

PY2024-PY2027

LRWDB
LITTLE ROCK WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

LRWDA LOCAL PLAN

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PY 2024 - 2027 Local Plan

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Section 1: Workforce and Economic Analysis

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

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

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

The Little Rock Workforce Development Board (LRWDB) is unique among Arkansas workforce development entities in that it serves the Little Rock metropolitan area, not a countywide or multi-county area.



As preparation for the PY2024-PY2027 plan, the LRWDB reviewed data analysis from the:

- Arkansas Division of Workforce Services, Labor Market Information (LMI)
 - State of Arkansas Workforce Development Areas: Long-Term Industry and Occupational Projections, 2020-2030
 - State of Arkansas Workforce Development Areas: Short-Term Industry and Occupational Projections, 2022-2024
 - 2023 Arkansas Labor Market and Economic Report
 - 2023 Arkansas Labor Market Report – December
 - Arkansas Hot 45: 2023-2024 Demand Occupations
- Bureau of Labor Statistics Little Rock Area Economic Summary – January 2024
- 2023-2024 Bureau of Labor Statistics employment and wage surveys

The 2023 Arkansas Labor Market and Economic Report provides data on top supersectors in Little Rock. While the Education and Health Services sector now has the lowest growth rate at 2.99%, it continues to have the largest projected employment in 2024 at 56,789 workers. Trade, Transportation, and Utilities (with 2024 projected employment at 33,706); and Leisure and Hospitality (with a growth rate of 5.71%) along with the notable addition of Manufacturing (with a growth rate of 5.63%) and the emergence of Financial Activities (with 2024 projected employment at 26,254).

Top Growing Industry Supersectors

NAICS Code	NAICS Title	2022 Estimated Employment	2024 Projected Employment	Numeric Change	Percent Change
102300	Financial Activities	24,583	26,254	1,671	6.80%
102500	Education and Health Services	55,141	56,789	1,648	2.99%
102100	Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	32,614	33,706	1,092	3.35%
102600	Leisure and Hospitality	13,166	13,918	752	5.71%
101300	Manufacturing	6,462	6,826	364	5.63%

**2023 Arkansas Labor Market and Economic Report
Little Rock Workforce Development Area**

The December 2023 Arkansas Labor Market Report and Bureau of Labor Statistics Little Rock Area Economic Summary showed that Private and Health Education Services and Leisure and Hospitality experienced growth. However, Trade, Transportation, and Utilities declined from 79,200 to 77,700 jobs and Manufacturing decreased slightly from 19,900 to 19,700 jobs since December 2022 within the Little Rock – North Little Rock – Conway metropolitan statistical area.

Nonfarm Payroll Jobs (Not Seasonally Adjusted)

(In Thousands)

NAICS	Dec 23	Nov 23	Dec 22	OTM	QTY
Total Nonfarm	389.1	388.3	382.9	0.8	6.2
Goods Producing	41.2	40.9	39.1	0.3	2.1
Mining, Logging & Construction	21.2	21.1	19.2	0.1	2.0
Manufacturing	20.0	19.8	19.9	0.2	0.1
Service Providing	347.9	347.4	343.8	0.5	4.1
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	79.0	77.8	80.1	1.2	-1.1
Wholesale Trade	18.3	18.3	18.0	0.0	0.3
Retail Trade	38.5	37.7	39.6	0.8	-1.1
Trans., Warehousing & Utilities	22.2	21.8	22.5	0.4	-0.3
Information	5.5	5.5	5.7	0.0	-0.2
Financial Activities	24.9	24.7	24.9	0.2	0.0
Professional & Business Services	47.1	47.3	47.8	-0.2	-0.7
Private Education & Health Services	67.1	66.7	63.0	0.4	4.1
Leisure & Hospitality	34.3	35.5	33.5	-1.2	0.8
Other Services	19.9	19.7	19.2	0.2	0.7
Government	70.1	70.2	69.6	-0.1	0.5
Federal Government	10.5	10.4	10.0	0.1	0.5
State Government	34.3	34.4	34.0	-0.1	0.3
Local Government	25.3	25.4	25.6	-0.1	-0.3

**December 2023 Arkansas Labor Market Report
Little Rock – North Little Rock – Conway MSA**

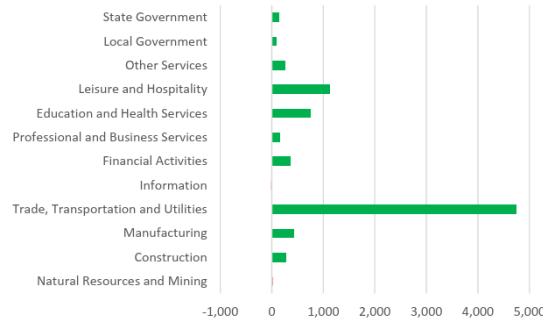
Data in the 2023 Arkansas Labor Market and Economic Report for the Central Arkansas Workforce Development Area indicates that the **Trade, Transportation, and Utilities** supersector leads the area, with 1,421 new jobs, moving employment to 42,635, followed by **Education and Health Services** with 792 new jobs to reach a total of 38,613 workers, **Leisure and Hospitality**, adding 866 new jobs to reach a new high of 19,919 workers. **Professional and Business Services** also makes the list of growing industry supersectors, projected to increase from 14,917 to 15,909 workers at a rate of 6.65%. [2023 Arkansas Labor Market and Economic Report]

Top Growing Industry Supersectors

NAICS Code	NAICS Title	2022 Estimated Employment	2024 Projected Employment	Numeric Change	Percent Change
102100	Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	41,214	42,635	1,421	3.45%
102400	Professional and Business Services	14,917	15,909	992	6.65%
102600	Leisure and Hospitality	19,044	19,910	866	4.55%
102500	Education and Health Services	37,851	38,613	762	2.01%
102700	Other Services (except Government)	12,764	13,285	521	4.08%

**2023 Arkansas Labor Market and Economic Report
Central Arkansas Workforce Development Area**

Wage increase for Trade, Transportation, and Utilities outpaces other sectors in the Little Rock area with a growth rate of 9.5%, which brought average weekly earnings to \$1,017 in 2022.



2023 Arkansas Labor Market and Economic Report

In the short-term, according to the State of Arkansas Workforce Development Areas Short-Term Industry and Occupational Projections 2022-2024, **Transportation and Material Moving Occupations** has emerged as a fastest growing major group, raising employment levels by 3.35 percent. However, between 2022 and 2024, projected growth for Transportation is outpaced by **Leisure and Hospitality**, which is projected to have a 5.71% rate of increase and **Manufacturing** with an increase of 5.63%. **Education and Health Services** has a more modest growth rate of 2.99% The **Professional and Business Services** was projected to expand at a rate of 3.67 with Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services increasing to 10,197 at a rate of 2.84%. [State of Arkansas Workforce Development Areas: Short-Term Industry and Occupational Projections, 2022-2024]

**City of Little Rock Workforce Development Area
2022-2024 Industry Projections by Major Division**

NAICS Code	NAICS Title	2022 Estimated Employment	2024 Projected Employment	Numeric Change	Percent Change
000000	TOTAL ALL INDUSTRIES	211,916	217,340	5,424	2.56%
006010	Self Employed Workers, All Jobs	10,977	11,159	182	1.66%
101000	Goods Producing	12,157	12,742	585	4.81%
101300	MANUFACTURING	6,462	6,826	364	5.63%
	Non-Durable Goods Manufacturing	3,586	4,074	488	13.61%
	Durable Goods Manufacturing	2,876	2,752	-124	-4.31%
102000	Services Providing	188,782	193,439	4,657	2.47%
102100	TRADE, TRANSPORTATION, AND UTILITIES	32,614	33,706	1,092	3.35%
420000	Wholesale Trade	7,151	7,533	382	5.34%
440000	Retail Trade	13,970	14,269	299	2.14%
480000	Transportation and Warehousing	10,020	10,451	431	4.30%
220000	Utilities	1,473	1,453	-20	-1.36%
102200	INFORMATION	2,325	2,126	-199	-8.56%
102300	FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES	24,583	26,254	1,671	6.80%
520000	Finance and Insurance	21,815	23,408	1,593	7.30%
530000	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	2,768	2,846	78	2.82%
102400	PROFESSIONAL AND BUSINESS SERVICES	25,123	25,275	152	0.61%
540000	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	9,915	10,197	282	2.84%
550000	Management of Companies and Enterprises	5,001	5,261	260	5.20%
560000	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	10,207	9,817	-390	-3.82%
102500	EDUCATION AND HEALTH SERVICES	55,141	56,789	1,648	2.99%
610000	Educational Services	11,447	11,729	282	2.46%
620000	Health Care and Social Assistance	43,694	45,060	1,366	3.13%
102600	LEISURE AND HOSPITALITY	13,166	13,918	752	5.71%
710000	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1,423	1,749	326	22.91%
720000	Accommodation and Food Services	11,743	12,169	426	3.63%
102700	OTHER SERVICES (EXCEPT GOVERNMENT)	15,498	14,982	-516	-3.33%
102800	GOVERNMENT	20,332	20,389	57	0.28%

Longer-term, **Leisure and Hospitality** is estimated to be the top growing supersector in the City of Little Rock WDA, with 16,440 workers by 2030, an increase of 34.00% between 2020 and 2030. **Education and Health Services** ranks second in industry projections by major division with an increase of 7,590 new jobs, an increase of 14.71% over a ten year span. Personal Care and Service Occupations is expected to continue to be a fast growing major group, with an increase of 9.58%. **Trade, Transportation, and Utilities** comes in next with 2,182 new jobs, a 7.84% increase, followed by **Manufacturing** with 833 new jobs (11.84% increase) and **Construction** with 210 new jobs (4.54% increase). The **Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services** sector is projected to increase from 9,790 to 10,916 at a rate of 11.5%. [State of Arkansas Workforce Development Areas: Long-Term Industry and Occupational Projections, 2020-2030]

**City of Little Rock Workforce Development Area
2020-2030 Industry Projections by Major Division**

NAICS Code	NAICS Title	2020 Estimated Employment	2030 Projected Employment	Numeric Change	Percent Change
000000	TOTAL ALL INDUSTRIES	198,233	219,765	21,532	10.86%
000067	Self Employed Workers, All Jobs	9,540	8,784	-756	-7.92%
101000	Goods Producing	12,189	13,248	1,059	8.69%
101100	NATURAL RESOURCES AND MINING	521	537	16	3.07%
101200	CONSTRUCTION	4,630	4,840	210	4.54%
101300	MANUFACTURING	7,038	7,871	833	11.84%
	Non-Durable Goods Manufacturing	2,861	3,310	449	15.69%
	Durable Goods Manufacturing	4,177	4,561	384	9.19%
102000	Services Providing	176,504	197,733	21,229	12.03%
102100	TRADE, TRANSPORTATION, AND UTILITIES	27,833	30,015	2,182	7.84%
420000	Wholesale Trade	6,668	6,993	325	4.87%
440000	Retail Trade	13,898	14,316	418	3.01%
480000	Transportation and Warehousing	5,515	6,976	1,461	26.49%
220000	Utilities	1,752	1,730	-22	-1.26%
102200	INFORMATION	2,455	2,184	-271	-11.04%
102300	FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES	23,196	25,620	2,424	10.45%
520000	Finance and Insurance	20,471	22,772	2,301	11.24%
530000	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	2,725	2,848	123	4.51%
102400	Professional and Business Services	24,711	27,179	2,468	9.99%
540000	PROFESSIONAL, SCIENTIFIC, AND TECHNICAL SERVICES	9,790	10,916	1,126	11.50%
550000	Management of Companies and Enterprises	4,359	4,842	483	11.08%
560000	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	10,562	11,421	859	8.13%
102500	EDUCATION AND HEALTH SERVICES	51,591	59,181	7,590	14.71%
610000	Educational Services	10,204	10,866	662	6.49%
620000	Health Care and Social Assistance	41,387	48,315	6,928	16.74%
102600	LEISURE AND HOSPITALITY	12,269	16,440	4,171	34.00%
710000	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1,322	1,617	295	22.31%
720000	Accommodation and Food Services	10,947	14,823	3,876	35.41%
102700	OTHER SERVICES (EXCEPT GOVERNMENT)	13,576	15,722	2,146	15.81%
102800	GOVERNMENT	20,873	21,392	519	2.49%

Using analysis of economic conditions as a guide, the LRWDB has identified target sectors in tiers that meet the following criteria: data-driven high growth/demand and high wage, entry-level positions that are accessible with basic to moderate skill levels, defined career pathways, stackable and transferrable credentials, engaged local educational and employer partners.

Tier 1:

- The **Health Services** supersector meets all of the criteria for a target sector - as established by the LRWDB based on Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) guidelines.

Survey data indicates that Health Services is a high growth sector with high wage occupations and a defined career path. The Healthcare and Social Assistance industry is projected to provide 48,315 jobs in Little Rock by 2030 with a 16.74% growth rate [State of Arkansas Workforce Development Areas Long-Term Industry and Occupational Projections, 2020-2030]. Within this sector, Personal Care and Services Occupations are estimated to grow at a rate of 3.04% between 2022 and 2024 [State of Arkansas Workforce Development Areas Short-Term Industry and Occupational Projections, 2022-2024]. Personal Care and Service Occupations are also expected to be a fast growing major group, with an increase of 9.58% between 2020 and 2030 [State of Arkansas Workforce Development Areas Long-Term Industry and Occupational Projections, 2020-2030]. The career pathway for those starting as entry level Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs), Medical Assistants or

Phlebotomists includes Licensed Practical Nurses, earning at mean wage of \$45,990 in 2022 [Arkansas Hot 45 2023-2024 Demand Occupations] and Registered Nurses with 8,800 employed in 2022 with an average wage of \$72,215 [2023 Arkansas Labor Market and Economic Report].

Partnerships with local educational partners indicate that the sector offers stackable and transferrable credentials and relationships with engaged local employers indicate the presence of job opportunities. Educational partners include the Little Rock School District, MedCerts, Baptist Health College Little Rock, The University of Arkansas at Little Rock and the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. Local employers in this sector include: CHI St. Vincent, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS), Arkansas Children's Hospital, Baptist Health, Arkansas Heart Hospital, Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System, and Arkansas State Veterans Home.

- **Trade, Transportation, and Utilities** is predicted to be the top growing supersector, adding 1,092 jobs to the local economy between 2022 and 2024 [State of Arkansas Workforce Development Areas Short-Term Industry and Occupational Projections, 2022-2024]. While Trade, Transportation, and Utilities is expected to grow at a rate of 3.35% overall, the Transportation and Warehousing segment of this sector is projected to employ 6,976 by 2030, an increase of 26.49% [State of Arkansas Workforce Development Areas Long-Term Industry and Occupational Projections, 2020-2030]. Within this sector, 10,451 people are projected to work in Transportation and Material Moving Occupations by 2024, a growth rate of 4.3% [2023 Arkansas Labor Market Report]. There were 4,655 total annual openings for Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand Occupations in 2022, earning a mean wage of \$32,880, and 4,917 total annual openings for Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers, earning a mean wage of \$47,090 [Arkansas Hot 45 2023-2024 Demand Occupations]. Entry-level jobs like Stockers and Order Fillers with 4,202 projected total annual openings with a mean wage of \$32,090 in 2022, offer a career pathway into Warehousing and Storage that requires basic skills.

Outreach and experience indicate a number of educational partners, including Goodwill (Certificate in Forklift Awareness), WorldLink Truck Driving Academy, 160 Driving Academy, and Rock River Driving Academy to support this sector. Local employers in this sector include Rock Region METRO, Wal-Mart, Dillard's, Maverick Trucking, Performance Foodservice, C.A.T. Transportation and ABF Freight System, Custom Craft Poultry and Amazon (in Warehousing and Storage).

- The **Advanced Manufacturing** sector meets many, but not all, of the criteria for a target sector - as established by the LRWDB based on WIOA guidelines.

Survey data indicates that Advanced Manufacturing is an emerging in-demand sector in Little Rock, projected to employ 6,826 in 2024 (an increase of 5.63% since 2022). Non-Durable Goods Manufacturing was projected to increase by 13.61% from 2022 to 2024 [State of Arkansas Workforce Development Areas Short-Term Industry and Occupational Projections, 2022-2024] and grow by 15.69% between 2020 and 2030. The Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing industry is projected grow at a rate of 32.89% to reach 1,087 workers by 2030 [State of Arkansas Workforce Development Areas Long-Term Industry and Occupational Projections, 2020-2030].

While career pathways in this sector are not as well defined as Health Services, Advanced Manufacturing offers capacity for movement into fast growing areas like food manufacturing with projected employment of 1,380 in 2024, an increase of 25.68% from 2022 [2023 Arkansas Labor Market and Economic Report].

Local stakeholders like the State Chamber of Commerce are beginning to develop consensus around common certification standards through the Manufacturing Skills Standards Council (MSSC). As a result, local educational partners like the Little Rock School District, Metro Career Technical Education Academy, Manufacturing Skill Standards Council, Pulaski Technical College have initiated activities to align with in-demand MSSC certifications. Business outreach also indicates that local employers like the Port of Little Rock, Dassault Falcon Jet, Caterpillar, AFCO Steel, Lexicon, Welspun, All Weather Insulated Panels, Cintas Custom Craft Poultry, De Wafelbakkers, Essick Air, GF Harvel and Sage V Foods are seeking employees with Advanced Manufacturing skillsets.

Tier 2

- **Construction** continues as a Tier 2 focal point based on the number of individuals currently employed in the supersector, a significant projected growth rate for the Construction industry, and the strength of the existing educational infrastructure to produce skilled Construction workers in the Little Rock area. Construction is projected to grow at a rate of 4.54% between 2020 and 2030, employing 4,840 workers by 2030 [State of Arkansas Workforce Development Areas Long-Term Industry and Occupational Projections, 2020-2030]. Construction Apprentices represent a significant career pathway in this sector since they are required to satisfy growth requirements.

Outreach to local stakeholders indicates that a wide variety of educational partners, like the Little Rock School District, Metro Career Technical Education Academy, AR Construction Education Foundation, University of Arkansas at Little Rock, Job Corps, Pulaski Technical College, Union & Employer Apprenticeships, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Certification Providers, are committed to development Construction competence. Similarly, local employers like Ridout Lumber Company, CDI Contractors, Sub-contractors, Unions, and Apprenticeship Programs are poised to employ skilled Construction workers.

- The **Leisure and Hospitality** sector has emerged as a significant option in Tier 2. This sector centers on arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services. Leisure and Hospitality was expected to grow at a rate of 5.71% to reach 13,918 workers by 2024 [2023 Arkansas Labor Market and Economic Report; State of Arkansas Workforce Development Areas Short-Term Industry and Occupational Projections, 2022-2024] and is expected to grow at a rate of 34.0% between 2020 and 2030 to reach a total of 16,440 workers [State of Arkansas Workforce Development Areas Long-Term Industry and Occupational Projections, 2020-2030]. The most promising segment of this sector continues to be skill development opportunities for job seekers in food handling, culinary specialties like chefs, and career options like restaurant management. There were 2,256 total annual openings for Restaurant Cooks with a mean wage of \$28,350 in 2022. One career path opportunity includes First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers, which had 1,939 total annual openings and a mean wage of \$32,350 in 2022 [Arkansas Hot 45 2023-2024 Demand Occupations].

Partnerships with local educational partners like FoodJobsWork provide a pathway toward a ServSafe Food Handler certification and "First Impressions" Customer Service Certification from the Arkansas Department of Parks, Heritage and Tourism (offered in partnership with local customer service experts. The Little Rock Convention and Visitor's Bureau offers channels to explore local employment opportunities.

A new partnership with the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation (NRAEF) offers additional opportunity for job seekers to pursue recognized and transferrable credentials that can lead to jobs with local employers, including restaurants, hotels, and other hospitality-oriented businesses. NRAEF provides apprenticeship programs for in-demand occupations like Line Cooks, Kitchen Managers, and Restaurant Managers that align with national NRAEF standards, leveraging competency-based on-the-job training and related courses through the National Retail Federation’s (NRF) Rise Up training and credentialing program that provides foundational employability skills to help people land jobs and get promoted.

Tier 3:

The LRWDB identified two additional sectors – Information Technology and Education – for which less local/regional economic data is available.

- The **Information Technology** sector focuses on training adults and youth for careers as computer programmers/coders and web designers. With the increase in network and online vulnerability, the cyber security area of study and related credentials is increasingly in demand. The Data Processing, Hosting and Related Services industry is projected to grow at a rate of 6.53% between 2022 and 2024 [2023 Arkansas Labor Market and Economic Report] and Data Processing, Hosting and Related Services are projected to grow at a rate of 6.53% between 2022 and 2024 [State of Arkansas Workforce Development Areas Short-Term Industry and Occupational Projections, 2022-2024]. Between 2020 and 2030, Computer and Mathematical Occupations are expected to grow at a rate of 12.13% to reach 6,481 workers [State of Arkansas Workforce Development Areas Long-Term Industry and Occupational Projections, 2020-2030].

- Educational and placement partners like the Forge Institute and Arkansas Center for Data Sciences (ACDS) are gaining momentum to grow Arkansas’ IT talent pipeline in fields like cyber security. Startups through incubators like the Venture Center are working to make job opportunities in this sector more available. Arkansas Hot 45 2023-2024 Demand Occupations lists total annual openings for Computer User Support Specialists at 318 with a mean wage of \$50,080.

- **Education** (Elementary, Middle School, Secondary) serves as a Tier 3 option due to projected employment openings. The Arkansas Hot 45 2023-2024 Demand Occupations lists total annual openings for elementary teachers as 1,066 with a mean wage of \$50,610, openings for middle school teachers at 483 with a mean wage of \$52,890, and secondary teacher openings at 957 with a mean wage of \$53,080. This sector offers availability of “gateway” jobs library assistants, and the capacity for local institutions to produce qualified graduates for more highly skilled teaching positions through local educational partners like the University of Arkansas at Little Rock and programs accredited by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education. However, the “high skill” levels required for progression into higher paying jobs [Arkansas Hot 45 2023-2024 Demand Occupations] makes this sector less accessible to a broad spectrum of job seekers.

1.2. Provide an analysis of the knowledge and skills required to meet the employment needs of the employers in the local area, including employment needs for in-demand industry sectors and occupations. [WIOA §108(b)(1)(B); 20 CFR 679.560(a)]

Updated data in Arkansas’ Hot 45: 2023-2024 Demand Occupations provides a snapshot of the knowledge and skills required for occupations in target sectors of Healthcare; Trade, Transportation, and Utilities Trade, Transportation; Advanced Manufacturing; Construction; Leisure and Hospitality; Information Technology, and Education by skill level (basic, moderate, high).

HIGH SKILL					MODERATE SKILL					BASIC SKILL				
Occupation	O*Net Skills	Total Annual Outings	Education	May 2022 Mean Wage	Occupation	O*Net Skills	Total Annual Outings	Education	May 2022 Mean Wage	Occupation	O*Net Skills	Total Annual Outings	Education	May 2022 Mean Wage
General and Operations Managers	Active Listening, Coordination, Monitoring	2,281	B	\$84,440	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	Operation and Control, Operations, Monitoring, Monitoring	4,977	PS	\$47,293	Food and Counter Workers	Service Orientation, Active Listening, Social Perceptiveness	8,649	NPE	\$25,580
Registered Nurses	Social Perceptiveness, Active Listening, Coordination	1,777	B	\$64,533	Nursing Assistants	Service Orientation, Active Listening, Social Perceptiveness	2,531	PS	\$29,970	Cashiers	Service Orientation, Active Listening, Service Orientation	6,063	NPE	\$26,740
Clergy	Speaking, Active Listening, Service Orientation	1,425	B	\$46,970	Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	Mathematics, Active Listening, Critical Thinking	1,887	SC	\$41,960	Retail Salespersons	Persuasion, Active Listening, Service Orientation	5,410	NPE	\$31,135
Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	Instructing, Speaking, Learning Strategies	1,366	B	\$52,010	Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary	O*NET Skills Unavailable	1,998	SC	\$28,840	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	Coordination, Critical Thinking, Operation and Control	4,655	NPE	\$32,880
Accountants and Auditors	Active Listening, Reading, Comprehension, Critical Thinking	1,308	B	\$70,440	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	Service Orientation, Coordination, Social Perceptiveness	863	PS	\$45,990	Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers	Critical Thinking, Speaking, Monitoring	4,628	HS	\$59,020
Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education	Instructing, Speaking, Active Listening	957	B	\$53,080	Medical Assistants	Social Perceptiveness, Active Listening, Speaking	684	PS	\$33,740	Stockers and Order Fillers	Active Listening, Reading, Comprehension, Monitoring	4,202	HS	\$32,090
Management Analysts	Active Listening, Critical Thinking, Reading, Comprehension	856	B	\$78,300	Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education	Instructing, Speaking, Active Listening	650	A	\$27,680	Walkers and Watchmen	Active Listening, Service Orientation, Speaking	3,751	NPE	\$28,270
Financial Managers	Active Listening, Critical Thinking, Reading, Comprehension	762	B	\$118,200	Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	Repairing, Troubleshooting, Critical Thinking	544	PS	\$43,280	Office Clerks, General	Active Listening, Reading, Comprehension	3,632	HS	\$36,190
Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	Critical Thinking, Reading, Comprehension, Writing	690	B	\$75,910	Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers	Operations, Monitoring, Critical Thinking, Troubleshooting	544	PS	\$42,540	Customer Service Representatives	Active Listening, Service Orientation, Speaking	3,012	HS	\$37,110
Medical and Health Services Managers	Critical Thinking, Speaking, Active Listening	657	B	\$74,840	Dental Assistants	Active Listening, Speaking, Reading, Comprehension	478	PS	\$36,570	Home Health and Personal Care Aides	Service Orientation, Active Listening, Social Perceptiveness	2,963	HS	\$34,480
Project Management Specialists	O*NET Skills Unavailable	541	B	\$82,380	Hairdressers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists	Active Listening, Speaking, Service Orientation	414	PS	\$28,910	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	Active Listening, Coordination, Critical Thinking	2,564	NPE	\$28,100
Human Resources Specialists	Speaking, Active Listening, Reading, Comprehension	519	B	\$69,780	Paralegals and Legal Assistants	Reading, Comprehension, Active Listening, Speaking	399	A	N/A	Cooks, Restaurant	Monitoring, Active Listening, Coordination	2,254	NPE	\$28,930
Fundraisers	Speaking, Active Listening, Persuasion	504	B	\$56,510	Computer User Support Specialists	Active Listening, Reading, Comprehension	218	SC	\$50,280	First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	Active Listening, Service Orientation, Speaking	2,180	HS	\$42,820
Middle School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education	Instructing, Speaking, Active Listening	483	B	\$52,890	Physical Therapist Assistants	Active Listening, Monitoring, Social Perceptiveness	283	A	\$44,270	Receptionists and Information Clerks	Active Listening, Speaking, Service Orientation	2,054	HS	\$30,410
Buyers and Purchasing Agents	Speaking, Negotiation, Critical Thinking	445	B	\$62,870	Telecommunications Equipment Installers and Repairers, Except Line Installers	Repairing, Troubleshooting, Critical Thinking	201	PS	\$51,470	First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	Coordination, Monitoring, Speaking	1,939	HS	\$33,350

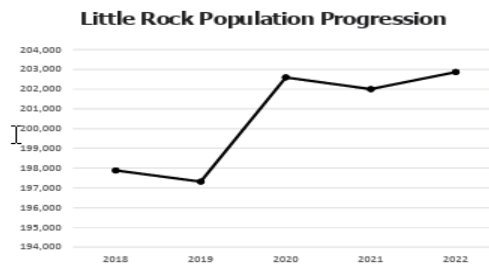
ARKANSAS' DEMAND OCCUPATIONS
HOT 45
2023-2024

Doctoral or professional degree (D) - Requires at least five years of full-time academic study beyond a bachelor's degree.
Master's degree (M) - Requires one to two years of full-time academic study beyond a bachelor's degree.
Bachelor's degree (B) - Requires four or five years of full-time academic study.
Associate degree (A) - Requires at least two years of full-time academic study.
Postsecondary non-degree award (PS) - Programs last at least two years to more than a year; leads to a certificate or other award.
Some college, no degree (SC) - Requires the completion of a high school diploma or equivalent plus the completion of one or more postsecondary courses that did not result in a degree or award.
High school diploma or equivalent (HS) - Requires the completion of high school or equivalent program resulting in the award of a high school diploma or an equivalent such as GED.
No formal education (NFE) - Specifies that a formal credential issued by an educational institution, such as a high school diploma or postsecondary certificate, is not typically considered necessary to enter the occupation.

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

According to the 2023 Arkansas Labor Market and Economic Report, the City of Little Rock Local Workforce Development Area's (LWDA) population equaled 202,864 in 2022, an increase of 866 since 2021. Between 2018 and 2022, Little Rock's population grew by 4,983.

Little Rock LWDA Population 2018-2022					
2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	
197,881	197,312	202,591	201,998	202,864	
Source: U.S. Census Bureau					
State of Arkansas Population 2018-2022					
2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	
3,013,825	3,017,804	3,011,542	3,025,891	3,045,637	
Source: U.S. Census Bureau					

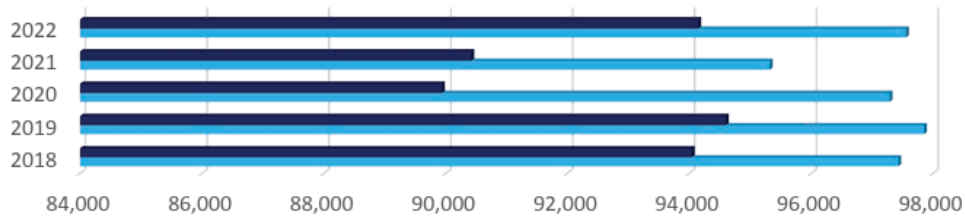


The labor force increased in the LWDA by 2,235 from 2021 to 2022, and saw an increase of 126 between 2018 and 2022. Employment increased by 3,725 from 2021 to 2022, and increased by 108 from 2018 to 2022. Unemployment and the unemployment rate decreased between 2021 to 2022, with unemployment decreasing by 1,490 and the unemployment rate decreasing by 1.6 percent to 3.5 percent in 2022. The unemployment rate fluctuated from 2018 to 2022, but ultimately settled at 3.5 percent in 2022, the same rate as 2018. The area unemployment rate fluctuated from January 2023 through July 2023, settling to 3.1 percent in July 2023. In November 2023, the unemployment rate rose to 3.3 percent [American Community Survey Snapshot – U.S. Census Bureau].

Little Rock Arkansas LWDA 2018-2022 Labor Force/Employment

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Labor Force	97,434	97,857	97,292	95,325	97,560
Employment	94,041	94,602	89,942	90,424	94,149
Unemployment	3,393	3,255	7,350	4,901	3,411
Unemployment Rate	3.5%	3.3%	7.6%	5.1%	3.5%

Source: Arkansas Division of Workforce Services



2023 Arkansas Labor Market and Economic Report

Table S2301 below takes a detailed look at the labor force data for the year 2022 calculated by the U.S. Census Bureau (based on the 2018-2022 American Community Survey). The table includes labor force participation rates, employment-to-population ratios and unemployment rates for various demographics. Higher unemployment rates are found among population ages 30-45, Blacks or African Americans, persons with disabilities and those with a high school diploma or equivalency.

Little Rock enjoys a high labor force participation rate among typical working-age employees aged 20-64. The overall local labor force participation rate is 62.4%, which already exceeds that state goal of 59.4% by 2028.

	Total	Labor Force Participation Rate	Employment/Population Ratio	Unemployment Rate
Population 16 years and over	162,720	62.4%	60.9%	2.3%
AGE				
16 to 19 years	9,626	27.9%	27.9%	0.0%
20 to 24 years	16,581	77.5%	75.1%	2.9%
25 to 29 years	13,949	77.8%	77.5%	0.4%
30 to 34 years	16,259	75.3%	73.0%	3.1%
35 to 44 years	29,585	79.8%	77.1%	3.0%
45 to 54 years	22,646	79.1%	77.0%	2.6%
55 to 59 years	10,863	68.4%	66.7%	2.5%
60 to 64 years	12,210	55.2%	54.7%	0.9%
65 to 74 years	17,861	34.2%	33.5%	2.0%
75 years and over	13,140	8.7%	8.7%	0.0%
RACE AND HISPANIC OR LATINO ORIGIN				
White alone	77,784	63.4%	62.2%	1.6%
Black or African American alone	66,856	60.9%	59.4%	2.5%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	N	N	N	N
Asian alone	N	N	N	N

Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	N	N	N	N
Some other race alone	N	N	N	N
Two or more races	N	N	N	N
Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)	N	N	N	N
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	75,670	63.7%	62.6%	1.5%
Population 20 to 64 years	122,093	75.1%	73.1%	2.4%
SEX				
Male	59,631	78.3%	76.0%	2.8%
Female	62,462	71.9%	70.4%	2.1%
With own children under 18 years	19,381	66.7%	65.2%	2.3%
With own children under 6 years only	5,357	77.4%	72.6%	6.2%
With own children under 6 years and 6 to 17 years	3,398	61.5%	61.5%	0.0%
With own children 6 to 17 years only	10,626	63.0%	62.6%	0.6%
POVERTY STATUS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS				
Below poverty level	19,941	39.2%	31.2%	20.4%
At or above the poverty level	99,139	83.3%	82.6%	0.8%
DISABILITY STATUS				
With any disability	16,234	49.9%	45.1%	9.6%
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT				
Population 25 to 64 years	105,512	74.7%	72.8%	2.3%
Less than high school graduate	5,028	48.0%	47.2%	1.7%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	22,932	60.8%	58.1%	3.8%
Some college or associate's degree	33,825	71.4%	69.4%	2.9%
Bachelor's degree or higher	43,727	87.5%	86.2%	1.5%

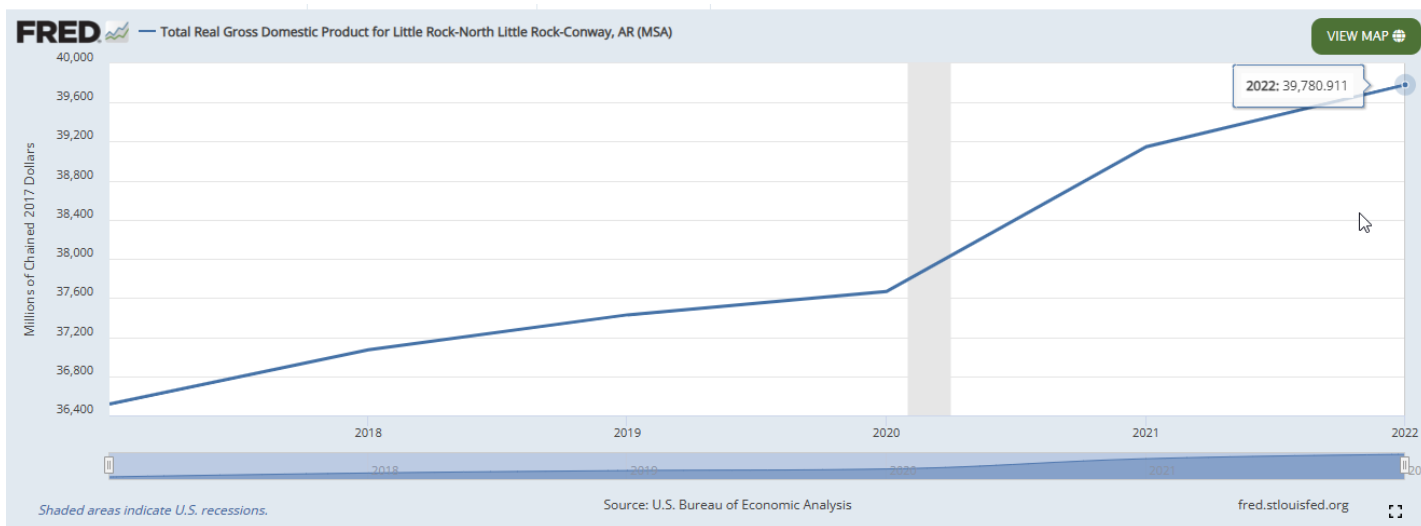
Table S1901 below (based on the American Community Survey 2018-2022 5-Year Estimates) includes median household income for Little Rock residents. The table illustrates that Little Rock benefits from a median household/per capita personal income of \$58,697, which exceeds the current median household income of \$52,600 across Arkansas but is less than both the current median household income of \$62,664 across the Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway MSA and the state goal of \$66,500 by 2028.

Households	86,365
Less than \$10,000	6.6%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	4.3%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	9.0%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	10.8%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	13.3%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	16.0%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	11.0%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	12.3%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	6.7%

\$200,000 or more	9.9%
Median income (dollars)	58,697
Mean income (dollars)	96,841

American Community Survey 2018-2022 5-Year Estimates

The graph below - based on Federal Reserve Economic Data (FRED) sourced from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis - illustrates that Total Real GDP for Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway residents stood at 39,780.911 million in 2022. When divided by the 757,768 residents of the MSA in 2022, Real GDP per capita equals \$52,497. Real GDP for the central Arkansas MSA is greater than current Real GDP per capital for Arkansas at \$45,000 and the state goal of \$51,000 by 2028.



Survey data reflects limited educational attainment for a significant percentage of Little Rock’s population. While 92.4% of person aged 25 and older in Little Rock have a high school diploma, only 44.1% have a Bachelor’s Degree or higher [American Community Survey, 2018-2022].

Survey data also indicates significant unemployment for individuals with specific barriers to employment. In The unemployment rate for people with disabilities in Little Rock, Arkansas is 19%. This figure reflects the percentage of individuals with disabilities who are actively seeking employment but are currently unemployed. [Arkansas Division of Workforce Services, 2022]. The unemployment rate for veterans is approximately 3.4% - higher than the overall average. This figure represents the percentage of veterans actively seeking employment but currently without a job. [National Center for Veteran Analysis and Statistics, Department of Veterans Affairs, 2022].

- 1.4. Provide an analysis and description of workforce development activities, including type and availability of education, training, and employment activities. Include analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of such services, and the capacity to provide such services, to address the education and skill needs of the workforce and the employment needs of employers in the local area. [WIOA §108(b)(1)(D); 20 CFR 679.560(a)]

Arkansas Workforce Center at Little Rock

The Arkansas Workforce Center at Little Rock is at the forefront of workforce development activities, and represents Arkansas' version of "the American Job Centers". The Little Rock Workforce Center is the area's comprehensive center. The Little Rock Workforce Center was certified as a comprehensive center by the Arkansas Division of Workforce Services as of July 1, 2023. The workforce center is managed locally by the Little Rock Workforce Development Board, which is composed of members from both the public and a majority private sector, reflecting local businesses, labor, partner agencies, and other key stakeholders to create a diverse and functional group. The boards, in alignment with the States' vision, provide front line strategic implementation for state-wide initiatives in addition to their locally-determined priorities. State initiatives include sector strategies, career pathway development, and delivery of standardized business services. Local priorities include layoff aversion, specific career pathway development, youth programs, targeted sector partnerships, work-based learning, and others. The LRWDB is tasked with procuring a one-stop operator for the daily operation of the Little Rock Workforce Center (LRWFC) in accordance with WIOA 121(d). The board carries out workforce activities by partnering locally through Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) to implement partner programs. The LRWFC is fully integrated with WIOA, Wagner-Peyser, Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG), Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS), Unemployment Insurance (UI), Adult Education and Family Literacy, Vocational Rehabilitation. Local partnerships and integration also exist with other state agencies, such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment and Training Programs, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and others.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

WIOA services and activities include assessment, job referrals, self-help job search, individual job development, individual training accounts (ITAs), occupational skills assessment, program eligibility assistance, resume assistance, employability workshops, comprehensive/specialized assessment, individual employment plans (IEP), individual service strategy (ISS), career planning, case management, short-term vocational services, referral to community services, labor market information (LMI), work experience, and on-the-job-training (OJT).

The LRWDB and LRWFC possess strengths in partnership among Workforce Center partners, youth services, and core WIOA service areas. Areas for improvement include business outreach to make employers aware of the full array of service offerings and services designed to address the needs of hard-to-reach populations (e.g., veterans, homeless, individuals with disabilities, returning citizens).

Partners include Goodwill Industries of Arkansas, Our House, Helping Hands, Carter's Crew, and others.

Business/Employer Services

The LRWDB and Little Rock Workforce Center offer three broad categories of services that can be customized to fit the needs of each employer:

A. Assessments and Information:

Businesses can receive information on incentive programs, such as the Work Opportunity Tax Credit; Labor Market Information like market conditions, industries, and occupations; workforce analysis through employee and candidate assessments; short and long term industry trends; and occupational projections.

B. Direct Assistance:

Businesses have access to Little Rock Workforce Center facilities for meetings, trainings, orientations, and interviews. The Little Rock Workforce Development Area (LRWDA) also hosts hiring events, which are customized

to the specific needs of local businesses. Job orders, which have been approved by staff, can also be placed through the workforce area communication channels. Businesses can also receive assistance with applicant referrals and applicant screening.

C. Response and Training:

The LRWFC provides rapid response measures in the event of a business downsizing or restructuring through the Governor's Dislocated Worker Task Force (state/local partnership). These include a variety of workshops to assist employees who are in transition. Customized training and re-training services are also available for incumbent workers, including the Career Readiness certificate program.

Little Rock Arkansas Workforce System Services-Unemployed and Underemployed

The LRWFC offers a full array of career services in accordance with WIOA 134(c)(2) for unemployed and underemployed. The workforce center has computers, printers, copiers, and resources along with staff to help jobseekers. However, digital services are offered as well such as Arkansas Job Link and Discover Arkansas's LMI portal. These two tools allow for jobseekers to search for jobs 24/7 and make data informed decisions about which path is best for them. Detailed services offered to unemployed and underemployed individuals are outlined in detail below.

Jobseeker Services

Career services, found through the LRWFC, offers a full line of services to prepare jobseekers for the regional workforce. Soft skills and technical training are two examples of these services which are provided and which employers look for in a good candidate for a position. LMI, which is updated regularly to ensure accuracy, is provided to individuals seeking services. This data includes information pertaining to job vacancies, skills needed to obtain said jobs, in-demand occupations and related earning potential, along with career ladders which exist within those occupations. Typical customers entering the center are engaged by an intake process that is designed to identify the needs of the individual by gathering information and then utilizing the appropriate resources for those needs. In some cases, the resources are initiated by a referral to a partner program. Customers are given solutions to address barriers, and issues by connecting directly with the appropriate workforce system partner as part of this philosophy.

Other career services provided through our one-stop center are outreach, intake, and orientation. Upon the completion of the initial assessment, eligibility will be determined and our career coaches will begin to provide recommendations for various programs along with financial aid information. Services are also provided to individuals to assist them in obtaining and retaining employment. Some of these services include career planning and counselling, occupational skills assessment, short-term prevocational services, internships and work experience, English language acquisition, and financial literacy.

Individualized career services within the Little Rock Workforce Center varies, but offers a full line of activities to prepare any individual jobseeker for the modern workforce. They address many of the soft skills and technical skills training Arkansas employers require such as:

1. Workforce Centers provide the following career services including outreach, intake and orientation; initial assessment; labor exchange services; eligibility determination; referrals to programs; performance and cost information; information on unemployment insurance; financial aid information and follow-up services.
2. Labor exchange services must also provide labor market information to the individuals seeking services. The information must be accurate and include information on local, regional and national labor markets, such as

job vacancies; skills necessary to obtain the jobs In-demand occupations and related earning potential and opportunities for advancement in those occupations.

3. Workforce Centers and partners must provide appropriate services for individuals to obtain or retain employment. These services include, but are not limited to Individual Employment Plan (IEP); Individual Service Strategy (ISS); career planning and counseling; comprehensive assessment; occupational skills assessment; short-term prevocational services; internship and work experience, including transitional jobs and industry partnerships; workforce preparation; out-of-area job search; English language acquisition and financial literacy.

Training Services

Career services help equip a jobseeker with the skills they need to find sustainable employment, however such skills may not be enough to obtain sustainable employment. In those circumstances formal training may be required. Copious amounts of training opportunities exist through the City of Little Rock Workforce Center, such as occupational skills training which can be obtained from numerous educational opportunities such as WorldLink Truck Driving Academy, 160 Driving Academy, Goodwill Industries, and Pulaski Technical College. Registered Apprenticeships are also available in a wide variety of traditional sectors, and are in the process of being expanded into non-traditional sectors such as information technology and nursing.

These training services are funded through a variety of funding sources, including Pell funds, financial aid, and other local and state partners. The Little Rock Workforce Development Board has established policies for the determination of eligibility, Individual Training Account Limits (ITAs) and targeted training aimed at in-demand industry sectors throughout the region such as transportation logistics and healthcare. Sector strategies has taken on a new role in the region, with the Little Rock Workforce Development Board using data-driven decision making to enhance the likelihood of employment of participants.

Supportive Services

In order to assist jobseekers in obtaining or retaining employment through career or training services, Arkansas Workforce Centers offer a variety of supportive services. The Little Rock Workforce Development Board has established a supportive service policy that outlines types, eligibility, and limits, including transportation; needs-related payments; housing; tools and equipment; uniforms; and other clothing. In addition to WIOA-funded supportive services, the LRWDB has developed relationships with community partners that assist with utility payments, food, shelter, and other basic needs.

Services to Individuals with Disabilities

Historically, there are significant barriers to the inclusion of individuals with disabilities into the overall strategy for economic development in Arkansas. Significant barriers for individuals with disabilities remain in relation to attaining employment. Current LMI data from ADWS on Disabilities in the Workforce indicates that the employment rate for individuals with disabilities is 35.3%, with a median wage of \$25,529.

The LRWDB partners with the Arkansas Division of Workforce Services (ADWS), Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS), Division of Services for the Blind and Care Above All Care to provide vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities. ARS, in coordination with the Arkansas Department of Human Services, Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) and other LRWDA partners, provide targeted training, education, and career services for individuals with disabilities to enable them to attain competitive integrated employment in Arkansas. Arkansas

Rehabilitation Services provides opportunities for individuals with disabilities to work and lead productive and independent lives, such as transition services for students finishing high school; services for those with special communication needs such as the deaf and hearing impaired; specialized assessment and treatment; vocational training at the Hot Springs Rehabilitation Center's ACTI; partnerships with private providers for specialized services; and cross-training and technical assistance for other agency staff in sensitivity to and accommodations for individuals with disabilities. The Little Rock Workforce Center is accessible for individuals with disabilities, including the need for physical or other accommodations.

Building on and former Governor Mike Beebe's Executive Order 10-17 and former Governor Asa Hutchinson's Employment First Initiative, state agencies are also encouraged to hire people with disabilities and serve as a hiring model to the private sector and provide consumer services with the goal of self-sufficiency through employment as the end result.

Partnering agencies and programs within the WIOA family that serve person with disabilities include: Unemployment Insurance (UI); Vocational Rehabilitation (VR); Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA); Veteran Services; Job Corps; Work Opportunity Tax Credit; Federal Bonding; and the Arkansas Career Readiness Certificate.

Other agencies with programs serving people with disabilities include Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Transitional Employment Assistance (TEA), Central Arkansas Development Council (CADC), and Arkansas Work Pays.

Job Search Assistance

Job search assistance services include registration for work through the Arkansas Job Link System (AJL), job orders received from employers, job referrals, resource computer lab, job fairs on site, workers assistance workshops, job placements, employer contacts, and community activities.

Job Seeker Services

Job seeker services include the latest information about job vacancies, registration for Job assistance, help with job and seeking skills such as resume writing and interview preparation. Services may also include usage of telephone, fax and copier services, computer services for job search, training for those who qualify, training scholarships, wage Information, services to Veterans, filing unemployment claims (exclusively online), dislocated worker-trade adjustment assistance, and referral to adult education.

Youth Services

Youth services include occupational skills, supportive services, work experience – year round, tutoring, job readiness/employment workshops, and work experience - summer employment.

Other partnering agencies and nonprofit organizations providing youth services are: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Transitional Employment Assistance (TEA), Career Pathways, Arkansas Work Pays, Carter's Crew, City Year Little Rock, Little Rock Job Corp, TRIO Educational Opportunity Center at UALR and Immerse Arkansas.

These strengths and weaknesses have informed the vision, goals, and tactics of the PY2024-PY2027 plan through concerted discussion and deliberation by LRWDB board members and staff.

Section 2: Strategic Vision and Goals

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

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

Based on the statistics and research outlined in Section of this plan, the LRWDB will focus on individuals without a college degree, including individuals in hard-to-reach populations like veterans and individuals with disabilities. The LRWDB will also recruit participants from, and give priority to the specific zip codes with high unemployment rates which represent the Capitol City’s most distressed neighborhoods: Midtown area, Central/Downtown area, and Southwest area in Little Rock. The Southwest area is the home of the Little Rock Workforce Development Board, within the Little Rock Workforce Center – a 14-year old, 54,000 square foot, One-Stop Center with 12 partner agencies providing workforce development services.

Vision

Little Rock will have a world-class workforce with the precise skills to supply in-demand occupations in local high-growth sectors and keep Little Rock’s economy competitive in the global marketplace.

Mission

To establish and cultivate a talent development system that offers employers, job seekers, and communities in the Little Rock metropolitan area the opportunity to realize and sustain economic prosperity.

Talent Development System Philosophy

We believe that...

- There must be a pipeline of skilled workers for Little Rock employers that fosters growth for local companies and attracts economic investment.
- Local and regional workforce needs can be best addressed through partnerships (e.g., city leadership, employers, educators) that support commonly held, locally relevant economic priorities.
- The data-driven needs of local business and industry should serve as the focal point for aligning education, training, and career management resources.
- Every Little Rock job seeker (adult, youth, dislocated worker) should have opportunity and access to targeted training and education that leads to a career with gainful employment.
- A meaningful talent development system must seek to remove barriers for hard-to-reach populations (older youth, returning citizens, individuals with disabilities, veterans, homeless, ESL).
- A transformational talent development strategy must incorporate job readiness (soft skills) training, vocational education, and job placement services.
- Marketing and awareness efforts are essential to tell the LRWDB’s “story” and promote the Little Rock talent development system as a preferred resource for local and regional employers.
- The LRWDB should operate within a regional partner network, providing a viable talent development system for Little Rock that is flexible, accountable, and streamlined in terms of resource investment.

- LRWDB staff must be recognized leaders in workforce development and be fully engaged in efficient, effective practices that connect employers with qualified job seekers.
- LRWDB members must serve as a board of choice for the community and board members must exhibit dedicated, active participation toward talent development objectives.
- By adopting and implementing best practices for talent development and innovative fund development approaches, the LRWDB can become a model for workforce development in the region and state.
- LRWDB board members, staff, and partners should demonstrate the highest levels of integrity, respect, transparency, and trust as they work to implement workforce development strategies.

Vision for the Little Rock Workforce Development Delivery System

The Little Rock workforce system, as envisioned under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), is quality focused, employer-driven, customer-centered, and customized to meet the needs of the local and regional economy. It aligns workforce development, education, and economic development programs to meet the needs of local and regional employers. It is designed to increase access to, and opportunities for, employment, education, training, and support services by job seekers, particularly those with barriers to employment. The Little Rock workforce development center, in conjunction with local and regional partners, works to connect job seekers with employers in key business sectors and promote the advancement of the local and regional economy.

Strategic Goals

The LRWDB's strategic goals include:

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

Goal 1 Objectives:

1. Establish local partnership forum(s) with key employers in Tier 1 sectors:
 - Healthcare: CHI – St. Vincent, Arkansas Children's Hospital, Baptist Health, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, Heart Hospital
 - Trade, Transportation, and Utilities – Texas TransEastern (TTE), Rock Region METRO, Wal-Mart, Dillard's, Maverick Trucking, Performance Foodservice, C.A.T. Transportation and ABF Freight System, Custom Craft Poultry, Alks & Lm Trucking, Inc., Amazon (Warehousing and Storage)
 - Advanced Manufacturing: Little Rock Port Authority, Dassault Falcon Jet, Envoy Air, Caterpillar, AFCO Steel, Lexicon, and Welspun, All Weather Insulated Panels, Cintas, Custom Craft Poultry, De Wafelbakkers, Essick Air, GF Harvel, Sage V Foods
2. Work with K-12 education, higher education, career and technical education, and adult education to establish new or expanded educational programs aligned with skill needs in Tier 1 sectors:

- Healthcare: Little Rock School District, Medlinc, Baptist Health College Little Rock, University of Arkansas at Little Rock, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, R&L Healthcare, Arkansas College of Health Careers, PAL Training Academy, Arkansas Employment Career Center, UA-PTC, Goodwill Industries of AR (pharmacy technician, medical assistant, phlebotomy)
 - Trade, Transportation, and Logistics: Goodwill (Certificate in Forklift and Warehouse), WorldLink Truck Driving Academy, 160 Driving Academy, and Rock River Driving Academy
 - Advanced Manufacturing: Little Rock School District, Metro Career Technical Education Academy, Manufacturing Skill Standards Council, UA-PTC, Goodwill Industries of AR (welding)
3. Establish increased data sharing mechanisms with economic development and non-governmental organizations to improved intake, referral, and case management for LRWFC customers seeking jobs in Tier 1 sectors.

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

Goal 2 Objectives:

1. Promote training that leads to industry recognized, transportable credentials and certification for Tier 1 sectors:
 - Healthcare: Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN), Registered Nurse (RN)
 - Trade, Transportation, and Utilities: Commercial Driver's License (CDL), Forklift Operator Certificate
 - Advanced Manufacturing: Certified Production Technician (CPT), Certified Logistics Technician (CLT), Machinist (NIMS), Welder (AWS/CW)
2. Maintain and build upon the documented common business outreach strategy to reinforce a common message that will be utilized by all workforce system partners.
3. Utilize data from customer satisfaction surveys to ensure continuous improvement of the Little Rock Workforce Development Area's talent development system.

Strategic Goal 3: Increase awareness of Little Rock's Talent Development System

Goal 3 Objectives:

1. Expand and reinforce an image-building outreach campaign – logo, infographic, print messaging - that educates Arkansans about available services and career development opportunities.
2. Expand and improve a user-friendly website that provides a common repository of information about career development opportunities that are relevant to K-12 education, parents, educators, adults, employers, government agencies, and the general public.

3. Maintain and build upon outreach to key audiences (employers, job seekers, educational partners, economic development entities) through technology platforms: Search Engine Optimization (SEO), social media, blog.

Strategic Goal 4: Address Skills Gaps for Little Rock job seekers.

Goal 4 Objectives:

1. Conduct a regional skills and asset analysis, using ongoing statistical analysis and research provided by MetroPlan, to determine the skills gap present and resources available to solve the skills issue.
 2. Develop and implement an action plan in alignment with the University of Arkansas skills gap study to address the basic core, technical, and soft skills gaps in the Little Rock metropolitan area.
 3. Analyze the effectiveness of currently used job readiness standards and run a comparative analysis of the educational system’s methodology for assessing career readiness in areas like reading and math.
- 2.2 Describe how the local board’s vision and goals align with and/or supports the vision and goals for the State’s workforce development system as established by the Arkansas Workforce Development Board. [WIOA §108(b)(1)(E)] (See Appendix D: Planning References and Resources)

The LRWDB’s vision and goals are aligned with the vision and goals for the State’s workforce development system as established by the Arkansas Workforce Development Board. This includes the high-level aspirations and three key performance indicators (as outlined in the table below), which have been established by The Arkansas Department of Commerce in alignment with the Arkansas Governor’s vision.

	Current	2028 Goal
Labor Force Participation Rate	57.7%	59.4%
Per Capita Income	\$52,600	\$66,500
Real GDP per Capita	\$45,00	\$51,000

However, the scope of the LRWDB’s vision, mission, strategic goals, and supporting objectives is the city of Little Rock. By cultivating a talent development system in the Little Rock metropolitan area, the LRWDB significantly contributes to the statewide vision of economic prosperity across the state.

The Labor Force Participation Rate and Real GDP per Capital for the LRWDA exceed the 2028 statewide goals. Therefore, the LRWDB will place emphasis on pursuing higher wage occupations within target sectors to increase Per Capita Income.

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

The LRWDB’s vision and goals contributes to each of the governor’s goals as follows.

An effective talent and workforce development system will be based on creative partnerships with educational partners, employers, community organizations and other service providers.

The LRWDB's local objectives to provide services for hard-to-serve populations, like veterans and homeless individuals, are aligned with the governor's workforce development goals. The board's increasing focus on employer engagement contributes to the governor's goal of enhanced service delivery to employers as well as job seekers.

The LRWDB's plans to increase awareness of Little Rock's Talent Development System, through mechanisms like an update website, support delivery of high-quality services through a comprehensive network of employers, educational providers, and community organizations.

Intensive coordination of educational programs at the local Little Rock level will allow the LRWDB to address skill gaps for job seekers in a more targeted, innovative manner.

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

The LRWDB's goals are aligned with each of the federal performance accountability measures for adults, dislocated workers, and youth.

Over the next four years, the LRWDB's sector strategy will focus on Tier 1 supersectors – Healthcare, Transportation (Trucking, Warehousing, and Logistics); and Advanced Manufacturing – to maximize results for job seekers, employers, and partners. Tier 1 industries are most closely aligned with the criteria for priority sectors established by the LRWDB: data-driven high growth/demand and high wage, entry level jobs that are accessible with basic skill levels, defined career pathways, stackable and transferrable credentials, and engaged local educational and employer partners. The LRWDB plans to focus on incremental addition of Tier 1 industries (one per year) over a three year period followed by consolidation and streamlining of efforts across Tier 1 industries in year four of the strategic planning period. Operational decisions regarding areas of focus in these target industries will be made using feedback from employers funneled through the LRWDB's Business Advisory Team (BAT).

Defined career paths that are aligned with local employer needs promote achievement of Employment (Second Quarter after Exit and Fourth Quarter after Exit) and median earnings (second quarter after exit) measures. Identification of specific stackable, transferrable credentials for each step in the targeted career paths leads to successful realization of the Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skills Gains measures. Perhaps most importantly, the LRWDB's focus on building employer relationships in designated Tier 1 sectors drives attainment of the Effectiveness in Serving Employers measure.

Section 3: Local Area Partnerships and Development Strategies

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

- 3.1 Considering the analysis described in Appendix B - Section 1, describe the local board's strategy to work with the entities that carry out the core programs to align resources available to the local area, to achieve the strategic vision and goals described in element 2.1. This analysis must include:
- A. A description of the local workforce development system; include key stakeholders and entities associated with administrative and programmatic/service delivery functions. Examples include

elected officials, advocacy groups, local workforce development board and committee structure, fiscal agent, operator(s), required program partners, and major contractors providing Adult/Dislocated Worker/Youth program elements. Describe respective roles and functional relationships to one another.

The Little Rock Workforce Development Board was appointed by the Mayor of Little Rock, Frank Scott, Jr., the area's single Chief Elected Official. Board members accepted staggered 1, 2, and 3 year terms that began on July 1, 2023 and continued into 2024. The board composition includes 19 members that represent the core partners as well as at least 51% business representatives and other groups according to the state and federal guidelines. The Little Rock Workforce Development Board, a non-profit corporation under the State of Arkansas, as constituted, is designated as the Grant Recipient/Administrative Entity and Fiscal Agent for the City of Little Rock. The CEO and the Workforce Development Board have entered into an agreement to assure they will comply with all provisions of the WIOA Act and other policies and directives set forth by the State Workforce Development Board. The LRWDB has developed and adopted bylaws which established four standing committees: Executive, Services to Youth, Services to Individuals with Disabilities and One-Stop Advisory. The LRWDB is co-located at the LRWFC with all of its required and core partners, including ADWS, Wagner-Peyser, Little Rock and Pulaski County School Districts Adult Education, and Vocational Rehabilitation Services. The LRWDB elected to extend its existing contract with Arbor E&T, d.b.a. Equus Workforce Solutions to perform Title I Service Provider/One-Stop Operator under WIOA, including the Adult/Dislocated/ and Youth program elements. The contract for these services was procured anew in PY 2021 The LRWDB staff will continue to provide administrative and programmatic monitoring, compliance and oversight of these programs.

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

The Little Rock Workforce Development Board operates only one workforce center, located at 5401 S. University Ave., Little Rock, AR 72209. The phone number is 501-682-0228. The center is open from 8am to 4:30pm. A non-profit corporation under the State of Arkansas, as constituted, was designated as the Grant Recipient/Administrative Entity and Fiscal Agent for the City of Little Rock.

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

UPDATED IN APPENDIX C: See Appendix C for organizational charts that depicts the local board, administrative and fiscal entities.

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

Note: The six (6) core programs identified by WIOA are: Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Adult

Education and Literacy, Wagner-Peyser Program, and Vocational Rehabilitation.

The Little Rock Workforce Development system is based upon the long-established concept of the One-Stop centers. Reconfirmed by the WIOA as the model Service delivery system for employment and training services, the state of Arkansas is working with local entities to redesign its comprehensive service center certification process. The WIOA rules and this certification process have identified six core programs that must be available at the One-Stop centers: adult, dislocated worker, youth, adult education and literacy, Wagner Peyser program, and Vocational Rehabilitation. Additional significant partners available through the Little Rock Workforce Center include Job Corps, American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Services provided by additional partners are coordinated by the Workforce Development boards standing committees and the One-Stop operator, Arbor E&T, d.b.a. Equus Workforce Solutions, which convenes monthly meetings of the One Stop Center Partners advisory committee. Services to youth participants and individuals with disabilities are likewise coordinated and informed by those committees, respectively. Each committee is chaired by a LRWDB member and activities of the committee are reported to the board on a monthly basis. This convening and coordination of services among the core and significant partners in the workforce center by the One-Stop operator supports the alignment, efficiency, and inclusiveness of the service delivery system.

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

The LRWDB has established specific local goals for providing services to hard-to-reach populations, including veterans, returning citizens, homeless persons, individuals with disabilities and English as a Second Language. Workforce center staff will review the individual's needs to determine what programs may be able to provide the appropriate services and then refer that individual to the corresponding program.

LRWFC staff honor the "priority of service" mandate for veterans. The LRWDB has also leveraged funds beyond WIOA to address the needs of other hard-to-reach populations with regard to education, training, employment, career pathways, and supportive services.. For instance, funds obtained through a YouthBuild grant can continue to be used to assist older youth. The LRWDB also partners with community organizations like Our House, Goodwill Industries, and the City of Little Rock to obtain and use grant monies for adult re-entry programs serving returning citizens and homeless persons. The LRWDB will also continue to seek grant funds for juvenile diversion programs.

- 3.4 Identify and describe (for each category below) the strategies and services that are and/or will be used to:
- A. Facilitate engagement of employers, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations, in workforce development programs in addition to targeted sector strategies.

The Little Rock Workforce Center (LRWFC) uses a demand driven concept, leveraging strategies like an Employer Toolbox and Business Advisory Team, to enhance partnerships with and engagement of local employers. In particular, the Business Advisory Team (BAT) will include individuals who are part of targeted business sectors and career pathways.

Further, the LRWDB has adopted a tiered approach to sector strategies to ensure that workforce system activities and outcomes align with data-driven business needs and occupational projections. The criteria for establishing high-priority sector tiers, as outlined in section 1 of this document, include: data-driven high growth/demand and high wage, defined career pathways, stackable and transferrable credentials, and engaged local educational and employer partners.

To facilitate achievement of sector strategy objectives, the LRWDB has established partnerships with multiple businesses, focusing on Tier 1 sectors:

- Healthcare:

CHI – St. Vincent, Arkansas Children’s Hospital, Baptist Health, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, Heart Hospital
- Trade, Transportation, and Utilities:

Rock Region METRO, Wal-Mart, Dillard’s, Maverick Trucking, Performance Foodservice, C.A.T. Transportation and ABF Freight System, Custom Craft Poultry, Alks & Lm Trucking, Inc., Amazon (Warehousing and Storage)
- Advanced Manufacturing:

Little Rock Port Authority, Dassault Falcon Jet, Envoy Air, Caterpillar, AFCO Steel, Lexicon, and Welspun, All Weather Insulated Panels, Cintas, Custom Craft Poultry, De Wafelbakkers, Essick Air, GF Harvel, Sage V Foods

See Appendix B for a summary of employer partnerships by sector strategy.

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

The LRWDB supports a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses by continued outreach, participation in events such as career and tech education summits, continuous development of targeted sectors, apprenticeships, on-the-job training, and work based learning.

Specifically, the LRWDB will leverage proven strategies like the Employer Toolbox and Business Advisory Team to customize solutions to employer’s needs in a broad array of employment-related areas (job referrals, job fairs, interviews).

Targeting Tier 1 sectors will allow the LRWDB to align stackable, portable credentials with the skill needs of local businesses, including:

- Healthcare: Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN), Registered Nurse (RN)
- Trade, Transportation, and Utilities: Commercial Driver’s License (CDL)
- Advanced Manufacturing: Certified Production Technician (CPT), Certified Logistics Technician (CLT), Machinist (NIMS), Welder (AWS/CW)

C. Better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development; and

The LRWDB will coordinate with local economic development partners to leverage resources within the Little Rock area, including:

- Arkansas Economic Development Commission (AEDC)
- Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce
- Little Rock Port Authority
- Greater Little Rock Chamber of Commerce

The LRWDB will participate in community outreach events and seek opportunities to execute sector strategies in partnership with these entities.

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

This may include the implementation of initiatives such as incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, work-based learning programs, apprenticeship models, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies, career pathways initiatives, utilization of effective business intermediaries, and other business services and strategies that support the local board's strategy in element 3.1. *[WIOA §108(b)(4)(A) & (B)]*

The local unemployment insurance division is a part of ADWS, one of the core Partners in the center, and is an integral part of the efforts to reengage those who are unemployed and seeking opportunities for employment or retraining. A concerted effort has been, and will continue to be, to identify those exhausting or those who are near too exhausting their UI benefits to provide additional intensive and coordinated services.

This may include the implementation of initiatives such as incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, work-based learning programs, apprenticeship models, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies, career pathways initiatives, utilization of effective business intermediaries, and other business services and strategies that support the local board's strategy in element 3.1. *[WIOA Sec. 108(b)(4)(A) and (B)].*

- 3.5 Describe local and regional efforts to support and/or promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services, in coordination with economic development and other partners. *[WIOA §108(b)(5)]*

The Little Rock Workforce Development Area is fortunate to be the home to several entrepreneurial skills training and start-up development centers. The Little Rock Venture Center encourages, trains and supports entrepreneurs in the development of their start-up ideas and links them to capital resources in the financial and banking center of the state and internationally. The Arkansas Regional Innovation Hub located just across the Arkansas River in North Little Rock does much the same, emphasizing additional entrepreneurial training programs for High School students and youth. The LRWDB also maintains a partnership with Winrock International, the Arkansas-based international development organization with a focus on agricultural, environmental and community development issues. In recent years, the Little Rock Technology Park has also found a home in Little Rock, evolving from the need to provide lab and research space for scientific and technological start-ups emerging from such places as Tech Launch at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock and

its College of Engineering and Information Technology, UAMS Bioventures Program, and the Arkansas Children's Hospital Research Institute. With the centers and the tech park being located in downtown Little Rock, this area has become known as the Creative Corridor, supported institutionally by the City of Little Rock, the Little Rock Regional Chamber of Commerce, the Small Business Administration, the Arkansas Small Business and Technology Development Center, and, of course, The Little Rock Workforce Development Board. Virtually all of these educational, research and business development institutions are represented on the LRWDB or one of its many committees, and these relationships will be used to ensure that clients who may wish to open their own business can do so with the aid of our entrepreneurial partners who provide those specific services. By building stronger relationships with entrepreneurial centers and supporting organizations, the LRWDA will be able to assist small enterprises with their specific workforce needs. Many small and medium firms do not have the resources to train staff, the LRWDA through the Business Advisory Team and WIOA scholarships can assist them with that need.

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

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

The LRWDB has established partnerships with educational institutions to facilitate achievement of sector strategy objectives, including:

- 160 Driving Academy
- Arkansas Center for Data Sciences
- Arkansas College of Health Careers
- Arkansas Construction Education Foundation
- Arkansas Employment Career Center
- Baptist Health College Little Rock
- Big Rock School of Massage Therapy
- Central AR School of Dental Assisting
- Compassionate Medical Academy
- Diesel Driving Academy
- Food Jobs Work
- Forge Institute
- Goodwill Industries
- Job Corps
- Job Works, Inc.
- Little Rock School District
- Manufacturing Skill Standards Council
- MedCerts
- Metro Career Technical Education Academy

- National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation (NRAEF)
- National Retail Federation (NRF)
- Nu Leif Logistics, LLC
- OSHA Certification Providers
- R&L Healthcare
- Union & Employer Apprenticeships
- University of Arkansas at Little Rock
- University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences
- UA - Pulaski Technical College
- WorldLink Truck Driving Academy

See Appendix B for a summary of educational partnerships by sector strategy.

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

The provision of Supportive Services will be assessed and coordinated among the One Stop Center Partners through the facilitation of the WIOA Title I program services provider and One-Stop operator. The workforce services delivery team will work cohesively and comprehensively to determine how each participant's needs will be met by the partners' different types and levels of Supportive Services. Participants will be referred to outside agencies if those needs cannot be met with internal resources. Supportive Services such as transportation will be coordinated through the provision of gas vouchers, public transit passes, agency-owned or contracted transportation, or Community sponsored transportation.

The board carries out workforce activities by partnering locally through Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) to implement partner programs. The LRWFC is fully integrated with WIOA; Wagner-Peyser; Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG); Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA); Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF); Unemployment Insurance (UI); Adult Education and Family Literacy; and Vocational Rehabilitation. Local partnerships and integration also exist in many areas with Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment and Training Programs, Job Corps, AARP and others.

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

The Little Rock Workforce Development Board and the Title I One-Stop WIOA programs service provider enjoy a long-standing, tried-and-tested partnership with the ADWS – the state agency charged with delivering employment services under the Wagner-Peyser Act – as well as the local adult education programs, the vocational rehabilitation programs, the two- and four-year educational institutions, chamber of commerce and other economic development entities, registered apprenticeship, and an array of community-based organizations in support of its initiatives. A priority of the local board and central to the implementation of the strategic plan is the integration of service delivery amongst multiple workforce and talent development programs and the prevention and/or elimination of duplication across programs. Alignment of core and optional

programs will be made possible by mutually identifying the pressure points and crossover areas that lead to duplication or inefficiencies. These strategies include:

The establishment of – and robust participation among the membership of – the One-Stop Partners Advisory Committee. The one stop operator facilitates an integrated, regular partners meeting each month within the comprehensive center located in Little Rock. Both community and co-located partners can attend and share current activities and announcements that then are lifted and shared seamlessly or modified or augmented to incorporate services of the other core and workforce center partners.

The LRWDB maintains an active and current website at www.lrworkforce.com that organizes services by function (rather than by program); when permitted by a program’s authorizing statute and as appropriate, and by coordinating staff communication, capacity building, and training efforts. Functional alignment also includes having workforce center staff who cross-trained to serve all customers seamlessly (including targeted populations) by providing a full range of services staffed by cross-functional teams, consistent with the purpose, scope, and requirements of each program.

Business Advisory Team (BAT)

The Workforce Center at Little Rock has increased its effort to create a uniformed delivery of business services to local employers. The Business Advisory Team (BAT) was created in PY2012 consisting of business service representatives from partner agencies. The Business Advisory Team is responsible for business outreach to identify and present the needs, concerns, and expectations of the employers and develop a strategy to serve the employers on a customized basis. The goal of the team is to implement an integrated, seamless method of service delivery to fulfill the business needs of employers. This is accomplished by responding with a demand driven system while providing the highest level of customer service. The members of the Business Advisory Team ensure that the Employer Toolbox is given to employers on initial contact. This toolbox provides written information on all services available at the local Workforce Center through pamphlets, brochures, business cards, and other reading material that gives a brief description of the Center’s services. The toolbox allows the Business Advisory Team to share a common message about the Center rather than program specific messages. The toolbox also educates employers on incentives available when hiring targeted populations through the Work Opportunity Tax Credit program, Federal bonding programs, work experience and on-the-job training (OJT) programs.

The Business Advisory Team Ambassadors will coordinate job fairs, informational fairs, and industry specific events where employers can recruit and conduct interviews on-site and at no cost to employers and jobseekers. The BAT coordinates informational workshops and trainings that are presented by a company representative who provides specific information on their unique screening processes. A BAT host will extend open house invitations to community and Faith-based organizations to tour the Center to see firsthand what the Center has to offer the general public as well as businesses. It works closely with the Little Rock Chamber of Commerce and other economic and community development organizations to establish strong partnerships. BAT members attend and participate in business after-hour networking events, and stay connected with national and state Human Resource Associations to develop closer relationships with major company stakeholders.

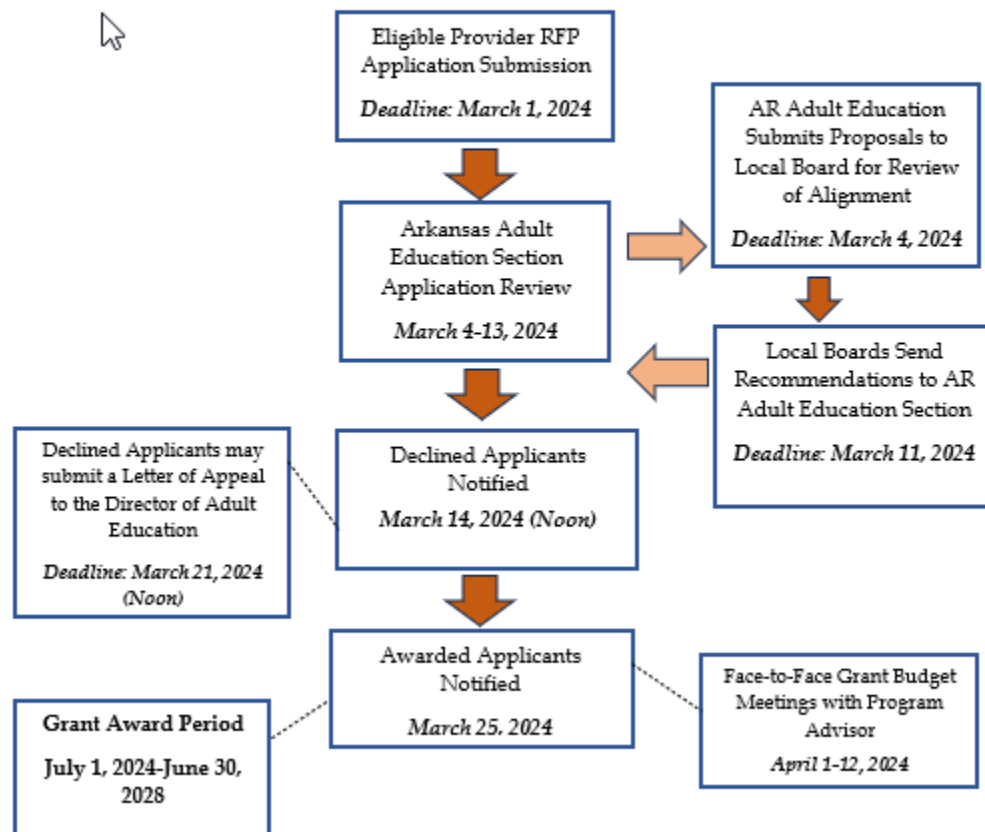
- 3.9 Describe how the local board will carry out a review of local applications submitted under WIOA Title II Adult Education and Literacy, consistent with the local plan (as described in WIOA

§107(d)(11) and WIOA §232). [WIOA §108(b)(13)]

In 2016 the LRWDB created an ad hoc committee to review adult education applications submitted under WIOA Title II adult education and literacy.

The committee reviews adult education applications according to the timeline set forth by the department of Career Education /Adult Education Division (see below).

RFP Review and Award Timeline



The Division of Workforce Services, Adult Education Section issued its RFP announcement for the 2024-2027 program years in January 2024, which is included in the appendix of this plan as Appendix E.

Supportive services are provided by ARS and DSB to promote inclusion and accommodation of individuals with disabilities in local applications submitted under WIOA Title II Adult Education and Literacy.

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

- Active

- Has a clear coordinator, convener, or convening team;
- Is led by industry as demonstrated by private sector members playing leadership roles;
- Has broad industry engagement as demonstrated by industry members attending meetings, partnering on activities, providing in-kind or financial resources, or similar;
- Includes critical and engaged partners across programs from workforce development;
- Can demonstrate that the partnership is not “just a workforce thing,” “just an economic development thing,” or “just an education thing.”
- Operates in a true labor market region, not within the confines of a workforce area or other geopolitical boundaries;
- Operates under shared strategic plan, road map, etc.;
- Can demonstrate clearly identified priorities and an action plan, be able to demonstrate recent or current activities, services or products that are a direct outcome of the partnership.

The Construction industry has the most active sector partnership in the Little Rock area. The Arkansas Builders and Contractors, Arkansas General Contractors, and Arkansas Subcontractors Associations are the primary stakeholders and drivers of partnership activities. These organizations, along with the Arkansas Construction Education Foundation (ACEF) are supporters of Arkansas’ registered apprenticeship programs. Contractors and union organizations jointly serve on a statewide steering committee to support apprenticeship programs and initiatives for this Tier 2 sector.

▪ Emerging

- Has at least an interim coordinator, convener, or convening team;
- Has engaged at least one private sector champion to help drive the launch and implementation of a sector partnership;
- Includes individuals from workforce development, education, economic development and other programs or organizations in strategic partner roles;
- Actively working to implement strategic priorities outlined in a launch meeting.

The State Chamber of Commerce is leading an emerging partnership group in the Advanced Manufacturing sector, incorporating leadership from the Manufacturing Standards Skills Council.

Similarly, Arkansas Tourism and Hospitality is attempting to convene workforce development activity in this sector. While Tourism and Hospitality is currently a Tier 2 sector for the Little Rock area, the LRWDB is monitoring workforce development activity in this sector for future planning efforts.

Also, through its partnership stemming from the USDOL YouthBuild Grant, the University of Arkansas at Little Rock – University District Community Development Corporation (UDCDC) and the LRWDB have developed a MOU which holds hope of developing into the first joint partnership between the entities to develop a recognized pre-apprenticeship training program in the construction trades by allowing pre-apprentices to work with experienced, licensed trade masters and journeymen in their respective trades. The initial meeting and negotiations took place in the spring and summer of 2022 when the LRWDB still had its YouthBuild Grant. Now that the YouthBuild grant is completed, an alternate source of resources and support for the project is being sought out by University of Arkansas – University District staff and the LRWDB. Viewing workforce development initiatives with a regional focus should foster greater collaboration among partners and promote economic development.

As part of Latino community outreach, the LRWDB is working with staff from the Mexican Consulate, the CAPDD, and the Little Rock Chamber of Commerce to continue to organize Latino Job Fairs to attract and recruit diverse talent from within the Latino community. A variety of companies in the Little Rock area attended prior events.

- Exploring
 - Is in the infancy stage, but actively considering or planning the preparation needed to launch a partnership;
 - Working to identify partners who would be involved;
 - Determining if the partnership really makes sense for the community.

Since Human Resource Directors are a critical component of a solid workforce development system in Little Rock, the LRWDB is seeking to establish contacts with a group of HR Directors who are meeting regularly in the economic area supported by the Little Rock Port Authority to work toward goals in the Advanced Manufacturing sector.

3.11 Does the local board currently leverage or have oversight of funding outside of WIOA Title I funding to support the local workforce development system? If so, briefly describe the additional funding and how it will impact the local system. If the local board does not currently have oversight of additional funding, describe any plans to pursue them.

- The LRWDB actively and regularly pursues funding outside of WIOA Title I appropriations. Grant funding is currently focused on supporting the Rock City Reentry Project.

The Rock City Reentry Project has grown and continues to improve its services and response to Arkansas having one of the fastest-growing prison populations in the country, largely due to its high rate of recidivism of more than 50%. With its 2 previous federal REO grants totaling \$1.75 million, the LRWDB was able to serve 389 individuals, 43 individuals more than it's required 346 enrollments. The combined recidivism rate for these 2 grants was never more than 13%. In September of 2022, the LRWDB was awarded a \$1.99 million grant from the US Department of Labor. The Pathway Home 3 grant project is designed to create a coordinated network of services and training opportunities to 200 incarcerated individuals 90 to 265 days prior to their release date. Case Management and Follow-up services to these individuals will equip them with the resources to obtain long-term, meaningful employment upon release and sustain them for the critical six-twelve months after – when recidivism is hardest to break. In April 2024, the LRWDB challenged itself to submit a grant for Pathway Home 5 funding to serve 300 individuals for \$2.99 million.

The additional funding impacts the local system by allowing the LRWDB to provide services to youth, dislocated workers, and adults that go beyond WIOA programs.

The LRWDB intends to continue to pursue these and other additional funding options to maximize workforce development offerings in the Little Rock area.

Section 4: Program Design and Evaluation

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

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

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

The LRWDB is currently working with its core partner ADWS to strengthen and improve its Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) and the software system which determines the basic elements and requirements for eligibility including: location, costs, graduation rates, placement rates, ability to track participants after completion and exit. The LRWDB is responsible for verifying that courses and training offerings made by the service provider meet in-demand occupational requirements. The LRWDB will, in addition, ensure that continuous improvement is demonstrated by more closely aligning its identified industry sectors in this plan with accredited training providers that can demonstrate the ability to meet and exceed local demand.

In particular, the board will work through LRWDB board members - like the Executive Director of the Arkansas Construction Education Foundation (ACEF) and representative of the UA Local 155 Plumbers & Pipefitters to expand awareness of the ETP list to Registered Apprenticeship programs and encourage their application for ETP status.

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

The LRWDB will work closely with 'remote' service locations such as community-based organizations, the Central Arkansas Library System, and other social service agencies within the Little Rock area to identify opportunities for electronic, computer, and Internet access to be made available as widely as possible. In particular, the LRWDB will seek to provide access to services for employers and harder-to-reach populations through existing technology channels like Arkansas Job Link and the LRWDB website.

In addition to website material, the LRWDB has increased its blogging and social media activity and incorporated this messaging into a redesigned website infrastructure. The LRWDB maintains business pages on LinkedIn and Facebook and posts to these sites on a monthly basis. Hashtags and website links are embedded in posts to highlight key topics and drive traffic to the LRWDB website. Social media-based programs like Take Action Tuesdays are used to make services more accessible via technology, with particular attention to mobile-friendly interfaces.

Due to the urban nature of the Little Rock area, the LRWDB's primary challenge is not providing access to users in remote areas. However, like other regions, the LRWDB does include clients with limited ability to use computer technology. So clients in remote areas will be encouraged through marketing materials (brochures/flyers) to contact their local workforce center by phone, where staff-assisted services can be made available.

- C. How entities within the one-stop delivery system, including one-stop operators and the one stop partners, will comply with WIOA section 188, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities, including providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities. [WIOA §108(b)(6)(C)] (See Appendix D: *Planning References and Resources*)

The LRWDB, in conjunction with entities within the one-stop delivery system, will comply with WIOA section 188, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 by pursuing several key actions, including:

- Provide training to staff on applicable provisions of the ADA using material jointly developed by the partners and State entities.
- Bring together core program partners to integrate services and supportive services, and leverage resources to improve services to individuals with disabilities and other protected groups who are unemployed, underemployed, or receiving Social Security disability benefits, by utilizing services available through our local centers to connect them to existing successful career pathways programs.
- Explore changes in service delivery design and establish or expand partnerships that better connect education, training, workforce, and supportive services to improve employment outcomes of individuals with disabilities. For example, to facilitate extensive pre-employment transition and improve the employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities, the LRWDB includes two representatives from Arkansas Vocational Rehabilitation and Lighthouse Services for the Blind.
- Encourage active engagement with the business sector to identify the skills and support that individuals with disabilities need and communicate these needs to the partners, education and training providers, as well as individuals with disabilities.
- Assess the physical and programmatic accessibility of the Little Rock Workforce Center and training facilities to ensure continued compliance and access for individuals with disabilities and other protected groups.

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

All of the following program partners are located at the Little Rock Workforce Center, 5401 S. University Ave., Little Rock, AR 72209 or at partner locations within the City of Little Rock:

- Arbor E & T dba Equus Workforce Solutions
- American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)
- Arkansas Rehabilitative Services Division (ARS)
- Arkansas Division of Services for the Blind
- Arkansas Division of Workforce Services (ADWS)
- Business Advisory Team (BAT)
- Career Development Center
- Employment Services (ES)
- Governor's Dislocated Worker Taskforce
- Little Rock Job Corps (LRJC)
- Little Rock School District (LRSD) – Adult Education
- Little Rock Workforce Development Board (LRWDB)
- National Emergency Grant (NEG)-as environmental and economic circumstances demand
- Rock City Reentry Project (RCRP)

- Summer Youth Employment
- Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)
- Unemployment Insurance Division (UI)
- Arkansas Department of Veteran's Affairs

See Appendix D for an organizational chart that depicts the LRWDB as part of the One-Stop Operator service provider system for Little Rock, including all required and optional program partners and their roles and resource contributions.

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

Our Local Area advocates and supports an integrated information system at the state and local level that would allow entities that carry out core programs to better coordinate service delivery for mutual customers and cross program referrals. Currently, all DOL-funded partner programs utilize Arkansas Job Link (AJL) as a technology platform. The State is exploring Information Technology options that will assist in the transitioning to an integrated common intake component which acts as the front end to the state's workforce programs. The LRWDB is committed to leveraging new resources like Google CiviForm, Research Improving People's Lives (RIPL), and Credential Engine when they are available. Until such an option exists, our workforce center staff maximizes the utilization of currently available technology to consolidate, streamline services and enhance the overall customer experience.

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

The LRWDB follows the L.E.A.D.E.R. in assessing and accepting the type of employment and training activities that may be provided to adults and dislocated workers.

L – Location: the training service must take place within a 50 mile radius of the LRWDA in order to make the cost of transportation and availability of time the most reasonable and practicable to our customer base.

E – Excellence: the training service provider must demonstrate an excellence in curriculum, facilities, trainer credentials and education, training equipment and supplies, and cost of program. All facilities must meet all ADA compliance concerns.

A – Accreditation and Licensing: all training service providers must be accredited or licensed by the acknowledged accrediting organization or state agency for its industry.

D – Demand Occupations: approved training service programs will be able to demonstrate that their programs will result in graduates ready to accept jobs on the demand occupations list and within the industry sectors outlined above.

E – Employer-Driven and Supported: training service providers must demonstrate a link to employers and businesses within the greater LRWDA that will lead to job placement, high wages, long-term retainment, and employer satisfaction.

R – Record of Success and Achievement: training service providers must demonstrate a track record of graduating students, credentials attained, job placement and retention, and linkages to successful career pathways.

If the training service organization is a L.E.A.D.E.R. in its field, then the LRWDB is ready to follow its lead and approve its program(s) as a valued partner in our community and workforce delivery system. With the many college campuses and private training service providers dispersed throughout the Little Rock region, there are sufficient training providers available to meet the needs of the participants.

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

Workforce Center staff members participate in activities coordinated by the Governor’s Dislocated Worker Task Force. State and local WIOA partners, like the Little Rock Regional Chamber of Commerce, will continue to build and maintain relationships with the business community to help with early warning of potential layoffs and promote early intervention.

Together, the following services will be provided:

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

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

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

Effective models and best practices for youth workforce activities relevant to the Little Rock area address each of the 14 program elements, including:

The Youth team utilizes GED Academy to assign online refresher and learning courses for tutoring, study skills training, instruction/evidence-based dropout prevention, and recovery strategies. A local resource lab, WIOA laptops, and the previously named TANF computer lab are readily available for onsite use at the LRWRC. The WIOA youth provider also often refers youth to partners such as Adult Education (LRSD, PCSSD) and UALR’s TRIO Educational Talent Search (ETS) program for tutoring support. LRSD Adult Education partners are also on-site, giving Youth staff access to monitor the attendance and have immediate results of each participant’s Adult

Basic Education (TABE) testing scores. Youth who attend at least 2 hours of instruction per day are eligible for monetary incentives, provided they submit a signed incentive timesheet including both their signature and that of the instructor. These strategies can lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, or a recognized postsecondary credential.

The Youth team has built and maintained good working relationships with Accelerated Learning Center, The Academy at Goodwill, Local Adult Education Centers, Graduate Arkansas, and Metro Career Technical Education Academy to provide alternative secondary school services or dropout recovery services. Youth may receive monetary incentives for attending these classes.

Work Experience is offered both during the summer and the academic year at the LRWC based on funds availability. Mandatory career readiness and WEX expectations training is required for each youth prior to entering any work experience. Workshops such as Roadmaps to Success with Equus and similar preparation courses are also offered and referred to attend with partner organizations such as Our House. The WIOA provider has also developed an internship and OJT style program at the Workforce Center for not only youth participants, but those enrolled in the City of Little Rock Summer Youth programs to expand skills and general workforce knowledge.

Occupational Skills Training is being offered to youth participants, to include various training programs. The most popular program is CNA training; however, youth may also take advantage of CDL training, Forklift Operator, Welding, and any other program on the Eligible Training Providers List leading to a credential in high demand occupations. WIOA staff have the ability to co-enroll youth when needed, with other programs in an effort to maximize all resources, including assistance with tuition payments.

WIOA youth participants are encouraged to engage in leadership development opportunities, including community service, peer-centered activities, job shadowing, and Linked in Learning courses. As all local school districts are now incorporating community service as a graduation requirement, the LRWDA plans to create/expand available community service opportunities within the Workforce Center at Little Rock.

Case Managers provide supportive services on a consistent basis, such as transportation, linkages to other community service opportunities, assistance with educational testing, referrals to health care, work-related tools, and assistance with appropriate work attire. The LRWB teams also maintains an updated list of available referral agencies who may also provide some of the same resources and services mentioned above.

Case managers and staff provide regular follow-up services to youth for at least one year after exit from a WIOA program, often longer if youth are co-enrolled or transfer into another program or that of a partner organization. The Statement of Service for Youth Policy requires regular contact with the youth and their employer to ensure successful employment and/or postsecondary education and training, including assisting the youth with work-related problems that may arise, providing appropriate supportive services, financial literacy, labor market information, and securing adult mentoring, among other services. All follow up services are designed to align with the youth's individual service strategy and career plans.

The Youth team continuously provides youth participants with comprehensive guidance and counseling to address their individual needs. This may include referrals to counseling, drug, and alcohol abuse counseling, and other services in partnership with counseling providers, such as Centers for Youth and Families, to provide workshops on relevant topics.

Youth participants utilize Money Skills and Smart Money Habits courses to gain financial literacy education. The Youth team also partners with local banks, such as Regions, First Security, and Consumer Credit Counseling

Services, to offer financial literacy education. Youth participants and their families may also be referred to the Central Arkansas Development Council (CADC).

Youth participants are introduced to the concept of entrepreneurship and exposed to training opportunities required to be successful independent business owners. All youth programs include a component on entrepreneurial opportunities by providing exposure to and speaking with local small businesses, capitol investors, and/or government support agencies. Youth also have the opportunity to visit/train with entrepreneurial and start-up support organizations, such as Brandon House, A Different Stroke of Art, and The Innovation Hub.

WIOA staff provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local areas, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services by referencing Career Watch, Discover Arkansas, and Arkansas Consumer Reporting System. The Youth team regularly attends and hosts industry specific job fairs that are shared with participants and a large network of local partners.

WIOA Youth can also benefit from Postsecondary preparation. Through a new FutureReady initiative, Youth clients can actively engage in self-discovery, and career exploration for multiple education and employment paths that offer opportunities for personal and professional growth. The Youth Case Manager will coordinate visits and accompany Youth participants when needed to ensure a proactive approach in receiving information from local training providers, agencies, and non-profit entities who are actively involved in preparing youth for post-secondary education and transition activities. In addition to college visits, such exploration is intended to be broad-based, focusing on each client's interests. Postsecondary education can be targeted toward Career Technical Education (CTE) pathways that may or may not include college, but include established pathways like Arkansas State Chamber's Be Pro Be Proud and the Apprenticeships routes. The Youth team will find and adopt a trackable online partner or program, which can provide digital career exploration and interest/aptitude assessments. WIOA staff can continue to discuss scholarships, grants and financial aid assistance with Youth and their parents, if applicable. Case Managers will also continue to review the in-demand occupations and requirements with Youth for training of their choice and walk through the necessary steps to complete an application for postsecondary admission.

Pre-employment transition services (PRE-ETS) to students with disabilities will include job exploration and counseling, work-based learning experiences, and workplace readiness training. Arkansas Rehab the Division of Services for the Blind will provide or coordinate implementation for students with disabilities.

The LRWDB has determined to leave undefined the term "Requires additional assistance to complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment." Because the State has chosen not to define "additional assistance" as it relates to WIOA Youth program eligibility, each local board has the responsibility for determining its own definition of this eligibility category. If a local board wishes to use this eligibility category, a local policy must be developed that specifies what conditions must be met for a youth to require additional assistance and what documentation is needed to demonstrate this eligibility category. To date, the LRWDB finds the WIOA Youth eligibility criteria to be sufficient in recruiting the numbers of youth required to fully enroll and will revisit this definition should the need arise.

The LRWDB holds its WIOA Title I Youth Services Provider, Equus Workforce Solutions, to be contractually responsible for making available to youth participants each and all the 14 Youth Service Elements, whether provided themselves or through a third-party partnership agreement (MOU, contract, ETPL, worksite agreement, etc.), which will be monitored and reviewed for quality and appropriateness. Therefore, ultimate proof of delivery of the 14 Youth Service Components is secured by the WIOA services provider contract.

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

As customers are interviewed, evaluated and/or assessed, it is apparent that career services are not always enough to enable job seekers to obtain self-sufficient employment. In some instances, formal training is required. Customer and Career Counselor identify appropriate training based on customer IEP and ISS using the approved training provider list. Training service funded by WIOA programs, may offer multiple training services such as:

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

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

Training services are funded through WIOA programs, Pell Grants, partner programs, and state and local grants. Local areas are responsible for establishing and implementing local policies for eligibility, Individual Training Account (ITA) limits, and the identification of in-demand sectors or occupations. Through multiple initiatives and projects, Arkansas has focused training and career development activities on sector strategies/partnerships and career pathway development. At the state level, the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) has been updated pursuant to WIOA Sections 122 and 134. This list ensures that Arkansans are able to make informed decisions on training providers and programs based on accurate data including completion and placement rates; labor market information; and wage expectations.

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

To be included on the ETPL, providers must submit an electronic application to the local board for their approval. All training providers will complete an online electronic application through the AJL ProviderLink.

All training must be directly linked to high-priority sectors, career pathways, and employment opportunities in the Little Rock metropolitan area. Any training for a participant that is paid for by WIOA funds must be on the Projected Employment Opportunities List for the state or local area.

The LRWDB will review the ETPL and work to add providers that support talent development outcomes for Tier 1 and Tier 2 sector strategies. Target employment opportunities will also be verified against Ongoing Education and Training (O'Net) codes that represent employable fields.

Section 5: Compliance

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

- 5.1 Describe the replicated cooperative agreements, as defined by WIOA 107(d)(11), in place between the local board and the Vocational Rehabilitation programs operated in the area with respect to efforts that will enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities and to other individuals, such as cross training of staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers, and other efforts at cooperation, collaboration, and coordination. [WIOA §108(b)(14)]

The LRWDB maintains a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS) division within the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services to exchange and provide cross training of staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers, and other efforts at cooperation, collaboration, and coordination. ARS staff attend joint partner meetings of the One-Stop Partners Advisory Committee and the Business Advisory Team meetings. An additional MOU exists with the ARS to provide square footage at the One-Stop Center for ARS staff members to implement a comprehensive rehabilitation lab and otherwise attend to the needs of its customers.

Reciprocally, staff from the different partners at the One-Stop Center support and collaborate upon projects that originate at ARS, such as sensitivity and accommodation trainings related to individuals with disabilities, job fairs and the Annual Business Summit.

The LRWDB is determined to adopt policies and attitudes that are not only inclusive of individuals with disabilities, but place their needs at a priority of services level.

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

The Little Rock Workforce Development Board is the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds as determined by the Chief Elected Officials.

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

The competitive processes to award the subgrants and contracts for activities funded by WIOA Title I programs in the Little Rock area occurs according to the Uniform Guidance provided by Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Super Circulars.

The LRWDB follows the procurement processes outlined for Competitive Proposals: Used for purchases over the Simplified Acquisition Threshold, which is currently \$150,000. This procurement method requires formal solicitation, fixed-price or cost-reimbursement contracts, and is used when sealed bids are not appropriate. The contract should be awarded to the responsible firm whose proposal is most advantageous to the program, with price being one of the various factors.

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

Note: See Appendix C: Planning References and Resources “Performance Targets Template”.

The Little Rock area’s negotiated local levels of performance for the federal measures match the state of Arkansas’ levels of performance – as outlined in Appendix F: Local Area WIOA Negotiated Performance Goals.

The primary implications for the local workforce system lie in adding emphasis on “Measurable Skill Gains” and “Effectiveness in Serving Employers.” Adding the “Measurable Skill Gains” negotiated measures requires the local area to meet stated goals in skill areas beyond formal education, such as certifications or credentials. Adding the “Effectiveness in Serving Employers” negotiated measure requires the local area to consider the needs of employers as a primary driver in building a talent pipeline, whereas the previous driver had largely been job seeker-focused.

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

The levels of performance for the federal measures as outlined in the response to question 5.4 and Appendix F are used by the LRWDB to measure performance and effectiveness of its own actions as the fiscal agent, eligible providers and the one-stop delivery system in the Little Rock area.

While each member of the one-stop delivery system functions as distinct operating units with unique contributions, the local board, eligible providers, and the local one-stop operator strive to function as a comprehensive, holistic structure to achieve the common measures.

The indicators used by the local board to measure performance and effectiveness of the local fiscal agent include: a monthly review of allowable expenditures; regular review of financial reports at Executive Committee and Full Board meetings (funding streams, budget); annual WIOA financial monitoring of programs, annual financial audit by independent auditor, and annual financial monitoring by Arkansas Department of Workforce Services.

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

The process used by the LRWDB for the receipt and consideration of input into the development of the local plan includes distribution to board members at the Executive Committee meeting on March 14. LRWDB members represent a variety of businesses, labor organizations, educational institutions, and government agencies. LRWDB members will also be asked to share the local plan with members of their business and community network and solicit comments.

- 5.7 Prior to the date on which the local board submits a proposed local plan, the proposed local plan must

be made available to members of the public through electronic and other means.

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

The LRWDB will make the proposed local plan available for public comment by:

- Publishing an announcement of the public comment period in the Arkansas Democrat Gazette on March 15
- Including an announcement of the public comment in the LRWDB's blog, available on the board's website: www.lrworkforce.com
- Alerts to online networks and community partners to share the announcement of the public comment period
- Print announcement of the public comment period at the Little Rock Workforce Center
- Full text of the local plan available on the LRWDB's website: www.lrworkforce.com

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

The LRWDB will collect public comments from all sources listed in question 5.7, part A, and consider them for inclusion in the proposed local plan at the board's April 18 meeting.

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

No comments received to date.

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

The designated equal opportunity officer for the Little Rock Workforce Center is:

Yolanda Carman, M.Ed., Business Service Manager/HR Representative
WIOA /Arkansas Workforce Center, 5401 South University Avenue, Little Rock, AR 72209

yolanda.carman@arkansas.gov

501-682-8038 Direct

501-682-7719 Office

501-537-0729 Fax

Section 6: Plan Assurances

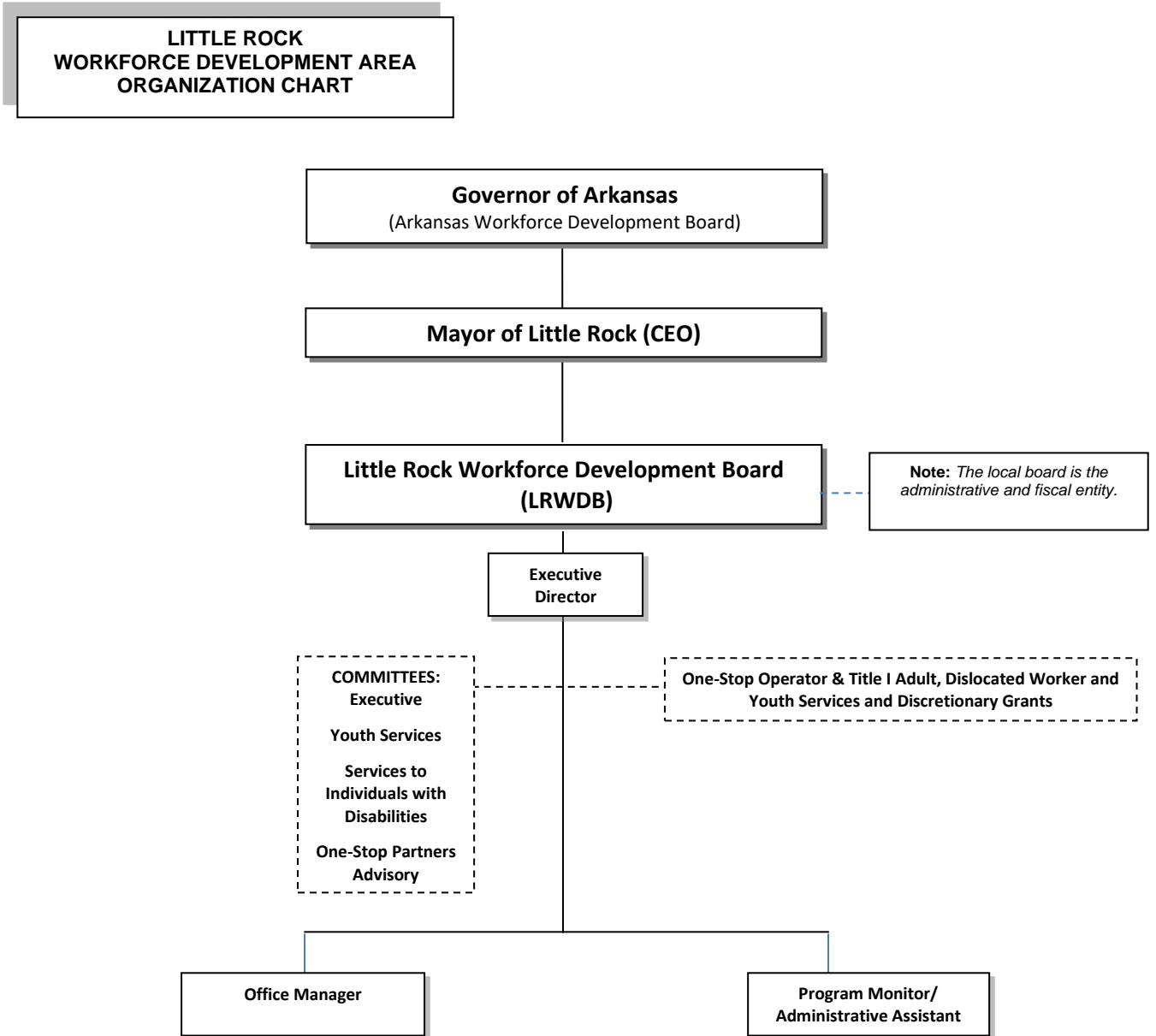
Planning Process and Public Comment		References
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6.1 The local board has processes and timelines, consistent with WIOA Section 108(d), to obtain input into the development of the local plan and provide the opportunity for comment by representatives of business, labor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

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>6.11 The local board has written procedures for resolving grievances and complaints alleging violations of WIOA Title I regulations, grants, or other agreements under WIOA and written policies or procedures for assisting customers who express interest in filing complaints at any point of service, including, at a minimum, a requirement that all partners can identify appropriate staff contacts and refer customers to those contacts.</p>	<p>WIOA Section 181(c); 20 CFR 683.600</p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>6.12 The local board has established at least one comprehensive, full-service one-stop center and has a written process for the local Chief Elected Official and local board to determine that the center conforms to the definition therein.</p>	<p>WIOA Section 121(e)(2)(A); 20 CFR 678.305</p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>6.13 All partners in the local workforce and education system described in this plan ensure the physical, programmatic and communications accessibility of facilities, programs, services, technology, and materials in one-stop centers for individuals with disabilities.</p>	<p>WIOA Section 188; 29 CFR parts 37.7-37.9; 20 CFR 652.8(j)</p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>6.14 The local board ensures that outreach is provided to populations and sub-populations who can benefit from one-stop services.</p>	<p>WIOA Section 188; 29 CFR 37.42</p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>6.15 The local board implements universal access to programs and activities to individuals through reasonable recruitment targeting, outreach efforts, assessments, service delivery, partner development, and numeric goals.</p>	<p>WIOA Section 188; 29 CFR 37.42</p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>6.16 The local board complies with the nondiscrimination provisions of Section 188 and assures that Methods of Administration were developed and implemented.</p>	<p>WIOA Section 188; 29 CFR 37.54(a)(1)</p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>6.17 The local board collects and maintains data necessary to show compliance with nondiscrimination provisions of Section 188.</p>	<p>WIOA Section 185; 29 CFR 37.37</p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>6.18 The local board complies with restrictions governing the use of federal funds for political activities, the use of the one-stop environment for political activities, and the local board complies with the applicable certification and disclosure requirements.</p>	<p>2 CFR Part 225 Appendix B; 2 CFR Part 230 Appendix B; 48 CFR 31.205-22; RCW</p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>6.19 The local board ensures that one-stop Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW) and business services staff, along with the Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker program partner agency, will continue to provide services to agricultural employers and MSFWs that are demand-driven.</p>	<p>WIOA Section 167</p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>6.20 The local board follows confidentiality requirements for wage and education records as required by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), as amended, WIOA, and applicable Departmental regulations.</p>	<p>WIOA Sections 16(i)(3) and 185(a)(4); 20 USC 1232g; 20 CFR 677.175 and 20 CFR part 603</p>
Administration of Funds		References
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>6.21 The local board has a written policy and procedures to competitively award grants and contracts for WIOA Title I activities (or applicable</p>	<p>WIOA Section 108(b)(16); 20 CFR</p>

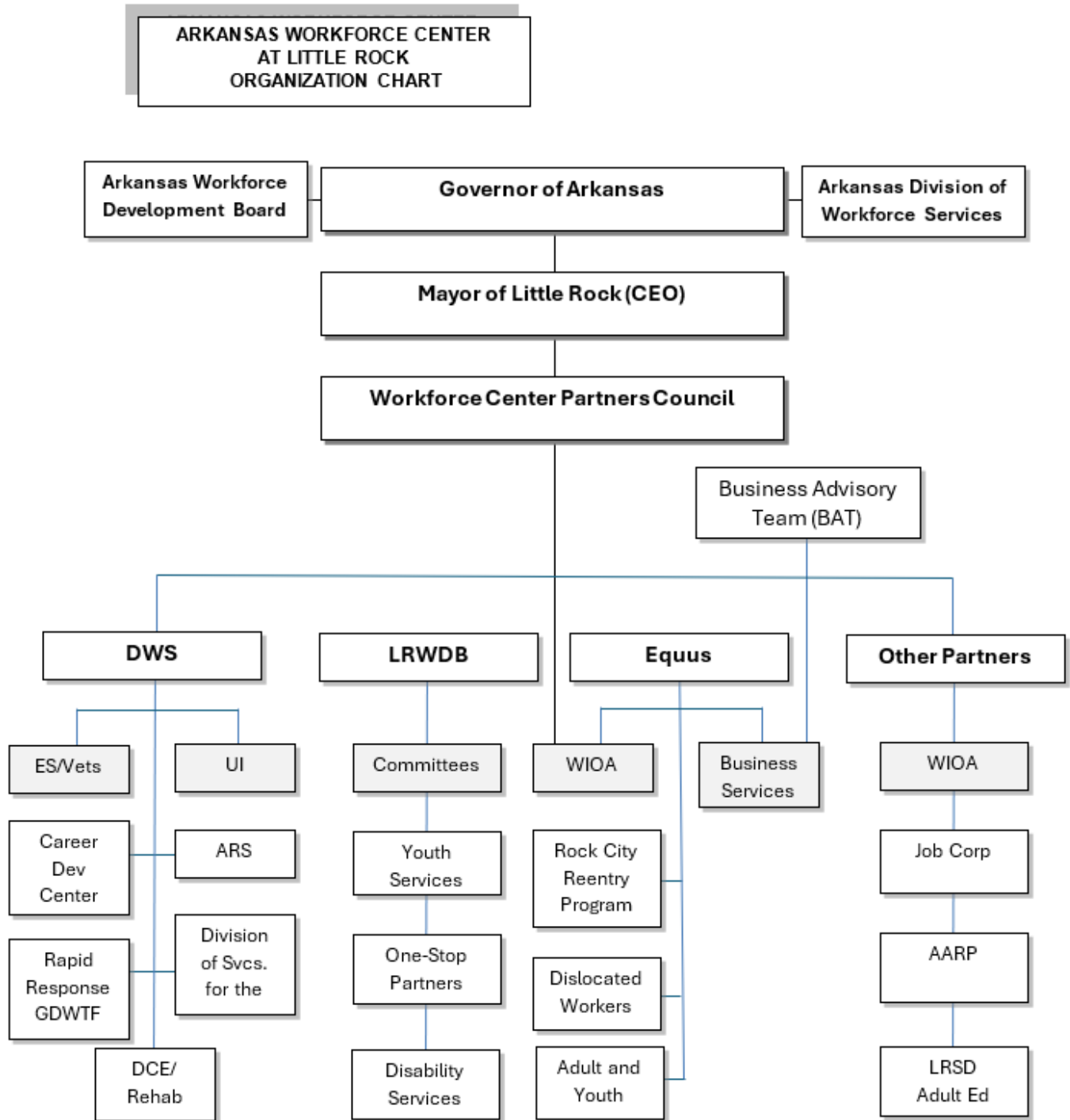
	federal waiver), including a process to be used to procure training services made as exceptions to the Individual Training Account process.	679.560(a)(15); WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(G); 20 CFR
6.22	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The local board has accounting systems that follow current Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and written fiscal-controls and fund-accounting procedures and ensures such procedures are followed to insure proper disbursement and accounting of WIOA adult, dislocated worker, and youth program funds.	WIOA Section 108(b)(15)
6.23	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The local board ensures compliance with the uniform administrative requirements under WIOA through annual, on-site monitoring of each local sub-recipient.	WIOA Section 184(a)(3); 20 CFR 683.200, 683.300, and 683.400-410
6.24	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The local board has a written debt collection policy and procedures that conforms with state and federal requirements and a process for maintaining a permanent record of all debt collection cases that supports the decisions made and documents the actions taken with respect to debt collection, restoration, or other debt resolution activities.	WIOA Section 184(c); 20 CFR Part 652; 20 CFR 683.410(a), 683.420(a), 683.750
6.25	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The local board will not use funds received under WIOA to assist, promote, or deter union organizing.	WIOA Section 181(b)(7); 20 CFR 680.850
Eligibility		References
6.26	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The local board has a written policy and procedures that ensure adequate and correct determinations of eligibility for WIOA-funded basic career services and qualifications for enrollment of adults, dislocated workers, and youth in WIOA-funded individualized career services and training services, consistent with state policy on eligibility and priority of service.	20 CFR Part 680 Subparts A and B; 20 CFR Part 681 Subpart A
6.27	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The local board has a written policy and procedures for awarding Individual Training Accounts to eligible adults, dislocated workers, and youth receiving WIOA Title I training services, including dollar and/or duration limit(s), limits on the number of times an individual may modify an ITA, and how ITAs will be obligated and authorized.	WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(G); 20 CFR 680.300-320
6.28	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The local board has a written policy and procedures that establish internal controls, documentation requirements, and leveraging and coordination of other community resources when providing supportive services and, as applicable, needs-related payments to eligible adult, dislocated workers, and youth enrolled in WIOA Title I programs.	WIOA Sections 129(c)(2)(G) and 134(d)(2); 20 CFR 680.900-970; 20 CFR 681.570

<p>6.29 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The local board has a written policy for priority of service at its workforce centers for local workforce providers that ensures veterans and eligible spouses are identified at the point of entry, made aware of their entitlement to priority of service, and provided information on the array of employment, training and placement services and eligibility requirements for those programs or services.</p>	<p>Jobs for Veterans Act; Veterans' Benefits, Health Care, and Information Technology Act; 20 CFR 1010; TEGL 10-09</p>
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Appendix C: Little Rock Workforce Development Board Organizational Chart



Appendix D: Little Rock Workforce Center Organizational Chart



Appendix E: Division of Workforce Services, Adult Education Section RFP Timeline

The Division of Workforce Services, Adult Education Section issued its RFP announcement for the 2024-2027 program years in January 2024 (see below).

**Arkansas Adult Education Section
Request for Proposals (RFP) Timeline**

Advertised.....January 28, 2024
Arkansas Democrat-Gazette (online and in print)

Website-Posting.....January 28, 2024 to March 1, 2024
Adult Education Website: <https://dws.arkansas.gov/adult-education/>
AALRC Website: <https://aalrc.org/>

Intent-to-Apply Deadline.....February 6, 2024
*E-mail: ADED.RFP@arkansas.gov
*Subject line: Intent to Apply Form

****Bidders' Conference (optional)**.....In-person and virtual-choose one date
Date: February 8, 2024
Time: 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Zoom: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87877729738>

Date: February 9, 2024
Time: 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Zoom: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85197998771>

In-Person Location
Arkansas Adult Learning Resource Center
124 W. Capitol Ave., Suite 1000, Little Rock, AR 72201
RSVP by February 6, 2024, to Ashley Davis by phone or e-mail
(501) 907-2490 or ashley@aalrc.org

***Is designed to give interested and eligible grantees the opportunity to ask questions regarding the Adult Education Request for Proposal.*

Proposals Due to the State Office.....March 1, 2024
State Office Submits Proposals to Local Boards.....March 4, 2024
Local Boards Return Proposals to State Office with Comments.....March 11, 2024
Review/Evaluate RFPs.....March 4-13, 2024
Notify Declined Applicants Deadline.....(Noon) March 14, 2024
Deadline to Appeal.....(Noon) March 21, 2024
Notify Awarded Applicants.....March 25, 2024
Grant Budget Meetings.....April 1-12, 2024
All Completed Grant Budgets Due to State Office.....May 3, 2024
Project Period.....**July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2028**

Appendix F: Local Area WIOA Negotiated Performance Goals



Hugh McDonald
SECRETARY OF COMMERCE

Charisse Childers, Ph.D.
DIRECTOR
DIVISION OF WORKFORCE SERVICES

November 15, 2023

W.J. Monagle
Executive Director
Little Rock Workforce Development Board
5401 South University Avenue, Suite 146
Little Rock, AR 72209

Dear Mr. Monagle:

In September 2023, representatives from the Little Rock Arkansas Workforce Development Area participated in a WIOA performance adjustment meeting with members of the ADWS team. This letter finalizes the agreed-upon negotiated performance levels for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) title I programs, for Program Years (PYs) 2022 and 2023.

Following a review of the Little Rock Arkansas Workforce Development Area's actual results reported for PYs 2016-2021, analysis of the Arkansas WIOA statistical adjustment model's outcomes, and subsequent discussions with your staff, the enclosed chart summarizes the negotiated performance levels.

The final agreed-upon performance targets are effective July 1, 2023, and should be included in future WIOA Regional and Local Plans and Modifications. ADWS expresses its appreciation for your team's willingness to engage in a productive and comprehensive process that will ensure effectiveness in achieving positive outcomes for individuals served by our state's workforce development system.

Should you have any questions, please contact Eddie Thomas, Deputy Director – Office of Employment Assistance at eddie.thomas@arkansas.gov or (501) 371-1028.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Charisse Childers".

Charisse Childers, Ph.D.
Director

Enclosure

cc: Mr. Miguel Lopez, Chairperson
Little Rock Workforce Development Board

The Honorable Frank Scott, Jr. – Mayor, City of Little Rock
Chief Elected Official

Appendix F: Local Area WIOA Negotiated Performance Goals

PY 22-23 WIOA PERFORMANCE GOALS

WIOA Title I: Adult Measure	Arkansas Negotiated Performance Levels		Little Rock Workforce Development Area Negotiated Performance Levels	
	PY 22	PY 23	PY 22	PY 23
Employment Rate 2nd quarter after exit	83.0%	83.0%	81.0%	82.0%
Employment Rate 4th quarter after exit	82.0%	82.0%	80.0%	81.0%
Median Earnings in the 2nd quarter after exit	\$6,649	\$6,649	\$6,449	\$6,549
Credential Attainment Rate	81.0%	81.0%	79.0%	80.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	71.0%	71.0%	69.0%	70.0%

WIOA Title I: Dislocated Worker Measure	Arkansas Negotiated Performance Levels		Little Rock Workforce Development Area Negotiated Performance Levels	
	PY 22	PY 23	PY 22	PY 23
Employment Rate 2nd quarter after exit	83.0%	83.0%	81.0%	81.0%
Employment Rate 4th quarter after exit	85.0%	85.0%	83.0%	83.0%
Median Earnings in the 2nd quarter after exit	\$7,227	\$7,227	\$7,527	\$7,527
Credential Attainment Rate	79.0%	79.0%	77.0%	77.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	68.5%	68.5%	66.5%	66.5%

WIOA Title I: Youth Measure	Arkansas Negotiated Performance Levels		Little Rock Workforce Development Area Negotiated Performance Levels	
	PY 22	PY 23	PY 22	PY 23
Education or Training Activities or Employment in the 2nd quarter after exit	73.0%	73.0%	71.0%	71.0%
Education or Training Activities or Employment in the 4th quarter after exit	76.0%	76.0%	74.0%	74.0%
Median Earnings in the 2nd quarter after exit	\$3,700	\$3,700	\$3,500	\$3,500
Credential Attainment Rate	62.0%	62.0%	60.0%	60.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	59.0%	59.0%	57.0%	57.0%