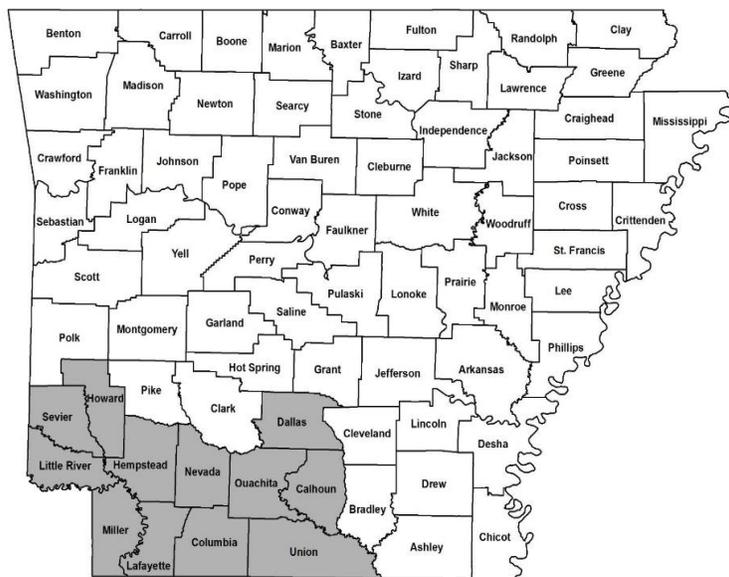

Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Area

Regional & Local Plans PY 2016 – PY 2019



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PY 2016 – PY 2019 Regional Plan
Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board

WIOA requires regional planning– a broad strategic approach to planning focused on the overarching vision, goals, alignment and shared responsibilities within the region. Arkansas intends to implement a two-tiered regional approach to meeting this requirement by allowing a two-year transitional plan. This approach provides latitude for regions that may not yet be able to fully address all the outlined elements required in a four-year regional plan.

1.1. Provide the following:

- A. A reference name for the planning region;
Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Region
- B. Identification of the local workforce development areas that comprise the planning region;
The Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Region is comprised of the Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Area.
- C. Identification of the counties each local workforce development area serves;
The Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Area is comprised of the following counties in Southwest Arkansas: Calhoun, Columbia, Dallas, Hempstead, Howard, Lafayette, Little River, Miller, Nevada, Ouachita, Sevier, and Union.
- D. Identification of the key planning region committee members charged with drafting the regional plan;
**The Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board representatives and community sectors: Becky Ives, Tammy Waters, Julie Roberson (Private Sector), John Mack (Veterans Representative), Rory Gulick (Economic Development), Lori White (Title I), Tamara Bowers (Wagner Peyser), Barbara Hamilton, Dr. Bentley Wallace (Education), Phoebe Bailey (Workforce), Kensel Green (ARS), and Shelda Garland (Board Staff).
Chief Elected Officials: Judge Floyd Nutt - Calhoun County, Judge Denny Foster - Columbia County, Judge Clark Brent - Dallas County, Judge Kevin Smith - Howard County, Judge Danny Ormand - Lafayette County, Judge Mike Cranford - Little River County, Judge Greg Ray - Sevier County, Judge Mike Loftin - Union County, Mayor Parnell Vann - Magnolia, Mayor Billy Ray Jones – Nashville.**
- E. Indication of the local workforce development area each committee member is associated with;
Members responsible for drafting the regional plan are part of The Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Area.

1.2. Provide a labor market and economic analysis of the workforce development planning region. This regional analysis must include:

- A. The economic conditions;
- B. Labor force employment and unemployment data;
- C. Information on labor market trends;
- D. Workforce development activities;
- E. The educational and skill levels of the workforce, including individuals with barriers;
- F. The development and implementation of sector initiatives for existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors or occupations for the region.

Indicate the sources of regional labor market and economic data. [WIOA Sec. 106(c)(1)(C)]

1.2 Labor Market and Economic Analysis of the Southwest Workforce Development Region

A. Economic Conditions; Labor Force Employment and Unemployment Data

The Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Area has a strong manufacturing sector. It is home to eleven Fortune 500 companies. According to the 2014-2018 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for Southwest Arkansas, employment in manufacturing accounts for 22.3% of all employment in the Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Area.

Calhoun and Ouachita counties share the Highland Industrial Park. Aerojet, Atlantic Research Corporation, Austin Powder, BEI Defense Systems Company, Camden Ordnance, Hitech Incorporated, Hughes Missile Systems, Lockheed-Martin, Loral Vaught Systems, National Testing Service, Olin Industries, and Tracor Aerospace are all among the Defense Department contractors in this defense industry cluster.

Timber and lumber production are important to the economy of the Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Region. According to the 2014-2018 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for Southwest Arkansas, the agriculture / forestry sector accounted for 3.4% of all employment in the State of Arkansas, and accounted for 11.6% of employment in Lafayette County, 8.9% of employment in Howard County, and 8.8% of employment in Calhoun County. Lumber production is closely tied to the construction industry, and a decline in housing production nationwide over the past 5 years has led directly to a decrease in employment in these counties, and decreased employment opportunities inevitably leads to loss of population.

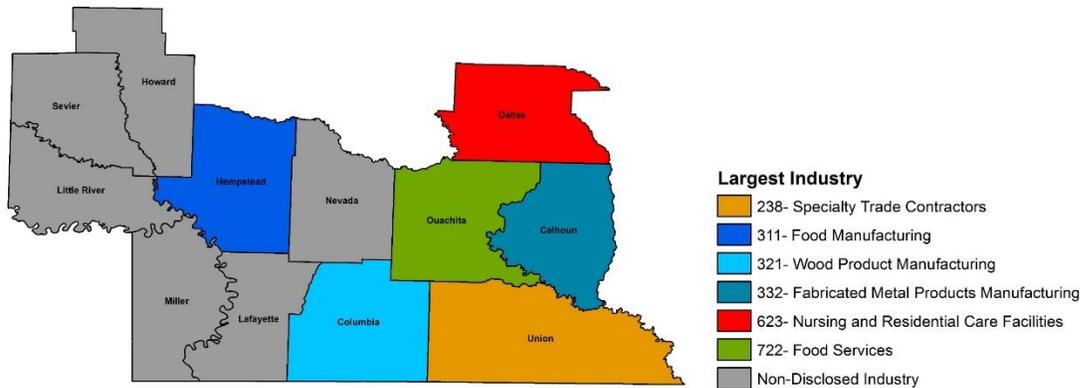
Although the oil boom passed many years ago, Southwest Arkansas still has oil and gas resources. Natural gas occurs in conventional reservoirs and unconventional reservoirs. Arkansas has both types. Conventional natural gas is obtained by drilling a well into a rock formation that allows the gas to flow into the well bore. Wet gas, which also contains heavier fluid hydrocarbons, is recovered from the oil and gas fields of Calhoun, Columbia, Hempstead, Lafayette, Miller, Nevada, Ouachita, and Union Counties.

According to the Arkansas Oil and Gas Commission's Annual Report of Production, 6.6 million barrels of oil and 11.6 million cubic feet of natural gas were pumped from wells in South Arkansas in 2012.¹

Unconventional natural gas resources in Arkansas include shale gas and coalbed methane (CBM). Shale gas is primarily found in NW Arkansas, but coalbed methane is present in Southwest Arkansas. In fact, Southwest Arkansas sits on a vast, untapped field of brown coal that could very well bring the next major industrial boom to Southwest Arkansas communities.

¹ These figures also contain relatively small contributions from production wells in Ashley and Bradley counties.

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In the Southwest Region, the top three private industries (by Employment) in 2016 are:

1. Food Services
 - Employs 4,713 workers
 - 297 individual establishments
 - Represents 5.1% of total Employment
 - Projected Growth (2016-2026) is 11.1%
2. Food Manufacturing
 - Employs 4,473 workers
 - 18 individual establishments
 - Represents 4.9% of total Employment
 - Projected Growth (2016-2026) is 4.0%
3. Nursing and Residential Care Facilities
 - Employs 3,230 workers
 - 198 individual establishments
 - Represents 3.5% of total Employment
 - Projected Growth (2016-2026) is 17.6%

*Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), Labor Market Information
Long-Term Employment Projections, Labor Market Information
North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), Industry Title of the 3-digit level*

2017 Average Annual Wages (Private Sector)

Ranked by County

1) Calhoun County=	\$55,066	7) Hempstead County=	\$35,352
2) Little River County=	\$54,995	8) Ouachita County=	\$34,077
3) Union County=	\$48,905	9) Lafayette County=	\$32,844
4) Columbia County=	\$39,141	10) Dallas County=	\$32,605
5) Miller County=	\$37,893	11) Howard County=	\$32,475
6) Nevada County=	\$37,720	12) Sevier County=	\$31,775

Southwest LWDA Annual Average Wage= \$39,404

Based on data obtained from the United States Census Bureau, the average annual wage in the State of Arkansas is \$42,708. As compared to the average wage of the Southwest Region of \$39,404, we are

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\$3,304 below the State average. Little River County is where Domtar Paper Mill is located and Calhoun County is where Highland Industrial Park (Houses Lockheed Martin, Aerojet, NTS, etc.) is located, which explains why they are the two highest in wages.

*Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), Labor Market Information
Source: United States Census Bureau*

B. Labor Force employment and unemployment data

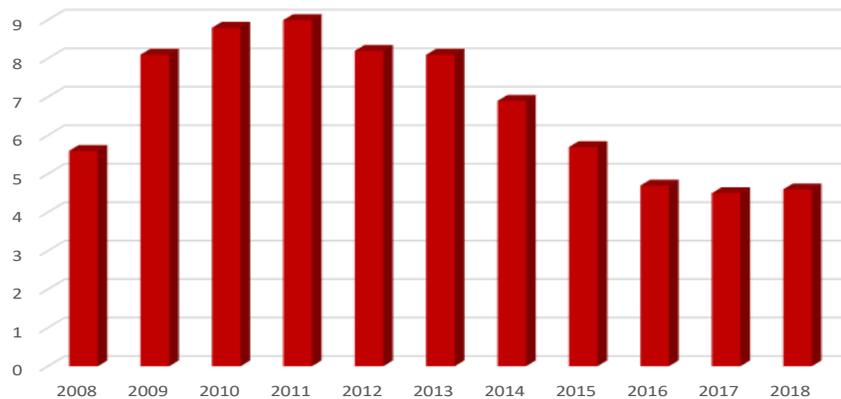
Employment Breakdown 2018

<u>Area/County</u>	<u>Labor Force</u>	<u>Employed</u>	<u>Unemployed</u>	<u>Unemploy. Rate</u>
Southwest Area	92,615	88,314	4,301	4.6%
Calhoun	2,404	2,310	94	3.9%
Columbia	8,991	8,562	429	4.8%
Dallas	2,811	2,687	124	4.4%
Hempstead	9,908	9,555	353	3.6%
Howard	5,922	5,717	205	3.5%
Lafayette	2,497	2,366	131	5.2%
Little River	5,485	5,196	289	5.3%
Miller	19,722	18,772	950	4.8%
Nevada	3,613	3,485	128	3.5%
Ouachita	9,755	9,301	454	4.7%
Sevier	5,549	5,290	259	4.7%
Union	15,960	15,074	886	5.6%

Source: Local Area Employment and Unemployment Statistics (LAUS), Labor Market Information

Average Unemployment Rates by County (April 2019)

2.5% = Howard County	3.5% = Columbia County
3.4% = Miller County	4.3% = Union County
3.4% = Hempstead County	3.7% = Lafayette County
3.6% = Nevada County	4.6% = Ouachita County
3.5% = Little River County	3.8% = Dallas County
4.1% = Calhoun County	3.9% = Sevier County

Southwest LWDA Unemployment Rates 2008 - 2018 (Annual Average)

Source: Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS), Labor Market Information

C. Information on labor market trends;

The Arkansas Department of Workforce Services Labor Market Information publication contains data covering employment and wages by industries in Arkansas. The data is from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) Program. This data is compiled from quarterly contribution and wage reports submitted by employers subject to the Arkansas Employment Security Law.

Southwest Arkansas Projected Industry Growth 2016-2026

Industry	Estimated Employment	Projected Employment	Numeric Change	Percent Change
Total Employment, All Jobs	91,962	98,185	6,223	6.77%
Natural Resources and Mining	3,263	3,442	179	5.49%
Construction	3,599	3,939	340	9.45%
Manufacturing	19,064	19,088	24	0.13%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	15,242	16,504	1,262	8.28%
Information	455	409	-46	-10.11%
Financial Activities	2,610	2,658	48	1.84%
Professional and Business Services	4,383	5,287	904	20.63%
Education and Health Services	18,165	20,321	2,156	11.87%
Leisure and Hospitality	5,714	6,254	540	9.45%
Other Services (Except Government)	3,524	3,337	-187	-5.31%
Government (Excluding State/Local Education & Hospitals)	6,092	6,434	342	5.61%

Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), Labor Market Information
Long-Term Industry Employment Projections 2016-2026

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Top 10 Projected Growth Industries

<u>Industry</u>	<u>Net Growth</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>
Ambulatory Health Care Services	824	28.6%
Social Assistance	758	33.2%
Generic Merchandise Stores	639	22.8%
Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	569	17.6%
Food Services and Drinking Places	521	11.1%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	393	36.8%
Administrative and Support Services	347	20.0%
Local Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals	331	9.4%
Truck Transportation	304	10.1%
Plastics and Rubber Products Manufacturing	227	8.1%

Source: Discover Arkansas Labor Market Information, Local Area Statistics 2016-2026

Projected Occupational Growth 2016-2026

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Estimated Employment</u>	<u>Projected Employment</u>	<u>Numeric Change</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>	<u>Total Annual Openings</u>
Total, All Occupations	91,962	98,185	6,223	6.77%	10,928
Management	9,617	10,172	555	5.77%	794
Business and Financial Operations	1,943	2,125	182	9.37%	197
Computer and Mathematical	413	459	46	11.14%	34
Architecture and Engineering	1,149	1,204	55	4.79%	90
Life, Physical, and Social Science	492	521	29	5.89%	50
Community and Social Service	1,672	1,781	109	6.52%	196
Legal	308	331	23	7.47%	21
Education, Training, and Library	5,392	5,548	156	2.89%	452
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	609	622	13	2.13%	60
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	4,010	4,654	644	16.06%	310

Source: Discover Arkansas Labor Market Information, Local Area Statistics 2016-2026

Top Ten Projected Growth Occupations 2016-2026

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Net Growth</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>
Personal Care Aids	509	42.20%
Combined Food Prep & Serving, Including Fast Food	366	16.20%
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	308	9.30%
Licensed Practical & Licensed Vocational Nurses	226	18.60%
Nursing Assistants	220	15.80%
Retail Salespersons	207	11.00%
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers	203	10.00%
Cashiers	200	7.40%
Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers	176	3.10%
Registered Nurses	146	14.00%

Source: Discover Arkansas Labor Market Information, Local Area Statistics 2016-2026

D. Workforce development activities;

Southwest Arkansas’s workforce development activities are coordinated through the following agencies: These agencies are responsible for all the core and non-core programs included in the combined Regional and Local Plan.

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Core Program</u>
SWAPDD	Adult (Title I) Dislocated Worker (Title I) Youth (Title I)
ADWS	Wagner-Peyser
ADCE	Adult Education and Family Literacy (WIOA Title II) Vocational Rehabilitation (Title I Rehabilitation)
DHS	Division of Services for the Blind (Title I Rehabilitation)

Non-Core Program

Trade Adjustment Assistance
Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Program (Title I)
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program

The Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Area consists of twelve counties and is the largest region in the state. Workforce activities and initiatives are driven by Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board (SWAWDB). The SWAWDB is comprised of local businesses, educational institutions, partner agencies, and other key stakeholders to create a diverse and functional group. The board, in alignment with the States’ vision, provides front line strategic implementation for state-wide initiatives in addition to locally-determined priorities. State initiatives include sector strategies, career pathway development, and delivery of standardized business services. Local priorities include layoff aversion, specific career pathway development, youth programs, targeted sector partnerships, and work-based learning.

The Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board, in conjunction with the Chief Elected Officials, is responsible for procuring a One-Stop Operator and Title I Service Provider. This entity will be responsible for the daily operation of the Workforce Centers in Southwest Arkansas in accordance with WIOA 121(d). Workforce activities are carried out by partnering locally through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to implement core, non-core, and other partner programs. With a foundation for service integration, Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development System operates under the “no wrong door” philosophy. Customers entering the center are engaged by an intake process that is designed to identify the needs of the individual by gathering information and then utilizing the appropriate resources for those needs. In some cases, the resources are initiated by a referral to a partner program. Customers are given solutions and next steps to their questions, barriers, and issues by connecting directly with the appropriate workforce system partner as part of this philosophy.

The Arkansas Department of Career Education, Adult Education Division (ACE/AED) funds four local adult education programs, two literacy councils. The local service delivery systems are diverse. Programs are funded through public school systems and community colleges. Local programs provide adult education services such as teaching academic skills to people who function from

beginning reading through a 12.9 functioning grade level and English as a Second Language (ESL). These services are free and provided in classes held in locations throughout each county. Additional programs such as family literacy, Workforce Alliance for Growth in the Economy (WAGE™), and Career Readiness Certificate (CRC) are also offered in some counties.

Southwest Arkansas Workforce Centers provide Jobs Access with Speech (JAWS). JAWS computers are designed for visually impaired individuals to gain access to job services. These systems are available in both comprehensive and affiliate sites.

Workforce System Services – Unemployed and Underemployed

The Southwest Arkansas Workforce Centers offers the full array of career services outlined in WIOA 134(c)(2) for unemployed and underemployed jobseekers. Basic career services are available at all service locations throughout Southwest Arkansas. All workforce centers in Southwest Arkansas have computers, printers, copiers, printed resources, and staff to assist jobseekers. Many of the services, including Arkansas Job Link and Discover Arkansas Labor Market Information (LMI) Portal, can be accessed virtually through the internet via computer, smart phone, or tablet. Arkansas Job Link is the state job matching system and the virtual one-stop-shop where Arkansans can centralize all their career search activities. It allows jobseekers to self-enter his/her resume(s) and job search 24/7. Arkansas Job Link also provides access to a toolbox of job search assistance links, including career exploration, training resources, self-marketing tools, Unemployment Insurance information, and additional job banks. The built-in event calendar communicates upcoming hiring events, job fairs, and other workforce activities. The Labor Market Information Portal is beneficial to employers and jobseekers. This labor market system provides a wide variety of local and regional labor market services, such as labor trends, statistics, economics, demographics, salaries, and employer data. It allows jobseekers to set up a personal page for their career exploration data to be readily accessible. Basic career services also extend beyond the virtual world. After the initial assessment, customers, as appropriate, may be provided with direct linkages to additional workforce activities, including multiple education and training opportunities across the workforce system through partner referrals. Many of these partners are housed within the workforce center.

Jobseeker Services

The Southwest Arkansas Workforce Centers offers a full line of activities to prepare jobseekers for the modern workforce. They address many of the soft skills and technical skills training Arkansas employers require.

Pre-employability training is offered to jobseekers to better prepare the individual for entry into employment.

Labor exchange services also provide labor market information to the individuals seeking services. The information must be accurate and include information on local, regional and national labor markets, such as job vacancies, skills necessary to obtain the jobs, in-demand occupations, related earning potential and opportunities for advancement in those occupations

The Southwest Arkansas Workforce Centers provide the following career services:

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Outreach, intake and orientation, Initial assessment, Labor exchange services, Eligibility determination, Referrals to programs, Performance and cost information, Information on unemployment insurance, Financial aid information, Follow-up services

Additionally, One-Stop and partners must provide appropriate services for individuals to obtain or retain employment. These services include, but are not limited to:

Individual Employment Plan (IEP), Career planning and counseling (no longer called case management), Comprehensive assessment, Occupational Skills Assessment, Short-term prevocational services, Internship and work experience, including transitional jobs and industry partnerships, Workforce preparation, Out-of-area job search, English language acquisition, Financial literacy

The State is a member of the America's Job Link Alliance for job matching. Jobseekers, as well as employers, utilize this data base for employment purposes. Arkansas Job Link provides self-service, case management, fiscal management, reporting, and more.

Training Services

Career services are not always enough to enable job seekers to obtain self-sufficient employment. In some instances, formal training is required. Southwest Arkansas Workforce Centers offer multiple training services such as: Occupational skills training, On-the-job training (OJT), Registered Apprenticeships, Incumbent worker training, Skill upgrading and retaining, Entrepreneurial training, and Adult education and family literacy activities.

Training services are funded through WIOA Title I programs, Pell Grants, partner programs, and state and local grants. Local areas are responsible for establishing and implementing local policies for eligibility, Individual Training Account (ITA) limits, and the identification of in-demand sectors or occupations. Through multiple initiatives and projects, Arkansas has focused training and career development activities on sector strategies/partnerships and career pathway development. At the state level, the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) has been updated pursuant to WIOA Sections 122 and 134. This list ensures that Arkansans can make informed decisions on training providers and programs based on accurate data including completion and placement rates; labor market information; and wage expectations. The Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board received a Sector Partnership Grant for implementing sector strategies in our region. Once fully implemented, the Eligible Training Provider's List will support the Employers need for training.

Apprenticeship

Registered Apprenticeship is a viable career option for WIOA participants. Registered Apprenticeship is an employer-driven model that combines on-the-job training with related classroom instruction that increases an apprentice's skill level and wages. It is a tried and true approach for preparing individuals for jobs, and meeting the business needs for a highly-skilled workforce. Businesses that use apprenticeship reduce worker turnover by fostering greater employee loyalty, increasing productivity, and improving the bottom line. It is a proven solution for businesses to recruit, train, and retain highly skilled workers. The National Apprenticeship Training Foundation and the Arkansas Apprenticeship Coalitions hosted a Regional Apprenticeship meeting for the Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Area. The meeting in Southwest focused on aligning the enrollment process and eliminating barriers to increase referrals to apprenticeship

programs. All participating agencies discussed eligibility and enrollment to work out the conflicting requirements and to align the process for the benefit of the employers, workers, and program outcomes.

Career Pathways Initiative

The Career Pathways Initiative programs are housed in each of the two-year colleges in Southwest Arkansas. Career Pathways Initiative staff aligns services with the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services, Department of Human Services, Adult Education, community and faith based organizations, and other programs to ensure that barriers are overcome and that employment and educational needs are met without duplication of services. The program has enjoyed much success and is touted as a model program nationally. The career pathway approach is a paradigm shift in how we prepare individuals for work and lifelong learning. It reorients existing education and workforce services from myriad disconnected programs to a structure that syncs employers' workforce needs with individuals' education and training needs.

Arkansas Association of Colleges

Arkansas Association of Colleges (ACC) is a strong partner for workforce development. ACC has provided much needed funding to the colleges for equipment and curriculum alignment to address local business and industry needs. The Southwest Region is home to SouthArk Community College in El Dorado, SAU Tech in Camden, UA Hope/Texarkana, and UA Cossatot in DeQueen.

Promise (Promoting Readiness of Minors on Supplemental Income) Grant

Arkansas Promoting Readiness of Minors on Supplemental Income (PROMISE) is a research project open to youth ages 14 to 16 who currently receive SSI benefits. For 1000 youth, PROMISE will provide additional services to youth and their families to support their education and career goals. Services include: Intensive case management, two paid competitive work experiences, education and employment training and support for youth and families, health and wellness training, and benefits counseling. Southwest participates in the program and provides the work experience opportunities in the local communities. Students are placed in appropriate career fields for the required number of hours.

Supportive Services

To assist jobseekers in obtaining or retaining employment through career or training services, Southwest Arkansas Workforce Centers offer a variety of supportive services. The Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board is responsible for establishing a supportive service policy that outlines types of services needed, eligibility, limits, etc. Examples of supportive services include child care; transportation; needs-related payments; tools and equipment; uniforms; and other clothing.

WIOA Title I, Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth services provide supportive services such as transportation assistance, child care assistance, needs related payments, and other supportive services (tools and equipment, uniforms, and other clothing), to job seekers to assist in obtaining and retaining employment. Through assessments and evaluations, Career Planners determine the needs of each participant and create an Individual Employment Plan to address the identified barriers. Transportation assistance is provided in the form of a reimbursement. Child Care assistance

is provided through vouchers to State approved childcare agencies. Needs Related Payments are provided through a stipend. Referrals to partner agencies are made to ensure the participants are receiving the optimal services to meet the individual's need.

Adult Education provides referrals to Career Pathways at local community colleges, career assessments, Career Coach assistance, job readiness /soft skills training, and educational and career goal planning. Career Pathways provides assistance with child care, transportation, tuition, and materials. Each adult education center has a local service directory that is utilized for student support services. Supportive services such as transportation, daycare, etc. are coordinated with partner agencies through participant referrals. Adult Education partners with Arkansas Rehabilitation Services to help provide individuals with disabilities access to services, diagnosis and evaluations of capabilities and limitations; guidance and counseling; assistive technologies; and job placement.

Arkansas Rehabilitation Services and the Division of Services for the Blind are mandated to research and apply all comparable benefits for services from other resources prior to applying vocational rehabilitation funds. The most frequently applied comparable resources come from sources outside of the core partner agencies. For example, tuition assistance in the form of grant funding, housing assistance from Housing and Urban Development, the individual's own medical insurance must first be applied to physical and mental restoration services. The supportive services provided by Arkansas Rehabilitation Services and the Division of Services for the Blind are arranged and coordinated according to an individual plan for employment which specifies a career goal and the areas that the individual may need supports in order to reach that goal. The supports needed are determined through assessments, evaluations, as well as the analysis and application of state and federal regulations and policies. The following supports services are assessed, evaluated, and analyzed for applicability and comparable services/similar benefits to each individual case: maintenance assistance to participate in employment or training that leads to employment, personal care attendant services, physical and mental restoration services, rehabilitation engineering, rehabilitation technology, and transportation to participate in employment or training activities. These support services are time limited and must accompany a substantial service that is directly related to obtaining or maintaining employment.

Business Services

The focal point of all workforce system activities is business and industry. These activities are taking place statewide and may include: Access to facilities –Use of Workforce Center facilities by a business for a variety of purposes such as meetings, trainings, orientations, interviews, etc.; Assessments – Any test or assortment of tests used to measure the skills, interests and/or personality traits of a jobseeker, potential employee, or current employee; Business education – Seminars, round tables, workshops, focus groups, etc.; Business information – Information given to a business pertaining to a variety of incentive programs or other information requested that provides a benefit to that business; Hiring events – A customized event for a single employer that assists with recruiting, interviewing, and hiring of one or more positions; Job fairs – Event for multiple employers that assists with the recruiting, interviewing, and hiring of one or more positions; Job postings – Staff-entered or web-entered job orders approved by staff; Labor market information – Information on state and local labor market conditions; industries, occupations, and characteristics of the workforce; area business identified skills needs; employer wage and benefit trends; short and long-term industry and occupational projections; worker supply and demand; and

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job vacancies survey results; Rapid Response – A variety of services to businesses that are facing restructuring and downsizing including onsite workshops for employees in transition; job placement assistance; and information on unemployment benefits; Screening – Any service that involves the initial evaluation of applications or resumes that assists the employer in the recruiting process; Training and retraining - Any service provided to a business that involves the training or retraining of current or future employees including OJTs, Work Experiences, Incumbent Worker Training, etc. Business Services provided by Title 1 Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Services include labor market information and growth trends for industry clusters, occupational wage and benefit trends, job placement assistance, identification of skills gaps, Rapid Response and layoff prevention, and information on training and retraining in demand industries.

Adult Education views employers as primary customers, alongside the student --- engaging employers as strategic partners instead of advisors. Employers are not limited to providing feedback on what Adult Education has chosen to do. Instead, Adult Education engages employers about the strengths and weaknesses of Adult Education services, hours of service needed to enhance access, priority skill sets that need to be taught, etc. Both problem solve together, enabling employers to utilize Adult Education to:

- Improve the educational training opportunities for their employees
- Access additional, needed support services for their employees
- Increase the skill levels of their employees
- Increase the retention of their employees when given access to training
- Improve job performance and career advancement opportunities for employees with additional training (i.e. credential attainment)
- Recruit qualified candidates.

The Adult Education Workforce Alliance for Growth in the Economy (WAGE™) programs coordinate classroom instruction and state certification, with pre-employment needs of local business and industry. Workforce Alliance for Growth in the Economy (WAGE™) programs meet with their Advisory Boards which is comprised of business/industry partners and partnering agencies. Through meetings and correspondence, local training needs are expressed to Adult Education centers and agencies in attendance which provides instructional guidance.

Arkansas Rehabilitation Services, Division of Services for the Blind and the local regional economic development organizations have implemented a business team to identify the needs of the business community and to offer programs that fund and support the training and supportive needs of existing or potential employees. The team meets with the regional chambers of commerce to discuss questions presented by businesses interested in expanding and locating in the area and to educate the chamber members on the direct and supportive services available to build a labor force. Following the model of the Arkansas Economic Development Commission (AEDC) and comparing it to the current employment statistics data, businesses in the following industries have been contacted regarding the opportunities for on-the-job training, educational enhancement, apprenticeship opportunities, and support services.

The Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Region is in the process of developing functional Business Service Teams to streamline the efforts of each program. The role of the Business Service Team will be to provide workforce development, education, and employment services for businesses in Southwest Arkansas. The goal will be maintaining regular contact with area

businesses, seek out new employer contacts, and provide services to these contacts. Off site visits will be made to employers to gather job orders and disseminate information on services such as the Work Opportunity Tax Credit, CRC, etc. At the initial meeting, the business service team will listen to the employers concerns and needs. Based upon what is learned from the employer, information to meet the employer's need will be provided.

Services to Persons with Disabilities

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act requires the workforce development system and the American Job Centers to meet the needs of job seekers who have disabilities, increase their access to high quality workforce services, and to prepare them for integrated employment leading to economic self-sufficiency. According to the March 2017 report on Disability Employment Statistics on individuals ages 16 and over from the Department of Labor Statistics, (<https://www.dol.gov/odep/>) nationwide there is a 20.4% labor force participation for persons with disabilities and a 68.7% participation rate of persons without disabilities. The unemployment rate of persons with disabilities is 10.6%, while the unemployment rate of people without disabilities is 4.3%. Historically, there are significant barriers to the inclusion of people with disabilities into the overall strategy for economic development in Arkansas. ARS in partnership with the Arkansas Department of Human Services, Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) are leading the charge for providing targeted training and education for people with disabilities in order for them to develop the skills and abilities needed to obtain competitive integrated employment in Arkansas. Through Governor Hutchinson's January 14, 2016 renewal of Governor Beebe's Executive Order 10-17, which was signed in 2010 all Arkansas State agencies are charged with monitoring and recruiting, training, and retaining qualified persons with disabilities in State Government. It also ensures that State agencies will work towards coordinating efforts to increase employment of Arkansans with disabilities through the Employment First Taskforce.

The Arkansas Department of Career Education, Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ACE/ARS) and the in partnership with Department of Human Services, Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) provide vocational rehabilitation services to people with disabilities. They are leading the charge for providing targeted training and education for people who have disabilities in order for them to develop the skills and abilities needed to attain competitive integrated employment in Southwest Arkansas.

The Department of Human Services, Division of Services for the Blind coordinates services for a comprehensive program to assess needs, and to plan, develop and provide job-related services to blind or severely visually impaired individuals. Such services are designed to assist individuals for employment that is commensurate within abilities, interests and informed choice and consistent with aligned strengths, resources, concerns and capabilities.

ARS vocational services are available for individuals who have disabilities and are not currently employed; or if seeking to advance in their present career. Services are provided to help persons who have disabilities obtain, and /or maintain employment that leads to independence, self-sufficiency and full inclusion in society.

The Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development has developed a Disability Committee to assess and provide recommendations to the workforce centers for accommodations and facility improvements to reduce access issues for individuals who have disabilities.

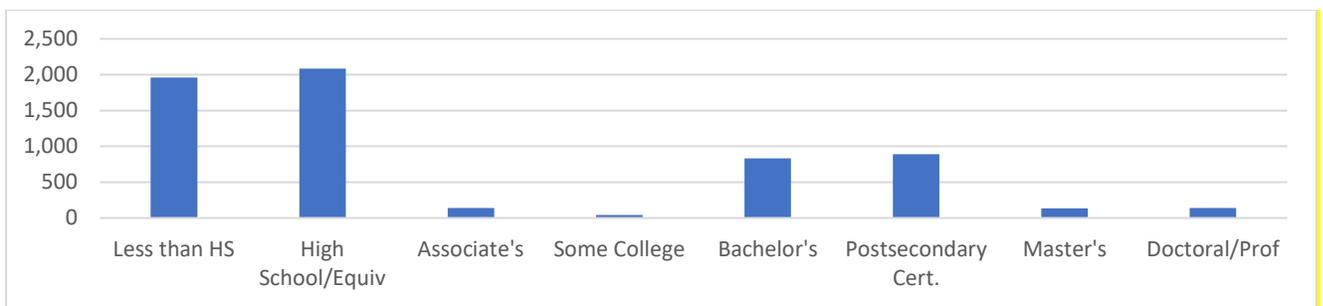
E. The educational and skill levels of the workforce, including individuals with barriers;

The following charts shows data collected from the 2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates on educational attainment in Southwest. The regional percentage of individuals with less than a high school diploma is 4.2% higher than the national average (12.6%). Sevier County has the highest percentage of individuals with less than high school diploma (28.3%), and Nevada County has the lowest percentage (14.2%). The highest increase in projected jobs for the southwest region require a high school diploma or less than high school diploma.

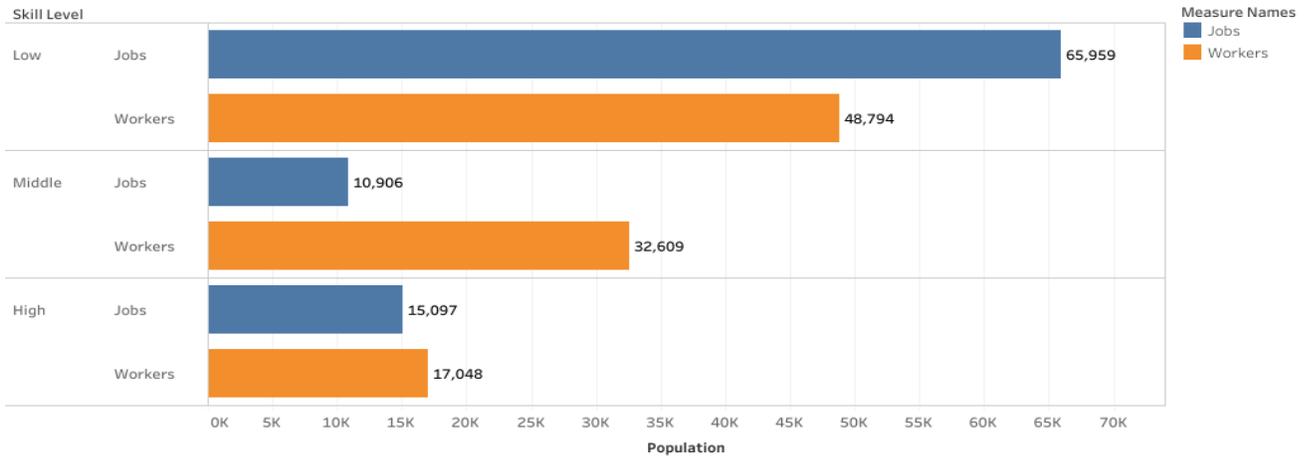
COUNTY	POPULATION 25 YEARS+	# Less than High School	% Less than High School	# High School grad or higher	% High School grad or higher	# bachelor degree or higher	% bachelor degree or higher
Calhoun	3,719	589	15.8%	1,774	47.7%	302	8.1%
Columbia	14,863	2,253	15.2%	6,009	40.4%	1,997	13.4%
Dallas	5,331	899	16.9%	2,258	42.4%	569	10.7%
Hempstead	14,441	2,873	19.9%	5,636	39.0%	1,228	8.5%
Howard	8,938	1,668	18.6%	3,126	35.0%	1,023	11.4 %
Lafayette	5,088	983	19.3%	2,126	41.8%	612	12.0%
Little River	8,956	1,333	14.9%	3,618	40.4%	661	7.4%
Miller	29,694	4,430	15.0%	10,919	36.8%	3,211	10.8%
Nevada	5,855	834	14.2%	2,619	44.7%	676	11.5%
Ouachita	16,834	2,491	14.8%	7,085	42.1%	1,549	9.2%
Sevier	10,640	3,005	28.3%	3,705	34.8%	699	6.6%
Union	27,264	4,402	16.1%	9,891	36.3%	3,928	14.4%
SW Region	151,623	25,760	16.8%	59,905	39.03%	22,399	14.59%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Projected Employment Growth by Education Level (2016-2026)



Skills Gap



Source: Occupational Statistics and Employment Projections, Labor Market Information
Long-Term Employment Projections, Labor Market Information

F. The Development and implementation of sector initiatives for existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors or occupations for the region.

The Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board contracted with Arkansas Economic Development Institute (AEDI) to collect regional data to assist in the implementation of the sector initiatives for existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors or occupations for the region. This information includes Industries ranked in descending order of the number employed at the region and county level; top ten occupations based on the total number of jobs, annual openings, projected 10-year growth, estimated wages, and location quotient; educational profiles which compares programs provided, completion numbers, job openings by demand occupation and expected wage by the 2- and 4-year institutions in the region against the demand sector information. This will help the SWAWDB align training programs to the needs of industry for the benefit of both the jobseeker and employers. Targeted training opportunities will provide participants with the increased probability of obtaining a good paying job. The increased labor pipeline will provide businesses with the workforce they need to operate and grow their companies throughout the region.

Top 15 Southwest Workforce Region Industry Groups (2017-2022)

NAICS	Description	2017 Jobs	2022 Jobs	2017 - 2022 % Change	2017 Location Quotient	2022 Location Quotient	Current Wages, Salaries, & Proprietor Earnings
31	Manufacturing	19,095	18,781	(2%)	2.80	2.84	\$52,089
90	Government	14,971	14,607	(2%)	1.13	1.12	\$34,342
62	Health Care & Social Assistance	10,249	11,176	9%	0.94	0.95	\$31,589
44	Retail Trade	9,083	9,324	3%	1.02	1.04	\$24,353
72	Accommodation & Food Services	5,402	5,605	4%	0.73	0.73	\$14,363
23	Construction	4,438	4,596	4%	0.94	0.95	\$42,137
81	Other Services (except Public Admin)	4,311	4,306	(0%)	1.04	1.03	\$20,306
48	Transportation & Warehousing	4,066	4,284	5%	1.35	1.38	\$43,584
56	Admin & Support & Waste Management & Remediation Svcs	2,839	3,034	7%	0.53	0.54	\$30,143
11	Agri, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	2,417	2,320	(4%)	2.32	2.27	\$35,957
42	Wholesale Trade	1,973	1,980	0%	0.61	0.60	\$47,751
52	Finance and Insurance	1,898	1,863	(2%)	0.57	0.55	\$45,843
54	Pro, Scientific, & Tech Services	1,269	1,366	8%	0.23	0.23	\$38,693
55	Management of Companies & Enterprises	1,115	1,405	26%	0.91	1.12	\$116,802
53	Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	841	898	7%	0.58	0.62	\$33,877

Source: Southwest Arkansas Workforce Region Occupational Sector Strategies Report
EMSI 2018.2

Manufacturing, Health Care, and Government are the Southwest Region's major industry employers. They account for 44, 315 jobs which is 53% of all jobs in the region. Of the three top industries, two show predicted declines by 2022 of 2% each. Because of the magnitude of these industries and the numbers they employ, emphasis remains on ensuring they have a workforce to support their efforts.

Occupational Recommendations at the Regional Level

SOC	Description	2017 Jobs	2022 Jobs	2017 - 2022 % Change	Annual Openings	Avg. Hourly Earnings	2017 Location Quotient	2022 Location Quotient
53-3032	Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	3,229	3,297	2%	381	\$17.90	3.06	3.07
25-2021	Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Ed	1,183	1,114	(6%)	84	\$20.54	1.55	1.45
29-2061	Lic. Practical & Lic. Vocational Nurses	1,111	1,146	3%	88	\$17.02	2.78	2.72
49-9071	Maintenance & Repair Workers, General	1,090	1,097	1%	112	\$16.31	1.35	1.33
41-1011	First-Line Super of Retail Sales Workers	956	990	4%	109	\$16.99	1.25	1.29
25-2031	Secondary School Teachers, Except Special & Career/Tech Ed	934	877	(6%)	64	\$21.39	1.70	1.59
51-2092	Team Assemblers	929	918	(1%)	112	\$14.78	1.52	1.49
51-1011	First-Line Super of Production & Ops Workers	900	888	(1%)	91	\$28.59	2.67	2.67
49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	830	870	5%	83	\$24.41	4.37	4.28
43-1011	First-Line Super of Office & Admin Support Workers	823	854	4%	88	\$22.65	1.01	1.02

Source: Southwest Arkansas Workforce Region Occupational Sector Strategies Report
EMSI 2018.2

Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers lists the most jobs and annual openings, but only shows a 2% projected growth rate. Industrial Machinery Mechanics has one of the lowest annual openings, but is projected to have the regions highest growth percentage of 5%. The manufacturing industry is the Southwestern Region's greatest strength though there are only four occupations listed above that could be considered manufacturing related.

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Occupational Recommendations at the County Level

Calhoun County

SOC	Description	2017 Jobs	2022 Jobs	2017 - 2022 % Change	Annual Openings	Avg. Hourly Earnings	2017 Location Quotient	2022 Location Quotient
53-3032	Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	643	612	(5%)	66	\$19.73	2.72	2.54
29-2061	Lic. Practical & Lic. Vocational Nurses	263	264	0%	19	\$17.17	2.94	2.79
51-9011	Chemical Equip Operators & Tenders	240	259	8%	30	\$23.13	26.64	29.63
43-1011	First-Line Super of Office & Admin Support Workers	232	238	3%	24	\$22.97	1.26	1.26
43-3031	Bookkeeping, Accounting, & Auditing Clerks	228	224	(2%)	25	\$18.52	1.08	1.10
47-2111	Electricians	228	262	15%	34	\$22.76	2.71	3.01
51-8093	Petroleum Pump Sys Operators, Refinery Operators, & Gaugers	208	221	6%	24	\$27.42	41.81	44.38
49-9071	Maintenance & Repair Workers, General	202	206	2%	20	\$17.31	1.12	1.11
47-1011	First-Line Super of Construction Trades & Extraction Workers	187	195	4%	20	\$28.89	2.35	2.45
51-1011	First-Line Super of Production & Operating Workers	166	175	5%	18	\$29.60	2.19	2.34

Source: Southwest Arkansas Workforce Region Occupational Sector Strategies Report
EMSI 2018.2

Columbia County

SOC	Description	2017 Jobs	2022 Jobs	2017 - 2022 % Change	Annual Openings	Avg. Hourly Earnings	2017 Location Quotient	2022 Location Quotient
53-3032	Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	643	612	(5%)	66	\$19.73	2.72	2.54
29-2061	Lic. Practical & Lic. Vocational Nurses	263	264	0%	19	\$17.17	2.94	2.79
51-9011	Chemical Equip Operators & Tenders	240	259	8%	30	\$23.13	26.64	29.63
43-1011	First-Line Super of Office & Admin Support Workers	232	238	3%	24	\$22.97	1.26	1.26
43-3031	Bookkeeping, Accounting, & Auditing Clerks	228	224	(2%)	25	\$18.52	1.08	1.10
47-2111	Electricians	228	262	15%	34	\$22.76	2.71	3.01
51-8093	Petroleum Pump Sys Operators, Refinery Operators, & Gaugers	208	221	6%	24	\$27.42	41.81	44.38
49-9071	Maintenance & Repair Workers, General	202	206	2%	20	\$17.31	1.12	1.11
47-1011	First-Line Super of Construction Trades & Extraction Workers	187	195	4%	20	\$28.89	2.35	2.45
51-1011	First-Line Super of Production & Operating Workers	166	175	5%	18	\$29.60	2.19	2.34

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Dallas County

SOC	Description	2017 Jobs	2022 Jobs	2017 - 2022 % Change	Annual Openings	Avg. Hourly Earnings	2017 Location Quotient	2022 Location Quotient
53-3032	Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	130	133	2%	15	\$16.43	3.49	3.43
29-2061	Lic. Practical & Lic. Vocational Nurses	76	69	(9%)	5	\$19.18	5.39	4.50
45-4022	Logging Equipment Operators	75	60	(20%)	9	\$19.44	93.81	77.57
51-9196	Paper Goods Machine Setters, Operators, & Tenders	61	65	7%	7	\$19.61	34.89	38.39
21-1093	Social & Human Service Assistants	60	75	25%	11	\$11.74	7.97	9.15
29-1141	Registered Nurses	55	60	9%	4	\$25.82	0.97	0.97
51-7041	Sawing Machine Setters, Operators, & Tenders, Wood	53	57	8%	7	\$13.22	51.92	55.68
49-9071	Maint & Repair Workers, General	34	37	9%	4	\$14.66	1.18	1.23
41-1011	First-Line Super of Retail Sales Workers	31	32	3%	4	\$16.64	1.13	1.16
43-1011	First-Line Super of Office & Admin Support Workers	27	29	7%	3	\$20.49	0.95	0.95

Source: Southwest Arkansas Workforce Region Occupational Sector Strategies Report
EMSI 2018.2

Hempstead County

SOC	Description	2017 Jobs	2022 Jobs	2017 - 2022 % Change	Annual Openings	Avg. Hourly Earnings	2017 Location Quotient	2022 Location Quotient
51-3022	Meat, Poultry, & Fish Cutters & Trimmers	225	263	17%	37	\$11.08	26.47	30.60
11-9013	Farmers, Ranchers, & Other Agri Managers	219	212	(3%)	16	\$14.07	8.64	9.03
53-3032	Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	182	166	(9%)	18	\$17.37	1.73	1.52
45-2092	Farmworkers & Laborers, Crop, Nursery, & Greenhouse	135	144	7%	23	\$11.18	3.13	3.29
49-9071	Maintenance & Repair Workers, General	107	116	8%	12	\$16.36	1.32	1.38
29-2061	Lic. Practical & Lic. Vocational Nurses	101	104	3%	8	\$16.36	2.52	2.43
41-1011	First-Line Super of Retail Sales Workers	98	100	2%	11	\$16.86	1.28	1.28
51-1011	First-Line Super of Production & Operating Workers	98	104	6%	11	\$28.59	2.90	3.09
25-2021	Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Ed	98	94	(4%)	7	\$20.45	1.27	1.20
43-1011	First-Line Super of Office & Admin Support Workers	90	94	4%	10	\$21.22	1.10	1.10

Source: Southwest Arkansas Workforce Region Occupational Sector Strategies Report
EMSI 2018.2

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Howard County

SOC	Description	2017 Jobs	2022 Jobs	2017 - 2022 % Change	Annual Openings	Avg. Hourly Earnings	2017 Location Quotient	2022 Location Quotient
53-3032	Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	239	226	(5%)	24	\$17.46	2.56	2.47
51-2092	Team Assemblers	148	126	(15%)	16	\$13.49	2.74	2.40
51-1011	First-Line Super of Production & Operating Workers	138	125	(9%)	13	\$27.04	4.62	4.40
49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	118	125	6%	12	\$21.02	7.02	7.17
51-4121	Welders, Cutters, Solderers, & Brazers	104	88	(15%)	10	\$18.83	5.34	4.67
49-9071	Maintenance & Repair Workers, General	99	95	(4%)	9	\$15.46	1.38	1.34
51-9061	Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, & Weighers	97	89	(8%)	11	\$14.78	3.78	3.58
29-2061	Lic. Practical & Lic. Vocational Nurses	91	98	8%	8	\$19.20	2.59	2.73
29-1141	Registered Nurses	80	94	18%	7	\$29.08	0.57	0.65
25-2021	Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Ed	79	79	0%	6	\$19.53	1.18	1.20

Source: Southwest Arkansas Workforce Region Occupational Sector Strategies Report
EMSI 2018.2

Lafayette County

SOC	Description	2017 Jobs	2022 Jobs	2017 - 2022 % Change	Annual Openings	Avg. Hourly Earnings	2017 Location Quotient	2022 Location Quotient
53-3032	Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	42	47	12%	6	\$16.70	2.31	2.52
29-2061	Lic. Practical & Lic. Vocational Nurses	35	37	6%	3	\$15.60	5.14	5.03
25-2021	Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Ed	29	24	(17%)	2	\$20.55	2.18	1.79
47-2111	Electricians	25	27	8%	3	\$22.88	3.91	4.02
25-2031	Secondary School Teachers, Except Special & Career/Tech Ed	23	19	(17%)	Insf. Data	\$21.58	2.39	1.97
41-1011	First-Line Super of Retail Sales Workers	18	20	11%	2	\$13.80	1.35	1.53
47-2061	Construction Laborers	17	21	24%	3	\$13.96	1.36	1.59
45-4022	Logging Equipment Operators	16	14	(13%)	Insf. Data	\$19.32	42.23	38.73
43-1011	First-Line Super of Office & Admin Support Workers	15	16	7%	Insf. Data	\$19.59	1.10	1.12
43-5052	Postal Service Mail Carriers	14	14	0%	Insf. Data	\$21.80	4.57	5.30

Source: Southwest Arkansas Workforce Region Occupational Sector Strategies Report
EMSI 2018.2

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Little River County

SOC	Description	2017 Jobs	2022 Jobs	2017 - 2022 % Change	Annual Openings	Avg. Hourly Earnings	2017 Location Quotient	2022 Location Quotient
53-3032	Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	124	85	(31%)	11	\$16.11	2.69	1.94
49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	110	98	(11%)	9	\$29.24	13.32	11.89
49-9071	Maintenance & Repair Workers, General	103	87	(16%)	9	\$15.76	2.92	2.59
47-2141	Painters, Construction & Maintenance	98	88	(10%)	8	\$20.28	10.14	9.97
51-9196	Paper Goods Machine Setters, Operators, & Tenders	92	84	(9%)	9	\$22.29	41.98	44.32
25-2021	Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Ed	88	76	(14%)	6	\$20.25	2.63	2.43
51-9023	Mixing & Blending Machine Setters, Operators, & Tenders	81	68	(16%)	8	\$21.01	25.95	23.42
25-2031	Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Tech Ed	70	60	(14%)	4	\$20.53	2.93	2.69
51-1011	First-Line Super of Production & Operating Workers	50	43	(14%)	4	\$27.65	3.38	3.16
45-4022	Logging Equipment Operators	34	35	3%	5	\$20.31	34.75	40.30

Source: Southwest Arkansas Workforce Region Occupational Sector Strategies Report
EMSI 2018.2

Miller County

SOC	Description	2017 Jobs	2022 Jobs	2017 - 2022 % Change	Annual Openings	Avg. Hourly Earnings	2017 Location Quotient	2022 Location Quotient
53-3032	Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	948	1,071	13%	131	\$17.85	5.31	5.82
43-6014	Secretaries & Admin Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, & Executive	266	269	1%	29	\$14.34	1.05	1.04
25-2021	Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Ed	259	235	(9%)	18	\$23.83	2.00	1.79
25-2031	Secondary School Teachers, Except Special & Career/Technical Ed	214	194	(9%)	14	\$24.12	2.30	2.06
49-9071	Maintenance & Repair Workers, General	213	219	3%	22	\$16.10	1.56	1.54
51-9197	Tire Builders	205	198	(3%)	22	\$20.62	100.24	100.13
51-9041	Extruding, Forming, Pressing, & Compacting Machine Setters, Operators, & Tenders	148	140	(5%)	17	\$19.85	22.52	22.12
49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	147	155	5%	14	\$29.32	4.58	4.43
41-1011	First-Line Super of Retail Sales Workers	140	144	3%	16	\$20.12	1.08	1.09
51-9023	Mixing & Blending Machine Setters, Operators, & Tenders	132	126	(5%)	14	\$20.93	10.85	10.27

Source: Southwest Arkansas Workforce Region Occupational Sector Strategies Report
EMSI 2018.2

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Nevada County

SOC	Description	2017 Jobs	2022 Jobs	2017 - 2022 % Change	Annual Openings	Avg. Hourly Earnings	2017 Location Quotient	2022 Location Quotient
53-3032	Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	195	223	14%	28	\$18.57	5.86	6.56
51-9197	Tire Builders	92	95	3%	11	\$17.60	243.09	258.99
29-2061	Lic. Practical & Lic. Vocational Nurses	60	68	13%	6	\$15.93	4.76	5.08
51-9041	Extruding, Forming, Pressing, & Compacting Machine Setters, Operators, & Tenders	48	49	2%	6	\$15.85	39.54	41.41
29-2041	Emerg Medical Tech & Paramedics	48	57	19%	5	\$12.25	11.44	12.23
51-2092	Team Assemblers	42	43	2%	5	\$14.18	2.16	2.18
51-9061	Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, & Weighers	41	42	2%	5	\$16.29	4.47	4.57
41-1011	First-Line Super of Retail Sales Workers	37	40	8%	5	\$17.74	1.54	1.64
45-4022	Logging Equipment Operators	34	42	24%	7	\$23.20	47.93	61.34
51-1011	First-Line Super of Production & Operating Workers	29	29	0%	3	\$30.56	2.69	2.77

Source: Southwest Arkansas Workforce Region Occupational Sector Strategies Report
EMSI 2018.2

Ouachita County

SOC	Description	2017 Jobs	2022 Jobs	2017 - 2022 % Change	Annual Openings	Avg. Hourly Earnings	2017 Location Quotient	2022 Location Quotient
53-3032	Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	258	251	(3%)	27	\$16.38	2.72	2.63
29-2061	Lic. Practical & Lic. Vocational Nurses	171	174	2%	13	\$16.99	4.77	4.66
29-1141	Registered Nurses	157	161	3%	9	\$23.57	1.09	1.07
25-2021	Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Ed	122	110	(10%)	8	\$17.98	1.77	1.62
43-1011	First-Line Super of Office & Admin Support Workers	95	101	6%	11	\$20.39	1.30	1.35
25-2031	Secondary School Teachers, Except Special & Career/Tech Ed	95	86	(9%)	6	\$18.93	1.92	1.75
41-1011	First-Line Super of Retail Sales Workers	92	92	0%	10	\$15.50	1.34	1.35
43-3031	Bookkeeping, Accounting, & Auditing Clerks	81	81	0%	9	\$15.27	0.96	1.01
49-9071	Maintenance & Repair Workers, General	78	81	4%	8	\$15.42	1.08	1.11
45-4022	Logging Equipment Operators	56	43	(23%)	6	\$19.56	27.51	22.48

Source: Southwest Arkansas Workforce Region Occupational Sector Strategies Report
EMSI 2018.2

Southwest Arkansas Regional - Local Plan PY 2016 – PY 2019

Sevier County

SOC	Description	2017 Jobs	2022 Jobs	2017 - 2022 % Change	Annual Openings	Avg. Hourly Earnings	2017 Location Quotient	2022 Location Quotient
25-2021	Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Ed	128	134	5%	11	\$18.46	2.66	2.82
53-3032	Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	106	109	3%	12	\$18.19	1.60	1.64
25-2031	Secondary School Teachers, Except Special & Career/Tech Ed	99	104	5%	8	\$19.42	2.88	3.04
41-1011	First-Line Super of Retail Sales Workers	75	81	8%	9	\$16.42	1.54	1.70
29-2061	Lic. Practical & Lic. Vocational Nurses	67	63	(6%)	5	\$16.11	2.69	2.43
49-9071	Maintenance & Repair Workers, General	61	58	(5%)	6	\$16.35	1.21	1.15
49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	57	57	0%	5	\$23.53	4.78	4.53
43-1011	First-Line Super of Office & Admin Support Workers	55	57	4%	6	\$22.63	1.07	1.10
49-3023	Auto Service Technicians & Mechanics	52	55	6%	5	\$14.23	1.96	2.10
51-1011	First-Line Super of Production & Operating Workers	50	41	(18%)	4	\$30.62	2.35	2.01

Source: Southwest Arkansas Workforce Region Occupational Sector Strategies Report
EMSI 2018.2

Union County

SOC	Description	2017 Jobs	2022 Jobs	2017 - 2022 % Change	Annual Openings	Avg. Hourly Earnings	2017 Location Quotient	2022 Location Quotient
53-3032	Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	643	612	(5%)	66	\$19.73	2.72	2.54
29-2061	Lic. Practical & Lic. Vocational Nurses	263	264	0%	19	\$17.17	2.94	2.79
51-9011	Chemical Equip Operators & Tenders	240	259	8%	30	\$23.13	26.64	29.63
43-1011	First-Line Super of Office & Admin Support Workers	232	238	3%	24	\$22.97	1.26	1.26
43-3031	Bookkeeping, Accounting, & Auditing Clerks	228	224	(2%)	25	\$18.52	1.08	1.10
47-2111	Electricians	228	262	15%	34	\$22.76	2.71	3.01
51-8093	Petroleum Pump Sys Operators, Refinery Operators, & Gaugers	208	221	6%	24	\$27.42	41.81	44.38
49-9071	Maintenance & Repair Workers, General	202	206	2%	20	\$17.31	1.12	1.11
47-1011	First-Line Super of Construction Trades & Extraction Workers	187	195	4%	20	\$28.89	2.35	2.45
51-1011	First-Line Super of Production & Operating Workers	166	175	5%	18	\$29.60	2.19	2.34

Source: Southwest Arkansas Workforce Region Occupational Sector Strategies Report
EMSI 2018.2

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The recommended occupations at the county level show both similarities and differences between the regional and county level. There are occupations that are unique and important to a county or counties that did not have to magnitude to be included at the regional level, while other occupations are recommended in a majority of the counties.

1.3 Based upon the regional labor market and economic conditions analysis and *Arkansas's Workforce Development Plan (PY 2016 –PY 2019)* describe the planning region's economic and workforce development oriented vision and strategic goals. [WIOA Sec. 106(c) and Sec. 107(d)]

Vision

Southwest Arkansas will have a world-class workforce that is well educated, skilled, and working to keep Southwest Arkansas's economy competitive in the global marketplace.

Southwest Arkansas's Talent Development System Philosophy

- We believe that there must be a pipeline of skilled workers for employers and a job for everyone in Southwest Arkansas that wants one.
- We believe that the talent development system of Southwest Arkansas must be relevant to the labor market to meet the needs of employers and jobseekers, and for the local area to compete globally.
- We believe that everyone in Southwest Arkansas should have opportunity and access to training and education that leads to a career with gainful employment.
- We believe Southwest Arkansas's workforce system must be a viable resource for business and industry.

Goals

Strategic Goal 1: Develop an efficient partnership with employers, the educational system, workforce development partners, and community -based organizations to deliver a platform that will prepare a skilled workforce for existing and new employers.

Goal 1 Objectives:

1. Expand employer partnerships through the support of industry engagement.
2. Improve communication/participation between education entities, local and state boards, government agencies, community-based organizations, and employers.
3. Collaborate with K-12 education, higher education, career and technical education, and adult education to provide consistent rules and eliminate barriers to implementing training programs around the State.

Strategic Goal 2: Enhance service delivery to employers and jobseekers.

1. Utilize a common intake process for jobseekers and businesses that will efficiently connect them with services available from all workforce development partner programs and identify any barriers to employment.
2. Promote training that leads to industry recognized credentials and certification.
3. Develop a common business outreach strategy with a common message that will be utilized by all workforce system partners.
4. Create a data-sharing network that includes WIOA required partners, community

organizations outside the established workforce system, and sector partners that can provide a greater outreach for client intake, referrals, and case management.

Strategic Goal 3: Increase awareness of the State’s Talent Development System

1. Work to change employer and jobseeker perceptions of the workforce system.
2. Utilize an image-building outreach campaign that educates Southwest Arkansans about the services and the career development opportunities available in Southwest Arkansas.
3. Utilize technology, including social media and search engine optimization, to better connect jobseekers and employers with the talent development system in Southwest Arkansas.
4. Develop a user-friendly website that provides a common repository of information about career development opportunities that are relevant to K-12 education, parents, educators, adults, employers, government agencies, and the public.

Strategic Goal 4: Address Skills Gaps

1. Help to implement an action plan to close the basic core, technical, and soft skills gaps in Arkansas.
2. Analyze the effectiveness of currently used job readiness standards and ensure coordination between the Arkansas Career Readiness Certificate (CRC) program and the Work Alliance for Growth in the Economy (WAGE) program.

1.4 Describe regional strategies used to facilitate engagement of businesses and other employers, including small employers and in-demand industry sector occupations. Describe methods and services to support the regional workforce system in meeting employer needs. [WIOA Sec. 106(c)]

Business engagement will be a vital role in the implementation of sector strategies. Partnerships with targeted industry alliances, Chamber of Commerce, labor organizations, and educational entities will allow the opportunity for businesses and employers to identify the workforce needs and design a collaborative resolution to ensure a continuous pathway of skilled laborers.

Adult Education programs contact businesses in multiple ways from letters, phone calls, meetings, etc. Workforce Alliance for Growth in the Economy (WAGE™) programs check in with their partnering businesses through WAGE quarterly meetings, emails, phone calls, and on site visits. In meetings, businesses are kept abreast of what is going on in adult education and provide information on their updates and needs. Many businesses seek adult education centers to help fill vacant positions or potential positions they look to fill.

Arkansas Rehabilitation Services, Division of Services for the Blind and the local regional economic development organizations have implemented a business team to identify the needs of the business community and to offer programs that fund and support the training and supportive needs of existing or potential employees. The team meets with the regional chambers of commerce to discuss questions presented by businesses interested in expanding and locating in the area and to educate the chamber members on the direct and supportive services available to build a labor force. Following the model of the Arkansas Economic Development Commission (AEDC) and comparing it to the current employment statistics data, businesses in the following industries have been contacted regarding the opportunities for on-the-job training, educational enhancement, apprenticeship opportunities, and support services. Actions completed by Arkansas Rehabilitation Services Business Engagement team regarding how businesses are engaged are listed below:

1. Partners in Progress, an initiative of ARS, was launched in 2016 to collaborate with other workforce partners while promoting partnership with business, area agencies, staffing agencies and workforce partners that work with qualified job candidates to create a more diverse workforce. The goals of this initiative are to leverage existing business relationships, engage business customers/Employers (particularly small and medium customers) expose them to ARS and its field office, create a platform for business customers to share what skills and abilities they are seeking to meet their business needs, strengthen relationships with businesses that results in multiple outcomes vs. single employment opportunities. Lastly this initiative supports WIOA efforts for engaging employers across the workforce system to align training with needed skills and match employers with qualified workers.
2. Additionally, to engage businesses and workforce partners, ARS hosts an annual event called Arkansas Business Employment Summit which is a business-to-business event that focuses on disability inclusion in the workplace. This conference brings business and industry together with other stakeholders to provide education and awareness on the business case for hiring people with disabilities. There are sessions on disability related topics important to business, and strategies that align with their organization's goals to create culturally competent workplaces. Businesses share the success they have had in employing people with disabilities within their organizations. Businesses are educated on new assistive technology and accommodations. Speakers from across the country are brought in to present the business case on the value of employing people with disabilities. Lastly, businesses for best hiring practices, providing reasonable accommodations, and being model employers are recognized. This event has provided a strong platform for enhancing business engagement while working towards achieving Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act performance measurements.

The Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Region is in the process of developing functional Business Service Teams that will streamline the efforts of business engagement from each program. The Business Service Team will listen to the employers concerns and needs. Based upon what is learned from the employer, information to meet the employer's need will be provided.

1.5 Describe how the planning region will define and establish regional workforce development service strategies. Describe how the planning region will develop and use cooperative workforce development service delivery agreements. [WIOA Sec. 106(c)(B)]

Workforce development service strategies will be based on local industry needs. Business Service Teams will meet with industry specific employers to identify the workforce needs, and service strategies will be designed to meet those needs. Career Pathways will be developed that meet the literacy and academic requirements of the industry, and resource mapping will provide job seekers with assistance to enter industry-designed training. The Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board is in the process of procuring the purchase of a document that provides baseline information to identify skill gaps, training barriers, high growth and high paying jobs. This information will include an educational profile which compares programs provided, completion numbers, job openings by demand occupation, expected wage by the 2- and 4-year institutions in the region against the demand sector information. The Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board will be the convener to bring business, labor, education, and economic development together to address the needs of Southwest Arkansas. The Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board will take the lead in developing the Memorandum of Understanding

and the Resource Sharing Agreement. These agreements will be subject to negotiation and mutual agreement among all partners.

1.6 Describe how the planning region will define and establish administrative cost arrangements, including the pooling of funds for administrative costs, as appropriate, for the region. [WIOA Sec. 106(c)(E)]

The Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Region will use TEGL 17-16 received from the Department of Labor that provides guidance on the Infrastructure Funding of the One-Stop Delivery System in accordance with the requirements set forth in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and its implementing regulations.

All partner programs must contribute to the infrastructure costs and certain additional cost of the one-stop delivery system based on their proportionate use. A partner's contribution must be an allowable, reasonable, necessary, and allocable cost to the program, consistent with the Federal Cost Principles set forth in the Uniform Guidance.

1.7 Describe how the planning region will determine and coordinate transportation and other supportive services for the region. [WIOA Sec. 106(c)(F)]

Partner programs within the Southwest Workforce Development Region will determine and coordinate transportation and other supportive services as allowable by their program. The Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Region has local partner meetings on a regular basis. Each partner provides information on what services are available and how each program can assist individuals by removing transportation and other barriers. The Southwest Region has developed a referral process that works and will continue to work together to ensure alignment and coordination of supportive services.

WIOA Title 1 Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth services provide supportive services such as transportation assistance, child care assistance, needs related payments, and other supportive services (tools and equipment, uniforms, and other clothing), to job seekers to assist in obtaining and retaining employment. Through assessments and evaluations, Career Planners determine the needs of each participant and create an Individual Employment Plan or **Individual Service Strategy** to address the identified barriers. Transportation assistance is provided in the form of a reimbursement or contracted public transportation, when available. Child Care assistance is provided through vouchers to State approved childcare agencies. Needs Related Payments are provided through a stipend. Referrals to partner agencies are made to ensure the participants are receiving the optimal services to meet the individual's need.

Adult Education provides referrals to Career Pathways at local community colleges, career assessments, Career Coach assistance, job readiness /soft skills training, and educational and career goal planning. Career Pathways provides assistance with child care, transportation, tuition, and materials. Each adult education center has a local service directory that is utilized for student support services. Supportive services such as transportation, daycare, etc. are coordinated with partner agencies through participant referrals. Adult Education partners with Arkansas Rehabilitation Services to help provide individuals with disabilities access to services, diagnosis and

evaluations of capabilities and limitations; guidance and counseling; assistive technologies; and job placement.

Arkansas Rehabilitation Services and the Division of Services for the Blind are mandated to research and apply all comparable benefits for services from other resources prior to applying vocational rehabilitation funds. The most frequently applied comparable resources come from sources outside of the core partner agencies. For example, tuition assistance in the form of grant funding, housing assistance from Housing and Urban Development, the individual's own medical insurance must first be applied to physical and mental restoration services. The supportive services provided by Arkansas Rehabilitation Services and the Division of Services for the Blind are arranged and coordinated according to an individual plan for employment which specifies a career goal and the areas that the individual may need supports in order to reach that goal. The supports needed are determined through assessments, evaluations, as well as the analysis and application of state and federal regulations and policies. The following supports services are assessed, evaluated, and analyzed for applicability and comparable services/similar benefits to each individual case: maintenance assistance to participate in employment or training that leads to employment, personal care attendant services, physical and mental restoration services, rehabilitation engineering, rehabilitation technology, and transportation to participate in employment or training activities. These support services are time limited and must accompany a substantial service that is directly related to obtaining or maintaining employment.

1.8 Describe strategies and services the planning region will employ to coordinate workforce development programs/services with regional economic development services and providers. [WIOA Sec. 106(c)(G)]

Southwest will continue to partner with regional economic development services and providers by leveraging resources with the Southwest Arkansas Planning and Development District, Chambers of Commerce and other economic development organizations. Each core agency will have a common referral form and coordinate services among individuals that are referred according to eligibility requirements. In this way, the appropriate agency to fit the needs of that individual will be targeted. Additionally, a more comprehensive and continuous service can be provided because all parties will be working towards a common employment goal and have access to the latest assessments and efforts of the other core partners through a shared data management system. This is our challenge and what we aspire to create with the assistance of our State partners. The Business Service Teams will also coordinate services through job fairs, business expos, Business after Hours, Community Coffee etc.

1.9 Describe how the planning region will establish an agreement concerning how the planning region will collectively negotiate and reach agreement with the State on local levels of performance for, and report on, the performance accountability measures described in WIOA Section 116(c), for local areas and the planning region. [WIOA Sec. 106(c)(H)] [proposed 20 CFR 677.210(b) and (c)] and [proposed 20 CFR 679.510(a)(2)]

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The Board, in conjunction with the Chief Elected Officials, will negotiate the local performance measures based upon the statistical adjustment model's outcomes of historical data, as well as existing and forecast economic factors. The negotiated performance measures for the Southwest Region are as follows:

Adult	Negotiated
Entered Employment Rate 2 nd Quarter After Exit	92.00%
Entered Employment Rate 4 th Quarter After Exit	87.00%
Median Earnings 2 nd Quarter After Exit	\$6,700.00
Credential Attainment 4 th Quarter After Exit	75.00%

Dislocated Worker	Negotiated
Entered Employment Rate 2 nd Quarter After Exit	92.00%
Entered Employment Rate 4 th Quarter After Exit	87.00%
Median Earnings 2 nd Quarter After Exit	\$7,400.00
Credential Attainment 4 th Quarter After Exit	77.00%

Youth	Negotiated
Educ/Train/Employment Rate 2 nd Quarter After Exit	88.00%
Educ/Train/Employment Rate 4 th Quarter After Exit	88.00%
Credential Attainment Rate	80.00%

PY 2016 - 2019 Local Plan

Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board

This document represents the Strategic Local Plan for the Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Area.

Section 1: Workforce and Economic Analysis

Please provide a separate response for each of the elements listed below.

- 1.1. Provide an analysis of the economic conditions, including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations; and the employment needs of employers in those industry sectors and occupations. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(A)] and [proposed 20 CFR 679.560(a)]

Note: Per WIOA Sec. 108(c), existing economic regional and/or local area analyses may be used if sourced data and/or derived analyses are economically relevant and current (i.e., within two years of the issuance of this guidance).

The Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Area has a strong manufacturing sector. It is home to eleven Fortune 500 companies. According to the 2014-2018 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for Southwest Arkansas, employment in manufacturing accounts for 22.3% of all employment in the Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Area.

Calhoun and Ouachita counties share the Highland Industrial Park. Aerojet, Atlantic Research Corporation, Austin Powder, BEI Defense Systems Company, Camden Ordnance, Hitech Incorporated, Hughes Missile Systems, Lockheed-Martin, Loral Vaught Systems, National Testing Service, Olin Industries, and Tracor Aerospace are all among the Defense Department contractors in this defense industry cluster.

Timber and lumber production are important to the economy of the Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Region. According to the 2014-2018 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for Southwest Arkansas, the agriculture / forestry sector accounted for 3.4% of all employment in the State of Arkansas, and accounted for 11.6% of employment in Lafayette County, 8.9% of employment in Howard County, and 8.8% of employment in Calhoun County. Lumber production is closely tied to the construction industry, and a decline in housing production nationwide over the past 5 years has led directly to a decrease in employment in these counties, and decreased employment opportunities inevitably leads to loss of population.

Although the oil boom passed many years ago, Southwest Arkansas still has oil and gas resources. Natural gas occurs in conventional reservoirs and unconventional reservoirs. Arkansas has both types. Conventional natural gas is obtained by drilling a well into a rock formation that allows the gas to flow into the well bore. Wet gas, which also contains heavier fluid hydrocarbons, is recovered from the oil and gas fields of Calhoun, Columbia, Hempstead, Lafayette, Miller, Nevada, Ouachita, and Union Counties.

According to the Arkansas Oil and Gas Commission's Annual Report of Production, 6.6 million barrels of oil and 11.6 million cubic feet of natural gas were pumped from wells in South Arkansas in 2012.²

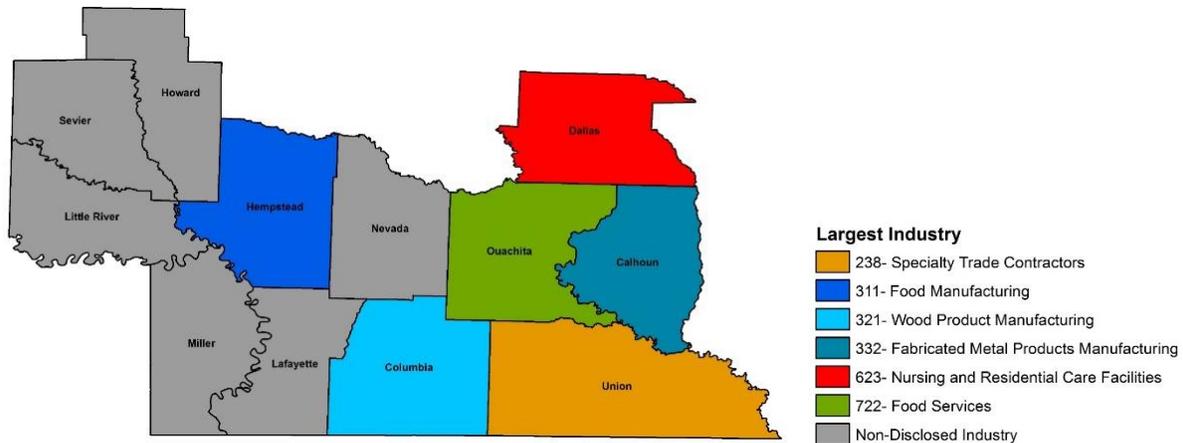
² These figures also contain relatively small contributions from production wells in Ashley and Bradley counties.

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Unconventional natural gas resources in Arkansas include shale gas and coalbed methane (CBM). Shale gas is primarily found in NW Arkansas, but coalbed methane is present in Southwest Arkansas. In fact, Southwest Arkansas sits on a vast, untapped field of brown coal that could very well bring the next major industrial boom to Southwest Arkansas communities.

The following chart shows the Employment by Industry and County in the Southwest Region.

Employment by Industry and County



Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), Labor Market Information

In the Southwest Region, the top three private industries (by Employment) in 2016 are:

4. Food Services
 - Employs 4,713 workers
 - 297 individual establishments
 - Represents 5.1% of total Employment
 - Projected Growth (2016-2026) is 11.1%
5. Food Manufacturing
 - Employs 4,473 workers
 - 18 individual establishments
 - Represents 4.9% of total Employment
 - Projected Growth (2016-2026) is 4.0%
6. Nursing and Residential Care Facilities
 - Employs 3,230 workers
 - 198 individual establishments
 - Represents 3.5% of total Employment
 - Projected Growth (2016-2026) is 17.6%

Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), Labor Market Information
Long-Term Employment Projections, Labor Market Information
North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), Industry Title of the 3-digit level

Employment Breakdown 2018

<u>Area/County</u>	<u>Labor Force</u>	<u>Employed</u>	<u>Unemployed</u>	<u>Unemploy. Rate</u>
Southwest Area	92,615	88,314	4,301	4.6%
Calhoun	2,404	2,310	94	3.9%
Columbia	8,991	8,562	429	4.8%
Dallas	2,811	2,687	124	4.4%
Hempstead	9,908	9,555	353	3.6%
Howard	5,922	5,717	205	3.5%
Lafayette	2,497	2,366	131	5.2%
Little River	5,485	5,196	289	5.3%
Miller	19,722	18,772	950	4.8%
Nevada	3,613	3,485	128	3.5%
Ouachita	9,755	9,301	454	4.7%
Sevier	5,549	5,290	259	4.7%
Union	15,960	15,074	886	5.6%

Source: Local Area Employment and Unemployment Statistics (LAUS), Labor Market Information

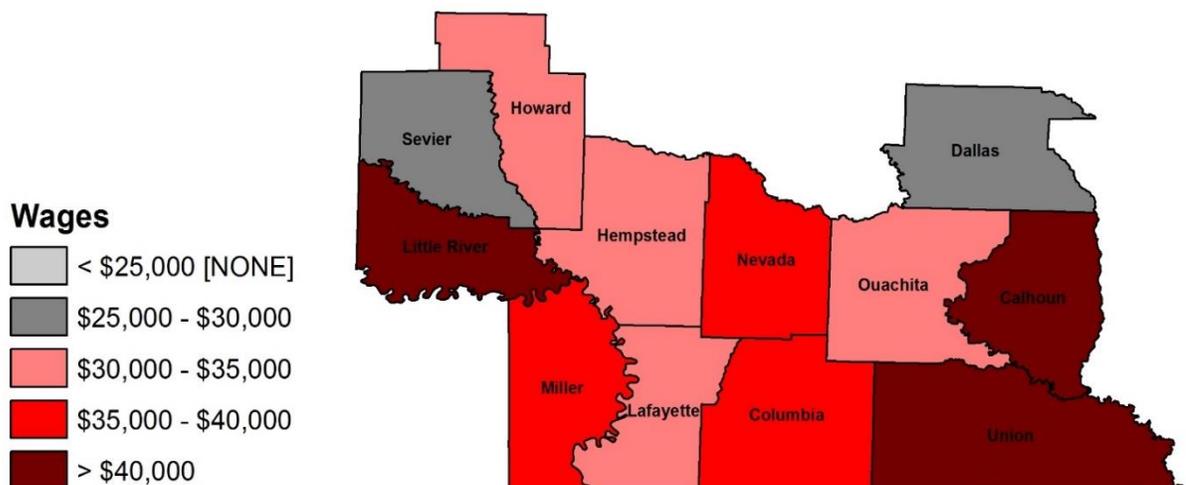
Wages by County

Southwest LWDA:

2017 Average Annual Wages (Private Sector)

Calhoun, Columbia, Dallas, Hempstead, Howard, Lafayette, Little River, Miller, Nevada, Ouachita, Sevier, and Union

Ranked by County



1) Calhoun County=	\$55,066	3) Union County=	\$48,905
2) Little River County=	\$54,995	4) Columbia County=	\$39,141

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5) Miller County=	\$37,893	9) Lafayette County=	\$32,844
6) Nevada County=	\$37,720	10) Dallas County=	\$32,605
7) Hempstead County=	\$35,352	11) Howard County=	\$32,475
8) Ouachita County=	\$34,077	12) Sevier County=	\$31,775

Southwest LWDA Annual Average Wage= \$39,404

Based on data obtained from the United States Census Bureau, the average annual wage in the State of Arkansas is \$42,708. As compared to the average wage of the Southwest Region of \$39,404, we are \$3,304 below the State average. Little River County is where Domtar Paper Mill is located and Calhoun County is where Highland Industrial Park (Houses Lockheed Martin, Aerojet, NTS, etc.) is located, which explains why they are the two highest in wages.

Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), Labor Market Information
Source: United States Census Bureau

Southwest Arkansas Projected Industry Growth 2016-2026

Industry	Estimated Employment	Projected Employment	Numeric Change	Percent Change
Total Employment, All Jobs	91,962	98,185	6,223	6.77%
Natural Resources and Mining	3,263	3,442	179	5.49%
Construction	3,599	3,939	340	9.45%
Manufacturing	19,064	19,088	24	0.13%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	15,242	16,504	1,262	8.28%
Information	455	409	-46	-10.11%
Financial Activities	2,610	2,658	48	1.84%
Professional and Business Services	4,383	5,287	904	20.63%
Education and Health Services	18,165	20,321	2,156	11.87%
Leisure and Hospitality	5,714	6,254	540	9.45%
Other Services (Except Government)	3,524	3,337	-187	-5.31%
Government (Excluding State/Local Education & Hospitals)	6,092	6,434	342	5.61%

Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), Labor Market Information
Long-Term Industry Employment Projections 2016-2026

Top 10 Projected Growth Industries

Industry	Net Growth	Percent Change
Ambulatory Health Care Services	824	28.6%
Social Assistance	758	33.2%
Generic Merchandise Stores	639	22.8%
Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	569	17.6%
Food Services and Drinking Places	521	11.1%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	393	36.8%
Administrative and Support Services	347	20.0%
Local Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals	331	9.4%
Truck Transportation	304	10.1%
Plastics and Rubber Products Manufacturing	227	8.1%

Source: Discover Arkansas Labor Market Information, Local Area Statistics 2016-2026

Projected Occupational Growth 2016-2026

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Estimated Employment</u>	<u>Projected Employment</u>	<u>Numeric Change</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>	<u>Total Annual Openings</u>
Total, All Occupations	91,962	98,185	6,223	6.77%	10,928
Management	9,617	10,172	555	5.77%	794
Business and Financial Operations	1,943	2,125	182	9.37%	197
Computer and Mathematical	413	459	46	11.14%	34
Architecture and Engineering	1,149	1,204	55	4.79%	90
Life, Physical, and Social Science	492	521	29	5.89%	50
Community and Social Service	1,672	1,781	109	6.52%	196
Legal	308	331	23	7.47%	21
Education, Training, and Library	5,392	5,548	156	2.89%	452
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	609	622	13	2.13%	60
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	4,010	4,654	644	16.06%	310

Source: Discover Arkansas Labor Market Information, Local Area Statistics 2016-2026

Top Ten Projected Growth Occupations 2016-2026

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Net Growth</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>
Personal Care Aids	509	42.20%
Combined Food Prep & Serving, Including Fast Food	366	16.20%
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	308	9.30%
Licensed Practical & Licensed Vocational Nurses	226	18.60%
Nursing Assistants	220	15.80%
Retail Salespersons	207	11.00%
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers	203	10.00%
Cashiers	200	7.40%
Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers	176	3.10%
Registered Nurses	146	14.00%

Source: Discover Arkansas Labor Market Information, Local Area Statistics 2016-2026

1.2. Provide an analysis of the knowledge and skills required to meet the employment needs of the employers in the local area, including employment needs for in-demand industry sectors and occupations.

[WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(B)] and [proposed 20 CFR 679.560(a)]

Basic knowledge and skills that employers need include literacy and math, problem solving, computing, communication, work readiness and other skills. These are things that almost every employer requires. In addition, skills that are particular to each job are varied. Advanced manufacturing employers are seeking individuals that have more technical skills, discuss transportation, distribution and logistics, etc. Reading skills are particularly needed as employees work more and more with technology improvements. Computation skills are needed to organize data for analysis and perform problem solving. The ability to write is the foundation for communication. Computer skills or technical skills are a requirement for many jobs. Workers are using new technology for advance information

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service. Manufacturing technology is creating more computation between companies because of the increase in capabilities of production and efficiency.

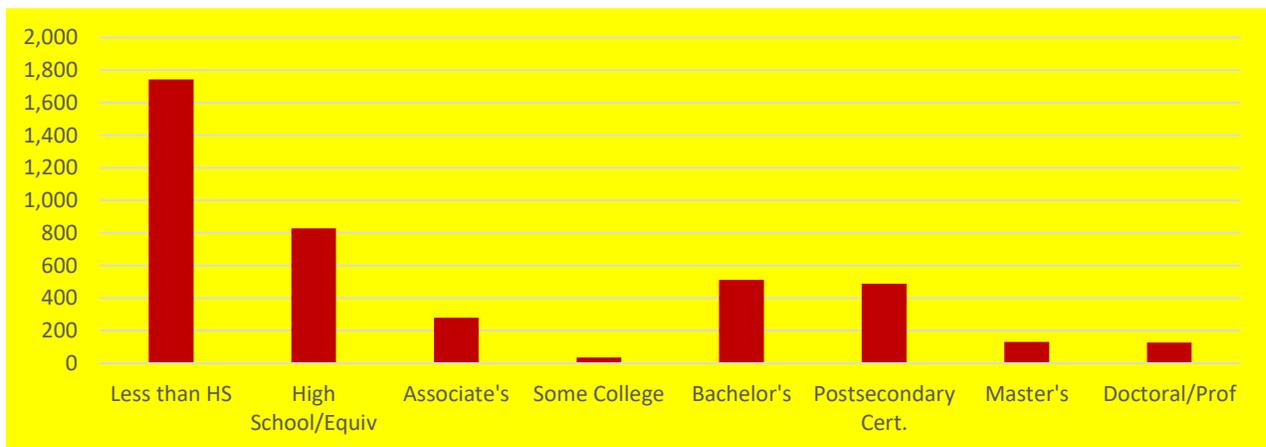
- Skill gaps exist in a wide classification of job classifications, but particularly in those classifications upgrading equipment to meet competition in their field.
- Substantial growth in the service sector requires skill preparation from basic entry-level employment to post-graduate training.
- Experience has indicated the educational capacity to meet skill gaps is constrained by funding, lack of instructors, and reluctance to design new programs that fulfill the requirements of upgrading employers.

With new management techniques and organization systems, the employee customer interactions require a portfolio of skills in addition to basic and technical. Communication skills, analytical skills, problem solving and creative thinking with interpersonal skills to negotiate and influence, along with self-management skills are the menu for growth of an employee.

Often a company will require specific skills that an employee must possess in order to cope with new technology, market changes, and competition. Companies must be innovative and constantly upgrade knowledge and skills that are relevant to the success of the company.

The Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board is going through a series of sector strategy sessions to better prepare as ambassadors and leaders in creating and carrying out sector strategy partnerships. This along with data provided by the State's LMI department and the acquired professional sector data, validation, and analysis will be used to develop relevant sector partnerships to determine the training, support, and career pathway designs to supply job seekers to the needed jobs of the region.

Projected Employment Growth by Education Level (2012-2022)



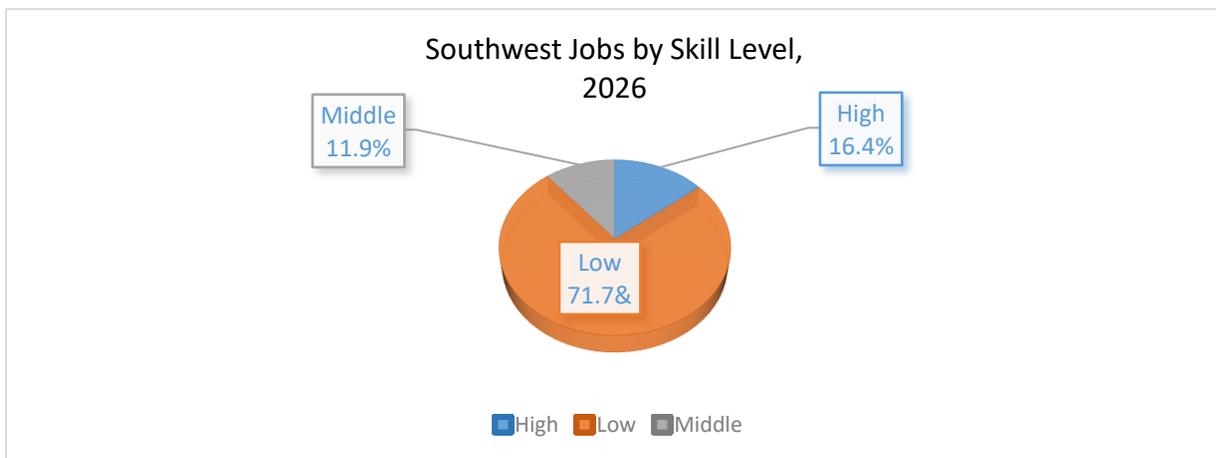
Source: Occupational Statistics and Employment Projections, Labor Market Information
Long-Term Employment Projections, Labor Market Information

COUNTY	POPULATION 25 YEARS+	# High School grad or higher	% High School grad or higher	# bachelor degree or higher	% bachelor degree or higher
Calhoun	3,719	1,774	47.7%	302	8.1%
Columbia	14,863	6,009	40.4%	1,997	13.4%

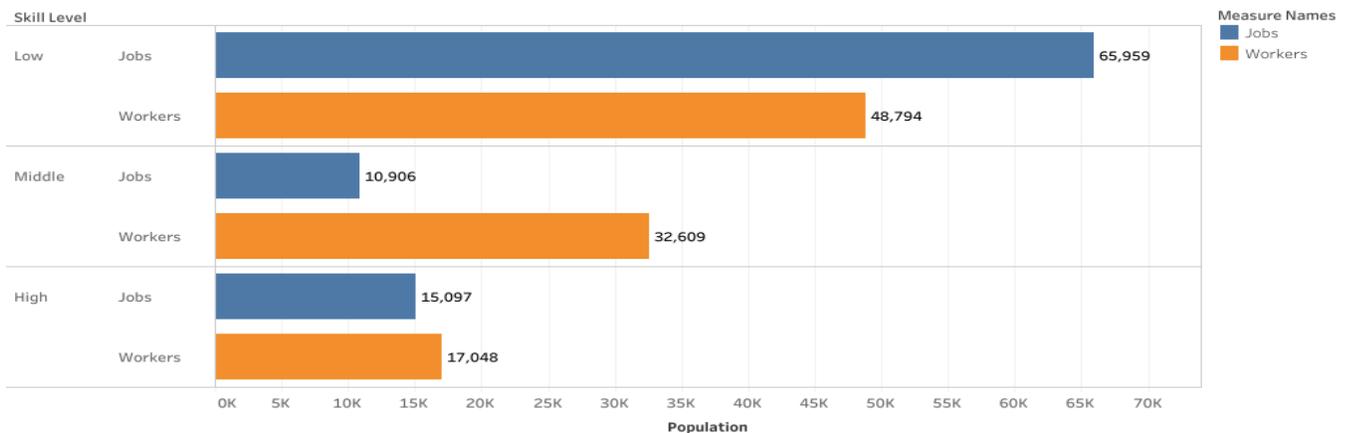
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Dallas	5,331	2,258	42.4%	569	10.7%
Hempstead	14,441	5,636	39.0%	1,228	8.5%
Howard	8,938	3,126	35.0%	1,023	11.4 %
Lafayette	5,088	2,126	41.8%	612	12.0%
Little River	8,956	3,618	40.4%	661	7.4%
Miller	29,694	10,919	36.8%	3,211	10.8%
Nevada	5,855	2,619	44.7%	676	11.5%
Ouachita	16,834	7,085	42.1%	1,549	9.2%
Sevier	10,640	3,705	34.8%	699	6.6%
Union	27,264	9,891	36.3%	3,928	14.4%
SW Region	153,465	59,905	39.03%	22399	14.59%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



Skills Gap



Education Title	2016 Estimated Employment	2026 Projected Employment	Net Growth	Percent Growth	Annual Openings -Growth	Annual Openings- Replacement	Annual Openings- Total
Doctoral/Professional degree	1,316	1,467	151	11.47%	14	61	75
Master's degree	1,213	1,349	136	11.21%	12	102	114

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Bachelor's degree	11,736	12,409	673	5.73%	61	924	985
Associate's degree	1,295	1,394	99	7.64%	7	109	117
Postsecondary non-degree award	6,005	6,534	529	8.81%	51	587	638
Some college, no degree	1,815	1,820	5	0.28%	0	185	185
High school diploma or equivalent	41,035	42,010	975	2.38%	101	4329	4,431
Less than high school	18,009	18,949	940	5.22%	94	2,701	2,795

The Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board is in the process of procuring the purchase of a document that provides baseline information which can be used for policy decision making by the SWAWDB. This information will help SWAWDB align training programs with the knowledge and skills required to meet the employment needs of the employers in the local area, including employment needs for in-demand industry sectors and occupations. Targeted training opportunities will provide participants with the increased probability of obtaining a good paying job. The increased labor pipeline will provide businesses with the workforce they need to operate and grow their companies throughout the region. This will be the SWAWDB's first step in the journey to close the gap between workforce and economic development and move toward the tailoring of training programs to explicitly meet the needs of industry throughout the twelve counties in Southwest Arkansas.

- 1.3. Provide an analysis of the local workforce, including current labor force employment (and unemployment) data, and information on labor market trends, and the educational and skill levels of the workforce in the region, including individuals with barriers to employment. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(C)] and [proposed 20 CFR 679.560(a)]**

Total Population= 218,323 (7.3% of Arkansas' Population)

Population by Age

- 76.3% over the Age of 18
- 17.8% over the Age of 65
- 58.4% Aged 18-65

Population by Race

- 67.8% White
- 28.6% Black
- 0.9% Native American/Alaskan Native
- 0.5% Asian
- 0.1% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 2.8% Other
- 1.8% Two or More Races
- 7.1% Hispanic (Of Any Race)

Civilian Labor Force

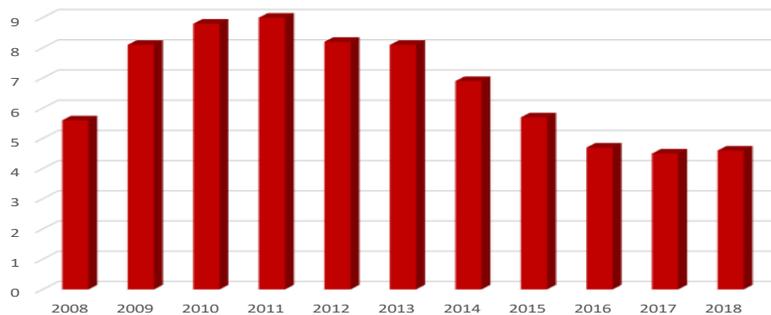
2019 Annual Average Civilian Labor Force Estimates

- Civilian Labor Force= 93,213
- Employment= 89,729
- Unemployment= 3,484
- Unemployment Rate= 3.7%

Average Unemployment Rates by County (April 2019)

- 2.5% = Howard County 3.5% = Columbia County
- 3.4% = Miller County 4.3% = Union County
- 3.4% = Hempstead County 3.7% = Lafayette County
- 3.6% = Nevada County 4.6% = Ouachita County
- 3.5% = Little River County 3.8% = Dallas County
- 4.1% = Calhoun County 3.9% = Sevier County

Southwest LWDA Unemployment Rates 2008 - 2018 (Annual Average)



1.4. Provide an analysis and description of workforce development activities, including type and availability of education, training and employment activities. Include analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of such services, and the capacity to provide such services, in order to address the education and skill needs of the workforce and the employment needs of employers in the region.

[WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(D)] and [proposed 20 CFR 679.560(a)]

Southwest Arkansas’s workforce development activities are coordinated through the following agencies: These agencies are responsible for all the core and non-core programs included in the combined Regional and Local Plan.

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Core Program</u>
SWAPDD	Adult (Title I)
	Dislocated Worker (Title I)
	Youth (Title I)

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ADWS	Wagner-Peyser
ADCE	Adult Education and Family Literacy (WIOA Title II) Vocational Rehabilitation (Title I Rehabilitation)
DHS	Division of Services for the Blind (Title I Rehabilitation)

Non-Core Program

Trade Adjustment Assistance
Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Program (Title I)
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program

The Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Area consists of twelve counties, and is the largest region in the state. Workforce activities and initiatives are driven by Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board (SWAWDB). The SWAWDB is comprised of local businesses, educational institutions, partner agencies, and other key stakeholders to create a diverse and functional group. The board, in alignment with the States' vision, provides front line strategic implementation for state-wide initiatives in addition to locally-determined priorities. State initiatives include sector strategies, career pathway development, and delivery of standardized business services. Local priorities include layoff aversion, specific career pathway development, youth programs, targeted sector partnerships, and work-based learning.

The Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board, in conjunction with the Chief Elected Officials, is responsible for procuring a One-Stop Operator and Title I Service Provider. This entity will be responsible for the daily operation of the Workforce Centers in Southwest Arkansas in accordance with WIOA 121(d). Workforce activities are carried out by partnering locally through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to implement core, non-core, and other partner programs. With a foundation for service integration, Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development System operates under the "no wrong door" philosophy. Customers entering the center are engaged by an intake process that is designed to identify the needs of the individual by gathering information and then utilizing the appropriate resources for those needs. In some cases, the resources are initiated by a referral to a partner program. Customers are given solutions and next steps to their questions, barriers, and issues by connecting directly with the appropriate workforce system partner as part of this philosophy.

The Arkansas Department of Career Education, Adult Education Division (ACE/AED) funds four local adult education programs, two literacy councils. The local service delivery systems are diverse. Programs are funded through public school systems and community colleges. Local programs provide adult education services such as teaching academic skills to people who function from beginning reading through a 12.9 functioning grade level and English as a Second Language (ESL). These services are free and provided in classes held in locations throughout each county. Additional programs such as family literacy, Workforce Alliance for Growth in the Economy (WAGE™), and Career Readiness Certificate (CRC) are also offered in some counties.

Southwest Arkansas Workforce Centers provide Jobs Access with Speech (JAWS). JAWS computers are designed for visually impaired individuals to gain access to job services. These systems are available in both comprehensive and affiliate sites.

Workforce System Services – Unemployed and Underemployed

The Southwest Arkansas Workforce Centers offers the full array of career services outlined in WIOA 134(c)(2) for unemployed and underemployed jobseekers. Basic career services are available at all service locations throughout Southwest Arkansas. All workforce centers in Southwest Arkansas have computers, printers, copiers, printed resources, and staff to assist jobseekers. Many of the services, including Arkansas Job Link and Discover Arkansas Labor Market Information (LMI) Portal, can be accessed virtually through the internet via computer, smart phone, or tablet. Arkansas Job Link is the state job matching system and the virtual one-stop-shop where Arkansans can centralize all their career search activities. It allows jobseekers to self-enter his/her resume(s) and job search 24/7. Arkansas Job Link also provides access to a toolbox of job search assistance links, including career exploration, training resources, self-marketing tools, Unemployment Insurance information, and additional job banks. The built-in event calendar communicates upcoming hiring events, job fairs, and other workforce activities. The Labor Market Information Portal is beneficial to employers and jobseekers. This labor market system provides a wide variety of local and regional labor market services, such as labor trends, statistics, economics, demographics, salaries, and employer data. It allows jobseekers to set up a personal page for their career exploration data to be readily accessible. Basic career services also extend beyond the virtual world. After the initial assessment, customers, as appropriate, may be provided with direct linkages to additional workforce activities, including multiple education and training opportunities across the workforce system through partner referrals. Many of these partners are housed within the workforce center.

Jobseeker Services

The Southwest Arkansas Workforce Centers offers a full line of activities to prepare jobseekers for the modern workforce. They address many of the soft skills and technical skills training Arkansas employers require.

Pre-employability training is offered to jobseekers to better prepare the individual for entry into employment.

Labor exchange services also provide labor market information to the individuals seeking services. The information must be accurate and include information on local, regional and national labor markets, such as: job vacancies, skills necessary to obtain the jobs, in-demand occupations and related earning potential and opportunities for advancement in those occupations

The Southwest Arkansas Workforce Centers provide the following career services:

Outreach, intake and orientation, Initial assessment, Labor exchange services, Eligibility determination, Referrals to programs, Performance and cost information, Information on unemployment insurance, Financial aid information, Follow-up services

Additionally, One-Stop and partners must provide appropriate services for individuals to obtain or retain employment. These services include, but are not limited to:

Individual Employment Plan (IEP), Career planning and counseling (no longer called case management), Comprehensive assessment, Occupational Skills Assessment, Short-term prevocational services, Internship and work experience, including transitional jobs and industry partnerships, Workforce preparation, Out-of-area job search, English language acquisition, Financial literacy.

The State is a member of the America's Job Link Alliance for job matching. Jobseekers, as well as employers, utilize this data base for employment purposes. Arkansas Job Link provides self-service, case management, fiscal management, reporting, and more.

Training Services

Career services are not always enough to enable job seekers to obtain self-sufficient employment. In some instances, formal training is required. Southwest Arkansas Workforce Centers offer multiple training services such as:

Occupational skills training, On-the-job training (OJT), Registered Apprenticeships, Incumbent worker training, Skill upgrading and retaining, Entrepreneurial training, and Adult education and family literacy activities

Training services are funded through WIOA Title I programs, Pell Grants, partner programs, and state and local grants. Local areas are responsible for establishing and implementing local policies for eligibility, Individual Training Account (ITA) limits, and the identification of in-demand sectors or occupations. Through multiple initiatives and projects, Arkansas has focused training and career development activities on sector strategies/partnerships and career pathway development. At the state level, the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) has been updated pursuant to WIOA Sections 122 and 134. This list ensures that Arkansans can make informed decisions on training providers and programs based on accurate data including completion and placement rates; labor market information; and wage expectations. The Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board received a Sector Partnership Grant for implementing sector strategies in our region. Once fully implemented, the Eligible Training Provider's List will support the Employers need for training.

Apprenticeship

Registered Apprenticeship is a viable career option for WIOA participants. Registered Apprenticeship is an employer-driven model that combines on-the-job training with related classroom instruction that increases an apprentice's skill level and wages. It is a tried and true approach for preparing individuals for jobs, and meeting the business needs for a highly-skilled workforce. Businesses that use apprenticeship reduce worker turnover by fostering greater employee loyalty, increasing productivity, and improving the bottom line. It is a proven solution for businesses to recruit, train, and retain highly skilled workers. The National Apprenticeship Training Foundation and the Arkansas Apprenticeship Coalitions hosted a Regional Apprenticeship meeting for the Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Area. The meeting in Southwest focused on aligning the enrollment process and eliminating barriers to increase referrals to apprenticeship programs. All participating agencies discussed eligibility and enrollment to work out the conflicting requirements and to align the process for the benefit of the employers, workers, and program outcomes.

Career Pathways Initiative

The Career Pathways Initiative programs are housed in each of the two-year colleges in Southwest Arkansas. Career Pathways Initiative staff aligns services with the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services, Department of Human Services, Adult Education, community and faith based organizations, and other programs to ensure that barriers are overcome and that employment and

educational needs are met without duplication of services. The program has enjoyed much success and is touted as a model program nationally. The career pathway approach is a paradigm shift in how we prepare individuals for work and lifelong learning. It reorients existing education and workforce services from myriad disconnected programs to a structure that syncs employers' workforce needs with individuals' education and training needs.

Arkansas Association of Colleges

Arkansas Association of Colleges (ACC) is a strong partner for workforce development. ACC has provided much needed funding to the colleges for equipment and curriculum alignment to address local business and industry needs. The Southwest Region is home to SouthArk Community College in El Dorado, SAU Tech in Camden, UA Hope/Texarkana, and UA Cossatot in DeQueen.

Promise (Promoting Readiness of Minors on Supplemental Income) Grant

Arkansas Promoting Readiness of Minors on Supplemental Income (PROMISE) is a research project open to youth ages 14 to 16 who currently receive SSI benefits. For 1000 youth, PROMISE will provide additional services to youth and their families to support their education and career goals. Services include: Intensive case management, two paid competitive work experiences, education and employment training and support for youth and families, health and wellness training, and benefits counseling. Southwest participates in the program and provides the work experience opportunities in the local communities. Students are placed in appropriate career fields for the required number of hours.

Supportive Services

To assist jobseekers in obtaining or retaining employment through career or training services, Southwest Arkansas Workforce Centers offer a variety of supportive services. The Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board is responsible for establishing a supportive service policy that outlines types of services available, eligibility, limits, etc. Examples of supportive services include child care; transportation; needs-related payments; tools and equipment; uniforms; and other clothing.

WIOA Title I, subject to funding, can provide transportation assistance, child care assistance, proper clothing and tools, etc. If a participant needs a supportive service that they cannot provide, a referral will be made to other partners.

Adult Education provides referrals to Career Pathways at local community colleges, career assessments, Career Coach assistance, job readiness /soft skills training, and educational and career goal planning. Career Pathways provides assistance with child care, transportation, tuition, and materials. Each adult education center has a local service directory that is utilized for student support services. Supportive services such as transportation, daycare, etc. are coordinated with partner agencies through participant referrals. Adult Education partners with Arkansas Rehabilitation Services to help provide individuals with disabilities access to services, diagnosis and evaluations of capabilities and limitations; guidance and counseling; assistive technologies; and job placement.

Arkansas Rehabilitation Services and the Division of Services for the Blind are mandated to research and apply all comparable benefits for services from other resources prior to applying vocational

rehabilitation funds. The most frequently applied comparable resources come from sources outside of the core partner agencies. For example, tuition assistance in the form of grant funding, housing assistance from Housing and Urban Development, the individual's own medical insurance must first be applied to physical and mental restoration services. The supportive services provided by Arkansas Rehabilitation Services and the Division of Services for the Blind are arranged and coordinated according to an individual plan for employment which specifies a career goal and the areas that the individual may need supports in order to reach that goal. The supports needed are determined through assessments, evaluations, as well as the analysis and application of state and federal regulations and policies. The following supports services are assessed, evaluated, and analyzed for applicability and comparable services/similar benefits to each individual case: maintenance assistance to participate in employment or training that leads to employment, personal care attendant services, physical and mental restoration services, rehabilitation engineering, rehabilitation technology, and transportation to participate in employment or training activities. These support services are time limited and must accompany a substantial service that is directly related to obtaining or maintaining employment.

Business Services

The focal point of all workforce system activities is business and industry. These activities are taking place statewide and may include: Access to facilities – Use of Workforce Center facilities by a business for a variety of purposes such as meetings, trainings, orientations, interviews, etc.; Assessments – Any test or assortment of tests used to measure the skills, interests and/or personality traits of a jobseeker, potential employee, or current employee; Business education – Seminars, round tables, workshops, focus groups, etc.; Business information – Information given to a business pertaining to a variety of incentive programs or other information requested that provides a benefit to that business; Hiring events – A customized event for a single employer that assists with recruiting, interviewing, and hiring of one or more positions; Job fairs – Event for multiple employers that assists with the recruiting, interviewing, and hiring of one or more positions; Job postings – Staff-entered or web-entered job orders approved by staff; Labor market information – Information on state and local labor market conditions; industries, occupations, and characteristics of the workforce; area business identified skills needs; employer wage and benefit trends; short and long-term industry and occupational projections; worker supply and demand; and job vacancies survey results; Rapid Response – A variety of services to businesses that are facing restructuring and downsizing including onsite workshops for employees in transition; job placement assistance; and information on unemployment benefits; Screening – Any service that involves the initial evaluation of applications or resumes that assists the employer in the recruiting process; Training and retraining - Any service provided to a business that involves the training or retraining of current or future employees including OJTs, Work Experiences, Incumbent Worker Training, etc. Business Services provided by Title 1 Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Services include labor market information and growth trends for industry clusters, occupational wage and benefit trends, job placement assistance, identification of skills gaps, Rapid Response and layoff prevention, and information on training and retraining in demand industries.

Adult Education views employers as primary customers, alongside the student --- engaging employers as strategic partners instead of advisors. Employers are not limited to providing feedback on what Adult Education has chosen to do. Instead, Adult Education engages employers about the strengths and weaknesses of Adult Education services, hours of service needed to enhance access,

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priority skill sets that need to be taught, etc. Both problem solve together, enabling employers to utilize Adult Education to:

- Improve the educational training opportunities for their employees
- Access additional, needed support services for their employees
- Increase the skill levels of their employees
- Increase the retention of their employees when given access to training
- Improve job performance and career advancement opportunities for employees with additional training (i.e. credential attainment)
- Recruit qualified candidates.

The Adult Education WAGE programs coordinate classroom instruction and state certification, with pre-employment needs of local business and industry. WAGE programs meet with their Advisory Boards which is comprised of business/industry partners and partnering agencies. Through meetings and correspondence, local training needs are expressed to Adult Education centers and agencies in attendance which provides instructional guidance.

Arkansas Rehabilitation Services, Division of Services for the Blind and the local regional economic development organizations have implemented a business team to identify the needs of the business community and to offer programs that fund and support the training and supportive needs of existing or potential employees. The team meets with the regional chambers of commerce to discuss questions presented by businesses interested in expanding and locating in the area and to educate the chamber members on the direct and supportive services available to build a labor force. Following the model of the Arkansas Economic Development Commission (AEDC) and comparing it to the current employment statistics data, businesses in the following industries have been contacted regarding the opportunities for on-the-job training, educational enhancement, apprenticeship opportunities, and support services. Actions completed by Arkansas Rehabilitation Services Business Engagement team regarding how businesses are engaged are listed below:

- Partners in Progress, an initiative of ARS, was launched in 2016 to collaborate with other workforce partners while promoting partnership with business, area agencies, staffing agencies and workforce partners that work with qualified job candidates to create a more diverse workforce. The goals of this initiative are to leverage existing business relationships, engage business customers/Employers (particularly small and medium customers) expose them to ARS and its field office, create a platform for business customers to share what skills and abilities they are seeking to meet their business needs, strengthen relationships with businesses that results in multiple outcomes vs. single employment opportunities. Lastly this initiative supports WIOA efforts for engaging employers across the workforce system to align training with needed skills and match employers with qualified workers.
- Additionally, to engage businesses and workforce partners, ARS hosts an annual event called Arkansas Business Employment Summit which is a business-to-business event that focuses on disability inclusion in the workplace. This conference brings business and industry together with other stakeholders to provide education and awareness on the business case for hiring people with disabilities. There are sessions on disability related topics important to business, and strategies that align with their organization's goals to create culturally competent workplaces. Businesses share the success they have had in employing people with disabilities within their organizations. Businesses are educated on new assistive technology and accommodations. Speakers from across the country are brought in to present the business case on the value of employing people with disabilities. Lastly, businesses for best hiring practices, providing reasonable accommodations, and being model

employers are recognized. This event has provided a strong platform for enhancing business engagement while working towards achieving Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act performance measurements.

The Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Region is in the process of developing functional Business Service Teams to streamline the efforts of each program. The role of the Business Service Team will be to provide workforce development, education, and employment services for businesses in Southwest Arkansas. The goal will be maintaining regular contact with area businesses, seek out new employer contacts, and provide services to these contacts. Off site visits will be made to employers to gather job orders and disseminate information on services such as the Work Opportunity Tax Credit, CRC, etc. At the initial meeting, the business service team will listen to the employers concerns and needs. Based upon what is learned from the employer, information to meet the employer's need will be provided.

Services to Persons with Disabilities

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act requires the workforce development system and the American Job Centers to meet the needs of job seekers who have disabilities, increase their access to high quality workforce services, and to prepare them for integrated employment leading to economic self-sufficiency. According to the March 2017 report on Disability Employment Statistics on individuals ages 16 and over from the Department of Labor Statistics, (<https://www.dol.gov/odep/>) nationwide there is a 20.4% labor force participation for persons with disabilities and a 68.7% participation rate of persons without disabilities. The unemployment rate of persons with disabilities is 10.6%, while the unemployment rate of people without disabilities is 4.3%. Historically, there are significant barriers to the inclusion of people with disabilities into the overall strategy for economic development in Arkansas. ARS in partnership with the Arkansas Department of Human Services, Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) are leading the charge for providing targeted training and education for people with disabilities in order for them to develop the skills and abilities needed to obtain competitive integrated employment in Arkansas. Through Governor Hutchinson's January 14, 2016 renewal of Governor Beebe's Executive Order 10-17, which was signed in 2010 all Arkansas State agencies are charged with monitoring and recruiting, training, and retaining qualified persons with disabilities in State Government. It also ensures that State agencies will work towards coordinating efforts to increase employment of Arkansans with disabilities through the Employment First Taskforce.

The Arkansas Department of Career Education, Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ACE/ARS) and the in partnership with Department of Human Services, Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) provide vocational rehabilitation services to people with disabilities. They are leading the charge for providing targeted training and education for people who have disabilities in order for them to develop the skills and abilities needed to attain competitive integrated employment in Southwest Arkansas.

The Department of Human Services, Division of Services for the Blind coordinates services for a comprehensive program to assess needs, and to plan, develop and provide job-related services to blind or severely visually impaired individuals. Such services are designed to assist individuals for employment that is commensurate within abilities, interests and informed choice and consistent with aligned strengths, resources, concerns and capabilities.

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ARS vocational services are available for individuals who have disabilities and are not currently employed; or if seeking to advance in their present career. Services are provided to help persons who have disabilities obtain, and /or maintain employment that leads to independence, self-sufficiency and full inclusion in society.

The Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development has developed a Disability Committee to assess and provide recommendations to the workforce centers for accommodations and facility improvements to reduce access issues for individuals who have disabilities.

Strengths and Weaknesses of Workforce Development Activities

Strengths:

- Southwest Arkansas has a strong workforce program to provide assistance to jobseekers.
- The SWAWDB has a strong representation of Private Industry of the strongest industry sectors in the region.
- Economic Development Organization serve on the SWAWDB.
- The Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Area has a broad range of One-Stop partners who provide value-added services to jobseekers who enter the Workforce Centers.

Weaknesses:

- The Arkansas labor force is shrinking and being accelerated by the retirement of Baby Boomers.
- Quality of Life issues exist in rural areas throughout the region, causing brain-drain.
- Coordination with Economic Development could be strengthened.
- Marketing and Outreach Activities are below where they should be across the region to promote Southwest Arkansas's talent delivery system.
- Business Service Team could be better coordinated.

Opportunities:

- The Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Region will embrace and implement sector strategies.
- Expanded Current Registered Apprenticeship Opportunities present a major opportunity for the Southwest Arkansas Workforce Region.
- Tailored Curricular Development opportunities exist in wake of strengthened industry sector partnerships.

Challenges:

- Younger generations do not have the skills in place to replace the aging workforce.
- Many Industries may not feel the public sector can assist them in their workforce needs.
- Duplication of Workforce Development efforts not only causes redundancy for jobseekers and industry, it is also a major waste of resources.
- Industries may relocate if they do not have the workforce needed to thrive in the Southwest Arkansas region.

Section 2: Strategic Vision and Goals

Section 2 responses will require input from members of the local workforce development board and other local stakeholders. Please provide a separate response for each of the elements listed below.

- 2.1 **Describe the local board’s strategic vision and goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce (including youth and individuals with barriers to employment). Include goals relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) in order to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(E)]**

Vision

Southwest Arkansas will have a world-class workforce that is well educated, skilled, and working to keep Southwest Arkansas’s economy competitive in the global marketplace.

Mission

To Promote and support a talent development system in Southwest Arkansas that offers employers, individuals, and communities the opportunity to achieve and sustain economic prosperity.

- 2.2 **Describe how the local board’s vision and goals align with and/or supports the vision and goals for the State’s workforce development system as established by the Arkansas Workforce Development Board. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(E)] (See Appendix C: Transitional Planning References and Resources)**

The SWAWDB’s vision and goals align with the State’s and will strive to have a workforce that is well educated, skilled and working in order to keep Southwest Arkansas competitive in the global marketplace.

- 2.3 **Describe how the local board’s vision and goals contributes to each of the governor’s goals. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(E)] (See Appendix C: Transitional Planning References and Resources)
Note: The State Plan includes several objectives under each goal.**

The SWAWDA shares the Governor’s vision for Economic Development and the State’s Strategic Plan that defines a stronger partnership between education, economic development and the State

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Workforce system to attract, retain and grow Arkansas' high growth industries. The Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development area will focus on the following:

Southwest Arkansas's Talent Development System Philosophy

- We believe that there must be a pipeline of skilled workers for employers and a job for everyone in Southwest Arkansas that wants one.
- We believe that the talent development system of Southwest Arkansas must be relevant to the labor market to meet the needs of employers and jobseekers, and for the local area to compete globally.
- We believe that everyone in Southwest Arkansas should have opportunity and access to training and education that leads to a career with gainful employment.
- We believe Southwest Arkansas's workforce system must be a viable resource for business and industry.

Goals

Strategic Goal 1: Develop an efficient partnership with employers, the educational system, workforce development partners, and community based organizations to deliver a platform that will prepare a skilled workforce for existing and new employers.

- Expand employer partnerships through the support of industry engagement.
- Improve communication/participation between education entities, local and state boards, government agencies, community-based organizations, and employers.
- Collaborate with K-12 education, higher education, career and technical education, and adult education to provide consistent rules and eliminate barriers to implementing training programs around the State.

Strategic Goal 2: Enhance service delivery to employers and jobseekers.

- Utilize a common intake process for jobseekers and businesses that will efficiently connect them with services available from all workforce development partner programs and identify any barriers to employment.
- Promote training that leads to industry recognized credentials and certification.
- Develop a common business outreach strategy with a common message that will be utilized by all workforce system partners.
- Create a data-sharing network that includes WIOA required partners, community organizations outside the established workforce system, and sector partners that can provide a greater outreach for client intake, referrals, and case management.

Strategic Goal 3: Increase awareness of the State's Talent Development System

- Work to change employer and jobseeker perceptions of the workforce system.
- Utilize an image-building outreach campaign that educates Southwest Arkansans about the services and the career development opportunities available in Southwest Arkansas.
- Utilize technology, including social media and search engine optimization, to better connect jobseekers and employers with the talent development system in Southwest Arkansas.
- Develop a user-friendly website that provides a common repository of information about career development opportunities that are relevant to K-12 education, parents, educators, adults, employers, government agencies, and the public.

Strategic Goal 4: Address Skills Gaps

- Help to implement an action plan to close the basic core, technical, and soft skills gaps in Arkansas.
- Analyze the effectiveness of currently used job readiness standards and ensure coordination between the Arkansas Career Readiness Certificate (CRC) program and the Work Alliance for Growth in the Economy (WAGE) program.

2.4 Describe how the local board's goals relate to the achievement of federal performance accountability measures. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(E)]

For participants enrolled in educational/skills training the goal is completion of training, obtain their credential and have measurable skills gain. These participants will be directed toward higher paying jobs which have a livable wage to help ensure a higher retention rate well beyond program exit. For participants receiving basic and individualized career services the same goal applies. The goal for Effectiveness in Serving Employers has not been identified. Once the area has adequate data on which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance, a goal will be established.

Section 3: Local Area Partnerships and Investment Strategies

Many of the responses in this section, such as targeted sector strategies, should be based on strategic discussions with the local board and partners. Please provide a separate response for each of the elements listed below.

3.1 Considering the analysis described in Appendix B - Section 1, describe the local board's strategy to work with the entities that carry out the core programs to align resources available to the local area, to achieve the strategic vision and goals described in element 2.1. This analysis should include:

- A. **A description of the local workforce development system; include key stakeholders and entities associated with administrative and programmatic/service delivery functions. Examples include elected officials, advocacy groups, local workforce development board and committee structure, fiscal agent, operator(s), required program partners, and major contractors providing Adult/Dislocated Worker/Youth program elements. Describe respective roles and functional relationships to one another;**

The Chief Elected Officials (CEO) of the Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development area designated the Southwest Arkansas Planning and Development District as their Grant Recipient/Administrative Entity and Fiscal Agent for the Workforce Innovations and Opportunity Act. The CEO's also voted to appoint a representative among themselves to act on their behalf. Sevier County Judge Greg Ray was elected Chairman of the CEO's. The CEO's appointed the required members for the Workforce Development Board for their respective areas. The newly appointed Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board (SWAWDB) has entered into a CEO/Local Board Agreement. The SWAWDB has four committees appointed by the board chair. They are: One Stop Committee, Performance Committee, Disability Committee and Youth Standing Committee. All required partners have been appointed by

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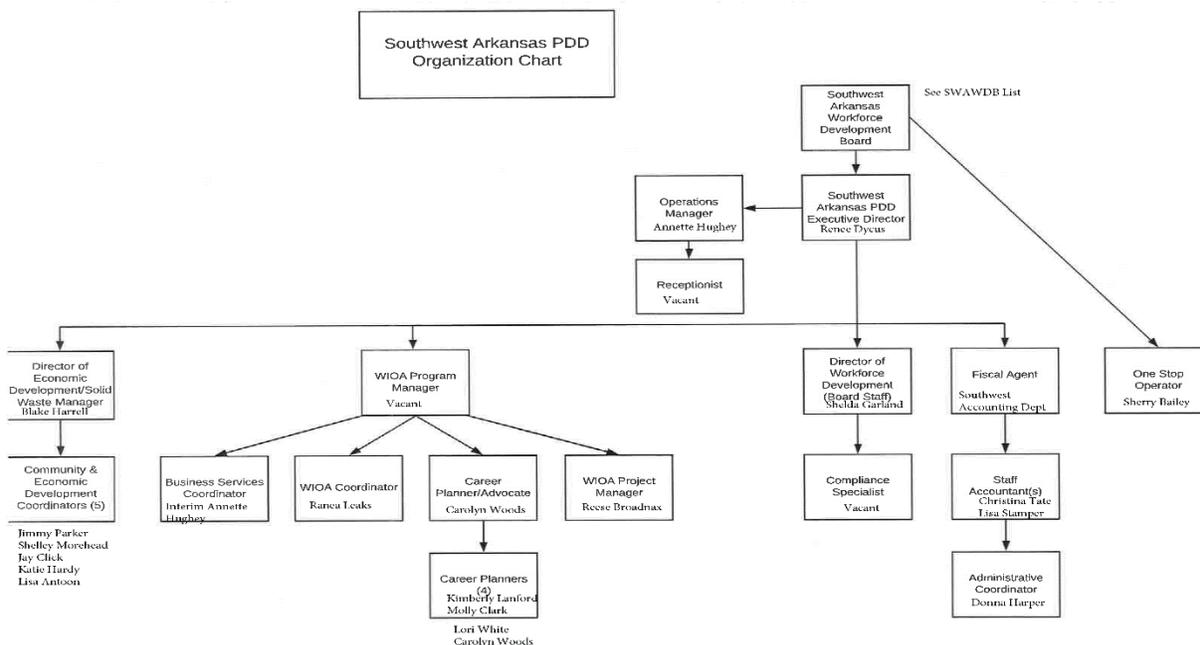
their various state agencies with a representative sitting on the SWAWDB. Southwest Arkansas Planning and Development District currently has the contract for One-Stop Operator and Adult, DLW, Youth service provider. The SWAWDB issued a new Request for Qualifications for One-Stop Operator and Title I Service Provider on April 19, 2017.

A list of all Arkansas Workforce Centers in the local area; include address, phone numbers, and hours of operation;

The following Southwest Arkansas Workforce Centers are:

- Comprehensive
 - Camden, 237 Jackson SW, Camden, AR 71701, 870-836-5024 (8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. M-F)
 - El Dorado, 523 East 6th, El Dorado, AR 71730, 870-863-0218 (8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. M-F)
 - Hope, 205 Smith Road, Hope, AR 71801, 870-777-3421 (8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. M-F)
- Affiliate
 - Texarkana, 1702 Saint Michael Drive, Texarkana, TX 75503, 903-794-4163 (8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. M-F)
 - Magnolia, 104 Harvey Couch Blvd., Magnolia, AR 71753, 870-234-3440 (8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. M-F)

B. An attached organization chart that depicts the local board, administrative and fiscal entities, and service providers. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(F)]



3.2 Describe the workforce development system in the local area that identifies the programs that are included in that system and how the local board will work with the entities carrying out core and other workforce development programs to support alignment to provide services, including programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et. seq), that support the strategy identified in the State plan under section 102(b)(1)(E). [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(2)]

Note: The six (6) core programs identified by WIOA are: Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Adult Education and Literacy, Wagner-Peyser Program, and Vocational Rehabilitation.

A referral process will be in place between the local board and the core programs to coordinate work ensuring individuals seeking services are made aware of all core program services.

3.3 Describe how the local board, working with the entities carrying out core programs, will expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment, including how the local board will facilitate the development of career pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs, and improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential (including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable, and stackable). [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(3)]

Workforce center staff will review the individuals' needs to determine which programs may be able to provide the appropriate services and then refer that individual to the corresponding program. Providing services to individuals with barriers to employment is a priority under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. The Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board will ensure that access to curriculum-aligned industry-recognized certificates verifying attainment of the critical skills that employers are looking. This can accelerate matching job seekers to employment and always career pathways to be obtained. Any individual who falls into the individuals with barriers to employment priority will receive services as deemed appropriate for the individual. The Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board chose to allow an additional assistance barrier for eligibility determination for youth participants.

Additional Assistance Barrier for In-School Youth – An individual who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment. Documentation will be placed in the files concerning the barrier details. No more than 5% of ISY assisted may be eligible based solely on the Additional Assistance Barrier for ISY.

- **At Risk of Dropping Out**
 - **Has a core GPA of less than 1.5 (on a 4.0 scale) or is a postsecondary student deemed by a school official to be on academic probation**
 - **Is deemed at risk of dropping out of school**
- **Poor Work History, Lack of Prospects**
 - **A youth 16 years of age or older who is currently unemployed AND either has not held a job for longer than three months or was fired from a job within six months of application.**
 - **A youth 18 – 21 years of age who has been unemployed for the last six months.**
- **Dysfunctional Domestic Situations**

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- Has a family history of chronic unemployment (during the two years prior to application, family members were unemployed longer than employed)
- Is a member of a single-parent household
- Lives with grandparent(s) or caretaker(s) other than natural or adoptive parents
- Is an emancipated youth
- **Victim of Abuse**
 - Has experienced a recent traumatic event (within two years of application), is a victim of abuse, or resides in an abusive environment. Documentation must be supplied by a school official, case manager of another government agency, or professional doctor or counselor
- **Substance Dependency or Abuse, Self or Immediate Family**
 - Has been referred to or is being treated by an agency for a substance-abuse related problem
- **Behavior Problems**
 - Has been suspended two or more times from school or has been expelled
 - Is participating in alternative education because of behavior problems in the normal classroom

Additional Assistance Barrier for Out-of-School Youth – A low-income individual who requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment. Documentation must be placed in the files concerning the barrier details.

- **Poor Work History, Lack of Prospects**
 - A youth 16 years of age or older who is currently unemployed AND either has not held a job for longer than three months or was fired from a job within six months of application.
 - A youth 18 – 24 years of age who has been unemployed for the last six months.
 - a) Self-attestation of individual work history
 - b) IWAGE printout
- **Entitlement Program Recipient**
 - Receives, or is a member of a family who receives, cash payments under a federal or state income-based public assistance program
 - Receives or has been determined eligible to receive, or is a member of a family who receives or is eligible to receive, Food Stamps with the six months prior to application
 - Has been determined eligible for free or reduced meals at school during the six months prior to application
- **Dysfunctional Domestic Situations**
 - Has a family history of chronic unemployment (during the two years prior to application, family members were unemployed longer than employed)
 - Is a member of a single-parent household
 - Lives with grandparent(s) or caretaker(s) other than natural or adoptive parents
 - Is an emancipated youth
- **Victim of Abuse**
 - Has experienced a recent traumatic event (within two years of application), is a victim of abuse, or resides in an abusive environment. Documentation must be supplied by a school official, case manager of another government agency, or professional doctor or counselor
- **Substance Dependency or Abuse, Self or Immediate Family**

- Has been referred to or is being treated by an agency for a substance-abuse related problem

3.4 Identify and describe (for each category below) the strategies and services that are and/or will be used to:

A. Facilitate engagement of employers, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations, in workforce development programs in addition to targeted sector strategies;

The Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Region is in the process of developing functional Business Service Teams. The role of the Business Service Team will be to provide workforce development, education, and employment services for businesses and small employers in Southwest Arkansas. The Business Service Team will listen to the employers concerns and needs. Based upon what is learned from the employer, information to meet the employer's need will be provided. The Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board is in the process of developing and implementing sector initiatives for existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors or occupations for the region. Once the Sectors are identified, training programs will be aligned to the needs of industry for the benefit of both the jobseeker and employers. Targeted training opportunities will provide participants with the increased probability of obtaining a good paying job. The increased labor pipeline will provide businesses with the workforce they need to operate and grow their companies throughout the region.

B. Support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses;

The Business Service Team will provide workforce development, education, and employment services for businesses and small employers in Southwest Arkansas. The goal will be maintaining regular contact with area businesses, seek out new employer contacts, and provide services to these contacts. Off site visits will be made to employers to gather job orders and disseminate information on services such as the Work Opportunity Tax Credit, CRC, etc. At the initial meeting, the business service team will listen to the employers concerns and needs. Based upon what is learned from the employer, information to meet the employer's need will be provided.

C. Better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development;

The SWAWDA recognizes that in order for economic and workforce development to align; job placement activities must coincide with job creation activities, the private sector must be included in the decision making process, and data driven decision making needs to be used in all decisions pertaining to training programs. The Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board will ensure coordination of workforce development and economic development partners to leverage resources throughout Southwest Arkansas, including Arkansas Economic Development Commission which is represented on the local Board. Other Economic Development Organizations, such as Ouachita Partners for Economic Development (OPED) are also represented on the SWAWDB.

D. Strengthen linkages between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs.

This may include the implementation of initiatives such as incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, work-based learning programs, apprenticeship models, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies, career pathways initiatives, utilization of effective business intermediaries, and other business services and strategies that support the local board's strategy in element 3.1.

[WIOA Sec. 108(b)(4)(A) and (B)].

Unemployment Insurance is co-located in all of our Southwest Arkansas Workforce Centers. Partners at the workforce centers meet routinely and discuss methods to better serve all customers, including unemployed individuals.

3.5 Describe local and regional efforts to support and/or promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services, in coordination with economic development and other partners.

[WIOA Sec. 108(b)(5)]

The SWAWDA will engage partners such as the Small Business Administration, Arkansas Small Business and Technology Development Center, etc. These relationships will be used to connect clients who may wish to open their own business with partners who provide those specific services.

3.6 Describe how the local board coordinates education and workforce investment activities with relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(10)]

Coordination in the Southwest area is achieved through the referral process. Any participant that enters a workforce center for a request for services will be assessed to determine which partner would be better to assist them with the service they need.

The SWAWDB will coordinate education and workforce investment activities with secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities through input at partner meetings. There is also collaboration between the board and secondary and postsecondary education programs providing services to the youth.

3.7 Describe efforts to coordinate supportive services provided through workforce investment activities in the local area, including facilitating transportation for customers. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(11)]

All supportive services will be coordinated through the core programs as well as other resources available. Supportive services are coordinated based on program eligibility, the economic need thresholds of the partner agencies, and the availability of program funds.

Title 1 Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth services provide supportive services such as transportation assistance, child care assistance, needs related payments, and other supportive services (tools and equipment, uniforms, and other clothing), to job seekers to assist in obtaining and retaining employment. Through assessments and evaluations, Career Planners determine the needs of each participant and create an Individual Employment Plan to address the identified barriers. Transportation assistance is provided in the form of reimbursement or contracted public transportation, when available. Child Care assistance is provided through vouchers to State approved childcare agencies.

Needs Related Payments are provided through a stipend. Referrals to partner agencies are made to ensure the participants are receiving the optimal services to meet the individual's need.

Arkansas Rehabilitation Services and the Division of Services for the Blind are mandated to research and apply all comparable benefits for services from other resources prior to applying vocational rehabilitation funds. The supportive services provided by Arkansas Rehabilitation Services and the Division of Services for the Blind are arranged and coordinated according to an individual plan for employment which specifies a career goal and the areas that the individual may need supports in order to reach that goal. The supports needed are determined through assessments, evaluations, as well as the analysis and application of state and federal regulations and policies. The following supportive services are assessed, evaluated, and analyzed for applicability and comparable services/similar benefits to each individual case: maintenance assistance to participate in employment or training that leads to employment, personal care attendant services, physical and mental restoration services, rehabilitation engineering, rehabilitation technology, and transportation to participate in employment or training activities. These support services are time limited and must accompany a substantial service that is directly related to obtaining or maintaining employment. The most frequently applied comparable resources come from sources outside of the core partner agencies. For example, tuition assistance in the form of grant funding, housing assistance from Housing and Urban Development, the individual's own medical insurance must first be applied to physical and mental restoration services.

Adult Education provides referrals to Career Pathways at local community colleges, career assessments, Career Coach assistance, job readiness /soft skills training, and educational and career goal planning. Career Pathways provides assistance with child care, transportation, tuition, and materials. Each adult education center has a local service directory that is utilized for student support services. Supportive services such as transportation, daycare, etc. are coordinated with partner agencies through participant referrals. Adult Education partners with Arkansas Rehabilitation Services to help provide individuals with disabilities access to services, diagnosis and evaluations of capabilities and limitations; guidance and counseling; assistive technologies; and job placement.

3.8 Describe strategies to implement the operational goals of the local one-stop system, maximizing coordination of services provided by the State's employment services under the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.), and the local board's service providers to improve services and avoid duplication. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(12)]

Center to WIOA is the integration of service delivery amongst multiple workforce and talent development programs. Southwest has strong partnerships among state agencies, two and four year educational institutions, economic development, Registered Apprenticeship, and community based organizations. A priority of the SWAWDB and central to the implementation of the strategic plan is to prevent and eliminate duplication across programs and align core programs. Alignment of core and optional programs will be made possible by the following strategies.

Reflect Robust Partnerships

Reflect the establishment of robust partnerships among partners. The one stop operator facilitates an integrated, co-located partnership that seamlessly incorporates services of the core partners and other workforce center partners.

Organize Service by Function

Organize and integrate services by function (rather than by program); when permitted by a program's authorizing statute and as appropriate, and by coordinating staff communication, capacity building, and training efforts. Functional alignment includes having workforce center staff who cross-trained to serve all customers seamlessly (including targeted populations) by providing a full range of services staffed by cross-functional teams, consistent with the purpose, scope, and requirements of each program.

Wagner-Peyser staff and the Title I Adult, DLW, and Youth provider staff are co-located in all Comprehensive Workforce Centers.

3.9 Describe how the local board will carry out a review of local applications submitted under WIOA Title II Adult Education and Literacy, consistent with the local plan (as described in WIOA Sec. 107(d)(11) and WIOA Sec. 232). [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(13)]

The Arkansas Department of Career Education will forward to the local areas the proposals that have met requirements to the RFP's for review and approval by the local board. The local boards should consider the extent to which the eligible applicant:

- Demonstrates its participation in carrying out activities related to the development and implementation of career pathways in the local area;
- Describes a plan for fulfilling its education and training and administrative responsibilities as a one-stop partner and for participating on the local workforce board;
- Aligns adult education and literacy activities with the education and training objectives and activities of the local workforce plan and the One Stop Delivery System, including concurrent enrollment in Title I and Title II programs under WIOA, as appropriate;
- Demonstrates a plan and strategies for effectively working with workforce partners identified by the local plan to share resources;
- Contributes to regional education and training efforts, including career pathways programs.

Request for Proposals were received and reviewed by a committee appointed by the Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board chairman. The committee had a teleconference to discuss the individual scores of each proposal. The Southwest Area received five proposals from Arkansas Department of Career Education. The committee's recommendation along with score sheets were sent to the Arkansas Department of Career Education.

3.10 Based on the analysis described in Appendix B - Section 1, identify the industries where a sector partnership is currently being convened in the local area or where there will be an attempt to convene a sector partnership and the timeframe. Categorize the sector partnerships as active, emerging, or exploring as defined below.

- **Active**
 - **Has a clear coordinator, convener, or convening team;**
 - **Is led by industry as demonstrated by private sector members playing leadership roles;**
 - **Has broad industry engagement as demonstrated by industry members attending meetings, partnering on activities, providing in-kind or financial resources, or similar;**
 - **Includes critical and engaged partners across programs from workforce development;**

- Can demonstrate that the partnership is not “just a workforce thing,” “just an economic development thing,” or “just an education thing.”
 - Operates in a true labor market region, not within the confines of a workforce area or other geopolitical boundaries;
 - Operates under some kind of shared strategic plan, road map, etc.;
 - Can demonstrate clearly identified priorities and an action plan, be able to demonstrate recent or current activities, services or products that are a direct outcome of the partnership.
- **Emerging**
 - Has at least an interim coordinator, convener, or convening team;
 - Has engaged at least one private sector champion to help drive the launch and implementation of a sector partnership;
 - Includes individuals from workforce development, education, economic development and other programs or organizations in strategic partner roles;
 - Actively working to implement strategic priorities outlined in a launch meeting.
 - **Exploring**
 - Is in the infancy stage, but actively considering or planning the preparation needed to launch a partnership;
 - Working to identify partners who would be involved;
 - Determining if the partnership really makes sense for the community.

Advanced Manufacturing – Emerging, Ongoing

Aerospace Technology – Emerging

Healthcare – Emerging

The Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board is in the process of procuring a document that will provide a base line of information which can be used for policy decision making by the Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board. This information will help SWAWDB align training programs to the needs of industry for the benefit of both the jobseeker and employers. Targeted training opportunities will provide participants with the increased probability of obtaining a good paying job. The increased labor pipeline will provide businesses with the workforce they need to operate and grow their companies throughout the region. This will be the SWAWDB’s first step in the journey to close the gap between workforce and economic development and move toward the tailoring of training programs to explicitly meet the needs of industry throughout the twelve counties in Southwest Arkansas.

Industry meetings are already taking place in the Southwest Region. The Calhoun and Ouachita Business and Industry Training Consortium (COBITC) meet to discuss the needs of businesses/industries located in Highland Industrial Park. The Columbia Business and Industry Training Consortium (CCBITC) meet to discuss the needs of businesses/industries located in Magnolia. The South Arkansas Workforce Training and Education Consortium (SAWTEC) meet to discuss the needs of businesses/industries located in the El Dorado area, the Industrial Technology Advisory Committee meet discuss the needs of businesses/industries in the Texarkana/DeQueen/Nashville/Hope area.

3.11 Does the local board currently leverage or have oversight of funding outside of WIOA Title I funding to support the local workforce development system? Briefly describe the additional

funding and how it will impact the local system. If the local board does not currently have oversight of additional funding, describe any future plans to pursue them.

The Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development area has partnered with Arkansas Department of Workforce Services (DWS) and SouthArk Community College (SACC) in the Sector Partnership NEG. Funds from this grant initiative will be used to provide dislocated workers and long-term unemployed individuals, pre-employment skills training and occupation specific training that lead to viable employment opportunities within the high-growth industry sectors of advanced manufacturing. SouthArk Community College is responsible for delivering workplace readiness and occupation-based training for displaced workers in the advanced manufacturing sector. A career counselor will offer specialized career counseling and will facilitate training programs that will lead to credentials in advanced manufacturing.

The Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development area received \$285,905 in PY 15 to partner with Arkansas Rehabilitation Services and the University of Arkansas for the Arkansas PROMISE, a research project for youth ages 14 – 16 who currently receive SSI benefits. PROMISE is a joint initiative of the U.S. Department of Education, the U.S. Social Security Administration, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the U.S. Department of Labor. Fifty-Four Promise Youth were offered work experience opportunities.

The Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development area has partnered with the Workforce Initiative Act Regional Workforce Grant Program. The primary goal of this grant program is to create long-term relationships between employers and regional workforce alliances to identify and address the challenge of job candidate skills gaps in the regional workforce pool. By ensuring that post-secondary educational institutions are producing the credentials employers need through consortia and data driven decision-making, Arkansas can meet the needs of current employers and be more effective in recruiting new industry to the state. In Southwest, the following received the Workforce Initiative Regional Workforce Grant:

1. UA Cossatot - along with SouthArk Community College, SAU Tech and UA Hope --- received \$76,500.00 to plan for a project entitled: [Regional Advanced Manufacturing Partnership: Building the Pipeline](#). It is focused on Industrial Technology/pre-Engineering courses. SAU Magnolia is also a partner related to transferability of courses/articulation.
2. SouthArk Community College – Futures in Information Technology - \$92,500 – Identify any information technology workforce needs and skills training gaps in 5 Union County School Districts.
3. SAU Tech – Aerospace Defense Sector Certification Pathways Planning Grant - \$57,130 – Focusing on Advanced Manufacturing/Production Technology

Section 4: Program Design and Evaluation

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Many of the responses below should be based on strategic discussions between the local board and one-stop partners. Please provide a separate response for each of the elements listed below.

4.1 Describe the one-stop delivery system in the local area including:

The Southwest area is comprised of twelve counties: Calhoun, Columbia, Dallas, Hempstead, Howard, Lafayette, Little River, Miller, Nevada, Ouachita, Sevier, and Union Counties. The Southwest area is mostly rural in nature. There are three certified, comprehensive workforce centers located in Hope (Hempstead Co.), Camden (Ouachita Co.) and El Dorado (Union County). Two affiliate centers are located in Magnolia (Columbia Co.) and Texarkana (Miller Co.).

All of the required WIOA partners are included in the Southwest certified one-stop delivery system. Workforce Centers directly provide the full array of employment services and connects customers to work-related training and education. The Workforce Centers provide career services, education and training, and supportive services that customers need to get good jobs and stay employed, and helps businesses find skilled workers and other services to support employer's needs. The Southwest One-Stop system has established strong, robust and sustained partnerships with core programs. All partners in the Southwest area are committed to the local vision of offering a fully integrated and accessible employer driven local workforce system that maximizes the resources of our education, workforce and economic development partners to develop the abilities and skills of job seekers and workers which will enable them to work and our businesses to remain in our area and grow.

- A. The local board's efforts to ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services, including contracted service providers and providers on the eligible training provider list, and ensure that such providers meet the employment needs of local employers, workers and jobseekers. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(6)(A)]**

The Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development area meets annually with Arkansas Department of Workforce Services' Labor Market Information team to determine the occupations that should be included on the Projected Employment Opportunities List. The Southwest area has the authority to add up to five additional emerging training programs that are not included on the statewide list. Once Sector Initiatives are fully implemented, the Eligible Training Provider's List will support the Employers need for training.

- B. How the local board will facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system in remote areas, using technology, and through other means. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(6)(B)]**

The SWAWDB has three comprehensive workforce centers and two affiliate centers. Each Career Planner covers three counties in the region. In order to serve those residents who are unable to travel to the centers, the Southwest area will coordinate with local officials to obtain a meeting space for clients to gather information and receive services. SWAWDB will coordinate with ADWS to dispatch a mobile unit to outlying areas that are in high demand of services.

- C. How entities within the one-stop delivery system, including one-stop operators and the one-stop partners, will comply with WIOA section 188, 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.**

[WIOA Sec. 108(b)(6)(C)] (See Appendix C: Transitional Planning References and Resources)

The Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development system will comply with WIOA section 188 by ensuring accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities by providing staff training and support by Arkansas Rehabilitation Services and Department of Human Services, Division of Services for the Blind.

Qualified applicants with disabilities, as defined in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the American with Disabilities Act (ADA), are invited to request any needed accommodations to participate in the application process covered by area offices. This process includes information related to completing the application, intake/eligibility determination, assessment and testing. All Workforce Centers will be ADA compliant in Southwest Arkansas. In addition, Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS) and Department of Human Services, Division of Department of Services for the Blind (DSB) are available in the Southwest Arkansas Workforce Centers to serve the needs of workers with disabilities. The Southwest area will:

- Provide training to staff on applicable provisions of the ADA using material jointly developed by the partners and State entities.
- Bring together core program partners to integrate services and supportive services, and leverage resources to improve services to individuals with disabilities and other protected groups.
- Explore changes in service delivery design and programs by establishing partnerships, alternate assessments, and programs that better connect education, training, workforce, and supportive services to improve employment outcomes of individuals with disabilities.
- Encourage active engagement with the business sector to identify the skills and support that workers with disabilities need and communicate these needs to the partners, education and training providers, as well as job seekers with disabilities.
- Continue to provide physical and programmatic accessibility to employment and training services for individuals with disabilities.
- Assess the physical and programmatic accessibility of all our centers and training facilities.
- Work with Vocational Rehabilitation and Department of Human Services, Division of services for the Blind (DSB) to provide clients with disabilities extensive pre-employment transition services so they can successfully obtain employment.
- Strive to improve the employment outcomes of individuals with disabilities and other protected groups who are unemployed, underemployed, or receiving Social Security disability benefits, by utilizing services available through our local centers to connect them to existing successful career pathways programs.

D. List all required and optional program partners; indicate the program(s) each partner provides and the physical location where the program(s) can be accessed. Describe the roles and resource contributions of the partners. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(6)(D)]

The required partners for the Southwest Arkansas Workforce Delivery Area are Adult Education, Title I (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Services), DWS – Employment Services, and Arkansas Rehabilitation. Arkansas Community Corrections has been a significant partner in the southwest area by providing referrals through the Alternative Sentencing Program.

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Adult Education provides several services to assist individuals in preparation for employment, such as: GED, TABE, WAGE certification, CRC certification, pre-employability skills training, and ESL classes.

Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth provides services to individuals through basic career services, individualized career services, and training services. Title I assists clients in paying for training costs, as well as supportive services to alleviate barriers to employment.

Department of Workforce Services (DWS) provides employment services through Unemployment Insurance and Job Services for those individuals working towards re-entry into the workforce. DWS also provides Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) to help decrease the burden of living expenses.

Arkansas Rehabilitation Services and Department of Human Services, Division of Services for the Blind, offer services to people with disabilities, and provide them with the appropriate accommodations to be successful in the workforce. They also provide training assistance to those who are seeking an education and qualify for their services.

Examples of Non-core partners include Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Program (Title I), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program, Boys and Girls Clubs, Chambers of Commerce, Public Schools, Two Year Colleges, Southwest Arkansas Development Council, etc.

E. Describe how the workforce centers are implementing and transitioning to an integrated technology-enabled intake and case management information system for core programs [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(21)]

The State of Arkansas is in the process of implementing a common intake and a case management system for the core partners.

4.2 Describe the local board's assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(7)]

Adult and DLW employment and training activities will consist primarily of those available through the eligible training provider list. This list will contain certified providers offering training programs relevant to current labor market demands and will be customized for the local area. Dissemination of the provider list through area one-stops and their partners will ensure that providers meet the employment needs of local employers and job seekers. Once sector initiatives are fully implemented, the Eligible Training Provider's List will support the Employers need for training.

Upon determination of customer needs to receive training services, ITAs will be used in all available training programs. Participants will receive an ITA for the training program they have selected through the eligible training provider list to be presented to the individual school.

4.3 Describe how the local board will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out in the local area with statewide rapid response activities. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(8)]

The Governor's Dislocated Worker Task Force is responsible for the statewide rapid response and layoff aversion activities. Layoff aversion is a proactive approach to planning for and managing economic

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transitions. The Dislocated Worker Task Force notifies the Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Area of all closures and layoffs through the Rapid Response program. Once notified, meetings and workshops are scheduled to explain all WIOA services available to the affected dislocated workers. Customers are enrolled in WIOA services as appropriate.

The Governor's Dislocated Worker Task Force may conduct a worker assistance workshop, attended by representatives of local and state agencies and affected workers to review available resources. Services and needs discussed at the workshop may include retraining and educational opportunities, unemployment insurance, social service programs, credit counseling, insurance options and resources to find a new job.

The Governor's Dislocated Worker Task Force Coordinator also serves as the liaison to the local chambers of commerce throughout the area. Information is provided to them about the affected workers, including their occupations and their educational and skill levels. The local Workforce Center staff builds on the services provided through the Governors Dislocated Workers Taskforce by providing information and services to the affected employees. Dislocated workers are given a full array of services available to them through the Arkansas Workforce Center partnership and community organizations.

State and local WIOA partners will continue to build and maintain relationships with the business community to help with early warning of potential layoffs and promote early intervention. Together, the following services will be provided:

- Layoff aversion activities
- Immediate and on-site contact with employers and local community representatives
- Assessment and planning to address the layoff schedule, assistance needs of impacted workers, re-employment prospects, and available resources
- Information and access to unemployment compensation benefits and programs, AWC services, and employment and training activities, including Trade Act, Pell Grants, GI Bill, WIOA DLW Program, and other resources
- Necessary services and resources, such as workshops, resource and job fairs to support re-employment assistance
- Trade Act petition services through the Governors Dislocated Workers Taskforce

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit is a Federal tax credit available to employers for hiring individuals from certain target groups who have consistently faced significant barriers to employment. Work Opportunity Tax Credit joins other workforce programs that incentivize workplace diversity and facilitate access to good jobs for American workers. For more information please visit:

<https://doleta.gov/business/incentives/opptax/>

The Shared Work Unemployment Compensation Program provides an alternative for employers faced with a reduction in work force. It allows an employer to divide available work or hours of work among a specific group(s) of employees in lieu of a layoff, and it allows the employees to receive a portion of their unemployment benefits while working reduced hours.

4.4 Describe the local board's assessment of the type and availability of youth workforce activities, including activities for youth with disabilities. Identify successful models and best practices for youth workforce activities relevant to the local area. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(9)]

Note: This section must include a description of the program design elements as well as how the local area will implement the 14 program elements.

The Southwest Workforce Development Area partners will provide, or make an appropriate referral to provide the fourteen required program elements to eligible youth participants in Southwest Arkansas, as stated in the Memorandum of Understanding for the Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Area. These services include:

- *Tutoring, study skills training and instruction leading to secondary school completion, including dropout prevention strategies. **Adult Education and Family Literacy***
 - Dropout prevention strategies can include, but are not limited to, placement in an alternative secondary school services setting, facilitating involvement of families and community, taking an individualized approach based on youth's individual needs.
 - Clients in need of tutoring will be referred to **Adult Education**
 - The Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board authorizes incentives for the participants that achieve goals that contribute to their success. **Title 1-B Youth Services**
 - Tutoring services can be used in conjunction with apprenticeship programs to help youth succeed, particularly during pre-apprenticeship or related classroom instruction.
- *Alternative secondary school offering specialized, structured curriculum inside or outside of the public-school system which may provide work, study and/or academic intervention for students with behavior problems, physical/mental disabilities, who are at risk of dropping out, and/or who are institutionalized or adjudicated youth*
 - Clients who require an alternative to traditional education establishments, will be referred to **Adult Education** to acquire a GED.
 - **Adult Education Centers** enroll 16 & 17-year-old students into the GED Program once eligibility requirements have been met. For 16 & 17-year-olds to participate in educational services provided by Adult Education, they must provide a signed waiver with official seal from their high school along with guardian permission. The process for enrolling 16-17 year-old students is the following: 1.) Intake Application and Identification. 2.) Orientation. 3.) TABE 11/12 test 4.) Guardian permission and signature. 5.) High School waiver form with signature and official seal.
- *Paid and unpaid work experiences that have as a component academic and occupational education. May include summer employment opportunities or throughout the school year, pre-apprenticeship programs, internships and job shadowing, and on-the-job training.*
 - **Title 1-B Youth Services** will provide work experiences and on-the-job training for clients who are interested in a specific career field, in order to improve their chances at earning a self-sufficient wage in a career of their interest.
 - **Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS) and the Division of Services for the Blind (DSB)** have youth programs for youth with disabilities that focus on employment. ARS and DSB have Supported Employment program models that are appropriate for youth with disabilities and the Pre-Employment Transition Program, which serves youth that are also students in an educational program from ages 16 to 21 in the State of Arkansas. The Supported Employment model provides job placement assistance, on-the-job supports and job coaching through a third party vendor that is qualified and monitored through ARS or DSB. Regular meetings and updates are built into this program model. With the Pre-Employment Transition model ARS and DSB provide 5 core services to

youth that are students. These services include: self-advocacy, work readiness, work-based learning, counseling on opportunities in post-secondary training, and job exploration. These services can be arranged through 3rd party vendors, schools, or directly through ARS counselors. This program is qualified and monitored by ARS or DSB staff. Additionally, ARS offers a summer work program on the campus of the Arkansas Career Training Institute (ACTI) that will train students in work readiness skills and assist them work based learning while on the campus.

- *Occupational skills training*
 - **Title 1-B Youth Services** will assist eligible clients with obtaining financial resources, enrollment, and supportive services for training that provide recognized degrees, certifications, or marketable skills that are directly related to in demand and emerging occupations in the state.
 - **ARS and DSB** provide occupational skills training to youth with disabilities by arranging for or directly providing financial resources and assistance with entering a training program. Additionally, the Arkansas Career Training Institute (ACTI) offers a variety of occupational skills trainings that can be provided on campus to eligible applicants.
 - Registered Apprenticeship is also a viable career option. Registered Apprenticeship is an employer-driven model that combines on-the-job training with related classroom instruction that increases an apprentice's skill level and wages. WIOA funds can be used to pay for the cost of the related classroom instruction component of apprenticeship programs.
- *Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster. **Adult Education and Family Literacy***
 - SWAWDB will establish Career Pathways thru partnerships, which will outline individualized steps that progress clients from current academic level, to an employability status that will result in earning a self-sufficient wage.
 - Registered Apprenticeship is also a viable career option. Registered Apprenticeship is an employer-driven model that combines on-the-job training with related classroom instruction that increases an apprentice's skill level and wages. It is a tried and true approach for preparing youth for jobs – and meeting the business needs for a highly-skilled workforce.
- *Leadership development opportunities, which include community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social behaviors **Title 1-B Youth Services, Adult Education and Family Literacy, Arkansas Rehabilitation Services, Division of Services for the Blind***
 - SWAWDB will use partnerships and Career Ready 101 to provide leadership development and other pre-employability classes. Clients will participate in peer-centered activities throughout their enrollment, to promote positive social behaviors
 - The Pre-Employment Transition Program offered through ARS and DSB provide soft skills training which includes a focus on social behaviors intended to enhance the development of employment skills for transition age youth by fostering the knowledge and growth of independent living skills, communication, and interpersonal skills to gain understanding of employer expectations related to timeliness and performance on the job.

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- ARS offers the Youth Leadership Forum at on the campus of the University of Central Arkansas which is open to youth with disabilities and designed to foster leadership skills. This is part of a nationwide effort to join youth with disabilities and promote empowerment.
- **Supportive services Title 1-B Youth Services, Arkansas Rehabilitation Services, Division of Services for the Blind**
 - After assessments, SWAWDB will provide supportive services to eligible clients to alleviate barriers. Referrals to other agencies will be made to better serve clients.
 - ARS and DSB can arrange for supportive services as related to the employment goal of the individual. This process and the types of supports available are detailed in section 3.7.
- **Adult mentoring**
 - Southwest will make referrals to community and faith-based organizations to provide one-on-one encouragement and direction.
 - Employers sponsoring Registered Apprenticeship programs can mentor WIOA eligible youth hired as apprentices.
- **Follow-up services Title 1-B Youth Services**
 - Southwest will provide Youth clients with 12 months of Follow-Up Services after exiting the program. Staff will maintain contact with clients and provide services, such as support and guidance, to assist in a successful transition in to the workforce.
- **Comprehensive guidance and counseling, including drug and alcohol abuse counseling, as well as referrals to counseling, as appropriate for the needs of the individual youth**
 - After thorough assessments, Staff will provide individualized counseling referrals to partnering agencies for Youth clients in need of formal counseling and additional supports.
- **Financial Literacy Adult Education and Family Literacy**
 - Staff will provide financial literacy training through the Career Ready 101 platform. Additional training will be provided in person for those clients who require additional assistance.
- **Entrepreneurial skills training Adult Education and Family Literacy, Community Colleges**
 - Clients who are interested in entrepreneurial skills training will be referred to local education facilities that offer such training. Career Planners will assess individual's needs and barriers to ensure the client is properly prepared for training.
- **Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area. (Career Awareness, Career Counseling, Career Exploration). Title 1-B Youth Services and Adult Education and Family Literacy**
 - Title 1-B and Adult Education staff will assist individuals in career exploration and counseling to map out career pathways that best suit the client.
- **Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training. Title 1-B Youth Services, Adult Education and Family Literacy, Arkansas Rehabilitation Services, Division of Services for the Blind**
 - Clients interested in post-secondary education will be referred to Adult Education for college preparatory classes. Career Planners will counsel on what to expect when transitioning in post-secondary education, and provide advice such as: time management, study habits, and educational resources.
 - Youth with disabilities that are receiving educational training can receive Pre-Employment Transition Services through ARS or DSB. One of the core component areas is counseling and guidance on post-secondary opportunities. This service can include

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exploration of available options, applying to schools, arranging for financial aid and supports to participate in the training. See section 3.7 for a description of the types of supports available for youth with disabilities.

- Youth are better equipped to compete for jobs with an educational credential. The area Adult Education Centers are available to assist youth aged 16 and 17 that are waived out of high school with earning the General Equivalency Diploma (GED).
- Pre-Apprenticeship programs can include basic skills, integrated instructional models, other activities designed to prepare youth to enter and succeed in apprenticeship programs.

Partner Program	Partner Organization	Authorization/Category	Contact Information
*Adult Education and Family Literacy (WIOA Title II)	Arkansas Department of Career Education	WIOA Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) program	237 Jackson St. SW Camden, AR 71701 870-837-4001 bhamilto@sautech.edu jmorriso@sautech.edu
*Adult Education and Family Literacy (WIOA Title II)	Arkansas Department of Career Education	WIOA Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) program	104 Harvey Couch Blvd Magnolia, AR 71753 870-234-6064 ssherpher@sautech.edu jmorriso@sautech.edu
*Adult Education and Family Literacy (WIOA Title II)	Arkansas Department of Career Education	WIOA Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) program	2500 S. Main St. Hope, AR 71801 870-722-8169 Charles.george@uacch.edu chris.thomason@uacch.edu
*Adult Education and Family Literacy (WIOA Title II)	Arkansas Department of Career Education	WIOA Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) program	183 College Dr. DeQueen, AR 71832 870-584-1135 jblack@cccua.edu Scole@cccua.edu
*Adult Education and Family Literacy (WIOA Title II)	Arkansas Department of Career Education	WIOA Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) program	3696 E. Main El Dorado, AR 71730 870-864-8478 asturdivant@southark.edu brjones@southark.edu
*Vocational Rehabilitation (WIOA Title IV)	Arkansas Department of Career Education, Arkansas Rehabilitation Services	State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C.720 et seq.), as amended by title IV of WIOA	708 W. Faulkner St. El Dorado, AR 71730 870-862-5451 Kensel.spivey@arkansas.gov Alan.McClain@arkansas.gov
*Vocational Rehabilitation (WIOA Title IV)	Arkansas Department of Career Education, Arkansas Rehab Services	State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C.720 et seq.), as amended by title IV of WIOA	2807 E. Broad Texarkana, AR 71854 870-733-2807 Kensel.spivey@arkansas.gov Alan.McClain@arkansas.gov

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Partner Program	Partner Organization	Authorization/Category	Contact Information
*Vocational Rehabilitation (WIOA Title IV)	Arkansas Department of Human Services, Division of Services for the Blind	State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C.720 et seq.), as amended by title IV of WIOA	123 W.18th Street El Dorado, AR 71730 863-6631 Ext. 166 Jessie.thomas@dhs.arkansas.gov Katy.morris@dhs.arkansas.gov
*WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Program (All Offices)	Southwest Arkansas Planning & Development District	WIOA title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs	101 Harvey Couch Blvd. Magnolia, AR 71753 870-234-4030 Patrick.carter@arkansas.gov Renee.dycus@arkansas.gov

4.5 Describe local board actions to become and/or remain a high-performing local board, consistent with the factors developed by the Arkansas Workforce Development Board. These factors have not been determined but will include effectiveness and continuous improvement criteria for local boards. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(18)]

The Board will require continuous monitoring of programs to ensure compliance with the law and that performance measures are met. Board staff information to board members to make certain they have a solid understanding of the board role. The board will work to maintain members with diverse expertise to meet the needs of the region's communities. They will maintain policies and procedures current and reactive to WIOA requirements. Work will continue to regularly update labor market data and analysis to be aware of emerging trends. The board will work with community colleges to determine the needs of employers.

4.6 Describe how training services will be provided in accordance with WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(G), the process and criteria for issuing individual training accounts. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(19)]

The individual training accounts (ITA) system is used by participants who are eligible for training services, and choose to attend training. A process is used to determine a participant's financial need. The individual selects the course of study from the eligible training provider list. The individual must have made application and received determination from other funding sources and present the award letter to the career specialist to show the monetary amounts of unmet financial need. Consideration of all available funds, excluding loans, will determine the person's overall need for WIOA funding. The ITA may be used to cover any education related expenses. Case manager will make sure that there is no duplication of services.

4.7 If contracts for training services are used, describe processes utilized by the local board to ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training programs, regardless of how the training services are to be provided. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(19)]

The Eligible Training Providers list is available online in all workforce centers. Participants approved for training through the ITA system must choose one of the approved programs in order to receive an ITA. Contracts may be used if it reflects a training program that is in demand.

4.8 Describe the process utilized by the local board to ensure that training provided is linked to in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area, or in another area to which a participant is willing to relocate. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(22)] and [WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(G)(iii)]

The SWAWDB uses the Projected Employment Opportunities List as the basic guide for determining in-demand occupations. All training providers will complete an online electronic application through the automated Arkansas Consumer Reporting System. All training must be directly linked to employment opportunities either in the local area or in an area to which an individual is willing to relocate. Any training for a participant that is paid for by WIOA funds must be on the Projected Employment Opportunities List for the state or local area. To be included on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), providers must submit an electronic application to the local board for their approval. The Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board is in the process of procuring a document that will provide a base line of information which can be used for policy decision making by the Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board. This information will help SWAWDB align training programs to the needs of industry for the benefit of jobseekers and employers. Targeted training opportunities will provide participants with the increased probability of obtaining a good paying job. The increased labor pipeline will provide businesses with the workforce they need to operate and grow their companies throughout the region. This will be the SWAWDB's first step in the journey to close the gap between workforce and economic development and move toward the tailoring of training programs to explicitly meet the needs of industry throughout the twelve counties in Southwest Arkansas.

Adult Education is able to negotiate employer specific training as it relates to services available within Adult Education's capabilities. This includes adult basic education and adult secondary education courses. Adult Education is able to accommodate such employer demands by providing courses on site at the employer's location, providing specific on-demand basic education courses, providing flexible class schedules, assessments, etc. These services will be negotiated between the employer and Adult Education Director.

Section 5: Compliance

Responses are focused on the local area's compliance with federal or state requirements. Please provide a separate response for each of the elements listed below.

5.1 Describe the replicated cooperative agreements, as defined by WIOA 107(d)(11), in place between the local board and the Vocational Rehabilitation programs operated in the area 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. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(14)]

Local ARS Field offices or other ARS organizational units will replicate cooperative agreements in part or in whole with local divisions of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act core programs. These may include the following:

- provision of intercomponent staff training and technical assistance with regard to:
- the availability and benefits of, and information on eligibility standards for, vocational rehabilitation services;
- the promotion of equal, effective, and meaningful participation by individuals with disabilities in workforce investment activities in the State through the promotion of program accessibility, the

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- use of nondiscriminatory policies and procedures, and the provision of reasonable accommodations, auxiliary aids and services, and rehabilitation technology, for individuals with disabilities;
- use of information and financial management systems that link all components of the statewide workforce development system, that link the components to other electronic networks, including nonvisual electronic networks, and that relate to such subjects as employment statistics, and information on job vacancies, career planning, and workforce innovation and opportunity activities; use of customer service features such as common intake and referral procedures, customer databases, resource information, and human services hotlines;
- establishment of cooperative efforts with employers to:
 - facilitate job placement; and
 - carry out any other activities that the designated State unit and the employers determine to be appropriate; identification of staff roles, responsibilities, and available resources, and specification of the financial responsibility of each component of the statewide workforce investment system regarding paying for necessary services (consistent with State law and Federal requirements);
 - specification of procedures for resolving disputes that will be monitored by the local board's rehabilitation committee at annual intervals to determine compliance with the objectives and tenants of the agreement.

Development of these agreements at the local level must include the local manager, field office district manager or the top executive at the organizational units of Arkansas Rehabilitation Services. The agreement must be signed by the local manager, the supervising Senior Leader from Arkansas Rehabilitation Services, and the Commissioner of Arkansas Rehabilitation Services or his/her designee. Copies of the agreement will be maintained by the local manager and Chief Fiscal Officer of Arkansas Rehabilitation Services.

5.2 Identify the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds as determined by the Chief Elected Official(s). [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(15)]

The Southwest CEO's have appointed the Southwest Arkansas Planning & Development District, Inc. as the fiscal agent for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

Patrick Carter
101 Harvey Couch Blvd
Magnolia, AR 71753

5.3 Describe the competitive processes to award the subgrants and contracts for activities funded by WIOA Title I programs within the local area. This includes, but is not limited to, the process used to award funds to a one-stop operator and other sub-recipients/contractors of WIOA Title I adult, dislocated worker, and youth services. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(16)]

The local board uses an RFP or RFQ process to award subgrants and contracts as outlined in Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I-B Financial, Procurement, Monitoring Policies & Procedures adopted by the Board and approved by the Western Workforce Area Chief Elected Officials. The notice advertising the RFP or RFQ is placed in a statewide newspaper and on the Administrative Entity's website. Additional media sources may be used. Each proposal submitted scored based on specific

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criteria. After the evaluation, the score of each proposal is presented to the full board. The Board selects the provider based upon the specified criteria and presented to the chief elected officials for final approval.

The following addresses conflict of interest and is outlined in the policy mentioned in the previous paragraph. Each recipient shall ensure that no individual in a decision making capacity, including Board members, will engage in an activity, including participation in the selection, award, or administration of an award or contract supported by WIOA funds if a conflict of interest, real or apparent, would be involved. Such a conflict would arise when the individual, any member of the individual's immediate family, the individual's partner, or an organization which employs, or is about to employ, any of the above, has a financial or other interest in the firm or organizations selected for award.

The Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board has adopted a One-Stop Operator and Service Provider Procurement Policy which requires a Confidentiality Agreement. The confidentiality agreement is required by committee members appointed by the Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board for selecting a One-Stop Operator and Title I Service Provider for the Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Area. An independent consultant and staff to the board are required to sign the confidentiality statement as they assist with the process.

5.4 Describe the local area's negotiated local levels of performance for the federal measures and their implications upon the local workforce system; attach the completed Performance Targets Template. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(17)]

(Note: Local performance measures for each local area will be the same as the State goals.)

WIOA Performance Measures	Performance Goals	
	PY18	PY19
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	Negotiated Goals	
Adult	92%	
Dislocated Worker	92%	
Youth	88%	
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	Negotiated Goals	
Adult	87%	
Dislocated Worker	87%	
Youth	88%	
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)	Negotiated Goals	
Adult	\$6,700	
Dislocated Worker	\$7,400	
Credential Attainment Rate	Negotiated Goals	
Adult	75%	
Dislocated Worker	77%	
Youth	80%	
Measurable Skill Gains	Negotiated Goals	
Adult	Baseline	
Dislocated Worker	Baseline	
Youth	Baseline	
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Negotiated Goals	

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Adult	Baseline
Dislocated Worker	Baseline
Youth	Baseline

Baseline Indicator Explanation: Each State submitting a Unified or Combined Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The State is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education on state adjusted levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

To effect an orderly transition to the performance accountability system in Section 116 of the WIOA, the Departments will use the transition authority under WIOA sec. 503(a) to designate certain primary indicators of performance as “baseline” indicators in the first plan submission. A “baseline” indicator is one for which States will not propose an expected level of performance in the plan submission and will not come to agreement with the Departments on adjusted levels of performance. “Baseline” indicators will not be used in the end of the year performance calculations and will not be used to determine failure to achieve adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. The selection of primary indicators for the designation as a baseline indicator is made based on the likelihood of a state having adequate data on which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance and such a designation will vary across core programs.

Describe the indicators used by the local board to measure performance and effectiveness of the local fiscal agent (where appropriate), eligible providers and the one-stop delivery system, in the local area. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(17)]

Financial reports will be provided to the SWAWDB quarterly for the Board to remain informed of all activities throughout the Title 1 funding. The SWAWDB staff will provide monitoring reports of the fiscal operations of the one stop operator and youth service provider. There will also be a separate procured audit of the one stop operator on an annual basis.

SWAWDB Staff will review applications for the Eligible Training Provider List.

5.5 Describe the process used by the local board for the receipt and consideration of input into the development of the local plan in compliance with WIOA section 108(d). Describe the process to provide an opportunity for public comment prior to submission of the local plan. Be sure to address how members of the public, including representatives of business, labor organizations, and education were given an opportunity to provide comments on the local plan. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b)(20)]

In accordance with the provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board Regional and Local Plan for the Southwest Arkansas Service Delivery Area was made available for review and comment. The Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board advertised the Regional and Local Plan in the Arkansas Democrat Gazette on November 19, 2016, giving the public 30 days to review and submit any comments back to SWAWDB. The plans remained on display for that 30-day period and anyone wishing to review the plans could may stop by the local office of SWAWDB between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

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5.6 Prior to the date on which the local board submits a proposed local plan, the proposed local plan must be made available to members of the public through electronic and other means.

A. Describe how the local board made the proposed local plan available for public comment. [WIOA Sec. 108(d)(1)];

The SWAWDB Regional and Local Plan was made available through email or if requested, a hard copy could be mailed. A copy was posted on the State Web Page.

A. Describe how the local board collected and considered public comments for inclusion in the proposed local plan. [WIOA Sec. 108(d)(2)]; and

The Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board advertised the Regional and Local Plan in the Arkansas Democrat Gazette on November 19, 2016, giving the public 30 days to review and submit any comments back to SWAWDB. The plans remained on display for that 30-day period and anyone wishing to review the plans could request either an electronic copy or a hard copy. Comments were due no later than 3:00 p.m. Wednesday, December 21, 2016 to be considered. There were no comments received.

B. If any comments were received that represent disagreement with the proposed local plan, include such comments within the local plan's attachments. [WIOA Sec. 108(d)(3)]

Comments were due no later than 3:00 p.m. Wednesday, December 21, 2016 to be considered. There were no comments received.

5.7 List the name, organization, and contact information of the designated equal opportunity officer for each workforce center within the local area.

Annette Hughey
 WIOA Equal Opportunity Officer
 SWAPDD, Inc.
 101 Harvey Couch Blvd.
 Magnolia, Arkansas 71754
 Telephone: (870) 235-7522

Section 6: Plan Assurances

Planning Process and Public Comment		References
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6.1 The local board has processes and timelines, consistent with WIOA Section 108(d), to obtain input into the development of the local plan and provide the opportunity for comment by representatives of business, labor organizations, education, other key stakeholders, and the public for a period that is no less than 30 days.	WIOA Sections 108(d); proposed 20 CFR 679.550(b)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6.2 The final local plan is available and accessible to the public.	Proposed 20 CFR 679.550(b)(5)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6.3 The local board has established procedures to ensure public access (including people with disabilities) to board meetings and information regarding board activities, such as board membership and minutes.	WIOA Section 107(e); proposed 20 CFR 679.390 and 679.550
Required Policies and Procedures		References
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6.4 The local board makes publicly-available any local requirements for the public workforce system, such as policies, including policies for the use of WIOA Title I funds.	Proposed 20 CFR 679.390
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6.5 The local board has established a written policy or procedure that identifies circumstances that might present conflict of interest for any local workforce investment board or entity that they represent, and provides for the resolution of conflicts.	WIOA Section 107(h); proposed 20 CFR 679.410(a)-(c)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6.6 The local board has copies of memoranda of understanding between the local board and each one-stop partner concerning the operation of the one-stop delivery system in the local area, and has provided the State with the latest versions of its memoranda of understanding.	WIOA Section 121(c); proposed 20 CFR 678.500-510
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6.7 The local board has written policy or procedures that ensure one-stop operator agreements are reviewed and updated no less than once every three years.	WIOA Section 121(c)(v)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6.8 The local board has negotiated and reached agreement on local performance measures with the local chief elected official(s) and the Governor.	WIOA Sections 107(d)(9) and 116(c); proposed 20 CFR 679.390(k) and 677.210(b)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6.9 The local board has procurement policies and procedures for selecting one-stop operators, awarding contracts under WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker funding provisions, and awarding contracts for Youth service provision under WIOA Title I in accordance with applicable state and local laws, rules, and regulations, provided no conflict exists with WIOA.	WIOA Sections 121(d) and 123; proposed 20 CFR 678.600-615 and 681.400
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6.10 The local board has procedures for identifying and determining the eligibility of training providers and their programs to receive WIOA Title I individual training accounts	WIOA Sections 107(d)(10), 122(b)(3), and 123; Proposed 20 CFR 679.370(l)-(m) and 680.410-430
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6.11 The local board has written procedures for resolving grievances and complaints alleging violations of WIOA Title I regulations, grants, or	WIOA Section 181(c); proposed 20 CFR 683.600

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	other agreements under WIOA and written policies or procedures for assisting customers who express interest in filing complaints at any point of service, including, at a minimum, a requirement that all partners can identify appropriate staff contacts and refer customers to those contacts.	
☒	6.12 The local board has established at least one comprehensive, full-service one-stop center and has a written process for the local Chief Elected Official and local board to determine that the center conforms to the definition therein.	WIOA Section 121(e)(2)(A); proposed 20 CFR 678.305
☒	6.13 All partners in the local workforce and education system described in this plan ensure the physical, programmatic and communications accessibility of facilities, programs, services, technology and materials in one-stop centers for individuals with disabilities.	WIOA Section 188; 29 CFR parts 37.7-37.9; 20 CFR 652.8(j)
☒	6.14 The local board ensures that outreach is provided to populations and sub-populations who can benefit from one-stop services.	WIOA Section 188; 29 CFR 37.42
☒	6.15 The local board implements universal access to programs and activities to individuals through reasonable recruitment targeting, outreach efforts, assessments, service delivery, partner development, and numeric goals.	WIOA Section 188; 29 CFR 37.42
☒	6.16 The local board complies with the nondiscrimination provisions of Section 188, and assures that Methods of Administration were developed and implemented.	WIOA Section 188; 29 CFR 37.54(a)(1)
☒	6.17 The local board collects and maintains data necessary to show compliance with nondiscrimination provisions of Section 188.	WIOA Section 185; 29 CFR 37.37
☒	6.18 The local board complies with restrictions governing the use of federal funds for political activities, the use of the one-stop environment for political activities, and the local board complies with the applicable certification and disclosure requirements	2 CFR Part 225 Appendix B; 2 CFR Part 230 Appendix B; 48 CFR 31.205-22; RCW 42.52.180; TEGL 2-12; 29 CFR Part 93.100
☒	6.19 The local board ensures that one-stop Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW) and business services staff, along with the Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker program partner agency, will continue to provide services to agricultural employers and MSFWs that are demand-driven.	WIOA Section 167
☒	6.20 The local board follows confidentiality requirements for wage and education records as required by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), as amended, WIOA, and applicable Departmental regulations.	WIOA Sections 116(i)(3) and 185(a)(4); 20 USC 1232g; proposed 20 CFR 677.175 and 20 CFR part 603
	Administration of Funds	References
☒	6.21 The local board has a written policy and procedures to competitively award grants and contracts for WIOA Title I activities (or applicable federal waiver), including a process to be used to procure training	WIOA Section 108(b)(16); proposed 20 CFR 679.560(a)(15); WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(G);

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	services made as exceptions to the Individual Training Account process.	proposed 20 CFR 680.300-310
☒	6.22 The local board has accounting systems that follow current Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and written fiscal-controls and fund-accounting procedures and ensures such procedures are followed to insure proper disbursement and accounting of WIOA adult, dislocated worker, and youth program funds.	WIOA Section 108(b)(15)
☒	6.23 The local board ensures compliance with the uniform administrative requirements under WIOA through annual, on-site monitoring of each local sub-recipient.	WIOA Section 184(a)(3); proposed 20 CFR 683.200, 683.300, and 683.400-410
☒	6.24 The local board has a written debt collection policy and procedures that conforms with state and federal requirements and a process for maintaining a permanent record of all debt collection cases that supports the decisions made and documents the actions taken with respect to debt collection, restoration, or other debt resolution activities.	WIOA Section 184(c); 20 CFR Part 652; proposed 20 CFR 683.410(a), 683.420(a), 683.750
☒	6.25 The local board will not use funds received under WIOA to assist, promote, or deter union organizing.	WIOA Section 181(b)(7); proposed 20 CFR 680.850
	Eligibility	References
☒	6.26 The local board has a written policy and procedures that ensure adequate and correct determinations of eligibility for WIOA-funded basic career services and qualifications for enrollment of adults, dislocated workers, and youth in WIOA-funded individualized career services and training services, consistent with state policy on eligibility and priority of service.	Proposed 20 CFR Part 680 Subparts A and B; proposed 20 CFR Part 681 Subpart A
☒	6.27 The local board has a written policy and procedures for awarding Individual Training Accounts to eligible adults, dislocated workers, and youth receiving WIOA Title I training services, including dollar and/or duration limit(s), limits on the number of times an individual may modify an ITA, and how ITAs will be obligated and authorized.	WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(G); Proposed 20 CFR 680.300-320
☒	6.28 The local board has a written policy and procedures that establish internal controls, documentation requirements, and leveraging and coordination of other community resources when providing supportive services and, as applicable, needs-related payments to eligible adult, dislocated workers, and youth enrolled in WIOA Title I programs.	WIOA Sections 129(c)(2)(G) and 134(d)(2); proposed 20 CFR 680.900-970; proposed 20 CFR 681.570
☒	6.29 The local board has a written policy for priority of service at its workforce centers for local workforce providers that ensures veterans and eligible spouses are identified at the point of entry, made aware of their entitlement to priority of service, and provided information on the array of employment, training and placement services and eligibility requirements for those programs or services.	Jobs for Veterans Act; Veterans' Benefits, Health Care, and Information Technology Act; 20 CFR 1010; TEGL 10-09