COMPREHENSIVE

WIOA 4-YEAR LOCAL PLAN

FOR

The South Central Oklahoma Workforce Area

PREPARED BY

SOUTH CENTRAL OKLAHOMA WORKFORCE BOARD, OESC, Department of Rehabilitation Services, Department of Human Services, and Adult Education and Family Literacy

Serving Caddo, Comanche, Cotton, Grady,

Jefferson, McClain, Stephens, and Tillman Counties

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Executive Summary

South Central Oklahoma Workforce Board (SCOWB) is pleased to present this Local Operational Four-year Workforce Development Plan for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. The Plan discusses SCOWB's vision, goals, and strategies for carrying out WIOA programs. Supported by data, the plan highlights the SCOWB's priorities for building a strong talent pipeline and statewide economic development. The plan was created based on the vision, goals, and strategies identified by Governor J. Kevin Stitt and the Governor's Council for Workforce and Economic Development (GCWED or Governor's Council) in the Unified State Plan. SCOWB also collaborated with our workforce partners to collaboratively discuss priority strategies to better serve our customers.

The federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) provides funding for workforce services that are driven by businesses, accountable to local communities, marked by excellence, and aligned across programs and funding streams to build the talent local companies need to succeed and grow. WIOA requires areas to develop a Plan every four years describing how funds will be used to address critical workforce needs. The WIOA Strategic (or Regional) Plan is in process and represents a shared vision of the South Central and Western Workforce Area's workforce development needs, goals, and strategies for the next four years—one that is tailored to local needs but aligned with the vision and goals set forth by the State. This Operational (or Local) Plan is developed to put these strategies into action.

This Plan was coordinated by the South-Central Oklahoma Workforce Board in collaboration with Chief Local Elected Official and our workforce system partners, with encouragement for input throughout the process and an opportunity for public review and comment.

For many years, partners in the South-Central area have worked together to better serve our communities to improve the lives of its citizens by providing workforce services. All partners work diligently to communicate needs of individuals, as well as business, to identify gaps and duplication in our funding, services, and requirements for our business and job seeker customers. The focus is toward how to streamline and improve. This local area prides itself on working together to best serve the individuals and businesses where it makes the most sense and does not put a hardship on the customer. Our workforce areas work together to build system wide workforce partnerships and align services around customer needs. We look forward to implementing this plan, tackling the workforce challenges before us, and deepening our strategic alliances to best support our customers and a healthy regional economy.

A. South Central's Workforce Development System Vision

1. Provide a description of the local board's strategic vision and goals to support economic growth and economic self-sufficiency, including:
   a. Goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment; and,
   b. Goals relating to the performance accountability measures based on performance indicators.
2. Describe the strategy to work with entities that carry out the core programs and required partners to align resources available to the local area, to achieve the strategic vision and goals.

Goals for Preparing an Educated and Skilled Workforce

Work-based learning provides our workforce with the skills and knowledge needed to secure and retain well-paying jobs in high-growth high-demand industries. To ensure we are working on providing more of the citizens with work-based learning, we have a stipulation in our service provision contract that they are to spend a minimum of 20% of the youth dollars for On-the-Job Training or work experience opportunities. At the same time, we have provided specific training programs aimed at providing these same individuals the opportunity to learn new skills associated with our in-demand occupations, such as welding, truck driving, and healthcare fields.

Another goal set by the board is to establish regularly scheduled partner meetings where we share information about our in-demand occupations, along with our business's needs in filling workplace openings. We currently talk to businesses about the skills needed and how to address those needs. The discussions center on how to get those skills and needs incorporated in existing training, new training or just making certain that our clients have those skills upon completion. As a result of the Partner meetings, we have better coordination with services to business. Our business services team works together on the planning and execution of career fairs and other community events. Career tech and Higher Ed are included in the discussions to help guide curriculum and future programs.

Staff can use the O*Net cross walk of skills, knowledge, and abilities to interact with their clients and use the cross walk to discuss moving to a more in-demand occupation using skills they already possess. In most cases little or no additional training is required. The Board wants to be at forefront of providing information about careers to the secondary school system through career pathways. Oklahoma Career Guide has been introduced to many of our secondary schools for career exploration.

Performance Accountability Measures Goals

SCOWB understands the new minimum for success moving forward will increasingly include a postsecondary degree or credential. The workforce system in South Central Oklahoma's mission "To enhance the area's prosperity by helping people and businesses with their workforce needs." Our rationale is that coordinating strategic priorities and plans across education, training, and industry will increase the wealth of all of South Central by providing employment opportunities for career ready talent for business and industry. State workforce partners, departments, and agencies impacting career readiness have developed metrics for targeted wealth generation across Oklahoma.

The GCWED selects targets from these metrics that facilitate the use of data to inform policy, track progress, and measure success consistently statewide. SCOWB will track our local progress to support the state vision and goals. Workforce partners will review funding sources and incentives provided by federal, state, and local sources and review the effectiveness of federal and state funding used by the state's education, workforce, and economic development system. Additionally, partners impacting career readiness will continue tracking metrics for targeted wealth generation. Workforce System Partner Agencies, including the Core Partners, meet regularly to provide updates regarding their education and training activities, and to leverage partnerships with and promotions of training and education. The metrics include our Federally required performance data, unemployment data, demand occupations and other labor market information. Our goal is continuous improvement and increasing our performance every year.

KEY COLLABORATIONS STRATEGIES:

1. Cross-System Alignment and Service Coordination

- **System Partners:** Core workforce partners in SCOWB are coordinating to align services and reduce costs due to budget constraints. Core partners attend quarterly partner meetings to find ways to better serve our customers and reduce cost per participant.
- **Strategic Alignment vs. Competition:** Emphasis on collaboration among all partners who serve the same population (citizens of South-Central Oklahoma).

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2. Collaboration with Work Ready Oklahoma (WRO)

- **Partnering with WRO Centers:** These centers help individuals not eligible for Title I or UI benefits to gain employment quickly. By co-enrollment or referrals, SCOWB customers have additional options to meet their career goals.
- **Co-enrollment and Braiding of Funds:** Shared service delivery using multiple funding streams to meet individuals' needs.

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3. Community-Based Organizations (CBOs)

- **Resource Expansion:** Continuous partnership development by OSOs and Service Provider staff with CBOs to expand resource availability.
- **Coalitions with new Partners**: Partnerships consist of Businesses and CBO partners and assist us in identifying programs that may otherwise go unnoticed and enable us to share these opportunities with other partners in the region.
- **Increase Support for Justice involved Individuals**: Increase partnerships with correctional facilities and replicate the Lawton Correctional Facility collaboration of bringing inmates that are nearing completion of their sentence onsite for job search, resume building, interviewing skills and occupational training or work experience if needed.

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4. Business Services Collaboration

- **Work-Based Learning Programs:** Partnerships with businesses to promote Registered Apprenticeships and On-the-Job Training (OJT).
- **Business Services Teams:** Continue coordination of business services teams to reduce duplication and expand outreach to business.

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5. Educational and Employer Partnerships

- **K-12 Engagement:**
  - **Career Pathways & Life Skills Events:** Collaboration with coalitions to host workshops and career exploration programs involving employers in key sectors (Healthcare, Manufacturing, Aerospace).
  - **High School Outreach:** Targeted programming for juniors and seniors to enhance career readiness and provide information on WIOA Programs.

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6. Support for Individuals with Barriers to Employment

- **Job Fairs & Community Events:** Participation in wellness symposiums, correctional center events, military base events and other outreach programs.
- **Oklahoma Rehabilitation Services (ORS) – IMPACT Meetings:** Partnering with ORS to host meetings that bring together businesses and stakeholders to tackle workforce barriers, with plans to expand.

B. Local Workforce Development System Response to Regional Plan

1. Provide an analysis of the local area's economic conditions, including:

a. Existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations; and
b. Employment needs of employers in existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations.

Existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations

Top Industries in South-Central Oklahoma by Jobs (As provided by the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission)

The industry most prominently represented in the South-Central Oklahoma workforce region based on job numbers in 2024 is Healthcare. Other highly represented industries include Retail Trade, Educational Services, Accommodation and Food Services, Manufacturing, Construction and Public Administration.

The Retail Trade and Accommodation & Food Services industries do not correspond to the SCOWB Demand Occupation List since the jobs do not meet the criteria established by minimum established

self-sufficiency wages in our sector. Demand occupations must require training that results in a license, certificate, credential, or degree.

There were an estimated 85,533 total jobs in South Central WFDA in 2024. The following table shows the top ten employment industry sectors in South Central WFDA. The largest sector is Healthcare and Social Assistance with 11,659 jobs. The second largest sector was Retail Trade with 10,390 jobs.

Top Industry Sectors by Total Number of Jobs - 2024

Employment		% Share
Health Care and Social Assistance	11659	13.631
Retail Trade	10390	12.14736
Educational Services	9226	10.78648
Accommodation and Food Services	9175	10.72685
Manufacturing	8256	9.652415
Construction	5463	6.387009
Public Administration	4769	5.575626
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	3722	4.351537
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	3463	4.04873
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	3362	3.930647
Finance and Insurance	3200	3.741246
Transportation and Warehousing	2755	3.220979
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	1987	2.32308
Other Services (except Public Administration)	1899	2.220196
Wholesale Trade	1775	2.075222
Utilities	1092	1.2767
Information	1047	1.224089
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1004	1.173816
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	856	1.000783
Management of Companies and Enterprises	433	0.506237

SCOWB Demand Occupation Industries & Businesses: Reviewed by Executive Committee on June 13, 2024 and approved by the full board on June 13, 2024. Demand occupations and targeted industries for each year are developed based on a review of the data contained in the South- Central Workforce Investment Area of Oklahoma Occupational Outlook developed by Economic Modeling Specialist International (LIGHTCAST) data. The North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) and the O*Net system were used in the preparation and review of the data.

2024 SCOWB Demand Occupation List

SOC	Description	Avg. Hourly Earnings	2024 Jobs	Avg. Annual Openings

11-1021	General and Operations Managers	$43.56	2,229	203
11-2021	Marketing Managers	$55.58	75	7
11-2022	Sales Managers	$58.82	126	12
11-2032	Public Relations Managers	$56.52	16	1
11-3012	Administrative Services Managers	$50.25	174	16
11-3013	Facilities Managers	$43.96	49	5
11-3021	Computer and Information Systems Managers	$61.10	154	14
11-3031	Financial Managers	$62.20	261	25
11-3051	Industrial Production Managers	$53.54	79	8
11-3121	Human Resources Managers	$61.08	133	11
11-9021	Construction Managers	$47.28	161	14
11-9031	Education and Childcare Administrators, Preschool and Daycare	$21.07	54	5
11-9041	Architectural and Engineering Managers	$73.05	72	6
11-9111	Medical and Health Services Managers	$54.55	330	33
11-9121	Natural Sciences Managers	$73.47	54	4
11-9151	Social and Community Service Managers	$30.34	58	6
11-9161	Emergency Management Directors	$36.94	29	3
11-9171	Funeral Home Managers	$40.16	11	1
11-9199	Managers, All Other	$58.69	255	21
13-1041	Compliance Officers	$28.92	193	17
13-1071	Human Resources Specialists	$31.10	651	59
13-1075	Labor Relations Specialists	$49.56	13	1
13-1081	Logisticians	$39.76	326	29
13-1082	Project Management Specialists	$40.75	373	32

13-1111	Management Analysts	$38.88	219	22
13-1121	Meeting, Convention, and Event Planners	$22.69	49	6
13-1131	Fundraisers	$28.52	32	3
13-1141	Compensation, Benefits, and Job Analysis Specialists	$27.32	45	4
13-1151	Training and Development Specialists	$34.04	263	25
13-1161	Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	$30.54	274	31
13-1199	Business Operations Specialists, All Other	$39.74	504	48
13-2011	Accountants and Auditors	$37.11	723	65
13-2028	Property Appraisers and Assessors	$24.80	204	21
13-2031	Budget Analysts	$38.25	32	2
13-2051	Financial and Investment Analysts	$38.80	76	6
13-2052	Personal Financial Advisors	$69.53	54	4
13-2061	Financial Examiners	$37.29	32	3
13-2072	Loan Officers	$34.97	290	22
13-2099	Financial Specialists, All Other	$39.41	45	3
15-1211	Computer Systems Analysts	$47.30	177	13
15-1212	Information Security Analysts	$57.34	94	8
15-1231	Computer Network Support Specialists	$33.09	74	7
15-1232	Computer User Support Specialists	$24.03	411	32
15-1241	Computer Network Architects	$43.99	123	7
15-1242	Database Administrators	$36.25	20	2
15-1243	Database Architects	$52.06	11	1
15-1244	Network and Computer Systems Administrators	$41.73	195	12
15-1252	Software Developers	$47.79	300	29

15-1253	Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers	$39.64	56	5
15-1254	Web Developers	$43.10	17	2
15-1255	Web and Digital Interface Designers	$33.81	21	3
15-1299	Computer Occupations, All Other	$43.57	290	22
15-2031	Operations Research Analysts	$32.22	60	5
15-2051	Data Scientists	$45.39	96	9
17-1011	Architects, Except Landscape and Naval	$40.34	36	3
17-1021	Cartographers and Photogrammetrists	$32.65	11	1
17-1022	Surveyors	$29.03	42	4
17-2011	Aerospace Engineers	$51.69	77	5
17-2041	Chemical Engineers	$61.42	22	2
17-2051	Civil Engineers	$41.83	153	12
17-2071	Electrical Engineers	$52.78	62	5
17-2072	Electronics Engineers, Except Computer	$43.89	66	5
17-2081	Environmental Engineers	$42.71	16	1
17-2112	Industrial Engineers	$51.23	102	8
17-2141	Mechanical Engineers	$46.06	86	8
17-2171	Petroleum Engineers	$75.31	54	4
17-2199	Engineers, All Other	$47.43	97	6
17-3011	Architectural and Civil Drafters	$28.77	48	6
17-3013	Mechanical Drafters	$30.04	22	2
17-3022	Civil Engineering Technologists and Technicians	$30.76	51	5
17-3025	Environmental Engineering Technologists and Technicians	$26.21	18	3
17-3026	Industrial Engineering Technologists and Technicians	$33.79	43	4

17-3029	Engineering Technologists and Technicians, Except Drafters, All Other	$37.36	66	7
19-2031	Chemists	$44.81	32	3
19-2041	Environmental Scientists and Specialists, Including Health	$38.09	36	3
19-2042	Geoscientists, Except Hydrologists and Geographers	$46.56	34	3
19-4021	Biological Technicians	$24.87	27	4
19-4031	Chemical Technicians	$35.39	49	7
19-4042	Environmental Science and Protection Technicians, Including Health	$24.79	15	2
19-4043	Geological Technicians, Except Hydrologic Technicians	$27.72	22	3
19-4092	Forensic Science Technicians	$28.84	11	2
19-4099	Life, Physical, and Social Science Technicians, All Other	$32.74	25	3
19-5011	Occupational Health and Safety Specialists	$37.33	92	11
21-1018	Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors	$29.26	162	18
21-1021	Child, Family, and School Social Workers	$20.35	376	33
21-1029	Social Workers, All Other	$44.87	27	2
21-1091	Health Education Specialists	$26.40	37	5
21-1092	Probation Officers and Correctional Treatment Specialists	$23.76	76	7
21-1099	Community and Social Service Specialists, All Other	$21.48	11	1
21-2021	Directors, Religious Activities and Education	$26.72	170	20
23-2011	Paralegals and Legal Assistants	$26.36	105	12
25-2011	Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education	$18.51	413	50
25-2031	Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education	$28.00	1,297	86
25-2052	Special Education Teachers, Kindergarten and Elementary School	$21.43	134	10
25-2057	Special Education Teachers, Middle School	$25.62	28	2
25-3099	Teachers and Instructors, All Other	$41.90	174	21

25-4013	Museum Technicians and Conservators	$20.76	12	2
25-9044	Teaching Assistants, Postsecondary	$17.27	81	11
25-9099	Educational Instruction and Library Workers, All Other	$17.99	28	3
27-1014	Special Effects Artists and Animators	$42.39	56	6
27-1024	Graphic Designers	$24.70	50	6
27-1025	Interior Designers	$25.04	12	2
27-2022	Coaches and Scouts	$21.53	135	18
27-2041	Music Directors and Composers	$24.85	33	4
27-3031	Public Relations Specialists	$32.22	92	10
27-3041	Editors	$23.79	40	5
27-4011	Audio and Video Technicians	$23.28	50	5
29-1031	Dietitians and Nutritionists	$26.66	47	4
29-1124	Radiation Therapists	Insf. Data	<10	0
29-1126	Respiratory Therapists	$33.68	83	5
29-1141	Registered Nurses	$39.17	1,520	97
29-1292	Dental Hygienists	$41.29	122	9
29-2018	Clinical Laboratory Technologists and Technicians	$26.25	238	17
29-2032	Diagnostic Medical Sonographers	$35.97	36	3
29-2034	Radiologic Technologists and Technicians	$28.27	182	10
29-2042	Emergency Medical Technicians	$14.53	199	18
29-2043	Paramedics	$21.61	244	14
29-2052	Pharmacy Technicians	$17.79	304	31
29-2053	Psychiatric Technicians	$18.86	47	4
29-2055	Surgical Technologists	$24.21	90	6

29-2056	Veterinary Technologists and Technicians	$16.66	77	10
29-2061	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	$24.40	967	84
29-2072	Medical Records Specialists	$23.46	135	10
29-2099	Health Technologists and Technicians, All Other	$21.54	78	6
29-9021	Health Information Technologists and Medical Registrars	$25.78	27	2
29-9099	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Workers, All Other	$28.85	20	1
31-1131	Nursing Assistants	$15.22	1,204	194
31-2011	Occupational Therapy Assistants	$27.85	64	11
31-2021	Physical Therapist Assistants	$27.91	104	18
31-9011	Massage Therapists	$22.10	12	3
31-9092	Medical Assistants	$16.54	467	63
31-9097	Phlebotomists	$16.75	113	16
33-1021	First-Line Supervisors of Firefighting and Prevention Workers	$34.00	99	10
33-2011	Firefighters	$24.29	536	57
33-2021	Fire Inspectors and Investigators	$26.49	16	2
33-3051	Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers	$27.02	1,056	111
33-9032	Security Guards	$16.22	756	106
39-4031	Morticians, Undertakers, and Funeral Arrangers	$23.87	36	5
39-5012	Hairdressers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists	$17.86	197	38
41-3031	Securities, Commodities, and Financial Services Sales Agents	$33.21	119	11
41-4011	Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Technical and Scientific Products	$39.68	196	20
41-9031	Sales Engineers	$49.21	15	2
43-3031	Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	$19.28	1,026	124
47-2031	Carpenters	$21.48	276	25

47-2111	Electricians	$28.88	456	47
47-2152	Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	$25.14	400	40
47-3013	Helpers--Electricians	$17.95	71	8
47-3015	Helpers--Pipelayers, Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	$15.80	122	14
47-4011	Construction and Building Inspectors	$27.14	88	13
49-2021	Radio, Cellular, and Tower Equipment Installers and Repairers	$25.01	12	1
49-2022	Telecommunications Equipment Installers and Repairers, Except Line Installers	$28.48	127	16
49-2095	Electrical and Electronics Repairers, Powerhouse, Substation, and Relay	$38.97	83	8
49-3021	Automotive Body and Related Repairers	$19.45	114	11
49-9021	Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers	$23.05	479	46
49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	$29.49	384	42
49-9051	Electrical Power-Line Installers and Repairers	$35.23	146	14
49-9052	Telecommunications Line Installers and Repairers	$25.35	103	12
49-9062	Medical Equipment Repairers	$29.94	53	6
49-9081	Wind Turbine Service Technicians	$28.08	79	12
51-4041	Machinists	$23.61	245	28
51-4121	Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	$22.48	467	54
51-4122	Welding, Soldering, and Brazing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	$20.90	11	1
51-8031	Water and Wastewater Treatment Plant and System Operators	$19.36	178	20
51-9081	Dental Laboratory Technicians	$31.22	34	4
51-9162	Computer Numerically Controlled Tool Programmers	$25.98	36	4
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	$23.64	1,417	169
53-7021	Crane and Tower Operators	$26.34	19	2

Employment Needs of Employers

Across both the South-Central Area and the Western Oklahoma Planning Region, employers continue to face challenges in finding qualified talent—not only to fill current job openings, but also to support future growth and expansion plans. In the Health Care sector, for instance, there is strong demand for candidates who possess the appropriate skills and credentials, such as state-issued nursing licenses. Presently, in the South-Central Area, major hospitals including Duncan Regional, Comanche County, Southwest Medical Center, and Grady County report more than 300 job openings. The majority of these are in nursing and other healthcare-related roles, though there is also demand for support staff in areas like maintenance and human resources.

These figures do not account for job openings at rural hospitals and other healthcare facilities, which often struggle with staffing due to comparatively lower wages. While not every high-demand or emerging role requires formal or long-term training, various support resources exist, such as short-term prevocational programs and on-the-job training opportunities.

Efforts are underway to improve alignment between in-demand occupation lists across the Planning Region, with a particular focus on strengthening the healthcare sector strategy. This initiative aims to positively impact the local workforce development system by ensuring that training aligns with industry needs. As job content and skill requirements continue to evolve, employers must create opportunities for workers to continually enhance their education and capabilities. To stay competitive in a global economy, businesses need to adopt more efficient, value-driven production systems that rely on a highly skilled workforce.

The increasingly rapid pace of technological change demands that education and training systems become more adaptable and responsive. This underscores the need for clearly defined career pathways that allow for easy entry into key industries and the ongoing retraining of current employees to keep pace with innovation. Workforce training must shift its focus to lifelong learning models that serve all workers, across all industries.

In addition to technical training and credentials, employers frequently report a continued need for soft skills, as well as greater community support in areas like affordable housing, transportation, and reducing employee turnover. These challenges must be addressed to create a more resilient and stable workforce.

The economic contributions of self-employment and small businesses are also critical. Although these are not fully reflected in the reviewed data, entrepreneurs play an essential role in the region's economic ecosystem. The Area intends to leverage labor market data from the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission (OESC) to better anticipate and respond to the needs of this important group.

The Area supports an industry partnership model designed to keep the workforce development system agile and responsive to changing business needs. Given the region's diverse economic landscape, collaboration across industries—especially with those identified as part of the Area's 'ecosystem industries'—is key. Working closely with secondary and post-secondary institutions, the

Area will continue to ensure that industry-specific curricula and skills training are aligned with workforce demands across all levels, from entry-level to senior positions.

B2. Describe the knowledge and skills needed to meet the employment needs of the employers in the local area, including employment needs in in-demand industry sectors and occupations.

In Demand Needs and Skills for Employment

Businesses in the South-Central Oklahoma Workforce Investment Area want educated and trained highly qualified skilled workers for their businesses—workers who have the knowledge, skill sets, and abilities that will meet their workforce needs and help them retain the competitive advantage and/or become globally competitive in the 21st century. Businesses are concerned about worker skills, both soft skills and hard skills. Research has shown that businesses in this area, and in all areas of the state and Nation, want employees with the following: work ethic; personal life management skills; written and oral communication skills; interpersonal skills; problem-solving skills; math and reading skills; teamwork skills; information gathering skills; computer literacy skills; organizational skills; listening skills; time management skills; self-direction and initiative skills; customer service skills; resource management skills; occupational and job-related skills; and physical dexterity skills. In addition, businesses want workers who are responsible, loyal, dependable, trustworthy, and possess a positive attitude and integrity. In general, businesses think that the current workforce lacks many of those skills listed above, but that the most critical skills needed are: personal life management skills; reading, writing, and math skills; team player skills; listening skills; occupational skills and job skills. The board's goal is that all customers are equipped with the knowledge, skills (including soft skills), and abilities that will equip them to obtain and retain employment in jobs of the 21st Century that will give them a good quality of life for their families; and, will meet the need of businesses for skilled workers which will promote their ability to remain globally, regionally, and locally competitive.

Healthcare

Health Care was identified as our most critical industry, specifically: Medical Assistant, LPN and RN. According to www.onetonline.org, the key skills required are:

Medical Assistant:

- **Speaking** — Talking to others to convey information effectively.
- **Active Listening** — Giving full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times.
- **Reading Comprehension** — Understanding written sentences and paragraphs in work related documents.
- **Social Perceptiveness** — Being aware of others' reactions and understanding why they react as they do.

- **Monitoring** — Monitoring/Assessing performance of yourself, other individuals, or organizations to make improvements or take corrective action.

LPN:

- **Service Orientation** — Actively looking for ways to help people.
- **Active Listening** — Giving full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times.
- **Coordination** — Adjusting actions in relation to others' actions.
- **Monitoring** — Monitoring/Assessing performance of yourself, other individuals, or organizations to make improvements or take corrective action.
- **Reading Comprehension** — Understanding written sentences and paragraphs in work related documents.

RN:

- **Active Listening** — Giving full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times.
- **Social Perceptiveness** — Being aware of others' reactions and understanding why they react as they do.
- **Service Orientation** — Actively looking for ways to help people.
- **Speaking** — Talking to others to convey information effectively.
- **Coordination** — Adjusting actions in relation to others' actions.

Retail Trade:

Retail Trade industry does not meet criteria established by our board for minimum established self-sufficiency wages or must require training that results in a license, certificate, credential, or degree. This industry does not require a license, certificate, credential, or degree. According to www.onetonline.org, the key skills required are:

- **Active Listening** — Giving full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times.
- **Persuasion** — Persuading others to change their minds or behavior.
- **Speaking** — Talking to others to convey information effectively.
- **Service Orientation** — Actively looking for ways to help people.
- **Negotiation** — Bringing others together and trying to reconcile differences.

Accommodation and Food Services

Accommodation and Food Services industry does not meet criteria established by our board for minimum established self-sufficiency wages or must require training that results in a license, certificate, credential, or degree. This industry does not require a license, certificate, credential, or degree and does not meet the wage requirements. According to www.onetonline.org, the key skills required are:

- **Time Management** — Managing one's own time and the time of others.
- **Monitoring** — Monitoring/Assessing performance of yourself, other individuals, or organizations to make improvements or take corrective action.
- **Judgment and Decision Making** — Considering the relative costs and benefits of potential actions to choose the most appropriate one.
- **Operation Monitoring** — Watching gauges, dials, or other indicators to make sure a machine is working properly.
- **Quality Control Analysis** — Conducting tests and inspections of products, services, or processes to evaluate quality or performance.

Manufacturing

The Manufacturing industry requires a variety of skills and education levels based on the specific jobs. Manufacturing is in demand in our area and is a high-wage industry. According to www.onetonline.org, the key skills required are:

Machinist:

- **Operation Monitoring** — Watching gauges, dials, or other indicators to make sure a machine is working properly.
- **Critical Thinking** — Using logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions, or approaches to problems.
- **Operation and Control** — Controlling operations of equipment or systems.
- **Active Listening** — Giving full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times.
- **Coordination** — Adjusting actions in relation to others' actions.

General and Operations Managers:

- **Active Listening** — Giving full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times.
- **Coordination** — Adjusting actions in relation to others' actions.

- **Monitoring** — Monitoring/Assessing performance of yourself, other individuals, or organizations to make improvements or take corrective action.
- **Social Perceptiveness** — Being aware of others' reactions and understanding why they react as they do.
- **Speaking** — Talking to others to convey information effectively.

First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers:

- **Active Listening** — Giving full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times.
- **Speaking** — Talking to others to convey information effectively.
- **Coordination** — Adjusting actions in relation to others' actions.
- **Critical Thinking** — Using logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions, or approaches to problems.
- **Management of Personnel Resources** — Motivating, developing, and directing people as they work, identifying the best people for the job.

Construction

The Construction industry contains many jobs that do not require a license, certificate, credential, or degree. Construction does cover jobs that could be obtained through a registered apprenticeship and would meet the wage requirements in our area. Civil Engineer is one occupation that would require training and according to www.onetonline.org, the key skills required are:

Civil Engineers:

- **Critical Thinking** — Using logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions, or approaches to problems.
- **Reading Comprehension** — Understanding written sentences and paragraphs in work related documents.
- **Active Listening** — Giving full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times.
- **Complex Problem Solving** — Identifying complex problems and reviewing related information to develop and evaluate options and implement solutions.
- **Mathematics** — Using mathematics to solve problems.

Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services The Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services industry contains many jobs that do not require a license, certificate, credential, or degree or does not meet the self-sufficiency wage established by the board. Administrative Services Manager and chief executives are two occupations that would require training and according to www.onetonline.org, the key skills required are:

Administrative Services Managers:

- **Speaking** — Talking to others to convey information effectively.
- **Active Listening** — Giving full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times.
- **Coordination** — Adjusting actions in relation to others' actions.
- **Reading Comprehension** — Understanding written sentences and paragraphs in work related documents.
- **Time Management** — Managing one's own time and the time of others.

Chief Executives:

- **Judgment and Decision Making** — Considering the relative costs and benefits of potential actions to choose the most appropriate one.
- **Complex Problem Solving** — Identifying complex problems and reviewing related information to develop and evaluate options and implement solutions.
- **Critical Thinking** — Using logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions, or approaches to problems.
- **Speaking** — Talking to others to convey information effectively.
- **Coordination** — Adjusting actions in relation to others' actions.

Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services

The professional, Scientific, and Technical Services industry covers many of our in-demand occupations. Some Examples from this industry are Environmental Scientists and Specialists, Mechanical Engineers, and Civil Engineers. According to www.onetonline.org, the key skills required are:

Environmental Scientists and Specialists, including health:

- **English Language** — Knowledge of the structure and content of the English language including the meaning and spelling of words, rules of composition, and grammar.
- **Mathematics** — Knowledge of arithmetic, algebra, geometry, calculus, statistics, and their applications.
- **Law and Government** — Knowledge of laws, legal codes, court procedures, precedents, government regulations, executive orders, agency rules, and the democratic political process.
- **Clerical** — Knowledge of administrative and clerical procedures and systems such as word processing, managing files and records, stenography, and transcription, designing forms, and other office procedures and terminology.
- **Biology** — Knowledge of plant and animal organisms, their tissues, cells, functions, interdependencies, and interactions with each other and the environment.

Mechanical Engineer:

- **Active Listening** — Giving full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times.
- **Critical Thinking** — Using logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions, or approaches to problems.
- **Mathematics** — Using mathematics to solve problems.
- **Reading Comprehension** — Understanding written sentences and paragraphs in work related documents.
- **Science** — Using scientific rules and methods to solve problems.

Civil Engineer:

- **Critical Thinking** — Using logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions, or approaches to problems.
- **Reading Comprehension** — Understanding written sentences and paragraphs in work related documents.
- **Active Listening** — Giving full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times.
- **Complex Problem Solving** — Identifying complex problems and reviewing related information to develop and evaluate options and implement solutions.
- **Mathematics** — Using mathematics to solve problems.

SCOWB has participated in several surveys, including an in-depth survey of our area businesses completed by Economic Development organizations and held quarterly Board meetings with a majority of business members. In addition to the skills and knowledge required above, we always get the same answer: "We need someone with soft skills. We want someone who will show up on time and will dress and act appropriately". Transportation and childcare were two of the top reasons employees called in or were late for work. SCOWB will develop strategies to address the childcare shortage and the lack of transportation in the South-Central area. The sector work done in healthcare and manufacturing shows the same needs as other industries. Childcare is a real challenge when a person is working evening or night shifts. As a result of the healthcare sector study, South-Central passed a critical demand policy to raise the priority for healthcare careers.

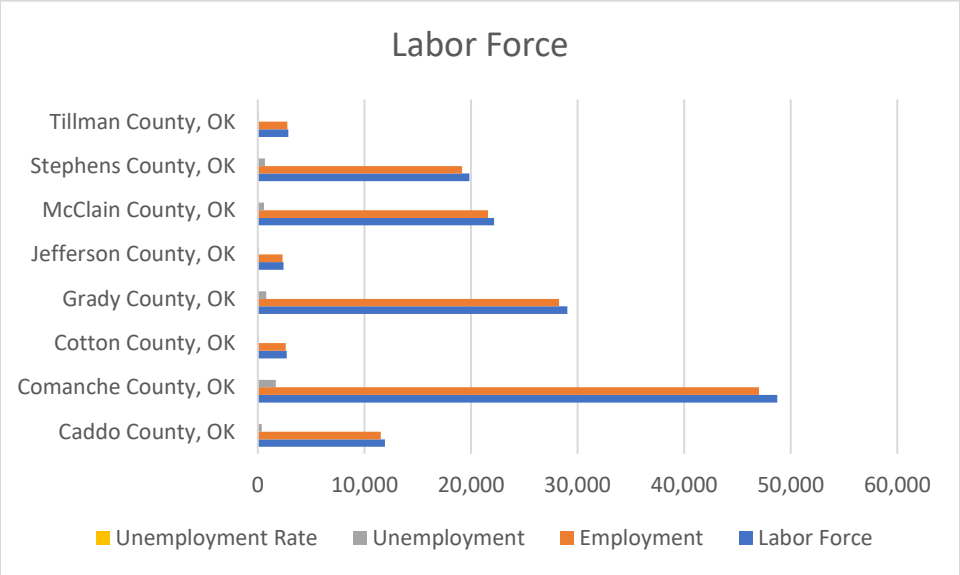
Our area has had several requests from businesses to provide pre-employment screening. South-Central recently purchased eSkill's software and are working with our local employers to provide pre-employment skills testing for potential employees. Due to funding cuts, pre-employment skills testing will not be offered as of PY25. At this time, we do not have a plan to replace this service. We will address in the partners meetings and see if another partner is able to offer a similar service.

B3. Provide an analysis of the local workforce, including current labor force employment and unemployment data, information on labor market trends, and educational and skill levels of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment.

Labor Force Employment by County

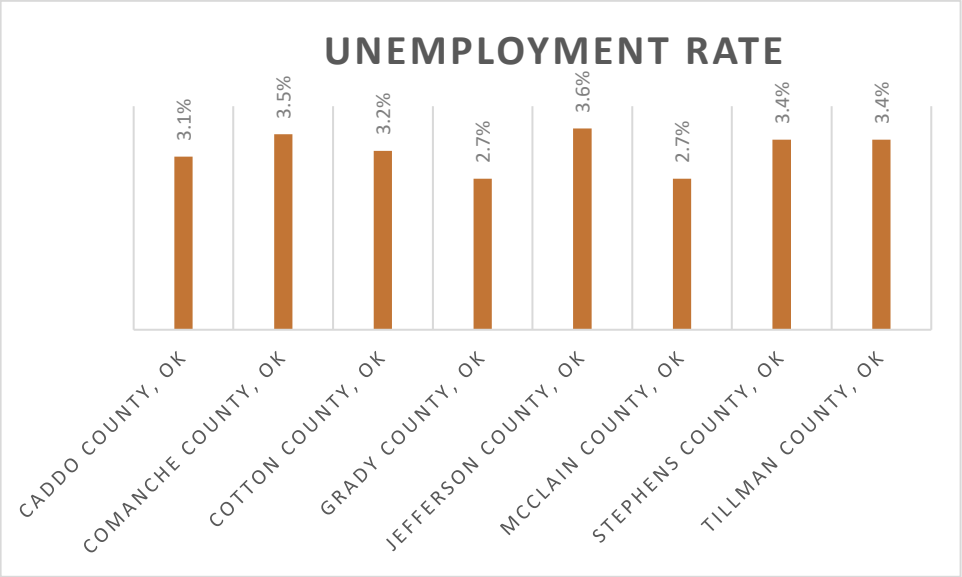
The table below compares the total employment and labor force in South Central WFDA by county. The largest labor force was found in Comanche County at 47,499. The second largest is in Grady County at 29,056. The third largest is in McClain County at 22,176. The fourth largestis in Stephens County at 19,844. The fifth largest is in Caddo County at 11,916. The sixth largest is in Tillman County at 2,859. The seventh largest is in Cotton County at 2,699. The smallest labor force was in Jefferson County at 2,417.

The largest employment was found in Comanche County at 47,027. The second largest is in Grady County at 28,273. The third largest is in McClain County at 21,588. The fourth largest is in Stephens County at 19,173. The fifth largest is in Caddo County at 11,546. The sixth largest is in Tillman County at 2,761. The seventh largest is in Cotton County at 2,613. The smallest labor force was in Jefferson County at 2,331.



Unemployment

The table below shows the unemployment rate for South Central WFDA. The highest unemployment was found in Jefferson County with an unemployment rate of 3.6%. The second highest unemployment was found in Comanche County which had an unemployment rate of 3.5%. The third highest unemployment rate was in Stephens County and Tillman County with 3.4%. The fourth highest unemployment rate was in Cotton County at 3.2%. The fifth highest unemployment rate was in Caddo County at 3.1%. The lowest unemployment rate was found in Grady and McClain Counties with an unemployment rate of 2.7%.



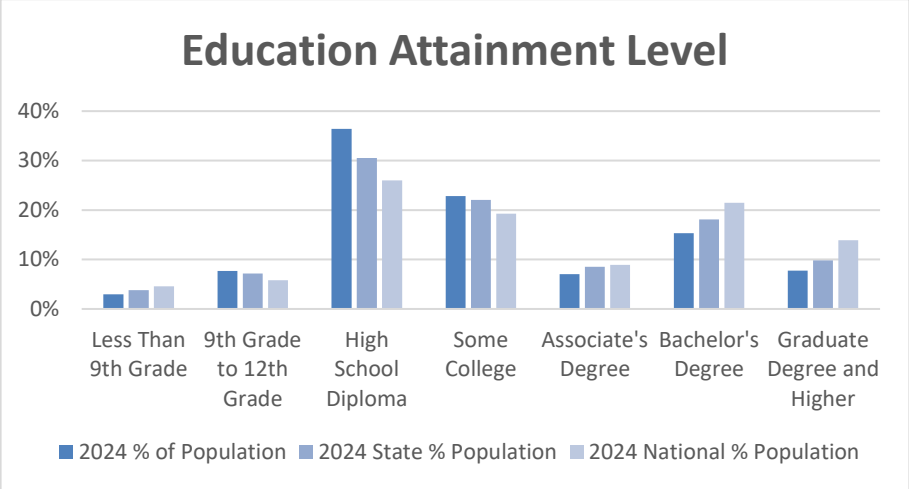
Source: LAUS, Bureau of labor Statistics

Education and Skills Levels

The chart below shows South Central WFDA Education Attainment Level. High School Graduates had the largest population at 37%. The second highest population was in Some College at 27%. The third largest was bachelor's degree at 17%. Lastly, the smallest population was in Less than 9th Grade with 3%.

In Oklahoma, High School Diploma had the highest share of the population at 36%. The second highest share of the population was Some College at 23%. The third highest share of the population is bachelor's degree at 15%. The fourth share highest share of the population is Graduate Degree and Higher, Associate's Degree, and 9th Grade to 12 Grade at have the same share of the population at 8%. The smallest group is less than 9th grade at 3%.

In the United States, High School Diploma had the highest share of the population 27%. The next is Some College and bachelor's degree at 20%. The smallest groups are Less than 9th grade at 5%.



Source: Lightcast-economicmodeling.com- 2024

B4. Provide an analysis of workforce development activities, **including providing the SWOT analysis** that indicates how the local area's service delivery system is prepared to meet the community's workforce development needs. The local area may add additional information to the regional SWOT analysis that was developed with the regional plan.

a. Describe the strengths and weaknesses of workforce development activities.
b. Describe the workforce development system's capacity to provide workforce development activities to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment.
c. Based on the regional plan's data analysis, describe the local area's key workforce development issues and possible solutions to be implemented within the local area.

SWOT Analysis

On Monday, April 28, 2025, 20+ stakeholders joined together to conduct a new SWOT analysis using tools provided by OESC. Training on how to conduct the SWOT Analysis more in-depth was provided by Rainna Okapal beforehand. As each Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat was identified, the group discussed 1. If it is an internal or external issue, and 2. How it would flow into the strategy and plans outlined in this Regional Plan document.

The tool encouraged the stakeholders to focus on a system that is meeting the customer's needs and is accessible, current, innovative, and continuously improving.

In conclusion, regional leadership extended invitations to 197 Core Partners, local elected officials, and Workforce Board members from both Western and South-Central local areas to participate in the SWOT analysis meeting. Follow up from feedback will be ongoing throughout the completion and bi-annual reviews of this Plan.

With the submission and approval of the Regional and Local Plan, the workforce boards will bring the partners into a more collaborative arena to understand what the plan's focus is and to align the Region's activities with the plan's goals.

a. Strengths & Weaknesses- SWOT Analysis

Strengths (S)

1. **Relationships and strong community commitments**
   – The region benefits from a tight-knit community that fosters trust, cooperation, and effective grassroots efforts.
2. **Business-driven boards representing a variety of industry**
   – The presence of diverse industry leadership encourages balanced economic development and informed decision-making.
3. **Collaboration across all partners**
   – Strong inter-organizational cooperation enhances program delivery and allows for more efficient use of resources.

Weaknesses (W)

1. **Limited transportation**
   – Inadequate transportation infrastructure or services hinder access to employment, education, and healthcare.
2. **Limited childcare**
   – A shortage of affordable and accessible childcare options creates barriers for working families, especially those seeking employment or training.
3. **Lack of access to healthcare and mental health services**
   – Poor availability of health and mental health care affects quality of life and workforce readiness.

Opportunities (O)

1. **Connections with military bases (Altus AFB, Ft. Sill, Vance AFB) and spaceport**
   – Partnerships with military and aerospace sectors offer significant workforce development and economic growth potential.
2. **Working together to solve transportation and childcare needs**
   – The region can leverage its collaborative spirit to address major service gaps, leading to broader participation in the workforce.
3. **Strong relationships with employers and economic development/coalitions**
   – Engaged employers and coalitions can help align training programs with local labor market needs and stimulate job creation.

Threats (T)

1. **Sanctions and funding cuts**
   – Financial instability from external policy decisions could jeopardize essential services and regional programs.

2. **Limited transportation**
   – Reappears as both a weakness and a threat, showing how critical and potentially worsening this issue is.
3. **Limited childcare resources**
   – Like transportation, this issue also doubles as both a current internal challenge and a looming external threat if left unresolved.

Workforce Investment System

SCOWB's Public Workforce Investment System includes partners from the following agencies:

Core Partners:

WIOA Title I. B: Adult, Dislocated Workers, and Youth

WIOA Title II: Adult Education and Literacy

WIOA Title III: Wagner-Peyser

WIOA Title IV: Vocational Rehabilitation

Other Partners include Department of Human Services, Title V SCSEP, Veteran's Services, Native American Programs, Job Corp, and Trade Adjustment Assistance programs.

The public workforce system, under the guidance of local workforce boards, is dedicated to serving a diverse range of businesses and job seekers. These boards ensure that the region's employment and training programs are accessible to and meet the needs of various populations, including displaced homemakers, low-income individuals, those with low reading and math skills, women, minorities, individuals training for non-traditional employment, veterans, public assistance recipients, and individuals facing multiple barriers to employment. These barriers include challenges faced by older individuals, people with limited English proficiency, and people with disabilities. Other job seekers face challenges like lack of transportation and limited childcare options. Through Oklahoma Works partnerships and programs, all career and training services provided by the WIOA Title I Service Provider are available to everyone and accessible through the Workforce Centers. The boards have also implemented an online application process to ensure services are easily accessible, even in hard-to-reach areas.

There are no "special" services set aside for specific groups, and currently, no specific nontraditional training and employment activities are offered in this workforce investment area. The specific needs of each targeted group are identified during the objective or initial assessment process, which is part of the service strategy design in each of the Workforce Centers.

The process for receiving services is straightforward. A job seeker can walk into an Oklahoma Works American Job Center, speak with a staff member, and begin the assessment process. The primary goal is to assist the job seeker in obtaining employment. If, after receiving basic career services, the staff determines that the customer cannot secure or retain employment or improve their job situation without more intensive services, a WIOA eligibility determination is made. If the job seeker is eligible and interested in further services, they proceed with the assessment process and complete an application for enrollment into the most suitable WIOA Title I program. WIOA Title I staff then work

with the customer to determine, through assessment, career planning, and counseling, the specific services needed to help them secure or improve employment.

Other core partners and additional partners follow similar processes as required by their specific funding streams when customers seek services. One of the goals is to have all customers participate in a similar intake process across the Region, enabling easy sharing of basic customer data and the connection of employment plans. This approach helps prevent the customer from being overwhelmed by multiple programs and avoids the need for them to prioritize one program over another to avoid potential sanctions. On January 13, 2025, Oklahoma Employment Security Commission launched a new state database system called Employ Oklahoma. As of May 2025, the local workforce boards, OESC and Title I service providers use this system. It is hopeful that other partners will use the same database to minimize duplication and help provide seamless services across all WIOA core partners.

Career Services are defined in TEGL 3-15 as:

Career Services. WIOA authorizes "career services" for adults and dislocated workers. There are three types of "career services": basic career services, individualized career services, and follow-up services. These services can be provided in any order; there is no sequence requirement for these services. Career services under this approach provide local areas and service providers with flexibility to target services to the needs of the customer. The three categories of career services are defined as follows:

Basic Career Services

Basic career services must be made available to all individuals seeking services served in the one-stop delivery system, and include:

- Determinations of whether the individual is eligible to receive assistance from the adult, dislocated workers, or youth programs.
- Outreach, intake (including identification through the state's Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services system of unemployment insurance (UI) claimants likely to exhaust benefits), and orientation to information and other services available through the one-stop delivery system.
- Initial assessment of skill levels including literacy, numeracy, and English language proficiency, as well as aptitudes, abilities (including skills gaps), and supportive service needs.
- Labor exchange services, including—
    - Job search and placement assistance, and, when needed by an individual, career counseling, including:
        - Provision of information on in-demand industry sectors and occupations (as defined in sec. 3(23) of WIOA); and,
        - Provision of information on nontraditional employment (as defined in sec. 3(37) of WIOA);

        - Provision of referrals to and coordination of activities with other programs and services, including those within the one-stop delivery system and, when appropriate, other workforce development programs.
        - Provision of workforce and labor market employment statistics information, including the provision of accurate information relating to local, regional, and national labor market areas, including—
    - 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.
        - Provision of performance information and program cost information on eligible providers of training services by program and type of providers.
        - Provision of information about how the local area is performing on local performance accountability measures, as well as any additional performance information relating to the area's one-stop delivery system.
        - Provision of 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 Children's Health Insurance 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)1 ; and 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 WIOA; and
- Provision of information and assistance regarding filing claims under UI programs, including meaningful assistance to individuals seeking assistance in filing a claim
    - Meaningful assistance means providing assistance:
        - On-site using staff who are properly trained in UI claims, filing, and/or the acceptance of information necessary to file a claim,
        - By phone or via other technology, as long as the assistance is provided by trained and available staff and within a reasonable time.
    - The costs associated with providing meaningful assistance may be paid for by the State's UI program, the WIOA Adult or Dislocated Worker programs, the Wagner-Peyser Employment Service, or some combination thereof these funding sources.

Individualized Career Services

If one-stop center staff determine that individualized career services are appropriate for an individual to obtain or retain employment, these services must be made available to the individual. These services

must be available in all one-stop centers. One-stop center staff may use recent previous assessments by partner programs 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 the employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives, and appropriate 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, in some instances, pre-apprenticeship programs may be considered as short-term prevocational services.
- 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, or training, or employment.
- Financial literacy services.
- Out-of-area job search assistance and relocation assistance; and
- English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs.

Follow-up Services

Follow-up services must be provided as appropriate for participants who are placed in unsubsidized employment, for up to 12 months after the first day of employment. Counseling about the workplace is an appropriate type of follow-up service. Follow-up services do not extend the date of exit in performance reporting.

Career Services for all core partners are provided in our comprehensive center. All other centers can do direct referrals to our partner programs. See Appendix B for a complete list of services by agency.

Employment Needs of Employers

Businesses in the South-Central Oklahoma Workforce Investment Area want educated and trained highly qualified skilled workers for their businesses—workers who have the knowledge, skill sets, and

abilities that will meet their workforce needs and help them retain the competitive advantage and/or become globally competitive in the 21st century. Businesses are concerned about worker skills, both soft skills and hard skills. Research has shown that businesses in this area, and in all areas of the state and Nation, want employees with the following: work ethic; personal life management skills; written and oral communication skills; interpersonal skills; problem-solving skills; math and reading skills; teamwork skills; information gathering skills; computer literacy skills; organizational skills; listening skills; time management skills; self-direction and initiative skills; customer service skills; resource management skills; occupational and job-related skills; and physical dexterity skills. In addition, businesses want workers who are responsible, loyal, dependable, trustworthy, and possess a positive attitude and integrity. In general, businesses think that the current workforce lacks many of those skills listed above, but that the most critical skills needed are personal life management skills; reading, writing, and math skills; team player skills; listening skills; occupational skills and job skills. The board's goal is that all customers are equipped with the knowledge, skills (including soft skills), and abilities that will equip them to obtain and retain employment in jobs of the 21st Century that will give them a good quality of life for their families; and, will meet the need of businesses for skilled workers which will promote their ability to remain globally, regionally, and locally competitive.
SCOWB has participated in several surveys, including an in-depth survey of our area businesses completed by the Southwest Oklahoma Impact Coalition. Even though this survey was completed several years ago, almost all the findings are still accurate today. In addition to the skills and knowledge required above, we always get the same answer: "We need someone with soft skills. We want someone who will show up on time and will dress and act appropriately" The sector work done in healthcare and manufacturing show the same needs as other industries.

The Western Region identified Lack of transportation and childcare as an area of weakness in our SWOT analysis. Our region plans to work with Oklahoma Human Services to provide a list of childcare facilities in our region. We are advocating for more childcare facilities to allow more opportunities for stay at home parents to enter the workforce and increase the labor force participation rate.

Transportation continues to be a challenge in rural Oklahoma. Many residents have to drive to a nearby city for employment. If they do not have a vehicle, public transportation is very limited in rural Oklahoma. SCOWB is working with Southwest Oklahoma Rural Transportation Planning Organization (SORTPO). Below is a summary of SORTPO initiatives. SCOWB Executivedirector participated in the interim study at the capital to bring awareness to the need for rural transportation options to support people in training or employment. The Western Region will continue to partner with SORTPO to bring all available initiatives to the region.

SORTPO Transit Planning Summary

- Fall 2024 - Interim Study – 044 House Transportation Committee Transportation/Mobility Needs rural Oklahoma
- Agency Presenters: SORTPO, NORTPO, South Central Oklahoma Workforce Board, Duncan Regional Hospital, Areawide Aging Agency- SWODA, Pathways to Healthier You, Thinkability, Cameron Duncan Campus

- Raise awareness of the needs of rural Oklahomans to access medical, education, training, employment, social services, recreation, and healthy foods.
- Winter 2025 – House Bill 2034 drafted.

    o Sponsored by Representative Archer

    o Calls for the establishment of a Regional Rural Transportation Task Force

    o Aims to identify and address rural mobility challenges

    o The Bill was laid over pending results of cooperation and partnership with key state agencies with the Oklahoma Department of Transportation in development of the Statewide Transit Plan with focus on transit initiatives in the rural areas.

- Collaboration and Coordination

    o State & Federal Partners:

        - Oklahoma Health Care Authority (OHCA)
        - Workforce Boards
        - Transit Agencies
        - Community Health Improvement Organizations
        - Health Departments
        - City of Altus/Altus Air Force Base
        - Duncan Regional Hospital, Grady Memorial Hospital
        - Tribal Leaders
        - Healthcare/Caseworkers
- Innovative Initiatives

    o Carolyn Watson Grant:

        - Grant approved $30,000 over 24 months
        - Create a mileage reimbursement program
        - Target Area: Caddo, Kiowa, and Stephens counties

    o Hunger Free Oklahoma Grant (WIC Program):

        - Collaborative project across SORTPO and NORTPO regions
        - **Mileage reimbursements for WIC clients**
        - **Target counties in SORTPO: Harmon, Jackson, and Tillman**

Through the well-trained staff of all partners and the connections being established, fostered, and grown, the Region has the capacity to meet employer needs. In a world of shrinking budgets and staff attrition, it is even more vital to have all staff from all partners cross-trained not just in their specific program goals and requirements. SCOWB is made up of mostly rural communities. As such, it has been imperative that all partners, agencies, educational facilities, and citizens rely on each

other to get things done. In this respect, the area is better equipped to meet the workforce needs of employers because we have been coordinating even before it was mandated and communities have learned not to rely on the state for clear directions or "procedures" on how to make things happen for the betterment of the community.

B5. Based on the regional plan's data analysis, describe the local area's key workforce development issues and possible solutions to be implemented within the local area.

Key Workforce Development Issues and Solutions

1. Limited Transportation

Issue: The rural nature of the SCOWB area and a lack of consistent public transportation options significantly restrict access to jobs, training centers, and support services—particularly for individuals without personal vehicles.

Proposed Solutions:

- Expand remote work opportunities through partnerships with Work Ready Oklahoma (WRO) centers, allowing individuals to work from home, thus bypassing transportation challenges.
- Support co-location and mobile services where workforce and community-based services are offered closer to where people live—especially in remote or underserved areas.
- Workforce system collaboration can help identify transportation needs at the community level and leverage partnerships with local transit authorities, nonprofits, or regional planning organizations for rideshare or vanpool programs.

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2. Limited Childcare & Changing Regulatory Requirements

Issue: Childcare access is both scarce and unstable due to regulatory complexity and workforce shortages in the childcare sector. This is a critical barrier to employment for parents and caregivers.

Proposed Solutions:

- Partner with Oklahoma Human Services to provide real-time listings of available childcare providers to workforce participants.
- Braiding of supportive services funds to help cover childcare expenses, allowing parents to participate in training or accept employment.
- Advocate for local solutions, such as employer-supported childcare or onsite centers, especially within growing businesses and institutions involved in apprenticeship and OJT programs.

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3. Lack of Access to Healthcare and Mental Health Services

Issue: Many residents face challenges in accessing routine medical care, behavioral health services, and addiction recovery programs—conditions that directly impact employability and job retention.

Proposed Solutions:

- Partner with healthcare providers and initiatives like "Pathways for a Healthier You" to integrate workforce and health outreach—particularly in high-need counties like Stephens and Jefferson.
- Co-locate mental health services with workforce programs when possible, or offer telehealth access at career centers.
- Continue cross-sector collaboration with community organizations (e.g., ORS, Department of Corrections, CLEAN) to support those facing compounding issues, including justice-involved individuals and those in recovery.

Integrated Strategies & Solutions by Goal Area

a. Increasing Labor Participation

- Key Challenge Addressed: Transportation, Childcare
- Strategy: Increase co-enrollment and service integration with WRO, CBOs, and other partners.
- Action: Expand MOUs with WRO to provide access to employment readiness, remote job opportunities, and professional clothing. Track co-enrollment and fund braiding to fill service gaps.

b. Growth of Existing Businesses

- Key Challenge Addressed: Workforce shortages due to barriers such as childcare, mental health, or transportation.
- Strategy: Promote employer-led training (OJT, Apprenticeships) and workforce solutions that accommodate employee needs.
- Action: Maintain and expand business service teams to build customized training pathways and increase OJT agreements by 20 percent in two years. Highlight flexible solutions for employers, such as job-sharing or remote work.

c. Improved Exposure to Workforce Opportunities

- Key Challenge Addressed: Limited awareness among students and jobseekers of career pathways.
- Strategy: Develop outreach efforts with K–12 and community organizations.
- Action: Integrate career exploration and career pathways into the K-12 system. Partner with the local Economic Development to connect business and education.

d. Opportunities for Individuals with Barriers

- Key Challenge Addressed: Access to services (health, transportation, childcare) for vulnerable populations.
- Strategy: Strengthen community coalitions that serve people with complex needs.
- Action: Continue to participate in cross-sector events (e.g., IMPACT, IPG summits, Military Soldier for Life programs, Duncan Regional Hospital Pathways initiatives), and support reentry and recovery populations with wraparound employment services. Leverage roles on advisory boards to shape responsive programming.

Conclusion

SCOWB is proactively addressing critical workforce development weaknesses through a multi-pronged strategy built on partnership, resource braiding, and community collaboration. By leveraging strengths—such as strong business service teams, community coalitions, and growing sector-based programs—the area is well-positioned to minimize threats and turn persistent weaknesses into opportunities for growth. A key next step will be continuing to track outcomes of co-enrollment and supportive services delivery, especially in areas affected by regulatory or service delivery gaps (e.g., childcare and healthcare).

C. Local Workforce Development System Description

C1. Describe the workforce development system in the local area by addressing each of the following.

a. List and describe the programs that are included in the system.
b. List the location(s) of the comprehensive One Stop Center(s) (at least one) within your local area; and any affiliated or specialized centers (both physically and electronically linked, such as libraries) in the local workforce development area. Identify the workforce system partners who are physically co-located in those centers.
c. Describe the roles and resource contributions of each of the one-stop partners. **Please include the completed Job Seeker and Business Services service matrices**.

Oklahoma Employment Security Commission (OESC):

Wagner-Peyser/Labor Exchange

Oklahoma's workforce system receives funding through the Wagner-Peyser Act (also commonly referred to as Labor Exchange). The Wagner-Peyser Act of 1933 established a nationwide system of public employment offices known as the Employment Service. The Act was amended in 1998 to make the Employment Service part of the One-Stop services delivery system.

The One Stop delivery system provides universal access to an integrated array of labor exchange services so that workers, job seekers and businesses can find the services they need at one stop and frequently under one roof in easy-to-find locations.

The Employment Service focuses on providing a variety of employment related labor exchange services including but not limited to job search assistance, job referral, and placement assistance for job seekers, re-employment services to unemployment insurance claimants, and recruitment services to employers with job openings. Services are delivered in one of three modes including self-service, facilitated self-help services and staff assisted service delivery approaches.

The OESC is a United States Department of Labor (USDOL) funded agency dedicated to providing quality service and assistance to Oklahoma businesses and job seekers. Our mission is to enhance Oklahoma's economy by:

- matching jobs and workers to increase the efficiency of local labor markets,
- providing Unemployment Compensation to support unemployed workers and their communities,
- preparing a skilled workforce to enhance and align their skills to meet local labor market needs,
- gathering, analyzing, and disseminating information about the labor force to improve local economic decisions.

The OESC has a vast amount of experience working with and supporting the business community. Whether assisting with the recruitment and attraction of new employers or sustaining existing employers, the OESC is a vital partner of business. Our highly trained staff works diligently to connect individuals with employment opportunities through customized services that allow every job seeker to know their skills, improve their skills and get the best job possible with those skills.

Unemployment Insurance

OESC maintains the Unemployment Insurance (UI) Program to pay unemployment benefits to qualified unemployed wage earners. OESC makes rigorous efforts to locate suitable employment opportunities and /or provide reemployment assistance so those individuals receiving unemployment benefits may reenter the workforce as quickly as possible. The Unemployment Insurance Division maintains the Unemployment Insurance program which was established through the Social Security Act of 1935. Unemployment benefits are paid as a weekly sum to qualified unemployed wage earners covered under the law. Funds for payment of these benefits are provided through a state tax paid by employers. Administrative funding for the program is provided through the Federal Unemployment Tax Act (FUTA) taxes paid by employers for that purpose.

OESC is the administrative partner for the following programs:

Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG)

The U.S. Department of Labor provides grant funds to the State of Oklahoma to provide employment and training services to eligible residents and workers. As a condition of receiving those funds, the priority of service will be given to qualified veterans when referring individuals to job openings, DOL-funded training programs, or related services. In accordance with the implementation of the Veterans' Priority Provisions of the "Jobs for Veterans Act" (PL 107-288), qualified veterans will receive priority referral to services over non-veterans as determined by each program's mandatory eligibility criteria.

Information and assistance will be provided by One-Stop and Workforce Center staff regarding available employment programs, training opportunities and services, eligibility requirements, and veteran priority. Veterans are encouraged to avail themselves of these opportunities.

The Federal Bonding Program

The U.S. Department of Labor's Federal Bonding program offers a proven and effective tool for workforce development professionals to help both employers and at-risk job applicants at no cost.

Many employers carry insurance to protect themselves against employee theft or dishonesty. Employees who handle money, valuable tools, or goods are covered. This insurance is called fidelity bonding. When such commercial insurance is denied because of an individual's background, the employer often denies a job to that person.

The Federal Bonding Program provides individual fidelity bonds to employers for job applicants who are deemed unbondable by commercial carriers because of a:

- Record of arrest, conviction, or imprisonment
- History of alcohol or drug abuse
- Poor credit history
- Lack of employment history
- Dishonorable discharge

Fidelity bonding may be provided for any individual who:

- Has a firm job offer and is qualified for the job

And if the job:

- Offers steady work with reasonable expectation of permanence
- Is not self-employment.

The Bond does not cover liability due to poor workmanship, job injuries or work accidents. It is not a bail bond or court bond for the legal system. It is not a contract bond, performance bond or license bond sometimes needed to be self-employed.

Bonds are issued in the amount of $5,000 (or higher) and are available at no cost to employers or job seekers. The applicant is covered for the first six months of employment, but the employer may then purchase additional coverage.

Trade Adjustment Assistance and Trade Readjustment Allowance

Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) is a federal program which provides assistance to workers who lose their jobs or whose hours of work and wages are reduced as a result of increased imports. Under this program you may qualify to receive allowances for training, job search and relocation if your

company is certified as "Trade Impacted" by U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). Additionally, a Trade Readjustment Allowance (TRA) may be payable if you qualify.

Trade Readjustment Allowance (TRA) is a weekly allowance paid to workers covered under a certified Trade Act petition who have been separated because of a lack of work in employment covered by the petition certification.

An application for TRA will not include applications for job training, job search, and/or relocation allowances. You are required to file a separate application for each of these benefits.

Work Opportunity Tax Credit

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) is a tax credit offered to employers as an incentive to hire individuals who are members of targeted groups that have traditionally faced significant barriers to employment. The credit is used to reduce the federal tax liability of private/for-profit employers.

WIOA Title I Program: Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Formula Programs

The Chief Elected Officials Consortium is the grant recipient for WIOA Title I program Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth formula programs. Funds for these programs are subcontracted to Dynamic Workforce Solutions. The intent of these programs is to help in need individuals obtain lasting employment at a self-sufficient wage. These programs help eligible individuals with a variety of services such as tuition assistance, work experience, on-the-job training, soft skills training, supportive services, and so much more. WIOA case managers sit down with participants and develop an individualized plan on how to help them overcome any barriers they might have to employment and help them find and retain sustainable employment. This plan can include referrals to partner sources that can help with other needs the participant might have. WIOA case managers follow their participants through their journey of entering the workforce and provide career guidance and other services for up to a year after exiting the program.

Department of Human Services

The Department of Human Services (OHS) manages many programs that are a vital part of our workforce system- from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) cash assistance to SNAP, to Child Care Subsidies, to Foster Care, to Child Support, to Emergency Utility Assistance. Client referrals can come from a WIOA program to OHS for critical supportive services, or from OHS to a workforce partner like Career Tech. Individuals who are eligible for the TANF program receive individualized one on one counseling and employment planning with their assigned OHS caseworker. This can include referrals to higher education, adult education, special projects, partner programs, or community work experience training. OHS has contracted with service providers that provide drug screening, educational screening, visual screening, etc. Training allowances can be provided for those individuals that actively participate in the program.

Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)

Authorized under Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965. The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is a community service and work-based job training program for older Americans. Authorized by the Older Americans Act, the program provides training for low-income, unemployed older Americans and supportive services that allow them to participate in the training. Participants also have access to employment assistance through American Job Centers. As described in TEGL 16-16, Attachment II, there are several ways that the SCSEP program partners in our area may coordinate with our American Job Centers. These strategies include:

- SCSEP services can be physically co-located in American Job Centers.
- American Job Centers can serve as a SCSEP host agency. The American Job Center supervisors can assign SCSEP participants tasks that free up career counselors' time to provide staff-assisted services. Some American Job Centers have trained SCSEP participants to provide computer assistance in resource rooms, particularly to other seniors.
- SCSEP and Local WDBs can develop comprehensive MOUs to streamline coordination processes and clarify when a jobseeker can be referred to SCSEP and when they might best be served by the Adult or Dislocated Worker program. MOUs can also consider how SCSEP will consider SCSEP participants' community service hours as an in-kind contribution for purposes of SCSEP's contribution towards infrastructure costs.
- SCSEP can provide paid work experience with community service employment assignments, while Title I Adult funds can support individualized career services such as working with an employment counselor.
- SCSEP can provide advice and training for American Job Center staff on adapting services to meet the needs of older adult learners; American Job Center staff can provide advice and training to SCSEP on the effective use of labor market information and job placement strategies. Our local American Job Center network will support each of these strategies for creating a closer alignment with SCSEP services.

Job Corps

Job Corps' mission is to educate and train highly motivated young people for successful careers in the nation's fastest-growing industries.

Job Corp offers free education and training programs that help youth ages 16-24 learn a career and earn a high school equivalency.

Within the South-Central Oklahoma Workforce Area, there are three main Job Corps partners.

- Guthrie Job Corps Center (co-located in our comprehensive center)
    - Type of Services: Outreach and Recruiting Students for GJCC ages 16-24
    - How to Obtain Services: Phone Interviews, Zoom Interviews, Face-Time interviews Scheduled Appointments only, no walk-in
- Talking Leaves Job Corps Center
- Tulsa Job Corps Center

Native American programs

We have 2 WIOA Native American programs in the South-Central Oklahoma area

- Comanche Nation WIOA
- KIOWA Tribe WIOA

WIOA Native American programs offer the same title I services to tribal members throughout South-Central Oklahoma.

National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) … Our local partner is ORO Development Corporation.

The National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) is a nationally directed, locally-administered program of services for migrant and seasonal farmworkers (MSFWs) and includes 52 employment and training grants, as well as 17 housing grants across the United States and Puerto Rico. The program partners with community organizations and state agencies to counter the chronic unemployment and underemployment experienced by farmworkers who depend primarily on jobs in agricultural labor performed across the country. The NFJP is an integral part of the public workforce system and a partner in the nationwide network of One-Stop Career Centers. In addition, NFJP partners with state monitor advocates to provide services to farmworkers and their families working in agriculture employment.

The NFJP program was created under the 1964 Civil Rights Act and is currently authorized under Section 167 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

Department of Education (ED) Programs

- Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) program, authorized under WIOA title II
- There are 4 local recipients of funds in South-Central Oklahoma:
    - Red River Technology Center
    - Great Plains Technology Center
    - Caddo Kiowa Technology Center
    - Chickasha Public Schools

Department of Education provides Adult Education and Family Literacy and family literacy leading toward high school equivalency diploma.

The State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services program

Authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 720 et seq.), as amended by WIOA title IV, Our Lawton one-stop partner is the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services.

The Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) expands opportunities for employment, independent life and economic self-sufficiency by helping Oklahomans with disabilities bridge barriers to success in the workplace, school and at home.

DRS is comprised of five program divisions, Vocational Rehabilitation, Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Disability Determination, Oklahoma School for the Blind and Oklahoma School for the Deaf. These divisions operate dozens of programs that help Oklahomans lead more independent and productive lives.

- Vocational Rehabilitation Division: Employment services for people with any disability, except blindness.
- Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired division: Employment and independent living services for people who are blind, and visually impaired.
- Disability Determination Services: Determines medical eligibility for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI).
- Oklahoma School for the Deaf: Educational programs for children who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- Oklahoma School for the Blind: Educational programs for children who are blind or visually impaired.

Services specific to employment and independence may include:

- ✓ vocational evaluation, counseling and career planning guidance are provided by counselors meeting the Comprehensive Standard for Professional Development (CSPD).
- ✓ Information and referral.
- ✓ Employment services, including job search, placement and follow-up services.
- ✓ Assistive technology, including telecommunications, sensory and other rehabilitation equipment and devices.
- ✓ Training including vocational, post-secondary, on-the-job, work experience, personal and vocational adjustment, job search skills development and job coaching.
- ✓ Diagnosis and treatment of physical and mental disabilities may be provided to enhance consumers' employment opportunities.
- ✓ Maintenance for additional costs connected with being evaluated to determine eligibility or receiving certain services under an individualized plan for employment (IPE).
- ✓ Transportation may be provided in connection with other services needed to reach employment goals.
- ✓ Instructional services, such as rehabilitation teaching and orientation and mobility services.
- ✓ Self-employment programs.
- ✓ Personal assistance services may be available while individuals are receiving VR services.
- ✓ Transition School-to-Work services for students.
- ✓ Supported employment.
- ✓ Post-employment services.

- ✓ Specialized programs to assist consumers who are blind, deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind and individuals with speech impairments, severe disabilities and those who require independent living services.
- ✓ Foreign-language interpreter services.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program

Authorized under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.) … Our one-stop partner in Lawton is Oklahoma Human Services.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is a federally-funded program for children deprived of support because of a parent's death, incapacity, absence, or unemployment. Cash assistance is available to the family on a time-limited basis through TANF. The purpose of this federal program is to provide temporary support in meeting basic needs, training leading to employment, employment services and childcare assistance for qualified families with children. Each family is individually assessed, and Career Services are based on the specific needs of each family. Examples of Career Services delivered by TANF may include:

- ✓ Career Planning
- ✓ Employment-Based Case Management
- ✓ Guidance & Counseling
- ✓ In-Depth Assessment
- ✓ Initial Assessment
- ✓ Initial Plan Development
- ✓ Job Development
- ✓ Job Placement Assistance
- ✓ Job Search
- ✓ Labor Market Information Distribution
- ✓ Literacy Skills
- ✓ Mentoring
- ✓ Retention / Job Coaching / Post-Employment Follow-Up
- ✓ Soft Skills Development
- ✓ Supportive Services Information
- ✓ Work Experience
- ✓ Work Readiness Skills Development

OHS will make these TANF services available to job-seeking customers in the South-Central Workforce Board in our comprehensive center and will be available by direct linkage to our affiliate centers. Clients must meet TANF eligibility guidelines.

Center Locations

The South-Central Oklahoma Workforce Investment Area has three Oklahoma Works Centers at the heart of its Public Workforce Investment System. They are located in Chickasha, Duncan, and Lawton. The Chickasha Center serves Caddo, Grady, and McClain counties; the Duncan Center serves Jefferson and Stephens counties; and the Lawton Ft. Sill Center serves Comanche (the largest county in terms of

population), Cotton, and Tillman counties. The Lawton Workforce Center serves as our comprehensive center. Employ Oklahoma is the current software for the centers, and it is available from any location with an internet connection. Access points have been established in technology center campuses and libraries throughout the eight-county region.

Partners in our centers include:

Chickasha - OESC, Dynamic Workforce Solutions, and Oklahoma Department of Veteran's affairs, Unemployment Access

Duncan - OESC, Dynamic Workforce Solutions, Oklahoma Department of Veteran's affairs, Unemployment Access, and Guthrie Job Corp

Lawton - OESC, Dynamic Workforce Solutions, Oklahoma Department of Veteran's affairs, Unemployment Access, Comanche Tribe Workforce, Department of Human Services, Guthrie Job Corp, Department of Rehabilitation Services and SCSEP Title V (AARP Foundation)

Partner Roles and Resource Contributions

Each year, our one-stop partners will produce a One-Stop Operating Budget that will give a detailed description of the financial contributions of each partner to the one-stop delivery system in our area. An Infrastructure Funding Agreement has been prepared and approved by all of the partners. All resource contributions will be allocated according to the proportion of benefit received by each of the partner programs, consistent with the Federal law authorizing the program, and consistent with all other applicable legal requirements, including Federal cost principles in 2 CFR part 200. In this section of our Local Plan, our focus is on a more general description of the resources that will be brought to the one-stop delivery system by our partners. Here is where we describe the services that each partner program will provide as well as the role they will play during the scope of our 4-year Plan.

Each of SCOWB's One-Stop Partners has been participating in an on-going system building and development process. Each has committed to inculcate appropriate contributions based on Federal and State guidance to further improve and streamline Job Seeker and Business Services.

See Job Seeker Service Matrix for South-Central Oklahoma attached at Appendix B.
See Business Services Matrix for South-Central Oklahoma attached at Appendix D.
See Partner Services Matrix for South-Central Oklahoma attached at Appendix E.

The board will work with the partner agencies to further define roles within the one-stop system to create less duplication and an overall better system.

C2. Identify your key strategies for aligning the core programs (WIOA Title I, II, III, and IV programs) as well as all required partner programs within the local one-stop system of comprehensive and

affiliate offices by addressing each of the following items. (**Include a copy of any completed Process Maps** and how they are used to align services and avoid duplication of services).

a. Assess the types and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area.
b. Provide an explanation of how the local board addresses local rapid response activities.
c. Describe how the local board will coordinate relevant secondary and post-secondary education programs and activities with workforce investment activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services.
d. Describe how the local board, in coordination with the One Stop operator, maximizes coordination, improves service delivery, and avoids duplication of Wagner-Peyser Act services and other services provided through the delivery system.
e. Describe how the local board will coordinate WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with adult education and literacy activities under WIOA Title II, including how the local board will carry out the review of local applications submitted under Title II.
f. Describe and assess the type and availability of youth workforce investment activities in the local area, including activities for youth who are individuals with disabilities, and provide an identification of successful models.

Adult and Dislocated Worker Training Activities

Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs, Wagner Peyser, Veterans services are available in all of our workforce centers. Department of Human Services, Department of Vocational Rehabilitation and Title V programs are available in our comprehensive center in Lawton. We have Title I staff currently co-located with Adult Education and Family Literacy in Lawton and Duncan. We can refer customers to any core programs if they are not available in the center with our direct referral form.

Rapid Response

Rapid Response activities are fully supported by the South-Central Oklahoma Workforce Board and the area's one-stop system partners. When mass layoffs or plant closures occur the state Rapid Response Team or business notifies the board business services staff or the one-stop operator which takes immediate steps to quickly respond to the plant closure/mass layoff to help workers find another appropriate job to return them to the workforce as quickly as possible. Quick coordination between state and local team members is believed by the board to be vitally important because by rapidly responding to the situation, the pain and anguish of affected dislocated workers can be minimized. This state and local partnership works extremely well. Meetings with affected employers and workers are scheduled at the convenience of the employer—day or night, whenever possible, prior to the closure or layoff, onsite at the company, and on company time.

At these meetings, and/or when they visit an area Oklahoma Works Center, information on services focuses on ensuring that affected workers are aware of all the services that are available—Unemployment Insurance, childcare assistance, health insurance information, job search assistance,

labor market information, financial and stress management assistance, and training services assistance. Most importantly, laid-off workers or workers facing impending layoff are also informed of the board's Targeted Industries by board staff, Business Services Team representatives, and one-stop leadership management teams during the Rapid Response meetings, and/or when they come to a center for assistance. If affected workers are unable to find employment, then training services will be offered. If, for instance, an affected worker does find employment, but it pays a wage less than 80% of their wage or salary equivalent at the time of layoff, training services will be provided. In either case, however, training will only be approved and funded if the training program leads to employment in one of the board's Targeted Industry Demand Occupations. The board is committed to helping dislocated workers get back on their feet as quickly as possible but would like to see them obtain new employment in occupations that are deemed most in demand in the area. In addition, to the services already mentioned, Job Fairs are scheduled frequently in the South-Central Oklahoma Workforce Investment Area to specifically assist this targeted group or any other person who wants employment.

Coordination of Secondary and Post-Secondary Education Programs

SCOWB has members and representatives from both Secondary and Post-Secondary education programs. Our local area works closely with our board members as well as our public schools, technology centers, and regional colleges and universities. Some examples are:

- South Central Oklahoma Workforce Board works with Duncan Public Schools, Red River Technology Center, Cameron University, Duncan Area Economic Development Foundation and local business on career pathways and a high school internship program.
- South Central Oklahoma Workforce Board works with Lawton Public Schools, Great Plains Technology Center, Cameron University, The Lawton Chamber, local core partners and local business on career pathways. SCOWB has service provider staff on the Lawton Public Schools Advisory team.
- SCOWB Executive Director collaborates with the Center For Workforce Excellence at Canadian Velley Technology Center.
- SCOWB staff recently met with Cameron University to share our demand occupations and provide input into the creation of micro-credentialing.
- SCOWB staff currently office on the University of Science and Arts campus to provide direct access to our programs. SCOWB will bring a career navigator onsite to perform enrollments as needed.

Coordination and Improvement of Services with Wagner-Peyser

Employment Service staff (ES) are integrated into the Oklahoma Works AJCs which forms a key part of an efficient and cohesive workforce framework. All center staff have clearly defined duties and responsibilities that align with the broader goals of the workforce system.. Our One-Stop-Operator conducts quarterly meetings and provides cross-training among the center staff. This training covers

how each program and function interact with all other programs in the system. Additionally, staff are cross-trained to enhance service delivery across all programs. At the regular scheduled One-Stop-Operator meetings or the business services team meetings, staff coordinate on outreach, hiring events and other multi partner events. The one-stop operator works closely with all the local center managers to resolve any issue and ensuring alignment of service delivery.

WIOA Title I & II Coordination

The services of the Adult Education and Family Literacy (AEFL) are offered through Caddo Kiowa Technology Center, Chickasha Public Schools (CPS), Red River Technology Center (RRTC) and Great Plains Technology Center (GPTC) will be available to the American Job Center network in South Central Oklahoma through a direct linkage. Our SCOWB Title I service provider currently has staff in Red River Technology Center, Great Plains Technology Center, Caddo Kiowa Technology Center and Chickasha Public Schools to coordinate with adult education and literacy.

Access to these services will be made available to customers of our American Job Center network through direct linkages with:

- Duncan through RRTC
- Chickasha through CKTC and CPS
- Lawton through GPTC.

Other points of contact may be identified during the MOU review. As updates are made to the partner's Point of Contact information, Adult Education and Family Literacy Partners communicate any such changes to the One-Stop Operator.

Currently, co-enrollments into Title I services for Adult education and family literacy have significantly decreased, due to the testing fees not counting toward the 40 percent training requirements unless the student is co-enrolled in an occupational skills training or work experience. Most students that are enrolled in the AEFL programs struggle to complete the high school completion programs. Enrolling in additional training would not be feasible for successful completion. SCOWB will continue to advocate to change policy to allow for test fees to be covered. GED/HSE completion remains as a goal for the State of Oklahoma.

Referrals

As Adult Education and Family Literacy customers -- including students, family members, and businesses -- who need additional career services, referrals may be made to our American Job Center locations in Duncan, Lawton and Chickasha or to our website.

It is recommended that customers complete the online application on the board website. Walk-in customers are accepted, although the availability of resources may be limited or delayed. All customers, even if they appear in person, will be required to fill out the online application.

As a rule, career services for job-seekers are limited to individuals who are eligible to work in the United States. There may be additional limitations, depending on the service. For example, some individualized services are only available to individuals who meet certain eligibility criteria related to family income, work history, etc.

Pursuant to the Jobs For Veterans Act, eligible veterans and covered spouses receive priority of service.

To drive this coordination, Section 107(d)(11) of the WIOA law provides that SCOWB will review the applications submitted to Title II in order to "determine whether such applications are consistent with the local plan." Additionally, SCOWB will make recommendation to Title II in order to "promote alignment" with the local plan. With respect to SCOWB's review of grant applications, our priority will be to confirm that each applicant properly describes their willingness to:

- Provide access through the one-stop delivery system to such program or activities carried out by the entity, including making their applicable career services available at the one-stop centers (in addition to any other appropriate locations), as described in WIOA Section 121(b)(1)(A)(i).
- Use a portion of the funds available for adult education and literacy activities to maintain the one-stop delivery system, including funds to support the infrastructure costs of one-stop centers in the South-Central Oklahoma area, as described in WIOA Section 121(b)(1)(A)(ii).
- Participate in the operation of the local one-stop system consistent with WIOA Section 121(b)(1)(A)(iv).
- Promote concurrent enrollment in programs and activities under title I – including, as appropriate, WIOA Formula Grant programs, WIOA Native American programs, etc. SCOWB will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out under Title I with the provision of local adult education and literacy activities. We will do this by pursuing various service alignment strategies in cooperation with our one-stop partners. The exact nature of these alignment activities will be determined by the partners working together to identify appropriate referral activities, possible co-location strategies, staff cross-training activities, etc.

Youth Workforce Investment Activities

The WIOA Youth Service Provider is responsible for providing the fourteen program elements. They refer eligible youth to other contractors, vendors, and community organizations that will deliver the youth program elements of service and they provide eligible youth the services identified below.

The WIOA Youth Service Provider is staffed with 8 talent development specialists that are located in the three Workforce Centers in the South-Central Oklahoma Workforce Investment Area. The talent development specialists also spend at least one day a week on-site with the Adult Education and Family

Literacy programs. All staff are trained to provide services for all WIOA Title I programs. Each talent development specialist is responsible for their respective areas. If a talent development specialist is unavailable, the Operations Manager will cover that area.

SCOWB's youth service provider has a structured and effective outreach process in place to ensure that there is an adequate flow of eligible youth applicants to meet program enrollment requirements. The program has linkages to groups or organizations in the community that support the referral and participation of eligible local area youth such as:

Department of Human Services
GED Training Classes
Native American Tribes
Workforce Center Partners
Women's Shelters
Youth and Family Services
Local High Schools
Career Technology Centers
Law Enforcement
Participant Referrals
Other Community Organizations

The South-Central Oklahoma Workforce Board through its Service Provider works with local agencies responsible for education, foster care, human services, juvenile justice, housing, and transportation. Members of the Board and partnership meetings represent education, human services, juvenile justice, and housing and provide input on WIOA youth activities.

Youth Career Navigators are located in the workforce centers as well as the Great Plains Technology Center and Red River Technology Center. Youth are required to register in the system. Summer employment opportunities directly linked to academic and occupational learning can be provided. The Service provider will make provisions for work experiences, internships and job shadowing. Youth Service Providers are required to spend a minimum of 20% on work-based learning.

SCOWB's Youth Service Provider has an effective program in place to develop contacts and youth opportunities with employers, higher education institutions and online programs. Opportunities with employers are addressed through activities such as but not limited to: job shadowing, paid and unpaid work experiences, job matching and employer engagement. The youth may also be exposed to tours at universities and technology centers. All newly enrolled youth are engaged in online career exploration assessments through Oklahoma Career Guide. Another online career exploration tool available for our youth is Virtual Job Shadowing, which allows the user to navigate through various occupations as well as provides soft skills and life skill trainings. As PY25 we will not have funding to support Virtual Job Shadowing. SCOWB will work with other partner agencies to see if a similar training is available.

As suggested by Department of Labor guidance, we will coordinate our work experience activities with other youth serving organizations and agencies. We will strengthen our partnership-building efforts by reaching out to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Community Services Block Grant activities, and Community Development Block Grant programs. Additionally, we will endeavor to expand our linkages with our Adult Education partners, WIOA Native American programs, and Job Corps.

C3. Describe how the local board will work with entities carrying out core programs to accomplish the following outcomes:

a. Expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment.
b. Facilitate the development of career pathways*. Provide a list of the career pathways, and for each include:
    - The phase of development (conceptual, in initial implementation, being sustained, or, expanding).
    - Workforce Demand (need) – Describe the business workforce need being addressed by the strategy. Indicate the industry(s) and occupations being represented, how the need was determined, and the occupational skills to be addressed.
    - Relevance – Indicate the connection between the demand and the priority(ies) for the region.
    - Strategy – Identify the sector partners and the role of each; o Funding – Describe available resources that will support the strategy; o Unfunded Critical Elements – Identify any critical elements for the identified strategy that must be done for the success of the strategy that cannot be met with available resources. This may include: the expansion of an existing strategy, in any phase, from one LWDA to others in the region; the need to procure new training vendors; planning sessions involving multiple partners; training of One-Stop staff; and development of regional data collection systems.
c. Facilitate co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs.
d. Improve access to activities leading to a recognized post-secondary credential (including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable, and stackable).
e. Facilitate engagement of employers* in workforce development programs, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations to:
    - Support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area.
    - Provide better coordination between workforce development programs and economic development.
    - Support sector partnership strategies, including a list of active sector partnerships. For each, describe:
        - The phase of development (conceptual, in initial implementation, being sustained, or, expanding)

- Workforce Demand (need) – Describe the business workforce need being addressed by the strategy. Indicate the industry(s) being represented, how the need was determined, the occupational skills to be developed, the number of jobs being addressed, and the timeframe(s) associated with the need.
- Relevance – Indicate the connection between the demand and the priority(ies) for the region.
- Strategy – Identify the sector partners and the role of each.
- Funding – Describe available resources that will support the strategy.
- Unfunded Critical Elements – Identify any critical elements for the identified strategy that must be done for the success of the strategy that cannot be met with available resources. This may include: the expansion of an existing strategy, in any phase, from one LWDA to others in the region; the need to procure new training vendors; planning sessions involving multiple partners; training of One-Stop staff; and development of regional data collection systems. o Strengthen linkages between the One Stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs; and,

- Implement initiatives such as incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, customized training programs, work-based learning, industry and sector strategies, career pathways initiatives, utilization of effective business intermediaries, and other business services and strategies designed to meet the needs of regional employers.

Access to Services for Eligible Individuals

SCOWB recognizes that education, supportive services, employment, and training services are critical to the success of many adults and dislocated workers, including unemployed and underemployed individuals and individuals with barriers to employment. The South-Central Area continues to develop a partnership to support the use of WIOA funds for the purpose of providing individuals, including low-skilled adults, youth and individuals with barriers to employment, including individuals with disabilities, with workforce development activities, education and supportive services. These partnerships facilitate the development of career pathways and co-enrollment into core programs, and improve access to activities leading to recognized postsecondary credentials, including industry-recognized certificates and certificates that are portable and stackable. The Opportunity Act allows supportive services to be provided to participants who are in career or training services, unable to obtain supportive services through other programs providing supportive services, and clarifies that they must be provided in a manner necessary to enable individuals to participate in career or training services. The SCOWB's policies and strategies, such as the ITA, Supportive Service and Demand Occupation Policies, align with the goals of WIOA and the state plan. SCOWB leverages system resources to ensure that supportive services are provided only when other funds cannot be garnered from other system partners. SCOWB also utilizes 211 as a resource when determining availability of supportive services.

The SCOWB ensures collaboration with our core partners at DRS so that individuals with disabilities are provided support and resources needed to secure training, education and employment. The co-

location of DRS in the Lawton Comprehensive American Job Center creates avenues for referrals and a streamlined process for these referrals. The Operator will be assisting with the coordination of these types of referrals in the affiliate centers throughout the South-Central Area. The SCOWB is committed to staff development opportunities that include cross training for all system partners to understand the roles of each partner so that referrals are increased and serves are leveraged across the workforce system.

SCOWB Core Program Partnerships

Adult Education/Literacy/Secondary and Post-Secondary Education

Often, clients eligible for WIOA services need to improve basic math, reading and writing skills as they make forward progress towards career goals. Our partners in Adult Education in South-Central Oklahoma offer programs that teach basic skills such as reading, math, high school equivalency preparation, and English as a Second Language (ESL) for non-native speakers. These programs are offered free to the public at numerous locations in the area.

The SCOWB is working diligently to align the connections between secondary education, adult education and postsecondary education to strengthen the workforce in South-Central Oklahoma. This alignment is included in the discussions among workforce system partner meetings, and the Partner Relations Committee. We recognize there is work needed but the efforts are underway and the system partners are committed to the process. A strong emphasis is being placed on ensuring that adult education and skills development, including Career Pathways, supports the achievement of diplomas and credentials in high-wage, high-growth occupations.

Wagner Peyser/OESC

SCOWB collaborates with OESC to provide clients with access to employment opportunities. We lean on our partners at OESC to provide a variety of employment-related services such as labor exchange information, job referral, and placement assistance for job seekers, re-employment services, unemployment insurance support, and recruitment services to employers with job openings. OESC services are delivered in one of three modes including self-service, facilitated self-help services, and staff-assisted service delivery.

Title I – Adult, DLW, and Youth

The Title I contractor provides integrated services to Adult and Dislocated Workers and Youth Programs. Most of the efforts provided by the Title I provider can be distinguished into three categories: Basic Career Services, Individual Career Services, and Training Services for Adult and Dislocated Workers as well as the 14 Youth Elements.

Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services

Department of Rehabilitation Services Referral Method

The Department of Rehabilitation Services staff will ensure that individuals with disabilities, including individuals on a waiting list, are provided accurate vocational rehabilitation information and guidance, using appropriate modes of communication. This information and guidance will be used to assist the individual in preparing for, securing, retaining, or regaining employment.

Staff will ensure that individuals with disabilities are appropriately referred to Federal and State programs, including components of the workforce system and other partners. Staff will comply with the workforce system and other partners referral preferences. Referral process attached.

SCOWB collaborates with our core partners at DRS to ensure that individuals with disabilities are provided support and resources needed to secure training, education and employment. COWIB, our fiscal agent and employer of record, currently enroll ORS customers into a STEPS program. This program is limited to COWIB as they have non-restricted funds to run the program. SCOWB staff assist onsite at the enrollment events in our area and provide information about other services available in the area.

OESC is committed to coordinating efforts with the Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) and other WIOA partner agencies through contact by telephone, electronic, in-person, or other means when available, referral activities of individuals with disabilities or significant barriers to employment related to the transition from unemployed or underemployed to fully employed.

SCOWB expands access to employment in conjunction with OESC through the following efforts:

Employment focused events

- Job Fairs and Hiring Events
- Internships
- Registered Apprenticeships
- Career Pathways
- Soft Skills Training Curriculum through LinkedIn Learning
- Work Based Learning (OJTs, Registered Apprenticeships, Work Experience etc.)

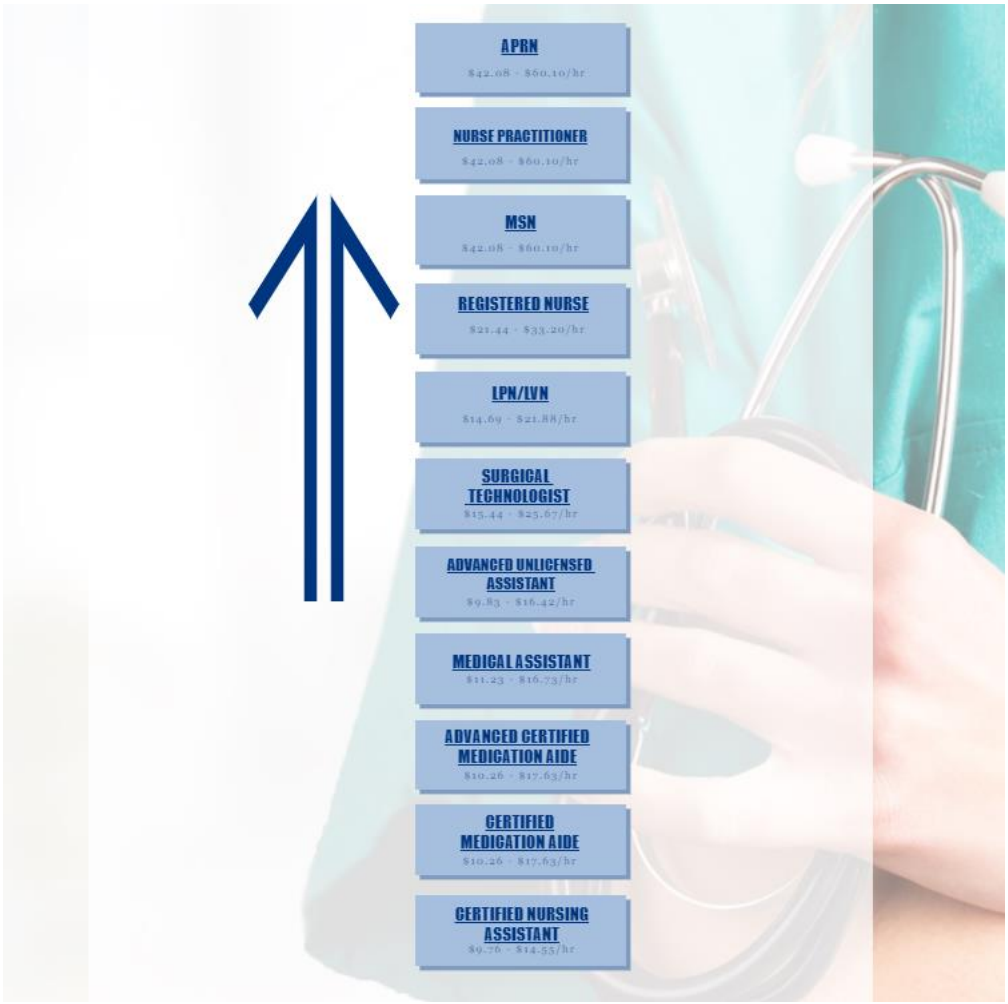
Career Pathways

Phase of Development

In 2018, the Western Region received a grant for Sector Strategies and partnerships. We began with healthcare and had 10 local lunch and learns across the region to hear from employers in the healthcare sector. In May 2019, we finalized our reports and strategies. One strategy SCOWB put in place as a result of the meetings is making healthcare occupations a critical demand and increasing the income requirements for eligibility under priority 4 of our Adult and DLW priority of service. Our board staff is expanding work in the healthcare sector and is currently working with Duncan Regional Hospital in the development of a healthcare career website and career ladder exploration as well as job openings in Southwest Oklahoma. The website is: https://www.swokhealthcareers.com/

Below is an example of a career ladder from the https://www.swokhealthcareers.com/ website in the nursing field. Training for nursing is available in our technology centers for CNAs, Medical Assistants, and LPN. RN training is available in our regional universities. You can also find career ladders for:

- Radiological Services
- Behavioral Health
- Respiratory
- Laboratory
- Doctors
- Pharmacy
- Physical rehabilitation
- Health information services
- Emergency medical services



In May 2019, we began work on our second sector manufacturing. Our local area had two lunch-and-learn meetings with manufacturers and began working on strategies to meet their needs. In

September 2024, we expanded our manufacturing efforts in Lawton and provided an all-day event with teachers and manufacturing and ended the day with all middle school teachers touring the manufacturing facilities at Goodyear, Goodyear training program at Great Plains Technology Center, Republic Paper and Cosmetic Specialty Labs. In December 2023, we held a cross sector summit in Duncan in partnership with Duncan Economic Development Foundation. 11 Local business and 20 workforce resources were brought together to gather ideas and find innovative ways to find employees and improve employee retention. SCOWB organized the interactive event to provide resources to employers.

Workforce Demand

The Healthcare Pathways group was formed to help address the needs of the healthcare industry. Career ladders were developed and the website was created to help educate potential job seekers of opportunities in the healthcare field. Work continues at regular pathway meetings to refine and perfect the site and explore other opportunities to address the healthcare industry needs.

Work is continuing in the manufacturing sector. The board is currently working with the Oklahoma Manufacturing alliance, the career techs and directly with businesses to help address the shortage of available workers.

Relevance

The Oklahoma State Plan discusses the State's vision, goals, and strategies for carrying out the WIOA programs administered by OESC, as well as those administered by core partners (Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services and Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education). Under the leadership of the Governor and the Governor's Council for Workforce and Economic Development (OK State Board), OESC has established a foundational framework that assembles the various workforce entities together as a delivery system. This supply chain model aligns all similarly missioned initiatives and organizations that touch WIOA efforts across the State and local levels. The State's strategic vision is to align resources, education, training, and job opportunities so that outcomes are pursued collectively to build Oklahoma's workforce. Under this new workforce system, the State is positioned to meet the six (6) 'success factors for effective workforce development owner' of Governor Stitt's Workforce Transformation Task Force Report published in April of 2023: 1) **Authority**; 2)
Accountability; 3) **Coordination**; 4) **Information**; 5) **Agility**; 6) **Durability**.

Working on a local level, The South-Central Oklahoma Workforce Board and our partners are focused on deploying resources, leveraging existing programs, and aligning curriculum with local and regional employment demand. The Centers for Workforce Excellence (CWE) provides a point of contact within each identified region that serves existing and prospective employers' workforce needs by coordinating resources and services. The program, established in late 2019, brought together groups from across the state to work hand-in-hand with business leaders, public education, higher education, economic developers, state agencies and CareerTech to devise a replicable workforce model that can be deployed statewide. Throughout the year, an Oklahoma Workforce Committee comprised of stakeholders from throughout the state worked to identify existing state resources and developed a strategic framework

that aligns the workforce with the needs of business and industry. This framework facilitates the integration of resources within Oklahoma's workforce and education system to ultimately launch a highly-effective and visible program that businesses can trust to support their growth and expansion. Duncan and Canadian Valley Technology Center have been certified as Centers of Excellence in the South-Central area and staff continue to work with both of those areas to further their workforce efforts.

Coordinated efforts between Title I and other system partners are expanding and supporting learning opportunities for workers at all stages of their education or career paths. Partners offer greater career and education guidance for adults through career and education planning workshops. Workshops are designed to help customers explore local and state labor markets, emerging and demand occupations and result in a training plan. Our One-stops focus on training that is on our Demand Occupations list. The demand occupations lists are created using data sources from the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission and Lightcast. As of PY25, funding will not be available for Lightcast.

Strategy

Each South-Central community has its own Business & Industry, Education/Training, Economic Development, Government and service provider array, so a cookie cutter approach does not work. However, Business and Industry, through economic development and community organizations must engage the secondary and post-secondary education structure to solidify first a communications relationship and following that an approach to identifying specific workforce needs and finally creating workforce development solutions through education and training. Our goal will continue to be the sponsorship and collaboration effort through our local and regional economic development and community organizations to refine our strategy for career pathways development into the future.

We will use www.okcareerguide.org and www.swokhealthcareers.com as resources for career planning, which includes information about education, training and salary ranges for each occupation. Therefore, career ladder information is readily available.

Funding

The South-Central Workforce board staff can provide staff assistance with sector strategies. Currently, the healthcare pathways committee has a special grant to assist with the development of the career ladders and website. Local businesses also contribute time and effort into the sector work. As of PY25, funding will not support sector strategies, although we will continue to support sector work in our local area.

In PY23, SCOWB received an Impact Partnership Grant from the Office of Workforce Development. With that grant, SCOWB participated with Lawton/Fort Sill Economic Development Corporation and Lawton Public Schools to host an Impact Partnership Summit. The summit brought together local manufacturers and Lawton Public School teachers. The summit allowed teachers to be exposed to

the manufacturing careers and allow them to make connections within the classroom. We had an interactive panel of manufacturers, and allowed teachers to have direct interaction with the manufacturers. We had a guest speaker to really connect the purpose of the event. Lunch was provided and then teachers had the opportunity to tour the local manufacturing facilities.

Unfunded Critical Elements

The Western Region received a sector grant in 2018 to begin work on the healthcare and manufacturing sectors. More funding would be needed to expand the current sectors as well as expand into other occupations. Several of the Sector Strategies SCOWB has participated in have not continued due to the lack of support. Business leaders do not desire or have the time to be the lead on expanding sector strategies. Duncan has several very successful projects mentioned in this plan including career pathways and the healthcare pathway. Both of these projects have local support. Our Lawton High School manufacturing sector strategy event was well received and really expanded teachers views on manufacturing, but there is no one locally to take the lead. The Board led the first event in hopes that a local agency or group would continue the effort. Our board, with two staff, cannot lead all the strategies in the 8-county area. More details on the sector events are below under Sector Strategies.

Co-Enrollment Facilitation

All individuals age 18 and above are enrolled in the Adult program when registering in Workforce Services. Individuals age 18 to 24 may participate in WIOA Title 1 Adult and Youth Programs concurrently. Individuals must meet eligibility requirements for the youth and adult program criteria. When an individual falls under the definition of a Dislocated Worker per local policy, and meet the eligibility requirements for the Adult program, the individual will be co-enrolled in both programs. Individuals who are eligible for the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) are considered dislocated workers and are co-enrolled in TAA and the Dislocated Worker Programs. Agency partnerships are utilized to assist clients, so they receive various services along the pathway to self-sufficiency. The workforce system in South-Central understands that co-enrolling clients and agency partnerships can improve access to activities which lead to recognized post-secondary credentials, industry recognized certificates and occupational licenses. Credentials may be portable and stackable along the career pathway. These shorter-term credentials allow clients to acquire more advanced jobs and higher wages. Agency partnerships align to the benefit of the client for funding and supportive services throughout the training programs. Through conversations and strategies as system partners, we are committed to improving the referral process to enhance co-enrollments that will provide increased support and success for job seekers. WIOA places a strong emphasis on planning across multiple partner programs to ensure alignment in service delivery. One key goal is to develop effective partnerships across programs and community-based providers to provide individuals with the employment, education, and training services they need. Effective partnering is pivotal to maximize

resources and to align services with career pathways and sector strategies. Career pathways allow for individuals to succeed in an environment that accounts for their current abilities and skill levels and provides them with an appropriate service structure to advance not just within an individual job but within an occupation or occupational cluster. In order to effectively promote and develop career pathways and sector strategies, it is vital that the WIOA core and one-stop partner programs work together to ensure a customer-centered approach to service delivery.

Improvements for Access to Post-Secondary Activities

Eligible Training providers are encouraged to expand training programs in accordance with the demand occupations and projected occupational outlook of the local area. SCOWB has convened meetings with eligible training providers and employers in an effort to provide the necessary training and credentials needed to fulfill the demand of the employers. Training providers are encouraged to provide programs that ensure clients will have a diverse choice of portable and stackable credentials throughout the career pathway to self-sufficiency. A diverse choice of programs and stackable credentials leads to high wage, high growth occupations, therefore, SCOWB is focused on aligning business, education and economic development to help navigate the workforce system in South-Central Oklahoma. SCOWB will continue to work with technology centers, colleges and universities to provide career pathways leading to stackable credentials. SCOWB currently has a registered apprenticeship that was coordinated through Great Plains Technology Center and the local plumbing business. We currently have several participants enrolled in the program. SCOWB is working with Canadian Valley technology center to possibly develop another apprenticeship at the request of a local employer. Registered apprenticeships are portable across our state as well as the nation.

Employer Engagement in Workforce Development

The South-Central Oklahoma Workforce Board engages local business members by being a business led and business driven board. Board staff work closely with business members to listen to their needs when developing policy and determining demand occupations. The board currently has one business services staff dedicated to serving business needs.

The South-Central Oklahoma Workforce Board works closely with our local and regional economic development agencies. We are current members of the Oklahoma Southwest Alliance, a 20-county regional economic development organization. Since Workforce Development is a key building block for Economic Development, we lend our expertise and assistance as needed to economically grow and sustain our communities. By working with the economic development agencies through business retention and expansion, we will be able to provide incumbent worker training to existing employees allowing those employees to move into higher positions within the companies. We can then move new employees into the open entry level positions. SCOWB was the first local area in the state to pass a customized training and incumbent worker policy to further serve our business community.

SCOWB currently assist with LIGHTCAST data and is often at the table when new employers are looking to re-locate to our area. SCOWB can provide data that is crucial in the decision making process to locate a new business. SCOWB can assist with interviewing and hiring needs of the company and once the new business meets the requirements for Work based learning, those services are offered.

Sector Partnerships

Phase of Development

In 2018, the Western Region received a grant for Sector Strategies and partnerships. We began with healthcare and had 10 local lunch and learns across the region to hear from employers in the healthcare sector. In May 2019, we finalized our reports and strategies. One strategy SCOWB put in place as a result of the meetings is making healthcare occupations a critical demand and increasing the income requirements for eligibility under priority 4 of our Adult and DLW priority of service. As a result of the sector strategy meetings, our board staff is expanding work in the healthcare sector and is currently working with Duncan Regional Hospital in the development of a healthcare career website and career ladder exploration as well as job openings in Southwest Oklahoma. The website is: https://www.swokhealthcareers.com/

In May 2019, we began work on our second sector manufacturing. Our local area had two lunch-and-learn meetings with manufacturers and began working on strategies to meet their needs.

In September 2023, we expanded our manufacturing efforts in Lawton and provided an all-day event with teachers and manufacturing and ended the day with all middle school teachers touring the manufacturing facilities at Goodyear, Goodyear training program at Great Plains Technology Center, Republic Paper and Cosmetic Specialty Labs.

In December 2023, we held a cross sector summit in Duncan in partnership with Duncan Economic Development Foundation. 11 Local business and 20 workforce resources were brought together to gather ideas and find innovative ways to find employees and improve employee retention. SCOWB organized the interactive event to provide resources to employers.

In May 2025, we held a transportation summit to connect training providers with local transportation businesses. We heard from both business, training providers and our local Dynamic staff and listened to business concerns and limitations due to insurance requirements. The goal of the summit was to make the connection and get customers completing training connected with the employers. It was suggested that local staff make the restrictions clear up front before training begins. We had over 20 businesses and providers that attended.

Workforce Demand

The board is working closely with the healthcare pathways committee to help develop career ladders and develop a website to support all healthcare businesses in our area. Job openings can be found in one central location and if needed, Title I can assist with training to move someone up the career ladder and fill needed openings. The number of jobs varies on a regular basis and the project is ongoing.

The Canadian Valley Technology Center of Excellence has identified three industries to be a focus of their efforts. These include healthcare, manufacturing and energy. This focus is in the beginning phases and the number of jobs and timeline is yet to be determined.

Relevance

As a projection of demand, by 2025 total employment in the Health Care sector will grow to 40,510 jobs in Western Oklahoma, an increase of 6,670 jobs for the region.

The list below encompasses some of the critical occupations for the Health Care ecosystem in Western Oklahoma. Healthcare remains one of the critical demands in the South-Central Area.

SOC	Industry	Median Hourly Earnings	Education Level
29-1141	Registered Nurses	$26.24	Associate's degree
31-1014	Nursing Assistants	$10.21	Postsecondary non-degree award
39-9021	Personal Care Aides	$8.66	Short-term on-the-job training
29-2061	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	$17.25	Postsecondary non-degree award
31-1011	Home Health Aides	$9.26	Short-term on-the-job training
31-9091	Dental Assistants	$16.59	Postsecondary non-degree award
31-9092	Medical Assistants	$11.77	Postsecondary non-degree award
29-2052	Pharmacy Technicians	$13.22	Moderate-term on-the-job training
11-9111	Medical and Health Services Managers	$35.10	Bachelor's degree
29-1051	Pharmacists	$51.96	Doctoral or professional degree

Strategy

Continue to support and participate in:

- The healthcare pathways committee is made up of businesses in the healthcare industry, economic development, service providers in the area, council of governments and others that may provide needed assistance for the goals of the committee.
- The Canadian Valley Technology Center of Excellence is made up of educational entities, area business members, local boards, and economic development. Each partner or business is working to contribute in their area of expertise.

Funding

- The healthcare pathways work is currently being funded by a special grant and are in the process of applying for additional grant funding.
- The Canadian Valley Center of Excellence is not receiving funding at this time

Unfunded Critical Elements

Unfunded critical elements that would require additional funding is keeping the website and career pathway ladders expanding. At this time Duncan Regional Hospital is providing staff time, but may need funding for the website and design. Duncan Regional Hospital is working on additional grant

funding to support their efforts. SCOWB would like to see additional funding for sector strategies to continue to expand the current strategies and continue to expand into new sectors.

Linkage between One Stop and Unemployment Insurance Programs

Unemployment Insurance Program Letter No. 20-15, states:

"UI programs play a vital role in the comprehensive, integrated workforce system by providing income support benefits to eligible individuals, who continue to be important customers of the workforce system."

The partners in South-Central Oklahoma's workforce development system have a continuing interest in strengthening the linkages between our system and the unemployment insurance programs authorized under state and federal law.

Training and Employment Guidance Letter 16-16, Attachment II, goes on to identify some of the needs of UI claimants and how they are met by a properly-designed workforce development system:

a. Provision of information and assistance regarding filing claims under UI programs, including meaningful assistance to individuals seeking assistance in filing a claim.
b. The American Job Center has current labor market information and provides a wide array of re-employment services free of charge.
c. Employment Service staff can refer claimants to job openings in the local area, or in other parts of the State or country if the claimant is willing to relocate.
d. Referral to various training programs.
e. Assistance in establishing eligibility for programs of financial aid assistance for training and education programs not provided under WIOA.
f. If job openings in current field are limited, can offer testing and counseling to determine other appropriate jobs for the claimant.
g. Claimants who believe they have special needs or considerations, such as physical needs, which may prevent them from getting a job, can be referred to other agencies for help with those needs.

Unemployment Insurance is linked to the one stop system by requiring customers seeking training to choose occupations from the Demand Occupations list in order to continue to receive their Unemployment Insurance. One Stop partners can help with training costs, job search, and resume assistance. Unemployment Insurance customers with special needs may be referred to other core partners for assistance. For Example, Department of Rehabilitation services could help provide assistive equipment needed to do a job.

Implemented Initiatives

SCOWB will continue to support and participate in initiatives such as incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, customized training programs, work-based learning, industry and sector strategies, career pathways initiatives, utilization of effective business intermediaries, and other business services and strategies designed to meet the needs of regional employers. SCOWB will discuss needs within the business services teams and develop ways to work together as a system to implement new initiatives.

C4. Describe how the local board will implement the goals and strategies of Oklahoma's Unified State Plan and the Regional Plan.

Board Implementation of Oklahoma's Unified State and Regional Plan

The goals of SCOWB are aligned with the state's goals and strategies for Oklahoma by preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including preparing youth and individuals with barriers to employment and other populations and meeting the skilled workforce needs of employers. SCOWB understands and supports the new minimum for success moving forward will increasingly include an industry recognized credential, postsecondary degree or credential including those with barriers. This mission is reflected in local policy, in service strategies and outcomes.

For full alignment, the local plan aims to align with the state's plan and the Governor's vision regarding the goals to propel Oklahoma into a Top 10 State for workforce development, including an increase in labor participation rate, create new high wage and private sector jobs, obtain a top ten status in unemployment rate and increase effectiveness in serving businesses. The local area in South-Central will provide improved access and services to all job seekers, including those with barriers to employment, which includes individuals with disabilities and other special populations.

SCOWB has always placed an emphasis on the alignment of resources. We are active in local and regional conversations that support the alignment of business, economic development, and education so that we are addressing the specific training needs of businesses. We have frequent and in-depth conversations with businesses and economic development to learn where the training needs are and then work closely with education to ensure those training needs are reflected in the programs offered locally. We focus on career pathways in high growth, high wage occupations and focus on training activities that lead to postsecondary credentials, including industry-recognized certificates for middle skill jobs that are in demand in the local area and throughout the region. We also include economic development partners in these critical conversations and lean into the expertise of these partners to help address issues such as transportation, which is frequently a challenge to rural Oklahoma.

Data

Data is a large driver behind the goals and strategies established by the SCOWB. We utilize LIGHTCAST, OESC, and data collected from our local and regional partners in economic development to identify skills gaps, track success and measure outcomes. A key aspect of developing a demand-driven system is understanding the demand for labor. Labor market data must be analyzed and disseminated in efforts to build a workforce system that is responsive to the needs of business and industry.

Partnerships

The success found in South Central Oklahoma is a direct reflection of the value of partnerships built through years of listening, responding and courageous conversations. Our partner network is robust and reflects the design of WIOA and the Unified State Plan. These partnerships are evident by the support of our local system team. Partners attend regularly and are vital contributors to the conversations and strategies designed at these system meetings.

Resources

Local resources include improved access to services for all job seekers. We are working with ORS to ensure our local workforce system is ADA certified. The SCOWB understands that services should never be hindered due to accessibility issues and is committed to the ADA certification process.

SCOWB utilizes education and training resources to support placement into high demand occupations. The SCOWB is committed to the development of Registered Apprenticeships (RA) and On-the-Job Training (OJT) to support employer's needs for skilled labor.

The SCOWB will support these efforts as follows: through the development of ITAs for participants to receive RA training, OJT contracts with an RA programs for providing classroom and OJT instruction; a combination of an ITA to cover the classroom instruction along with an OJT contract to cover the OJT portion of the RA; and utilizing incumbent worker training for upskilling apprentices who already have an established working/training relationship with the RA program.

The SCOWB is aligned with the goals and strategies of Oklahoma's Unified State Plan, specifically in the areas outlined below; however, this section does not include all aspects of the strategies that support the state plan. Many other strategies are included throughout the local plan.

Skilled Workforce/Targeted Sectors

The Oklahoma Works initiative strives to ensure that existing and new businesses in the state are successful and that Oklahoma residents have the ability to obtain work in occupations that generate family sustaining wages. A large majority of the emerging occupations require nothing more than a high school diploma or the equivalent. However, this level of education and skills attainment will not allow Oklahomans or Oklahoma's economy to grow and thrive. The occupations within the emerging industries must be analyzed and targeted strategically to ensure our area has the right talent to attract new and expand existing businesses. There are 6 emerging industries that cover the South-Central area. Of those industries several occupations are expected to grow at a highly projected rate. By analyzing occupations that require at least a postsecondary non-degree award and choosing to focus our efforts

on careers requiring that level of education at a minimum, our area can expect more jobs and higher wages.

The local area in South-Central Oklahoma emphasizes the critical need for postsecondary non-degree awards, credentials and certificates and focuses efforts on careers that are in demand and also targets emerging sectors in wealth generating occupations. The local area has placed a heavy emphasis on credentials, certificates and degree attainment and will continue to provide pathways for South-Central Oklahomans to attain these post-secondary attainments, targeting middle skills occupations that meet employer demands in the area and region. The Title I contractor provides career guidance that helps job seekers discover careers in high demand, high growth occupations. Additionally, the SCOWB Executive Committee reviews data from OESC, LIGHTCAST and other sources, to assess the needs of local businesses and helps the local area to focus on training programs that are responsive to business needs.

Employer Needs

The SCOWB supports employer's needs for proper skills, knowledge and abilities by delivering focused skills training and work-based learning. In efforts to address the skills gap the SCOWB works closely with business and education to ensure the workforce system is aligned to focus on skills and training specifically needed by employers in South-Central Oklahoma. These efforts are demonstrated through quarterly Workforce Development meetings, Oklahoma Southwest Alliance and career pathway team meetings. Other efforts include targeted coordination with employers and system partners to meet specific needs such as expansions or hiring events.

Targeted Populations

The SCOWB focuses services and funding on targeted populations who have been identified as most vulnerable in the workforce system. The South-Central area targets veterans, military spouses, dislocated workers, individuals with disabilities, at risk youth, justice involved individuals, low-income individuals, and individuals with limited English proficiency.

Access for All Initiative

As outlined in the State Unified Plan, the Access for All initiative within Oklahoma Works places a focus on recruitment, hiring, and promotion of individuals with disabilities in the state of Oklahoma's workforce system. The SCOWB is committed to ensuring access for all and has taken steps towards certification through Able Tech and Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS). As outlined by Able Tech and DRS, the SC Workforce System Partners will focus on two distinct aspect of program access creating more inclusive programs and services for Oklahoma's job seekers. The first steps for inclusion are making sure the built environment (buildings that house programs and services) and information and communication technology (websites, software, technology resources, printed forms and brochures) are accessible to all people. SCOWB has committed our incentive funds to help with the program access.

All South-Central Oklahoma Works Centers have been evaluated for ADA compliance. The SCOWB, landlords, One-Stop Operator, Center Managers, and Oklahoma Rehabilitation Services will formulate a plan to address the deficiencies.

C5. Describe how the local board will coordinate local workforce development activities with regional economic development activities that are carried out in the local area and how the local board will promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services.

SCOWB coordinates local workforce development activities with regional economic development activities that are carried out in the local area and promotes through Workforce Board staff and member education, training and membership in local, regional, state, national and international economic development organizations. The integration of workforce development into the larger category of economic development requires a specific effort to support the total building block picture of the six components of economic development, as recognized by the International Economic Development Council. Those components are Workforce Development, Leadership Development, Community Capacity Development, Business Retention and Expansion, Entrepreneurial Development and Business and Industry Recruitment. SCOWB has become the trusted organization for workforce data. We frequently provide Lightcast information to help complete request for proposals or in preparation for a site selection visit. SCOWB business services team has been a big part of planning and executing career fairs, sector events, mock interviews, and other support as needed.

SCOWB staff and members participate directly in the regional organization, the Oklahoma Southwest Alliance (OSA). Additionally, the Executive Director is a graduate of the University of Oklahoma Economic Development Institute and understands the needs of our economic development organizations. Currently our local Economic Developers are invited to attend partner meetings with all of our core partners. Economic Development sits on the SCOWB board.

C6. Describe how:

a. The local board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services through the system in order to meet the employment needs of local employers, workers, and jobseekers; and,
b. Entities within the One Stop delivery system, including system/center operators and partners, will comply with section 188 of WIOA, if applicable, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities, including providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities.

Local Training Providers for the South-Central Area

Five Career Technology Centers with six locations:

(Provide Occupational Skills Training that results in Credential, License or Degree)

- Caddo-Kiowa Technology Center (Ft. Cobb)

- Canadian Valley Technology Center (Chickasha)
- Great Plains Technology Center (Lawton, Frederick)
- Mid-America Technology Center (Wayne)
- Red River Technology Center (Duncan)

Two Regional Colleges and Universities with three locations:

(Provide Occupational Skills Training that results in Credential, License or Degree)

- Cameron University (Lawton, Duncan)
- University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma (Chickasha)

Other training providers include:

(Provide Occupational Skills Training that results in Credential, License or Degree)

- CBM Driving Academy

The types of training through our training providers include industry occupational skills training, as well as academic training that leads to a credential, certificate, license or degree. Other training includes: work experience, On the job training (OJT), internships and apprenticeships.

Goal: Continuously improve the performance and effectiveness of eligible service providers within the system to better meet the employment needs of local employers, workers, jobseekers, and One-Stop delivery system partners.

Strategy: SCOWB will work directly with our training providers to ensure data in the eligible training provider list is up to date. SCOWIB will work with training providers whether one-on-one, through advisory committees or boards, or frequent email communication to ensure the providers are aware of our demand occupations. We will also update providers on input from businesses as a result of our business services teams.

Eligible Training Provider Eligibility Requirements

A full list of eligibility requirements can be found in state WSD#07-2024.

The Oklahoma ETPL Procedure outlines the types of training authorized under WIOA, and the eligibility processes and criteria to be added to the ETPL. The State, Local Board, and Training Provider responsibilities are defined, stressing the importance of close collaboration between Local Boards and training providers seeking to serve WIOA customers in the local area.

SCOWB Coordinator will work with the training provider contact to ensure that the provider account information is completed accurately and timely. The point of contact must register on Oklahoma's virtual case management system and an account must be approved by the ETP's State's Administrator prior to the ETP account registration. Once the contact's account has been approved, they can review and complete the training providers registration process working with the SCOWB ETP Coordinator to ensure all information is entered. Once all applicable information and documentation has been submitted, the ETP State's Administrator will review, and approve or deny

the provider account. The ETP State Administrator will communicate any issues with the SCOWB ETP Coordinator as needed.

SCOWB Coordinator will work with training providers to ensure all information is updated every two years.

EO and ADA Compliance

As described in the Federal Regulations at 29 CFR Part 38, Section 188 applies to any recipient of funding under Title I of WIOA. It is also applicable to:

- Programs and activities that are part of the one-stop delivery system and that are operated by one-stop partners, to the extent that the programs and activities are being conducted as part of the one-stop delivery system; and
- The employment practices of a recipient and/or one-stop partner, to the extent that the employment is in connection with programs and activities that are being conducted as a part of WIOA Title I or the one-stop delivery system.

SCOWB's Equal Opportunity Policy is updated to reflect the requirements of the State's Nondiscrimination Plan and we have complaint procedures in place. EO officer has attended the required training and provides annual training to the partner staff in the centers.

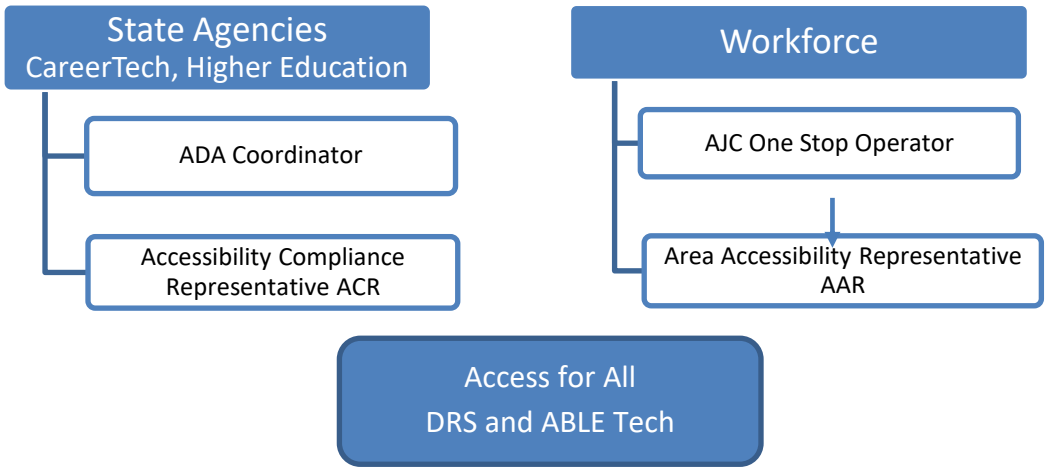
NOTE: As provided in Section 107(d)(12)(B)(i) of WIOA, *"The chief elected official in a local area shall serve as the local grant recipient for, and shall be liable for any misuse of, the grant funds allocated to the local area under sections 128 and 133…."*

The entities of the local workforce system in South-Central Oklahoma – including our One-Stop Operator and each of our one-stop partners – are focused on accessibility for all job seekers and businesses. This includes access to facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials. Working with the Governor's Council for Workforce and Economic Development (GCWED) and other partners as described in the State's Unified Plan, we will bring sharper focus on developing and employing more Oklahomans with disabilities.

As described in Oklahoma's Unified Plan, the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) is leading Oklahoma's Workforce System towards enhanced accessibility. The objective is to provide equitable services to individuals with disabilities and to ensure that all Workforce System partners comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

For example, we will work to ensure everyone has access to all centers in South-Central Oklahoma. South-Central has completed the Center Certification and Star Accessibility requirements.

> American Job Centers shall designate an Area Accessibility Representative, or AAR. The AAR is unique to Entities that do not otherwise have an ADA Coordinator or ACR identified. The AAR coordinates activities related to certification as well. American Job Centers maintain a one-stop operator; it is recommended that the one-stop operator also be appointed as the AAR. SCOWB's one-stop operator serves as our AAR.



Physical Accessibility

Access for All will assist the Oklahoma Works Workforce System Partners in working toward certification of their physical locations in the following ways. Access for All will assess physical locations and review them for compliance with the ADA Standards for Accessible Design and make recommendations for ways in which any noted deficiencies may be corrected. Access for All will work with the Oklahoma Works Workforce System ADA Coordinators or their designees to design and implement a systematic process for ensuring that leased and purchased spaces are thoroughly reviewed for compliance with the ADA Standards prior to taking possession.

At the Workforce System Area level, each Area will designate an Area Accessibility Representative, or AAR. Access for All will work with each AAR to provide them with the training they will need in order to identify the physical accessibility barriers most commonly encountered in most locations. Areas for which training shall be provided include:

- Parking Areas
- Accessible Routes
- Ramps
- Entrances and Doors
- Signage
- Interior Spaces
- Bathrooms

The AAR can contact Access for All to request information and guidance for situations outside their levels of expertise. Ensuring that knowledge of design requirements are distributed among the Workforce System will help in preventing and ameliorating barriers for physical access.

Information and Communication Technology Accessibility

Access for All looks at the processes and people involved in creating accessible technology environments for Job Seekers. In state agencies, the Career and Technical Education system and higher education institutions the Certification asks for each entity to report its designated Accessibility Compliance Representative, or ACR. The ACR serves as the point of contact between the entity and Access for All, as well as being the point of contact within the entity. The AAR's role is different than

that of the ACR. An AAR will serve primarily as a coordinator of activity between the Workforce System Area and Access for All.

Access for All will assist the Oklahoma Works Workforce System Partners in working toward certification in technology accessibility by providing a framework. This framework consists of tools to help to identify and prioritize technology tools offered to Job Seekers. This will capture all of the technology that Job Seekers use, whether they come from within an entity or from outside of the entity. Then, each entity will answer a questionnaire that asks about policy and processes to help to make sure that accessibility is always part of the conversation about technology use. Based on the technology inventory and questionnaire (see "Resources" below), Access for All will work with each entity that seeks certification to detail the entity's efforts in the context of five areas, where applicable:

- Policy and Procedure
- Procurement and Acquisition
- Web sites and Software
- Non-web Content (Word, PowerPoint, PDF, for example)
- Multimedia

Access for All will help to define the full scope of the entity's certification steps and to set achievable goals within that scope. Ultimately, certification steps for entities that seek certification depend on the kind of technology that the entity serves up to Job Seekers.

You can **submit questions about the Certification process online** (http://bit.ly/AccessQuestion).

UPDATE: SCOWB received a grant to update the board website and make it accessible and to update any needed technology in the centers.

Additional Access for All Certification Resources

- The ADA Physical Accessibility Checklist is available in two formats: ADA Checklist in Word and ADA Checklist in PDF. This accessibility checklist has been provided to assist in identifying key aspects of accessibility for site locations. It conforms to the latest accessibility guidelines contained in the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design. It has helpful notes and visual aids to guide the individuals utilizing it to be better able to accurately assess a given location for compliant with the Standards.
- ICT Accessibility Checkpoints look at process and policy that support an independent and sustained ICT accessibility effort.
- Tools are available to help to guide you through the certification process in more detail. Each tool fits into a different timeframe in the ICT accessibility certification process.
    - Information and Communication Technology Inventory
        - This asks that the Entity identify all of the technology that it uses to provide access to programs, services or activities or to communicate with all Job Seekers. The inventory asks to identify the tool, the Entity that owns or administers the tool, and the importance of the tool to the Job Seeker's work with the Entity.
    - Access for All ICT Accessibility Program Questionnaire
        - This guides the Entity through a set of questions that help to identify challenges and opportunities in beginning and sustaining activities around ICT accessibility. The questionnaire helps to more specifically measure where an Entity is with

respect to ICT accessibility processes, training and administration. It will be used to track progress over time as well.

Surveys to Employers, Employees and Job Seekers

Surveys have been developed that ask employers, service provider employees and job seekers about their experience with the Workforce System. Surveys are provided to all customers (Business and Job Seekers) that visit our one-stop centers. All customers are encouraged to complete the short survey. Survey results are presented to the board at each meeting. Our One Stop Operator has fun challenges between offices to encourage surveys to be completed.

C7. Describe how the local board will coordinate WIOA Title I workforce development activities with the provision of transportation, childcare, and other appropriate supportive services in the local area. **Include a copy of a completed Job Seeker Wrap Around Services service matrix**.

Coordination of Supportive Services

SCOWB requires that the Service provider use information from www.211oklahoma.org to determine if needed supportive services are available from any source other than WIOA Title I funds. SCOWB will work closely with our partner agencies to Co-Enroll and directly refer customers to ensure all supportive service needs are met. SCOWB, along with partner agencies, have completed a list of Job Seeker Services in Appendix B.

C8. Provide the executed cooperative agreements* which define how service providers will carry out the requirements for integration of, and access to, the entire set of services available in the local One Stop system. This includes cooperative agreements between the local WDB and other local entities with respect to efforts that will enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities and to other individuals, such as cross training of staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers, and other efforts at cooperation, collaboration, and coordination.

Cooperative Agreement

Cooperative agreement provided by OESC is attached at Appendix D. SCOWB will request a review of the agreement and work on providing more information. With the loss of the board business services staff, it is critical that we can track who is providing business services.

We will explore other agreements as needed as we work toward the integration of our One Stop Centers.

C9. Identify the local:

Service Providers

a. Fiscal agent:

Central Oklahoma Workforce Innovation Board
3813 North Santa Fe Ave., Suite 135
Oklahoma City, OK 73118

b. One Stop Operator(s)

The Kaiser Group (DE) LLC dba Dynamic Workforce Solutions
237 South Street, Suite 101
Waukesha, WI 53186

c. Service Provider(s) for Adult and Dislocated Worker WIOA Title I Basic and Individualized Career Services

The Kaiser Group (DE) LLC dba Dynamic Workforce Solutions
237 South Street, Suite 101
Waukesha, WI 53186

d. Service Provider(s) for Youth WIOA Title I Services

The Kaiser Group (DE) LLC dba Dynamic Workforce Solutions
237 South Street, Suite 101
Waukesha, WI 53186

C10. Describe the competitive process used to award the subgrants and contracts for WIOA Title I activities.

Competitive Process

SCOWB follows a competitive Request for Proposal (RFP) procurement process:

SCOWB starts with a cost analysis to determine if the previous contracts were reasonable and accurate. Once the cost analysis is complete. SCOWB prepares a request for proposal. Once the RFP is complete, COWIB as our fiscal agent releases the RFP to a bidder's list and other board directors. The bidder's list is a comprehensive list of businesses or entities that have interest in Workforce Development activities. All responses are time and date stamped in at the COWIB office. On the date given in the RFP, all bids are open in a given location that is open to the public. SCOWB board chair appoints an RFP committee to review, score and recommend subgrant contracts. The SCOWB follows the procurement process in local policy (see Appendix A) and ensures compliance with state and federal guidance.

Sole Source Procurement for Training Contracts

The sole source procurement method may be used when issuing On-the-Job Training (OJT) contracts and customized training contracts. This exception is permitted to accommodate employer-specific training needs while ensuring that workforce development funds are used efficiently to provide targeted skill development for job seekers.

Training Procurement Processes

Procurement for On-the-Job Training (OJT), Customized Training, and Individual Training Accounts (ITA) will follow SCOWB's corresponding policies that can be found on the board website, www.SCOWIB.info

Training services must be delivered in accordance with SCOWB's Policy on Informed Consumer Choice, ensuring participants have the information needed to make informed decisions when selecting an eligible training provider. Training selections must align with the participant's individual employment plan (IEP) and support their career goals. SCOWB, through the local One-Stop Center, provides customers access to state and local lists of eligible training providers, as required under WIOA Section 122(d).

C11. Describe the local levels of performance negotiated with the State.

Local Negotiated Performance Levels

Program	Performance Metric	2022/2023 Negotiated Goals
Adult	Credential Attainment	71.5 %
Adult	Employment 2nd Quarter After Exit	68 %
Adult	Employment 4th Quarter After Exit	67.3 %
Adult	Measurable Skills Gain	61 %
Adult	Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	$5,675
DW	Credential Attainment	77 %
DW	Employment 2nd Quarter After Exit	73.3 %
DW	Employment 4th Quarter After Exit	75 %
DW	Measurable Skills Gain	66.5%
DW	Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	$9,000
Youth	Credential Attainment	64 %
Youth	Employment 2nd Quarter After Exit	72 %
Youth	Employment 4th Quarter After Exit	72 %
Youth	Measurable Skills Gain	61 %
Youth	Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	$3,750

State Negotiated Performance

Title I – Youth Program	Program Year: 2023	Program Year: 2023	Program Year: 2024	Program Year: 2025
Performance Indicators	Expected	Negotiated	Negotiated	Negotiated
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	70.0%	73.0%	76.5%	76.5%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	66.0%	71.0%	79%	79%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)	$3,200.00	$3,650.00	$6,162	$6,162
Credential Attainment Rate	50.0%	61.3%	65.0%	65.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	59.0%	59.0%	72.8%	72.8%

Title I – Dislocated Worker Program	Program Year: 2023	Program Year: 2023	Program Year: 2024	Program Year: 2025
Performance Indicators	Expected	Negotiated	Negotiated	Negotiated
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	73.3%	75.0%	75.7%	75.7%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	70.5%	74.1%	75%	75%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)	$7,371.00	$8,360.00	$10,000.00	$10,000.00
Credential Attainment Rate	68.0%	75.0%	82.5%	82.5%
Measurable Skill Gains	62.0%	67.0%	71.0%	75.0%

Title I – Adult Program	Program Year: 2023	Program Year: 2023	Program Year: 2024	Program Year: 2025
Performance Indicators	Expected	Negotiated	Negotiated	Negotiated
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)[21]	66.7%	70.0%	76.5%	76.5%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit) [22]	66.0%	67.3%	79.0%	79.0%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)	$5,675.00	$5,000.00	$6,162	$6,162
Credential Attainment Rate	65.5%	70.5%	65.0%	65.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	60.0%	61.0%	72.8%	72.8%

Title II– Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program	Program Year: 2023	Program Year: 2023	Program Year: 2024	Program Year: 2025
Performance Indicators	Expected	Negotiated	Negotiated	Negotiated
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	36.0%	36.0%	37.0%	38.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	38.0%	38.0%	39.0%	40.0%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)	$4,100.00	$4,100.00	$5,200.00	$5,250.00
Credential Attainment Rate	27.0%	27.0%	28.0%	30.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	41.0%	42.0%	43.2%	43.5%

Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service Program	Program Year: 2023	Program Year: 2023	Program Year: 2024	Program Year: 2025
Performance Indicators	Expected	Negotiated	Negotiated	Negotiated
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	59.1%	59.1%	62.2%	62.2%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	61.0%	61.0%	63.0%	63.0%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)	$5,900.00	$5,900.00	$6,840	$6,840
Credential Attainment Rate	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Measurable Skill Gains	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

Vocational Rehabilitation Program	Program Year: 2023	Program Year: 2023	Program Year: 2024	Program Year: 2025
Performance Indicators	Expected Level	Negotiated Level	Negotiated	Negotiated
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	48.3%	51.6%	58.6%	58.7%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	37.9%	38.7%	51.6%	51.7%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)	$4,384.58	$4,845	$5,331	$5,427
Credential Attainment Rate	38.8%	39.8%	51%	51.1%
Measurable Skill Gains	58.6%	72.9%	72%	72.5%

All Core WIOA Core Programs	Program Year: 2023	Program Year: 2023	Program Year: 2024	Program Year: 2025
Performance Indicators	Expected	Negotiated	Expected	Negotiated
Effectiveness of Serving Employers	Not Applicable*	Not Applicable*	Not Applicable*	Not Applicable*

*In the final rule implementing WIOA, the Departments indicated that they would initially implement this indicator in the form of a pilot to test the feasibility and rigor of three proposed approaches. During Program Year (PY) 2022, the Departments initiated the rulemaking process to establish a standard definition of Effectiveness in Serving Employers. States will continue to report two of three proposed approaches until the Departments issue the final rule and implement the indicator.

C12. Describe the actions the local board will take toward becoming or remaining a high performing board.

Actions for a High Performing Board

SCOWB's Board brings together leaders from business, government, education, and non-profit sectors to jointly develop ways to coordinate workforce development with economic development. Additionally, our Board works to develop creative solutions that expand and improve our region's workforce, providing better jobs for workers and a skilled workforce for business and industry.

SCOWB will work to meet the goals listed in the state plan on page 56 by:

- Meeting or exceeding our local performance measures.
- Reducing Administrative Overhead
- Increasing labor force participation Rates
- Growth of Private Business
- Successful economic development, including the retention and growth of existing businesses and the establishment of new businesses;
- Improved educational awareness and exposure to workforce opportunities; and
- Robust opportunities for diverse career pathways for all Oklahomans – disabled, veterans, justice-involved, parents, etc. – to pursue gainful employment.

C13. Describe how training services will be provided through the use of individual training accounts, including, if contracts for training services will be used, how the use of such contracts will be coordinated with the use of individual training accounts, and how the local WDB will ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training programs regardless of how the training services are to be provided.

Provision of Training Services

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014, in §134(F) establishes the requirement that "training services…shall be provided in a manner that maximizes consumer choice in the selection of an eligible provider of such services," and further establishes, in §134(G)(i) that "training services shall be provided through the use of individual training accounts…and shall be provided to eligible individuals through the one-stop delivery system."

Training services must be linked to occupations that are in demand in the local area or in another area to which an adult or dislocated worker (DLW) receiving services is willing to relocate. Training services shall be limited to individuals who are unable to obtain other grant assistance, including Federal Pell grants or require assistance beyond the assistance made available under other grant assistance programs.

This policy applies to any customer enrolled in the WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and National Emergency Grant, receiving training through an ITA.

INDIVIDUAL TRAINING ACCOUNTS

ITAs will be developed and awarded to all eligible participants. The ITA will inform the participant of the amount of WIOA financial support that SCOWB will make available on his/her behalf, inform SCOWB and the service provider which eligible training provider and demand occupation the participant has selected for training, and inform SCOWB and the service provider of the beginning and end dates of the training program. Additionally, the ITA outlines the participant's responsibilities to the

WIOA program and SCOWB.

Exceptions to use: There are five exceptions to the use of an ITA for WIOA training:

a. When services provided are on-the-job training or customized training;

b. When SCOWB determines that there are an insufficient number of eligible providers in its area to accomplish the purpose of a system of ITAs.

c. When SCOWB determines if there is a community-based or other private organization with a training program that serves special participant populations with demonstrated effectiveness. Special participant populations are defined in OWDI 16-2013 dated September 16, 2013.

d. When SCOWB enters into a pay-for-performance contract consistent with Sec 683.510.

e. When SCOWB determines that it would be most appropriate to contract with an institution of higher education or other eligible provider of training series will facilitate the training of multiple individuals in in-demand industry sectors occupations, provided that the contract does not limit consumer choice.

The development of an ITA is not necessary when the participants are TAA funded.

C14. Describe how One Stop centers are implementing and transitioning to an integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information system for programs carried out under WIOA.

Implementation of an Integrated System

Currently the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission and WIOA Title I staff share a common intake and case management system. At this time, other partners do not share the intake and case management system; however, under WIOA and our planned regionalism effort, we expect and invite the efficiencies of cost and systems sharing in the future.

We have noted with great interest that the State of Oklahoma's Unified Plan addresses the topic of technology-enabled intake and case management information systems for workforce development programs in our state as a weakness. Employ Oklahoma went live in January 2025. Currently, OESC and Title I use Employ Oklahoma. It is hopeful, that other agencies will come on board with the new system.

While the Governor's Council develops their implementation strategies, the one-stop partners in the South-Central Oklahoma area will continue to use the existing resources we have available for the collection of program-specific participant data. While these resources are not integrated, they do provide a baseline for the development of a future system for data sharing, etc.

Existing program resources include, but are not limited to:

- The AWARE Case Management System. This is an internet-based Electronic Records Managements software used by the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services, to track services provided under WIOA Title IV.

- The LACES NexGen System. “LACES” stands for Literacy, Adult, and Community Education System. This is an online student data management software designed for providers of Adult Education and Family Literacy (ABE), volunteer literacy, and correctional education. With LACES NexGen, our WIOA Title II partners are able to track everyone associated with our ABE / GED / ESL programs.
- The Employ Oklahoma System. The Employ Oklahoma system is used as a client management application in several of our one-stop partner programs. The system allows case managers to track their caseload and report information required under Labor Exchange, Re-Employment Services, WIOA Section 129, WIOA Section 134, TAA (TRA Adjustment Act), and other federal programs.

The Employ Oklahoma system has several self-service features that are widely used by the customers (job-seekers and employers) in our local workforce development system. It is also designed for use by case managers in several of our one-stop partner programs. These are recognized as advantages of the Employ Oklahoma system. However, Employ Oklahoma is a new system and does not presently meet the needs of all one-stop partners – so, it is not a fully integrated system in that regard.

The one-stop partners in South-Central Oklahoma look forward to the eventual development and use of fully integrated intake and case management systems. In the meantime, we will use our existing resources to facilitate our intake and case management functions. We will work toward continuous improvement of current systems and ways to further integrate to create a seamless customer flow.

C15. Describe the direction given to the One Stop center operator to ensure priority for adult career and training services will be given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient.

Priority of Service

The One Stop Center Operator is given a copy of the board’s priority of service policy. The policy is as follows:

STATUTORY PRIORITY AND SPECIAL POPULATIONS FOR ADULT PROGRAMS

ETA and the State continue to focus on the requirement to serve individuals with the barriers to employment2 listed in WIOA 3(24). All barriers to employment must be documented in the individual employment plan (IEP), including each of the barriers reported in the demographics section of the virtual case management system, as well as those later addressed during an interview, assessment, or evaluation. The IEP must also document steps that will be taken to resolve the barriers, progress toward barrier removal, and indicate when the barrier has been resolved or removed.

The Statutory Priority and Special Populations for Adult Programs include individuals with the following barriers to employment:

1. Displaced homemakers, as defined in WIOA 3(16);

2. Low-income individuals;

3. Indigenous Americans, including individuals who identify as Native Americans or American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians;

4. Individuals with disabilities, as defined in WIOA 3(25) and including individuals who are in receipt of Social Security Disability Insurance);

5. Older individuals (age 55 and older);

6. Ex-offenders;

7. Homeless individuals (as defined in section 41403(6) of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 or a homeless child or youth as defined under section 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act;

8. Youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system;

9. Individuals who are:

a. English language learners (WIOA 203(7)),

b. Individuals who have low levels of literacy, defined as an individual who is unable to compute or solve mathematical problems or read, write, or speak English at a level necessary to function on a job, in the individual's family, or in society; and

c. Individuals facing substantial cultural barriers;

10. Eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers (as defined in WIO 167(i)(1-3);

11. Individuals within two years of exhausting lifetime TANF eligibility;

12. Single parents (including single pregnant women);

13. Long-term unemployed individuals (unemployed for 27 or more consecutive weeks); and

14. Other groups the State determines to have barriers to employment

PRIORITY POPULATIONS UNDER WIOA

Due to the statutorily required priority for Adult funds, priority must be provided in the following order:

- Priority 1: Veterans and eligible spouses who are also included in the groups given statutory priority for WIOA Adult formula funds. This means that veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient receive first priority for services provided with WIOA Adult formula funds for individualized career services and training services.
- Priority 2: Non-covered persons (i.e., individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses) who are included in the groups given priority for WIOA Adult formula funds - recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient.
- Priority 3: Veterans and eligible spouses who are not low income or receiving public assistance, and those who are not basic skills deficient.
- Priority 4: Any other priority population established by the LWDB. (An example, for non-covered persons who are not included in groups given priority for WIOA Adult formula funds, such as persons living within a designated Promise Zone.) A Priority 4 locally established priority population must be documented in local policy.**

- Priority 5: Non-covered persons outside the groups given priority for WIOA funding. This priority includes individuals who are considered to be particularly vulnerable due to specific barriers to employment, as listed in WIOA 3(24).

**** PRIORITY POPULATIONS ESTABLISHED BY THE LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

1. Individuals participating or scheduled to participate in a Registered Apprenticeship program
2. Individuals that are committed to an On-the-Job Training opportunity with a local business
3. Individuals that are going into a Critical Demand Occupation and meet the 250% of the Lower Living Standard Income Level income eligibility requirement.

In addition, Section 1.a of Attachment A which follows provides specific information about how income and benefits derived from military service relate to the statutory low-income priority that applies to certain workforce programs. Section 3 of Attachment A points out that the GI Bill and other education and training benefits administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs are not required to be coordinated with WIOA training (i.e., veterans and eligible spouses cannot be required to exhaust their VA benefits prior to gaining access to WIOA training). Section 4 of Attachment A identifies the implications of priority of service for the processes of some specific workforce programs that are impacted by this requirement.

The above policy is only applicable to the WIOA Title I policy, we will bring in partner agencies to develop a further direction for the one-stop operator. For example, the Jobs For Veterans Act PL207-188.

C16. Describe the process used by the local board to provide a 30-day public comment period prior to submission of the plan, including an opportunity to have input into the development of the local plan, particularly for representatives of businesses, education, and labor organizations. The required public comment process is outlined in section 108(d) of WIOA.

Public Comment Period

To allow for the 30-day comment period, SCOWB will post the link to the local plan on the www.SCOWIB.info website and email the plan to all board members and local and regional partners for comment. All Comments will be included in the final local plan.

ASSURANCES:

SCOWB agrees to the following assurances:

- SCOWB assures it will establish fiscal control and fund accounting procedures to ensure the proper disbursement of, and accounting for all funds received through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.
- SCOWB assures it shall keep records that are sufficient to permit the preparation of reports required by the Act and shall maintain such records, including standardized records for all individual participants, and submit such reports as the State may require.
- SCOWB assures it will collect and maintain data necessary to show compliance with the nondiscrimination provisions of the Act.

- SCOWB assures funds will be spent in accordance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, regulations, written Department of Labor Guidance, written Oklahoma guidance, and all other applicable Federal and State laws.
- SCOWB assures that veterans will be afforded employment and training activities authorized in the Jobs for Veterans Act and 20 C.F.R. Part 1010.
- SCOWB assures it will comply with any grant procedures prescribed by the Secretary which are necessary to enter into contracts for the use of funds under WIOA, but not limited to the following:
    - General Administrative Requirements – Uniform Guidance at 2 C.F.R. Part 200 and 2 C.F.R. Part 2900.
    - Assurances and Certifications – SF 424B – Assurances for Non-Construction Programs.
    - 29 C.F.R. Part 31,32 – Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Assurance (and Regulation).
    - 29 C.F.R. Part 93 – Certification Regarding Lobbying (and Regulation).
    - 29 C.F.R. Parts 94 and 95 – Drug Free Workplace and Debarment and Suspension; Certifications (and Regulation).

The following signatures attest that:

- They submit this local plan on behalf of the local WDB and Local Elected Officials in the area.
- The planning was done with leaders within the community and represents the collective thinking of those local representatives.
- The information contained herein is true and accurate to the best of their knowledge.
- The local plan represents the local boards and local elected officials' efforts to maximize resources available under Title I of WIOA and to coordinate these resources with other State and Local programs in the local area.
- They will operate the local system in accordance with the local plan, and applicable federal and state laws, regulations, policies and rules; and,
- All assurances within this document have been met.

Appendix A - COWIB (Fiscal Agent) procurement process
Appendix B - Partner Service Matrix for South-Central Oklahoma
Appendix C – Department of Rehabilitation Referral Guide
Appendix D – Business Service Matrix
Appendix E – Partner Services Document

SIGNATURES:

WDB Chair: Shawn Freie

Signature _____ Date _____

Chief Local Elected Official: Glen Murray

Signature _____ Date _____

SCOWB Executive Director: Trina Southard

Signature _____ Date _____