



## Local Workforce Development Area 19

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## INTRODUCTION

In 1998, Congress signed the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) to impact the national economy through a “customer-focused” workforce development system. WIA guidance indicated that the primary customer of our workforce system is the business community. Businesses create the jobs needed for ultimate success in the local and/or global economies. As a demand-driven system, these are the jobs on which our local workforce system focuses its efforts.

In July 2014, Congress passed the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), recognizing that now more than ever, effective education and workforce development opportunities are critical to the country’s economic recovery. WIOA is intended to move the workforce system to the next step, to prepare workers for the 21st century workforce, while helping businesses find the skilled employees they need to compete and create jobs in America. With the implementation of WIOA, CareerSource Heartland (CSH) anticipates a positive impact to our service delivery and our local communities.

A successful career development system must support actions that promote business growth and global competitiveness. It must be centered on the skill sets needed by local businesses, and must provide the means for workers to obtain those skills through education, training and job succession. Successful talent development includes wage progression through rapid attachment to the workforce, continual skill gains, and lifelong learning.

Our workforce, economic development and education systems must reflect the current reality of global competition. In today’s technological environment, companies are establishing a global footprint, enhancing competition and opening new markets. We must continue to address local industry needs, and at the same time, prepare our workforce to compete in the global market.

The workforce board plays an important part in the overall scheme of a successful workforce development system and economic viability. Keep in mind the critical connections among business needs, workforce development, workforce education, and economic development. Workers are the lifeblood of business success, and workforce development is the “people” or “talent” part of economic development.

We strongly encourage the development of local partnerships, to provide seamless services to businesses and jobseekers. Bringing agencies together as partners promotes a common focus for the benefit of the area, while eliminating duplication of services. In times of reduced resources, this stretches and leverages valuable resources for economic viability. It is extremely important for secondary and post-secondary educators, economic developers, businesses, and workforce professionals to collaborate. By working together, we will create the workforce that our local economy demands.

## ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

### (1) Chief Elected Official(s) (CEO)

- A. Identify the chief elected official(s) by name, title, mailing address, phone number and email address.

The Executive Board Chair and Chief Elected Official for CareerSource Heartland (CSH) is:

Jack Richie, Commissioner  
Highlands County Board of County Commissioners  
600 S. Commerce Ave.  
Sebring/33870 863-402-6863  
[jrichie@hcbcc.org](mailto:jrichie@hcbcc.org)

Along with Commissioner Richie, the Local Elected Officials (LEO) serving on our Executive Board are:

Terry Burroughs, Commissioner  
Okeechobee County Board of County Commissioners  
304 NW 2<sup>nd</sup> St., Room 123  
Okeechobee/34972 863-763-6441  
[tburroughs@co.okeechobee.fl.us](mailto:tburroughs@co.okeechobee.fl.us)

Jim Selph, Commissioner  
DeSoto County Board of County Commissioners  
201 E. Oak St., Suite 201  
Arcadia/34266 863-993-4800  
[j.selph@desotobocc.com](mailto:j.selph@desotobocc.com)

Mike Thompson, Commissioner  
Hardee County Board of County Commissioners  
412 W. Orange St., A203  
Wauchula/33873 863-773-9430  
[mikethompson@hardeemail.com](mailto:mikethompson@hardeemail.com)

Article 1, Section 3 of the CSH By-laws designates the Executive Board Chair as the workforce Local Area's Chief Elected Official, for authentication purposes.

- B. If the local area includes more than one unit of general local government in accordance with WIOA sec. 107(c)(1)(B), attach the agreement that has been executed to define how the parties will carry out the roles and responsibilities of the chief elected official.

Please see the Heartland Workforce Investment Consortium Interlocal Agreement (Attachment 1); and Article 1, Section 3 of the CSH Bylaws (Attachment 2).

- C. Attach a copy of the agreement executed between the chief elected official(s) and the Local Workforce Development Board.

Please see Attachment 1, the Heartland Workforce Investment Consortium Interlocal Agreement.

D. Describe the Bylaws established by the CEO to address the criteria contained in §679.310(g) of the proposed WIOA regulations:

i. The nomination process used by the CEO to elect the local board chair and members;

Please see item number 7 of the aforementioned Interlocal Agreement, which stipulates and outlines the nomination process used to elect local board members.

Additional information can be found in the organization's Bylaws (Attachment 2).

Article III, Section 3 states:

a. Members of the Board of Directors must be appointed by majority vote of the CSH Executive Board.

b. Nominations to fill vacancies in the Business category shall be solicited from local Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development Organizations, or other business support-related organizations within Local Area 19. Nominations to fill vacancies in non-Business categories shall be solicited from the required organizations and institutions.

Concerning the election of the board chair, the Bylaws state:

Article IV, Section 2. Eligibility as Officers

a. The Chair must be selected from among members representing the Business category and must have served as a member of the Board for a minimum of one (1) year.

Article IV, Section 6. Election of Officers

a. Elections shall be held in April of the year that elections are necessary. An Ad Hoc Nominating Committee shall be appointed by the Chair at the January board meeting of that year.

b. The Ad Hoc Nominating Committee shall present a slate of candidates for each office being filled, not to preclude the nomination of other candidates from the general membership (floor). Such nominations must receive a second in order to be considered.

c. All officers shall be elected by a majority vote of members present at the meeting, provided a quorum is established.

ii. The term limitations and how the term appointments will be staggered to ensure only a portion of membership expire in a given year;

CSH Bylaws Article III Section 4 reads:

a. Pursuant to federal and state law, and except as indicated in Article III, Sections 2 and 6, members may serve until their successors are appointed.

b. Board members are nominated as required by law or as needed to fill vacancies and may be re-appointed, if necessary, for consecutive terms.

The provisions referenced in Article III, Sections 2 and 6, indicate:  
Section 2.

b. Education and Training Provider (ETP: Other (ETPO) Secondary Education: One (1) representative. The District Superintendent, or his/her designee, from each School District within the local area will serve on a rotational basis, each for a one-year term.

Adult Education and Literacy (ETPA: One (1) representative.

A designee from the local providers of these services will serve on a rotational basis, each for a one-year term.

- c. Government Representative/Economic Development (GRED): Two (2) members  
No more than two representatives from all Economic Development Organizations operating within the local area may serve as a board member at any given time. Seating will be on a rotational basis for a one-year term each.

Economic Development		School Districts	
2015-16	DeSoto and Okeechobee	2015-16	Highlands
2016-17	Hardee and Highlands	2016-17	Okeechobee
2017-18	DeSoto and Okeechobee	2017-18	Hardee
2018-19	Hardee and Highlands	2018-19	DeSoto

Because of the unlimited terms of members and the established rotations for School District and Economic Development representatives, staggering of terms is not necessary.

- iii. The process to notify the CEO of a board member vacancy to ensure a prompt nominee;

The President/Chief Executive Officer (P/CEO), on behalf of and in conjunction with the CSH Executive Board, notifies all board members and executive board members, including the Chief Elected Official (CEO), immediately when it becomes known that a vacancy exists or will soon exist. Through written and other communications, the P/CEO reaches out to the board members and representatives of the following organizations, as appropriate, to solicit nominations:

- Chambers of Commerce;
- Economic Development Agencies
- Industry associations or trade groups;
- Labor organizations
- Educational agencies, including those responsible for K-12;
- Adult Education; technical education and post-secondary education;
- Vocational Rehabilitation and local organizations that assist individuals with disabilities; and
- Youth-serving organizations;

It is the Board's intent to present nominations at the next official meeting of the Consortium (CSH Executive Board) after the vacancy occurs, provided that at least one month has been allowed for solicitation of nominations.

- iv. The proxy and alternative designee process that will be used when a board member is unable to attend a meeting and assigns a designee as per the requirements at §679.110(d)(4) of the proposed WIOA regulations;

Currently, CSH Bylaws do not allow for proxy voting.

Article VI, Section 6 states: Board members shall not vote at any meeting by proxy, nor shall alternates be permitted to sit as voting members at any meetings. Alternate representatives may be required by a member to attend and participate in meetings on their behalf for information and discussion purposes only.

- v. The use of technology, such as phone and Web-based meetings, that will be used to promote board member participation;

WebEx or call-in capabilities are regularly made available for both full board and separate committee meetings.

All Board and committee meetings are publicly noticed. WebEx and call-in capabilities are made available for board members and public participation.

- vi. The process to ensure board members actively participate in convening the workforce development system's stakeholders, brokering relationships with a diverse range of employers, and leveraging support for workforce development activities;

CSH understands that building an effective workforce system requires input and participation from all stakeholders. To that end, Article II, Statement of Purpose, items 1 and 4 of the CSH Bylaws indicate the Board's intent to:

Item 1. Design and implement workforce related strategies that facilitate cooperation throughout the local area to maximize talent development, economic development and sustainable growth to improve the quality of life of our citizens, while recognizing the unique attributes of each of the counties within our geographic area.

Item 4. Seek ways to market workforce services to the community at large by collaborating with county and local area Economic Development Organizations, Educational Institutions, Chambers of Commerce, and other business agencies, groups, committees and partners.

As such, Board membership is designed to include the system's stakeholders, and is outlined in Article III, Section 2:

In accordance with guidance as outlined in WIOA law and s.445.007, Florida Statutes, the CSH Board is comprised of members from the following categories (See List of Acronyms at the end of this section):

- a. Business (Private-Sector): Seventeen (17) members – 51% majority. Representatives should be owners of a business, or other individuals with optimum policy-making or hiring authority. Business members must have employment opportunities that reflect those available within the local area. Individuals must be nominated by business organizations and/or business trade associations.
- b. Education and Training Provider (ETP): Four (4) members.
  - i. Institution of Higher Learning (ETPC) – Post-Secondary Education: One (1) representative
  - ii. Other (ETPO) Private For-Profit Training Provider: One (1) representative
  - iii. Other (ETPO) Secondary Education: One (1) representative.

The District Superintendent, or his/her designee, from each School District within the local area will serve on a rotational basis, each for a one-year term.

iv. Adult Education and Literacy (ETPA: One (1) representative.

A designee from the local providers of these services will serve on a rotational basis, each for a one-year term.

Note: At the discretion of the CSH Board of Directors, a Private Not-for-Profit Training Provider (ETPO) – if one becomes available – may be seated by replacing a member from one of the “Other” ETPO positions.

c. Government Representative/Economic Development (GRED): Two (2) members  
No more than two representatives from all Economic Development Organizations operating within the local area may serve as a board member at any given time. Seating will be on a rotational basis for a one-year term each.

d. Government Representative/Vocational Rehabilitation (GRVRD): One (1) representative from programs carried out under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, other than section 112 or Part C.

e. Additional Government, Workforce, and Community-Based Organizations: Six (6) members

i. Organization for individuals with Disabilities (WOD) – 1 member

ii. Veterans Organization (WOV) – 1 member

iii. Florida Department of Children & Families (GRO) – 1 member

iv. Public Housing Authority/HUD (GRO) – 1 member

v. Organization for Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers (GRO) – 1 member

vi. Senior Community Service Employment/SCSEP (GRO) – 1 member

f. Workforce Labor Organization (WOLO): Two (2) members

Representatives must be nominated by local labor federations. If no local employees are represented by such organizations, other representatives of employees can be considered for this category.

The committee structure, outlined in Article VII, Section 1, is also designed to include stakeholders and to identify and respond to workforce issues.

CSH has specific Standing Committees/Councils in order to enhance workforce development within the local area and provide guidance that best reflects business demands, best practices, strategic imperatives, and new initiatives funded by the Florida Legislature and the federal government.

The three most active committees are:

1. The Business Enhancement Committee (BEC) serves as a catalyst between industry, economic development organizations, educators, and training providers, to identify skills needed to fill critical jobs necessary for business retention, expansion, and recruitment activities. The BEC also assists in defining local goals and objectives that help underemployed workers improve their skills to enhance their economic self-sufficiency. Strategies embrace the concept of lifelong learning. The committee is comprised of a majority of Board members representing private sector businesses. Committee members are appointed by the Committee Chair. Membership is extended to other individuals with appropriate related business experience and expertise. These individuals are designated “Community” members and are voting members of the BEC and non-voting members of the Board of Directors.

2. The Finance & Operations (F&O) Committee. Members are appointed by the F&O Committee Chair and include at least three (3) members from the Business (private sector) category. Responsibilities of the Committee include formulating the CSH Bylaws for review and approval by the CSH Board of Directors, analysis of all budgetary and/or fiscal-related matters including review of the annual budget, review of auditing and monitoring reports, reviewing and recommending approval or disapproval of all training, support services, or related program activities, ensuring the respective programs are being operated within the scope of existing federal and state law, review of Request for Proposals (RFP's) outside the jurisdiction of other CSH Committees/Councils, and review of any necessary operational plan and/or budgetary amendment – as might be needed to obtain state approval – to ensure encumbrances and/or expenditures are within budget.
  
3. The Youth Council provides assistance and guidance with promoting successful entry into the workforce through education and workplace experience that leads to self-sufficiency and career advancement. Key components of the strategy include efforts that enlist business, education, and community support for students to achieve long-term career goals – ensuring that young people entering the workplace for the first time have the academic and occupational skills required to succeed in the workplace. Membership of this Council includes board members with special interest or expertise in youth policy, representatives of youth service agencies including Juvenile Justice and local law enforcement agencies, representatives of local Public Housing Authorities, and individuals and representatives of organizations who have experience relating to youth activities. Youth Council membership is extended to other individuals with appropriate expertise and experience serving youth. These individuals are designated “Community” members and are voting members of the Youth Council and non-voting members of the Board of Directors.

Additional input is accepted via the following methods:

- Agenda items submitted by individuals, organizations, or other interested parties having an official or vested interest in the item being considered by the Board.
- Agenda items considered by the Board, as deemed to be relevant material or of significant enough interest to the public to warrant comment and/or input from any member of the public present.

Any unscheduled speakers or individuals may address the Board of Directors at the discretion of the Board Chair by completing a “citizens not on the agenda” form.

Acronyms – Section V: **Board Membership Designations**

BU	Business
WOLO	Workforce – Labor Organization
WOJ	Workforce – Joint labor-management Apprenticeship Program
WOD	Workforce – Community-based org. representing Individuals with Disabilities
WOV	Workforce – Community-based organization representing Veterans
WOY	Workforce – Community-based organization representing Youth
ETPA	Education and Training Provider – Adult Education and Literacy
ETPC	Education and Training Provider – Institution of Higher Education
ETPO	Education and Training Provider – Other
GREDE	Government Representative – Economic Development
GRES	Government Representative – Employment Service
GRVRD	Government Representative – Vocational Rehabilitation
GRO	Government Representative – Other

vii. Any other conditions governing appointments or membership on the local board.

In accordance with guidance established in the Heartland Workforce Investment Consortium Inter-local Agreement, one Local Elected Official (LEO) from each Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) of the member counties is appointed to serve as that BOCC's representative on the CSH Executive Board. The Executive Board is the vehicle through which elected officials in the member counties participate in the planning, approval and operation of the local workforce investment board's employment and training assistance programs, as mandated by law. A Chair and Vice-Chair are selected from among the LEOs that comprise the Executive Board. The Executive Board Chair is designated as the workforce Local Area's Chief Elected Official, for authentication purposes.

The membership of the CSH Board of Directors is consistent with the requirements of federal and state law. A majority of the Board's members are representatives from the Business (private sector) category.

New members are appointed to fill the same category of membership in which the vacancy occurred in order to maintain the balance of membership. There is no requirement for new members to be from the same organization, institution, or company, as the member being replaced.

E. Provide a description of how the CEO was involved in the development, review and approval of the plan.

The Executive Board of CSH is comprised of one LEO from each of its four Boards of County Commissioners. The LEOs attend all board meetings, overseeing and approving actions taken. Additionally, the President/Chief Executive Officer keeps the Executive Board aware of legislative, federal or state mandates that affect daily operations of the organization.

Specifically, the CEO is invited to and regularly participates in CSH Board and committee meetings during which this plan's development, along with related meetings held with community partners regarding this plan, have been discussed and vetted.

A draft of this Plan has been presented to the CEO for review, comment and approval. Similarly, any public comments received, along with responses to those comments, will also be presented to the CEO upon receipt.

## **(2) Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB)**

A. Identify the chairperson of the Local Workforce Development Board by name, title, mailing address, phone number and email address. Identify the business that the chair represents.

The Chairperson of the CareerSource Heartland Board of Directors is William (Bill) J. Nielander, P.A., Nielander Law Firm, 172 E. Interlake Blvd., Lake Placid, FL 33852, 863-465-8181.

B. Provide a description of how the LWDB was involved in the development, review, and approval of the plan.

CSH maintains a continuous process of planning, implementation, and evaluation, with Board members regularly providing input into both philosophical and strategic planning processes. The committee structure of the Board allows for small group discussion and the development of specific aspects of the plan, along with its overall objectives and processes. Planning

efforts focus on public and local agency partner input into the implementation of WIOA and its integration with other programs such as Adult Education and Literacy, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Division of Blind Services, Welfare Transition, Migrant Seasonal Farmworker and Agricultural Programs including the Farmworker Career Development Programs, Veterans Services, Carl Perkins and others. Relationships have been established and maintained with local economic development organizations, Central Florida Regional Planning Council (CFRPC), local airport authorities, educational facilities, businesses, chambers of commerce and other community entities. As our approach is ongoing, our strategies evolve and regularly align local initiatives with State and Federal imperatives. At each step of this process, the Board has provided direction and oversight.

Throughout the planning process, the President/CEO has kept the Board apprised of the developments and recommendations of the State's WIOA Task Force. CSH By-laws and board membership have been reviewed and updated. Members of partner agencies, clients, and the public at large regularly attend meetings and were invited to submit input and comment on the activities of the Board. The Board approved the development of the memoranda of understanding that resulted from these meetings.

All Board and committee meetings are publicly noticed in accordance with Florida's Sunshine Law. Attendees from the general public were invited to provide comments and were given a formal opportunity to do so at each full board meeting.

The Local Plan draft was shared with Board members in late March. Members were given the opportunity to review the draft and offer suggestions, comments and/or corrections. Any public comments received will also be provided to the Board prior to final approval of the Local Plan document, which is anticipated to occur at the April 20, 2016 Board meeting.

**(3) Local Grant Subrecipient (local fiscal agent or administrative entity)**

A. Identify the entity selected to receive and disburse grant funds (local fiscal agent) if other than the chief elected official. WIOA section 107(d)(12)(B)(1)(iii); 20 CFR 679.420

The Consortium has identified Heartland Workforce Investment Board, Inc., dba CareerSource Heartland as the local grant recipient and administrative entity.

B. Identify the entity selected to staff the LWDB (commonly referred to as the administrative entity) and assist it in carrying out its responsibilities as a board organized under WIOA. (May be the same as the fiscal agent). 20 CFR 679.430

The Consortium has selected the Heartland Workforce Investment Board, Inc., dba CareerSource Heartland as the local grant recipient and administrative entity.

C. If a single entity has been selected to operate in more than one of the following roles: local fiscal agent, local board staff, one-stop operator or direct provider of career services or training services, attach the agreement that describes how the entity will carry out its multiple responsibilities including how it will develop appropriate firewalls to guard against any conflict of interest.

Please see Attachment 1 – the Heartland Workforce Investment Consortium Interlocal Agreement – and Attachment 3 – CSH July 8, 2014 letter to CSF requesting extension of authorized designation as Direct Service Provider, approved by the CSF Board of Directors on August 28, 2014.

As outlined in Attachment 4, CSH follows the principles of the “Carver Model.” The Board maintains its role as a strategic planning and policy board and oversight body. The President/CEO acts as the sole point of accountability. The establishment of this practice provides a sufficient “firewall” between the CSH Board of Directors and daily operations.

As CSH has followed all required processes to be designated as a direct provider of Career Services, all services within our system, with the exception of youth services, are provided directly. The majority of youth services are provided through competitively procured contracted providers; however, some eligible youth may receive basic career services through CSH’s Career Centers, or may be served through On-the-Job Training or Individual Training Account mechanisms.

#### **(4) One-Stop System**

- A. Provide a description of the local one-stop system (including the number, type and location of full-service and other service delivery points).

CSH operates four fixed Career Centers, one in each of the four counties that comprise Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) 19. The Centers located in Sebring (Highlands County), Wauchula (Hardee County), and Okeechobee (Okeechobee County) are full-service Career Centers. The Career Center located in Arcadia (DeSoto County) is designated as a satellite Center. CSH services are accessible through its website at [www.careersourceheartland.com](http://www.careersourceheartland.com).

- B. Identify the days and times when service delivery offices are open to customers. Customers must have access to programs, services and activities during regular business days at a comprehensive one-stop center.

To ensure that customers have access to Career Center programs, services and activities during regular business days, each Career Center is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The Career Centers in DeSoto, Hardee and Okeechobee counties are closed for lunch, Monday through Friday from 12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. Career Centers are closed one day per quarter to provide ongoing staff training and development.

Information on CSH programs, services and activities, is accessible 24/7 through its website.

- C. Identify the entity or entities selected to operate the local one-stop center(s).

As noted above, CSH is a direct provider of Career Services and currently operates the local one-stop Career Centers.

- D. Identify the entity or entities selected to provide career services within the local one-stop system.

As previously noted, CSH is a direct provider of career services within the local one-stop system, with the exception of youth services, which are contracted following a competitive procurement process.

CSH intends to continue direct service provision and is awaiting further guidance from CSF and the Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) concerning necessary actions that must be taken to ensure compliance with WIOA.

E. Identify and describe what career services will be provided by the selected one-stop operator and what career services, if any, will be contracted out to service providers.

As a direct provider, CSH career centers currently provide three types of career services: basic career services, individualized career services, and follow-up services.

**Basic Career Services:**

Available to all individuals seeking services in CSH career centers, and include:

- Determinations of whether an individual is eligible to receive assistance from the adult, dislocated worker, or youth programs;
- Outreach, intake (including identification through the state's Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services system of unemployment insurance (UI) claimants likely to exhaust benefits), and orientation to information and other services available through the career center system;
- Initial assessment of skill levels including literacy, numeracy, and English language proficiency, as well as aptitudes, abilities (including skills gaps), and supportive service needs;
- Labor exchange services, including – Job search and placement assistance, and, when needed by a customer, career counseling that includes provision of information on in-demand industry sectors and occupations (as defined in sec. 3(23) of WIOA); and provision of information on nontraditional employment (as defined in sec. 3(37) of WIOA);
- Provision of referrals to and coordination of activities with other programs and services, including those within our career center delivery system and, when appropriate, other workforce development programs;
- Provision of workforce and labor market employment statistics information, including the provision of accurate information relating to local, regional, and national labor market areas, including: job vacancy listings in labor market areas; information on job skills necessary to obtain the vacant jobs listed; and information relating to local occupations in demand and the earnings, skill requirements, and opportunities for advancement for those jobs;
- Provision of performance information and program cost information on eligible providers of training services by program and type of providers;
- Provision of information about how the local area is performing on local performance accountability measures, as well as any additional performance information relating to our local career center delivery system;
- Provision of information relating to the availability of supportive services or assistance, and appropriate referrals to those services and assistance, including: child care, child support, medical or child health assistance available through the State's Medicaid program and Children's Health Insurance Program, benefits under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), assistance through the earned income tax credit, housing counseling and assistance services sponsored through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and assistance under Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and other supportive services and transportation provided through that program;
- Assistance in establishing eligibility for programs of financial aid assistance for training and education programs not provided under WIOA; and
- Provision of information and assistance regarding filing claims under UI programs including meaningful assistance to individuals seeking assistance in filing a claim.

#### Individualized Career Services:

If career center staff determine that individualized career services are appropriate for an individual to obtain or retain employment, these services will be made available. Individualized Career Services are available in all CSH career centers. These services include:

- Comprehensive and specialized assessments of the skill levels and service needs of adults and dislocated workers, which may include – diagnostic testing and use of other assessment tools; and in-depth interviewing and evaluation to identify employment barriers and appropriate employment goals;
- Development of an individual employment plan, to identify the employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives and appropriate combination of services for the customer to achieve his or her employment goals, including the list of, and information about, eligible training providers;
- Group and/or individual counseling and mentoring;
- Career planning
- Short-term pre-vocational services, including development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training, in some instances pre-apprenticeship programs may be considered as short-term pre-vocational services;
- Internships and work experiences that are linked to careers;
- Workforce preparation activities that help an individual acquire a combination of basic academic skills, critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills, and self-management skills, including competencies in utilizing resources, using information, working with others, understanding systems, and obtaining skills necessary for successful transition into and completion of postsecondary education, or training, or employment;
- Financial literacy services;
- Out-of-area job search assistance and relocation assistance; and
- Referrals to English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs.

#### Follow-up Services:

Follow-up services will be provided as appropriate for customers who are placed in unsubsidized employment, for up to 12 months after the first day of employment. Counseling about the work place is offered as appropriate. Follow-up services will not extend the date of exit in performance reporting.

All Career Services described above are available in CSH career centers and happen in no specific sequence.

F. Pursuant to the CareerSource Florida Administrative Policy for One-Stop Certification, please provide the required attestation that at least one comprehensive one-stop center in your local area meets the certification requirements.

WIOA requires that there be at least one physical, comprehensive one-stop certified career center in each LWDA with access to all required, and any approved additional partner programs, services and activities. Access may be through electronic means if applicable and practicable, including the use of web sites, telephones, or other means to improve the efficiency, coordination, and quality of career center partner services.

The Highlands County career center located in Sebring serves as the physical, comprehensive career center for LWDA 19. The career center has met the criteria for One Stop Credentialing pursuant to reviews by the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity's Programmatic Monitoring Team:

- Provides the career services described in WIOA section 134(c)(2);
- Provides access to training services as described in WIOA section 134(c)(3), including serving as the point of access to training services for participants in accordance with section 134(c)(3)(G);
- Provides access to the employment and training activities carried out under WIOA section 134(d), if any;
- Provides access to programs and activities carried out by career center partners. Access means having either program staff physically present at the location; having partner program staff physically present at the career center appropriately trained to provide information to customers about the programs, services, and activities available through partner programs; or providing direct linkage through technology to program staff who can provide meaningful information or services.
- Provides access to the data, information, and analysis described in section 15(a) of the Wagner-Peyser Act (29U.S.C. 491-2(a) and all job search, placement, recruitment, and other labor exchange services authorized under the Wagner Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.);
- Has knowledgeable staff, including trained career counselors, as appropriate, available to provide assistance. Professional team members providing direct customer service must comply with the minimum skill standards for front-line staff found in CareerSource Florida Administrative Policy 89 and have a basic orientation to all required career center partner programs.
- Is accessible to the general public during regular business days which is defined as Monday through Friday.
- Is physically and programmatically accessible to individuals with disabilities. CSH staff remains abreast of developments regarding improvements to services for persons with disabilities and shares that information with career center staff. Information is shared with customers regarding the availability of auxiliary aids and services as needed.
- CSH has procedures in place to address issues related to achieving, managing, and improving performance. The LWDA's EEO officer ensures that facilities and equipment meet the needs of jobseekers with disabilities. Center Branch Managers and management staff work together to ensure that all staff attends training as needed, including Tier 1 certification and subsequent continuing education.

## ANALYSIS OF NEED AND AVAILABLE RESOURCES

(1) Please provide an analysis (or existing analysis pursuant to WIOA section 108(c)) of the regional economic conditions, which must include:

A. Information on existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations;

### Existing Demand Occupations

The majority of the top 15 existing demand occupations are low-skill occupations characterized by relatively low wages and high rate of worker turnover.

Most of the top five existing demand occupations are related to customer service and hospitality. The only exception is farmworkers and laborers, crop, nursery, and greenhouse workers.

Combined food preparation and serving workers, including fast food, is the top existing demand occupation, with 1,037 projected total job openings between 2015 and 2023.

Two of the top 15 existing demand occupations are related to agriculture.

Two of the top 15 existing demand occupations are in the healthcare occupations of nursing assistants and registered nurses, which have a relatively high turnover rate and will continue to experience employment growth as a result of the increasing demand for healthcare services, driven by population growth and aging, expanding insurance coverage, and technological change.

### TOP 15 EXISTING DEMAND OCCUPATIONS

(ranked by total job openings)

Workforce Development Area 19 - De Soto, Hardee, Highlands, and Okeechobee Counties

Rank	Occupation		2015 - 2023			2015 Hourly Wage (\$)				
	Code	Title	Employment 2015	Employment 2023	Total Job Openings*	Median	Entry**	Exp***		
1	353021	Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food	2,234	2,545	311	13.9	1,037	9.27	8.84	9.89
2	412031	Retail Salespersons	2,045	2,292	247	12.1	817	10.02	8.81	13.71
3	452092	Farmworkers and Laborers, Crop, Nursery, and Greenhouse	3,191	2,960	-231	-7.2	780	10.11	8.78	11.40
4	412011	Cashiers	1,690	1,774	84	5.0	704	9.33	8.84	10.26
5	434051	Customer Service Representatives	1,255	1,375	120	9.6	391	11.44	8.89	13.51
6	439061	Office Clerks, General	1,560	1,668	108	6.9	369	10.95	8.92	13.20
7	119013	Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers	2,758	2,704	-54	-2.0	354	40.70	25.02	48.68
8	372011	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	1,251	1,401	150	12.0	334	9.40	8.81	11.22
9	311014	Nursing Assistants	1,087	1,252	165	15.2	327	10.73	9.26	11.74
10	436014	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	1,427	1,611	184	12.9	321	14.12	10.07	16.77
11	291141	Registered Nurses	1,046	1,208	162	15.5	319	28.69	23.84	32.42
12	353031	Waiters and Waitresses	683	725	42	6.2	310	9.08	8.72	12.78
13	411011	First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	971	1,043	72	7.4	240	18.91	13.25	24.19
14	373011	Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers	766	844	78	10.2	233	10.78	9.55	11.82
15	533032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	974	1,083	109	11.2	232	13.73	11.47	15.55

\* Job openings result from economic growth and from replacement needs. For declining occupations, all job openings result from replacement needs.

\*\* Entry Wage - The wage an entry-level worker might expect to make. It is defined as the average (mean) wage earned by the lowest third of all workers in a given occupation.

\*\*\* Experienced Wage - The wage an experienced worker might expect to make. It is defined as the average (mean) wage earned by the upper two-thirds of all workers in a given occupation.

Source: Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Labor Market Statistics, October 2015

## Emerging Industries

Healthcare, professional and personal services industries top the lists of emerging industries. Emerging industries tend to employ a higher percentage in professional occupations.

### Top Emerging Industries

Workforce Development Area 19 - De Soto, Hardee, Highlands, and Okeechobee Counties

Industry		Employment		2015 - 2023 Change	
Code	Title	2015	2023	Total	Percent
5415	Computer Systems Design and Related Services	107	144	37	34.6
6215	Medical and Diagnostic Laboratories	48	63	15	31.3
5416	Management, Scientific, and Technical Consulting Services	126	162	36	28.6
6111	Private Elementary and Secondary Schools	187	237	50	26.7
6214	Outpatient Care Centers	535	677	142	26.5
6117	Educational Support Services	26	32	6	23.1
5239	Other Financial Investment Activities	23	28	5	21.7
5413	Architectural, Engineering, and Related Services	295	349	54	18.3
5419	Other Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	202	238	36	17.8
6213	Offices of Other Health Practitioners	441	515	74	16.8
8129	Other Personal Services	35	40	5	14.3

Source: Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Labor Market Statistics, October 2015

## Emerging Occupations

The healthcare industry sector has the most top emerging occupations (four of top 15) of all the major industry sectors.

The largest top emerging occupation in the healthcare industry sector is registered nurses, with employment in 2015 of 1,046 and a projected eight-year growth rate of 15.5%.

The top two emerging occupations in the professional services industry sector are computer network architects and civil engineers.

Energy-related sales representatives, recycling and reclamation workers, and solar thermal and weatherization installers and technicians are the top three emerging occupations in the clean tech industry sector. Energy sales representatives buy or sell energy products on behalf of residential or commercial customers or utilities and negotiate and oversee contracts for energy sales. Recycling and reclamation workers sort and prepare materials for recycling, identify and remove hazardous substances, and dismantle components of disused appliances. Solar thermal and weatherization installers and technicians install or repair thermal energy systems designed to collect, store, and circulate solar-heated water for residential, commercial, or industrial use.

The growth in the construction industry sector of the emerging occupation first-line supervisors of construction and extraction workers is related to increasing residential and commercial use of solar photovoltaic or thermal systems.

A top emerging occupation in the manufacturing industry sector is fuel cell technicians. That occupation involves installing, operating, or maintaining integrated fuel cell systems in transportation, stationary, or portable applications.

Transportation, storage, and distribution managers is the top emerging occupation in the logistics and distribution industry sector, as a result of technological advances in the field of logistics. The number of persons employed as logistics managers, which is a specialty within the transportation, storage, and distribution managers occupation, is projected to increase.

The top two emerging occupations in the education industry sector are instructional coordinators and tutors. Instructional coordinators develop instructional material, coordinate educational content, and incorporate current technology in specialized fields that provide guidelines to educators and instructors for developing curricula and conducting classes. Tutors provide non-classroom academic instruction to students on an individual or small-group basis for proactive or remedial purposes.

**Top 15 Emerging Occupations**  
(ranked by percent growth)

Workforce Development Area 19 - De Soto, Hardee, Highlands, and Okeechobee Counties

Rank	SOC Code	Title	Employment		2015 - 2023		Industry Sector Linkage	2015 Hourly Wage (\$)		
			2015	2023	Level Change	Percent Change		Median	Entry*	Exp**
1	173029	Fuel Cell, Manufacturing Production, Photonics Technicians	8	10	2	25.0	Manufacturing	NA	NA	NA
2	292099	Neurodiagnostic and Ophthalmic Technologists, Surgical Assistants	41	49	8	19.5	Healthcare	14.89	12.94	16.99
3	471011	First-Line Superv. of Construction and Extraction Workers	168	200	32	19.1	Construction	22.18	19.93	25.09
4	474099	Solar Thermal and Weatherization Installers and Technicians	132	156	24	18.2	Clean Tech	13.65	10.74	16.12
5	113071	Transportation, Storage, and Distribution Managers	19	22	3	15.8	Logistics and Distribution	48.70	32.77	77.46
6	291069	Hospitalists, Nuclear and Preventive Medicine Physicians	32	37	5	15.6	Healthcare	82.89	22.13	100.76
7	291141	Registered Nurses	1,046	1,208	162	15.5	Healthcare	28.69	23.84	32.42
8	151143	Computer Network Architects	66	76	10	15.2	Professional Services	21.80	17.45	26.62
9	519199	Recycling and Reclamation Workers	188	215	27	14.4	Clean Tech	9.85	8.97	11.07
10	413099	Sales Representatives, Energy-Related	212	242	30	14.2	Clean Tech	23.64	15.10	30.13
11	131199	Security Management and Sustainability Specialists	250	285	35	14.0	Healthcare	27.74	19.52	33.81
12	253099	Tutors	105	118	13	12.4	Education	NA	NA	NA
13	391021	First-Line Supervisors of Personal Service Workers	58	65	7	12.1	Other Services	21.56	11.83	24.88
14	259031	Instructional Coordinators	91	101	10	11.0	Education	21.05	16.75	26.04
15	172051	Civil Engineers	30	33	3	10.0	Professional Services	32.58	26.59	37.54

\* Entry Wage - The wage an entry-level worker might expect to make. It is defined as the average (mean) wage earned by the lowest third of all workers in a given occupation.

\*\* Experienced Wage - The wage an experienced worker might expect to make. It is defined as the average (mean) wage earned by the upper two-thirds of all workers in a given occupation.

NA - Not available for this occupation

Source: Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Labor Market Statistics, October 2015

**B. The employment needs of employers in those industry sectors and occupations. WIOA §108(b)(1)(A)**

As part of our ongoing strategic planning efforts, our local board and partners have identified Agriculture, Biofuels and Renewable Energy, Healthcare and Life Sciences, Information Technology, Logistics and Distribution, and Niche Manufacturing/Processing (aviation, building component design, food and beverage, plastics) as the targeted industries for our local area.

Our strong partnerships with local area economic development organizations, coupled with our business relationships, help us stay abreast of the needs of local employers. The workforce required to maintain the demand of these targeted occupations must be multi-faceted in regard to core competencies, and needs to demonstrate adaptability in terms of new processes and technology.

For our Existing Demand Occupations, employers in our region are predicted to face a labor force supply shortfall of some 75 positions in Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, including Fast Food, and 26 positions for Waiters and Waitresses according to DEO's supply and demand tool. In addition, local employers are expected to face a supply shortage of some 139 positions for Retail Salespersons and Cashiers.

For the Local Area's Emerging Industries, Computer Systems Design and Related Services, the labor supply is predicted to exceed the forecast demand, due to a high level of college enrollment in related fields. A small labor force shortfall is currently predicted in the Medical & Diagnostic Laboratories and Management, Scientific and Technical Consulting Services industries. Currently, available data demonstrates a long-term supply shortage of Pre-School, Elementary School, Middle School and Secondary School Teachers and Teaching assistants of some 74 positions.

Registered Nurses are a significant Emerging Occupation, and long term supply is predicted to meet demand. Strong growth is predicted in a number of STEM occupations and employers in these sectors are expected to require well educated and trained employees to fill the positions that become available. Our growing manufacturing base will require employees with a broad range of skills, some vocational (such as CDL training and heavy equipment operations) and others with supervisory/management skills. Renewable energy positions tend to require degree level qualifications, but local colleges are providing the necessary courses.

**(2) Please provide an analysis of the knowledge and skills needed to meet the employment needs of the employers in the region, including employment needs in in-demand industry sectors and occupations. WIOA §108(b)(1)(B)**

Only two of the top 15 existing demand occupations require significant technical training: registered nurses and farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural managers. Registered Nurses require a minimum of an Associate's Degree, but may find it difficult to obtain entry level positions without prior work experience. A more practical path for many has been to work as a CNA or LPN while obtaining a Bachelor's Degree in Nursing. However, this option is decreasing as LPN positions are diminishing.

Ranchers and other agricultural manager positions usually require a four year bachelor's degree (usually in a STEM discipline), and several years of work-related experience, on-the job training and/or vocational training.

A high school diploma, or equivalent, is the minimum requirement to obtain employment in all but the lowest tier service or agricultural sector jobs. For most of the jobs in the local area, additional skills such as reading for information, applied mathematics, locating information, writing, and computer operations are necessary for continued employment. Technical skills, including certifications are required for many jobs in the manufacturing, construction, finance, healthcare, and aviation sectors.

Skills needed for this local area's in-demand occupations also include strong soft skills such as interpersonal communication, teamwork, critical thinking/problem solving, decision-making, balancing home and work responsibilities, high emotional quotients, and customer service.

**(3) Please provide an analysis of the workforce in the region, including current labor force employment (and unemployment) data, information on labor market trends, and the educational and skill levels of the workforce in the region, including individuals with barriers to employment. WIOA §108(b)(1)(C)**

### **Labor Force and Unemployment**

The unemployment rate has declined by 1.1 percentage points over the year to 7.3 percent in September 2015. Since the trough of the Great Recession (unemployment rate = 10.8 percent), the unemployment rate has decreased by 3.5 percentage points. The labor force has been declining in recent years (September 2015 labor force = 35,376). In addition, the number of unemployed persons has been declining in recent years (September 2015 unemployed persons = 2,589) and the number of employed persons has remained fairly constant (September 2015 employed persons = 32,787).

### **Persons with Barriers to Employment**

The most recent information on unemployment rates for persons with barriers to employment is for 2013. The LWDA 19, 2013 unemployment rate was 27.0 percent for disabled persons, 14.0 percent for American Indians and Alaska Natives, 45.7 percent for Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders, and 10.6 percent for persons 55 and older.

## Education of the Workforce

In 2013, the most common educational attainment level of LWDA 19 workforce participants from 25 to 64 years old was high school diploma (including equivalency) at 35.3 percent, followed by some college or Associate's degree at 26.4 percent, and then less than high school diploma at 24.4 percent. 13.9 percent of workforce participants had attained a Bachelor's degree or higher.

## Employment by Government

In September 2015, the employment was 4,400. The over the year change in September 2015 (+100 jobs, +2.3 percent) was 200 more when compared to September 2014 (-100 jobs, -2.3 percent). The number of jobs in this sector has been trending upward over the past year.

- (4) Please provide an analysis of the workforce development activities (including education and training) in the region, including an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of such services and the capacity to provide such services, to address the identified education and skill needs of the workforce and employment needs of employers in the region. WIOA §108(b)(1)(D) and §108(b)(7)

CSH, in consideration of the Governor's strategic objectives, is focused on providing a comprehensive local workforce system that will provide quality career guidance to students and job seekers, address occupational skill gaps, expand training opportunities by working with employers to develop relevant training programs, increase credential attainments, multiply employment openings and placements, and augment existing access to career center services.

CSH-sponsored activities for Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs meet the federal and state guidelines of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), and support the imperatives outlined in the State Plan.

While our career centers offer universal access to program services, the process for providing workforce training services to adults and dislocated workers is integrated and provided through the provision of career and training services.

To meet the education and skill needs of the workforce and the employment needs of the local area, innovation, communication, the development of practical partnerships with a focus on excellence, are critical. To create the seamless delivery of a strong talent supply chain, CSH and partners are engaged in the identification of core competencies as a means of streamlining and developing services. Strategic partnerships continue to be among our highest priorities in an effort to expand individual organizational opportunities and maximize services and benefits.

CSH focuses service delivery around the needs of employers. When these entities require skill sets for their operations, we seek to meet those needs through the use of Occupational Skills Training, On-the-Job Training, or Customized Training. When businesses identify a need for training that is not immediately available, we work with our educational partners toward the development of opportunities and related solutions. Our Work Experience component enhances the connectivity of job seekers to businesses, and job matching is conducted daily in an effort to refer the right people to the right jobs. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of local employer needs, actions taken, CSH performance, and training program outcomes assist us in assuring that current processes are effective and successful.

In addition, continual and effective communication with all partners and stakeholders, along with enhanced partnerships with business, education, economic development, and community and governmental organizations, will ensure we meet both the current and future workforce needs of our community and thus achieve our goals. As a result of the cooperative efforts of our local partners, CSH is emerging as a leader in the realm of workforce development and business service delivery in DeSoto, Hardee, Highlands, and Okeechobee counties.

**(5) Please provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area. WIOA §108(b)(7)**

Adults and Dislocated Workers receive an interview evaluation and assessment to obtain enough information to make a determination of eligibility for service delivery. The case file will contain documentation to support the need for career services and/or training services. CSH supports work first; therefore, career services will be provided first. If the customer is unable to obtain employment leading to self-sufficiency through the receipt of career services, the customer may be referred to training services. There is no Federally-required minimum time period for participation in career services before receiving training services.

Training services for Adults and Dislocated Workers include Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) as well as work-based training options such as Employed Worker, On-the-Job, and Customized Training, with emphasis placed on the attainment of industry recognized credentials, job placement, job retention, and wage gains. A Work Experience training program is also in place to implement and enhance employment opportunities for job seekers.

CSH has local policies in place to ensure that training funds are reserved for those determined most in need of training, and responds to the established needs of local employers as qualified by the demand occupations listed on the Targeted Occupations List. As a direct result of this Area's Board goals, objectives and strategies, CSH staff are trained to assess the needs of all customers, including those identified in the targeted populations of Veterans and eligible spouses, dislocated workers, displaced homemakers, migrant seasonal farm workers, customers with limited English-speaking proficiency, public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals, individuals who are basic skills deficient, people with disabilities, ex-offenders, long-term unemployed, and the underemployed. Based on assessment results, services may be directly provided, or, as appropriate, customers may receive referrals to partners or community-based agencies.

**(6) Please provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of youth workforce investment activities in the local area, including activities for youth who are individuals with disabilities. The description and assessment must include an identification of successful models of such youth workforce investment activities. WIOA §108(b)(9)**

The CSH local area is rural in nature, and offers entry-level employment opportunities in retail, hospitality, and service industries. Employment opportunities offering self-sufficient wages in the area, such as positions in the Healthcare, Education, and Corrections industries, require a high school diploma and training beyond high school. Businesses of all types express a common need for soft skills, including the ability to solve problems, think creatively, and follow a work schedule. CSH works closely with the local school districts, Heartland Educational Consortium, juvenile justice organizations, businesses, Home Builders Institute and local state colleges to develop and implement programs that will help create a pipeline of youth who have both the hard and soft skills needed to enter and maintain employment in the demand occupations of the area. In this region, the local school districts and state colleges have implemented alternative high school opportunities and career academies to promote attainment of high school diplomas and vocational certifications. The Heartland Educational Consortium has implemented the FloridaLearns STEM Scholars program to enhance the science, technology, engineering, and math skills of local area youth. CSH sponsors two youth provider programs who serve at risk in-school and out-of-school youth by providing work readiness training and the soft and hard skills youth need to obtain and maintain value-added employment in this local service area.

CSH youth provider staff expose youth to a variety of activities designed to encourage youth to complete high school and continue lifelong learning opportunities. Activities including classroom

lessons, career exploration activities and techniques, work experience and job shadowing, work readiness courses, support through mentoring and tutoring, and community service event participation, help participants understand what it takes to survive in the world of work, and even more important, how education and job training correlate to wages earned. Participants receive individual counseling and encouragement, and work directly with their case managers to develop an individual service strategy (ISS) that best fits their needs, goals, and interests. Incentives are offered when participants meet specific benchmarks relating to their individual goals.

The overall goal of the youth program is to assist a youth to obtain a diploma or equivalent GED, and transition into skilled employment and/or post-secondary education in order to gain self-sufficiency and become a productive member of the workforce.

One of the most important parts of the youth's participation in these programs is the development of the individual service strategy (ISS). In order to develop strong and pertinent goals, objectives, and strategies specific to the individual, an assessment must be completed. The assessment consists of an informational interview with the case manager who reviews education, work history, skills, interests, abilities, needs, and barriers to success. The TABE test assesses the student's current basic reading and math levels. Additional assessment tools may be used to enhance the assessment process, including but not limited to Kuder Journey and CareerScope. Work readiness activities introduces the youth participant to the world of work, and includes career planning, values clarification, decision making, job search activities, positive work habits, attitudes and behaviors, problem solving and creative thinking skills, adaptability, and improved self-image. Often, career exploration is warranted to assist the youth in understanding labor market information related to a career of interest. My Career Shines is available to assist youth in answering such questions as "Is the job available in this area? What does it pay? What are the day to day job duties? What are the hours of work? What is the opportunity for advancement? How much education is needed? Is the education available locally?"

Work readiness, work experience, and occupational skill goals are defined based on the youth's individual assessment results combined with their needs, interests, and goals. Assigned goals, objectives, and activities are detailed on the ISS, which serves as the roadmap to the youth's success. The ISS is a living document which is updated and changed as the youth's situation changes. The ISS incorporates work readiness, work experience, and occupational skills components, including career counseling, basic skills instruction, job shadowing, academic and work experience integration, leadership, citizenship, core values, and community services. Service strategies help the youth identify and accomplish the steps needed to reach their goals, while also receiving the highest level of quality services available. Written career plans serve as a tool for increasing career awareness, improving career planning, and establishing a link between high school preparation and future career success.

Joint partnerships have been established with local employers, local chambers of commerce's, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, the juvenile justice system, the local public school systems, other educational institutions, the foster care system, and other community agencies and partner agencies that offer and specialize in serving youth. These partnerships help ensure that certain skill levels are attained by the youth as a result of their participation in identified programs, and that the skills attained are consistent with the requirements of local employers. Youth participate in Work Experience activities to gain work-related skills. Work readiness skills classes result in the youth's enhanced employability. Occupational skills training results in industry recognized credentials or occupational completion points, again enhancing employability of participants.

Additionally, our youth providers work closely with the local educational facilities to assist youth participants in identifying and locating funding for advanced training opportunities. The providers

also work closely with local businesses and the career centers to connect youth with employment opportunities. Follow-up services are provided to ensure the youth's continued growth and success.

## LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA VISION AND STRATEGIC GOALS

(1) Please provide a description of the local board's strategic vision and goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce (including youth and individuals with barriers to employment), including goals relating to primary indicators of performance described in WIOA section 116(b)(2)(A) in order to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. WIOA §108(b)(1)(E)

### Board Vision

The CareerSource Heartland Board is committed to the vision of optimizing economic/workforce development in the Heartland. Facilitating cooperation throughout our four-county local area will maximize talent development, economic development and sustainable growth to improve the quality of life of our citizens, while recognizing the unique attributes of each of the four counties within our LWDA.

The Board's strategic imperatives are broadly aligned with those of CareerSource Florida and include the Florida Chamber of Commerce's "Six Pillars" framework:

1. Develop and maintain a regional talent development strategy through diversified public and private-sector partnerships.
2. Develop and recruit talent to support economic development priorities in the local area's targeted and emerging industries.
3. Support and encourage technological enhancements and innovation in industry.
4. Identify and improve factors that influence the area's business climate.
5. Support local strategies that enhance business development and value-added job creation.
6. Balance growth management with economic development to preserve quality of life.

A competitive workforce guarantees competitive business. Therefore, access to a skilled and trainable workforce, capable of supporting the region's current and emerging labor market needs, is fundamental to the growth and diversification of the local economy.

Since the enactment of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, our workforce system has developed a greater understanding of the region's needs, and strengthened partnerships with business and community agencies. WIOA takes these processes to the next level. Our workforce system is evolving and innovative, with a focus on leveraging strategic partnerships to meet the regions unique labor market needs. Vision, focus and priority-based resource allocation are required in order to build the capacity and competency as a customer-focused, demand-driven workforce system.

### Board Strategies

Our local area welcomes and supports both the national and state strategic priorities and actions that promote alignment and improved integration of services:

- Collaborative service delivery across federal and state programs.
- Alignment and regional collaboration with local economic developers.
- Dual-customer focus providing assistance in the business lifecycle through engagement with employers as partners in the system.
- Alignment and integration of programs so that customers receive all appropriate services and are referred to targeted programs and educational resources where appropriate.
- Reemployment services for unemployed job seekers.
- Effective uses of Labor Market Information for dual focus customers as well as strategic plans developed for Board purposes.
- Employer engagement to respond to needs of the industry through strengthened customer service.
- Pro-active outreach to target populations through outreach and training activities.

- Wagner-Peyser funded agricultural outreach through MSFW representatives.
- Addressing the needs of Senior Community Service Employment through partnerships with AARP.

### **Board Goals**

CSH embraces WIOA's intent and the new CSF goal - To increase the prosperity of workers and employers, reduce welfare dependency, increase economic self-sufficiency, meet employer needs and enhance worker productivity and business competitiveness.

As identified in our agreement with the Department of Economic Opportunity, we operate in accordance with governing federal and state law concerning our performance standards. This agreement ensures CSH reports the information in the appropriate systems, measures the same performance standards, and has common measures for comparison. We anticipate that we will meet or exceed the standards established. Strategic essentials include the further development of more focused talent development strategies, improved recruitment of talent to support local targeted and emerging industries, promoting training programs that support value-added job creation, and increasing partnerships to enhance service delivery and continue creating a successful local workforce development system. General goals include increasing business engagement, enhancing business relationships, and a continued focus on increasing the number of job openings filled.

(2) Please describe the local area's strategy to work with entities that carry out the core programs to align resources available to the local area to achieve the strategic vision and goals established by the local board.

CSH has established strong relationships with our Adult Education/Literacy and Vocational Rehabilitation partners, and has developed initial memoranda of understanding designed to enhance service delivery, avoid duplication of service, promote customer service, and facilitate effective alignment of available resources. We are currently in discussion with representatives from the Division of Blind Services to establish stronger understanding of each other's services and to develop mutual referral processes and open lines of communication. With all partners, we will continue to promote integration of service delivery, with a focus on closely coordinating services and complementing each organization's strengths in order to best serve our mutual customers. Continued discussions will include the promotion of each organization's performance measures as well as coordination of activities.

CSH also works closely with community entities that carry out core programs. Staff members are involved through Board or committee memberships in a number of initiatives/organizations including: The Homeless Coalition; Transportation Disadvantaged; Juvenile Justice Advisory Councils; DCF Community and District meetings; Highlands and Hardee County Prosperity Partnerships; Ridge Area Arc; Highlands County Industrial Development Authority/Economic Development Commission; Hardee County Economic Development Authority; Okeechobee Executive Roundtable; and Heartland Regional Transportation Planning Organization-Citizens Advisory Committee. Each organization discusses needs related to its consumers and solutions related to those needs. These issues and solutions are critical not only to the development of strategies by our Board, but to the development of a successful workforce development system.

Additional partnerships are in place with the Heartland Educational Consortium for STEM related education and experiences for youth, and Agricultural and Labor Programs, Inc., for financial assistance in support of one's quest toward self-sufficiency.

We have also established a relationship with Highway Park Neighborhood Council to assist residents in obtaining the skills needed to locate and obtain employment, start small businesses, and improve and expand existing businesses.

It is our intent to understand the services offered by core programs and partners, to share information, to integrate service delivery, to maximize resources, and to streamline referral processes.

**(3) Please describe the actions the local board will take toward becoming or remaining a high-performing board, consistent with the factors developed by the state board pursuant to section 101(d)(6) of WIOA.**

Over the last several years, CSH has demonstrated high performance, and intends to continue to perform at a high level. This is accomplished through the delivery of high quality customer service, integrity and transparency, staff development, data and program analysis, quality assurance monitoring, continuous improvement, and ongoing dialogue with customers and community partners.

Connecting our businesses with skilled talent is top priority. Our Business Operations team focuses on understanding our businesses' needs and communicating those needs to Management and Career Development staff. As appropriate, Management works with education and training providers to promote or develop career pathways and job training programs. Career Development staff members conduct recruitment for open positions, promote job training opportunities as appropriate, and provide various services to job seekers to prepare or transition individuals into initial employment, re-employment, or upgraded employment. We believe high quality customer service results in high performance outcomes.

The expectations of integrity and transparency are set with all new employees, and are practiced daily throughout the organization. Decisions are made and actions occur in adherence to guiding principles, laws, regulations, policies, and procedures. Documentation enhances transparency. Ongoing general oversight, guidance and direction are provided to staff, and expectations are reinforced through periodic reminders, as well as annual ethics training.

Staff development is one of the keys to high performance. Not only does it enhance morale, increase loyalty and productivity, and promote personal growth, it also enhances customer service, keeps staff up to date on the latest tools, philosophies and program requirements, and promotes growth and continuous improvement in day to day processes. Staff regularly participates in job-related webinars and/or conferences, including the annual workforce summit. Updated information is provided to staff via email and at staff meetings. CSH holds quarterly staff development sessions to enhance employee skillsets. To ensure that staff skills remain current and relevant, all frontline staff members complete the standardized Tier 1 workforce training modules offered through the Department of Economic Opportunity, followed by a minimum of 15 hours of continuing training annually.

Data and program analyses are ongoing processes at CSH. The results are used to provide oversight, improve performance, increase efficiency and effectiveness, and enhance strategic planning.

Supervisors and Management Team members conduct periodic quality assurance monitoring of programmatic processes, services, and performance levels for continuous improvement purposes. Along with the Salesforce customer satisfaction survey for businesses, CSH recently implemented a web-based customer satisfaction survey, available to all customers. Responses are used to evaluate and make improvements to current processes and procedures.

Ongoing dialogue with our customers and community partners keeps us aware of program developments, services available, and local area needs.

Each of these strategies promotes continuous improvement and contributes to keeping us on the cutting edge of service delivery, program development, and high performance.

**(4)** Please describe service strategies the LWDB has in place or will develop that will improve meeting the needs of customers with disabilities as well as other population groups protected under Section 188 of WIOA and 29 CFR Part §38.

For the provision of services, targeted groups are included in the universal population of job-seekers. All career and training services are available to those determined eligible as universal customers. The mix of services provided to a customer depends on his/her needs and choices, and on the eligibility of the individual. Our Career Centers are organized so that customers access a resource room and self-directed career services first, and progress to more staff-assisted services as needed to secure employment.

To enhance service delivery to individuals with disabilities, CSH works closely with Ridge Area Arc; DVR; and DVR subcontractors such as Red Lion. DVR is collocated in two of our Career Centers, promoting close communication and service plan development. The Arc and Red Lion provide additional support appropriate to individuals' needs, and utilize our centers to maximize work readiness and job placement of consumers, further enhancing communication and service delivery.

A CSH staff member attends and participates in Homeless Coalition meetings, in an attempt to identify and provide services to Veterans, Veterans with Special Barriers to Employment (SBEs) or others having disabilities.

CSH is establishing relationships with the Division of Blind Services to enhance work-related services to individuals with bi-lateral visual impairment.

Our designated Equal Opportunity Officer ensures that all applicable non-discrimination and equal opportunity laws and processes are followed. CSH provides staff training on effectively serving individuals with disabilities, as well as on the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, sex, religion, age, political affiliation, pregnancy, citizenship status of lawfully admitted immigrants, gender identity, sexual orientation, or connections to groups associated with people of a certain sex.

All CSH Career Centers feature accessible computer workstations and adaptive equipment to provide equitable and flexible use, and simple, intuitive use for persons with disabilities. Self-paced programs and software are available. Adaptable equipment is integrated into the resource rooms to accommodate individuals with vision or hearing disabilities. Adequate space is provided to accommodate individuals in wheelchairs, those with assistive devices, or customers with service animals. An interview room with Skype access is available to provide job seekers who experience mobility or transportation challenges the opportunity to participate in remote job interviews anywhere internet access is available.

**(5)** Describe the process used to develop your area's vision and goals, including a description of the participants in the process.

CSH's vision and goals have been developed and have evolved through years of strategic planning, research, and participation in community and partner meetings, surveys, focus groups, advisory councils, and stakeholder input.

In 2010, our organization funded an Industry Cluster Analysis for our then tri-county region (DeSoto, Hardee, and Highlands). Although this analysis is five years old, comparison of current data to that which was presented in 2010 is similar, and the conclusions and recommendations remain valid.

In partnership with Central Florida Regional Planning Council, a number of community visioning and strategic planning efforts have occurred, encompassing Polk, Hardee, Highlands, DeSoto, Okeechobee, Glades, and Hendry Counties.

- Heartland 2060 designed a regional blueprint to guide growth and development over the next fifty years.
- The Sustainable Communities grant activities provided for a five year growth and development plan.
- Currently underway is the Heartland Long Range Transportation Plan.
- The Heartland Rural Mobility Plan (HRMP) was designed to identify and address the mobility challenges within the six-county rural area.

These activities incorporated a number of community partners, including county and municipal elected officials, education, economic development, and transportation representatives, businesses, area planners, community organizations, and workforce Board and staff members.

- Florida's Heartland Regional Economic Development Initiative (FHREDI) commissioned a Comprehensive Community Assessment study in an effort to maximize regional competitiveness for business investment. This study incorporated data from three of our four counties.
- The Heartland Regional Transportation Planning Organization (HRTPO) coordinates transportation plans for the Heartland Region including the six counties of DeSoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands and Okeechobee and the urbanized area of Highlands County including the cities of Sebring and Avon Park.
- CSH staff participated in the Department of Economic Opportunity's Competitive Florida Asset Mapping initiative conducted in DeSoto County.
- CSH staff has participated in joint planning sessions with LWDA's 17, 18, and 24.
- Independently, and also in cooperation with South Florida State College and with local Chambers of Commerce, we have conducted various surveys to assess the needs of local businesses.

CSH staff and board members have participated in these efforts, all of which have contributed to CSH's current visions, goals, and strategies.

Specifically, participants in our planning processes include(d) local elected officials from each of our four counties, representatives from our economic development organizations (DeSoto, Hardee, Highlands and Okeechobee County IDA and/or EDCs, Central Florida Regional Planning Council (CFRPC) and Sebring Airport Authority), neighboring workforce development agencies (CareerSource Polk, CareerSource Southwest Florida and CareerSource Suncoast), community based organizations (Department of Children and Families, Ridge Area Arc, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Avon Park Housing Authority, Florida Non-Profit Housing, AARP, Department of Juvenile Justice, Florida Prosperity Partnership, Safe Children Coalition-Sarasota YMCA, Heartland for Children, Transportation Disadvantaged), educational organizations (School Districts of DeSoto, Hardee, Highlands and Okeechobee Counties, Indian River State College, South Florida State College, Heartland Education Consortium), private businesses, CSH staff and individual members of the public.

Working toward the goal of diversifying the local economy and creating value-added jobs through innovation and planned regional growth, the above-noted partners have touched on the topics of land use, infrastructure needs, transportation modes and needs, broadband access, water and energy, healthcare, regional culture and cultural needs, economic and talent development, and the overall quality of life of our residents. Our strategic planning partners aim to develop new opportunities while expanding existing industry clusters.

Current Targeted Industries for this region include: Healthcare and Life Sciences, Logistics and Distribution, Biofuels and Renewable Energy, Niche Manufacturing [Aviation, Food and Beverage, Plastics, and Building Component Design], Information Technology and Agriculture. Career pipelines promoting and utilizing Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) skills continue to be promoted.

Innovative and evolving, our workforce system focuses on leveraging strategic partnerships to meet the regions' unique labor market needs. Vision, focus, and priority-based resource allocation are required in order to build the capacity and competency to become a more customer-focused, demand-driven workforce system. Locally, we promote and support synergy among workforce, economic development, businesses, and job training (education) entities. With workforce development as the "people part" of economic development, CSH believes the following issues matter most from a workforce perspective, as we work with our partners to realize economic prosperity:

- Support Regional Capacity-Building
- Understand and Stay Abreast of Supply & Demand Needs of Local Industry
- Focus on Tomorrow's Talent
- Help Develop Talent in Support of Area Needs Aligned with Targeted Industries
- Support Business Growth and Retention
- Recognize and Assist with Industry Sustainability
- Prioritize Projects Based on Support of Targeted Industry Clusters

Our vision and goals are designed to align talent development, economic development, and sustainable growth within our four-county region. Our strategic imperatives are aligned with the Florida Chamber Foundation's Six Pillars Concept.

Vision: "Optimizing economic/workforce development through collaboration within the Heartland."

Strategic Imperatives:

1. Develop and maintain a regional talent development strategy through diversified public and private-sector partnerships.
2. Develop and recruit talent to support economic development priorities in the region's targeted and emerging industries.
3. Support and encourage technological enhancements and innovation in industry.
4. Identify and improve factors that influence the area's business climate.
5. Support local strategies that enhance business development and value-added job creation.
6. Balance growth management with economic development to preserve quality of life.

Realigning and restructuring to integrate funding and resources to more effectively and efficiently provide services will be an on-going process. The use of WIOA dollars to engage the Talent Supply chain in newly identified targeted industry clusters will assist in providing solutions in the demand-driven approach to job creation. New approaches are being pursued to assist those needing only basic career services to achieve self-sufficiency, and retraining options are being developed in consideration of those who now face long-term unemployment barriers. Florida Flex, Incumbent Worker Training, and Employed Worker Training options are being promoted region-wide to improve the competitiveness and global marketability of local businesses.

**(6)** Describe how the LWDB's goals relate to the achievement of federal performance accountability measures to support economic growth and self-sufficiency. WIOA §108(b)(1)(E)

Please see #5, above. We believe our goals speak directly to the achievement of economic growth and self-sufficiency for our local area. As noted, our vision and goals are designed to align talent development, economic development, and sustainable growth within our four-county area, ideally

strengthening economic growth and promoting self-sufficiency. Our strategic imperatives are intentionally aligned with the Florida Chamber Foundation’s Six Pillars Concept, as the framework for the development and sustainability of healthy, thriving communities.

Verification of our achievement to date can be found in the data provided in CareerSource Florida’s Earnings and Economic Opportunity 2015 Fact Book. In our local area, participants who received services from CSH and entered fulltime employment increased their earnings by 89%; while part-time workers increased their wages by 69%. The total impact in annual earnings exceeded \$97 million. In addition, CSH exceeded all 2014-2015 Expanding Business Engagement goals by increasing: employer retention by 20%; continuous improvement by 10%; and excellence by 25%, indicating that businesses find value in CSH services.

**(7)** Please indicate the negotiated local levels of performance for the federal measures. WIOA §108(b)(17)

Negotiated measures for local levels of performance for the upcoming program year are not yet known. Our negotiated common measures for 2015-2016 are as follows:

Adult Entered Employment Rate	88.55%
Adult Employment Retention Rate	88.10%
Adult 6 Months Earnings	\$17,000.00
Dislocated Workers Entered Employment Rate	88.00%
Dislocated Workers Retention Rate	88.00%
Dislocated Worker Average 6 Month Earnings	\$12,431.85
Youth Placement in Employ/Education	92.50%
Youth Attainment of Degree/Certificate	92.50%
Youth Literacy and Numeracy Gain	71.60%
Wagner Peyser Entered Employment Rate	61.50%
Employment Retention Rate	71.60%
Wagner Peyser Average 6 month Earnings	\$10,500.00

**(8)** Please describe indicators used by the LWDB to measure performance and effectiveness of the local fiscal agent (where appropriate), contracted service providers, and the one-stop delivery system in the local area. WIOA §108(b)(17)

CSH is the designated fiscal agent and direct service provider for LWDB 19. Currently, WIOA Youth services are provided through contracted service providers.

Federal and State negotiated performance measures are compared to actual performance data in an effort to determine the LWDB’s goal attainment. Internal and external program and fiscal monitoring results for CSH and its service providers are utilized to assist with determining compliance, effectiveness, and areas for performance improvement. Annual audits are conducted, as required by law, for CSH and its contracted service providers. The audit results are reviewed and considered when gauging the effectiveness of each fiscal agent. Business survey data and/or customer feedback are additional indicators which are assistive in determining the public’s opinion of the effectiveness of CSH and its contracted service providers.

To ensure the performance and effectiveness of our service providers, one-stop delivery system and fiscal responsibilities, we use an oversight, monitoring, and system performance improvement evaluation process, including:

- a. Periodic on-site monitoring visits to ensure programmatic and statutory compliance of all funded programs
- b. Ongoing reviews and assessments of service providers' performances
- c. Periodic independent monitoring for programmatic and fiscal compliance by a qualified and certified public accounting firm
- d. Ongoing assessment of labor and economic data and trends

In addition, an independent certified accounting firm conducts periodic programmatic, procurement and fiscal monitoring using federal and state monitoring instruments, which outline programmatic and fiscal compliance and quality improvement factors. Monitoring reports identify findings, observations, and recommendations.

At a minimum, the Chief Programs Officer (CPO) conducts periodic monitoring of sub-recipients at least once during the Program Year. Compliance and process monitoring of program activities and services to participants is performed by supervisors and overseen by the CPO. Monitoring may be conducted using the state monitoring instruments, and may also consist of a review of the effectiveness or efficiency of a given process.

Performance monitoring occurs to validate actual program performance against contracted or negotiated performance standards.

The results of all monitoring activities are used to evaluate progress, identify existing or emerging problems, and suggest corrective actions as appropriate.

**(9) Please describe the definition of "self-sufficiency" utilized by your local area. WIOA §108(b)(1)**

Self-sufficiency as defined for individuals served as Adults and Employed Adults (18 and older):

- Adults and Employed Adults with a family income equal to or above 200% of poverty or the Non-Metro 70% of the Lower Living Standard Income Level (LLSIL), whichever is higher, and not receiving other federal, state or local cash or food stamp assistance, or otherwise not meeting the Federal definition of low-income, are determined to be self-sufficient; or
- Employed workers who do not obtain documentation from their employer, verbally or in writing, that the employee(s) will not be retained unless additional training or services are received, are determined to be self-sufficient.

For Dislocated Workers who are working in an income maintenance job:

- Self-sufficiency as defined for Employed Dislocated Workers:
- Employed dislocated workers with a family income equal to or above 200% of poverty or the Non- Metro 70% of the Lower Living Standard Income Level (LLSIL), whichever is higher, and not receiving other federal, state or local cash or food stamp assistance, or employed dislocated workers not meeting the Federal definition of low-income are determined to be self-sufficient.

## COORDINATION OF SERVICES

**(1) Coordination of programs/partners:** Please describe how individualized career services will be coordinated across programs/partners in the one-stop centers, including Vocational Rehabilitation, TANF and Adult Education and Literacy activities. Specify how the local area will coordinate with these programs to prevent duplication and improve services to customers. TEGL 3-15

As a result of our long-standing relationships with our Adult Education and Literacy, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and other community partners, CSH has been pro-active in the development of Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) and/or Resource Sharing Agreements, which are the foundation of service integration. These agreements describe services to be delivered by each party individually and jointly, methods for referral, cost sharing efforts, and the intent to integrate and maximize service delivery while avoiding duplication of services. Releases of information are obtained for information sharing purposes, and efforts continue to identify mandatory application information in order to simplify cross-referral processes.

In addition, staff receives cross-training and on-going information regarding all partner services within the system that support local workforce development. As appropriate, customers receive referrals to community agencies to assist them in accessing services and overcoming barriers.

The CSH Board establishes and maintains communication and information exchange with community partners through joint meetings, workshops, staff training, advisory councils, and internet-based information exchange. These joint communications maximize resources within the region and ensure that all programs are aware of each other's services and prevent duplication.

CSH is diligently working toward the development of a true local workforce development system, promoting the integration of service delivery and funding streams, to result in, as much as possible, seamless service delivery.

Please see the MOUs included in this plan for additional specifics – Attachment 5.

**(2) Coordination with Economic Development Activities:** Please provide a description of how the local board will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out in the local areas with economic development activities carried out in the region (or planning region) in which the local area is located, and promote entrepreneurial training and microenterprise services. WIOA §108(b)(4)(iii)

The leadership of CSH has determined that the primary customer of our workforce system is the business community that creates the jobs our workers need (demand-driven concept). CSH plays a vital role in performing outreach to our businesses and collaborating with our Economic Development Organizations, Chambers of Commerce, Education, and other key partners to enhance the economic viability of our communities and region. By working together with our partners, we gain valuable insight into targeted industries and can help shape the workforce pipeline that our local economy demands.

Economic development is the engine that drives our local economy. Workforce development is a prime component, or “the people/talent part”, of economic development. Businesses cannot grow or even remain productive without workers, which are their lifeblood. The labor force, our job seekers, is the product that we deliver. We must understand the workforce market and know what businesses need – what the demand is. It is our job to know our workforce inventory, make sure it has received the proper preparation (training or employability skills), and help connect the business community with our most qualified workers, in the most efficient and user friendly way possible.

Our focus and principal objective is to employ a successful career development system - one that supports business growth, innovation, and global competitiveness. This focus centers on the skill sets needed in the local labor market and how workers can obtain those skills through education, training, and job succession. We assist in workforce preparation to promote wage progression through rapid attachment to the workforce, continual skill gains, and personal development activities.

During a time of Board downsizing, recognizing the importance of our connectivity with local economic development initiatives, the CSH Board voted to keep two economic development representatives at all times, rotating those two seats among our four counties on an annual basis. In addition, the President/CEO is a current member of the Highlands County Industrial Development Authority/Economic Development Commission and the Hardee County Economic Development Authority boards. CSH regularly participates in the economic development initiatives of Central Florida Regional Planning Council. CSH staff regularly attends the meetings of the Hardee County Industrial Development Authority/Economic Development Commission, and is in regular communication with the economic development organizations in DeSoto and Okeechobee counties. CSH staff have been identified as members of locally formed "response teams," established to welcome and inform business prospects of the services available in the local area.

The CSH Business Operations Team, the outside sales force of our organization, works to expand our local workforce system's capacity to be demand (market)-driven, responsive to the needs of local businesses, and a contributor to the economic well-being of the community. Their responsibilities include developing new business relationships and evaluating the workforce needs of businesses. Through interaction with the businesses and community partners, they glean vital information related to workforce market demand. They develop expertise on targeted industries within our local area and stay abreast of business trends. They answer business inquiries on a variety of issues ranging from tax incentives to fair labor practices, and know where to refer businesses for other community resources. By doing so, we promote workforce quality, enhanced productivity and economic competitiveness for our entire area.

Local businesses face significant challenges on a daily basis with shortages of qualified labor, the need for more highly skilled workers, relevant labor market information, and the ability to retain quality staff. CSH strives to become the direct line of communication for all business workforce needs and increase market share over the traditional recruiting and hiring mechanisms used by most employers. We strive to be the workforce "center of excellence" for our four-county area, and can do so with increased value-added services to our business customers. Value-added services are those that are offered beyond the basic job posting for an employer. Our challenge is to continually assess employers' needs and deliver timely results that meet those needs.

In support of entrepreneurial efforts, CSH partners with the University of South Florida Small Business Development Center, IMBiz, Inc. Business Development Center, and Highway Park Neighborhood Council. These organizations provide support and guidance to entrepreneurs. Each offers a review of business feasibility, as well as guidance and training concerning: the legal structures of businesses; business plan development; marketing studies and strategies; bookkeeping/accounting/recordkeeping processes; and understanding financials and developing financial projections, thus providing the critical foundations all entrepreneurs need to know to become successful in business.

**(3) Coordination of education and workforce investment activities:** Please describe how the local board will coordinate education and workforce investment activities carried out in the local area with relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services. WIOA §108(b)(10)

CSH understands that career pipeline development begins in the K-12 educational system, and continues through post-secondary education. As such, we have established strong partnerships with our local school districts and post-secondary education providers. During a time of Board downsizing, understanding the importance of our connectivity with educational partners, the CSH Board voted to keep secondary and post-secondary representatives at the table, rotating the secondary seat annually among our four counties on an annual basis. CSH has established MOUs with two of our four secondary school systems that also offer Adult Education and Literacy services, further enhancing delivery of services surrounding the development of career pathways and pipelines. Please see these MOUs for additional information on efforts to coordinate strategies and avoid duplication of services.

CSH and our local secondary school representatives regularly share information concerning the needs of youth, the development of career academies, Career and Professional Education Act (CAPE) entries, and Carl Perkins funding. Our secondary education partners worked closely with our post-secondary partners to ensure the articulation of skills learned in career academies into programs offered in the public college systems.

CSH has entered into Training Vendor agreements with our post-secondary providers to offer Individual Training Accounts to support job training in occupations listed on our local Targeted Occupations List (TOL). Consumer choice is strongly supported and promoted, since the majority of our approved job training programs are provided by multiple educational institutions, allowing participant choice regarding cost, class location, and class frequency. Program completion and placement success statistical data is also available to consumers, further enhancing their decision-making.

In addition, we partner with our post-secondary providers to provide skills upgrade (employed worker) training for the incumbent workers of local businesses. This customer driven strategy allows CSH to assist local businesses by partially funding the identified training, resulting in a higher skilled employee for the local business. CSH often acts as the liaison between the business and the training provider in an effort to coordinate strategies and avoid duplication of services and/or information provided/required. As the result of our partnerships, both South Florida State College and Indian River State College have demonstrated the ability to quickly respond to requests for the development of customized training opportunities that specifically address a business' need.

Please see our MOUs (Attachment 5) and our Training Vendor Agreements (Attachment 6) for additional detail.

**(4) Coordination of transportation and other supportive services:** Please describe how the local board will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out under this title in the local area with the provision of transportation, including public transportation, and other appropriate supportive services in the local area. WIOA §108(b)(10)

For the immediate delivery of transportation related to work and work-related activities, we partner with the local Transportation Disadvantaged Program (TD), whose mission is to enhance the mobility of Floridians by providing medical, employment, education and other life sustaining trips to individuals lacking transportation. Eligible individuals include those who meet specific income guidelines and who are unable to transport themselves because of a disability or lack of other transportation options.

Although public transportation is generally unavailable in our four-county area, the DeSoto-Arcadia Regional Transit (DART) offers a deviated -fixed - route service in and around the City of Arcadia and to/from Nocatee to the south, Monday through Saturday. This service is provided through the cooperation of the DeSoto County Board of County Commissioners, the Florida Department of Transportation, and the Federal Transit Administration. For individuals functionally unable to board along the fixed route, with a 24-hour notice, DART buses will deviate up to 3/4 mile. Riders are expected to pay a fare of fifty cents per ride.

CSH provides gas cards to eligible participants in the Welfare Transition program. For the provision of other transportation-related support services, CSH partners with ALPI, Catholic Charities, and Veterans services as appropriate.

In addition, the recently established Heartland Regional Transportation Planning Organization (HRTPO) coordinates transportation plans for a six county area, (DeSoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands and Okeechobee), including the cities of Sebring and Avon Park. This organization provides the forum for local elected officials, county and municipal staff, transportation industry experts, and the public to work together to improve transportation in the designated area. Select CSH Executive Board, Board and staff members participate either directly on the HRTPO Board or indirectly on the technical, citizens, and/or mobility committees, which are designed to offer input into the planning and developing multimodal transportation options.

**(5) Coordination of Wagner-Peyser Services:** Please provide a description of plans and strategies for, and assurances concerning, maximizing coordination of services provided by the state employment service under the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C 49 et seq.) and services provided in the local area through the one-stop delivery system to improve service delivery and avoid duplication of services. WIOA §108(b)(10)

In 2000, the Department of Economic Opportunity gave local Boards the authority to provide local guidance and day to day supervision to Wagner-Peyser (WP) funded state merit staff. This forward thinking action has led to full integration and maximum coordination of service delivery in the local workforce system.

Basic Career Services made available by WP staff include:

- Center orientation; participant registration into Employ Florida Marketplace; initial assessment; job matching; resume review; referrals to job openings;
- Presentation of information and/or referrals to other services available through the one-stop delivery system;

Basic Career Services are made available to all individuals seeking services served in the one-stop delivery system, and include:

- Center orientation; participant registration into Employ Florida Marketplace; initial assessment; job matching; resume review; referrals to job openings;
- Presentation of information and/or referrals to other services available through the one-stop delivery system

Individualized Career Services made available as appropriate by WP staff, in coordination with career center partners, include:

- Comprehensive and specialized assessments of the skill levels and service needs of adults and dislocated workers, which may include:
  - Diagnostic testing and use of other assessment tools; and
  - In-depth interviewing and evaluation to identify employment barriers and appropriate employment goals;

- Development of individual employment plans, to identify the employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives, and appropriate combination of services for the participant to achieve his or her employment goals, including the list of, and information about, eligible training providers;
- Group and/or individual counseling and mentoring;
- Career planning (e.g. case management);
- Short-term pre-vocational services, including development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training, in some instances pre-apprenticeship programs may be considered as short-term pre-vocational services;
- Internships and work experiences that are linked to careers;
- Workforce preparation activities that help an individual acquire a combination of basic academic skills, critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills, and self-management skills, including competencies in utilizing resources, using information, working with others, understanding systems, and obtaining skills necessary for successful transition into and completion of postsecondary education, or training, or employment;
- Financial literacy services;
- Out-of-area job search assistance and relocation assistance; and
- Referral to English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs.

**(6) Coordination of Adult Education and Literacy:** Please describe how the local board will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out under this title in the local area with the provision of adult education and literacy activities under Title II in the local area, including a description of how the local board will carry out, consistent with subparagraphs (A) and (B)(i) of section 107(d)(11) and section 232, the review of local applications submitted under Title II. WIOA §108(b)(10)

CSH is committed to facilitating cooperation throughout its four-county area to maximize talent development, economic development and sustainable growth to improve the quality of life of our citizens; developing and maintaining a talent development strategy through diversified public and private-sector partnerships; developing and recruiting talent to support economic development priorities of the local area; supporting local strategies that enhance business development and value-added job creation; and providing exceptional customer service.

CSH recognizes Adult Education and Literacy as a critical component of workforce/talent development in the local career center delivery system; and understands that individuals who can benefit from adult education and literacy services can be expeditiously identified and served using a shared referral/placement concept through the local career center delivery system. As such, CSH has established MOUs with our local Adult Education and Literacy providers to collaborate and establish the organizational framework to integrate the delivery of program services offered and to provide services in a coordinated, seamless and customer-friendly manner.

Each MOU details funding guidelines, expectations surrounding delivery of adult education and literacy activities, requirements to serve individuals with disabilities, and performance of responsibilities as required by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, as appropriate for each entity, toward the development of a workforce talent-development system, such as:

- A. Provide job seekers with the skills and credentials necessary to secure and advance in employment with family-sustaining wages.
- B. Participate in rigorous evaluations that support continuous improvement of local career center systems by identifying which strategies have proven more effective for targeted populations.
- C. Ensure that high-quality integrated data are provided to policymakers, employers, and job seekers as necessary tools for making informed decisions.

- D. Develop referral processes that enhance customer-friendly service and avoid duplication of efforts and data.
- E. Provide links to each other's websites to promote program awareness and to provide information to customers concerning services available within the workforce system.
- F. Utilize technology wherever possible to enhance service delivery.

Each partner has agreed to: participate in activities associated with assessing related organizational performance as well as developing and carrying out improvement plans, as appropriate, with the expectation that these activities will include full integration of workforce development services by partners so that services will be delivered in a seamless manner; be familiar with the array of services provided by the other; and mutually refer potential candidates.

CSH will review the applications of providers wishing to provide adult education and literacy services under Title II (WIOA funds), and will evaluate these applications according to the minimum requirements as noted under subparagraphs (A) and (B)(i) of section 107(d)(11) and sections 231, 232, and 233.

**(7) Cooperative Agreements:** Please provide a description of the replicated cooperative agreements (as defined in WIOA section 107(d)(11)) between the local board or other local entities described in section 101(a)(11)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29U.S.C 721(a)(11)(B)) and the local office of a designated state agency or designated state unit administering programs carried out under Title I of such Act (29 U.S.C. 721(a)(11) with respect to efforts that will enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities and to other individuals, such as cross-training staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers and other efforts of cooperation, collaboration and coordination.

Establishing cooperative agreements are a high priority for CSH. We have existing Memorandum's of Understanding (MOU) with numerous partners to include Vocational Rehabilitation. We are in the process of establishing agreements with the Division of Blind Services. The MOUs delineate the relationships, outline shared resources, facilities/office space, shared staff if appropriate, service coordination, referral processes, and information sharing protocols.

CSH works closely with the Ridge Area Arc and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services to provide services to individuals with disabilities; the local Sheriff's offices, Florida Department of Law Enforcement, and Florida Department of Corrections, to provide outreach to offenders; and the educational system to assist those individuals who are basic skills deficient. The mix of services provided to a customer depends upon his/her needs and choices, as well as the eligibility of the individual. Career centers are organized so that customers can access a resource room and self-directed Basic Career Services.

To aid in the development of employment opportunities for persons with disabilities, each career center has designated staff trained to assist customers with information concerning accommodations, placement services, and counseling.

As the state further defines the roles of each core partner statewide, cooperative agreements will be reviewed to define roles and responsibilities.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE LOCAL ONE-STOP SYSTEM

**(1) General System Description:** Describe the one-stop delivery system in your local area, including the roles and resource contributions of one-stop partners. WIOA §108(b)(6)

A. Is each of the required WIOA partners included in your one-stop delivery system? Describe how they contribute to your planning and implementation efforts. If any required partner is not involved, explain the reason.

All of the required WIOA partners are included in the CSH delivery system, with services provided on-site or through technology. Programs administered by CSH, including contracted services, include: Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs under title I of WIOA; Employment services under Wagner-Peyser; Trade Adjustment Act activities under chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974; Jobs for Veterans Grant (LVER and DVOP); Components of the Reemployment Assistance program operated by DEO; Workforce related activities through Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) as authorized under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act and the draft WIOA rule; and effective January 1, 2016, the mandatory Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) E&T program.

Of the programs not administered by the LWDA:

The CSH Board of Directors membership mandates a seat for a representative from each the following organizations, thus allowing for regular input into the strategic planning and implementation efforts of our local workforce system: Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), and programs representing Adult Education and Literacy and Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act. In addition, the Executive Director of the Avon Park Housing Authority (HUD sponsored programs) and the Deputy Director of Florida Non-Profit Housing Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers) occupy CSH Board seats, professionally representing their programs/populations. A representative from the Department of Children and Families is also a current CSH Board member.

DVR is presently collocated in one, and soon to be collocated in a second, of our Centers. SCSEP is collocated in one Center.

CSH has MOUs in place with:

- the Agriculture and Labor Program, Inc. (ALPI), the provider of employment and training activities through the Community Services Block Grant under 42 U.S.C.
- The Farmworker Career Development Programs operated through Indian River State College and South Florida State College and serving Migrant/Seasonal Farmworkers

Job Corps and Native American programs do not have a local office or representative, but they are linked to CSH via technology.

Although there is no formal agreement in place for services authorized under section 212 of the Second Chance Act of 2007, CSH has established strong partnerships with the Florida Departments of Law Enforcement and Corrections. It is through these partnerships that these organizations have a voice in planning and implementation. We have established referral processes which include releases of information, allowing for open communication and follow-up and promoting stronger job-search support for ex-offenders. We regularly participate in re-entry sessions coordinated by local correctional institutions, offering soon-to-be released offenders information on services available through the workforce system. CSH staff also serves as the liaison between employers and ex-offenders for Federal Bonding applications.

CSH has a resource-sharing agreement in place with Ridge Area Arc, an organization focused on promoting independence and employment of individuals with developmental and other disabilities. The Executive Director is a current Board member who regularly participates in planning and implementation strategy development.

B. Identify any non-required partners included in the local one-stop delivery system.

Please see above response and copies of all executed MOUs, Attachment 5.

C. The LWDB, with the agreement of the chief elected official, shall develop and enter into a memorandum of understanding between the local board and the one-stop partners. Please provide a copy of any executed MOUs. WIOA §108(b)(6)(D).

Please see copies of all executed MOUs, Attachment 5.

**(2) Customer Access:** Describe actions taken by the LWDB to promote maximum integration of service delivery through the one-stop delivery system for both business customers and individual customers.

A. Describe how entities within the one-stop delivery system, including one-stop operators and one-stop partners, will comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act regarding physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology and materials for individuals with disabilities, including providing staff training and support for addressing needs of individuals with disabilities. Describe how the LWDB incorporates feedback received during consultations with local Independent Living Centers regarding compliance with Section 188 of WIOA. WIOA §108(b)(6)(C)

Service provision to and maximum integration of individuals with disabilities has been addressed throughout this document. To ensure physical and programmatic accessibility for individuals with disabilities, an ADA survey is completed on all facilities prior to lease signing. ADA computer stations are available at each site, and TTY/TDD is available via the Florida Relay Service at "711". Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. There is no Center for Independent Living located within this local area.

CareerSource Heartland designates four days in each year for staff development and training; subjects such as addressing the needs of disabled individuals are regularly covered, with speakers from local organizations invited to address the staff.

B. Please describe how entities within the one-stop delivery system are utilizing principles of universal design in their operation.

Career centers in LWDA 19 assist job seekers with disabilities and annually assess for physical and programmatic accessibility. This includes, but is not limited to, ensuring assistive technology and materials are in place, and front-line staff are trained in the use this technology. In addition, CSH and its partners located within the career centers ascribe to the principles of universal design of the facility, materials, service delivery and technology whenever and wherever possible and practical, including the following seven core principles:

1. Equitable Use. The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities.
  - a. The same means of use is provided for all users; identical whenever possible; equivalent when not.
  - b. We avoid segregating or stigmatizing any users.
  - c. We ensure provisions are made for privacy, security, and safety to be equally available to all users.

2. Flexibility in Use. The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.
  - a. We provide choice in methods of use.
  - b. We adapt to the user's pace.
3. Simple and Intuitive Use. The design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skill, or current concentration level.
  - a. We eliminate unnecessary complexity.
  - b. We try to always meet the users' expectations.
  - c. We accommodate a wide range of literacy and language skills.
4. Perceptible Information. The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities.
  - a. We use different modes (pictorial, verbal, written) for redundant presentation of essential information.
  - b. We maximize "legibility" of essential information.
  - c. We make it easy to give instructions or directions.
5. Tolerance for Error. The design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.
  - a. We arrange facility furniture, equipment and walkways to minimize hazards and hazardous elements are eliminated, isolated, or shielded.
  - b. We provide fail safe features.
6. Low Physical Effort. The design can be used efficiently and comfortably and with a minimum of fatigue.
  - a. Allow user to use reasonable operating forces.
  - b. Minimize repetitive actions.
  - c. Minimize sustained physical effort.
7. Size and Space for Approach and Use. Appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use regardless of user's body size, posture, or mobility.
  - a. We always attempt to provide a clear line of sight to important elements for any seated or standing user.
  - b. We make reach to all components comfortable for any seated or standing user.
  - c. We provide adequate space for the use of assistive devices or personal assistance.

C. Please describe how the LWDB facilitates access to services provided through the local delivery system, including remote areas, through the use of technology and through other means. WIOA §108(b)(6)(B)

Our mobile device-friendly website has links to EFM, local labor market statistics, and frequently highlights the latest available service offerings to our clients. In addition, we make extensive use of social media applications, such as Facebook and LinkedIn, to bring our clients the latest job openings, employment news, and articles that offer employment-related advice and guidance.

In addition, CSH partners with Indian River State College and South Florida State College, with DeSoto and Hardee County School Districts and with Highway Park Neighborhood Council, electronically linking services and information related to adult education and literacy and job training programs, and providing job search, career exploration, and job readiness assistance to regional job seekers.

**(3) Integration of Services:** Please describe how one-stop career centers are implementing and transitioning to an integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information system for programs carried out under this Act and programs carried out by one-stop career center partners. WIOA §108(b)(21)

For the provision of job search activities, individuals can register and seek employment using EFM (EmployFlorida Marketplace) anywhere the internet access is available. Newly registered individuals receive a welcome communication from CSH, delivered via email, text, or phone depending upon customer choice. Similar communication methods are used to contact customers for recruiting, job matching, monthly follow-up, event notification, etc.

Our CSH website offers information on services available as well as links to resources, services and partners' services. We are in the process of adding links to the websites of our training and adult education and literacy providers, each of which will also be adding a link to our website.

Access to our Career Center orientation is available in both English and Spanish through our website. Staff is in the process of updating the WIOA program orientation as well as a few basic workshop presentations, which will be posted on the website upon completion and translation.

CSH promotes and makes available online skills programs (i.e. Alison, GCF Learning) that offer a full line of narrated courses to enhance work readiness and job skills.

It is important to note that internet accessibility in many parts of our rural area remains problematic. For this reason, CSH continues to support efforts to strengthen broadband capability throughout our local area.

Also, a large number of our job seeking population remains unfamiliar or uncomfortable with computers in general. This discomfort carries over to online job searching, resume development, completing applications online, etc. For these individuals, CSH offers a basic computer skills workshop, followed by hands-on experience. Assistance and guidance is provided through resume development and upload, navigating through employment websites, and completing applications online.

CSH is in transition mode, working diligently toward offering additional services in a virtual or electronic format.

**(4) Competitive Selection of OSO:** Describe the steps taken or to be taken to ensure a competitive process for selection of the one-stop operator(s). WIOA §121(d)(2)(A)

CSH has been a direct service provider and one-stop operator since 2008. We are awaiting additional guidance from CSF and DEO regarding competitive process for the selection of a one-stop operator. Once further direction is received, CSH will adhere to those requirements.

**(5) System Improvement:** The state's certification policy has not been finalized by the state workforce board. Following its completion and issuance, please describe any additional criteria or higher levels of service than required in order to respond to labor market, economic and demographic conditions and trends in the local area. WIOA §108(b)(6)(A)

CSH is awaiting additional guidance and the final draft of the state's certification policy. Once this information is received, CSH will review, and additions to this section will be made as appropriate.

## DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM SERVICES

**(1) System description:** Please describe the local workforce development system. Identify the programs that are included in the system and how the local board will work with the entities carrying out core programs and other workforce development programs to support alignment in provision of 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)

CSH – LWDA 19 – serves DeSoto, Hardee, Highlands, and Okeechobee counties. South Florida State College, Indian River State College, and the local area school districts work closely with CSH to ensure that programs are aligned to the greatest extent possible. Our focus is on creating a globally competitive workforce to facilitate economic development, and to promote prosperity for existing and future business and industry, as well as our communities.

CSH Core Programs include:

- Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act - Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Services
- Wagner-Peyser
- Welfare Transition
- Trade Adjustment Act
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
- Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker Program
- Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment Program
- Local Veterans Employment and Disabled Veteran's Outreach Programs
- Senior Community Service Employment Program

The local school districts coordinate Carl D. Perkins applications with CSH. Referral partnerships are in place for Vocational Rehabilitation, Division of Blind Services and Adult Education. We are in the process of working with these partners to develop closer service delivery processes.

**(2) Sub-grants and contracts:** Please provide a description of the competitive process to be used to award sub-grants and contracts in the local area for WIOA-funded activities. WIOA §108(b)(16)

CSH procurement policies comply with CFR Part 200 – Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards or other applicable federal or state procurement requirements for all goods and services. CSH competitively procures all goods and services meeting the established competitive procurement threshold. Competitive procurements will be conducted in a manner which provides for full and open competition. Requests for Proposal (RFP) or similar procurement mechanisms are made available to the public through the use of public advertising and/or the CSH website. RFPs are reviewed, rated and ranked for the Board's consideration in the selection of the sub-grantee award.

**(3) Expanding access to employment:** Please describe how the local board, working with 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 recognized postsecondary credential (including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable, and stackable). WIOA §108(b)(3)

CSH has an extensive outreach network in place to create community awareness regarding available employment and training services and all employment events. Career centers provide access to individuals with barriers to employment:

- Each career center has a Disability Specialist available to assist customers with disabilities in navigating CSH services and provide referrals to appropriate community agencies/services.
- A Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialist provides intensive case management, and employment and training services to Veteran's with significant barriers to employment.
- Bi-lingual staff (Spanish/English) is available to communicate with our Spanish speaking customers.
- Area correctional institutions are well aware of and refer exiting inmates to employment, training, education and support services through our career centers.

Year-round marketing and community partners facilitate awareness of, and access to, our programs. CSH career centers have computer labs and staff to assist customers in job search as needed. All locations host hiring events at employer request and work with partners to publicize the events to all populations, including individuals with barriers.

CSH maintains a website with access to EFM and a calendar of hiring events and workshops. A "hot jobs" link is updated regularly with new employment offerings.

By working closely with providers of education and training in our local area, CSH can facilitate career pathway opportunities for eligible individuals. CSH career counselors are well versed regarding programs and services to allow for seamless service delivery and co-enrollment when appropriate.

**(4) Key Industry Sectors:** Identify how the LWDB plans to better align its resources to support and meet the training and employment needs of key industry sectors in the local area. Describe policies adopted or planned for aligning training initiatives and Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) to sector strategies and demand occupations. WIOA §134(c)(1)(A)(v)

Key Industry Sectors for LWDA 19 are: Healthcare and Life Sciences, Logistics and Distribution, Biofuels and Renewable Energy, Niche Manufacturing (Aviation, Food and Beverage, Plastics, and Building Component Design), Information Technology, and Agriculture.

We have established strong partnerships with our business, economic development and education partners to ensure that we are balancing the need to follow the targeted occupations list with horizon jobs. We operate as a demand-driven system and are aware it is critical to align the timing of training individuals into key sectors to the availability of jobs for the graduates. These collaborative efforts ensure that curriculum aligns with the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to produce a highly effective workforce.

**(5) Industry Partnerships:** Describe how the LWDB will identify and work with key industry partnerships where they exist within the local area, and coordinate and invest in partnership infrastructure where they are not yet developed. WIOA §134(c)(1)(A)(iv)

CSH has established a number of partnerships. Partners' roles have been discussed throughout this document and are further specified in MOUs.

CSH actively participates in local strategic partnerships specific to key components that affect the workforce and economy of the local area. With commitments and direct involvement in each agency, we strive to continuously identify workforce challenges and develop solutions to create a skilled talent pipeline as well as enhancing economic development.

AARP, The Arc, CFRPC, and DBPR are colocated in our career centers to promote service delivery to targeted populations. Additional partners include Department of Juvenile Justice, Department of Children and Families, and various community organizations representing disabled individuals, Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers, homeless individuals, and Older Workers. MOUs, RSAs, and Partner Agreements have been established outlining the specific activities of each partner. Mandatory partners are linked via technology.

**(6) In-demand training:** 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 §134(c)(G)(iii)

CSH staff receives the Regional and State Demand Occupations list annually from DEO. Staff compares the regional list with locally available training programs, historical employment needs and employer requests. CSH's Board of Directors and staff, educational representatives, economic development representatives, Chambers of Commerce, and local businesses are all asked to provide input on potential training programs needed to ensure current initiatives, area business recruitment goals, and business retention needs, are being addressed. Once the list has been reviewed, a final Eligible Training Provider List with the training programs for each provider is presented to the CSH Board of Directors for approval.

**(7) Employer Engagement:** Please describe the strategies and services that will be used in the local area to:

- A. facilitate engagement of employers, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations, in workforce development programs;
- B. support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area;
- C. better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development;
- D. Strengthen linkages between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs. WIOA §134(c)

The leadership of CareerSource Heartland has determined that the primary customer of our workforce system is the business community that creates the jobs our workers need (demand-driven concept). The Business Operations Team plays a vital role in performing outreach to our businesses and collaborating with our Economic Development Organizations, Chambers of Commerce, Education, and other key partners to enhance the economic viability of our communities and region.

The Board follows the "Carver" Model of Governance (Attachment 4), allowing Organized Labor members the same strategic planning and oversight functions as regular board members. By working

together with our partners, we gain valuable insight into targeted industries and can help shape the workforce pipeline that our local economy demands.

As previously alluded, economic development is the engine that drives our local economy. Workforce development is a prime component, or “the people part”, of economic development. Businesses cannot grow or even remain productive without workers, which are their lifeblood. The labor force, our job seekers, is the product that we deliver. We must understand the workforce market and know what businesses need – what the demand is. It is our job to know our workforce inventory, make sure it has received the proper preparation (which in our case may be training or employability skills), and help connect the business community with our most qualified workers, in the most efficient and user friendly way possible.

Our focus and principal objective is to employ a successful career development system - one that supports business growth, innovation, and global competitiveness. This focus centers on the skill sets needed in the local labor market and how workers can obtain those skills through education, training, and job succession. We assist in workforce preparation to promote: wage progression through rapid attachment to the workforce, continual skill gains, and personal development activities. The Business Operations Team works to expand our local workforce system’s capacity to be demand (market)-driven, responsive to the needs of local businesses, and a contributor to the economic well-being of the community. By doing so, we promote workforce quality, enhanced productivity and economic competitiveness for our entire region.

The Business Operations Team is the outside sales force of our organization. Their responsibilities include developing new business relationships and evaluating the workforce needs of businesses. They are the principal representatives of CSH to the business community, and therefore, must present a positive image of our organization. Through interaction with the businesses and community partners, they glean vital information related to workforce market demand. They develop expertise on targeted industries within our region and stay abreast of business trends. They answer business inquiries on a variety of issues ranging from tax incentives to fair labor practices, and know where to refer businesses for other community resources.

Local businesses face significant challenges on a daily basis with shortages of qualified labor, the need for more highly skilled workers, relevant labor market information, and the ability to retain quality staff. CSH strives to become the direct line of communication for all business workforce needs and increase market share over the traditional recruiting and hiring mechanisms used by most employers. We also strive to become the workforce “center of excellence” for the tri-county area and can do so with increased value-added services to our business customers. Value-added services are those that are offered beyond the basic job listing for an employer. The Business Operations Team’s challenge is to continually assess employers’ needs and deliver timely results that meet those needs.

A broad menu of services is available to the businesses to not only address the employers’ existing workforce needs, but also to anticipate and prepare for future needs. Following is a partial listing of activities the Business Operations Team considers to provide effective outreach to the business community.

1. Increase the level of penetration to the businesses, their understanding and knowledge of available services, and the different incentives available for employers to recruit, train, and retain employees. This is enhanced through a successful marketing program, which consists of presenting our message to the business customer. Key components of marketing include advertising, public relations, and direct contact. Emphasis is placed on the use of the Employ Florida Marketplace system.
2. Conduct an analysis of existing labor market conditions within the region to identify skill gaps between an employer’s needs and the skills of available workers. If there is a shortage of a

qualified labor pool, Career Center staff will screen for eligible candidates with the potential for additional skills training utilizing WIOA funds. An effective Job Matching program is an asset in finding the best qualified candidate for filling vacancies or offering possible training opportunities. Every effort is made to assist employers to expand their access to the potential labor pools consisting of youth, older workers, individuals with disabilities, and other targeted populations. For the employed worker lacking the skills necessary for advancement, customized training may be an alternative to upgrade skills. If an employer has a hard to fill vacancy and can train the right candidate, On-the-Job Training (OJT) may be an available course of action.

3. Assist businesses with developing effective non-traditional training modalities that can respond to rapid changes in business workforce needs and technology. Assist with the coordination of the appropriate training provider for technical assistance and identification of a program curriculum and instructor, as necessary.

4. Analyze the workforce development needs of new or expanding businesses and offer solutions that can be provided through CSH. This includes developing customized training agreements with employers or industry groups of employers. Encourage and assist employers with applications for FloridaFlex and IWT grants through coordination with CareerSource Florida, Inc.

5. Understand the nature of businesses operating in our rural area and deliver workforce services in a manner that recognizes the urgency of the marketplace, hiring cycles, and patterns or seasonal staffing needs. This includes educating the employer on special incentive programs, such as Work Opportunity Tax Credit, Enterprise Zone incentives, and the Federal Bonding initiative.

6. Identify job openings with area employers, obtain the necessary job information (job title, minimum qualifications, pay, etc.), and provide applicable information to the Career Center's Business Specialist for posting job orders for potential referrals of job seekers. This also includes customized recruitment assistance, including advertising. Effective coordination is necessary between the Business Operations Team and the job seeker team to ensure proper and ongoing feedback is provided to the employer on the status of job opening(s), including number of referrals made.

7. Host and facilitate job fairs and hiring events, including those targeting non-traditional jobs, and assisting with job placements.

8. Host business roundtable discussions and business advantage seminars, or similar events, for local businesses. Topics are determined based on the needs and/or workforce concerns of the business community.

9. Provide outplacement assistance for downsizing and business closures, in support of, and in collaboration with, the local workforce REACT team.

10. Develop, implement, and maintain an effective Professional Placement Network for our local service area.

11. Confidentially track employer information for trend analysis on services provided. Use this information to follow-up with employers to assess their satisfaction and need for further assistance.

12. Coordinate with our economic development, education, and chamber of commerce partners to expand their knowledge of workforce development and include our local strategy into their respective programs.

**(7) Priority for Services:** Describe the local policy and procedures that have been established to give priority to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient in the provision of individualized career services and training services in the Adult program.

CSH's priority of services is established for Veterans, Veteran's spouses, recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient. Basic skills deficient criteria is established as an individual that is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or in society. The established priority will be used in the provision of individualized career and training services. Once those who are a top priority have been served, others applying for assistance will be served on a first-come, first-served basis.

**(8) Training Services:** Please describe how training services will be provided, including, if contracts for training services are to be used, how such contracts will be coordinated with the use of ITAs. WIOA §134(c)(1)(A)(v)

CSH limits ITAs to classroom training for individuals for occupations listed on the Targeted Occupations List. Training vendor agreements will be used for training programs approved annually based on occupations listed on the Targeted Occupations List. The amount of an ITA may be increased or decreased depending on the needs of the customer, but may not exceed the lifetime cap. CSH will seek training with credential options to begin or extend career pathways.

Agreements and contracts for services are used for On-the-Job Training (OJT), Customized Training (CT), Employed Worker Training (EWT), or when the Board determines there is a community-based or private organization with a training program of demonstrated effectiveness that serves special participant populations facing multiple barriers to employment, including low-income individuals with substantial language or cultural barriers, offenders, homeless individuals, and other hard-to-serve populations as defined by the Governor. Demonstrated performance includes consideration of program completion rates, attainment of skills, certificates or credentials earned, placement after training, and employment retention.

**(9) Customer choice process:** Describe processes utilized by the local board to ensure customer choice in the selection of training programs, regardless of how the training services are to be provided. WIOA §108(B)(19)

The Board assures that local career centers and partners will adhere to the principles of customer choice as outlined in provisions of WIOA. Customers interested in training services must select a field from the Demand Occupations List and meet eligibility criteria. Training programs and training provider information is available at all CSH career centers. Career Counselors provide career assessment and career counseling services to assist customers in developing their career pathways. Customers will work with Career Counselors during the selection process to analyze cost and how to coordinate financial resources, allowing them to make an informed decision.

Each customer will be given the opportunity to choose a training program and provider, while considering their own needs and preferences, based on the data indicating the success rate of students completing the program, obtaining a credential (if needed for that occupation) and finding employment.

**(10) Individual training accounts:** Describe the process and criteria for issuing Individual Training Accounts. WIOA §108(b)(19)

A. Describe any ITA limitations established by the board:

ITAs are used to provide financial assistance to eligible WIOA Adults and Dislocated Workers. CSH has established a priority/most in need policy to identify individuals with barriers to employment and to ensure priority of service to Veterans. Those customers identified who are Veterans and/or have barriers to employment (TANF, SNAP recipients, homeless, basic skills deficient) will be placed as the first to be served through an ITA.

CSH provides ITAs for eligible WIOA clients in need of financial assistance to obtain the job skills necessary for employment leading to self-sufficiency. ITAs are issued for approved training programs and training providers, and may be used for the payment of tuition and books necessary for academic progress, or other expenses associated with education and training, as previously authorized on the specific program expense sheet billed by the training provider.

All ITA training is limited to two years in duration and must result in the attainment of industry-recognized credentials or certifications, an associate's degree, or a bachelor's degree. Priority of ITAs is given to vocational and technical programs lasting not more than twelve (12) consecutive calendar months. However, consideration is given to those programs not lasting more than twenty-four (24) consecutive months including those instances of customers having current academic credit. In no instance will CSH fund all four (4) years of a customer's post-secondary education. Funding for Baccalaureate level training must receive prior approval by the CSH President/CEO or designee. Funding for education and training beyond the baccalaureate level is limited to certifications. Exceptions to these limitations require the prior approval of the CSH President/CEO or designee.

The threshold for allowable investment is \$5,000 per customer entering training in a Targeted Industry, and \$4,000 per customer entering training in a Non-Targeted Industry. Exceptions to this threshold must be approved in advance by the CSH President/CEO. The above thresholds do not include supportive services required for participation in training.

B. Describe any exceptions to the use of ITA.

Exceptions to the use of an ITA are On-the-Job Training, Customized Training, Employed Worker Training, work-based training (i.e. work experience), and youth training.

**(11) Microenterprise and Entrepreneurial Training:** Please describe mechanisms that are currently in place or will be in place to provide microenterprise and entrepreneurial training, and support programs and co-enrollment, where appropriate, in core programs as described in WIOA section 134(a)(3)(A)(i). WIOA §108(b)(5)

In support of microenterprise and entrepreneurial efforts, CSH partners with the University of South Florida Small Business Development Center, IMBiz, Inc. Business Development Center, and Highway Park Neighborhood Council. These organizations provide support and guidance to budding entrepreneurs. Each offers a review of business feasibility, as well as guidance and training concerning: the legal structures of businesses; business plan development; marketing studies and strategies; bookkeeping/accounting/recordkeeping processes; and understanding financials and developing financial projections, thus providing the critical foundations all entrepreneurs need to know to become successful in business.

Individuals who express interest in microenterprise/entrepreneurial training are also referred to local economic development organizations and the Small Business Association. Co-enrollment in core programs is strongly encouraged.

**(12) Enhancing Apprenticeships:** Please describe how the LWDB enhances the use of apprenticeships to support the local economy and individuals' career advancement. Describe how job seekers are made aware of apprenticeship opportunities in the area's career centers. TEGL 3-15

Apprenticeship opportunities are limited in this local area. At this time, individuals interested in apprenticeship opportunities are generally referred to us directly by our local colleges. These referrals are handled on a case-by-case basis. We will offer support and provide input as needed to entities looking to expand apprenticeship opportunities.

**(13) Other Program Initiatives:** Describe the services to be provided that may include the implementation of initiatives such as incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies career pathway initiatives, utilization of effective business intermediaries, and other initiatives in the support of the board's vision and strategic goals described in Section III. WIOA §134(c)

Along with the provision of traditional training, work-based training options have proven to be an effective means of upgrading the skills of existing workers in this area and addressing the needs of high-value businesses. Work-based training options include customized training, on-the-job training, and work experience opportunities. CSH prioritizes work-based training options to businesses in the regionally identified Targeted Industry Sectors (Healthcare and Life Sciences, Logistics and Distribution, Biofuels and Renewable Energy, Niche Manufacturing [Aviation, Food and Beverage, Plastics, and Building Component Design], Agriculture and Information Technology). These industries were identified through analysis of labor market information, data provided by Enterprise Florida, local economic development organizations, community government and business, Catalyst Project determination and the Regional Targeted Occupations List. These industries add value to the local economy through the need for higher skill sets and payment of wages which allow for self-sufficiency.

Work-based training is prioritized to employees of businesses for occupations on the Targeted Occupations List. Since its inception, ongoing changes to local work-based training options have included updating and streamlining of the application and agreement processes for employer ease, and refinement of the targeting process. Emphasis is placed on training to growing and emerging industries with high paying jobs that are in demand in the region. Non-profits as well as for-profit companies are served because our targeted sectors include life sciences which often include not-for-profit hospitals and bio-tech non-profit companies. Economic developers, community partners, and educators are included in our marketing efforts to increase usage of the area's services.

The Board reviews labor market data and adjusts programs to meet the changing needs of the local area. Data is shared among community leaders, economic developers, chambers of commerce, business leaders, and board members.

Work-based training options are used to provide additional skills necessary for individuals to move up the career ladder, which may result in pay increases or promotions.

Surveys, business visits, consultation, media and marketing tools, provide businesses with information regarding the availability of funding to assist in providing skills-upgrade training to

employees. Interested businesses must submit a completed work-based training application for funding consideration.

Employed individuals who are full-time, part-time, working poor with varying learning levels are evaluated and determined in need of training individually according to CSH policy. Funding is designated following state guidelines and based on evaluation of the training program and CSH funding levels.

**(14) Service Provider Continuous Improvement:** Describe the local board's efforts to ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services, including contracted services providers and providers on the eligible training provider list, through the system and ensure that such providers meet the needs of local employers, workers and jobseekers. WIOA §108(b)(6)(A).

Performance is evaluated through detailed objectives reflecting the goals of CSH. An overall system-wide approach is used to review processes and performance issues. Supervisory staff is assigned the core programs and services to be monitored to ensure all federal, state and local regulations and policies are followed. If areas of concern are noted, technical assistance and training are provided to front-line staff to ensure they understand the requirements.

As new tools for job seekers and businesses are developed, we include staff feedback to ensure buy-in. Staff is included when information is delivered by subject matter experts to ensure staff remains aware of customer needs and suggestions for improvement. PowerPoint presentations and other materials developed are housed on our shared drive for staff use and review.

Periodically, internal focus groups review current local practices and performance and make recommendations for actions to be taken as appropriate. These groups also review best practices identified by other regions and work to incorporate these practices into our processes as appropriate. Youth services are contracted out through a competitive procurement process. Internal monitoring is conducted to ensure all 14 program elements are made available to the youth; 75% of the youth served are out-of-school; and monitoring of agreements, safety and supervision are being provided. Corrective Action Plans are required if major issues are found.

Eligible training provider performance is reviewed annually to ensure training resources are utilized to increase the skills of individuals in targeted industries. Eligible training providers are monitored regarding number of enrollees, both WIOA and non-WIOA participants; WIOA outcomes and performance, and placements. In addition, eligible training providers must meet state requirements to become a provider and CSH reviews the programs they offer, and approves the individual training programs to ensure they align with local employer demands and economic development initiatives.

DEO also monitors all programs and services offered at the career centers as well as youth contractors. All monitoring reports conducted by the State are provided to the Board for their review.

**(15) Youth Program Design:** Describe the design framework for youth programs in the local area, and how the 14 program elements required in §681.460 of the proposed WIOA regulations are to be made available within that framework. WIOA §129(c)(1)

LWDA 19 is rural in nature, and offers entry-level employment opportunities in retail, hospitality, and service industries. Employment opportunities offering self-sufficient wages in the area, such as positions in the Health Care, Education, and Corrections industries, require a high school diploma and training beyond high school. Businesses of all types express a common need for soft skills, including the ability to solve problems, think creatively, and follow a work schedule. CSH works closely with the local school districts, Heartland Educational Consortium, juvenile justice

organizations, businesses, Home Builders Institute and the local state colleges to develop and implement programs that will help create a pipeline of youth who have both the hard and soft skills needed to enter and maintain employment in the demand occupations of the area. In this area, the local school districts, South Florida State College, and Indian River State College have implemented alternative high school opportunities and career academies to promote attainment of high school diplomas and vocational certifications.

Through intensive assessment, mentoring and coaching, and a career plan will be developed with each WIOA youth participant. All 14 of the youth program elements will be available to youth participants within our LWDA. The specific elements that will be utilized by each youth in achieving their career plan will be customized and based upon the youth's assessed needs. The specific components are career-oriented and are directed at high school diploma/GED attainment, post-secondary/advanced education, military enlistment, or unsubsidized employment. All youth who are deemed to be basic skills deficient will receive basic skills instruction.

During the competitive procurement process, the proposals will be required to address each of the 14 elements to provide information on how each will be made available to youth participants.

#### **Improving Educational Achievement:**

- (1) Tutoring, study skills training, instruction and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized post-secondary credential;
- (2) Alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate;
- (3) Paid and unpaid work experiences that have academic and occupational education as a component of the work experience, which may include the following types of work experiences:
  - a. Summer Employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year;
  - b. pre-apprenticeship programs;
  - c. Internships and job shadowing; and
  - d. On-the-job training opportunities;
- (4) Occupational skill training, which includes priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized post-secondary credentials that align with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area involved, if the Local Board determines that the programs meet the quality criteria described in WIOA sec. 123;

#### **Preparing for and succeeding in employment:**

- (5) Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster;
- (6) Leadership development opportunities, including community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors;
- (7) Supportive services;

#### **Supporting Youth Development:**

- (8) Adult mentoring for a duration of at least 12 months that may occur both during and after program participation;
- (9) Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation;
- (10) Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling, as well as referrals to counseling, as appropriate to the needs of the individual youth;
- (11) Financial literacy education;
- (12) Entrepreneurial skills training;
- (13) Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services; and
- (14) Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to post-secondary education and training.

**A. Definition of the term “a youth who is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual’s family, or in society.”** Describe how the local board defines whether a youth is unable to demonstrate these skills well enough to function on the job, in their family, or in society and what assessment instruments are used to make this determination. 20 C.F.R. §681.290

CareerSource Heartland defines the definition of “a youth who is unable to compute or solve programs, or read, write, or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual’s family, or in society” as:

Basic Skills Deficient in English, Language, or Math, as determined by TABE (Test of Adult Basic Education) scores at or below the 8<sup>th</sup> grade level in any one of these three areas.

**B. Definition of “requires additional assistance.”** Describe how the local board defines the term “requires additional assistance” used in determining eligibility for WIOA-funded youth programs. 20 CFR §681.300

CareerSource Heartland defines the definition of “requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment” as:

An individual who has a disability (included in WIOA),  
Or has been held back one or more grade levels,  
Or is a migrant seasonal farmworker or a family member of a migrant seasonal farmworker,  
Or who demonstrates limited English proficiency,  
Or resides in a county where the unemployment rate exceeds the state average,  
Or is the child of a person who was a teen parent,  
Or who has a parent who is currently incarcerated,  
Or who demonstrates a history of job loss due to lack of basic skills, job skills or substance abuse problems,  
Or resides in a county in which the percentage of teen births is above the state average.

## REGIONAL PLANNING ANALYSIS

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) provides for a new regional planning process designed to promote alignment with economic development and education, improved services to employers, workers and job seekers, improved performance in the delivery of workforce services and more efficient delivery of services through coordinated administrative arrangements. The CareerSource Florida Network and its partners have a unique opportunity to engage in regional planning in order to meet the goals of both WIOA and, more importantly, Florida's vision for talent development.

Please describe your strategy toward analyzing potential WIOA planning regions as defined in WIOA section 106(a)(2). Such strategy should include, but not be limited to:

- (1) An analysis of the regional economy, labor market areas, and industry sectors in a region that include your local area.

The CSH region is comprised of DeSoto, Hardee, Highlands and Okeechobee counties, an area that has been designated as part of the South-Central Rural Area of Opportunity (RAO). The land area in square miles totals 3,060. Based on the 2014 population estimates by the United States Census Bureau, this equates to 66.3 persons per square mile. In the 2014 population estimates, the population of LWDA 19 was 202,852.

The total estimated labor force in LWDA 19 was 75,853 in 2014, representing 37% of the population. The remaining population's largest component is residents over age 65, comprising 20.75% of the total population. The 2014 population estimates indicate that 36,053 individuals in the region are receiving social security benefits.

Economically, the region has an average per capita income of \$17,480 with an average median household income of \$41,575. The numbers are 66% and 73.0% respectively of the State of Florida's data. Additionally, the population at or below the poverty level is 27.1%. While these numbers are reflective of the region, the poverty level nationally is almost a mirror of the three counties, and indicative of the recessionary period occurring in the past three years.

The region's industrial composition is predominately based on agriculture and service-providing occupations. The four industries shown in the chart of Regional Major Employing Industries – Agriculture, Health Care, Retail, Education – account for over two-thirds of the regions employment. With the exception of Health Care and Social Assistance and Education, the skill sets required in these industries are minimal.

In the short term, local industry sectors are in a recovery mode. Anticipated hiring in Healthcare and Retail are believed to have the most activity, based on the State's Supply and Demand reports.

Looking forward through the year 2023, a small growth in employment (8.7% from 2015) is projected. Occupations anticipated to grow are in the Construction & Extraction Occupations (20.2%), Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations (16.7%), and Computer and Mathematical Occupations (14.4%).

While much can be made of the rural nature of our four counties, and the effect on our well-being, the future does hold promise of increased productivity and economic diversity. Sustainable bio-fuels, improved inter-modal transportation, and international trade appear to be nearing fruition as our area expands into the global economy. Information and Broadband technologies and services now being established in the area will increase our ability to communicate globally. All of these factors should improve our region from workforce, education, business, and environmental viewpoints. Several projects, including an Enterprise Florida Catalyst Project, expect to produce growth in manufacturing, construction, aviation, health and life sciences, finance, and product distribution. Major airport

expansion is planned, in addition to expansion of local industrial parks, resulting in a more diversified economy.

Additional statistics that reflect strongly on the region include the large portion of Hispanic (25.5%) population. The remaining populations are predominately White (64.7%) and Black (9.5), as an average in the area. Ratios of gender are about equal, with 51.6% of the population being male, and 48.4% female. With a large veterans population of 19,555 (9.7%), only 6,306 (32%) are of workforce age, again reflecting the age factor of the population.

A high school diploma or General Educational Development Diploma (GED) is the minimum standard to obtain employment for all but the lowest service sector jobs. Additional skills such as reading for information, applied mathematics, locating information, writing, computer operation and other specific skills, including soft-skills, are necessary for most continued employment. Technical skills, including some certifications, are required for many jobs in manufacturing, construction, finance, healthcare, and aviation. CSH will continue to work with the Economic Development councils and commissions, local school boards, Chambers of Commerce, and Education partners to develop programs that will provide the skills necessary to establish employment pipelines for current, expanding, and new businesses in the region.

The USDA Atlas of Rural and Small Town America indicates the educational achievement levels for the region. Those with no High School diploma (28.45%) and those with a High School diploma (36.75%) constitute the local culture of the area. These high percentages reflect strongly on the ability to retain or attract advanced skill industries into the region. Those with some college education (17.85%) or a Bachelor's degree or higher (13.18%) are subject to migration to urban areas for employment. A major challenge facing education in the region is to educate and credential graduates in both the secondary and post-secondary populations. CSH is collaborating with educators through WIA youth programs, specialized training programs, and skills upgrades when feasible to alleviate this challenge.

The required skill levels for success in specific jobs are rapidly increasing. Employers repeatedly indicate that today's workers often lack even the basic soft skills needed to meet the demands of the current workforce. Declining funds in the Workforce Development System jeopardize the stability of the local delivery system. High school and community college students are not enrolling in the math and science courses needed for the emerging workforce, suggesting the workforce pipeline will not meet the skill requirements of the future without new direction.

In response to the voice of business and the expected skill set requirements of emerging jobs, CSH is partnering with education, employers, and economic development to create a continuum of services that recruits and trains workers to meet the local demands. Some skills shortages can be alleviated by upgrading currently employed workers through customized training opportunities. Other skills gaps may be alleviated through the provision of work-based or on-the-job training. Our current partnerships, along with the significant contributions of industry specific advisory committees, will assist CSH in investing workforce efforts toward successfully meeting current and emerging local workforce needs.

One of the major differences in our region as compared to our urban neighbors is the size of our businesses. With minimal manufacturing in the region, businesses with less than 10 employees account for 78% of the employers. The skill sets required are typically minimal in small business. The few employers that have more than 10 employees are related to agriculture, education, medical or public service occupations. Local employment is impacted by economic cycles tied to the services and agricultural industries. The decline in housing sales has negatively impacted the construction industry. Regional unemployment typically meets or exceeds statewide averages. Many available jobs offer low wages and few, if any, benefits. There is a critical need in this region for high-skill, high-wage jobs that offer benefits and upward mobility.

While small businesses may be viewed by some as a weakness, it is also one of the region's strengths. With a strong entrepreneurial spirit exhibited in developing a business, new ventures find an environment friendly and conducive to assisting with company growth. This growth potential will be key to the improvement of a skilled workforce and its subsequent economic growth. Efforts are being made to identify the area's non-traditional worker, (i.e. older workers, disabled, youth, etc.) and link these workers with employers. The wide range of services available through Career Centers is crucial when dealing with workforce shortages. Resources include employee recruiting, customized training, targeted career fairs, workshops, business seminars, and retention support strategies.

**(2) Specific milestones and timelines for consultation with:**

**A. Other local workforce development boards**

CSH attended a "Super Region Planning session" in cooperation with Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDA) 17 and 18 on April 9, 2015. This multi-region plenary session resulted in the recognition that, but for minor differences, the philosophies, goals and areas of importance are similar across our local areas. Since the initial meeting, LWDA 17 has joined our "super region."

Among our four LWDAs: numerous joint economic development analyses have already occurred and strategies are in place; commuter patterns are shared; areas are contiguous, sharing labor market similarities. The Directors of the four entities met in January 2016, to discuss the plan and local initiatives. A follow-up meeting is planned for April, 2016, with continued meetings to occur quarterly. Our current plans include discussion and collaboration on the following topics:

1. Sharing responsibility to transfer anticipated unused funds among regional partners instead of sending back to DEO. The goal would be to ascertain the need for funds with regional partners first. If not needed, then extend to DEO to offer to all boards.
2. Review cap rates for various training to determine the necessity of merging structure if appropriate.
3. Collaborate to establish a Regional Targeted Occupations List and Eligible Training Providers.
4. Review opportunities to cost share/bulk order supplies for maximum efficiency and benefit.
5. Collaborate on workforce supply for new and expanding business.

As action is completed on the above items, we anticipate continued collaboration and the addition of new discussion and planning issues.

It is important to note that our four LWDAs have been informally collaborating for years, in support of business and job seeker needs and economic development priorities.

**B. Local elected officials;**

Since June 24, 2015, and ongoing, our LEOs have been kept apprised of the focus of WIOA, the implications to the Board and local area, developments and recommendations of the WIOA Task Force, and guidance disseminated by CSF and/or DEO. This information has been provided in Board meetings and via periodic email communications. Concerning Planning Regions, they have been informed of the preliminary meetings that have been held with LWDAs 17, 18, and 24. They were made aware that currently, each LWDA is designated as a planning region, encouraged to identify ways to establish regional strategies for service delivery, sector strategies for in-demand industry sectors, coordination of services, and pooling of administrative costs as appropriate.

### C. Economic development organizations;

In this LWDA, three of our four county economic development organizations have representation on the CSH Board, either by full membership or through the Business Enhancement Committee (BEC) Community membership. The Sebring Airport Authority also has representation via the BEC Community group. By virtue of their Board membership/relationship, they have been kept involved in the same manner as our Local Elected Officials. Our strong partnerships with local area economic development organizations help us stay abreast of the needs of current and potential local employers.

Florida's Heartland Regional Economic Development Initiative (FHREDI) commissioned a Comprehensive Community Assessment study in an effort to maximize regional competitiveness for business investment. This study incorporated data from counties located in two of the LWDA's in our working planning region. The overarching recommendation focused on the need to better prepare our regional workforce to meet the current and emerging demands of business.

In partnership with Central Florida Regional Planning Council, a number of community visioning and strategic planning efforts have occurred, encompassing Polk, Hardee, Highlands, DeSoto, Okeechobee, Glades, and Hendry Counties (inclusive of three of the four LWDA's in our working planning region).

- Heartland 2060 designed a regional blueprint to guide growth and development over the next fifty years.
- The Sustainable Communities grant activities provided for a five year growth and development plan.
- Currently underway is the Heartland Long Range Transportation Plan.
- The Heartland Rural Mobility Plan (HRMP) was designed to identify and address the mobility challenges within the six-county rural area.

These activities incorporated a number of community partners, including county and municipal elected officials, education, economic development, and transportation representatives, businesses, area planners, community organizations, and workforce Board and staff members.

Locally, we will continue to utilize the results of these initiatives as we address regional planning.

### D. Core and mandatory one-stop partners for potential regional implications;

Locally, our core and mandatory one-stop partners have representation on the CSH Board either through full membership or via CSH Board Committee Community membership, and have been kept involved in the same manner as our Local Elected Officials, or by individual emails or meetings. Potential regional implications are still to be discerned. As our four-county LWDA working planning region develops, and implications are recognized and addressed, this section will be updated accordingly.

### E. Analysis of coordination of services with potential regional implications.

In terms of planning regions and overall coordination, CSH is awaiting additional guidance concerning the interpretation and implications of language surrounding performance and administrative costs. Once guidance is provided, updates to this section of the plan will be made as appropriate. Please see item (2) A, above, for our current "regional planning" topics of discussion.

## PUBLIC COMMENT PROCESS

Please describe the process used, in accordance with the five criteria below, to provide an opportunity for public comment and input into the development of the local plan:

**(1)** Make copies of the proposed local plan available to the public through electronic and other means, such as public hearings and local news media. WIOA §108(d)(1)

Notices inviting comment on the proposed local plan will occur via newspapers, email, and website posting.

Specific to this plan, our timeline is as follows:

- Draft plan availability for public comment noticed March 31, 2016
- Draft plan noticed to interested parties including parties of the Board/Consortium members, as well as business and labor organizations not represented on the Board March 31, 2016
- Responses due from interested parties by April 30, 2016
- Responses incorporated by May 15, 2016 (updates will be sent to DEO upon receipt)
- Draft Plan forwarded to the CSH Board for review and approval April 20, 2016
- Final Plan submitted to DEO April 29, 2016

**(2)** Provide no more than a 30-day period for comment on the plan before its submission to the Governor, beginning on the date on which the proposed plan is made available, prior to its submission to the Governor. WIOA §108(d)(2)

The 30-day public comment period began on March 31, 2016 and will close April 30, 2016. All comments are required to be in writing via email or regular postal service. Comments will be reviewed with plan revisions made as appropriate.

**(3)** Provide a description of the process used by the board to obtain input and comment by representatives of businesses and labor organizations for the development of the plan. WIOA §108(d)(2)

The committee structure of the Board allows for small group discussion and the development of specific aspects of the plan, along with its overall objectives and processes. The CSH Board is comprised of a minimum of 51% representation from private business, and includes labor representation. Members of partner agencies, clients, and the public at large, regularly attend meetings, and are invited to submit input and comment on the activities of the Board. Planning efforts focus on public and local agency partner input into the implementation of WIOA and its integration with other programs such as Welfare Transition, Migrant Seasonal Farmworker and Agricultural Programs including the National Farmworker Jobs Program, Veterans Services, Carl Perkins, Adult Education, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and others. Relationships have been established and maintained with local economic development agencies, the local airport authorities, educational facilities, local businesses, and the local chambers of commerce. All Board and committee meetings are publicly noticed in accordance with Florida's Sunshine Law. Attendees from the general public are invited to provide input and are given a formal opportunity to do so at each full board meeting.

Additionally, the plan is posted on the CSH website for access to the general public and other interested parties, and comments are invited.

(4) Describe any other efforts to coordinate with other workforce partners to obtain input into the development of the plan.

Please see #3 above.

(5) Include, as an attachment with the plan to the Governor, any comments that express disagreement, the LWDB's response to those comments, and a copy of the published notice. WIOA §108(d)(3)

No comments have been received to date.

**SIGNATURE PAGE**

This plan represents the efforts of CareerSource Heartland to implement the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act in the following counties:

- DeSoto
- Hardee
- Highlands
- Okeechobee

We will operate in accordance with this plan and applicable federal and state laws, rules, and regulations.

**CareerSource Heartland**

**Board Chair:  
William J. Nielander**

**Chief Elected Official/Chair, Exec. Board:  
Jack Richie**

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Signature

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Signature

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