

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

Local Area: Catawba

Counties within the Local Area: Chester, Lancaster, York

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D R A F T

Attachment B: Local Plan Requirements

The local plan serves as a four-year action plan to develop, align, and integrate local area service delivery strategies with those that support the state's strategic and operational goals. In partnership with the chief elected officials, each local board must develop and submit a local plan to identify and describe the policies, procedures, and activities that are carried out in the local area, consistent with the strategic vision and goals outlined in the State Plan and the respective regional plan. The following guiding principles should be considered priorities and included in responses throughout the document:

- Partnership and collaboration
- Increased access to resources and services through the use of technology
- The impact of COVID-19 on the local area's workforce and strategies to facilitate rapid reemployment
- Innovation and cost efficiencies

The local plan must include:

Section I:	Workforce and Economic Analysis
Section II:	Strategic Vision and Goals
Section III:	Local Area Partnerships and Investment Strategies
Section IV:	Program Design and Evaluation
Section V:	Operations and Compliance

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:

The mission of the Catawba Workforce Development Board (WDB) is, "To create, modify, and sustain a local system of cooperation and collaboration among all workforce development entities to ensure that the employment-related needs of employers, incumbent workers, and job seekers are met." One of the fundamental ways we achieve this is regularly reviewing state and local labor market data and economic conditions. The WDB Strategic Planning Committee reviews data annually to determine which in-demand industries to recommend to the WDB for approval. Please see the attached examples of data we routinely review – Catawba Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS) 2019, Catawba Area Community Profiles, I-77 Alliance Employment by Industry, I-77 Alliance Labor Market Projections, I-77 Alliance Average Annual Wage by Industry (Northern Commuter Shed), South Carolina Economic Analysis Report – Catawba Workforce Area, Workforce Profiles for Chester, Lancaster, and York Counties.

The Catawba Workforce Development Board reviewed the region's top 5 industry clusters for allowable training within a month of this Local Plan being public. Based on analysis of these reviews

and our knowledge of new employers locating to our area, our current in-demand industries are Healthcare, Maintenance/Manufacturing, Transportation/Logistics, Building/Construction, and Office/Computer Technology. Although Retail, Accommodations, and Food Services employ large numbers, these are typically low wage jobs that do not require specific certifications. In addition, many of these positions were greatly impacted by the COVID19 pandemic. The sectors will remain the same and continue to be reviewed by the Workforce Development Board in light of the pandemic. Existing processes will continue to be expanded, updated, and adjusted to meet the new, virtual expectations of area businesses.

Furthermore, as a member of the WIOA Central Region, we have implemented some of the same strategies used to determine target industries for the WIOA Central Region and those industries are very similar to the Catawba Workforce Development area. We have chosen to concentrate on Advanced Manufacturing first and then move on to other in demand industries. We will continue to use these tools and other relevant information to provide the best workforce possible in the Catawba Area. The Catawba Workforce Development Area is also a part of the I-77 Alliance which includes all three of our counties.

As another method of meeting the employment needs in our area, we gather information from employers through many different avenues about what they need. There are employers on our WDB and WDB committees. Our Business Solutions Team communicates with employers weekly by phone, email, videoconferences, and surveys. We also work closely with local Economic Development staff, Chamber of Commerce staff, and other great partners that share employer needs.

Given the feedback provided from the region's economic development partners and stakeholders, the biggest need for dislocated workers will be On the Job Training (OJT). These workers already have work history and experience but may need to learn new skills at a new job. This will be especially true for those coming from hospitality, tourism, retail, and restaurant jobs that want to increase their income and benefits. Some of these participants may need Occupational Skills Training (OST) to become employed at a self-sustaining wage. They could also receive help from Transitional Employment (TE) to gain valuable work experience and improve their work history and resumes. Supportive services such as childcare reimbursement, technology and internet access services, and travel reimbursement will be provided, as necessary, once need has been established. Access to broadband and transit are services that are critical to support individual reemployment needs and are not available in all part of our area. We recently received a Rapid Response Dislocated Worker Grant to help those workers obtain training and/or work experience to obtain careers with self-sufficient wages and benefits.

Employers continually stress that they are looking for employees with good soft skills. The need for soft skills has been a statewide concern as referenced in the South Carolina Job Skills Gap Update 2015. While we have been addressing this need with workshops, we now have a specialized and dedicated soft skills curriculum in the Catawba area. As an answer to a request from our Strategic Planning Committee and WDB, local service provider (Equus) staff developed a 12-hour, highly interactive soft skills course –Job Endurance Training (JET). It was first piloted in 2018 to local HR

and economic development professionals and received great reviews. Now the program is offered area wide to job seekers in our SC Works Centers. It is also offered through partnerships with University of South Carolina – Lancaster (USCL) to graduating seniors and with the Alston Wilkes Society to those recently released from incarceration. Although it was created as an in-person course, it has been adapted to be delivered virtually during the pandemic. The JET program received a National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) Innovation Award in 2019.

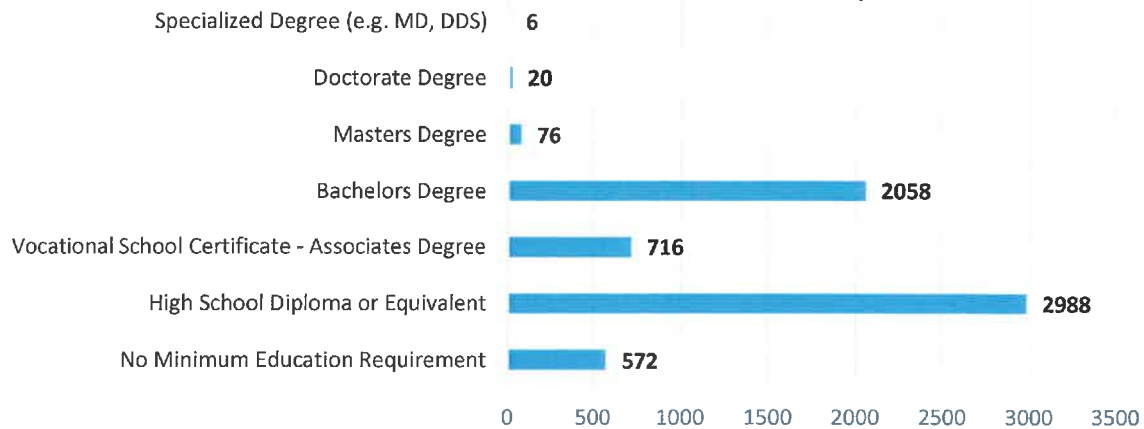
Employers also stress that they need employees that are “trainable” for their jobs. This includes employees with basic reading and math skills for entry-level jobs, especially in manufacturing. The Worldwide Interactive Network (WIN) assessment is a great tool to determine job seeker skills because it is a “work-focused” standardized test. All WIOA participants take WIN, which consists of Applied Math, Locating Information, and Reading for Information. (This has been paused or waived during the pandemic when testing sites were closed.) We also offer on-line training through the WIN Courseware and The Academy to increase WIN scores. Results from the WIN courseware and the WIN placement tests may be used as supporting documents for a waiver for the WIN assessment.

The Academy is a web-based learning tool that offers a library of more than 8,400 vocational skills, job readiness, adult education, and motivational courses. Equus developed The Academy in response to the need for offering personalized skills training and remedial education in an easy-to-use service tool. The skill enhancement curriculum results from a collaboration with Skillsoft, a pioneer in the field of learning with a long history of innovation. Skillsoft provides learning solutions for customers worldwide in various industry sectors. The courses have been developed by industry-leading experts to ensure the courses build talent and develop a more knowledgeable, productive, and valuable workforce. A new partnership between Equus and LinkedIn Learning has added access to an additional 15,000 courses through The Academy. The Academy is available 24/7 from anywhere with internet access. Certificates of completion may be printed and added to resumes and LinkedIn profiles.

Another regional concern expressed by employers is they have more jobs that require some training beyond a high school diploma or GED but do not require a four-year degree. Our local area’s focus is to review and approve quality training providers and programs that will allow us to meet the needs of our area employers by upskilling our labor force. That training could include courses that provide job specific and/or industry specific certifications or Associate’s Degrees. This was referenced in the South Carolina Job Skills Gap Update 2015 and continues to be reflected in job openings for the in the first two quarters of 2020. It is notable that the number of jobs requiring those skills is significantly less than those requiring a high school equivalent. Please see chart below:

Job Openings

Online Advertised Jobs Catawba Area 1st&2nd Qtr. 2020



In reviewing job order data from 2019 and June 2020 in the Catawba area (Job Opening by Industry attachments), the jobs requiring a vocational school certification or an Associate's Degree remain mostly healthcare and maintenance occupations. We are continually working with training providers to create and provide new programs that will meet the needs of area employers. Recent examples include the addition of Carolina Construction School to give participants another choice for CDL and Heavy Equipment training.

During the pandemic, we have seen increased openings for truck drivers of all types. This is due to increased on-line shopping. We also continue to see an increase in demand for Welders, Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) and Utility Line Workers. Due to the stress on our Healthcare industry caused by COVID19, training opportunities in the healthcare sector are also critical and in demand. Case management staff report seeing an increased demand for training as Patient Care Technicians, Phlebotomist, Pharmacy Technicians, and Medical Office Support. These trends are right on target with the industry and occupation projections in the attached. Catawba Workforce Development Area Conditions section of the South Carolina 2019 Economic Analysis Report.

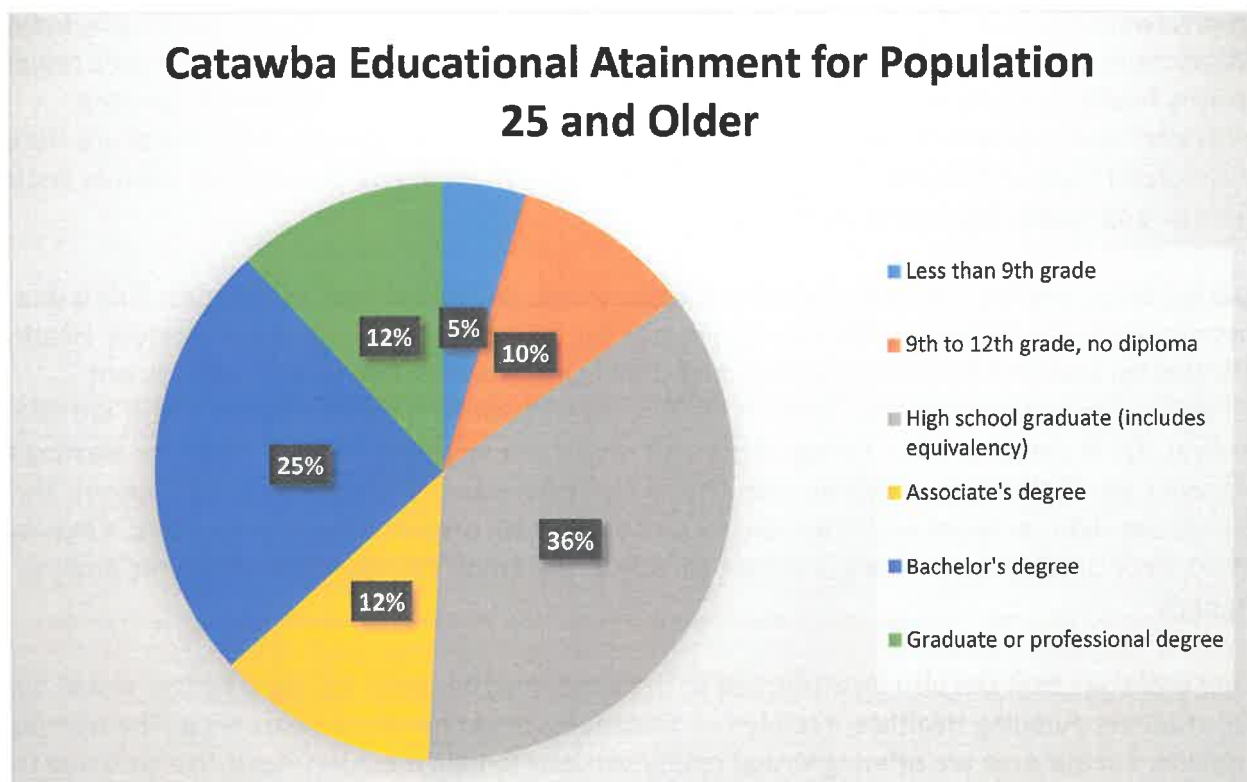
One challenge that can also be attributed to the pandemic, has been finding creative, virtual ways for students pursuing Healthcare related certifications, to get hands-on experience. The training providers in our area are offering virtual reality sessions to help meet this need. We continue to look for new, quality training programs (in-person and on-line options) to meet the needs of employers and job seekers in our area.

- 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; and

Our WDB uses many tools to analyze the workforce in our area. One major source is the Catawba Community Profile, provided by South Carolina Department of Employment & Workforce (SCDEW

or DEW). Page 1 and 2 show extremely low unemployment figures for 2019 and early 2020 but that drastically changed due to the pandemic, as it hit a high of 12.9% in May. June showed a drop to 10.1% and, although we anticipate more drops in the coming months as businesses and schools reopen, we do not anticipate going back to the historic lows of 2019 in the near future.

The following chart (Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2018 5-Year Estimate) shows the educational attainment of those 25 and older in our area. It is notable that 15% do not have a high school credential. This is usually a barrier to employment and our WDB requires attainment of a high school credential prior to entering occupational training. (Some employers have relaxed that requirement over the last couple of years and we grant waivers occasionally on a case by case basis.) It is encouraging to see that 48% have an Associate's, Bachelor's, or advanced degrees. Our goal is to guide individuals into programs related to our in-demand industries with strong career path and long-term employment potential.



In addition to the labor market trends mentioned in the previous section, the June 2020 issue of Labor Market Trends, published by SCDEW, highlighted an article from the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Monthly Labor Review about Telework. The pandemic has shown, "that 37 percent of U.S. jobs can be performed entirely at home – a number that greatly exceeds any recent estimate of how many workers telecommute on an average day." This will be an important trend to follow as we come out of the pandemic to see if telework remains the same, increases, or lessens. We have

also seen an increase in on-line shopping and the need for order fillers and delivery people. This will also be a trend to watch over the coming year.

- **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.**

We have used several tools to analyze area training opportunities. In addition to those documents already mentioned, we use employer input (those serving on WDB committees and from Business Solutions Team), high school dropout data, WIOA participants entering/completing training data, etc. One weakness, as noted in the previous section, is that in our area, 15% of our population does not have a high school credential. To address this concern, we require all WIOA participants to obtain a GED or high school diploma prior to occupational training. We work closely with area Adult Education partners to refer participants to their programs to complete their high school credential (diploma or GED). The following is a link to our Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) for the Catawba Area <https://scpath.org/Search/ProviderSearchLocalArea?localArea=7>

Although we do have some particularly good options for training, we always welcome more quality options for short-term credentials. We continually look for opportunities to collaborate on new training programs with our current providers. We are always searching for credible new providers to give our participants more options. New providers must be vetted through WDB staff and the WDB to ensure they are providing quality courses before they can be added to our ETPL. In the last two years, we have added Carolina Construction School in Lancaster as a provider for Heavy Equipment Operator and Commercial Driver certifications. We are glad to have this new option for these in-demand careers. With many manufacturing jobs coming to our area, it is a definite strength that we have the Certified Manufacturing Technician course through York Technical College to prepare job seekers for entry-level positions. Even though we have promoted the program and done a “pilot class”, we have had problems recruiting students for this course as many participants state they are not interested in manufacturing jobs. We will continue to collaborate with York Technical College to market and recruit for this course by highlighting the hi-tech, clean environment of many new manufacturing employers. One of our strengths is that we continue collaborating with training providers on more short-term training that results in an industry recognized credential that aides our participants obtain employment.

We continue to work with training providers during the pandemic to keep WIOA students engaged while most classes are only offered virtually/on-line. Some students do not learn as well in this environment and need extra support to be successful. We have hosted Zoom meetings with several providers and case management staff. Topics have included: **more guided curriculum with more “check points”** along the way; more opportunities for one-on-one time with instructors to ask questions; more guided study periods to prepare for certification exams; etc. Case management staff has worked with participants to discuss difficulties and find solutions.

Another strength is, at the onset of the pandemic, our staff moved quickly to begin updating workshops for virtual delivery. Workshops transitioned to virtual delivery include: Resume Workshop, WIOA Orientation, SC Works System Orientation, SCWOS Job Searching and Background Profile, Interviewing Tips, Mock Interviewing, JET (Job Endurance Training), and LEGACY. Newly created workshops include: Stress-Friend or Foe, LinkedIn Networking, LinkedIn Learning via The Academy, Social Media-Making it Work for You, and Virtual Interviewing. Staff continue to update current workshops and develop new workshops to roll out to SC Works customers.

One weakness in the Catawba area that has become apparent during the pandemic is the lack of internet access in many rural areas. This is not just a local problem, but a statewide issue and we understand several statewide initiatives are underway to address the issue. We also realized that a virtual platform to host large hiring events is vital now that large scale, in person events are no longer possible. The cost of these programs skyrocketed at the beginning of the pandemic and are too expensive for most local areas to purchase given limited resources. SCDEW is currently in the process of procuring a virtual job fair platform for statewide use. We look forward to having that important tool soon. We have been successful in small, one company virtual hiring events, but this is not ideal and we need a way to host our quarterly job fairs for numerous employers. We continue to research products in hopes of finding an affordable option or other funding sources.

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.

The Catawba WDB's Vision is "Partnering to develop and maintain a globally competitive workforce that enhances regional economic growth and improved quality of life."

The Catawba WDB Goals are as follows:

Employer Services:

- Improve ongoing understanding of employer needs
- Provide talent pipeline to meet occupational demand of employers
- Collaborate with partner agencies to educate and improve communication with employers on all services available
- Obtain a virtual job fair platform

Job Seeker Services:

- Increase the number of qualified job seekers
- Improve soft skills of job seekers
- Improve guidance of job seekers toward growing occupations/careers

- Continue collaboration with partners to help all job seekers, especially those with barriers, to get all services needed to become employed
- Increase avenues of providing information to job seekers through technology


Youth:

- Increase success rate (performance goals) and retention rate
- Increase meaningful work-based learning opportunities and work opportunities
- Collaborate with other entities to improve transportation options
- Increase ability to locate and maintain stable housing by obtaining employment with self-sufficient wages
- Increase financial literacy through the LEGACY curriculum and partnering with industry experts
- Continue to provide soft skills through a combination of LEGACY and JET facilitation

WDB Management Role:

- Continue to educate WDB members and encourage them to promote WIOA services
- Maximize cooperation/coordination with partners
- Continue to update goals and strategies
- Work with partners to develop transportation solutions for area workforce

We review Adult and Youth performance measures quarterly with our service provider. Many other measures are reviewed monthly and include number of participants placed in work-based learning, expenditures for work-based learning, number of businesses served, number of job orders placed, number of participants served, number of workshops offered, number of participants placed in occupational training, number placed in GED, measurable skills gains, OJTs, JET sessions, etc.

		Catawba Regional Operational Month-At-A-Glance Report												
		Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	PY19 Year End
Center Traffic:														
Total Regional Traffic #s		2,895	2,603	2,063	1,729	1,920	1,992	2,378	2,077	1,015	0	0	200	18,872
Chester		441	380	373	317	305	227	267	334	77	0	0	0	2,721
Lancaster		1,143	1,009	867	949	822	926	1,123	907	507	0	0	89	8,340
York		1,311	1,214	823	463	793	819	990	836	431	0	0	111	7,811
Employer Services:														
Total # of Employers Contacted		157	74	177	117	128	79	77	218	95	165	139	99	1,525
# of Employer Engagement Events		6	7	8	10	4	10	14	21	5	5	7	9	106
# of OJT Contracts Executed		4	0	0	2	0	0	2	5	2	0	1	0	16
# of Recruitment Events Held		42	40	21	23	18	19	22	20	5	0	0	2	212
# of Recruitment Event Attendees		364	186	113	235	126	89	140	81	35	0	0	13	1,382
# of New Job Orders Entered by Catawba Staff		338	400	509	401	404	325	501	436	425	242	295	303	4,579
Catawba Staff Assisted Job Referral #s for Region		315	156	217	130	154	97	142	104	90	4	55	51	1,495
WIOA Related:														
Total # of WIOA Orientations Conducted		4	11	14	9	4	6	7	8	5	27	47	25	167
Total # Attending WIOA Orientation		22	61	75	55	12	15	24	33	18	27	47	25	414
# of WIOA Adult Enrollments		21	9	15	11	12	13	14	13	8	0	6	8	130
# of WIOA DW Enrollments		3	8	8	18	11	8	12	8	6	4	5	6	97
# of Adults & DWs Entering Training		5	11	9	20	2	7	14	8	4	0	5	9	84
% Entering Training Related Employment		0%	100%	50%	100%	100%	75%	83%	100%	100%	100%	50%	75%	84.8%
SC Works Regional Operator Data														
Total # In House Workshops Conducted by All Partners		36	42	27	45	28	29	29	34	32	5	5	0	292
# of In House Workshop Attendees		57	93	62	100	71	70	80	159	26	5	5	0	728
# of One/Stop Partner Referrals (SC Works) via SCWOS		59	45	47	66	41	33	48	55	31	10	21	81	541
# of Rapid Response Sessions		2	1	2	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	9
# of Rapid Response Session Attendees		10	2	81	0	0	0	80	0	0	0	0	0	173
Months impacted by COVID-19														



The above information is presented to our Youth Council and Workforce Development Board at all meetings. We also added additional tools to track and report activities and services provided virtually during the pandemic:

PY19 4th Quarter Virtual Services Spotlight

April – May – June



Spotlighted Virtual Services	Chester	Lancaster	Rock Hill	Regional Totals
ES Outbound Call Summary	522	2730	4847	8099
ES Incoming Call Summary	569	4036	1939	6544
In Center Traffic (Wager Peyser Services)	0	114	61	175
WIOA Orientations (ADWY)	7	3	15	25
Completed Certifications and Enrollments (ADWY)	0	2	12	14
Individual Career Counseling Sessions (ADWY)	0	41	77	118
BST Blast of Information Relevant to Area Employers	84	170	560	814
BST New/Existing Employer Engagement Activities	0	10	6	16
BST Employment and COVID-19 Data to Job Seekers	1146	1760	9511	12417
BST Blast of Information to our Partners	581	566	726	1873
Legacy Activity (YAW)	18	4	10	32

All core partners and many other partners are members of our WDB and committees, so they are key players in the discussions and decisions that are made. Partner meetings are held monthly in each county (this is now virtual due to pandemic) and this is a great venue to share best practices and learn about and discuss resources each partner can provide. This discussion and follow-up enable the alignment of resources and eliminates duplication. A resource matrix for job seekers has been completed and distributed to partners in each county. (Matrix for each county is attached.)

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 local planning process involved input for relevant sections of the plan from meetings and minutes from WDB, committees, employers, partners, economic development, Adult Ed, providers, etc. Due to pandemic closures and a need for the creation of the COVID-19 Catawba Local Workforce Development Area Plan, we have been in very close communication with our area partners. The draft plan was sent out to the full WDB, committees, CEOs, partners, economic development, Adult Ed Directors, providers, etc. for input.

The Catawba Region held a Zoom call with economic development stakeholders and representatives from Chester County, Lancaster County, York County, and the City of Rock Hill to gather information

about area employers and impacts as a result of COVID19. The call also included the SC Economic Development Association President, York Technical College, South Carolina Manufacturing Extension Partnership (SCMEP), and Catawba Regional Council of Governments (COG) staff. Monthly calls are also being conducted through the Catawba Regional COG with city and county executives (managers/administrators/supervisors), and those calls provide an update on employers as well.

The plan was posted on the SC Works Catawba website (www.scworkscatawba.net) and Catawba Regional Council of Governments (www.catawbacog.org) for public comment. Email blasts to WDB, Economic Development, Adult Ed, local elected officials, etc. were sent to give information about the plan, link, comment period, and email address 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 Catawba workforce system consists of many agencies and programs. Our core and required program partners are listed below. We have many additional partners including, WelVista: Prescription Drug Assistance, Affinity Health: medical assistance, Pilgram's Inn: Community and faith-based organizations to name a few. We are continually seeking out and adding new partnerships in our area.

AARP SCSEP Program: Senior Community Service Employment Program
Adult Education- Chester, Lancaster, Rock Hill, and Tri-District: Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Programs
Alston Wilkes Society: Second Chance Programs
Carolina Community Actions, LLC: Community Services Block Grant Employment and Training Activities
Catawba Indian Nation/SC Indian Development Council: Native American Programs
Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD): Employment and Training Activities
Equus Workforce Solutions (formerly ResCare Workforce Services): Operator of OneStop System and service provider of Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Out of School Youth Programs
Goodwill: Employment and Training Assistance
Job Corps, DOL – Insights Training Group, LLC: Job Corps Programs
SC Department of Employment and Workforce: Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker Program
SC Department of Employment and Workforce: Trade Adjustment Assistance Programs
SC Department of Employment and Workforce: Unemployment Insurance Compensation
SC Department of Employment and Workforce: Veteran's Employment and Training Programs
SC Department of Employment and Workforce: Wagner-Peyser Employment Services Program
SC Department of Social Services (DSS) - Chester, Lancaster, and York County: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Programs & Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP)
SC Vocational Rehabilitation Department (SCVRD) - Lancaster and Rock Hill Area (Rock Hill Area Office covers Chester): Rehabilitation Programs for Individuals with Disabilities
York Technical College: Post-Secondary Education Programs (Perkins)

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

Our operator, Equus Workforce Solutions, has facilitated individual meetings with partners to develop a working Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with specific methods of partnering being established. Please see the attached Memorandum of Understanding, including the Resource Sharing Agreement (RSA) Budget for more detail.

A key strategy in delivering support and service delivery alignment is creating and maintaining partnerships. Working together with various communities, businesses, local Chambers, workforce partners, economic development, local and county government, and other workforce stakeholders/colleagues in each county, we can leverage funds, assets, processes, and knowledge. Very often agencies may serve the same population. If worked efficiently, these partnerships allow us to wrap an individual in services. When wrapped in services, individuals have fewer missed steps on their journey to self-sufficiency. To effectively assist job seekers on their journey to self-sufficiency, we work to provide a holistic approach, starting with the basics, such as food, housing, clothing, and healthcare needs. By utilizing our partnerships with SNAP, DSS, Housing Authority, Welvista, Affinity Health Center, and other partners within the area, we can help stabilize the job seeker, so they can focus on reemployment activities. The Catawba area has applied for and received a grant (Reentry Navigator Grant – Take Two) to provide a dedicated navigator for the “justice involved” population and a separate grant (United Way Grant) to ensure that we are giving more jobseekers an opportunity to improve or reaffirm their soft skills.

Take Two is the Catawba Regional Reentry Program that has been designed to help justice involved individuals, in Chester, Lancaster, and York Counties, as they strive to make their next step in the right direction. We will accomplish this by immersing those we serve in career readiness activities, both general and those specific to the justice involved population. Along with partner collaboration, Take Two participants will be wrapped in services to motivate and encourage them as they journey towards self-sufficiency and employment. This grant has allowed us to have a dedicated staff member, who will work closely with and receive referrals from Adult and Dislocated Worker programs, DEW, Drug Court in York and Lancaster, Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) in all 3 counties, Probation, Pardon, & Parole (PPP) in all 3 counties, Local law enforcement in all 3 counties, alongside community-based partners. York Technical College is also another major program partner. They have committed up to \$40,000 in scholarships. The scholarships will support students in completing one of several educational programs, credit and non-credit, including, but not limited to the following:

- Manufacturing Fundamentals/ServeSafe/OSHA 10
- Truck Driving/Commercial Driver’s License
- Certified Logistics Associate/Certified Logistics Technician
- Microsoft Office classes, including Microsoft Office Certification
- Industrial Trades, including Welding and Automotive Technology
- Building and Construction Trades

Another grant we were awarded is the United Way Financial Stability Grant. Job Endurance Training: Everyone Developing Gainful Employment (JET: EDGE) Program. The goal of this initiative is to strengthen York County families through financial stability, by impacting their ability to obtain and retain gainful employment. The JET Edge program will allow for innovation by recruiting individuals who are underemployed and providing services such as JET, Job Shadowing, and Transitional Employment. Job Shadowing activities offered will not only include the traditional job shadowing experience but will also offer a unique activity of virtual reality job shadowing. This piece may look different while we are under pandemic restrictions. Transitional Employment opportunities will be targeted along the My Ride Rock Hill transit routes and near the residences of participants outside of the transit service areas in York County to ensure transportation is not a barrier. These activities will contribute to achieving program success. One of the main partners of the JET EDGE Program will be the Rock Hill Housing Authority. They received a HUD Resident Opportunities and Self-Sufficiency - Service Coordinators program grant, to promote employment and self-sufficiency.

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

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

Catawba is committed to serving targeted populations and those with barriers to employment. More collaboration with partners who also serve these targeted populations will continue to help us serve those groups. Those partners include SCVRD, DSS, DJJ, Alston Wilkes Society, Goodwill, and Job Corps. These partners are members of our WDB, Youth Council, and/or have a presence in our SC Works Centers. Partners also attend our monthly partner meetings in each county. These meetings help inform all partners of services offered and facilitate the alignment of resources and eliminate duplication of services. Our WDB Priority Populations Committee has been actively working on ways to better serve those with disabilities. We have partnered with AbleSC to host several workshops with employers to highlight benefits of hiring employees with disabilities and services to help employees with disabilities. This committee has created an informational handout about some lesser-known disabilities and the additional services that may be provided. This committee, with the addition of some new justice-involved organization members, is now serving as our advisory committee for our Reentry Navigator Grant. We are excited to have a staff person totally dedicated to the justice-involved population and helping them navigate the road to self-sufficient employment. We also have partnerships with Foster Care for those aging out of the system at 18: Children's Attention Home and Lancaster Children's Home. We have strong relationships with area high school guidance counselors who refer those graduating without plans for further education, to SC Works for services.

Other strategies being utilized are:

- Recruiting blasts are being sent out by text and email to individuals identified as recently registering in SCWOS due to the impact of COVID-19
- Groups identified by industry sector will receive targeted blasts through email and text with information regarding growth in that particular or a related industry

- Groups identified as underemployed pre COVID-19, will receive Industry Sector rack cards through text and email spotlighting industries to interest them in pursuing career opportunities within one of our in-demand industry sectors
- SC Works will partner with area SCPATH approved training providers and share training opportunities through text and email with our Catawba Area COVID19 impacted job seekers that will prepare them for in-demand positions in our area which pay a livable wage
- Concentrated and targeted advertising through text, email, and Facebook of JET and the benefits of gaining the sought-after employability skills
- Concentrated and targeted advertising through text, email, and Facebook of our LEGACY Job Readiness preparation curriculum designed for our 17 to 24-year-old young adults
- Collaborating with workforce partners, participants can benefit from being co-enrolled with other community agencies that can provide support services necessary for individual employment success
- Assessing participants based on their interests and placing them in virtual group WebEx settings using WebEx, forming cohorts with similar goals
- **Improve access to activities leading to a recognized post-secondary credential, including an industry-recognized certificate or certification that is portable and stackable:**

As mentioned previously, we are continually seeking programs/providers of short-term training for our in-demand jobs. Our close working relationship with our Adult Ed Centers provides a wonderful referral system to move students right into occupational skills training as soon as they receive their GED or high school diploma. One of our Adult Ed Centers has partnered with their high school Career Center to offer several industry-recognized certification programs in evening hours included on the local Eligible Training Providers List (ETPL). This provides accessible training for an area with extremely limited public transportation. We will encourage more Career Centers follow this model since transportation is a barrier in our area.

After review of applications for inclusion on the ETPL for the Catawba area, the following providers and programs were added to the list of approved options for the PY20 program year:

Training Provider	Newly Approved Programs
Career Step	Medical Billing/Coding, Medical Transcription, Medical Assistant, Computer Technician, Medical Admin Asst, Pharmacy Tech, EKG, Healthcare Information Tech Kinetic Potential - IT
Kinetic Potential	Cybersecurity 1: Introduction to IT and Cybersecurity
Penn Foster	Pharmacy Tech

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

Area employers are engaged by being members of the WDB and committees. Catawba is a member of the Central Region and in the last 18 months, we have been working with a new consultant to continue developing Sector Partnerships. The first in-demand industry we have targeted is Advanced Manufacturing and several area manufacturers and economic development representatives are involved in this exciting opportunity as team members.

There are a variety of programs available to assist area employers with gaining access to an untapped pool of viable candidates and resources within the Catawba area.

One of the most popular programs is our On-the-Job Training program. This program is designed to establish a continuous flow of qualified candidates, by reimbursing the employer a percentage of the new hire's wages during their training period. This program gives area Employers the opportunity to train their new employees to their standards and do so in a cost-effective manner.

Similar to the On-the Job Training program is the Transitional Employment Program. This program is designed to provide our participants with the work experience necessary to assure that they are more competitive on and off paper. Transitional Employment is a type of paid Work-Experience that is considered an individualized career service. Transitional Employment opportunities are time-limited and subsidized up to 100 percent. These jobs are in the public, private, or nonprofit sectors and are only available for individuals with barriers to employment who are chronically unemployed or have an inconsistent work history.

HR Café serves all business professionals that operate in an HR, operational, or supervisory role within their organizations. HR Café is for the individuals who wear the hat of an HR representative, with or without the title. This program allows these business professionals the opportunity to remain "in-the-know" regarding any and all HR matters and is facilitated by Joanie Winters, a local employment law attorney in concert with our SC Works Centers in the Catawba area.

Everybody's Business is another Employer-facing program designed to provide information and solutions for challenging issues impacting the Catawba area. This program was born out of a need to provide solutions for businesses who do not have a human resource presence on-site. The Business Solutions Team discovered that there were a variety of small businesses without HR departments. For Everybody's Business presentations, any business representative may attend including HR designees, managers, supervisors, owners, and key decision makers.

The Catawba area has done many types of job fairs over years. Some have been huge with 30+ employers with large crowds and some have been smaller, industry specific events. Employers commented that they liked the smaller events with less employers and crowds so they could talk with job seekers more. We have also done job fairs in each county to highlight jobs with employers in that county for job seekers that wanted to live closer to their job and reduce their commute. Job fairs during the pandemic will be very different. We hope to soon have a virtual job fair platform (SCDEW is procuring a statewide platform) to host numerous companies and job seekers. SCWorks Catawba also has a drive through job fair planned for September.

Hiring Events are individualized sourcing opportunities for the employers within the Catawba area. Hiring Events are typically held for one employer at a time with a single focus on that company's

individual hiring needs. These Events are designed to capture the attention of the universal job seeker and enrolled WIOA participant.

When state WIOA funds are available, SC Works Catawba facilitates the Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) Program. The purpose of the IWT program is to assist employers with upgrading the skills of current employees in an effort to keep businesses and workers competitive. The target demographic of this program includes private sector employers located in Chester, Lancaster, and York counties faced with changing skill requirements due to new technology, retooling, new product lines, and new organizational restructuring.

SC Works Catawba has been fortunate in the way of collaborative opportunities. SC Works Catawba hosts quarterly partner meetings in each county to give area partners the opportunity to network and have working knowledge of one another's offerings. During the pandemic, we have done virtual meetings, combining all counties. We have worked closely with the organizations above in hosting area-specific events, information sessions, job fairs, hiring events, JET sessions, and other internally developed programs that target area businesses and partners. Over the years, our relationships with economic development, area partners, and businesses have blossomed into mutually beneficial relationships where there is a reciprocal expectation of sharing best practices and being catalysts for change. These have resulted in initiatives and have evolved with the addition of every partner as they share their area of expertise.

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

Along with addressing employer concerns over the soft skills gap, our workforce system continually strives to meet the needs of businesses in the Catawba area. We will continue to work toward strengthening the workforce pipeline by reviewing our in-demand industries annually and guiding WIOA participants into those training areas by sharing the most recent Labor Market Information (LMI) available. We will continue to work locally and regionally on sector strategies with our partners, employers, training providers, etc. Locally, we have built stronger partnerships with economic development through more frequent communication to better anticipate employer needs. Of course, employer input is extremely important, and we will continue to listen to employers about their current and future needs. In late 2018 and early 2019, we held focus groups in each county to gauge the interest of area manufacturing employers in starting a program like the North Carolina Manufacturing Institute. While most thought the idea was good, many were not committed to providing financial support or giving program completers priority in hiring. Technology (webinars, email, surveys, etc.) will be used to reach more employers and will allow them to efficiently provide feedback and input.

The WIOA Central Region will continue toward sector strategies and workforce pipeline with our initial focus being on Advanced Manufacturing. The region was rejuvenated and redirected with the rollout of the new platform in summer of 2019 and held several productive meetings with manufacturing representatives from throughout the region. Unfortunately, COVID19 has delayed progress over the last six months.

- **Improve coordination between workforce development programs and economic development:**

Economic development representatives are members of our WDB and committees. Through our strong partnership with economic development in our area, we often collaborate on projects and support each other's initiatives. They are also active participants in our quarterly Business Services Team meetings. Local economic development representatives have been active in the previously mentioned WIOA Central Region Sector Strategies initiative. The Catawba WIOA Administrator serves on a couple of workforce related committees of the Rock Hill Economic Development Corporation.

The Catawba Area is also part of the I-77 Alliance and we will continue to work with these economic development alliances to strengthen the workforce pipeline in our region and area.

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

There is a very strong partnership with the Reemployment and Eligibility Assessment (REA) representative housed in our comprehensive SC Works Center. Referrals are frequently made for those identified participants receiving Unemployment Insurance (UI) to job readiness activities and possible one-on-one assistance that can be provided for those eligible for individualized WIOA career services. DEW staff in other SC Works Centers also refer UI claimants to the same services. Over the most recent 90 period, we had 97 referrals, so we average at least 1 referral per day. Information about SC Works services and workshops is available throughout the center.

With assistance from the Labor Market Information pulled from the SC Works platform, the industry and area-specific information pulled by the Business Intelligence Department, Labor Market Information received from the SCDEW and economic development, and information received directly from Catawba area employers, the Business Solutions Team has ensured that every demographic has access to information that is pertinent to our economic recovery. Due to the existence of an uncertain economy and operating during unprecedented times, the dissemination of information is prioritized by need for our participants. By identifying the resources that provide the most assistance in meeting the basic needs of those we serve, we can help keep our communities informed. Weekly email and text blasts go out containing information ranging from Unemployment Insurance updates and Lifeboat Jobs received from SCDEW, to resources on coping with the increasing anxiety and depression some are facing because of the pandemic. Our partners and employers are provided information, also, but in a way that can help them manage their business needs. The Business Solutions Team remains in regular contact with area employers and partners to assure that they have access to business support and hiring opportunities presented by SC Works.

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 learning (WBL) activities, including registered apprenticeship programs:**

In PY19, the Catawba area implemented our Transitional Employment program. This initiative provides paid work-based learning opportunities for adults and dislocated workers entering a new field or adding to their limited work experience. This program provides the opportunity for area employers to see the talent we work with while assessing job seekers as a potential member of their team. Since the Introduction of this program in PY19, this project has made 17 successful placements and new partnerships within the area. We have also facilitated partnerships with Apprenticeship Carolina staff to leverage and maximize both funding opportunities for our shared pool of participants. The new push of Apprenticeship Carolina and partnerships has greatly increased our presence as an organization within the Catawba area and should present excellent apprenticeship opportunities for our participants, partners, and employers. Once again, COVID19 has paused some of these efforts.

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

Currently, we do not have a formal assessment tool for soft skills. The process of evaluation begins with the objective assessment during enrollment. The Career Advisor looks for social and physical cues by observing how participants interact with others. Participants are engaged in conversation and asked about the soft skills that are important to them and discuss their level of comfort within each of those areas. We also ask for specific examples of job seekers putting these skills in action as previous roles and interactions with their co-workers and supervisors are discussed. We take advantage of opportunities to observe personal and professional demeanor and interactions each time they visit the SC Works Center, participate in workshops – both in-person and virtually, during one-on-one visits, and on phone calls. These observations also occur in SCWorks resource rooms with universal job seekers so that appropriate referrals can be made.

As mentioned earlier, we utilize our JET curriculum to provide soft skill training in the Catawba area. The three-day program operates from 9am - 1pm each day and typically operates out of Catawba area SC Works Centers. There are six topics that JET covers during the standard three-day session-- Communication, Integrity, Time Management, Teamwork, Problem Solving, and Conflict Resolution. JET is a program designed to be facilitated in full or in pieces, dependent on the needs of the audience. JET is also open to all our partners, the general public, and all WIOA participants. The pandemic has forced JET to be offered virtually.

Our participants and universal job seekers also have access to Soft Skills Courseware through WIN which includes four modules: Communicating Effectively, Conveying Professionalism, Thinking Critically and Solving Problems, and Promoting Teamwork and Collaboration. Soft Skills Courseware helps learners develop and demonstrate attitudinal and behavioral skills that are critical for success in the workplace, school, and everyday life. These competencies are a key component of WIN's comprehensive approach to preparing learners and job seekers for success and providing future employers with workplace-ready candidates.

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

Full implementation of Career Pathways will improve knowledge and access to stackable credentials. This will take time but will be quite beneficial. Stackable credentials provide numerous entry and exit points within a career. The entries and exits on the career path will vary from person to person and provide a guide for an individual to get a minimal credential to gain employment and then move forward with other credentials while still being employed.

We work closely with the York Technical College to leverage courses covered under other funding streams so that we can stack trainings to better prepare those successfully completing multiple opportunities and marketing them to area employers. The college has worked toward offering courses for both continuing education and credit to enable students to enter/exit training at more points to earn stackable credentials along the way.

We are working more closely than ever with our CORE partners – through meetings, learning about services, more communication, etc. – to ensure appropriate referrals for co-enrollment. Referrals are tracked through SCWOS for agencies using the system. This allows all partners to better serve those seeking assistance through the system and eliminate duplication of services.

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

As a part of the implementation of our SC Works Certification Standards, our SCWorks Centers close to the public for a full day bi-monthly so that all center staff can participate in team building, cross-training and strategic planning activities. Our Operator, Equus Workforce Solutions, and management of co-located partners collaborate on the planning and facilitation of this full day meeting. Various speakers have been featured and pertinent topics covered such as Active Shooter Awareness training by local law enforcement, Reentry and Poverty Simulations, Mental Health Awareness presentations led by National Association of Mental Illness (NAMI), Human Trafficking, Work Opportunity Tax Credit and Federal Bonding by SC DEW, SC DEW Labor Market Information and numerous other informative and engaging topics.

During these bi-monthly team meetings, we thoroughly cover at least one SC Works Certification Standard, a Center Safety Element, and a LEGACY Standard. We also feature a partner initiative or program and discuss needs so that we can collectively problem solve. The rollout of the Your Next Step rebranding, along with the SC Works 101 Training initiative, has provided valuable tools. This training has been instrumental in broadening the concept of a workforce system made up of many partners with a common purpose rather than focusing on individual programs within workforce centers. Equus staff, co-located partner staff, and those that spend time in the centers embrace the concept of working in tandem to serve the job seekers and businesses of the Catawba area.

- **Streamline intake and referral processes:**

With the invasive nature of COVID-19 and the need to adhere to national guidance to keep staff and customers safe, our focus on the delivery of services in a virtual environment led to streamlining processes. This was done out of necessity and our provider was able to transition quickly to an efficient virtual model. Referrals are entered into SCWOS for required partners that utilize that system. Most required WIOA partners are still providing a large percentage of their services in a virtual manner as we navigate returning to serve individuals in-person following social distancing guidelines. Once referred for WIOA services, customers were able to join a group orientation virtually or to participate in a virtual one on one session with an available team member. We were able to move to a more efficient electronic file system and most of our in-person group activities transitioned to WebEx, Skype, Microsoft Teams, or other virtual platforms as we continued to connect to job seekers. In-person services are conducted by appointment only at this time, and we will continue to support this hybrid model of service delivery for the foreseeable future. Partnering with our local Adult Education team members and working from their sites has allowed us to partner in a way that provides support so that WIOA services can be offered concurrently with GED/High School Diploma attainment. Those services include case management, transportation reimbursement, child care assistance, JET (Job Endurance Training), LEGACY, and many other workshops.

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

One of the WDB's strategic goals is to convene area partners and agencies to discuss options for reliable transportation for job seekers, workers, etc. in the Catawba area. We anticipate this project to kick off by the end of 2020. Since the last Local Plan, the City of Rock Hill has started their free transit service. The routes include stops near SCWorks Rock Hill, York Technical College, downtown, hospital, shopping areas, grocery stores, etc. We are also collaborating with area housing authorities to provide options for those we serve that may not be in a stable living situation. This is a barrier that must be addressed before full attention can be given to the development of a career with sustainable wages. For some of our hardest to serve participants, and those exiting the foster care or justice systems, obtaining their vital records is usually the first barrier they encounter. We partner with Alston Wilkes Society to help guide these priority populations through this process so that they will be ready for their next steps. Our Reentry Navigator will also help with obtaining vital records for justice involved participants.

- **Supporting industry-led, sector partnerships:**

We will continue to work locally and regionally on sector strategies with our partners, employers, training providers, etc. Locally, we have built stronger partnerships with economic development through more frequent communication to better anticipate employer needs. Of course, employer input is extremely important, and we will continue to listen to employers about their current and future needs. In late 2018 and early 2019, we held focus groups in each county to gauge the interest of area manufacturing employers in starting a program like the North Carolina Manufacturing Institute. While most thought the idea was good, many were not committed to providing financial

support or giving program completers priority in hiring. Technology (webinars, email, surveys, etc.) will be pursued to reach more employers and not take them away from their jobs while providing input. The WIOA Central Region will continue toward sector strategies and workforce pipeline with our first sector being Advanced Manufacturing. The region was rejuvenated and redirected with the rollout of the new platform in summer of 2019 and held several productive meetings with manufacturing representatives from throughout the region. Unfortunately, COVID-19 has delayed progress over the last few months. This vital mission will become priority again soon.

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

Our bi-monthly SCWorks team meetings quarterly partner meetings provide the perfect forums to spotlight partners and any upcoming programs they may be involved in or sponsoring. These meetings not only keep us informed, but provide the opportunity to enhance our partnerships and provide support to each other's individual program activities in which our shared customers would benefit. Collaborative communication creates an environment of growth through the sharing of best practices that may lead to successful outcomes.

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.**

We will continue to nurture existing partnerships previously mentioned to implement the strategies and services. Also, we continue to develop new partnerships. One of the newest partnerships is with United Way of York County as we recently received a grant to deliver soft skills training and provide transitional employment opportunities to help participants reach self-sustaining employments. Other new partnerships have been developed with various justice-involved agencies during the concept phase and now roll out of the Reentry Navigator Grant. Participation in the Rock Hill Economic Development Talent Development Committee has provided another valuable, strengthened partnership.

SC Works Catawba has developed and strengthened a variety of partner relationships within the area. In 2018, SC Works Catawba held the first in-house event with the Catawba Indian Nation—a relationship that had not been previously been maximized. Our team has also created or enhanced relationships with organizations like Pilgrims' Inn, The Housing Authority, Probation, Parole, and Pardon (PPP), Alston Wilkes, the Small Business Administration at Winthrop University, among others. All of these partnerships, old and new, allow the Catawba area to better serve job seekers, participants, and employers by working together to share information and best practices.

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.**

The process of evaluation begins with the objective assessment during enrollment. The Career Advisor looks for social and physical cues by watching how participants interact with others when possible. Participants are engaged in conversation and asked about the soft skills that are important to them and discuss their level of comfort within each of those areas. We also ask for specific examples of them putting these skills in action as we discuss their previous roles and interactions with their co-workers and supervisors. We take advantage of all opportunities to observe their demeanor and interactions each time they visit the SC Works Center, participate in workshops – both in-person and virtually, during one-on-one visits, and phone calls. These observations also occur in our resource rooms with our universal job seekers so that appropriate referrals can be made. We do not currently have a formal assessment tool for soft skills but will investigate options that are accurate and not terribly time consuming.

- 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.**

We accomplish this by being responsive to the needs of the employers in our area by reaching out to them by phone, email, or in person to discuss their needs and offer services based on their needs. The major need for area employers is filling open jobs. Hiring events are conducted each week to meet immediate needs of the employers. We have had great success with On-the-Job Training, which allows employers to be reimbursed a percentage of a newly hired employee's wages while they are being trained. In PY 19, we placed over 25 participants in OJTs. This encourages employers to "train their own" rather than try to find the exact skills prospective employees need. Another valuable resource that we can offer employers is Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) funds. These funds allow employers to train existing employees on new skills to increase productivity, add additional processes, etc. We will continue to be proactive in meeting the needs of area businesses. Analyzing the most recent data (provided by SCDEW, Catawba COG, I-77 Alliance, etc.) and meeting with Economic Development staff and Ready SC staff on a more frequent basis will help us to anticipate needs of existing and new employers.

Equus facilitates the IWT process and advertises when funds are made available so that businesses are aware of the process to apply for IWT funding. Individual guidance is provided to each company throughout the process as needed. Businesses are contacted when postings that could be filled by an OJT participant are discovered in the SC Works Online system. Business Solutions Consultants also make appointments and cold calls to share information about the OJT program. As mentioned earlier, there will be a greater focus on apprenticeships in the Catawba Area and we plan to partner with Apprenticeship Carolina to hold events designed to educate employers on the benefits of this program. Regional and Local Sector Strategies initiatives will continue and will help us review and refine our in-demand industries.

We have a couple of unique offerings for businesses in the Catawba Area. As mentioned before, the HR Café is a quarterly “lunch and learn” event in each county sponsored by SC Works and a local attorney. SC Works advertises and coordinates the events, and the attorney provides lunch and a presentation on a relevant employment law topic. (HR Café has moved to Zoom due to the pandemic.) This has been very well attended and a great resource for businesses, and we plan to continue this popular service indefinitely. It is also a wonderful way to introduce SC Works to employers.

We have also launched a new resource for employers called “Everybody’s Business”. These quarterly gatherings feature a speaker focusing on a variety of current hot topics for HR professionals. One recent subject discussed the impact that medical marijuana can have on the hiring process. Employers are finding this opportunity quite valuable.

Coordinated by the Business Services Team, the first industry-specific job fair was held in June 2016 and it was a great success. Employers and job seekers said in their surveys that they liked the smaller venue and crowd because it allowed more time for interaction. Similar events have been held in all three counties. We also held some “Home Town” job fairs featuring in-county employers to attract talent back “home” and reduce commute. Some virtual hiring events have been held for individual employers but we are very excited that SCDEW is in the procurement process for a virtual job fair platform that will enable us to host larger, multi-employer job fairs again soon.

- 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 representatives are members of the WDB and committees and are provided the opportunity to present at each meeting to keep all involved informed. We have strengthened our partnerships with the Existing Business Coordinators with the economic development department in each county by having them as WDB and committee members and are working to expand those partnerships with area city economic development entities. These relationships throughout the area have led to increased communication, information sharing and services to employers. We will also become more involved with the I-77 Alliance, which includes all three of our three counties, along with Richland and Fairfield Counties, by attending their meetings and engaging with Alliance Staff members.

The Catawba Area is also a part of the WIOA Central Region. Local economic development representatives serve on the regional sector strategies team and have been valuable members. The WDB will continue to support the Central Region’s sector strategies and career pathways initiative as they will be beneficial to our area. The selected in-demand jobs for our local area are almost identical to those for the region, with manufacturing being at the top of both. Work with the WIOA Central Region will continue with sector strategies and workforce pipeline with the new consulting group. The region has been rejuvenated and redirected to what we believe is a successful path over the last 18 months.

Because WIOA has not promoted entrepreneurial or microenterprise training in the past, this is still in the planning stages. While we know this is not the path for many of our participants, we want to be able to provide the best training possible for those best suited for these careers. We have a relationship with the Winthrop Small Business Incubator and participants showing interest in entrepreneurship are informed of the dates and times of their 'Intro to Entrepreneurship' Workshops. Those with entrepreneurial aspirations are also guided to 17 courses offered by Equus on The Academy including the following:

- Entrepreneurship: Raising Startup Capital
- Entrepreneurship Foundations
- Entrepreneurship: Finding and Testing Your Business Idea
- Entrepreneurship: Bootstrapping Your Business, etc.

The Equus partnership with LinkedIn Learning also offers training courses that will benefit the budding entrepreneur.

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:

The WDB staff provides guidance to program providers so that we continually improve our services and outcomes. This is provided through technical assistance (in person, Zoom, phone, and email), scheduled meetings with Youth and/or Adult/Dislocated Worker (DW) staff, monitoring, etc. We measure outcomes through subsequent technical visits, monitoring, report review, performance, etc.

The WDB expects our Operator and Adult/DW/Youth Provider to maintain processes to meet local employment needs. Our provider does this in many ways including:

- Polling of businesses at least quarterly to see what skills potential employees need and then working with training providers to develop those programs that will help with the skills gap. Polling usually takes place in person, over the phone, or by email. Other forms of technology such as on-line surveys and webinars are being considered.
- Staff analyzes recent labor market information (provided by SCDEW, Catawba COG, Equus, etc.) and identifies open positions in the Catawba area and the skills the positions may require.
- Providing information to job seekers to guide their choice of training to an area with in-demand opportunities. Hot Jobs are posted in each SC Works Center and emailed out to

partners and participants. LMI is also available in each Center. Again, more uses of available technology are being considered to reach more job seekers and provide more up-to-date information, especially during the pandemic.

- Providing JET soft skills workshops and online training through The Academy, LinkedIn Learning, and WIN Courseware Soft Skills modules to bring awareness to the importance of soft skills
- Making The Academy (over 4,000 free, online courses in a wide variety of areas) available to job seekers.
 - 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:

Our outreach, which is conducted by both Wagner Peyser (WP) and WIOA staff, provides off-site assistance and workshops in remote areas throughout the Catawba area, including the following:

- Kershaw Correction Facility
- Tri-District, York, Rock Hill, Fort Mill, Lancaster, and Chester Adult Education
- Catawba Indian Nation
- Christ Central Ministries
- Pre-Release Facility
- Probation, Pardon and Parole
- Keystone Substance Abuse Services
- York County Women's Christian Job Corps
- Pathways
- Parent Smart
- Area High Schools and Vocational/Technology Centers

We will continue to provide services to as many off-site locations as possible. In order to provide services more often and/or to more locations, and due to the COVID pandemic, we are investigating using more technology. Workshops continue to be converted to virtual versions. This would help provide services to remote areas. Our Operator is developing a toolkit of job readiness workshop videos, BST Pro Tips YouTube videos and Your Next Step tutorials that can be accessed via the internet or through SC Works Catawba Toolkit Flash Drives that will be made available to those without internet. Our goal is to provide quality services to as many people as possible throughout our communities. We rolled out a new initiative, branded SC Works Express, in 2019 to reach outlying communities in our area. The pandemic has suspended this initiative currently. We were using space in Tri-District Adult Ed and planned to expand this to other spaces in York, Great Falls, etc. in the future as needed but this is currently "on hold." These efforts would help us reach job seekers where they are rather than expecting them to come to us.

- 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:

Staff in each center have been trained on the proper procedure to ensure compliance with non-discrimination and all ADA guidelines. Equus conducts a “Quality Measurement Tool” assessment quarterly, rotating centers, and a review of ADA compliance. Equus has coordinated and hosted Info Sessions with Vocational Rehabilitation and area Mental Health representatives for staff in SC Works centers throughout the Catawba area to ensure staff awareness. These sessions will be offered in the future as needed. ADA equipment in the comprehensive center is checked at least annually to ensure proper functioning. WDB staff schedules training, as needed, from SCDEW staff. Local WDB staff and SCDEW perform annual monitoring of the SCWorks Centers.

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

Roles and contributions are specified in detail in the local MOU and Resource Sharing Agreement (RSA) and that document is attached.

Some contributions are monetary, and some are “in kind. The utmost goal of all staff and partner staff in the SC Works centers is to provide the best possible service to customers. Staff are trained to greet customers and can guide them to the many services available from various partners.

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

SC Works staff provide a wide variety of workshops (10-12 different workshops for a total of 30-35 workshops) each month to help individuals prepare for and find employment. (September 2020 workshop calendar is included in the attachments) Workshops are examined frequently and changed as needed to keep content up to date. While new workshops are added, as needed, to cover new relevant topics and entice attendance, it is important for staff to continue to update workshops to provide the best possible information to customers. Career Advisors (case managers) work one on one with their participants to assess their skills, interests, goals, etc. to develop an individual employment plan. When it is determined that a participant lacks marketable skills, case managers help guide the participant in training programs approved by the WDB that focus on the industry sectors identified for the Catawba area. All training programs on the ETPL fall into one of those industry sectors. While there is good variety of training providers and programs on the ETPL, more options are needed, and we are continually looking for more training solutions with new providers or new programs with current providers. Equus follows the local ETPL approved for the Catawba area when discussing training options with participants. Career Advisors are in place to assist with job matching and act as a liaison with the Business Solutions Team for direct hire and OJT

opportunities for WIOA participants. While we know that the employment and training activities are successful, we always strive to improve.

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

Equus and WP staff follow the lead of the State Dislocated Worker team and attend rapid response events to provide an overview of services available to affected employees. Upon receipt of affected employee lists, contact is made by mail or phone to ensure the potential clients have knowledge of the services available through the SC Works system. Equus and WP staff notify the State DW team if they become aware of a pending lay-off in the area or as soon as possible after receiving knowledge of a closure so that services can be offered both locally and state-wide.

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.

Our Youth provider is also Equus Workforce Solutions. They offer a wide range of services for their participants. These include workshops, JET soft skills training, pre-employment skills training, mentoring, assistance with obtaining GED/high school diploma, work-based learning, occupational skills training, transportation assistance, childcare assistance, etc.

The Equus pre-employment skills training program, LEGACY is tailored to young adults, 17 to 24 years old. The program walks the job seeker through designing their own career pathway. The modules include: Financial Literacy, Entrepreneurship, Study Skills, Leadership Development, Training, College Planning, Resume Development, Mock Interview, Mentorship, and Career Advisement.

While these services have been successful, we are always working to improve our processes and the delivery of our services by assessing the relevance and effectiveness of the tools we use. Workshops, JET, and pre-employment skills training (groups or one-on-one) are evaluated at least quarterly by Equus WIOA to be sure that content is up to date and relevant to the needs of employers. One of the recent additions is a workshop titled (Interviewing Tips: Virtual vs. In-person" to prepare job seekers for the current environment. We have effective working relationships with all our Adult Ed centers and this allows for easy referrals and communication regarding participants. It was determined by Adult Ed and WIOA staff that there should be more access to youth staff for Adult Ed participants to make it easier for the participant to connect with their case manager. Prior to the pandemic, we had youth provider staff on-site weekly at our Adult Ed Centers to provide easy access for referrals, workshops, etc. While we have obtained some high-level work experiences to match participants' interests, we have many opportunities for participants to gain basic work skills for those that lack work experience. Our provider works to create these opportunities and align them with the career goals of the participants. As mentioned before, there are a good variety of training providers and programs on the ETPL, but we are continually looking for more providers and programs to increase the options for participants.

Our Youth provider partners with Vocational Rehabilitation in each county to best assist youth with disabilities through potential co-enrollment. We have also held Youth staff meetings at Vocational Rehabilitation and have had speakers from Catawba Mental Health to further improve the understanding of available services and partnership with these agencies. Although this has helped to improve communication between staff members regarding services and referrals, we continue to find ways to work together to serve more individuals.

Additionally, our youth providers partner with Adult Education, DJJ, DSS and others to serve youth with barriers to employment. There is also a referral system in place with DJJ and DSS. Although the referral numbers did not increase for PY19 due to COVID19, these have been great steps toward serving more youth with barriers and we continue to develop these relationships.

Transportation reimbursement and childcare assistance are especially valuable services for Youth participants. We currently reimburse for transportation, based on mileage, and pay a flat fee per day/week for childcare. Transportation is a huge barrier in our area because there is limited public transportation outside of Rock Hill. We have “on-demand” transit in Chester and York Counties and riders must schedule days in advance. Rock Hill now has a free bus service that has routes around the city with stops at York Tech, near the Rock Hill SC Works Center, mall areas, hospital, etc. Taxis are more costly, therefore, making them a poor option. The Catawba area will continue to seek solutions to the ongoing transportation issue for our participants by working with the COG and other entities to improve the transportation options by pursuing grants and other available resources.

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.**

WIOA Youth Providers incorporate the 14 Youth Elements in the following ways.

- 1) **Tutoring:** Adult Education Centers provide tutoring and study skills training to youth as needed for both GED and occupational skills training.
- 2) **Alternative Secondary School Recovery Services:** This can be accomplished by utilizing our online resources; The Academy, GED Academy, and Career Ready 101 or “in-person” tutoring.
- 3) **Occupational Skills Training:** Youth assessed as needing further training are referred to short term occupational skills training, through our Eligible Training Providers, based on participant interests.
- 4) **Work Experience:** Work based learning opportunities (WEX & OJT) are available to those Youth who have completed career readiness training. These opportunities are created based on participant career interests and employer availability.
- 5) **Concurrent Education & Training:** These opportunities can be paid or unpaid and will provide academic and occupational education components (OST & OJT).

- 6) **Leadership Development:** Leadership development opportunities are also focused on Job Readiness training through our in-house LEGACY curriculum combined with JET for additional soft skills.
 - 7) **Supportive Services:** Supportive Services are provided to those in need of childcare, transportation, tools, or any other work-related expenses.
 - 8) **Mentoring:** When applicable, adult mentoring can be established by partnering a youth with an available mentor for additional support.
 - 9) **Follow Up:** Follow up services are provided to Youth participants for one year after they complete their training.
 - 10) **Comprehensive Counseling:** Talent Engagement and Career Advisors counsel and provide one-on-one guidance to participants for many obstacles their participants may face.
 - 11) **Financial Literacy:** We partner with local credit unions to facilitate financial simulations and also make referrals through SC Works Online Services (SCWOS), referral forms, and/or phone calls to other partner agencies as needed for more support with financial literacy.
 - 12) **Entrepreneurial Skills Training:** Partnership and referrals to Winthrop Small Business Incubator, business/entrepreneurial courses through Equus The Academy; courses through LinkedIn
 - 13) **Labor Market Information:** Labor market information and other information about in-demand industries or occupations is provided to all youth participants.
 - 14) **Activities for transition to post-secondary education and training:** Additional services offered congruent with workforce preparation include education services (GED and/or occupational skills training), additional supportive services (childcare payment, transportation reimbursement, etc.), financial literacy education, and preparation activities for transition to post-secondary education and training.
6. If using the basic skills deficient definition contained in WIOA Section 3(5)(B), what is the LWDA's 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.

The Catawba area continues to use TABE.

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.

Communication is the key to coordination. WIOA COG staff, Adult/DW staff, and Youth staff meet every other month with our Adult Ed directors. WIOA COG staff are routinely in contact with our major training providers as needed to discuss new programs, changes in programs, etc. Program managers and case management staff are also in contact with training providers of their participants. COG staff and Equus management have an effective working relationship with our

training providers allowing for the development of needed curriculum based on employer need and job seeker skills gap. Providers have also worked with us to facilitate off schedule courses specific to WIOA participant demand if an adequate number of participants need the course. We also will continue to strengthen these partnerships by maintaining open communication and continue to explore options for job specific training as the needs of our area employers change. We will continue to increase our efforts to provide supportive services for students that are WIOA eligible but their tuition is paid from another source.

- 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.**

Provision of transportation, childcare, and other appropriate supportive services are based on need and the availability of funds. Career Advisors always look for other resources before using WIOA funds. We work with students that receive tuition/books through other sources (PELL, Lottery, SCVRD paid training, DSS paid training, various scholarships/grants, etc.) and provide transportation, childcare, testing fees, and other supportive services as needed. We currently reimburse for transportation, based on mileage, and pay a flat fee per day/week for childcare. Transportation is a huge barrier in rural portions of our area because there is limited public transportation. We have “on-demand” transit in Chester and York Counties and riders must schedule days in advance. Rock Hill now has a free bus service that has routes around the city with stops at York Tech, near the Rock Hill SC Works Center, mall areas, hospital, etc. Taxis are more costly, therefore, not the best choice. The Catawba area will continue to seek solutions to the ongoing transportation issue for our jobseekers by pursuing grants and other available resources.

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

As the operator, Equus coordinates meetings to discuss integration of activities and service delivery flow within the SC Works centers at a minimum of once per quarter. The referral process is being followed to ensure smooth transition while delivering career services to job seekers based on their individual level of need. The Regional Director for WP services is invited to participate in monthly management meetings with the Equus Leadership Team to ensure consistency of service delivery. Catawba WP/WIOA Business Solutions Team members meet monthly and the full Catawba Business Solutions Team (including partners) meets quarterly. They also meet more frequently as job fairs are being planned. Again, communication is key in planning and delivering non-duplicative services.

- 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.**

In the Catawba Area, we have always had an effective relationship between WIOA and Adult Ed, but it has been strengthened over the last couple of few years through bi-monthly meetings. COG WIOA staff coordinate and facilitate these meetings with Adult Education Directors, representatives from the Equus A/DW program and Youth program. Meetings have been held at different locations to share program facilities and program offerings to clients. Meetings have shifted to Zoom during the pandemic. Attendees agree that these meetings have proven to be greatly beneficial as processes are discussed and established as a result of the committee meetings. Meeting in person helps to “put faces with names” and has improved communication. We also have a successful referral process. Youth staff have designated space in three of our four Adult Ed Centers (not enough space in the fourth, but they are in close proximity to the SC Works Center and Youth office). (COVID19 has changed some access to space at Adult Ed Centers and reduced the number of referrals for PY19.) WIOA covers all costs for the attainment of a GED or high school diploma.

Adult Ed provided the following process for WIOA review of Adult Ed Proposals:

Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB)
Adult Education Proposal Review Process

- Notification will be sent to Board Chairs with a cc: Admins to include the following:
 - Information on the upcoming Adult Education RFP and WIOA requirements for LWDB’s review of proposals and an
 - Outline of the proposal review process and timeline.
- RFP to be released in fall/winter 2017.
- Eligible providers (potential grantees) to submit Letter of Intent. *This will allow us to gauge the number of proposals to expect.*
 - The amount of time it takes to review proposals will depend on the number of proposals received in each LWDA.
- LWDB Proposal Review Training will be held via live webinar.
 - During the webinar, LWDB members will be provided with an overview of the proposals, instructions on how to review proposals, and how to use the proposal review rubric. LWDB members will have an opportunity to ask questions during the webinar. A webinar playback option will be available.
 - A point of contact will be available during the review process to answer questions and to clarify any information.
 - Any LWDB members with potential conflicts of interest should recuse themselves from the review process. For example, technical college representatives should not review any proposals if a technical college within their area submits a proposal.
- Upon receipt of all grant applications, SCDE - Office of Adult Education staff will screen all applications to determine eligibility to apply for funds. All applications deemed eligible will be sorted by their LWDA and packaged for hard-copy or electronic transmittal to the Board Chair and LWDA Administrator. The package also will include the rubric and review instructions.

- Board members will use the rubric to review each proposal for alignment with their Local Plan.
 - Once the review process is complete, all forms and other supporting documentation will be forwarded to the Office of Adult Education for consideration in the grant competition process.
 - SCDE - Office of Adult Education staff will review LWDB comments and feedback on Local Plan and one-stop alignment and consider the results of the review.
11. A description of how the local board will coordinate with partner programs to conduct affirmative outreach to include members of groups protected by the Equal Opportunity provisions of WIOA § 188, including individuals of various religions, racial and ethnic backgrounds, individuals of limited English proficiency, individuals with disabilities, and individuals of different age groups and sexes.

The Catawba WDB is committed to serving all people in our area. The Priority Populations Committee has been very active in spearheading initiatives to help us reach all demographics. This has included partnering with AbleSC to host events for employers to share the benefits of hiring employees with disabilities and the many services available for those employees. This committee will also serve as the advisory council for the Reentry Navigator Grant.

SCWorks had a successful Virtual Reverse Job Fair in PY19 for a small group of WIOA participants with disabilities. These participants had the opportunity to present themselves for employment consideration to a panel of employers with open positions. The size and scope of the event was shifted to a virtual platform due to the impacts of COVID19. We plan to collaborate with Vocational Rehabilitation, SC Commission for the Blind, and other partners that work with this priority population to replicate this Reverse Job Fair model annually going forward.

We have also increased our partnerships with a myriad of area faith-based organizations. These organizations receive our SCWorks Partner Blasts and are invited to participate in our partner meetings and other SCWorks sponsored events. We have also taken part in community events sponsored by various faith-based organizations by setting up informational booths and sharing SCWorks related services with those in attendance. The Transformation Center in Rock Hill is allowing SCWorks Catawba to host our first "Drive Through Job Fair" in their parking lot later this month. We work closely with several organizations with a focus on individuals that have experienced varying states of homelessness. SCWorks Catawba hopes to play a critical role as they work to regain stability which often begins with an employment opportunity once their basic needs are being met.

We join efforts with our Adult Education partners to work with individuals with English as their second language. There have been some awesome success stories by combining our efforts and identifying employment opportunities that were great fits as they continued to work on English proficiency. We plan to broaden our outreach this year in order to increase our work with the ESL population in our area.

Over the past two years, we have also strengthened our relationship with Catawba Indian Nation, the only federally-recognized tribe in SC. We have enrolled and worked with several individuals through our Young Adult Works program and will continue to recruit and make WIOA services available. Through this partnership, we have hosted job fairs the last 2 years at the Reservation and we will continue to do so on an annual basis once it is safe to do so.

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 Works system. This includes agreements between the local board or other local entities with respect to 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.

Detailed Memorandum of Understanding agreements are in place with partners and specify the minimum level at which we will partner to ensure integration and the optimal delivery of workforce related services. Partners with a focus on the employment needs of individuals with disabilities have hosted informational sessions for the staff located within each SC Works Center throughout the Catawba area. We are collaborating to share our services with employers, spotlighting services and potential work accommodations that can be designed to encourage employment of those individuals with disabilities. Currently, partner meetings are hosted by SC Works quarterly in the Catawba area by zoom. These meetings help us avoid duplication of services. One partner at each meeting does a “partner spotlight” segment to detail the services they offer. This helps other agencies in attendance learn about additional services available for their clients. This has been an effective way for partners to collaborate to better serve customers. Partner meetings have been held as a part of a company tour for those in attendance to learn about the company and hiring needs. Job fairs are a collaborative event between SCWorks staff and partner staff, rotate quarterly between counties, and include a partner section so job seekers can learn about their services. SCWorks staff have been and will continue to be trained on the basic services offered by all partners.

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

Catawba Regional Council of Governments (COG) is an association of South Carolina local governments in Chester, Lancaster, Union, and York counties. The COG serves as a forum for intergovernmental cooperation and as a central staffing resource for grantsmanship, land use and transportation planning, community and economic development, workforce development, GIS mapping, information systems, and project management. (Note – the Catawba WIOA Area only consists of Chester, Lancaster, and York Counties. Union County is part of the Upstate WIOA Area.)

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

Catawba follows the same process for each Request for Proposal (RFP). We continually maintain a potential bidder list that consists of current contractors, previous contractors, and contractors that have asked to be added to the list. We do not remove contractors from this list unless they request it. Prior to releasing an RFP, WIOA COG staff sends letters and/or emails to potential bidders telling them about the RFP. We also post legal notices in each local newspaper. The RFP is posted to our website and we also will email or mail copies to interested bidders. The last two RFP cycles, we have held our bidders conference by email. Potential bidders submit questions by a certain date, and all questions and answers are posted to our website. Proposals must be received at the COG by the deadline and are logged in when received. The bidder is also given/sent a receipt showing date and the time bid was received. Three non-WIOA COG staff members open the bids and verify that each bid meets criteria (signed, proper number copies, etc.). This is verified on a form for each bid. The Executive Committee or the Youth Review Committee meets to discuss and score each bid. This is documented on a form for each bid by each committee member. WIOA COG staff averages total scores to determine if bids meet minimum criteria. The committee then determines the program(s) to fund and recommends funding amounts for each. These recommendations are taken to the Youth Council and/or WDB for approval. After approval, all bidders are notified of the results.

4. Agreed upon local performance goals after negotiations are finalized.

Chart to be added after negotiations.

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;
- A description of fiscal and program performance goals beyond the federal measures and how progress will be tracked and made publicly available;
- A description of the methodology used by the local board to allocate SC Works center infrastructure funds; and
- A description of the roles and contributions of SC Works partners, including cost allocation.

Our strategic plan goals, along with the actions contained in the plan, will continue to keep the Catawba Area on track to remain a high-performing workforce area. We also require additional goals for Equus to earn profit and those goals help the Catawba area continuously improve. Our Executive Committee reviews the goals at the beginning of each program year and then they are approved by the WDB. PY20 profit goals will be added when negotiations are completed. Equus is required to spend 40% of A/DW funds on participant costs and 25% of Youth funds on work-based learning. They are also required to spend 90% of their budgets each program year.

We plan to continue to use the SC OneStop/SC Works Standards. Also, COG WIOA staff monitors the SC Works Centers annually, Equus internal “Quality Measurement Tool” reviews are conducted quarterly and Equus external review is conducted annually at a minimum. The Equus Internal process improvement committee meets and assesses services to ensure continuous improvement. The OneStop Committee receives feedback and considers ways to improve the SC Works Centers.

In order to cover the infrastructure costs of the SC Works Centers in Catawba, we are currently using “full time equivalent” (FTEs). This means that each full-time staff person has their time assigned to each office in which they work and shares costs accordingly. Please see the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), including the Resource Sharing Agreement (RSA) Budget (attached).

The utmost goal of all staff in the SC Works centers is to provide the best possible service to customers. Staff are trained to greet customers and can guide them to the many services available from various partners. Roles and contributions are specified in detail the local MOU and Resource Sharing Agreement (RSA). Some contributions are monetary and some are “in kind”.

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;
 - How the use of training service contracts will be coordinated with the use of ITAs; and
 - 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.

We generally do not use contracts for training services with training providers. We have only used a contract for a pilot program for one session of Certified Manufacturing Technician training program. We may use this method in the future if the need and/or opportunity arises.

Training budgets are developed in the SCWOS Individual Fund Tracking (IFT) system for programs appearing on the local approved ETPL. Scholarship applications are completed by WIOA participants interested in training and as a part of that process, training costs are gathered from the prospective training provider and the individual training account is based on that information.

Participants identified to need further training are provided with LMI and other data about “in-demand” jobs. They are also provided with information about training programs in our area. Case management staff help guide the participants in making their training choice. Training choice is supported when indicators (WIN, My Next Move, Career Pathway Explorer, and the completion of labor market information) for the field of study supports their choice. This includes it being within the industry sectors supported by the Catawba area and the likelihood of the ability to be successful in the chosen field. These criteria are thoroughly discussed with the WIOA participant.

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 businesses, labor organizations, and education.

The Catawba Area has attempted to gather input from as many sources as possible. We have shared the draft Local Plan and Regional plan through email with the WDB and committees (which include employers, SCVRD, DSS, WP, other partners, economic development, providers, etc.), CEOs, and Adult Ed directors for input. Once approved by the Catawba WDB, the Local Plan and Regional Plans were posted on the Catawba Regional COG website and the SCWorks Catawba website along with instructions for comment.

- 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.**

With the invasive nature of COVID-19 and the need to adhere to national guidance to keep staff and customers safe, our focus on the delivery of services in a virtual environment led to streamlining processes. This was done out of necessity and our provider was able to transition quickly to an efficient virtual model. Referrals are entered into SCWOS for required partners that utilize that system. Most required WIOA partners are still providing a large percentage of their services in a virtual manner as we navigate returning to serve individuals in-person following social distancing guidelines. Once referred for WIOA services, customers were able to join a group orientation virtually or to participate in a virtual one on one session with an available team member. We were able to move to a more efficient electronic file system and most of our in-person group activities transitioned to WebEx, Skype, Microsoft Teams, or other virtual platforms as we continued to connect to job seekers. In-person services are conducted by appointment only at this time, and we will continue to support this hybrid model of service delivery for the foreseeable future. Partnering with our local Adult Education team members and working from their sites has allowed us to partner in a way that provides support so that WIOA services can be offered concurrently with GED/High School Diploma attainment. We began using the SCWOS Greeter module in 2019 and this helps keep a count of customers and their specific needs. It also helps get customers to specific staff members or departments quicker.

- 9. A description of how the local board ensures compliance with the adult priority of service requirements under WIOA Title I.**

Change 2 Adult Priority of Service instruction letter was issued from SCDEW in October 2018 with an immediate effective date. The instruction was sent out by COG WIOA staff to Equus, our Operator. Equus staff has thoroughly reviewed the instruction to ensure compliance with Adult priority of service requirements. A summary of the priority of service is displayed on each staff computer.

- 10. A description of how the local board is serving priority populations, including those with barriers to employment, as required by WIOA.**

We have several partners that work primarily with special populations in the centers on a part-time basis including SC Vocational Rehabilitation, DSS, Alston Wilkes, Job Corp, Welvista, and others. This helps WIOA to connect with those individuals to offer services.

The Operator has developed a robust outreach plan to reach pockets of job seekers that do not come into a local SC Works system which includes interaction with community partners, faith-based organizations, and participation in local community events. The plan includes providing workshops and information at these community locations to reach underserved individuals.

Our Youth programs focus their outreach to special populations. Youth staff spend time each week at area Adult Ed Centers. (The pandemic has temporarily paused this.) They also have a working relationship with local staff at DJJ, DSS, SCVRD, and other agencies that serve special populations.

Our Priority Populations (formerly disAbilities) Committee has been highly active and has produced informational fliers to help partner staff better understand many types of disabilities. They have also hosted many events to make employers aware of benefits of hiring job seekers with disabilities. We will continue these efforts and embark on new efforts to reach other special populations.

The Catawba area recently received a Reentry Navigator Grant for our area and we are extremely excited to be able to better serve those customers that have been involved in the justice system. The Priority Populations Committee has recently added members from justice-involved agencies will serve as the advisory group for this grant.

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

Monitoring will be performed by the Administrative Entity (AE) WIOA staff, at least once annually, and will include onsite and desktop monitoring. It will include a review of the program administration, the financial management system, the implementation of program services, maintenance of required documentation, compliance with applicable LWDA Policies and Procedures, as well as compliance with general contract requirements and AE's procurement requirements.

For financial monitoring, grantee ledgers will be requested a week in advance for AE staff to make selections. These will be emailed back to grantee staff to pull each item requested and any necessary backup documentation prior to onsite monitoring. If completed virtually, documents should be scanned/emailed or dropped off at Catawba Regional Council of Governments no later than the day before monitoring is scheduled. For programmatic monitoring, a sample of participants registered (at least 10%) will be reviewed. Since files are electronic, a review of SCWOS data will be conducted and staff should be available to address questions or concerns related to the files, reporting, performance and any other issues while AE are monitoring (virtually or on-site).

An official monitoring report will be written and forwarded to the signatory official within forty-five (45) days identifying any deficiencies as well as outstanding areas of operation and accomplishments. A response and corrective action plan (if needed) should be submitted to the AE within 30 days of the date of the report. The AE will respond to the grantee after reviewing and if necessary, a follow up monitoring will be scheduled.

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

- Supportive Services policy
- OJT reimbursement policy;
- IWT policy, when using local funds;
- Youth incentives policy;
- Local training cap policy;
- Youth BSD policy (if applicable);
- Local definition for youth who “require additional assistance”; and
- Adult and dislocated worker self-sufficiency definition(s) for training.

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

- Memorandum(s) of Understanding, including signature sheets;
- Resources Sharing Agreements, including signature sheets;
- All service provider grants, including statements of work and budgets;
- Statements of work for in-house operational staff (where applicable);
- Current or most recent Grant Application Request(s)/Request(s) for Proposals;
- LWDB By-Laws
- LWDB and Committee meeting schedules;
- LWDB budgets; and
- Local monitoring schedules

Local Plan Signatures

Local Workforce Development Board:

_____ Workforce Development Board

_____ Chair

Signature

Date

Local Grant Recipient Signatory Official:

_____ Workforce Development Area

Name

Title

Signature

Date