

REGIONAL AND LOCAL PLAN PY 2024 - 2027

Local Workforce Development Area Name:

New Orleans Workforce Development Area (LWDA 12)

As part of Region One

Workforce Development Board Partnership

Plan Effective Date: 1/1/2025

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CHAPTER 1: ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ANALYSIS: REGIONAL

The Combined Plan must include the Strategic Planning Elements section that analyzes the Region's current economic environment and identifies the Regional/Local's overall vision for its workforce development system. The required elements in this section allows the Regional/Local area to develop data-driven goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce and to identify successful strategies for aligning workforce development programs to support economic growth. Unless otherwise noted, all Strategic Planning Elements apply to Combined Regional/Local Plan core and partner programs, which are included in this plan.

This regional component of the plan must discuss how the region has collected and analyzed regional labor market information including the local planning requirements. Additionally, the chapter must demonstrate alignment with education and economic development. Regional teams are encouraged to use the labor market information that will provide consistency in the data used for regional analysis throughout the state.

A. Provide an analysis of the:

1. Economic conditions including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations (§ 679.560(a)(1)(i));
 - What are the targeted industries, high-impact industry clusters, and in-demand occupations in the region?
 - What industries and occupations have favorable location quotients?
 - What industries and occupations have favorable demand projections based on growth?
 - What industries and occupations have favorable demand projections based on replacements?
 - What industries and occupations are considered mature but still important to the economy?
 - What industries and occupations are considered emerging in the regional economy?
 - What sources of supply and demand data were used to determine the targeted industries occupations and skills?

Targeted Industries and High-Impact Clusters in the Greater New Orleans Region

Regional Overview

The Greater New Orleans Region comprises eight parishes in the 1st Regional Labor Market Area (RLMA 1): Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. James, St. John the Baptist, and St. Tammany. Positioned strategically along the Mississippi River and the Gulf of Mexico, this region serves as a vital economic hub for Louisiana. Its natural advantages have historically supported strong industries such as manufacturing, logistics, oil and gas, and more recently, professional services and healthcare.

The region's economy is underpinned by robust infrastructure, including an expansive network of ports, railroads, and highways, which facilitates both domestic and international trade. This

foundation, combined with a highly skilled and diverse workforce, positions the Greater New Orleans Region as a center of innovation and economic resilience.

Overview of Regional Employment (2023)

NEW ORLEANS RLMA



RLMA 1 Parishes: Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. James, St. John the Baptist, St. Tammany



596,544

Number of people participating in the **Civilian Labor Force** in April 2023



576,936

Employment recorded level in April 2023



\$44.45

Mining has the highest average **hourly wage** in the region



3.3%

Unemployment rate as of April 2023



6.6%

Transportation and warehousing highest projected growth in the region through 2024

Industry Projections 2022 to 2024

Industry Forecast: Total, All Industries

Area	Base 2022 Employment	Projected 2024 Employment	Difference	Percent Change
Statewide	1,956,496	2,015,125	58,629	3.0%
New Orleans RLMA	573,952	582,080	8,128	1.4%

Major Industries in the New Orleans RLMA

Industry	Base 2022 Employment	Projected 2024 Employment	Difference	Percent Change
Health Care and Social Assistance	79,775	81,181	1,406	1.8%
Other Services, Except Public Administration	70,297	70,609	312	0.4%
Accommodation and Food Services	63,912	67,132	3,220	5.0%
Retail Trade	56,385	55,839	-546	-1.0%
Educational Services	44,399	44,336	-63	-0.1%
Government	35,530	34,708	-822	-2.3%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	33,343	34,797	1,454	4.4%
Administrative and Waste Services	31,918	31,191	-727	-2.3%
Manufacturing	28,713	28,864	151	0.5%
Transportation and Warehousing	26,969	28,749	1,780	6.6%

Growing and Shrinking Industries (2022-2024)

Top 5 Growing Industries in the New Orleans RLMA

Industry	Base 2022 Employment	Projected 2024 Employment	Difference	Percent Change
Accommodation and Food Services	63,912	67,132	3,220	5.0%
Transportation and Warehousing	26,969	28,749	1,780	6.6%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	33,343	34,797	1,454	4.4%
Health Care and Social Assistance	79,775	81,181	1,406	1.8%
Construction	27,002	28,297	1,295	4.8%

Bottom 5 Shrinking Industries in the New Orleans RLMA

Industry	Base 2022 Employment	Projected 2024 Employment	Difference	Percent Change
Government	35,530	34,708	-822	-2.3%
Administrative and Waste Services	31,918	31,191	-727	-2.3%
Finance and Insurance	16,383	15,773	-610	-3.7%
Retail Trade	56,385	55,839	-546	-1.0%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	6,947	6,570	-377	-5.4%

Region One - Sector Selection Criteria

When evaluating which sectors to prioritize for workforce development in Region One, several key criteria guide decision-making to ensure maximum economic and social impact. These criteria encompass both workforce dynamics and broader economic considerations. Metrics such as total job share and projected openings due to growth and attrition provide insight into labor market demands. Additionally, the sector's economic influence is assessed through its ability to generate self-sustaining wages, contribute to regional wage totals, and drive industry revenue. The geographic scope of a sector's influence, as well as its potential to address priority occupations, further emphasizes its importance in fostering sustainable regional development. Together, these factors shape a strategic approach to sector selection and investment.

Region One – Targeted Sector Selection Criteria

- Total job share for a sector
- Total projected number of openings due to growth
- Total projected number of openings due to attrition
- Economic impact
 - Occupations that offer self-sustaining wages
 - Overall total wage impact on the regional economy
 - Overall revenue impact for industry on the region
 - Impact of sector on multiple geographical areas within a region
- Ability to impact priority occupations within a sector

Targeted Industries and Clusters

The economic fabric of the Greater New Orleans Region is woven with industries that reflect a strategic alignment with its natural resources, geographic advantages, and demographic trends. These industries, both traditional and emerging, are not only pillars of economic growth but also provide a foundation for sustainable development. Collaborative efforts among economic stakeholders have ensured that the identification of these industries aligns with long-term regional goals, addressing workforce challenges and leveraging opportunities for expansion and innovation. This targeted approach positions the region to thrive in a competitive and rapidly evolving global economy.

Manufacturing, Including Oil and Gas Cluster

- **Economic Impact:** Manufacturing remains the largest contributor to the Gross Regional Product (GRP), representing 25% of the total and generating an impressive \$10.6 billion annually.
- **Job Share:** Employs 33,324 workers across 1,340 establishments, offering stable, high-paying positions that are crucial to the regional economy.
- **Wages and Workforce Challenges:** While the sector supports self-sustaining jobs, it faces an ongoing shortage of skilled workers, highlighting the need for workforce development initiatives.

- **Regional Significance:** This industry benefits from proximity to the Mississippi River and an established industrial infrastructure, making it a cornerstone of the regional economy. It also drives upstream industries like logistics and trade, amplifying its economic impact.
- **NAICS Codes:** 32–33 (Primary Manufacturing), 21 (Oil & Gas Extraction and Support Activities).

Healthcare Cluster

- **Economic Impact:** Healthcare is a cornerstone industry, contributing \$7.3 billion to the regional GRP.
- **Job Share and Growth Potential:** With 71,142 employees and projected growth of 8%, healthcare is a rapidly expanding sector fueled by rising demand for medical services and technological advancements.
- **Wages and Key Occupations:** Offers significant opportunities in roles such as nursing, medical assistants, and healthcare administration, providing sustainable wages and career pathways.
- **Regional Impact:** With the aging population and increasing healthcare needs, this sector plays a critical role in both economic development and quality of life.
- **NAICS Codes:** 621 (Ambulatory Healthcare Services), 622 (Hospitals), 623 (Nursing Facilities), 902622 & 903622 (State and Local Hospitals).

Transportation and Logistics, Including Wholesale Trade

- **Economic Impact:** Contributing \$10.1 billion to the GRP, this sector serves as the backbone of regional and international trade.
- **Job Share:** Employs 43,139 workers in freight movement, storage, and distribution, making it one of the region's most critical industries.
- **Strategic Importance:** The region's location along the Mississippi River and its proximity to the Gulf of Mexico make it a vital hub for domestic and international trade. Upcoming infrastructure projects, such as major port expansions, will further solidify its position as a logistics powerhouse.
- **NAICS Codes:** 4811–4842, 4861–4869, 4881–4889, 4931, 5324, 42.

Construction Sector

- **Economic Impact:** Construction remains a critical driver of infrastructure development, especially with large-scale projects like the expansion of the region's port systems.
- **Transition from Recovery:** Once driven by Hurricane Katrina recovery efforts, the construction sector is now focused on forward-looking infrastructure projects that are key to regional competitiveness.
- **Job Share:** Employs nearly 30,000 workers, supporting a wide range of trades, including electricians, heavy equipment operators, and project managers.

- Strategic Importance: Port expansions and other infrastructure projects require sustained labor demand, creating significant opportunities for skilled trades and supporting industries like manufacturing and logistics.
- NAICS Codes: 23 (Construction).

Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (Emerging Sector)

- Emerging Sector: This sector represents a cross-cutting group of occupations that drive innovation and operational efficiency across industries, employing more than 33,000 workers, of which nearly 20,000 are technical (engineering, computer, scientific) in nature.
- Job Share and Growth: Encompasses roles like business operations specialists, accountants, and environmental scientists, which are essential to industries like manufacturing, healthcare, and logistics.
- Wages and Regional Impact: These positions often provide competitive wages and opportunities for career advancement, making the sector a key focus for economic development. The nearly 20,000 technical jobs boast an average wage of \$107,194.
- NAICS Codes: 54.

Information Technology (IT) as a Cross-cutting Occupation Group

- Emerging Priority: IT occupations are increasingly critical, supporting the digital infrastructure required by industries such as healthcare, logistics, and energy.
 - Key Roles: Includes jobs such as computer systems analysts, cybersecurity specialists, and network administrators, which are in high demand as businesses prioritize digital transformation. Some of the highest growth occupations include Data Scientists, Software Q&A Analysts, and Software Developers.
 - Cross-Sector Impact: IT serves as a foundational sector, enhancing productivity and innovation across all other targeted industries.
 - Occupation Group: 15-200.
-

Emerging Infrastructure Projects and Their Workforce Impact

The Greater New Orleans Region is poised for significant economic growth, driven by transformative infrastructure projects that will generate substantial job opportunities and enhance the region's competitiveness. These projects align closely with the region's targeted industries, particularly transportation, logistics, construction, and hospitality, and are anticipated to create thousands of jobs, both directly and indirectly.

Louisiana International Terminal (LIT)

The \$1.8 billion Louisiana International Terminal in St. Bernard Parish is a landmark project that will elevate Louisiana's import and export capabilities. This public-private partnership between the

State of Louisiana, the Port of New Orleans, Ports America, and Terminal Investment Limited is expected to create over 17,000 new jobs statewide by 2050. The facility will support logistics professionals, supply chain managers, and port operators, driving demand across the transportation and logistics sectors.

St. Bernard Transportation Corridor

Complementing the LIT, the \$230.5 million St. Bernard Transportation Corridor will connect the terminal to the interstate system, facilitating efficient cargo movement. This infrastructure investment will support job creation in construction, logistics, and related industries, further solidifying the region's position as a hub for trade and transportation.

TCI Tank Logistics Rail Line Expansion

In October 2024, TCI Tank Logistics announced plans to expand its rail line at the Port of New Orleans. This project is expected to generate 40 direct new jobs with an average annual salary of \$60,000 and retain 41 existing jobs in Orleans Parish. Additionally, 94 indirect jobs are anticipated, for a total of 134 potential new jobs supporting manufacturing and logistics.

New Orleans Public Belt Railroad Enhancements

Significant enhancements to the New Orleans Public Belt Railroad, including the Transloading Industrial Park and Claiborne Yard expansion, aim to improve freight movement efficiency and stimulate economic growth. These projects will bolster the logistics sector, supporting skilled rail operators and freight handlers, and contribute to broader regional economic development.

Bayou Phoenix Development

The Bayou Phoenix Development in New Orleans East will transform the long-abandoned Six Flags site into a multi-use entertainment complex, featuring hotels, sports facilities, retail outlets, a movie studio, and an amphitheater. Slated for completion by 2027, this redevelopment project will generate numerous construction jobs and create long-term opportunities in the hospitality and tourism industries, revitalizing the local economy.

Gulf Coast Corridor Improvement Project

The Gulf Coast Corridor Improvement Project aims to restore the rail route between New Orleans and Mobile, Alabama, which has been inactive since Hurricane Katrina. Supported by funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, this project is expected to be completed by 2025 and will create jobs in transportation, infrastructure, and tourism, connecting regional economies and enhancing accessibility.

Projected Workforce Impact

These infrastructure projects collectively represent a significant investment in the region's economy. Combined, they are anticipated to create:

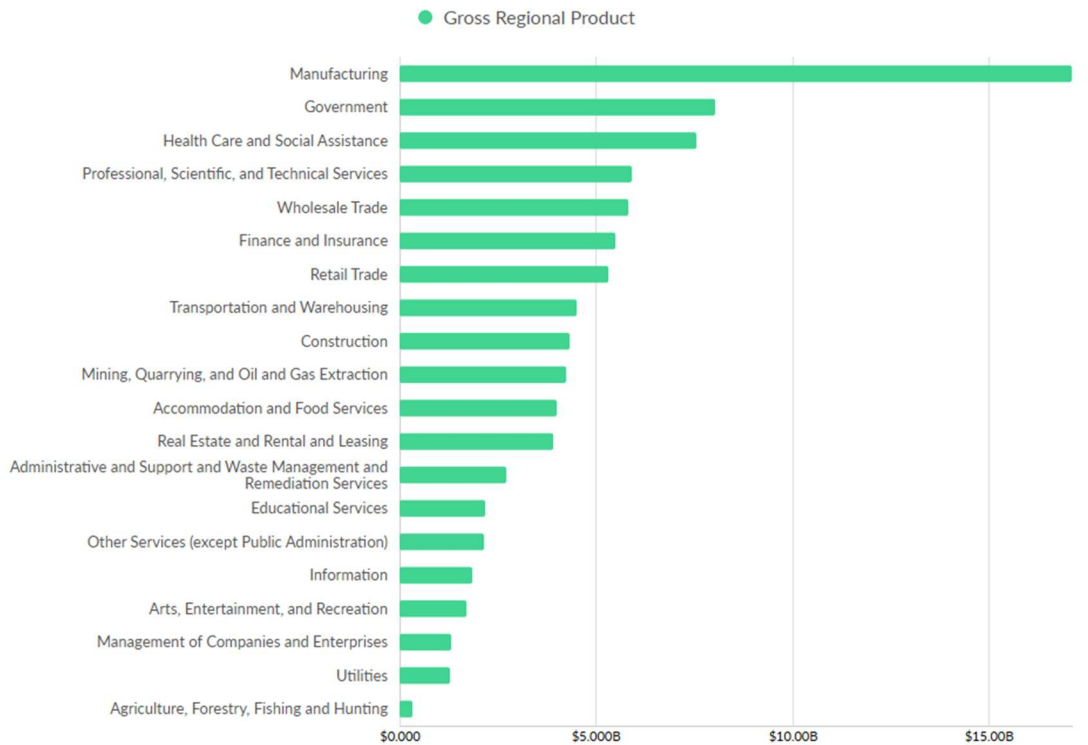
- **Direct Jobs:** Over 17,000 jobs from the Louisiana International Terminal and hundreds more from projects like the TCI Tank Logistics Rail Line Expansion and Bayou Phoenix Development.
- **Indirect Jobs:** Additional opportunities in supporting industries such as construction, logistics, and retail.
- **Broader Economic Benefits:** Enhanced regional connectivity, increased trade capacity, and revitalized local economies.

By aligning workforce development strategies with these projects, the Greater New Orleans Region can ensure a prepared and competitive workforce to meet the growing demands of these transformative initiatives.

The Greater New Orleans Region's **diverse economic portfolio**, anchored by traditional sectors like manufacturing, healthcare, construction, and logistics, and bolstered by emerging industries such as IT and professional services, showcases its adaptability to shifting economic trends. Strategic investments in these targeted industries and clusters are essential to ensuring the region's resilience and competitiveness in the years ahead. By addressing workforce challenges, fostering innovation, and maximizing the impact of infrastructure projects, the region is positioned to achieve sustained economic vitality. This forward-looking approach capitalizes on current strengths while preparing for future demands, ensuring that the Greater New Orleans Region remains a vibrant hub of economic activity.

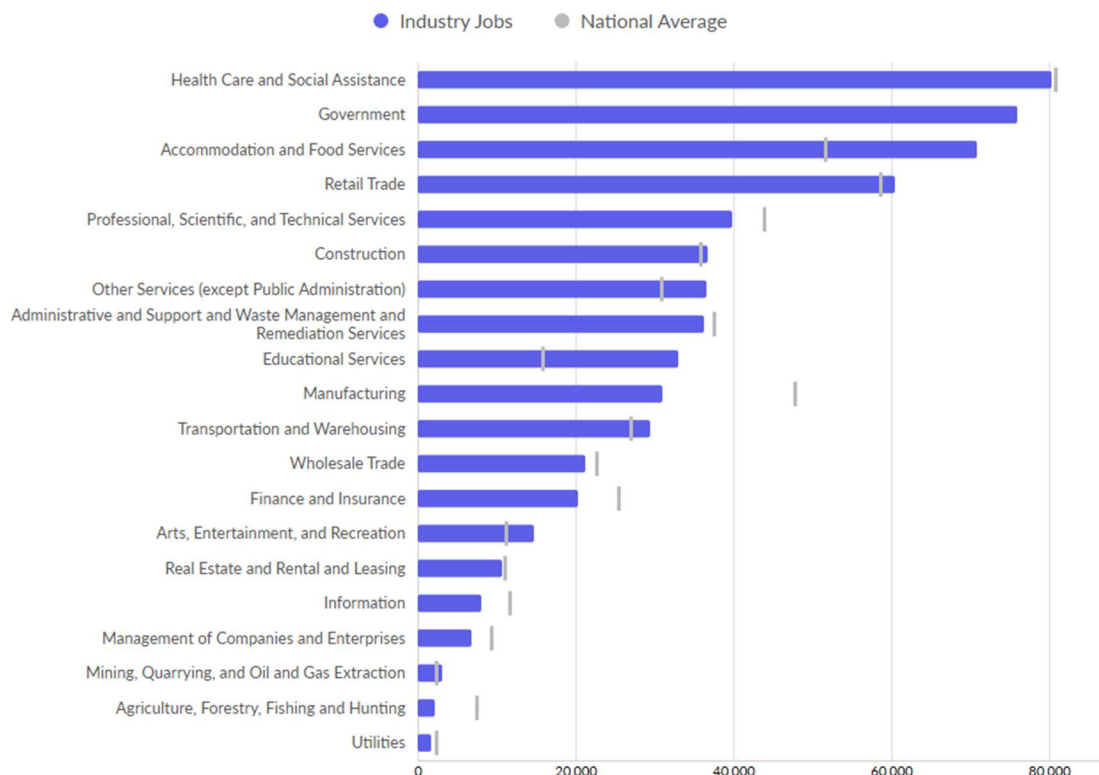
The **Gross Regional Product (GRP) chart** below highlights manufacturing as the leading economic contributor in the Greater New Orleans Region, generating the highest GRP across industries, followed by Government and Healthcare. Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services, along with Wholesale Trade, also play significant roles, underscoring the diverse economic base. This diversity highlights the region's capacity for sustainable growth by combining traditional industries with emerging sectors like professional services. Such a balanced economic portfolio not only drives current success but also positions the region for future resilience and innovation.

Top Industry GRP



The chart below illustrates the largest occupational sectors in the Greater New Orleans Region, highlighting industries by the number of jobs compared to the national average. While sectors like Healthcare and Social Assistance, Government, and Accommodation and Food Services dominate in terms of employment, it is important to note that these may not directly align with the region's targeted high-impact sectors. Instead, this chart provides valuable context for understanding the broader labor market dynamics and the significance of supporting industries that drive workforce participation and economic stability.

Largest Industries



High Demand Occupations

The Greater New Orleans Region is projected to have over 211,525 job openings across all occupations in the coming years. Notably, more than 62% of these positions (131,849) offer a median self-sustaining wage of \$14.48 per hour, equivalent to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level. Among occupations requiring education beyond a high school diploma but not exceeding a Bachelor's degree, the top 20 high-demand roles account for 43,130 anticipated openings between 2024 and 2027. These openings include opportunities for both net new job growth and replacement needs due to workforce transitions and retirements. These roles play a critical role in the region's economic vitality, offering individuals pathways to rewarding careers while driving the expansion of key industries. To meet this demand, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) local workforce development boards and centers prioritize these occupations, aligning training programs with high-demand roles to prepare residents for sustainable, high-growth careers.

Top 20 Occupation Projections for 2024 – 2027

(Requiring greater than high school diploma, but less than or equal to bachelor's degree)

SOC	Description	2024 Jobs	2027 Jobs	2024 - 2027 Change	2024 - 2027 Replacement Jobs	2024 - 2027 Openings	Median Hourly Earnings	Typical Entry Level Education
062653-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	8,036	8,183	147	3,882	4,040	\$15.54	High school diploma or equivalent
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	14,402	14,581	179	3,430	3,658	\$50.25	Bachelor's degree
43-6014	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	10,762	10,394	(369)	3,542	3,543	\$18.44	High school diploma or equivalent
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	8,356	8,355	(1)	3,362	3,451	\$17.88	High school diploma or equivalent
35-1012	First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	6,081	6,227	147	2,688	2,853	\$17.56	High school diploma or equivalent
29-1141	Registered Nurses	10,749	11,317	567	1,775	2,348	\$38.90	Bachelor's degree
31-1131	Nursing Assistants	4,481	4,642	161	1,934	2,107	\$15.13	Postsecondary nondegree award
43-3031	Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	5,732	5,643	(89)	1,985	2,015	\$21.22	Some college, no degree
49-9071	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	6,639	6,764	124	1,806	1,942	\$19.23	High school diploma or equivalent
43-4171	Receptionists and Information Clerks	4,484	4,614	130	1,809	1,939	\$15.04	High school diploma or equivalent
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	5,711	5,820	109	1,795	1,933	\$23.66	Postsecondary nondegree award
43-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers	6,187	6,143	(45)	1,760	1,795	\$26.41	High school diploma or equivalent
25-9045	Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary	4,461	4,505	44	1,558	1,625	\$14.85	Some college, no degree
41-4012	Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	5,393	5,385	(7)	1,424	1,515	\$32.02	High school diploma or equivalent
13-1199	Business Operations Specialists, All Other	5,592	5,620	28	1,429	1,483	\$30.67	Bachelor's degree
53-3033	Light Truck Drivers	4,234	4,361	126	1,336	1,479	\$18.60	High school diploma or equivalent
31-9092	Medical Assistants	3,074	3,331	256	1,206	1,463	\$17.30	Postsecondary nondegree award

25-2021	Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	6,677	6,702	25	1,324	1,409	\$26.08	Bachelor's degree
41-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	4,664	4,613	(51)	1,366	1,379	\$21.16	High school diploma or equivalent
13-2011	Accountants and Auditors	4,663	4,734	71	1,070	1,153	\$35.63	Bachelor's degree
		130,380	131,933	1,553	40,478	43,130		

Key Occupations and Their Role in Targeted Industry Sectors

Manufacturing and Oil & Gas

General and Operations Managers (11-1021): With 3,658 projected openings and a median wage of \$50.25, these managers are crucial to improving operational efficiency and productivity across manufacturing and energy sectors.

Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers (53-3032): Supporting supply chains vital to manufacturing and oil and gas industries, these drivers are projected to have 1,933 openings, earning a median wage of \$23.66.

Captains, Mates, and Pilots of Water Vessels (53-5021): While not in the top 20 occupations, is essential to the transportation of goods and resources for the energy sector, these professionals are expected to have 773 openings, with a median wage of \$49.70.

Healthcare

Registered Nurses (29-1141): Among the most in-demand roles, registered nurses are projected to have 2,348 openings with a median wage of \$38.90. They are vital to delivering quality patient care and addressing the region's growing healthcare needs.

Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses (29-2061): In the near top 20, Projected to have 939 openings, these healthcare providers play an essential role in patient care, with a median wage of \$26.34.

Medical Assistants (31-9092): With 1,463 projected openings, these workers support clinical and administrative healthcare needs, earning a median wage of \$17.30.

Transportation and Logistics

Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers (53-3032): With 1,933 openings, these roles are indispensable for sustaining regional supply chains and ensuring connectivity across industries.

Captains, Mates, and Pilots of Water Vessels (53-5021): Supporting international trade and waterborne logistics, these positions are critical to the transportation sector, with 773 projected openings.

Construction

General and Operations Managers (11-1021): With 3,658 openings, operations managers play a vital leadership role in large-scale infrastructure projects, such as port expansions, earning a median wage of \$50.25.

Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers (53-3032): With 1,933 openings, these drivers are critical to the transportation of materials and supplies necessary for construction projects, earning a median wage of \$23.66.

Carpenters and Skilled Trades (Various SOC Codes): While not explicitly listed, construction trades are key to completing large-scale infrastructure projects, creating sustained demand for electricians, equipment operators, and other skilled workers.

Managers, All Other (11-9199): Also, while in the near top 20, with 907 projected openings, these managers oversee specialized aspects of construction projects, ensuring alignment with timelines and budgets, earning a median wage of \$50.32.

Summary

The top 20 high-demand occupations and other key occupations near the top 20, driven by total openings from net new growth and workforce replacements, are critical to the Greater New Orleans Region's economic success. These roles directly support the four targeted sectors—Manufacturing and Oil & Gas, Healthcare, Transportation and Logistics, and Construction. By focusing on these key occupations, workforce development initiatives can align with regional priorities, ensuring a resilient and competitive economy capable of meeting current and future labor market demands.

Industries and Occupations with Favorable Location Quotients

The Greater New Orleans Region exhibits strong location quotients (LQ) in several key industries and occupations, highlighting their high concentration and economic significance compared to the national average. Among industries, Educational Services and Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction stand out with particularly favorable LQs. The leadership of Educational Services reflects the region's emphasis on higher education and specialized training institutions, which play a critical role in workforce development and economic stability. Similarly, the prominence of Oil and Gas Extraction underscores the region's strategic advantage in energy production, bolstered by its access to abundant natural resources and well-established infrastructure.

From an occupational perspective, sectors such as Legal, Food Preparation and Serving, and Protective Services display notable employment concentrations. The Legal sector thrives due to the region's robust civic and business environment, while Food Preparation and Serving underscores the cultural richness and tourism-driven economy of the region. Protective Services are essential in addressing the region's unique challenges, including public safety and emergency management, particularly in a geographic area prone to natural disasters. These occupational concentrations illustrate the region's specialized workforce strengths, which underpin both economic resilience and regional competitiveness.

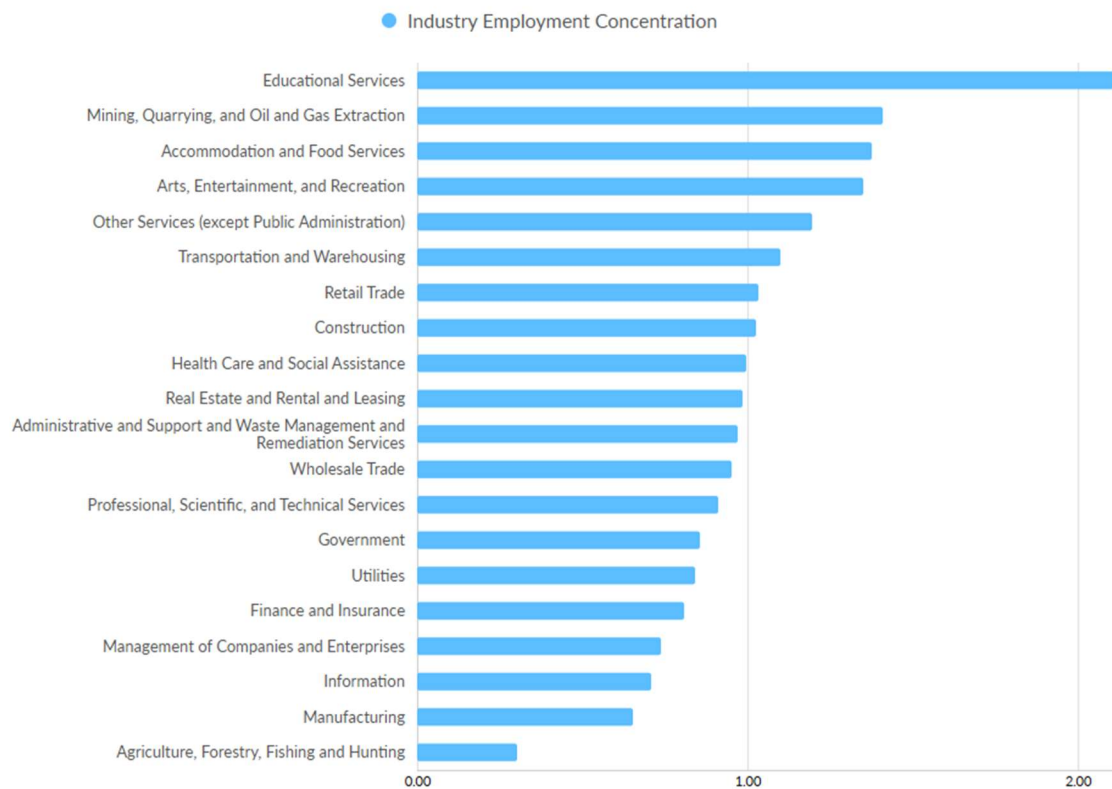
Moreover, industries and occupations with favorable location quotients align seamlessly with the region's targeted sectors and key roles, emphasizing their critical importance to the Greater New

Orleans economy. **Manufacturing and Oil & Gas** leverage the region’s proximity to the Mississippi River and industrial infrastructure, driving high employment concentrations in industrial production, logistics, and energy. These sectors depend on a skilled workforce to sustain energy output and industrial growth, further highlighting their strategic importance.

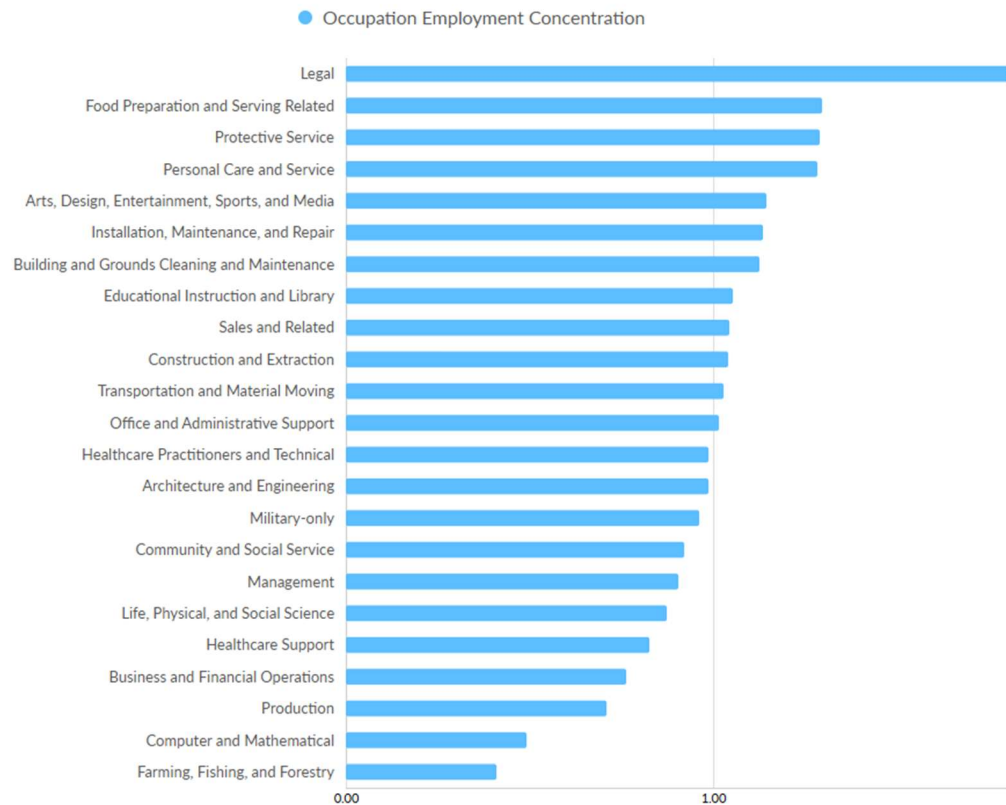
Healthcare, as a cornerstone of the regional economy, reflects strong demand for essential occupations such as registered nurses, medical assistants, and licensed vocational nurses. These roles are indispensable for addressing the healthcare needs of an aging population and expanding access to care. Similarly, **Transportation and Logistics** serve as vital connectors for regional industries to national and international markets, with occupations like heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers and captains of water vessels ensuring supply chain efficiency and trade facilitation.

Lastly, the **Construction** sector plays a pivotal role in regional growth, fueled by infrastructure projects such as port expansions. This sector generates demand for skilled trades, including electricians and project managers, which are essential for advancing the region’s physical and economic development. Together, these industries and occupations with high location quotients reinforce the alignment of the region’s economic strengths with its targeted sectors, ensuring sustained growth and competitive advantage.

Top Industry Employment Concentration



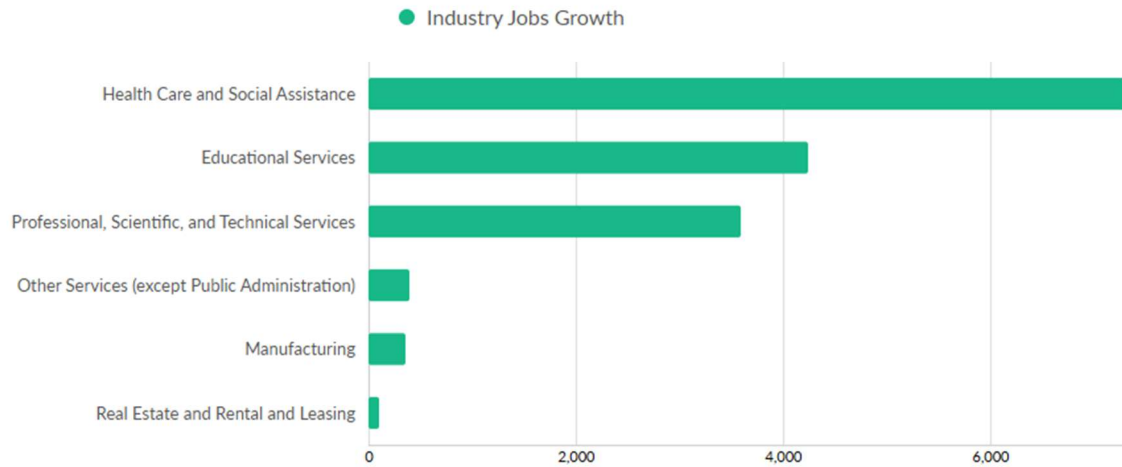
Top Occupation Employment Concentration



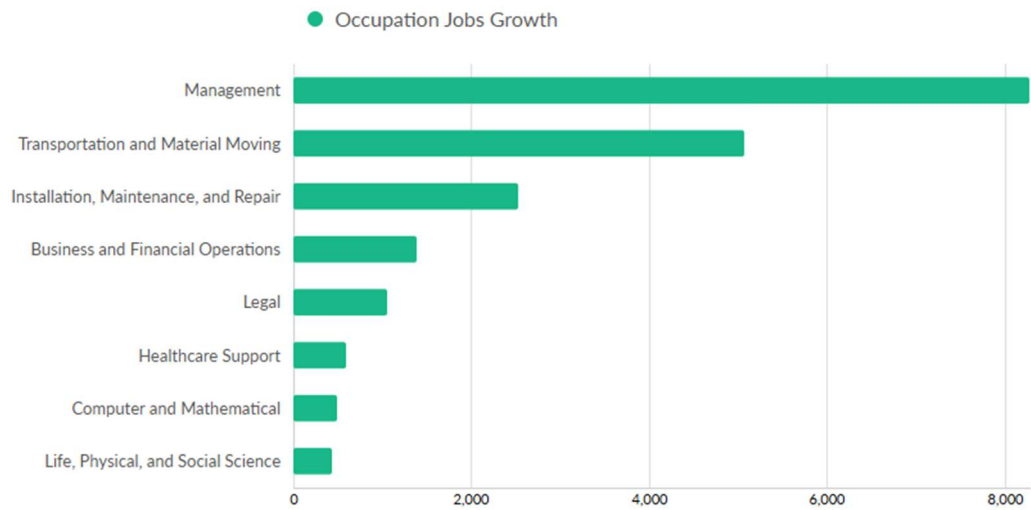
Industries and Occupations with Favorable Demand Projections Based on Growth

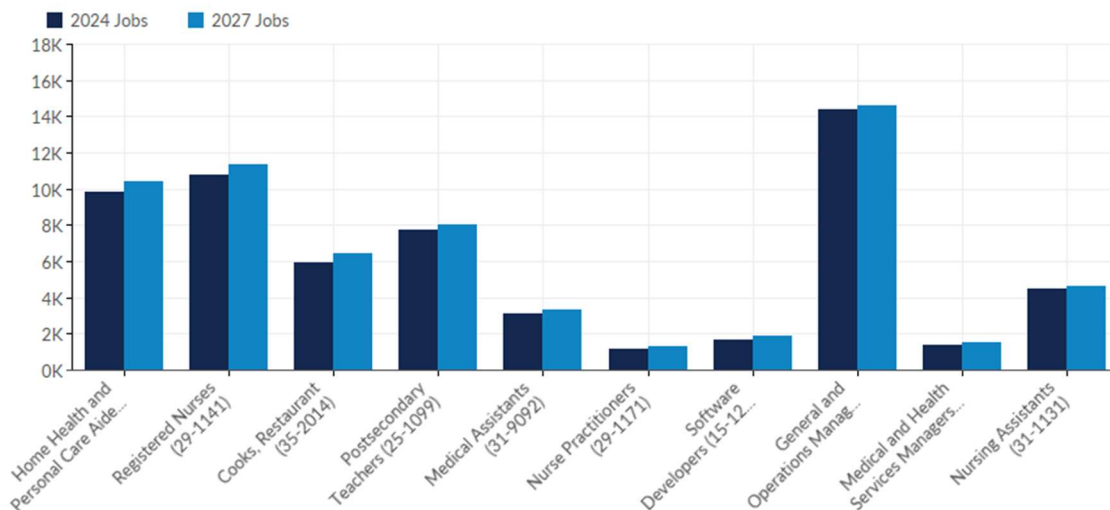
When evaluating workforce opportunities, it is important to distinguish between net growth and total job demand. Net growth represents an expanding industry, highlighting sectors that are increasing their overall workforce rather than simply replacing workers due to exits or transfers. Industries with strong net growth indicate areas of emerging economic opportunity, which can guide workforce development strategies and career planning.

Top Growing Industries



Top Growing Occupations





In the Greater New Orleans Region, several industries demonstrate favorable growth projections:

- **Health Care and Social Assistance** leads with the highest net job growth, adding over 4,000 jobs by 2027. This growth reflects the increasing demand for healthcare services, driven by population needs and regional efforts to expand access. High-demand occupations in this sector include **Registered Nurses, Licensed Practical and Vocational Nurses, and Medical Assistants**, all of which align with growing healthcare needs and provide sustainable career opportunities.
- **Educational Services** is also experiencing significant growth, adding nearly 2,000 jobs. This industry is essential for preparing the workforce for future challenges and includes occupations such as **Elementary and Secondary School Teachers**. These roles provide stable, well-paying careers while supporting workforce development across other sectors.
- **Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services** shows robust growth, with an increase nearly 1,000 jobs. This sector drives innovation and technical advancements, with key occupations such as **Business Operations Specialists, Accountants and Auditors, and Human Resources Specialists** leading demand. These roles are essential for businesses seeking to remain competitive and align with the region's strategic priorities.
- **Manufacturing** demonstrates positive growth of nearly 800 jobs, reflecting the region's investment in industrial capacity and energy production. Occupations like **General and Operations Managers, Industrial Mechanics, and Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers** are critical to this sector's ongoing expansion.
- **Construction**, while not currently reflected in the net growth data, is poised to experience significant demand due to upcoming infrastructure projects related to the expansion of the region's port systems. These large-scale developments will create sustained demand for skilled construction workers, such as electricians, heavy equipment operators, and project managers, positioning construction as a key growth sector in the coming years.

The distinction between net growth and total job demand is essential for understanding the dynamics of regional employment. While industries with high total demand (including

replacements) indicate where the greatest number of job openings exist, industries with net growth point to areas of economic expansion and innovation. These growing industries, coupled with high-demand occupations, represent key opportunities for workforce development initiatives to strengthen the local economy and provide residents with long-term career pathways.

By strategically aligning workforce efforts with these sectors, the Greater New Orleans Region can ensure it remains competitive, resilient, and prepared to meet the demands of a shifting economy.

Jobs with the Highest Number of Replacement Jobs

Replacement jobs, created when workers leave their positions due to retirement, career changes, or other reasons, represent a crucial component of the Greater New Orleans Region's labor market. These roles often reflect occupations with large existing workforces and consistent demand, making them vital to sustaining the region's economy. Replacement opportunities are particularly abundant in two distinct groups: occupations requiring no formal education and those requiring a high school diploma with wages at or above \$15 per hour. These roles support both traditional and emerging sectors while offering critical opportunities for job seekers.

Top 5 Occupations Requiring No Formal Education

1. **Fast Food and Counter Workers (SOC 35-3023):** With 8,562 replacement jobs, fast food and counter workers play an integral role in the hospitality and service industries. These positions, while often entry-level, are essential to supporting the region's tourism economy and food service infrastructure, which are vital to New Orleans' cultural identity and economic vibrancy.
2. **Cashiers (SOC 41-2011):** Cashiers, with 8,234 replacement jobs, reflect the continued importance of retail in the local economy, even as the sector faces challenges from automation and e-commerce. Their presence in grocery stores, small businesses, and larger retail establishments ensures community access to essential goods and services.
3. **Waiters and Waitresses (SOC 35-3031):** Waitstaff are essential to the hospitality and tourism sectors, contributing 7,661 replacement jobs. With New Orleans being a globally recognized destination for food and culture, these roles are critical for maintaining the high-quality dining experiences that attract millions of visitors annually.
4. **Retail Salespersons (SOC 41-2031):** Generating 6,521 replacement jobs, retail sales roles remain a cornerstone of the retail trade sector. These positions support the local economy by providing customer service and driving sales, even as the industry adapts to shifting consumer behaviors.
5. **Food Preparation Workers (SOC 35-2021):** With 4,601 replacement jobs, food preparation workers are critical behind-the-scenes contributors to the region's food service industry. From casual eateries to high-end restaurants, these roles ensure efficiency and quality, supporting the vibrant culinary culture for which New Orleans is renowned.

Top 5 Occupations Requiring a High School Diploma with Wages at or Above \$14.48 Per Hour

1. **Stockers and Order Fillers (SOC 53-7065):** Stockers and order fillers, with 3,882 replacement

jobs, are critical to the **Transportation and Logistics** sector. These roles ensure efficient inventory management and the smooth movement of goods, supporting industries like retail, manufacturing, and construction.

2. **Secretaries and Administrative Assistants (SOC 43-6014):** These professionals, with 3,542 replacement jobs, provide vital administrative support across industries, including **Construction**, where managing the logistics of large-scale projects like port expansions requires precise organization and communication.
3. **General and Operations Managers (SOC 11-1021):** With 3,430 replacement jobs, general and operations managers are pivotal to the success of sectors such as **Construction** and **Manufacturing**. These leaders oversee complex operations, manage resources, and drive efficiency, making them indispensable to the region's economic infrastructure.
4. **Customer Service Representatives (SOC 43-4051):** Generating 3,362 replacement jobs, customer service representatives are key to maintaining relationships with clients and consumers across industries. From healthcare to logistics, these roles ensure seamless operations and enhance customer satisfaction.
5. **First-line Supervisors of Food Preparation Workers (SOC 35-1012):** Contributing 2,688 replacement jobs, supervisors across all industries are critical, but most often need replacement in the food industry. Their work ensures that food operations run smoothly and efficiently.

First-Line Supervisors are needed in all industries. By 2027 there will be a need to fill more than 10,000 first-line supervisor openings across all industries. There exists a higher-than-average rate and transferable of skills which often leads to better opportunities.

Connection to Targeted Industries

Replacement jobs in these occupations highlight their importance in maintaining the strength of the Greater New Orleans Region's targeted industries:

- **Transportation and Logistics** relies heavily on stockers, order fillers, and truck drivers to ensure goods flow efficiently through the region's robust supply chain infrastructure.
- **Construction** benefits from administrative assistants and operations managers who coordinate the complex logistics of infrastructure projects like the port expansions, which are set to drive the region's growth in the coming years.
- **Hospitality and Retail** depend on roles such as cashiers, retail salespersons, waitstaff, and food preparation workers to support the vibrant service economy that is central to New Orleans' global reputation.

The abundance of replacement jobs across these occupations reflects the region's economic diversity and resilience. These opportunities not only provide career pathways for workers but also ensure that critical industries remain well-staffed and capable of meeting the demands of a dynamic and evolving economy. By aligning workforce development initiatives with these replacement needs, the region can sustain its economic vitality while creating accessible opportunities for its residents.

Mature but Still Important Industries and Occupations

Despite showing modest or flat growth, some industries remain vital economic drivers in the Greater New Orleans Region, contributing significantly to the local economy and providing essential services. These industries play key roles in community stability, workforce development, and maintaining a robust economic foundation, even as they face challenges and evolve with changing market dynamics.

- **Retail Trade:** Employing over **57,000 workers**, the retail trade sector remains a critical pillar of the regional economy. While net growth is modest or even slightly negative in some areas, such as retail salespersons and cashiers, the sector continues to generate a substantial number of replacement jobs, ensuring consistent workforce demand. This resilience underscores its importance in providing goods and services to the community and supporting other economic activities. Retail managers, who play a vital leadership role, are essential for ensuring operational efficiency and adapting to challenges like e-commerce competition and shifting consumer preferences.
- **Public and Private Educational Services:** With a steady upward trend and employing approximately **58,000 workers**, this industry is indispensable for workforce development and long-term economic growth. Educational services not only prepare individuals for high-demand occupations but also foster regional innovation by enhancing skills and knowledge. Roles like elementary and secondary school educators are particularly vital, supporting the next generation of workers and ensuring community stability. Growth in this sector reflects increasing investments in education and the region's commitment to equipping its workforce for future opportunities.

While the **Retail Trade** sector adapts to evolving consumer behaviors and technological advancements, and the **Educational Services** sector responds to growing workforce demands, both industries remain critical drivers of the Greater New Orleans economy. Their enduring relevance, even in the face of modest or flat net growth, highlights the importance of these industries in providing employment, community services, and economic stability. Occupations such as retail managers and educators exemplify their contribution, ensuring that these sectors continue to support the regional economy and adapt to future challenges.

Louisiana Star Rated Occupations

Major Occupations in the New Orleans RLMA

Occupation	SOC Code	Base 2022	Projected 2024	Difference	Percent Change	Star Rating
Retail Salespersons	41-2031	15,565	15,439	-126	-0.81%	★
Cashiers	41-2011	15,327	15,119	-208	-1.36%	★
Registered Nurses	29-1141	14,942	15,299	357	2.39%	★★★★★
Waiters and Waitresses	35-3031	11,430	11,856	426	3.73%	★
General and Operations Managers	11-1021	11,126	11,350	224	2.01%	★★★★★
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	37-2011	9,985	9,869	-116	-1.16%	★
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	53-7062	9,623	9,939	316	3.28%	★★
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	43-6014	9,434	9,225	-209	-2.22%	★★★
Office Clerks, General	43-9061	8,967	8,931	-36	-0.4%	★★
Fast Food and Counter Workers	35-3023	8,001	8,247	246	3.07%	★

Major 5 Star Occupations in the New Orleans RLMA

Occupation	SOC Code	Base 2022	Projected 2024	Difference	Percent Change
Registered Nurses	29-1141	14942	15299	357	2.39%
General and Operations Managers	11-1021	11126	11350	224	2.01%
Lawyers	23-1011	4663	4819	156	3.35%
Accountants and Auditors	13-2011	4613	4690	77	1.67%
First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers	47-1011	2707	2826	119	4.4%
Captains, Mates, and Pilots of Water Vessels	53-5021	2510	2648	138	5.5%
Financial Managers	11-3031	2291	2325	34	1.48%
First-Line Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers	49-1011	2284	2309	25	1.09%
First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	51-1011	2089	2094	5	0.24%
Medical and Health Services Managers	11-9111	1893	2005	112	5.92%

The Region's Economic Evolution and Emerging Sectors

The Greater New Orleans Region's economy is undergoing a significant transformation, with the rise of emerging sectors that complement its traditional industries. This evolution is driven by technological advancements, an increased emphasis on innovation, and a strategic focus on building a more diversified and resilient economic foundation.

- **Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services:** Employing 33,761 individuals, this sector is at the forefront of the region's economic growth. The increasing demand for technical expertise and innovative solutions has positioned this industry as a critical driver of progress. From business operations specialists and environmental science technicians to accountants and auditors, the sector supports a wide range of occupations that enhance efficiency and sustainability across multiple industries. Its contributions are especially impactful in areas like **construction** and **healthcare**, where technical innovation is key to improving processes and outcomes.
- **Information Technology (IT):** Expanding rapidly, the IT sector is driven by the growing demand for digital solutions and cybersecurity measures across industries. Occupations such as software developers, IT specialists, and network administrators are increasingly critical to meeting both local and national needs. IT plays a pivotal role in modernizing industries like **manufacturing** and **transportation and logistics**, enabling these traditional sectors to stay competitive in a global market. Additionally, IT supports the region's workforce development efforts by introducing high-tech career pathways that align with future labor market demands.

Opportunities for Diversification and Resilience

These emerging sectors represent more than just economic growth; they highlight the region's ability to adapt to changing economic landscapes and leverage its workforce strengths. Professional, scientific, and technical services provide a foundation for innovation, fostering new business opportunities and enhancing productivity across all industries. Similarly, the IT sector ensures that local businesses remain competitive and prepared for the increasing digitalization of the global economy.

The rise of these sectors also reflects the region's commitment to building economic resilience. By diversifying its economic base, the Greater New Orleans Region is better equipped to weather fluctuations in traditional industries such as oil and gas. Workforce development initiatives that prioritize skills in technical services and IT further enhance this resilience, ensuring the region remains a hub for innovation, sustainability, and long-term growth.

As these sectors continue to expand, they create new career opportunities for residents, attract investment to the region, and strengthen its position as a competitive and forward-looking economic center.

Sources of Supply and Demand Data

This analysis is grounded in data from:

Louisiana Workforce Commission

Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS): National and regional employment and wage trends.

Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW): Detailed industry-level insights.

U.S. Census Bureau: Demographic and economic data.

Lighcast

GNO, Inc. Regional Economic Development Entity

2. Employment needs of employers in existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations (§ 679.560(a)(1)(ii));





















The employment landscape in the Greater New Orleans Region reflects diverse and evolving needs across existing and emerging industry sectors. In **Manufacturing and Oil & Gas**, there is a consistent demand for skilled trades such as machinists, electricians, and welders, alongside operations managers capable of overseeing production and integrating advanced technologies. Meanwhile, the **Healthcare** sector urgently requires Registered Nurses, Medical Assistants, and Licensed Practical Nurses to address the needs of an aging population and expanding healthcare infrastructure.

The **Transportation and Logistics** sector highlights the need for Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers, warehouse supervisors, and logistics analysts to maintain and optimize supply chain operations. Emerging sectors, such as **Information Technology (IT)** and **Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services**, reveal growing opportunities for software developers, cybersecurity specialists, data analysts, and business operations professionals. Additionally, **Construction** is experiencing sustained demand for skilled laborers, project managers, and equipment operators due to major infrastructure projects, including port expansions. Employers across all these sectors consistently prioritize technical certifications, problem-solving skills, and hands-on experience with emerging technologies.

The "**Top Posted Occupations**" chart further illustrates the region's dynamic workforce demands. Registered Nurses lead with over 15,600 job postings between June and November 2024, underscoring the critical need for healthcare professionals. Retail Salespersons, First-Line Supervisors of Retail Workers, and Customer Service Representatives demonstrate the continued importance of retail and customer-facing roles in the regional economy. Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers, with nearly 1,000 unique postings, highlight the logistics sector's vital role in supporting supply chains. General and Operations Managers stand out as a key occupation across multiple industries, reflecting a high demand for leadership and strategic oversight in Manufacturing, Construction, and IT.

With median posting durations ranging from 19 to 32 days, employers face varying levels of urgency and competition to fill these critical roles. This highlights the importance of targeted workforce development initiatives and accelerated training programs to bridge the gap between

job seeker skills and employer needs, ensuring a responsive and resilient labor market.

Occupation (SOC)	Total/Unique (Jun 2024 - Nov 2024)	Posting Intensity	Median Posting Duration
 Registered Nurses	15,688 / 5,699	3 : 1 	19 days
 Retail Salespersons	5,505 / 2,088	3 : 1 	28 days
 First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	3,510 / 1,330	3 : 1 	26 days
 Customer Service Representatives	3,810 / 1,105	3 : 1 	24 days
 Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	2,623 / 988	3 : 1 	29 days
 Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	2,225 / 964	2 : 1 	27 days
 Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	2,677 / 908	3 : 1 	23 days
 Fast Food and Counter Workers	2,374 / 899	3 : 1 	32 days
 Food Service Managers	2,205 / 878	3 : 1 	28 days
 General and Operations Managers	2,363 / 875	3 : 1 	25 days

3. 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 (§ 679.560(a)(2));
 - What are the targeted career pathway clusters in the region?
 - What are the skills that are in demand in the region?
 - How well do the existing skills of job seekers match the demands of local businesses?

Targeted Career Pathway Clusters in the Region

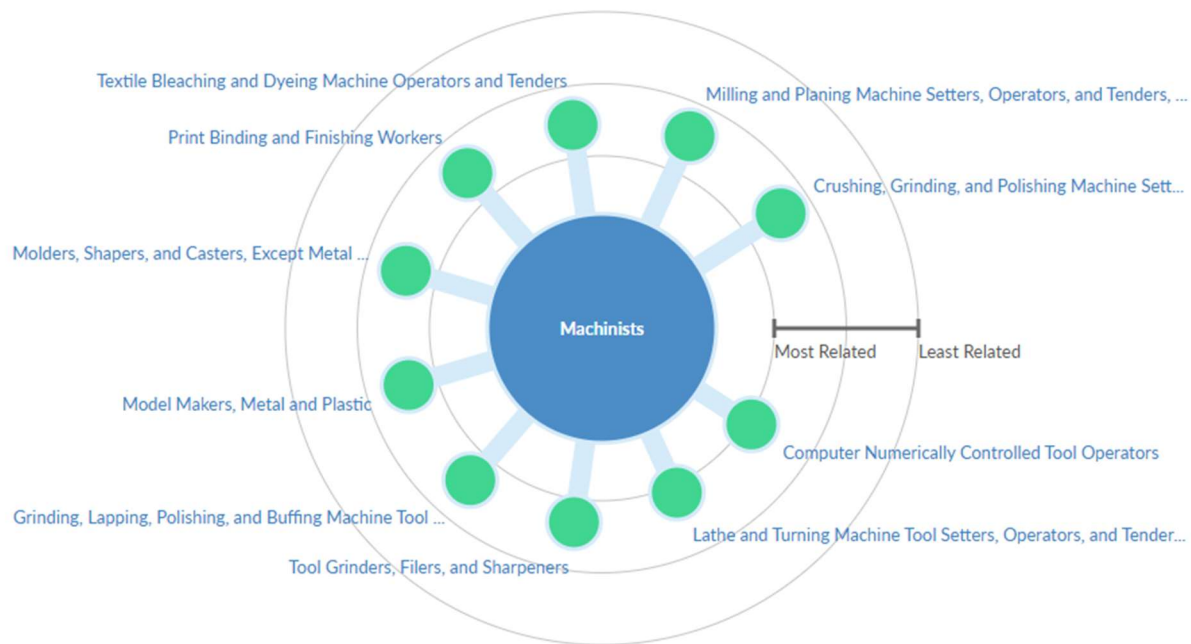
To meet the workforce needs of in-demand industries and support economic growth, the Greater New Orleans Region has prioritized several targeted career pathway clusters. These clusters are designed to align training and education programs with high-demand occupations, providing residents with clear and accessible routes to sustainable careers.

Manufacturing:

The manufacturing sector continues to evolve with the adoption of advanced technologies. Career pathways in manufacturing focus on advanced manufacturing techniques, robotics, and automation, equipping workers with the skills needed for modern production environments. Training programs often include certifications in industrial maintenance, CNC machining, and mechatronics, addressing the growing demand for specialized skills. These pathways support regional industries such as oil and gas, petrochemicals, and general manufacturing, ensuring a steady pipeline of qualified workers.

Feeder Jobs Leading to Industrial Machinist

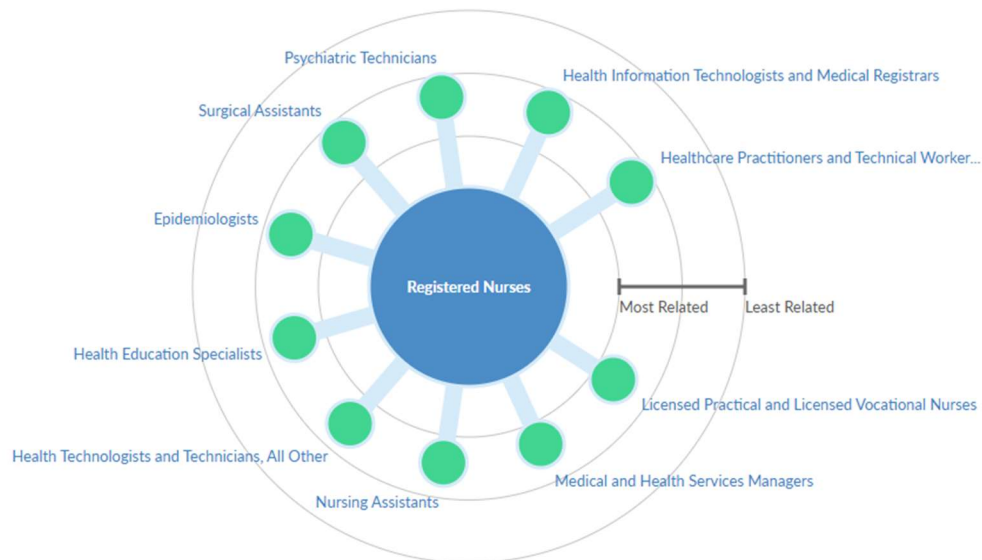
Below are the top listed feeder jobs for Machinists with median advertised salary of \$57,088. Select a job to view additional insight (i.e. Skill Gaps) between Machinists and your selected occupation.



Healthcare: The healthcare sector is a cornerstone of the regional economy, with growing demand for professionals across various roles. Career pathways in healthcare focus on Registered Nursing, Licensed Practical Nursing, and Medical Assisting, which are critical to addressing the region's expanding healthcare infrastructure. Additionally, pathways in healthcare administration prepare individuals for roles in hospital management and patient access, while medical technology programs equip students with skills in areas like medical imaging and laboratory sciences. These pathways are supported by partnerships with major healthcare employers such as Ochsner Health, ensuring alignment with industry standards and needs.

Feeder Jobs Leading to Registered Nursing

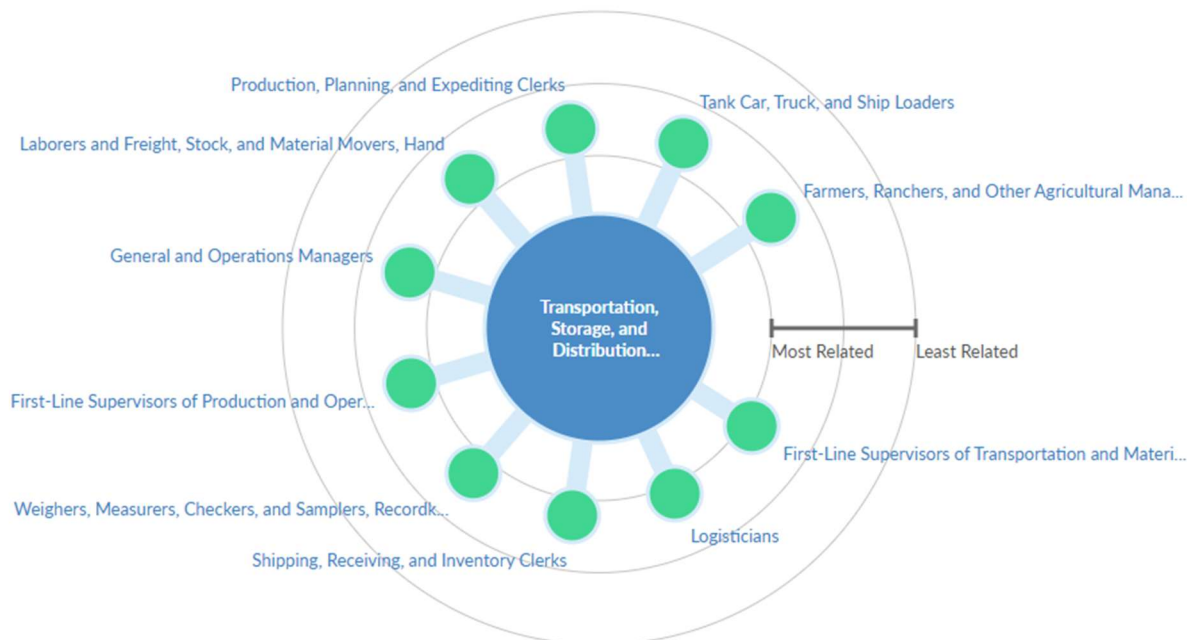
Below are the top listed feeder jobs for Registered Nurses with median advertised salary of \$100,224. Select a job to view additional insight (i.e. Skill Gaps) between Registered Nurses and your selected occupation.



Transportation and Logistics: As a regional hub for trade and distribution, the transportation and logistics sector offers numerous opportunities for workforce development. Career pathways in this cluster focus on Commercial Driver's License (CDL) training programs, which prepare individuals for roles as Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers. Supply chain management and logistics certification programs provide additional pathways for those seeking careers in warehousing, freight coordination, and transportation analysis. These programs support the region's infrastructure expansion efforts and the increasing demand for efficient supply chain operations.

Feeder Jobs Leading to Transportation, Storage, and Distribution Managers

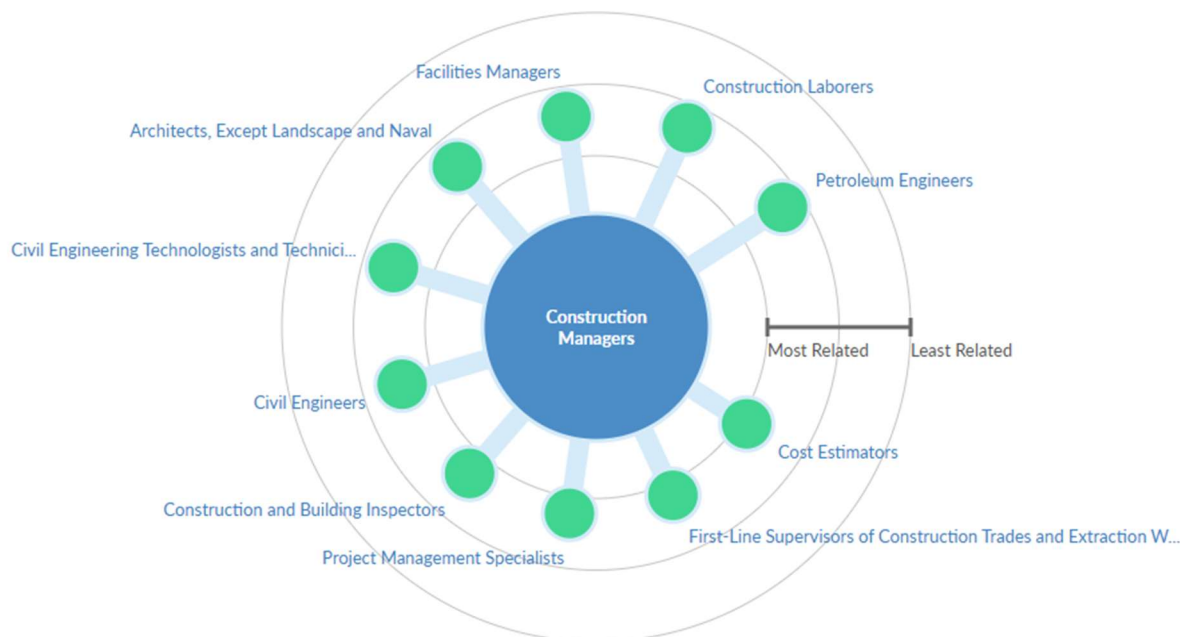
Below are the top listed feeder jobs for Transportation, Storage, and Distribution Managers with median advertised salary of \$60,032. Select a job to view additional insight (i.e. Skill Gaps) between Transportation, Storage, and Distribution Managers and your selected occupation.



Construction: With significant infrastructure projects underway, including the tremendous port expansions, construction is a high-priority sector for workforce development over the next few years. Career pathways in construction emphasize apprenticeships and certifications in trades such as carpentry, electrical work, plumbing, and heavy equipment operation. These programs are often employer-driven, with partnerships between workforce boards and local unions ensuring that participants receive hands-on training and access to employment opportunities. Additionally, past programs like the Construction Connection have been proven to streamline the hiring process and connect job seekers directly with employers in the industry.

Feeder Jobs Leading to Construction Managers

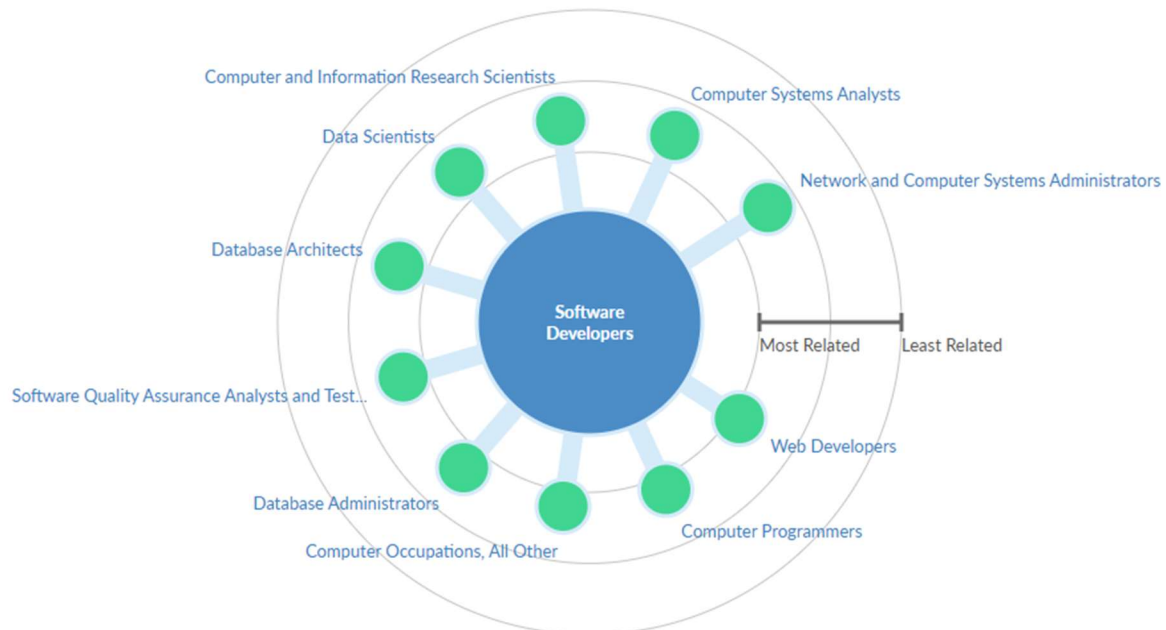
Below are the top listed feeder jobs for Construction Managers with median advertised salary of \$89,984. Select a job to view additional insight (i.e. Skill Gaps) between Construction Managers and your selected occupation.



Information Technology and Technical Services: The IT and technical services cluster is one of the fastest growing in the region, fueled by increasing digitization across industries. Career pathways in this sector focus on areas such as cybersecurity, software development, and data science, which are critical to meeting both local and national demand. Training programs often include industry-recognized certifications, such as CompTIA and AWS, and are designed in collaboration with employers like DXC Technology to ensure relevance and applicability. These pathways provide opportunities for both entry-level and advanced roles, supporting the region's efforts to build a tech-savvy workforce.

Feeder Jobs Leading to Software Developer

Below are the top listed feeder jobs for Software Developers with median advertised salary of \$115,072. Select a job to view additional insight (i.e. Skill Gaps) between Software Developers and your selected occupation.



By focusing on these career pathway clusters, the Greater New Orleans Region ensures that workforce development efforts are closely aligned with industry needs. These pathways not only provide clear routes to high-demand occupations but also support the region's broader goals of economic mobility and resilience. Through partnerships with employers, educational institutions, and workforce boards these targeted pathways prepare residents for meaningful careers while addressing critical labor shortages in key industries.

Skills in Demand in the Region

The workforce needs in the Greater New Orleans Region reflect a diverse array of technical and soft skills that are essential for maintaining and expanding the region's economy. These demands are influenced by the unique economic structure of the area, which is driven by sectors such as healthcare, transportation and logistics, IT, construction, and manufacturing. To remain competitive and meet the expectations of employers, workforce development strategies must focus on equipping individuals with both specialized technical skills and essential soft skills.

Technical Skills: The Foundation of Regional Employment

The demand for technical skills is evident across key industries, and it reflects the region's reliance on specialized expertise to sustain economic growth:

- **Healthcare Dominance:** As the region's largest employer, the healthcare industry underscores the need for nursing and medical support skills. With over 16,900 job postings for nursing-related roles, the demand for healthcare professionals continues to outpace supply. Specialized skills like health assessment and medical privacy are becoming increasingly vital, particularly as advancements in medical technology evolve how care is delivered.
 - **Data and Analytics:** The rapid rise of data-driven decision-making is transforming the workforce across industries. Skills in data analysis and data collection are growing at rates of +25.8% and +29.9%, respectively. These capabilities are highly sought after in IT and professional services, where businesses rely on analytics to optimize operations and develop innovative solutions.
 - **Transportation and Logistics:** The demand for Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers and logistics coordinators highlights the importance of CDL licensure and supply chain expertise. With the region's role as a critical transportation hub, these technical proficiencies ensure the seamless movement of goods across national and international markets.
 - **Construction and Manufacturing:** The ongoing infrastructure projects and industrial expansion emphasize the need for workers with certifications in trades such as welding, carpentry, CNC machining, and occupational safety. These roles form the backbone of industries driving the region's physical and economic development.
-

Soft Skills: A Universal Workforce Requirement

While technical skills are vital, soft skills remain a universal requirement across all sectors. Employers consistently highlight these competencies as critical for workforce success:

- **Communication and Leadership:** With communication appearing in over 35% of job postings, it is clear that the ability to convey ideas effectively and collaborate with others is indispensable. Leadership, often associated with managerial roles, is another skill highly valued by employers seeking candidates who can inspire teams and drive results.
 - **Customer Service and Problem-Solving:** As the region continues to grow its retail, hospitality, and healthcare sectors, customer-facing skills remain essential. The ability to address client needs and resolve challenges efficiently is vital to maintaining satisfaction and fostering long-term business relationships.
 - **Attention to Detail and Teamwork:** In precision-based industries like healthcare, manufacturing, and IT, attention to detail ensures quality and safety, while teamwork facilitates collaboration and innovation.
-

Emerging Skills: Preparing for the Future

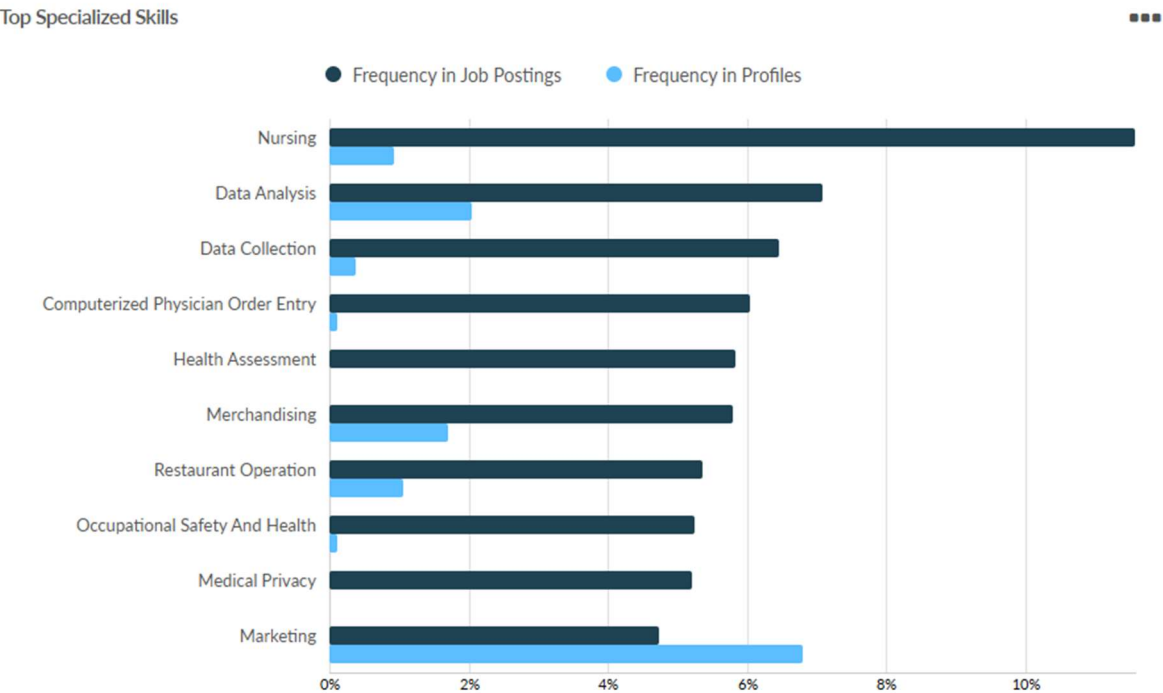
As industries adapt to technological and environmental shifts, emerging skills are becoming critical for regional competitiveness:

- **Digital Transformation and IT:** Programming languages like Python and Java, as well as knowledge of cloud computing and cybersecurity, are increasingly in demand as businesses integrate digital tools into their operations.
- **Data Science and Artificial Intelligence:** The integration of AI technologies into industries like healthcare and logistics highlights the need for skills in data modeling, machine learning, and AI implementation.
- **Sustainability Practices:** Growing attention to environmental impact has created demand for workers who understand sustainability principles, particularly in construction, manufacturing, and logistics.

Analysis of Regional Trends

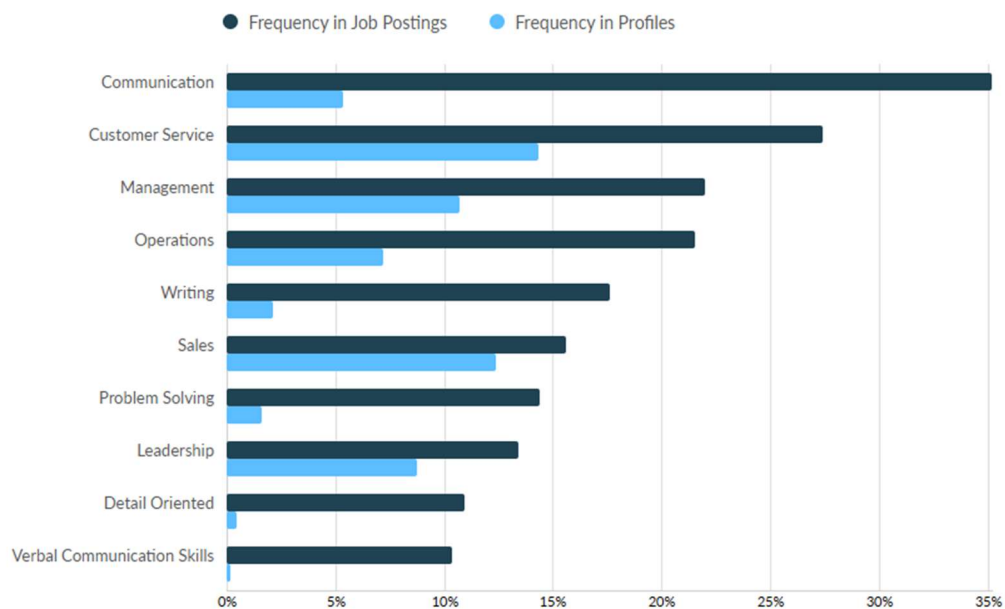
The accompanying data provides valuable insights into these trends. The **Top Specialized Skills** chart identifies nursing, data analysis, and data collection as leading technical competencies, while the **Top Common Skills** chart highlights communication, leadership, and customer service as essential soft skills. The projected growth rates for these skills, such as +29.9% for data collection and +23% for marketing, reflect the evolving needs of the workforce and the increasing complexity of regional industries.

Moreover, median posting durations, particularly for roles requiring technical expertise, suggest challenges in filling these positions, further emphasizing the need for targeted training and workforce development initiatives. This is especially critical as healthcare and data-related roles continue to dominate job postings, aligning with national trends.



Skills	Postings	% of Total Postings	Profiles	% of Total Profiles ?	Projected Skill Growth	Skill Growth Relative to Market
Nursing	16,913	12%	4,063	1%	+20.1%	Rapidly Growing
Data Analysis	10,354	7%	8,885	2%	+25.8%	Rapidly Growing
Data Collection	9,451	6%	1,637	0%	+29.9%	Rapidly Growing
Computerized Physician Order Entry	8,820	6%	487	0%	+17.1%	Growing
Health Assessment	8,515	6%	0	0%	+14.7%	Growing
Merchandising	8,479	6%	7,419	2%	+15.0%	Growing
Restaurant Operation	7,833	5%	4,565	1%	+28.0%	Rapidly Growing
Occupational Safety And Health	7,666	5%	520	0%	+12.2%	Growing
Medical Privacy	7,613	5%	0	0%	+16.6%	Growing
Marketing	6,930	5%	29,553	7%	+23.0%	Rapidly Growing

Top Common Skills



Skills Present in the Region

Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce

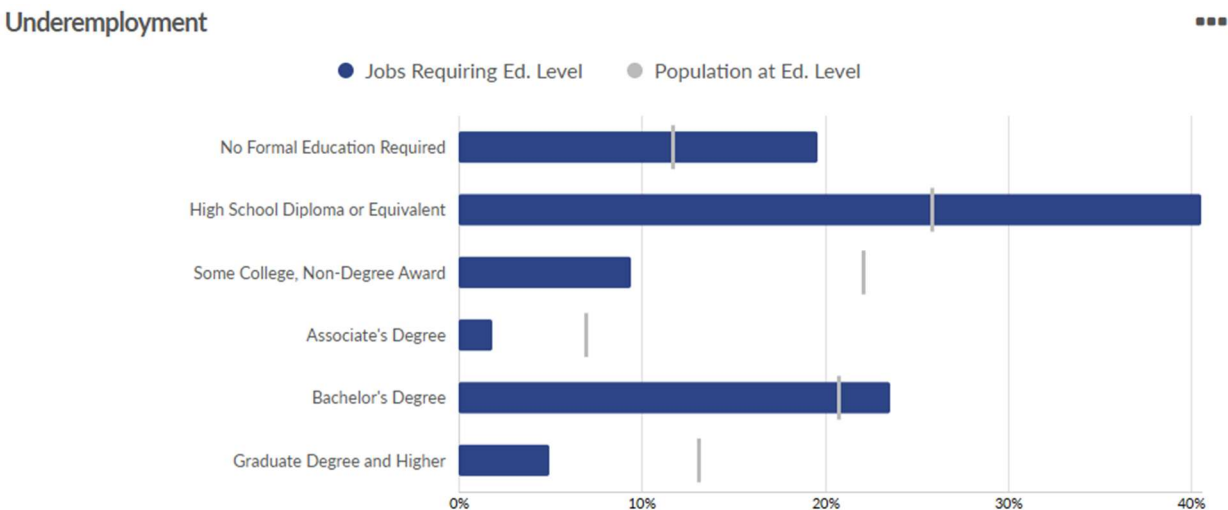
The underemployment graph highlights the disparity between the education levels of the workforce and the educational requirements of available job postings in the Greater New Orleans Region. However, it should be noted that this graph reflect all jobs and not just those offering self-sustaining wages. With that being said, a significant portion of jobs (all) requires only a high school

diploma or equivalent, yet there is a notable surplus of individuals with higher education levels, including bachelor's and associate degrees. This mismatch is most evident among bachelor's degree holders, where the population at this educational level far exceeds the number of jobs requiring such qualifications. Similarly, individuals with graduate degrees are underemployed due to a lack of advanced positions relative to their qualifications. Conversely, jobs requiring no formal education or only a high school diploma appear to be more aligned with the workforce, suggesting that these roles are adequately filled.

This data underscores the importance of workforce alignment strategies, such as creating opportunities for those with higher education levels and expanding pathways to advanced roles. Programs that emphasize reskilling or transitioning individuals into industries with greater demand for higher qualifications, such as healthcare, IT, and professional services, can help bridge the gap and mitigate underemployment in the region.

Educational Attainment

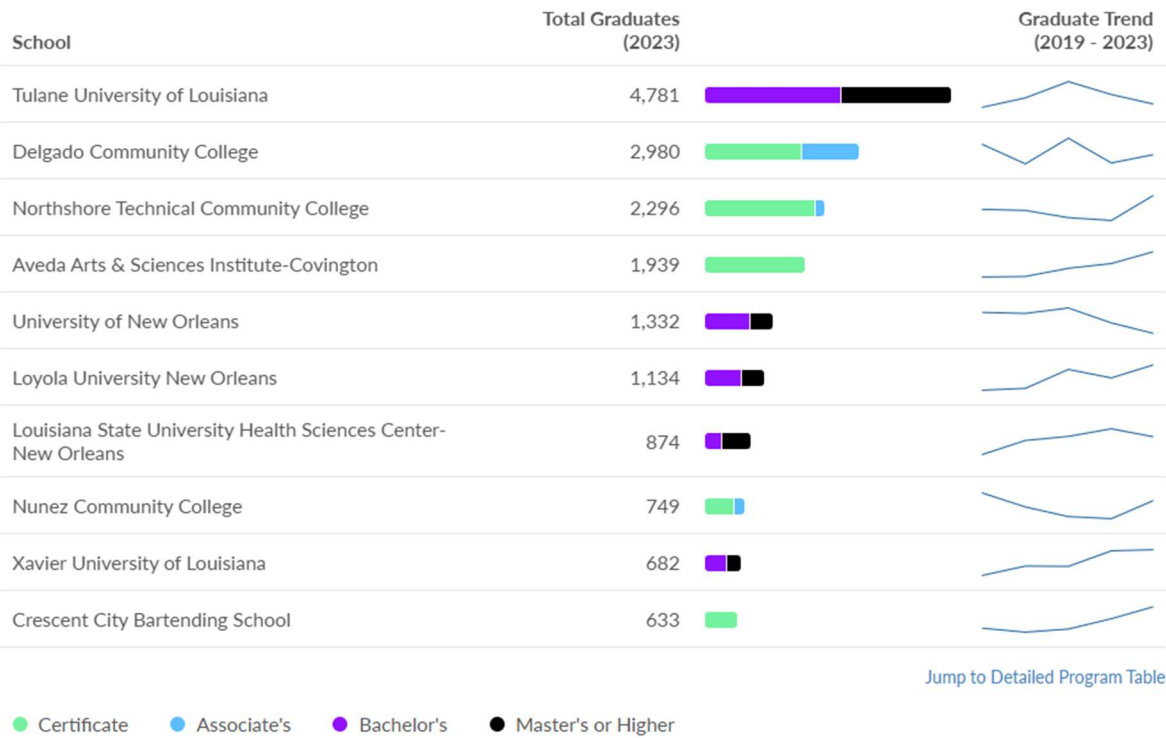
Concerning educational attainment, 20.7% of the selected regions' residents possess a Bachelor's Degree (0.5% below the national average), and 6.9% hold an Associate's Degree (1.9% below the national average).



Educational Pipeline

...

In 2023, there were 19,867 graduates in 2024 - RLMA 1 (New Orleans MSA). This pipeline has grown by 1% over the last 5 years. The highest share of these graduates come from "Aesthetician/Esthetician and Skin Care Specialist" (Certificate), "Cosmetology/Cosmetologist, General" (Certificate), and "General Studies" (Certificate).



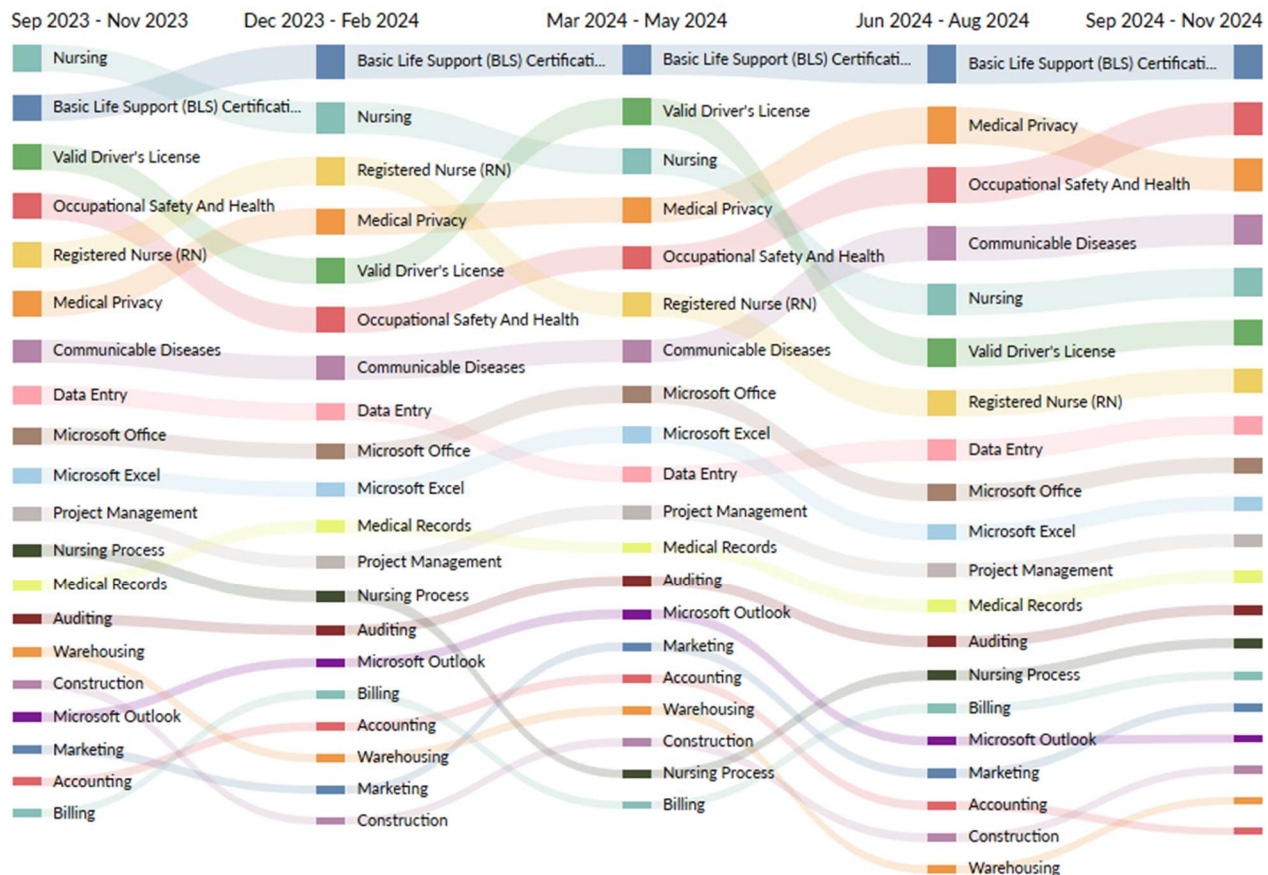
Skills sought by Employers in Targeted Sectors

There is an evolving demand for skills across key industries in the Greater New Orleans Region, prioritizing the most sought-after capabilities. In **healthcare**, skills such as Nursing, Registered Nurse (RN) certification, Medical Privacy, and Communicable Disease management consistently appear, reflecting the critical need for patient care expertise, regulatory compliance, and public health management. This sector dominates skill demand due to the region's growing healthcare infrastructure and workforce needs.

In **construction**, skills like Occupational Safety and Health, Project Management, and Warehousing are in high demand, emphasizing the importance of safety compliance, efficient project execution, and inventory handling for ongoing infrastructure development and expansion projects. Similarly, the **transportation and warehousing** industry showcases demand for skills such as Valid Driver's License, Warehousing, and Occupational Safety and Health, highlighting the need for logistics expertise, supply chain efficiency, and adherence to safety standards.

The **professional, technical, and scientific** services sector emphasizes skills like Project Management, Marketing, and Microsoft Excel, which are critical for organizational strategy, data analysis, and effective communication in high-skill industries. In manufacturing, skills such as

Microsoft Office, Data Entry, and Auditing are in demand, demonstrating the sector's reliance on administrative proficiency and quality control to maintain operational efficiency.



Meeting Employer Needs

To effectively bridge the gap between job seeker skills and employer expectations, regional workforce development initiatives are focused on several strategic priorities:

- **Expanding Access to Certifications and Accelerated Training Programs:** Targeted efforts are underway to increase access to certifications and fast-track training in key industries, including healthcare, IT, construction, manufacturing, and logistics. These programs aim to address specific skill shortages while accelerating job readiness.
- **Employer-Centric Training Design:** Workforce boards are actively partnering with employers to co-design training programs tailored to address critical skill gaps in high-demand sectors. This collaborative approach ensures that training aligns with real-world business needs.
- **Promoting Soft Skill Development:** To complement technical training, initiatives emphasize the development of soft skills such as communication, problem-solving, and teamwork through workshops, mentorship opportunities, and hands-on experiences.

The Greater New Orleans Region has a unique opportunity to cultivate a workforce that fully meets the demands of both established and emerging industries. By aligning workforce development

efforts with the precise skills required by employers, the region can foster a resilient, adaptable, and inclusive economy, ensuring long-term competitiveness and growth.

Alignment of Job Seeker Skills with Business Demands

While there is partial alignment between the skills of job seekers and the demands of local businesses, significant gaps persist in critical sectors. Industries such as healthcare and construction have successfully implemented training programs to address workforce needs; however, fields like IT, advanced manufacturing, and logistics face ongoing challenges. Employers consistently report difficulties in finding candidates with specialized certifications, technical expertise, and hands-on experience.

This highlights the pressing need for strong collaboration among workforce boards, educational institutions, and employers to close these gaps. Expanding experiential learning opportunities, such as apprenticeships and internships, and enhancing outreach to underserved populations can further align job seeker skills with industry demands, ensuring that the region's workforce is prepared to meet evolving economic challenges.

4. Regional workforce considering current labor force employment and unemployment data, information on labor market trends, and educational and skill levels of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment (§ 679.510(a)(1)(iv) and § 679.560(a)(3)).
 - How is the region changing in terms of demographics, labor supply and occupational demand?
 - What special populations exist in the region, what is their magnitude, and what are the policy and service implications to meet the needs of these individuals?
-

Changing Demographics

The demographic trends in the Greater New Orleans Region indicate modest but notable changes between 2024 and 2027, with implications for workforce planning and economic development. The overall population is projected to decline slightly by 26,383 individuals, representing a 2% decrease. This decline is evenly distributed across genders, with both males and females experiencing a 2% reduction in population. Females will continue to constitute a slightly larger proportion of the population (51.76%), compared to males (48.24%).

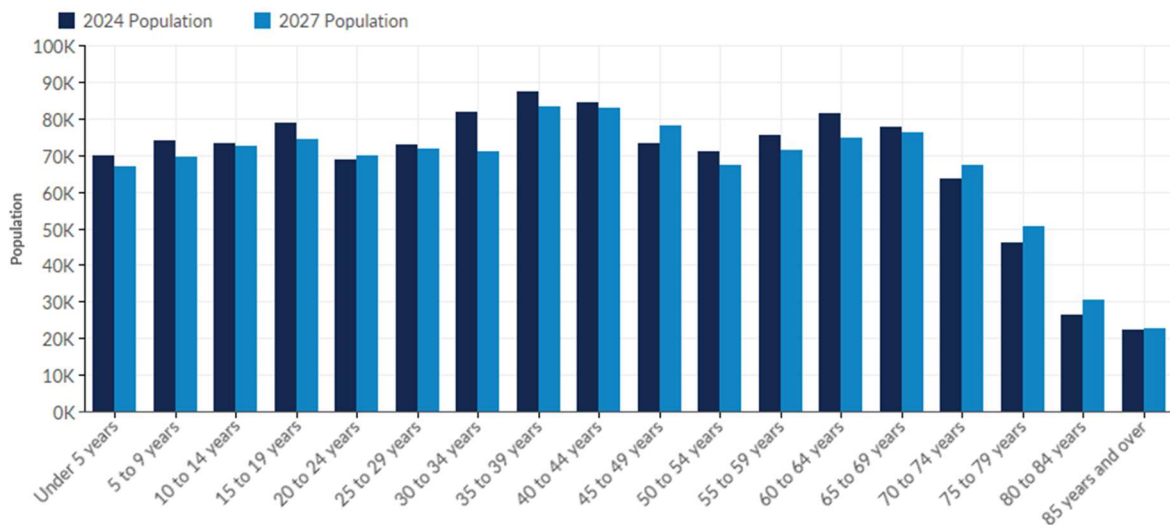
Analyzing the population by age cohort reveals shifts that could impact labor force participation. The working-age population (ages 25 to 64) remains the largest segment, but younger age groups, such as those under 20, are also declining, potentially signaling a future challenge in replenishing the workforce. Meanwhile, older cohorts, particularly those aged 65 and above, remain steady or increase slightly, emphasizing the need for healthcare and retirement services to support an aging population.

Racial and ethnic demographics show minimal shifts, with White, Non-Hispanic individuals maintaining the largest share of the population, followed by Black, Non-Hispanic and Hispanic

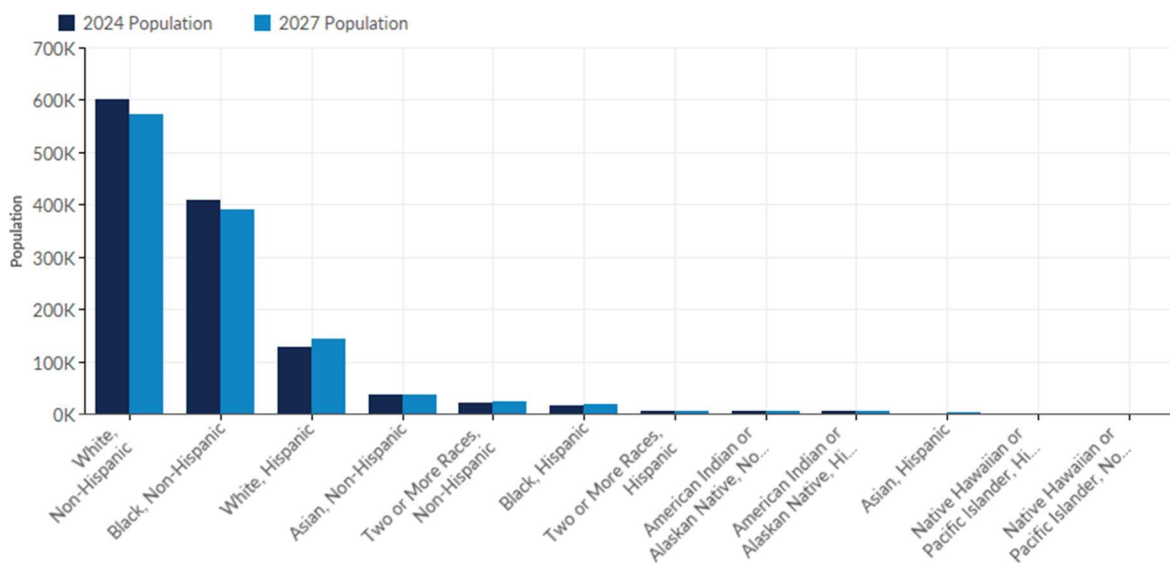
individuals. These stable proportions indicate that diversity within the region will remain a consistent feature, and workforce strategies should continue to focus on equitable opportunities across all racial and ethnic groups.

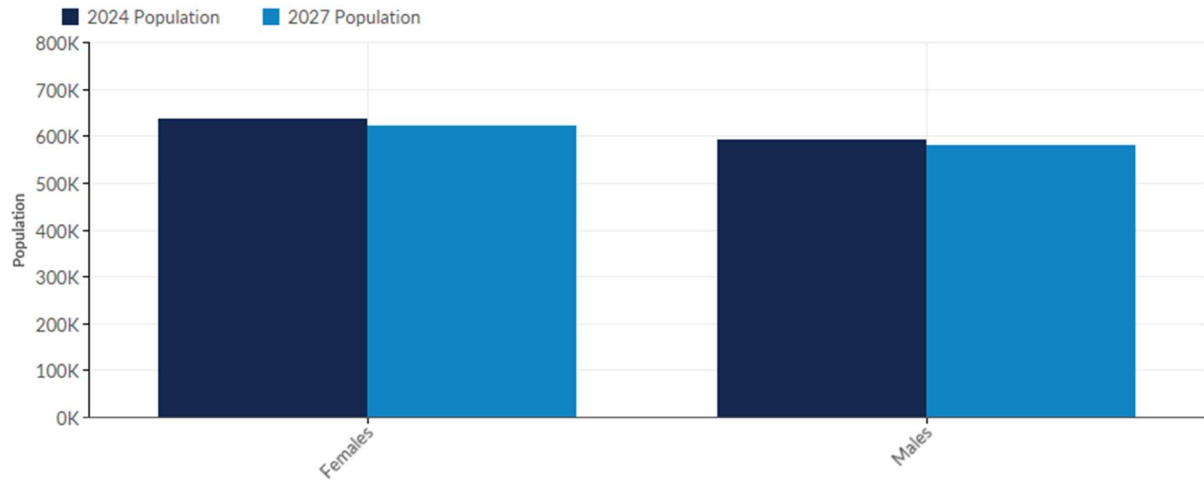
Overall, these demographic changes underscore the importance of policies aimed at attracting and retaining a younger, diverse, and highly skilled workforce to sustain economic growth while addressing the needs of an aging population. Strategies such as investing in education, expanding workforce training, and enhancing quality of life for all age groups will be essential in adapting to these trends.

Population by Age Cohort



Population by Race/Ethnicity



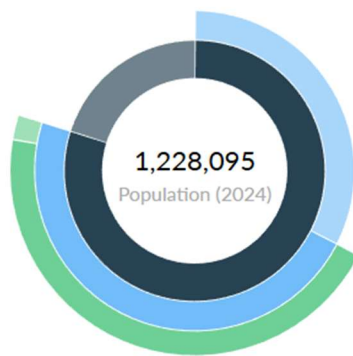


Gender	2024 Population	2027 Population	Change	% Change	2027 % of Cohort
Females	635,717	621,992	-13,725	-2%	51.76%
Males	592,378	579,720	-12,658	-2%	48.24%
Total	1,228,095	1,201,713	-26,383	-2%	100.00%

Current Regional Labor Supply

The October 2024 Labor Force Breakdown provides a detailed view of the Greater New Orleans Region's population and workforce dynamics. Of the total population of 1,228,095, approximately 980,370 individuals belong to the 16+ civilian non-institutionalized population. Among this group, 581,378 individuals are in the labor force, representing those either employed or actively seeking employment. The employed population accounts for 554,510 individuals, while 26,868 are unemployed, reflecting an unemployment rate of roughly 4.6%. Meanwhile, 398,992 individuals are not part of the labor force, encompassing those who are retired, pursuing education, or facing barriers to employment. Additionally, 247,724 individuals fall into the category of under 16, military, or institutionalized populations. This breakdown highlights the importance of policies aimed at increasing labor force participation and reducing barriers for those not currently engaged in the workforce to further enhance regional economic productivity.

Oct 2024 Labor Force Breakdown



	Population
16+ Civilian Non-Institutionalized Population	980,370
Not in Labor Force (16+)	398,992
Labor Force	581,378
Employed	554,510
Unemployed	26,868
Under 16, Military, and institutionalized Population	247,724

Labor Force Participation Rate

The labor force participation rate (LFPR) in the Greater New Orleans Region has experienced fluctuations over the past five years, reflecting broader economic trends and regional dynamics. As of October 2024, the LFPR stands at 59.3%, slightly lower than the peaks observed in 2023 but consistent with national trends in workforce engagement. The region's LFPR has shown resilience following significant declines in 2020 due to the economic disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, with gradual recovery driven by strategic investments in workforce development and targeted industry support. However, the recent slight decline highlights the ongoing challenges in labor force engagement, including workforce aging and barriers to participation. These trends emphasize the importance of continued efforts to improve access to education, training, and supportive services, ensuring that the region's workforce remains competitive and adaptable to evolving economic conditions.

Labor Force Participation Rate Trends



Unemployment In the region

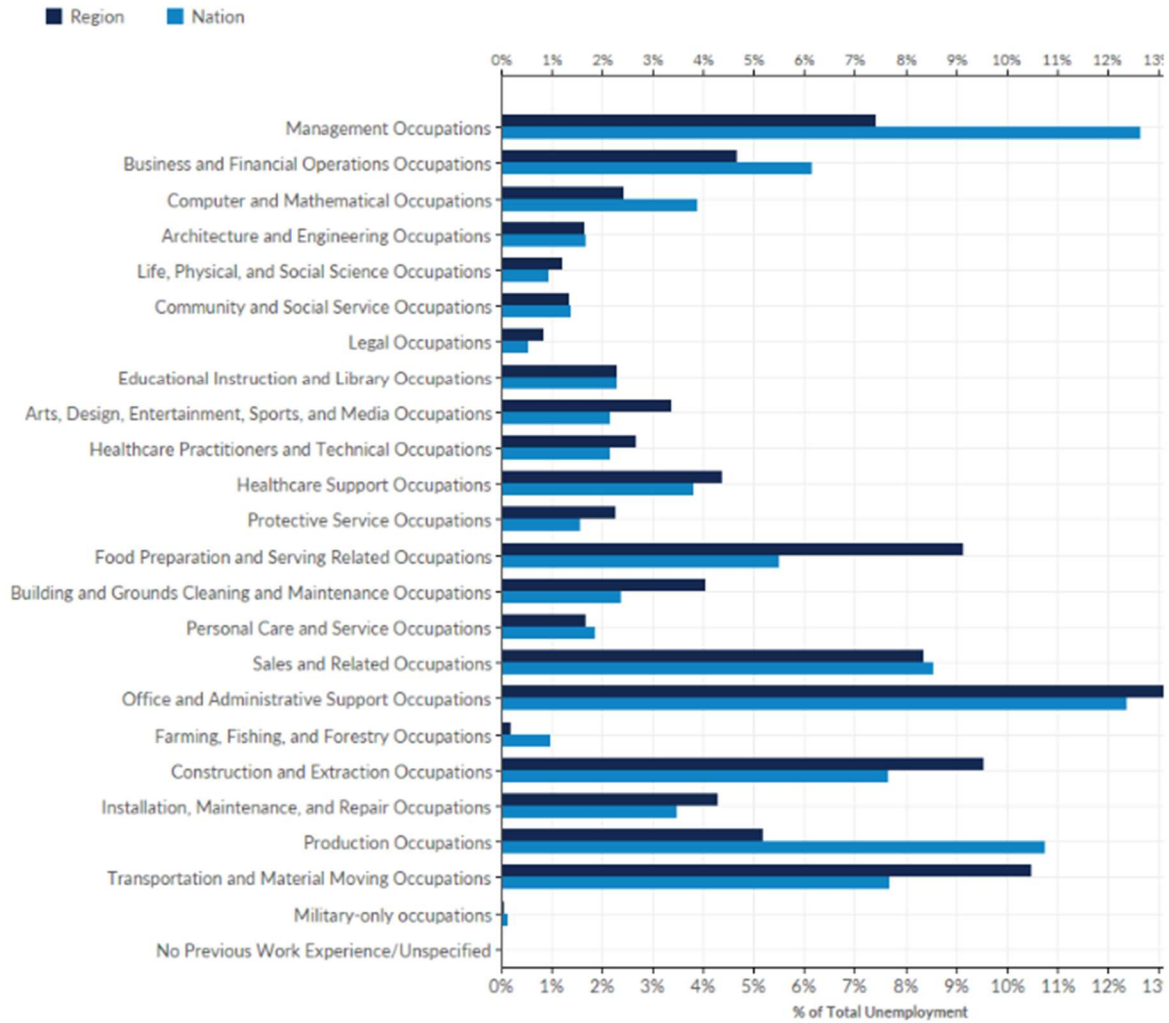
The October 2024 unemployment data by occupation provides a comprehensive view of how joblessness is distributed across various occupational categories in the Greater New Orleans Region. With a total unemployment figure of 26,868, certain occupations stand out with higher unemployment rates compared to others. Notably, Management Occupations exhibit the largest share of unemployment, exceeding the national average, which could reflect ongoing structural adjustments in leadership roles or challenges in matching qualified candidates to available positions. Similarly, Sales and Related Occupations, as well as Office and Administrative Support Occupations, show significant unemployment rates, suggesting potential oversupply or a shift in demand due to automation and evolving business needs.

On the other hand, certain skilled trades and technical roles, such as Construction and Extraction Occupations and Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations, also register moderate unemployment rates, despite these being sectors traditionally associated with steady demand. This may highlight seasonal fluctuations or a mismatch between the skills of job seekers and employer needs. Healthcare-related occupations, such as Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations, maintain lower unemployment rates, reflecting the ongoing demand for professionals in this sector to meet the needs of an aging population.

The data underscores the importance of aligning workforce development efforts with the changing needs of the regional economy. Investments in targeted upskilling programs, particularly for roles in high-demand industries like healthcare, transportation, and logistics, can help mitigate unemployment in areas with persistent joblessness while preparing the workforce for emerging opportunities in the Greater New Orleans Region.

26,868

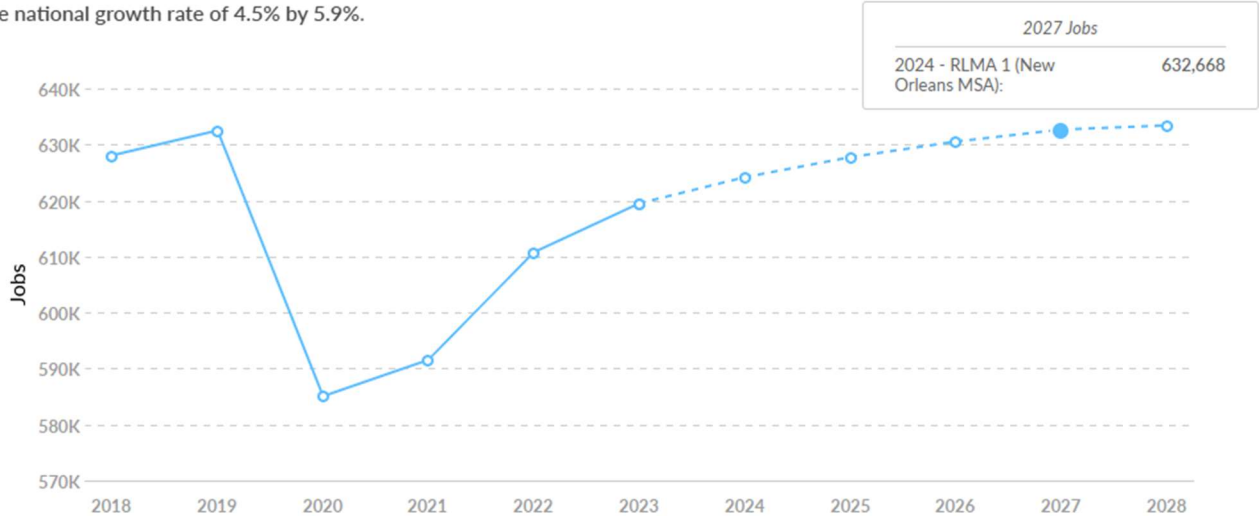
Total Unemployment (10/2024)



Job Trends

...

From 2018 to 2023, jobs declined by 1.4% in 2024 - RLMA 1 (New Orleans MSA) from 628,038 to 619,497. This change fell short of the national growth rate of 4.5% by 5.9%.



The Greater New Orleans Region's labor supply is undergoing notable shifts, driven by changes in labor force participation, employment dynamics, and unemployment distribution. As of October 2024, the labor force participation rate (LFPR) stands at 59.3%, reflecting resilience from pandemic-related declines but signaling ongoing challenges in workforce engagement due to aging demographics and participation barriers. Of the 980,370 individuals in the civilian non-institutionalized population aged 16 and older, 581,378 are in the labor force, with 554,510 employed and 26,868 unemployed, resulting in a regional unemployment rate of approximately 4.6%. However, 398,992 individuals remain outside the labor force, underscoring the importance of addressing barriers to participation through enhanced access to education, training, and supportive services.

Unemployment data by occupation highlights disparities, with Management, Sales, and Office Support Occupations experiencing higher-than-average unemployment rates, potentially due to structural adjustments and shifting job demands. Conversely, skilled trades such as Construction and Healthcare-related roles maintain lower unemployment, reflecting ongoing demand in these sectors. These dynamics emphasize the need for targeted workforce development strategies to align labor supply with the evolving demands of the regional economy. By prioritizing upskilling initiatives in high-demand industries like healthcare, transportation, and logistics, the region can enhance workforce adaptability, reduce unemployment, and ensure sustained economic productivity.

Special Populations in the Region

Reentry Population

The Greater New Orleans Region includes a significant reentry population, estimated at approximately **7,000 individuals**. These individuals face barriers such as limited job training, employer hesitancy, and the need for supportive services like housing, transportation, and mental health resources. Workforce boards, particularly the **First Planning District** and **Jefferson Workforce Boards**, actively support reentry efforts by partnering with organizations such as the **Southern University Law Center (SULC)** and **St. Tammany Parish offices** to host expungement events. Programs like the **Louisiana Prisoner Reentry Initiative (LA-PRI)** also offer critical services to help individuals transition successfully into the workforce. As a policy, individuals in the reentry population receive **priority of service** to ensure access to job training and placement opportunities.

Policy and Service Implications:

- **Expungement Services:** Continued partnerships with SULC and regional entities to remove employment barriers for reentry individuals.
 - **Tailored Job Programs:** Expanding training in high-demand fields such as construction, manufacturing, and logistics.
 - **Employer Engagement:** Incentivizing businesses to hire reentry individuals through tax credits and workforce readiness programs.
-

Unemployment and Dislocated Worker Population

The total unemployment population in the eight-parish Greater New Orleans Region MSA, **26,868 individuals**, represents the potential dislocated worker population. This group includes individuals affected by layoffs, sector transitions, and economic disruptions. Workforce boards support dislocated workers through initiatives such as **On-the-Job Training (OJT)**, targeted job fairs, employer networking events, and enhanced job-matching services. These programs aim to connect dislocated workers with opportunities in growing industries like healthcare, IT, and advanced manufacturing.

Policy and Service Implications:

- **OJT Programs:** Providing paid, hands-on training with regional employers to upskill dislocated workers.
 - **Job Fairs and Networking:** Hosting targeted events to connect dislocated workers with hiring employers in high-demand sectors.
 - **Job Matching:** Career specialists and business service representatives actively work to "open doors" to employers by making introductions and advocating for job placements.
-

Youth Population

The region has an estimated **10,000 disconnected youth (ages 16-24)** who are neither in school nor employed. These young individuals face challenges such as limited access to education, mentorship, and career opportunities. Workforce boards have developed youth-specific initiatives outlined in the **Youth Services section** of regional and local plans, which include apprenticeship programs, HISET support, and soft skills training.

Policy and Service Implications:

- **Apprenticeships and Internships:** Creating hands-on learning opportunities in high-growth sectors such as IT, healthcare, and construction.
 - **Mentorship Programs:** Partnering with local employers to provide career guidance and real-world experiences.
 - **Expanded Youth Services:** Leveraging regional and local plan frameworks to ensure comprehensive support for disconnected youth.
-

Veterans

The region is home to approximately **6,000 veterans**, many of whom face challenges transitioning into civilian careers. Workforce boards collaborate with local veterans' organizations and initiatives such as **NextOp** to connect veterans with high-demand jobs in logistics, manufacturing, and IT. Veterans receive **priority of service** through all workforce programs, ensuring access to tailored support and job placement services. Core and mandated partners work together to provide seamless assistance for veterans, from skills translation to employment readiness.

Policy and Service Implications:

- **Priority Services:** Ensuring veterans receive front-line access to workforce development programs.
 - **Veteran-Specific Initiatives:** Partnering with **NextOp** and hosting veteran-focused job fairs.
 - **Collaboration:** Ensuring all workforce system partners collaborate to address the unique needs of veterans.
-

Senior Population

The senior population, defined as individuals aged 55 years and older, comprises **138,066 individuals**, representing **24% of the current workforce** in the Greater New Orleans Region. Within this group, individuals aged 65 and older account for **8%**, while those aged 55 to 64 make up **16%**. This substantial demographic highlights the need for targeted workforce programs that address the challenges and opportunities of an aging workforce, including upskilling, flexible work options, and leveraging their extensive experience to meet regional labor demands.

Policy and Service Implications:

- **Customized Workforce Programs:** Initiatives like SCSEP and AARP Back to Work help address barriers for senior workers. SCSEP offers part-time community service roles, helping seniors gain work experience, while AARP provides skills training, resume assistance, and workshops for re-entering the workforce.
- **Employer Engagement:** Encouraging businesses to recognize the value seniors bring to the workforce through experience and reliability.
- **Supportive Services:** Providing technology skills training and addressing other barriers like transportation and healthcare access.
- **Job Matching for Seniors:** Career specialists and business service representatives actively assist seniors by identifying suitable roles, making employer introductions, and advocating for job placements in industries like healthcare, retail, and customer service.

B. Describe the development and implementation of sector initiatives for in-demand industry sectors or occupations for the planning region (§ 679.510(a)(1)(iii)). Plans must answer the following questions:

- How will the workforce partners convene employers, foundations and regional institutions to help lead sector partnerships and make coordinated investments?
- Identify the established and active industry sector partnerships in the region.
- What other sector-based partnerships exist in the region? If any exist, are they business-led and what is their role in planning?
- What other public-private partnerships exist in the region that could support sector strategies and what is their role in planning?
- What neutral conveners with the capacity to help establish sector partnerships exist in the region and what is their role in planning?

Development and Implementation of Sector Initiatives for In-Demand Industry Sectors

The Greater New Orleans Region demonstrates a comprehensive approach to workforce development through sector initiatives that address in-demand industry needs. These initiatives are guided by the collaboration of four local workforce boards, employers, foundations, and regional institutions. Below are detailed responses to the questions, highlighting specific initiatives.

How Workforce Partners Will Convene Employers, Foundations, and Regional Institutions

Workforce partners in the Greater New Orleans Region utilize a collaborative and strategic approach to convene employers, foundations, and regional institutions to lead sector partnerships and make coordinated investments. Key strategies include:

- **Sector-Specific Advisory Councils:** Workforce boards establish sector-specific advisory councils comprising employers, educational institutions, and foundation representatives. These councils meet regularly to identify workforce needs, discuss training program design, and align investments with industry priorities. For example, the **GNORAAMP** (Greater New Orleans Regional Advanced Manufacturing Partnership) regularly gathers aerospace and advanced manufacturing leaders like **NASA Michoud** and **Lockheed Martin** to align training initiatives with industry advancements.
- **Regional Workforce Summits:** Workforce partners host regional workforce summits and industry forums, bringing together stakeholders to share insights, identify gaps, and foster collaboration. Initiatives like the **Port of New Orleans Workforce Development** utilize these summits to engage maritime employers, logistics companies, and local institutions in workforce planning.
- **Public-Private Partnerships:** Collaborations between workforce boards, employers, and foundations are formalized through public-private partnerships. For instance, the **FUEL Initiative** partners with energy companies like **Shell** and **Entergy** to drive investments in renewable energy training, ensuring alignment with both current and future workforce needs.
- **Educational and Industry Partnerships:** Workforce boards partner with institutions like **Delgado Community College**, the **University of New Orleans**, and local technical schools to design programs that directly address skill shortages. These partnerships are exemplified by the **Mechatronics Apprenticeship** in **Jefferson Parish**, which brings together manufacturers and educators to train workers in robotics and automation.
- **Neutral Conveners:** Organizations such as the **St. Tammany Economic Development Corporation** act as neutral conveners, facilitating dialogue between stakeholders, ensuring alignment across sectors, and identifying opportunities for coordinated investments. They play a crucial role in initiatives like **Northshore Healthscape**, connecting healthcare employers with training providers to address workforce shortages.
- **Leveraging Funding Opportunities:** Workforce partners align federal, state, and private funding to maximize the impact of investments. For example, the **Thrive New Orleans Initiative** secures grants from environmental foundations and public agencies to fund training in sustainable construction and green infrastructure.

By fostering collaboration through these structured approaches, workforce partners ensure that sector partnerships are employer-led, foundation-supported, and aligned with regional priorities, resulting in coordinated investments that meet the workforce needs of both established and emerging industries.

Established and Active Industry Sector Partnerships in the Greater New Orleans Region

Aerospace and Advanced Manufacturing (Greater New Orleans Regional Advanced Manufacturing Partnership - GNORAAMP): GNORAAMP connects aerospace and advanced manufacturing employers, including **NASA Michoud Assembly Facility** and **Lockheed Martin**, with educational institutions and workforce boards in **Orleans Parish** to address workforce needs. This

partnership has launched training programs in advanced manufacturing technologies, focusing on aerospace engineering and precision production. Successes include increased regional job placements in high-demand roles and enhanced regional competitiveness as an aerospace manufacturing hub.

Maritime and Logistics (Port of New Orleans Workforce Development): The **Port of New Orleans** collaborates with freight operators, workforce boards, and **Delgado Community College** in **Orleans Parish** to create tailored training programs for maritime and logistics careers. These programs address critical skill gaps in supply chain management and port operations. The initiative has supported the port's infrastructure expansion by ensuring a steady flow of qualified workers. Outcomes include reduced skill shortages and improved workforce readiness for roles in freight handling, warehousing, and transportation.

Technology (The Tech Hub Initiative): The Tech Hub, based in **Orleans Parish**, partners with IT employers such as **IBM**, **local startups**, and educational institutions like **Delgado Community College** and the **University of New Orleans**. The initiative has launched specialized training programs in cybersecurity, cloud computing, and data analytics. Successes include significant job placements in IT roles, particularly among underrepresented groups, and the development of a robust talent pipeline to support the region's growing tech sector.

Healthcare (Northshore Healthscape): Northshore Healthscape, located in **St. Tammany Parish**, partners with healthcare providers such as **Ochsner Health** and **St. Tammany Health System**, alongside local workforce boards and colleges. The partnership addresses workforce needs in nursing, medical assisting, and healthcare administration. Successes include the graduation of hundreds of credentialed healthcare professionals annually, many of whom fill critical roles in local hospitals and clinics. This initiative has also improved access to healthcare services in underserved communities.

Green Infrastructure and Construction (Thrive New Orleans Initiative): Thrive New Orleans, operating in **Orleans Parish**, collaborates with construction firms, **environmental nonprofits**, and government agencies to train workers in sustainable construction and urban resilience. The initiative has created over 100 jobs annually in green infrastructure projects such as stormwater management systems and energy-efficient housing. Successes include training underserved residents and completing community resilience projects that address climate and environmental challenges.

Advanced Manufacturing (Mechatronics Apprenticeship): The Mechatronics Apprenticeship program, led by **Laitram, LLC**, **Elmers** and **Zatarain's** is based in **Jefferson Parish** and partners with **Delgado Community College** and technical schools. The program trains workers in robotics, automation, and mechatronics, addressing critical skill shortages in advanced manufacturing. Outcomes include dozens of apprentices transitioning into full-time roles at leading regional manufacturing firms, strengthening the advanced manufacturing workforce pipeline.

Energy (FUEL Initiative): LSU's Future Use of Energy in Louisiana (FUEL) initiative, centered in **East Baton Rouge Parish**, collaborates with energy companies such as **Shell** and **Entergy**, alongside

community colleges and technical training centers. The initiative aims to double the state's energy workforce by 2050 by expanding training in renewable energy and traditional energy sectors. Early successes include an increase in enrollment in energy-related training programs and strategic investments by private partners in workforce development.

These initiatives highlight the collaborative efforts of workforce boards, employers, educational institutions, and local governments to address workforce needs across various parishes. Their successes in training, job placement, and economic growth reinforce the Greater New Orleans Region's commitment to aligning workforce development with industry demands.

CHAPTER 2: STRATEGIES FOR SERVICE INTEGRATION: REGIONAL

This regional component of the plan must describe the regional service strategies, including use of cooperative service delivery strategies and the connection of job seekers with employers.

- A. Provide 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 (§ 679.560(a)(4)). Plans must respond to the following:
- Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of workforce development activities in the region.
 - Analyze the capacity of the regional partners to provide workforce development activities to address the education and skill needs of the workforce including individuals with barriers to employment.
 - Analyze the capacity of the regional partners to provide activities to address the needs of employers.
 - How well do existing training programs in the region and local areas prepare job seekers to enter and retain employment with regional businesses?
 - Summarize the commitments of each program partner to implement the selected strategies.

Analysis of Workforce Development Activities in the Greater New Orleans Region

The Greater New Orleans Region boasts a dynamic workforce development ecosystem that leverages collaboration, innovation, and strategic investments to align with regional and state economic goals. While the region has made significant strides in addressing workforce challenges and fostering economic resilience, opportunities remain to strengthen service delivery, expand partnerships, and address skill gaps to meet the evolving needs of employers and jobseekers.

Strengths of Workforce Development Activities

Robust Regional Collaboration

The region's Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) work closely with each other and with the local and regional economic development organizations, educational institutions, and industry leaders to align training programs with employer needs. Partnerships like the **GNORAAMP (Greater New Orleans Regional Advanced Manufacturing Partnership)** for aerospace and advanced manufacturing, and the **Port of New Orleans Workforce Development** for maritime and logistics careers, exemplify how collaboration creates direct pathways to employment.

Innovative Service Delivery Models

Workforce boards have implemented online tools, such as online appointment setting, interactive chats, pre-screening applications, jobseeker videos, and virtual case management, which enhance accessibility for employers and jobseekers alike. These tools simplify hiring processes, increase workforce engagement, and ensure jobseekers are better matched to available opportunities.

Sector-Focused Strategies

The region's targeted investments in high-demand industries, such as healthcare, construction, manufacturing, IT, and logistics, ensure that workforce training efforts remain relevant to the labor market. Initiatives like the **FUEL Initiative** for energy and the **Mechatronics Apprenticeship** for advanced manufacturing address specific employer needs and contribute to regional economic resilience.

Weaknesses of Workforce Development Activities

Funding Limitations

Despite the success of various initiatives, limited funding restricts the scalability and reach of workforce programs, particularly in underserved areas. In addition to the overall lack of resources, the reliability and stability of funding streams remain challenges, as many programs depend on time-limited grants or fluctuating budgets. This uncertainty can hinder long-term planning and the ability to sustain and grow impactful programs. Additional resources and more stable, predictable funding mechanisms are essential to expand services, ensure equitable access to workforce opportunities, and maintain program effectiveness over time.

Coordination Challenges

The region's extensive network of 72 workforce development partners creates complexities in service delivery, sometimes leading to fragmented efforts. Improved coordination across partners is essential to maximize efficiency and outcomes.

Persistent Skill Gaps

Employers in sectors like IT and advanced manufacturing report ongoing challenges in finding candidates with specialized technical skills. Expanding access to training in emerging areas, such as robotics, artificial intelligence, and renewable energy, will be critical to addressing these gaps.

Meeting Educational and Skill Needs

Educational Partnerships

The region benefits from strong partnerships with institutions such as **Delgado Community College**, **University of New Orleans**, and technical schools. These collaborations ensure that training programs are aligned with employer needs in key industries like advanced manufacturing, healthcare, and IT.

Adult Education and Apprenticeships

Programs like **Jump Start 2.0** and registered apprenticeships offer valuable pathways for skill development, particularly for individuals transitioning into the workforce or seeking upskilling opportunities. These programs emphasize hands-on learning and real-world application.

Work-based learning (WBL) offers Career and Technical Education (CTE) students on-the-job training and classroom instruction, helping them develop job skills, explore career interests, and gain real-world experience. WBL experiences now include cooperative education, paid internships, and structured on-the-job training through Registered Apprenticeships recognized by the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC).

Support for Special Populations

Initiatives such as **Reboot Louisiana** and the **MJ Foster Promise Program** provide comprehensive support, including childcare, transportation, and financial assistance, to help individuals with barriers to employment access sustainable career opportunities.

Barriers to Address

Despite these efforts, underserved populations such as individuals with disabilities, veterans, and seniors face challenges. Programs like **SCSEP (Senior Community Service Employment Program)** and **NextOp Veterans** require additional resources to expand their impact. Greater investments in short-term training programs and stackable certifications would further address workforce gaps and improve accessibility.

Addressing Employer Needs

Employer-Driven Training Programs

Workforce boards collaborate directly with employers to develop customized training programs in healthcare, logistics, and advanced manufacturing. Programs like **Thrive New Orleans** in construction and the **Tech Hub Initiative** for IT ensure training aligns with employer demands and addresses skill shortages.

Labor Market Data Utilization

Partnerships with economic development organizations provide real-time labor market intelligence, allowing workforce boards to refine training priorities and investments. This ensures training programs remain relevant and responsive to regional economic needs.

Sector-Based Approaches

Sector-specific initiatives such as **Northshore Healthscape** for healthcare and the **Port of New Orleans Workforce Development** for logistics demonstrate the effectiveness of aligning workforce development with regional economic priorities.

Challenges in Meeting Employer Needs

While these efforts have achieved significant successes, employers in emerging sectors still face difficulties recruiting candidates with advanced technical skills and certifications. Expanding training in fields like automation, robotics, and cybersecurity is essential to close these gaps and meet the region's future workforce demands.

Effectiveness of Training Programs

Successes

Training programs in the Greater New Orleans Region are aligned with high-demand occupations, such as registered nurses, IT specialists, and heavy equipment operators. On-the-job training programs have been particularly effective, achieving over 90% retention rates among participants after 12 months, underscoring the value of experiential learning.

Opportunities for Improvement

Expanding short-term credential programs and developing stackable certifications would allow jobseekers to acquire in-demand skills more efficiently. These enhancements would improve workforce adaptability and ensure alignment with the evolving needs of employers.

Partner Commitments

Collaborative Agreements

Workforce boards, educational institutions, and economic development agencies maintain Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and cooperative agreements to streamline service delivery and foster resource sharing.

Focus on Special Populations

Programs like **Louisiana Rehabilitation Services**, **NextOp Veterans**, and **SCSEP** provide tailored support to underserved groups, ensuring equitable access to workforce opportunities for individuals with disabilities, veterans, and seniors.

Sector Strategy Investments

Workforce development efforts prioritize high-growth industries such as healthcare, construction, IT, and energy. Initiatives like **FUEL** and **GNORAAMP** highlight the commitment to aligning workforce development with regional economic priorities and labor market needs.

- B. Describe how transportation and other supportive services are coordinated within the region (§ 679.510(a)(1)(vi)). Plans must respond to the following questions:
- What regional organizations currently provide or could provide supportive services?
 - What policies and procedures will be established to promote coordination of supportive services delivery?

Coordination of Transportation and Supportive Services in the Greater New Orleans Region § 679.510(a)(1)(vi)

The Greater New Orleans Region has established a comprehensive and well-coordinated system for delivering supportive services that address the barriers jobseekers face in accessing workforce opportunities. This system integrates efforts from a network of regional organizations and service providers, ensuring that individuals receive the assistance they need to achieve economic stability and sustainable employment.

Regional Organizations Providing Supportive Services

The region's network of supportive service providers plays a critical role in addressing barriers to employment. Organizations like Catholic Charities and the United Way of Southeast Louisiana

provide essential housing, utilities, and transportation assistance, helping stabilize individuals during transitional periods. Total Community Action (TCA) addresses significant challenges for families, such as access to affordable childcare and transportation subsidies, making it easier for parents to participate in training or secure employment.

Goodwill Industries of Southeast Louisiana supports jobseekers through counseling and workforce services, empowering them with the skills needed to thrive in the workplace. Community Action Agencies address basic needs through food security programs and emergency financial assistance, while the Council on Aging ensures elderly residents can access transportation to attend training or employment opportunities. These organizations collectively form the foundation of a regional system designed to meet the needs of jobseekers across diverse demographic groups.

Policies and Procedures for Coordination

The region employs a structured approach to coordinate supportive services effectively:

Interagency Collaboration: Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) formalize partnerships through Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) to streamline service delivery and reduce redundancies.

Needs-Based Verification: Supportive services are verified at the time of request, ensuring efficient allocation of resources that align with individual requirements.

Centralized Resource Mapping: The region maps resources across providers to identify gaps and overlaps, ensuring that services reach the populations that need them most.

Regional Data Sharing: Through regular data sharing meetings, partners align supportive services with labor market trends and employer needs.

Integrated Service Delivery: Co-enrollment across WIOA, TANF, and SNAP programs allows jobseekers to access multiple services through a single point of contact, enhancing efficiency and accessibility.

Examples of Coordination in Action

The region's collaborative approach is evident in its execution of supportive services:

- **Transportation Assistance:** Subsidized transportation programs through TCA and transit partnerships help jobseekers attend job interviews, training sessions, and employment opportunities.
- **Housing and Utility Support:** Emergency housing and utility assistance from Catholic Charities and Community Action Agencies provide critical stability for jobseekers facing financial crises.

- **Childcare Services:** Partnerships with local entities deliver affordable childcare options, enabling parents to pursue workforce opportunities without prohibitive childcare costs.

C. Describe the coordination of services with regional economic development services and WIOA service providers (§ 679.510(a)(1)(vii)). Plans must answer the following questions:

- What economic development organizations, WIOA service providers or businesses are actively engaged in regional planning?
- What economic development organizations, WIOA service providers or businesses were invited to participate but declined?

Coordination of Services with Regional Economic Development Services and WIOA Service Providers

The Greater New Orleans Region has developed a comprehensive framework to align economic development initiatives with workforce services. This approach ensures that workforce development strategies are closely integrated with regional economic priorities and that labor market needs are addressed effectively. Through partnerships with key organizations, WIOA service providers, and businesses, the region fosters collaboration to create meaningful pathways to employment and economic growth.

Active Participation in Regional Planning

The Greater New Orleans Region benefits from the active participation of a diverse network of organizations that play critical roles in shaping workforce strategies and aligning them with the needs of employers and jobseekers.

Regional Economic Development Organizations

1. **Greater New Orleans, Inc. (GNO, Inc.):**
GNO, Inc. is a leading force in regional planning, driving initiatives that connect industry needs with workforce services. By sharing labor market data, facilitating sector-based strategies, and securing grants, GNO, Inc. ensures that workforce development remains a key driver of economic progress.
 2. **Regional Planning Commission (RPC):**
The RPC provides critical infrastructure planning and data analysis to support economic and workforce development initiatives. Its focus on transportation and logistics aligns closely with workforce strategies for supply chain management and related industries.
-

Local Economic Development Entities by Parish

1. **Jefferson Parish Economic Development Commission (JEDCO):** JEDCO supports business attraction, retention, and workforce development through partnerships with local industries and educational institutions. Its focus on advanced manufacturing, IT, and energy directly aligns with regional workforce strategies.
2. **St. Tammany Economic Development Corporation (Northshore Economic Development):** The St. Tammany Economic Development Corporation works closely with healthcare providers, manufacturers, and technical schools to align workforce initiatives with local economic priorities, as demonstrated by the **Northshore Healthscape** partnership.
3. **St. Bernard Economic Development Foundation (SBEDF):** SBEDF supports workforce development in key industries such as maritime, logistics, and construction. Its collaboration with workforce boards ensures alignment between local job training programs and employer needs.
4. **Plaquemines Association of Business and Industry (PABI):** PABI plays a critical role in supporting workforce development for Plaquemines Parish. Focused on the energy and maritime industries, PABI partners with local workforce boards, employers, and educational institutions to prepare workers for high-demand careers. These efforts ensure alignment with regional workforce strategies and help bolster the parish's economic stability.
5. **Orleans Parish Economic Development Office:** The office focuses on urban economic initiatives, including technology, green infrastructure, and entrepreneurship, ensuring alignment with regional strategies like **Thrive New Orleans** and **The Tech Hub Initiative**.
6. **St. Charles Parish Department of Economic Development and Tourism:** This department supports workforce initiatives in petrochemical manufacturing, energy, and logistics, partnering with local industries to ensure the availability of skilled labor.
7. **St. James Parish Economic Development Office:** The St. James Parish Economic Development Office focuses on workforce development in industries such as petrochemicals, advanced manufacturing, and agriculture. Through partnerships with local technical schools and businesses, the parish supports training programs that prepare residents for careers in these high-demand sectors.
8. **St. John the Baptist Parish Economic Development Office:** This office emphasizes workforce development in logistics, petrochemicals, and advanced manufacturing. By collaborating with employers and workforce boards, St. John Parish ensures the alignment of job training programs with local economic priorities, supporting job creation and economic growth.

WIOA Service Providers

The region's WIOA service providers play a pivotal role in delivering workforce services to jobseekers, employers, and underserved populations.

- **Workforce Development Boards (WDBs):** The four WDBs in Region One provide strategic oversight and coordinate service delivery across the region's eight parishes. These boards ensure that workforce programs are tailored to meet employer demands and align with economic development goals.
- **Adult Education Providers:** A network of 11 adult education entities works collaboratively to

address foundational skill gaps. These providers focus on improving literacy, numeracy, and digital skills, helping adult learners prepare for high-demand occupations in sectors such as healthcare, construction, and IT.

- **Community Action Agencies:** These agencies are instrumental in delivering wraparound supportive services. By providing assistance with childcare, transportation, utilities, and emergency financial support, they help jobseekers overcome barriers that might otherwise prevent them from accessing workforce programs.
- **Vocational Rehabilitation Services:** Organizations such as Louisiana Rehabilitation Services ensure that individuals with disabilities have access to tailored training programs and supportive services, enabling them to participate fully in the workforce.
- **Youth Service Providers:** Programs focused on youth workforce development deliver career readiness training, internships, and mentoring to help young people transition into sustainable employment. These services are particularly critical for at-risk youth and those from underserved communities.
- **Community-Based Organizations:** Community-based organizations (CBOs) are essential partners in the region's workforce ecosystem, providing targeted support and connecting jobseekers to vital resources. These organizations address unique community needs, complementing WIOA services through innovative and localized approaches.
 - **Faith-Based Organizations:** Churches and faith-based groups offer job readiness workshops, support networks, and access to emergency assistance for vulnerable populations.
 - **Nonprofits:** Organizations like **Urban League of Louisiana** and **Goodwill Industries** deliver workforce training, job placement services, and soft skills development tailored to the needs of underserved communities.
 - **Civic Groups and Advocacy Organizations:** These groups provide mentorship, career counseling, and advocacy for populations facing systemic barriers to employment, such as reentry individuals and single parents.

Business Engagement

Employers in the Greater New Orleans Region play a central role in workforce planning and service delivery, ensuring alignment between workforce programs and industry demands. In healthcare, **Ochsner Health, Lakeview Regional Medical Center, and Slidell Memorial Hospital** lead collaborative efforts with workforce partners, including local workforce boards and educational institutions, to design training programs addressing critical skill shortages in nursing, medical assisting, and healthcare administration. Similarly, the **Northshore Healthscape** initiative involves healthcare providers such as **St. Tammany Health System**, focusing on credentialing and workforce readiness to support the growing healthcare demands of the region.

In advanced manufacturing and IT, companies like **Laitram, NASA Michoud, and IBM** actively contribute to initiatives such as the **Mechatronics Apprenticeship Program** and **The Tech Hub Initiative**, which provide training in robotics, automation, cybersecurity, and data analytics. These programs are critical for developing a skilled pipeline of workers to support innovation-driven industries. The energy sector is also a major focus, with companies such as **Shell** and **Entergy**

partnering with the **FUEL Initiative** to expand the workforce in both renewable and traditional energy sectors, ensuring long-term sustainability and growth.

The maritime and logistics sectors see significant engagement from employers through the **Port of New Orleans Workforce Development** initiative, which connects companies like **Cargill** and **Associated Terminals** with workforce boards and training providers. This partnership addresses skill gaps in supply chain management, freight handling, and transportation, ensuring a steady flow of qualified workers to support regional economic activity. Through these collaborations, business engagement ensures that workforce services remain demand-driven, fostering career pathways for jobseekers while meeting the needs of the region's industries.

Economic Development Organizations, WIOA Service Providers, or Businesses Invited but Declined Participation

Regional workforce planning in the Greater New Orleans Region is not a standalone function or a single event; rather, it is an ongoing, collaborative process that involves continuous engagement and robust information sharing among stakeholders. While the majority of economic development organizations, WIOA service providers, and businesses have actively participated in shaping regional strategies, some have occasionally been unable to engage due to competing priorities, resource limitations, or timing conflicts.

For instance, certain smaller businesses and organizations, particularly those in rural areas or niche sectors, may not have the capacity to fully engage in planning activities, despite being invited. Similarly, some organizations might defer participation until they see more immediate alignment with their operational goals or capacity-building needs. These instances highlight the need for continuous outreach and the cultivation of relationships over time.

The region addresses these gaps by fostering an open and transparent environment for planning, characterized by robust information sharing through advisory councils, sector-focused forums, and regular stakeholder meetings. This ensures that organizations that may have previously declined participation remain informed about opportunities to engage and contribute to regional planning as their circumstances allow. By emphasizing collaboration as an ongoing process, the region remains committed to broadening participation and ensuring that workforce strategies are inclusive and responsive to the diverse needs of all stakeholders.

Mechanisms for Coordination

The region employs several mechanisms to ensure effective coordination among its economic development organizations, WIOA service providers, and businesses:

- **Formalized Agreements:** Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and cooperative endeavor agreements establish clear roles and responsibilities, reducing duplication of effort and enhancing collaboration.
- **Integrated Data Sharing Platforms:** Tools like EMSI and The Data Center enable stakeholders to access real-time labor market and economic data, ensuring workforce strategies are informed by the latest trends.
- **Cross-Regional Committees:** Regular meetings of Workforce Development Board leadership and Business Services Teams foster alignment across sectors and ensure that programs remain responsive to employer needs.
- **Employer Roundtables:** Sector-specific employer roundtables provide direct input on workforce challenges and priorities, shaping training programs and service delivery models.
- **Co-Enrolled Programs:** Programs that integrate WIOA, TANF, and SNAP services allow jobseekers to access multiple resources through a single point of contact, enhancing efficiency and reducing administrative burdens.

D. Describe the coordination of administrative cost arrangements, including the pooling of funds for administrative costs, as appropriate (§ 679.510(a)(1)(v)).

Coordination of Administrative Cost Arrangements, Including Pooling of Funds

The Greater New Orleans Region has explored collaborative approaches to managing administrative costs among the four local workforce boards. While achieving a unified approach has proven challenging due to differing jurisdictional rules, guidelines, and priorities, the region remains committed to identifying opportunities for greater efficiency and resource sharing.

Efforts to improve coordination include discussions on streamlining administrative activities between the local areas and the state. A prior recommendation has been the decentralization of **Wagner-Peyser Funds** to the local level, as it is in numerous other states, allowing these funds to be braided with existing resources. This approach would reduce duplication of administrative functions, enhance service delivery, and maximize the impact of available funding.

By maintaining open communication and exploring innovative solutions, the region continues to work diligently toward a more coordinated and cost-effective administrative framework that supports workforce development goals across all local areas.

Collaborative Cost-Sharing Agreements

Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) in the region formalize their cost-sharing arrangements through Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and resource-sharing agreements. These documents outline the roles and responsibilities of each partner agency, ensuring clarity and transparency in the allocation of administrative costs. Key components include the sharing of expenses for staff training, technology infrastructure, and shared facilities such as American Job Centers.

By centralizing certain administrative functions, WDBs reduce duplication of efforts, allowing more resources to be allocated toward direct workforce services. Examples include joint procurement of software for case management and shared access to labor market data platforms like Lightcast.

Pooling of Funds

Pooling administrative funds among WIOA-mandated partners enables the region to support shared priorities efficiently. For instance, pooled funds are often used to:

- Maintain and upgrade technology systems that streamline case management and reporting.
- Cover the costs of regional planning activities, such as labor market studies and economic development initiatives.
- Fund shared training sessions for staff across partner organizations, ensuring consistency in service delivery and compliance with federal regulations.

This approach not only optimizes available resources but also fosters collaboration among partners by focusing on shared objectives.

CHAPTER 3: VISION, GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES: REGIONAL

This section will outline how the Local Board(s) will coordinate the regional workforce, education and economic development activities with regional activities that are carried out in the local areas. The responses must ensure alignment with other plans as well as illustrate that businesses, education, and workforce development stakeholders have provided input and are involved in the development of the strategies.

- A. Describe the local strategic vision to support state and regional economic growth (§ 679.560(a)(5)). Describe how this aligns with the State of Louisiana’s vision and principles.

Local Strategic Vision to Support State and Regional Economic Growth (§ 679.560(a)(5))

The Greater New Orleans Region embraces a strategic vision that aligns with the State of Louisiana’s broader goals of fostering economic mobility, educational excellence, and workforce resilience under Governor Jeff Landry’s leadership. This vision emphasizes collaboration across workforce development, education, and economic development stakeholders to create a unified approach that advances regional economic growth and ensures upward mobility for all residents.

Key Pillars of the Local Strategic Vision

The Greater New Orleans Region's local workforce boards are guided by strategic priorities designed to foster economic growth, address workforce gaps, and ensure equitable access to opportunities for all residents. These pillars reflect a commitment to collaboration, innovation, and alignment with both regional and state-level goals.

Promoting Educational Accessibility and Excellence

The region prioritizes building strong educational pathways that span from K-12 to adult learning. Initiatives such as **Jump Start 2.0** and expanded dual-enrollment programs enable high school students to graduate with industry-recognized credentials, preparing them for high-demand jobs. For adult learners, programs like **Reboot** and the **MJ Foster Promise Fund** offer targeted training in critical sectors, addressing skill gaps while overcoming barriers to employment. These efforts ensure that education remains a cornerstone of workforce development.

Fostering Sector-Based Workforce Development

The region's strategy aligns closely with Louisiana's focus on high-growth sectors, including manufacturing, healthcare, construction, transportation, logistics, and information technology. Sector partnerships, such as those with **Ochsner Health, Lakeview Regional Medical Center, and Slidell Memorial Hospital** in healthcare and leading employers in advanced manufacturing, ensure that training programs align with employer needs. These initiatives provide jobseekers with clear career pathways while addressing pressing workforce shortages.

Enhancing Accessibility for Underserved Populations

Recognizing the barriers faced by many residents, the region prioritizes inclusive workforce strategies to foster economic mobility. Key services include transportation assistance, childcare subsidies, and reentry programs for justice-involved individuals. These initiatives, combined with targeted outreach to underserved populations, ensure equitable access to workforce development programs, particularly for those facing poverty or low educational attainment.

Aligning Workforce Development with Economic Development Goals

Collaboration with regional economic development organizations such as **Greater New Orleans, Inc. (GNO, Inc.)** and the **Regional Planning Commission (RPC)** ensures that workforce strategies are aligned with broader economic priorities. These partnerships address employer needs, support infrastructure projects, and utilize labor market data to refine workforce initiatives, fostering economic growth across the region.

Investing in Lifelong Learning and Digital Skills

In response to the growing demand for digital competencies, local efforts focus on upskilling residents through IT training programs, cybersecurity certifications, and partnerships with technology employers such as **DXC Technology**. These initiatives not only prepare the workforce for emerging opportunities but also enhance adaptability in the face of evolving industry demands.

Alignment with the State of Louisiana’s Vision and Principles

The local vision is deeply aligned with the State of Louisiana’s workforce principles, ensuring a unified approach to workforce development:

- **Economic Mobility:** Local programs provide pathways out of poverty through targeted skills training and credentialing for high-wage, high-demand jobs.
 - **Educational Excellence:** By leveraging partnerships across K-12 and post-secondary institutions, the region builds a talent pipeline tailored to meet industry needs.
 - **Inclusivity:** Focused efforts on individuals with barriers to employment reflect the state’s goal of equitable access to economic opportunities.
 - **Employer-Led Strategies:** Collaboration with businesses ensures workforce programs are demand-driven and aligned with current and future labor market needs.
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Stakeholder Engagement in Strategy Development

The development of the regional vision is shaped by insights from a diverse group of stakeholders:

- **Businesses:** Employers in healthcare, construction, manufacturing, and IT provide critical input on workforce gaps and co-design training programs through sector partnerships.
 - **Education:** K-12 systems, community colleges, and universities collaborate on curriculum development, dual-enrollment initiatives, and credentialing programs.
 - **Workforce Development:** Local WIOA boards, American Job Centers, and community organizations deliver direct services and wraparound support for jobseekers.
 - **Economic Development:** Partnerships with entities like **GNO, Inc** and **PABI** ensure workforce initiatives are aligned with regional economic growth strategies.
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Commitment to Collaboration and Continuous Improvement

The local workforce boards are dedicated to fostering collaboration, innovation, and adaptability in workforce strategies. Through regular stakeholder meetings, integrated resource planning, and data-driven decision-making, the region ensures its strategies remain responsive to economic shifts and labor market needs. By aligning closely with the State of Louisiana’s goals, the Greater New Orleans Region positions itself as a leader in economic and workforce development, driving a resilient and inclusive economy that benefits all residents.

- B. Describe the local 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 (§ 677.155(a)(1)).

Local Goals for Preparing an Educated and Skilled Workforce

§ 677.155(a)(1)

The Greater New Orleans Region is committed to cultivating a workforce that is educated, skilled, and equipped to thrive in an evolving labor market. Recognizing the region's economic strengths and the opportunities created by growing sectors such as healthcare, construction, manufacturing, and IT, the local workforce strategy prioritizes preparing youth and individuals with barriers to employment. These goals are reinforced by a focus on performance accountability measures that track progress and ensure effective outcomes for job seekers and employers alike.

Preparing Youth for Workforce Success

A key priority for the Greater New Orleans Region is equipping youth with the tools and opportunities needed to succeed in a competitive and evolving labor market. This effort focuses on early exposure to high-demand industries, access to aligned educational pathways, and real-world learning experiences.

Expanding Career Pathways

Programs such as **Jump Start 2.0** and dual-enrollment initiatives provide high school students with the opportunity to graduate with industry-recognized credentials, preparing them for immediate employment or post-secondary education. These efforts are targeted at high-demand fields like IT, healthcare, and advanced manufacturing, ensuring that young people enter career pathways where opportunities are abundant.

Work-Based Learning Opportunities

Local workforce boards are collaborating with employers to create paid internships and apprenticeships that offer students hands-on experience in critical sectors. These programs help bridge the gap between classroom learning and industry expectations, providing youth with the practical skills and exposure needed to succeed.

Engaging Underserved Youth

Outreach efforts prioritize at-risk and underserved youth, ensuring they have access to the resources, mentorship, and guidance necessary to thrive. Partnerships with community organizations promote equity and inclusion by addressing barriers and creating tailored programs to meet the unique needs of this population.

Supporting Individuals with Barriers to Employment

The Greater New Orleans Region is committed to creating opportunities for individuals facing barriers to employment. By addressing challenges such as lack of education, transportation, and other systemic obstacles, workforce initiatives aim to foster economic mobility for all residents.

Customized Training Programs

Programs like **Reboot Louisiana** and the **MJ Foster Promise Fund** are designed to provide technical skills and certifications for individuals who may lack formal education or face barriers to employment. These initiatives target high-demand occupations such as construction trades, CDL drivers, and nursing, offering sustainable wage opportunities.

Supportive Services

Non-skill-related barriers, such as childcare, transportation, and access to technology, are addressed through integrated supportive services. By embedding these supports into workforce programs, the region ensures participants can fully engage in training and employment opportunities.

Inclusive Initiatives

Specialized programs cater to populations such as justice-involved individuals, individuals with disabilities, and veterans. These include reentry services, disability-inclusive training programs, and career navigation support tailored to the unique needs of these groups.

Developing a Lifelong Learning Workforce

The changing nature of the economy requires a workforce that values continuous learning and adaptability. The region invests in initiatives that promote lifelong learning and skills advancement to meet the evolving demands of industries.

Flexible Credentialing Programs

Collaborations with community colleges and industry partners offer stackable credentials that allow workers to advance their careers incrementally. Programs like short-term IT boot camps and construction certifications provide clear pathways to higher-paying roles.

Advanced Technical Training

The region prioritizes training in advanced manufacturing, robotics, and cybersecurity, addressing the growing demand for digital and technical skills across sectors. These programs prepare participants for emerging opportunities in innovation-driven industries.

Employer Partnerships

Businesses such as **Ochsner Health**, **DXC Technology**, and local construction firms actively collaborate in program design, ensuring that training aligns with current and future job requirements. This employer-driven approach enhances the relevance and effectiveness of workforce programs.

Alignment with Performance Accountability Measures

The region's workforce development initiatives are designed to meet and exceed federally mandated performance accountability measures. These benchmarks ensure programs deliver measurable outcomes that benefit jobseekers and employers alike.

Employment Rate

Programs are structured to place participants in sustainable employment within high-demand sectors. Partnerships with employers ensure a seamless transition into roles with growth potential.

Median Earnings

Training efforts focus on occupations offering competitive wages, such as IT specialists, registered nurses, and general and operations managers. Regular labor market analysis helps target roles that meet or exceed the region's median wage.

Credential Attainment

Local boards emphasize certifications and degrees tied directly to employer needs. Collaborations with educational institutions ensure that participants achieve credentials valued by the labor market.

Measurable Skill Gains

Short-term training programs are designed to track progress through skill-based milestones, preparing participants for incremental career advancement while ensuring adaptability in the workforce.

Employer Engagement

Regular feedback from businesses informs the design and delivery of workforce programs. Business satisfaction surveys and sector partnerships ensure workforce initiatives remain aligned with labor market demands.

Equity and Sustainability in Workforce Goals

The region's workforce strategy is rooted in equity, ensuring all residents—regardless of their starting point—can access training, earn credentials, and secure meaningful employment. Sustainability is also a core focus, with continuous improvement processes that use data and stakeholder feedback to refine strategies and address emerging challenges.

By emphasizing youth development, support for individuals with barriers to employment, and alignment with performance measures, the Greater New Orleans Region is building an inclusive and adaptive workforce. These efforts align with state goals for economic mobility, ensuring residents are prepared to meet the demands of an evolving labor market while fostering long-term economic resilience.

- C. Provide a description of the regional and local strategies that will achieve the vision and principles. This must include a description of the strategies and services that will be used in the local areas:
1. To facilitate engagement of employers in workforce development programs, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations (§ 679.560(b)(3)(i));

Regional and Local Strategies to Facilitate Employer Engagement in Workforce Development Programs § 679.560(b)(3)(i)

Key Regional and Local Strategies

The Greater New Orleans Region's workforce development efforts are grounded in collaboration, adaptability, and a commitment to meeting the needs of both employers and jobseekers. By fostering industry partnerships, engaging businesses of all sizes, and aligning programs with labor market data, the region has developed strategies that support long-term economic growth and workforce resilience.

Industry-Led Collaborations

Collaboration with key industries remains at the heart of the region's workforce strategy. Sector partnerships bring together employers, workforce boards, and educational institutions to design training programs that address specific workforce needs. For example, the **GNORAAMP (Greater New Orleans Regional Advanced Manufacturing Partnership)** focuses on equipping workers with advanced manufacturing skills such as robotics, automation, and precision production, preparing them for careers in a rapidly evolving sector. In healthcare, collaborations with **Ochsner Health** address workforce shortages by creating specialized programs in nursing, healthcare administration, and related fields. The energy sector benefits from initiatives like the **FUEL Initiative**, which ensures workforce development in renewable and traditional energy fields, preparing workers for emerging opportunities while supporting the region's sustainability goals.

Engaging Small and Medium-Sized Employers

Small and medium-sized businesses play a vital role in the regional economy, and the workforce development system prioritizes their engagement to ensure they can access the resources needed to remain competitive. Dedicated business services teams work closely with these employers, providing one-on-one consultations to assess workforce needs and offer labor market insights. These teams also connect businesses to workforce incentives such as **On-the-Job Training (OJT)** and **Work Experience (WEX)** programs, which subsidize hiring and training costs. Programs like the **Incumbent Worker Training Program (IWTP)** provide small employers with financial support to upskill their current workforce, helping them adapt to industry changes and increase productivity.

Targeted Outreach to In-Demand Industries

The region's targeted outreach efforts focus on identifying high-growth industries using labor market intelligence tools such as **EMSI**. Sectors like healthcare, IT, and logistics are prioritized due to their high demand for skilled workers. Regular employer roundtables create opportunities for businesses in these industries to share workforce challenges and collaborate with workforce boards on tailored solutions. These discussions not only inform workforce planning but also foster stronger relationships between employers and workforce development partners.

Co-Designing Workforce Solutions

Workforce programs are developed in close collaboration with employers to ensure they are aligned with current and future job requirements. Apprenticeship programs in fields like construction and IT combine classroom instruction with hands-on experience, creating a pipeline of skilled workers ready to meet employer needs. Additionally, work-based learning opportunities, such as paid internships and job shadowing, provide participants with practical, industry-specific experience that bridges the gap between education and employment.

Integrating Employer Feedback

A continuous feedback loop with employers ensures that workforce programs remain responsive to the evolving demands of the labor market. Employers are engaged through surveys and direct consultations to provide insights into training effectiveness and identify emerging needs. By involving employers in the evaluation of training outcomes, the region can refine its programs to improve candidate performance and meet industry standards more effectively.

Services to Support Employer Engagement

The Greater New Orleans Region offers a comprehensive suite of services to employers, designed to facilitate talent acquisition, improve workforce retention, and leverage technology to enhance

recruitment efforts. These employer-centered services ensure businesses can access the skilled workforce they need to thrive in a competitive economic landscape.

Talent Acquisition Support

Employers benefit from robust talent acquisition services provided through the region's **American Job Centers (AJCs)**. These centers offer pre-screening services, ensuring employers receive candidates who align closely with their specific job requirements. By matching job seekers to positions based on qualifications, AJCs save employers time and resources in the hiring process. Workforce boards also coordinate **targeted hiring events and job fairs** tailored to high-demand sectors, creating direct connections between job seekers and employers. These events, both in-person and virtual, enable businesses to efficiently meet their staffing needs while promoting job opportunities in critical industries.

Customized Workforce Solutions

To support long-term workforce sustainability, workforce boards offer customized solutions that address employers' unique challenges. For example, **employee retention strategies** include leadership development programs and team-building workshops aimed at reducing turnover and improving workplace culture. Additionally, employers receive assistance in navigating funding opportunities such as the **Incumbent Worker Training Program (IWTP)** and Louisiana's **Rapid Response Program** for dislocated workers. These grants enable businesses to upskill their existing workforce, adapt to changing industry demands, and recover from economic disruptions.

Technology-Enhanced Services

Employers in the region have access to technology-driven tools that streamline the recruitment process. The **HiRE (Helping Individuals Reach Employment)** platform allows businesses to post job openings, search candidate resumes, and connect with qualified job seekers, all in one centralized portal. In addition, **virtual job fairs** expand employers' reach by enabling them to engage with candidates across the region without geographic limitations. These online tools enhance efficiency, broaden access to talent, and support employers in meeting their workforce needs.

Alignment with Vision and Principles

These strategies align with the State of Louisiana's vision of fostering economic mobility and resilience by ensuring that employers play an active role in workforce development. By prioritizing sector partnerships, small business engagement, and customized solutions, the region equips employers with a skilled workforce while creating opportunities for job seekers. This collaborative approach ensures that workforce programs are both demand-driven and inclusive, addressing the needs of the economy and the community alike.

2. To support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area (§ 679.560(b)(3)(ii));

Strategies to Support a Local Workforce Development System that Meets Business Needs

§ 679.560(b)(3)(ii)

The Greater New Orleans Region's local workforce development system is designed to address the evolving needs of businesses while ensuring job seekers are equipped with the skills and resources to succeed. This system prioritizes alignment between workforce training, employer demands, and regional economic goals through a combination of collaborative partnerships, tailored services, and innovative approaches.

Key Strategies to Meet Business Needs

Customized Employer Services

To address specific workforce challenges, the region offers personalized services that connect businesses with the tools and resources they need.

Business Service Representatives (BSRs): Dedicated BSRs work directly with employers to identify workforce gaps and develop tailored solutions. These include programs such as **On-the-Job Training (OJT)**, **Incumbent Worker Training (IWT)**, and **Work Experience (WEX)**, all designed to address unique training and hiring needs.

Customized Training Programs: Employers collaborate with training providers to create specialized training initiatives. For instance, **Ochsner Health** partners with local boards to develop healthcare certification programs, while IT firms like **DXC Technology** benefit from boot camps focused on cybersecurity and software development.

Sector-Based Approaches

Industry-specific strategies ensure that workforce initiatives remain aligned with regional economic priorities.

- **Targeted Sector Partnerships:** Partnerships in industries such as healthcare, construction, transportation, and IT bring together employers, training providers, and economic development organizations to co-design programs that address current and future workforce needs.
- **Rapid Response Services for Employers:** Businesses undergoing downsizing or closures receive support from **Rapid Response teams**, which help workers transition into new roles while maintaining positive employer relationships.

Talent Recruitment and Retention Support

Efforts to recruit and retain talent focus on building pipelines that align with employer needs and offering businesses seamless access to qualified candidates.

- **Pre-Screened Talent Pipelines: American Job Centers (AJCs)** provide businesses with pre-screened candidates tailored to their specific hiring criteria, reducing recruitment time and costs.
- **Job Fairs and Hiring Events:** Workforce boards coordinate industry-specific events that connect employers with job seekers in high-demand sectors like logistics, manufacturing, and professional services.

Enhanced Use of Technology

Technological tools enhance workforce development by streamlining employer engagement and expanding access to job seekers.

- **HiRE (Helping Individuals Reach Employment):** This online platform allows businesses to post job openings, search resumes, and access labor market data to refine their hiring strategies.
- **Virtual Workforce Services:** Employers can participate in virtual job fairs, conduct online interviews, and engage with training programs, broadening their reach and simplifying the recruitment process.

Support for Small and Medium-Sized Businesses (SMBs)

Recognizing the unique challenges faced by small and medium-sized businesses, the region offers targeted support to enhance their workforce capacity.

- **SMB Engagement Programs:** Workforce boards dedicate resources to assist SMBs in workforce planning, accessing training funds, and navigating labor market challenges.
- **Shared Workforce Solutions:** Collaborative programs allow SMBs to share resources like training facilities and expert instructors, reducing costs while improving access to skilled labor.

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3. To better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development (§ 679.560(b)(3)(iii));.

Coordination of Workforce Development Programs and Economic Development (§ 679.560(b)(3)(iii))

The Greater New Orleans Region prioritizes seamless integration of workforce development and economic development initiatives to ensure alignment between labor market needs and regional economic strategies.

Key Coordination Strategies

Joint Planning and Data Sharing: Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) collaborate with organizations like Greater New Orleans, Inc. (GNO, Inc.), and the Regional Planning Commission (RPC) to align workforce training with economic growth priorities.

- Shared labor market data and industry forecasts guide investments in in-demand sectors such as construction, healthcare, and IT.

Sector Partnerships: Sector-based strategies engage economic development partners and employers to co-design training programs aligned with high-growth industries. For example, the Nothshore Healthscape initiative was developed through economic development partnerships and employer feedback.

Business and Workforce Advisory Councils: Advisory councils composed of business leaders and economic development professionals provide continuous input into workforce strategies, ensuring responsiveness to shifting economic demands.

Collaborative Grants and Funding: Joint applications for state and federal funding support initiatives that simultaneously address workforce and economic development needs, such as DRA grants or technology-driven manufacturing.

4. To strengthen linkages between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs (§ 679.560(b)(3)(iv));

Strengthening Linkages Between the One-Stop Delivery System and Unemployment Insurance Programs (§ 679.560(b)(3)(iv))

The Greater New Orleans Region integrates unemployment insurance (UI) services with the one-stop delivery system to provide seamless support for jobseekers transitioning back into the workforce.

Key Strategies for Linkage Improvement

Co-Location of Services: Unemployment Insurance services are co-located within American Job Centers (AJCs) to ensure easy access to reemployment resources, such as job matching, resume workshops, and training opportunities.

Coordinated Case Management: UI claimants are assigned case managers who coordinate services across UI programs and WIOA-funded training initiatives to streamline their return to work.

Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) Programs: AJCs coordinate with RESEA to provide UI claimants with personalized career counseling, skills assessments, and connections to training programs in high-demand industries.

Technology-Enabled Support: Digital tools and virtual workshops allow UI claimants to access one-stop services remotely, broadening participation and reducing barriers.

5. To promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services (§ 679.560(b)(4));

Promoting Entrepreneurial Skills Training and Microenterprise Services (§ 679.560(b)(4))

The region emphasizes fostering entrepreneurship as a pathway to economic self-sufficiency and innovation.

Key Strategies and Services

Entrepreneurial Training Programs: Partnerships with organizations like the Urban League of Louisiana and Louisiana Small Business Development Centers (LSBDCs) provide workshops on business planning, financial management, and marketing.

Microenterprise Support: Microenterprise programs offer small business loans, grants, and technical assistance to entrepreneurs in underserved communities.

Targeted Outreach to Youth and Special Populations: Programs such as the Young Entrepreneurs Academy engage youth in hands-on entrepreneurial training, while initiatives for veterans and justice-involved individuals provide tailored support for starting small businesses.

Incubators and Coworking Spaces: Collaborations with incubators like Propeller and The Idea Village provide entrepreneurs with mentorship, networking opportunities, and shared office space to grow their businesses.

6. To implement initiatives such as incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies, career pathways initiatives, utilization of effective business intermediaries, and other business services and strategies designed to meet the needs of regional employers (§ 679.560(b)(3)(v)).

Implementing Employer-Focused Initiatives (§ 679.560(b)(3)(v))

The region implements a variety of initiatives to address employer needs and ensure a skilled and adaptable workforce.

Key Initiatives

On-the-Job Training (OJT) Programs: OJT programs subsidize wages for new hires during their training period, enabling employers to onboard candidates while reducing financial risk.

Incumbent Worker Training Programs (IWTP): Employers partner with workforce boards to upskill existing employees in fields such as advanced manufacturing, healthcare, and IT. Customized training programs are funded to address specific business needs.

Customized Training Programs: Tailored training initiatives, like those developed for Ochsner Health and DXC Technology, ensure that workers are equipped with the skills required for specific roles.

Sector Strategies and Career Pathways Initiatives: Sector strategies align training programs with employer needs, while career pathways initiatives provide clear advancement opportunities in industries like transportation and healthcare.

Utilization of Business Intermediaries: Workforce boards partner with intermediaries such as industry associations and chambers of commerce to strengthen employer engagement and facilitate workforce solutions.

Business Services and Support: Business services teams offer hiring support, pre-screening of candidates, and access to grants for workforce training, ensuring that employers can address their labor needs efficiently.

These coordinated efforts ensure that the region's workforce development system is responsive to business needs, fosters economic growth, and supports jobseekers in accessing sustainable employment opportunities.

D. Describe regional strategies that will increase apprenticeship and other work-based learning opportunities.

Regional Strategies to Increase Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning Opportunities

The Greater New Orleans Region has implemented a robust set of strategies to expand apprenticeship and work-based learning opportunities. These initiatives are designed to align with the needs of employers in high-demand industries while providing career pathways for job seekers, particularly individuals with barriers to employment. By fostering collaboration among employers, training providers, and workforce development organizations, the region is building a sustainable model for workforce development.

Key Strategies

Expansion of Registered Apprenticeships

- **Industry-Specific Programs:** The region has successfully introduced new apprenticeship programs tailored to high-demand industries, such as the Deckhand/Tankerman program for maritime transportation and apprenticeships in construction trades like pipefitting and welding.
- **Employer Partnerships:** Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) collaborate with employers to create customized apprenticeship models, ensuring alignment with specific occupational requirements.

Integration of On-the-Job Training (OJT)

- OJT programs offer businesses a cost-effective solution to train workers while ensuring they acquire the practical skills needed to perform effectively. In a study conducted by LWC, they found 92.4% of OJT participants are retained by their employers after 12 months, highlighting the program's success in fostering long-term employment.

Work-Based Learning Pathways

- **Internships and Co-Op Programs:** These opportunities allow students and recent graduates to gain hands-on experience in industries such as healthcare, IT, and advanced manufacturing. Employers collaborate with educational institutions to offer structured learning experiences.
- **Youth-Focused Initiatives:** Programs such as Jump Start 2.0 integrate dual enrollment opportunities with career and technical education, providing high school students with pathways to apprenticeships and industry-recognized credentials.

Streamlined Candidate Recruitment

- **Online Pre-Screening Tools:** The region has developed tools to simplify the apprenticeship application process, ensuring a seamless experience for candidates and reducing administrative burdens for employers.

Support for Underserved Populations

- **Second Chance Employers:** Programs are in place to support individuals reentering the workforce after incarceration, including apprenticeships that emphasize skill-building in trades like industrial maintenance and construction.
 - **Veterans and Disabled Workers:** Customized apprenticeships and transitional programs cater to the unique needs of veterans and individuals with disabilities, ensuring equitable access to work-based learning.
-

Public-Private Partnerships Driving Growth

The Greater New Orleans Region leverages a variety of public-private partnerships as critical components of its workforce and economic development strategies. These collaborations bring together government entities, private employers, educational institutions, and nonprofit organizations to address workforce needs and economic priorities. Key initiatives include the **FUEL Initiative**, which focuses on preparing workers for clean energy and advanced manufacturing roles, and the **Port of New Orleans Workforce Development Program**, which supports logistics and maritime sector workforce needs through specialized training and partnerships with Delgado Community College.

Other notable efforts, such as the **HealthCARE Connections Initiative**, tackle healthcare worker shortages by offering tuition assistance and clinical training, while the **IT Innovation Hub** develops talent pipelines for the region's growing tech sector through coding boot camps and mentorship programs. These partnerships enhance alignment between training and industry demands, leverage shared resources, drive innovation, and ensure equitable access to workforce opportunities, ultimately contributing to the region's long-term growth and competitiveness.

Future Initiatives

- **Healthcare and IT Replication:** Following the success of construction apprenticeship programs, efforts are underway to develop similar initiatives in healthcare and IT.
- **Sector-Specific Training Programs:** Advanced manufacturing and energy sectors are identified

as priority areas for apprenticeship expansion.

These strategies collectively enhance the region's capacity to meet employer needs, bridge skill gaps, and provide equitable access to quality work-based learning opportunities.

- E. Describe initiatives to shorten the time from credential to employment and address how the area will work with the education system to begin putting training opportunities in place to meet this strategy.

Initiatives to Shorten the Time from Credential to Employment

The Greater New Orleans Region is committed to reducing the time it takes for individuals to move from acquiring credentials to securing employment. By leveraging innovative training models, regional partnerships, and employer engagement, workforce development efforts focus on equipping job seekers with the skills and connections they need to enter the labor market efficiently and successfully.

Streamlined Training and Credentialing Programs

Accelerated Credentialing Programs: Programs like Jump Start 2.0 allow high school students to dual enroll in technical education courses, enabling them to graduate with industry-recognized credentials. These initiatives are designed to address skill gaps in key sectors, such as healthcare, construction, and advanced manufacturing.

Fast-Track Career Pathways: Local training providers, including Delgado Community College and the Louisiana Technical College System, offer condensed training schedules for in-demand occupations such as welders, pipefitters, and IT specialists. These programs are developed in collaboration with employers to align training outcomes with workplace requirements.

Employer-Based Training: On-the-Job Training (OJT) and customized training programs are integral to connecting job seekers with immediate employment opportunities. With 92.4% of OJT participants retained after 12 months, these programs emphasize practical skills and employer satisfaction.

Workforce and Education System Collaboration

Partnerships with K-12 and Post-Secondary Institutions: Workforce boards work with schools to integrate career exploration and technical education into curricula. By coordinating with Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) and local employers, these partnerships ensure that students graduate workforce-ready.

Industry-Driven Curriculum Design: Through advisory councils and sector partnerships, employers play a direct role in shaping training curricula. This approach ensures alignment with evolving industry needs, particularly in sectors like IT and healthcare.

Interactive Career Resources: Comprehensive Centers across the region host interactive kiosks that provide information on training programs, funding opportunities, and career pathways. These tools empower job seekers to make informed decisions and quickly transition to training or employment.

Innovative Approaches to Address Barriers

Support for Special Populations: Initiatives such as the Re-Entry Program under the Second Chance Act and partnerships with veteran services provide tailored training opportunities, ensuring equitable access to fast-track programs.

Comprehensive Support Services: Wraparound services, including childcare, transportation, and financial assistance for training materials, help job seekers overcome barriers to completing accelerated programs.

Digital Tools and Virtual Training: Online pre-screening tools, virtual classrooms, and video-based job counseling expand access to training and shorten delays caused by logistical challenges.

By fostering strong partnerships, integrating employer-driven training models, and addressing individual barriers, the region is positioned to create a seamless pipeline from credentialing to employment, supporting both job seekers and employers in achieving their goals.

- F. Describe the steps that will be taken to support the state's efforts to align and integrate education, workforce and economic development including:
- Fostering the improvement and expansion of employer-driven regional sector partnerships to increase the focus on critical in-demand occupations in key sectors that are the engine of economic growth for the state and its regions.
 - Expanding career pathway opportunities through more accelerated and work-based training and align and integrate programs of study leading to industry-recognized credentials and improved employment and earnings.
 - Expanding career services and opportunities for populations facing multiple barriers to close the gap in educational attainment and economic advancement through career pathways and improved career services and expansion of bridge programs.
 - Expanding information for employers and job seekers to access services to support the alignment and integration of economic development, workforce development and education initiatives for supporting sector partnerships and career pathways.

Steps to Support the State's Alignment and Integration of Education, Workforce, and Economic Development

The Greater New Orleans Region implements a strategic approach to integrate education, workforce development, and economic initiatives. These strategies emphasize building employer-

driven partnerships, expanding career pathways, addressing skill gaps, and improving accessibility to services for both employers and job seekers.

Fostering Employer-Driven Regional Sector Partnerships

Sector-Based Collaborations

The region engages employers through dynamic sector partnerships that streamline training and hiring efforts in high-demand industries. For example, partnerships with organizations like GNO, Inc., and local chambers of commerce focus on aligning workforce development with critical sectors such as healthcare, IT, advanced manufacturing, and transportation. These collaborations ensure workforce strategies address the needs of both employers and job seekers.

Data-Driven Decision-Making

Regional economic development entities leverage labor market intelligence, powered by platforms like Lightcast, to guide investments in training and workforce initiatives. This data-driven approach aligns workforce programs with high-demand occupations and supports strategic decision-making in high-growth sectors.

Expanding Career Pathway Opportunities

Accelerated Training and Work-Based Learning

Programs like **Jump Start 2.0** integrate dual enrollment and technical education, enabling high school students to earn industry-recognized credentials while completing their diplomas. Additionally, on-the-job training (OJT) programs and registered apprenticeships provide rapid pathways to employment in key industries like healthcare, manufacturing, and IT.

Bridge Programs

Training initiatives are paired with comprehensive support services to help individuals overcome barriers to employment. These bridge programs are designed to transition participants into high-wage, high-demand careers, particularly in sectors requiring advanced technical skills.

Addressing Skill Gaps for Special Populations

Targeted Support Services

Customized training programs are available for veterans, individuals with disabilities, and those with justice-involved backgrounds, developed in collaboration with partners like Louisiana Rehabilitation Services. Programs are tailored to meet the unique needs of these groups, ensuring equitable access to career opportunities.

Community Engagement

Efforts to connect underserved populations with job and training opportunities include outreach events like job fairs and industry-specific recruitment sessions. Digital tools and platforms also help bridge gaps by providing access to career resources and job matching services.

Improving Information Access for Employers and Job Seekers

Interactive Tools and Portals

Online platforms, including pre-screening applications and labor market dashboards, enhance transparency and accessibility for both employers and job seekers. These tools provide real-time insights into job openings, training programs, and labor market trends.

Comprehensive Career Services

American Job Centers act as centralized hubs offering a range of services, including career counseling, resume workshops, and connections to training providers. These centers ensure job seekers have the resources needed to navigate career transitions effectively.

CHAPTER 4: OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES: LOCAL

This chapter provides an overview of all the operating systems and policies within the Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs). LWDAs must incorporate key documents in the plan that describe the one-stop delivery system and the services provided by the workforce partners.

- A. Coordination of Planning Requirements: The plan will incorporate the Memorandum of Understanding and Service Integration Action Plan and include the following statements in this chapter:
 - 1. The Local Workforce Development Area **Memorandum of Understanding** provides a description of the one-stop delivery system, and other information that is essential to the establishment and operation of effective local workforce development systems as required by the WIOA Rule (20 CFR Part 678.705). The Memorandum of Understanding and any subsequent modifications is incorporated by reference into this plan.

Coordination and Planning Requirements

The **Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA 12)** representing Orleans Parish, overseen by the **New Orleans Workforce Development Board (NOWDB)** and overseeing the **American Job Center (JOB1)** has developed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and cost allocation plan with all core and mandated partners to support a seamless one stop workforce delivery system. The goal of the MOU is to develop a workforce system where core partners are co-located providing unduplicated workforce services and sharing infrastructure costs. Areas outlined in the MOU include services provided by each partner, target populations, participation requirements, site supervision, performance accountability, and cost allocation. LWDA 12's Memorandum of Understanding provides a description of the One-Stop delivery system and other information that is essential to the establishment and operation of effective local workforce development systems as required by the WIOA Rule (20 CFR Part 678.705). The Memorandum of Understanding and any subsequent modifications is incorporated by reference into this plan.

The One Stop Operator coordinates quarterly meetings with all mandated partners to review the MOU and cost allocation plan. The core and mandated partners include organizations administering the following programs:

- WIOA Title Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth
- Wagner Peyser
- Job Corps
- Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Programs
- Adult Education and Literacy Activities
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Trade Adjustment Assistance
- Carl Perkins Career & Technical Education
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Community Services Block Grants (CSBG)
- Jobs for Veterans
- Senior Community Service Employment Activities
- Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
- State Unemployment Compensation Program
- Second Chance Act Programs

2. The Local Workforce Development Area **Service Integration Action Plan** provides a description of how local workforce partners will align and coordinate services as required by the State of Louisiana Integrated Service Delivery Policy (OWD 2-23.2). The Service Integration Action Plan and any subsequent modifications is incorporated by reference into this plan.

LWDA 12's Service Integration Action Plan provides a description of how local workforce partners will align and coordinate services as required by the State of Louisiana Integrated Service Delivery Policy (OWD 2-23.1). The Service Integration Action Plan and any subsequent modifications is incorporated by reference into this plan.

- B. Provide information regarding the use of technology in the one-stop delivery system, including a

description of:

1. How the workforce centers are implementing and transitioning to an integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information system for programs carried out under WIOA (§ 679.560(b)(20)).

Use of Technology

The LWDA 12 has strategically integrated technology to optimize its intake, case management, and service delivery processes, aligning with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requirements. These efforts have significantly enhanced accessibility, efficiency, and client outcomes, making technology a cornerstone of LWDA 12's operations.

The HiRE Platform: A Centralized Solution

At the heart of LWDA 12's technology framework is the **HiRE (Helping Individuals Reach Employment)** platform, managed by the Louisiana Workforce Commission. This comprehensive system serves as a centralized hub for job seekers, employers, and workforce staff, streamlining operations and ensuring seamless service delivery.

- **For Job Seekers:** HiRE offers a user-friendly interface to research in-demand occupations, upload résumés, apply for jobs, and access training opportunities.
 - **For Employers:** The platform facilitates job postings, candidate searches, and recruitment coordination, simplifying the hiring process.
 - **For Workforce Staff:** HiRE's integrated tools support eligibility determination, case management, program tracking, and outcome reporting, ensuring compliance with WIOA standards while boosting operational efficiency.
-

Adapting to Virtual Needs

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated LWDA 12's transition to virtual service delivery. The HiRE platform became a vital tool for remote intake, eligibility determination, and case management. To complement these efforts, additional digital tools were adopted:

- **Formsite and Adobe Software:** These solutions enable the secure, electronic submission of documents and e-signatures, reducing the need for in-person visits.
 - **Virtual Triage Forms:** Clients can now submit intake forms remotely, streamlining the onboarding process.
 - **Text Messaging Integration:** Outreach and retention efforts have been enhanced with text messaging, ensuring timely communication with participants.
-

Innovative Tools for Enhanced Client Support

In addition to leveraging traditional digital tools, LWDA 12 has introduced cutting-edge technologies to improve client engagement and outcomes:

- **Virtual Reality (VR):** VR headsets have been incorporated into the work readiness curriculum, providing participants with immersive experiences to practice and improve workplace skills in a simulated environment.
 - **Virtual HiSET Preparation:** Youth participants preparing for their HiSET exams now have access to fully virtual classes, removing barriers to education and enabling greater flexibility.
-

Commitment to Continuous Innovation

LWDA 12 remains steadfast in its pursuit of innovative solutions to better serve the community. By embracing new technologies and best practices, the organization ensures that its services are not only effective but also fiscally responsible and client-centered.

This forward-thinking approach underscores LWDA 12's dedication to transforming its one-stop delivery system into a model of accessibility, efficiency, and innovation, providing meaningful support for job seekers, employers, and workforce staff alike.

2. 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 (§ 679.560(b)(5)(ii)).

Facilitate Access to Services

The Local Workforce Development Board is dedicated to ensuring equitable access to the one-stop delivery system for all clients, including individuals in remote or underserved areas. By leveraging technology and community partnerships, the Board bridges geographic and digital divides, enabling job seekers and employers to connect with critical workforce services.

Core Technology Components:

HiRE Platform: The centralized hub for job seekers, employers, and workforce staff, offering tools for eligibility determination, program tracking, and reporting.

Virtual Tools: The implementation of platforms like Formsite, Adobe, and virtual triage forms facilitates remote document submission and intake, ensuring service continuity.

Advanced Technologies: Virtual Reality (VR) is used to simulate workplace scenarios for skill development, and virtual HiSET preparation courses remove barriers to education.

Partnerships to Enhance Accessibility

Recognizing that not all individuals have reliable internet or technology at home, the Local Board has partnered with public libraries, community organizations, and other local hubs. These partnerships provide access to computers, internet services, and trained staff who can assist clients in navigating

the HiRE platform and other virtual tools.

The workforce staff also provide **remote consultations and case management services**, ensuring clients in remote areas receive personalized support without needing to travel long distances.

Innovative Tools for Remote Engagement

The Local Board has integrated a range of technologies to simplify and expand remote service delivery:

- **Formsite and Adobe Software:** These tools enable clients to securely submit required documents electronically, reducing the need for in-person visits.
- **Online Training and Certification Programs:** Virtual training opportunities allow clients to gain in-demand skills and credentials, enhancing their employability from anywhere.

Future Initiatives to Strengthen Remote Access

Looking ahead, the Local Board is committed to advancing remote service delivery by:

- **Investing in Mobile-Friendly Platforms:** Ensuring that services are easily accessible on smartphones and tablets.
- **Exploring Chatbot Technology:** Introducing real-time virtual assistance to address client questions and provide immediate support.
- **Addressing Digital Equity Challenges:** Collaborating with local stakeholders to expand access to affordable internet and technology for underserved communities.

A Commitment to Inclusive Service Delivery

Through these initiatives, the Local Board aims to ensure that the one-stop delivery system remains inclusive, effective, and accessible for all. By harnessing technology and fostering community collaboration, the Board continues to eliminate barriers, bringing workforce services to even the most remote and underserved areas.

- C. Describe how the Local Board will support the strategies identified in the Combined State Plan and work with entities carrying out core programs, including a description of (§679.560(b)(1)(ii)):
1. Expanding access to employment, training, education and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment (§ 679.560(b)(2)(i));
 - Scaling up the use of Integrated Education and Training models to help adults get their HISET and work on other basic skills and English language acquisition while earning credential and industry-recognized credentials that lead to in-demand occupations;
 - Using the insights and lessons learned from successful dual credit programs to scale up similar efforts in other sectors and regions;
 - Determining the most effective marketing methods and messages for informing college and university students about Prior Learning Assessments;
 - Investigating how targeted marketing can identify segments of the labor force, such as mature workers and the underemployed, who may not require extensive education or training to qualify for jobs in high demand occupations;

Supporting Strategies Identified in the Combined State Plan

Expanding Access to Employment, Training, Education, and Supportive Services

The NOWDB recognizes the importance of addressing systemic barriers that limit access to employment, training, and education opportunities. A comprehensive approach is employed to ensure that services reach individuals who need them most, especially those facing significant challenges to workforce entry or career advancement.

Scaling Up Integrated Education and Training Models

NOWDB is scaling up Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs that combine foundational skills development, such as HSET preparation and English language acquisition, with industry-recognized credentialing. These programs equip participants with the dual competencies of workplace readiness and technical expertise, fostering seamless transitions into in-demand occupations. Partnerships with local training providers and educational institutions ensure that IET programs are accessible and tailored to meet the needs of both jobseekers and employers.

Using Insights from Dual Credit Programs

Dual credit programs, which enable students to earn both high school and college credits simultaneously, have proven effective in certain sectors. NOWDB is actively exploring ways to expand these models into additional industries, such as healthcare, technology, and advanced manufacturing, to increase training efficiency and outcomes.

Determining Effective Marketing for Prior Learning Assessments

Recognizing the untapped potential of prior learning assessments, the Board is working to develop targeted marketing campaigns aimed at informing college and university students about how PLAs can accelerate their educational and career pathways. This effort involves close collaboration with academic institutions to identify best practices in communication and outreach.

Investigating Targeted Marketing for Labor Force Segments

To optimize workforce participation, the Board is identifying underemployed groups, mature workers, and individuals with partial qualifications who require minimal training to become job-ready for high-demand roles. Through data-driven strategies, NOWDB tailors its outreach to connect these groups with suitable opportunities and resources. Public libraries are vital community hubs, and NOWDB leverages these locations to extend the reach of employment and training services. By partnering with New Orleans Public Libraries, the Board ensures that resources are accessible to individuals in geographically underserved areas. Active participation in job fairs, community events, and local partnerships enhances public awareness of workforce services. These efforts are designed to create direct connections between jobseekers, training opportunities, and employers.

-
2. Facilitating the development of career pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs (§ 679.560(b)(2)(ii)); and

Facilitating the Development of Career Pathways and Co-Enrollment

To establish robust career pathways and promote co-enrollment in core programs, NOWDB employs innovative strategies and collaborative frameworks. These initiatives aim to ensure that every

participant has access to comprehensive resources, enabling them to achieve sustainable employment and career growth.

NOWDB's identification of seven high-growth industries (healthcare, advanced manufacturing, green infrastructure, technology, hospitality, film and digital media, and transportation) serves as the foundation for its workforce strategies. Collaborations with major employers in these sectors provide entry-level positions and career progression opportunities for individuals overcoming significant barriers. Specialized initiatives target historically underserved groups, offering tailored programs and resources to meet their unique needs. A core strength of the JOB1 Center is its integration of multiple service providers under one roof. This co-location fosters a streamlined, holistic service delivery model that eliminates redundancy and ensures participants can easily access diverse resources.

The Board's commitment to aligning educational systems with workforce demands is exemplified through its partnerships with K-12 institutions and post-secondary organizations. Efforts include designing curricula that address industry needs and providing career exploration programs to students at critical decision-making points. To ensure efficiency and effectiveness, JOB1 staff undergo comprehensive cross-training to deliver integrated services across all program areas. This training enables staff to address the multi-faceted needs of participants seamlessly.

3. Improving access to activities leading to a recognized post-secondary credential (including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable, and stackable) (§ 679.560(b)(2)(iii)).

Improving Access to Activities Leading to Recognized Post-Secondary Credentials

NOWDB's focus on credential attainment is integral to its mission of preparing a competitive workforce equipped with industry-recognized qualifications. These efforts are designed to address current labor market needs while anticipating future demands.

Collaborations with entities such as Delgado Community College, Total Community Action, and specialized training organizations ensure that participants have access to high-quality programs aligned with employer expectations. The Board actively engages with training providers to develop curricula that address skills gaps. By integrating credential attainment into all major training initiatives, NOWDB guarantees that participants acquire qualifications that enhance their employability and career potential. Credentials offered are portable and stackable, allowing for continuous skill-building and professional growth.

Engaging directly with employers, the Board identifies industry-specific training requirements and designs programs to meet these needs. Customized training partnerships with organizations such as Ochsner Health System and LCMC Health have led to the creation of targeted certification programs. NOWDB's comprehensive approach aligns educational pathways with workforce strategies to ensure participants are well-prepared for roles in high-growth industries. This integration minimizes the skills gap and supports long-term career success.

By implementing these targeted strategies and fostering collaborative partnerships, NOWDB is paving the way for an inclusive, responsive workforce development system. These efforts ensure

that all residents of New Orleans have equitable access to resources that support meaningful, sustainable employment.

D. Provide information regarding the local coordination strategies with state (including the Combined State Plan), regional and local partners to enhance services and avoid duplication of activities, including a description of:

1. Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth employment and training activities under WIOA Title I (§ 679.560(b)(6)).

Employment and Training Activities Under WIOA Title I

The JOB1 Business and Career Solutions Center provides a comprehensive suite of employment and training services designed to eliminate barriers to employment and empower participants to achieve self-sustaining wages. These services align with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I requirements and the priorities outlined in the Combined State Plan, ensuring that job seekers receive targeted, demand-driven support tailored to their needs and the regional labor market.

Assessment and Tailored Service Delivery

Each participant undergoes an initial assessment to evaluate job readiness and develop a personalized roadmap to success. Based on the assessment, individuals are categorized as Adults or Dislocated Workers and receive a range of services, including individualized employment plans, career planning, and counseling. This triage process ensures that participants are matched with the most appropriate resources to help them achieve their career goals.

The integration of these activities creates a participant-centered system that combines tools, training opportunities, and career counseling to support skill development and credential attainment. This comprehensive approach aligns directly with the Combined State Plan's emphasis on career pathways and accessible service delivery.

Employment and Training Services

JOB1's employment and training services are strategically targeted toward high-demand industries, as identified through labor market analyses. The goal is to align workforce development initiatives with employer needs and regional economic priorities. Key services include:

- **Individual Training Accounts (ITAs):** ITAs provide participants with access to occupational skills training programs listed on the statewide Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). These programs are designed to equip participants with industry-recognized certifications and skills needed for high-growth occupations, supporting the State Plan's goal of fostering training investments that lead to sustainable employment and career advancement.
- **On-the-Job Training (OJT):** JOB1 collaborates with local employers to deliver hands-on, experiential training that meets workforce needs while providing participants with practical skills in real-world settings.
- **Customized Training:** Programs developed in partnership with employers address specific skill gaps, ensuring that training aligns with market demands and directly contributes to regional

economic growth.

- **Work Experience:** For individuals with limited employment history, subsidized work experiences offer opportunities to build a work record, develop employability skills, and transition into permanent employment.
- **Supportive Services:** JOB1 addresses barriers to participation by offering resources such as transportation assistance and childcare, ensuring equitable access to training and employment opportunities.
- **Career Exploration and Online Training Tools:** Participants can access tools such as O*Net for career exploration, Alison for free online certifications, and The Academy for 24-hour online training in more than 100 industries.
- **Customized Job Fairs:** Tailored hiring events connect participants with employers in targeted industries, addressing immediate workforce gaps while supporting participant placement in sustainable careers.

Alignment with the Combined State Plan

JOB1's activities are deeply aligned with the objectives of the Combined State Plan, ensuring that training investments and service delivery systems address the needs of both job seekers and employers.

The provision of ITAs and the development of individualized employment plans reflect the State Plan's focus on creating clear career pathways that lead to family-sustaining wages and long-term upward mobility. The use of OJT and customized training programs further supports the Plan's emphasis on employer-driven workforce solutions, providing hands-on learning opportunities that directly meet market demands.

Additionally, JOB1's integration of services with Wagner-Peyser and the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) exemplifies the State Plan's vision of a seamless, cohesive service delivery system. Regular performance monitoring and data-driven decision-making ensure transparency and continuous improvement, aligning with the Plan's requirement for accountability and effective resource allocation.

Conclusion

The JOB1 Business and Career Solutions Center exemplifies a holistic approach to workforce development, offering robust employment and training services that align with WIOA Title I and the Combined State Plan. By integrating ITAs, OJT, supportive services, and customized training into its broader strategy, JOB1 prepares participants for success in high-demand industries while addressing regional economic priorities. This alignment positions JOB1 as a critical partner in advancing workforce development goals for both the region and the state.

2. Adult education and literacy activities under WIOA Title II. This description must include how the Local Board 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 (§ 679.560(b)(12)).

The (NOWDB) includes a representative of eligible providers administering adult education and literacy activities under Title II, which include representatives of local education agencies and of community-based organizations with demonstrated experience and expertise in addressing the education or training needs of individuals with barriers to employment, in accordance with WIOA

sec. 107(C)(i-iii) Local Workforce Development Boards. The Board will plan to align the Title II adult education providers in Orleans Parish, which will include the mapping of services provided and their connection to the workforce. Additionally, the Board will participate in the review of applications submitted for Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act funding to ensure that the goals outlined in the applications are aligned to the goals and objectives of the Local Workforce Development Board's regional/local plan.

The Board currently holds representation from an institution of higher education, Delgado Community College, which also serves as a core-mandated adult literacy partner for JOB1. As a partner, Delgado Community College receives direct participant referrals from JOB1 because of its comprehensive assessments, individual employment planning, career planning and/or counseling. Additional Title II Funded Programs referred by JOB1 for adult education and literacy activities include:

- Delgado Community College Adult Education Program
- YMCA Educational Services
- Youth Empowerment Project/ New Orleans Providing Literacy to All Youth (NOPLAY)
- Catholic Charities

Other community partner organizations and institutions providing adult education and/or literacy activities:

- JOB1 Business and Career Solutions Center
- New Orleans Job Corps Center
- New Orleans Public Library

3. Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.) services (§ 679.560(b)(11)).

Wagner-Peyser Act Services Integration

The New Orleans Workforce Development Board (NOWDB) integrates Wagner-Peyser Act services into its workforce development system through the JOB1 Business and Career Solutions Center. This collaboration ensures a streamlined service delivery model that aligns with the Combined State Plan and enhances access for job seekers and employers. By combining Wagner-Peyser services with WIOA Title I programs, the local system avoids duplication, promotes efficiency, and delivers comprehensive support tailored to individual and regional needs.

Wagner-Peyser services include job search assistance, job placement support, and career guidance. These services are accessible through self-service options via the HiRE (Helping Individuals Reach Employment) platform, which allows job seekers to independently access job listings, research industries, and explore training opportunities. For individuals requiring additional support, JOB1 staff provide personalized assistance, such as résumé preparation, career counseling, and job matching, to help participants achieve their employment goals.

Reemployment services are a critical component of Wagner-Peyser offerings, targeting individuals

receiving unemployment insurance to facilitate their rapid return to the workforce. These efforts include tailored job search strategies and connections to training programs that align with local labor market demands.

Coordination with Regional and State Partners

NOWDB collaborates with the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) to ensure Wagner-Peyser services are seamlessly integrated with WIOA programs and other workforce initiatives. The HiRE platform serves as a shared data system, allowing for effective tracking and reporting of services provided to job seekers and employers. Wagner-Peyser staff are co-located within the JOB1 center, creating a unified service delivery environment that simplifies access for participants and strengthens coordination between programs.

Partnerships with state and regional economic development organizations further enhance service alignment. These collaborations focus on high-demand industries identified in the Combined State Plan, such as healthcare, technology, and advanced manufacturing. By aligning services with regional economic priorities, NOWDB ensures that job seekers are connected to sustainable employment opportunities and that employers have access to a skilled workforce.

Alignment with the Combined State Plan

The integration of Wagner-Peyser services reflects the priorities of the Combined State Plan, promoting economic growth, enhancing accessibility, and driving measurable workforce outcomes. By tailoring services to meet the needs of job seekers and employers, NOWDB supports state goals of increasing employment rates, fostering skill development, and driving wage growth. Regular evaluations of service delivery ensure continuous improvement and accountability, enabling Wagner-Peyser services to effectively contribute to the region's economic and workforce development.

Through these efforts, NOWDB demonstrates its commitment to building a responsive, efficient, and equitable workforce system that leverages Wagner-Peyser Act services to meet the evolving needs of the community.

4. Vocational rehabilitation service activities under WIOA Title IV (§ 679.560(b)(13)).

Vocational Rehabilitation Services under WIOA Title IV

The NOWDB collaborates with Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) to ensure comprehensive employment and training opportunities for individuals with disabilities. This partnership supports the integration of vocational rehabilitation services into the broader workforce development system and aligns with the goals of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title IV.

Coordination with Louisiana Rehabilitation Services

LRS staff have a regular presence at the JOB1 Business and Career Solutions Center (local AJC) to provide direct support to individuals with disabilities. Due to LRS's staffing concerns, they are not able to have a staff permanently co-located at JOB1. LRS has scheduled days at the AJC and staff are present at all employment and outreach events hosted by JOB1. Services provided by LRS staff

include vocational rehabilitation assessments, career counseling, and individualized employment planning. Additionally, the JOB1 team has a direct contract with LRS to schedule a participant for services whenever needed. By coordinating with LRS, the Board ensures that individuals with disabilities receive tailored support to overcome employment barriers and access training opportunities that align with labor market demands.

Training and Support for Center Staff

To improve service delivery, LRS provides regular training for JOB1 staff on strategies for effectively working with individuals with disabilities. This training ensures that staff are well-equipped to address the unique challenges faced by this population and provide high-quality support. Additionally, the JOB1 center maintains adaptive equipment to facilitate job searches, such as screen readers, magnifiers, and access to Louisiana Relay services for individuals with hearing or speech impairments.

Accessibility and Compliance

The Board conducts annual assessments of the physical and programmatic accessibility of the JOB1 center to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and WIOA Section 188 requirements. This includes ensuring that facilities are barrier-free and that program materials are available in accessible formats.

Community Resource Integration

A comprehensive resource guide has been developed to connect individuals with disabilities to community services and additional support networks. Partnerships with local mental health organizations and rehabilitation offices further enhance the ability to serve this population, fostering a holistic approach to workforce development.

By integrating vocational rehabilitation services with the overall workforce system, the NOWDB ensures equitable access to employment and training for individuals with disabilities, contributing to the broader goals of inclusion and workforce participation outlined in the Combined State Plan

5. Relevant secondary and post-secondary education programs and activities with education and workforce investment activities (§ 679.560(b)(9)).

Relevant Secondary and Postsecondary Education Programs and Activities

The NOWDB is committed to strengthening coordination and alignment between secondary, post-secondary education programs, and workforce investment activities to ensure a seamless pipeline for career readiness and advancement. A key element of this strategy is the partnership with Delgado Community College, which serves as a primary hub for postsecondary workforce development initiatives. Delgado offers a variety of programs designed to prepare students for high-demand industries and emerging sectors, aligning with labor market trends identified in the regional and state workforce plans.

Coordination with Secondary Education Programs: The Board actively collaborates with local

secondary education institutions to create pathways for students to transition smoothly into post-secondary education or the workforce. This includes initiatives to expand career and technical education (CTE) programs and dual enrollment opportunities, enabling high school students to earn industry-recognized certifications or college credits before graduation.

Expanded Partnerships with Delgado Community College: The partnership with Delgado is focused on several critical areas:

- **Youth Opportunities Skill Training Program:** This program aims to serve Orleans Parish youth, providing targeted training that addresses local workforce needs.
- **Experiential Learning Opportunities:** Delgado collaborates with JOB1 to provide students with access to on-the-job training, internships, and work-based learning opportunities that align with their training programs. This practical experience enhances their readiness for the labor market.
- **Customized and Apprenticeship Training Programs:** Delgado supports efforts to expand and refine apprenticeship programs tailored to local industry requirements, ensuring participants gain relevant skills and direct employment pathways.
- **Industry-Driven Curriculum Design:** Through partnerships with local employers and economic development agencies, Delgado continually updates its curricula to reflect the evolving demands of industries such as healthcare, advanced manufacturing, and information technology.

Alignment with the State Plan: These efforts are intricately aligned with Louisiana’s Combined State Plan, emphasizing demand-driven education and workforce systems. The collaboration supports the development of career pathways that lead to family-sustaining wages and upward mobility. It also integrates secondary and post-secondary strategies, ensuring education initiatives are tied to workforce outcomes.

Support from Additional Educational Partners: The Board’s network extends to other local education and training providers, including public schools, technical colleges, and community organizations. These partnerships help create a holistic approach to education and workforce development, particularly for underserved populations.

Conclusion:

By fostering robust connections between secondary and post-secondary education programs and aligning these with workforce investment strategies, the New Orleans Workforce Development Board ensures that job seekers have access to the education and training necessary to thrive in high-demand careers. This integrated approach supports a more equitable and effective workforce system, meeting both local employer needs and state workforce goals.

6. How the Local Board will support the state strategies identified under § 676.105 and work with the entities carrying out core programs and other workforce development programs, including programs of study and career pathway programs under the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.) to support service alignment and needs identified in regional or local level assessments including the Perkins Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (§ 679.560(b)(1)(ii)).

Alignment with State Strategies under § 676.105

The NOWDB actively supports the state strategies identified in § 676.105, aligning its efforts with Louisiana's Combined State Plan. The Board emphasizes coordination with core program entities, career and technical education providers under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act, and other workforce development partners to enhance service alignment and address regional workforce needs.

Integration with Core Workforce Development Programs

NOWDB collaborates closely with entities responsible for implementing core workforce development programs, including WIOA Title I (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth), Title II (Adult Education and Literacy), Title III (Wagner-Peyser Act services), and Title IV (Vocational Rehabilitation). This integrated approach ensures a seamless delivery system that maximizes resources, avoids duplication, and provides participants with comprehensive access to employment and training services.

- **Adult Education and Literacy Integration:** The Board includes representatives of adult education providers in Orleans Parish to map services and align them with workforce development objectives. The Board reviews applications for Adult Education and Family Literacy Act funding to ensure alignment with its regional plan .
- **Vocational Rehabilitation Services:** Coordination with Vocational Rehabilitation partners ensures individuals with disabilities receive tailored services, including career counseling, skills training, and job placement, promoting equitable workforce participation .

Support for Career Pathways and Perkins Act Goals

NOWDB actively supports the development of career pathways in high-demand industries, as identified in Louisiana's Combined State Plan. Key sectors include healthcare, advanced manufacturing, technology, construction, and logistics. Efforts to align K-12, post-secondary, and workforce pathways are reinforced through partnerships with local education agencies and training providers.

- **Career Pathways Development:** The Board collaborates with Delgado Community College and YouthForce NOLA to create opportunities for high school students to gain industry-recognized credentials, aligning educational initiatives with regional labor market demands.
- **Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA):** The Board contributes to Perkins Comprehensive Local Needs Assessments, ensuring workforce development initiatives address skills gaps and meet the needs of employers and students. This collaboration ensures the alignment of career and technical education programs with regional economic priorities.

Enhancing Service Alignment

The Board's strategies to enhance service alignment include:

- **Data-Driven Planning:** Utilizing labor market information and performance data, the Board identifies priority industries and aligns its training investments with high-growth sectors.
- **Coordination through MOUs:** Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with mandated partners, including Perkins Act entities, outline roles, responsibilities, and cost-sharing agreements. Quarterly meetings review progress, ensuring accountability and alignment.

Conclusion

Through robust partnerships with core program providers, career and technical education stakeholders, and regional employers, NOWDB ensures that its workforce strategies align with state priorities and effectively address local and regional workforce needs. These efforts contribute to a well-coordinated, high-impact system that supports career readiness and economic growth.

7. Provide a copy of the local supportive service policies and describe how the Local Board will coordinate the provision of transportation and other appropriate supportive services in the local area (§ 679.560(b) (10)) and include information on the supportive services by each local program as appropriate.

Supportive Services Policy and Coordination

Supportive Services Policy and Coordination

The JOB1 Business and Career Solutions Center, under the oversight of the NOWDB, is committed to addressing barriers to employment and training through comprehensive supportive services. These services are provided in compliance with the Supportive Services SOP and are integral to the success of participants under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

Local Supportive Services Policy

The **Supportive Services Policy** establishes guidelines for providing assistance to individuals who need help overcoming obstacles to completing training or securing sustainable employment. These services include but are not limited to transportation, childcare, housing support, utility assistance, and access to necessary work-related tools or uniforms.

Participants' eligibility and needs are assessed on an individual basis, ensuring resources are allocated effectively. Documentation supporting these services, such as receipts or self-attestation forms, is maintained in compliance with the SOP's procedural guidelines.

Types of Supportive Services Offered

The range of supportive services aligns with the directives outlined in the policy and includes the following:

- **Transportation Assistance:** Bus tokens, transit passes, mileage reimbursement, and ride-share services as a last resort.
- **Childcare Assistance:** Financial support for licensed childcare providers to facilitate participants' engagement in workforce activities.
- **Emergency Housing Assistance:** One-time payments for rent, deposits, or eviction fees to ensure housing stability.
- **Utility Assistance:** Coverage of utility disconnection notices for essential services like water, gas,

and electricity.

- **Uniforms and Work Tools:** Funding for employment-related attire, tools, and equipment, including items such as eyeglasses.
 - **Books and Educational Supplies:** Support for materials required for training programs, as verified through syllabi or program descriptions.
 - **Virtual Learning Technology:** Provision of laptops and Wi-Fi access for participants in training programs requiring these resources.
 - **License Fees and Testing:** Coverage for certification or licensing costs necessary for employment.
 - **Needs-Related Payments:** Daily financial assistance for participants enrolled in approved training programs.
-

Coordination of Supportive Services

The NOWDB is committed to delivering supportive services through effective collaboration with WIOA core partners and community organizations. This coordinated approach ensures that participants receive the assistance they need to overcome barriers and achieve their employment and training goals.

Support for WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs

Participants in the WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs receive services specifically designed to address common challenges. These include transportation assistance, training-related expenses, and other resources that enable individuals to sustain their engagement in workforce development activities and pursue sustainable career opportunities.

Targeted Services for WIOA Youth Program

The WIOA Youth Program provides specialized support for young participants. Services such as incentives, stipends, and additional resources are tailored to promote educational success and career readiness. These efforts are particularly impactful for out-of-school youth, helping them overcome unique challenges and transition successfully into the workforce.

Resources for Adult Education and Literacy Participants

To address barriers related to low literacy or limited English proficiency, NOWDB collaborates with Adult Education and Literacy Programs. Supportive services are provided to enhance access to training and educational opportunities, ensuring participants have the tools they need to succeed in their chosen career paths.

Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities

NOWDB works with Vocational Rehabilitation Services to ensure individuals with disabilities have access to necessary accommodations and assistive technologies. Specialized resources, including job coaching and adaptive tools, help participants with disabilities fully engage in workforce development programs and achieve meaningful employment outcomes.

Leveraging Technology and Local Partnerships

NOWDB maximizes the use of technology platforms like **HiRE** to streamline service delivery and improve accessibility. Partnerships with community organizations further enhance these efforts, ensuring equitable access to supportive services for all participants, regardless of their geographic or economic circumstances.

Through this multi-faceted and collaborative approach, NOWDB ensures that supportive services are effectively coordinated and delivered, fostering an inclusive and responsive workforce development system.

Policy Compliance and Transparency

The LWDA 12 ensures that supportive services are delivered effectively, equitably, and in full compliance with established guidelines. The following measures reflect the organization's commitment to policy adherence and transparency.

Reasonable and Necessary Supportive Services

Supportive services are provided only when they are determined to be reasonable and necessary for addressing participants' specific barriers to training or employment. Costs associated with these services must align directly with program requirements and objectives, ensuring that resources are utilized efficiently to support participants' success.

Compliance with Documentation Standards

LWDA 12 enforces strict documentation standards to maintain transparency and accountability. All requests for supportive services must include required forms, such as justification case notes, receipts, and additional substantiating records as specified in the Supportive Services SOP. This rigorous process ensures a clear audit trail and adherence to policy requirements.

Multi-Level Review and Approval Process

A comprehensive, multi-level review process is integral to maintaining the integrity of supportive services. Each request undergoes thorough evaluation by multiple levels of oversight to ensure adherence to program guidelines. This layered approval system promotes accountability, prevents misuse of resources, and guarantees that services are appropriately tailored to participants' needs.

By adhering to these principles, LWDA 12 demonstrates its commitment to delivering supportive services in a transparent, efficient, and compliant manner. This approach strengthens the workforce development system and builds trust among participants, staff, and stakeholders.

Conclusion

Through a well-defined supportive services policy and robust coordination with WIOA partners, NOWDB ensures participants receive the resources needed to overcome barriers to employment and training. This strategic approach aligns supportive services with local economic priorities, fostering

an inclusive and responsive workforce development system.

- E. Provide a description of how the local area will provide adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities including:
1. A description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area (§ 679.560(b)(6)).

Description and Assessment of WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker Services in the New Orleans Local Area

The JOB1 Business and Career Solutions Center plays a critical role in delivering employment and training services for adults and dislocated workers in the New Orleans area. These services, guided by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), aim to align job seeker skills and credentials with the needs of local employers. By offering a variety of programs and leveraging an integrated service delivery model, JOB1 ensures that individuals receive personalized support to achieve self-sufficiency and career advancement.

Service Delivery Approach

The service delivery at JOB1 is built on an integrated triage-service delivery model that emphasizes efficiency and customization. The approach is driven by three specialized teams:

Career Development Team: This team supports job seekers in building the skills required for gainful employment. They assist with job searches, resume preparation, and interview skills, while also creating individualized employment plans and conducting assessments to identify skill gaps.

Recruitment and Placement Team: Acting as a bridge between job seekers and employers, this team coordinates with businesses to match candidates with open positions that align with their qualifications and career goals.

Business Services Team: Dedicated to employer engagement, this team collaborates with regional businesses to identify workforce needs, design strategic solutions, and promote the programs available through JOB1.

The Center also utilizes the HiRE (Helping Individuals Reach Employment) technology platform, which streamlines service delivery by enabling real-time tracking of activities, outcomes, and program eligibility. This ensures that every job seeker receives consistent and effective support, whether accessing services in-person or virtually.

Employment and Training Activities

JOB1 offers an extensive range of employment and training programs designed to meet the diverse needs of job seekers. Comprehensive assessments are conducted to evaluate each participant's readiness for employment, followed by tailored recommendations for training and career development. Key activities include:

- Workforce readiness workshops on topics such as resume writing, job search strategies, interviewing, and financial literacy.

- Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) that fund occupational skills training programs, providing certifications in high-demand fields.
- On-the-job training opportunities where participants gain hands-on experience while employed.
- Work experience placements for individuals with limited employment history, including those facing significant barriers such as disabilities or prior incarceration.
- Training and career services are further enriched through workshops on foundational skills, computer literacy, and business basics, offered in partnership with Title II providers.

Employer-Focused Services

The JOB1 Center also prioritizes employer engagement to ensure its services meet the needs of local businesses. Through initiatives like customized recruitment, job fairs, and on-the-job training, the Center directly supports workforce development in the region. The Business Services Team collaborates with employers to address workforce gaps, design training programs, and provide solutions tailored to specific industries.

The focus on high-demand industries—such as healthcare, advanced manufacturing, hospitality, technology, and transportation—ensures that job seekers are trained in fields that offer sustainable career pathways. This alignment with market demand positions JOB1 as a vital resource for both employers and job seekers.

Strengths and Accessibility

JOB1's integrated service delivery model ensures that job seekers receive a comprehensive and seamless experience. Services are accessible both in-person and virtually, enabling individuals to participate regardless of logistical or geographic barriers. The Center's focus on addressing systemic challenges, such as lack of transportation and childcare, further enhances its ability to serve underserved populations.

By fostering strong partnerships with businesses, training providers, and community organizations, JOB1 maintains a dynamic and responsive workforce development system. Cross-trained staff, state-of-the-art technology, and a commitment to continuous improvement ensure that the Center remains adaptive to the evolving needs of the labor market.

Assessment

The coordinated efforts at JOB1 effectively bridge the gap between job seekers and employers, creating a robust system that promotes self-sufficiency and economic growth. The focus on high-demand industries, employer engagement, and personalized support underscores the Center's role as a key driver of workforce development in New Orleans. While challenges such as funding limitations and systemic barriers persist, JOB1's proactive approach ensures it continues to meet the needs of the local community.

2. A description of how the Local Board will coordinate workforce development activities carried out in the local area with statewide rapid response activities (§ 679.560(b)(7)).

Coordination of Workforce Development Activities with Statewide Rapid Response

Efforts

To expedite the reemployment of dislocated workers, the Board is committed to providing professional and timely support through the state's Rapid Response activities. In collaboration with the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) and other partner agencies, the Board ensures that employees affected by layoffs due to company closures or downsizing receive the necessary resources to reenter the labor market swiftly. The Rapid Response Team comprises representatives from the LWC Rapid Response Unit, the JOB1 Business and Career Solutions Center, and the LWC Unemployment Insurance Unit, offering assistance through staff support, informational pamphlets, and brochures.

The Board's primary objective is to deliver these services directly to affected employees before their separation date by:

- **Engaging employers' representatives** to plan and coordinate Rapid Response activities.
- **Providing on-site services**, including orientations, job readiness workshops, and job matching or referral assistance.
- **Maintaining ongoing support** for dislocated workers post-layoff through the JOB1 Business and Career Solutions Center to address their needs and facilitate a seamless transition back to employment.

This proactive approach ensures that dislocated workers are equipped with the tools and resources required to navigate their career transitions effectively.

- F. Provide a description of how the local area will provide youth activities including:
1. A description and assessment of the type and availability of youth workforce investment activities in the local area, including activities for youth who are individuals with disabilities, which must include an identification of successful models of such activities (§ 679.560(b)(8)).

Description and Assessment of Youth Workforce Investment Activities, Including for Youth with Disabilities

The WIOA Youth program aims to provide a wide range of comprehensive services to support both in-school and out-of-school youth in achieving academic and employment success. These services address unique challenges and barriers, offering individualized support through the development of Individual Service Strategies (ISS) tailored to each participant's needs, skills, and career goals.

Core Activities Available: The JOB1 YouthWork Career Center (YCC) offers the 14 WIOA-required program elements, forming the foundation for service delivery. These include:

- **Academic Support:** Tutoring, study skills training, and alternative secondary school programs.
- **Work-Based Learning:** Paid and unpaid work experience, summer employment opportunities, and internships.
- **Career Preparation:** Workforce preparation, career counseling, and financial literacy education.
- **Occupational Skills Training:** Training programs aligned with high-demand occupations, often offered concurrently with academic education.
- **Supportive Services:** Comprehensive guidance, adult mentoring, and leadership

development activities.

- **Transition Assistance:** Services that prepare youth for post-secondary education and employment pathways.

The program places a strong emphasis on work-based learning and partnerships with organizations like the Job Corps, YouthForce NOLA, and Delgado Community College to expand technical education and internship opportunities in high-wage, high-demand industries.

Services for Youth with Disabilities: Youth with disabilities receive tailored support through referrals to Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) for additional resources and specialized assistance. The YCC also provides access to adaptive equipment and technology, such as Louisiana Relay services, ensuring accessibility for job search and career development. Collaboration with disability-serving agencies and mental health providers enhances the ability to address the unique needs of this population.

Successful Models: The JOB1 YouthWork Career Center employs an integrated, customer-centered approach that aligns community resources into a comprehensive One-Stop System. This model, proven effective in cities like Chicago and Houston, increases service delivery efficiency and expands the reach to both in-school and out-of-school youth. Partnerships with the Mayor's Office of Youth and Families and other local initiatives further strengthen service delivery.

Outcomes: Through this system, the program connects youth to career pathways and achieves meaningful outcomes such as increased post-secondary credential attainment, enhanced work readiness, and successful transitions to employment.

2. A description of how local areas will meet the minimum expenditure rate for out-of-school youth.

Description of How Local Areas Will Meet the Minimum Expenditure Rate for Out-of-School Youth

The NOWDB is committed to meeting and exceeding the minimum expenditure rate for out-of-school youth (OSY), as required under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). While the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) has approved a waiver lowering the minimum expenditure requirement from 75% to 50%, NOWDB remains focused on prioritizing this population through targeted investments and innovative strategies.

Comprehensive Outreach and Recruitment Efforts

To ensure compliance with the expenditure requirement, NOWDB has implemented a robust outreach and recruitment strategy designed specifically to engage OSY. Collaborations with shelters, foster care programs, and juvenile justice agencies help identify and support disconnected youth, while partnerships with Delgado Community College and Opportunity Youth programs provide tailored pathways to address their educational and workforce needs. These efforts directly contribute to achieving the minimum expenditure rate by driving program enrollment and

participation.

Targeted Outreach Campaigns with Bright Moments

Since the pandemic, NOWDB has enhanced its outreach efforts by incorporating the local Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) **Bright Moments** into its strategy. This partnership has formalized a structured outreach campaign that leverages neighborhood canvassing and creative social media approaches. By targeting specific demographics—including OSY, dislocated workers, single parents, seniors, and veterans—the Board ensures that its outreach aligns with expenditure goals while addressing the needs of underserved populations.

Youth-Centered Workforce Programs

The JOB1 YouthWork Career Center (YCC) plays a vital role in achieving expenditure goals by delivering impactful programs that cater directly to OSY. Paid work experience, internships, and apprenticeships address employment barriers and encourage active participation in workforce programs. Co-locating youth services at the YCC and utilizing virtual platforms ensures that programs are accessible, further driving engagement and expenditure compliance.

Oversight and Financial Accountability

To meet expenditure requirements, NOWDB employs rigorous oversight of funding allocations. Regular monitoring and reporting processes help identify any gaps in spending, allowing for timely corrective actions to align expenditures with program goals. This ensures that resources are effectively utilized to maximize impact for OSY participants while meeting federal guidelines.

Conclusion: A Commitment to OSY and Expenditure Compliance

Through strategic outreach, targeted partnerships, and impactful program design, NOWDB not only meets the minimum expenditure rate for OSY but also delivers transformative opportunities that empower these individuals to succeed. These efforts reflect NOWDB's dedication to fostering an inclusive workforce system that addresses the unique challenges faced by OSY while strengthening the local economy.

- G. Provide a description of how the local area will provide services to individuals with barriers to employment⁸ as outlined in the Combined State Plan:
1. Provide information on how priority 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) (§ 679.560(b)(21)).

Ensuring Priority of Service for Targeted Populations Under WIOA

The NOWDB ensures that recipients of public assistance, low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient are prioritized in accordance with WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(E). Priority of service is implemented through a **tiered eligibility system** at the JOB1 Business and Career Solutions Center, as outlined in the previous local plan. This system ensures that individuals facing significant barriers to employment are given first access to WIOA-funded services, including career counseling, training programs, and supportive services.

To enhance accessibility for these priority groups, NOWDB relies on the **HiRE platform**, which supports targeted outreach, streamlined application processes, and integrated case management. For example, HiRE enables staff to identify individuals who meet priority criteria and guide them through the intake process efficiently. In addition, NOWDB staff are trained on eligibility determination, cultural competency, and case management strategies to address the unique challenges faced by these populations.

Strategies to Support Priority Populations:

Re-Entry Services: JOB1 provides comprehensive support for returning citizens, including academic remediation, job readiness, skills training, and job placement. Specialized services, such as peer support systems and tailored interview preparation, help address unique barriers like employment gaps and criminal records. Partnerships with juvenile and adult courts, parole offices, and nonprofits strengthen these efforts.

Support for English Language Learners: Services for ELL include bilingual staff, referral partnerships with ESL providers, online courses in Spanish, and staff training to understand resources benefiting ELL participants.

Supportive Services: Support such as transportation assistance, childcare, and financial aid for training-related expenses, are integral to ensuring that recipients of public assistance and other priority groups can fully engage in workforce programs. These services are closely monitored and coordinated with other local partners to avoid duplication of resources and maximize impact

2. Describe how the local workforce area will ensure equitable access to workforce and educational services through the following actions:
 - Disaggregating data by race, gender and target population to reveal where disparities and inequities exist in policies and programs.
 - Developing equity goals in conjunction with the education system and prepare action plans to achieve them.
 - Exposing more high school students, particularly young women and minorities, to careers in science, technology, engineering and math fields.
 - Exploring how effective mentor programs can be expanded to adults, particularly those who are displaced and moving to a new career.
 - Providing training to workforce program staff on data-driven approaches to address equity gaps.
 - Enduring workforce services are strategically located in relation to the populations in most need.

Ensuring Equitable Access to Workforce and Educational Services

NOWDB has implemented a robust equity strategy to ensure all individuals, particularly those from historically underserved populations, have access to workforce and educational opportunities. Building on the initiatives detailed in the previous local plan, the following actions have been prioritized:

Disaggregating Data by Race, Gender, and Target Population: NOWDB uses disaggregated data to identify disparities in program participation and outcomes. This analysis informs targeted outreach and program adjustments to address inequities. For example, data may reveal underrepresentation of minorities in certain training programs, prompting adjustments in recruitment strategies.

Developing Equity Goals and Action Plans: Equity goals are developed in collaboration with local educational institutions and community organizations. These goals focus on increasing access to high-growth career pathways, such as science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields, for young women and minorities. Action plans include creating specialized training programs and expanding awareness campaigns.

Promoting STEM Careers: NOWDB collaborates with partners such as YouthForce NOLA to expose high school students, particularly young women and minorities, to STEM careers. This includes hands-on workshops, internships, and mentorship opportunities.

Expanding Mentorship Programs for Adults: Effective mentorship programs are extended to adults, especially displaced workers transitioning into new careers. These programs pair participants with industry professionals to build confidence, skills, and networks needed for career success.

Training Workforce Staff: Workforce staff are trained in data-driven approaches to identify and address equity gaps. This includes using performance metrics and participant feedback to continuously improve service delivery.

Strategically Locating Services: Workforce services are strategically placed in communities with the highest need, ensuring physical and virtual access for populations facing geographic and transportation barriers. Partnerships with community organizations help extend the reach of these services

H. Provide a description of training policies and activities in the local area, including:

1. How local areas will meet the annual Training Expenditure Requirement;

Training Policies and Activities: Meeting the Annual Training Expenditure Requirement

The NOWDB is committed to meeting and exceeding the annual training expenditure requirements under WIOA Title I. Through strategic investments in training programs, partnerships, and supportive services, NOWDB ensures that its initiatives align with regional economic priorities while addressing the needs of participants.

Empowering Participants Through Individual Training Accounts (ITAs)

NOWDB uses Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) as a cornerstone of its training strategy. ITAs allow eligible participants to select programs from the state's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), focusing on certifications and credentials in high-demand industries. Priority sectors include:

- Healthcare

- Advanced manufacturing
- Transportation and logistics
- Technology

By targeting these industries, NOWDB ensures that participants acquire skills that lead to sustainable employment while addressing the workforce demands of the local economy.

Expanding Work-Based Learning Opportunities

Work-based learning models, including On-the-Job Training (OJT) and apprenticeships, are integral to NOWDB's approach. These programs allow participants to earn wages while gaining practical, hands-on experience in real-world settings. By leveraging these models, NOWDB not only supports local employers but also ensures that training expenditures are effectively allocated to build participants' skills and readiness for long-term careers.

Strengthening Partnerships with Education Providers

Collaborations with education institutions like Delgado Community College and other technical schools play a critical role in delivering high-quality training. These partnerships expand the availability of cost-effective programs, ensuring participants have access to the resources and education needed to achieve their career goals.

Monitoring and Oversight of Training Expenditures

To ensure compliance with training expenditure requirements, NOWDB has established rigorous oversight and monitoring processes. Monthly reviews track the percentage of funds allocated to training activities, with corrective actions implemented as necessary to meet targets. The JOB1 Business and Career Solutions Center contributes to this effort by providing detailed reports on:

- Training enrollments
- Completion rates
- Credential attainment

These processes ensure transparency, accountability, and alignment with expenditure goals.

Addressing Barriers Through Supportive Services

NOWDB recognizes that barriers to participation often hinder individuals from fully engaging in training opportunities. To address these challenges, the Board provides comprehensive supportive services, including:

- Transportation Assistance:** Ensuring participants can travel to training sites.
- Childcare Support:** Helping caregivers balance their responsibilities while pursuing training.
- Technology Resources:** Providing access to digital devices and internet connectivity to bridge the digital divide.

These services are vital in supporting underserved populations, such as low-income individuals, displaced workers, and those with significant employment barriers, ensuring equitable access to training opportunities.

Delivering Measurable Outcomes

NOWDB's training strategy is designed to produce measurable results, including:

- Higher employment rates among participants
- Wage growth and career advancement

- Strengthened alignment between training outcomes and labor market demands

By aligning training activities with regional workforce needs and addressing barriers to participation, NOWDB not only meets its expenditure requirements but also contributes to the long-term economic vitality of the New Orleans region. Through these initiatives, NOWDB reaffirms its commitment to building an inclusive and resilient workforce system.

2. How local areas will encourage the use of work-based learning strategies, including the local area goals for specific work-based learning activities and proposed outcomes related to these activities;

Promoting and Expanding Work-Based Learning Strategies

The NOWDB actively promotes work-based learning (WBL) strategies, including on-the-job training (OJT), apprenticeships, internships, and transitional job opportunities, as critical components of its workforce development strategy. These programs are designed to bridge the gap between classroom learning and practical workplace experience, ensuring participants gain skills that align with local employer needs.

NOWDB collaborates with local employers to identify high-demand occupations and develops customized WBL opportunities that provide immediate value to businesses while enhancing the employability of participants. OJT programs, for instance, allow employers to train new hires while receiving reimbursement for a portion of the training costs, fostering skill development in sectors such as healthcare, technology, advanced manufacturing, and construction.

The Board's goals for WBL activities include increasing participation rates among priority populations, such as individuals receiving public assistance, youth, individuals with disabilities, and dislocated workers. Specific outcomes targeted include higher job placement rates, increased credential attainment, and stronger employer satisfaction. Monitoring and evaluation of these programs are conducted regularly to ensure they meet both participant and employer needs.

3. Provide a copy of the local Individual Training Account Policy and describe how training services outlined in WIOA Sec. 134 will be provided through the use of individual training accounts, including, if contracts for training services will be used, how the use of such contracts will be coordinated with the use of individual training accounts under that chapter, and how the Local Board will ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training programs regardless of how the training services are to be provided (§ 679.560(b)(18)); and

Administration and Coordination of Individual Training Accounts

The NOWDB administers Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) to provide WIOA-eligible participants with access to high-quality training programs aligned with in-demand occupations. ITAs are primarily utilized for occupational skills training delivered by institutions listed on Louisiana's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), ensuring that participants are prepared for careers in fields critical to the region's economic growth.

The ITA policy promotes participant-driven decision-making, empowering individuals to select

training providers and programs based on their career goals and labor market needs. Career counselors at the JOB1 Business and Career Solutions Center play a vital role in guiding participants through this process, helping them make informed decisions that align with their skills, interests, and employment opportunities.

Requirements for ITA Approval

To ensure consistency and effectiveness, the following stipulations apply to the approval and use of ITAs:

- Participants must be enrolled in family income growth plans, aiming for self-sufficiency, defined as achieving an annual income of at least 200% of the poverty level.
- ITAs must align with high-demand jobs as identified in the local workforce development plan, with values established by NOWDB to reflect market trends.
- Training programs must be approved on the statewide ETPL to guarantee quality and relevance.
- Funding is based on individual needs, as assessed through the participant's Household Expense Worksheet and related documentation.
- Pell Grants or other financial aid are incorporated into the budget analysis before ITA funding is issued.
- ITAs are issued only after accounting for the total cost of the training program, ensuring full financial transparency and compliance.
- ITA vouchers are tracked through a local designated system to ensure their total value does not exceed approved limits.
- Participants must achieve passing grades in prior coursework to continue receiving ITA funding.
- ITAs are non-transferable and issued specifically to the individual's chosen training organization.
- WIOA funds are not used to repeat failed courses initially paid for with ITA funding.

Coordination with Training Contracts

While ITAs support individual training needs, NOWDB also utilizes contracts for training services when group training is more cost-effective or addresses specific employer or regional workforce needs. Customized training contracts are particularly effective for preparing cohorts of workers for high-demand industries in response to employer demands.

Ensuring Consistency and Quality

Coordination between ITAs and training contracts ensures that all participants, regardless of the funding mechanism, have access to consistent, high-quality training options. Career counselors facilitate this alignment by helping participants identify the most suitable training pathway to meet their personal and professional goals while addressing regional economic priorities.

Through this dual approach, NOWDB leverages ITAs and training contracts to maximize resource efficiency, enhance workforce readiness, and meet the evolving demands of the local labor market. This strategy ensures equitable access to training opportunities and supports the region's long-term economic vitality.

4. Provide a copy of the local training provider approval policy and procedures. Describe how the Local Board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services through the system and that the providers will meet the employment needs of local employers, workers and jobseekers.

Approval and Continuous Improvement of Eligible Training Providers

NOWDB's training provider approval policy ensures that all eligible training providers (ETPs) meet rigorous quality standards and align with regional labor market needs. Providers seeking approval must demonstrate their ability to deliver industry-recognized credentials, achieve strong completion and placement rates, and maintain affordability for participants.

The approval process involves an initial evaluation by NOWDB staff, followed by ongoing performance monitoring. Providers are required to submit regular reports on participant outcomes, including credential attainment, employment rates, and wage increases. These metrics are used to assess the provider's effectiveness in meeting the needs of local employers and jobseekers.

To support continuous improvement, NOWDB offers technical assistance and professional development opportunities for training providers. The Board also facilitates collaboration between providers and local employers to ensure training programs remain responsive to evolving industry demands. By maintaining a robust ETP system, NOWDB ensures that participants have access to high-quality training options that lead to meaningful employment opportunities.

- I. Describe if the local workforce board will authorize the transfer of WIOA Title IB workforce funds, including the maximum dollar amount and/or percentage that is authorized to be transferred on an annual basis:
 1. To transfer funds between the adult and dislocated worker funding streams.

Transfer of WIOA Title IB Workforce Funds Between Adult and Dislocated Worker Funding Streams

The NOWDB reserves the authority to transfer up to 50% of funds between the Adult and Dislocated Worker funding streams annually, in accordance with WIOA regulations. This flexibility allows the Board to adapt to changing labor market conditions and participant needs, ensuring that resources are directed to the program with the greatest demand.

Data-Driven Decision-Making

NOWDB employs a data-driven approach to assess the need for fund transfers. Labor market analyses and monthly performance reports are used to evaluate program demands and identify areas where additional resources are required. For instance, during periods of economic downturns or increased layoffs, funds may be reallocated to the Dislocated Worker program to address the needs of individuals requiring rapid reemployment services.

Monitoring and Oversight

The Board continuously monitors expenditures across the Adult and Dislocated Worker funding streams.

If a potential funding gap is identified, the Board evaluates the need for a transfer and collaborates with the State to initiate the transfer process. This ensures that services remain uninterrupted and aligned with the region's workforce priorities.

Transparency and Accountability

Fund transfers are reviewed and approved by the Board to maintain transparency and accountability. This process ensures that resource allocation aligns with regional workforce goals and maximizes the impact of WIOA funds on job seekers and employers in the local area.

By combining robust monitoring, a data-driven approach, and responsive resource management, NOWDB effectively manages WIOA funds to address shifting workforce needs and maintain service excellence.

2. To use funds for incumbent worker training as outlined in WIOA Sec. 134(d)(4)(A)(i).

Utilization of WIOA Funds for Incumbent Worker Training

The NOWDB utilizes WIOA funds to support Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) programs in compliance with WIOA Section 134(d)(4)(A)(i). These programs aim to enhance the skills of existing employees, improve business competitiveness, and support regional economic growth.

Eligibility and Employer Commitment

IWT is available to employees who:

- Are currently employed.
- Have an established employment history with the employer for six months or more. For training provided to a cohort, not all employees are required to meet the six-month employment history requirement, provided the majority do.

Employers participating in IWT programs must meet the Fair Labor Standards Act requirements for an employer-employee relationship and are required to contribute a share of the training costs. This cost-sharing requirement demonstrates the employer's commitment to workforce development and ensures shared investment in the success of the program.

Program Design and Goals

IWT programs focus on enhancing the competitiveness of both employees and employers. Training activities are customized to meet specific employer needs, such as adopting new technologies, addressing skill gaps, or obtaining industry-recognized certifications. These programs are particularly targeted at high-growth industries such as healthcare, technology, and advanced manufacturing, where the demand for skilled workers is most critical.

Employers must commit to retaining employees or averting layoffs as a result of the training. This ensures that the benefits of IWT extend not only to individual employees but also to the overall stability and productivity of the business.

Funding Allocation and Strategic Alignment

NOWDB will reserve no more than 20% of the combined WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker allocation for IWT, ensuring a balanced approach to workforce development. IWT programs are

aligned with state and regional economic strategies to foster innovation and support economic growth.

Outcomes and Impact

Through IWT, NOWDB promotes employee retention, enhances productivity, and supports employers in maintaining a competitive workforce. These initiatives strengthen the region's ability to adapt to evolving industry demands while driving long-term economic growth.

3. To use funds for transitional jobs as outlined in WIOA Sec. 134(d)(5).

Utilization of WIOA Funds for Transitional Jobs

The NOWDB supports the use of WIOA funds for Transitional Jobs to assist individuals with significant barriers to employment in gaining meaningful work experience and transitioning to unsubsidized employment. These jobs are short-term, subsidized employment opportunities designed to help participants build a work history, develop workplace skills, and overcome challenges to entering or re-entering the workforce.

Target Populations and Program Focus

Transitional Jobs programs focus on serving individuals who face significant employment barriers, including:

- Returning citizens (formerly incarcerated individuals).
- Long-term unemployed individuals.
- Those with limited or no work history.

By collaborating with local employers and community organizations, NOWDB ensures that Transitional Jobs programs are aligned with industries offering strong hiring potential. This strategic alignment increases the likelihood that participants will transition successfully to permanent, unsubsidized employment.

Program Design and Administration

Transitional Jobs are administered through the Operator of the JOB1 Business and Career Solutions Center. The program incorporates supportive services, such as transportation assistance, job coaching, and career counseling, to address participants' unique needs and facilitate their success. These services are integrated into the Transitional Jobs framework to ensure participants have the tools and support necessary to thrive in the workplace.

Funding and Allocation

NOWDB dedicates no more than 10% of the combined WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker allocation to Transitional Jobs services. This allocation ensures that sufficient resources are available to provide meaningful opportunities for individuals with barriers while maintaining a balanced workforce development budget.

Outcomes and Impact

Transitional Jobs provide participants with a structured environment to gain critical skills, establish a work history, and rebuild confidence. These programs not only enhance the employability of participants but also strengthen local workforce readiness by addressing barriers to sustained employment. By leveraging WIOA funds and fostering partnerships with employers and community organizations, NOWDB creates pathways to permanent employment for individuals most in need.

4. To use funds for pay for performance contracts as outlined in WIOA Sec. 133(b)(2-3).

Use of WIOA Funds for Pay-for-Performance (PFP) Contracts

The NOWDB has the option to use WIOA funds to implement Pay-for-Performance (PFP) contracts as a performance-based strategy to incentivize service providers to achieve measurable outcomes. These outcomes would include job placements, credential attainment, and wage growth, aligning financial incentives with program performance to maximize the return on investment for workforce development funds.

Key Features of PFP Contracts

WIOA Pay-for-Performance strategy includes the following characteristics as outlined in 20 CFR 683.510:

- **Defined Workforce Problem and Target Population:** The Board identifies the workforce challenge, target population (e.g., youth, individuals with disabilities, or other hard-to-serve groups), desired outcomes, and acceptable costs before implementing a PFP contract.
- **Independent Validation of Performance Outcomes:** The strategy includes a mechanism for independently verifying whether the specified performance outcomes have been achieved.
- **Reallocation of Funds:** If the service provider fails to meet the agreed-upon benchmarks, the Board reallocates funds to other activities under the contract strategy, ensuring accountability and effective resource use.

Funding Allocation

NOWDB will reserve no more than:

- **10% of the total local WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker allocations** for PFP contracts related to adult training services as described in WIOA Section 134(c)(3).
- **10% of the total local WIOA Youth allocation** for PFP contracts supporting youth training services and activities as described in WIOA Section 129(c)(2).

Application to High-Priority Programs

PFP contracts are typically applied to high-priority programs serving populations with significant barriers to employment. These programs target outcomes such as increasing employment rates, skill development, and self-sufficiency among youth, individuals with disabilities, and other underserved groups.

Monitoring and Accountability

The Board would closely monitor service providers participating in PFP contracts to ensure continuous improvement and successful outcomes. Performance benchmarks are tracked to ensure

alignment with local workforce priorities and to drive innovation and efficiency in service delivery.

Outcomes and Benefits

When implemented, linking payments directly to performance, PFP contracts promote accountability, efficiency, and innovation in workforce development programs. This approach ensures that WIOA funds are effectively utilized to address workforce challenges and deliver impactful results for participants and employers alike.

CHAPTER 5: PERFORMANCE GOALS AND EVALUATION: LOCAL

The plan must include information on the actions the Local Board will take toward becoming or remaining a high performing board, consistent with the factors developed by the State Board (WIOA Sec. 101(d)(6)) and (§ 679.560(b)(17)).

- A. Provide information regarding the local levels of performance negotiated with the Governor 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 (core and required partners as applicable) in the local area (§ 679.560(b)(16)).
 - 1. WIOA Performance Measures

High-Performing Board

The NOWDB exemplifies a strong, business-led, collaborative organization that actively supports economic growth through a comprehensive and dynamic workforce development system. By working strategically with local and regional partners, NOWDB addresses workforce challenges and develops innovative solutions that promote meaningful planning and coordination. These partnerships include economic development entities such as the City of New Orleans Office of Economic Development, and Greater New Orleans Inc. (GNO, Inc.), ensuring the creation of a robust pipeline of skilled workers to meet the demands of local and regional employers.

As the primary convener of workforce development stakeholders, NOWDB plays a critical role in advancing the City of New Orleans' workforce goals. The Board fosters collaboration among stakeholders to improve employer engagement, strengthen the regional labor market, and expand local workforce development initiatives to align with employer needs. In its advocacy role, NOWDB champions policy recommendations and proactively seeks local and national resources to support its mission.

Commitment to Accountability

NOWDB recognizes that accountability is fundamental to a successful workforce investment system. This commitment starts with the Board itself, which ensures quality service delivery by holding the JOB1 Business and Career Solutions Center to elevated standards of professionalism and performance.

To maintain a performance accountability system, NOWDB will:

- **Forge Strong Partnerships:** Develop a collaborative and transparent relationship with the JOB1 operator to ensure shared goals and aligned efforts.
- **Conduct Regular Oversight:** Hold frequent meetings to review performance metrics, service quality, and staff development initiatives.
- **Adopt Continuous Improvement Practices:** Implement a continuous improvement model to drive excellence across all aspects of operations.
- **Implement Corrective Measures:** Require written corrective action plans for performance benchmarks flagged as unmet in Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) quarterly reports.
- **Enhance Reporting Standards:** Mandate monthly reports from the career center operator detailing service utilization, staff activities, and progress in unsubsidized job placements.

Driving Workforce Excellence

Through strategic collaboration, rigorous accountability, and a steadfast commitment to continuous improvement, NOWDB ensures that the workforce development system serves the evolving needs of employers and job seekers alike. By setting high standards and fostering an environment of professionalism and innovation, NOWDB continues to strengthen its position as a high-performing board driving economic growth and workforce success in the City of New Orleans.

Negotiated Performance Levels of WIOA for Orleans Parish: PY 2023 Outcomes

LWDA 12	Negotiated	Adjusted	Actual
	PY22/PY23	PY23	PY23
ADULT			
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	65.9%	67.2%	68.3%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	50.5%	51.5%	66.7%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$5,300	\$5,822	\$7,297
Credential Attainment	68.2%	69.5%	79.7%
Measurable Skill Gains	57.0%	60.0%	75.0%
DISLOCATED WORKER			
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	64.0%	66.0%	61.7%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	64.5%	66.0%	64.8%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$6,700	\$6,800	\$7,725
Credential Attainment	79.8%	79.0%	70.9%
Measurable Skill Gains	63.5%	63.9%	85.0%
YOUTH			
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	65.0%	67.0%	58.6%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	68.5%	67.3%	64.7%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$3,100	\$3,756	\$5,001
Credential Attainment	65.8%	50.0%	50.9%
Measurable Skill Gains	50.0%	50.5%	80.0%

NOWDB's performance accountability system is grounded in federal and state requirements, using WIOA Common Measures to evaluate the effectiveness of its workforce programs. The Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) negotiates performance goals with each local area, and the following

measures have been set for LWDA 12 (Orleans) for Program Years 2024–2025:

Negotiated Performance Levels for WIOA Orleans Parish (LWDA 12)

	PY 2024	PY 2025
WIOA Title I Adult		
Employment Rate 2 nd quarter after exit	67.59%	67.59%
Employment Rate 4 th quarter after exit	52.06%	52.06%
Median Earnings in the 2 nd quarter after exit	\$5,977	\$5,977
Credential Attainment Rate	72.5%	72.5%
Measurable Skill Gains	61.27%	61.27%
WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker		
Employment Rate 2 nd quarter after exit	65.0%	65.0%
Employment Rate 4 th quarter after exit	64.0%	64.0%
Median Earnings in the 2 nd quarter after exit	\$7,100	\$7,100
Credential Attainment Rate	75.0%	75.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	65.53%	65.53%
WIOA Title I Youth		
Employment Rate 2 nd quarter after exit	66.0%	66.0%
Employment Rate 4 th quarter after exit	67.0%	67.0%
Median Earnings in the 2 nd quarter after exit	\$4,327	\$4,327
Credential Attainment Rate	51.05%	51.05%
Measurable Skill Gains	50.67%	50.67%

These measures provide a comprehensive framework for assessing the performance of the local area, fiscal agent, service providers, and the one-stop delivery system. NOWDB’s commitment to exceeding these benchmarks reflects its dedication to becoming a high-performing board

2. Additional State Performance Measures

Not applicable

B. Provide a description of the current and planned evaluation activities and how this information will be provided to the local board and program administrators as appropriate.

1. What existing service delivery strategies will be expanded based on promising return on investment?

Continuous Improvement and Return on Investment in Workforce Programs

The NOWDB is dedicated to continuous improvement and the evaluation of program outcomes to maximize the effectiveness of WIOA funds. The Board receives detailed monthly reports from the One-Stop Operator, which include key metrics such as WIOA enrollments, service utilization across activities, expenditures for each training component, training completion rates, and job placement outcomes.

Using this data-driven approach, the Board makes informed decisions on how to allocate funding to achieve the best return on investment (ROI). Programs or training activities that demonstrate low completion rates or suboptimal job placement outcomes receive reduced WIOA funding, ensuring resources are directed to initiatives that deliver the most impact.

Focus on Measurable Return on Investment

In alignment with NOWDB's policy, the Board expects a measurable return on investment for all WIOA funds. Specifically, the ROI for WIOA Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) is set at four times the amount of the WIOA funds invested. This means that for every WIOA dollar allocated to an ITA, the annual earnings of the training participant must be at least four times the investment.

For example, a \$6,000 WIOA ITA investment should result in the participant achieving an annual income of at least \$24,000. This standard underscores the Board's commitment to ensuring that WIOA-funded training programs lead to meaningful, self-sustaining employment opportunities for participants, while also maximizing the impact of public funds.

Building on these principles, the **Earn and Learn Initiative** exemplifies a promising approach to achieving measurable ROI. Funded through philanthropic contributions, this program offers participants living wage stipends while they are enrolled in approved training programs. By reducing financial burdens, participants can fully engage in their studies and skill development, leading to higher completion rates and improved job placement outcomes.

The measurable ROI from the Earn and Learn Initiative includes increased program enrollment, greater participant retention, and wage progression. For example, participants who might otherwise face financial constraints are able to focus on completing their training, which in turn enhances their employability and long-term economic stability. This initiative demonstrates the Board's commitment to innovation in workforce strategies that prioritize both participant success and the effective use of resources.

Through rigorous monitoring and adherence to these performance benchmarks, NOWDB continues to optimize workforce development efforts and deliver tangible benefits to both job seekers and the local economy.

2. What existing service delivery strategies will be curtailed or eliminated based on minimal return on investment?

Evaluating and Phasing Out Ineffective Service Delivery Strategies

While there are no specific service delivery strategies currently under this consideration, delivery strategies with minimal ROI would be reduced or phased out as needed. The Board would evaluate these strategies using monthly performance data, including enrollment rates, completion rates, and employment outcomes. Programs with persistently low completion rates or limited job placements, particularly those not aligned with high-demand industries, could receive reduced funding.

The focus remains on programs that deliver measurable outcomes and employment results for participants while maintaining alignment with employer demand and regional economic goals.

3. What new service strategies will be used to address regional educational and training needs based on promising return on investment?
 - What return on investment and qualitative outcome data for various education and training programs will be collected to identify barriers to enrollments?
 - What are the most cost-effective approaches to taking down those barriers or helping residents overcome them?

Implementing New Service Strategies to Address Regional Educational and Training Needs

The NOWDB is committed to addressing regional educational and training needs through innovative strategies that leverage emerging technologies, data-driven approaches, and targeted outreach. These initiatives are designed to expand access, reduce barriers, and align workforce development efforts with regional priorities.

Integrated Career Pathway Models

NOWDB is expanding career pathway initiatives that integrate adult basic education with occupational training. These programs enable participants to address foundational skills gaps while earning industry-recognized credentials, enhancing their employability in high-demand sectors. The integration of the Pathway Home IV Reentry Program further strengthens this model by supporting incarcerated individuals with pre-release work readiness services and post-release training opportunities.

Enhanced Virtual Access

To improve accessibility, NOWDB is scaling up virtual career fairs, workshops, and training programs. These offerings are particularly beneficial for individuals facing transportation or mobility challenges, ensuring that services remain inclusive and widely available. Innovative tools like virtual reality programming have also been incorporated to provide immersive training in essential workplace skills, including conflict resolution, public speaking, and interviewing.

Targeted Outreach Campaigns

NOWDB has implemented a formalized and robust outreach strategy to reach underrepresented and underserved populations. This approach includes the following components:

- **Partnership with Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs):** Collaborating with local DBE Bright Moments has strengthened neighborhood canvassing efforts and diversified outreach methods. Strategies include creating engaging social media campaigns featuring videos, links, and alternate messaging to reach varied audiences effectively.
- **Demographic-Specific Campaigns:** Long-term outreach efforts now focus on messaging tailored to specific demographics, including youth, dislocated workers, single parents, seniors, and veterans. This targeted approach ensures that the unique needs of each group are addressed through customized programming and support.

- **Labor Market Data Utilization:** Labor market data helps identify additional underrepresented groups, such as English language learners and justice-involved individuals. Programs are then designed to meet these populations' specific educational and training needs.
- The HIRE NOLA campaign further bolsters these outreach efforts by promoting the skills and employability of targeted populations through testimonials, multimedia outreach, and employer engagement.

Additionally, the Board's Dislocated Worker recruitment strategies have proven effective in driving ROI. A robust outreach campaign featuring neighborhood canvassing, radio ads, billboards, and varied social media approaches has consistently increased enrollment. Collaborative efforts with the Louisiana Workforce Commission's RESEA program further enhance the reach and impact of these initiatives.

Innovative Program Initiatives

NOWDB continues to evolve its program offerings to meet the needs of participants and employers:

- **Reverse Job Fairs for On-the-Job Training (OJT):** The "Reverse Job Fair" concept has shown significant ROI and is continually refined based on employer feedback to enhance its effectiveness. This structure has yielded considerable success in OJT placements, providing participants with meaningful work opportunities.
- **Career and Training Fair Collaboration with Jefferson Parish AJC and Delgado CC:** NOWDB has successfully implemented regional collaboration as a strategy to break down barriers to employment and training. This fair connected over 175 job seekers from across the region to nearly two dozen employers and numerous training opportunities, showcasing the power of collaboration in workforce development. The single-event format not only streamlines the job search process for participants but also allows employers and training providers to access a diverse talent pool efficiently. By addressing logistical challenges and providing centralized access to resources, this collaboration has proven to be a scalable and cost-effective model. Replicating such events strengthens regional workforce alignment and helps residents overcome barriers to employment.
- **Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program:** This annual initiative provides over 1,000 youth with summer employment opportunities, enabling them to explore career interests, gain work experience, and connect with workforce resources.
- **Young Adult Expo:** This annual event celebrates workforce achievements among young adults and provides exposure to employment and training opportunities, mental health resources, and career demonstrations.
- **JJIC Youth Work Experience Initiative:** This program provides juvenile detainees with opportunities to gain soft and hard skills through work experience within the detention facility, preparing them for post-release reintegration.
- **Media/Podcast Studio:** JOB1's new media and podcast studio facilitates professional-quality content creation for workforce development, outreach, and training purposes.
- **Virtual Reality Programming:** JOB1 has implemented virtual reality tools to deliver hands-on career readiness training. These programs support essential skills development, such as motivational interviewing, public speaking, and conflict resolution, in an immersive and engaging environment.
- **ARPA-Funded Initiatives:** Utilizing funding from the American Rescue Plan Act, JOB1 is

expanding initiatives in youth STEM exploration, green infrastructure training, and the Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) program. These efforts target high-growth sectors and prepare participants for emerging job opportunities.

- **Youth STEM Exploration:** Offers hands-on exposure to STEM fields, equipping youth with critical skills for emerging industries.
 - **Green Infrastructure Training:** Prepares participants for careers in sustainable construction and environmental technology, addressing workforce demands in green industries.
 - **Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG):** Provides at-risk youth with academic support, employability skills, and mentorship to improve school-to-work transitions.
-

Data Collection for ROI and Outcome Evaluation

NOWDB prioritizes data-driven decision-making to ensure its programs deliver measurable outcomes. Key metrics include:

- **Completion Rates:** Monitoring the percentage of participants who successfully complete educational and training programs.
 - **Credential Attainment:** Tracking the number of industry-recognized credentials earned by participants.
 - **Employment Rates and Wage Progression:** Evaluating job placement success and earnings growth among participants.
 - **Participant Satisfaction and Employer Feedback:** Collecting qualitative insights to refine program offerings and improve participant experiences.
 - This comprehensive evaluation process helps identify barriers such as financial constraints, logistical challenges, or awareness gaps, and informs strategies to address these effectively. For example, ARPA-funded supportive services, including transportation assistance and funding for vital documents, have proven to reduce these barriers significantly.
-

Conclusion

By incorporating innovative strategies, targeted outreach, and rigorous evaluation processes, NOWDB continues to expand access to education and training, ensuring alignment with regional economic priorities and fostering inclusive workforce development. These efforts not only meet federal requirements but also contribute to the long-term vitality of the New Orleans region.

CHAPTER 6: TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS & ASSURANCES: LOCAL

This section includes the technical requirements and assurances that are required by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA Sec. 121(c)(2)(iv)).

A. Fiscal Management

1. Identify the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds described in WIOA Sec. 107(d)(12)(B)(i)(III) as determined by the chief elected official or the Governor under WIOA Sec. 107(d)(12)(B)(i) (§ 679.560(b)(14)).

Fiscal Management

The City of New Orleans serves as the Fiscal Agent for the NOWDB, ensuring effective financial oversight and accountability. The Board utilizes the City of New Orleans' procurement processes for selecting the One-Stop Operator(s) and WIOA adult, dislocated worker, and youth service/training providers, adhering to established standards and promoting transparency.

Procurement Process

The Board/Fiscal Agent employs a procurement process designed to maximize open and free competition. This process adheres to the following regulatory standards as applicable:

- **2 CFR Part 215:** Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations.
- **Louisiana Procurement Code (R.S. 39:1551-1755):** Governing the procurement of goods and services within the state.
- **29 CFR 95.40-48:** Federal procurement standards for grant administration.

The Board/Fiscal Agent ensures compliance with Section 107(d)(10)(B, C, and D) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014. Written procurement procedures are maintained to demonstrate adherence to these regulations, including the solicitation and award of contracts for goods and services. Sufficient records are kept to document each procurement, ensuring transparency and accountability.

The Board/Fiscal Agent is also vigilant regarding organizational conflicts of interest and other practices that could reduce competition, maintaining a fair and equitable procurement environment.

Disbursement of Grant Funds

The City of New Orleans, as the administrative entity for WIOA formula funds, is responsible for the disbursement of grant funds to the local JOB1 One-Stop Operator/WIOA Service Provider and other service providers procured through the competitive bidding process.

The JOB1 Operator oversees the disbursement of funds for WIOA program service delivery costs, including:

- **WIOA Training:** Ensuring participants receive occupational and skills training aligned with workforce needs.
- **Supportive Services:** Covering expenses that enable program participation, such as transportation and childcare.
- **Work Experience:** Funding placements that provide practical on-the-job training.
- **On-the-Job Training (OJT):** Subsidizing employer costs for training new employees in the workplace.

2. Provide a copy of the local procurement policies and procedures and describe the competitive procurement process that will be used to award the sub grants and contracts for WIOA Title I activities (§ 679.560(b)(15)).

Local Procurement Policies and Competitive Process for WIOA Title I Activities

The City of New Orleans employs a competitive procurement process that adheres to federal regulations under 2 CFR Part 215, Louisiana Procurement Code (R.S. 39:1551-1755), and 29 CFR 95, 40-48. This process ensures open and free competition while mitigating organizational conflicts of interest.

- The procurement process includes publicly advertised Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for the selection of one-stop operators and WIOA service providers.
- Proposals are evaluated based on established criteria, including the provider's capacity to deliver services, past performance, and alignment with the Board's workforce goals.
- Contracts are awarded to qualified providers who meet performance expectations and provide cost-effective services.

Documentation of all procurement activities is maintained to demonstrate compliance with WIOA requirements and to ensure transparency in the use of public funds

B. Physical and Programmatic Accessibility

1. Describe how entities within the one-stop delivery system, including one-stop operators and the one-stop partners, will comply with WIOA Sec. 188, if applicable, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology and materials for individuals with disabilities, including providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities (§ 679.560(b)(5)(iii)).

Accessibility and Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The local One-Stop Career Center is fully compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Section 188. All partners are committed to providing reasonable accommodations to ensure equitable access to services for individuals with diverse needs. Accommodations include, but are not limited to, assistive devices and support for individuals with hearing disabilities, vision impairments, speech-language impairments, and limited English proficiency.

To ensure compliance and maintain high accessibility standards:

- **Facility Reviews:** The City of New Orleans Senior Compliance Monitor conducts regular assessments of the One-Stop facility to verify adherence to ADA standards and WIOA Sec. 188 requirements. These reviews ensure that the facility remains accessible and inclusive for all participants.
- **Staff Training:** Training programs are regularly provided to staff co-located at the One-Stop Career Center. These sessions focus on understanding and addressing the unique needs of

individuals with disabilities, promoting an inclusive service environment.

- **Resource Distribution:** The One-Stop Operator, the Board, and all partners have been provided with copies of Title IV services, ensuring consistent awareness and application of accessibility guidelines and resources.

Through these measures, the One-Stop Career Center reinforces its commitment to creating an inclusive environment that supports the diverse needs of all individuals seeking workforce services.

2. Provide copies of executed cooperative agreements (as applicable) 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 system, with respect to efforts that will enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities (§679.560(b)(13)). This may include cross training of staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers and other efforts at cooperation, collaboration and coordination.

Cooperative Agreements and Integration of Services for Individuals with Disabilities

The NOWDB facilitates the integration of workforce services through a **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)** and a **Service Integration Action Plan**, as required under WIOA. These agreements establish the framework for collaboration among core and mandated partners, ensuring comprehensive service delivery that meets the diverse needs of individuals, including those with disabilities.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

The MOU outlines the roles, responsibilities, and cost-sharing arrangements among partners within the JOB1 Business and Career Solutions Center, including provisions to address the needs of individuals with disabilities. It specifies the following key areas:

- **Co-location of Core Partners:** Partners such as Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) provide training and employment services for individuals with disabilities directly within the One-Stop Center.
- **Shared Infrastructure Costs:** Ensuring that resources are utilized effectively to create accessible and inclusive service environments.
- **Collaboration on Training and Services:** Coordinated efforts to deliver services, including adaptive technology, vocational rehabilitation, and employer outreach.

Service Integration Action Plan

The Service Integration Action Plan complements the MOU by providing specific strategies to align and coordinate services among local workforce partners. Highlights include:

- **Cross-Training of Staff:** JOB1 staff receive regular training from LRS and other disability-focused organizations to enhance their ability to support individuals with disabilities effectively.

- **Use of Assistive Technologies:** The One-Stop Center provides adaptive equipment, including screen readers and relay services, to ensure accessibility for individuals with vision, hearing, or mobility impairments.
- **Referral Processes:** Partners utilize the Unite Us electronic referral platform to ensure seamless connections to additional services and resources.

Cooperative Efforts to Support Individuals with Disabilities

NOWDB has implemented several initiatives to enhance service delivery for individuals with disabilities:

- **Technical Assistance and Staff Training:** Regular training sessions help staff recognize and address the unique needs of individuals with disabilities, ensuring compliance with ADA standards.
- **Employer Collaboration:** The Board collaborates with local employers to promote inclusive hiring practices and provide on-the-job accommodations.
- **Community Partnerships:** NOWDB works with mental health organizations, rehabilitation offices, and other community agencies to expand service offerings and improve outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

By maintaining these agreements and fostering collaboration, NOWDB ensures that individuals with disabilities receive equitable access to workforce services and are empowered to achieve their employment goals.

C. Plan Development and Public Comment

1. Describe the process used by the Local Board, consistent with WIOA Sec. 108(d), to provide a 30- day public comment period prior to submission of the plan, including an opportunity to have input into the development of the local plan, particularly for representatives of businesses, education and labor organizations (§ 679.560(b)(19)).

Coordination with Regional and Local Plan Programs

The development of this local plan involved extensive regular collaboration among Board representatives and mandated partners. The NOWDB includes members who represent core partners, ensuring diverse perspectives and alignment across programs. These representatives also serve on the Board's Program Committee, which meets bimonthly in addition to full Board meetings. The Program Committee plays a pivotal role in planning and coordinating programs and activities outlined in the Combined Plan. During the planning process, committee members provided valuable input into various sections of the local plan, ensuring it reflects the collective goals and priorities of the region.

Public Comment on the Local Plan

To ensure transparency and inclusivity, the NOWDB has made the Regional and Local Plan available

for public comment. The draft plan is accessible on the City of New Orleans' website for a 30-day public review period, as mandated, before its final submission to the Louisiana Workforce Commission. Core partners have also been provided copies of the plan for their review and feedback. Comments and suggestions submitted via email during this period are shared with the Board and considered for incorporation, ensuring that the plan reflects the needs and priorities of the broader community.

This collaborative and transparent approach underscores NOWDB's commitment to aligning regional and local workforce initiatives with stakeholder and public input.

2. Provide a summary of the public comments received and how this information was addressed by the CEO, partners and the Local Board in the final plan.

To be added after public comment period

3. Provide information regarding the regional and local plan modification procedures.

Plan modifications are conducted in alignment with state and federal guidelines. The Board reviews local labor market data and program performance metrics annually to determine if adjustments to the plan are necessary. Proposed modifications are subject to the same public comment process as the original plan, ensuring transparency and stakeholder engagement.

REGIONAL / LOCAL PLAN SIGNATURES

By signing the Regional / Local Plan, all signatories attest that:

1. They submit this plan on behalf of the region and the local areas within that region;
2. The planning was done with leaders throughout the region and represents the collective thinking of those regional representatives;
3. The information contained herein is true and accurate to the best of their knowledge;
4. The regional plan and accompanying local plans represent the local workforce development boards' efforts to maximize resources available under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and to coordinate these resources with other State and Local programs in the planning region;
5. They will operate the local system in accordance with the regional plan, their respective local area plan, and applicable federal and state laws, regulations, policies and rules.

Local Area Name: _____

Name of Chief Elected Official for the LWDA: _____

Signature and Date: _____

Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Name of Local Workforce Development Board Chairman: _____

Signature and Date: _____

Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Name of Local Workforce Development Board Director: _____

Signature and Date: _____

Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

E-Mail Address: _____