**Greater Nebraska Workforce Development Area**

**Local Plan for Program Years 2021-2024**

**(July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2025)**

Describe the strategic vision of the local board to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency, which must include goals that align with the goals and strategies defined in the current state plan or subsequent modification of the state plan for the following factors:

Greater Nebraska Workforce Development Board

**Mission**

To establish a workforce system that provides data-driven and employer-validated talent solutions through the integration of education, workforce, and economic development resources across systems

**Vision**

To deliver local coordinated, proactive, responsive and adaptable services for job seekers and employers to maximize opportunities for earning, learning, and living

Greater Nebraska recognizes and supports the State’s current vision to be a national model for the delivery of workforce development services. The Greater Nebraska Workforce Development Board’s strategy to fulfill this vision is to increase efforts to eliminate barriers for participants and businesses, provide the support businesses need to thrive, strengthen provider partnerships, and work toward system alignment with a goal of helping individuals and families achieve self-sufficiency while supplying businesses with a strong workforce.

Greater Nebraska will ensure focus areas and action items fall under one of the three following:

1. Coordinated partnerships focused toward working collaboratively, sharing information, and aligning policies across programs to ensure efficiency and enhanced access.
2. Data driven initiatives concentrated on the needs of employers and the community.
3. Continuous improvement to meet the changing needs of job seekers and employers.

In support of Nebraska’s two-part statewide goal, Greater Nebraska has identified the following objectives and action items for contributing to the achievement of this goal:

Selection and prioritization of development of career pathways

State Goal: Selection and prioritization of the development of career pathways for three or more in-demand sectors or occupations identified in Nebraska’s Combined State Plan, Tables 9 through 12 of Section II.1.A.

Greater Nebraska will use data to drive decisions when creating new and building upon existing initiatives to prepare individuals for the workforce. The following industries were identified during the development of Greater Nebraska’s local plan in 2021:

* Health Care and Social Assistance;
* Manufacturing;
* Educational Services;
* Information Technology; and
* additional industries essential to the economic vitality of each community.

The Nebraska Workforce Development Board’s state Career Pathways Workgroup identified five industry sectors that are in demand across all of Nebraska’s local workforce development areas and is prioritizing these industry sectors for career pathways development:

* Health care/medical;
* Manufacturing;
* Accommodation and food services;
* Transportation, distribution, and logistics (heavy and tractor-trailer trucking, transportation, and
* warehousing); and
* Construction.

Greater Nebraska has combined these lists to focus on the following:

* Health Care and Social Assistance;
* Manufacturing;
* Accommodation and Food Services;
* Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics;
* Construction;
* Educational Services;
* Information Technology.

Greater Nebraska has partnered with the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services and Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation to participate in a technical assistance grant through the American Public Health Services Association (APHSA) to align processes and develop Career Pathways. Initial efforts have focused on the healthcare industry. A summit was held in December of 2022 to learn about the barriers healthcare employers are facing with recruitment and retention, as well as the barriers preventing some from participating in career pathways. The group is currently planning job seeker focus groups to learn about the barriers that prevent individuals from participating in career pathways. Greater Nebraska has also partnered with Nebraska VR on their Career Pathways Advancement Project. This partnership has focused primarily on the manufacturing industry.

Greater Nebraska Panhandle area staff have partnered with the Western Nebraska Community College’s (WNCC) Health Sciences department to provide services to individuals interested in pursuing the healthcare industry, particularly nursing. Staff also partner heavily with the Powerline Construction and Maintenance Technology program at WNCC to provide students with the financial support and case management they need to be successful in the program. More recently, a career pathway partnership was developed with TranSystems to assist them with filling positions in the Construction and Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics industries.

Greater Nebraska MidPlains staff are working with Equus to build a standard operating procedure for the co-enrollment and co-case management process between Title Ib and TANF. Through this partnership, Greater Nebraska and Equus will work to develop career pathways targeting healthcare in the community.

Greater Nebraska’s Central region has partnered with employers in the healthcare (Mary Lanning Hospital) and manufacturing (CNH and Chief Industries) industries to develop formal Career Pathway Projects to assist with business recruitment, retention, and training strategies. More recent partnerships have been developed in the accommodation and food services (Grand Island Casino) industry.

Career Pathway efforts in the Southeast and Northeast regions have also focused on the manufacturing and healthcare industries.

State Goal: Identification of three or more barriers to participation in the selected and prioritized career pathways among job seekers and workers (including unemployed workers), Veterans, and individuals with barriers to employment.

Greater Nebraska will work to address barriers to enrollment by reducing paperwork, implementing remote processes, and creating a more efficient process for co-enrollment. All staff have been provided with laptops for greater mobility to meet with clients, which will allow teams to better serve individuals in rural areas.

The Nebraska Workforce Development Board’s state Career Pathways Workgroup identified the following barriers through brainstorming sessions and analysis of common needs. Greater Nebraska will further explore these barriers through job seeker focus groups as part of a project through the American Public Human Services Association in collaboration with DHHS and Nebraska VR.

* Childcare. The financial burden for maintaining adequate childcare impedes continuous employment and may also include an inability to find adequate childcare or disruptions in service that adversely impact single parents at a high rate.
* Criminal history. Exclusionary employment policies and practices create structural barriers for ex-offenders and prevent them from entering or reentering the workforce.
* Low income. Limited income precludes job seekers/workers from obtaining necessary occupational skills training and credentials and accessing transportation resources necessary for employment in in-demand industry sectors in local and regional labor markets.
* Disability/health. Unfavorable institutional barriers arise from misperceptions of increased business costs, lack of worker qualifications, or performance issues due to job seeker/worker disabilities or health issues.
* Cultural differences. Cultural differences compete with norms, values, and beliefs, which may extend to language barriers for individuals lacking English language proficiency.
* Literacy skills, basic credentials, occupational credentials. Barriers are created when individuals lack adequate literacy skills, basic credentials (i.e., GED or high school diploma), and occupational credentials required to perform minimum job requirements or essential employment functions.
* Aging-out of foster care. Youth who have aged-out of foster care and lack adequate housing, transportation, education, or training necessary to enter the workforce experience significant barriers.

Nebraska Department of Labor has onboarded a Reentry Program Coordinator to strengthen service provision to justice involved individuals and better track the effectiveness of initiatives. Greater Nebraska staff continue to expand services to incarcerated individuals in partnership with Nebraska Department of Corrections. The State’s Reentry Program Coordinator has provided training on reentry services to assist individuals with overcoming barriers related to background checks, lack of work history, and lack of resources.

Positive working relationships with the justice community have been developed in the Greater Nebraska Panhandle region, resulting in increased referrals from State of Nebraska Parole and Probation offices. With the increased training and attention that has been brought to the efforts to support re-entry job seekers, Greater Nebraska has been able to better support this population in their job search efforts.

Greater Nebraska MidPlains staff have built a great relationship with the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services Work Ethic Camp (WEC) in McCook. The team is currently exploring ways to start a Tax Education class for individuals currently incarcerated at WEC and nearing release. The Disabled Veteran’s Outreach Program/Local Veteran’s Employment Representative staff person is in the process of obtaining training and approval to begin working with Veterans incarcerated at WEC.

Staff in the Southeast region conduct a Workforce Academy Workshop to individuals at the Nebraska Correctional Center for Women (NCCW) on a monthly basis. The presentation covers how to use NEworks to job search, resume preparation, information on the fidelity bonding program, how to use labor market information, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, and other Nebraska Department of Labor services.

The Greater Nebraska team is also part of the Nebraska Economic Mobility Task Force. This group brings partner staff together to address such issues as gaps in service, community needs, and potential solutions. In addition to participation in NEMTF, a work group will be convened to determine best practices to address known barriers as outlined in the State plan. This group will also work to learn hidden barriers.

Greater Nebraska’s Southeast team has developed a strong working relationship with the Beatrice Vet’s Club Manager and County Veteran Service Officer through a new developed Veteran’s Group called EVETS, Eliminating Veteran Suicide through education and services. The local DVOP has joined this group and recently worked to help connect multiple Veterans with financial assistance. This is an ongoing, developing relationship that will strengthen services for Veterans and their families.

State Goal: Identification of five or more key barriers to participation in the selected and prioritized career pathways by employers and regional and local industry sector partnerships.

Greater Nebraska participates in business services groups, including EmployNebraska, which has local area chapters in Grand Island, Hastings, Kearney, Beatrice, Columbus, Norfolk, Sidney, and the Panhandle. These groups work with local areas businesses and schools to identify workforce needs. In addition to these efforts, business services groups will convene to determine best practices to address known barriers as outlined in the State plan. This group will also work to learn hidden barriers.

As part of the APHSA project, a summit was held with healthcare industry employers to identify barriers experienced by businesses during participation in career pathways. These summits will continue with a focus on each of the industries selected and prioritized in this plan.

During the initial summit, the following were identified as barriers to recruitment:

* Formed partnerships without any real momentum. Talent pipelines coming out of the colleges tend to disperse without the opportunities for companies to connect with them. Career and Technical college job fairs are not being promoted as they have in the past.
* Connecting with job seekers who have been in the workforce for 5-15 years. Particularly, job seekers who have families and struggle to work and obtain credentials necessary for opportunities.
* Inflexible work schedules. Due to current staffing levels, many employers have had to implement lengthy shifts or mandatory overtime, which is not appealing to some candidates, particularly those with families.
* Streamlining the selection process. Background and reference checks often take several weeks to come back. These checks are required for positions in healthcare and out of the control of employers. In some cases, new hires are going through the entire selection process for employers to find out they are no interested in working for the company.

The following were identified as barriers to retention:

* Job hopping. With the shortage in workers, employees are moving from job to job for gains in wages or hiring bonuses.
* Hesitance to provide assistance for advancement, such as tuition assistance. Some employers reported issues with employees moving on to another company offering more competitive wages and benefits after utilizing advancement assistance.
* Lack of advancement opportunities. Smaller businesses reported issues with retaining employees due to limited growth potential.

Barriers to participation in workforce programs:

* Lack of awareness. The majority of participating employers indicated their largest barrier in participating in workforce programs was due to the lack of knowledge that they exist.
* Lack of understanding. Several employers reported they were aware of services, but did not understand how they could gain access or what support they could offer.

A strategic plan will be developed from the information learned during the initial summit and updated as additional needs and barriers are learned during future summits and other activities. Greater Nebraska will continue to work toward educating all employers about services available and how to access them. The Greater Nebraska One-Stop Operator created a Workforce System Guide for Employers, which is sent to all newly registered recruiting account contacts in NEworks. The guide is also available on the internet and is used by Business Services Representatives during their consultations.

Alignment of the State’s workforce development system

State Goal: Coordination of workforce development activities

Greater Nebraska will work to coordinate with plan partners, community partners, and other local areas to develop a more efficient and effective system. This will include:

* coordination of workforce development activities and services statewide to maximize service delivery for job seekers, workers, and employers;
* process improvement projects to identify and remedy areas of inefficiency;
* implementation of technological resources that will support:
  + integration of supportive services available throughout the One-Stop delivery system;
  + participation in career pathway programs by job seekers, workers, employers, and industry sector partnerships

Greater Nebraska has developed SOPs with Trade and SNAP Next Step to outline co-case management processes and streamline service delivery. Additional SOPs are in development with Job Corps and the local area TANF service provider.

Process improvement to address inefficiencies with the WIOA Title Ib enrollment process is currently in process. Initial action items have centered around duplicative forms, alignment of activities, and guidance on partner coordination to complete, maintain, and update the Objective Assessment and Individualized Employment Plan/Individual Service Strategy for multiple programs.

Greater Nebraska will continue to expand implementation of the SOPs and to identify action items within the process improvement project. The local area will also work with partners as part of the State Alignment Workgroup to identify technological resources to further streamline partner collaboration and service delivery.

State Goal: Technology Integration

Greater Nebraska will work with the State and partners to identify and implement technological solutions, striving for efficiency and program alignment. Projects will include:

* working with partners to expand program use of NEworks. This includes training on NEworks features and testing to identify individual program and co-enrollment needs;
* implementation of mobile teams utilizing mobility kits;
* development of online enrollment processes.

Greater Nebraska has implemented the Eligibility Explorer within NEworks to streamline the enrollment process and provide participants with more information regarding the programs they are enrolled in. The system also allows participants to upload documents directly and securely, rather than spending time traveling to the office, or sending them through email which may be compromised. Staff have been equipped with laptops and other tools necessary for meeting participants in the community. In addition, partnerships with libraries have been strengthened through the process of preparing them to be host agencies for SCSEP participants and other partner programs. Trainings have also been provided to library staff on workforce services. Greater Nebraska will continue to work toward more efficient processes through technology integration and partner collaboration.

State Goal: Common Intake System

One-Stop partners will be exploring ways to streamline and integrate initial intake processes. Greater Nebraska will work to reach efficiency and seamless service delivery in co-enrollment, and co-case management with all partner programs through:

* increased cross training;
* development of procedures for system usage;
* evaluation of program alignment;
* leveraging of common process to eliminate unnecessary action items; and
* identification and implementation of best practices to address areas of opportunity.

Greater Nebraska acknowledges the State is refining its common intake system technology and will readily support the implementation of such when available. Greater Nebraska will continue to collaborate with partners through the Nebraska Workforce Development Board’s Alignment workgroup and other initiatives to align processes, eliminate unnecessary steps to enrollment, and identification and implementation of promising practices.

State Goal: Policy Development

Greater Nebraska will work to fully implement all State policies in a timely manner, in addition to updating or creating regional and local area policies that specify clear courses of actions, set clear expectations, guide decision-making and support outcomes. Policy coordination will occur among partners and other local areas.

Greater Nebraska continues to update policies to ensure service delivery is comprehensive, equitable, and compliant with all State and Federal guidelines.

State Goal: Online Resources

Greater Nebraska has greatly expanded its remote technological capabilities as a result of the pandemic allowing reemployment services to better serve previously underserved populations in rural areas. Greater Nebraska will work to increase mobile access to programs and staff through the support and development of:

* remote Reemployment Services presentations;
* online program orientation;
* accessible and fillable enrollment forms;
* initiatives geared toward increasing technological access in remote areas, including expanding services provided through partnerships with public libraries.

The Greater Nebraska One Stop Operator has been working with the Nebraska Library Commission’s Innovation and Technology Director to develop online resources for career exploration. Greater Nebraska continues to work with the Library Commission to execute the Workforce Navigator position, utilizing SCSEP, Nebraska VR, and other partner program participants. Additionally, Greater Nebraska has started a process improvement project to identify and eliminate unnecessary steps, streamline enrollment and co-enrollment, and implement solutions to provide more equitable access to underserved populations.

State Goal: Cross Training and Technical Assistance

*Cross Training*

Greater Nebraska will work with the State and all partners to develop, implement, and expand cross-training. Greater Nebraska, in coordination with the Trade and Economic Transitions grant hosted a seminar on co-enrollment and co-case management in March of 2021. Attendees included partner program staff from all three local areas. This seminar was followed by an online presentation focused on reemployment services, which was be open to job seekers, employers, and partners statewide. Greater Nebraska has also participated in the Statewide cross trainings developed by the Nebraska Workforce Development Board’s Alignment workgroup through presentation of the One-Stop system and Title Ib programs in collaboration with the other local areas and attendance for the trainings offered by partner programs.

The Greater Nebraska Workforce Development Board has contracted with Nebraska Department of Labor to hire a One-Stop Operator. A key component of the OSO’s duties is to ensure all partners are cross trained and receive continuous training opportunities for stronger partnerships and a more effective workforce system.

*Technical Assistance*

Greater Nebraska will continue to host TA calls with WIOA staff monthly, covering issues affecting performance, collaborative opportunities, and reinforcement of or changes to processes. To increase collaboration and coordination, these calls will be expanded beyond WIOA staff to include other Title I and partner programs in which participants can and should be co-enrolled accordingly.

Greater Nebraska has partnered with Trade and SNAP Next Step E&T to host joint TA calls and in person trainings when appropriate. These efforts will be expanded to include additional partners.

State Goal: Co-enrollment

Greater Nebraska continues to work with partners to align programs and reduce barriers to co-enrollment and co-case management. The Greater Nebraska One-Stop Operator has developed an expanded referral process and tracking method for partners who do not have access to NEworks. This tool and process will continue to be tested and refined for easier connection to partner programs. Teams will meet regularly to examine further opportunities for simplification and alignment. Greater Nebraska staff have also received rudimentary training on the statistical adjustment model utilized by USDOL and NDOL to determine actual performance to gain a better understanding of how this tool addresses higher barrier participants and alleviate concerns regarding co-enrollments. Co-enrollments in partner programs are and will continue to be reported to the Greater Nebraska Workforce Development Board, along with suggestions for policy and procedural changes. The Columbus office has seen great success with the WIOA and SNAP Next Step partnership at 76.6% co-enrollment. This partnership is currently being expanded to include TANF. Lessons learned, such as team bonding, treating all goals as team goals, presentation of co-enrollment, and coordinating communication with clients, are currently and will continue to be shared with other local areas and partners.

Greater Nebraska now has standard operating procedure guides developed in collaboration with SNAP Next Step E&T and Trade to provide teams with guidance on co-enrollment requirements, co-case management, coordination of services, and exit procedures. Additional SOPs are in development with Job Corps and the local area TANF service provider. Greater Nebraska has coordinated joint trainings and sharing of best practices with partners to develop a “one team” mentality. This includes several trainings and collaborative sessions with SNAP Next Step E&T and the alignment of an annual coordinated outreach goal.

State Goal: Public Sector Partnership

Greater Nebraska will contribute toward, and work to implement, strategies identified by the Nebraska Partner Council, including:

* coordination with local workforce development areas to strengthen workforce system alignment;
* targeted outreach to disadvantaged populations;
* continuous improvement; and
* alignment of systems.

As part of a coordinated approach to workforce development, the plan partners will meet regularly for planning purposes, information sharing, resource coordination and continuous workforce system improvement.

Greater Nebraska’s Administrator was added to the Nebraska Partner Council in PY22. The local area is also involved in the State Workforce Alignment workgroup, which has started the process of alignment through cross training. Efforts in 2023 will focus on documentation required by partners to streamline processes for participants.

1. preparing an educated and skilled workforce (including youth and individuals with barriers to employment); and

With the growth of business needs outpacing the flow of workers in all Greater Nebraska economic areas of concentration ([NEworks - Nebraska Labor Availability Study Publications](https://neworks.nebraska.gov/gsipub/index.asp?docid=802)), the Board’s strategies to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency will focus dually on the needs of employers and preparing individuals to meet those needs. The Greater Nebraska Workforce Development Board’s goals are designed to facilitate a staff approach to meeting people where they are, connecting them with opportunities to increase their skills, and putting them on a path to self-sufficiency. Greater Nebraska staff are prepared to help individuals achieve their career goals through the path best suited to them.

Partnerships between programs, education, and workforce will continue to be developed to provide youth with the support they need to enter the workforce and continue to grow, becoming contributing members to the economic growth of their communities. Through relationships such as Nebraska Department of Education Career and Technical Education (CTE) and other local area secondary school programming, Greater Nebraska will expand its offerings to further connect with youth to provide work-based learning, labor market information, and supportive services.

Example: Grand Island Public Schools offers students Career Pathways (Apprenticeships), partnering with Greater Nebraska Central region staff to provide the participant with supportive services and the employer with OJT wage reimbursement. More recently, the Central region team has begun partnering with Hastings College to assist student teachers with Work Experience/OJT opportunities and supportive services during student teacher requirements.

Greater Nebraska staff continue to develop relationships with local high schools, partner agencies, and employers to promote services for youth, including work-based learning. Greater Nebraska staff participate on boards and advisory groups such as the Grand Island Public Schools Freshman Advisory Board, Norfolk High School Career Academy Advisory Board, Norfolk High School Carl Perkins Advisory Board, and the Columbus High School Carl Perkins Advisory Committee. Youth representatives focus on strengthening relationships by providing presentations on Work Experience/OJT to high school audiences, educating groups on Labor Market Information, meeting with potential participants and their support teams, and facilitating sessions during events such as a youth conferences. Conferences included those hosted by Empower Families in the Panhandle, the “Grow Our Own, Keep Our Own” conference involving ESU 9, ESU 10, and ESU 11 in the Central region, the Governor’s Agricultural and Economic Development Summit. Through these efforts Greater Nebraska has been able to enroll youth in Work Experiences and Occupational Skills Trainings, and provide much needed Supportive Services.

In collaboration with EmployNebraska groups, NDCS, TANF, SNAP Next Step E&T, homeless services, Veteran transition service providers, literacy programs, providers of disability services and other partners, Greater Nebraska works to effectively serve individuals with barriers to employment. Staff work with each participant to identify barriers that may prevent the individual from successfully completing training or obtaining and maintaining employment and develop a plan to overcome those barriers through program support, co-enrollment, and referrals. Greater Nebraska will continue these partnerships with a goal of moving individuals and families toward self-sufficiency and stability.

Example: Greater Nebraska’s North Platte office has created a relationship with Families First Partnership in North Platte/Lincoln County. Individuals who request supportive services from Families First are connected with Reemployment Services Coordinators at the North Platte office to begin working on steps to a stable income. When appropriate, the individual is further connected with SNAP Next Step and other partners for co-enrollment. Families First is part of the Bring Up Nebraska collaborative.

Greater Nebraska recently participated in development of the Bring Up Nebraska Statewide Plan. Bring Up Nebraska coordinates existing resources within a community, enabling young adults and families to determine their own paths toward well-being goals, and lifts up their lived experiences to shape the well-being system. Longer-term solutions are designed to increase family and community protective factors, strengthen parent and child resiliency, increase self-sufficiency, and realize positive life outcomes. Greater Nebraska staff have been added to Bring Up Nebraska workgroups and committees throughout Greater Nebraska, such as the Southeast Nebraska Collaborative in the Beatrice service delivery area. Greater Nebraska teams will work with the Bring Up Nebraska partner in their area to provide workforce and sustainability services to individuals seeking assistance or involved in family court systems.

The EmployBeatrice group in Southeast Nebraska has partnered with NGage, the local economic development group, and identified priorities for 2023, including housing, lack of applicants, apprenticeships, and youth initiatives. Greater Nebraska has increased its partnership with Proteus across the state to reach more Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers. Southeast Region staff have collaborated with Proteus to provide presentations at Southeast Community College to groups of students with farm backgrounds furthering their studies in various programs at the college.

Greater Nebraska’s relationships with post-secondary institutions, short term training providers, and employers provide participants with a range of occupational skills and on the job training opportunities in all industries. Nebraska has a strong and innovative community college system, which provides participants with a supportive and engaging learning environment. The colleges are responsive to sector-based initiatives throughout Nebraska, ensuring coursework is relevant to industry needs.

Example: Greater Nebraska staff have partnered with Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation to provide individuals with the preparation they need to apply for status as a Journeyman. Vocational Rehab assists these individuals with the cost of training at Central Community College, while Greater Nebraska staff provide OJT placement with employers. Central Community College has developed a program focused on helping the individual be successful on their career path, without unnecessary courses. This model will be replicated in other areas and industries.

Greater Nebraska staff serve on Advisory Boards and committees for local community colleges, including the Career Advisory Group at Metropolitan Community College (MCC) and Information Technology Advisory Committee at Mid-Plains Community College (MPCC). Partner staff within the offices are also connected with these groups. The SNAP Next Step E&T staff person in the Columbus offices was recently added to the MCC Spanish Advisory Board. Greater Nebraska Panhandle staff attend student orientations for those going into H3 areas of study to provide information regarding our services and how we can support them in achieving their career goals. Greater Nebraska Southeast staff work with Southeast Community College Continuing Ed Workforce Solutions Department to collaborate in talking to employers about needed training and lining up customized training. Through these partnerships, Greater Nebraska will work with post-secondary providers, partners, and employers to develop and implement strategies for preparing an educated and skilled workforce.

### **relating to the performance accountability measures based on the performance indicators described in 20 CFR § 677.155(a)(1).**

Greater Nebraska leverages community partnerships and business relationships to address the needs of youth and individuals with high barriers to employment. Collaborative relationships with co-enrollment partners and resources are fostered to ensure performance is achieved. WIOA and SNAP Next Step are currently working toward the alignment of processes and performance measures, including the timing and definition of a successful exit, to improve performance for both programs. This model will be expanded to TANF and other partners.

Due to program requirements, this is still a work in process. Greater Nebraska and SNAP Next Step have identified a misalignment that prevents full common exit. Individuals who obtain a survival job while completing training or begin receiving unemployment benefits that result in them losing their SNAP benefits are required to be exited from SNAP Next Step. In these cases, the programs have worked together to identify a process for supporting these individuals during the SNAP Next Step job retention period and for transitioning the individual fully to WIOA Title Ib services. Should the individual lose their source of income, they are assisted with reapplying for SNAP benefits and referred back to SNAP Next Step for re-enrollment.

The Greater Nebraska Workforce Development Board and subcommittees regularly review performance, identifying areas of opportunity. The Strategic Planning committee will utilize data to identify employer needs, anticipate industry growth, and determine strategies and focus areas for talent development. The System Performance committee will expand its review of the data to include identification of best practices and mobile accessibility to programs and services to support the State’s vision of becoming a national model. The Board will prioritize funding based on the needs of the community and in relation to performance measures to ensure program staff are able to implement appropriate services with the highest impact.

Taking into account the analyses described in Section 1 for regional plan elements, describe the local board’s strategy to:

1. work with entities that carry out core programs and required One-Stop partner programs in the local area to align resources available to the statewide planning region and the local area; and

Cooperation, collaboration, and coordination will continue to be key themes of the Greater Nebraska Workforce Development Board. Greater Nebraska will focus efforts toward the alignment of programs, including leveraging of resources, definition of success, and coordinated participant exit. Workforce system strategies include expanding active outreach to individuals with disabilities, Veterans, youth, English language learners, and other target populations to make them aware of services. Staff have been equipped with laptops and other resources to enable them to meet individuals more easily in the community. This has resulted in more effective outreach and service delivery. Managers work with their teams and partners to develop schedules for regular onsite service delivery targeted toward specific populations, including reentry (e.g. Nebraska Correctional Center for Women and Work Ethic Camp), individuals experiencing homelessness (e.g. Connection Homeless Shelter), and other high barrier populations. Additionally, partners will work to develop a co-case management process that will provide for more effective coordination of resources. These processes have been developed with SNAP Next Step E&T and Trade. Greater Nebraska is currently in the process of developing agreements and SOPs with Job Corps and TANF. Each partner commits to cross-training of staff, as appropriate, and to providing other professional learning opportunities that promote continuous quality improvement. The Board will review reports of activities regularly to identify progress and areas of opportunity.

The One-Stop Operator will continue to work with partners across the system to ensure referrals are substantive and appropriate, in addition to coordinating cross training and ongoing communication. The OSO will convene partners to facilitate integrated partnerships that seamlessly incorporate services for the common customers served by multiple program partners of the American Job Center (AJC). The Board will determine One-Stop Operator activities and outreach based on analysis of community, employer, and job seeker needs.

1. achieve the strategic vision and goals described directly above in Section 1 for local plan elements.[[1]](#footnote-1)

The Greater Nebraska Workforce Development Board will capitalize and expand on existing partnerships to develop specific action items in its strategy to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. Data sources including labor market information, Rural Prosperity Nebraska (<https://ruralprosperityne.unl.edu>), studies provided by Nebraska Department of Labor, and other resources will be used to drive decision making.

Greater Nebraska has partnered with stakeholders in the Panhandle to address infrastructure and housing issues in preparation for employers planning to set up operations in the area. Nebraska Department of Labor is prepared to serve these new employers and the families that will relocated to the area for employment. Specific initiatives are focused on supporting entrepreneurial growth, business expansion, and turnover. Through partnerships with Sidney E3, University of Nebraska Extension Center of Rural Prosperity, Western Nebraska Community College, SourceLink, and local Chamber and Economic Development Directors, Greater Nebraska has positioned appropriate programs to assist in strategic planning to provide economic opportunities for residents to not only meet their material needs through work, but create opportunities for mobility and realization of career goals.

Greater Nebraska will involve business, partners, and other stakeholders every step of the way. Work will continue to strengthen existing sector partnerships focused on Manufacturing and Healthcare. Additional initiatives will incorporate STEM careers and awareness of growth opportunities.

Describe the *workforce development* system in the local area, including:

The AJC network includes six core programs: Title Ib Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs; the Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) program; Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service (ES) program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III of WIOA; and the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV of WIOA. The AJC network also includes other required and additional partners identified in WIOA, including the Senior Community Service Employment Program authorized under title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (co-located); Career and technical education programs (direct linkage); Trade Adjustment Assistance (co-located); Jobs for Veterans State Grants programs (co-located); employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant (direct linkage); employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (direct linkage); programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws (co-located); Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) authorized under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act (direct linkage, with co-location being added to two affiliate sites). Through the American Job Centers, these partner programs and their direct service providers ensure businesses and all job seekers—a shared client base across the multiple programs—have access to information and services that lead to positive educational and employment outcomes. Greater Nebraska AJCs and partner staff strive to:

* Provide job seekers with the skills and credentials necessary to secure and advance in employment with wages that sustain themselves and their families;
* Provide access and opportunities to job seekers, including individuals with barriers to employment, as defined in section 3(24) of WIOA, such as individuals with disabilities, individuals who are English language learners, and individuals who have low levels of literacy, to prepare for, obtain, retain, and advance in high-quality jobs and high-demand careers;
* Enable businesses and employers to easily identify and hire skilled workers and access other human resource assistance, including education and training for their current workforce. Examples may include assistance with pre-screening applicants, writing job descriptions, offering rooms for interviewing, consultation services on topics like succession planning and career ladder development, and other forms of assistance.
* Participate in rigorous evaluations that support continuous improvement of AJCs by identifying which strategies work better for different populations; and
* Ensure that high-quality integrated data informs decisions made by policy makers, employers, and job seekers.

The management of the AJC network is the shared responsibility of the local Greater Nebraska Workforce Development Board (GNWDB), the Chief Elected Officials Board (CEOB), the six WIOA core program partners, required One-Stop partners and other additional One-Stop partners, One-Stop Operator, site Managers, and service providers. Through the AJC, the One-Stop Operator carries out the activities described below:

* Facilitates integrated partnerships that seamlessly incorporate services for the common customers served by multiple program partners of the AJC;
* Develops and implements operational policies that reflect an integrated system of performance, communication, and case management, including Standard Operating Procedures to guide co-enrollment and referral-based partnerships;
* Uses technology to achieve integration and expanded service offerings;
* Organizes and integrates AJC services by function (rather than by program), when permitted by a program’s authorizing statute and, as appropriate, through coordinating staff communication, capacity building, and training efforts. Functional alignment includes having AJC staff who perform similar tasks serve on relevant functional teams (e.g., skills development teams or business services teams);
* Service integration that focuses on serving all customers seamlessly and equitably, including targeted populations, by providing a full range of services staff equipped with the resources and technology needed to connect job seekers with employers, training programs, and supportive services.

1. the partners and programs that are included in the *workforce development* system;[[2]](#footnote-2) and

Greater Nebraska has a fully integrated system involving Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth program, National Dislocated Worker Grant, Wagner-Peyser, TAA, and RESEA. Unemployment Insurance, Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation, SNAP Next Step E&T, and SCSEP are co-located in most offices, with plans for expansion. More recently, TANF and NCBVI staff have been added to the onsite partners in select locations. Strong relationships exist through direct linkage to colleges within the Nebraska Community College Association, Nebraska Department of Education (Carl D. Perkins), Community Action Partnerships (CSBG), and Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) program. Greater Nebraska staff provide services within the correctional system to help prepare individuals returning to the community and workforce. Community partners include TANF and Bring Up Nebraska, focused toward helping families reach self-sufficiency; and EmployNebraska, focused toward connecting employers with job seekers.

Greater Nebraska staff participate in local partner boards and advisory groups to strengthen partnerships, bring resources together, and coordinate services. Activities include:

* Lexington Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors
* Mid-Plains Community College Information Technology Advisory Committee
* Hastings Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors
* Grand Island Area Economic Development Corporation Advisory Board
* Hastings Community Impact Network
* Hastings United Way Board of Directors
* Grand Island Public Schools Freshman Advisory Board
* Hastings Area Chamber of Commerce Business Industry Education
* Kearney Chamber of Commerce Business Education Committee
* EmployGI Community Group
* Employkrny Community Group
* Kearney Community Connections
* Grand Island Community of Care
* CASA of South Central Nebraska Board
* Beatrice Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors
* Southeast Nebraska Collaborative
* EVETS – Eliminating Veteran Suicide through Education and Services
* Leadership Beatrice
* Leadership Norfolk
* Leadership Scottsbluff
* Southeast Nebraska Manufacturing Partners
* Nebraska City Center for Children and Families Board
* Columbus Public Schools Carl Perkins Advisory Committee
* Metropolitan Community College Career Advisory Group
* Norfolk High School Career Academy Advisory Board
* Norfolk High School Carl Perkins Advisory Board
* Sidney E3 Committee (Energizing Entrepreneurial Ecosystems
* Cheyenne County Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors
* Cheyenne County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors
* Cheyenne County Economic Development Committee
* Western Nebraska Community College Nursing Program Advisory Board
* Western Nebraska Community College Business Resources for Entrepreneurs
* Kiwanis Club of Scottsbluff Board of Directors
* ESU Migrant Education Policy Council
* Panhandle Area Development District Board of Directors
* LifeLink Advisory Board
* Western Nebraska Transition Grant Board
* Panhandle Business and Professional Women Board of Directors
* Western Nebraska Economic Development Interlocal
* Empowering Families Board
* Buddy Check 22 (Veteran suicide prevention)
* Tiny Homes for Vets
* Career Connections Workgroup

1. how the local board will work with the entities carrying out core programs and other One-Stop partner programs to support service alignment, including programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 USC 2301 et seq.).[[3]](#footnote-3)

The Greater Nebraska Workforce Development Board System Coordination Committee acts to align and leverage services and resources of WIOA core and partner programs, prevent duplication of services, monitor One-Stop System performance, and form strategies to ensure continuous improvement of the system. The Board will convene with core programs and other One-Stop partners to work toward service alignment and creation of workforce strategies. The Board Strategic Planning Committee guides employer engagement, sector strategies, and development of career pathways. Data will be analyzed regularly to drive decision making and goal setting.

Greater Nebraska staff participate in EmployNebraska groups throughout Nebraska, which brings business service teams from core partners together to work toward a common goal. These groups meet regularly to identify employer, job seeker, and community needs; develop strategies to address barriers faced by employers and job seekers; and work toward system alignment and coordination for programs and services targeting employers.

Greater Nebraska partners with the Career and Technical Education providers through area schools to support CTE programs and activities. Greater Nebraska Title I and Wagner-Peyser programs coordinate workforce services geared toward Nebraska secondary and postsecondary schools with Nebraska Department of Education under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education act. The reVISION program links schools with career education and industry professionals, providing educators the support and resources needed to implement and adjust curriculum to meet the needs of the workforce in a changing economy. Greater Nebraska will continue to support NDE’s plan, including the promotion and alignment of programming targeting occupations leading to family-sustaining wages, as outlined in the Nebraska Perkins V State Plan. Several strategies include:

* Industry sector partnerships
* Public sector partnerships
* Promoting career pathways, including career readiness
* Focusing on high-demand industry sectors and occupations during the provision of career

services

* Increasing co-enrollment of program participants and coordinating funding across partner

programs

* Expanding work-based learning opportunities, including apprenticeships, and
* Implementing joint partner initiatives

As a result of the reVISION project, Grand Island Northwest High School implemented an onsite CNA program to train students in a medical pathway, allowing students the opportunity for an onsite training and potential work-based learning opportunity with the support of WIOA funds. This partnership continues to strengthen through collaboration between the Title Ib Youth team, local ESUs, and the Nebraska Department of Education/CTE Division to bring youth services related to work-based learning (Work Experience, OJT, Apprenticeship, etc) and training to partner schools. The Central Regional Manager will be presenting during the State CTE convention in the summer of 2023.

Beatrice Public Schools (BPS) is engaged in a five-year process to re-evaluate the presence and quality of the school’s Career and Technical Education programming. BPS has started a CTE initiative group consisting of community service partners and employers. Community services partners involved in the initiative consist of Nebraska Department of Labor, Christ Community Church, Gage Area Growth Enterprise, Southeast Community College, Beatrice Area Chamber of Commerce, and Mainstreet Beatrice. Area employers consist of Kinney Manufacturing, Midwest Livestock, Rare Earth Salts, Lottman Construction, Security First Bank and Rare Earth Salts. Various other Beatrice area manufacturing and farm implement employers have showed interest in the initiative. The goal of the initiative is to expand Career and Technical programming to BPS students through partnerships with community service partners and community employers. Partners will focus on building a workforce pipeline of successful CTE BPS graduates and connecting them with area employers who are willing to employ and potentially provide access to continuing higher education in the participant’s field of choice.

The five-year plan includes:

* Identification of internal and external stakeholders of the school;
* Data collection regarding alignment with industry sectors, their current perception of career and technical education in the community, and their vision for what is possible within career technical education;
* Engagement of staff in evaluating and understanding stakeholder data and in brainstorming solutions to achieve the school’s mission through Career and Technical Education.

This initiative will be used to engage CTE teachers, work-based learning coordinators, core academic teachers, and school counselors in collaborating for the purpose of intentional programs of study and CTE experiences that propel students’ preparation for postsecondary success. The initiative is currently in the strategic planning and identifying priorities stage. Currently, the NDOL Southeast office will contribute as an external stakeholder and provide support to all area stakeholders by providing WIOA Title Ib services where appropriate. Through NDOL’s employer services and WIOA services, NDOL can support both the mission of BPS and NDOL by connecting people to employment success.

Greater Nebraska’s Columbus team is involved in planning meetings for the Columbus Public Schools CTE grant and staff are assigned to serve on the Carl Perkins Advisory Committee. In addition to Greater Nebraska staff, this committee is comprised of the Chamber, Central Community College, Nebraska VR, employers, and other partners and members of the community. The committee ranks classes, completes surveys, and participates in strategic planning and collaborative sessions.

Describe the *One-Stop delivery* system in the local area, including:

The Greater Nebraska One-Stop system is comprised of full-service American Job Centers as well as a network of other service delivery points. There are two (2) comprehensive American Job Centers and ten (10) Nebraska Department of Labor (NDOL) offices throughout the 88-county region.

The Beatrice American Job Center is located in Southeast Nebraska. Reemployment services include Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs; Trade Adjustment Assistance; Jobs for Veterans State Grants; Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Services; and Unemployment Insurance. Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation is co-located, and direct linkages are provided to Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act programs; the Nebraska Community College System; SNAP; TANF; SCSEP; Pine Ridge Job Corps; Ponca and Winnebago Tribes; Fairbury Housing Authority; and Blue Valley Community Action Partnership (CSBG). The Regional Manager of this center also oversees the Nebraska City affiliate site and provision of services at the Nebraska Correctional Center for Women.

The Grand Island American Job Center is located in Central Nebraska. Reemployment services include Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs; Trade Adjustment Assistance; Jobs for Veterans State Grants; Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Services; and Unemployment Insurance. Co-located partners include SCSEP and Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation. Direct linkages are provided to Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program; the Nebraska Community College System; SNAP; TANF; Pine Ridge Job Corps; Ponca and Winnebago Tribes; and Central Nebraska Community Action Partnership (CSBG). The Regional Manager of this center also oversees the Hastings and Kearney affiliate sites.

The AJC network includes six core programs: Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs; the Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) program; Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service (ES) program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III of WIOA; and the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV of WIOA. The AJC network also includes other required and additional partners identified in WIOA, including the Senior Community Service Employment Program authorized under title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (co-located); Career and technical education programs (direct linkage); Trade Adjustment Assistance (co-located); Jobs for Veterans State Grants programs (co-located); employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant (direct linkage); employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (direct linkage); programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws (co-located); Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) authorized under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act (direct linkage, with co-location being added to two affiliate sites). Through the American Job Centers, these partner programs and their direct service providers ensure businesses and all job seekers—a shared client base across the multiple programs—have access to information and services that lead to positive educational and employment outcomes. Greater Nebraska AJCs and partner staff strive to:

* Provide job seekers with the skills and credentials necessary to secure and advance in employment with wages that sustain themselves and their families;
* Provide access and opportunities to job seekers, including individuals with barriers to employment, as defined in section 3(24) of WIOA, such as individuals with disabilities, individuals who are English language learners, and individuals who have low levels of literacy, to prepare for, obtain, retain, and advance in high-quality jobs and high-demand careers;
* Enable businesses and employers to easily identify and hire skilled workers and access other human resource assistance, including education and training for their current workforce. Examples may include assistance with pre-screening applicants, writing job descriptions, offering rooms for interviewing, consultation services on topics like succession planning and career ladder development, and other forms of assistance.
* Participate in rigorous evaluations that support continuous improvement of AJCs by identifying which strategies work better for different populations; and
* Ensure that high-quality integrated data informs decisions made by policy makers, employers, and job seekers.

The management of the AJC network is the shared responsibility of the local Greater Nebraska Workforce Development Board (GNWDB), the Chief Elected Officials Board (CEOB), the six WIOA core program partners, required One-Stop partners and other additional One-Stop partners, One-Stop Operator, site Managers, and service providers. Through the AJC, the One-Stop Operator carries out the activities described below:

* Facilitates integrated partnerships that seamlessly incorporate services for the common customers served by multiple program partners of the AJC;
* Develops and implements operational policies that reflect an integrated system of performance, communication, and case management, including Standard Operating Procedures to guide co-enrollment and referral-based partnerships;
* Uses technology to achieve integration and expanded service offerings;
* Organizes and integrates AJC services by function (rather than by program), when permitted by a program’s authorizing statute and, as appropriate, through coordinating staff communication, capacity building, and training efforts. Functional alignment includes having AJC staff who perform similar tasks serve on relevant functional teams (e.g., skills development teams or business services teams);
* Service integration that focuses on serving all customers seamlessly and equitably, including targeted populations, by providing a full range of services staff equipped with the resources and technology needed to connect job seekers with employers, training programs, and supportive services.

| **Partner Program** | **Partner Organization** |
| --- | --- |
| Adult, DLW, & Youth WIOA Programs | Nebraska Department of Labor |
| Jobs for Veterans' State Grants | Nebraska Department of Labor |
| Wagner-Peyser Employment Services | Nebraska Department of Labor |
| Trade Adjustment Assistance | Nebraska Department of Labor |
| Unemployment Insurance | Nebraska Department of Labor |
| Nebraska Adult Education | Nebraska Department of Education |
| Nebraska Adult Education | Central Community College |
| Nebraska Adult Education | Western Nebraska Community College |
| Nebraska Adult Education | Northeast Community College |
| Nebraska Adult Education | Southeast Community College |
| Nebraska Adult Education | Mid-Plains Community College |
| Vocational Rehabilitation | Nebraska VR |
| Commission for the Blind & Visually Impaired | Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired |
| Senior Community Service Employment Program | National Able Network / NDOL |
| Temporary Assistance for Needy Families | Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services |
| Job Corps | CHP International / Pine Ridge Job Corps Center |
| Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Programs | Proteus, Inc. |
| Native American Programs | Ponca Tribe |
| Native American Programs | Winnebago Tribe |
| Career and Technical Education Programs at the Postsecondary Level | Central Community College |
| Career and Technical Education Programs at the Postsecondary Level | Western Nebraska Community College |
| Career and Technical Education Programs at the Postsecondary Level | Northeast Community College |
| Career and Technical Education Programs at the Postsecondary Level | Mid-Plains Community College |
| Career and Technical Education Programs at the Postsecondary Level | Southeast Community College |
| Employment and Training Activities Carried Out Under the Community Services Block Grant | Blue Valley Community Action Partnership |
| Employment and Training Activities Carried Out Under the Community Services Block Grant | Central Nebraska Community Action Partnership, Inc. |
| Employment and Training Activities Carried Out Under the Community Services Block Grant | Community Action Partnership of Mid Nebraska |
| Employment and Training Activities Carried Out Under the Community Services Block Grant | Northwest Community Action Partnership |
| Employment and Training Activities Carried Out Under the Community Services Block Grant | Community Action Partnership of Western Nebraska |

1. how the local board will ensure the continuous improvement of providers in the *One-Stop delivery* system and ensure that the providers will meet the employment needs of local employers, workers, and job seekers;[[4]](#footnote-4)

The Greater Nebraska Workforce Development Board is committed to continuous improvement, as are the workforce partners. The Board monitors the effectiveness of the local workforce system through regular committee meetings and report outs of performance, enrollments, compliance, and customer satisfaction. The Board has established the following to track and assure continuous improvement:

* The System Coordination Committee acts to align and leverage services and resources of WIOA core and partner programs, monitor One-Stop System performance, and form strategies to ensure continuous improvement of the system.
* The Strategic Planning Committee guides employer engagement, sector strategies, and development of career pathways, in addition to monitoring of program finances and the One-Stop System.

One-Stop Operator Activities:

* Joint planning, policy development, and system design processes to ensure delivery of integrated services, program alignment, a multi-entry or “no wrong door” approach, and elimination of duplication;
* Regular evaluation of the availability of career services and referrals to system partners;
* Accessibility and effectiveness of service provision to populations with barriers to employment, veterans, and employers;
* Development and implementation of effective communication tools to increase information sharing and collaboration with the partners;
* Collection and evaluation of input from customers, employers, internal partners, and community partners to develop specific improvement strategies;
* Participation in regularly scheduled partner meetings, local area task forces, and other collaborative opportunities to exchange information and encourage program and staff integration.

Activities the board will participate in to ensure that service providers are meeting the needs of local employers include:

* Review of labor market trends to anticipate employer needs;
* Evaluating workforce system performance measures;
* Review of all employer satisfaction surveys;
* Review of data compiled from the industry sector survey;
* Use of data to drive strategic planning and operational efficiency.

Activities the board will participate in to ensure that service providers are meeting the needs of local workers and job seekers include:

* Increase co-enrollments in partner programs,
* Review of all customer satisfaction surveys,
* Development and implementation of co-enrollment, assessment, referral, and case management processes.
* Expansion of work-based learning to improve access to employment that concurrently prepares individuals with the skills needed for employment.

The Greater Nebraska Workforce Development Board will also review results of local, state, and federal monitoring. The respective programs will be expected to meet monthly QA review (internal audit) and quarterly data validation requirements to ensure all information entered into NEworks is accurate and documented in the customer file. When services are not meeting the needs of local employers, workers, job seekers, or partners, the board will work with the Administrative Entity to create a corrective action plan.

Greater Nebraska has worked to develop a more robust local area monitoring process and is in the process of developing a more formal report out of the findings and areas of concerns identified, in addition to technical assistance and trainings provided to address these issues. The current process consists of:

* Data Validation Monitoring (DVM) conducted on all new enrollments
* Quarterly Data Validation Monitoring conducted on a randomized selection of cases, with at least one active case included for each case manager
* Quarterly Quality Assurance (QA) reviews conducted on a randomized selection of cases, with at least three active cases for each case manager
* Mandatory training for all case managers and office Managers for any QA/DVM that received a score of less than 80%
* Review and approval of all expenditures prior to submission to Finance; followed by review and recording of all expenditures paid out by Finance
* Technical Assistance and additional training provided to address issues identified during internal monitoring and State level comprehensive reviews
* Compliance with the nondiscrimination, disability, and equal opportunity requirements evaluated as part of the American Job Center certification process and additionally (typically annually) as required
* Report out of findings identified and trainings conducted are made to the Chief Elected Officials and Greater Nebraska Workforce Development Boards during joint meetings. Greater Nebraska is in the process of developing a more formalized report.

1. how the local board will facilitate access to services provided through the *One-Stop delivery* system through the use of technology and other means, including access in remote areas;[[5]](#footnote-5)

The Greater Nebraska Workforce Development Board will continue to work with the Greater Nebraska team to develop mobile processes and expand access to the One-Stop system. Staff have been equipped with needed equipment and support to increase outreach and service delivery efforts to remote areas. Greater Nebraska is working on development and execution of a plan to allow partners and libraries to connect with the workforce centers via video conferencing platforms to provide job seekers access to workforce staff for quick assistance and scheduled program appointments. Reemployment Services orientation videos will continue to be developed and made available online via the dol.nebraska.gov website and social media platforms. Additional initiatives include identification of virtual hiring event best practices and expansion of this tool to better serve employers and job seekers.

The partners of the AJC will make accessibility of basic, individualized, follow up, and any other services available through the one-stop delivery system. All services will be made available to those individuals with the greatest barriers to employment, to include individuals with disabilities.

Direct access to the partners will be made available at the AJC via direct linkage through real-time technology, whenever the partner services are not made available on site.

The One-Stop Operator’s responsibilities include the organization and coordination of partner staff in order to optimize and streamline service delivery efforts. Operational policies that reflect an integrated system of performance, communication, and case management, including uses of technology to achieve integration and expanded service offerings will continue to be created and implemented. Standard Operating Procedures have been developed with Trade and SNAP Next Step E&T. Additional SOPs are in development with TANF and Job Corps.

1. how entities within the *One-Stop delivery* system, including One-Stop operators and the One-Stop partners, will comply with WIOA Sec. 188 and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 USC § 12101 et seq.) regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities, including the provision of staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities;[[6]](#footnote-6) and

All facilities are physically accessible, in compliance with ADA standards for accessible design. Reasonable accommodations and modifications are provided to individuals with disabilities when administering assessments. Each site is equipped with assistive technology for individuals with visual and/or mobility impairments. Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired recently updated the equipment at each site to include the LyriQ reader and ONYX OCR. This is in addition to JAWS and Dragon Naturally Speaking, both of which are maintained by Nebraska Department of Labor.

Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation is co-located at both Greater Nebraska Comprehensive American Job Centers and direct linkage has been established with Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired. These partnerships will enable the One-Stop system to utilize their expertise to help identify issues and develop strategies for correcting any access issues to programs and facilities including training of staff.

All centers will work proactively with community partners who have specialized training and/or expertise regarding the design of services for individuals with disabilities to improve upon adaptive service offerings. Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired provided training on working with individuals needing accommodations to all Nebraska Department of Labor staff in 2022. Additional trainings are in development and will be implemented ongoing. Referral processes and resource lists will be implemented to quickly connect individuals with accommodations.

At point of entry, all customers will be provided the notice of Equal Employment Opportunity rights and grievance procedures to ensure Greater Nebraska is in compliance with 20 CFR 683.600. Greater Nebraska Workforce Development Board recently transitioned to the utilization of NEworks Document Manager, a more efficient technology, based acknowledgement of these rights and procedures.

Greater Nebraska utilizes Language Line for individuals who are not fluent in English. Training on Language Line services was provided to all Nebraska Department of Labor staff in 2022. The Nebraska Department of Labor Division of Unemployment received an Equity Grant through NASWA in 2022. As part of this grant, the process of applying for unemployment insurance is being evaluated for areas of process improvement to ensure access to services is equitable across all populations, including those with higher barriers. Additionally, documents are being evaluated for readability and will be translated to both Spanish and Vietnamese. This will include some Division of Reemployment Services documents.

1. roles and resource contributions of the One-Stop partners.[[7]](#footnote-7)

In accordance with 20 CFR 678.420, each of the required One-Stop partners (Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs; the Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) program; the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service (ES) program, and Vocational Rehabilitation) contributes funds toward the provision of career services, collaboration with Workforce Development Boards, and the One-Stop delivery system. Required One-Stop providers and other partners are working toward full integration of all services available throughout the One-Stop delivery system.

| **Partner Program** | **Partner Entity** | **Services/Resources** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Wagner-Peyser Employment Services | Nebraska Department of Labor | Business and Job Seeker services |
| Adult, DLW, Youth | Nebraska Department of Labor | Resources for training and employment |
| Trade Adjustment Assistance | Nebraska Department of Labor | Resources for training and employment |
| Jobs for Veterans State Grant | Nebraska Department of Labor | Veterans’ services: Local Veterans’ Employment Representative; Disabled Veterans’ Outreach Program |
| Unemployment Insurance | Nebraska Department of Labor | Unemployment benefits |
| Adult Education | Nebraska Department of Education;  Central Community College; Northeast Community College; Southeast Community College; Mid-Plains Community College | Basic Skills Improvement, High School Equivalency Preparation, English as a Second Language, Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship and Civic Participation, Workforce Preparation Activities, Integrated Education and Training |
| Vocational Rehabilitation | Nebraska VR;  Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired | Job training, employment accommodations, skills coaching; Accessibility training for staff |
| TANF | Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services | Resources for training and employment |
| SNAP Next Step E&T | Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services | Resources for training and employment |
| Career and Technical Education (Perkins) | Nebraska Department of Education;  Central Community College; Northeast Community College; Southeast Community College; Mid-Plains Community College | Vocational curriculum, career counseling, academic-vocational integration, and experiential learning |
| Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) | Blue Valley Community Action Partnership;  Central Community Action Partnership;  Community Action Partnership of Mid-NE;  Northeast Community Action Partnership;  Southeast Community Action Partnership | Basic needs services, emergency assistance, supportive services, early childhood education |
| Housing and Urban Development (HUD) | Fairbury Housing Authority;  Scotts Bluff County Housing Authority | Housing services |
| Job Corps | Pine Ridge Job Corps | Residential education and job training |
| Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker | Proteus | Job training, health care, education assistance |
| Native American Programs | Ponca Tribe  Winnebago Tribe | Health services, social services, education |
| Second Chance Act | Siouxland Human Investment Partnership | Reentry Employment Opportunities |
| Senior Community Services Employment | National Able Network | Resources for training and employment |

Describe how the local board will work with entities carrying out the core programs to:[[8]](#footnote-8)

1. expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment;

The Greater Nebraska Workforce Development Board will utilize data, in addition to State, Regional, and Local plans to drive initiatives for expansion, including strategic coordination with core programs. It is the position of the Board that full integration of services is key to expanding access. The Greater Nebraska North Platte office has implemented a “light case management” model across all onsite programs to increase staff awareness of job seeker needs and knowledge of available resources. All staff have received training and been empowered to meet one on one with an individual to determine basic eligibility and make referrals. Staff are specifically trained to notice when an individual is struggling or may benefit from an evaluation. Greater Nebraska continues to work to expand this model and establish full integration through technology, comprehensive cross training, and streamlined co-enrollment processes.

While much of Nebraska is within commuting distance of a Workforce Center, there are several counties that are underserved. Greater Nebraska staff have been fully equipped with laptops and have greater mobility to provide Title I and Title III services within these counties. This extension of services will be done in collaboration with Title II and Title IV programs, as well as all partners throughout the Greater Nebraska service delivery area to capitalize on the strengths and capacity of all core partners. The One-Stop Operator has focused heavily on partnership development with the Nebraska Library Commission to identify high need areas and establish a working relationship to increase service delivery through local libraries in underserved communities.

The Board will also work with core programs to utilize partnerships with other partner programs to expand access. Initiatives will include:

* Bring Up Nebraska – Partnerships with community collaboratives under the Bring Up Nebraska umbrella will continue to be strengthened to provide services to individuals in need of income stability. Greater Nebraska recently participated in the Bring Up Nebraska State Plan development to identify areas where workforce could support the goals of the initiative.
* Expansion of the Columbus WIOA/SNAP partnership to include TANF – this expanded case management model will provide participants true wrap around services and a team focused on their individual and family self-sufficiency. This partnership has been expanded to the North Platte teams as well. The One-Stop Operator is currently working on development of a Standard Operating Procedure between Greater Nebraska Title Ib, Wagner-Peyser, and TANF to formalize the partnership and provide guidance to the teams on how to implement joint goals and coordinate service delivery.
* Reentry – Staff have been trained by the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services and cleared to expand service offerings within the walls of the institutions. Greater Nebraska staff have implemented services in several NDCS facilities in collaboration with community reentry partners. Service expansion and partner collaboration will continue to be developed and expanded to other areas.
* Homeless services – The Board will work with local area Continuum of Care partners to coordinate workforce offerings in support of the State of Nebraska Consolidated Plan for Housing and Community Development. Collaborative efforts have taken place in the local offices and continue to be expanded. Greater Nebraska’s Grand Island team has a staff member on the local Continuum of Care advisory group. With the State level MOU between workforce and homeless services currently on hold, Greater Nebraska will work to move forward at a local level in anticipation of future guidance.

1. facilitate the development of career pathways, in accordance with the goals and strategies defined in the state plan and subsequent modifications of the state plan, and co-enrollment in the core programs; and

The Greater Nebraska Workforce Development Board will work with partners to determine development and prioritizations of career pathway initiatives, in addition to convening Greater Nebraska staff, partners, and other stakeholders to address barriers to participation for both job seekers and employers. Greater Nebraska will work toward identification and implementation of best practices for both development of career pathways and co-enrollment.

Greater Nebraska will utilize the Business Services Team, consisting of both internal and partner Business Services Reps (BSRs) to provide baseline data to the Board for consideration of new or enhanced Sector Partnerships, including the development of career pathways. BSRs will provide feedback from businesses to the Board to help guide decisions. Trend analysis of location quotients and other labor market data will provide the Board an indicator of the health of industries and occupations critical to the stabilization and growth of Nebraska’s economy. This data will help the partners to focus efforts on career pathways most relevant and beneficial to Nebraska businesses and job seekers.

Through the Greater Nebraska, Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, and Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation partnership to participate in a technical assistance grant through the APHSA to align processes and develop Career Pathways, a summit was held with healthcare industry employers to identify barriers experienced by businesses during participation in career pathways. The group is currently planning job seeker focus groups to learn about the barriers that prevent individuals from participating in career pathways. This data will be used by the Board to identify areas of priority, needed updates to policies and/or procedures, and additional partnerships.

Greater Nebraska has also partnered with Nebraska VR on their Career Pathways Advancement Project focused primarily on the manufacturing industry. Through this partnership, target employers have been identified for a summit similar to the one held with healthcare industry employers. This summit is planned for Spring of 2023.

At the time of initial writing, Greater Nebraska Title I and Title III staff were recruiting job seekers and employers for a pilot partnership with Facebook Career Connections. This opportunity was also made available through Title II and Title IV programs. Through this program, participants were enrolled into WIOA Title I Adult, Youth, and other partner programs to receive six weeks of training on digital marketing through LinkedIn, followed by 12 weeks of work experience/transitional jobs, concluding with an industry recognized certificate. Partners were able to identify areas of improvement and best practices for development of work experience opportunities from this project. Additional projects include the Macy JAG project. This project supported participants enrolled in Greater Nebraska Title Ib Youth and Nebraska VR. Through this project, students learned agricultural skills by farming land donated to the school for the project. Crops grown were used in the school kitchen and provided to the community. Future plans include having students create business plans to sell the crops and canning activities to teach sustainability.

The Nebraska Department of Economic Development (DED) currently supports, with the aid of lead and local boards, five Next Generation Sector Partnerships. Next Generation Sector Partnerships are comprised of businesses, from the same industry and in a shared labor market region, who work with education, workforce, economic development and community organizations to address the workforce and other competitiveness needs of the targeted industry. There are two active manufacturing partnerships in Central and Northeast Nebraska, and over 120 business leaders and public partners working together to creatively problem-solve and grow their industry and region. Additional initiatives include Healthcare in the Northeast, Southeast, and Panhandle regions. Greater Nebraska will work to expand these initiatives to the Tech Sector in efforts to proactively keep talent in the State of Nebraska.

1. improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential (including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable, and stackable).

The Board will continue to work with local area partners, businesses, and training providers to coordinate efforts toward industry and job seeker needs. Through alignment of programs and the elimination of duplication of services, job seekers will have access to more comprehensive program assistance and supportive services. Collaboration with employers, Economic Development, and training providers will aid in the development of career pathways and programs leading to industry-valued credentials identified as essential to a stronger workforce. The Strategic Planning Committee will continue to drive discussions to identify, prioritize, and take action to address sector and career pathway needs.

Describe the strategies and services that will be used in the local area:[[9]](#footnote-9)

1. to facilitate employer engagement with *workforce development* programs, including engagement of small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations;

Employer engagement strategies will incorporate the proactive use of available workforce and industry data to help determine future industry needs, potential workforce disruptions, and to ensure the availability of a skilled workforce to drive growth within the state’s high-wage, high-skill, and high-demand industries and occupations. Industry focus in Manufacturing and Healthcare will continue through the collaboration of groups such as the Central Nebraska Manufacturing Partnership and Southeast Nebraska Manufacturing Partnership. During the healthcare summit conducted as part of the APHSA technical assistance grant, Greater Nebraska has identified education of employers about the services available to be a priority in order to address the top two reasons identified as a barrier to participation in career pathways:

* Lack of awareness. The majority of participating employers indicated their largest barrier in participating in workforce programs was due to the lack of knowledge that they exist.
* Lack of understanding. Several employers reported they were aware of services, but did not understand how they could gain access or what support they could offer.

Greater Nebraska will utilize partnerships developed through staff participation in initiatives such as Leadership Beatrice, Leadership Norfolk, EmployBeatrice, EmployGI, EmployKrny, and others to educate business and community partners about the services offered the Ons-Stop and workforce development system.

Greater Nebraska has designated business services staff trained to conduct thorough employer needs assessments and provide comprehensive and strategic services, including connection with appropriate workforce development programs and service offerings. Employers are recruited and engaged through offerings including: individual company account management; recruiting, screening and hiring services, assessments and training (incumbent worker, occupational skills, and on-the-job training); consulting services (labor market information); tailored workshops. Staff have expanded hiring events to include more creative offerings in response to the pandemic. Statewide, drive-thru and virtual events were held, which garnered positive responses from employers. The Greater Nebraska Beatrice office successfully held a Tailgate Job Fair in coordination with Department of Health and Human Services and will continue this offering seasonally. These hiring events continue throughout Greater Nebraska. In addition, staff also work with employers to capitalize on in person hiring events by assisting them with identifying screening processes and interview components that can be conducted during events. This new strategy has resulted in attendees walking away with job offers, which in turn drives up attendance at future events.

There is a need for more specialized training, particularly in the development of strategies to respond to more localized issues, including layoff aversion. Incumbent Worker Training and Customized Training are largely underutilized in Nebraska despite a low unemployment rate that makes it difficult for employers to find qualified workers. Greater Nebraska has updated policies and provided trainings to prepare staff to implement these strategies. Staff continue to work with businesses in Greater Nebraska communities to identify needs for these strategies and other services.

1. to support a local *workforce development* system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area;

Greater Nebraska partners will engage with businesses to identify current and upcoming skills/training needs to support local area stability and growth. Community based postsecondary education and training providers will be involved to develop relevant training programs and resources. Program alignment around business needs will incorporate work-based learning and customized trainings to develop a talent pipeline solution for employer hiring needs.

The workforce system in the region will work collectively with the Nebraska Manufacturing Advisory Council (NeMAC), other trade councils, and local employers to identify and address workforce needs. Greater Nebraska staff are involved in EmployNebraska groups throughout the local office regions. These groups are focused on the collective needs of businesses and job seekers to more efficiently connect employers with talent. The One-Stop Operator will engage with local chambers of commerce and economic groups to identify additional opportunities to participate in community initiatives.

Employer summits held as part of the APHSA technical grant will provide data to guide efforts toward service delivery and process improvements. Initial efforts will focus on barriers identified during the healthcare summit held in December 2022. During the initial summit, the following were identified as barriers to recruitment:

* Formed partnerships without any real momentum. Talent pipelines coming out of the colleges tend to disperse without the opportunities for companies to connect with them. Career and Technical college job fairs are not being promoted as they have in the past.
* Connecting with job seekers who have been in the workforce for 5-15 years. Particularly, job seekers who have families and struggle to work and obtain credentials necessary for opportunities.
* Inflexible work schedules. Due to current staffing levels, many employers have had to implement lengthy shifts or mandatory overtime, which is not appealing to some candidates, particularly those with families.
* Streamlining the selection process. Background and reference checks often take several weeks to come back. These checks are required for positions in healthcare and out of the control of employers. In some cases, new hires are going through the entire selection process for employers to find out they are no interested in working for the company.

The following were identified as barriers to retention:

* Job hopping. With the shortage in workers, employees are moving from job to job for gains in wages or hiring bonuses.
* Hesitance to provide assistance for advancement, such as tuition assistance. Some employers reported issues with employees moving on to another company offering more competitive wages and benefits after utilizing advancement assistance.
* Lack of advancement opportunities. Smaller businesses reported issues with retaining employees due to limited growth potential.

1. to better coordinate *workforce development* programs and economic development;

The One-Stop Operator will incorporate the following strategies as part of an initiative to better coordinate workforce programs with economic development programs:

* Staff and board member attendance at Chamber and economic development functions
* Staff and board member attendance at the annual Governor’s Summit on Economic Development
* Board updates on each local office area economic development activities, sector partnerships, economic planning
* Active participation in State and local economic development planning
* Relationship building between workforce professionals and economic development professionals
* Expansion of access to entrepreneurial and small business development offerings through technology, promotion, and referral of workforce customers to these local resources

The Greater Nebraska One-Stop Operator continues to work on these initiatives and strengthen collaboration. The OSO has seen great success in areas such as the Panhandle, where Greater Nebraska, Economic Development, and other partners have come together to work on a strategic plan to increase entrepreneurship in the area and address infrastructure and housing needs in preparation for new employers committed to bringing their operations to the area over the coming years.

Greater Nebraska staff serve local area Chambers of Commerce and Economic Development, including in the following capacities:

* Beatrice Chamber of Commerce – Ambassador
* Lexington Chamber of Commerce – Ambassador
* Hastings Chamber of Commerce – Board of Directors
* Grand Island Area Economic Development Corporation – Advisory Board
* Hastings Area Chamber of Commerce – Business Industry Education
* Kearney Chamber of Commerce – Business Education Committee
* Kearney Community Connections

1. to strengthen linkages between the local *One-Stop delivery* system and the Nebraska’s unemployment insurance programs; and

Workforce center staff have been cross trained to provide meaningful assistance to unemployment insurance claimants. Staff are trained to assist claimants with navigating the unemployment application and answering questions pertaining to most communication received. Resource rooms are equipped with dedicated UI computers and ringdown phones to connect claimants directly with UI staff during hours of operation. Additionally, UI staff are co-located at most centers, providing claimants and workforce services staff a direct resource for more technical questions. Most workforce services staff assisted with UI benefits functions during the height of claims resulting from COVID. This direct exposure has better equipped staff with an understanding of how to help claimants proactively provide needed documents for increased efficiency of claim processing.

Co-location of Unemployment Insurance (UI) staff has created a stronger partnership between unemployment and One-Stop partners. UI will continue to be incorporated in programs such as NEres and Rapid Response. Moving forward, the One-Stop Operator will work with UI to educate staff about the program and help facilitate better customer service.

All UI claimants are required to participate in Nebraska’s Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment program. The program, also called NEres, includes one-on-one job coaching and other assistance for getting back to work. During these sessions, claimants and other voluntary participants are provided information about One-Stop partner programs, including WIOA Title I services.

An area of opportunity with UI customers includes ensuring that they are aware of all the avenues available to them through the AJCs and career centers, not just UI services. A reemployment services presentation has been developed and printed material updated for staff use. The One-Stop Operator has also implemented a handbook outlining all programs and services, which has been made available to staff and customers.

Additionally, Greater Nebraska added questions pertaining specifically to UI to the local area customer satisfaction survey. This survey is provided to all individuals who receive a service by email, NEworks messaging, and QR codes posted and available on cards in the offices. The survey is pulled weekly and results sent to respective office Managers and UI Administration to address areas of opportunity.

1. that may include the implementation of initiatives (which must support the strategies described above in Sections 6.a. through 6.d.), such as incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training 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.

Greater Nebraska will utilize data including timely labor market information, employment projections, and information gathered directly from employers to help devise strategies that ensure Nebraska businesses have the talent needed to thrive in a global economy. Initiatives may include, but are not limited to: new and customized training options, incumbent worker training, on the job training, industry specific assessments, work-based learning opportunities, collaboration with state and local economic development agencies to implement industry sector strategies, and other initiatives that respond to the needs presented in the data and expressed directly by employers.

The local area will use labor market data and NEworks.nebraska.gov to provide information to students, unemployed and underemployed individuals, and new workers on high-wage, high-skill and high-demand (H3) jobs in Nebraska. This information will help to guide individuals onto career pathways that meet their needs and interests.

The GNWDB has identified the expansion of work-based learning models as a key strategy for improving access to employment that concurrently prepares individuals with the skills needed for employment and addresses business needs. GNWDB will work with businesses, business intermediaries such as the chambers of commerce, and organized labor to develop new work-based learning models in the region’s target industries. The previous local plan included an additional commitment to expanding work-based learning (including on-the-job training, registered apprenticeships, transitional jobs, customized training, work experience, job shadowing, entrepreneurship, and pre-apprenticeship) with a goal of reaching a 35% of the overall caseload in the WIOA Title 1B program by June 30, 2021. *Update: COVID hindered progress toward this goal. However, there has been promising movement in this direction, particularly in the Grand Island and Hastings areas. This goal will remain a part of the plan with a new target date of June 30, 2025.* Greater Nebraska increased from 18.5% in PY20 to 24.4% in PY21. As of February 15, 2023, Greater Nebraska’s rate of placement into work-based learning opportunities had reached 25.3% for PY22. Due to the success of the region, Greater Nebraska’s Central region team was asked to present on their OJT success and “Marketing the Individual” during the 2023 roundtable to be held in Des Moines, Iowa in April of 2023.

Describe how the local board will coordinate local workforce investment activities with regional economic development activities that are carried out in the local area and how the local board will promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services.[[10]](#footnote-10)

This is an area of opportunity for Greater Nebraska. Under guidance from the Greater Nebraska Workforce Development Board, the One-Stop Operator will increase efforts toward the development and implementation of programs and strategies that are focused on microenterprise and entrepreneurial training. This will include:

* increased participation in economic development activities focused on entrepreneurship;
* enhanced training for Greater Nebraska staff;
* and cross training with providers of entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services.

Greater Nebraska’s Sidney office relocated to Western Nebraska Community College in late 2021 and is co-located with the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Center. This move has strengthened the collaborative approach toward the provision of ongoing entrepreneurial training and assistance throughout the area. Through a partnership involving Nebraska Department of Labor, the Chamber, Panhandle Economic Development, Western Nebraska Community College, and other entities, the E3 project was developed to grow and develop the network of professionals within the community, with a focus on entrepreneurship. This group was able to secure funding to support an Entrepreneurial Navigator who will be co-located with the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Center and Greater Nebraska’s Sidney office. With an estimated addition of 8,000+ jobs to the area over the coming years, additional areas of focus for the group include:

* infrastructure and housing to support families as jobs are added to the area,
* development of a trade program to prepare job seekers for incoming jobs,
* and strategic planning to bring in multiple businesses to utilize the former Cabela’s corporate offices, rather than a single, large employer.

Describe and assess the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area.[[11]](#footnote-11)

Greater Nebraska provides high quality employment and training services to assist job seekers with acquiring essential skills to compete for in-demand jobs. Services are coordinated by partner providers to ensure goals are in alignment and services are not duplicated. Nebraska’s Eligible Training Provider List provides a comprehensive and robust offering of long-term and short-term occupational skills training (OST) for most occupations. Work based learning, which includes on the job training, registered apprenticeships, transitional jobs, customized training, work experience, job shadowing, and pre-apprenticeship, is also available to participants.

Adult and DLW programs actively conduct outreach to individuals with barriers to employment. All facilities are physically accessible, in compliance with ADA standards for accessible design. Reasonable accommodations and modifications are provided to individuals with disabilities when administering assessments. All information is provided in an accessible, understandable, and usable format.

There are three types of “career services” available for adults and dislocated workers (DLW) within AJCs and career centers: basic career services, individualized career services, and follow-up services. These services may be provided in any order as sequence of service is not required which provides staff the flexibility to target services to meet the needs of the customer.

| **Basic Career Services** |
| --- |
| Eligibility determination for workforce PARTNER services, including WIOA Title IB Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs. |
| Outreach, intake (including profiling), and orientation to information and other services available through the local workforce delivery system, including:   1. an opportunity to initiate an application for TANF assistance and non-assistance benefits and services, which could be implemented through the provision of paper application forms or links to an application web site |
| Initial assessment of skill levels including literacy, numeracy, and English-language proficiency, as well as aptitudes, abilities (including skills gaps), and supportive services needs |
| Labor exchange services, including:   1. job search and placement assistance and career counseling (when needed by an individual), including provision of information on in-demand industry sectors and occupations and nontraditional employment; 2. appropriate recruitment and other business services on behalf of employers, including labor market information and referrals to specialized business services other than those traditionally offered through the local workforce delivery system; and development of on-the-job training contracts and employer job development for unsubsidized placements |
| Provision of referrals to and coordination of activities with other programs and services, including programs and services within the local workforce delivery system and, when appropriate, other workforce development programs |
| Provision of workforce and labor market employment statistics information, including the provision of accurate information relating to local, regional, and national labor market areas, including:   1. job vacancy listings in labor market areas; 2. information on job skills necessary to obtain the vacant jobs listed; and information relating to local occupations in demand and the earnings, skill requirements, and opportunities for advancement for those occupations |
| Provision of performance information and program cost information on Eligible Training Providers by program and type of providers |
| Provision of information, in usable and understandable formats and languages, relating to how the local area is performing on local performance accountability measures, as well as any additional performance information relating to the local workforce delivery system |
| Provision of information, in usable and understandable formats and languages, relating to the availability of supportive services or assistance, and appropriate referrals to those services and assistance, including:   1. child care; 2. child support; 3. medical or child health assistance available through Nebraska's Medicaid program and Children's Health Insurance Program; 4. benefits under SNAP; and 5. assistance through the earned income tax credit; and assistance under Nebraska's TANF program and other supportive services and transportation provided through TANF |
| Provision of information and meaningful assistance to individuals seeking assistance in filing a claim for unemployment compensation |
| Assistance in establishing eligibility for programs of financial aid assistance for training and education programs not provided under WIOA |

| **Individualized Career Services** |
| --- |
| Comprehensive and specialized assessments of the skill levels and service needs of adults and dislocated workers, which may include:   1. diagnostic testing and use of other assessment tools; and 2. in-depth interviewing and evaluation to identify employment barriers and appropriate employment goals |
| Development of an individual employment plan, to identify the employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives, and appropriate combination of services for the participant to achieve his or her employment goals, including information on and access to the Eligible Training Provider List |
| Group counseling |
| Individual counseling |
| Career planning |
| Short-term pre-vocational services, including development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct services to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training |
| Work experience, transitional jobs, pre-apprenticeships, registered apprenticeships, internships, job shadowing, Entrepreneurial skills training, On the Job Training |
| Occupational Skills Training (OST), Incumbent Worker Training (IWT), Customized Training (CT), Skill upgrading and retraining, programs that combine workplace training with related instruction which may include cooperative education, and other training services as determined by the workforce PARTNER’s governing rules |
| Workforce preparation activities |
| Financial literacy services |
| In and Out-of-area job search assistance and relocation assistance |
| Adult education and literacy activities, including English-language acquisition programs and integrated education and training programs [20 CFR § 678.430: If any AJC Partner or service provider receives funds directly or indirectly from U.S. Department of Health and Human Services or other Federal agencies, it is required under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and its implementing regulations, to take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to its programs by persons with limited English proficiency. Title VI also prohibits Federal grant recipients from utilizing methods of administration that have the effect of discriminating against persons based on their race, color, or national origin. In some cases, a provider's failure to provide language assistance to linguistically or culturally diverse populations could be a violation of Title VI. However, the Title VI requirement to take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access does not mean that jurisdictions are required to provide universal ESL training. While individual jurisdictions may need to provide ESL training and testing to TANF family members in some cases, universal ESL training is not a statutorily mandated requirement.] |

**Follow-up Services**

Greater Nebraska provides follow-up services for adults and dislocated workers for 12 months after the first date of employment. Follow-up services vary by type and intensity as they are based on the individual needs of each participant, but may include referrals for supportive services, job search assistance, and job retention coaching.

Describe how the local board will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out in the local area with statewide Rapid Response activities.[[12]](#footnote-12)

All Rapid Response activities will be reported to the Greater Nebraska Workforce Development Board. If current investment activities do not support the current need, the Board will convene to set aside specific funds for activities including layoff aversion strategies such as incumbent worker training and customized training. Greater Nebraska will ensure that:

* If a local representative becomes aware of a potential layoff or closure, they will notify the State via NDOL.RapidResponse@nebraska.gov.
* A representative of Trade and the WIOA Title Ib Dislocated Worker program provides program specific information at all onsite meetings.
* When an onsite meeting cannot be arranged, content for outreach to employees and employers is provided to the Rapid Response Unit.
* The One-Stop Center or affiliated site will provide additional follow-up with employees to connect them with appropriate and requested resources.
* Workshops and career fairs, based on identified affected workforce needs, are coordinated in partnership with the Wagner-Peyser Program.
* Additional community resources, outside of the mandated partners, are identified.

The Greater Nebraska Central team worked with Eaton Corporation during a Trade certified closure that resulted in a mass layoff in 2022. Rapid Response event was held in August of 2022, with 62% of attendees enrolled in Trade and co-enrolled into WIOA Title Ib DLW by January of 2023. Several attendees were still in the process of enrollment during the writing of this two-year plan modification. Rapid Response activities included an onsite hiring event with nine manufacturing industry employers in the regional area. Thus far, twelve of the enrolled individuals have been placed into On-the-Job Training, with three in Occupational Skills Training. The team has been working with the Hastings Police Department to support an individual who will be attending law enforcement, with the goal of beginning an OJT with the police department upon receipt of his law enforcement certification.

The Greater Nebraska Southeast team has been working with Malco Tools to provide services to layoffs currently taking place in stages. Beatrice staff planned and executed a hiring fair at DeWitt Community Center with 24 employers. Over 40 individuals have received services, with 16 enrolled into WIOA Title Ib Dislocated Worker thus far. This layoff is currently pending for Trade certification due to delay in Federal guidance. The Beatrice team has been working with participants to determine if they may be eligible for Trade Adjustment Assistance services under a prior Trade certified petition, with at least one co-enrollment.

In cases where a Rapid Response event is not held, the local area office will promote and host a community presentation to market reemployment services available to job seekers. Furthermore, staff will receive comprehensive training on layoff aversion strategies in order to identify appropriate opportunities and respond with effective strategies.

In January of 2023, the Norfolk team was made aware of a mass closure and layoff that had occurred without notice to the employees or the Nebraska Department of Labor team. Staff quickly mobilized to provide rapid response services to individuals walking into the office for services and scheduled sessions that were promoted on social media to connect with affected individuals who had not yet accessed services. Events such as this one and the Eaton layoff above are debriefed for identification of support needs and best practices to be shared with all Greater Nebraska offices.

Describe and assess 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 identification of successful models of such activities.[[13]](#footnote-13)

Greater Nebraska strives to serve all youth through an integrated service delivery system. Partnerships with organizations including Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation and Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired are integral to ensuring staff are equipped to think inclusively and provide accommodations, if needed. High quality services for in-school and out-of-school youth begins with career exploration and guidance, continued support for educational attainment, and opportunities for skills training. Participants are provided opportunities for work-based learning through work experience, on the job training, job shadowing, pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships, and customized training.

Many youth have multiple challenges to employment and may need a variety of support and services. The Board ensures that each American Job Center is universally accessible and that physical, programmatic, and communications access is available to everyone, including persons with disabilities. Universal design is incorporated into the board certification process of each AJC and affiliate site.

Greater Nebraska provides all youth with the 14 youth program elements as described in the State plan:

|  |
| --- |
| **WIOA 14 Youth Program Elements** |
| Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and dropout prevention activities |
| Alternative secondary school and dropout recovery services |
| Paid and unpaid work experience |
| Occupational Skills Training (OST) |
| Education offered concurrently with workforce preparation |
| Leadership development opportunities |
| Supportive services |
| Adult mentoring |
| Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling |
| Financial literacy education |
| Entrepreneurial skills training |
| Services that provide labor market information |
| Postsecondary Preparation and Transition Activities |
| Follow-up services |

During PY22, Greater Nebraska received Governor’s reserve funds to support the Macy JAG project. This project supported 23 participants during their Summer Work-Experience. Additional participants were supported by Nebraska VR. Participants were co-enrolled in both programs where eligible. Through this project, students learned agricultural skills by farming land donated to the school for the project. Crops grown were used in the school kitchen and provided to the community. Future plans include having students create business plans to sell the crops and canning activities to teach sustainability.

Describe how the local board will coordinate relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities with education and workforce investment activities to align strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services.[[14]](#footnote-14)

Greater Nebraska Title I and Wagner-Peyser programs coordinate with Nebraska Department of Education under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education act. Workforce staff work closely with local area education providers to integrate services and connect students and job seekers with career pathways determined by participant interest and labor market information. Each office is connected with local area secondary schools to coordinate presentations, tours, career fairs, and other activities geared toward youth exploring career opportunities as part of the reVISION program. Work Experience funds are used to help youth gain the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed for the workforce, in addition to providing an opportunity to explore career paths they may be interested in pursuing. Secondary schools in Nebraska have been expanding career and technical programs to expose students to Nebraska industries and prepare them to meet the needs of local area businesses. The local area will work to support initiatives such as the Grand Island Public School’s Career Pathways Institute. Through this project, students of Grand Island Public Schools are connected with the Grand Island American Job Center for support during their apprenticeship with a local area employer.

Local area postsecondary providers are receptive to business/industry needs, ensuring coursework offerings are relevant to industry needs. The local area will work with its community colleges to share data that informs the development of new courses, curricular modifications, and recruitment efforts. The Board will make every effort to support community college proposals for grants and attempts to integrate services into the proposals will be made. Recently, Central Community College, Northeast Community College, and Southeast Community College received a grant to develop Registered Apprenticeship hubs through the Apprenticeship Building America (ABA) Program. Greater Nebraska is supporting this initiative by helping to connect job seekers with available programs, evaluating individuals for program eligibility, and enrolling as a appropriate to provide support with training, education, case management, and supportive services.

Describe how the local board will coordinate WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with the provision of transportation and other appropriate supportive services in the local area.[[15]](#footnote-15)

Greater Nebraska partners with TANF, Community Action Partnerships, SNAP Next Step E&T, SCSEP, Job Corps, and other partners to coordinate assistance for clients. Each office is also building a relationship with Bring Up Nebraska coalitions throughout the state to increase access to supportive services. Provision of supportive services is prioritized based on availability through partner programs and the immediacy of the need.

Fourteen Greater Nebraska communities have public transit within city limits, in addition to intercity routes connecting 30 Nebraska communities and four communities in neighboring states. Despite this transit system, the vast geographic area of the local area and the lack of public transit in rural areas complicates the ability to meet the needs of employers and job seekers. Where possible, Greater Nebraska provides bus passes and mileage reimbursement to eligible participants to attempt to mitigate this primary barrier. WIOA Title 1B staff coordinate services with partners in their respective communities.

The lack of a comprehensive and reliable transit system in all Nebraska communities is widely recognized. Efforts exist in Nebraska to address these shortfalls. Nebraska Department of Transportation developed a multi-phase Mobility Management project to identify and address gaps in service delivery. The Mobility Management Phase 1 project produced a comprehensive concept development report which identified regional centers across the state that were transportation destinations for medical services, shopping, and employment. During this phase market needs were analyzed and concepts were developed to fill gaps in service.

In Phase 2, the state was organized into six regions based on the regional centers identified in Phase 1 (Panhandle, Southwest, North Central, South Central, Northeast, and Southeast). Statewide and Regional Coordinating Committees were established to identify additional gaps and needs. Focusing in each region, coordination strategies were developed based on leveraging existing service to improve access, creating system efficiencies to reduce redundant service and expanding transportation access to areas without service.

The Nebraska Department of Transportation launched Phase 3 of the Mobility Management Project in July 2019. Stage One, consisting of seven projects, including several studies, coordination, public relations, and selection of a technology vendor, is currently underway. As part of this project, Open Plains Transit recently added rural public transit in Valentine, Nebraska, a largely underserved area. Partners in Columbus, another underserved area, are currently working on the development of a transit system in the Columbus area.

Describe plans, assurances, and strategies for maximizing coordination, improving service delivery, and avoiding duplication of WIOA Title III Wagner-Peyser services and other services provided through the One-Stop delivery system.[[16]](#footnote-16)

Greater Nebraska will work to align services across programs and ensure ongoing cross training is completed with all partners to eliminate duplication of services. The North Platte office has developed a model for collaborative service integration through implementation of “light case management” across all programs. This has resulted in a stronger understanding of partner programs and resources, increasing referrals, co-enrollments, and coordination of services. MOU’s have been established to define a detailed process among AJC partners.

The Wagner-Peyser Program Coordinator has developed a comprehensive training to prepare all new staff for light case management activities. As these processes have been implemented throughout the State, best practices that are identified are shared with other offices.

Describe how the local board will coordinate WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with adult education and literacy activities provided under WIOA Title II. This description must include how the local board will carry out the review of local adult education service provider applications, consistent with WIOA Secs. 107(d)(11)(A) and (B)(i) and 232.[[17]](#footnote-17)

Adult Education is available through the workforce system to provide foundational education and subject matter knowledge. This includes academic and foundation skills, corrections education, GED or high school equivalency diploma, postsecondary preparation, career pathways foundations, work readiness skills, basic literacy, computer literacy, and English-as-a-Second Language instruction. The foundational knowledge imparted through workforce system’s education services form a basis that is applicable across a range of industries and occupations. The core partners work with K-12, public and private postsecondary institutions and other education and training providers to connect job seekers with education opportunities aligned to their specific needs.

Assessments are administered by WIOA core partners according to the needs of their clients in order to gauge career interests, measure basic skills, identify specific job competencies, assess English and basic education literacy (i.e., ABE, ESL/GED), evaluate specific functional skills, and determine eligibility for public assistance.

Application Review Updated 3/7/2023

During competitive funding application years, the workforce board carries out a review of specific portions of local applications submitted under WIOA Title II by eligible service providers seeking a grant under the provisions of The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act to determine whether the content of specific portions of such applications are in alignment with the local plan.

The Adult Education State Director will instruct the board on the process and procedures for the review. The State Director will also provide the appropriate application sections of all eligible applicants serving in the identified workforce area along with the necessary determination forms to assist the board in reporting their findings.

The workforce board chair will designate a review team of no less than three board members to participate with the workforce administrator in the review of the submitted applications.

The review team will document on the appropriate alignment form, whether the application is found to be consistent with the local plan. These evaluations will be provided to the board chair for recommendations to the State Director. On behalf of the workforce board, the board chair will notify the Adult Education State Director in writing of the recommendations no later than 15 working days after receipt of the application.

Provide copies of executed *cooperative agreements*, as attachments to the local plan, which define how *all* local service providers will carry out requirements for integration of and access to the entire set of services available in through local One-Stop delivery system.[[18]](#footnote-18) In this context, *cooperative agreement* means a legal instrument of financial assistance between a Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity and a non-Federal entity that is, consistent with 31 USC §§ 6302-6305:[[19]](#footnote-19)

* 1. used to enter into a relationship, the principal purpose of which *is to* transfer anything of value from the Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity to the non-Federal entity to carry out a public purpose authorized by a law of the United States (refer to 31 USC § 6101(3)) and *not to* acquire property or services for the Federal government or pass-through entity's direct benefit or use; and
  2. distinguished from a grant in that it provides for substantial involvement between the Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity and the non-Federal entity in carrying out the activity contemplated by the Federal award.

Greater Nebraska does not have any cooperative agreements.

Identify the entity responsible for the disbursal of grant funds described in WIOA Sec. 107(d)(12)(B)(i) as determined by NDOL or the local CEO, as applicable.[[20]](#footnote-20)

The administrative entity and the fiscal agent for the Chief Elected Officials Board and Greater Nebraska Workforce Development Board is Nebraska Department of Labor. The NDOL Administrative and Finance staff oversee all budgets, performance tracking, program monitoring, and reporting, with oversight from the CEOB and GNWDB.

Describe the competitive process that will be used to award local area subgrants and contracts for WIOA Title I activities.[[21]](#footnote-21)

A competitive process, based on Nebraska Department of Administrative Services procurement policies and procedures, will be and has been used when issuing a request for purchase (RFP). The State follows the same policies and procedures it uses for its non-Federal procurements.

Nebraska’s procurement model contains six phases including procurement types, procurement planning, market research, solicitation and award, contract management and completion and closeout. There are numerous steps involved with each phase. The competitive bidding process is a fourteen-step process outlined below:

* Complete the RFP/ ITB
* Public Notice
* Pre-Bid Conference
* Question and Answer Period
* Final Preparations
* Receipt of Bids
* Bid Opening
* Bid Review
* Distribution of Bids
* Evaluation Process
* Oral Interviews/ Demonstrations
* Best and Final Offer
* Evaluation and Award
* Contract Finalization

Greater Nebraska will issue an RFP for Title Ib Adult/Dislocated Worker, Title Ib Youth, and One-Stop Operations in 2024.

Describe the current local levels of performance negotiated with NDOL, consistent with WIOA Sec. 116(c), to be used by the local board to measure the performance of:

a. local WIOA Title I programs; and

b. performance of the local fiscal agent, if applicable, local Title I service providers, and the local One-Stop delivery system.[[22]](#footnote-22)

The State of Nebraska negotiates state performance levels with the federal Employment and Training Administration and utilizes a statistical adjustment model as a basis for negotiations with each local area. Greater Nebraska local area performance levels are negotiated by the State and Greater Nebraska, represented by the Reemployment Services Administrator and Greater Nebraska Workforce Development Board Chair. Greater Nebraska’s performance goals are higher than State negotiated performance in several areas. Failure to meet these goals results in Technical Assistance requirements and recommendations. The Greater Nebraska Workforce Development Board will require Greater Nebraska program staff to request Technical Assistance prior to failure of any performance metric.

**Negotiated Performance Measures**

Workforce Development Activities (Title 1 of WIOA) – GNWDB

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Adult** | **PY 2020** | **PY 2021** | **PY 2022** | **PY 2023** |
| Employment Q2 after exit | 83% | 83% | 78% | 78% |
| Employment Q4 after exit | 79% | 79% | 75.5% | 75.5% |
| Median earnings Q2 after exit | $6,300.00 | $6,300.00 | $6,500.00 | $6,500.00 |
| Credential Attainment Rate | 63% | 63% | 62% | 62% |
| Measurable Skills Gains | 62% | 62% | 57% | 57% |
| **Dislocated Worker** | **PY 2020** | **PY 2021** | **PY 2022** | **PY 2022** |
| Employment Q2 after exit | 89% | 89% | 85% | 85% |
| Employment Q4 after exit | 86% | 86% | 82.9% | 82.9% |
| Median earnings Q2 after exit | $8,250.00 | $8,250.00 | $8,300.00 | $8,300.00 |
| Credential Attainment Rate | 61% | 61% | 61% | 61% |
| Measurable Skills Gains | 68% | 68% | 69% | 69% |
| **Youth** | **PY 2020** | **PY 2021** | **PY 2022** | **PY 2022** |
| Employment Q2 after exit | 83% | 83% | 75% | 75% |
| Employment Q4 after exit | 81% | 81% | 74% | 74% |
| Median earnings Q2 after exit | $5,290.00 | $5,290.00 | $3,800.00 | $3,800.00 |
| Credential Attainment Rate | 55.8% | 55.8% | 47% | 47% |
| Measurable Skills Gains | 56% | 56% | 45% | 45% |

Describe the actions the local board will take toward becoming or remaining a high-performing local board, consistent with factors developed by the state board.[[23]](#footnote-23)

The Nebraska Workforce Development Board has not established guidelines for becoming a high-performing local board.

Describe how training services for adults and dislocated workers outlined in WIOA Sec. 134 will be provided through the use of individual training accounts,[[24]](#footnote-24) including:

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) mandates that all training services, except for limited exception identified in the Contracting with Training Providers Policy, be provided through the use of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) and that eligible individuals shall receive ITAs through the one-stop delivery system.

Training services may be made available to employed and unemployed adults, dislocated workers, and youth after a career planner determines, through an interview, evaluation or assessment, and career planning, that the individual:

* Is unlikely or unable to obtain or retain employment leading to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment through career services (adults and dislocated workers);
* Is in need of training services to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment (adults and dislocated workers); and
* Has the skills and qualifications to participate successfully in training services.

Training can also be provided when:

* The participant selects a program of training services that is directly linked to the employment opportunities in the local area or planning region, or in another area to which the individual is willing to commute or relocate;
* A WIOA Adult participant is in one of the priority populations.

1. whether contracts for training services will be used;

No contracts for training are currently used in the local area. The board has established a local policy for providing training outside of ITA’s. Specific criteria has been established for contracting with training providers that are not part of the ITA process.

1. how the use of contracts for training services will be coordinated with the use of individual training accounts; and

Contracts for services may be used instead of ITAs when one or more of the following five exceptions apply and the local area has fulfilled the consumer choice requirements. Exceptions to ITA’s are intended to meet special needs and are used infrequently. The Strategic Planning Committee must review all programs before making a recommendation to the GNWDB. All training program providers interested in becoming listed on the Eligible Training Provider List will be assisted with connecting with the Nebraska WIOA Policy team to begin the process of being evaluated for addition to the list.

| 1. | when the services provided are on-the-job training (OJT), customized training, incumbent worker training, or transitional employment; |
| --- | --- |
| 2. | when the local board determines that there are an insufficient number of eligible training providers in the local area to accomplish the purpose of a system of ITAs; |
| 3. | when the local board determines that there is a training services program of demonstrated effectiveness offered in the area by a community-based organization or another private organization to serve individuals with barriers to employment; |
| 4. | when the local board determines that it would be most appropriate to contract with an institution of higher education or other eligible provider of training services that will facilitate the training of multiple individuals in in-demand industry sectors or occupations, provided that the contract does not limit consumer choice. Providers of training services must be authorized by accrediting or governing authorities to provide training services in Nebraska or to Nebraska residents; or |
| 5. | when the local board is considering entering into a pay-for-performance contract, and the local board ensures the contract is consistent with WIOA requirements on pay-for-performance contracts (see 20 CFR § 683.510). |

1. how the local board will ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training programs regardless of how the training services are to be provided.

The Greater Nebraska Workforce Development Board requires informed consumer choice in a participant’s selection of an eligible training provider. The requirements for consumer choice include:

* Availability of the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) to customers through the One-Stop system;
* An individual who has been determined eligible for training services may select a program from the ETPL after consultation with a career planner.
  + Consultation with a career planner will include:
    - An interview, evaluation or assessment, and career planning informed by local labor market information and training provider performance information
      * appraisal of the participant's need for training services based on an interview, evaluation or assessment, and career planning informed by local labor market information and training provider performance information or any other career service received; and
      * documenting the participant's need for training services in the participant's case file.
* Priority consideration must be given to programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials and are aligned with in-demand occupations in the local area.
* Unless the program has exhausted training funds for the program year, the career planner must refer the individual to the selected provider and establish an ITA for the individual to pay for training.
* The costs for training services paid through an ITA to a training provider will be funded by out-of-school youth, adult, or dislocated worker program funds, depending on the program in which the participant is enrolled or co-enrolled. Nebraska received a waiver to allow ITAs for in-school youth during PY22 and PY23. Greater Nebraska will evaluate all in-school youth for co-enrollment into adult or dislocated worker and will first utilize adult/DLW funds for eligible individuals prior to utilizing in-school youth funds.
* Training services for eligible individuals are typically provided by training providers who receive payment for their services through an ITA. The ITA is a payment agreement established on behalf of a participant with a training provider. Individuals may select training programs that cost more than the maximum allowed amount for an ITA, if they have other funding sources available to supplement the ITA. Other sources may include: Pell Grants, scholarships, loans, severance pay, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), etc. Training services must be provided in a manner that maximizes informed consumer choice.
* The local board, through the One-Stop center, may coordinate funding for ITAs with funding from other Federal, State, local, or private job training program or sources to assist the individual in obtaining training services, subject to requirements for coordination of WIOA training funds under 20 CFR § 680.230.
* In cases where there is a lack of Eligible Training Providers for a particular training, the Board will follow the process for entering into a contract with a provider to ensure participants have access to the needed training. All training providers are assisted with connecting with the Nebraska WIOA Policy team to begin the process of being listed on the Eligible Training Provider List.

The One-Stop Operator is expected to ensure this availability and to oversee its usage. Reemployment Services Coordinators serve as career planners and are consultants during this process and thoroughly document the consumer choice process.

Describe how the local area One-Stop center(s) is implementing and transitioning to an integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information system for programs carried out under WIOA and by other One-Stop partners.[[25]](#footnote-25)

Greater Nebraska is working with the State to ensure processes to be implemented are compliant, as well as learning best practices from other states. It is the goal of the Greater Nebraska Workforce Development Board to develop and implement an integrated, technology-enabled intake process as part of a process improvement plan focused toward making WIOA services more accessible, efficient, and effective.

Greater Nebraska currently utilizes NEworks as a case management information system. This system is also used by State programs, including TAA and NDWG, as well as SNAP Next Step E&T. Additional partners are working with the State to determine how usage of the system may benefit their program(s).

With the common intake system having been abandoned due to lack of partner interest, Greater Nebraska has been working with partners to identify cost-effective resources to streamline co-enrollment and co-case management. The Nebraska Economic Mobility Task Force is made up of front-line partner staff, including WIOA Title Ib, SNAP Next Step E&T, Voc Rehab, TANF, and other partners. Through the work done by this task force, partners are able to identify best practices for co-enrollment/co-case management as well as existing policies and procedures that hinder coordinated service delivery. This information is provided to the State Alignment Workgroup, which is made up of program partner decision makers.

Describe the direction given by NDOL to the local board and by the local board to the One-Stop Operator will ensure that:

* 1. priority for adult career and training services will be given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient, consistent with WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(E) and 20 CFR § 680.600;[[26]](#footnote-26) and

Following the Priority of Service chart below, individuals will be enrolled into career and training services based on their category. Staff will case note priority of service determination at enrollment. Should capacity or funds become an issue, program resources will be focused toward participants with the highest priority levels in descending order.

Whjle capacity and funds have not been any issue in Greater Nebraska, the Greater Nebraska Workforce Development Board receives a report out of priority of service data for new enrollments during each System Coordination committee and Board meeting.

* 1. Veterans receive priority of service in all USDOL-funded training services, which includes training services provided through Title I programs.[[27]](#footnote-27)

One-Stop partner staff must give priority for career services, training, and employment services to Veterans, eligible spouses of Veterans, and non-Veterans who are:

* Recipients of public assistance;
* Other low-income individuals; or
* Individuals who are basic-skills deficient.

WIOA sec. 134(c)(3)(E) states that priority for individualized career services and training services funded with Title I adult funds must be given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient in the local area.

Services to eligible adult participants must be provided in the following order:

|  |
| --- |
| **First, Veterans and eligible spouses of Veterans who are:** |
| A. Recipients of public assistance; |
| B. Low-income; or |
| C. Basic-skills deficient; |
| **Second, Individuals who are not Veterans and eligible spouses of Veterans but are:** |
| A. Recipients of public assistance; |
| B. Low- income; or |
| C. Basic-skills deficient; |
| **Third, Veterans and eligible spouses of Veterans who are not:** |
| A. Recipients of public assistance; |
| B. Low- income; or |
| C. Basic-skills deficient |
| **Last, to persons who are not:** |
| A. Recipients of public assistance; |
| B. Low- income; or |
| C. Basic-skills deficient. |

One-Stop and partner staff receive quarterly Priority of Service training from JVSG staff.

1. Describe the process used by the local board to provide an opportunity for the public comment on the development of the local plan or any subsequent modification of the plan before submitting the plan to NDOL. To provide adequate opportunity for public comment, local boards must:
   1. make information about and copies of the plan and subsequent modifications available to the public through electronic and other means, such as public hearings and local news media;
   2. include an opportunity for comment by members of the public, including representatives of businesses, education, and labor organizations.
   3. provide no more than a 30-day period for comments on the plan and subsequent modifications before submission to NDOL, beginning on the date on which the plan and modifications are made available to the public;
   4. submit to NDOL any comments that represent disagreement with the plan or subsequent modifications *or* indicate that disagreeing public comments were not received, if that is the case; and
   5. ensure that all open meetings are held in compliance with the Nebraska Open Meetings Act.

**Public Comment Process**

A public notice was issued in the following newspapers:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Beatrice Daily Sun**  200 North Seventh Street  Beatrice, NE 68310  (402) 223-5233  beatrice.legals@beatricedailysun.com | **Scottsbluff Star-Herald**  1405 Broadway  Scottsbluff, NE  (308) 632-9000  casey.harvey@starherald.com |
| **Columbus Telegram**  1254 17th Avenue  Columbus, NE  (402) 564-2741  col.clerk@lee.net | **Sidney Sun-Telegraph**  817 12th Ave  Sidney, NE 69162  (308) 254-2818  legals@suntelegraph.com |
| **Grand Island Independent**  422 W. First  Grand Island, NE  (308) 382-1000  legals@theindependent.com | **Kearney Hub**  13 E 22nd St  Kearney, NE  (308) 233-9707  legals@kearneyhub.com |
| **Hastings Tribune**  908 W 2nd  Hastings, NE  (402) 462-2131  legals@hastingstribune.com | **Norfolk Daily News**  PO Box 977  Norfolk, NE 68702  (402) 371-1020  legals@norfolkdailynews.com |
| **North Platte Telegraph**  621 N Chestnut St.  North Platte, NE  (308) 535-4731  jmurrish@nptelegraph.com |  |

The Board will provide no more than a 30-day period for comment on the plan before its submission to the Governor, beginning on the date on which the proposed plan is made available.

The board will submit any comments that express disagreement with the plan to the Governor along with the plan.

Consistent with WIOA sec. 107(e), the board will make information about the plan available to the public on a regular basis through electronic means and open meetings as the plan is updated.

On March 1, 2021, the GNWDB hosted a public meeting via videoconference. The local and regional plan modification were available for comment.

Copies of the proposed plan modification will be made available to the public through the NDOL website and by request.

Regional partners and the public were invited to a public meeting on March 1, 2021 via videoconference to discuss the proposed plan allowing for the opportunity for comment by members of the public, including representatives of business, labor organizations, and education.

1. 20 CFR § 679.560(a)(6) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. 20 CFR § 679.560(b)(1)(i). *Workforce development system* refers to the entirety of the workforce development system in the local area, which may include partners other than required One-Stop partners. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. 20 CFR § 679.560(b)(1)(ii) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. 20 CFR § 679.560(b)(5)(i) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. 20 CFR § 679.560(b)(5)(ii) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. 20 CFR § 679.560(b)(5)(iii) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. 20 CFR § 679.560(b)(5)(iv). The term *resource contributions* refers to programmatic and service contributions, rather than contributions pursuant to funding agreements. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. 20 CFR § 679.560(b)(2) [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. 20 CFR § 679.560(c)(i)-(v) [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. 20 CFR § 679.560(b)(4) [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. 20 CFR § 679.560(b)(6) [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. 20 CFR § 679.560(b)(7) [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. 20 CFR § 679.560(b)(8) [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. 20 CFR § 679.560(b)(9) [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. 20 CFR § 679.560(b)(10) [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. 20 CFR § 679.560(b)(11) [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. 20 CFR § 679.560(b)(12) [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. 20 CFR § 679.560(b)(13) [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. 20 CFR § 675.300 [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. 20 CFR § 679.560(b)(14) [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. 20 CFR § 679.560(b)(15) [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. 20 CFR § 679.560(b)(16) [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. 20 CFR § 679.560(b)(17) [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. 20 CFR § 679.560(b)(18) [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. 20 CFR § 679.560(b)(20) [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. 20 CFR § 679.560(b)(21) [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. 20 CFR § 680.650 [↑](#footnote-ref-27)