



Polk County Workforce Development Board, Inc.
dba
CareerSource Polk

2025-2028
Four-Year Local Workforce Plan
January 1, 2025 - December 31, 2028

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Introduction

Key Dates

Public Comment Process

Plan Submission

Organizational Structure

Analysis of Need and Available Resources

The local plan must describe strategic planning elements, include:

(1) A regional analysis of:

(a) Economic conditions including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations (20 CFR 679.560(a)(1)(i))

Polk County is an economically diverse region, coexistent with the Lakeland-Winter Haven Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). The 232,000 households account for \$12.8 billion in annual income and \$18.7 billion in total economic activity. The Lakeland-Winter Haven MSA was in the top quartile for economic growth. The total area of the county is approximately 2,010 square miles which makes it the fourth largest county in Florida, exceeded only by Dade, Palm Beach, and Collier counties. The total land area of Polk County is approximately 1,875 square miles. Polk County is the fastest growing county in Florida and the nation with an estimated population of 818,330 as of July 1, 2023.

Notable strengths for the region include the fact that logistically Polk County is the only Southeast location which offers two international airports within an hour's drive – Orlando and Tampa. It is intersected by Interstate 4, the Polk County Parkway, State Road 60 and Highway 27, and has easy access to Interstate 75 on the west and 95 on the east. Metropolitan Orlando-Kissimmee and Tampa-St. Petersburg, Clearwater located in adjacent counties, have a cost of living index of 101.7 and 104.2 respectively, while metropolitan Lakeland has a cost of living index of 91.6.

Polk County estimated 2024 population is 848,278 with a growth rate of 3.66% in the past year and a 16.18% growth rate since 2020, according to the most recent United States census data. Polk County is the 8th largest county in Florida. The 2010 population

was 603,119 and has seen a growth of 40.65% since that time. It is projected that Polk’s will reach 1 million by 2029.

Polk County’s current unemployment rate is 3.6%, slightly higher than the state of Florida at 2.8%, but lower than the national average of 3.8%. It is projected that Polk County will need 65,866 new jobs in the next 10 years to keep up with the population growth.

The strongest industry in the county is manufacturing and logistics. Polk’s central location to highways, airports, seaports, and rail is ideal for emerging employers in these growing industries.

OCCUPATIONS GAINING THE MOST NEW JOBS										
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA 17 - POLK COUNTY										
Rank	SOC Code	SOC Title	Employment				Total Job Openings	2020 Median Hourly Wage (\$)*	Education	
			2021	2029	Growth	Percent Growth			FL**	BLS**
1	53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	9,124	10,614	1,490	16.3	11,021	14.93	NR	NR
2	35-3023	Fast Food and Counter Workers	6,413	7,594	1,181	18.4	11,403	9.90	NR	NR
3	53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	8,511	9,442	931	10.9	8,170	20.09	PS	PS
4	53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	7,058	7,823	765	10.8	7,800	15.14	HS	HS
5	41-2031	Retail Salespersons	7,223	7,780	557	7.7	8,413	11.79	HS	NR
6	37-3011	Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers	3,362	3,883	521	15.5	3,933	13.43	NR	NR
7	43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	7,889	8,385	496	6.3	8,250	14.84	PS	HS
8	31-1120	Home Health and Personal Care Aides	1,780	2,249	469	26.3	2,285	11.51	PS	HS
9	35-2014	Cooks, Restaurant	1,454	1,875	421	29.0	2,143	12.36	PS	NR
10	35-3031	Walters and Waitresses	3,553	3,973	420	11.8	5,688	9.56	NR	NR
11	53-7051	Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	2,826	3,245	419	14.8	2,780	17.84	PS	NR
12	53-3033	Light Truck or Delivery Services Drivers	2,349	2,746	397	16.9	2,451	24.20	PS	HS
13	31-9092	Medical Assistants	1,571	1,965	394	25.1	1,798	14.82	PS	PS
14	11-1021	General and Operations Managers	3,377	3,756	379	11.2	2,498	41.47	A	B
15	47-2061	Construction Laborers	3,249	3,627	378	11.6	2,936	15.01	NR	NR

Emerging Occupations

The majority of the top 15 occupations gaining the most new jobs in our county are low-income skills occupations characterized by relatively low wages and high rate of worker turnover. The top five existing occupations are related to customer service and hospitality or involve manual work.

Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand is the leading occupation with the most jobs, with 10,614 projected total job openings between 2021 and 2029.

Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers (3), Health and Personal Care Aides (8) Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators (11), Home and Medical Assistants (13) Construction Laborers (15), Carpenters (18) are the few occupations within the demand occupations that require technical skills or credentialing. The other occupations emphasize customer service or manual/clerical work.

The emergence of Heavy and Tractor- Trailer Truck Drivers in the top five existing occupations will continue to experience employment growth because of the increasing demand for Commercial Truck Drivers, driven by population growth and the increase of manufacturing and logistics companies within the county.

Emerging Industries

Retail, Warehousing, Rental and Leasing Services, Accommodation and Construction of Buildings are the top five fastest growing industries in Polk County. These industries tend to employ a higher percentage in professional occupations, however, there has been a tremendous growth in Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores in the region during recent years.

FASTEST-GROWING INDUSTRIES						
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA 17 - POLK COUNTY						
Rank	NAICS Code	NAICS Title	Employment			
			2021	2029	Growth	Percent Growth
1	448	Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores	1,375	1,737	362	26.3
2	493	Warehousing and Storage	14,295	17,793	3,498	24.5
3	532	Rental and Leasing Services	721	874	153	21.2
4	721	Accommodation	1,317	1,585	268	20.3
5	236	Construction of Buildings	2,253	2,702	449	19.9
6	541	Professional and Technical Services	8,656	10,321	1,665	19.2
7	621	Ambulatory Health Care Services	13,241	15,731	2,490	18.8
8	442	Furniture and Home Furnishings Stores	758	890	132	17.4
9	611	Educational Services	5,263	6,148	885	16.8
10	812	Personal and Laundry Services	1,302	1,507	205	15.7
11	327	Nonmetallic Mineral Product Mfg	1,122	1,297	175	15.6
12	713	Amusement, Gambling & Recreation Ind	2,908	3,336	428	14.7
13	321	Wood Product Manufacturing	1,920	2,197	277	14.4
14	722	Food Services and Drinking Places	17,982	20,553	2,571	14.3
15	523	Financial Investment & Related Activity	458	520	62	13.5
16	441	Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers	4,886	5,544	658	13.5
17	484	Truck Transportation	6,499	7,341	842	13.0
18	811	Repair and Maintenance	2,886	3,226	340	11.8
19	562	Waste Management and Remediation Service	812	907	95	11.7
20	561	Administrative and Support Services	16,014	17,844	1,830	11.4

Emerging Occupations

Understanding which occupations are adding the most new jobs and growing the fastest helps workforce officials focus on training residents for roles that will be in demand. This also aids economic developers in supporting expanding businesses. If local employers can't find the skilled workers they need, it could negatively impact the area's economy. Additionally, occupational analysis helps CareerSource Polk and its educational partners plan for the necessary programs.

The majority of the top emerging occupations are in the healthcare field, which follows the overall Florida statewide distribution of emerging occupations.

In 2019, one of the healthcare industry sector top emerging occupations was Nurse Practitioners, who can prescribe medication, examine patients, diagnose illnesses, and provide treatment, much like physicians do. Over the course of two years (2021), this occupation remained in the top position of emerging occupations within the region. Physician Assistants has increased in rank as the top second emerging occupation, which in 2019, it was not even ranked in the top 15.

FASTEST-GROWING OCCUPATIONS										
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA 17 - POLK COUNTY										
Rank	SOC Code	SOC Title	Employment				Total Job Openings	2020 Median Hourly Wage (\$)*	Education	
			2021	2029	Growth	Percent Growth			FL**	BLS**
1	29-1171	Nurse Practitioners	189	279	90	47.6	183	48.61	M+	M
2	29-1071	Physician Assistants	179	249	70	39.1	159	48.25	B	M
3	31-9097	Phlebotomists	260	343	83	31.9	310	16.56	PS	PS
4	11-9111	Medical and Health Services Managers	417	546	129	30.9	394	44.78	B	B
5	29-2056	Veterinary Technologists and Technicians	343	447	104	30.3	338	16.70	A	A
6	29-1131	Veterinarians	149	193	44	29.5	88	-	M+	D
7	35-2014	Cooks, Restaurant	1,454	1,875	421	29.0	2,143	12.36	PS	NR
8	15-1232	Computer User Support Specialists	1,110	1,407	297	26.8	974	23.02	PS	SC
9	15-1256	Software Developers and Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers	651	825	174	26.7	536	41.51	B	B
10	31-1120	Home Health and Personal Care Aides	1,780	2,249	469	26.3	2,285	11.51	PS	HS
11	31-9092	Medical Assistants	1,571	1,965	394	25.1	1,798	14.82	PS	PS
12	43-5111	Weighers, Measurers, Checkers, and Samplers, Recordkeeping	240	299	59	24.6	267	18.64	HS	HS
13	13-1161	Market Research Analysts & Marketing Specialists	705	871	166	23.5	724	26.58	B	B
14	25-1011	Business Teachers, Postsecondary	138	170	32	23.2	124	-	B	D
15	51-6011	Laundry and Dry-Cleaning Workers	259	316	57	22.0	329	10.73	HS	NR

(b) The employment needs of employers in existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations. (20 CFR 679.560(a)(1)(ii)).

Polk County's economy has been historically based on three primary industries: phosphate mining, agriculture and tourism. Today, phosphate mining, agriculture and tourism still play vital roles in the local economy. However, the county has successfully expanded and diversified its economic base in recent years. Polk County's central location within the large Florida marketplace has attracted numerous manufacturers and distribution centers in recent years. There are more than 440 manufacturers in the county, manufacturing a broad line of products – including food products, chemicals, paper and building materials and benefit from Polk County's logistics and distribution advantages.

As a result of such population growth, economic activities especially in terms of having a ready workforce are critical. In February 2023, Polk's labor force grew by 2.3% increasing the work force to 332,457. Additionally, non-agricultural employment was 262,100, an increase of 9,900 jobs, up 3.9% over the year.

Of the fastest growing occupations and the occupations gaining the most new jobs, more than 50% of the occupations require education beyond a high school diploma. CareerSource Polk uses a variety of methods to identify needed job skills. We work with employers and industry related organizations to identify worker shortages in specific occupations as well as identifying challenges facing businesses in filling jobs. Work

readiness skills are the number one concern for area businesses. To address those concerns, the information is communicated to our education and training partners to aid them in crafting curriculum and developing programs that meet the current and future business needs.

Workforce needs of the businesses are also identified through staff and Board involvement on various committees and taskforces throughout the county. Through this engagement, board members are encouraged to utilize workforce services and provide constructive feedback regarding any opportunities for improvement needed in our system delivery.

Using the Regional Targeted Occupations List (RTOL), employers, local economic development and educational partners, and other industry representatives have the opportunity to review, comment and make recommendations for changes at any time. Requested changes are then presented to the Workforce Performance Council (WPC) for review, including local and state economic development priorities and linkage to local job opportunities. Additionally, the WPC considers the region's projected employment and earnings outcomes. The WPC then generates its' recommendations for the final RTOL.

Priority for training is given to occupations in the regionally identified targeted industries. CareerSource Polk's targeted industry sectors are selected in alignment with those targeted industries identified through collective efforts of our designated countywide economic development organization, Central Florida Development Council. Currently, our targeted industry sectors include Advanced Manufacturing Agribusiness & Agritechnology, Aviation and Aerospace, Health Sciences, and Logistics, Supply Chain & Distribution Florida's targeted and infrastructure industries area also considered.

Existing In-Demand Sectors and Occupations

Healthcare & Social Assistance: This is the largest sector in Polk County, with major employers like Lakeland Regional Health and BayCare Health System. Key occupations include registered nurses, medical assistants, and home health aides.

Retail Trade: Major retailers such as Publix Super Markets and Walmart are significant employers. Common roles include retail sales workers, cashiers, and stock clerks.

Educational Services: Polk County Public Schools and Southeastern University are major employers. In-demand occupations include teachers, administrative staff, and support personnel.

Emerging Sectors and Occupations

Manufacturing, Distribution, and Logistics: Polk County's strategic location between Tampa and Orlando supports growth in these sectors. Key roles include warehouse workers, logistics coordinators, and manufacturing technicians.

Technology and Innovation: With the rise of tech startups and innovation hubs, there is increasing demand for software developers, IT specialists, and data analysts.

Construction and Real Estate: As the population grows, so does the need for construction workers, real estate agents, and property managers.

Future Trends

Green Energy and Sustainability: There is a growing focus on sustainable practices and renewable energy, leading to new opportunities in solar energy, environmental engineering, and sustainability consulting.

Healthcare Expansion: With an aging population, the demand for healthcare services and related occupations is expected to continue rising.

These sectors and occupations reflect the dynamic and evolving job market in Polk County, offering a range of opportunities for job seekers and businesses alike.

- (2) **An analysis of the knowledge and skills, including credentials and licenses, needed to meet the employment needs of the employers in the local area, including employment needs in in-demand industry sectors and occupations (WIOA § 108(b)(1)(B) and 20 CFR 679.560(a)(2)).**

Healthcare & Social Assistance:

To meet the needs of employers in the healthcare and social assistance sector, the key knowledge, skills, credentials, and licenses required for some of the main occupations include:

Registered Nurses (RNs)

- **Knowledge & Skills:** Patient care, critical thinking, communication, and time management.
- **Credentials & Licenses:** Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) or Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN); Pass the NCLEX-RN exam; State licensure from the Florida Board of Nursing.

Medical Assistants

- **Knowledge & Skills:** Clinical procedures, administrative tasks, patient interaction, and basic medical knowledge.

- **Credentials & Licenses:** Certificate or diploma from an accredited medical assisting program; Certification (optional but preferred) such as CMA (Certified Medical Assistant) or RMA (Registered Medical Assistant).

Home Health Aides

- **Knowledge & Skills:** Personal care, basic medical knowledge, empathy, and physical stamina.
- **Credentials & Licenses:** High school diploma or equivalent; Completion of a state-approved training program; Certification from the Florida Department of Health (for Medicare-certified agencies).

Additional Roles

- **Medical Coders:** Knowledge of ICD-10, CPT, and HCPCS coding systems; certification such as CPC (Certified Professional Coder) or CCS (Certified Coding Specialist).
- **Healthcare Administrators:** Knowledge of healthcare management, leadership skills, and often a master's degree in health administration (MHA) or related field.

Major Employers

- Lakeland Regional Health offers various roles from entry-level to specialized positions requiring a range of certifications and experience.
- BayCare Health System: Similar requirements, with a focus on patient care and administrative efficiency.

Retail Trade:

In Polk County, major retailers like Publix Super Markets and Walmart are significant employers, and they typically look for the following knowledge, skills, and credentials for common roles such as retail sales workers, cashiers, and stock clerks:

- **Knowledge and Skills:**
 - **Customer Service Skills:** Ability to interact positively with customers, handle inquiries, and resolve complaints efficiently.
 - **Communication Skills:** Clear and effective verbal communication is crucial for assisting customers and working with team members.

- **Basic Math Skills:** Essential for handling transactions, giving correct change, and managing inventory.
- **Attention to Detail:** Important for tasks like stocking shelves, ensuring accurate pricing, and maintaining inventory records.
- **Physical Stamina:** Ability to stand for long periods, lift heavy items, and perform repetitive tasks.
- **Sales Techniques:** Understanding of basic sales principles to assist in upselling and promoting products.
- **Technical Skills:** Familiarity with point-of-sale (POS) systems, barcode scanners, and basic computer skills for inventory management.
- **Credentials and Licenses:**
 - **High School Diploma or GED:** Generally required for most entry-level positions.
 - **Retail Certifications:** While not always mandatory, certifications such as the National Retail Federation (NRF) Customer Service and Sales Certification can be beneficial.
 - **Forklift Certification:** For stock clerks and other roles that involve operating machinery, a forklift certification might be required.
 - **Food Safety Certification:** For roles involving food handling, certifications like the ServSafe Food Handler certification may be necessary.

Additional Considerations:

- **Experience:** Previous experience in retail or customer service can be a significant advantage.
- **Bilingual Skills:** In areas with diverse populations, being bilingual (e.g., English and Spanish) can be highly valuable.

These skills and credentials help ensure that employees can meet the demands of the retail environment and provide excellent service to customers.

Educational Services:

To meet the needs of employers, particularly in educational services like Polk County Public Schools and Southeastern University, here are the key knowledge, skills, credentials, and licenses required for various in-demand occupations:

Teachers

- **Knowledge and Skills:**

- Subject Matter Expertise: Deep understanding of the subject(s) you will be teaching.
- Classroom Management: Ability to manage and engage a diverse classroom.
- Technology Integration: Proficiency in using educational technology and digital tools.
- Pedagogical Skills: Knowledge of teaching methods and strategies.
- Communication: Strong verbal and written communication skills.
- Cultural Competence: Ability to work effectively in a multicultural environment.

- **Credentials and Licenses:**

- Bachelor's Degree: In education or a specific subject area.
- Teaching Certification: Florida Educator Certification is required.
- Continuing Education: Ongoing professional development and training.

Administrative Staff

- **Knowledge and Skills:**

- Organizational Skills: Ability to manage multiple tasks and priorities.
- Leadership: Strong leadership and team management skills.
- Communication: Excellent interpersonal and communication skills.
- Problem-Solving: Ability to address and resolve issues efficiently.
- Technology Proficiency: Familiarity with administrative software and tools.

- **Credentials and Licenses**

- Bachelor's or master's degrees: In education administration, business administration, or a related field.
- Experience: Previous experience in educational administration is often required.

Support Personnel

- **Knowledge and Skills:**

- Technical Skills: Depending on the role, skills in IT, maintenance, or other technical areas.
- Customer Service: Strong customer service and communication skills.
- Flexibility: Ability to adapt to various tasks and responsibilities.
- Teamwork: Ability to work collaboratively with other staff members.
- **Credentials and Licenses:**
 - High School Diploma or Equivalent: Minimum educational requirement for many support roles.
 - Specialized Training: Depending on the role, specific training or certifications may be required (e.g., IT certifications, maintenance training).

Technology and Innovation:

To meet the needs of employers, especially in the fields of technology and innovation, some key knowledge areas, skills, and credentials that are highly sought after including:

- **Knowledge and Skills:**

Programming and Software Development:

- Languages: Proficiency in languages like Python, Java, JavaScript, C++, and SQL.
- Frameworks and Tools: Familiarity with frameworks such as React, Angular, Django, and tools like Git and Docker.
- Software Development Life Cycle (SDLC): Understanding of Agile and DevOps methodologies.

Data Analysis and Data Science:

- Statistical Analysis: Knowledge of statistical methods and tools like R, SAS, and SPSS.
- Data Visualization: Skills in tools like Tableau, Power BI, and D3.js.
- Machine Learning: Understanding of machine learning algorithms and frameworks like TensorFlow and Scikit-learn.

IT Support and Networking:

- Network Configuration: Knowledge of network protocols, configurations, and security.

- Technical Support: Skills in troubleshooting hardware and software issues.
- Cloud Computing: Familiarity with cloud platforms like AWS, Azure, and Google Cloud.

Cybersecurity:

- Security Protocols: Understanding of cybersecurity principles and protocols.
- Tools: Proficiency in tools like Wireshark, Metasploit, and various antivirus software.

Credentials and Licenses

- **Certifications:**

- CompTIA A+: For entry-level IT support roles.
- Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP): For cybersecurity roles.
- Certified Data Professional (CDP): For data analysis and data science roles.
- AWS Certified Solutions Architect: For cloud computing roles.

- **Degrees:**

- Bachelor's Degree: In Computer Science, Information Technology, Data Science, or related fields.
- Master's Degree: For advanced roles, a master's in a specialized area like Cybersecurity or Data Science can be beneficial.

- **Licenses:**

- While specific licenses are not typically required for most tech roles, certain positions, especially those involving sensitive data or critical infrastructure, may require background checks and security clearances.

Local Opportunities

Polk County has a growing number of tech startups and innovation hubs, creating a demand for these skills.

Manufacturing, Distribution, and Logistics sectors:

These sectors are indeed thriving due to their strategic location. Some of the key knowledge areas, skills, and credentials needed for various roles in these sectors include:

Warehouse Workers

Skills: Forklift operation, Inventory management, Basic computer skills for inventory software, Physical stamina and manual dexterity

Credentials: Forklift certification, High school diploma or equivalent

Logistics Coordinators

Skills:

Strong organizational and multitasking abilities

Proficiency in logistics software (e.g., SAP, Oracle)

Excellent communication and problem-solving skills

Knowledge of supply chain management

Credentials: Bachelor's degree in logistics, supply chain management, or a related field
Certifications such as Certified Supply Chain Professional (CSCP) or Certified in Logistics, Transportation, and Distribution (CLTD)

Manufacturing Technicians

Skills:

Technical skills in operating and maintaining machinery

Understanding of manufacturing processes and quality control

Ability to read and interpret technical drawings and blueprints

Troubleshooting and repair skills

Credentials:

Associate degree in manufacturing technology or a related field

Certifications such as Certified Manufacturing Technician (CMT)

General Requirements Across Roles

Soft Skills: Attention to detail, teamwork and collaboration, time management, adaptability and flexibility.

Licenses and Certifications:

OSHA safety certifications

Relevant industry-specific certifications

Employers in Polk County are looking for individuals who can adapt to the fast-paced environment and contribute to the efficiency and productivity of their operations

Construction and Real Estate: As Polk County continues to grow, the demand for skilled professionals in construction and real estate is increasing. Here are some of the key

knowledge areas, skills, credentials, and licenses needed to meet employer needs in these fields:

Construction

- **Knowledge and Skills:**

- Technical Skills: Proficiency in construction techniques, blueprint reading, and the use of construction tools and machinery.
- Safety Practices: Understanding of OSHA regulations and safety protocols to ensure a safe working environment.
- Project Management: Ability to manage projects, including scheduling, budgeting, and coordinating with various stakeholders.
- Problem-Solving: Strong analytical skills to troubleshoot issues that arise on the job site.
- Communication: Effective communication skills for interacting with team members, clients, and subcontractors.

- **Credentials and Licenses:**

- OSHA Certification: Certification in OSHA safety standards is often required.
- Trade Licenses: Depending on the specific trade (e.g., electrical, plumbing), appropriate state licenses are necessary.
- Project Management Certification: Certifications like PMP (Project Management Professional) can be beneficial.

Real Estate

- **Knowledge and Skills:**

- Market Knowledge: Deep understanding of the local real estate market, including property values, market trends, and neighborhood demographics².
- Sales and Negotiation: Strong sales skills and the ability to negotiate effectively with buyers and sellers.
- Customer Service: Excellent customer service skills to build and maintain client relationships.
- Legal Knowledge: Familiarity with real estate laws, contracts, and regulations.

- Marketing: Ability to market properties effectively using various channels, including online listings and social media.
- **Credentials and Licenses:**
 - Real Estate License: A valid Florida real estate license is mandatory for real estate agents and brokers.
 - Continuing Education: Ongoing education to stay updated with the latest real estate laws and market trends.
 - **Certifications:** Additional certifications like CRS (Certified Residential Specialist) or ABR (Accredited Buyer's Representative) can enhance credibility and expertise.

Property Management

- **Knowledge and Skills:**
 - Property Maintenance: Knowledge of property maintenance and repair.
 - Tenant Relations: Skills in managing tenant relationships and handling tenant issues.
 - Financial Management: Ability to manage budgets, collect rent, and handle financial records.
 - Regulatory Compliance: Understanding of local housing laws and regulations.
- **Credentials and Licenses:**
 - Property Management License: While not always required, having a property management license can be advantageous.
 - Certified Property Manager (CPM): Certification from the Institute of Real Estate Management (IREM) can be beneficial.

(3) An analysis of the workforce in the regional area, including current labor force employment and unemployment data, information on labor market trends, the educational and skill levels of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment and current skill gaps (WIOA § 108(b)(1)(C) and 20 CFR 679.560(a)(3)).

Post Covid, Polk count experienced and continues to experience rapid growth. The county's population of prime working age (35-54) increased by 16% over the past decade. Meanwhile,

residents aged 20-34 saw a 30.2% increase and those aged 55-64 experienced a 19.3% rise during the same period.

Labor Force and Unemployment

The unemployment rate in the CareerSource Polk region was 4.7 percent in July 2024. This rate was 0.7 percentage point greater than the region's year ago rate of 4.0 percent. The region's July 2024 unemployment rate was 0.9 percentage point above the state rate of 3.8 percent. The labor force was 347,347, up 3,400 (+1.0 percent) over the year. There were 16,316 unemployed residents in the region.

Mining, Logging, and Construction

In July 2024, the employment was 16,600. The over the year change in July 2023 (+700, 4.4 percent) The number of jobs in this sector has been trending upward over the past year.

Manufacturing

In July 2024, the employment was 20,000. The over the year change in July 2023 (+400, +2.0 percent) The number of jobs in this sector has been trending upward over the past year.

Trade, Transportation, and Utilities

In July 2024, the employment was 75,300. The over the year change in July 2023 (+1700, +2.3 percent) The number of jobs in this sector has been trending upward over the past year.

- The employment for **Wholesale Trade** was 12,300. The over the year change in July 2023 (+600, +5.1 percent).
- The employment for **Retail Trade** was 32,900. The over the year change in July 2023 (+500, +1.5 percent)
- The employment for **Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities** was 30,000. The over the year change in July 2023 (+600, +2.0 percent)

Information

In July 2024, the employment was 2,300. The over the year change in July 2023 (-100, 4.2 percent) The number of jobs in this sector has trended downward over the past year.

Financial Activities

In July 2024, the employment was 16,400. The over the year change in July 2023 (-100, -0.6 percent) The number of jobs in this sector has trended downward the past year.

Professional and Business Services

In July 2024, the employment was 40,600. The over the year change in July 2023 (+1200, +3.0 percent) The number of jobs in this sector has been trending upward over the past year.

Education and Health Services

In July 2024, the employment was 40,800. The over the year change in July 2023 (+2,400, +6.3 percent) The number of jobs in this sector has been trending upward over the past year.

Leisure and Hospitality

In July 2024, the employment was 27,500. The over the year change in July 2023 (+900, +3.4 percent) The number of jobs in this sector has been trending upward over the past year.

Other Services

In July 2024, the employment was 8,200. The over the year change in July 2023 (+200, +2.5 percent) The number of jobs in this sector has trended upward over the past year.

The Lakeland-Winter Haven MSA:

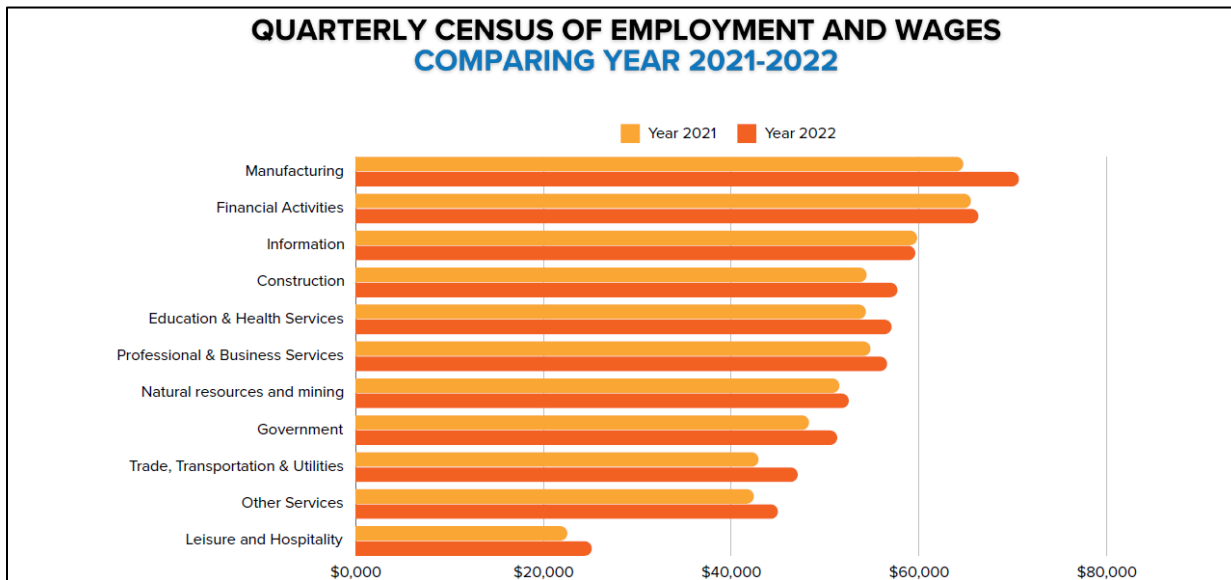
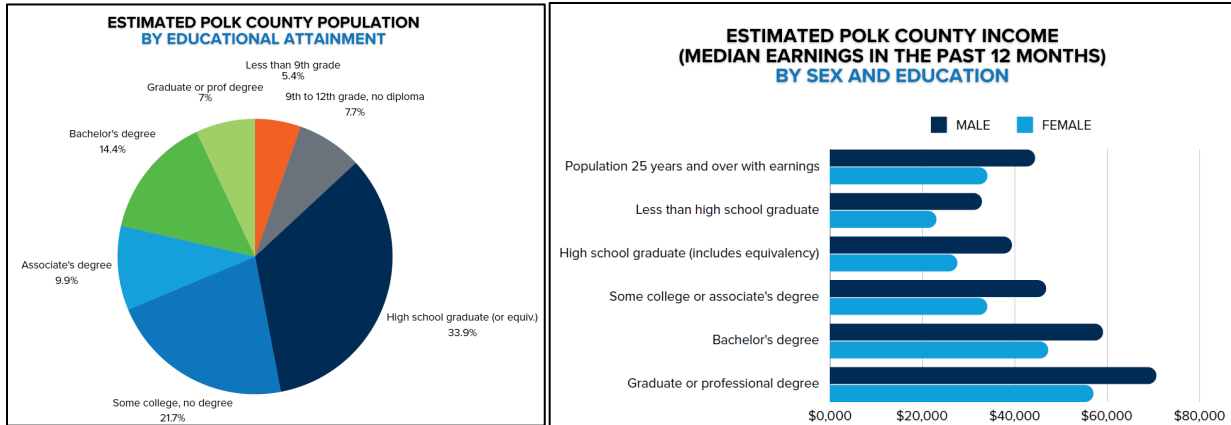
- Had the fastest annual job growth rate compared to all the metro areas in the state in the Education and Health Services (+6.3 percent) industry.
- Was tied for the second highest annual job growth compared to all the metro areas in the state in the Manufacturing (+400 jobs) industry.
- Had the second fastest annual job growth rate compared to all the metro areas in the state in the Manufacturing (+2.0 percent) industry.
- Was tied for the third fastest annual job growth rate compared to all the metro areas in the state in the Professional and Business Services (+3.0 percent) industry.

Education of the Workforce

Based on the U.S. Census Bureau's 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year estimates, the educational attainment for Polk County's population aged 25 years and older is as follows:

- Total population (24 and over): 509,692
 - Less than 9th grade education: 5.4% (27,325 individuals)
 - 9th to 12th grade, no diploma: 7.7% (39,385 individuals)
 - High school graduates or equivalent: 33.9% (172,834 individuals)
 - Some college, no degree: 21.7% (110,582 individuals)
 - Associate's degree: 9.9% (50,281 individuals)
 - Bachelor's degree: 4.4% (73,601 individuals)
 - Graduate or professional degree: 7.0% (35,684 individuals)

Of the total population aged 25 and over 89% (442,982) graduated from high school or higher, while 21.4% (109,285) hold a bachelor's degree or higher. The median earnings over 12 months indicates that males earn higher wages and females and those with bachelor's degrees and graduate or professional degrees earn higher wages than those without.



Overall, the county faces a skills mismatch. High skill/high wage positions are difficult to fill, while the county unemployment remains low. With only 13.1% of the population without a high school diploma, employment opportunities are greater than they have been in the past but still limited for those and meeting pre-requisites for educational/training programs can continue to seem unattainable.

Individuals with criminal backgrounds have found it harder than most other sub-groups to find employment, even when their qualifications meet the employers' needs. Because a prison record or felony greatly reduces prospects in the job market, even individuals with in-demand skills seem to have fewer opportunities to interview with a prospective employer whether the charges legally or illegally make them ineligible for a job opening.

Persons with Barriers to Employment

The most recent information on unemployment rates for persons with barriers to employment is for 2020. Polk County 2020 unemployment rate was 33.7 percent for disabled persons, 0.3 percent for American Indians and Alaska Natives, 0.0 percent for Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders, and 12.3 percent for persons 55 and older.

(4) An analysis of the workforce development activities, including education and training, in the local area. This analysis must include the strengths and weaknesses of workforce development activities and the capacity to provide workforce development activities to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment, and the employment needs of employers (WIOA § 108(b)(1)(D) and (20 CFR 679.560(a)(4)).

The implementation of WIOA provided a new opportunity to fully evaluate the workforce development system, policies, procedures and strategies to better meet the skill needs of the workforce and the talent needs of employers. The evaluation also allowed for the identification of strengths and weaknesses as listed below:

Identified areas of strengths include:

- Strong relationships among board executive leadership allowing for collaboration on numerous initiatives and grant applications and frequent sharing of information and best practices.
- Diverse secondary and postsecondary training opportunities in the State.
- Logistically, Polk County is the only Southeast location which offers two international airports within an hour's drive – Orlando and Tampa. It is intersected by Interstate 4, the Polk County Parkway, State Road 60 and Highway 27, and has easy access to Interstate 75 on the west and 95 on the east. Metropolitan Orlando-Kissimmee and Tampa-St. Petersburg, Clearwater located in adjacent counties, each have a cost of living index of 99.1, while metropolitan Lakeland has a cost of living index of 91. Our 3.5 million-strong talent pool is supported by world-class educational institutions like Florida Polytechnic University and the Polk State Clear Springs Advanced Technology Center. Both institutions offer rigorous, industry-focused courses of study that leave students fully prepped for career success before their graduation caps hit the ground.
- Two fully integrated one-stop career centers to serve a wide variety of customers including specific populations and programs (WIOA, WT, SNAP, MSFW, Veterans, TAA, Wagner-Peyser, RESEA). A service model to ensure a true seamless service

that allows for staff to serve any customer who walks through the door in a more effective, comprehensive and efficient manner.

- CareerSource Polk encourages and promotes the attainment of high skill/high wage jobs through the Individual Training Account System, designed to equip eligible individuals to enter the workforce and retain employment. The use of the Regional Targeted Occupations List (RTOL) serves as the catalyst for establishing approved occupational training programs, emphasizing “in demand” occupations.

Opportunities for improvement:

- Of the adults aged 25 or older, 13.1% do not have a high school diploma or equivalent. Polk County has the eleventh highest single-year dropout rate in Florida at 13.6%. Those holding a Bachelor’s degree or higher comprise only 19.9% of the region’s population versus the state average of 32%.
- Increasing the share of working-age adults who have postsecondary education or industry-recognized credentials.
- Development and utilization of contextualized literacy programs are crucial to helping TANF/SNAP Able Bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWD) clients and will be a component of alignment of educational services.
- As of the latest data, approximately 19.6% of Polk County’s population is aged 65 and over. Given the county’s total population of around 725,046, this translates to roughly 143,000 residents in that age group. The state’s percentage of those aged 65 and over is 21.6; this is largely a by-product of the aging of the Baby Boomers population.
- Workers from the early years of the Baby Boom generation began entering their 60s around 2011 and were anticipated to retire in large numbers. However, due to economic conditions, many opted to remain employed, which has complicated job opportunities for younger workers. Inevitably, Baby Boomers will soon retire in significant numbers, taking with them the knowledge and experience that have been crucial to the growth and prosperity of various industries.
- Growing immigrant population with language barriers.

Workforce strategies must also take into account the skills and abilities of individuals with barriers to employment, including individuals with disabilities, veterans, ex-offenders, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients and those who do not speak English well or at all, to meet present workforce needs and future demand.

Workforce development activities include:

Activity	Description	Strength(s)	Weaknesses
Orientation/Intake	Provides Information about all services available through the One-Stop career center for all service seekers	Assists in determining need for supportive services; Allows staff to establish eligibility and determination for all programs and provide follow-up services for individuals as applicable.	Multi-step process, may frustrate customer
Resume Assistance Quality Job Referral	Review or assistance with developing a resume to be posted in Employ Florida	Ensure resume is professional and reflects the specific knowledge, skills and abilities of the customer Facilitates job matching and quality referrals	Time consuming, depends on customer having all information immediately available
Assessment of skill levels and service needs	Testing to determine skills levels, interest, aptitudes	Assists in the determination of customer's job readiness	May frustrate customer who don't quite understand the necessity
Job Readiness Workshops	Intensive workshop addressing resume writing, suitable attire and Interviewing techniques	2-Weeks of intensive training to position customers to stand out from other candidates. Customers are more confident upon completion of training.	Long training, Face-to-face Attendance only offered at career centers. Requires individual to travel to the career centers.
Labor Market Information	Statistical information related to occupations in demand, earnings and skill requirements.	Information readily available on job skills necessary to obtain the jobs described in the statistics and information relating to local occupations in demand and the earnings and skill requirements for such occupations	
Individual Employment Plan	Establishes customer's employment goals, achievement objectives, combination of services.	Developed with customer, provides guidance on how to achieve their goals and the list of available services to assist with their goals	Requires face-to-face meetings with case manager, one step of the multiple steps required for program participation.
Case Management	Provides counseling, assistance, follow up	Case Manager provides on-going support through the process Removes barriers to employment	Difficult to keep contact information.
Individual Training Accounts	Provides eligible customers a scholarship account to access training programs through approved training providers in a demand occupation.	Encourage and promote attainment of high skill/high wage job; Based on customer choice;	Issued only for qualified programs at qualified schools
Employer services	Assisted process for job posting, recruiting events, job referrals, grants, labor market information	On-going support through the process of job postings, job referrals, recruiting qualified individuals; Employer receives percentage of wage reimbursement while the employee is in training	Cumbersome process to obtain placement results in a timely manner.
Supportive Services	Services necessary for individuals to participate in activities such as transportation, referral to childcare, dependent care, housing, etc.	Assists individuals with necessary services while participating in a program.	Limited funds.

Local Workforce Development Board Strategic Vision & Goals

Local plans describe how LWDBs implement strategies that help Floridians secure good jobs, while providing employers with the skilled workers needed to compete in the global economy. Local strategies must prioritize employment, emphasize education and training, and ensure LWDBs are responsive to Florida employers' demand for qualified workforce talent.

- (1) Describe the LWDB's strategic vision to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. This must include goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce (including youth and individuals with barriers to employment), and goals relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance described in WIOA § 116(b)(2)(A) and (20 CFR 679.560(a)(5)).

CareerSource Polk's strategic vision and goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce seek to engage not only our business, education and economic development partners, but to also recognize value and necessity recruiting and retaining a qualified team of workforce professionals who are willing and capable of carrying out our mission. Our primary mission and vision at CareerSource Polk are to be the innovative leader to ensure and sustain a quality workforce for today and the future. The realization of this mission begins with the level and caliber of staff we employ. With that mission in mind, our strategic goals include the following:

- **Staff Engagement Goal:**

To recruit, train, and retain a team of workforce professionals who are aligned with and motivated by our mission, we prioritize training and development. This involves not only understanding and meeting performance measures but also delivering high-quality service to every customer, helping them achieve their employment goals.

We focus on assessing staff needs, addressing training gaps, evaluating training effectiveness, and conducting quality assurance reviews of every customer's case. This ensures quality service and helps customers reach self-sufficient employment.

A well-trained workforce directly impacts the goals set with clients and their motivation to pursue higher education or training, leading to better job opportunities. By helping clients reach their full potential, we enhance employability skills, increase placement rates, and improve job retention.

- **Board Engagement Goal:**

To recruit, educate, and engage board members who are willing to invest the time necessary to understand the workforce system and clearly envision the alignment of

workforce, education and economic development for the sole purpose of ensuring a qualified workforce. Board members engage by bringing their expertise to the table to develop strategies and policies that are designed to aid workforce clients in meeting their full potential with regard to career pathways, education and training opportunities to realize those pathways, and career guidance that supports their efforts to obtain and retain employment that will ensure job satisfaction, retention, and self-sufficiency.

- **Economic Development Partners Engagement Goal:**

Our primary focus with regard to engaging and being engaged with our economic development partners is to ensure that expanding and new businesses are fully aware of the talent pool within our region and the surrounding areas so that they are able to make well informed choices about their recruitment needs and the labor market variables that impact their recruitment and retention efforts.

As a single county region with 17 municipalities, our goal is to be involved with all of our chambers of commerce and economic development organizations via our workforce system leadership staff and/or board members so that we know firsthand the skills and talent needed to fulfill our businesses workforce needs and convey those needs to appropriate partners so that our missions are aligned.

- **Education & Training Partners Engagement Goal:**

Our education and training partners are essential to the success of our mission. The Board is fully aware of the value of our education partners and the need to ensure that training and education are closely aligned with the workforce needs of our business partners. As stated in our mission, one of our primary goals is to ensure an educated (qualified) workforce. Our board works diligently with our education partners to increase the level of graduates who obtain their high school diploma or GED in order to expand workforce and training opportunities.

We partner with both education and economic development partners to enhance placement efforts of our local college graduates into careers that align with their education and goals, all the while, fulfilling the talent needs for our business community. The board works to ensure ongoing planning, communication, and strategic alliances with our education and training partners that will result in the successful placement of job seekers into jobs that are a good match for the business needs, thereby yielding greater levels of employer and employee satisfaction and retention.

- **Business Partners Engagement Goal:**

Our goal is to actively involve business partners in our planning and training initiatives to ensure we meet their needs. By continuously monitoring these needs, we align our programs, service delivery strategies, and policies to maintain a business-friendly and demand-driven system.

Current Challenges and Strategies:

1. **Challenge:** The Business Services Division must maintain knowledgeable staff to communicate the value of CareerSource Polk’s workforce services to businesses and community organizations.
 - **Strategy:** Business Services staff will receive ongoing training in business services-related topics and will further identify and develop relationships with business and community organizations.
2. **Challenge:** Using technology effectively to advance sector strategies.
 - **Strategy:** Business Services staff will receive ongoing training on the use of customer relationship management databases, such as:
 - Salesforce
 - Florida Occupational Supply Demand System
 - EDEPS
 - Employ Florida
 - Infogroup Employer Database
3. **Challenge:** The perception that the Business Services Division primarily provides services related to entry-level and lower-wage occupations.
 - **Strategy:** Through the use of databases and customer relationship management, further develop relationships with high skill/high wage employers and those whose employment opportunities are on the career path to high skill/high wage jobs.

We will continue to identify and address any challenges employers note in accessing workforce services, work to enhance employer satisfaction, and measure the effectiveness of employer outreach programs.

CareerSource Polk staff, in collaboration with the Board of Directors and its Councils, service providers, and partners, will work together to analyze and interpret Labor Market Information in developing programs and opportunities that align the best interests of job seekers and employers with the economic future of the county.

The Workforce Performance Council will continue to recommend policies and strategies to improve the quality of jobs filled by the underemployed, including researching, addressing, and improving the types of training and delivery systems available to incumbent workers. The Council will continue to review Labor Market Information and other pertinent data in designing strategies to address training related to high skill/high wage issues.

The Youth Development Council will continue to design and recommend service strategies that prepare young people and others new to the workforce for employment or transition to additional education beyond high school.

CareerSource Polk partners with the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation and refers individuals with disabilities who cannot be assisted at the career center.

(2) Taking into account the analyses described in (1) through (4) in Section B. Analysis of Need and Available Resources above, describe the local area’s strategy to work with entities that carry out the core programs and combined state plan partner programs to align resources available to the local area, to achieve the strategic vision and goals described in number (1) above (20 CFR 679.560(a)(6)).

CareerSource Polk has engaged in a comprehensive accountability model that aims to ensure a service delivery strategy that positions the customer at the forefront of all we do. We will continue to seek innovative approaches to service delivery that align with the rapid growth, generational and technological changes in our workforce.

A monitoring plan is in place to review Board policies, practices, and fiscal and programmatic operations, which is conducted by a third party on a quarterly basis every fiscal year. Monitoring reports, along with the Corrective Action Plans are provided to the Board, through the appropriate Council for full review and comment. The Councils review the reports and address concerns to the Board staff on a quarterly basis.

Once each program year, we are also monitored by the FloridaCommerce which conducts a fiscal and programmatic review. Results are shared with the Board of Directors through the appropriate Councils for full review and comment. The Councils review the reports and address concerns to the Board staff on a quarterly basis.

A Financial Audit is performed by a third-party audit firm annually, which is shared with the Board of Directors.

CareerSource Polk's Workforce Performance Council reviews, on quarterly basis, all customer concerns and addresses those concerns with the One-Stop Operator. The goal of this process is to ensure that customer concerns are being addressed timely and effectively and to determine if any workforce policy or procedure is impeding staff's ability to deliver quality customer service to our customers.

CareerSource Polk career centers strive to be physically and programmatically accessible to all customers, including individuals with disabilities. All of CareerSource Polk's facilities are ADA compliant providing necessary accommodations, adequate space for the use of assistive devices or personal assistants, allowing individuals to participate in the full range of programs.

CareerSource Polk supports individuals with limited English proficiency, employing bilingual staff and providing printed material in several languages. We will continue collaborating with partners to provide services, resources, and referrals to limited English speaking jobseekers. Local Adult Education programs offer Adult English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) instruction for adults to improve their English speaking and writing skills but also to improve their academic skills so they can earn a high school credential and enter postsecondary education to improve their career options.

Equal Opportunity evaluates each CareerSource Polk facility at least every three years to ensure compliance with ADA standards.

CareerSource Polk staff members receive training on disability awareness, sensitivity, and etiquette; and outreach for employers and federal contractors that are required to comply with Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act. In addition, select staff are trained to enroll SSA beneficiaries in the Ticket to Work program. Individuals requiring additional services may be referred by staff to other agencies.

CareerSource Polk offers a variety of resources and information on services available to persons with disabilities including: information on training opportunities and links to online training; technology guides for using screen enlargement software, screen reading software, Windows Accessibility features, American Sign Language interpreters, referral to the Abilities work portal on www.employflorida.com, and the Text Telephone or Teletypewriter for the Deaf (TTY); information on the ADA and accessibility; links to service providers and resources to assist persons with disabilities in removing barriers to employment; and links to information for employers interested in hiring a person with a disability including tax benefits, the ADA and accommodations.

The CareerSource Polk Board of Directors in collaboration with the CEO established the vision and goals through ongoing dialogue about the critical components needed to meet customer needs through collaborative partnerships. Each council of the Board contributes to the discussion during council meetings based on the analysis of changing markets, prior performance, and the necessity for emphasized accountability to ensure customer success.

CareerSource Polk's strategic vision and goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce seek to engage not only our business, education, and economic development partners, but to also recognize value and necessity recruiting and retaining a qualified team of workforce professionals who are willing and capable of carrying out our mission. The LWDB's goals are consistent with the State goals. LWDB will follow the lead of the State in negotiating performance for the performance accountability measures for the Region based on previous performance, local economic indicators, and labor market data for the area.

(3) Describe the LWDB's strategies to work with core and combined partners to contribute to the following statewide goals:

(a) Increase local labor force participation.

CareerSource Polk will use the following strategies to increase labor participation:

- Continue to promote internship opportunities for our out-of-school youth which increases the potential for permanent employment.
- Continue to educate business community on the barriers faced by not only job seekers, but current employees and ways to minimize those barriers.

- Continue to promote and distribute our daily job postings to our partner network to keep them abreast of new and relevant opportunities for each partner’s respective clients.
- Continue to make our jobseeker community aware of different CSP hosted industry, employer and specific job/skills related recruitment events scheduled and taking place in our career centers on a daily/weekly basis. Engage with community organizations.
- Continue to promote CareerSource Polk’s referral network aimed at reducing barriers to employment to ensure the necessary support mechanisms are in place for a smooth and stress-free transition back into the workforce. Barriers include transportation, childcare, housing, food insecurities, and healthcare, and skill bonding, development, etc.
- Continue to promote CareerSource Polk’s Workforce Incentive Awards which supports the removal of the aforementioned barriers.
- Continue to accommodate requests from community partners to engage in outreach efforts and awareness campaigns about CSP and partner services that lead to skills enhancement and employment.

(b) Ensure local jobseekers and employees aged 25-70 have a credential of value.

CareerSource Polk will implement the following strategies to educate and promote valuable credentials:

- **Maintain partnerships with educational institutions** and provide ongoing feedback on business needs for a skilled workforce.
- **Sustain awareness campaigns** for jobseekers about the WIOA program to enhance education and skills, thereby increasing earning potential.
- **Educate employers** through roundtables, seminars, and CareerSource Polk’s Best Places to Work Signature Program about training grant opportunities for employed workers and on-the-job training support for new hires.
- **Share jobseeker testimonials** related to obtained credentials and the positive impact these credentials have had on their lives.
- **Strengthen CSP’s network of mentors** to support employees and jobseekers in achieving their career goals.

- **Lead efforts to educate partners** on the importance of ensuring every customer understands the significance and impact of valuable credentials for both short-term and long-term employment and wage gains.

(c) Median wages greater to or equal to 75% of the median hourly wage in Florida.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor, the median hourly wage in Florida is \$30.85. However, several payroll companies report a slightly lower median wage of \$24.26 per hour. Considering the range between these figures, 75% of the median hourly wage falls between \$18.20 and \$23.14.

At CareerSource Polk, we believe that achieving this goal requires a two-fold strategy: first, focusing on educating and supporting business efforts to increase wages; and second, diligently aligning the skills of incumbent workers and jobseekers with employer needs for a skilled workforce within their industry. This clearly highlights the need for credentials of value. Additional strategies include the following:

- For business, CareerSource Polk will continue to support and provide relevant labor market information to existing and potential new businesses looking to relocate to Polk. Conversations surrounding these topics often include labor needs, types of positions, education and skills required/desired and wages expectations
- For the labor force, CareerSource Polk gives priority to ensure that our training dollars support high wage occupations.

(d) Increase the second quarter after exit employment rate by 10% for each of the following populations:

- a. Individuals 55 years and older
 1. Continue to promote and offer training programs that focus on updating digital skills and other relevant competencies.
 2. Promote part-time, remote, or flexible work options to attract older workers to both businesses and older workers.
 3. Investigate the provision of incentives to employers who hire and retain older workers.

4. Establish mentorship programs where older workers can share their experience and knowledge with younger employees.
- b. Youth
1. Increase opportunities for internships and apprenticeships to provide hands-on experience.
 2. Offer robust career counseling services to help youth identify career paths and necessary skills.
 3. Focus on developing soft skills such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving.
 4. Collaborate with educational institutions to align curricula with industry needs and provide job placement services.
- c. Individuals Receiving SNAP and TANF Benefits
1. Enhance job placement services that connect beneficiaries with employers.
 2. Provide supportive services such as childcare, transportation, and housing assistance to remove barriers to employment.
 3. Offer targeted skills training programs that align with local labor market demands.
 4. Implement work experience programs that provide on-the-job training and build work history.
- d. Individuals Without a High School Diploma or Speakers of Other Languages
1. Expand access to adult education programs, including GED preparation and ESL classes. Work to get programs back into CareerSource Polk career centers.
 2. Provide vocational training programs that do not require a high school diploma.
 3. Continue to offer language support services, including translation and interpretation, to help non-native speakers navigate the job market.
 4. Work with employers to create job opportunities that include on-the-job training and do not require a high school diploma.
- e. Individuals with Disabilities

1. Develop customized employment services that match individuals' abilities with job opportunities.
2. Provide access to assistive technology that can help individuals with disabilities perform job tasks.
3. Educate employers about the benefits of hiring individuals with disabilities and provide support for workplace accommodations.

(e) Increase total number of newly registered apprentices annually.

1. Offer tax credits, subsidies, or grants to employers who start and maintain apprenticeship programs.
2. Streamline the registration process to make it easier for employers to set up apprenticeship programs.
3. Conduct workshops and seminars to educate employers about the benefits of apprenticeships and how to implement them.
4. Launch targeted marketing campaigns to raise awareness about the benefits of apprenticeships among both employers and potential apprentices.
5. Partner with community organizations, schools, and local governments to promote apprenticeship opportunities.
6. Share testimonials and success stories from current and former apprentices to highlight the program's benefits.
7. Establish mentorship programs to support apprentices throughout their training.
8. Provide career counseling services to help potential apprentices understand the opportunities available and the steps to get started.
9. Offer additional support such as transportation, childcare, and housing assistance to remove barriers to participation.
10. Expand apprenticeship programs into non-traditional industries such as healthcare, IT, and green energy.
11. Focus on recruiting underrepresented groups, including women, minorities, and individuals with disabilities.
12. Develop flexible training models that can accommodate different learning styles and schedules.

(f) Increase registered apprenticeship programs.

Same as above.

(g) Increase registered pre-apprenticeship programs.

Same as above.

(h) Increase percentage of 12th grade secondary career and technical education enrollment.

1. Host information sessions for students and parents to explain the benefits of CTE programs, including career opportunities and potential earnings.
 - Train school counselors to actively promote CTE programs and guide students in selecting relevant courses.
 - Use social media, school websites, and local media to highlight success stories and the advantages of CTE programs.
2. Partner with local businesses and industries to provide students with real-world experiences through internships, apprenticeships, and job shadowing.
 - Invite industry professionals to speak at schools about career paths and the importance of technical skills.
3. Provide robust career counseling services to help students understand the pathways available through CTE programs.
 - Establish mentorship programs where current CTE students and alumni can guide and support new enrollees.
 - Provide robust career counseling services to help students understand the pathways available through CTE programs.
 - Establish mentorship programs where current CTE students and alumni can guide and support new enrollees.
4. Offer scholarships and grants specifically for students enrolling in CTE programs.
5. Create recognition programs to celebrate student achievements in CTE, such as awards ceremonies and certificates.

(i) Build talent pipeline for targeted new and emerging industries of focus by assisting individuals to earn credentials that directly support the sector.

CareerSource Polk works collaboratively with our education, employment and economic development partners to build a talent pipeline that supports the growth of new and emerging industries by assessing the needs of emerging through our Talent Pipeline Partnership which aligns with our regions sector strategies adopted by our leading economic development organization, Central Florida Development Council.

Description of Strategies and Program Services

The local plan must address how the LWDB coordinates service delivery with core programs of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Division of Blind Services and the Division of Career and Adult Education, as well as core and combined state plan partners (described in Introduction Section C, above) including, but not limited to TANF, SNAP Employment and Training (E&T), JVSG, SCSEP, CSBG programs authorized under the state's unemployment insurance laws (referred to as Reemployment Assistance in Florida), programs authorized under section 212 of the Second Chance Act of 2007, and Housing and Urban Development, where available.

(1) Workforce Development System Description: Describe the local workforce development system including:

(a) All the programs included in the system; and

Employment and training activities available for adult and dislocated worker customers include but are not limited to:

- Orientation to the services available through the One-Stop career center for all service seekers;
- Outreach, recruitment and intake;
- Initial assessment of skill levels, aptitudes and abilities in order to determine job readiness;
- Matching of employer job requirements and screening for supportive service needs;
- Job search and placement assistance, including job workshops, job referrals and job development;
- Job preparation class: our free workshops on interview techniques, resume writing, dressing for success and other topics that will help customers stand out from other candidates;
- Provision of employment statistics information which includes job vacancy listings in the local, regional and national labor market areas;
- Information on job skills necessary to obtain the jobs described in the statistics and information relating to local occupations in demand and the earnings and skill requirements for such occupations;
- Provision of accurate information relating to the availability of supportive services, including childcare and transportation available in Polk County, and referral to such services, as appropriate;
- Assistance in establishing eligibility and determination for all programs and provide follow up services for individuals as applicable;
- Referral to other services – customer may be referred for other services as needed,

- i.e. Welfare Transition, Ticket-To-Work, SNAP, Veterans, Youth Services, Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker;
- Development of an Individual Employment Plan via Employ Florida System to identify the employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives, and appropriate combination of services;
 - Short-term pre-vocational services, including development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality and professional conduct to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training;
 - Assistance with filing for financial aid;
 - Individual, group and career counseling;
 - Individual training accounts for up to \$10,000: workers who are either unemployed or working in low-wage jobs may be eligible for tuition assistance up to \$10,000 including instructional costs, books, materials, fees (such as application costs, registration, and laboratory fees) and academic supportive services. The primary focus is on the attainment of certificates or degrees of value in the labor market leading to a job in high demand occupations, and emerging industries;
 - On-the-job-training (OJT) – training for customers that are new employees may receive paid training and their employers are reimbursed a percentage of the new employee wages while in training if their business is located in Polk County and meets all federal guidelines;
 - Employed Worker Training – training for an existing employee who is given industry wide training by the employer who is then reimbursed a percentage of the training cost.
 - Internships – paid work experience to bridge the gap between the educational and professional worlds, making it easier to transition from academic life into a career.

TRAINING ACTIVITIES

Training services are designed to equip eligible individuals with the skills to enter the workforce and retain employment. These services will be provided by Board approved providers or other special grant programs and includes:

- Services provided to individuals who meet eligibility requirements are unemployed, unable to obtain employment; or are employed, but are determined in need of additional services in order to obtain or retain employment that allows for self-sufficiency. Customers are interviewed; evaluated and assessed by the case manager

who determines customer is in need of training services and has the qualifications to successfully participate (appropriate TABE scores, interest and aptitude) in the selected program or training services.

- Selection of programs for training services that are directly linked to Polk County high skill/high wage employment opportunities or similar opportunities in other geographic areas for which the individual is willing to relocate.

Once customer eligibility is established, the ITA will be used as the primary funding source.

- Customer must apply for financial aid from the Pell Grant and other available financial sources, to use as the secondary funding source for other training related costs not covered through the ITA
- Customers are determined to be eligible in accordance with the priority system or are determined to be a candidate directed to other special programs.

(b) How the LWDB supports the strategy identified in the state plan under 20 CFR 676.105 and Chapter 445.003, F.S..

CareerSource Polk's delivery of services is carried out through its comprehensive One-Stop delivery system, which integrates the provision of services for unemployed, underemployed, and employed workers including WT/TANF and SNAP customers. For WT/TANF customers and others who may require additional education and training, including job readiness, and adult basic education skills training, etc., referrals are made to other partners including, school districts, community-based programs, and faith-based organizations.

CareerSource Polk operates two full service one-stop career centers. Both centers provide WIOA, TAA, WT, SNAP, Veterans, Wagner-Peyser, MSFW and RESEA services. Upon entering a full-service career center, job seekers find integrated case management approach to assist these individuals to become competitive for employment. Partners co-located at the one-stop career center include: AARP, ALPI, Job Corp, Rebuild Florida, and Polk County Public Schools. Vocational Rehabilitation is in the same facility, on the third floor.

Services provided include:

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

The WIOA program provides individualized services intended to help job seekers return to the workforce by utilizing general, individual, and if determined eligible, training services. WIOA provides one-on-one assistance with resumes, interviewing, job search, and career planning. Workers who are either unemployed or working in low-wage jobs may be eligible for supportive services while seeking employment, interviewing or attending training. The primary focus of training is to obtain a certificate or degree of value to the labor market, leading to a job in high demand occupations and emerging industries. As funding allows, participants may be eligible to receive tuition assistance which may include instructional costs, books, materials, and fees (such as application costs, registration, and laboratory fees).

The target population for WIOA services consist of workers who have lost their jobs due to no fault of their own (dislocated workers); Homemakers who have lost their financial support from a family member; recipients of public assistance and other low-income individuals when funds are limited; employed workers that need skills upgrading or retraining.

WIOA Youth:

The Youth program is designed to guide eligible young adults, through high-quality case management, toward educational attainment which includes career guidance and exploration. Youth services allow for the provision of summer and/or year-round work experience opportunities such as internships and pre-apprenticeships, and skills training along a career pathway for in-demand industries and occupations, including supportive services. The ultimate goal for program participants is either advancement into post-secondary education or the attainment of employment with a family-sustaining or self-sustaining wage. Youth program services are prioritized for out-of-school youth (OSY) and youth with significant barriers, including disabilities, pregnant or parenting, or those subjected to the juvenile/adult justice system.

Wagner-Peyser

Wagner-Peyser provides labor exchange bringing together individuals who are seeking employment and employers who are seeking employees. Through Wagner-Peyser labor

exchange system, we have the capacity to assist job seekers to find employment; assist employers in filling jobs and facilitate the match between job seekers and employers.

Welfare Transition/TANF

The Welfare Transition Program (WTP) provides emphasis on work, self-sufficiency, and personal responsibility; as well as opportunities for welfare recipients to move from welfare to work. The support structure includes the programs and services such as: employment programs, job training, childcare and transportation assistance; diversion programs to reduce domestic violence and child abuse; diversions to prevent families from going on welfare and relocation assistance.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program emphasizes work, self-sufficiency, and personal responsibility. Program participants gain valuable skills, training, and work experience to reach total self-sufficiency.

Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA)

The program provides re-employment services to pre-selected UC claimants that are most likely to exhaust their unemployment benefits. The services provided include, but are not limited to:

- Orientation and Assessment
- Labor market information unique to area of work experience
- Developing an employability development plan
- Job and additional services referrals
- Follow-up to further assist in their employment efforts

Migrant Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW)

CareerSource Polk is committed to serving farmworkers who work in the Polk County service area. The MSFW Outreach Specialist assigned to our Region is bi-lingual and is accustomed to serving the farmworker population and employers located within Polk County. Our MSFW Outreach Specialist works jointly with the agricultural employers and

directly with the farmworkers to deliver available employment services and knowledge of services available in our One-Stop career center and other agencies available to the farmworkers to promote quality of the labor exchange and quality of life for farmworkers in our service area.

Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)

Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) helps workers who are adversely affected by foreign imports or job shifts to a foreign country. Assistance is provided to eligible workers in the form of reemployment services, training, job search, relocation, and support benefits in the form of Trade Readjustment Allowances (TRA) and/or Alternative/Reemployment Trade Adjustment Assistance (ATAA/RTAA) for older workers.

FLORIDA COMMERCE Merit Staff maintain familiarity with TAA requirements, screening, and determination applicability. As part of the TAA Information Meeting, and in any subsequent contact, the local TAA Coordinator will emphasize the importance of receiving an assessment prior to their enrollment in training deadline. Any affected workers requesting TAA assistance that may be coming from outside the region are referred to the local designated TAA staff.

Veteran Services

Our region utilizes an electronic tracking system for all customers that enter the One-Stop Career Center. Veterans are identified in a prominent manner on this system which allows all Wagner-Peyser staff to see the next available customer. Those identified by the VET status will be provided service before non-VETs by Wagner Peyser staff.

Veterans and eligible spouses have priority of service in the Resource Room and for all programs operated by the Region and are seen immediately. Veterans are offered the full range of One-Stop services to include job counseling, job search/referral, resume services, as well as specialized assistance on Veterans rights and benefits as well as assistance and interface with the Veteran's Administration (VA) programs.

- (c) How the LWDB works with entities carrying out core and combined programs and other workforce development programs, including programs of study authorized under The Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.) to support service alignment (WIOA § 108(b)(2) and 20 CFR 679.560(b)(1)).**

CareerSource Polk's delivery of services is carried out through its comprehensive One-Stop delivery system, which integrates the provision of services for unemployed, underemployed, and employed workers including WT/TANF and SNAP customers. For WT/TANF customers and others who may require additional education and training, including job readiness, and adult basic education skills training, etc., referrals are made to other partners including, school districts, community-based programs, and faith-based organizations.

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(2) Adult and Dislocated Worker Employment and Training Activities:

- (a)** Provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area (WIOA §108(b)(7) and 20 CFR 679.560(6)).

CareerSource Polk has a robust menu of workforce services to offer to both businesses and the workforce throughout the region. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act is designed to assist job seekers with high quality career services, education and training and the support services needed to obtain good jobs and retain their employment. Additionally, it is designed to match businesses with the skilled workers they need to compete in the local and global economy. Training activities will be targeted to:

- Provide job seekers with the skills and credentials necessary to secure and advance in employment with sustaining wages.
- Provide access and opportunities to all job seekers, including individuals with barriers to employment, such as persons with disabilities, low income or disadvantaged, homeless, ex-offenders, basic skills deficient or those with limited English.
- Enable businesses to identify with ease and hire qualified, skilled workers and access other supports, including education and training for their current workforce.

- Participate in rigorous evaluations that support continuous improvement of the local workforce system by identifying which strategies work better for various populations.
- Ensure that high-quality integrated data inform decisions by local policy makers, board members, local area management, businesses and job seekers across core and optional partners.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act authorizes career services for adults and dislocated workers. There are two types of Career Services available within CareerSource Polk workforce system: Basic and Individualized Career Services. These services may be provided in any order and with no required sequence allowing staff to provide tailored services to each customer to target the needs of the customer.

Basic Career Services

Basic career services will be available to all individuals seeking services in the CareerSource Polk workforce system, and include:

- Determination of an individual’s eligibility to receive assistance from the adult, dislocated worker, or young adult programs;
- Outreach, intake (including identification through the CareerSource Polk’s Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment Program (RESEA) and/or the state’s unemployment insurance (UI) for claimants likely to exhaust benefits, and orientation to information and other services available through the career centers;
- Initial assessment of skill levels including literacy, numeracy, and English language proficiency, as well as aptitudes, abilities (including skills gaps), transferrable skills and supportive service needs;
- Labor exchange services, including job search and placement assistance and, when needed by an individual, career counseling.
- Information on in-demand industry sectors and occupations (as defined in sec. 3(23) of the Opportunity Act);
- Information on nontraditional employment (as defined in sec. 3(37) of the Opportunity Act);
- Referrals to, and coordination of, activities with other programs and services, including those within the CareerSource Polk region and, when appropriate, other workforce development programs within larger regional planning areas;

- Workforce and labor market employment statistics information, including the provision of accurate information relating to local, regional, and national labor market areas, including job vacancy listings in labor market areas; 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 jobs;
- Performance information and program cost information on eligible providers of training services by program and type of providers;
- Information about how the local area is performing on accountability measures, as well as any additional performance information relating to the area's workforce system;
- Information relating to the availability of supportive services or assistance, and appropriate referrals to those services and assistance, including: child care; child support; medical or child health assistance available through the State's Medicaid program and Florida's KidCare Program; benefits under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); assistance through the earned income tax credit; housing counseling and assistance services sponsored through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) ; assistance under a State program for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and other supportive services and transportation provided through that program;
- Assistance in establishing eligibility for programs of financial aid assistance for training and education programs not provided under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act; and
- Information regarding filing claims under UI programs, including meaningful assistance to individuals seeking to file a claim.

Individualized Career Services

If Career Center staff determine that individualized career services are appropriate for an individual to obtain or retain employment, then these services are made available through CareerSource Polk Career Center resources, or partners. Career Center staff may use recent or previous assessments by partner programs (TANF- OSST assessment) to determine if individualized career services would be appropriate. These services include:

- Comprehensive and specialized assessments of the skill levels and service needs of adults and dislocated workers, which may include diagnostic testing and use of other

assessment tools; and in-depth interviewing and evaluation to identify employment barriers and appropriate employment goals;

- Development of an individual employment plan to identify employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives, and, if appropriate, the combination of services for the participant to achieve his or her employment goals, including the list of, and information about, eligible training providers;
- Group and/or individual counseling and mentoring;
- Career planning (e.g. case management);
- Short-term pre-vocational services, including development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training;
- Internships and work experiences that are linked to careers;
- Workforce preparation activities that help an individual acquire a combination of basic academic skills, critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills, and self-management skills; including competencies in utilizing resources, using information, working with others, understanding systems, and obtaining skills necessary for successful transition into and completion of postsecondary education, training, or employment;
- Financial literacy services;
- English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs.

All customers of the Career Centers may avail themselves of the Career Center Assessment Labs which have a variety of tools including, but not limited to:

- Interest Inventory Assessment
- Florida Ready to Work

Any customer considered for an Individualized Training Account (ITA) or other educational or training services must have the need for such services documented in the assessment process. Assessment updates may be made as the customers' circumstances change, and as new barriers to success are identified. Additionally, assessments will ensure ITA or other educational candidates meet Section 134 (c) (3)(A)(I)(cc) which states that an eligible trainee must "have the skills and qualifications to successfully participate in the selected program of training services" in addition to meeting the other eligibility criteria.

Comprehensive assessments of customer needs are essential if sound decisions are to be made by the customers and staff regarding the services needed by the customer. Such assessments are especially important for lower-skilled or less-experienced potential workers, and for those seeking to enter a new field due to layoffs.

The CareerSource Polk Business Services Division provides employer services based on the needs of the employer.

Our Business Services Team is made up of three Business Service Consultants each covering a specific geographic area based on population density. The assigned areas include the Northeast quadrant of Polk County, the Lakeland area in the western quadrant and the entire southern area of the county. Our Business Service Consultants schedule visits to new and existing employers to educate them on the full range of services available to them including training grants.

The Business Services staff will assist the employer in identifying the appropriate grant for which to apply and assist the employer in the application process. Availability of training grants will be expanded in as much as the budget allows.

Customized Training, On-the-Job Training (OJT), and Employed Worker Training (EWT) are provided on a case-by-case basis as requested by employers. The Workforce Performance Council must approve all training grants valued over \$50,000.

Employed Worker Training opportunities will be offered to eligible WIOA participants and promoted to employers through the Business Services Division. Individuals selected for training opportunities may be full-time or part-time workers, or underemployed participants. Individual career plans are developed to guide the participant toward employment and career goals. CareerSource Polk routinely seeks other funding sources to assist employers in meeting the needs of the workforce including assisting them with CareerSource Florida grant applications.

For customized employed worker the individual must be at or below the wage of 200% of poverty for a family of three as shown by USDOL LLSIL and must demonstrate a need for training to avoid lay-off to upgrade his/her skill level to increase their wage within the company. The Case Manager will contact the potential employee and/or employer to arrange an eligibility intake and inform him/her of the necessary documentation he/she will need to provide. After the intake process is completed the Case Manager will notify the Business

Services Division that the customer has been determined eligible and data entered into the MIS system.

The Board has no other providers of WIOA services beyond OJT and customized training.

- (b)** Provide a description of local policies and procedures for individualized career and training services in the Adult program to give priority to veterans, recipients of public assistance, and other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient. 20 CFR 679.560(21).

CareerSource Polk's Administrative Policy PY11-02 – Priority of Service outlines the requirements that ensure priority of service is provided to the customers outlined above and that adequate protocols are in place to ensure compliance.

Outlined in policy is: The requirement to provide priority of service applies to all Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and Wagner Peyser (WP) funded activities, including technology-assisted activities; the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP); Indian and Native American Programs (INAP); National Farmworker Job Training Programs; Trade Adjustment Assistance Programs (TAA); job training funded through the Women's Bureau, and any other current or future qualified job training program. All program activities issued or executed by program operators, regardless of how they are procured, must be administered in compliance with priority of service requirements.

The one-stop career centers must have a process in place at the point of entry to identify veterans and eligible spouses who are entitled to priority of service and provide information on the full array of employment, training, and placement services available under priority of service and any applicable eligibility requirements for those programs and/or services. Priority of services must be available at all stages of career and training services. (Point of entry can include reception areas, resource areas, websites and informational bulletin boards).

The one-Stop career centers must also ensure implementation of processes that identify veterans and eligible spouses who access service delivery programs through the Internet and that necessary information on priority of service is posted on websites and other portals that can be accessed remotely, as well as the integration of services available through DVOP staff members.

It is important to note that state and local program operators do not have the discretion to establish further priorities within the overall priority established by the regulations.

In the event WIOA funds allocated are limited, priority within the eligible population for training services will be determined in the following manner. (If an individual does not meet the priority guidelines, the Career Specialist (CS) will provide information on alternative funding.)

The highest priority of service will be for an adult who is at least one of the following:

- a. An individual who receives or is a member of a member of a family that receives cash welfare payments under a Federal or State welfare program. This category includes both TANF and SSI benefits.
- b. A veteran.
- c. An individual who is receiving or, at any time in the prior six months, was eligible to receive food stamps.
- d. An individual who has received or is a member of a family which has received, a total family income (exclusive of unemployment compensation, child support payments, and welfare payments) for the six month period prior to his/her application for services, which in relation to the family size when annualized, is less than 125% of the Poverty Level as established by the Department of Health and Human Services.
- e. An individual who was a Job Corps participant at any time in the six month period prior to his/her application.
- f. An individual who is eligible to receive welfare transitional benefits.

The next highest priority for service will be for an adult with one or more of the following barriers to employment regardless of income.

- a. Homeless individual
- b. Offender
- c. Older Worker
- d. Physically or mentally disabled
- e. Single parent with one or more children under the age of 18 living in the applicant household

f. Substantial language or cultural barriers

(3) Training Services: Describe how training services outlined in WIOA section 134 are provided including:

(a) A description of the process and criteria for issuing ITAs, including a description of any ITA limitations established by the LWDB and a description of any exceptions to the use of ITAs.

Authorized staff at the one-stop delivery system or youth programs to issue ITAs, must follow the criteria and process described below:

Establish customer's ITA eligibility as indicated below. ITA recipients must be:

- WIOA customers who are eligible to work in the United States;
- WIOA Adult or WIOA Older Youth customers who are residents of Polk County;
- TANF or SNAP service eligible customers served by Polk County;
- Unable to find suitable employment with existing skills and/or academic credentials as evidenced through unsuccessful placement while actively participating in career services offered through CareerSource Polk centers service system. Suitable employment is defined as an occupation which pays at least the state's Lower Living Standard Income Level (LLSIL) per hour for Adults or 80% layoff wage replacement for Dislocated Workers;
- Determined through assessment that training is appropriate for the recipient unless the recipient proves to have completed a higher education degree;
- Select a training program that is linked to a demand occupation in the Regional Targeted Occupations List (RTOL) and make a commitment to seek employment in the field once trained;
- Select a training provider from the approved CareerSource Polk Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL).
- Provide evidence that they have the financial resources to cover all other living expenses while completing the training period

For training education that are Pell eligible programs:

- Agree to apply for and bring proof of Pell grant application eligibility determination to the case manager as soon as possible; but not later than the beginning of the next term.
- If ITA approved, the customer must acknowledge and agree to the use of Pell Grant funds to pay for other training related costs not covered through the ITA, such as rent,

utilities, fuel, etc.

- If Pell ineligible, the customer must provide proof of ineligibility to the case manager prior to being considered for ITA for the next term.

Note: If the customer is a late enrollee and Pell is not possible for the first term, the ITA will pay during that period while Pell is pending. The customer must still apply for and bring to the career center staff the proof of Pell application eligibility as soon as possible but not later than the beginning of the next term.

ITA limitations established by the board.

The maximum CareerSource Polk approved cost for an ITA (CAP) is \$10,000.

All ITAs will be categorized using a fair market value based on potential earnings upon entering employment. Training programs with the potential for higher earnings will have a larger amount of allowable investment than those earning less. The thresholds for allowable investment will be as follows:

Tiers	Average Entry Wage	Maximum Investment
Entry Tier	\$13.77 or less	\$6,500
Bridge Tier	\$13.78 – 16.93	\$7,500
High Wage Tier	\$16.94 and up	\$10,000

ITA exceptions established by the board

The customer is expected to complete training within the amount of funding approved at the beginning of training; however, CareerSource Polk recognizes that this may not always be possible due to acts of nature, i.e., hurricanes, or uncontrollable circumstances, i.e., major illness of self or immediate family, suffered loss due to fire, death of immediate family. In extraordinary circumstances, the customer prepares a written justification fully detailing the circumstances that made it impossible to complete training under the initial approved funding and submits for LWDB’s CEO review and/or approval through the appropriate line of communication.

(b) If contracts for training services are used, how the use of such contracts are coordinated with the use of ITAs.

CareerSource Polk does not use contracted training for Adults nor Dislocated Workers. However, CareerSource Polk will work with FloridaCommerce, CareerSource Florida

and the REACH office to implement performance-based tuition to ensure the successful placement of students when they complete their education supported through an ITA.

(c) How the LWDB will ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training programs regardless of how the training services are to be provided (WIOA §108(b)(19) and 20 CFR 679.560(18)).

Our policy emphasizes that all training services will be provided in a manner that maximizes customer choice. Eligible customers receiving an ITA will be provided with a link to an online list of all eligible training providers locally and in the State, which may provide instruction in the occupational areas that he/she has chosen to pursue. The list will include the provider's name, information including cost, and other appropriate information for each program. After this process, the customer will select the training provider.

(d) How the LWDB ensures training provided is linked to in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area, or in another area to which a participant is willing to relocate (WIOA §134(c)(3)(G)(iii)). Include strategic or other policies that align training initiatives and Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) to sector strategies and demand occupations (WIOA §134(d)(1)(A)(ix)(II)(aa)).

CareerSource Polk will provide customers with data not limited to local labor market information about higher-paying employment opportunities, showing them current job openings and guiding them to the training resources that will prepare them for better jobs. CareerSource Polk utilizes assessment tools that help customers determine their strengths and what careers would suit them best. This information, paired with current information about what local businesses need, will enable the customer to make an educated choice as they consider their career options.

(e) How the LWDB incorporates/includes work-based training activities in the local area's service delivery model.

CareerSource supports multiple work-based initiatives, including on-the-job training, customized training, employed/incumbent worker training, apprenticeship, and paid work experience.

Work-based training is business driven to ensure the activities are business-valued. Rather than a one size fits all approach, solutions are created with the business to meet their unique hiring, retention, and development of their workforce.

(4) Youth Workforce Investment Activities: Provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of youth workforce investment activities (services) in the local area,

including activities for youth who are individuals with disabilities. The description and assessment must:

(a) Identify successful models of such youth workforce investment activities (WIOA §108(b)(9) and 20 CFR 679.560(b)(8)).

CareerSource Polk provides high-quality services for all youth and young adults, beginning with career exploration and guidance, continued support for educational attainment, opportunities for skills training in in-demand industries and occupations. Services are provided to youth ages 16 to 24 who reside in Polk County. We qualify and assist youth in gaining academic and employability skills needed to become successful as they transition into adulthood.

Career Source Polk will conduct training for youth staff, to better understand the different types of disabilities, how to handle issues of disclosure and disability identification with sensitivity at program intake, and how to determine the most effective mix of services and referrals to make when a disability is identified. These trainings will be presented by subject matter experts and include such topics as: federal, state, and local disability policies; identifying barriers/hidden disabilities; disability awareness and etiquette; website accessibility; providing reasonable accommodations; assistive technology accommodations and resources; Section 503 for federal contractors; and simulation training. Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), Mental Health Centers, and the Department of Correction will also be invited to attend these events and asked to present on relevant topics.

Within the youth facilities, staff will be trained to follow established procedures to ensure inclusion and compliance. Starting with intake, customers should be asked if any assistance is needed and if they have a disability, once they are assured that their response is voluntary and will be kept confidential. Customer orientations should include a discussion of Equal Opportunity (EO) and the right to file a complaint. Following orientation, services should be reviewed with the client by determining the client's eligibility and need of services in an integrated setting. For example, not all customers should be automatically referred to VR; only those that appear to be eligible and in need of VR services. Ongoing training will need to occur to educate staff on the services, funding, and the resources available to determine when it is appropriate to refer to partner agencies and possibly blend funding. Agency partners will seek to coordinate efforts and leverage funding between partner agencies to meet the employment and training needs of the

customer. Memorandums of Understanding may be developed or reviewed, as necessary, to outline the responsibilities of each partner.

Workforce Development Boards, through the IN-DEI grant, may continue to operate as Employment Networks (EN) and either offer benefits counseling in-house or work with their local Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) representative to provide benefits counseling to Social Security beneficiaries receiving SSI/SSDI. WDBs not currently operating as an EN will receive information and training about the benefits of the Ticket to Work Program and how to become an active EN.

Staff will also be trained to use multiple resources and tools to ensure accessibility to services. One such resource that staff will be encouraged to use is the Guidepost for Success, which is a set of key educational and intervention strategies for young people, including those with disabilities. Additionally, One-stop assessments, Individual Service Strategy (ISS), and Academic and Career Planning (ACPs) tools will continue to be utilized to identify career paths, barriers to employment, training or service needs, and employability skills. These assessments will also assist with identifying hidden disabilities and the potential need for accommodation.

CareerSource Polk will implement policies to support accessibility to services throughout the state. Development of a Reasonable Accommodation Policy will be explored that requires the WDBs to formally track when a reasonable accommodation is requested and whether it is approved or denied. This policy may include but will not be limited to the process for handling and tracking reasonable accommodation requests; examples of reasonable accommodations (i.e., frequent breaks, ensuring a quiet testing environment, reading the test aloud); providing training and information regarding One-stop procedures; and a process for notifying the state regarding the approval/denial of the request(s). The state will track both informal and formal complaints received in the One-stop offices through the State's Quarterly Customer Service Record Log, this will help the state identify any patterns for alleged discrimination of individuals with disabilities.

(b) Include the local area's design framework for the local youth program and how the 14 program elements required in 20 CFR 681.460 are made available within that framework (WIOA § 129(c)(1)).

CareerSource Polk's Young Leaders Program design is structured to ensure effective service delivery to maximize the level and participation of as many eligible young adults as possible, with a primary focus on service delivery strategies that increase participation

of out-of-school as well as those young adults who are most at risk of not acquiring the necessary skills and abilities to attain meaningful employment.

The success of a solid youth program that fulfills the intent of WIOA largely depends on the compliance of program requirements which include:

- the expenditure of a minimum of 75 percent of funding on services to out-of-school youth;
- the expenditure of 20 percent of funding on the provision of work experiences for youth, including those with significant barriers to employment;
- the development of strong career pathways for youth;
- the co-enrollment of eligible youth into appropriate partner programs and activities, including TANF;
- the provision of the 14 required youth program design elements;
- the provider's past record of success with the retention of youth participants in education, training activities, or unsubsidized employment during the second and fourth quarters after program exit; and
- a detailed description of the local board's negotiated performance goals for which the provider has a role in meeting and/or exceeding

The Young Leaders program is designed to guide eligible young adults, through high-quality case management, toward educational attainment which includes career guidance and exploration. The services of the Young Leaders program allow for the provision of summer and/or year-round work experience opportunities such as internships and pre-apprenticeships, and skills training along a career pathway for in-demand industries and occupations, including supportive services.

The goal for the participating young adults is either advancement into post-secondary education or the attainment of employment with a family-sustaining or self-sustaining wage. The Young Leaders program services are prioritized for out-of-school youth (OSY) and young adults with significant barriers, including disabilities, pregnant or parenting, or those subjected to the juvenile/adult justice system.

At the beginning of program year 2013-2014, the Local Workforce Development Board was authorized by FloridaCommerce to provide direct services to the young adults in Polk

County. The framework of our Young Leaders program follows the 14 program elements required on §681.460 of the proposed WIOA regulations.

The funds allocated to our local area are allocated to serve eligible in-school and out-of-school youth. Now that we have completely transitioned to WIOA, our primary goal is to serve out-of-school youth. Understanding that the work experience is a critical WIOA youth program element, the Local Area has placed significant emphasis in providing work experience for OSY, in addition to the Summer Youth Employment Program.

In-house services provided through state waiver include:

- Recruitment and Outreach. Conduct activities, including outreach to local government facilities, non-profit and faith-based organizations that provide support services to disconnected youth and young adults, including the use of word-of-mouth referrals, and social media platforms. Other suggested recruitment strategies may include visiting low-income communities and neighborhoods, knocking on doors, and speaking to friends, families, and young adults about available services and opportunities.
- Designing a program application process that is easy to complete by removing as many of the administrative hurdles as possible.
- Creating an online youth friendly orientation that is accessible through CareerSource Polk website.

Objective assessment of academic level, skills level, and service needs of each participant would include:

- Test of Adult Basic Education – is designed to effectively assess both the knowledge and skills of the young adult.
- CareerScope – is a web-based career assessment reporting system which measures both aptitude and career interest to help young adults begin the career or educational planning process.

Development of an individual service strategy for each young adult includes:

- Customized career pathway plan
- Addressing barriers
- Setting goals and activities

- Documenting achievements / credentials
- Notating academic progress
- Identifying supportive service needs

Engagement: Many disconnected young adults face challenges and life obstacles that result in the cycling in and out of program services. Such challenges may include periods of homelessness, issues with the criminal justice system, pressures to provide for their families, and substance abuse, among others.

- Recognizing the unique hardships of each individual and working to establish trust between participants and staff, we must create an atmosphere where participants feel staff is invested in their success.
- Once a participant is enrolled staff must communicate regularly and effectively. Explain the program’s available services and activities, the expectations of the participant, and any available support services that may be necessary.
- Set achievable goals with the participant early in the process and communicate the status of progress towards meeting those goals often.
- Placing young adults in cohorts allows individuals to move through the program and receive services with others. Participants often become friends and gain a sense of togetherness and accountability within the cohort. Such engagement may also open the door for young adults to take a leadership role, such as tutoring other participants, giving presentations, etc.
- Ensure that supportive services are made available to participants to help remove barriers that would prevent them from continuing with the program.
- If a young adult leaves the program, the Career Development Specialist will remain in contact with that individual and encourage re-engagement through phone calls, texts, social media, or in-person visits at their hangouts or homes.

Participants will have an opportunity to take advantage of work experience or community service activities which will encourage the following:

- practical experience
- workplace skills
- increase self confidence
- increase understanding of the work involved in a particular field
- develop a greater understanding of work life issues.

CareerSource Polk’s Youth program ensures compliance with the 14 program elements through partnerships with qualified organizations and agencies whose missions align with our own. The table below outlines each program element and how our program is structured to ensure the provision of services are acquired to deliver each element successfully and efficiently:

Program Element	CareerSource Polk	Services Outsourced (MOUs)
Tutoring, study skills training, and instruction leading to completion of secondary school, including dropout prevention strategies.		East Area Adult School at Triviss West Area Adult School at Ridge Ridge & Triviss Technical Colleges Polk County Public Schools Polk State College
Alternative secondary school services, as appropriate (Dropout Retrieval)		Polk County School District Donald e. Woods Opportunity Center Penn Foster
Paid and unpaid work experiences linked to academic and occupational learning	Youth Employment / Youth Internship Programs Job shadowing, volunteer work	Polk County School District – Career Academies Apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships
Occupational skills training, leading to recognized post-secondary credentials aligned with in-demand industry sectors		Ridge & Triviss Technical Colleges Eligible Training Providers (through Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) Polk State College Alison
Education offered concurrently with workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster	Florida Ready to Work Fifth Third Financial Literacy Academy Start Right, Stay Right Pathful	Opportunities to earn a credential are encouraged. On-the-Job Training Paid Work Experience Electrical Apprenticeships
Leadership development opportunities, which may include community service and peer centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social behaviors during non-school hours, as appropriate.		Talbot House Ministries Planned Parenthood Peace River Center The Dream Center Healthy Start Coalition Lighthouse Ministries The Way Center
Supportive services	All support services available through ITAs, if applicable	
Adult mentoring for the period of participation and a subsequent period, for a total of not less than 12 months		Boys & Girls Club, Risk Club Lakeland Police Athletic League (PAL), Made Mentors Triumphant Solutions ASAP Fresh Barbershop City of Haines City
Follow up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation, as appropriate	Career Development Specialists	

Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral, as appropriate.	Career Development Specialist	Teen Pregnancy Prevention Alliance, Healthy Start Coalition Peace River Center Florida Department of Health (tobacco free initiative) Polk County Health Department Central Florida Healthcare Homeless Youth Task Force Licensed Mental Health Counselors
Financial Literacy education		Fifth Third Bank Mulberry Community Service Center
Entrepreneurial skills training		Polk State College Small Business Development Center The Well Tampa Area Electrical JATC
Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area (career awareness, career counseling, career exploration)	Career Development Specialists and Florida Commerce career center staff, Business Services team, Industry leaders	ONET Chmura Career One-Stop Employ Florida
Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training.	Career Development Specialist	FAFSA Assistance

(c) Describe the LWDB’s policy regarding how the local area will determine when an individual meets the definition of basic skills deficient contained in Administrative Policy 095 – WIOA Youth Program Eligibility.

CareerSource Polk’s Young Leaders Program design is structured to ensure effective service delivery to maximize the level and participation of as many eligible young adults as possible, with a primary focus on service delivery strategies that increase participation of out-of-school as well as those young adults who are most at risk of not acquiring the necessary skills and abilities to attain meaningful employment.

The success of a solid youth program that fulfills the intent of WIOA largely depends on the compliance of program requirements which include:

- ✓ the expenditure of a minimum of 75 percent of funding on services to out-of-school youth;
- ✓ the expenditure of 20 percent of funding on the provision of work experiences for youth, including those with significant barriers to employment;
- ✓ the development of strong career pathways for youth;
- ✓ the co-enrollment of eligible youth into appropriate partner programs and activities,

- including TANF;
- ✓ the provision of the 14 required youth program design elements;
- ✓ the provider's past record of success with the retention of youth participants in education, training activities, or unsubsidized employment during the second and fourth quarters after program exit; and
- ✓ a detailed description of the local board's negotiated performance goals for which the provider has a role in meeting and/or exceeding

The Young Leaders program is designed to guide eligible young adults, through high-quality case management, toward educational attainment which includes career guidance and exploration. The services of the Young Leaders program allow for the provision of summer and/or year-round work experience opportunities such as internships and pre-apprenticeships, and skills training along a career pathway for in-demand industries and occupations, including supportive services. The goal for the participating young adults is either advancement into post-secondary education or the attainment of employment with a family-sustaining or self-sustaining wage. The Young Leaders program services are prioritized for out-of-school youth (OSY) and young adults with significant barriers, including disabilities, pregnant or parenting, or those subjected to the juvenile/adult justice system.

At the beginning of program year 2013-2014, the Local Workforce Development Board was authorized by FLORIDACOMMERCE to provide direct services to the young adults in Polk County. The framework of our Young Leaders program follows the 14 program elements required on §681.460 of the proposed WIOA regulations.

The funds allocated to our local area are allocated to serve eligible in-school and out-of-school youth. Now that we have completely transitioned to WIOA, our primary goal is to serve out-of-school youth. Understanding that the work experience is a critical WIOA youth program element, the Local Area has placed significant emphasis in providing work experience for OSY, in addition to the Summer Youth Employment Program.

In-house services provided through state waiver include:

- Recruitment and Outreach. Conduct activities, including outreach to local government facilities, non-profit and faith-based organizations that provide support services to disconnected youth and young adults, including the use of word-of-mouth referrals,

and social media platforms. Other suggested recruitment strategies may include visiting low-income communities and neighborhoods, knocking on doors, and speaking to friends, families, and young adults about available services and opportunities.

- Designing a program application process that is easy to complete by removing as many of the administrative hurdles as possible.
- Creating an online youth friendly orientation that is accessible through CareerSource Polk website.

Objective assessment of academic level, skills level, and service needs of each participant would include:

- Test of Adult Basic Education – is designed to effectively assess both the knowledge and skills of the young adult.
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Development of an individual service strategy for each young adult includes:

- Customized career pathway plan
- Addressing barriers
- Setting goals and activities
- Documenting achievements / credentials
- Notating academic progress
- Identifying supportive service needs

Engagement: Many disconnected young adults face challenges and life obstacles that result in the cycling in and out of program services. Such challenges may include periods of homelessness, issues with the criminal justice system, pressures to provide for their families, and substance abuse, among others.

- Recognizing the unique hardships of each individual and working to establish trust between participants and staff, we must create an atmosphere where participants feel staff is invested in their success.
- Once a participant is enrolled staff must communicate regularly and effectively. Explain the program's available services and activities, the expectations of the participant, and any available support services that may be necessary.

- Set achievable goals with the participant early in the process and communicate the status of progress towards meeting those goals often.
- Placing young adults in cohorts allows individuals to move through the program and receive services with others. Participants often become friends and gain a sense of togetherness and accountability within the cohort. Such engagement may also open the door for young adults to take a leadership role, such as tutoring other participants, giving presentations, etc.
- Ensure that supportive services are made available to participants to help remove barriers that would prevent them from continuing with the program.
- If a young adult leaves the program, the Career Development Specialist will remain in contact with that individual and encourage re-engagement through phone calls, texts, social media, or in-person visits at their hangouts or homes.

Participants will have an opportunity to take advantage of work experience or community service activities which will encourage the following:

- practical experience
- workplace skills
- increase self confidence
- increase understanding of the work involved in a particular field
- develop a greater understanding of work life issues.

CareerSource Polk's Youth program ensures compliance with the 14 program elements through partnerships with qualified organizations and agencies whose missions align with our own. The table below outlines each program element and how our program is structured to ensure the provision of services are acquired to deliver each element successfully and efficiently:

(d) Define the term “a youth who is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual’s family, or in society” and describe how the LWDB defines whether a youth is unable to demonstrate these skills sufficiently to function on the job, in their family, or in society and what assessment instruments are used to make this determination (20 CFR 681.290).

CSP's WIOA Youth Program defines “A youth who is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual’s family or in society” by having TABE test scores below or at an 8.0 for either reading or total math.

As part of the program eligibility, students are assessed through TABE tests to determine level of knowledge and comprehension of the English language. Through this assessment, a student is considered basic skills deficient if he/she scores at or below the 8th grade level on the math, reading and language arts.

Nearly one-fifth of Polk County's population speaks a language other than English in the home. To assist individuals with limited English proficiency, bi-lingual staff is available, partnerships are developed with organizations which provide multi-lingual services and staff receives training in cultural awareness. Program materials printed in multiple languages are also available for distribution.

The region partners with organizations such as Heart to Heart Community Enrichment (Creole) and Farmworkers Program (Spanish) that have staff that can assist in translating or providing services. Also, the region is currently translating program FACT sheets in Spanish and Creole.

The region will also take into consideration the recommendation to seek for an interpreter to provide services to customers that speaks a language other than Spanish or Creole.

(e) Define the term “requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to obtain or retain employment” and describe the circumstance(s) or other criteria the LWDB will use to qualify a youth under this eligibility barrier (20 CFR 681.300).

CareerSource Polk has identified the following definition for youth needing additional assistance:

- as defined by USDOL to include juvenile offender, pregnant or parenting teen, high school dropout, youth currently out of school, homeless; and/or
- is disabled; and/or
- An individual who has no work experience or limited work experience; or
- Is at risk of dropping out of high school (school districts recommends placing this youth into dropout prevention programs conducted within their schools). Based upon a youth's age, he/she should be at a certain grade or grade level. As an example, if the youth is not in the 11th grade based upon his age, but is in the 9th grade, he/she could be deemed as “at-risk of dropping out of high school”. If the youth is not at a reading

or math grade level consistent with his actual grade enrollment, then he/she could be in need of “additional assistance” and at-risk of dropping out of school.

Not more than five percent of the ISY newly enrolled in a given program year may be deemed eligible based on the “requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment” criterion.

Documentation may include, but are not limited to, legal records (for the offender), medical records (for the pregnant teen and the disabled), and school records (for the high school dropout and the disabled). For homeless youth, documentation could include written verification from an individual or agency providing temporary assistance, written statement from Social Security Agency, or an applicant statement/self-attestation, in limited cases.

(5) Self-Sufficiency Definition: Under WIOA § 134(c)(3)(A) training services may be made available to employed and unemployed adults and dislocated workers who need training services to obtain or retain employment leading to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment. Describe the definition of “self-sufficiency” used by your local area for:

(a) Adults (distinguish if there are different definitions for unemployed individuals or employed workers); and

(b) Dislocated Workers (WIOA § 134(c)(3)(A)(xii)).

(c) If self-sufficiency is defined differently for other programs or populations served in the local area, describe the definition of “self-sufficiency” used for those programs as well. NOTE: If the local area utilizes a self-sufficiency definition that exceeds 250% of the Lower Living Standard Income Level (LLSIL) or LLSIL wage rate, the description must include the rationale/methodology used by the local area to determine the local area’s self-sufficiency standard.

LWDB’s self-sufficiency definition is based on whether the individual at the time of application is employed. The LWDB provides a separate self-sufficiency definition for dislocated workers. The Region also uses the self-sufficient wage to measure performance outcomes.

- The definition of self-sufficiency for adult-employed workers is the local LLSIL as annually published by the Department of Economic Opportunity for eligible adults.

- The self-sufficient wage for dislocated workers is the LLSIL as annually published by the Department of Economic Opportunity or 80% of the layoff wage, whichever is greater.

Self Sufficiency for recipients of public assistance, and people with disabilities and other barriers to employment:

WT/TANF programs are defined as follows:

For WT/TANF – 69% of the LLSIL

For SNAP – 67% of the LLSIL

(6) Supportive Services and Needs-Related Payments: Describe the types of supportive services offered in the local area to include any applicable limits and levels. The supportive services offered by the LWDB in the local area must align with the supportive services outlined in CareerSource Florida Administrative Policy 109 – Supportive Services and Needs-Related Payments.

CareerSource Polk provides funded support services to those who are eligible under governing rules and regulations for the type of funding deemed appropriate and allowable. Limitations on funds will not affect the amount that we provide as the limit is already relatively low. Therefore, CareerSource Polk funded support services will be provided to those who are eligible until funds are exhausted.

Supportive Services may be provided for Welfare Transition, WIOA Youth, Adults, and Dislocated customers who are participating in authorized program activities and who otherwise are unable to obtain such supportive services.

The Local Board will consider payment for customer support needs that will remove barriers, enable the customer to attend and/or to remain in training, prepare for and actively participate in work related activities that will allow them to attain and remain in full-time permanent employment, including but not limited to job search, post placement employment and community work experience.

Services are coordinated for customers to receive, based on need, support services in an amount up to \$1000 for transportation needs, inclusive of fuel cards, bus passes and limited vehicle repairs. Other supportive services may include ABE/GED classes, clothing, medical services and childcare referral services.

CareerSource Polk is actively engaged with Polk County Transportation Disadvantage Local Coordinating Board, which addresses issues related to transportation for the disabled, elderly, disadvantaged and blind services.

(7) Individuals with Disabilities: Describe service strategies the LWDB has in place or will develop that will improve meeting the needs of customers with disabilities as well as other population groups protected under Section 188 of WIOA and 29 CFR Part 38.

CareerSource Polk career centers strive to be physically and programmatically accessible to all customers, including individuals with disabilities. All of CareerSource Polk's facilities are ADA compliant providing necessary accommodations, adequate space for the use of assistive devices or personal assistants, allowing individuals to participate in the full range of programs.

CareerSource Polk supports individuals with limited English proficiency, employing bilingual staff and providing printed material in several languages. We will continue collaborating with partners to provide services, resources and referrals to limited English speaking jobseekers. Local Adult Education programs offer Adult English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) instruction for adults to improve their English speaking and writing skills but also to improve their academic skills so they can earn a high school credential and enter postsecondary education to improve their career options.

Equal Opportunity evaluates each CareerSource Polk facility at least every three years to ensure compliance with ADA standards.

CareerSource Polk staff members receive training on disability awareness, sensitivity and etiquette; and outreach for employers and federal contractors that are required to comply with Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act. In addition, select staff is trained to enroll SSA beneficiaries in the Ticket to Work program. Individuals requiring additional services may be referred by staff to other agencies. In addition, Vocational Rehabilitation is co-located in our one-stop service delivery system.

CareerSource Polk offers a variety of resources and information on services available to persons with disabilities including: information on training opportunities and links to online training; technology guides for using screen enlargement software, screen reading software, Windows Accessibility features, American Sign Language interpreters, referral to the Abilities work portal on www.employflorida.com, and the Text Telephone or Teletypewriter for the Deaf (TTY); information on the ADA and accessibility; links to service providers and resources to assist persons with disabilities in removing barriers to employment; and links to information

for employers interested in hiring a person with a disability including tax benefits, the ADA and accommodations.

(8) Linkage with Unemployment Insurance (referred to as Reemployment Assistance in Florida) programs: Describe strategies and services used in the local area to strengthen linkages between the one-stop delivery system and the Reemployment Assistance program (WIOA § 134(c) and 20 CFR 679.560(b)(3)(iv)).

FloridaCommerce jointly managed staff are in the Career Centers and, among other tasks, assist customers as they file Unemployment Insurance Claims. CareerSource Polk recognizes that being unemployed is very overwhelming to customers. There are dedicated computers in each of the Career Centers to facilitate filing claims, job search, and updating resumes. FloridaCommerce staff are cross trained to answer basic questions and assist with issues like address changes, 1099's, etc. FloridaCommerce staff ensure customers are assisted with filing their unemployment claim and can answer questions regarding the initial claims process as well as any questions about rights and responsibilities.

CareerSource Polk RESEA staff conducts the reemployment services and eligibility assessment for referred customers. In 2010, the Florida Legislature passed a law (Chapter 443.091, F.S.) requiring Reemployment Assistance (RA) claimants to register with the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (FloridaCommerce) using the state's management information system, Employ Florida (EF), and report to the Career Center as directed by CareerSource Polk for reemployment services. The goal is to ensure RA claimants have access to the full array of employment and training services through the CareerSource Polk delivery system while ensuring that claimants comply with the State's requirements to actively engage in seeking work as a condition of receiving benefits.

(9) Highest Quality of Services to Veterans and Covered Persons: Describe the LWDB's strategies and policies for providing veterans and covered persons with the highest quality of service at every phase of services offered. Policies must be implemented to ensure eligible veterans and covered persons are aware of their entitlement to priority of service, the full array of programs and services available to them, and applicable eligibility requirements for those programs and/or services.

CareerSource Polk is highly dedicated to providing outstanding service to veterans/eligible spouses and have integrated the veteran services within our career centers. Our Community Involvement and Outreach partnerships are intertwined in that we both work together in coordination for supportive services to veterans and their families throughout the year, assisting with seasonal events, hiring and local events that address the specific needs of veterans within our community. The DVOP specialist conduct outreach activities in the local

area to build capacity with community resources, engage with current participants, and actively recruit eligible veterans to increase their case load

The Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER) is integrated within the Business Service Unit and is involved in all hiring/recruiting and job fairs to ensure and support the hiring of local veterans. The LVER and Business Service Unit work cohesively to assist staff with job-ready veterans for job matching, job development and possible job placement.

(10) Entities Carrying Out Core Programs and Combined State Plan Partner Programs: Describe how the LWDB works with entities carrying out core and combined state plan partner programs to:

- (a)** Expand access to employment, training, education and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment; (20 CFR 679.560(b)(2)(i))
- (b)** Facilitate the development of career pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs; (20 CFR 679.560(b)(2)(ii) and
- (c)** Improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential (including a portable and stackable credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification) (WIOA § 108(b)(3) and 20 CFR 679.560(b)(2)(iii), to include credentials contained on Florida’s Master Credentials List.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act fosters new opportunities for innovation and collaboration across Federal, State, and local agencies, private organizations, and businesses. The shift in VR, Division of Blind Services, CTE, CSBG, SECEP and Adult Education’s roles as core partners in the workforce development system will enhance service options and job choices for those we serve. CareerSource Polk will continue to work with our core partners to:

- Implement the Opportunity Act with other core programs, including the design of the One-Stop Career Center System and the integrated performance accountability system
- Efficiently provide services
- Implement universal design principles into the workforce development system’s facilities and operations
- Establish partnerships with community rehabilitation service providers and businesses
- Review services, programs and partnerships of core Opportunity Act programs to reduce duplication of efforts, as well as gaps between programs
- Work collaboratively to ensure that disability navigators are cross trained with core

- partner processes
- Partner to communicate, strategize and execute agreed upon methods of meeting the needs of individuals with disabilities
- Identify opportunities to expand services/programs to meet ongoing needs of individuals with disabilities

Eligible customers service will be co-enrolled in Wagner-Peyser and WIOA as appropriate, and there is an increased emphasis in all CareerSource Polk service provider contracts on industry-recognized credentials.

Through new and continued partnerships CareerSource Polk will promote efforts to economic self-sufficiency that is attainable through recognized post-secondary credentials and certification.

(11)Employer Engagement: Describe strategies and services used in the local area

- (a) Facilitate engagement of employers in workforce development, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations; (20 CFR 679.560(b)(3(i))**

The Business Services Division utilizes the Regional Demand Occupations List, its relationships attained through business related organizations (Chambers of Commerce, Society for Human Resources Management, EDCs, etc.) and lists of employers as the basis for identifying and initiating contact with small and large employers throughout the region. The Business Services Division works directly with employers in identifying and addressing their employment and training needs. This is done through monthly newsletters, e-mail blasts, social media, online surveys, employer-site visits, job fairs, recruiting events, human resources roundtables and an Annual State of the Workforce Summit.

Customer relationship management is conducted through employflorida.com as well as Econovue. Activities and case notes in EF provide required documentation of the services provided.

- (b) Support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area. (20 CFR 679.560(b)(3(ii))**

Meeting the needs of businesses in the local area can be evaluated through the surveys. Following some of the events and services, employers are provided with an electronic survey, they may also be provided with hard copy surveys at some of the events, such as job fairs, recruitment events, and the Workforce Summit.

Business Service Division staff are members of local, regional or statewide business forums and attend meetings to stay abreast of current and emerging workforce needs. These include Chamber of Commerce, Mid-Florida Society for Human Resources Management, Economic Development Organizations, the Polk Manufacturer's Association, Career Academies, etc.

(c) Utilize community-based information related to educational programs and industry needs contained in the quarterly reports submitted to the LWDB by the local area's education and industry consortium. (CareerSource Florida Strategic Policy 2023.09.19.A.2)

(12) Enhancing Apprenticeships: Describe how the LWDB enhances the use of registered apprenticeships to support the local economy and comply with CareerSource Florida Strategic Policy 2019.02.13.A.1 – Registered Apprenticeship Strategic Policy. Describe how the LWDB and apprenticeship navigators work with industry representatives, education partners, and local businesses to develop registered apprenticeships, in collaboration with apprenticeship training representatives from the Florida Department of Education and other partners. Describe strategies and operations that promote and support statewide apprenticeship goals that include, but are not limited to:

- (a)** Increasing total number of new apprentices and pre-apprentices per year
- (b)** Increasing total number of registered apprenticeship programs and program occupations
- (c)** Increasing total number of registered pre-apprenticeship programs
- (d)** Expanding registered apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships into healthcare, advanced manufacturing, aviation and aerospace, information technology, and other emerging industries.
- (e)** Supporting apprentices with WIOA services to support the on-the-job learning, related instruction, and supportive services.

CSP encourages career seekers to utilize apprenticeship programs as a career pathway to high demand, high wage occupations that are needed in the LWDA. CSP has identified the critical need for skilled labor in the areas of manufacturing and recognizes that apprenticeship programs are a key job-driven strategy for employers and industries.

CSP makes job seekers aware of apprenticeship opportunities through orientations, outreach/community events, flyers, presentations, and partnership meetings.

CareerSource Polk is constantly working with the educational partners to ensure apprenticeship programs are included as part of our extensive offering of training programs. Apprenticeship programs are included on our Eligible Training Providers List (ETPL), which is available to all customers emphasizing customer choice. The list is

available on our website, and a copy is also offered to the customers when working with the case managers in the ITA process.

CSP is working with industry representatives and local businesses to develop registered apprenticeships in collaboration with apprenticeship training representatives from FloridaCommerce and other partners, including educational partners.

Description of Local One-Stop Delivery System

(1) **General System Description: Describe the one-stop delivery system in your local area, including the roles and resource contributions of one-stop partners (WIOA §108(b)(6)).**

CareerSource Polk's delivery of services is carried out through its comprehensive One-Stop delivery system, which integrates the provision of services for unemployed, underemployed, and employed workers including Welfare Transition/Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (WT/TANF) and SNAP E&T customers. For WT/TANF customers and others who may require additional education and training, including job readiness, and adult basic education skills training, etc., referrals are made to other partners including, school districts, community-based programs, and faith-based organizations.

CareerSource Polk operates two full service one-stop career centers. Both centers provide WIOA, TAA, WT, SNAP, Veterans, Wagner-Peyser, MSFW and RESEA services. Upon entering a full-service career center, job seekers find integrated case management approach to assist these individuals to become competitive for employment. Partners co-located at the one-stop career center include: AARP (SCSEP) and Job Corps. Vocational Rehabilitation is located in our Winter Haven facility, on the third floor. Services provided include:

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

The WIOA program provides individualized services intended to help job seekers return to the workforce by utilizing general, individual, and if determined eligible, training services. WIOA provides one-on-one assistance with resumes, interviewing, job search, and career planning. Workers who are either unemployed or working in low-wage jobs may be eligible for supportive services while seeking employment, interviewing, or attending training. The primary focus of training is to obtain a certificate or degree of value to the labor market, leading to a job in high demand occupations and emerging industries. As funding allows, participants may be eligible to receive tuition assistance which may include instructional costs, books, materials, and fees (i.e. application costs, registration, and laboratory fees).

The target population for WIOA services consist of workers who have lost their jobs due to no fault of their own (dislocated workers); Homemakers who have lost their financial support from a family member; recipients of public assistance and other low-income individuals when funds are limited; employed workers that need skills upgrading or retraining.

WIOA Youth:

The Youth program is designed to guide eligible young adults, through high-quality case management, toward educational attainment which includes career guidance and exploration. Youth services allow for the provision of summer and/or year-round work experience opportunities such as internships and pre-apprenticeships, and skills training along a career pathway for in-demand industries and occupations, including supportive services. The ultimate goal for program participants is either advancement into post-secondary education or the attainment of employment with a family-sustaining or self-sustaining wage. Youth program services are prioritized for out-of-school youth (OSY) and youth with significant barriers, including disabilities, pregnant or parenting, or those subjected to the juvenile/adult justice system.

Wagner-Peyser

Wagner-Peyser provides labor exchange bringing together individuals who are seeking employment and employers who are seeking employees. Through Wagner-Peyser labor exchange system, we have the capacity to assist job seekers to find employment; assist employers in filling jobs and facilitate the match between job seekers and employers.

Welfare Transition/TANF

The Welfare Transition Program (WTP) provides emphasis on work, self-sufficiency, and personal responsibility; as well as opportunities for welfare recipients to move from welfare to work. The support structure includes the programs and services such as: employment programs, job training, childcare and transportation assistance; diversion programs to reduce domestic violence and child abuse; diversions to prevent families from going on welfare and relocation assistance.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment & Training (SNAP E&T)

The SNAP E&T program emphasizes work, self-sufficiency, and personal responsibility. Program participants gain valuable skills, training, and work experience in an effort to reach total self-sufficiency.

Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA)

The program provides re-employment services to pre-selected UC claimants that are most likely to exhaust their unemployment benefits. Services include, but are not limited to:

- Orientation and Assessment
- Labor market information unique to area of work experience
- Developing an employability development plan
- Job and additional services referrals

- Follow-up to further assist in their employment efforts

Migrant Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW)

CareerSource Polk is committed to serving farmworkers who work in the Polk County service area. The MSFW Outreach Specialist assigned to our Region is bi-lingual and is accustomed to serving the farmworker population and employers located within Polk County. Our MSFW Outreach Specialist works jointly with the agricultural employers and directly with the farmworkers to deliver available employment services and knowledge of services available in our One-Stop career center and other agencies available to the farmworkers to promote quality of the labor exchange and quality of life for farm workers in our service area.

Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)

Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) helps workers who are adversely affected by foreign imports or job shifts to a foreign country. Assistance is provided to eligible workers in the form of reemployment services, training, job search, relocation, and support benefits in the form of Trade Readjustment Allowances (TRA) and/or Alternative/Reemployment Trade Adjustment Assistance (ATAA/RTAA) for older workers.

FloridaCommerce Merit Staff maintain familiarity with TAA requirements, screening and determination applicability. As part of the TAA Information Meeting, and in any subsequent contact, the local TAA Coordinator will emphasize the importance of receiving an assessment prior to their enrollment in training deadline. Any affected workers requesting TAA assistance that may be coming from outside the region are referred to the local designated TAA staff.

Veteran Services

Our region utilizes an electronic tracking system for all customers who enter our career centers. Veterans are identified in a prominent manner on this system which allows all Wagner-Peyser staff to see the next available customer. Those identified by their veteran status will receive priority of service which means they will be attended to before non- veterans.

Veterans and eligible spouses have priority of service in the resource room and for all programs operated by the region and are seen immediately. Veterans are offered the full range of career center services to include job counseling, job search/referral, resume services, as well as specialized assistance on veterans' rights and benefits as well as assistance and interface with Veteran's Administration (VA) programs.

- (a) Describe how WIOA core partners and combined state plan partners contribute to the LWDB’s planning and implementation efforts. If any core or required partner is not involved, explain the reason.

CareerSource Polk enjoys strong partnerships with required and non-required One-Stop partners. Through these partnerships, attempts are made to minimize duplication of services and leverage resources to ensure efficient use of funds in our region. All partners are allowed, encouraged and applauded for participation in our quarterly Partner Management Team meetings which allow full disclosure of each agency’s services, successes and concerns. Discussions at meetings include full engagement of partners with various agency plans, participation in task forces and/or committees and collaboration on grant opportunities that will benefit the region.

All partners are allowed and encouraged to become Tier 1 certified, providing access to Employ Florida and allowing partner agencies to make job referrals.

Vocational Rehabilitation, Polk County Public Schools GED Program, ALPI and Job Corps provide services at the One-Stop career centers. All other partners are located at their own facilities. CareerSource Polk also provides the rural community with services on the Mobile One-Stop Unit as needed.

Several of our strategic partners serve on the CareerSource Polk Board and/or the Youth Development Council.

CareerSource Polk maintains an electronic distribution list of partners and uses it regularly to inform partners of workforce activities, including job fairs, grant opportunities, recruitment events, equipment availability through our disposal process, etc.

Partners are essential to CareerSource Polk’s planning and implementation efforts, as they contribute to our goal of providing seamless and integrated employment services for our customers through the One-Stop delivery system.

- (b) Identify any optional/additional partners included in the local one-stop delivery system and how their inclusion in the local system achieves state and local strategies, operations and performance outcomes.

N/A

- (2) Customer Access: Describe actions taken by the LWDB to fully implement CareerSource Florida Strategic Policy 2021.09.15.A.1 – Availability of Services to Floridians and promote maximum integration of service delivery through the one-stop delivery system for both business customers and job seekers.**

- (a) Describe how entities within the one-stop delivery system, including one-stop operators and one-stop partners, comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act regarding physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology and materials for individuals with disabilities, including providing staff training and support for addressing needs of individuals with disabilities. Describe how the LWDB incorporates feedback received during consultations with local Independent Living Centers on compliance with Section 188 of WIOA (WIOA §108(b)(6)(C)).

CareerSource Polk utilizes the EEO monitoring tool to inspect site operations and services and ensure ADA compliance. Hearing impaired customers are assisted through American Sign Language interpreters, the TTY system, and a current staff member with conversational sign language skills. Individuals with visual impairments are assisted using Job Assess with Speech (JAWS) in the resource room and assessment labs, large print copies and electronic copies of documents. In addition, assistance and referrals may be made through Lighthouse for the Blind or the Division of Blind Services. Individuals with disabilities are referred to the Florida Abilities Work portal on www.employflorida.com. The Disability Program Navigator facilitates staff training on providing services, and resources available to individuals with disabilities.

- (b) **Describe how entities within the one-stop delivery system use principles of universal design in their operation.**

The Board assures us that the local career center delivery system provides services to all customers consistent with the principles of universal access and in accordance with all relevant laws and regulations, state policies and procedures. The Board also assures us that applicable career services will be provided in at least one physical career center in the workforce area. In the event a facility requires changes to its lay-out, equipment or furniture, a designer may be contracted to ensure the facility remains ADA compliant and is accessible to everyone, regardless of their age, ability, or status in life.

Universal access principles include:

Equitable use

Flexibility in use

Simple and intuitive use

Perceptible information

Tolerance for Error

Low physical effort

Size and space for approach and use

- (c) Describe how the LWDB facilitates access to services provided through the local delivery system, including remote areas, using technology and other means (WIOA §108(b)(6)(B) and 20 CFR 560 (b)(5)(ii)).

Our local delivery system provides ADA compliant facilities in our Winter Haven and Lakeland career centers. Annual reviews by the CareerSource Polk Facilities Manager and the EEO ensure ADA compliance and access to services.

Remote areas are served through our website and social media, the mobile unit, a partnership with members of the Polk County Library Cooperative and other organizations, and co-locating staff at select sites throughout the county. CareerSourcePolk.com and social media (Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn) provide information on the services available to employers and job seekers. The mobile unit travels to municipalities, libraries, non-profit organizations, and correctional probation offices throughout the county providing job seekers with access to computers with internet service, printers, copiers and fax machines and Career Specialists. CareerSource Polk staff has provided training to Polk County library staff and agency partners, and provide updates on new job postings, programs, recruiting events, job fairs and other activities via email.

Services are currently provided by stationing staff at different partner locations, i.e., Libraries, Traviss and Ridge Career Centers, Housing Authorities and Community Centers. Staff continues to develop agreements to co-locate staff at additional partner locations as necessary.

- (3) Integration of Services:** Describe how one-stop career centers implemented and transitioned to an integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information system for programs carried out under WIOA and programs carried out by one-stop career center partners (WIOA §108(b)(21)).

CareerSource Polk facilitates a paperless system that enables workforce system staff to operate more efficiently with greater accountability and allows customer to submit documentation via electronic means without having to present at our physical locations. Customers can complete various program orientations online to avoid long lines and long waits at the career centers.

- (4) Sub-grants and Contracts:** Describe the competitive process used by the LWDB to award sub-grants and contracts in the local area for WIOA-funded activities (WIOA §108(b)(16)).

The extent of competition will be consistent with the dollar amount but, in general, procurements will be conducted in an open manner, available to the public for response and all procurement decisions will be documented.

Competitive procurement process must be used for purchases of \$250,000.01 and above. Each process shall be publicly advertised and a formal request for bids, proposals, or quotes shall be issued. Where the services are for the purpose of implementing grant activities, and not for the day-to-day operations of the agency except as provided herein for On-the-Job Training, GED Training and Employed/Incumbent Worker Training, the decision to let an RFP or a bid shall be made by the governing board, which is, the Polk County Workforce Development Board, Inc., for their approval.

CareerSource Polk will maintain a list of previous and prospective proposers who have asked to be included on the proposer/bid list for various types of goods and services. CareerSource Polk will ensure all prequalified lists of persons, firms, or products which are used are current and potential bidders will not be precluded from qualifying during the solicitation period. When CareerSource Polk issues a formal solicitation, these proposers will, if practicable, be notified that CareerSource Polk is seeking goods or services.

Legal notices will be posted on the Board's website and shall appear in at least one newspaper of general circulation for three (3) consecutive days whenever a formal bid/proposal is let. Potential bidders will be given at least ten (10) working days to respond to the advertisement if time permits.

Solicitations will provide for all the following:

- Clear and accurate descriptions of the services being procured. The description must not contain features that restrict competition.
- All requirements that must be fulfilled and all other factors used in evaluation of bids or proposals.
- Technical requirements described in terms of functions to be performed or performance required, including a range of acceptable or minimum acceptable standards.
- Specific features of--brand name or equal descriptions, if included in the solicitation.
- If procuring goods or certain types of services, the acceptability of metric measurements.
- Preference for ecologically sound and energy-efficient products.

The Board will accept proposals based upon the terms and conditions of the RFP.

Proposals / bids submitted are received by the Board staff and stamped with date and time of receipt.

Proposal/bid evaluation criteria are published with the RFP or bid. The rating criteria include but are not limited to the following elements:

- Proposer's financial capability. Proposer's books and records are kept in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.
- Reasonableness of the cost.
- Proposer's ability to meet performance goals.
- Proposer's record of past performance in the delivery of services.
- Proposer's experience.

The Board may conduct pre-award surveys where indicated.

RFPs and bids shall be reviewed by staff for responsiveness. Nonresponsive proposers are notified in accordance with the RFP or bid.

The President/CEO shall assemble review committees to rate and rank proposals and bids. Generally, review committees consist of board members and/or staff members who volunteer to serve in that capacity. They may on occasion consist of members of the community with special applicable expertise.

Proposals to serve Youth must be presented to the Youth Development Council which shall make recommendations as to funding in some cases to the Board of Directors.

Other proposals/bids for program services must generally be presented to the appropriate Committee/Council who provides oversight for that good or service. The committee then makes recommendations for funding and in some cases selection to the Board's Executive Committee for selection and approval.

Recommendations from the Board's committees are submitted for consideration to the Full Board of Directors which makes the final selection and approval determinations.

All procurement contracts and other transactions between local workforce boards and units of state or local governments using WIOA funds must be conducted only on a cost reimbursement basis. No provision for profit is allowed.

Any excess of revenue over costs incurred for services provided by a governmental or non-profit entity must be included in program income.

The type of agreement entered into by the local workforce board may be fixed price or cost reimbursement, depending on the method of procurement and services being procured. The “cost-plus-a-percentage-of-cost” or “percentage of construction cost” methods of contracting shall not be used.

CareerSource Polk will negotiate profit as a separate element of the price for each contract in which there is no price competition and in all cases where cost analysis is performed. Costs or prices based on estimated costs for contracts are negotiated using the Federal cost principles.

When possible, CareerSource Polk may enter into state and local intergovernmental agreements where appropriate for procurement or use of common or shared goods and services and may use Federal excess and surplus property in lieu of purchasing new equipment and property.

For fixed amount sub-awards prior approval from FLORIDA COMMERCE will be obtained. Payments will be based on meeting specific requirements of the Federal award and accountability is based on performance and results. The award amount will be negotiated using the cost principles as the guide. CareerSource Polk will use cost, historical cost, or unit pricing data to establish the fixed amount award with assurance the sub-recipient will realize no increment above actual cost. If the award is terminated before the completion of the project, the award amount will be adjusted. The sub-recipient will certify in writing to CareerSource Polk at the end of the award that the project or activity was completed or the level of effort was expended. Prior written approval is required by the sub-recipient for changes in project leader or scope of effort.

Positive efforts shall be made by recipients to utilize small businesses, minority-owned firms, labor surplus area firms and women’s business enterprises, whenever possible. Recipients of Federal awards shall take all of the steps outlined in xvii to further this goal.

Contracts shall be made only with responsible contractors who possess the potential ability to perform successfully under the terms and conditions of the proposed procurement. Consideration shall be given to such matters as contractor integrity, record of past performance, financial and technical resources, or accessibility to other necessary resources. In certain circumstances, contracts with certain parties are restricted by agencies’ implementation of E.O.s 12549 and 12689, “Debarment and Suspension.”

Awards will not be made to a debarred or suspended party. This is required to be verified for all sub-recipient contracts and for vendor contracts greater than or equal to \$35,000, or procurements of Federally required audit services in any amount.

(5) Service Provider Continuous Improvement: Describe how the LWDB will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers through the system and that such providers will meet the employment needs of local employers, workers and job seekers (WIOA 108(b)(6)(A) and 20 CFR 679.560(5)(i)).

To ensure the continuous improvement of contracted service providers and other eligible providers of services, we will continue to monitor and assess the services provided to determine areas of opportunity to improve our service delivery. With the implementation of WIOA, it presents a great opportunity to review the services, programs, and policies and procedures to align resources, correct deficiencies and ensure compliance with the new law.

We continue to enhance system-wide accountability and continuous improvement for the workforce system in general, including training providers. Several methods are currently being implemented at the state level to monitor and assess performance on a quarterly and annual basis through the core partners' submission of data to Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program (FETPIP) for data validation and compliance with WIOA requirements and subsequent reporting to USDOL and USDOE.

The state and local boards' Eligible Training Providers List" and the related eligibility procedures ensure the accountability, quality and labor-market-relevance of the training services programs that receive funds through WIOA Title I-B. Training providers will be subject to the initial eligibility pursuant to WIOA, which grants eligibility for only one full fiscal year, after which they make seek continued eligibility, based on performance and compliance with other requirements as established by the local board.

To ensure the continuous improvement of the services provided by CareerSource Polk who is responsible for providing direct oversight and technical support for the execution of workforce programs. CareerSource Polk's as the One-Stop Operator monitors performance through the appropriate MIS systems (i.e. EF, OSST) as well as monthly meetings with the career center management. Quarterly performance meetings are conducted with the Project Manager and Career Center management to discuss successes, concerns and questions that have surfaced during the quarter.

The CareerSource Polk Board is also structured to provide oversight of program activities. The top management of each Department (One-Stop Career Center, Youth Services, and Business Services) is required to attend the appropriate Board Council/Committee and report on performance over the quarter. The Youth Development Council receives and reviews the quarterly performance report of the Youth Leaders program. The Workforce Performance Council receives and reviews the quarterly performance report of the One-Stop Operator and reviews the quarterly performance report of the Business Services.

CareerSource Polk contracts with a third-party qualified firm that provides programmatic and fiscal monitoring of workforce programs. The contracted monitors conduct monitoring visits at least 4 times during the fiscal year. Monitoring reports, along with the Corrective Action Plans are provided to the Board, through the appropriate Council for full review and comment. The Councils review the reports and address concerns to the Board staff and Service Provider staff on a quarterly basis.

The continuous improvement of the eligible training providers must include:

- Information specifying the levels of performance achieved with respect to the number of individuals engaging in the program of study. The total number of individuals exiting from the program of study
- The total number of participants who received training services through each of the adult programs and the dislocated worker program
- Average cost per participant for the participants who received training services
- The number of individuals with barriers to employment served by each of the adult programs and dislocated workers.

Coordination of Services

- (1) Coordination of Programs/Partners: Describe how services are coordinated across programs/partners in the one-stop centers, including Vocational Rehabilitation, TANF, SNAP E&T and Adult Education and Literacy activities. Specify how the local area coordinates with these programs to prevent duplication and improve services to customers. 20 CFR 679.560.**

Partnerships are the cornerstone of our strategic initiatives. At CareerSource Polk, we take pride in leading and nurturing our extensive partnership network. Our commitment is to continually strengthen these relationships to optimize resources, enhance services, and prevent duplication.

CareerSource Polk maintains a comprehensive resource bank of partner services and programs, complete with direct contacts for relevant services. Our team excels at identifying and addressing employment barriers while working directly with customers. We focus on building strong, personal relationships with our partner program contacts to ensure our customers' needs are met efficiently, reducing the need for repeated attempts. These connections may occur through designated referral platforms such as Unite Us, WebAuthor, dedicated and encrypted email, or phone calls. To prevent duplication of services, CareerSource Polk records all supportive services and case notes into Employ Florida and collaborates with other community partners as needed.

For our mandated partners, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with each partner program outlines the terms for cooperation and consultation between the partner and the board regarding workforce program services. These services are delivered by staff in a coordinated, seamless, and customer-friendly manner within the local one-stop career centers.

We are committed to ensuring career centers are accessible to all job seekers, regardless of obstacles to employment, level of need, or degree of career development. CareerSource Polk provides a common service flow for customers, starting when a job seeker visits our website, utilizes the mobile unit, or enters one of the career centers or affiliate sites. Each location, both physical and virtual, provides information on the various services offered, delivers an orientation, and gives the job seeker an opportunity to take advantage of services through registration.

Once a jobseeker visits CareerSource Polk's website or a physical location, they begin benefiting from our services, including those provided by our local staff and partner staff

(FloridaCommerce, Polk County Public Schools (PCPS), AARP, Job Corps, Agricultural and Labor Program Inc., etc.). Orientation and intake services can begin online, at the center, or via the mobile unit. Occasionally, we bring WIOA services to our training providers to save customers an additional stop at one of our centers. A job seeker might belong to one or more categories (e.g., WIOA, WT, veteran, MSFW, dislocated worker, etc.). No matter how they are classified in terms of service or funding needs, our fully integrated system guarantees they receive the necessary support.

(2) Coordination with Economic Development Activities: Describe the strategies and services that are used in the local area to better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development ((20 CFR 679.560(b)(3)(iii)).

Include an examination of how the LWDB will coordinate local workforce investment activities with local economic development activities that are carried out in the local area and how the LWDB will promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services (WIOA §108(b)(5) and 20 CFR 679.550(b)(4)).

CareerSource Polk is actively engaged with all economic development organizations in the region, including the Central Florida Development Council, Lakeland Economic Development Council, Bartow Committee of 100, Winter Haven Economic Development Council, Haines City Economic Development Council, Lake Wales Economic Development Council, and local Chambers of Commerce (Lakeland Area Chamber, Bartow Chamber, Auburndale Chamber, Mulberry Chamber, Lake Alfred Chamber, Northeast Polk Chamber, and Greater Winter Haven Chamber). Our leadership and business services team members serve as board members or key contacts for all economic development activities in the region.

CareerSource Polk's Business Services team and our President & CEO collaborate with our economic development organizations to meet with businesses looking to expand their business operations or relocate their business to Polk County. Staff regularly attend chamber of commerce functions and serve as guest speakers to promote our services and activities.

The region also offers entrepreneurship training and partners with the Small Business Development Center (SBDC), which is funded by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), Defense Logistics Agency, State of Florida, and other private and public partners. SBDC staff provides training to our Business Services staff, who in turn refer employers/entrepreneurs to the SBDC for assistance. SBDC staff also participate as guest speakers and exhibitors at CareerSource Polk events. Additionally, all Individual Work Plans

for Social Security Ticket to Work participants include information on contacting the SBDC for business start-up assistance.

- (3) **Coordination with Rapid Response: Describe how the LWDB coordinates workforce investment activities carried out in the local area with statewide rapid response and layoff aversion activities (WIOA §108(b)(8) and 20 CFR 679.560(b)(7). The description must include how the LWDB implements the requirements in CareerSource Florida Strategic Policy 2021.06.09.A.2. – Rapid Response and Layoff Aversion System and CareerSource Florida Administrative Policy 114 – Rapid Response Program Administration.**

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014 requires that each state establish a Rapid Response dislocated worker unit to implement statewide Rapid Response activities. In response to this requirement, the state of Florida created the Rapid Response service component for the regional workforce boards within the state, which provides assistance for area employers and workers affected by temporary or permanent business layoffs. However, CareerSource Polk also responds to those companies who, based on the impact of their closure or layoff, are not required to file a WARN notice.

CareerSource Polk Business Services Unit provides Rapid Response services with our jointly managed staff, and all workforce program staff to area employers that are planning to close their facility or lay off a significant portion of their workforce. CareerSource Polk's Director of Business Services serves as the Rapid Response Coordinator and takes the lead . WARN notices from Florida Commerce are sent to our CEO, Vice President of Operations and our Rapid Response Coordinator. CareerSource Polk follows the requirements outlined in CareerSource Florida and Florida Commerce policies.

The Director of Business Services at CareerSource Polk serves as the local Rapid Response Coordinator. This role involves leading communication with the state Rapid Response Coordinator, acting as the primary contact for affected employers and dislocated workers, coordinating the local Rapid Response team, ensuring accurate and timely reporting of activities in Employ Florida, and spearheading layoff aversion strategies in the region. Upon the announcement of a permanent closure, layoff, or disaster causing mass job dislocation, the Rapid Response Coordinator promptly contacts the employer and develops a plan of action to ensure the availability of essential services.

Throughout the year, our Business Services Team, through it's monthly Business Roundtable Series, its' Business Services Signature Employers' Edge Seminars and its State of the

Workforce Summit, educate our employers on layoff aversion strategies, as a proactive approach to workforce planning. Suggested layoff aversion strategies, which are designed to prevent or minimize job losses include:

- **Incumbent Worker Training:** Providing current employees with training to upgrade their skills, making them more valuable to the company and reducing the need for layoffs.
- **Work Sharing Programs:** Reducing the hours of all employees instead of laying off a few, allowing workers to keep their jobs while the company reduces costs.
- **Early Warning Networks:** Monitoring and identifying companies at risk of layoffs early on, so that intervention strategies can be implemented in time.
- **Linkages to Loan Programs:** Connecting businesses with loan programs and other financial assistance to help them stay afloat during tough times.
- **Customized Training Programs:** Developing specific training programs tailored to the needs of the business to help employees transition to new roles within the company.

(4) Industry Partnerships: Describe how the LWDB identifies and collaborates with existing key industry partners in the local area. Describe how the LWDB coordinates and invests in partnership infrastructure where key industry partnerships are not yet developed (WIOA§108(b)(4)A)). The local area must describe how the following elements are incorporated into its local strategy and operational sector strategy policy:

CareerSource Polk identifies key industry partnership opportunities through inquiries and feedback from our business, education and economic development partners, professional organizations, such as the Society for Human Resources Management, local chambers of commerce and our extensive network of business partners.

Our key industry sectors of focus include Health Sciences, Advanced Manufacturing, Agriculture & Agri technology, Aviation & Aerospace, Logistics Supply Chain & Distribution. These industry sectors were determined through a collaborative partnership with the county's premier economic development organization, the Central Florida Development Council. By fostering a broad partnership, we aim to ensure that education and training opportunities remain in sync with the evolving needs of the labor market.

Through our economic development partners, a comprehensive analysis of labor market intelligence forms the basis of the selected industries to target. The data from various sources supports our collective focus.

Advanced Manufacturing: Manufacturing employs nearly 20,000 people in Polk County and generates \$4.3 billion in GDP. It's part of a growing industry: more than 24,000 manufacturers call Florida home, employing over 430,000 workers.

Agriculture & Agri Technology: Agricultural and related industries make up 26.1% (81,902) of the total jobs in Polk County generating approximately \$4.4 billion in GDP. Polk often leads the state in citrus production and total number of citrus acres in production. University of Florida's Lake Alfred research center is ensuring citrus will continue for years.

Health Sciences: Education and health sciences employ over 40,000 people. With five major medical centers and a host of specialty clinics, healthcare is one of Polk County's fastest-growing industries. From health technology and informatics to robotic microsurgery, Polk County's life sciences industry continues to evolve.

Aviation & Aerospace: Polk offers proximity to major infrastructure access points including the Orlando International Airport, Tampa International Airport, Lakeland Linder International Airport and three regional airports within the County propelling our competitiveness in aviation and aerospace – meaning expertise and efficiencies for companies looking to grow. With close to 700 total aircraft operations a day, offering all the advantages of metro airports, without the heavy traffic and high costs of major metro areas, Polk County's aviation sector is soaring. Regional employment in 2022Q4 was 455 with an average annual salary per worker at nearly \$57,000.

Logistics Supply Chain & Distribution: At the epicenter of Florida's distribution chain, companies in Polk can reach nearly 20 million people with same-day delivery, giving them an advantage over competitors in the growing e-commerce and delivery markets. The logistics, supply chain and distribution industries employ more than 700,000 people in the state; jobs in each category are there for those looking for employment in Polk County as companies expand and new firms move in.

CSP uses a similar framework for identifying in-demand occupations.

We work with our state college and manufacturing businesses to identify training candidates, provide training and placement for the participants in manufacturing jobs. CSP has excellent relationships with business partners across several industry sectors.

The President & CEO and CareerSource Polk's Business Services team members engage with nearly all of the economic development organizations throughout the county (i.e. Central Florida Development Council, the Lakeland Economic Development Council, Haines City and Winter Haven EDCs, local Chambers of Commerce, etc.) enabling CareerSource Polk to strategically assist with business development and retention efforts.

(a) Selected industries or sectors are driven by high-quality data (cite data source used);

CareerSource Polk, in partnership with our local economic development organizations, regularly review and analyze high quality, labor market information by industry and occupation to sector strategy efforts. Specific data sources include: LMI shared by Florida Commerce,

- Employment projections Data (both by industry and occupation) produced by Florida Commerce.
- Occupational Employment Statistics and Wages (OES) program. Information is a result of an occupational employment and wage survey conducted by Labor Market Information, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.
- Employ Florida and Help Wanted Online – The Conference Board reports to determine real time labor demand through online ads and job postings.
- Local Economists from local educational institutions.
- JobsEQ

(b) Sector strategies are founded on a shared, regional vision;

The Polk County Workforce Development Board, Inc. dba as CareerSource Polk has been aligned with our local economic development organizations since 1996 when the Heartland Private Industry Council was replaced by Regional Workforce Boards under the Workforce Investment Act. The act aimed to streamline and improve the state's workforce development system. The new RWBs were designed to align with

community college districts and took over the responsibilities of the Private Industry Councils, focusing on job training and workforce development.

Enhanced partnerships were identifying key industry partnership opportunities through inquiries and feedback from professional organizations, such as the MidFlorida Society for Human Resources Management, local Chambers of Commerce, Lakeland LEADS, and serves on several local Boards charged with policy development for workforce and education programs.

The key industry sectors our local area has identified include Health Sciences, Advanced Manufacturing, Agriculture & Agri technology, Aviation & Aerospace, Logistics Supply Chain & Distribution. To ensure that education and training opportunities stay aligned with the needs of the labor market, CSP uses a similar framework for identifying in-demand occupations. We are currently working with our state college and local businesses to identify training candidates, provide training and placement for the participants in manufacturing jobs. CSP has excellent relationships with business partners across several industry sectors.

(c) The local area ensures that sector strategies are directed by industry;

CSP ensures that sector strategies are driven by industry inclusion; they are part of the process. Representatives from targeted industries serve/participate in different regional economic development organizations. The Business Services team continuously provides feedback from employers in targeted industry sectors.

(d) The local area ensures that sector strategies are aimed at strategic alignment of service delivery systems;

CSP's Management Team has great partnerships with economic development organizations throughout the county, institutions of higher learning, and other community organizations. CSP also meets with these partners to ensure alignment of service delivery systems.

(e) The local area transforms services delivered to job seekers/workers and employers through sector strategies;

CSP recognizes the importance of good relationships with employers and strives to be flexible to meet their employment and training needs working closely with state and training partners to meet their needs. We continuously assist by conducting different

assessments, pre-employment training and screening as per the employer's requirements for hiring as well as onsite recruitment events.

(f) The sector strategies are measured, improved, and sustained.

Measurement is conducted based on employer satisfaction through Salesforce, job seeker placements and training completions.

(5) Coordination with Relevant Secondary and Postsecondary Education: Describe how the LWDB coordinates relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities with education and workforce investment activities (including activities related to the Credentials Review Committee, as appropriate) to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services (WIOA §108(b)(10) and 20 CFR 679.560(b)(9)).

Coordination of education and workforce investment activities must be linked to employment opportunities in the local area. The local area contracts with education and training providers whose measurable performance qualifies them to receive WIOA funds to offer a wide variety of training programs and occupational choices to eligible customers. The Regional Targeted Occupations List (RTOL) is the document that determines the occupations for which training may be sponsored. The targeted occupations list identifies the labor market needs of Florida's business community and encourages job training based on those needs, with emphasis on jobs that are both high demand and high skill/high wages.

CareerSource Polk's workforce development strategy is intricately tied to education, starting with the secondary school system to include career and technical schools, and continuing through postsecondary education to include our local state college, and public and private colleges and universities. All core programs have a history of engaging with the education system, in particular the career and technical schools and local colleges and will continue to develop those relationships.

CareerSource Polk partners with Polk County Public Schools in providing services to individuals enrolled in the GED program. Our mobile unit travels to specific locations, as requested, removing the transportation barrier for some while providing immediate access to technology for other customers. We also host GED classes at our Winter Haven career center and assist with funding GED tests.

CareerSource Polk partners with post-secondary educational institutions allowing them to make presentations to our customers about their various training programs.

Some staff are out stationed at or visit the various post-secondary educational institutions which allows students for immediate access to program and services information provided by CareerSource Polk.

There has also been significant collaboration between CareerSource Polk and Polk State College which has been the recipient of two Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College Career Training (TAACCCT) grants. The grant was used to develop curriculum and customize programs to re-train dislocated workers in Advanced Manufacturing. The grant helped prepare dislocated workers and other unemployed individuals for careers in advanced manufacturing. CareerSource Polk will analyze the results of the projects and utilize best practices and lessons learned to help improve the broader workforce development system.

In serving individuals with disabilities, CareerSource Polk will continue to work collaboratively with local community/state colleges, career, and technical schools to explore the development of training programs that are implemented with universal design to train individuals with disabilities for competitive, integrated employment in jobs that meet local labor market demand.

(6) Coordination of Transportation and Other Supportive Services: Describe how the LWDB coordinates WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with the provision of transportation assistance, including public transportation, and other appropriate supportive services in the local area (WIOA §108(b)(11) and 20 CFR 679.560(b)(10)).

CareerSource Polk provides funded support services to those who are eligible under governing rules and regulations for the type of funding deemed appropriate and allowable. Limitations on funds will not affect the amount that we provide as the limit is already relatively low. Therefore, CareerSource Polk funded support services will be provided to those who are eligible until funds are exhausted.

Supportive Services may be provided for Welfare Transition, WIOA Youth, Adults, and Dislocated customers who are participating in authorized program activities and who otherwise are unable to obtain such supportive services.

The Local Board will consider payment for customer support needs that will remove barriers, enable the customer to attend and/or to remain in training, prepare for and actively participate in work related activities that will allow them to attain and remain in full-time permanent employment, including but not limited to job search, post placement employment and community work experience.

Within each consecutive twelve-month period, a WIOA and Welfare Transition mandatory customer may receive, based on need, support services in an amount up to \$1000 for clothing and transportation needs, inclusive of fuel cards, bus passes and limited vehicle repairs. Transitional services for up to 3 months may also be provided to customers who obtained employment and are no longer eligible for cash assistance.

Services are coordinated for customers to receive, based on need, support services in an amount up to \$650 for transportation needs, inclusive of fuel cards, bus passes and limited vehicle repairs. Other supportive services may include ABE/GED classes, clothing, medical services and childcare referral services.

CareerSource Polk is actively engaged with Polk County Transportation Disadvantage Local Coordinating Board, which addresses issues related to transportation for the disable, elderly, disadvantaged and blind services.

(7) Coordination of Wagner-Peyser Services: Describe plans, assurances, and strategies for maximizing coordination, improving service delivery, and avoiding duplication of Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C 49 et seq.) services and other services provided in the local area through the one-stop delivery system (WIOA §108(b)(12) and 20 CFR 679.560(b)(11)).

CareerSource Polk maximizes the labor exchange services provided by Wagner-Peyser staff in many ways, starting as the initial point of contact with individuals who are seeking employment and employers who are seeking employees. We present the delivery of services as a seamless system to all individuals. In striving to provide the best services to customers, we train our staff to assist customers and make their participation experience an effective one, meeting their needs and providing excellent customer services during their participation in one-stop activities.

We provide orientation to the services available through the One-Stop career center and assess customer's skills levels and abilities to determine job readiness and provide immediate assistance with job matching of employer job requirements and screening for supportive service needs. Career Services are provided to all customers who are primarily seeking employment assistance, both self-service and assisted, including customers seeking veteran's services that have no identified significant barriers. Customers are registered in Employ Florida (EF).

In order to improve the service delivery and avoid duplication of services, CareerSource Polk maximizes its resources by working cohesively with partners. Partner's staff participates in cross training sessions related to customer service, eligibility, resources, referrals, and performance issues, which empowers them to effectively identify and assist customers according to their needs.

- AARP Senior Citizen Supported Employment Program- staff are co-located in the Winter Haven career center and assist customers with Resource Room services.
- The Agricultural and Labor Program, Inc.- staff are co-located in the Lakeland career center and assist customers with housing, transportation, and utilities as well as training and employment.
- Job Corp - staff are co-located in the Lakeland career center and assist eligible youth customers with engaging in alternative residential education and job training.
- Polk County Drug Court – CareerSource Polk provides mobile unit services as well as staff to assist individuals referred by the Drug Court system with job search activities.
- Polk County Public Schools - CareerSource Polk partners with Polk County Public Schools in providing services to individuals enrolled in the GED program. Our mobile unit travels to specific locations removing the transportation barrier for some while providing immediate access to technology. We also host GED classes in our career centers, and fund GED tests.

Our partnership with the above listed partners allows us to enhance the participation and performance of customers served through the system.

(8) Coordination of Adult Education and Literacy: Describe how the LWDB coordinates WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with adult education and literacy activities under WIOA Title II. This description must include how the LWDB carries out the review of local applications submitted under Title II WIOA § 108(b)(10), consistent with WIOA sections 107(d)(11)(A) and (B)(i) and WIOA § 232 (20 CFR 679.560(b)(12)).

We continuously meet with the Polk County Public Schools - Adult Education to strengthen partnership and to collaborate on various grant opportunities. At the local level, some adult education providers have developed relationships with postsecondary education providers. Students who do not earn a high enough score on placement tests at the postsecondary

institution are referred to a local adult basic education program for remedial work. After the student has demonstrated sufficient academic progress at the local adult education program, as determined by an approved standardized test, the student is referred back to the postsecondary institution.

- (9) Reduction of Welfare Dependency: Describe how the LWDB coordinates workforce investment activities to reduce welfare dependency, particularly regarding how services are delivered to TANF/Welfare Transition and SNAP E&T participants, to help individuals become self-sufficient. This description must include:**

Welfare Transition Program:

We often co-enroll participants in the WT Program in adult education/literacy training and in WIOA to provide training opportunities, while WT provides support services. Classroom training and OJTs are also coordinated effort between programs. For WT participants who are medically deferred or have documented disabilities, we refer them to VR or the Division of Blind Services, and for legal assistance to apply for SSI or SSDI.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

Participants in the SNAP program may be dually enrolled in the WIOA Adult/Dislocated Workers and/or Youth Services programs to receive education and training opportunities. Participants are also referred to community partners for adult education/literacy training, legal assistance, and housing. Participants in the SNAP program receive assistance with transportation costs related to participation through the Food Stamp Reimbursement (FSR) Program.

- (a) How the CLIFF suite of tools is used to support the case management of participants, consistent with CareerSource Florida Strategic Policy 2023.06.07.A.5;**

The CareerSource Polk case management team has been trained to utilize the CLIFF Dashboard to offer informational resources tailored to customers' positions on the national 'crisis-stability continuum.' Currently, the CLIFF suite of tools is utilized with TANF/Welfare Transition and SNAP E&T participants, with plans to extend its use to case management for WIOA, RESEA, and JVSG participants. The CLIFF tool aids case management through assessment, goal setting and planning, progress tracking, service delivery, reporting, and data analysis.

- (b) Information and data on activities related to initiatives in the local area that support the self-sufficiency of public benefit recipients (i.e., Hope Florida); and**

CareerSource Polk provides multiple activities/programs to support self-sufficiency including:

- **Hope Florida Program:** CareerSource Polk has a Hope Florida Navigator who is available to receive and issue referrals to the Department of Children and Families. As part of the program, CareerSource Polk conducts an assessment and then connects the individual with application employment and/or training programs.
- **Job Search Skills Training:** CareerSource Polk offers workshops regularly to assist job seekers with effective resume writing, interviewing, and networking skills.
- **Get There Faster Veterans:** CareerSource Polk offers a program for veteran and activity duty military spouses that provides employment and training activities along with supportive services. Veterans with significant barriers to employment are targeted for participation in the program. Transportation Assistance: Help overcome transportation barriers to job opportunities.
- **Ticket to Work Program:** CareerSource Polk offers employment services to individuals receiving SSI or SSDI. Through the program, an individual employment plan is established to assist persons with a disability find and keep employment.
- **CareerSource Polk Workforce Incentive Awards:** The Workforce Incentive Awards were created in 2019 to recognize and provide support to Polk County residents demonstrating a commitment to both pursuing a career through the CareerSource Polk (CSP) workforce system and demonstrating a commitment to becoming and remaining self-sufficient. Eligibility Requirements: Must be a Polk County resident, a current or former CareerSource Polk customer within the last 3 years.
- Awards are designed to address barriers to employment and may include support the following needs:
 - Transportation
 - Childcare
 - Housing Assistance
 - Food Insecurities
 - Education & Training
 - Healthcare
 - And more...

(c) Strategies and services used in the local area to support co-enrollment of Welfare Transition and SNAP E&T participants into other workforce development programs. 20 CFR 675.100(h) and 20 CFR 680.620.

The following strategies and services are used in the local area to support the co-enrollment of WT and SNAP participants into other workforce programs:

needs and identify opportunities for co-enrollment in relevant programs.

Collaboration with Training Providers: Develop partnerships with educational institutions and training providers offering programs aligned with in-demand skills.

Streamlined Enrollment Process: Facilitate a smooth transition between TANF/SNAP E&T and co-enrolled programs, minimizing administrative burdens for participants.

Incentives and Support Services: Offer incentives like transportation assistance, childcare support, or completion bonuses to encourage co-enrollment and program completion.

Success Stories: Share success stories of participants who achieved self-sufficiency through co-enrollment, inspiring others to follow suit.

By leveraging the CLIFF suite, supporting self-sufficiency initiatives, and promoting co-enrollment, the local workforce board empowers TANF/SNAP E&T participants with the tools and resources they need to overcome barriers and achieve self-sufficiency. This collaborative approach strengthens the community by reducing welfare dependency and fostering a skilled and competitive workforce.

Performance & Effectiveness

- (1) The local levels of performance negotiated with the Governor and chief local elected official(s) with WIOA § 116(c), to be used to measure the performance of the local area and to be used by the LWDB for measuring the performance of the local fiscal agent (where appropriate), eligible providers under WIOA Title I Subtitle B, and the one-stop delivery system in the local area. (WIOA §108(b)(17) and 20 CFR 679.560(16)(b))

While performance negotiations had yet to occur prior to Plan submission, CareerSource Polk temporarily proposes the current performance measures remain in effect:

LWDB 17 CareerSource Polk WIOA Performance Measures	PY2024 Proposed Performance Levels	PY202 Proposed Performance Levels
Adults:		
Employed 2nd Qtr. After Exit	87.0%	87.0%
Employed 4th Qtr. After Exit	86.0%	86.0%
Median Wage 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$7,000	\$7,000
Credential Attainment Rate	77.0%	77.0%
Measurable Skills Gains	60.0%	60.0%
Dislocated Workers:		
Employed 2nd Qtr. After Exit	85.0%	85.0%
Employed 4th Qtr. After Exit	75.0%	75.0%
Median Wage 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$8,152	\$8,152
Credential Attainment Rate	72.1%	72.1%
Measurable Skills Gains	75.0%	75.0%
Dislocated Workers:		
Employed 2nd Qtr. After Exit	70%	70%
Employed 4th Qtr. After Exit	72.0%	72.0%
Median Wage 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$3,251	\$3,251
Credential Attainment Rate	91.4%	91.4%
Measurable Skills Gains	60.0%	60.0%
Wagner-Peyser:		
Employed 2nd Qtr. After Exit	61.0%	61.0%
Employed 4th Qtr. After Exit	66.0%	66.0%
Median Wage 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$5,497	\$5,497

(2) Actions the LWDB will take toward becoming or remaining a high- performing board, consistent with the factors developed by the state board pursuant to WIOA §101(d)(6).

CareerSource Polk has engaged in a comprehensive accountability model that aims to ensure a service delivery strategy that positions the customer at the forefront of all we do. We will continue to seek innovative approaches to service delivery that align with the rapid growth, generational and technological changes in our workforce.

A monitoring plan is in place to review Board policies, practices, and fiscal and programmatic operations, which is conducted by a third party CPA firm on a quarterly basis every fiscal year. Monitoring reports, along with the Corrective Action Plans are provided to the Board, through the appropriate Council for full review and comment. The Councils review the reports and address concerns to the Board staff on a quarterly basis.

Once each program year, we are also monitored by the FLORIDA COMMERCE which conducts a fiscal and programmatic review. Results are shared with the Board of Directors through the appropriate Councils for full review and comment. The Councils review the reports and address concerns to the Board staff on a quarterly basis.

A financial audit is performed by a third-party audit firm annually, which is presented to the with the Board of Directors.

CareerSource Polk's Workforce Performance Council reviews, on quarterly basis, all customer concerns and addresses those concerns with the One-Stop Operator. The goal of this process is to ensure that customer concerns are being addressed timely and effectively and to determine if any workforce policy or procedure is impeding staff's ability to deliver quality customer service to our customers.

(3) How the LWDB considered feedback from one-stop career center customers when evaluating the effectiveness of its one-stop career centers.

CareerSource Polk is committed to delivering exceptional customer service by not only offering basic services but also continuously seeking ways to enhance their value. The staff at CareerSource Polk Career Center are trained to prioritize customer needs and effectively remove employment barriers. They focus on understanding customer expectations and preferences, organizing programs and services around what matters most to the customer, ensuring long-term benefits beyond their interaction with the staff.

In addition to being customer-centric, CareerSource Polk collaborates with local businesses and educational institutions to develop career pathways. Every adult, dislocated worker, WTP customer, and young adult enrolled in services will have a career plan to identify their career goals. CareerSource Polk aims to improve the lives of its customers by helping them envision and achieve bright futures.

Customers are encouraged to share their experiences, either anonymously or directly with any staff member, including the CEO. Feedback can be provided in person, by phone, via email, through the website, or on CareerSource Polk's social media platforms. Employees include a link in their email signatures for "Employee Shoutouts," allowing customers to express their satisfaction or concerns. Feedback through this method goes directly to the CEO. When feasible, existing policies may be reviewed and revised to ensure investment in the local workforce. All customer concerns are included in quarterly Board reports and discussed at the Workforce Performance Council meetings, detailing how each issue was addressed. Additionally, proactive assessments are conducted to identify and improve areas based on regional needs.

(4) Actions the LWDB took to implement and assess the use and effectiveness of the following WIOA waiver(s) in effect for Florida, if applicable.

- (a)** Waiver associated with the requirement at WIOA § 129(a)(4)(A) and 20 CFR 681.410 that State and local areas expend 75 percent of local formula youth funds on out-of-school youth. The response should include programmatic outcomes including the increase of:
- a. Youth that attained a measurable skill gain;
 - b. Youth that attended post-secondary education;
 - c. Youth that participated in occupational skills training;
 - d. ISY who participated in work experience opportunities; and
 - e. Youth that earned an industry-recognized credential.

Not applicable. CareerSource Polk did not request or take advantage waiver.

- (b)** Waiver of 20 CFR 681.550 to allow WIOA individual training accounts (ITAs) for in-school youth (ISY). The response should include programmatic outcomes including:
- a. Improved response of the LWDB and youth providers to the workforce needs of ISY;
 - b. Increased number of youth that utilized an ITA to pursue an industry-recognized post-secondary credential;
 - c. Increased access to and engagement of ISY in need of post-secondary education, training, and support to succeed in the labor market; and
 - d. Increased number of prepared youth candidates who are ready to fill high growth industry demand in the State and local area.

Not applicable. CareerSource Polk did not request or take advantage of waiver.

Regional Plan Requirements

LWDBs in an identified planning region will have to work together to formulate a regional plan as an addendum to each of their local plans. Once identified, planning regions will remain in effect if federal and state requirements for planning regions continue to be met. With each submission of the regional plan to the state, the respective LWDBs and chief local elected official(s) will certify that the requirements to be identified as a planning region continue to be met. The regional plan must include:

- (1) **Names of the LWDBs that comprise the planning area.** ([Administrative Policy 123: Regional Planning Area Identification and Requirements](#))
- (2) **Description of how the planning region shares a single labor market, shares a common economic development area, and possesses federal and non-federal resources, including appropriate education and training institutions, to administer activities under WIOA, subtitle B.** ([Administrative Policy 123: Regional Planning Area Identification and Requirements](#))
- (3) **Analysis of regional and local population centers, commuting patterns, industrial composition, location quotients, labor force conditions, and geographic boundaries.** ([Administrative Policy 123: Regional Planning Area Identification and Requirements](#))
- (4) **Description of the established regional service strategies using cooperative service delivery agreements that include but are not limited to:**
 - (a) Consistent eligibility standards and enrollment processes.
 - (b) Common training and coordination of supportive service offerings, as appropriate.
 - (c) Common technology tools and sharing of data within tools outside of Employ Florida.
- (5) **Description of sector strategies for existing and emerging in-demand sectors or occupations.** (20 CFR 679.560(a)(1)(ii))
 - (a) How will the planning region convene or support the convening of regional employers, foundations, institutions, and other stakeholders to create or maintain sector partnerships?
 - (b) Identify and describe the established and active sector partnerships in the planning region.
- (6) **Description of the collection and analysis of regional labor market data (in conjunction with the state).**
- (7) **Description of the planning region's coordination of administrative cost arrangements, including the pooling of funds for administrative costs, as appropriate.**
- (8) **Description of the planning region's coordination of transportation and other supportive services, as appropriate.**
- (9) **Description of the planning region's coordination of services with regional economic development services and providers.**

- (10) Description of the planning region’s establishment of an agreement concerning how the planning region will collectively negotiate and reach agreement with FloridaCommerce on local levels of performance for, and report on, the performance accountability measures described in WIOA Sec. 116(c) for local areas or the planning region.**
- (11) Description of the planning region’s strategy to prepare an educated and skilled workforce (including youth and individuals with barriers to employment) to meet the needs of the employers.**
- (12) Description of the local strategies, policies, and improvements to enhance consistency and coordination within the planning region and help streamline experiences for job seekers, workers and businesses, allowing a more agile workforce system to better adapt to changing marketplace and consumer expectations.**
- (13) Description of the steps that will be taken to support the state’s efforts to align and integrate education, workforce, and economic development, including:**
- (a) Fostering the improvement and expansion of employer-driven regional sector partnerships to increase the focus on critical in-demand occupations in key sectors that are the engine of economic growth for the state and its planning region.**
 - (b) Expanding career pathway opportunities through more accelerated and work-based training and aligning and integrating programs of study leading to industry-recognized credentials and improved employment and earnings.**
 - (c) Expanding career services and opportunities for populations facing multiple barriers to educational attainment and economic advancement.**

No regional plan is being submitted at this time. CareerSource Polk intends to align with the following boards as a regional planning area: LWDB16 - CareerSource Pasco Hernando, LWDB 18 - CareerSource Suncoast, and LWDB 28 - CareerSource Hillsborough Pinellas. As a result, the aforementioned boards will seek regional planning area designation at CareerSource Florida’s Board of Directors meeting in June 2025.

Attachments

Please provide a link to the local board's website showing the attachments described below or upload attachments in a searchable PDF file with the local and regional plan:

Links for all required attachments are included below:

- A. Executed interlocal agreement** that defines how parties carry out roles and responsibilities of the chief local elected officials (if the local area includes more than one unit of general local government in accordance with WIOA § 107(c)(1)(B).

Link: [Interlocal Agreement](#)

- B. Executed agreement between the chief local elected official(s) and the LWDB.**

Link: [Interlocal Agreement](#)

- C. Evidence of designation of the fiscal agent by the chief local elected official(s), if other than the chief local elected official(s).**

Link: [Interlocal Agreement](#)

- D. Current by-laws** established by the chief local elected official(s) to address criteria contained in 20 CFR 679.310(g) and Administrative Policy 110 - Local Workforce Development Area and Board Governance.

Link: [Board Bylaws](#)

- E. Current board member roster**, meeting minutes for the local plan agenda item, discussions about the plan, and the board's vote on the local plan.

Link: [Board Member Roster](#) Password Protected: The password is **2024direct0ry!**

Link: [Board Meeting Minutes](#)

Link: [Board's Vote on Local Plan](#)

- F. Organizational chart** that outlines the organizational structure of the local area including the local workforce development board staff, one-stop operator, direct provider of workforce services, youth service provider and jointly managed FloridaCommerce staff. The organizational chart should identify specific roles defined in the Grantee-Subgrantee Agreement to include:

(a) Regional Security Officer.

(b) Chief Ethics Officer.

(c) Custodian for purchased property and equipment.

(d) Personnel Liaison.

(e) Public Records Coordinator.

(f) Equal Opportunity Officer.

(g) Person who promotes opportunities for persons with disabilities.

Link: [Organizational Chart](#)

- G. Agreements describing how any single entity selected to operate in more than one of the following roles:** local fiscal agent, local board staff, one-stop operator, or direct provider of career services, will carry out its multiple responsibilities, including how it develops appropriate firewalls to guard against conflicts of interest. Also attach copies of any processes and procedures that clearly detail a) how functions are sufficiently separated; b) descriptions of the steps the local area has taken to mitigate risks that could lead to impropriety; c) firewalls (physical, technological, policies, etc.) created to ensure such risks are mitigated; and d) oversight and monitoring procedures.

Link: [Agreement Between Polk County BoCC and CareerSource Polk as One-Stop Operator.](#)

H. **Executed Memoranda of Understanding** for all one-stop partners (Section III(b)(2) of the State of Florida WIOA Unified Plan).

Link: [Executed MOUS with one-stop partners](#)

I. **Executed Infrastructure Funding Agreement** with all applicable WIOA required partners (Section III(b)(2) and Section IV(a)(1)(d) of the State of Florida WIOA Unified Plan).

J. Link: [Executed Infrastructure Funding Agreements with WIOA required partners](#)

K. **Executed cooperative agreements** which define how all local service providers, including additional providers, will carry out the requirements for integration of and access to all services available in the local one-stop delivery system. This includes cooperative agreements (as defined in WIOA section 107(d)(11)(B) between the LWDB or other local entities described in WIOA section 107(d)(11)(C) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C 721(a)(11)(B)) and the local office of a designated state agency or designated state unit administering programs carried out under Title I of such Act (29 U.S.C. 721(a)(11) with respect to efforts that enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities and to other individuals, such as cross-training staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers and other efforts of cooperation, collaboration and coordination.).

Link: [Same as MOUs & Infrastructure Agreements](#)

L. **A description of the process used by the LWDB to obtain input and comment by representatives of business and labor organizations for the development of the plan.** The LWDB must make information about the plan available to the public on a regular basis through electronic means and open meetings.

On September 4, 2024, the public was made aware of the plan for review online at www.careersourcepolk.com and provided method to submit comments electronically. The public was also made aware of the Plan's availability for comment via CareerSource Polk social media platforms and via email distribution to CSP's business and community member database.

END OF LOCAL PLAN