

**Nebraska Workforce Development Board
Meeting Minutes
December, 08 2017**

Agenda Item 1: Call to Order

Chair Mark Moravec called the Nebraska Workforce Development Board (NWDB) meeting to order on December 08, at 9:30 am at the Lincoln Marriott Cornhusker Hotel, 33 S 13th St., Lincoln NE. Mark introduced Lindsey Sullivan, the Administrative Assistant with the Office of Employment and Training. Lindsey worked for the Department of Health and Human Services as a staff assistant at the Grand Island Veteran's home. Previous to this position, Lindsey held the title of Facility Coordinator at the Sheldon Museum of Art with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Agenda Item 2: Roll Call

Lindsey Sullivan, Administrative Assistant called the roll. It was determined that a quorum was established.

Members Present (15):

John Albin
Senator Joni Albrecht
Brian Deakin
Jason Feldhaus
Allan Hale

James Hanson, Jr.
Don Nordell
Mark Moravec
Susan Martin
Terri Ridder

Jennifer Sedlacek
Carol Swigart
Lisa Wilson

Members Absent (8)

Tammie Beck
Matthew Blomstedt
Michael Geary

Courtney Phillips
Susan Martin
Mark Moravec

Governor Pete Ricketts
Becky Stitt

Nebraska Department of Labor (NDOL) Staff in Attendance:

Stan Odenthal, Director, Office of Employment & Training
Deb Andersen, Policy Coordinator, Office of Employment & Training
Danna Bacon, Job Training Program Coordinator, Office of Employment & Training
Lindsey Sullivan, Administrative Assistant, Office of Employment & Training
Thomas Ukinski, Attorney III, Office of the General Counsel
David Branch, Employment Services Program Specialist, Office of the General Counsel

Guests in Attendance:

Phil Baker, Nebraska Department of Labor, Labor Market Information
Shannon Grotrian, Nebraska Department of Labor, Greater Nebraska Workforce Development Area
Wendy Sieler, Staff Assistant, Office of Employment & Training
Dylan Wren, Nebraska Department of Labor, Greater Nebraska Workforce Development Area
Jan Norlander-Jensen, City of Lincoln, Greater Lincoln Workforce Development Area
Erin Porterfield, Heartland Workforce Solutions, Greater Omaha Workforce Development Area
Alejandra Sinecio, Heartland Workforce Solutions, Greater Omaha Workforce Development Area
Randy Kissinger, Nebraska Department of Labor, Office of Employment & Training
Cherisa Price, City of Lincoln, Greater Lincoln Workforce Development Area
Teri Chasten, Department of Health and Human Services
Rich Katt, Nebraska Department of Education

Agenda Item 3: Notice of Publication

Lindsey Sullivan announced that Notice of Public Meeting was duly published in the Beatrice Daily Sun, Grand Island Independent, Lincoln Journal Star, North Platte Telegraph, Omaha World Herald, and Scottsbluff Star-Herald and on the State of Nebraska Public Meeting Calendar in accordance with the Nebraska Open Meetings Act. Copies of the Act were available from Legal Counsel or administrative staff.

Agenda Item 4: Approval of Minutes

James Hanson motioned to approve the minutes of the December 8th, 2017 meeting (Handout #1). Brian Deakon seconded the motion. All members present voted by voice vote to approve the motion, which carried unanimously.

Chair Mark Moravec announced that meeting agendas, minutes, and handouts for meetings of the full board and standing committees are available on the NDOL website at www.dol.nebraska.gov under the heading "Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)."

Agenda Item 5: Greater Nebraska Plan Modification

Chair Mark Moravec directed the board to Handout 2 in accordance with agenda item 5 outlining the proposed plan modification request submitted by the Greater Nebraska Workforce

Development Board for the transfer for \$200,000 in funds from the Dislocated Worker program to the Adult Program. The outline provided a justification for the funds transfer.

Carol Swigart motioned to approve the Greater Lincoln Plan Modification (Handout #2). Jason Feldhaus seconded the motion. All members present voted by voice vote to approve the motion, which carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 6: Strategic Direction Committee Report Out

Brian Deakin greeted the group and touched base on the committee responsibilities (handout 3) including: employer engagement, industry sector partnerships, career pathways, connects to “Big Picture” workforce efforts, regional plans and workforce-related grants.

Brian reported on updates to Industry Partnerships in Nebraska. In central Nebraska: Kearney, Grand Island, Hastings and Holdrege the effort was launched in August of 2017. They just hosted their first live meeting after the launch. Brian noted the high energy, engagement and general excitement that is focusing around these initiatives. The Southeast Public Sector Training is looking at a potential launch in February 2018 focusing on the manufacturing industry. The Omaha area is on the horizon after the first of the year focusing on the Health Care Industry. In the Northeast region of the state a Public Sector Training was held in September, launch anticipated in January of 2018. A Lincoln area launch is anticipated in the early 2018 time frame as well. In the Southwest region of Nebraska a potential partnership group attended one of the live meetings. Brian noted the growth and synergy taking foot in this region.

Brian reported on the Central NE launch concerning their manufacturing partnership. A meeting was recently held at Career Pathways in Grand Island, NE, Brian defined four major take a ways from that meeting.

Brian encouraged the board to visit Career Pathways as it models what the committee wants to see as a collaboration between education, industry and partnership in support of the workforce for the state.

The group discussed marketing the value of central Nebraska as an employment hub for individuals and families. To not only work with and support our current workforce but to make this a welcoming environment for others to want to come to work in our state.

Meetings have been initiated with school and school boards in regard to improving the ability of training and skill development hub for current employees

A representative from the Grand Island Airport board addressed the group in context of ground and air transportation relating the challenges and opportunities of bringing change to the central Nebraska area.

Brian reported on National Apprenticeship Week (November 13-19). Brian referenced Scott Asmus’s presentation to the board on October 20th and noted that the group is starting to see some traction with the grant and US apprenticeships. Brian made three announcements regarding participation in this year’s National Apprenticeship Week line up.

Dramco tools became Nebraska’s first Youth Apprenticeship program in partnership with Career Pathways Institute (Grand Island Public Schools). A signing ceremony took place at Dramco Tools on 11-14-17. John Albin, Nebraska Department of Labor’s Commissioner, Mikey Foley, Lt. Governor, Dr. Tawana Grover, Superintendent and Jeremy Jensen, Mayor of Grand Island attended.

The Ariens Company in Auburn, NE had a signing ceremony for new apprenticeships on 11-14-17 entering their Registered Apprenticeship Program.

North End Teleservices Call Center in Omaha and Bellevue University hosted a Registered Apprenticeship celebration on 11-16-17. North End Teleservices and Bellevue University will be publicly adopting their Standards of Apprenticeship for Front-Line Supervisors.

Brian announced potential Registered Apprenticeship development:

- There has been a lot of interest in the South Sioux City and Beatrice areas following group employer meetings hosted in each community.
- South Sioux City Schools Career Academies are potentially interested in creating a Youth Apprenticeship Intermediary, similar to Career Pathways Institute.
- Metropolitan Community College Center for Advanced and Emerging Technologies is discussing plans to utilize Registered Apprenticeship.
- Bellevue University is working on adding Addiction Counseling and Teller occupations to their intermediary program.
- Pine Ridge Job Corps is collaboration with GBW Railcar Services Registered Apprenticeship program. This is in the initial development stages.
- Mobius Communications began development of a Low Voltage/Fiber Optic Cable Technician program in Hemingford, Nebraska. Mobius would like to create a veterans hiring initiative around their program.
- CHI Health is interested in a Registered Apprenticeship program for Hospital Coders. They may collaborate with AHIMA for program development.
- No More Empty Pots in Omaha is close to the final stages of program development for a Cook/Chef intermediary program.

Agenda Item 7: System Alignment Committee Report Out

Terri Ridder addressed the board referencing Handout 4, slides 2 and 3 outlining the committee members and responsibilities. Terri announced that the focus of the committee update for this meeting would be on Eligible Training Providers and the mandatory 2-year modification of Nebraska's Combined State Plant.

Terri informed the group that the Eligible Training Provider Program currently has 602 programs on the Eligible Training Provider List. Of those 602 programs, 31 are Registered Apprenticeship programs offered by 13 sponsors listed on slide 5. 571 of the total are non-apprenticeship programs offered by 24 training providers. Of these 571: 456 are linked to employment opportunities in high-demand, high-skill, high-wage occupations (H3 occupations); 47 are linked to high-demand, high skill occupations; and 68 are linked to high-demand only occupations.

Terri introduced the newest Eligible Training Provider, No More Empty Pots and presented a short film highlighting the provider. No More Empty Pots is a grassroots non-profit organization in Omaha that connects individuals and groups to improve self-sufficiency, regional food security, and economic resilience of urban and rural communities through advocacy and action. To help support this effort, the organization collaborates with an array of public and private organizations, businesses, communities, individuals and entrepreneurs.

No More Empty Pots is the first community-based organization on the Eligible Training Provider List. They are establishing a Culinary Workforce Training Program that will offer: classroom training, internships and job placement to whom the majority are members of WIOA's target population groups.

The second update focused on the Combined State Plan mandatory 2-year modification. WIOA requires that states update state plan strategies based on changes in the labor market and economic conditions or other factors affecting the implementation of the plan.

The 9th and final slide of the System Alignment Committee Report Out, laid out a tentative timeline for the modification. Dates of note concerning the board are March 2, 2018 in which a draft modification, including public comments, will be provided to the board for review and March 9, 2018, the next NWDB meeting at which the board will consider the draft of modified sections of the plan to the portal. On March 16th the draft modification will be submitted and in late June of this year Federal reviewers will provide approval or request revisions of the modification.

Agenda Item 8: Local Area Updates and Initiatives

Chair Mark Moravec introduced Carol Swigart and Project Director, Cherisa Price-Wells to present on behalf of the Local Lincoln area.

Carol Swigart announced that Local Lincoln felt like their biggest accomplishment this year was partnering with the mayor of Lincoln to issue 3 RFP's for One-Stop Operator, Adult Dislocated Worker Provider and Youth Provider. Through this process two responses were received, one from the Urban Development Committee and ResCare Workforce Services. Following the responses the board did select ResCare and with the Mayor's support. Contracts were issued in October 2017. They are looking forward to working with ResCare and increasing enrollment in worker-based training opportunities particularly in Apprenticeship.

Local Lincoln will continue collaborating with key community stakeholders to move forward in the Next Generation Partnerships Pipeline. They anticipate growing activity in the new year.

Cherisa Price-Wells talked about key initiatives for the Greater Lincoln Workforce. Economic development has a focus to engage workforce partners this year to address the skilled workforce shortage in Nebraska. They have met with over 150 businesses in business expansion and retention programs.

Key initiatives include:

- Educating employers on using our existing talent market through: Education forums, Internship forums, Immigrant forums and talent forums.
- Collaborating with other workforce partnerships to promote clear workforce development programming through their Talen forum, Talent Team and Knowledge Council.
- Collaboration with Lincoln companies to create a summer series for their interns. They recorded 100 participants in year one and 300 participants in three events.
- South East Community is a significant partner who is undergoing plans to change their program and space. Students will be moving from a quarter-based system to a semester-based system.

Classes will be based on in-demand in contrast to scheduling what they have always offered in the past.

- Veteran's Student Support: Increased partnership with Veteran's Administration for recruiting staffing and collaboration
- Engage Learning, they have introduced the on-course training, focusing on student engagement

In regard to the partnership with Leadership Lincoln, Charisa announced that they completed a poverty simulation that was very impactful. This simulation is offered to staff, faculty and students focused on the impact of poverty on our college students. Two initiatives to address adult basic education are: Career Pathways Implementation Initiative which focuses on long-term career pathways and the American Job Center Initiative, holding collaborative meetings with the AJC's to increase the quality of care for students.

In Local Lincoln's partnership with the Career Academy, they work closely with pathway support teams in communicating specific skills that are needed are included in programs offered. They also collaborate on events such as mock interviews and capstone events.

Lincoln Business Task Force partnerships utilizes efforts around employer relationship and workforce efforts and share information with over 300 non-profits within the community. The taskforce focuses on meeting with Case Managers who can distribute this information to families in their case load.

In September this organization hosted a Veteran's Job Fair in which over 100 Veterans and over 40 employers who attended. At a Case Managers event the group hosted 88 case managers and 30 employees.

In Sector Partnerships with a healthcare focus, the partnership is working with the Career Academy to build recruitment. They recently held a Job Fair at Brian.

Charisa introduced the group to Project Homeless Connect, a Nationwide, statewide event, working with those who are homeless or near homeless. An event was held this year at the Pinnacle Bank Arena, where individuals had access to any resources they might need, for example, laptops were available for job-seekers to register for NEworks, explore career pathways and re-entry options. Charisa presented a video of the event. This year the event helped 445 individuals as compared to last year's 443 individuals. Based on the success of the event Charisa challenged our board that if this is something they could model in their communities to work with their community partners and host an event.

Charisa briefly discussed updates concerning the One-Stop Operator and WIOA program. They have been working to honor the WIOA guidelines through communication and monthly forums that will, moving forward be offered on-site with key partners to learn more about their respective programs and see how they (we) can better connect. They have been working on cross-training forum on a quarterly basis for partners. Professional development training is offered, most recently the webinar, *Breaking Barriers from Incarceration to Employment*. They are implementing a new service delivery model.

Concerning the WIOA program, Charisa announced that they have the opportunity to do increased case management support. They currently have a significant waiting list of over 300 individuals interested in programming, of which mostly are adults. This is a good opportunity to work with partners and see what co-enrollment options there are for these individuals. Per Charisa, they believe in conducting business under the model of *leaving people better off than where we found them*. With this in mind, anyone who calls in is made aware of free resources through the AJC and partner resources despite the wait list. They have developed an enhanced service delivery model, "*Helping those live the best lives,*" whether those are our job seekers, co-workers, children and families.

There are some new online tools, such as the ResCare Career Assessment tool, picture-based career assessment that can be utilized via computer, notebook or phone that allows users to think about what their interests are and on the backend of the program it connects to labor market information that will present jobs that available to the user based on these parameters and their education level. Users have the option to look at career ladders but adding additional education scenarios. ResCare additionally offers online classes and professional development and user friendly financial philosophy classes. They offer a computer essentials class met for those of the populace who are not able to utilize computer.

Mark Moravec introduced Lisa Wilson to present on behalf of the Greater Nebraska local area. Lisa thanked everyone for their support this year in their activities. They started off the year by completing and RFP for the One-Stop Operator. The bidding process conclusion did not receive approval however the Governor did approved continued support from the Nebraska Department of Labor. Through the sole source procurement process the One-Stop Operator was awarded to the Department of Economic development. Greater Lincoln had completed their local and regional service agreements. The Governor accepted the plans for the Tri-City regional and Greater Nebraska area. The local area certified their Beatrice and Grand Island Local Job Centers.

Lisa briefly mentioned the SNAP pilot with the Department of Health and Human Services which will be discussed in more detail by Randy Kissinger during this meeting.

Lisa mirrored her excitement and acknowledged Brian's comments on the Sector Strategy updates and energy in Central Nebraska.

Concerning 2017, Lisa announced that the funding agreements were all complete and would be ready to present about mid-December. Regional plans for Scottsbluff, Norfolk and Columbus are complete. North Platte will be completed in the near future.

Training is complete for the Adult and Dislocated Worker in Lexington and the training for the Youth Programs in Beatrice.

The American Job Center managers are working together to host a monthly meeting so that they stay in tune with and on top of what the needs are for the region.

Lisa referenced Brian's enthusiasm for the Apprenticeship program dually noting the interest and high energy behind the program. A lot of businesses are interested and they are thinking about how this can be implemented and how they can best work with the education and school systems available in the area.

The area is working on developing more integrated workforce systems increasing the coordinator of the centers across the 88 county area with the assistance of Economic Development. Lisa states that Linda Black has been very helpful in working with them on these initiatives.

Mark introduced James Hanson Jr. and Erin Porterfield to present on behalf of the Greater Omaha local area.

James initiated the Greater Omaha area report out by listing a few accomplishments from the last year:

- They finished and are now implementing the data project they have been working on for five plus years.
- They are continuing to pursue financing outside of WIOA. They feel that it is very important in Omaha to reach out to those entities that are not necessarily performance-based, they discussed hiring felons, those who have been to jail, they see this as something they could potentially fund in the future
- They were awarded by the work of Erin and her staff, the Community Builder Award
- James made mention of the excellent relationship they have with Heartland Workforce Solutions and notes that in the past 15 years, never has he seen this board so active
- In a recent break-out SWAT analysis, the identified weakness underlying all areas of discussion was concerns with branding. That the public does not necessarily know who they are and what they can provide. They want to develop a marketing plan that speaks to employers and job-seekers. They are working on an RFP for brand management, integrating their social media and redesigning their website to be more user friendly. Some small changes have already been made. Their hope is to share their success and template with the other local areas of the state.

Erin Porterfield thanked the board for their leadership in past years and helping them to accomplish great things. John Albin and Stan Odenthal were thanked on behalf of the Department of Labor for their open communication with the local areas. Erin expressed her gratitude toward other local areas and agencies on working together through the common ground of WIOA and figuring out next action steps and creating efficiency for career seekers and efficiency for career talent seekers.

Erin posed the question how we actualize efficiency and increase inclusivity. She believes it is through blurring lines between programs and partners. What does that look like? Currently they are pulling together their NERes care staff and NDOL staff to work together in functionally the same way and sharing Intel. An example of this was recently hosted Veteran's Career Fair where 28 businesses and roughly 114 career seekers, primarily Veterans were onsite at the local AJC.

Erin provided an additional example of blurred partnerships with *Workforce Wednesdays*, where they invite business partners in the community to come at 7:30AM for coffee and snacks and have conversations about what their talents needs are and how they can meet those together.

They have been working on research alignment and engagement for a number of years but it is going to see some increased activity as they have been awarded as the recipient of a grant through the city of Omaha for \$520,000 to implement innovation based on a systemic plan they submitted for a work ready community to decrease unemployment in high occurrence areas. So far of 104 individuals who have gone through the career ready program 100% have received jobs and 87% have retained their jobs.

Erin introduced another innovative project, *Career Readiness to Eliminate Disparities*, bringing industry into play with NCRC through Career Exploration Tours. The area facilitates this by working with a local industry in providing transportation from areas of Omaha and the AJC's to an industry, lunch and ending with a career fair. They are receiving good response from industry and career seekers.

Erin concluded by recognizing Lindsey Wolsley that will be working with them on Healthcare initiatives, noting that upcoming will be their first Industry Sector Standup and acknowledging the youth council that has pulled together a number of funders and partners to develop a community strategy for youth that are not employed or in school, set to run in the January and February timelines.

Mark thanked the presenters on behalf of the Board and noted that plans are in place to request that local area representatives provide similar presentations moving forward on an annual basis.

Agenda Item 9: reVISION Program and Career Education

Chair Mark Moravec introduced Rich Katt, presenting on the Revision Program and Career Education in Nebraska in partnership with the Department of Economic Development and the Department of Labor. Revision, establishing a clear vision for Nebraska Career Education, is a strategic approach for Nebraska schools to analyze their current Career Education system and make adjustments to more effectively prepare students for college careers. Revision provides a unique opportunity to bring understanding, new energy and commitment to Career and Technical Education as a vital education, workforce and economic development strategy through a five step program: Re-work-Review and assess current career education programs; Initial Revision team meeting-collaborating to review and analyze data and identify areas for improvement; a Community Engagement Meeting- to share key information and other feedback from community stakeholders; a secondary Revision team meeting- to review key information and feedback to initiate Strategic Plan Development; and Technical Assistance-individualized support by NCE staff to develop and finalize a 3-5 year Revision Strategic Plan.

Nebraska Career Education is working on reaching rural areas through a regional approach through the Revision approach. Areas and school that complete this project are eligible to apply for an Action Grant, funded through Federal Perkins dollars to apply their Strategic Plan that they can apply each year for up to three years. To date they have awarded over \$3,000,000.00 in Action Grants. Statistically about 1/3 of applicants receive grant funded to complete their strategic plan.

Some noted outcomes of the Revision include: addition of new Programs of Study, increased interest from the business perspective in creating workplace experiences, engagement with Nebraska Career Connections, review of PK-12 career development and increased of relevance of curriculum for students.

There is a strong interest in Work-based learning with the assistance of Katie Thurber. This includes developing career readiness standards through a program called Habitudes and handouts to purposefully and intentionally meet standards from elementary school up through high school age students. Conversations are starting in elementary schools about transference skills and what they want to do and become instead of, "*what I want to be*" in the narrowest of career pathways. Instead of having "random acts of guidance" from counselors, every teacher can be equipped with the language and information to help guide students toward career pathways. Forms and information can be found on the following website: www.nebraskacareertours.com.

Agenda Item 10: SNAP/WIOA Pilot Project

Chair Mark Moravec introduced Teri Chasten and Randy Kissinger to present on behalf of the SANP/WIOA Pilot Project. SNAP is a supplementary assistance program formally known as food stamps.

Teri Chasten announced to the group that she would be speaking on behalf of the role that DHHS has in this program. The pilot was implemented in July of 2016. The SNAP program does have a Federal labor guideline for unemployed individuals. What makes this collaborative program and pilot unique is that the focus is on underemployed participants, families that are not able to make ends meet, that are working very hard, especially if they are single parents.

The goal of this pilot is to reduce their need for assistance of programs like SNAP to completely getting them off the benefit entirely.

DHHS identifies the participants that would be eligible for the program pilot, focusing on households of four or less, one adult that is currently working, who are English proficient and within the pilot area. When the program started in 2016 it only included Grand Island. It has recently extended to Hastings and Columbus. DHHS staff contact eligible participants and talk to them about the program and if they have any goals or interest, if they would like assistance in achieving better employment opportunities. A meeting is scheduled for interested parties with a DHHS case manager and an NDOL case manager.

Randy Kissinger informed the board what happens when participants are handed over to NDOL staff from the initial DHHS contact. With low unemployment rates across the state a focus was geared toward underemployed individuals that potentially had a mismatch on their skills sets. Not only is the goal to decrease or end DHHS assistance programs and address underemployment but it is also an opportunity to work with employers and career seekers on retention.

Of the 30 piloted in Grand Island only one self-terminated from the pilot due to moving out of state. The remainder of the applicants spent time addressing retention and their barriers such as child care and transportation concerns. Through this process individuals become more self-sufficient and improve their family life. Participants gain the resources and information needed to make an educated decision in making a job transfer such as wage differential and benefits impactation, reducing stagnancy and recidivism.

Teri provided an overview on some of the statistics of the pilot program. About 50% of eligible individuals from the screening process enroll. 84 % of those who attend the initial meeting continue on in the program. Currently 64 participants are enrolled. About 23% of clients have

new jobs. The annual salary of pilot participants has increased an average of \$10,000.00 a year. The beginning average salary was \$1,300.00 a month and on average the participants are successfully leaving the program at \$2,150.00 a month. Eight participants received fewer SNAP benefits and seven no longer receive SNAP benefits.

Terri shared some success stories one of which a single mother who was making \$900.00 a month with no benefits received a new position and is now making over \$2,000.00 a month with benefits and a pension.

There are plans to expand the pilot further in 2018. Currently the pilot is on track to extend to Norfolk in May of 2018. With the 2016 implementation meetings were 1:1, with the expansion to Hastings the pilot is looking at utilizing technology such as skype for those that may have transportation barriers so that no matter where you are in the state you can have access to this resource program.

Terri expressed that they were looking into aligning this pilot with Federal programs to potentially access federal funds. Both organizations are completing the pilot to date with no extra funding.

Don Nordell questioned how the pilot worked with clients to go from dependency on SNAP programs to financial independency. Randy answered that they meet with clients 1:1 and access what their best option is, is it additional training. About 1/3 of the current applicants enrolled are in additional training, in school. Some applicants and employers choose to enter into on the job training. The program additionally looks at offsetting certain costs such as providing transportation, onsite daycare and uniforms. Teri reiterated that the budget work they do with each individual really helps make an impact on the decision that person is going to make.

Deb Anderson questioned what the age range was for the SNAP pilot participants. Teri answered they did not set intentional age parameters for the pilot but that SNAP does have requirements for individuals aged 19-50 years of age so they participants will fall into this age range.

Susan Martin commended the program and expressed her excitement on the expansion of the pilot.

Senator Joni Albright mentioned that families would not take a raise for fear of restructuring. She commended this pilot and thinks it will be great for the state. She questioned whether they were receiving calls even if they were not in the pilot and if so, could they still receive benefits. Randy answered that yes they were receiving calls and are serving roughly an additional 30-40 individuals even though they did not meet this pilot parameters, they are also seeing family members referring others.

Agenda Item 11: Member Updates

Board members were asked to provide a 1-minute update on “1 big thing” happening in their industries or organizations this included updates for those members who are also members of local workforce development boards and a 1-minute update on “1 big thing” happening in their local workforce development area.

Chair Mark Moravec initiated agenda item 11 by announcing several projects underway

- his team initiated a development division program in Lincoln down at the Railyard that has been highly successful
- Three new development sites: Norfolk Medical and Surgical care center; Grand Island building new hospital, medical office building and hotel; Hastings developing housing sites, around 220 apartments
- Lincoln Huddle worldwide headquarters
- Completing all the steel for the new Scheele's store down at South Point Pavilion
- Business charities business in Omaha
- New retail stores in Grand Island
- Remodel of Hastings library
- Hampton School Project near completion
- St. Paul Church
- Jefferson Elementary School in Grand Island
- New fire hall in Roseland
- Arrow East Hotel completed in Broken Bow
- New office for Chief Ethanol in Hastings
- They are building the first Olympic Trap course at Heartland Event Center in Grand Island
- Finishing an IT company expansion in Kearney

Brian Deakon remarked on all the growth and expansion in his part of the state. There is a lot of infrastructure happening to meet those needs.

Terri Ridder commented that her big project right now is working on providing a nursing facility across from the hospital to meet needs of community. Her concern is finding staff to find skilled workers. Northeast Community college is expanding into WestPoint to fill some skillset needs in the future. Economic development is working on marketing to bring young workers back to the area to work.

James Hansen Jr. as a family owned business they are keeping busy and payroll going.

Lisa Wilson of CNH is seeing increased orders for next years. They have been flat for three years so they are excited to develop some new staff.

Don Nordell of Black hills energy remarked that they serve around 300 communities across the state. Their team will continue to see the effects of the current retirement bubble they are in. Looking at implanting new technology and hiring new workers while maintaining a reasonable rate for customer service.

John Albin declined from an update as main topics of interest were addressed at the meeting through partnership activities.

Jennifer Sedlachek mentioned to the board that her company recently completed their second force reduction and jobs have settled. Rail traffic is still at an all-time high. They are running a little short on skilled workers in different capacities throughout the state.

Jason Feldhaus mentioned a couple of large projects they are working on. They are engaging Sarpy County Community, they received a grant and will be working with the Rapid Results institute to make social change in 100 days to address poverty concerns. He extended an offer to the Department of Labor to assist in working with these individuals to get them off benefits or reduce benefits and get kids back into their homes. 84% of children removed from homes is due to neglect and not abuse.

Senator Joni Albright addressed the board and thanked them for their initiatives and energy. Senator Albright commended the Revision presentation on education noting that not only do we need to work with school but parents and getting them on track with this new process and providing them with information to help them be successful.

Susan remarked that there isn't a lot of awareness how much the Department of Labor and the Department of Health and Human Services work with everyone to help coordinate these efforts.

In the end it's not just about branding our programs but branding our state to employers and careers seekers coming into our state. To show them how much we care and educate them on how to be a collaborative partner.

Allan Hale remarked that the two main drivers on their data center are Google and Facebook. They currently have about 500 individuals who do not live in Nebraska that are traveling into Nebraska to work as they do not have the skilled workforce available to them. They are looking for more people for their apprenticeship program, they currently have 18 enrolled. Allan invited referrals especially in the Greater Nebraska area of the state.

Susan Martin remarked that with all the new development jobs are steady and the winter season outlook is positive. Their registered apprenticeship programs are continuing to get a number of applicants and continue to provide the needed skills that her team needs. Terri announced that their Public Sector aspect is currently, "up in the air," due to government funding.

Terri and Stan Odenthal declined updated as main topics of interest were addressed at the meeting through partnership activities.

Agenda Item 12: Public Comment

Chair Mark Moravec asked guests in attendance if there was anyone who wished to make a comment. No comments were made.

Agenda Item 13: Adjournment

Chair Mark Moravec asked if there was motion to adjourn the meeting.

Brian Deakon motioned to adjourn the meeting. Don Nordell seconded the motion. All members present voted by voice vote to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 11:33 AM.

DRAFT

Combined State Plan for Nebraska's Workforce System July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2020

2-year modification
Draft released – January 26, 2018

Summary of Public Comments and Responses

The Nebraska Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, and Labor and the Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired:

- released the modification Combined State Plan for Nebraska's Workforce System in compliance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act; and
- sought public comment on this modification during a 30-day period beginning January 26, 2018 and ending February 25, 2018.

In addition, a public hearing was held on February 7, 2018 from 2p to 3p. The hearing was available simultaneously at the following ten (10) Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation locations across the state through interactive video conferencing technology:

- Columbus - 3100 23rd Street, Suite 5
- Fremont - 827 North D Street
- Grand Island - 203 East Stolley Park Road, Suite B
- Kearney - 315 West 60th Street, Suite 400
- Lincoln - 3901 North 27th Street, Suite 6
- Norfolk - 1212 Benjamin Avenue
- North Platte - 200 South Silber, Building 2
- Omaha - 1313 Farnam on the Mall
- Omaha - 12011 Q Street
- Scottsbluff - 505A Broadway, Suite 500

Questions regarding this summary may be sent to ndol.wioa_policy@nebraska.gov.

This summary may be accessed on the Nebraska Department of Labor *Manuals, Plans, and Reports* webpage, which is accessible at dol.nebraska.gov and can be located by:

- clicking on the *Resources* tab on the Nebraska Department of Labor homepage,
- then clicking on the orange *WIOA* button, and
- then clicking on the *Manuals, Plans, and Reports* tab.

Public comments received in writing

1. Comment: One commenter recommended revision of Section III.b.4 (assessment and evaluation of core programs and one-stop partner programs) to align it more closely with 20 CFR § 682.220 regarding coordination with (1) local boards and agencies responsible for the administration of WIOA Title I through IV programs; and (2) the Secretaries of Education and Labor in relation to evaluations of WIOA Titles I through IV provided for by their respective agencies as described in 20 CFR § 682.220(b)(4).

Partner response: The plan partners agree with the commenter's recommendation and will make related revisions to the draft modification prior to submission.

2. Comment: One commenter recommended revision of Section VI.2.3 to align it with the State's current policy on Eligible Training Providers with regard to procedures, eligibility criteria, and information requirements for determining training provider initial and continued eligibility, including Registered Apprenticeship programs.

Partner response: The WIOA Title I plan partner agrees with the commenter's recommendation and will make related revisions to the draft modification prior to submission.

3. Comment: One commenter recommended revisions of Section VI.3.1 to align it with the State's current policy on the WIOA Title I Youth Program regarding state-developed criteria to be used by local boards in awarding grants for youth workforce investment activities and describe how the local boards will take into consideration the ability of the providers to meet performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance for the youth program.

Partner response: The WIOA Title I plan partner agrees with the commenter's recommendation and will make related revisions to the draft modification prior to submission.

4. Comment: One commenter recommended removing the reference to the Rapid Response policy in Table A of Section VI.1.2.A. Rapid Response activities are performed according to an established Rapid Response procedures manual, rather than the State's policy which is outdated as it is based on the NPRM.

Partner response: The WIOA Title I plan partner agrees with the commenter's recommendation and will make the related revision to the draft modification prior to submission.

5. Comment: One commenter requested the RESEA Distance Waiver be removed from the Title IB Waiver Requests section, noting that the waiver request will be submitted in a different manner.

Partner response: The WIOA Title I plan partner agrees with the commenter's request and will make the related revision to the draft modification prior to submission.

6. Comment: Regarding the Wagner-Peyser stand-alone office waiver request in the Title IB Waiver Requests section, one commenter suggested providing information regarding possible office locations.

Partner response: The WIOA Title III plan partner is taking the commenter's suggestion into consideration and may make related revisions to the draft modification prior to submission

Public comments received during the public hearing

7. Comment: One commenter asked if the state's modification, once approved by Federal reviewers, will affect the regional and local plans of local workforce development boards.

Partner response: Guidance and instructions regarding the required 2-year modification of regional and local plans will be issued to local workforce development boards.

**Combined State Plan for Nebraska's Workforce System
July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2020**

Plan Partners

1. WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs - Nebraska Department of Labor
2. WIOA Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program – Nebraska Department of Education
3. WIOA Title III Wagner-Peyser Employment Service - Nebraska Department of Labor
4. WIOA Title IV Vocation Rehabilitation, General – Nebraska Department of Education
5. WIOA Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation, Blind – Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired
6. Jobs for Veterans State Grant Program - Nebraska Department of Labor
7. Senior Community Service Employment Program – Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services
8. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program – Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services
9. Trade Adjustment Assistance Program - Nebraska Department of Labor
10. Unemployment Insurance - Nebraska Department of Labor

5. Waiver Requests (optional)

States wanting to request waivers as part of their Title I-B Operational Plan must include a waiver plan that includes the following information for each waiver requested:

Planning Regions

Statutory requirements to be waived

Nebraska requests that the ETA waive its required reconfiguration of Nebraska's designated regions and local areas, as requested in the ETA's June 29, 2016 letter to Governor Ricketts and in the September 26, 2016 email to Commissioner Albin, because:

- Nebraska's designated planning regions meet the criteria established under WIOA Sec. 106(a)(2) and 20 CFR § 679.210; and
- the Governor is permitted to reconfigure a designated local area only in the event that the local area:
 - fails to perform successfully and sustain fiscal integrity according to the requirements of WIOA Sec. 106(e)(1) – (2) and 20 CFR §§ 679.250 and 679.260; or
 - agrees to reconfiguration.

Background

In its letter dated June 29, 2016 regarding requested revisions to this plan, the US Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration (ETA) states that Nebraska must reconfigure its regions so that the two counties that comprise the Greater Lincoln Local Workforce Development Area are not split between two regions.

Based on its responses in the final WIOA Labor-only rules to comments on 20 CFR § 679.210, the ETA interprets WIOA Sec. 106(a)(2) and 20 CFR § 679.210 to say that a local area cannot be split across two planning regions. Neither WIOA Sec. 106(a)(2) nor 20 CFR § 679.210 states that a local area cannot be split across two planning regions. Rather, WIOA Sec. 106(a)(2) and 20 CFR § 679.210 say that a region must consist of one local area or two or more contiguous local areas. Assignment of Nebraska's initially-designated local areas to the planning regions designated by the Governor meets the criteria established under WIOA Sec. 106(a)(2) and 20 CFR § 679.210 in that all three of Nebraska's local areas are contiguous.

The designated planning regions identified in this plan include contiguous counties from two of the state's three local areas. If one or more contiguous counties from a local area cannot be a part of a planning region, then Nebraska finds itself with planning region boundaries that mirror those of Nebraska's local areas, which were established more than 30 years ago. The local areas then become *de facto* planning regions.

On September 26, 2016, Commissioner John Albin was notified by email that Nebraska must reconfigure its local areas so that no local area is split between two regions. Under WIOA Sec. 106(b)(2), 20 CFR § 679.250(a), and TEGL 27-14, the Governor is required to approve a request for initial designation as a local area from any local area that was designated as a local area for purposes of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) for the 2-year period preceding the date of enactment of WIOA; provided the local area had performed successfully and sustained fiscal integrity during that 2-year period. Because each of Nebraska's local areas met these criteria and one local area requested its initial designation as a local area continues under WIOA as it had under WIA, Nebraska's local area boundaries

remain unchanged. Based on the requirements of WIOA Sec. 106(b)(2) and 20 CFR § 679.250(a), the Governor is not permitted to reconfigure Nebraska's initially-designated local areas.

Prior to subsequent designation of any local area, the Governor will again consult with local area chief elected officials and local workforce development boards and attempt realignment of local area boundaries. Implementing the planning regions as originally designated will greatly facilitate the alignment of the local area and regional boundaries.

Actions undertaken to remove state or local barriers

In July and August of 2015, the Governor held focus groups across the state, including the communities of Omaha, Lincoln, Grand Island, Norfolk, Scottsbluff, and North Platte. These public focus groups were attended by more than 250 workforce system representatives, including employers, state and local workforce development board members, community college representatives, one-stop partners, representatives of economic development entities, elected officials, and other interested parties.

Nebraska's then-proposed planning regions were determined based on analysis of empirical regional economic and labor market data, performed by the Nebraska Department of Labor Office of Labor Market Information. The analysis was a main topic of discussion at the focus group events. Data analyzed included:

- commuting patterns;
- numbers of employers and jobs supported regionally;
- projections of regional job growth, particularly in H3 occupations ("H3" refers to high wage, high skill, high demand);
- locations of training facilities;
- targeted industry growth patterns; and
- workforce system service delivery patterns.

Based on the empirical data and related input from the focus groups in August 2015, the Governor took the proposed planning regions to each local area's Chief Elected Official and Workforce Development Board with the idea of aligning local area boundaries with the proposed planning regions. Two of Nebraska's three local areas agreed with the realignment of local area boundaries; one did not. However, *all three local areas agreed that the then-proposed planning regions were appropriate* and supported the submission of this plan with the designated planning regions identified in the Program-specific Requirements for Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Activities under Title I-B, Section 1.1.A. There is *no objection by any of Nebraska's three local areas* to being "split" for the purpose of establishing planning regions.

When contacted about this waiver request, all three local area Chief Elected Officials and Local Workforce Development Board Chairs, in addition to the Chair of the Nebraska Workforce Development Board and the Commissioner of the Nebraska Department of Labor, expressed continued support of the planning region designation.

Nebraska's large land mass (77,358 square miles) supports only three WIOA local workforce development areas. The ability to consolidate two or more total local workforce development areas is practically non-existent without going to a two local area or single-area state design. While this might make sense in the future, the chief elected officials and local workforce development boards are not ready. However, designating planning regions does provide the vehicle to align workforce services and delivery with regional economies. The current local area configuration has been in place since 1983, established under the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). This configuration, particularly in the eastern,

most populated portion of Nebraska, has not represented economic or service patterns for a number of years.

As stated above, under WIOA Sec. 106(b)(2), 20 CFR § 679.250(a), and TEGL 27-14, the Governor is required to approve a request for initial designation as a local area from any local area that was designated as a local area for purposes of WIA for the 2-year period preceding the date of enactment of WIOA; provided the local area performed successfully and sustained fiscal integrity during that 2-year period. Again, because each local area met these criteria and one local area requested its initial designation as a local area continues under WIOA as it had under WIA, Nebraska's local area boundaries remain unchanged.

Designating planning regions in Nebraska that align with outdated local area boundaries does not meet with the spirit of 20 CFR § 679.200, which defines the purpose of identifying planning regions as alignment of workforce development activities and resources with larger regional economic development areas and available resources to provide coordinated and efficient services to both jobseekers and employers. Aligning workforce development services and programs with the designated planning regions that reflect current economic conditions, workforce patterns, and employment projections is critical in creating Nebraska's workforce system.

If Nebraska's current local area boundaries, which are over 30 years old, become Nebraska's planning region boundaries, alignment of the workforce development activities and resources of the local areas with larger regional economic areas and resources through the planning activities required under 20 CFR § 679.510 will not occur.

Waiver Goals and Outcomes

Waiver of the ETA's requested reconfigurations will allow Nebraska to not only comply with the requirements of WIOA Section 106(a) and 20 CFR Part 679 Subpart D but also ensure that Nebraska's workforce system is aligned and based on the development of employment and training systems tailored specifically to regional economies.

In this plan, Nebraska identifies four goals, which are aligned with and supported by the structure of Nebraska's planning regions as identified in this waiver request:

- Goal 1. Enhance coordination between plan partners and other key workforce development system stakeholders to:
 - ensure jobseekers and employers are provided coordinated and seamless services;
 - reduce duplication of effort; and
 - maximize the resources among the state's workforce development system partners
- Goal 2. Increase workforce participation by:
 - expanding access to assessment, education, training, and employment services and other workforce development activities; and
 - preparing jobseekers, including individuals in Nebraska who are experiencing barriers to employment and other populations, for occupations that provide family-sustaining wages
- Goal 3. Enhance employer engagement through industry sector partnership initiatives, informed by workforce and industry data to support identification of:
 - future industry needs;
 - opportunities for collaboration among industry sector employers;
 - potential workforce disruptions

- Goal 4. Promoting economic self-sufficiency among Nebraska's jobseekers and reducing welfare dependency by increasing postsecondary credential attainment, employment, retention, and earnings to:
- meet the skill requirements of employers; and
 - enhance productivity and competitiveness of Nebraska

The plan partners developed each of these goals based on the practical reality of the data analyzed by the Nebraska Department of Labor Office of Labor Market Information *and* the formation of planning regions based on that data. Retaining the original boundaries of Nebraska's designated planning regions will ensure collaboration across local area boundaries in support of the goals established in this plan. Without this waiver, the goals are compromised due to the misalignment of education and training programs and partner services.

Alignment with US Department of Labor policy priorities

Under 20 CFR § 675.100, four of the eight identified purposes of Title I of WIOA include priorities involving activities at the regional level:

- enhancing the strategic role for states and elected officials, and local workforce development boards in the public workforce system by increasing flexibility to tailor services to meet employer and worker needs at state, regional, and local levels;
- supporting the alignment of the workforce investment, education, and economic development systems in support of a comprehensive, accessible, and high-quality workforce development system at the Federal, state, and local and regional levels;
- improving the quality and labor market relevance of workforce investment, education, and economic development efforts by promoting the use of industry and sector partnerships, career pathways, and regional service delivery strategies in order to both provide America's workers with the skills and credentials that will enable them to secure and advance in employment with family-sustaining wages, and to provide America's employers with the skilled workers the employers need to succeed in a global economy; and
- increasing the prosperity and economic growth of workers, employers, communities, regions, and states.

These four priorities are the very basis of Nebraska's workforce system stakeholders' support for the designated planning regions. Designing and implementing Nebraska's workforce system based on current economic and labor market data will result in a service delivery system that makes sense to employers and jobseekers and greatly improves alignment with Nebraska's community colleges and the service delivery areas of the one-stop partners. The stakeholders fully support the development of comprehensive regional partnerships and alignment of workforce development activities with regional economic development activities, as well as the execution and implementation of sector strategies and career pathways.

Individuals impacted by the waiver

First and foremost, employers and jobseekers are impacted by the misalignment of local area boundaries serving as the boundaries of planning regions.

Beneficiary of the establishment of this waiver is the entirety of Nebraska's workforce system, including:

1. employers;
2. jobseekers, including WIOA priority population groups;
3. local area one-stop partners and delivery systems;

4. local workforce development boards;
5. economic development entities; and
6. the state board.

Designing and implementing regional plans that align with the economic, labor market, and service-delivery patterns will provide increased access to workforce services for employers and jobseekers, which truly aligns with the full intent of WIOA.

Monitoring progress and implementation

The process for monitoring the implementation of the Governor's designated planning regions will be done through the state board. Each local workforce development board responsible for their region has submitted a regional plan that aligns jobseeker and employer services with regional economies. The Board will monitor progress by:

- measuring partnerships developed, participants served regionally (including co-enrollments), and employers served; and
- gathering feedback from the local workforce development boards on the alignment of jobseeker and employer services from a regional perspective.

Nebraska has three designated planning regions, which are outlined below and depicted under the Program-specific Requirements for Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Activities under Title I-B, Section 1.1.A.:¹

1. Metro Region - covers Dodge, Douglas, Cass, Sarpy, Saunders, and Washington counties, with Douglas County being the focal county;
2. Southeast Region - covers Fillmore, Gage, Jefferson, Johnson, Lancaster, Nemaha, Otoe, Pawnee, Richardson, Saline, Seward, Thayer, and York counties, with Lancaster County being the focal county; and
3. Greater Nebraska Region - covers the remaining seventy-four (74) counties in Nebraska and includes 10 focal counties: Adams, Buffalo, Cheyenne, Hall, Holt, Lincoln, Madison, Platte, Red Willow, and Scotts Bluff counties.

Under Nebraska's regional configuration, local areas are assigned to the planning regions as described below. For each planning region, one local board is designated as the "lead local board."

1. Metro Region
 - a. Greater Omaha Workforce Development Board is assigned to the Metro Region and is the lead local board for the planning region.
 - b. Greater Omaha Workforce Development Board is responsible for:
 - i. coordinating the Metro regional planning activities, including collaborating with the:
 - (a) one-stop and workforce system partners, which must include representatives from the Greater Nebraska and Greater Lincoln Workforce Development Area WIOA Title I (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs) service providers in Cass, Dodge, and Saunders counties; and
 - (b) Greater Lincoln and Greater Nebraska Workforce Development Boards, which have oversight of Cass, Dodge, and Saunders counties; and
 - ii. preparing and submitting the Metro Region regional plan and the Greater Omaha local area plan.

¹ The term *focal county* refers to the main county or counties in a region to which employees from other counties commute for work. Each region has at least one (1) focal county.

2. Southeast Region
 - a. Greater Lincoln Workforce Development Board is assigned to the Southeast Region and is the lead local board for the planning region.
 - b. Greater Lincoln Workforce Development Board is responsible for:
 - i. coordinating the Southeast regional planning activities, including collaborating with the:
 - (a) one-stop and workforce system partners, which must include representatives from the Greater Nebraska Workforce Development Area WIOA Title I (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs) service providers in Fillmore, Gage, Jefferson, Johnson, Nemaha, Otoe, Pawnee, Richardson, Saline, Seward, Thayer, and York counties; and
 - (b) Greater Nebraska Workforce Development Board, which has oversight of Fillmore, Gage, Jefferson, Johnson, Nemaha, Otoe, Pawnee, Richardson, Saline, Seward, Thayer, and York counties; and
 - ii. preparing and submitting the Southeast Region regional plan and the Greater Lincoln local area plan.
3. Greater Nebraska Region
 - a. Greater Nebraska Workforce Development Board is assigned to the Greater Nebraska Region.
 - b. Greater Nebraska Workforce Development Board is responsible for:
 - i. coordinating the Greater Nebraska in regional planning activities, including collaborating with the:
 - (a) WIOA Title I (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs) service providers in the remaining 74 counties in Nebraska; and
 - (b) Workforce system representatives in each of the 10 focal counties; and
 - ii. preparing and submitting the Greater Nebraska Region regional plan and the Greater Nebraska local area plan.

Notice to local workforce development boards and public comment

The Nebraska Department of Labor notified local area chief elected officials and workforce development boards of its intent to submit this waiver request on January 26, 2018 through the publication of this 2-year modification of this plan.

Local area chief elected officials, local workforce development boards, and the public have the opportunity to comment on this waiver request during the public comment period for this 2-year modification of this plan, which includes a public hearing on February 7, 2018 as described in the Public Comments section at the front of this plan.

Stand-alone Wagner-Peyser Employment Service offices

Statutory requirements to be waived

Nebraska requests a waiver of the statutory requirements under 20 CFR §§ 652.202 and 678.315:

- prohibiting the existence of Wagner-Peyser Employment Service offices as stand-alone affiliate sites; and
- requiring the physical presence of one or more required one-stop partners more than 50 percent of the time an affiliate site is open.

Background

Nebraska has 93 counties covering 77,358 square miles. Nebraska's 93 counties are served by four comprehensive one-stop centers in three local workforce development areas. Jobseekers and employers in 31 of the 93 counties are within a one-hour drive of the comprehensive one-stop center(s) in their respective local areas. Jobseekers and employers in the remaining 62 counties, all of which are part of the Greater Nebraska Workforce Development area, are underserved due to:

- restrictions regarding stand-alone Wagner-Peyser offices;
- budget limitations among required one-stop partners affecting their ability to provide a physical presence in the rural areas of the local area; and
- geographic isolation based on:
 - the distance to the nearest comprehensive one-stop center, and
 - limited or no access to public transportation in rural areas.

While access to virtual services are an option in addressing this need, delivery of virtual services is contingent upon the customer's ability to access technology, which may be limited based on:

- income;
- educational attainment;
- disability;
- English proficiency; or
- homelessness.

Actions undertaken to remove state or local barriers

During the development of memorandums of understanding and funding agreements among required one-stop partners in the Greater Nebraska Workforce Development Area, the Greater Nebraska Workforce Development Board sought to establish affiliate sites in underserved rural communities in the local area. Because of budget limitations, required one-stop partners in the Greater Nebraska local area were and remain unable to provide a physical presence in those rural areas in addition to their required physical presence or presence through direct linkage in the comprehensive one-stop centers in the local area.

The Nebraska Department of Labor, as the Wagner-Peyser grantee for the State of Nebraska, has the capacity to provide staffing for affiliate sites in rural Nebraska but is prohibited from doing so because of the:

- restrictions regarding stand-alone Wagner-Peyser offices; and
- inability of required one-stop partners to provide staffing at least 50 percent of the time the proposed affiliate sites would be open.

Waiver Goals and Outcomes

Goals and outcomes of this waiver request include:

- increased access to one-stop delivery system services in the Greater Nebraska Workforce Development Area for jobseekers and employers through:
 - establishment of stand-alone Wagner-Peyser offices in underserved rural communities located more than 45 miles from the nearest comprehensive one-stop center in the local area; and
 - direct linkage to required one-stop partners that do not have a physical presence in rural Greater Nebraska;

- enhanced ability of required one-stop partners in the Greater Nebraska Workforce Development Area to provide services to underserved populations in geographically isolated rural areas, including individuals with barriers to employment.

Alignment with US Department of Labor policy priorities

Ensuring the provision of services to individuals with barriers to employment is a required function of the state workforce development board and local workforce development boards.² In the context of this waiver request, geographic isolation is a barrier to employment. Implementation of this waiver will align with this required function of the boards as a strategy for better meeting the needs of individuals with barriers to employment through leveraging resources and capacity within the local workforce development system.

Individuals impacted by the waiver

Individuals in the Greater Nebraska Workforce Development Area impacted by this waiver include:

- individuals with barriers to employment residing in geographically isolated rural areas;
- employers operating in geographically isolated rural areas;
- required one-stop partners that do not have a physical presence in rural Greater Nebraska;
- the local workforce development board and its ability to effectively serve employers and jobseekers, including individuals with barriers to employment, in geographically isolated rural areas; and
- the state workforce development board and its ability to ensure the provision of services to employers and jobseekers, including individuals with barriers to employment, in geographically isolated rural areas.

Monitoring progress and implementation

NDOL will monitor progress and implementation of this waiver in the Greater Nebraska Workforce Development Area by:

- collaborating with the local workforce development board on the development and implementation of an action plan for establishment of stand-alone Wagner-Peyser offices in key regions of the local area;
- coordinating with the local workforce development board and required one-stop partners to establish a mechanism for use of established stand-alone Wagner-Peyser offices on an as-needed basis, based on a reasonable cost allocation methodology; and
- monitoring of local area performance in key regions of the local area where stand-alone Wagner-Peyser offices have been established.

Notice to local workforce development boards and public comment

The Nebraska Department of Labor notified local area chief elected officials and workforce development boards of its intent to submit this waiver request on January 26, 2018 through the publication of this 2-year modification of this plan.

Local area chief elected officials, local workforce development boards, and the public have the opportunity to comment on this waiver request during the public comment period for this 2-year

² 20 CFR § 679.130(e)(1) and 679.370(h)(3)

modification of this plan, which includes a public hearing on February 7, 2018 as described in the Public Comments section at the front of this plan.

DRAFT

Assessment of core programs and one-stop partner programs

(a) Background

Under Section III.b.4.A of the Combined State Plan, the state is required to describe how the state will assess *core programs* each year:

- for quality, effectiveness, and improvement of programs broken down by local area or provider; and
- based on performance accountability measures described in WIOA Sec. 116(b); and
- based on regional and local planning goals.

Under Sections III.b.4.B of the Combined State Plan, the state is required to describe how the state will assess *other one-stop partner programs* each year, taking into account regional and local planning goals.

The state is required to report the outcomes of these assessments every two years in its response to Section III.b.4.C of the Combined State Plan.

(b) Overview

The proposed approach for assessment:

- for core programs, is to utilize the performance accountability measures described in WIOA Sec. 116(b) as they apply to individual programs; and
- for core programs and other one-stop partners, is to utilize:
 - assessment criteria defined under the state's policy on certification of one-stop centers, adapted for these assessment purposes; and
 - regional and local planning goals established in regional and local plans, as they apply to individual programs.

(1) Assessment of core programs

Assessment of core partner programs will occur annually during the third quarter of each program year, concurrent with the assessment of one-stop partner program services, and will include assessment based on the criteria described below in section (b)(2). In addition, assessment of core programs will include assessment based on the following performance accountability measures defined in WIOA Sec. 116(b), as they apply to each core program:

- employment rates at the second and fourth quarters after program exit;
- median earnings at the second quarter after program exit;
- credential attainment rate;

- measurable skills gains; and
- effectiveness in serving employers.

Core program performance will be evaluated at the program level, based on state levels of performance negotiated by each core program with its Federal partner and the following standards.

- The standard of *exceeded* means the core program exceeded negotiated performance levels when actual performance on an individual performance measure is in excess of 100 percent of the negotiated level of performance.
- The standard of *met* means the core program met negotiated performance levels when actual performance on an individual performance measure falls within the 80 percent to 100 percent range of the negotiated level of performance.
- The standard of *failed* means the core program failed to meet negotiated performance measures when actual performance on an individual performance measure is less than 80 percent of the negotiated level of performance.

Assessment of the performance of core programs authorized under Titles II and IV will occur once their respective levels of performance have been negotiated with their Federal partners and performance data is available for all core programs.

(2) Assessment of one-stop partner program services

Assessment of one-stop partner program services will occur annually during the third quarter of each program year. Programs will be assessed for:

- effectiveness, physical and programmatic accessibility, and continuous improvement; and
- progress on achievement of regional and local planning goals established in regional and local plans, as they apply to individual programs.

Assessments will be performed by teams consisting of representatives of one-stop partner programs using:

- criteria established in the state's policy on one-stop center certification, adapted for these assessment purposes, as they relate to individual one-stop partner programs; and
- regional and local planning goals defined in the local board's regional and local plan, as they apply to individual one-stop partner programs.