

2024 - 2027

Local Plan



The Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB) Local Plan for 2024-2027

Barney Trujillo

Serving the Counties of: Cibola, Colfax, Los Alamos, McKinley, Mora, Rio Arriba, San Juan, San Miguel, Santa Fe, Taos

Transforming the Workforce for a Stronger Northern New Mexico

**Northern Area Local Workforce
Development Board**

Lead CEO Alex Naranjo:

"As the Lead Chief Elected Official for the Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board, I am deeply invested in the success of our local plan for 2024-2027. This plan reflects our collective commitment to driving economic growth and workforce development across Northern New Mexico. By working hand-in-hand with our partners, we are creating a robust framework that addresses the current and future needs of our communities. Our focus remains on fostering a skilled, adaptable workforce that can thrive in today's evolving economy."



NALWDB Chair Joseph Weathers:

"As Chair of the Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board, I am pleased to support the strategic direction outlined in our 2024-2027 Local Plan. This plan is the culmination of careful planning, collaboration, and a shared vision for our region's economic future. We are dedicated to building strong partnerships that will help us meet our workforce goals, improve service delivery, and support the growth of our local industries. The Northern Area's success depends on our ability to provide meaningful opportunities for both job seekers and employers, and this plan is our roadmap to achieving that success."



Executive Director Lisa Ortiz:

"In developing the 2024-2027 Local Plan, our focus has been on ensuring that the Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board continues to meet the needs of our communities with excellence and innovation. This plan is a strategic blueprint for how we will enhance our services, expand access to training, and strengthen our partnerships. Our team is committed to executing this plan with precision and dedication, ensuring that every individual we serve has the opportunity to gain the skills and support they need to succeed in the workforce. We are excited about the future and confident that our efforts will lead to sustained economic growth and improved quality of life for all residents of Northern New Mexico."



Executive Summary

The Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB) Local Plan for 2024-2027 outlines an ambitious strategy for transforming the region's workforce and aligning it with the evolving needs of Northern New Mexico's economy. Building on insights gained from the 2023 and 2024 Northern Region Workforce Development Conferences, now an annual event, this plan emphasizes the NALWDB's commitment to fostering strategic partnerships, developing innovative programs, and ensuring inclusivity and equity across all initiatives.

The NALWDB's approach focuses on key sectors such as healthcare, advanced manufacturing, trades, information technology (IT) and broadband expansion, by addressing current workforce shortages and preparing for future opportunities, the NALWDB is developing a future-ready workforce. Collaborations with local businesses, educational institutions, and economic development partners ensure that workforce programs align with regional economic goals, providing participants with the skills needed to thrive in high-demand industries.

A pivotal part of this plan is the integration of wrap-around services through partnerships like the Northern New Mexico Workforce Integration Network (WIN). These services, including transportation, childcare, and essential resources, ensure that participants—particularly those facing significant barriers—receive comprehensive support, allowing them to successfully complete workforce training and enter sustainable employment.



Additionally, the NALWDB is dedicated to supporting regional economic development. By working closely with organizations such as the Greater Gallup Economic Development Corporation (GGEDC) and the Cibola Economic Development Foundation, the NALWDB helps identify key industry trends, supports business growth, and ensures that workforce initiatives are aligned with local economic needs. This creates a seamless connection between workforce development and regional economic strategies, fostering long-term prosperity for businesses and job seekers alike.

An example of this commitment is the \$50,000 grant awarded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. This grant, running from May 1, 2024, through April 30, 2026, will support a document drive and annual workforce conference, aimed at addressing barriers to employment in Northwest New Mexico. These initiatives will help individuals secure necessary documentation for employment and bring together stakeholders to collaborate on workforce solutions.

Key strategies in the plan include enhancing safety, health, and infrastructure projects, increasing labor force participation, and promoting future-readiness through targeted training programs. These efforts ensure that the Northern Area addresses both immediate workforce challenges and positions itself to adapt to future economic shifts.

Key Strategic Goals:

1. Support for Safety, Health, and Infrastructure:
 - Collaborate with healthcare, trades, and IT sectors to address workforce shortages and support infrastructure projects through partnerships with local hospitals, construction companies, and community colleges.
2. Future-Readiness:
 - Partner with educational institutions and industry associations to develop training programs in fields such as advanced manufacturing, CDL, and heavy equipment operations, ensuring the region is prepared for future economic shifts.
3. Increasing Labor Force Participation:
 - Engage disengaged populations, including rural residents and individuals with disabilities, through collaborations with social service agencies, tribal governments, and community organizations to provide access to workforce development services.

Cross-Goal Strategies:

- Employer Engagement:
 - Host job fairs and hiring events across the 10-county region in collaboration with economic development organizations, chambers of commerce, and NMDWS, helping connect job seekers with employers.
- Youth Outreach:
 - Expand Summer and Winter Academies through collaborations with local school districts, Career Technical Education (CTE) programs, and businesses. These academies will provide students with hands-on work experiences, exposing them to various career pathways and workforce development opportunities.
- Improving Communication and Integration:
 - Enhance coordination and data sharing with state workforce partners, economic development agencies, and educational institutions to ensure streamlined service delivery and real-time tracking of participant outcomes.
- Cost Containment:
 - Promote co-location with service providers to ensure cost-effective service delivery, particularly in rural and underserved areas.

Tailored Priority Sector Strategies:

- Healthcare:
 - Address healthcare workforce shortages through partnerships with local healthcare providers and educational institutions, focusing on training and retaining critical healthcare workers.
- Trades:
 - Foster sustainable growth in the trades sector by collaborating with trade organizations, NMDWS, and educational institutions to ensure a skilled workforce capable of supporting regional development.
- Information Technology (IT):
 - Collaborate with community colleges, technical schools, and local ISPs to offer training in network administration, cybersecurity, and broadband technology, preparing participants for careers in the rapidly growing IT sector.

Support for Adult Education and DVR Programs: In addition to providing employer-driven training, the NALWDB will support and refer participants to Integrated Education & Training (IET) programs offered by adult education providers. These programs help adult learners improve their literacy and foundational skills while simultaneously completing workforce training aligned with specific career goals. By supporting participants' educational development, NALWDB ensures that they meet the skill requirements demanded by employers and succeed in high-demand industries.

Furthermore, the NALWDB will collaborate closely with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) to refer individuals with disabilities to essential services that help them overcome barriers to employment. This partnership will ensure that all participants, regardless of their challenges, have access to the support and training needed to enter or re-enter the workforce.

The NALWDB's collaboration with economic development partners is central to this plan. By aligning workforce training with regional economic strategies, the NALWDB ensures that Northern New Mexico's workforce is prepared to meet both immediate and long-term economic needs. This plan reflects a shared vision of building a resilient, inclusive, and sustainable workforce that supports economic growth and empowers individuals and communities to thrive.

By leveraging the collective efforts of employers, educational institutions, community organizations, government agencies, and economic development organizations, the NALWDB will guide Northern New Mexico toward a prosperous future. The 2024-2027 Local Plan serves as both a roadmap for the next three years and a testament to the power of partnership and innovation in shaping a stronger, more vibrant region.

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Local Plan Source List:

NMDWS - Laser Data Economic Research & Analysis Bureau

Data obtained from the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions' Laser Data Economic Research & Analysis Bureau.

NMDWS - Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages Program

Employment and wage data sourced from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages Program, provided by the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions.

NM TRD - Monthly Local Government Distribution Reports (RP-500)

Local government distribution data gathered from the Monthly Local Government Distribution Reports (RP-500), available through the New Mexico Taxation and Revenue Department.

EDD Calculations

Economic data calculated and verified by the Economic Development Department (EDD).

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)

Data on employment, wages, job openings, and sector-specific trends sourced from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Available at: <https://www.bls.gov>

U.S. Census Bureau

Demographic and employment data obtained through the American Community Survey (ACS) and Current Population Survey (CPS) by the U.S. Census Bureau.

Available at: <https://www.census.gov>

O*NET Online

Occupational data, including skill requirements and wages, retrieved from O*NET Online.

Available at: <https://www.onetonline.org>

New Mexico Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

Guidelines and policies sourced from the WIOA State Plan, supporting workforce development goals and funding across New Mexico.

Local Community Colleges and Adult Education Providers

Workforce training and educational support data from regional education institutions, including *Santa Fe Community College* and *San Juan College*, as well as providers of Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs.

W.K. Kellogg Foundation Grant

Details on the grant provided by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, supporting workforce initiatives in Northwest New Mexico.

Available at: <https://www.wkcf.org>

Participant and Employer Surveys

Original data from participant and employer feedback collected as part of the NALWDB workforce development programs and initiatives.

Regional Economic Outlook Reports

Economic forecasts and labor market trends from institutions like the *University of New Mexico Bureau of Business and Economic Research (BBER)*.

NALWDB Annual Conference

Employer engagement strategies and panel discussions sourced from the NALWDB's 2nd Annual Conference, featuring key representatives like Tim Hagamen, Paige Ryan, and others

§679.580(b)(1) and (2)(i)

Economic Conditions

Explanation of Changes in Regional Labor Market and Economic Conditions for the Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB) Region (2024-2027 Local Plan):

The Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB) serves ten counties in northern New Mexico—Cibola, Colfax, Los Alamos, McKinley, Mora, Rio Arriba, San Juan, San Miguel, Santa Fe, and Taos. These counties have experienced significant shifts in labor market dynamics and economic conditions shaped by the COVID-19 recovery, sectoral shifts, and changing workforce demands. Below is a detailed look at the key drivers, challenges, and implications for workforce planning across the NALWDB region.

Key Economic Drivers and Sectoral Shifts

Growth in Healthcare and Social Assistance

The healthcare and social assistance sector has become a major economic driver in the NALWDB region, accounting for approximately 12% of all employment across the ten counties. In McKinley County, healthcare has been a primary sector of growth, with the local hospital and outpatient services expanding. Cibola County has also seen a 15% increase in employment in this sector over the last three years due to the region's aging population and increased access to healthcare services. To meet the rising demand for skilled healthcare workers, the NALWDB is actively working with local institutions to expand training programs for nursing, medical technicians, and healthcare administration. Training programs are expected to grow by 10% annually to meet workforce needs by 2027.

Expansion of Retail Trade

Retail trade accounts for about 11% of total employment in rural counties like Rio Arriba, Taos, and Colfax, driven by consistent consumer demand and local tourism. Despite fluctuations in the broader economy, the retail sector in these areas has remained resilient. Taos County alone experienced a 4.7% growth in retail employment in 2023. However, consumer confidence and disposable income levels in the region are fragile, requiring workforce planning that accounts for economic volatility. Retail remains a key entry point for many in the local workforce, and the NALWDB is exploring workforce development initiatives to support customer service training and small business entrepreneurship programs.

Emergence of Information Technology and Professional Services

In Los Alamos County, IT and professional services have become pivotal to the local economy, driven by proximity to the Los Alamos National Laboratory. The sector has grown by 8.5% annually over the past five years, making it one of the region's fastest-growing fields. High-paying jobs in software development, cybersecurity, and data analysis are fueling demand for a STEM-educated workforce. Currently, 15% of all new jobs in Los Alamos County are in IT or professional services, with projected growth expected to continue. The NALWDB is aligning its training programs with

local industry needs by offering specialized certifications in high-demand fields, including IT project management, software development, and systems engineering.

Challenges in Traditional Sectors (Mining and Construction)

Mining, once a dominant industry in counties like Rio Arriba and San Juan, has seen a steep decline, reducing its contribution to the local economy by 20% over the past five years. This downturn has led to a sharp decrease in mining-related employment, with 2,000 jobs lost since 2020 in Rio Arriba County alone. Similarly, the construction sector has experienced mixed results, with growth primarily in Santa Fe and McKinley counties, while Mora and Colfax counties saw a 6% decline in construction employment in 2023, exacerbated by the aftermath of the Hermits Peak Fire and inconsistent public infrastructure investments. The NALWDB is focusing on transitioning workers from mining and construction into sectors like heavy equipment operation and CDL training, with an emphasis on upskilling and cross-training displaced workers.

Unemployment and Employment Dynamics

Unemployment trends vary significantly across the region. As of mid-2024, the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions reports:

- The Santa Fe MSA reported one of the lowest unemployment rates in the state at 3.1%, largely due to recovery in sectors like healthcare, education, and leisure.
- The Farmington MSA, encompassing much of San Juan County, saw an uptick in unemployment to 6.5%, driven by continued declines in the manufacturing and construction industries.
- McKinley County's unemployment rate has improved to 4.8% as the healthcare sector expanded and more residents were employed in social assistance programs.
- Rio Arriba and Mora counties continue to struggle, with unemployment rates hovering around 5.7% and 6.1%, respectively, due to job losses in mining and public sector jobs.
- The statewide unemployment average for New Mexico is 4.3%, highlighting the uneven recovery across the NALWDB region.

Strategic Implications for Workforce Planning

Given the diverse economic conditions across the NALWDB region, a strategic, data-driven approach to workforce planning is essential. Labor Market Information (LMI) from the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions supports the following priorities for the 2024-2027 local plan:

Targeted Workforce Development

Focus on growth sectors like healthcare, education, and leisure, particularly in Santa Fe County, where these industries are expanding. Developing and expanding training programs aligned with these sectors will maximize employment opportunities.

Example: In McKinley County, where healthcare has seen a 20% increase in workforce demand, targeted investment in healthcare training programs will address shortages in qualified healthcare professionals.

Addressing Economic Disparities

Tailored interventions are necessary for areas like the Farmington MSA, where unemployment is rising due to industrial decline. Workforce development efforts should focus on upskilling workers from declining industries, such as mining, and transitioning them into growing fields like healthcare and IT.

Example: In San Juan County, where mining jobs are in decline, expanding CDL and heavy equipment training programs will help displaced workers transition into transportation and logistics sectors.

Leveraging Additional Funding

Securing additional funding sources, such as the \$50,000 W.K. Kellogg Foundation grant, will be vital in filling gaps left by fluctuations in federal WIOA funding. This funding will support efforts like the annual workforce development conference and initiatives addressing employment barriers.

Example: In McKinley County, where job seekers face significant barriers, using the grant to facilitate document drives will help unemployed individuals access job opportunities more efficiently.

Continuous Monitoring and Adaptation

Ongoing LMI analysis is crucial for adapting workforce strategies in response to economic shifts. The NALWDB will collaborate with the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions to regularly update its understanding of labor market trends and adjust its training and service offerings accordingly.

Example: In Los Alamos County, monitoring the growth of the IT sector will allow the NALWDB to develop specific training programs for high-demand occupations, ensuring that the local workforce is equipped with the necessary skills to meet employer needs.

Building a Resilient Workforce for Northern New Mexico

The NALWDB region is characterized by a dynamic economic landscape, with both growth opportunities and challenges. Sectors such as healthcare, retail, and professional services are driving economic expansion, while traditional industries like mining and construction face volatility. To address these varied economic conditions, the NALWDB must prioritize targeted workforce development, particularly in emerging industries, while supporting regions affected by industrial decline.

By leveraging funding from grants and continuously monitoring LMI data, the NALWDB can adapt its strategies to the region's evolving needs, ensuring a resilient, inclusive, and future-ready workforce for Northern New Mexico.

§679.580(b) (2)(ii)

Funding

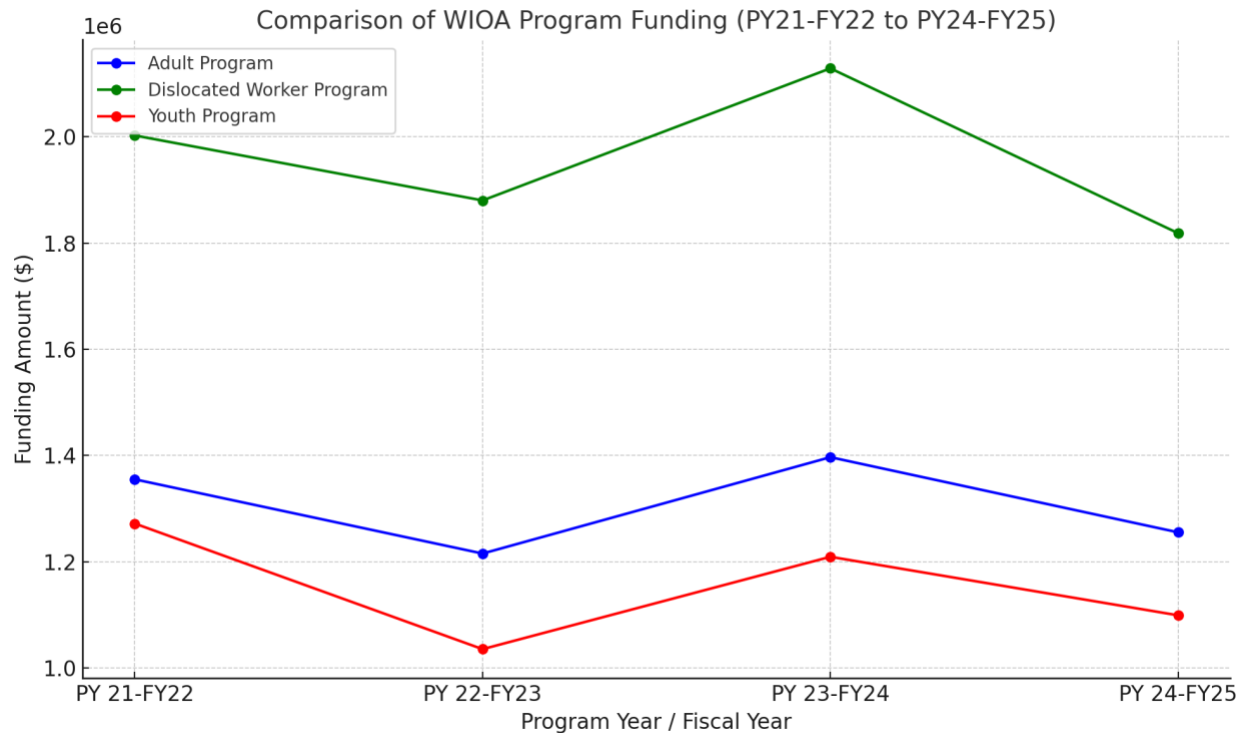
Explanation of Changes in Financing for WIOA Title I and Partner-Provided WIOA Services:

As part of the 2024-2027 Local Plan, it is crucial to outline the changes in financing that will impact Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I and partner-provided services in the Northern Area Local Workforce Region. This explanation considers the adjustments in federal and state funding, the role of partner resources, and strategic financial planning to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of workforce services in the region.

Below is a detailed table outlining the funding allocations for the **Adult, Dislocated Worker**, and **Youth** programs across Program Years (PY) and Fiscal Years (FY) from **PY21-FY22** to **PY24-FY25**.

Program	PY 21 - FY 22	PY 22 - FY 23	PY 23 - FY 24	PY 24 - FY 25
Adult Program	\$1,355,249	\$1,215,559	\$1,396,945	\$1,255,483
Dislocated Worker	\$2,002,554	\$1,880,275	\$2,128,924	\$1,818,621
Youth Program	\$1,271,991	\$1,035,597	\$1,209,445	\$1,099,273

This table provides an overview of the funding trends for each program, reflecting the financial resources allocated to support workforce development efforts across Northern New Mexico for PY21 through PY24. If you need further breakdowns or adjustments, let me know!



The charts above reflect funding trends for the **Adult**, **Dislocated Worker**, and **Youth** programs over four program years (PY21-FY22 to PY24-FY25). These trends highlight the changes in financial allocations that will influence the delivery of services under WIOA Title I.

Adult Program Funding:

- Trend: Funding for the Adult Program has shown a gradual decrease over the years, with a significant reduction of -\$141,462 projected for PY24-FY25.
- Outlook: The consistent reduction in Adult Program funding will require NALWDB to efficiently manage resources to maintain essential workforce services, such as job seeker training and support. Strategic partnerships and the pursuit of additional funding sources will be critical to mitigate the impact of the ongoing funding cuts.

Dislocated Worker Program Funding:

- Trend: The Dislocated Worker Program has also experienced a gradual decrease in funding, with a projected reduction of -\$310,303 for PY24-FY25.
- Outlook: The ongoing decline in Dislocated Worker Program funding emphasizes the need for targeted outreach and resource efficiency. NALWDB will continue to focus on providing access to training for displaced workers, particularly in high-demand sectors such as IT, healthcare, and trades, to address the impact of reduced financial support.

Youth Program Funding:

- Trend: The Youth Program has seen steady reductions in funding over the years, with the largest decrease of -\$110,172 expected in PY24-FY25.
- Outlook: The consistent decline in Youth Program funding highlights the importance of exploring alternative funding sources and forming new partnerships, such as public-private collaborations and grant opportunities. Despite the reductions, NALWDB will prioritize initiatives like summer academies, work-based learning, and collaborations with local schools to ensure continued support for youth workforce readiness.

WIOA Title, I Funding Adjustments

Federal Budget Allocations:

- The federal government periodically adjusts its budget allocations for WIOA Title I programs based on economic conditions, workforce needs, and legislative priorities. For the 2024-2025 period, changes in the federal budget may lead to shifts in the amount of funding available for Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs under Title I. These adjustments could necessitate a review of resource allocation to ensure priority areas receive sufficient support, potentially impacting the scope and scale of services provided.

State Funding Contributions:

- The State of New Mexico plays a crucial role in supplementing federal WIOA funds through its budgetary process. Any changes in state-level contributions could affect the overall funding landscape. Close monitoring of these contributions is essential, as variations may influence the ability to maintain or expand current service levels, especially in areas of high need.

Partner-Provided WIOA Services

Leveraging Partner Resources:

- WIOA emphasizes collaboration with partner agencies to deliver comprehensive services. Changes in the funding levels or financial stability of these partners could affect the availability and quality of services. For example, if a partner organization faces budget cuts or funding reallocations, it might reduce its capacity to deliver services, impacting participants who rely on a network of support.
- **W.K. Kellogg Foundation Grant:**
 - The W.K. Kellogg Foundation has awarded the Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB) a grant of \$50,000 for the period of May 1, 2024, through April 30, 2026. This grant is aimed at addressing barriers to employment in

Northwest New Mexico by leveraging networks, collaborations, and resources. The funding will support initiatives such as facilitating a document drive and hosting an annual conference, which are critical to enhancing workforce services in the region.

- **Northern New Mexico Workforce Integration Network (WIN):**
 - WIN is a key partner in the region, receiving a \$6.4 million American Rescue Plan Good Jobs Challenge grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA). This grant is focused on transforming and diversifying the regional economy by building a robust workforce in healthcare and skilled trades. WIN's role in providing wrap-around services and direct training opportunities complements NALWDB's efforts, especially in supporting un- and underemployed adults through resources like transportation, childcare, and other support services that ensure participants stay on track toward their employment goals.
- **County Partnerships:**
 - NALWDB continues to collaborate with counties within its region to secure additional funding to support areas where WIOA funds may be insufficient. These partnerships are vital in supplementing the resources needed to deliver comprehensive workforce services, particularly in underserved areas or for specialized programs. Ongoing collaboration with county governments ensures that NALWDB can maintain and expand its service offerings even in the face of By addressing these changes in financing, the 2024-2027 Local Plan ensures that WIOA Title I and partner-provided services, including those supported by WIN and other partners, remain responsive, effective, and sustainable, even as funding landscapes evolve.
- **HED: Adult Education/WIOA Title II**

The Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB) collaborates with Adult Education programs across the northern region, recognizing them as a core partner under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Sharing common goals, target populations, and performance metrics, these Adult Education services form a foundational part of the workforce system. Adult Education programs serve individuals aged 16 and older who need support to improve core academic and workplace readiness skills. Across the northern region, they provide education and training opportunities designed to help eligible New Mexicans enhance their skills, earn a High School Equivalency (HSE) credential, learn English as a Second Language (ESL), pursue higher education, and attain meaningful employment.

Strategic Financial Outlook:

As the funding landscape evolves, the NALWDB will implement strategic financial planning to navigate potential fluctuations in federal and state contributions, as well as partner-provided resources. This includes:

- **Maximizing Resource Efficiency:** Streamlining processes and reducing overhead to ensure that funding is directed toward high-impact services.
- **Leveraging Additional Funding:** Exploring new grants, public-private partnerships, and philanthropic contributions to supplement existing funding, such as the W.K. Kellogg Foundation grant and the WIN partnership.
- **Contingency Planning:** Preparing for various funding scenarios to protect essential services and adjust resource allocation based on available financial support.

By focusing on these strategies, the NALWDB will ensure that workforce services remain resilient, inclusive, and responsive to the region’s evolving economic needs.

§679.580(b)(2)(iii)

Board Structure Updates

Any changes to the LWDB structure, including membership and committees. Changes to the LWDB Structure, Including Membership and Committees

SEE ATTACHMENT

§679.580(b)(2)(iv)

Performance Updates

- (a) Include an update to Attachment E of this document to reflect negotiated performance measures for PYs 2024 and 2025.**

Attachment E for Program Years (PY) 2024 and 2025, the Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB) is in the process of finalizing its performance targets in collaboration with the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (NMDWS). The ongoing negotiations will ensure that these measures reflect both local workforce needs and state-wide priorities, aligning with the goals of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

- (b) Include a chart of past, current, and expected service levels for Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth for PYs 2020 and 2023.**

The chart below summarizes the past, current, and expected service levels for Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs in the Northern Area for PYs 2022, 2023, and projected levels for PYs 2024-2025.

Program	Performance Measure	Negotiated (2022-2023)	PY 2022 Actual	PY 2023 Actual	PY 2022 Status	PY 2023 Status	PY 2024
Adult	Employed in Q2	75.0	68.29	75.18	Failed	Exceeded	79%
Adult	Median Wages in Q2	7100.0	7775.0	9798.0	Exceeded	Exceeded	9,500
Adult	Employed in Q4	75.0	67.95	75.63	Failed	Exceeded	79%
Adult	Credential Attainment	67.0	67.35	56.67	Exceeded	Failed	68%
Adult	Measurable Skills Gains	65.0	66.88	76.64	Exceeded	Exceeded	76%
Dislocated Worker	Employed in Q2	70.0	70.83	80.39	Exceeded	Exceeded	79%
Dislocated Worker	Median Wages in Q2	7650.0	7336.0	9377.0	Failed	Exceeded	8,898
Dislocated Worker	Employed in Q4	73.0	71.17	79.61	Failed	Exceeded	78.5%
Dislocated Worker	Credential Attainment	60.0	70.42	61.19	Exceeded	Exceeded	65%
Dislocated Worker	Measurable Skills Gains	62.0	76.07	76.62	Exceeded	Exceeded	76%
Youth	Employed in Q2	66.0	72.5	75.82	Exceeded	Exceeded	70%

Youth	Median Wages in Q2	3400.0	3465.0	4502.0	Exceeded	Exceeded	4,300
Youth	Employed in Q4	65.0	72.51	76.04	Exceeded	Exceeded	72%
Youth	Credential Attainment	50.5	51.19	57.63	Exceeded	Exceeded	55%
Youth	Measurable Skills Gains	51.5	66.45	85.83	Exceeded	Exceeded	79%

The Performance Updates for PY2022 and PY2023, along with the outlook for the Local Plan Years 2024-2027, paint a clear picture of both successes and areas for improvement in the Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs. The past two years have seen significant progress in employment and wage outcomes, with a few challenges around credential attainment that will need to be addressed as the program moves forward into 2024 and beyond.

In the Adult program, while employed in Q2 and Median Wages in Q2 both exceeded targets in PY2023, the performance in Credential Attainment declined, falling short of the 67% target. The program exceeded the goal for Measurable Skills Gains in both PY2022 and PY2023, which indicates that participants are improving their skills, but translating those gains into recognized credentials remains a challenge. As the program looks toward the Local Plan Years 2024-2027, proposed targets for Employed in Q2 and Q4 have increased to 79%, with Median Wages set to rise to \$8,500. There will be a particular focus on improving Credential Attainment, with a target of 68%, while continuing to build on the success of Measurable Skills Gains with a proposed target of 68%.

For the Dislocated Worker program, there has been consistent strength in employment outcomes, with Employed in Q2 and Q4 both exceeding targets in PY2023. Wage outcomes also showed strong improvement, with Median Wages in Q2 increasing to \$9,377 in PY2023, well above the \$7,650 target. However, similar to the Adult program, Credential Attainment saw a decline in PY2023, falling short of the target. The Local Plan Years 2024-2027 will focus on maintaining strong performance in employment outcomes, with a proposed wage target of \$8,500 for Q2 wages. The target for Credential Attainment has been set at 65%, reflecting the need for focused efforts to ensure participants are not only gaining skills but also earning credentials. Measurable Skills Gains have remained strong and are expected to continue with a target of 72% in the coming years.

The Youth program has consistently performed well across all measures, with Employed in Q2 and Q4 both exceeding targets in PY2022 and PY2023. Median Wages in Q2 showed strong growth, increasing to \$4,502 in PY2023, surpassing the target of \$3,400. The Credential Attainment rate also improved, rising to 57.63% in PY2023, exceeding the 50.5% target, while Measurable Skills

Gains saw a substantial increase to 85.83%, far exceeding the target of 51.5%. The outlook for the Local Plan Years 2024-2027 builds on this success, with proposed targets of 70% for Employed in Q2 and 72% for Employed in Q4. Median Wages in Q2 are expected to rise to \$4,300, while Credential Attainment is targeted at 52%, with Measurable Skills Gains set at 55%.

Looking ahead to the Local Plan Years 2024-2027, the NALWDB will continue to leverage strong partnerships with local employers, training providers, and support networks like the Northern New Mexico Workforce Integration Network (WIN) to ensure continuous improvement. While Credential Attainment remains a challenge in some programs, the overall outlook is positive, with increased targets for employment and wages reflecting confidence in the region's growing workforce and economic opportunities. Enhanced youth outreach, employer engagement, and data-driven decision-making will help guide the region's workforce development efforts, ensuring that participants continue to achieve their career and independence goals across all sectors, including healthcare, IT, trades, and broadband expansion.

In summary, the performance over PY2022 and PY2023 has laid a solid foundation for the Local Plan Years 2024-2027, with strong wage and employment outcomes across all programs. Moving forward, the focus will be on maintaining this momentum, particularly in employment and wage gains, while addressing areas like Credential Attainment to ensure that participants are equipped with the qualifications needed to succeed in the evolving job market.

(c) Include changes in strategies to meet local performance goals, as well increased service levels.

To meet and exceed local performance goals, as well as increase service levels for the Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs, the Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB) has implemented several key strategy adjustments:

Strengthening Credential Attainment and Training Access

Challenges:

- In PY 2023, the Adult program experienced a decline in credential attainment, falling short of the 67% negotiated target, reaching only 56.67%.
- The Dislocated Worker program met its credential attainment target but still needs to increase support to help more participants gain certifications.

Strategy Adjustments:

- Expanded Short-Term Certification Programs: The NALWDB will increase partnerships with community colleges and vocational schools to provide more short-term certification courses. This will focus on sectors such as IT, healthcare, and trades. By offering flexible,

short-term programs, more participants will be able to complete certifications while balancing work or other commitments.

- **Enhanced Outreach to Dislocated Workers:** Increased focus on reaching dislocated workers who need certifications to re-enter high-demand fields like advanced manufacturing, CDL, and heavy equipment operations. Offering accelerated training options will help participants earn credentials faster.
- **Supportive Services for Certification Completion:** The NALWDB will allocate more funding for supportive services, such as childcare and transportation, to help participants complete their training programs. Additional case management services will ensure participants stay on track to complete credential programs.

Targeted Employment and Wage Growth Programs

Challenges:

- The Youth program and Dislocated Worker program both experienced wage growth, but further improvement is needed.

Strategy Adjustments:

- **Sector-Focused Career Pathways:** The NALWDB will develop career pathway initiatives focused on high-wage sectors such as IT, advanced manufacturing, and healthcare. These programs will provide participants with clearly defined paths from entry-level positions to higher-paying roles, with the goal of increasing both employment rates and median wages.
- **Increased Employer Partnerships:** NALWDB will work closely with local employers in high-demand sectors to develop customized on-the-job training (OJT) programs and apprenticeships. These partnerships will ensure participants gain the skills needed for specific roles while increasing employment opportunities.
- **Wage Incentives for Employers:** The NALWDB will explore offering wage subsidies or tax incentives to employers who hire participants and pay above the regional median wage in key sectors, encouraging higher earnings for workers in the region.

Enhancing Youth Engagement and Measurable Skills Gains

Challenges:

- Although the Youth program performed well in employment measures, continued improvement is needed in engaging youth in credential programs and measurable skills gains.

Strategy Adjustments:

- **Expanded Work-Based Learning Programs:** The NALWDB will expand apprenticeship and internship programs through partnerships with local businesses. Programs like the Summer and Winter Youth Academies will offer more youth opportunities for hands-on work experiences in sectors like healthcare, trades, and IT, increasing their measurable skills gains.
- **Career Readiness Workshops:** More emphasis will be placed on career readiness workshops in high schools, helping youth develop essential workplace skills early on. By partnering with Career Technical Education (CTE) programs and local school districts, youth will be better prepared to transition into employment or further training.

Leveraging Data-Driven Decision Making

Challenges:

- A need for improved alignment between training programs and local labor market needs was identified.

Strategy Adjustments:

- **Labor Market Analysis Integration:** The NALWDB will enhance its use of real-time labor market data to ensure that training programs align with the region's in-demand sectors. By regularly reviewing local employer needs and job market trends, the board can adjust its training offerings to ensure participants are gaining relevant skills for current job opportunities.
- **Participant Tracking Systems:** The NALWDB will implement more robust data tracking systems to monitor participant progress in real-time. This will allow case managers to provide timely support, ensuring participants meet credential attainment and measurable skills gains targets.

Increased Collaboration with Educational and Workforce Partners

Challenges:

- Coordination between workforce programs and educational institutions needs improvement to maximize training and employment outcomes.

Strategy Adjustments:

- **Strengthening Partnerships with Educational Institutions:** The NALWDB will deepen collaboration with local community colleges, technical schools, and adult education providers to co-design programs that meet the skill needs of local employers. These

partnerships will ensure that participants in Adult and Youth programs receive training aligned with job market demands.

- **Integrated Service Delivery:** To provide seamless services, the NALWDB will enhance integration between workforce services, UI programs, and WIOA partners. By aligning intake processes and case management systems, participants will receive quicker access to training and employment support.

Through these strategic changes, the NALWDB expects to meet and exceed local performance goals, while increasing service levels and improving outcomes across Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs for PY 2024.

Subsequent Local Board Certification

As a part of the local plan review process, NMDWS will review each local board to assess the extent to which the local board has ensured that workforce investment activities carried out in the local area have enabled the local area to:

- (i) meet the corresponding performance accountability measures, and**
- (ii) achieve sustained fiscal integrity, as defined by Section 106(e)(2). The term “sustained fiscal integrity,” used with respect to a local area, means the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor has not made a formal determination, during either of the last two consecutive years preceding the determination regarding such integrity, that either the grant recipient or the administrative entity of the area misexpended funds provided under WIOA Subtitle B due to willful disregard of the requirements of the provision involved, gross negligence, or failure to comply with accepted standards of administration.**

As part of the local plan review process, the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (NMDWS) will assess each local board to determine the extent to which the local board has ensured that workforce investment activities in the local area have enabled it to:

1. Meet the corresponding performance accountability measures.
2. Achieve sustained fiscal integrity, as defined by Section 106(e)(2). Sustained fiscal integrity means that the U.S. Department of Labor has not made a formal determination, during either of the last two consecutive years preceding the determination, that the grant recipient or the administrative entity of the area misexpended funds provided under WIOA Subtitle B due to willful disregard of the requirements of the provision involved, gross negligence, or failure to comply with accepted standards of administration.

Justification for Recertification of NALWDB

The Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB) has demonstrated consistent effectiveness in fulfilling its mission of enhancing workforce development in Northern New Mexico. The following points underscore why the NALWDB should be recertified:

1. Proven Track Record of Performance

The NALWDB has consistently met or exceeded key performance accountability measures, including employment rates, median earnings, credential attainment, and measurable skill gains across various participant categories (Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth). This consistent performance highlights the board's ability to deliver meaningful outcomes for job seekers and employers in the region, aligning with the expectations set forth by WIOA and NMDWS.

2. Sustained Fiscal Integrity

The NALWDB has maintained impeccable fiscal integrity, evidenced by clean audits with no findings of mismanagement or misexpenditure of funds. The board's fiscal management, supported by an experienced fiscal agent and rigorous oversight mechanisms, ensures that all funds are managed transparently and in compliance with federal and state regulations. This track record of responsible financial stewardship demonstrates that the NALWDB has not only complied with but excelled in maintaining the standards of fiscal integrity required for recertification.

3. Effective Strategic Planning and Execution

The NALWDB has demonstrated strong strategic planning capabilities, aligning its goals with the New Mexico Workforce State Plan for 2024-2027. The board's strategic initiatives, such as addressing workforce shortages in healthcare and infrastructure, increasing labor force participation, and preparing for future economic changes, reflect a proactive approach to workforce development. This strategic alignment ensures that the board's efforts contribute to both regional and statewide economic growth, a critical factor in achieving recertification.

4. Strong Partnerships and Collaboration

The NALWDB has established robust partnerships with key stakeholders, including local employers, educational institutions, community organizations, and government agencies. These collaborations enhance the board's ability to deliver comprehensive workforce services and respond effectively to the specific needs of the region. Notably, the partnership with the Northern New Mexico Workforce Integration Network (WIN), supported by a \$6.4 million grant, exemplifies the board's ability to leverage additional resources and expand service delivery, which is vital for meeting performance goals and maintaining certification.

5. Commitment to Continuous Improvement

The NALWDB is dedicated to continuous improvement in both service delivery and internal operations. This commitment is evident in the board's regular program evaluations, adjustments based on data-driven insights, and enhancements in monitoring capabilities. The recent increase in staff capacity for fiscal oversight and the adoption of innovative service delivery models further demonstrate the board's proactive approach to improvement, which is essential for sustaining high performance and achieving recertification.

6. Responsiveness to Regional Economic Needs

The NALWDB has shown a deep understanding of the unique economic conditions and workforce challenges in Northern New Mexico. The board's initiatives are tailored to address these specific needs, such as supporting rural communities, enhancing broadband access, and developing workforce solutions for high-demand sectors like healthcare and skilled trades. This responsiveness ensures that the board's efforts are directly contributing to the economic vitality and resilience of the region, aligning with the requirements for recertification.

7. Alignment with State and Federal Priorities

The NALWDB's strategic goals and operations are closely aligned with state and federal workforce development priorities. This alignment ensures that the board's programs not only address local needs but also contribute to broader economic objectives. Such alignment is crucial for ensuring that the board's efforts are part of a cohesive statewide strategy, a key factor in the recertification process.

The Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB) has clearly demonstrated its capacity to meet performance accountability measures and maintain sustained fiscal integrity, as required under WIOA. The board's proven performance, financial stewardship, strategic planning, strong partnerships, commitment to continuous improvement, responsiveness to regional needs, and alignment with state and federal priorities collectively justify its recertification. Continuing the NALWDB's certification is essential to maintaining and expanding its positive impact on Northern New Mexico's workforce and economy, ensuring the ongoing delivery of high-quality workforce development services in the region.

\$679.560(c)

IFA Update

Provide a copy of the local board infrastructure funding agreement (IFA). If the IFA is not yet completed, include a detailed description of the steps taken toward progress in completing the IFA, as well as an expected timeline for completion.

All Infrastructure Funding Agreements (IFAs) in the Northern Area have been agreed upon and signed by the core partners, demonstrating a collaborative and transparent approach to managing the shared costs of operating One-Stop centers. The Northern Area IFA is designed to ensure that infrastructure costs are equitably distributed among all partners based on their proportionate use and the relative benefits they receive from the services provided at the One-Stop centers.

Methodology for Cost Allocation

When developing the local IFA, the Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB) and partner agencies selected from various cost allocation methods that comply with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), its implementing regulations, and the Uniform Guidance, including federal cost principles. The selected methodologies were chosen to ensure fairness and transparency, focusing on cost categories that reflect the actual use and benefits received by each partner.

Infrastructure Costs Budget

The infrastructure costs budget is a critical component of the IFA and is included within the broader One-Stop operating budget. This budget outlines the costs associated with maintaining and operating the One-Stop centers, including utilities, rent, maintenance, and other necessary expenses. As mandated by WIOA, the infrastructure costs budget is also a required element of the local Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), ensuring that all parties are fully aware of and agree to their financial responsibilities.

Collaborative Decision-Making Process

To reach an agreement on the IFA, the Northern Area and its One-Stop partners engaged in a collaborative decision-making process. This process involved:

1. **Meeting to Determine the Infrastructure Costs Budget:** Partners convened to review and agree upon the overall budget for infrastructure costs. This included identifying all relevant expenses and determining how they should be allocated among the partners.
2. **Selecting Cost Allocation Methodologies:** The partners then discussed and selected the most reasonable and acceptable cost allocation methodologies. These methodologies were chosen based on their ability to effectively distribute costs according to the proportionate use and relative benefits each partner received from the One-Stop center services.
3. **Ensuring Transparency and Good Faith Negotiations:** Throughout the process, partners were committed to negotiating in good faith, maintaining an open and transparent environment. Full disclosure of all relevant costs and funding sources was a priority, ensuring that all partners had a clear understanding of their financial commitments.

The successful negotiation and signing of the IFAs by all core partners reflect the NALWDB's commitment to fostering a collaborative, transparent, and equitable approach to managing One-Stop infrastructure costs. This agreement ensures that the financial responsibilities of operating One-Stop centers are shared fairly among all partners, supporting the continued delivery of vital workforce services across the Northern Area. The established methodologies and transparent negotiation processes set a strong foundation for the ongoing partnership and operational stability of the One-Stop centers.

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WIOA Implementation Highlights

Include a section highlighting WIOA implementation accomplishments to date.

The Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB) has made remarkable progress in implementing the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) throughout Northern New Mexico. This progress reflects the board's commitment to improving workforce development services and ensuring sustainable employment for residents. Here is a summary of key accomplishments in the implementation of WIOA:

Achievement of Performance Measures

In Program Year (PY) 2023, the Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB) continued its upward trajectory, building on the success of PY 2022, where it met all 15 performance measures, a significant improvement from PY 2020, when only one measure was met. This achievement highlights the board's dedication to strategic planning, continuous improvement, and effective service delivery. In PY 2023, NALWDB maintained strong performance across key metrics, including surpassing employment targets in the Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs, with median earnings in the Adult Program exceeding \$10,000. Additionally, there was a notable improvement in credential attainment, driven by collaborations with educational institutions and the expansion of short-term credential programs. These accomplishments showcase NALWDB's commitment to fostering a skilled, resilient, and adaptable workforce, positioning the region for continued success in the 2024-2027 local plan. The board remains focused on sector-specific training, strengthening partnerships, and using performance data to meet the region's evolving workforce needs.

Expansion of Training Programs

The board has significantly expanded its training programs, targeting industries with high demand such as healthcare, skilled trades, and information technology (IT). By collaborating with partners like San Juan College and the Southwest Indian Foundation, specialized training in heavy equipment operation and welding has been made available, leading to greater employability for participants. In PY 2023, additional partnerships with the New Mexico School of Massage Therapy, Rio Arriba County, and Phoenix Truck Driving have broadened training opportunities.

Sector Strategy Development

The annual Northern Region Workforce Development Conference has become a cornerstone event in aligning sector strategies with WIOA's goals. In 2024, the conference brought together over 200 industry professionals, facilitating collaboration and knowledge-sharing across sectors like healthcare, hospitality, trades, and IT. This focus on practical solutions has led to significant advances in addressing workforce challenges across the region, with new projects such as the City of Española's police officer and firefighter training serving as prime examples of successful sector-focused initiatives.

Youth Engagement and Development

Youth engagement remains a priority for the NALWDB. Programs such as the 2023 Summer Youth Career Academy and partnerships with UNM Taos have provided young people with valuable work experience and job-ready skills. In PY 2023, the board expanded its youth programs, working with organizations like the Las Vegas Boys & Girls Club and launching cutting-edge training through the New Collar Network 3-D printing class at SFCC. These programs equip youth with skills needed for 21st-century careers.

Support with Targeted Initiatives

NALWDB has been proactive in supporting adults facing job displacement or transitioning from incarceration. Targeted initiatives, such as collaborations with local correctional facilities and employers, have provided critical job training and employment services. In PY 2023, programs like CDL training at the Grants Correctional Facility and the Culinary Arts program at Santa Fe Prison helped equip incarcerated individuals with the skills needed for successful workforce reentry.

Development of Key Partnerships

The NALWDB continues to develop strategic partnerships with businesses, educational institutions, and community organizations. Partnerships with organizations like the Greater Gallup Economic Development Corporation, the Southwest Indian Foundation, and various municipal governments have helped create job pipelines for local residents. In PY 2023, new partnerships with RV Transportation, Melloy Honda, and Earth Care have expanded opportunities for CDL training and work-based learning programs, further aligning workforce services with regional economic needs.

Continuous Improvement and Innovation

The NALWDB's commitment to continuous improvement and innovation has led to the implementation of new technologies and performance tracking systems. The integration of the Unite Us platform, in partnership with the Northern New Mexico Workforce Integration Network (WIN), has improved service coordination, making the delivery of workforce services more efficient and responsive. The board's ability to maintain high enrollment levels and achieve performance targets despite staffing challenges reflects its resilience and adaptability.

Key PY 2023 Projects and Accomplishments

- New Mexico School of Massage Therapy: NALWDB partnered with this new business in Santa Fe to offer training for 12 students.
- CDL Training with Rio Arriba County Government: 10 employees received CDL training through Phoenix Truck Driving, enhancing their job skills.
- UNM Taos Power Up Program: 29 out-of-school youth were enrolled, working toward their HiSET diploma.
- New Collar Network 3-D Printing Class at SFCC: Participants received advanced training in CAD Design and 3-D Printing as part of a 12-week bootcamp.
- Santa Fe Prison Culinary Arts Program: Inmates enrolled in the Culinary Arts certificate program, gaining skills that prepare them for employment upon release.
- San Juan College 5 enrolled registered medical assistants.

Through these projects, NALWDB achieved adult enrollment at 121% and dislocated worker enrollment at 86%, the highest in four years. This success is due to the board's strategic partnerships, commitment to innovation, and emphasis on workforce alignment.

The NALWDB's implementation of WIOA has resulted in transformative changes in Northern New Mexico's workforce landscape. Through expanded training programs, strategic partnerships, sector-based initiatives, and a focus on youth engagement and dislocated worker support, the board has made significant strides in building a resilient, skilled, and adaptable workforce. As the NALWDB continues to evolve its strategies in line with WIOA's goals, it remains a central force in driving workforce development and economic prosperity across the region.

By aligning workforce services with regional economic needs, fostering partnerships, and reaching underserved populations, the NALWDB ensures that the region's workforce is prepared to meet the challenges and opportunities of the future.

Plan Content

STRATEGIC PLANNING ELEMENTS

A. Economic and Workforce Analysis

The plan must describe the local board area's current economic and workforce conditions. Per §679.560(a)(1)(iii), as appropriate, a local area may use an existing analysis, which is a timely current description of the regional economy, to meet these requirements. Please indicate the source of any data used in your analysis.ⁱ

§679.560(a)(1)(i)

Include a regional analysis of economic conditions including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations.

§679.560(a)(1)(ii)

Include a regional analysis of employment needs of employers in existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations.

§679.560(a)(2)

Knowledge and skills needed to meet the employment needs of the employers in the region, including employment needs in in-demand industry sectors and occupations.

The Northern New Mexico region exhibits a diverse economic landscape, characterized by a blend of established industries and emerging sectors. This mix of economic drivers offers both opportunities for growth and challenges related to economic volatility and workforce alignment. Below is an expanded analysis that incorporates key employment data, industry trends, and skill requirements.

Northern New Mexico's economy is built on a diverse foundation of sectors, including retail trade, construction, healthcare, accommodation and food services, CDL and heavy equipment, **and** skilled trades. These industries provide employment opportunities across urban and rural areas, with growth projected in construction, healthcare, and trades due to infrastructure and renewable energy projects. Meeting the workforce needs in these sectors will require continued investment in

education, vocational training, and workforce development initiatives to ensure that the region's workforce can meet future demand.

Retail Trade

Retail trade remains a cornerstone industry in several counties across Northern New Mexico, including Rio Arriba, Taos, and McKinley. This sector supports both local small businesses and larger retail chains, contributing significantly to the local economy.

Rio Arriba County: Retail trade accounted for 31% of total Monthly Taxable Gross Receipts (MTGR) in Q3 FY24, highlighting its importance in local economic activity.

Taos County: Retail trade, alongside construction and accommodation/food services, contributed to 63% of the county's MTGR, further showcasing its role in the economy, especially in tourist-heavy areas.

Construction

The construction sector in Northern New Mexico shows both growth and challenges, with some counties seeing a surge in construction activities while others experience declines.

- Taos County: A 13% year-over-year increase in MTGR reflects strong construction activity driven by housing projects and infrastructure development.
- Mora and Colfax Counties: These counties reported year-over-year declines in construction activity, down 15% and 24%, respectively. This fluctuation is often tied to broader economic factors such as public infrastructure investments and market conditions.

Construction employment is projected to grow by 18% over the next decade, driven by large infrastructure projects, renewable energy developments, and housing construction.

Healthcare and Social Assistance

Healthcare is one of the most dynamic sectors in Northern New Mexico, particularly in rural areas like Cibola and McKinley counties. The region's aging population and increased access to healthcare services are driving demand for healthcare professionals.

- Cibola County: Experienced a 42% year-over-year increase in MTGR from the healthcare sector, largely due to increased healthcare needs and expanded service availability.
- McKinley County: Reported a 37% increase in healthcare-related MTGR, highlighting the sector's growth.

Healthcare contributes 15% of total employment in the region, with high demand for roles such as registered nurses (RNs), certified nursing assistants (CNAs), and medical technicians. Employment in healthcare is expected to grow by 22% by 2030.

Accommodation and Food Services

Tourism-driven counties like Taos and Colfax rely heavily on the accommodation and food services sector. As the region continues to attract visitors due to its cultural heritage and natural beauty, this sector remains critical for employment and local revenue generation.

- Colfax County: The accommodation and food services sector became the largest contributor to MTGR in Q3 FY24, accounting for 29% of the county's total, up from 16% in the previous quarter.

Employment in this sector is projected to grow by 15% over the next decade, driven by the region's tourism growth and recovery post-pandemic. Key occupations include hospitality managers, food service workers, and retail staff.

CDL and Heavy Equipment

The CDL (Commercial Driver's License) and Heavy Equipment sector plays a vital role in Northern New Mexico, particularly in supporting transportation, logistics, construction, and renewable energy projects.

- Rio Arriba County: Local governments and private employers are increasingly seeking CDL-trained drivers to manage transport and delivery needs. CDL training programs are expanding to meet these demands, particularly for public sector roles.
- Heavy Equipment Operators: These operators are critical for public infrastructure projects such as road maintenance and construction, renewable energy installations, and other large-scale infrastructure efforts. Key equipment includes bulldozers, cranes, and excavators, with ongoing demand for certified operators.
- Employment Growth: The demand for CDL drivers and heavy equipment operators is expected to grow by 10-15% over the next decade, driven by infrastructure development and transportation logistics related to both public and private sector projects.

This sector is also closely tied to the region's growing renewable energy projects, where heavy equipment operators are needed for the construction and maintenance of solar farms and wind energy installations.

Trades (Skilled Trades)

The Trades sector, including carpentry, plumbing, welding, and electrical work, is a critical driver of economic growth in Northern New Mexico. The construction boom, infrastructure projects, and the demand for residential and commercial building renovations have significantly boosted employment in the skilled trades.

- Santa Fe and Taos Counties: These counties are seeing high demand for trades professionals due to ongoing infrastructure and housing projects. Apprenticeships and trade schools are vital pipelines for filling these roles, offering workers hands-on experience and specialized certifications.

- **Employment Growth:** Employment in the skilled trades sector is expected to grow by 10-12% over the next decade, driven by an increase in construction projects, demand for housing, and a shift toward more sustainable building practices.
- **Key Occupations:**
 - **Carpenters:** Essential for framing, structural work, and finishing projects.
 - **Electricians:** Required for electrical installations and maintenance in both residential and commercial construction.
 - **Plumbers:** Needed for infrastructure work related to water systems, heating, and gas installations.
 - **Welders:** Integral to construction, industrial, and energy projects, particularly those related to renewable energy and infrastructure upgrades.

The trades sector is characterized by a demand for certifications, hands-on experience, and the ability to adapt to changing technologies and construction practices.

Emerging Industry Sectors in Northern New Mexico

In addition to well-established industries, several emerging sectors are poised to drive future economic growth in Northern New Mexico. These sectors, particularly those aligned with technological innovation and sustainability, present opportunities for job creation and regional economic diversification.

Renewable Energy

Northern New Mexico is experiencing increased interest and investment in renewable energy, particularly solar and wind energy projects. The region's natural resources, including its abundant sunshine and favorable wind conditions, make it an ideal location for renewable energy development.

Growth Drivers

- **State and Federal Incentives:** New Mexico's commitment to achieving renewable energy targets, supported by both state and federal incentives, has accelerated the growth of this sector.
- **Environmental Sustainability:** Growing global demand for clean energy solutions is driving investments in solar and wind power, creating job opportunities for those with specialized skills in energy production, installation, and maintenance.

Key Occupations

- **Solar Panel Installers:** The demand for solar installers is expected to grow by 30% by 2030, driven by residential, commercial, and utility-scale solar projects.
- **Wind Turbine Technicians:** Wind energy projects, particularly in rural counties, are creating job opportunities for technicians responsible for installing and maintaining wind turbines.

- **Renewable Energy Engineers:** Engineers with expertise in renewable systems design, energy storage, and grid integration are increasingly needed to manage large-scale projects.

Skills and Knowledge Needed

- Proficiency in solar energy systems and wind turbine technology.
- Technical certifications from organizations like the North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners (NABCEP).
- Strong understanding of electrical systems, mechanical components, and renewable energy safety protocols.

Information Technology (IT)

The Information Technology (IT) sector in Northern New Mexico is rapidly growing, driven by investments in broadband expansion, cybersecurity, and digital infrastructure. Los Alamos County is emerging as a hub for IT and professional services, owing to its proximity to research institutions like the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL).

Growth Drivers

- **Broadband Expansion:** Efforts to expand broadband access, particularly in rural areas, are driving demand for IT professionals who can install, manage, and maintain digital networks.
- **Cybersecurity:** With the increasing threat of cyberattacks, there is a rising need for cybersecurity professionals to protect sensitive data and systems in both public and private sectors.

Key Occupations

- **Network Administrators:** As broadband infrastructure expands, network administrators are needed to manage and secure these systems. Salaries for network administrators average \$67,000 annually, with significant demand across urban and rural areas.
- **Cybersecurity Specialists:** Cybersecurity is a critical area of growth, with specialists earning an average salary of \$92,000. Demand for these roles is projected to grow by 25% over the next decade.
- **IT Support Specialists:** With businesses increasingly relying on digital infrastructure, IT support professionals are essential for troubleshooting and maintaining computer systems.

Skills and Knowledge Needed

- Proficiency in networking and systems administration, including knowledge of protocols like TCP/IP.
- Certifications such as CompTIA Network+, Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA), and CompTIA Security+.
- Expertise in cybersecurity protocols, data protection, and ethical hacking.

Film and Digital Media

Northern New Mexico has seen growth in the film and digital media industry, particularly in areas such as Santa Fe and Taos. The region's unique landscapes and cultural appeal have made it an attractive location for filmmakers and digital content creators.

Growth Drivers

- **Film Production Incentives:** New Mexico offers generous tax incentives for film and digital media production, attracting both large studios and independent filmmakers to the region.
- **Streaming Services and Digital Content:** The rise of streaming platforms has increased demand for content production, with many filmmakers choosing Northern New Mexico as a backdrop for movies, TV shows, and digital series.

Key Occupations

- **Film Production Crew:** Technicians, camera operators, lighting experts, and sound engineers are in demand as film and TV production increases in the state.
- **Digital Media Specialists:** With the rise of digital platforms, there is a growing need for professionals who can manage video editing, graphic design, and multimedia production.
- **Location Managers:** Location scouting and management are critical for ensuring film productions run smoothly, with particular demand for those familiar with Northern New Mexico's diverse landscapes.

Skills and Knowledge Needed

- Expertise in film production techniques, including camera operation, lighting, and sound engineering.
- Proficiency in digital media software such as Adobe Creative Suite for video editing, graphic design, and animation.
- Knowledge of New Mexico's film industry regulations and location management.

Advanced Manufacturing

The advanced manufacturing sector is emerging as a key area of economic growth in Northern New Mexico, particularly in Los Alamos and Santa Fe counties. This sector encompasses industries such as 3D printing, aerospace, and renewable energy component manufacturing.

Growth Drivers

- **Technological Innovation:** The integration of cutting-edge technologies like 3D printing and robotics is transforming the manufacturing landscape, allowing companies to produce high-tech components locally.

- **Renewable Energy Manufacturing:** As the renewable energy sector grows, so does the demand for locally manufactured components, such as solar panels and wind turbine parts.

Key Occupations

- **3D Printing Technicians:** Workers skilled in additive manufacturing are increasingly needed for producing parts and components used in various industries, including aerospace and healthcare.
- **Robotics Technicians:** As automation becomes more prevalent, technicians with expertise in robotics and automation systems are required to maintain and operate high-tech manufacturing equipment.
- **CNC Machinists:** Computer Numerical Control (CNC) machinists are in demand to operate precision machinery used in advanced manufacturing.

Skills and Knowledge Needed

- Knowledge of additive manufacturing techniques, particularly 3D printing technologies.
- Proficiency in operating CNC machines and robotic systems used in automated production.
- Technical certifications in manufacturing processes and quality control.

Biotechnology

The biotechnology sector is a growing field in Northern New Mexico, with emerging opportunities related to healthcare, agricultural technology, and environmental science. Proximity to research institutions like Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) and the University of New Mexico is driving innovation and commercialization of biotech solutions.

Growth Drivers

- **Research and Development (R&D):** Investment in biotech R&D, particularly in medical and environmental applications, is creating opportunities for companies to develop new products and technologies.
- **Public Health and Agriculture:** Biotechnology's role in improving healthcare outcomes and advancing agricultural practices is creating demand for skilled workers.

Key Occupations

- **Biotech Researchers:** Professionals with expertise in genomics, microbiology, and molecular biology are needed to work on new medical treatments and agricultural technologies.

- **Lab Technicians:** Technicians skilled in operating biotechnology equipment and conducting experiments are in demand across medical and research laboratories.
- **Environmental Biologists:** As the focus on sustainability grows, environmental biologists are needed to develop biotech solutions for clean energy, water management, and climate resilience.

Skills and Knowledge Needed

- Strong foundation in biological sciences, including genetics, biochemistry, and molecular biology.
- Proficiency in laboratory techniques and biotechnology tools.
- Knowledge of regulatory frameworks governing biotech research and commercialization.

Northern New Mexico is witnessing the rise of several emerging industries that are poised to drive future economic growth. From renewable energy and information technology to film production and biotechnology, these sectors offer new opportunities for job creation and economic diversification. Meeting the workforce demands of these industries will require investments in education, technical training, and skills development to ensure that workers in the region are prepared to participate in these rapidly growing sectors.

Existing In-Demand Industry Sectors and Employment Needs

Employers in Northern New Mexico are looking for workers who possess a mix of technical expertise, industry-recognized certifications, and strong soft skills. Meeting the employment needs of these sectors requires continuous investment in education, vocational training, and partnerships between employers, educational institutions, and workforce development programs. From healthcare and IT to construction and renewable energy, the region's workforce must adapt to evolving industry demands and equip itself with both specialized technical skills and essential interpersonal abilities to ensure sustainable employment and economic growth.

Healthcare

The healthcare sector is the fastest-growing industry in Northern New Mexico, driven by an aging population and increased access to healthcare services. Healthcare employers in both urban and rural counties face workforce shortages, particularly in specialized roles.

Employment Needs

- **Registered Nurses (RNs):** With a projected growth rate of 22% by 2030, RNs remain one of the most in-demand healthcare occupations. Employers are seeking nurses for hospitals, clinics, long-term care facilities, and home healthcare.

- **Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs):** CNAs are critical for supporting patient care in long-term care settings and rehabilitation centers, with over 600 job openings projected annually.
- **Behavioral Health Specialists:** As mental health services become more integrated into primary care, there is a growing demand for behavioral health professionals, particularly in underserved rural areas such as McKinley and Cibola counties.

Skills Needed

- Clinical skills, including patient care, diagnostics, and administering medication.
- Knowledge of electronic health records (EHR) and telehealth technology.
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills, particularly for patient-facing roles.

Construction and Skilled Trades

Construction continues to be a significant employer in Northern New Mexico, especially in Santa Fe and Taos counties, where public infrastructure projects and housing developments are driving demand. The renewable energy industry, particularly solar and wind energy projects, is also fueling demand for workers with construction-related skills.

Employment Needs

- **Electricians:** There is growing demand for electricians to work on both public infrastructure and renewable energy installations, with 450 job openings annually.
- **Plumbers and Pipefitters:** The need for skilled plumbers is projected to grow, particularly in housing and commercial development projects. Around 300 job openings are expected annually, with wages averaging \$54,000 per year.
- **Heavy Equipment Operators:** As infrastructure development accelerates, heavy equipment operators are in demand for road construction, renewable energy installations, and large-scale construction projects.

Skills Needed

- Technical skills in reading blueprints, electrical systems, and plumbing infrastructure.
- Knowledge of safety regulations, including OSHA standards.
- Experience with heavy machinery for infrastructure projects.

Government and Education

Government services and education remain vital sectors in Northern New Mexico, providing stable employment in areas such as Santa Fe (the state capital) and Farmington. Educational institutions are experiencing workforce shortages, particularly for specialized roles in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields.

Employment Needs

- **K-12 Teachers:** There is a consistent need for teachers in rural and underserved areas, particularly in special education and STEM subjects. The demand for teachers is projected to grow by 5% by 2030.
- **Public Administrators:** Local and tribal governments are in need of professionals to manage public services, budgets, and program operations, with an estimated 200 job openings annually.
- **Special Education Teachers:** Special education remains a critical need across the region, especially in rural districts with limited resources for students with disabilities.

Skills Needed

- Instructional skills, particularly in STEM and special education.
- Administrative and budgeting skills for government roles.
- Cultural competency and communication skills, especially in multilingual communities.

Tourism and Hospitality

The tourism and hospitality sector is a key economic driver for counties like Taos and Colfax, which depend heavily on seasonal tourism. As the region recovers from the pandemic, there is a growing demand for workers to support hospitality, accommodation, and retail services.

Employment Needs

- **Hotel and Resort Managers:** As tourism rebounds, there is increased demand for managers to oversee hotel operations and guest services.
- **Food Service Workers:** Restaurants, hotels, and resorts are looking for chefs, line cooks, and food service staff, with 1,000 job openings expected annually due to turnover and demand growth.
- **Retail Workers:** With tourist traffic increasing in cities like Taos, retail establishments are seeking workers who can manage operations, assist customers, and sell local products.

Skills Needed

- Customer service and hospitality management skills.
- Food safety certifications for chefs and food service staff.
- Strong communication and teamwork abilities to interact with guests.

Renewable Energy

Northern New Mexico is becoming a hub for renewable energy, particularly in solar and wind power. Investments in clean energy infrastructure are creating new opportunities for skilled labor in installation, maintenance, and management of renewable energy systems.

Employment Needs

- **Solar Panel Installers:** Solar energy projects across the region require skilled installers to meet growing demand. Employment in this occupation is projected to grow by 30% by 2030.
- **Wind Turbine Technicians:** Wind energy projects in rural areas such as Colfax and McKinley counties are driving demand for wind turbine maintenance technicians. Technicians in this field earn around \$56,000 per year.

Skills Needed

- Technical expertise in renewable energy systems, including solar panels and wind turbines.
- Knowledge of electrical systems and renewable energy installation.
- Certifications in renewable energy technologies and safety protocols.

Information Technology (IT)

The IT sector is rapidly growing in counties like Los Alamos, driven by investments in broadband expansion, cybersecurity, and digital infrastructure. Employers in this field are looking for workers with advanced technical skills to support the region's transition into a more digital economy.

Employment Needs

Network Administrators: With the expansion of broadband infrastructure, there is a need for network administrators to install, maintain, and secure these systems. Salaries average \$67,000 per year, with around 200 job openings annually.

- **Cybersecurity Specialists:** As businesses and government agencies prioritize data protection, demand for cybersecurity professionals is expected to grow by 25% by 2030. Cybersecurity specialists in Northern New Mexico can earn upwards of \$92,000 per year.
- **IT Support Specialists:** Businesses across industries are seeking IT support staff to manage networks, troubleshoot issues, and maintain computer systems.

Skills Needed

- Proficiency in networking technologies, cybersecurity protocols, and digital infrastructure management.
- Certifications such as CompTIA Security+, CompTIA Network+, and Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA).

- Analytical and problem-solving skills to manage IT challenges and maintain network security.

Cross-Sector Employment Needs

Soft Skills

- In addition to technical and industry-specific skills, employers across Northern New Mexico consistently emphasize the need for soft skills that are transferable across sectors.
- Communication Skills: Effective communication is critical across sectors like healthcare, tourism, and IT, where clear interaction with patients, customers, and team members is essential.
- Teamwork and Collaboration: Employers value employees who can work well with others, collaborate on projects, and adapt to team dynamics.
- Problem-Solving and Critical Thinking: Analytical thinking and problem-solving skills are in high demand, particularly in IT and construction, where troubleshooting complex issues is a key part of the job.

Northern New Mexico's employers across various sectors are increasingly looking for workers with specific technical knowledge, certifications, and soft skills to meet the region's growing demands. The following is an analysis of the knowledge and skills needed to fill employment gaps in both established and emerging industries in the region.

Healthcare Sector

Key Occupations:

- Registered Nurses (RNs)
- Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs)
- Medical Assistants
- Behavioral Health Specialists
- Healthcare Administrators

Knowledge and Skills Needed

- Clinical Skills: Strong foundational knowledge in patient care, medical procedures, diagnostics, and administering medications. Healthcare workers must be proficient in understanding anatomy, physiology, and nursing principles.
- Electronic Health Records (EHR) Systems: Healthcare professionals must be proficient in EHR systems for managing patient data, ensuring compliance with healthcare regulations, and maintaining patient confidentiality.

- **Behavioral Health Knowledge:** With the increasing need for mental health services, behavioral health professionals require expertise in counseling, crisis intervention, and substance abuse treatment, particularly in rural and underserved areas of the region.
- **Communication Skills:** Strong interpersonal and communication skills are essential for healthcare professionals to effectively interact with patients, families, and colleagues in high-stress environments.
- **Certifications:** RNs, CNAs, and medical assistants need relevant certifications and licensure (e.g., state nursing licensure for RNs, CNA certifications, medical assistant certifications).

Construction and Skilled Trades

Key Occupations:

- Electricians
- Plumbers and Pipefitters
- Carpenters
- Welders
- Heavy Equipment Operators

Knowledge and Skills Needed

- **Technical Proficiency:** Workers in skilled trades must possess knowledge in specific areas such as electrical systems, plumbing infrastructure, carpentry, and welding techniques. Understanding blueprints, technical drawings, and engineering plans is critical.
- **Certifications and Licensing:** Many roles require certifications, including Journeyman Electrician or Master Plumber licenses, as well as specific welding certifications. Workers must also comply with safety standards like OSHA certifications.
- **Mechanical Skills:** Heavy equipment operators must have advanced mechanical and operational skills to handle complex machinery like bulldozers, cranes, and excavators for infrastructure and construction projects.
- **Problem-Solving:** Workers must troubleshoot and resolve issues that arise during projects, particularly in trades like plumbing and electrical work where installation and repairs are complex.
- **Safety Compliance:** Construction workers must be knowledgeable about workplace safety, personal protective equipment (PPE) requirements, and environmental regulations to prevent accidents on job sites.

Information Technology (IT) Sector

Key Occupations:

- Network Administrators
- Cybersecurity Specialists
- IT Support Specialists
- Software Developers

Knowledge and Skills Needed

Networking and Systems Administration: IT professionals must be proficient in managing and maintaining local area networks (LANs), wide area networks (WANs), and cloud-based systems. Knowledge of networking protocols, such as TCP/IP, and hardware components is essential.

- **Cybersecurity:** With the rise of digital services, employers seek cybersecurity professionals skilled in securing networks, preventing cyber threats, and conducting ethical hacking. Certifications such as CompTIA Security+, Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP), and Certified Ethical Hacker (CEH) are highly valuable.
- **Programming and Software Development:** Developers need proficiency in programming languages like Java, Python, and C++, as well as knowledge of application development, software testing, and system integration.
- **Problem-Solving and Analytical Thinking:** IT workers need strong analytical skills to troubleshoot system failures, manage IT infrastructure issues, and prevent security breaches. Cybersecurity specialists, in particular, require sharp problem-solving skills to identify and mitigate potential threats.
- **Certifications:** Certifications like CompTIA Network+, Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA), and other industry-standard credentials are important to demonstrate expertise in IT systems and networking.

Renewable Energy Sector

Key Occupations:

- Solar Panel Installers
- Wind Turbine Technicians
- Renewable Energy Engineers
- Energy Auditors

Knowledge and Skills Needed

- **Renewable Energy Systems:** Workers need specialized knowledge of solar energy systems, wind turbine technology, and sustainable energy practices. Technicians must understand system components, installation procedures, and grid integration.

- **Electrical and Mechanical Skills:** Proficiency in electrical wiring, power systems, and mechanical maintenance is essential for renewable energy technicians. Workers must be able to troubleshoot mechanical issues with solar panels and wind turbines.
- **Technical Certifications:** Industry-recognized certifications in renewable energy technologies, such as North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners (NABCEP) for solar installers or wind technician certifications, are critical for employability.
- **Project Management:** Engineers and energy auditors must have skills in project planning, risk management, and system design. They must also have knowledge of local regulations, energy efficiency standards, and environmental laws.

Tourism and Hospitality

Key Occupations:

- Hotel and Resort Managers
- Food Service Workers
- Retail Workers
- Event Coordinators

Knowledge and Skills Needed

- **Customer Service:** Workers in hospitality and tourism need strong customer service skills, including problem-solving, effective communication, and the ability to meet diverse customer needs. This includes handling complaints, managing reservations, and coordinating events.
- **Food Safety and Handling:** Food service workers need to be trained in food safety regulations and best practices for food handling and preparation. Certifications such as ServSafe are essential for compliance with local health regulations.
- **Event Planning:** Event coordinators must be knowledgeable in logistics, vendor management, and event marketing, particularly in high-tourism areas like Taos and Santa Fe that host festivals, conferences, and cultural events.
- **Cultural Competency:** In Northern New Mexico's tourism sector, especially in regions with significant Native American and Hispanic cultural heritage, workers benefit from understanding local customs, history, and geography, which enhances the visitor experience.

Government and Education

Key Occupations:

- K-12 Teachers
- Public Administrators
- Social Workers

- Higher Education Faculty

Knowledge and Skills Needed

- **Instructional Expertise:** Teachers, especially in STEM and special education, need deep subject matter expertise, classroom management skills, and adaptability to different learning styles. Teachers must also be proficient in virtual learning platforms as remote education becomes more common.
- **Public Policy and Administration:** Public administrators require knowledge of public budgeting, policy development, and program management. They also need skills in navigating complex governmental regulations and working with diverse community stakeholders.
- **Cultural and Community Engagement:** Social workers and educators need strong communication skills and cultural competency to serve Northern New Mexico's diverse populations. Understanding the socio-economic and cultural background of students and clients is key to providing effective services.
- **Educational Technology:** Teachers and faculty must be adept at using digital tools and technologies to enhance learning, manage remote instruction, and ensure accessibility for all students.

§679.560(a)(3)

An analysis of the regional workforce, including current labor force employment and unemployment data

Northern New Mexico's labor force shows both promise and challenges, with varied employment levels and unemployment rates depending on the county. The workforce is influenced by key industries such as healthcare, construction, government services, and hospitality.

Labor Force Participation

The labor force participation rate in Northern New Mexico hovers around 60%, slightly below the national average of 62.6%. This discrepancy is largely due to the diverse economic conditions across the region.

- **Urban Areas:** Counties like Santa Fe have a higher participation rate, bolstered by access to employment opportunities in sectors such as healthcare, IT, and hospitality. Santa Fe's labor force participation rate is closer to 64%, driven by a relatively high concentration of jobs and better access to training and education.
- **Rural Areas:** In contrast, rural counties such as Mora and McKinley have lower participation rates, often below 55%. These counties face significant challenges, including limited

access to employment opportunities, a reliance on declining industries such as mining and agriculture, and fewer workforce training resources. The lack of infrastructure, transportation, and available childcare in rural areas further exacerbates low participation rates, particularly for women and individuals with disabilities.

Unemployment Data

Unemployment rates vary across the region, with higher rates in rural and economically disadvantaged counties and lower rates in areas with strong industry presence.

- Santa Fe County: Unemployment rate of 4.2% as of mid-2023, reflecting relatively stable employment due to its diverse economy, including government services, education, and tourism.
- McKinley County: Unemployment rate of 7.5%, one of the highest in the region, due to economic challenges such as the decline of traditional industries like mining and insufficient diversification.
- Taos County: Unemployment rate of 6.3%, driven by seasonal fluctuations in tourism and the construction industry.

The region's unemployment rate overall ranges from 5% to 7%, compared to the national rate of 3.7%. Disparities between counties highlight the need for tailored workforce strategies that address both high-skill job growth in urban areas and more basic employment opportunities in rural locations.

Wage Growth

- Average wage growth in counties like Cibola and San Miguel has outpaced employment growth, with wages increasing by 11.4% and 7.1% year-over-year, respectively. This reflects rising demand for skilled workers in industries like healthcare and construction, tightening labor markets, and inflationary pressures.

Labor Market Trends

Northern New Mexico's labor market is shaped by both established and emerging industries, each contributing to job creation and workforce demand.

Healthcare

The healthcare industry is the fastest-growing sector in the region, driven by an aging population and increased healthcare access.

- Employment in the healthcare sector is projected to grow by 22% by 2030.

- Key occupations include Registered Nurses (RNs), Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs), Medical Assistants, and Behavioral Health Specialists. There are approximately 1,500 RN job openings projected annually, with wages averaging \$79,000 per year.

Construction and Skilled Trades

Construction continues to be a significant driver of employment, particularly in Taos and Santa Fe counties, where infrastructure development and housing projects are robust.

- Employment in construction is expected to grow by 18% over the next decade.
- Key occupations include Electricians, Plumbers, Carpenters, and Heavy Equipment Operators, with salaries ranging from \$44,000 to \$54,000 per year.

Rural counties like Mora and Colfax face volatility in construction due to seasonal and market-related factors, with year-over-year declines of 15% and 24%, respectively, in construction-related economic activity.

Tourism and Hospitality

Tourism is a major employer, especially in Taos and Colfax counties, where the economy is heavily reliant on seasonal tourism.

- Employment in tourism is projected to grow by 15% as the sector recovers from the pandemic.
- Jobs in hospitality management, food service, and retail are in high demand, with expected wages of \$24,000 to \$48,000 annually.

Information Technology (IT) and Renewable Energy

Emerging industries such as IT and renewable energy are beginning to shape the labor market, particularly in Los Alamos County and other areas with high-tech investments.

- IT-related employment, including roles in network administration, cybersecurity, and software development, is projected to grow by 25% by 2030.
- The renewable energy sector, particularly solar panel installation and wind turbine maintenance, is expected to grow by 30% over the next decade, creating new opportunities in rural areas suited for energy projects.

Educational and Skill Levels of the Workforce

Educational attainment and skill levels in Northern New Mexico vary significantly between urban and rural areas, impacting the types of jobs accessible to the local workforce.

Educational Attainment in Northern New Mexico

Educational attainment varies significantly across Northern New Mexico, with urban counties like Santa Fe and Los Alamos having much higher levels compared to rural areas.

- Santa Fe County sees 42% of its residents holding a bachelor's degree or higher, while Los Alamos County leads the region with 66% of residents possessing a bachelor's degree or advanced degree. These higher attainment levels are closely tied to the presence of government agencies, research institutions, and high-tech industries like the Los Alamos National Laboratory, which demand a highly educated workforce and offer high-paying jobs.
- Rural counties such as Mora and McKinley face lower educational attainment rates, with less than 20% of residents holding a post-secondary degree. This gap limits access to high-skill, high-wage employment, particularly in sectors like healthcare, information technology, and professional services. The lower educational attainment levels in these areas are often compounded by limited access to higher education institutions, economic barriers, and fewer job opportunities that incentivize continued education.

Workforce Skills

The region's workforce is characterized by a mix of traditional skills in agriculture and trades, alongside emerging technical and professional skills in sectors like IT and renewable energy.

- **Healthcare Skills:** There is high demand for clinical and technical skills, including knowledge of electronic health records (EHR) systems, diagnostic technologies, and patient care.
- **Skilled Trades:** Practical skills in carpentry, plumbing, welding, and heavy equipment operation are essential for the region's construction sector, with many workers gaining experience through vocational programs and apprenticeships.
- **IT and Technical Skills:** The growth of the IT and renewable energy sectors requires a workforce proficient in networking, cybersecurity, solar energy installation, and wind turbine maintenance. Workers with STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education are particularly sought after in Los Alamos and other high-tech hubs.

4. Barriers to Employment

A significant portion of Northern New Mexico's population faces barriers to employment, including low-income individuals, veterans, people with disabilities, youth, and those with limited English proficiency.

Key Barriers

- **Access to Education and Training:** Rural residents often face limited access to educational institutions and vocational training, hindering their ability to gain the skills necessary for higher-paying jobs. This creates a cycle of underemployment and limits economic mobility.
- **Transportation and Infrastructure:** Many rural areas lack public transportation, making it difficult for low-income individuals to commute to job centers. This disproportionately affects counties like Mora and Colfax, where infrastructure is less developed.

- **Economic Volatility:** Industries like mining and construction, which once drove employment in counties like McKinley and Rio Arriba, have become more volatile due to market fluctuations and automation, leading to job losses and increased unemployment.
- **Social and Health Barriers:** Individuals with disabilities, health challenges, or social barriers, such as a lack of childcare or family support, may struggle to enter or remain in the workforce. The Vocational Rehabilitation Program (Title IV) works to address these challenges, but gaps in services remain, especially in rural areas.
- **Youth Unemployment:** Out-of-school youth face barriers related to lack of work experience, education, and career opportunities. Partnerships with YouthWorks, Job Corps, and other youth-focused programs aim to provide skills training, job placement, and educational support, helping these individuals enter the workforce.

Sources

- NMDWS - Laser Data Economic Research & Analysis Bureau
- NMDWS - Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages Program
- NM TRD - Monthly Local Government Distribution Reports (RP-500)
- EDD Calculations
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS): Data on employment, wages, job openings, and sector-specific trends.
- <https://www.bls.gov>
- U.S. Census Bureau: Demographic and employment data through the American Community Survey (ACS) and Current Population Survey (CPS).
- <https://www.census.gov>
- O*NET Online: Provides occupational data, including skill requirements and wages.
- <https://www.onetonline.org> Analysis of Workforce Development Activities

Analysis of Workforce Development Activities

§679.560(a)(4)

An analysis of workforce development activities, including education and training, in the region. This analysis must include the strengths and weaknesses of workforce development activities and capacity to provide the workforce development activities to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment, and the employment needs of employers.

The Northern New Mexico region, under the guidance of the Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB), has developed a comprehensive suite of workforce development activities designed to address the diverse needs of its population. These activities encompass education, vocational training, job placement, and supportive services, with a strong focus on

helping individuals, particularly those with barriers to employment, gain the skills necessary to meet local employers' needs. The Northern New Mexico Workforce Integration Network (WIN) is a key resource partner in these efforts, providing essential support services that complement NALWDB's objectives.

Strengths of Workforce Development Activities

Comprehensive Training Programs

Healthcare Training Initiatives: The region has robust healthcare training programs, such as the partnership with Santa Fe Community College (SFCC), which supports nursing students. Five SFCC nursing students enrolled in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) program receive comprehensive supportive services, including textbooks, laptops, scrubs, and other essential tools. This partnership not only prepares students for the NCLEX exam but also ensures they have the necessary resources to succeed in their studies and careers.

- **Construction and Industrial Training:** The Southwest Indian Foundation's Industrial Worker Program offers intensive training in welding and heavy equipment operation, which are critical skills in the region's construction industry. Over three cohorts, 32 participants received training, with a new cohort focusing on welding and heavy equipment operation. Participants benefit from both classroom instruction and hands-on experience, which is essential for their success in these trades.
- **Emerging Technologies:** The New Collar Network's 3D Printing Bootcamp at SFCC is a prime example of how the region is preparing workers for jobs in emerging industries. Participants, who are vetted for their potential, engage in a 12-week, full-time program that equips them with skills in CAD design and 3D printing, earning them a New Collar Network 3D Printing Technician Master Badge. This program helps participants gain employment in the high-tech sector, contributing to the region's economic diversification.

Strong Educational Partnerships

- **Collaborations with Local Colleges:** The NALWDB has formed strong partnerships with institutions such as UNM Taos and San Juan College, which play a crucial role in workforce development. For example, the UNM Taos Nursing Program, which boasts a 100% NCLEX pass rate over the past three years, successfully graduated all 23 WIOA participants enrolled in the program. This demonstrates the effectiveness of the collaboration in producing qualified healthcare professionals who are ready to meet the region's needs.
- **Supportive Services:** Educational partnerships are also strengthened by the provision of supportive services. For instance, in the UNM Taos' Power Up Program, 29 out-of-school youth (OSY) participants work toward their HiSet diploma, with WIOA providing incentives

as benchmarks are met. This support helps students achieve their educational goals and prepare for post-secondary education or entry into the workforce.

- **Adult Education/WIOA Title II**
Adult Education (AE) programs provide education and training opportunities designed to help eligible New Mexicans improve their skills, earn a High School Equivalency (HSE) credential, learn English as a second language (ESL) and civics, pursue higher education, and secure meaningful employment. In collaboration with AE programs and colleges in the Northern Regions, several Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs have been implemented to address the needs of high-demand industries. Each IET program incorporates three critical components:
 - **Adult Education:** Contextualized literacy and math instruction relevant to the targeted occupation.
 - **Workforce Preparation:** Soft skills training, including communication, teamwork, and problem-solving.
 - **Occupational Skills Training:** Technical training aligned with industry standards, leading to an industry-recognized credential.
- These programs are essential for creating pathways to success, equipping individuals with the tools needed to excel in both academic and workplace environments.
- According to the NM Adult Education State Office, Adult Education programs in Northern New Mexico served a total of 2,916 students in 2023-2024. Of these, 367 individuals earned a High School Equivalency (HSE), and 54% achieved a Measurable Skill Gain (MSG). Below is a breakdown of Adult Education programs in the Northern Region and the number of participants served during 2023-2024:
 - Diné College: 134
 - Luna Community College: 104
 - New Mexico State University – Grants: 158
 - Northern New Mexico College: 205
 - San Juan College: 429
 - Santa Fe Community College: 1,309
 - University of New Mexico – Gallup: 210
 - University of New Mexico – Los Alamos: 152
 - University of New Mexico – Taos: 215
 - Total for Northern Region: 2,916
- This data highlights the critical importance of strong partnerships between the Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB) and AE programs. By working together, these entities can ensure that individuals receive the support and resources needed to enhance their education, improve their skills, and access better employment opportunities. Collaboration is essential for achieving successful outcomes for participants and strengthening the overall workforce in the region.

Targeted Programs for High-Demand Sectors

- **CDL Training for Local Governments:** The NALWDB has responded to the demand for Commercial Driver's License (CDL) training in the region. For example, Rio Arriba County requested CDL training for ten employees, provided through Phoenix Truck Driving School. This training enables these employees to fulfill their job requirements, addressing the critical need for qualified CDL drivers in the region.
- **Vocational Training in Construction:** Five WIOA participants attended Construction Seminars in Albuquerque, where they successfully obtained their contractor's licenses. These seminars specialize in test preparation for licensing exams and continuing education for contractors, ensuring that participants are well-prepared to enter the construction industry.
- **Integrated Education and Training (IET) Models** – During the 2024–2025 fiscal year, a diverse range of IET programs will be available, tailored to meet the needs of high-demand industries:
 1. Santa Fe Community College: Facilities Maintenance Technician, Phlebotomy, and Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA).
 2. Northern New Mexico College: Wildland Firefighting and MCC3 Building Trades Certification.
 3. Luna Community College: Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) and Welding.
 4. UNM-Taos: EMT, Emergency Medical Responder, and CNA.
 5. UNM-Los Alamos: EMT, CNA, and Broadband.

Innovative Approaches to Youth and At-Risk Populations

- **Summer Youth Academy:** The 2023 Summer Youth Academy, part of the NALWDB's youth engagement strategy, provided 80 participants with career exploration, job shadowing, and community service opportunities. The academy's curriculum included financial literacy, career development, and soft skills training. Participants received paid incentives for completing various components, such as creating a digital career portfolio or participating in community service projects, which enhanced their employability and life skills.
- **Programs for Incarcerated Individuals:** The collaboration with the New Mexico Corrections Department exemplifies the NALWDB's commitment to supporting at-risk populations. At the Springer Correctional Facility, nine out of ten inmates successfully completed a Heavy Equipment training program. One participant has already been paroled and employed, highlighting the program's effectiveness in providing incarcerated individuals with valuable skills that improve their chances of successful reintegration into the workforce.
- **Responsive to Employer Needs**
- **On-the-Job Training (OJT) Programs:** The OJT programs are tailored to meet the specific needs of local employers. For example, the City of Bloomfield Police Department partnered with NALWDB to provide on-the-job training for three newly hired employees. These participants successfully completed their training and have since remained employed with

the department, demonstrating the effectiveness of the OJT program in fulfilling the workforce needs of local employers.

Weaknesses of Workforce Development Activities

Accessibility Challenges in Rural Areas

- **Limited Access to Training Facilities:** Rural counties, such as Mora and Colfax, face significant challenges in accessing workforce development programs. The lack of nearby training facilities means residents may need to travel long distances, which can be a barrier to participation. This geographic disparity limits the effectiveness of workforce development efforts in these more remote parts of the region.
- **Transportation Barriers:** Transportation remains a significant barrier for many participants, particularly in rural areas. For example, participants in the CDL training program in Colfax County may struggle with transportation to training sites, which could limit their ability to complete the program and obtain employment.

Capacity Constraints and Resource Limitations

- **Insufficient Training Slots:** High-demand programs, such as the CDL and healthcare certifications, often face capacity constraints. For instance, the CDL training program partnered with RV Transportation served 80 participants across several counties, but two students were unable to attend and are now required to repay the program costs. This highlights the limited capacity and the need for more training slots to accommodate the demand.
- **Funding Challenges:** Despite the successful acquisition of grants, such as the \$50,000 grant from the Kellogg Foundation, funding remains a challenge. Some programs, particularly those serving high-demand sectors, may not have enough resources to meet the needs of all eligible participants, limiting the impact of workforce development activities.

Alignment with Employer Needs

- **Skill Gaps:** There are instances where training programs may not fully align with the specific needs of employers. For example, some participants in the Registered Medical Assistant program at San Juan College were unable to meet the college's entrance assessment requirements, disqualifying them from admission despite qualifying for WIOA services. This mismatch indicates a need for better alignment between training curricula and employer expectations.
- **Evolving Industry Requirements:** The construction industry, particularly in counties like Taos where there is a delay in the Jaco Builders project, requires workers who can adapt to changing industry requirements. This highlights the importance of continuously updating training programs to keep pace with industry developments.

Program Completion and Retention Issues

- **Barriers to Program Completion:** Participants sometimes face barriers that prevent them from completing their training programs. For example, some individuals in the Registered Medical Assistant program did not meet the entrance assessment requirements, leading to program disqualification. These barriers highlight the need for additional support services, such as tutoring or preparatory courses, to help participants succeed.
- **Retention in Employment:** Ensuring that participants retain their jobs after completing training is a critical challenge. For instance, while participants in the OJT program with Lancer Health Group successfully completed their training, ongoing support may be needed to ensure they remain employed and can advance in their careers.

Need for Advanced and Specialized Training

- **Expansion of STEM and High-Tech Training:** The growing focus on high-tech industries in the region requires more advanced training programs. For instance, the New-Collar Network's 3D Printing Bootcamp is a step in the right direction, but there is a need for similar programs in other high-demand areas, such as renewable energy and advanced manufacturing.
- **Specialized Training for Emerging Industries:** As new industries, such as biotechnology and renewable energy, emerge in the region, there is a need for specialized training programs that can equip workers with the necessary skills. The development of such programs will be essential for meeting the workforce needs of these growing sectors.

Capacity to Address Education and Skill Needs

Expanding Capacity through Partnerships

- **Collaboration with Local Employers:** The NALWDB's partnerships with employers are key to expanding capacity. For example, the collaboration with the City of Española to fill police officer and firefighter positions through OJT programs helps ensure that training activities are aligned with employer needs, leading to successful job placements.
- **Leveraging Community Resources:** Partnerships with community organizations and educational institutions have allowed the NALWDB to broaden the reach of its programs. The collaboration with UNM Taos' Power Up Program is a notable example, as it provides 29 OSY participants with the opportunity to achieve their HiSet and transition to post-secondary education.
- **WIN's Role as a Resource Partner:** WIN is a key resource partner that supports NALWDB's efforts by providing wrap-around services, such as transportation, childcare, and housing, which help participants overcome barriers to training and employment. WIN's initiatives, particularly in Healthcare and Skilled Trades, align with NALWDB's sector strategies, ensuring that participants have access to the support they need to succeed.

Enhancing Access and Support for Individuals with Barriers

- Targeted Support Services: Providing targeted support services is crucial for helping individuals with barriers to employment. For instance, the SFPS Work-Based Learning program offers out-of-school youth (OSY) work-based learning internships, paying them \$14.60 an hour and providing supportive services based on need. These services ensure that participants can focus on their training without being hindered by external challenges.
- Increased Focus on Rural Areas: Expanding services in rural areas, such as through mobile training units or online learning platforms, could help address the accessibility challenges faced by residents in more remote counties. The development of additional CDL programs and vocational training options in these areas is essential for meeting the region's diverse workforce needs. WIN's Mobile Training Unit is a critical component in this effort, providing Skilled Trades training to remote areas and increasing access to workforce development resources.

Adapting to the Evolving Workforce Needs

- Continuous Program Evaluation and Improvement: The NALWDB must continue to evaluate and adapt its workforce development activities to ensure they meet the evolving needs of the workforce and employers. This includes updating curricula, expanding training opportunities in emerging industries, and enhancing partnerships with local employers to align training with real-world job requirements. WIN's focus on healthcare and Skilled Trades through its targeted training initiatives also helps to address these evolving needs, ensuring that the region's workforce is prepared for high-demand jobs.

By building on these strengths and addressing the identified challenges, the Northern New Mexico region can continue to develop a skilled, adaptable, and resilient workforce that drives economic growth and improves the quality of life for all its residents. The NALWDB's ongoing efforts to expand training opportunities, enhance support services, and adapt to the evolving needs of the workforce and employers are crucial to achieving these goals.

Strategic Vision and Goals

AS679.560(a)(5)

A description of the local board's strategic vision to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. This must include goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce (including youth and individuals with barriers to employment), and goals relating to the performance

accountability measures based on performance indicators described in §677.155(a)(1) of the WIOA Joint Rule.

The Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB) is dedicated to fostering regional economic growth and promoting economic self-sufficiency through targeted workforce development initiatives. These efforts address the unique needs of the diverse population in Northern New Mexico and support employers by ensuring a steady pipeline of skilled workers. The NALWDB's vision aligns with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and focuses on preparing an educated and skilled workforce, especially among youth and individuals with barriers to employment. The Board also aims to meet or exceed performance accountability measures to ensure the continued success and growth of its programs.

Goals for Preparing an Educated and Skilled Workforce

Expand Access to Education and Training

The NALWDB aims to provide broader access to education and training for youth and individuals facing employment barriers.

- **Youth Programs:** One key initiative is the UNM Taos Power Up Program, which currently supports 29 out-of-school youth (OSY) by helping them earn their HiSET and prepare for post-secondary education. By expanding similar programs throughout the region, the NALWDB will increase the number of youth participants, ensuring that they have the resources and support to succeed in education and workforce preparation.
- **Support for Individuals with Barriers to Employment:** Building on successful collaborations, such as the partnership with the New Mexico Corrections Department, which provided heavy equipment training to inmates at Springer Correctional Facility, the NALWDB plans to extend this initiative to additional correctional facilities. The goal is to include more vocational training programs that help individuals overcome barriers to employment and secure sustainable jobs upon their release.

Promote Lifelong Learning and Upskilling

The NALWDB is committed to promoting lifelong learning and upskilling to keep workers competitive in an evolving job market.

- **Incumbent Worker Training:** Programs like the on-the-job training (OJT) initiative with the City of Bloomfield Police Department exemplify this commitment. The NALWDB aims to replicate this model across other industries to provide ongoing training that helps workers continuously develop new skills. This strategy ensures long-term employability and career advancement for workers in industries such as healthcare, trades, and public safety.

- **STEM and High-Demand Occupations:** Expanding programs like the New-Collar Network partnership with Santa Fe Community College, which provides advanced training in CAD Design & 3D Printing, is another key goal. By equipping participants with cutting-edge technical skills, the NALWDB positions them for success in high-demand STEM occupations, including advanced manufacturing, information technology, and cybersecurity.

Sector Strategies and Partnerships

The NALWDB prioritizes sector-specific training and workforce development programs to meet the needs of Northern New Mexico's key industries.

- **Trades Program Development:** Addressing the regional shortage of skilled construction workers, the NALWDB will collaborate with educational institutions to expand Trades Program courses. This includes preparatory classes for contractor licenses and specialized trade certifications. These efforts will ensure that participants acquire the skills and certifications required to meet the growing demand in the construction sector, which is vital to regional infrastructure development.
- **Apprenticeships and Work-Based Learning:** The NALWDB supports and plans to expand apprenticeship programs, such as its collaboration with Melloy Honda in Farmington, which offers automotive trainees hands-on learning opportunities. By increasing these work-based learning partnerships, particularly in high-demand sectors like healthcare and automotive industries, the NALWDB will facilitate smoother transitions from education to employment for participants.

Goals Relating to Performance Accountability Measures

To align with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) performance accountability measures, the Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB) has developed a set of strategic goals aimed at improving participant outcomes. These goals emphasize employment rates, median earnings, credential attainment, measurable skill gains, and effectiveness in serving employers.

Meeting or Exceeding WIOA Performance Indicators

The NALWDB is committed to exceeding its performance targets by expanding partnerships, improving program delivery, and focusing on sectors with strong job growth potential.

Employment Rate: Enhancing Workforce Participation

- **Key Objective:** The NALWDB aims to improve participant employment rates by increasing partnerships and expanding programs that lead to high employment outcomes in growing sectors such as healthcare, trades, and advanced manufacturing.

- Example: The partnership with Lancer Health Group in Colfax County offers on-the-job training (OJT) for psychiatric evaluation and treatment roles. This program not only addresses local healthcare shortages but also provides participants with direct pathways to employment.
- Action Plan: The NALWDB plans to replicate successful OJT models in other high-demand fields, such as construction and information technology (IT), ensuring participants are prepared for regional labor market demands.

Median Earnings: Expanding Access to High-Wage Occupations

- Key Objective: Increase the median earnings for program participants by offering access to training programs that lead to high-wage jobs, particularly in healthcare and advanced manufacturing.
- Example: The UNM Taos Nursing Program, known for its high NCLEX pass rates and strong job placement record, is a prime model. Graduates of this program consistently find employment in well-paying healthcare roles, significantly increasing their median earnings.
- Action Plan: NALWDB will collaborate with local colleges and industries to replicate successful models like the Taos Nursing Program, focusing on other high-demand sectors like IT and advanced manufacturing to create similar wage growth opportunities for participants.

Credential Attainment: Boosting Certifications in High-Demand Fields

- Key Objective: Increase the number of participants who earn industry-recognized certifications and postsecondary credentials, ensuring they are qualified for high-demand jobs in key sectors.
- Example: The Southwest Indian Foundation's Industrial Worker Program offers certifications such as the NCCER Blue Card and the OSHA 10-hour General Industry Completion Card, making participants more competitive for jobs in the construction and industrial trades sectors.
- Action Plan: The NALWDB will expand similar certification programs, particularly in healthcare, IT, and trades, to ensure participants are obtaining credentials that are aligned with regional labor market needs. This will include increasing partnerships with community colleges and private employers to deliver certification-based training.

Measurable Skill Gains: Ensuring Ongoing Skill Development

- Key Objective: Ensure that participants demonstrate measurable skill gains while enrolled in workforce development programs, enhancing their chances of securing employment and advancing in their careers.
- Example: The Santa Fe Prison Culinary Arts Program equips inmates with valuable culinary skills and hands-on training, preparing them for jobs in the hospitality industry upon release.

- Action Plan: The NALWDB plans to replicate successful models like the Culinary Arts Program in other sectors, such as welding, heavy equipment operation, and IT, to ensure that participants across various programs are making measurable skill gains, leading to improved employability.

Effectiveness in Serving Employers: Meeting Regional Industry Needs

- Key Objective: Increase the effectiveness of the workforce development system in meeting the needs of local employers by offering customized training and OJT programs.
- Example: The collaboration with the City of Española has led to successful OJT programs for critical positions such as police officers and firefighters, providing employers with well-prepared candidates while ensuring participants are job ready.
- Action Plan: NALWDB will continue expanding partnerships with local governments, businesses, and industry associations to offer OJT programs in sectors like healthcare, public safety, and trades, ensuring employers have access to a skilled workforce. The goal is to increase employer satisfaction by demonstrating that the workforce system can effectively meet their staffing and skill needs.

Through these targeted goals and strategies, the NALWDB is committed to improving participant outcomes and meeting or exceeding all WIOA performance indicators. By focusing on employment rates, median earnings, credential attainment, measurable skill gains, and employer satisfaction, the NALWDB ensures that its workforce development programs align with the region's evolving economic needs and provide long-term benefits to both participants and employers.

§679.560(a)(6)

Taking into account analyses described in Sections A and B above, describe the local board's overall strategy for working with the entities that carry out the core programs and required partners to align resources available to the local area, to achieve the strategic vision and goals.

The NALWDB is committed to leveraging partnerships and aligning resources with entities carrying out core programs to achieve its strategic goals.

- Integrated Service Delivery: The NALWDB will emphasize integrated service delivery models, such as the partnership with Santa Fe Community College (SFCC), where Title I staff engage directly with students during orientations. This ensures participants can access the full range of services needed to improve their educational and employment outcomes.
- Leveraging Partnerships: Successful partnerships, such as the Southwest Indian Foundation's Industrial Worker Program, will be expanded. By pooling resources from multiple stakeholders, including local employers and educational institutions, the

NALWDB will provide comprehensive training that aligns with both participant needs and regional industry demands.

Maximizing Funding Opportunities

The Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB) is committed to securing additional funding and leveraging resources to expand programs that address regional workforce shortages. By obtaining grants and forming partnerships, the NALWDB ensures that industries in high-demand fields, such as healthcare, IT, and advanced manufacturing, have access to a well-trained and prepared workforce.

Targeted Program Development

The NALWDB's strategy involves securing funding to develop and expand programs tailored to the specific needs of regional industries facing workforce shortages. This includes:

- **CDL Training and Heavy Equipment Programs:** Programs like CDL training, developed in collaboration with RV Transportation and Phoenix Truck Driving, exemplify how the NALWDB successfully addresses regional workforce shortages. These programs provide participants with the skills necessary to enter the high-demand transportation and logistics sector. The success of these programs will be used as a model for other critical fields, ensuring industries such as healthcare, IT, and advanced manufacturing benefit from similar initiatives.
- **Expanding the WIN Network:** The Workforce Integration Network (WIN) has proven to be a vital partner in addressing barriers to employment, such as food insecurity, transportation, and childcare. WIN's ability to connect participants with these essential supportive services allows them to remain engaged in workforce training and employment programs. The NALWDB will continue to collaborate with WIN and secure additional resources to expand these supportive services, ensuring that no barrier prevents participants from reaching their employment goals.

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation Grant as a Model for Expansion

One example of successful funding acquisition is the \$50,000 grant awarded to the NALWDB by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation for the period of May 1, 2024, through April 30, 2026. This grant specifically addresses barriers to employment in Northwest New Mexico, allowing the NALWDB to facilitate:

- **Document Drives:** These events help individuals obtain necessary documents, such as identification and work permits, that are essential for securing employment. This is particularly valuable for individuals facing bureaucratic barriers to job placement.

- **Annual Workforce Conference:** The grant will support an annual conference that brings together employers, service providers, and community organizations to identify workforce needs and develop collaborative solutions. This event encourages networking and the sharing of resources, fostering partnerships that benefit both job seekers and regional employers.

The success of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation grant provides a framework for future funding opportunities. By demonstrating the impact of targeted grants, the NALWDB can continue to seek additional resources to support similar initiatives, such as expanding training programs in sectors like healthcare, IT, and trades.

Future Funding Efforts for High-Demand Fields

Building on its current successes, the NALWDB will expand its targeted program development to address shortages in key sectors:

- **Healthcare:** The NALWDB aims to secure funding for healthcare training programs, similar to its efforts in trades and CDL, by collaborating with local hospitals and clinics. Programs like those developed with the Taos UNM Nursing Program, which has successfully placed graduates into high-paying nursing positions, will serve as a model for expanding healthcare training opportunities across the region.
- **Information Technology (IT) and Advanced Manufacturing:** The NALWDB recognizes the growing demand for workers in IT fields such as network administration, cybersecurity, and broadband technology. By collaborating with local ISPs, community colleges, and technical schools, the NALWDB will seek funding to establish advanced IT training programs. This will ensure that participants gain industry-recognized certifications and are prepared for the evolving job market in these rapidly expanding sectors.
- **Trades:** Recognizing the critical need for skilled workers in the trades, the NALWDB will continue to secure funding for training programs in welding, heavy equipment operation, and construction. The Industrial Workforce Program, developed in partnership with the Southwest Indian Foundation, will be expanded to offer certifications such as NCCER Blue Card and OSHA General Industry Completion Cards. These programs will be scaled up to meet the increasing demand for skilled labor in construction and infrastructure projects throughout Northern New Mexico.

Data-Driven Decision Making

To ensure its programs are aligned with actual job market needs, the NALWDB will use data to guide its decisions.

- **Labor Market Analysis:** By analyzing labor market trends, the NALWDB can identify emerging job opportunities and skills gaps. For example, the expansion of the New Mexico School of Massage Therapy reflects the Board’s data-driven approach, ensuring that training programs address actual regional needs.
- **Performance Monitoring:** The NALWDB will continue tracking key performance indicators, as seen with the UNM Taos Nursing Program, to evaluate the success of its programs. This ongoing evaluation allows the NALWDB to make adjustments and ensure that programs meet their intended goals.

Commitment to Inclusivity and Equity

The NALWDB prioritizes inclusivity and aims to provide equitable access to all workforce services.

- **Equity in Service Delivery:** Expanding programs like the Springer Correctional Facility training initiative demonstrates the NALWDB’s commitment to ensuring that underserved populations have access to the skills and training needed to achieve economic self-sufficiency.
- **Community Engagement:** Initiatives like the Fall Education Enrollment Drive (FEED) and Spring Enrollment Drive (SEED) will continue engaging the community, connecting students with educational resources, and fostering an inclusive environment. These efforts ensure that all Northern New Mexico residents have the opportunity to benefit from regional economic growth.

Through these strategic goals and targeted initiatives, the NALWDB is committed to building a resilient workforce that can support regional economic growth and ensure economic self-sufficiency for Northern New Mexico’s residents. By addressing current workforce needs and preparing for future shifts, the NALWDB will foster long-term success for both participants and employers.

OPERATIONAL ELEMENTS

§679.550(c)

Local Board Area Profile. Describe the geographical workforce development area, including the LWDA’s major communities, major employers, training and educational institutions (technical and community colleges, universities, etc.), population, diversity of the population, and relevant growth trends.

The Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB) serves a diverse and expansive region in Northern New Mexico, covering ten counties: Cibola, Colfax, Los Alamos, McKinley, Mora,

Rio Arriba, San Juan, San Miguel, Santa Fe, and Taos. This region accounts for approximately 27.6% of New Mexico's total population and features a mix of urban centers, rural communities, and tribal lands, each contributing to the region's economic and cultural vibrancy.

Major Communities

- **Santa Fe:** As the state capital, Santa Fe is a cultural and governmental hub, with a strong economy driven by government services, tourism, arts, and an emerging technology sector.
- **Farmington:** This city in San Juan County is a commercial and healthcare center for the Four Corners region, with a significant presence in energy production and a growing focus on economic diversification.
- **Los Alamos:** Home to the Los Alamos National Laboratory, this area is a leading center for scientific research and technology, generating demand for high-skilled jobs in STEM fields.
- **Gallup:** Located along a major trade route, Gallup is an important hub for commerce, particularly in Native American arts and crafts.
- **Taos:** Known for its artistic community and tourism, Taos contributes significantly to the region's economy through its cultural and historical attractions.
- **Española:** A central community in Northern New Mexico, Española plays a key role in education and healthcare, with Northern New Mexico College supporting local workforce development.
- **Las Vegas:** Situated in San Miguel County, Las Vegas serves as an educational hub, with New Mexico Highlands University and Luna Community College driving the local economy through training and educational programs.

Major Employers

- **Los Alamos National Laboratory:** A major scientific research facility that provides numerous high-skilled jobs in the region.
- **Christus St. Vincent Regional Medical Center:** A key healthcare provider and employer in Santa Fe.
- **San Juan Regional Medical Center:** A crucial healthcare institution in Farmington, serving the wider Four Corners area.
- **Retail and Hospitality Sectors:** Significant employers in Santa Fe, Taos, and Gallup, driven by tourism and consumer demand.
- **State of New Mexico:** As the largest employer in the region, the State of New Mexico provides a wide range of jobs in government services in Santa Fe and across multiple communities.
- **New Mexico Behavioral Health Institute:** Located in Las Vegas, this is the state's only public psychiatric hospital, playing a significant role in the local economy and providing specialized healthcare employment opportunities.

Economic Summaries: 2024

The Northern Area region exhibited a diverse set of economic trends during Q3 FY24, with several counties experiencing growth while others faced significant challenges. Cibola County saw solid economic expansion driven by its healthcare and retail trade sectors, while Taos County benefited from strong performance in construction and retail trade. Conversely, Rio Arriba County faced significant challenges, particularly in the mining industry, which contributed to a steep decline in Monthly Taxable Gross Receipts (MTGR). Santa Fe County experienced a decline in MTGR, primarily driven by utilities, but maintained economic stability through growth in professional and scientific services.

Meanwhile, Los Alamos County posted one of the strongest performances, with notable increases in both MTGR and employment. McKinley County and San Juan County also showed mixed results, with growth in retail and healthcare, but notable declines in industries such as mining and transportation.

Monthly Taxable Gross Receipts (MTGR) refer to the total amount of taxable sales within a specific timeframe, commonly used as a measure of economic activity within a county. MTGR is a key indicator of economic health, reflecting the sales performance of different industries, and is often used to gauge trends in sectors such as retail trade, healthcare, and construction.

Rio Arriba County

- **Overall Summary:** Despite some positive developments in specific industries, Rio Arriba County faced notable economic challenges in Q3 FY24, particularly in key sectors such as mining and construction.
- **Economic Performance:** In Q3 FY24, Rio Arriba County experienced a significant decline in Monthly Taxable Gross Receipts (MTGR), decreasing by nearly 28%, or \$57.2M, from Q2 FY24. The reported MTGR for Q3 FY24 was \$148.8M, which was \$28.8M below the eight-quarter average of \$177.6M.
- **Key Industries:** Retail trade emerged as the largest sector, accounting for 31% of total MTGR in Q3 FY24, up from 26% in the previous quarter. The mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction industry faced a significant year-over-year (YOY) decline, contributing to the overall negative growth.
- **Employment and Wages:** Average employment grew by 2.8% YOY, adding 224 jobs, while average weekly wages increased by 7%, reaching \$972.

Taos County

- **Overall Summary:** Taos County's economy showed growth in Q3 FY24, driven by key industries such as construction and retail trade, despite challenges in utilities and a decline in GRT collections.

- **Economic Performance:** Taos County's MTGR increased by \$5.1M, or 1.7%, in Q3 FY24 compared to Q2 FY24. The MTGR for Q3 FY24 was \$300M, which was \$22.4M larger than the eight-quarter average of \$277.4M.
- **Key Industries:** Construction saw the largest increase in MTGR, rising by \$8.2M, or 13%, YOY. However, utilities experienced the largest decline, posting a decrease of \$3.5M, or 19%, YOY.
- **Employment and Wages:** Employment grew by 253 jobs, or 2.4% YOY, while average weekly wages increased by \$55, or 6.7%, reaching \$875.

San Miguel County

- **Overall Summary:** San Miguel County's economy remains stable, with slight fluctuations in MTGR and GRT collections. The growth in employment and wages reflects positive economic trends.
- **Economic Performance:** San Miguel County's MTGR remained relatively stable, averaging \$143.8M over the last eight quarters. In Q3 FY24, MTGR was reported at \$141.4M, slightly below the eight-quarter average.
- **Key Industries:** The retail trade and health care and social assistance industries were the primary drivers of YOY growth, adding \$3.4M in MTGR.
- **Employment and Wages:** Employment grew by 2.8% YOY, reaching 7,759 jobs, while average weekly wages increased by 7.1%, with the average wage now at \$860 per week.

Mora County

- **Overall Summary:** Mora County's economy exhibited a mix of growth and contraction in Q3 FY24, with retail trade showing notable growth while the construction industry faced declines.
- **Economic Performance:** Mora County's MTGR decreased by nearly \$11M, or 27%, from Q2 FY24 to Q3 FY24, with the construction industry being the largest contributor by share. However, retail trade saw an increase in its share, contributing positively to the economy.
- **Key Industries:** The retail trade industry was the largest contributor to YOY growth, adding \$2.1M, despite a significant YOY decline of \$2.3M in the construction industry.
- **Employment and Wages:** Employment remained flat, while average weekly wages grew by 8.2% YOY, indicating improvement in wage levels within the county.

Colfax County

- **Overall Summary:** Colfax County's economic performance in Q3 FY24 showed challenges in key industries such as construction, but the accommodation and food services sector showed resilience, becoming the largest contributor to MTGR.
- **Economic Performance:** Colfax County's MTGR decreased by 8.1%, or \$10M, from Q2 FY24 to Q3 FY24. The accommodation and food services industry became the largest contributor to MTGR during Q3 FY24, accounting for 29% of the total.

- **Key Industries:** The accommodation and food services industry led the growth, adding \$4.6M in MTGR, while the construction industry saw a significant decline.
- **Employment and Wages:** Employment decreased by 3.3%, equating to a reduction of 139 jobs YOY. However, average weekly wages increased by \$48, or 5.7% YOY, indicating an improvement in wage levels.

Santa Fe County

- **Overall Summary:** Santa Fe County experienced a decline in MTGR in Q3 FY24, driven by decreases in key sectors like utilities. However, other sectors showed positive growth, contributing to overall economic stability.
- **Economic Performance:** Santa Fe County's MTGR saw a significant decrease in Q3 FY24, falling by \$133.6M, or 8.1%, compared to Q2 FY24. The retail trade industry remained the largest contributor to MTGR, accounting for 27% of the total.
- **Key Industries:** The professional, scientific, and technical services industry led the YOY growth, with a \$14.7M increase, while the utilities industry experienced the largest YOY decline, with a \$7.7M decrease.
- **Employment and Wages:** Employment grew modestly by 0.4% YOY, totaling 61,473 jobs, while average weekly wages increased by 4.2%, reaching \$1,226 per week.

Los Alamos County

- **Overall Summary:** Los Alamos County is experiencing strong economic growth, driven by key industries such as administrative support and scientific services, contributing to increases in employment, wages, and overall economic stability.
- **Economic Performance:** Los Alamos County's MTGR increased significantly by \$234M (41.6%) from Q2 FY24 to Q3 FY24, reaching a total of \$796.5M. The administrative/support and waste management/remediation industry was the largest contributor to this growth.
- **Key Industries:** The administrative/support and waste management/remediation industry posted a \$93.3M YOY increase, while professional, scientific, and technical services saw a 40% YOY increase.
- **Employment and Wages:** Employment grew by 11.1% YOY, adding 2.2K jobs, and average weekly wages increased by 2.4% YOY. The number of establishments also increased YOY, reflecting a growing economic base.

Cibola County

- **Overall Summary:** Cibola County is experiencing solid economic growth, particularly in the health care and retail trade sectors, driving increases in both employment and wages.
- **Economic Performance:** Cibola County's MTGR increased by \$19.6M, or 19%, from Q2 FY24 to Q3 FY24, totaling \$123.8M. The retail trade and health care and social assistance industries were the top contributors.
- **Key Industries:** Health care and social assistance led the YOY growth with a \$4M increase in MTGR, while retail trade contributed a \$2M YOY increase.

- **Employment and Wages:** Employment grew by 3.4% YOY, adding 224 jobs, and average weekly wages increased by 11.4% YOY. However, the number of establishments declined by 1.3% YOY, reflecting challenges in business growth.

McKinley County

- **Overall Summary:** McKinley County's economy showed mixed results in Q3 FY24, with growth in retail trade and health care, but significant declines in mining and public administration.
- **Economic Performance:** McKinley County's MTGR averaged \$365.5M over the last eight quarters, slightly higher than the \$356.1M reported for Q3 FY24, representing a 6.3% decline from Q2 FY24.
- **Key Industries:** Retail trade posted a \$13M YOY increase, while the mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction industry faced a \$15.2M decline.
- **Employment and Wages:** Employment increased by 1.8% YOY, and average weekly wages rose by 5.1%. However, the number of establishments declined by 4.7% YOY, indicating challenges in business sustainability.

San Juan County

- **Overall Summary:** San Juan County's economy in Q3 FY24 was marked by stable overall performance with strong growth in specific sectors, particularly in the "Other Services" industry. However, challenges in transportation, warehousing, and utilities indicate areas that may require attention moving forward.
- **Economic Performance:** San Juan County's MTGR increased by 2.8%, or \$26.8M, from Q2 FY24 to Q3 FY24, reaching \$978.9M. The "Other Services" industry was the second-largest contributor to MTGR.
- **Key Industries:** The "Other Services" industry doubled its MTGR YOY, while the construction industry experienced a \$15.8M YOY increase.
- **Employment and Wages:** Employment increased by 575 jobs.

Higher Education and Training Institutions

The NALWDB region is home to a variety of educational institutions that contribute to workforce development by offering a range of programs from vocational training to advanced degrees.

- **Santa Fe Community College (SFCC):** Offers a wide range of programs including healthcare, business, arts, trades, and technology. It is also a key partner in initiatives like the New Collar Network's 3D Printing Bootcamp.
- **University of New Mexico - Taos (UNM Taos):** Provides programs in nursing, general education, and trades, including the Power Up Program, which helps youth achieve their High School Equivalency and pursue post-secondary education.

- San Juan College: Known for its strong programs in healthcare, energy, and technical trades, San Juan College is pivotal in training the local workforce.
- Northern New Mexico College: Offers degree and certificate programs focused on serving rural communities, with strong ties to local industry needs.
- New Mexico Highlands University: Specializes in training educators and social workers, offering robust programs in education, social work, and business.
- Central New Mexico Community College (CNM): Provides a broad range of technical and vocational training programs that support workforce development in trades and healthcare.
- University of New Mexico (UNM): Operates branch campuses across the state, including in Gallup, Grants, Los Alamos, and Taos, offering comprehensive undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs.
- New Mexico State University (NMSU) - Grants: Focuses on education, nursing, and trades, serving as a critical educational resource for Cibola County.
- Brookline College: Specializes in healthcare education, offering programs in nursing, medical assisting, and other allied health fields.
- Pima Medical Institute: Offers healthcare-related programs such as medical assisting, dental hygiene, and veterinary technology.
- Luna Community College: Provides education and training in a variety of fields including trades, healthcare, and education, serving San Miguel County and surrounding areas.
- Make Santa Fe Registered Apprenticeship and Pre-apprenticeship in Intelligent Manufacturing: Focuses on advanced manufacturing, offering apprenticeship opportunities in intelligent manufacturing.
- Native Nations CDL Navajo Technical University: Provides CDL training and other technical education programs, supporting the transportation industry.
- New Mexico Academy of Healing Arts: Specializes in holistic and healing arts education, offering programs in massage therapy and other wellness practices.

Population and Diversity

The NALWDB region is characterized by a diverse population, including significant Native American, Hispanic, and Anglo communities. This diversity contributes to the region's cultural richness and shapes workforce development strategies, particularly in addressing the needs of different demographic groups.

Growth Trends

- Economic Diversification: The region is moving beyond traditional industries such as energy and agriculture, with growth in healthcare, technology, education, and tourism.
- Aging Population: The aging population in rural areas is increasing the demand for healthcare services and related workforce development.

- **Tourism and Hospitality Growth:** Continued growth in tourism is creating jobs in retail, hospitality, and cultural sectors.
- **Infrastructure Development:** Investments in transportation and broadband infrastructure are crucial for connecting rural areas to educational and employment opportunities.

The Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board oversees a geographically and culturally diverse region with unique economic drivers and workforce needs. The region's higher education and training institutions are key to preparing a skilled workforce, supported by major employers and strategic partnerships. As the region continues to grow and diversify, the NALWDB is well-positioned to address both current and future workforce development challenges through targeted strategies and collaborations.

§679.550(c)

***Local Board Structure.* Provide a full roster of local board membership, including the group each member represents, in Attachment B. Include a list of all standing committees, along with a description of the purpose of each committee.**

§679.560(b)(1)(i)

Provide a description of the workforce development system in the local area that identifies the programs that are included in the system; demonstrating alignment with regional economic, workforce and workforce development analysis. (In addition, please provide a list in Attachment C of the one-stop centers in your local area, including address and phone numbers. Indicate the one-stop operator for each site and whether it is a comprehensive or satellite center. Include a list of the one-stop partners physically located at each of the one-stop centers in the local board area, and the services provided by these partners.)

The Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB) coordinates a comprehensive workforce development system in compliance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). This system includes mandated WIOA core partners and additional workforce programs that contribute to addressing the specific needs of job seekers, employers, and the overall economy in Northern New Mexico. The system integrates workforce, education, and supportive services to ensure that the diverse population of the region can access meaningful career opportunities.

Programs Included in the Workforce Development System

The workforce development system in the Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB) region is built on a strong foundation of collaboration between various **WIOA Title I** programs, **one-stop partners**, and local agencies. The system aims to provide comprehensive services to job seekers, dislocated workers, youth, and employers, aligning with the region's economic needs and workforce development goals. The primary objective is to prepare a skilled workforce for high-demand sectors such as healthcare, trades, advanced manufacturing, and information technology (IT), while addressing regional labor market challenges through targeted programs and partnerships.

Programs Included in the Local Workforce Development System

1. WIOA Title I - Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs
 - Adult Program: Provides career services, including training and employment opportunities for individuals aged 18 and over, with a focus on individuals facing barriers to employment.
 - Dislocated Worker Program: Assists individuals who have been laid off or whose job loss has resulted from economic downturns or other factors. Services include reemployment, skills training, and career counseling.
 - Youth Program: Focuses on serving youth aged 16-24, both in-school and out-of-school, by providing education, training, and employment opportunities to help them build successful careers.
 - YouthBuild: Targets low-income young adults aged 16-24, offering education, counseling, and job skills training in construction and other in-demand sectors, further enhancing youth services under WIOA Title I.
2. WIOA Title II - Adult Education and Literacy Programs
 - Programs include GED preparation, basic skills education, and English as a Second Language (ESL) services. These programs are delivered through local community colleges and adult education providers, preparing individuals for entry into the workforce or further education.
 - Key Partners: Local community colleges such as San Juan College, UNM Taos, and Santa Fe Community College, which provide adult education programs and career training aligned with regional economic demands.
3. WIOA Title III - Wagner-Peyser Employment Services
 - These services are provided through the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (NMDWS), offering job matching, labor market information, unemployment insurance, and other employment-related services.
 - NMDWS staff are physically located in most one-stop centers across the NALWDB region, ensuring seamless access to services such as job search assistance, career counseling, and reemployment services.
4. WIOA Title IV - Vocational Rehabilitation Services

- The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) provides specialized services to individuals with disabilities, helping them gain and retain employment. These services include job coaching, career counseling, and adaptive technology assistance.
- DVR staff work within one-stop centers to ensure participants with disabilities can access job training and employment services tailored to their needs.
- 5. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
 - TANF offers financial assistance and employment services to low-income families, helping them secure employment and achieve self-sufficiency. TANF partners are collocated in some one-stop centers, providing job search assistance, work readiness training, and supportive services such as childcare and transportation.
- 6. Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)
 - SCSEP provides training and employment services to older workers aged 55 and above, helping them reenter the workforce. SCSEP participants receive training to enhance their skills and find employment in sectors that suit their experience.
- 7. Job Corps
 - Job Corps offers free education and vocational training for young adults aged 16-24. Training is provided in sectors such as healthcare, IT, and construction, ensuring participants are prepared for high-demand careers. NALWDB partners with Job Corps to align their training with regional workforce needs, facilitating pathways to local employment.
- 8. Workforce Integration Network (WIN)
 - WIN addresses barriers to employment by providing wrap-around services such as transportation, childcare, and food security assistance, ensuring participants can stay engaged in workforce training and employment programs.
 - WIN's mobile service units reach underserved communities in rural areas, offering job search assistance, training information, and direct support to individuals facing challenges in accessing traditional one-stop services.
- 9. Apprenticeship Programs
 - Apprenticeship programs offer hands-on training combined with classroom instruction in fields such as construction, IT, and manufacturing. These programs are designed to meet the specific needs of local employers and provide participants with a direct pathway to employment.
- 10. Reentry Programs
 - These programs are tailored to individuals transitioning out of incarceration, providing job training, placement services, and support to help them successfully reenter the workforce. Reentry programs are essential for integrating returning citizens into the local economy.
- 11. Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)

- TAA assists workers who have lost their jobs due to foreign trade. The program offers retraining, job search assistance, and financial aid to help dislocated workers regain employment.

12. Veteran Employment Services

- These services focus on providing employment support specifically for veterans, often through partnerships with the Department of Veterans Affairs or state-level veteran services offices. Veterans receive specialized assistance to transition to civilian employment.

13. Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Programs (MSFW)

- MSFW programs assist migrant and seasonal farmworkers in accessing employment services, education, and training programs. These programs ensure that agricultural workers have access to workforce services that align with local economic needs.

By incorporating these programs, the NALWDB ensures a comprehensive and inclusive workforce development system that meets the needs of a diverse range of participants, aligning with regional economic demands and providing targeted services to individuals with varying barriers to employment.

Demonstrating Alignment with Regional Economic, Workforce, and Workforce Development Analysis

The Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB) strategically aligns its workforce development system with regional economic trends, labor market demands, and workforce development goals. This alignment ensures that the programs and services offered are responsive to the unique needs of Northern New Mexico's economy, job seekers, and employers. Below are key components that demonstrate how the NALWDB integrates regional economic, workforce, and workforce development analysis to drive its initiatives.

Data-Driven Decision-Making

The NALWDB employs a data-driven approach to ensure its workforce development strategies are aligned with real-time labor market trends. This is accomplished through:

- **Labor Market Information (LMI):** The board regularly reviews labor market data provided by the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (NMDWS) and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). This data includes unemployment rates, industry growth projections, and the demand for skilled workers across sectors.

- **Industry Growth Analysis:** Regional economic development organizations, such as the Greater Gallup Economic Development Corporation (GGEDC) and Cibola County Economic Development, provide insights into industries projected for growth. These insights guide the NALWDB's decision-making on the types of training programs and workforce services to offer.
 - *Example:* The healthcare sector is projected to grow significantly due to an aging population, prompting the NALWDB to increase training opportunities for nurses, medical assistants, and behavioral health professionals. Programs are developed in collaboration with local healthcare employers and institutions such as San Juan College.

Alignment with High-Growth Sectors

The NALWDB focuses on key sectors that are projected to grow and drive the Northern New Mexico economy. These include:

- **Healthcare:** The region's healthcare sector is one of the largest employers and is expected to continue expanding due to demographic trends such as an aging population and the need for behavioral health services. The NALWDB partners with local healthcare providers, community colleges, and universities to ensure that the workforce has access to relevant training and certifications in healthcare professions.
 - *Example:* The *Registered Medical Assistant Program* at San Juan College is supported by Title I funding to address the shortage of qualified healthcare workers in the region. The program includes hands-on training and guarantees a pathway to employment.
- **Construction and Skilled Trades:** Infrastructure development projects, housing construction, and the need for trades professionals such as electricians, welders, and plumbers make the construction industry a vital part of the regional economy. The NALWDB works with trade associations, apprenticeship programs, and employers to provide training for trades professionals.
 - *Example:* The *Southwest Indian Foundation's Industrial Worker Program* offers welding and heavy equipment training, addressing the region's demand for skilled labor in construction and infrastructure projects.
- **Information Technology (IT):** The IT sector is crucial for supporting regional broadband expansion and digital transformation efforts across various industries. The NALWDB collaborates with local colleges and training providers to offer IT certifications in areas like network administration, cybersecurity, and broadband technology.
 - *Example:* The *New Collar Network's 3D Printing Bootcamp* aligns with the growing need for digital manufacturing skills and provides participants with industry-recognized certifications in CAD design and 3D printing.

Collaboration with Regional Economic Development Organizations

The Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB) is committed to aligning its workforce development efforts with regional economic development strategies. By partnering with key economic development organizations, the NALWDB ensures that its programs meet local labor market needs and contribute to regional growth. Below are examples of how the NALWDB collaborates with major regional economic development organizations:

1. **North Central New Mexico Economic Development District (NCNMEDD), also known as the Northern New Mexico Council of Governments (COG)**
The NCNMEDD is the administrative home of the Northern New Mexico Workforce Integration Network (WIN), which focuses on providing comprehensive support to individuals facing employment barriers such as transportation, childcare, and food insecurity. By partnering with NCNMEDD and WIN, the NALWDB ensures that participants receive the support they need to achieve their workforce goals. This collaboration highlights the importance of holistic and flexible workforce development strategies that address individual barriers, helping participants stay on track toward successful employment outcomes.
2. **Greater Gallup Economic Development Corporation (GGEDC)**
The NALWDB works with GGEDC to support industrial workforce training in sectors such as construction, energy, and advanced manufacturing. This partnership focuses on developing a skilled workforce to meet employer demands in high-demand industries like welding and heavy equipment operation. NALWDB promotes apprenticeship programs, certifications, and work-based learning opportunities that address local labor shortages, particularly in CDL and heavy equipment operation.
3. **Cibola County Economic Development**
The NALWDB collaborates with Cibola County Economic Development to align workforce initiatives with the county's economic development goals. Together, they focus on expanding workforce opportunities in construction trades and apprenticeships. These programs provide participants with hands-on experience and industry-recognized credentials, supporting the region's demand for skilled labor. Work-based learning initiatives further connect participants to local businesses, providing valuable on-the-job training opportunities.
4. **NALWDB Conference Panels in Economic Development**
The NALWDB further strengthens its collaboration with regional economic development organizations through its Annual NALWDB Conference, where representatives from these organizations, business leaders, and workforce professionals gather to discuss strategies for aligning workforce development with regional economic growth. During the second annual NALWDB Conference, panels featured experts in economic development who addressed topics such as industrial workforce training, apprenticeship programs, and workforce alignment with state-level initiatives in sectors like IT, broadband, and construction.

In addition to these key partners, the NALWDB engages with several other important economic development organizations:

- Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) plays a pivotal role in developing workforce training in high-tech industries and STEM fields, critical to the region's technological growth.
- Taos County Economic Development Corporation supports workforce development in agriculture, natural resource management, and small business sectors, vital to the rural economy.
- Santa Fe Chamber of Commerce fosters business and workforce partnerships, promoting business growth and addressing skills shortages.
- Eight Northern Indian Pueblos Council collaborates on workforce strategies tailored to Indigenous communities, ensuring alignment with tribal economic goals.

These partnerships demonstrate the NALWDB's commitment to aligning workforce development with broader regional economic priorities, fostering sustainable economic growth across Northern New Mexico.

Tailored Training Programs for Regional Needs

The NALWDB works with educational institutions, industry partners, and workforce stakeholders to design training programs that meet the needs of both job seekers and employers. These training programs are carefully tailored to address skill gaps in critical industries, ensuring that participants are prepared for in-demand jobs. Programs include:

- Customized Training Programs: These are developed in partnership with local employers to provide targeted skills training for specific job roles. Employers benefit by having workers who are trained to meet their precise operational needs, while participants gain job-specific skills that increase their employability.
 - *Example: Phoenix Truck Driving* provides CDL training for Rio Arriba County employees, helping to fill a critical need for skilled drivers in the transportation sector.
- Apprenticeships and On-the-Job Training (OJT): Apprenticeships and OJT programs provide participants with hands-on experience while also earning wages. These programs are aligned with industries facing skills shortages, such as construction, manufacturing, and healthcare. The NALWDB collaborates with local employers to ensure these programs meet the region's labor demands.

Alignment with the New Mexico State Plan and WIOA

The NALWDB's workforce development initiatives are designed to support and enhance the strategic objectives outlined in the New Mexico Workforce State Plan (2024-2027) and comply with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). This alignment is key to ensuring that local workforce strategies not only serve the region's needs but also contribute to statewide and

national priorities. Below are some of the main areas where the NALWDB aligns with the New Mexico State Plan and WIOA requirements:

1. Career Pathways Development

The NALWDB places a strong emphasis on building career pathways that help individuals navigate from entry-level positions to higher-skill and higher-wage jobs. Career pathways provide clear, structured routes for advancement in various industries, offering multiple entry and exit points for individuals with different levels of experience and education. The NALWDB collaborates with educational institutions, training providers, and employers to ensure that these pathways lead to industry-recognized credentials.

Example: Healthcare Pathways

Through partnerships with Santa Fe Community College (SFCC) and San Juan College, the NALWDB has developed healthcare career pathways. These pathways start with Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) training and advance to Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) and Registered Nurse (RN) credentials.

Alignment with WIOA: This supports WIOA's goal of increasing access to education and training opportunities for individuals, especially those with barriers to employment. These healthcare career pathways provide a sequence of training that aligns with employer demand while giving individuals the opportunity to progressively enhance their skills and earnings.

Other Emerging Pathways: NALWDB is exploring additional pathways in sectors like construction trades, CDL and heavy equipment operations, and information technology (IT), in line with state and regional priorities.

2. Sector Strategies

Sector strategies are central to both the New Mexico State Plan and WIOA's vision of a demand-driven workforce system. The NALWDB actively supports sector strategies by focusing on high-demand industries in the region. These sectors include healthcare, construction, and information technology, all of which play a significant role in both regional economic development and state-level workforce priorities.

- Example: Information Technology (IT) and Broadband Expansion
- The NALWDB has prioritized IT certifications and broadband training in response to New Mexico's initiative to expand digital infrastructure and services in rural areas. By preparing workers for jobs in IT and broadband, the NALWDB helps meet the state's goal of expanding high-speed internet access and creating more tech-related jobs in underdeveloped regions.

- **Alignment with WIOA:** This aligns with WIOA’s emphasis on sector partnerships that bring together workforce boards, education providers, and employers to develop talent pipelines that respond to industry needs.
- **Construction Sector Focus:**
- With ongoing efforts to rebuild infrastructure and promote housing projects, the NALWDB focuses on providing training and certification in the construction trades. The goal is to ensure a sustainable talent pipeline that can meet regional demand while providing workers with stable, high-wage employment.
- **Partnerships with Training Providers:** Collaborations with institutions and apprenticeship programs ensure that training is accessible and aligned with current industry standards.

3. Access to Services and Inclusivity

The NALWDB is committed to making workforce development services more inclusive by improving access for individuals with barriers to employment, such as individuals with disabilities, low-income workers, and those from rural or underserved communities. This aligns with the WIOA mandate to provide priority services to these populations.

Example: Mobile Units and Remote Access:

- In collaboration with partners like the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (NMDWS) and the Northern New Mexico Workforce Integration Network (WIN), the NALWDB ensures that mobile units deliver workforce services to remote areas, helping to reduce geographic barriers.
- **ADA Compliance:** The NALWDB takes measures to ensure that all services comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other nondiscrimination laws, making workforce services accessible to everyone.

4. Data-Driven Decision Making

An essential element of the New Mexico State Plan and WIOA is the use of data-driven decision-making to improve workforce outcomes. The NALWDB has adopted a more rigorous approach to data collection and analysis, using real-time data to monitor program performance, assess labor market trends, and make necessary adjustments to its programs.

Example: Participant Data Audits:

- The NALWDB conducts regular audits of participant data to ensure that data is accurately recorded and utilized to improve program delivery. This data is used to refine strategies and address the needs of both participants and employers more effectively.

- **Alignment with WIOA:** This aligns with WIOA’s performance accountability requirements, which emphasize the importance of tracking and improving participant outcomes across core programs.

5. Employer Engagement and Partnerships

Building strong partnerships with employers is a key focus for both the New Mexico Workforce State Plan and WIOA. The NALWDB works closely with employers across the region to ensure that workforce development programs meet the needs of the local labor market.

- **Example: NALWDB Annual Conference**
 - The second annual NALWDB conference provides a platform for employers, community leaders, and workforce professionals to collaborate on workforce strategies. This event strengthens the NALWDB’s connection with employers and ensures that programs are aligned with real-world business needs.

By aligning its workforce strategies with the New Mexico Workforce State Plan and WIOA, the NALWDB ensures that it remains focused on building a workforce that meets both local and statewide needs, while providing opportunities for individuals to advance their careers and achieve economic self-sufficiency.

Inclusivity and Support for Individuals Facing Barriers

In alignment with the NALWDB’s mission to promote inclusivity, the board tailors its programs and services to support individuals who face significant barriers to employment. This includes:

- **Supportive Services:** The NALWDB provides access to childcare, transportation assistance, housing support, and financial literacy programs to ensure that individuals with barriers to employment can participate fully in workforce development activities.
- **Targeted Outreach:** Programs are designed to reach underrepresented groups, including Native Americans, veterans, individuals with disabilities, and at-risk youth. By providing targeted services and working with partners such as Vocational Rehabilitation and YouthWorks, the NALWDB ensures that these populations have access to meaningful training and employment opportunities.
 - *Example:* The *YouthWorks* program focuses on at-risk youth, offering paid internships, high school equivalency preparation, and career exploration in industries such as construction and culinary arts.

Continuous Improvement and Adaptation

The NALWDB regularly evaluates its programs and services to ensure they remain aligned with the evolving needs of the regional economy. Performance metrics are monitored closely, and feedback from employers, participants, and stakeholders is incorporated into the continuous improvement process. This approach ensures that the workforce development system adapts to new economic challenges and opportunities, such as shifts in technology or emerging industries.

In summary, the NALWDB's workforce development system is aligned with regional economic goals, high-growth industries, and labor market needs through data-driven analysis, strong partnerships with economic development organizations, and targeted programs that support both job seekers and employers. By continuously adapting to the evolving economic landscape, the NALWDB ensures that its workforce development efforts contribute to the long-term growth and self-sufficiency of Northern New Mexico.

Below is the expanded list of the One-Stop Career Centers in the NALWDB service area, including addresses, phone numbers, operators, types of centers, and the services provided by One-Stop partners.

Location	Address	Phone Number	Operator	Type	Partners Located	Services Provided
<i>Santa Fe One-Stop Center</i>	525 Camino de Los Marquez Santa Fe, NM 87505	(505) 827-7426	NMDWS	Comprehensive	NMDWS, Title I, Title III, Vocational Rehabilitation, YouthWorks	Employment services, skills training, job placement, youth services
<i>Farmington One-Stop Center</i>	3401 30 th St., suite B Farmington, NM 87401	(505) 566-4210	NMDWS	Comprehensive	NMDWS, Title I, Title II, Title III, SFCC, Job Corps	Career services, education programs, job placement, skills training

<i>Gallup One-Stop Center</i>	2918 E. Hwy 66, Gallup, NM 87301	(505) 722- 2001	NMDWS	Satellite	NMDWS, Title I, Vocational Rehabilitation	Career counseling, OJT, supportive services
<i>Taos One- Stop Center</i>	1036 Salazar Rd., Taos, NM 87571	(575) 758- 8765	NMDWS	Satellite	NMDWS, Title I, UNM Taos Power Up Program	Education, training
<i>Española One-Stop Center</i>	319 N. Paseo de Oñate, Española, NM 87532	(505) 753- 2285	NMDWS	Satellite	NMDWS, Title I, Title II, Vocational Rehabilitation, TANF	Career services, adult education, job placement, supportive services
<i>Las Vegas One-Stop Center</i>	833 Grand Ave., Las Vegas, NM 87701	(505) 425- 6451	NMDWS	Satellite	NMDWS, Title I, Vocational Rehabilitation, SCSEP, TANF	Career services, OJT, supportive services, training, senior employment
<i>Grants One-Stop Center</i>	900 mount Taylor St., Grants, NM 87020	(505) 287- 6621	NMDWS	Satellite	NMDWS, Title I,	Career services, OJT, supportive services
<i>Raton</i>	1233 Whittier St. Raton NM 87740	(505)	NMDWS	Satellite	NMDWS, Title I,	Career services, OJT, supportive services

This table provides an expanded overview of the One-Stop Career Centers in the NALWDB service area. Each center offers a range of services depending on its designation (comprehensive or satellite) and the workforce programs and partners physically located at each center. Comprehensive centers provide the full array of services mandated by WIOA, including employment services, training programs, and supportive services, while satellite centers offer more targeted services such as career counseling, On-the-Job Training (OJT), and support for individuals with disabilities.

§679.560(b)(1)(ii)

Describe how the LWDB will support the strategies identified in the State Plan and work with the entities carrying out core programs and other workforce development programs, including programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.) to support service alignment.

The Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB) is committed to aligning its workforce development efforts with the strategies outlined in the New Mexico Workforce State Plan. The NALWDB actively collaborates with entities carrying out WIOA core programs and other workforce development initiatives to ensure service alignment and effective delivery of training, education, and employment services. This alignment is critical for addressing regional workforce needs and supporting the economic growth of Northern New Mexico. Additionally, the NALWDB integrates Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (Perkins V) programs to ensure the development of a skilled workforce.

Alignment with Statewide Workforce Goals

The NALWDB supports the New Mexico Workforce State Plan by focusing on several key strategies:

- **Sector Strategies:** The NALWDB prioritizes the development of sector-specific workforce programs in high-demand industries such as healthcare, advanced manufacturing, information technology (IT), and construction. These sector strategies are aligned with the state's workforce goals to build a strong talent pipeline for critical industries.
 - *Example:* The NALWDB works closely with healthcare providers to offer training for nurses, medical assistants, and behavioral health professionals, ensuring the region can meet the growing healthcare needs identified in the state plan.
- **Career Pathways:** The NALWDB supports the development of clear and accessible career pathways that allow individuals to advance from entry-level positions to higher-skill, higher-wage jobs. These pathways are designed in collaboration with local educational institutions, training providers, and employers, and they align with the state's priorities for increasing post-secondary credential attainment and supporting lifelong learning.
 - *Example:* The partnership with *Santa Fe Community College (SFCC)* and *Northern New Mexico College* helps develop career pathways in healthcare, construction,

and IT, allowing individuals to build stackable credentials while addressing the state's workforce needs.

- **Integrated Service Delivery:** To ensure that job seekers receive seamless access to all available services, the NALWDB promotes integrated service delivery at One-Stop Career Centers. This includes coordinating with core program partners, community-based organizations, and employers to provide comprehensive support services such as career counseling, job placement, and skills training.

Collaboration with Core Programs

The NALWDB works closely with partners administering the WIOA core programs to ensure that services are aligned, and resources are used efficiently. Collaboration with these programs supports the goals of the state plan by providing job seekers with access to a wide range of training, education, and employment services.

- **WIOA Title I (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs):** These programs are key to providing career services, training, and work experience opportunities for eligible job seekers. The NALWDB works to ensure that participants in Title I programs can access resources such as job search assistance, OJT programs, and industry-specific training.
 - *Example:* The *YouthWorks* program, supported by Title I funding, provides at-risk youth with paid internships, job readiness training, and educational support to ensure successful transitions into the workforce.
- **WIOA Title II (Adult Education and Literacy):** The NALWDB collaborates with local educational institutions to offer adult education services, including high school equivalency programs and literacy training. This collaboration ensures that individuals with low educational attainment can access foundational education services that prepare them for further training or employment.
 - *Example:* Programs such as *UNM Taos Power Up* provide HiSET preparation and transition assistance into post-secondary education, aligning with the state's focus on increasing educational attainment.
- **WIOA Title III (Wagner-Peyser Employment Services):** The NALWDB supports the delivery of employment services through One-Stop Career Centers, ensuring that job seekers can access job listings, resume writing assistance, and career counseling. These services help individuals connect with job opportunities and employers, supporting both state and regional employment goals.
- **WIOA Title IV (Vocational Rehabilitation Services):** The NALWDB collaborates with the state's Vocational Rehabilitation programs to ensure individuals with disabilities receive the accommodations and support they need to access training and employment opportunities. By providing assistive technologies, job readiness training, and career services, the NALWDB ensures that individuals with disabilities are included in the workforce.

Collaboration with Perkins V Programs

The NALWDB works in partnership with local educational institutions that receive Perkins V funding to align Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs with regional workforce needs. This collaboration ensures that CTE programs provide students with the technical skills and certifications needed for in-demand careers.

- **CTE Program Alignment:** The NALWDB collaborates with Perkins-funded programs at *Santa Fe Community College (SFCC)*, *San Juan College*, and *Northern New Mexico College* to ensure that students enrolled in CTE programs receive training that is aligned with the needs of local employers. This includes sectors such as healthcare, information technology, trades, and advanced manufacturing.
 - *Example:* Perkins V programs in healthcare allow students to earn industry-recognized credentials such as Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) or Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN), supporting the state's goal of expanding the healthcare workforce.
- **Work-Based Learning Opportunities:** Through its collaboration with Perkins-funded institutions, the NALWDB helps connect CTE students with internships, apprenticeships, and OJT opportunities. These work-based learning experiences are crucial for students to gain practical skills that are directly applicable to the workplace.
 - *Example:* The partnership with *Melloy Honda* in Farmington offers apprenticeships for students in San Juan College's automotive program, providing hands-on experience and a pathway to full-time employment.

Enhancing Service Alignment

The NALWDB promotes the alignment of workforce development services to ensure that job seekers and employers receive coordinated, comprehensive support. By encouraging collaboration between core programs and Perkins V programs, the NALWDB ensures that all available resources are leveraged to provide high-quality services to participants.

- **Co-Enrollment:** To maximize the benefits available to job seekers, the NALWDB encourages co-enrollment across multiple WIOA and Perkins programs. Co-enrollment allows participants to access a broader range of services, such as skills training through Title I and adult education through Title II, creating a more comprehensive support system.
 - *Example:* A dislocated worker might be co-enrolled in the Dislocated Worker Program (Title I) and a CTE program funded by Perkins V, allowing them to receive job retraining while also gaining industry-specific certifications.
- **Resource Sharing:** The NALWDB promotes resource sharing among workforce system partners to ensure that services are delivered efficiently and cost-effectively. This includes sharing labor market information, job placement resources, and training materials to reduce duplication of efforts and better serve the region's workforce.

- **One-Stop Career Centers:** The NALWDB ensures that One-Stop Career Centers serve as a central point for accessing WIOA and Perkins services. These centers provide a full range of services, including job placement, career counseling, training referrals, and supportive services such as transportation and childcare assistance.

Strengthening Partnerships

Strong partnerships are central to the NALWDB's strategy for supporting the state plan. The board actively collaborates with educational institutions, employers, community organizations, and economic development partners to align workforce development efforts with regional economic needs.

- **Collaboration with Educational Institutions:** The NALWDB works closely with community colleges, technical schools, and universities to ensure that their curriculum and training programs are responsive to industry demands. By aligning educational offerings with regional workforce needs, the board helps students transition seamlessly from education to employment.
 - *Example:* The partnership with *UNM Taos* ensures that students in the *Power Up Program* receive the education and support necessary to advance into post-secondary programs or the workforce, supporting the state's goal of increasing educational attainment.
- **Employer Engagement:** The NALWDB works with local employers to identify workforce needs, develop customized training programs, and create opportunities for internships and apprenticeships. By maintaining close relationships with employers, the board ensures that training programs are directly aligned with the skills and qualifications that businesses require.
 - *Example:* The NALWDB's collaboration with healthcare employers such as *Lancer Health Group* ensures that training programs for nurses and medical assistants align with the specific skills needed in the healthcare sector.

Commitment to Continuous Improvement

The NALWDB is committed to continuously improving its programs and services to ensure they remain aligned with the evolving needs of the workforce and regional economy. The board regularly monitors program performance, solicits feedback from participants and employers, and adjusts its strategies based on labor market trends.

- **Performance Monitoring:** The NALWDB uses performance metrics to assess the effectiveness of its workforce programs, ensuring that services are meeting both participant and employer needs.

- **Stakeholder Feedback:** The board regularly engages with stakeholders—including employers, participants, and community organizations—to gather feedback on workforce programs and identify areas for improvement.

In summary, the NALWDB plays a key role in supporting the strategies identified in the New Mexico Workforce State Plan by aligning its programs with statewide goals, collaborating with WIOA core programs and Perkins V initiatives, enhancing service delivery, and strengthening partnerships with employers and educational institutions. Through these efforts, the NALWDB ensures that Northern New Mexico’s workforce is prepared for success in the region’s growing industries.

§679.560(b)(2)(i)

Describe how the local board will work with entities carrying out core programs to expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment.

The Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB) is committed to expanding access to employment, training, education, and supportive services, with a particular focus on individuals who face barriers to employment. NALWDB collaborates with entities such as the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (NMDWS), the Northern New Mexico Workforce Integration Network (WIN), and local educational institutions to ensure that services are accessible to those most in need.

Key initiatives include:

- **Barrier Mitigation Through Support Services:** WIN plays a critical role in helping individuals overcome obstacles such as food insecurity, transportation, and childcare. WIN ensures that eligible individuals can stay on track toward their employment and independence goals, creating customized support systems for each participant. By addressing these immediate barriers, individuals are better positioned to complete training and find employment. This is particularly critical for participants who come from rural or underserved areas within NALWDB’s ten-county region, where transportation and other support services are often scarce.
- **Utilization of Mobile Units:** NALWDB leverages the mobile units operated by partners such as NMDWS and WIN to provide outreach and services in remote areas. These mobile units offer critical services, including job search assistance, resume development, career counseling, and access to training programs, which are often unavailable in more isolated areas. This mobile outreach is crucial in areas like Cibola, Mora, and Rio Arriba counties, where public transportation and service infrastructure are limited.
- **Document Drives and Supportive Events:** The \$50,000 grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, awarded to the NALWDB for the period of May 1, 2024, through April 30, 2026, supports a document drive and an annual conference. These efforts help participants, particularly those with documentation barriers, to obtain necessary identification and work

authorization documents that are often prerequisites for employment or program enrollment. By addressing these administrative hurdles, NALWDB opens the door to training and employment for a larger group of eligible individuals.

- **Job Fairs and Employer Outreach:** NALWDB works with NMDWS and local partners to organize job fairs throughout the 10-county region. These fairs provide direct access to job opportunities, particularly for those with limited connections to employers. Additionally, by coordinating with local employers, NALWDB ensures that individuals with barriers to employment are considered for positions that align with their skills and training.

§679.560(b)(2)(ii)

Describe how the local board will work with entities carrying out core programs to facilitate the development of career pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs.

The NALWDB collaborates with entities like NMDWS, WIN, educational institutions, and economic development organizations to facilitate career pathway development and promote co-enrollment in core programs. This collaboration allows participants to access a wide range of services that align education and training with regional labor market needs, particularly in high-demand sectors.

Key data and strategies include:

- **Career Pathways in High-Demand Sectors:** NALWDB focuses on developing career pathways in key sectors such as trades, CDL, heavy equipment operation, and IT, which align with regional economic priorities. For example, the NALWDB works with institutions to create training programs that lead to certifications in these areas. These pathways are tailored to meet the needs of the local labor market, as evidenced by the Board's partnership with entities like Greater Gallup Economic Development Corporation (GGEDC) and Cibola County Economic Development, which help align training programs with local business needs.
- **Integrated Education and Training (IET):** The Board supports IET programs that blend adult education with technical training, particularly in sectors where stackable and portable credentials are critical. For example, programs in trades and CDL offer participants the ability to earn credentials that not only improve immediate employment prospects but also allow for further advancement through additional training and certifications.
- **Co-Enrollment for Seamless Progression:** NALWDB works to ensure co-enrollment in core programs where participants can access both educational and employment services simultaneously. For instance, participants in the Summer and Winter Academies benefit from job shadowing, paid work experience, and educational components such as financial literacy, which are coordinated through partnerships with educational institutions and local businesses. Co-enrollment ensures that individuals can progress through multiple stages of training and employment without unnecessary delays.

- **Youth Career Development:** As part of its Summer and Winter Academies, NALWDB partners with local businesses to provide short-term job experiences for youth. In 2023, for example, the Summer Youth Academy enrolled 80 participants, offering a combination of online career exploration, job shadowing, and work experience. These youth-focused programs are part of the broader career pathways strategy, aimed at helping young individuals develop the skills necessary to transition into long-term career opportunities.

§679.560(b)(2)(iii)

Describe how the local board will work with entities carrying out core programs to improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential (including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable, and stackable).

The NALWDB works closely with its partners to ensure that eligible individuals have access to activities leading to recognized postsecondary credentials, including those that are industry-recognized, portable, and stackable. This effort is aligned with the region's economic development goals and focuses on equipping individuals with skills that are in demand in the local job market.

Key data and strategies include:

- **Access to Certifications and Credentials in Key Sectors:** NALWDB ensures that participants have access to certifications in priority sectors such as IT, trades, CDL, and heavy equipment. These certifications are designed to be stackable and portable, allowing participants to build on their credentials as they advance in their careers. For instance, CDL and heavy equipment certifications allow workers to start with entry-level positions and continue their education to qualify for higher-paying roles. IT sector certifications, supported by NALWDB's focus on broadband expansion, offer participants the flexibility to advance within the growing tech sector, which is becoming increasingly important in Northern New Mexico.
- **Focus on Integrated Education and Training (IET):** NALWDB emphasizes the importance of IET programs, which integrate basic education with technical skills training. These programs help individuals earn credentials that are both portable and stackable. For example, a participant may begin with basic adult education and then progress to a trades certification, ensuring that they not only meet immediate employment needs but also have the opportunity for future advancement.
- **Data-Driven Credentialing Decisions:** NALWDB has adopted an improved approach to data collection and analysis to ensure that the credentialing programs offered align with labor market demands. Real-time data collection helps monitor program performance, and program audits ensure that participants are properly recorded and that the programs lead to credentials that are valued by employers. This data-driven approach ensures that credentials earned by participants are relevant and provide value in the local job market.
- **Partnership with Economic Development Entities:** NALWDB works closely with economic development organizations, such as GGEDC and Cibola County Economic Development, to

ensure that credentialing opportunities align with regional economic needs. This includes convening panel discussions with regional representatives, such as Tim Hagamen and Johanna Nelson, to identify emerging industry needs and ensure that credentialing programs keep pace with economic trends.

These collaborative efforts ensure that participants have access to education and training opportunities that lead to meaningful, recognized postsecondary credentials, helping them advance in their careers while meeting the evolving needs of the local economy.

§679.560(b)(3)(i)

Describe the strategies and services that will be used in the local area to facilitate engagement of employers in workforce development programs, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations.

The Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB) is focused on fostering meaningful and sustained engagement with employers, including small businesses and those in high-demand sectors, to ensure that workforce development programs are aligned with employer needs and promote economic growth. This employer-centric approach is critical to driving job creation and workforce readiness in Northern New Mexico.

Strategy:

- **Direct Employer Engagement:** The NALWDB will enhance outreach efforts to establish strong connections with employers across key sectors. By engaging employers through tailored outreach programs, industry forums, and personalized business services, the board will ensure that small businesses and high-demand industries such as healthcare, trades, IT, and hospitality are fully integrated into workforce development efforts.

Services:

On-the-Job Training (OJT) and Customized Training Programs: These programs allow employers to train new hires according to their specific needs while receiving financial assistance for wages during the training period. Customized training also enables employers to upskill existing employees, ensuring they remain competitive and meet industry demands.

Examples:

- The partnership with Guardian Angel Home Health Hospice provided OJT opportunities to address staffing shortages, helping the business grow while developing a pipeline of skilled workers.

- Collaboration with Air Interfacility Transport LLC in Farmington led to OJT programs that trained dispatchers and drivers, addressing critical workforce gaps in emergency services.
- Expanding Business Partnerships: NALWDB will build on successful engagements with small businesses like Silver Dollar Wood Products (Raton) and Quezada Jacobs Family Agency, LLC (Santa Fe), offering virtual recruitment services, OJT contracts, and customized workforce solutions to help these businesses expand and recover post-pandemic.

Future Strategy:

- Sector-Specific Partnerships: NALWDB will focus on deepening engagement with key industry sectors, such as healthcare, construction, and emergency services, to ensure workforce programs align with labor market demands. Expanding sector strategies will include regular employer roundtables, tailored industry-specific training programs, and workforce development summits.
- Example: Lancer Health Group will receive expanded OJT programs to train additional employees in behavioral health services, addressing gaps in psychiatric care across Colfax County.

§679.560(b)(3)(ii)

Describe the strategies and services that will be used in the local area to support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area.

The Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB) is committed to building a responsive and dynamic workforce development system that directly addresses the evolving needs of businesses in the Northern region of New Mexico. By collaborating closely with local employers, industry groups, and economic development organizations, the NALWDB ensures that the workforce development system remains flexible, proactive, and tailored to the demands of the local labor market.

Strategy: Building a Responsive Workforce System

- The NALWDB actively engages with businesses of all sizes, from small local enterprises to large regional employers, to better understand their workforce needs and tailor services accordingly. The board leverages its partnerships with educational institutions, industry associations, and community-based organizations to design training programs that directly respond to employer demand, ensuring that the local workforce is equipped with the skills necessary to fill high-demand positions.
- Additionally, the NALWDB will continue to implement On-the-Job Training (OJT), Incumbent Worker Training, and Customized Training programs that allow employers to upskill their

current workforce while preparing new hires for specific roles within their organizations. These programs are key tools in helping businesses remain competitive and ensuring that their workforce is both highly skilled and adaptable to changing industry needs.

- Expanding use of workforce preparation and pre-vocational paths to broaden training on foundational skills, in partnership with the Adult Education system. The Individualized Education & Training (IET) model, administered by the New Mexico Higher Education Department, is an effective way to synchronize the paths of foundational skills development and more specific job training. As trainings and credentials are developed, we will use the same tools currently used for literacy and numeracy to strengthen foundational workforce skills.

Ongoing Activities:

1. On-the-Job Training (OJT) Programs:

- OJT programs have been instrumental in supporting local businesses by offering financial assistance to train new employees directly on the job. These programs reimburse employers for a percentage of the trainee's wages, helping businesses offset training costs while ensuring that new employees gain the skills needed to excel in their roles.
- Example: Farmington Fire Department:
 - The NALWDB's partnership with the Farmington Fire Department exemplifies the impact of OJT programs. Facing a significant portion of its workforce approaching retirement, the fire department collaborated with the board to implement OJT for new recruits. This initiative not only ensured the continuity of critical services but also provided trainees with the skills and knowledge required to serve as first responders in their community.
 - Expansion Plans: Building on this success, the NALWDB will extend OJT opportunities to other public safety agencies, such as police departments and EMS services, throughout the Northern region. By doing so, the board will address workforce shortages in essential services while ensuring that businesses and public agencies have access to skilled workers.

2. Incumbent Worker Training (IWT):

- Incumbent Worker Training allows employers to upskill their existing workforce, enabling them to remain competitive in an increasingly complex economic environment. By investing in the professional development of their current employees, businesses can enhance productivity, retain talent, and better position themselves for growth.
- Example: Guardian Angel Home Health Hospice:
 - The NALWDB's partnership with Guardian Angel Home Health Hospice involved providing customized training to home health aides and administrative staff. This program addressed staffing shortages by equipping existing employees with advanced skills in patient care, medical

administration, and compliance with healthcare regulations. As a result, Guardian Angel was able to improve the quality of care provided to patients while reducing employee turnover.

- Future Initiatives: In response to the growing demand for home healthcare services, the board plans to expand IWT programs across additional healthcare providers in the region, including nursing homes, rehabilitation centers, and assisted living facilities. This approach will not only improve the quality of care but also ensure career advancement opportunities for healthcare workers.

3. Customized Training Programs:

- Customized Training programs are developed in collaboration with local businesses to meet specific employer needs. These programs allow businesses to design a training curriculum that aligns with their industry standards, ensuring that employees receive targeted instruction relevant to their roles.
- Example: Lancer Health Group:
 - The NALWDB collaborated with Lancer Health Group in Colfax County to develop customized training for psychiatric evaluations and treatment services. By offering specialized training to new employees, Lancer Health was able to fill critical roles in behavioral health, an area with a significant labor shortage in rural New Mexico.
 - Expansion: The NALWDB plans to replicate this model across other healthcare providers in the region, particularly in behavioral health and telemedicine, areas that have seen growing demand post-pandemic.

Future Strategy:

1. Small Business Engagement:

- Recognizing the importance of small businesses in the local economy, the NALWDB will expand its efforts to engage small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in workforce development programs. Small businesses often face unique challenges in recruiting and retaining skilled workers, and the board aims to address these challenges by offering tailored workforce solutions that cater to the specific needs of smaller employers.
- Example: Farmington Fire Department & LNM Heating & Cooling:
 - In previous engagements, the NALWDB successfully partnered with local government and small businesses like Farmington Fire Department & LNM Heating & Cooling to provide OJT contracts and customized recruitment services. These partnerships enabled both companies to rebuild their workforce post-pandemic, helping them meet their operational needs while contributing to local job creation.
 - Expansion Plans: In the 2024-2027 period, the board will target more small businesses across diverse industries, such as hospitality, trades, and retail,

offering specialized recruitment services, training programs, and virtual hiring events.

2. Sector-Specific Training and Apprenticeships:

- The NALWDB will deepen its focus on sector-specific training programs that align with the needs of high-growth industries such as healthcare, construction, IT, and trades. By partnering with local educational institutions and industry groups, the board will continue to develop apprenticeship programs and other training initiatives that provide both hands-on experience and classroom instruction.
- Example: Associated Builders and Contractors of New Mexico (ABC):
 - In collaboration with ABC, the board has funded apprenticeship programs to prepare workers for careers in construction, addressing the labor shortages in this critical industry. These programs provide participants with industry-recognized certifications and a direct pathway to employment, ensuring that the construction sector has a steady pipeline of skilled workers.
 - Expansion Plans: In response to rising demand in the construction industry, the board will work with regional contractors, builders, and infrastructure developers to expand apprenticeship opportunities in areas such as electrical work, plumbing, and HVAC systems. The board will also support ongoing construction projects in the Northern region, ensuring that workers are prepared for these opportunities.

3. Technology-Driven Training Solutions:

- The NALWDB will leverage technology to deliver virtual and hybrid training programs, particularly in rural areas with limited access to in-person training opportunities. This approach will ensure that workers in remote communities can access high-quality training that prepares them for in-demand occupations.
- Example: New Collar Network 3D Printing Bootcamp:
 - The board's collaboration with New Collar Network provided participants with a 12-week full-time 3D Printing Bootcamp, equipping them with in-demand CAD design and 3D printing skills. This technology-driven training initiative expanded career options for participants in industries such as manufacturing and digital fabrication.
 - Future Plans: The board will expand these initiatives to other high-tech sectors, including IT support, cybersecurity, and digital marketing, using virtual training platforms to reach participants across the Northern region.

Workforce System Success and Impact:

- The NALWDB's efforts to build a responsive workforce development system have already yielded positive outcomes. For example, the board's coordination with local businesses to deliver OJT and customized training programs has resulted in higher job placement rates and increased employee retention.
- Example: City of Bloomfield Police Department:

- By partnering with the City of Bloomfield Police Department, the board helped train new recruits through OJT programs. As a result, the department was able to fill essential law enforcement positions, and multiple participants who completed the training program are now employed full-time as police officers. This partnership model will be expanded to other law enforcement agencies across the region.

Through targeted programs such as OJT, Incumbent Worker Training, Customized Training, and sector-specific initiatives, the NALWDB will continue to build a responsive workforce system that directly meets the needs of businesses in the Northern region. By working closely with employers, industry leaders, and educational partners, the board ensures that its workforce development programs are aligned with local labor market demands, helping businesses thrive and fostering economic growth across the region.

§679.560(b)(3)(iii)

Describe the strategies and services that will be used in the local area to better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development.

The Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB) plays a critical role in aligning workforce development programs with regional economic development efforts. By fostering strong partnerships with economic development organizations and actively participating in regional planning, the NALWDB ensures that workforce training and development initiatives are closely aligned with the economic growth strategies of Northern New Mexico. This coordination allows for a more integrated approach to job creation, industry growth, and the development of a skilled workforce.

Strategy: Aligning Workforce Development with Economic Development Goals

The NALWDB collaborates extensively with regional economic development organizations, such as the Greater Gallup Economic Development Corporation (GGEDC), Cibola Communities Economic Development, and the North Central New Mexico Economic Development District (NCNMEDD), to ensure that workforce development strategies are informed by regional economic priorities. This approach enables the board to support industries critical to the region's economy, such as healthcare, construction, energy, and trades, while simultaneously addressing workforce gaps.

The board also collaborates with local chambers of commerce, municipal economic development departments, and industry associations to ensure that workforce initiatives align with broader regional economic goals, such as job creation, infrastructure development, and the expansion of high-growth industries.

Services and Activities:

- Industrial Workforce Training and Partnerships with GGEDC:
 - The ongoing Industrial Workforce Program in collaboration with the Greater Gallup Economic Development Corporation (GGEDC) is a cornerstone of NALWDB's workforce and economic development coordination efforts. This program offers training in welding, heavy equipment operation, and industrial safety, aligning with GGEDC's goal of preparing a skilled labor force for the manufacturing and energy sectors.
 - Expansion Plans: Over the next four years, the NALWDB will work with GGEDC to expand the program to include additional training in advanced manufacturing, renewable energy, and logistics. This will support regional employers in meeting the demand for a highly skilled industrial workforce.
- Good Jobs Challenge Grant:
 - Through support for the Good Jobs Challenge Grant, which aims to create pathways into high-paying jobs in healthcare and construction, the NALWDB has positioned itself as a key player in fostering economic development. The initiative focuses on providing training for Latino, Indigenous, and formerly incarcerated individuals, thus addressing workforce shortages in these critical sectors while also contributing to inclusive economic growth.
 - Role of the NALWDB: The board will host regular events, job fairs, and training programs through its One-Stop centers to facilitate the connection between job seekers and employers. This initiative will work closely with economic development partners to identify emerging opportunities in high-growth sectors, ensuring the labor market remains responsive to local economic trends.
- Collaboration with Cibola Communities Economic Development:
 - The NALWDB's partnership with Cibola Communities Economic Development focuses on creating job opportunities in critical sectors such as healthcare, construction, and renewable energy. By aligning workforce training programs with the development of these industries, the NALWDB helps meet the region's labor market needs while contributing to economic resilience.
 - Example: Recent collaborations have led to the expansion of renewable energy training programs and initiatives that focus on retraining workers displaced by industry shifts. These programs ensure that workers can transition into new industries, such as solar energy or energy efficiency technologies, which are growing in demand in the Northern region.
- Entrepreneurial Development and Small Business Support:
 - In addition to collaborating on large-scale industrial projects, the NALWDB will promote entrepreneurship and small business growth as part of its economic development strategy. The board works with local Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs), chambers of commerce, and municipal governments to offer

small businesses support through workforce planning, recruitment, and customized training programs.

- Example: The NALWDB has worked with small businesses such as Pedro's Bakery and Los de Mora Local Growers to provide access to OJT programs and small business planning support, ensuring that entrepreneurs have the workforce and resources needed to thrive.

Future Strategy:

- **Expanding Industry-Specific Workforce Programs:**
 - The NALWDB will continue to expand workforce development programs that align with regional economic development goals, focusing on industries identified as high growth by regional economic development agencies. These industries include healthcare, IT, advanced manufacturing, and clean energy.
 - **Focus on Infrastructure Projects:** The board will work closely with GGEDC and NCNMEDD to develop workforce programs tied to major infrastructure projects, such as transportation and broadband expansion, ensuring that local workers are prepared to take advantage of the employment opportunities generated by these initiatives.
- **Incorporating Economic Development Panel Insights:**
 - The NALWDB's 2024 Northern Region Workforce Development Conference emphasized economic development as a key element of workforce planning. Insights from panelists such as Tim Hagamen, Paige Ryan, and Peter Mitchell, who are regional representatives from the New Mexico Economic Development Department (EDD), will be used to inform future strategies.
 - Example: Panel discussions highlighted the importance of building stronger linkages between workforce development and emerging sectors such as energy transition and disaster resilience, areas where the NALWDB will focus future training and skill-building efforts.
- **Local Economic Development Partnerships:**
 - Through active participation in regional economic development forums, the NALWDB will continue to partner with economic leaders, including Eileen Yarborough from Cibola Communities Economic Development and Camilla Bustamante from North Central NM Economic Development, to foster regional job growth. By aligning workforce programs with economic planning, the board can ensure that local industries have access to a ready and capable workforce.

Panel Contributions: Economic development panelists such as Mayor David Romero of San Miguel County and Bridget Dixson of the Santa Fe Chamber of Commerce have provided valuable insight into workforce needs at the local level, informing the NALWDB's strategic direction. Collaboration with these leaders will focus on job creation strategies and employer-driven workforce development programs.

Entrepreneurial Skills Training and Support for Small Businesses:

- The NALWDB will continue to collaborate with SBDCs, local chambers of commerce, and entrepreneurial support organizations to provide training and resources that foster small business growth.
 - Training Programs: Entrepreneurial skills training will cover critical areas such as business planning, financial management, marketing strategies, and workforce management.
 - Small Business Success: The NALWDB will support small businesses like Mora Valley Community Health Services by offering workforce development programs that help them meet staffing needs, thereby contributing to the local economy.

§679.560(b)(3)(iv)

Describe the strategies and services that will be used in the local area to strengthen linkages between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs.

The NALWDB is dedicated to creating stronger linkages between the One-Stop system and Unemployment Insurance (UI) programs to ensure seamless service delivery for UI recipients. This strategy enables unemployed individuals to access workforce development services and quickly transition back into the labor market.

Strategy:

- Coordinated Case Management: The NALWDB will integrate UI programs with One-Stop services, ensuring that UI recipients are quickly connected to job training and employment opportunities through direct outreach and coordinated case management.

Services:

- Job Fairs and Hiring Events: Building on the success of the "Spring into Summer with WIOA" event, the NALWDB will host additional job fairs and rapid hire events targeting UI recipients. These events will feature on-the-spot interviews and job placements, particularly in high-demand sectors like construction, CDL driving, and healthcare.
- Direct Outreach: The NALWDB will conduct targeted outreach to UI recipients, informing them of training and job placement opportunities and connecting them with career counseling and job search services at One-Stop centers.

Future Strategy:

- **Seamless Service Delivery:** The NALWDB will implement tools such as coordinated intake forms and joint case management software to ensure UI recipients have quick and seamless access to all available workforce services.

§679.560(b)(4)

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

The Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB) plays a central role in aligning local workforce investment activities with regional economic development efforts. By partnering with key economic development organizations and local businesses, the NALWDB ensures that workforce initiatives are integrated with the broader regional economic development strategies. The Board also actively promotes entrepreneurial skills training and provides support for small business services to foster economic growth in the ten-county region it serves.

Coordination with Regional Economic Development Activities

The NALWDB works closely with several regional economic development entities to coordinate workforce investment activities and ensure alignment with regional economic goals. These entities include the Greater Gallup Economic Development Corporation (GGEDC), Cibola County Economic Development, and other local economic development partners. Through regular communication and participation in economic development planning, the NALWDB tailors its workforce programs to meet the needs of growing industries in the region.

- **Strategic Alignment with Economic Development Goals:** NALWDB ensures that its workforce training programs are aligned with the region's economic growth strategies, particularly in sectors such as trades, CDL, heavy equipment, IT, and broadband expansion. By working with economic development partners, the NALWDB identifies high-demand occupations and tailors training programs accordingly. For example, the Board works with partners like GGEDC to align its workforce investments with major infrastructure projects and regional initiatives that require skilled workers, such as CDL drivers and heavy equipment operators.
- **Engagement in Regional Panels and Conferences:** The NALWDB actively participates in regional panels and conferences that bring together economic development experts and business leaders to discuss emerging trends and workforce needs. Panelists such as Tim

Hagamen, Paige Ryan, and Peter Mitchell, among others, provide valuable insights into local and regional economic conditions. By engaging in these discussions, the NALWDB gains a deeper understanding of industry demands and regional economic shifts, allowing it to adjust its programs accordingly. The annual NALWDB Conference, supported by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, provides an opportunity for further collaboration and alignment of workforce and economic development efforts.

- **Data-Driven Decision Making:** The NALWDB has adopted a more rigorous approach to data collection and analysis, using real-time data to monitor regional economic conditions and adjust workforce investment activities. This approach ensures that workforce training is responsive to economic shifts, allowing the Board to direct resources to areas of greatest need and economic opportunity. Program audits and performance evaluations ensure that investments lead to meaningful employment outcomes in alignment with regional economic growth.

Promotion of Entrepreneurial Skills Training

The NALWDB actively promotes entrepreneurial skills training as part of its strategy to foster economic development and support small businesses in the region. Recognizing that small businesses are critical drivers of economic growth and job creation, the Board collaborates with local partners to provide training and resources that help individuals develop the skills needed to start and manage their own businesses.

- **Entrepreneurial Training Programs:** In collaboration with local institutions and business development centers, the NALWDB supports entrepreneurial training programs that provide participants with foundational business skills, such as financial management, marketing, and business planning. These programs are particularly beneficial for individuals interested in starting small businesses in trades, IT, and other local industries. By offering entrepreneurial training alongside traditional workforce development programs, NALWDB provides participants with the skills and confidence needed to pursue self-employment and small business ownership.
- **Youth Entrepreneurship Initiatives:** The NALWDB promotes entrepreneurial skills among young individuals through initiatives such as the Summer and Winter Academies. These academies not only provide participants with work experience and career exploration opportunities but also include components of financial literacy and business development. By engaging youth in entrepreneurial thinking, the NALWDB fosters the next generation of small business owners and entrepreneurs who will contribute to the region's economic vitality.
- **Support for Small Business Services:** The NALWDB partners with local chambers of commerce, business incubators, and small business development centers to ensure that aspiring entrepreneurs have access to the resources and mentorship needed to succeed. These partnerships offer participants access to services such as business counseling,

mentorship, and funding opportunities, which are essential for launching and sustaining small businesses in the region.

Support for Small Business Development

The NALWDB plays a proactive role in supporting small business services by collaborating with local organizations that provide resources and assistance to small businesses. The Board's support extends beyond entrepreneurial training to include efforts that connect small business owners with workforce solutions that meet their hiring and skills needs.

- **Workforce Solutions for Small Businesses:** By coordinating with NMDWS and local educational institutions, the NALWDB helps small businesses access skilled workers who meet their specific needs. The Board's role in organizing job fairs and promoting workforce services ensures that small businesses can connect with qualified candidates, including individuals who have completed training programs in trades, CDL, and IT. Additionally, NALWDB assists small businesses in navigating programs that offer incentives for hiring and training employees, such as the On-the-Job Training (OJT) program.
- **Local Business Engagement:** NALWDB ensures that local businesses are directly engaged in workforce development efforts by promoting short-term job experiences through its Summer and Winter Academies. Local businesses participate by hiring youth for job shadowing and work experiences, allowing them to contribute to the development of the local talent pipeline. This engagement not only supports workforce development but also strengthens the relationship between small businesses and the local community.

In summary, the NALWDB's efforts to coordinate workforce investment activities with regional economic development initiatives are deeply rooted in collaboration with key partners and a data-driven approach to program development. By promoting entrepreneurial skills training and supporting small businesses, the Board is contributing to the overall economic growth of the region, fostering a vibrant workforce, and helping individuals develop the skills needed to succeed in the evolving economy.

§679.550(c)

Describe how the local board will develop and implement training across systems for all core partners to ensure a unified approach to service delivery, including vocational rehabilitation.

The Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB) is committed to developing and implementing a unified approach to service delivery through cross-system training for all core partners, including vocational rehabilitation. By fostering a collaborative, seamless delivery

system, the NALWDB ensures that individuals, particularly those with barriers to employment, can access comprehensive, coordinated services that meet their needs.

Collaborative Training for Core Partners

To ensure a unified approach, the NALWDB works closely with core partners, including the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (NMDWS), vocational rehabilitation services, adult education providers, and other relevant entities. The goal is to create a cohesive system where each partner understands its role and the available resources, allowing for efficient referrals and co-enrollment across programs. Training initiatives focus on cross-partner communication, referral processes, and co-enrollment strategies to improve participant outcomes.

- **Regular Cross-Partner Training Sessions:** The NALWDB facilitates regular training sessions for staff from core programs, including vocational rehabilitation, workforce services, adult education, and other key partners. These sessions cover a range of topics, such as intake procedures, eligibility requirements, case management, and data sharing protocols. By ensuring that all partners are on the same page, these training sessions help to streamline the customer experience and ensure consistency across the system.
- **Vocational Rehabilitation Integration:** Specific attention is given to integrating vocational rehabilitation services into the broader service delivery system. Staff from vocational rehabilitation participate in joint training sessions with other core partners to ensure they are aware of the full range of services available to individuals with disabilities. This includes training on how to effectively refer participants to training programs in trades, CDL, heavy equipment, and IT, where they can earn industry-recognized credentials. Additionally, vocational rehabilitation staff are trained on how to incorporate other supportive services, such as the Northern New Mexico Workforce Integration Network (WIN), into their service plans to address barriers such as transportation or childcare.

Data Sharing and Case Management Integration

A unified approach to service delivery requires effective communication and data sharing across systems. NALWDB emphasizes training that promotes the use of integrated case management systems and data platforms to ensure core partners can access real-time information on participants, track their progress, and coordinate services effectively.

- **Use of Shared Data Systems:** Core partners, including vocational rehabilitation, are trained on the shared case management system used by NMDWS. This system allows for real-time tracking of participant progress, including enrollment in training programs, employment outcomes, and supportive services received. By having access to this information, vocational rehabilitation staff can make informed decisions when developing individualized plans for their clients, ensuring that services are coordinated and that no participant falls through the cracks.

- **Program Audits and Real-Time Data Monitoring:** The NALWDB has adopted a more rigorous approach to data-driven decision-making. Regular audits of participant data ensure that all core partners, including vocational rehabilitation, are accurately recording participant progress and service delivery. Training on the use of data collection tools is provided to ensure that all partners are contributing to a unified system that tracks performance and identifies areas for improvement.

Cross-Program Staff Development and Capacity Building

The NALWDB is focused on building the capacity of staff across core programs to provide high-quality services that are responsive to the diverse needs of participants. This includes joint training initiatives that bring together staff from different programs to learn from one another and develop a shared understanding of service delivery strategies.

- **Unified Service Delivery Models:** Through training, NALWDB promotes the adoption of service delivery models that integrate vocational rehabilitation with other core services. For example, vocational rehabilitation staff are trained to work alongside adult education and workforce staff to develop comprehensive service plans for individuals with disabilities. These plans may include co-enrollment in Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs, where participants receive both vocational rehabilitation support and training in high-demand sectors such as trades, CDL, or IT.
- **Capacity Building for Specialized Services:** In addition to general training on service delivery, NALWDB provides specialized training for staff in areas such as serving individuals with disabilities, trauma-informed care, and working with individuals with significant barriers to employment. By equipping staff with the tools they need to address these challenges, NALWDB ensures that services are tailored to the unique needs of participants.

Leveraging Partnerships for Unified Service Delivery

The NALWDB relies on strong partnerships to ensure that all core programs, including vocational rehabilitation, work together seamlessly. Key to this is the coordination of training programs and service strategies that ensure each partner understands the resources available to participants across the system.

- **Partnership with Vocational Rehabilitation Services:** The NALWDB works closely with vocational rehabilitation agencies to ensure that services for individuals with disabilities are fully integrated into the workforce development system. This partnership includes joint planning sessions and cross-training opportunities where vocational rehabilitation staff learn how to leverage NALWDB resources to support their clients, such as co-enrolling participants in job training programs that lead to industry-recognized credentials.
- **Collaborative Service Delivery:** The NALWDB's collaboration with partners like WIN and NMDWS ensures that vocational rehabilitation services are part of a comprehensive service

delivery system. For example, participants in vocational rehabilitation may also receive support from WIN to address barriers such as transportation and childcare, allowing them to fully participate in training programs. This holistic approach is reinforced through cross-training, where staff from different programs learn to coordinate services and ensure participants receive the full range of support they need.

In summary, the NALWDB's approach to developing and implementing training across core partners, including vocational rehabilitation, focuses on creating a unified service delivery system. Through regular cross-partner training sessions, integrated case management systems, staff development initiatives, and strategic partnerships, the Board ensures that all partners are working together to deliver coordinated, high-quality services that meet the diverse needs of participants, especially those with barriers to employment.

One-Stop Delivery Activities and Expansion Strategies

The Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB) is deeply committed to the continuous improvement of eligible providers and facilitating access to workforce development services, particularly in remote areas of Northern New Mexico. The board's efforts are guided by a dedication to meeting the employment needs of local employers, workers, and job seekers through strategic partnerships, innovative programs, and the use of technology.

§679.560(b)(5)(i)

Describe how the local board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers through the system and how such providers will meet the employment needs of local employers, workers, and job seekers.

Continuous Improvement of Eligible Providers

The Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB) prioritizes continuous improvement across its workforce development programs and the one-stop delivery system to ensure that eligible training providers and services meet the evolving needs of local employers, workers, and job seekers. By implementing a data-driven approach, fostering partnerships, and ensuring accessibility, the NALWDB enhances the effectiveness of both training programs and the one-stop system.

Regular Monitoring and Evaluation of Eligible Providers

The Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB) is committed to ensuring that eligible training providers on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) consistently meet the region's workforce demands and maintain high standards. To achieve this, the NALWDB conducts ongoing

monitoring and evaluation of these providers, ensuring that training programs are effective and aligned with industry needs.

Key Components of Monitoring and Evaluation:

- **Performance Metrics:** The board tracks key performance indicators such as completion rates, employment outcomes, and wage data. Providers that consistently meet or exceed these metrics are recognized for their effectiveness, while those that fall short receive technical assistance and support to enhance their services. This ensures that training remains relevant to the labor market.
- **Participant Feedback:** The NALWDB conducts regular site visits and collects participant feedback through surveys and performance reviews. These activities provide insight into how training programs are being implemented and whether they meet the expectations of both participants and employers.

Provider-Specific Initiatives:

San Juan College for Healthcare Training: The NALWDB partners with San Juan College to continually improve its healthcare training programs, such as the Registered Medical Assistant (RMA) and Nursing programs. By tracking outcomes like job placement rates and incorporating adjustments like enhanced hands-on experiences, these programs have seen improved employment outcomes for graduates.

Industrial Workforce Program with Southwest Indian Foundation: The NALWDB collaborates with the Southwest Indian Foundation to deliver the Industrial Workforce Program, which focuses on welding and heavy equipment operation. Regular data-driven tracking of certifications and employment outcomes ensures that the program continues to align with industry needs and remains effective in preparing participants for in-demand jobs.

Role of the ETPL Committee:

The ETPL Committee meets regularly to review the performance of providers on the Eligible Training Provider List. This committee plays a critical role in ensuring that training programs meet the region's evolving economic needs and provide participants with the skills necessary for success in the workforce. Through these regular evaluations, the committee works to maintain the quality and relevance of training programs, ensuring that participants are well-prepared to enter or advance in high-demand sectors.

By maintaining rigorous standards for training providers, the NALWDB ensures that participants have access to high-quality education and training that leads to meaningful employment outcomes across sectors such as healthcare, industrial trades, and information technology.

Customized Training for Local Employers

NALWDB collaborates with local businesses to develop customized training programs tailored to their specific needs. Partnerships with companies like Lancer Health Group and Air Interfacility Transport LLC allow the board to track employee retention and performance, making necessary

adjustments to ensure that the training continues to meet employer needs and produces skilled workers who contribute to the region's economy.

Continuous Improvement and Customer Service in the One-Stop Delivery System

The NALWDB is dedicated to ensuring that the one-stop delivery system continuously improves and adapts to meet the needs of job seekers and employers:

- **Customer Surveys:** In PY22, 13,227 customer surveys were conducted with a 3.2% return rate, shifting from quarterly to monthly feedback to enable more immediate service adjustments. Customer satisfaction reached 50.7% in Q3, and 49% in Q4, with 62% of respondents indicating they would recommend America's Job Centers.
- **Service Expansion:** The NALWDB plans to broaden its feedback collection across all Title I, Title III, and partner services, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of service effectiveness.

Business Engagement and Partnership Development

The NALWDB continuously engages businesses to strengthen its one-stop services:

- **On-the-Job Training (OJT):** Partnerships with local businesses, such as Z Pet Hotel and the Farmington Fire Department, have helped fill critical positions through OJT programs. The board plans to expand these partnerships to address workforce gaps in sectors such as healthcare, by working with organizations like Guardian Angel Home Health Hospice.

Integrated Service Delivery and Vocational Rehabilitation

To maintain a unified approach, the NALWDB aligns services across multiple programs:

- **Vocational Rehabilitation Integration:** Vocational rehabilitation services are fully integrated into the one-stop system, ensuring individuals with disabilities receive coordinated support. Joint training sessions between vocational rehabilitation staff and other core partners enhance understanding of available services and co-enrollment processes.
- **Cross-Program Collaboration:** Regular bi-weekly coordination meetings with Site Managers, Partner Leaders, and the One-Stop Operator ensure seamless service delivery across programs like Title I, Title II, and TANF.

Targeted Outreach and Events

The NALWDB actively promotes community engagement:

- **Employment Events:** Events such as the Farmington Workforce Connection Center's annual employment fair bring businesses and job seekers together, providing immediate

hiring opportunities. The board plans to expand outreach through community fairs, rapid hire events, and youth-focused initiatives, particularly in rural areas.

Support for Displaced Workers

The NALWDB plays a critical role in assisting workers displaced by economic shifts, such as plant closures:

- **Energy Transition Act (ETA) Initiatives:** Through the ETA Displaced Worker Assistance Fund, individuals displaced by mine closures in San Juan and McKinley Counties have been retrained for in-demand occupations like CDL driving. The NALWDB continues to support dislocated workers through targeted outreach and employment programs designed to meet their needs.

Expanding Physical Presence and Mobile Services

To ensure service coverage in remote areas, the NALWDB collaborates with partners like NMDWS and WIN to deploy mobile service units:

- **Mobile Units:** These units deliver essential services, such as job search assistance and training resources, to underserved communities in rural areas like Chama and Peñasco. The NALWDB will explore opportunities to establish satellite offices and expand mobile services to enhance service delivery across the region.

Ensuring Accessibility and Nondiscrimination Compliance

The NALWDB is dedicated to ensuring that all one-stop centers meet ADA and nondiscrimination standards:

- **Physical Accessibility:** All one-stop centers are ADA-compliant, with accessible entrances, restrooms, and pathways. Regular accessibility audits ensure ongoing compliance.
- **Programmatic Accessibility:** Digital platforms comply with WCAG standards, and assistive technologies are available at all centers. The NALWDB provides ongoing ADA compliance training for staff and designates an accessibility coordinator at each center.

Through its focus on continuous improvement, strategic partnerships, and commitment to accessibility, the NALWDB ensures that eligible providers and the one-stop system effectively serve the region's diverse workforce needs. The board's data-driven approach, integrated service delivery, and targeted outreach initiatives contribute to building a cohesive workforce development system that supports both job seekers and employers.

§679.560(b)(5)(ii)

Describe how the local board will facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system, including in remote areas, through the use of technology and other means.

The Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB) is committed to ensuring that all residents of the Northern Region have access to the comprehensive services provided through the one-stop delivery system. Recognizing the geographic challenges and remote nature of many communities in the area, the NALWDB has implemented a multifaceted approach to facilitate access to these services, utilizing technology, partnerships, and innovative outreach strategies.

Utilization of Technology

- **Virtual Services:** During the COVID-19 pandemic, the NALWDB successfully transitioned many services to virtual platforms, a practice that continues to benefit residents in remote areas. These virtual services include online workshops, job fairs, and remote career counseling, which are accessible to individuals regardless of their location. The board plans to expand these digital services further to ensure equal access across the region.
- **Digital Platforms:** The NALWDB has invested in user-friendly digital platforms that allow job seekers to access resources, apply for jobs, and participate in training programs online. This includes the use of the "Unite Us" platform, which facilitates coordinated care and referrals across service providers, ensuring that individuals in remote areas receive timely and comprehensive support.

Mobile Service Units

Partner Mobile Units: Although the NALWDB does not own a mobile unit, it collaborates closely with partners like the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (NMDWS) and the Workforce Integration Network (WIN), both of which operate mobile units. These mobile units travel to rural and underserved areas, such as Chama and Peñasco, providing direct job search assistance, resume writing workshops, and training resources. These units are equipped to deliver a wide range of services, bringing the one-stop system's offerings directly to the communities that need them most.

Satellite Offices and Expanded Physical Presence

- **Satellite Offices:** The NALWDB operates several satellite offices throughout the region, including in Taos, Española, Las Vegas, Raton, Grants, and Gallup. These offices extend the reach of the one-stop system, ensuring that services are accessible to individuals who may not be able to travel to the main centers.

- **Plans for Additional Satellite Offices:** The NALWDB is exploring the establishment of additional satellite offices, particularly in collaboration with education institutions such as Santa Fe Community College and other educational facilities. By partnering with local colleges and training centers, the NALWDB aims to enhance access to workforce services and ensure all communities, no matter how remote, have access to education and employment resources.

Partnerships with Local Organizations

- **Collaboration with Community-Based Organizations:** The NALWDB partners with local organizations such as community colleges, libraries, and nonprofit organizations to offer one-stop services in accessible locations. For instance, partnerships with institutions like UNM Taos and the Greater Gallup Economic Development Corporation allow for the hosting of job fairs, training sessions, and other events in locations that are more convenient for remote populations.
- **Employer Engagement:** The NALWDB works closely with local employers to facilitate On-the-Job Training (OJT) and Customized Training programs that are accessible to residents in remote areas. These programs often include remote work options or are designed to meet the specific needs of local employers, thereby reducing the need for long commutes.

Outreach and Engagement Strategies

- **Targeted Outreach:** The NALWDB conducts targeted outreach to ensure that residents of remote areas are aware of the services available to them. This includes direct mail campaigns, social media outreach, and collaboration with local media to promote services and events.
- **Community Events:** The NALWDB hosts community events, such as job fairs and career workshops, in partnership with local organizations. These events are often held in accessible locations within remote communities, ensuring that residents can participate without needing to travel long distances.

Ensuring Accessibility for All Populations

- **ADA Compliance:** All one-stop centers, including satellite offices and mobile units, are fully compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), ensuring physical and programmatic accessibility for individuals with disabilities. The NALWDB provides staff training to address the needs of individuals with disabilities, ensuring that all services are inclusive and accessible.

- **Bilingual Services:** The NALWDB offers bilingual services and materials to accommodate the region's diverse population, including Spanish-speaking individuals. This ensures that language barriers do not prevent access to essential services.

Through the strategic use of technology, mobile service units, partnerships, and targeted outreach, the NALWDB effectively facilitates access to one-stop services across the Northern Region, including in remote areas.

§679.560(b)(5)(iii)

Describe how entities within the one-stop delivery system, including one-stop operators and the one-stop partners, will comply with WIOA sec. 188 (Nondiscrimination)

The Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB) is fully committed to ensuring that all entities within the one-stop delivery system, including one-stop operators and partners, adhere to the nondiscrimination requirements outlined in WIOA Sec. 188 and the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This commitment is reflected in the following strategies and practices designed to ensure the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs, services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities.

Physical Accessibility of Facilities

- **ADA-Compliant Facilities:** All one-stop centers, including both comprehensive and satellite offices, are required to meet or exceed ADA standards for physical accessibility. This includes features such as wheelchair ramps, accessible restrooms, elevators, and designated parking spaces for individuals with disabilities.
- **Regular Facility Audits:** The NALWDB conducts regular audits of its facilities to ensure continued compliance with ADA requirements. Any identified deficiencies are promptly addressed to maintain a barrier-free environment for all users.

Programmatic Accessibility

- **Inclusive Program Design:** All programs and services offered through the one-stop delivery system are designed to be inclusive and accessible to individuals with disabilities. This includes ensuring that all workshops, training sessions, and job fairs are held in accessible locations and are designed to accommodate a variety of needs.
- **Reasonable Accommodations:** The NALWDB and its partners are committed to providing reasonable accommodations to individuals with disabilities. This includes offering sign

language interpreters, providing materials in alternative formats (e.g., large print, Braille), and allowing for extended time in training or testing environments as needed.

Technology Accessibility

- **Accessible Technology:** The one-stop centers utilize technology that is accessible to individuals with disabilities. This includes providing screen readers for the visually impaired, captioning services for video content, and ensuring that all online resources are compatible with assistive technologies.
- **Web Accessibility Standards:** The NALWDB ensures that its websites and digital platforms comply with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), providing accessible online services and resources for individuals with disabilities.

Training and Support for Staff

- **Staff Training on ADA Compliance:** All staff members, including those working at one-stop centers and partner organizations, receive regular training on ADA compliance and the requirements of WIOA Sec. 188. This training covers the legal obligations to prevent discrimination, the importance of accessibility, and practical guidance on how to provide services to individuals with disabilities.
- **Specialized Disability Awareness Training:** The NALWDB provides additional training focused on disability awareness, ensuring that staff members are equipped to understand and address the unique needs of individuals with disabilities. This training includes how to interact with individuals with various disabilities, the use of assistive technologies, and the process for requesting and providing accommodations.
- **Continuous Professional Development:** The NALWDB encourages continuous professional development for staff, offering opportunities to attend workshops, seminars, and courses on best practices in serving individuals with disabilities. This ensures that staff are up-to-date with the latest knowledge and techniques in accessibility and nondiscrimination.

Collaboration with Disability Advocacy Organizations

- **Partnerships with Advocacy Groups:** The NALWDB collaborates with local and state disability advocacy organizations to ensure that the one-stop system is meeting the needs of individuals with disabilities. These partnerships provide valuable insights into areas for improvement and help guide the development of more inclusive practices.
- **Advisory Committees:** The NALWDB includes representatives from disability advocacy groups in advisory committees to provide ongoing feedback and recommendations on accessibility issues. This helps ensure that the perspectives of individuals with disabilities are considered in all aspects of service delivery.

Monitoring and Continuous Improvement

- Ongoing Monitoring: The NALWDB regularly monitors compliance with WIOA Sec. 188 and ADA requirements across all one-stop centers and partner organizations. This includes reviewing policies, procedures, and practices to ensure they are effectively preventing discrimination and promoting accessibility.
- Feedback Mechanisms: The NALWDB has established mechanisms for individuals with disabilities to provide feedback on their experiences with the one-stop system. This feedback is used to make continuous improvements to facilities, programs, and services.
- Data-Driven Decision Making: The NALWDB uses data collected from customer surveys, performance metrics, and feedback from disability advocacy organizations to inform decision-making and drive improvements in accessibility and service delivery.

The NALWDB is deeply committed to ensuring that the one-stop delivery system is fully accessible and inclusive for individuals with disabilities. By adhering to the requirements of WIOA Sec. 188 and the ADA, and through ongoing training, monitoring, and collaboration with advocacy organizations, the NALWDB ensures that all individuals, regardless of ability, have equal access to workforce development services and opportunities.

§679.560(b)(5)(iv)

Describe the specific roles and resource contributions of the one-stop partners, to date. Please include your process for updating any cooperative agreements, resource sharing agreements, and memoranda of understanding relevant to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

WIOA Title I and One-Stop Partner Contributions

The Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB) collaborates extensively with a diverse network of WIOA Title I and one-stop partners to deliver comprehensive workforce services across Northern New Mexico. Each partner brings specialized resources and expertise, ensuring that job seekers, workers, and employers have access to training, employment, and supportive services. These partnerships are crucial to the region's workforce development system and are continually updated through cooperative agreements, resource-sharing agreements, and memoranda of understanding (MOUs).

New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (NMDWS)

- Role: A core partner under WIOA Title I, NMDWS administers essential employment services such as job matching, unemployment insurance, and labor market information. NMDWS staff are embedded in all one-stop centers, providing critical support to both job seekers and employers.

- **Resource Contributions:** NMDWS provides staffing, operational support, and access to the America’s Job Center Online System (NMWCOS), which integrates job listings, training opportunities, and employment data.
- **Collaborative Efforts:** NMDWS works with NALWDB to implement sector strategies in key areas like healthcare, trades, CDL, and heavy equipment operations, and supports outreach in rural communities through mobile service units.

Adult Education Providers (Title II)

- **Role:** Adult education providers, including local community colleges, deliver essential services such as GED preparation, basic skills education, and English language acquisition for individuals seeking to improve their education and job prospects.
- **Resource Contributions:** These providers contribute instructors, educational materials, and facilities, ensuring participants have access to resources that align with the region’s workforce needs in healthcare, IT, and trades.
- **Collaborative Efforts:** The NALWDB ensures adult education programs are integrated into the broader workforce system, allowing participants to access educational resources and employment services through one-stop centers.

Vocational Rehabilitation (Title IV)

- **Role:** The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) provides specialized services for individuals with disabilities, including job coaching, counseling, and adaptive technology.
- **Resource Contributions:** DVR contributes funding, adaptive technology, and expertise to ensure the physical and programmatic accessibility of one-stop centers for individuals with disabilities.
- **Collaborative Efforts:** DVR collaborates with NALWDB to ensure one-stop centers meet ADA requirements, and that staff are trained to serve individuals with disabilities. This partnership provides seamless vocational rehabilitation services for job seekers requiring specialized assistance.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

- **Role:** TANF offers financial assistance and work opportunities to low-income families. TANF staff at one-stop centers assist participants with job search activities, work readiness training, and access to supportive services like childcare and transportation.
- **Resource Contributions:** TANF contributes financial resources and case management services, vital for enabling low-income individuals to participate in workforce programs.
- **Collaborative Efforts:** NALWDB coordinates with TANF to align services, ensuring recipients can easily access job training, educational programs, and employment opportunities through the one-stop system.

Workforce Integration Network (WIN)

- **Role:** WIN addresses barriers to employment, such as transportation, childcare, and food insecurity, ensuring participants remain engaged in training and employment programs.

- **Resource Contributions:** WIN contributes a flexible support network and mobile service units that provide underserved communities with essential resources such as job search assistance, training information, and other supportive services.
- **Collaborative Efforts:** WIN works closely with NALWDB to ensure that participants facing significant barriers receive the necessary support. This collaboration provides customized paths for individuals to pursue employment and training successfully.

Job Corps

- **Role:** Job Corps offers free education and vocational training to young adults, equipping them with skills in sectors like healthcare, IT, and construction.
- **Resource Contributions:** Job Corps contributes training programs, facilities, and instructors, helping young individuals gain industry-relevant skills in high-demand fields.
- **Collaborative Efforts:** NALWDB partners with Job Corps to align training programs with regional labor market needs, ensuring Job Corps graduates have access to local employment opportunities and that employers in the area can find qualified workers.

Economic Development Organizations

- **Role:** Economic development organizations, such as the Greater Gallup Economic Development Corporation (GGEDC) and Cibola County Economic Development, help identify regional workforce needs and connect businesses with workforce services.
- **Resource Contributions:** These organizations provide labor market data, employer connections, and resources for growth initiatives, contributing to sector strategies in construction, trades, and healthcare.
- **Collaborative Efforts:** NALWDB works with these partners to ensure workforce services align with regional economic development goals. This includes tailored training programs and employment opportunities designed to meet the specific needs of local industries.

Process for Updating Cooperative Agreements, Resource Sharing Agreements, and Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs)

To ensure that all agreements between one-stop partners are current and reflect the evolving needs of the workforce system, the NALWDB follows a structured process for reviewing and updating cooperative agreements, resource sharing agreements, and MOUs.

Regular Review and Updating

- **Annual Review:** The NALWDB conducts an annual review of all cooperative agreements, MOUs, and resource sharing agreements. This review involves input from all partners to ensure that any changes in roles, resources, or service delivery are addressed.
- **Stakeholder Meetings:** Regular meetings with representatives from all one-stop partners are held to discuss necessary updates or revisions to agreements. This collaborative

process ensures that the workforce system remains aligned with WIOA requirements and local workforce needs.

Amendments and Revisions

- **Formal Amendments:** If significant changes are needed, such as the addition of new services or partners, the NALWDB facilitates formal amendments to the agreements. These amendments are drafted with legal counsel to ensure compliance with WIOA regulations.
- **Interim Revisions:** Minor changes, such as updates to contact information or resource allocations, can be made through interim revisions. These changes are documented and shared with all partners to ensure transparency.

Documentation and Accessibility

- **Centralized Documentation:** The NALWDB maintains centralized records of all agreements, amendments, and revisions. This ensures that all partners have access to the most up-to-date versions of these documents.
- **Transparency and Communication:** The NALWDB keeps open lines of communication with all partners, ensuring that any changes to agreements are clearly communicated and understood by all parties involved.

By maintaining a robust process for updating agreements and clearly defining the roles and resource contributions of each partner, the NALWDB ensures that the one-stop system operates efficiently and effectively, providing comprehensive services that meet the needs of employers, workers, and job seekers across the region.

§679.560(c)

Describe how entities within the one-stop delivery system, including one-stop operators and the one-stop partners, will provide for the Accessibility for English Language Learners (ELL).

The Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB) is committed to ensuring that English Language Learners (ELL) have full access to the services and programs provided through the one-stop delivery system. To achieve this, the NALWDB and its one-stop operators and partners have implemented a comprehensive strategy that addresses the unique needs of ELL participants. The following outlines the key elements of this strategy:

Bilingual Staff and Language Services

- **Bilingual Staff:** The one-stop centers are staffed with bilingual employees who can assist ELL participants in their native languages. This includes providing information, guidance, and support in languages commonly spoken in the region, such as Spanish and Navajo.
- **Language Line Services:** For languages that are not represented among the bilingual staff, the one-stop centers utilize language line services, which offer real-time interpretation in multiple languages. This ensures that ELL participants can access services without language barriers.

Translated Materials and Resources

- **Program Materials:** All essential program materials, including brochures, application forms, and instructional guides, are translated into the primary languages spoken by ELL participants in the region. This ensures that ELL participants can fully understand the services available to them and how to access these services.
- **Digital Resources:** Online resources, such as the America's Job Centers website, are available in multiple languages. This includes translated web pages and instructional videos that guide ELL participants through the process of accessing job search tools, training programs, and other services.

Customized Training and Educational Programs

- **ELL-Specific Programs:** The NALWDB collaborates with local educational institutions to offer training programs specifically designed for ELL participants. These programs integrate language learning with vocational training, helping participants acquire both language skills and job-specific competencies simultaneously.
- **Integrated Education and Training (IET):** The one-stop centers promote Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs that combine adult education with workforce preparation. These programs are tailored to the needs of ELL participants, providing them with the skills needed to succeed in the workforce while improving their English proficiency.

Outreach and Community Engagement

- **Targeted Outreach:** The NALWDB and its partners conduct targeted outreach efforts to ELL communities, ensuring that they are aware of the services available through the one-stop system. This includes partnering with local community organizations, faith-based groups, and cultural centers to disseminate information and build trust within ELL communities.
- **Community Events:** The one-stop centers host and participate in community events that are specifically designed to engage ELL participants. These events provide an opportunity for ELL individuals to learn about available services, meet with bilingual staff, and connect with other community resources.

Training for Staff and Partners

- **Cultural Competency Training:** All one-stop staff and partners receive ongoing training in cultural competency and working with ELL participants. This training includes best

practices for communication, understanding cultural differences, and providing effective support to ELL individuals.

- **Language Accessibility Training:** In addition to cultural competency, staff are trained in using language line services and other translation tools to assist ELL participants. This ensures that all staff members are equipped to provide high-quality service to individuals with limited English proficiency.

Collaboration with Community Organizations

- **Partnerships with Local Organizations:** The NALWDB works closely with community organizations that specialize in serving ELL populations, such as immigrant and refugee support groups. These partnerships help to identify the needs of ELL participants and ensure that the one-stop centers are providing relevant and accessible services.
- **Co-Location of Services:** In some cases, ELL services are co-located with the one-stop centers, allowing participants to access language classes, citizenship preparation, and other support services in the same location where they receive workforce development services.

Monitoring and Continuous Improvement

- **Feedback from ELL Participants:** The NALWDB regularly collects feedback from ELL participants to assess the effectiveness of services and identify areas for improvement. This feedback is gathered through surveys, focus groups, and one-on-one interviews conducted in participants' preferred languages.
- **Performance Monitoring:** The board tracks outcomes for ELL participants, including employment rates, training completion, and wage progression. This data is used to refine programs and ensure that they are meeting the specific needs of the ELL population.

By implementing these strategies, the NALWDB ensures that English Language Learners have equitable access to the full range of services offered through the one-stop delivery system. This commitment to accessibility helps to bridge language gaps, promote inclusivity, and support the successful integration of ELL participants into the workforce.

Partnerships

The NALWDB One-Stop Operator has continued regular Site Manager and Partner meetings on a bi-weekly basis. During these meetings, partner leaders, Site Managers, and the One-Stop Operator discuss event strategies, office needs, staffing, customer service, and other workforce updates as needed. This is a key opportunity for system feedback and strategizing future efforts in a streamlined fashion. While these meetings are generally held via Zoom to quickly relay information to all partners at once, the One-Stop Operator has also encouraged Partner Leaders to meet regularly with their Site Managers to discuss specific needs and strategies at a local level.

Additionally, the One-Stop Operator has worked with partners to:

1. Direct Outreach to Target Populations:
 - Inform target populations, including Dislocated Workers, Youth, Veterans, and Businesses, of the availability of services through meetings, orientations, social media, and other marketing tools.
2. Host Events:
 - Organize both on- and off-site events, including large community fairs, youth-specific initiatives, and rapid hire events.
3. Pre-Apprenticeship Opportunities:
 - Partner with local high schools and work-based learning programs to provide pre-apprenticeship opportunities to youth throughout the region.
4. Wrap-Around Services Coordination:
 - Coordinate efforts to provide wrap-around services by orienting Title II, Title IV, TANF, and other Community-Based Organizations on services and opportunities to braided resources.
5. Strategic Alignment:
 - Implement strategies that align with NALWDB efforts, sectors, projects, and regional needs as advised by the One-Stop Committee and NALWDB member feedback and input.
6. Community Impact Meetings:
 - Attend and participate in local community impact meetings.

Brand Alignment: The One-Stop Operator worked with Site Managers and Partner Leaders to further align outreach efforts, center services, and community events under the America's Job Center brand. This includes hosting and attending events to provide information on services as a One-Stop America's Job Center versus the individual distribution of partner information to support the community with a broader range of services.

Key Partnership Outcomes

Initiative	Description	Outcomes
ETA - Displaced Worker Assistance	Staff met with individuals impacted by plant and mine closures in San Juan and McKinley Counties. Assisted with Energy Transition Act Fund applications and coordinated training/employment pathways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- 309 individuals engaged- Over 100 interested in new skills training- 24+ transitioned into CDL training- Partnerships with San Juan College, Diné College, and Echo Food Bank

San Juan County Employment Event (SJCEE)	Hosted at San Juan County Fairgrounds, involving 90 businesses and organizations providing employment opportunities and resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 184 opportunity-seekers registered - On-site interviews and job offers - Career preparation services, including a business casual career closet
Santa Fe County Career and Resource Fair (SFCCRF)	Inaugural event hosted by Santa Fe Workforce Connection Center, providing career prep services and community engagement activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 80+ opportunity-seekers attended - Access to career prep services and business casual career closet - Additional amenities: bounce house, local DJ, face painting, raffle items

The Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board’s 2024-2027 local plan outlines a comprehensive approach to coordinating services across programs and expanding the One-Stop delivery system. By focusing on customer service, business engagement, integrated service delivery, targeted outreach, community impact initiatives, and strategic partnerships, the NALWDB aims to create a more inclusive, responsive, and effective workforce development system. Through enhanced digital access, strengthened employer partnerships, increased accessibility for special populations, data-driven decision-making, and robust community engagement, the NALWDB is well-positioned to meet the diverse needs of the region’s workforce and ensure that all residents have access to the resources they need to succeed.

Service Implementation for Indicated Populations

§679.560(b)(8)

Provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of youth workforce investment activities in the local area including activities for youth with disabilities, and other barriers, such as homeless youth, foster and former foster youth, and/or expecting and parenting youth.

§679.560(c)

Describe how the local board is planning or working to fulfill specific Youth requirements, as laid out in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, including:

- a. how the board is providing for the 14 required Youth service elements;**

- b. approach towards meeting the 20% work experience, including the use of Registered Apprenticeship as a service strategy;
- c. approaches toward meeting the 75% OSY minimum expenditure;
- d. a description of changes in the youth provider's service delivery models;
- e. a description of any changes in outreach activities around Youth; and

any changes in Youth case management approach, including the use of supportive services.

Youth

Description and Assessment of Youth Workforce Investment Activities: The NALWDB provides a robust array of youth workforce investment activities tailored to meet the diverse needs of the region's youth, including those with disabilities, homeless youth, foster and former foster youth, and expecting and parenting youth. Innovative program designs such as the Summer Youth Career Academy and the Winter Youth Academy, which have successfully engaged youth across the Northern Region.

- Youth with Disabilities: The NALWDB collaborates with local educational institutions and agencies to provide tailored services, including accessible work experiences and specialized training programs for youth with disabilities. These efforts ensure that youth with disabilities are fully integrated into all workforce development activities.
- Youth Facing Other Barriers: For homeless youth, foster and former foster youth, and expecting and parenting youth, the NALWDB offers comprehensive support services, including housing resources, childcare, healthcare, and counseling. These services are designed to address the specific barriers these youth face, enabling them to participate fully in workforce programs.

Fulfilling WIOA Youth Requirements:

1. 14 Required Youth Service Elements

The NALWDB ensures that all 14 required youth service elements are available to eligible youth, forming a comprehensive framework that integrates educational, occupational, and supportive services.

1. Tutoring, Study Skills Training, Instruction, and Dropout Prevention
 - *Description:* Academic support to improve grades, attendance, and retention.
 - *Approach:* NALWDB partners with local schools, adult education providers, and community organizations to offer in-person and virtual tutoring, study groups, and dropout-prevention strategies.
2. Alternative Secondary School Services or Dropout Recovery Services
 - *Description:* Programs that re-engage youth who have dropped out or need alternative pathways to earn a high school credential.

- *Approach:* Collaboration with alternative high schools, online HSE (High School Equivalency) programs, and adult education centers ensures youth receive flexible schedules and individualized instruction.
- 3. Paid and Unpaid Work Experiences
 - *Description:* Internships, job shadowing, pre-apprenticeships, and on-the-job training that build work readiness skills.
 - *Approach:* NALWDB coordinates with local businesses, nonprofits, and labor unions to offer varied work experiences in high-demand fields such as healthcare, technology, and construction.
- 4. Occupational Skills Training
 - *Description:* Industry-specific training that leads to recognized postsecondary credentials.
 - *Approach:* Partnerships with community colleges and accredited training providers allow youth to gain targeted technical skills in areas like welding, phlebotomy, and emergency medical services.
- 5. Education Offered Concurrently with Workforce Preparation and Training
 - *Description:* Integrated models combining academic, occupational, and workforce readiness instruction.
 - *Approach:* Programs like Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) at Santa Fe Community College help youth earn credentials while boosting foundational literacy, math, and employability skills.
- 6. Leadership Development Opportunities
 - *Description:* Activities that foster responsibility, confidence, and civic engagement.
 - *Approach:* Youth leadership workshops, peer mentoring, and community service projects cultivate teamwork, problem-solving, and public speaking skills.
- 7. Supportive Services
 - *Description:* Assistance with transportation, childcare, work attire, and other needs so youth can fully engage in their programs.
 - *Approach:* NALWDB and its partners fund or refer youth to external resources for meeting personal needs—ensuring minimal disruptions to training and employment pursuits.
- 8. Adult Mentoring
 - *Description:* Structured relationships with caring adults who provide guidance, coaching, and academic/employment support.
 - *Approach:* Collaborations with local nonprofit agencies and volunteer-based organizations connect youth to mentors who model positive behaviors and offer career insight.
- 9. Follow-Up Services
 - *Description:* Continued support for at least 12 months after participants exit the program.

- *Approach:* Case managers maintain regular contact, helping youth retain employment, explore further education, and access ongoing supportive services if needed.
- 10. Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling
 - *Description:* Personalized counseling addressing mental health, substance abuse, or other barriers to success.
 - *Approach:* NALWDB youth providers partner with community mental health agencies, ensuring professional counseling referrals and holistic care.
- 11. Financial Literacy Education
 - *Description:* Instruction on budgeting, banking, credit, and long-term financial planning.
 - *Approach:* Local financial institutions and nonprofits deliver workshops and online training sessions, equipping youth with responsible money-management skills.
- 12. Entrepreneurial Skills Training
 - *Description:* Education on business start-up, market analysis, and basic business planning.
 - *Approach:* Collaborations with Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) introduce youth to entrepreneurship through seminars, coaching, and networking events.
- 13. Labor Market and Employment Information
 - *Description:* Access to real-time data on job openings, wages, career pathways, and industry trends.
 - *Approach:* NALWDB leverages state labor market information to guide youth toward in-demand sectors, helping them make informed career decisions.
- 14. Activities that Help Youth Prepare for and Transition to Postsecondary Education and Training
 - *Description:* College application assistance, financial aid guidance, and dual-enrollment opportunities.
 - *Approach:* The board partners with area colleges and universities to streamline admissions, host campus tours, and ensure youth have the financial resources needed to continue their education.

2. 20% Work Experience Requirement

The NALWDB surpasses the mandated 20% expenditure on youth work experiences by embedding paid internships, pre-apprenticeships, and Registered Apprenticeship placements within all youth programming.

- Paid Internships
 - *Implementation:* The board coordinates with private and public sector employers in healthcare, technology, hospitality, and construction to place youth in structured, short-term, paid internships.
 - *Outcome:* In the last program year, over 60 youth completed internships, developing technical competencies and professional networks.

- Registered Apprenticeship Programs
 - *Approach:* Through collaboration with labor unions, community colleges, and employer associations, youth are placed into Registered Apprenticeships in skilled trades (e.g., carpentry, plumbing, electrical).
 - *Benefits:* Participants receive on-the-job training, progressive wage increases, and an industry-recognized credential.
- Pre-Apprenticeship Partnerships
 - *Collaboration with State Initiatives:* Working with the state’s pre-apprenticeship program, NALWDB helps youth begin earning wages (often \$15/hour) while gaining foundational skills, work readiness training, and a direct pathway into Registered Apprenticeships.
- Ongoing Support & Monitoring
 - *Case Management:* Staff regularly check in with employers and participants, ensuring placements match career goals and youth are building relevant, marketable skills.
 - *Feedback Loop:* Employer and participant feedback informs continuous improvement of work-based learning opportunities.

3. 75% OSY Minimum Expenditure

WIOA requires that at least 75% of youth funds be dedicated to out-of-school youth (OSY), and the NALWDB prioritizes programs and partnerships that serve this population.

- Program Examples
 - Healthcare Pathways at UNM Taos: Collaboration led to 23 OSY participants graduating from a nursing program, demonstrating high-impact results for youth disengaged from traditional secondary education.
 - Bridge Programs with Adult Education Providers: OSY can pursue their High School Equivalency (HSE) while receiving occupational training and career coaching. This dual approach integrates basic skills development with hands-on workforce preparation.
 - Community-Based Wraparound Services: Through local nonprofits, OSY receive comprehensive counseling, employability skills workshops, and connections to housing, nutrition, and mental health resources—minimizing barriers to participation and success.

By focusing resources on OSY, the board ensures that this high-need demographic receives the specialized attention and support required to transition into meaningful employment or postsecondary education.

4. Service Delivery Model Changes

The NALWDB’s youth provider has adopted a “youth development framework,” placing emphasis on holistic, personalized services that address educational, career, and personal development goals.

- Holistic Assessment and Individualized Planning

- *Approach:* Each participant undergoes a comprehensive intake that identifies strengths, barriers, and career interests. This data informs personalized service plans and targeted referrals.
- *Youth Development Framework:* Staff members act as coaches and mentors, helping youth set and achieve milestones in academics, work readiness, and life skills.
- **Sector-Focused Cohorts**
 - *Implementation:* Youth are grouped by career interest—such as healthcare, information technology, or trades—to promote peer support, focused training, and employer-driven curriculum.
 - *Outcome:* Participants report increased motivation and clarity in goal-setting, while employers appreciate a pipeline of candidates with sector-specific skills.
- **Continuous Engagement and Case Management**
 - *Supportive Services:* Transportation assistance, childcare referrals, and access to mental health counseling help youth remain engaged and overcome obstacles.
 - *Monitoring and Feedback:* Frequent check-ins allow staff to adjust services, address emerging challenges, and celebrate successes, resulting in higher completion rates and better placement outcomes.

5. Outreach Activities

The NALWDB continues to expand its outreach efforts to increase visibility and connect with at-risk youth populations.

- **Targeted Recruitment:** Engagement with local high schools, community colleges, and community centers ensures that eligible youth are informed about available services.
- **Marketing and Media Campaigns:** Social media advertisements, radio spots, and printed materials in community hubs help reach youth who may not be involved in traditional education systems.

6. Youth Case Management and Supportive Services

To bolster retention and success, NALWDB has enhanced its case management approach, delivering comprehensive supportive services based on each youth's individual needs.

- **Transportation and Work Attire:** Providing bus passes, fuel cards, and professional clothing helps reduce economic barriers to participation.
- **Financial Literacy and Life Skills:** Workshops cover budgeting, credit management, conflict resolution, and time management, equipping youth for long-term stability.
- **Tailored Referrals:** Case managers connect youth to partners offering housing assistance, counseling, or legal services, ensuring a safety net of community support.

Conclusion

By offering all 14 WIOA-mandated youth service elements, allocating at least 75% of funds to OSY, integrating a robust work experience component that meets the 20% requirement, and implementing service delivery model changes rooted in a youth development framework, the

NALWDB cultivates a comprehensive and responsive environment. This ensures out-of-school and at-risk youth receive the guidance, resources, and hands-on opportunities necessary to succeed in both education and employment.

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Adults and Dislocated Workers

§679.560(b)(6) and §679.560(c)

Provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area, including any services targeted toward adult populations with barriers, such as displaced homemakers, homeless adults, ex-offenders, single parents and pregnant women, and/or long-term unemployed.

Description and Assessment of Adult and Dislocated Worker Services: The NALWDB offers a wide range of employment and training services for adults and dislocated workers, focusing on those facing significant barriers, such as displaced homemakers, homeless adults, ex-offenders, single parents, pregnant women, and the long-term unemployed.

- **Employment and Training Activities:** Services include job search assistance, career counseling, skills training, on-the-job training (OJT), and supportive services. For example, the board's partnership with the Farmington Fire Department provided customized training for over 25 new cadets, addressing a critical workforce need due to impending retirements.
- **Targeted Services for Populations with Barriers:** The board collaborates with local shelters, social service agencies, and community organizations to offer targeted services for populations with barriers. These services include housing assistance, legal support, childcare, and access to healthcare, ensuring comprehensive support for participants as they re-enter the workforce.

Individuals with Disabilities

§679.560(b)(13) and §679.560(c)

Describe how individuals with disabilities will be served through the one-stop center system in the local area, including copies of executed cooperative agreements which define how all local service providers, including additional providers, will carry out the requirements for integration of and access to the entire set of services available in the local one-stop delivery system. This includes cooperative agreements (as defined in WIOA sec. 107(d)(11))

between the LWDB or other local entities described in WIOA sec. 101(a)(11)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 721(a)(11)(B)) and the local office of a designated State agency or designated State unit administering programs carried out under title I of the Rehabilitation Act(29 U.S.C. 720 et seq.) (The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation within the NM Public Education Department and the Commission for the Blind) (other than sec. 112 or part C of that title (29 U.S.C. 732, 741) and subject to sec. 121(f)) in accordance with sec. 101(a)(11) of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. 721(a)(11)) 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 and resources, cooperative efforts with employers, and other efforts at cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, such as improving or creating referral processes, joint enrollment and case management.

The Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB) is committed to ensuring that individuals with disabilities have full access to the One-Stop delivery system. This commitment is supported by cooperative agreements with local service providers, including the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and the Commission for the Blind.

Cooperative Agreements and Integration

These agreements define the roles and responsibilities of each agency in providing integrated services. For example, the NALWDB has worked with DVR to implement a shared referral system, improving service coordination and ensuring that individuals with disabilities receive the support they need.

Accessibility Enhancements

The board has invested in making its services accessible to all individuals, including the use of assistive technologies, accessible facilities, and alternative formats for materials. In addition, the NALWDB provides specialized staff training to ensure personnel are equipped to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities. Examples of this training include:

- Disability Awareness and Etiquette: Sessions that help staff understand various types of disabilities and best practices for respectful, inclusive communication.
- Assistive Technology Training: Hands-on workshops demonstrating the use of screen readers, voice-to-text software, and other adaptive equipment so staff can effectively assist customers who rely on these technologies.
- Reasonable Accommodations and Legal Requirements: Instruction on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and related regulations, ensuring staff understand accommodation processes and how to advocate for customers in the workplace.

Through these specialized trainings and ongoing partnerships with disability service providers, the NALWDB ensures that staff can deliver tailored assistance—including career counseling, job placement, and supportive services—that enable individuals with disabilities to successfully navigate the workforce system and achieve their employment goals.

Veterans

§679.560(c) and §680, Subpart E

Describe the board’s strategic approach to serving Veterans to improve employment outcomes for this population, including priority of service efforts.

Strategic Approach to Serving Veterans: The NALWDB places a high priority on serving veterans, ensuring they receive the support needed to transition successfully to civilian employment.

- Priority of Service: Veterans receive priority access to all workforce services, including job training, placement, and supportive services. The board collaborates with local veterans’ organizations and the Department of Veterans Affairs to ensure that veterans are aware of and can access the services available to them.
- Tailored Services: The NALWDB offers specialized services for veterans, including career counseling focused on translating military experience into civilian job skills, veteran-specific job fairs, and assistance with navigating benefits and services. These efforts have led to improved employment outcomes for veterans in the region.

Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers

§679.560(c),

Parts 653 and 685

Describe, as appropriate, the board's approach to serving migrant seasonal farmworkers within its respective area to increase education and employment outcomes for this population.

Approach to Serving Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers: The NALWDB is dedicated to improving the education and employment outcomes for migrant seasonal farmworkers in the Northern Region.

- **Targeted Outreach and Services:** The board conducts targeted outreach through partnerships with agricultural employers, migrant worker advocacy groups, and educational institutions. Services provided include ESL (English as a Second Language) classes, job placement assistance, and access to healthcare and legal resources, all designed to address the unique needs of this population.

Native Americans

§679.560(c) and Part 684

Describe, as appropriate, the board's approach to serving Native Americans within its respective area to increase education and employment outcomes for this population.

Approach to Serving Native Americans: The NALWDB provides culturally relevant services to Native American communities, working closely with tribal governments and organizations.

- **Culturally Relevant Services:** The board offers job training, business development support, and educational opportunities tailored to the cultural and economic needs of Native American communities. Partnerships with tribal governments ensure that these services align with tribal priorities and contribute to community development.

Individuals with Low Income

§679.560(c) and §680, Subpart E

Describe how the board will identify and work with low-income individuals, including any plans to coordinate locally with the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program to serve this population, as well as to serve TANF exhaustees.

Identifying and Serving Low-Income Individuals: The NALWDB focuses on supporting low-income individuals by providing access to education, training, and employment opportunities that promote economic self-sufficiency.

- **Collaboration with TANF:** The board collaborates with the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program to coordinate services for low-income individuals. Joint case management, referrals, and access to supportive services such as childcare and

transportation are key components of this collaboration, helping individuals overcome barriers to employment.

- **Targeted Training Programs:** The NALWDB offers training programs specifically designed for low-income individuals, focusing on high-demand occupations that offer pathways to stable employment. For instance, programs in healthcare and skilled trades have been particularly successful in helping low-income participants secure well-paying jobs.

Older Individuals

§679.560(c)

Provide a description of how the local board will coordinate WIOA title I workforce investment activities with the Senior Community Service Employment Program (Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965) to serve the employment needs of older individuals.

Coordinating Services for Older Individuals: The NALWDB coordinates with the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) to meet the employment needs of older individuals.

- **Employment and Training Opportunities:** The board provides older workers with training programs that address skills gaps and facilitate re-entry into the workforce. Supportive services are also available to help older individuals overcome barriers such as age discrimination or physical limitations.
- **Supportive Services:** The NALWDB ensures that older workers have access to the resources they need, including job search assistance, retraining programs, and workplace accommodations, helping them to remain active in the workforce.

Individuals with Low Literacy Levels

§679.560(b)(12)

Provide a description of how the local board will coordinate WIOA title I workforce investment activities with adult education and literacy activities under WIOA title II. Describe the joint planning processes planned or underway that will enhance the provision of services to individuals with receiving adult education services, such as cross training of staff, technical assistance, sharing resources, sharing of information, cooperative efforts to improve or create referral processes, joint enrollment and case management. This description must also include how the LWDB will carry out the review of local applications submitted under title II consistent with WIOA Secs. 107(d)(11)(A) and (B)(i) and WIOA sec. 232.

Coordinating Services for Individuals with Low Literacy Levels: The NALWDB works closely with adult education providers to deliver integrated services for individuals with low literacy levels.

- **Joint Planning and Service Delivery:** The board engages in joint planning with adult education providers to ensure that literacy services are integrated with workforce development activities. This includes cross-training staff, sharing resources, and developing referral processes that facilitate seamless service delivery.
- **Improving Literacy and Employability:** The NALWDB offers programs that combine literacy instruction with job training, helping individuals improve their literacy skills while gaining the qualifications needed for employment. Collaborative efforts, such as the partnership with UNM Taos for nursing and construction programs, illustrate the board's commitment to enhancing employability through literacy and skills training.

Coordination of Services Across Programs:

The Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board's 2024-2027 local plan outlines a comprehensive approach to coordinating services across programs. By focusing on integration, collaboration, and continuous improvement, the NALWDB is well-positioned to meet the diverse needs of the region's workforce and ensure that all residents have access to the resources they need to succeed.

Coordination with Wagner-Peyser Services

§679.560(b)(11)

Provide a description of plans, assurances, and strategies for maximizing coordination, improving service delivery, and avoiding duplication of Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.) services and other services provided through the one-stop delivery system;

Plans, Assurances, and Strategies: The NALWDB is committed to maximizing coordination and improving service delivery while avoiding duplication of Wagner-Peyser services within the One-Stop delivery system. The One-Stop Operator ensures that Wagner-Peyser staff are fully integrated into the service delivery process, working alongside Title I staff to provide seamless access to services such as job search assistance, career counseling, and labor market information.

- **Integrated Service Delivery:** Wagner-Peyser staff are co-located within the One-Stop centers, facilitating the sharing of resources and the coordination of activities. This integration allows for a unified approach to serving job seekers, ensuring they receive comprehensive support without redundancy.
- **Joint Outreach Efforts:** The NALWDB coordinates joint outreach efforts with Wagner-Peyser services, targeting key populations such as veterans, individuals with disabilities, and dislocated workers. These efforts include co-hosted job fairs, workshops, and community events.

Coordination with Rapid Response Activities

§679.560(b)(7)

A description of how the local board will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out in the local area with statewide rapid response activities

Coordination with Statewide Rapid Response: The NALWDB plays an active role in coordinating local workforce investment activities with statewide rapid response efforts to address layoffs, closures, and other employment disruptions.

- **Rapid Response Team Integration:** The board ensures that its Rapid Response team is closely aligned with state-level rapid response activities. This coordination includes sharing information on impending layoffs, collaborating on the development of customized services for affected workers, and providing timely access to resources such as unemployment insurance and retraining programs.
- **Local Rapid Response Efforts:** In response to the plant and mine closures in San Juan and McKinley Counties, the NALWDB's Rapid Response team facilitated the enrollment of over 300 displaced workers into retraining programs, including CDL training and healthcare certifications. These efforts were crucial in helping workers transition into new employment opportunities.

Coordination with Secondary and Postsecondary Education Systems

§679.560(b)(9)

Provide a description of how the local board will coordinate relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities with education and workforce investment activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services;

§679.560(b)(2)(iii)

Describe how the local board will work with entities carrying out core programs to improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential (including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable, and stackable).

Coordination of Education and Workforce Activities: The NALWDB works closely with secondary and postsecondary education institutions to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication.

- **Educational Partnerships:** The board's collaboration with institutions like Santa Fe Community College (SFCC) and UNM Taos ensures that students have access to workforce

development resources that complement their educational pursuits. Programs such as the I-BEST model at SFCC and the Power Up program at UNM Taos integrate academic learning with practical workforce skills, leading to industry-recognized credentials.

- Pathways to Credentials: The board emphasizes the importance of creating pathways that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials. For example, the partnership with UNM Taos' nursing program has provided students with a clear pathway to obtaining their NCLEX-RN® certification, which is both portable and stackable.

Coordination of Supportive Services

§679.560(c)

Provide a description of the board's follow-up policy and procedures for each of the targeted groups in Section G.

Coordination with Supportive Services: The NALWDB ensures that workforce investment activities under WIOA Title I are closely coordinated with the provision of supportive services, including transportation, childcare, and other critical supports.

- Integrated Supportive Services: The board collaborates with local service providers to offer a comprehensive range of supportive services that address the needs of job seekers. This includes providing transportation vouchers, childcare subsidies, and assistance with work attire, which are essential for enabling participants to fully engage in training and employment opportunities.
- Targeted Support for Vulnerable Populations: For instance, the board's youth service provider, offers supportive services tailored to the needs of low-income youth, such as covering the costs of uniforms and supplies for those enrolled in work experience programs.

Coordination of Follow-Up Services

§679.560(c)

Provide a description of the board's follow-up policy and procedures for each of the targeted groups in Section G.

Follow-Up Policy and Procedures: The NALWDB has established robust follow-up policies and procedures to ensure that participants receive ongoing support after exiting workforce programs.

- Follow-Up Support: Participants in all targeted groups, including youth, adults, and dislocated workers, receive follow-up services for a minimum of 12 months after program

completion. This support includes career counseling, job retention services, and additional training as needed to ensure long-term success.

- Customized Follow-Up: For example, youth participants who complete the Summer Youth Career Academy receive follow-up services that include mentoring, access to job placement resources, and ongoing guidance to support their transition into further education or full-time employment.

Coordination of Service Priorities

§679.560(b)(21)

Describe the direction given by the Governor (NMDWS) and the LWDB to the one-stop operator to ensure priority for adult career and training services will be given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient consistent with WIOA sec. 134(c)(3)(E) and §680.600 of the WIOA DOL Rule.

Direction from the Governor and LWDB: The NALWDB ensures that priority for adult career and training services is given to recipients of public assistance, low-income individuals, and those who are basic skills deficient, as outlined in WIOA sec. 134(c)(3)(E) and §680.600.

- Priority of Service Implementation: The board directs the One-Stop Operator to implement priority of service policies across all partner programs. This includes ensuring that individuals who meet these criteria are fast-tracked for services such as job training, supportive services, and job placement assistance.
- Focused Outreach: Outreach efforts are particularly targeted at low-income individuals and those receiving public assistance, ensuring they are aware of the priority services available to them and can access these services without delay.

Coordination of Outreach Efforts

§679.560(c)

Describe how the board will coordinate outreach efforts across partner programs for shared customers and target populations.

Coordinated Outreach Across Partner Programs: The NALWDB coordinates outreach efforts across all partner programs to ensure that shared customers and target populations receive consistent messaging and have access to a comprehensive range of services.

- Unified Outreach Strategy: The board's outreach strategy includes the development of joint marketing materials, coordinated social media campaigns, and collaborative community

events. For example, the Spring into Summer career fair was promoted across multiple platforms, reaching a wide audience and facilitating access to various workforce services in one location.

- Cross-Program Referrals: The board also emphasizes cross-program referrals, ensuring that individuals who engage with one partner program are seamlessly connected to other relevant services, such as TANF or vocational rehabilitation.

Coordination of Professional Development Activities

§679.560(c)

Describe how professional development activities will be coordinated across all partner programs staff.

Professional Development Across Partner Programs: The NALWDB is committed to fostering continuous professional development across all partner programs, ensuring that staff are equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to deliver high-quality services.

- Joint Training Initiatives: The board coordinates joint training sessions for staff from different partner programs, focusing on topics such as customer service, case management, and the latest labor market trends. These sessions promote a shared understanding of best practices and help staff collaborate more effectively.
- Ongoing Skill Development: The board also encourages participation in state and national workforce development conferences, where staff can learn about new tools, resources, and strategies that can be implemented locally.

Coordination of Referrals

§679.560(c)

Describe how the board will coordinate customer referrals across partner programs.

Coordinating Customer Referrals Across Partner Programs: The NALWDB ensures that customer referrals between partner programs are handled efficiently and effectively, with the goal of providing seamless service delivery.

- Centralized Referral System: The board is exploring the implementation of a centralized referral system that will allow all partner programs to track referrals and share relevant customer information. This system is designed to minimize duplication and ensure that customers receive the full range of services they need.
- Improved Communication: Regular meetings between Site Managers, Partner Leaders, and the One-Stop Operator help to streamline the referral process, ensuring that staff are aware of all available services and can make informed referrals.

Coordination with Other Partner Programs

§679.560(c)

Describe any other services provided in the one-stops to support the local workforce development system and customers. Include any coordination plans or activities the board has with any other partner programs such as, AmeriCorps, JobCorps, Youth Build, Mission: Graduation, Innovate Educate, etc.

Coordination with Additional Partner Programs: The NALWDB coordinates with a variety of additional partner programs to enhance the local workforce development system and provide comprehensive support to customers.

- AmeriCorps and JobCorps: The board collaborates with AmeriCorps and JobCorps to offer participants opportunities for skill development, community service, and education. These programs are particularly valuable for youth and young adults looking to gain experience and credentials.
- Mission: Graduate and Innovate+Educate: Partnerships with initiatives like Mission: Graduate and Innovate+Educate allow the board to offer targeted educational and employment services aimed at increasing graduation rates and improving employability for young adults. These partnerships are integrated into the board's overall strategy for reducing youth unemployment and promoting lifelong learning.
- YouthBuild: The NALWDB's collaboration with YouthBuild provides at-risk youth with the opportunity to gain construction skills while working towards their high school equivalency. This program is an integral part of the board's strategy to engage out-of-school youth and provide them with pathways to stable, well-paying jobs.

Administrative Elements

Fiscal and Performance Management

§679.560(b)(14)

Identify the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds described in WIOA sec. 107(d)(12)(B)(i)(III). Zlotnick and Sandoval, Fiscal Agent

The Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB) designates Zlotnick & Sandoval PC as the current fiscal agent responsible for the disbursement of all grant funds under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), as described in WIOA sec. 107(d)(12)(B)(i)(III). As the fiscal agent, Zlotnick & Sandoval PC ensures that all funds are disbursed according to federal, state, and local regulations, maintaining transparency and accountability in financial management. The fiscal agent works in close coordination with the NALWDB Executive Director to ensure that all

disbursements align with the strategic goals of the local workforce development plan and contribute to the effective delivery of services.

§679.560(b)(15)

Provide a detailed description of the competitive process that will be used to award the subgrants and contracts for WIOA title I activities. (Please provide a copy of the board's procurement policy or policies, including conflict of interest provisions as a part of Attachment A.) The Request for Proposal process is a series of steps that an organization use to request proposals from vendors for Title I services. The process can be lengthy, number of proposals received, and questions asked during evaluation process, but typically takes two months. Steps include: Write RFP; Issue RFP; Review Responses and select a vendor and interview top three selected vendors. (See Attached Financial Policy)

The NALWDB uses a transparent and competitive procurement process to award subgrants and contracts for WIOA Title I activities. This process includes the following key steps:

1. Request for Proposals (RFP): The NALWDB issues RFPs for specific services required under WIOA Title I. These RFPs are widely publicized to ensure maximum participation from eligible service providers.
2. Proposal Evaluation: Submitted proposals are evaluated by a review committee using a standardized scoring system. The evaluation criteria include factors such as the provider's experience, capacity to deliver services, cost-effectiveness, and alignment with the NALWDB's strategic goals.
3. Conflict of Interest Provisions: The NALWDB adheres to strict conflict of interest provisions to ensure that the procurement process is fair and impartial. Board members and staff involved in the procurement process are required to disclose any potential conflicts of interest and recuse themselves if necessary.
4. Awarding Contracts: Based on the evaluation results, contracts are awarded to the most qualified providers. The NALWDB monitors these contracts to ensure compliance with performance expectations and regulatory requirements.

The NALWDB's procurement policies, including conflict of interest provisions, are detailed in Attachment A.

§679.560(b)(16)

Provide the local levels of performance negotiated with the Governor (NMDWS) and chief elected official consistent with WIOA sec. 116(c), to be used to measure the performance of the local area and to be used by the local board for measuring the performance of the local fiscal agent (where appropriate), eligible providers under WIOA title I subtitle B, and the one-stop delivery system in the local area, in Attachment E. (see attached current Negotiated

Measures, currently we are under performance negotiations with NM DWS.) The Northern board establishes performance accountability indicators and performance reporting with our Title I Service Provider, the established indicators include Service provider must understand and monitor each participant and report regularly to the board to ensure proper documentation is being collected and uploaded to WCOS to achieve positive outcomes for individuals served.

The local levels of performance for the Northern Area have been negotiated with the Governor (NMDWS) and the chief elected official, in accordance with WIOA sec. 116(c). These performance measures are designed to assess the effectiveness of the local workforce system and include metrics such as employment rate, median earnings, credential attainment, measurable skill gains, and effectiveness in serving employers. The NALWDB will use these performance indicators to measure the success under WIOA Title I subtitle B, and the one-stop delivery system. Specific performance levels for PY 2024-2027 are detailed in Attachment

§679.560(b)(17)

Describe the actions the LWDB will take toward becoming or remaining a high-performing workforce development board. The Northern board meets regularly with board members, understanding the service providers updates throughout the 10 counties; Engaging board members, having regular Committee meetings and Sector Strategy meetings; Bringing businesses to the table with our yearly Northern Workforce Development Conference, this allows us to bring Businesses/Employers; Economic Development, Institutions and Eight Northern Pueblos to discuss the urgent matters in their communities.

The Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB) is dedicated to maintaining and enhancing its status as a high-performing workforce development board. The following strategic actions will be implemented to achieve this goal:

Strategic Planning and Alignment

- Regular Strategic Planning Sessions: The NALWDB will continue to conduct regular strategic planning sessions to ensure that workforce development activities align with the economic needs of the Northern New Mexico region. This includes setting clear priorities based on current labor market data and aligning with state and federal workforce strategies.
- Integration with Regional and Statewide Initiatives: The board will align its strategic goals with the New Mexico Workforce State Plan, ensuring that local efforts contribute to broader state objectives. This includes participating in statewide initiatives and collaborating with other local boards to share best practices and resources.

Enhanced Stakeholder Engagement

- **Building Strong Partnerships:** The NALWDB will deepen its relationships with key stakeholders, including employers, educational institutions, community organizations, and government agencies. By fostering collaboration, the board will ensure that its programs are responsive to the needs of the local economy and support the creation of a skilled workforce.
- **Employer and Industry Collaboration:** The board will actively engage with local employers and industry leaders to identify skills gaps and develop targeted training programs. This approach will ensure that workforce development efforts are directly aligned with the needs of businesses in the region.

Capacity Building and Professional Development

- **Training for Board Members and Staff:** The NALWDB will prioritize ongoing professional development for board members and staff. This includes completing a minimum of 10 hours of training per program year to stay informed about the latest trends, regulations, and best practices in workforce development.
- **Leadership Development:** The board will invest in leadership development programs to enhance the capabilities of its members and staff, ensuring they are equipped to lead the board effectively and respond to emerging challenges in the workforce landscape.

Performance Monitoring and Continuous Improvement

- **Regular Performance Assessments:** The NALWDB has implemented a robust system for monitoring its performance against Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) indicators. This includes regular reviews of key performance metrics, such as employment rates, credential attainment, and participant satisfaction.
- **Data-Driven Decision Making:** The board will use data analytics to identify trends, assess the effectiveness of programs, and make informed decisions about resource allocation. This approach will ensure that interventions are targeted, effective, and aligned with regional workforce needs.

Innovative Service Delivery

- **Adopting New Technologies:** The NALWDB will explore and implement new technologies to enhance service delivery, including the use of integrated, technology-enabled intake, and case management systems. These tools will improve the efficiency of service delivery and ensure that participants have seamless access to the resources they need.

- Expanding Access to Training: The board will continue to develop and expand training opportunities through Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) and partnerships with local educational institutions. This includes focusing on high-demand sectors and ensuring that training programs are accessible to all, particularly those in rural and underserved areas.

Fiscal Responsibility and Transparency

- Strengthening Financial Oversight: The NALWDB will maintain rigorous financial oversight through its Finance Committee and ensure that all WIOA funds are managed in compliance with federal, state, and local regulations. This includes regular audits and transparent reporting of financial activities.
- Efficient Resource Allocation: The board will continue to seek out new funding opportunities, such as grants and public-private partnerships, to supplement WIOA funds. This approach will ensure that the board can sustain and expand its programs even in the face of funding fluctuations.

Commitment to Inclusivity and Equity

- Promoting Equity in Service Delivery: The NALWDB is committed to ensuring that all individuals, including those with barriers to employment, have access to workforce development services. This includes targeted outreach to underserved communities and the provision of wrap-around services to support participant success.
- Inclusive Decision-Making Processes: The board will actively seek input from a diverse range of stakeholders, including participants, employers, and community organizations, to ensure that its programs are inclusive and meet the needs of all segments of the population.

By implementing these actions, the NALWDB will continue to strengthen its role as a high-performing workforce development board, delivering impactful and equitable services that support the economic growth and prosperity of the Northern New Mexico region.

Provision of Training Services through Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) and Coordinated Contracts under WIOA Section 134

Training services under WIOA Section 134 in the Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB) are primarily provided through the use of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs). The NALWDB ensures that ITAs are effectively used to allow participants to select training programs that align with their career goals and meet local labor market demands. The process is structured to include the following key elements:

Use of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs):

- Pathway Development through Individual Employment Plans: The NALWDB has instructed its WIOA Title I service providers to use the Individual Employment Plan (IEP) as a crucial tool for developing a pathway leading to employment. During the IEP process, it may be determined that a participant requires additional training to achieve their employment goals. The ITA is then used as a vehicle to provide this training.
- Eligibility and Access: Eligible participants are provided with ITAs, which function as vouchers that can be used to pay for training programs offered by approved providers listed on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). The participant's ability to function at a college level is assessed, and based on this assessment, a case manager works with the participant to research labor market data to identify demand occupations.
- Informed Customer Choice: Once research is completed, participants are guided through the ETPL, which offers a comprehensive list of board-approved training providers. The list includes detailed information on course requirements, costs, and program outcomes. This process ensures that participants can make an informed choice from a wide range of training providers, supported by the case manager who prepares the necessary documents to secure funding and commitment to pay costs as listed on the ETPL.

Coordination of Contracts for Training Services:

- Complementary Use of Contracts and ITAs: While ITAs are the primary method for providing training services, the NALWDB may also utilize contracts for training services, especially in situations where specific industry or employer partnerships necessitate cohort training or specialized programs. These contracts are carefully coordinated with ITAs to ensure a seamless approach to workforce development.
- Flexibility and Responsiveness: The NALWDB's use of both ITAs and contracts allows for a flexible and responsive training system that can adapt to the evolving needs of the workforce and employers in the region. This ensures that participants receive the necessary training to secure and retain employment, regardless of the method of service delivery.

High-Quality Program Delivery and Customer Support:

- Serving a Diverse Population: The NALWDB aims to serve a minimum of 500 WIOA Title I eligible Adult and Dislocated Workers from the service area. The board also ensures that applicants who do not meet WIOA eligibility requirements receive referrals for additional assistance through internal programs or local community

service organizations. The focus is on creating a clear pathway to employment in high-paying, high-demand industries.

- Support for Barriers and Challenges: The program also addresses barriers such as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has significantly affected employment services, especially in rural communities. The NALWDB is committed to stepping up efforts to prepare the workforce to return to industries or transition to new jobs available in different sectors. Close coordination with Workforce offices and outreach to those seeking unemployment support are key components of this strategy.

Comprehensive Service Model:

- Individualized and Holistic Approach: The Adult and Dislocated Worker Services program employs a client-centered case management approach that is individualized, culturally sensitive, and designed to address the specific needs of each participant. This approach includes career and employment services, skill development, employer outreach, work experiences, career pathway identification, and financial education to help clients manage personal finances effectively.
- Coordination with One-Stop Partners: The NALWDB coordinates with WIOA partners such as TANF, SNAP, and community-based organizations to avoid duplication of services and improve overall service delivery to job seekers. The board also supports industry-led meetings and engages with local chambers of commerce, small business groups, and governmental workforce meetings to align with the goals of NALWDB's strategic plan.

Checks and Balances:

Monitoring and Accountability: ITAs are closely monitored by financial staff to ensure proper documentation and correct amounts before submission to the Fiscal Agent for payment processing. This system of checks and balances ensures that all financial transactions are transparent and compliant with WIOA regulations.

The NALWDB remains committed to delivering high-quality training services that empower individuals to succeed in high-demand occupations. Through the effective use of ITAs, coordinated contracts, and a comprehensive service model, the board supports the development of a skilled workforce that meets the needs of Northern New Mexico's economy.

Pay-for-Performance Contract Strategy

Currently, the Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB) does not have plans to implement a pay-for-performance contract strategy under WIOA Section 128(b). While the

option to reserve and use up to 10 percent of total funds allocated under this section exists, the NALWDB has determined that its current service delivery and contract management processes are sufficient to meet performance expectations without the need for a pay-for-performance approach. The board will continue to monitor and evaluate its service providers through established performance metrics and regular reviews to ensure high-quality service delivery.

Minimum Training Expenditure Requirement

The NALWDB is committed to meeting the Minimum Training Expenditure Requirement of 60%. For PY 2024-2027, the NALWDB anticipates obligating at least 80% and expending a minimum of 40% of current year funding by the end of the third quarter of each program year. These expenditure rates will be closely monitored to ensure compliance and to maximize the impact of training funds.

Integrated, Technology-Enabled Intake and Case Management System

The NALWDB, in collaboration with its partners, is transitioning to an integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information system. This system will streamline service delivery across all WIOA programs and partner services, improving data sharing, case management, and tracking of participant outcomes. The system will be designed to enhance user experience and ensure that participants receive coordinated and efficient services throughout their engagement with the workforce system.

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