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WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT (WIOA)

LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PLAN
PROGRAM YEARS 2024 -2027

WORKFORCE CONNECTION OF CENTRAL NEW MEXICO (WCCNM)
AREA WORKFORCE BOARD

Master DRAFT September 15, 2024

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Executive Summary

The Workforce Connection of Central New Mexico (WCCNM) serves as the Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) for Bernalillo, Sandoval, Valencia, and Torrance Counties. These four counties combined represent New Mexico's Central Region, also known as the Albuquerque Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA).

The State Workforce Development Board (SWDB), New Mexico Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Combined State Plan Program Years 2024-2027 (State Plan) provides details on the goals and strategies, cross-goal strategies, and alignment strategies required to guide the WCCNM in developing a local plan that aligns its programs and services within the State's workforce system. The State Plan is available on the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (NMDWS) website at the following URL:
https://www.dws.state.nm.us/en-us/WIOA/WIOA-Plans-and-Reports.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Public Law 113-128, requires each local workforce development board (LWDB), in partnership with the appropriate chief local elected official(s), to develop and submit a comprehensive four-year local plan to the state (NMDWS). This WCCNM Local Workforce Development Plan Program Years 2024-2027, mirrors the State Plan*,* and demonstrates full compliance with the Federal and State WIOA regulations.

The WCCNM has defined specific goals that are in direct alignment with the State Plan and associated work NMDWS is tasked with leading over the next 4-years. Upon NMDWS approval of the WCCNM's 4-Year Local Plan, the WCCNM and its partners will begin developing S.M.A.R.T. Goal Action Plans for each of the approved goals the WCCNM has proposed in this plan.

In accordance with §679.580(a), at the end of the first 2-year period of the WCCNM 4-year Local Plan (August 2026) , the WCCNM must review the Local Plan and submit modifications to the plan to reflect changes in labor market and economic conditions or other factors affecting the implementation of the WCCNM WIOA Local Plan, including S.M.A.R.T. Goal updates.

The WCCNM continues to serve un- and under-employed populations in the Central Region. Through WCCNM's 4-Year Local Plan Sector Strategy and Career Pathway development goals, the Central Region demonstrates full support of the State Plan and NMDWS to deliver a workforce prepared to meet employer demand by achieving career pathway goals leading to self-sufficiency.

A. Plan Overview and Guidance
1. Background

Please do not make any edits to this "Plan Overview and Guidance" section. The content in this section is to inform you of the mandated process we must follow. This content came directly from the State Plan and NMDWS guidance and we can't their directives.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Public Law 113-128, requires each local workforce development board (LWDB), in partnership with the appropriate chief local elected official(s), to develop and submit a comprehensive four-year local plan to the state. Additionally, local plans must be modified at the end of the first two-year period of the four-year local plan to reflect changes in labor market and economic conditions and other factors affecting the implementation of the local plan. Federal regulations require states and LWDBs to regularly revisit and recalibrate state plan strategies in response to changing economic conditions and workforce needs of the state (20 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 676.135).

State Workforce Development Board
The State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) plays a leadership role in aligning federal investments in job training and education programs, integrating service delivery across programs, enhancing the capacity and performance of the workforce development system at both the state and local levels, ensuring the one-stop system is customer driven, and the workforce system is job-driven and matches employers with skilled individuals. As such, the SWDB establishes overarching strategies and framework for the local boards to follow in developing local plans that are consistent with the State Plan. These expectations include:
- establishes accountability measures and expectations for the implementation of the local board plans; conducts annual (or more frequent) review of local boards plans and progress
- ensures compliance with criteria for membership on a local board;
- receives and communicates public comments regarding the activities of the local boards to ensure accountability and transparency;
- recommends action consistent with state rule and policy if local board outcomes are not achieved and are not consistent with the principles, strategies, and vision described in the State Plan.

Source: Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Combined State Plan Program Years 2024-2027 Section III. Operational Planning Elements, State Strategy Implementation, State Board Functions, p 89.

The State Plan is a Combined Plan. The Combined State Plan core partner programs as stated in the State Plan are:
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.)

- Employment and Training programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(d)(4)))
- Work programs authorized under section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(o))
- Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers programs (Activities authorized under chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq.))
- Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program (programs authorized under 38, U.S.C. 4100 et. seq.)
- Unemployment Insurance programs (programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws in accordance with applicable Federal law)
- Senior Community Service Employment program (programs authorized under title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.))
- Employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development

Message From Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham

Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham is dedicated to making New Mexico the best state in the union for children to grow and thrive. Workforce development is a key part of achieving this goal because children thrive with the economic stability that comes from the efforts of a strong, supported workforce. Workforce development builds vibrant and healthy communities, supports sustainable economic initiatives, aids businesses of all sizes, and helps individuals find meaningful and sustaining opportunities.

Four significant dynamics in our state shaped the 2024-2027 WIOA State Plan:
- First, the COVID-19 global pandemic changed the way we think about work and workplaces.
- Second, the state faces an inverted labor market with over 30,000 more vacancies than unemployed people looking for work in 2023.
- Third, Governor Lujan Grisham's bold educational initiatives, including the Opportunity Scholarship that provides tuition-free college and the Early Childhood Education and Care Fund that endowed accessible early childhood services, opened a world of possibilities to many New Mexicans.
- Finally, billions of dollars of infrastructure investment will require a skilled workforce. Each one of these is a historical first. The combination of all of four factors creates a once-in-a-generation opportunity to improve the lives of all New Mexicans.

Message From Sarita Nair, Cabinet Secretary
New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions

After a comprehensive participatory process, we developed a vision, goals and strategies that are a marked departure from the WIOA State Plans of the past. While continuing to align to the

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state's forward-looking economic development goals, this Plan emphasizes the immediate needs of New Mexico communities to build and improve infrastructure and to take care of each other. The plan also recognizes that the rapidly changing nature of work – both with advancements in technology and the emergence of new industries - means that we need to prepare our workforce for a future we cannot fully envision yet.

WCCNM Local Plan Development Objectives

WIOA emphasizes the importance of collaboration and transparency in the development and submission of local plans. LWDBs provide leadership, and should seek broad stakeholder involvement, in the development of their local plan. Chief local elected officials, LWDB members, core program partners, mandatory one-stop career center partners, and local economic development entities are an integral part of the planning process. The Unified and Combined State Plans serve as 4-year action plans to develop, align, and integrate the State's systems and provide a platform to achieve the State's vision and strategic and operational goals. A Unified or Combined State Plan is intended to:

1. Align, in strategic coordination, the six core programs required in the Unified State Plan pursuant to § 676.105(b), and additional Combined State Plan partner programs that may be part of the Combined State Plan pursuant to § 676.140;
2. Direct investments in economic, education, and workforce training programs to focus on providing relevant education and training to ensure that individuals, including youth and individuals with barriers to employment, have the skills to compete in the job market and that employers have a ready supply of skilled workers;
3. Apply strategies for job-driven training consistently across Federal programs; and
4. Enable economic, education, and workforce partners to build a skilled workforce through innovation in, and alignment of, employment, training, and education programs.
Source: *https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/20/676.100*

SWDB Local Plan Development Guidance

The State Workforce Development Board (SWDB), New Mexico Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Combined State Plan Program Years 2024-2027 (State Plan) provides details on the goals and strategies, cross-goal strategies, and alignment strategies required to facilitate the WCCNM in developing a local plan that aligns its programs and services within the State's workforce system. To see the full State Plan, please go https://www.dws.state.nm.us/en-us/WIOA/WIOA-Plans-and-Reports. The following summarizes the State Plan goals and strategies:

Collectively, the Combined State Plan goals center on how the State prepares an educated and skilled workforce, including youth and individuals with barriers to employment, and meets the skilled workforce needs of employers. The goals also underscore the importance of attracting

talent to New Mexico and improving the vitality of rural communities as well as equipping all New Mexicans with the skills and tools needed to succeed in the future of work.

- **Goal 1:** Collaborate with employers to expand the workforce that supports the safety, health, and well-being of New Mexican families and the modernization of New Mexico's infrastructure.
- **Goal 2:** Build and empower the workforce to thrive in the face of changes to the state and national economy and the way we work.
- **Goal 3:** Increase year-over-year labor force participation rates and economic prosperity for disengaged and difficult to reach New Mexicans.
- **Goal 4:** Attract out-of-state workers to New Mexico and improve retention of New Mexicans within the State, particularly in rural communities.

Please see State Plan, pages 79 – 89 for full details on the NMDWS goals.
https://www.dws.state.nm.us/en-us/WIOA/WIOA-Plans-and-Reports

The New Mexico Combined State Plan cross-goal strategies, and alignment strategies are relevant to New Mexico achieving the following multiple goals or cross-goal strategies:

Cross-Goal Strategies

Cross-Goal Strategy 1: Collaborate across WIOA partners, workforce regions, education providers, and employers to develop comprehensive [sector] strategies for priority sectors that are tailored to each workforce region and detail actionable plans for outreach and recruitment.

Cross-Goal Strategy 2: Coordinate with education and training providers and employers in priority sectors to create flexible pathways, certification programs, short-term credentialing, and work-based learning opportunities to prepare the workforce.

Cross-Goal Strategy 3: Work with the NM Public Education Department (PED), WIOA partners, and employers to increase outreach in middle and high schools and help students explore available career paths in priority sectors by streamlining and clearly defining the path among work-based learning programs. New Mexico has done a great job of investing in programs to connect youth to work. Unfortunately, those programs are not connected to each other or our sector strategies. This strategy aims to address this challenge.

Cross-Goal Strategy 4: Enhance outreach efforts around incentives and programs available to employers in priority sectors that support them with finding and retaining qualified talent. A recurring theme in the planning process is that we have programs to meet a wide variety of populations where they are and engage them in training and work. Unfortunately, much like work-based learning programs, these

programs are largely unknown, often underutilized, and disconnected from each other and from the business community.

In addition to the WCCNM Local Plan supporting the State's Goals and Cross-Goal Strategies listed above, to align all programs and services within the State's workforce system, the Core and Combined Partners will pursue the following strategies:

<mark>Alignment Strategies</mark>

Alignment Strategy 1: Improve communication and collaboration among Core and Combined State Plan program partners.
Alignment Strategy 2: Strengthen the Statewide Workforce Development Board (SWDB) by improving its committee structure and outlining specific goals and tasks for committees and board members.
Alignment Strategy 3: Improve services to the employer community by streamlining processes, increasing coordination, and defining clear pathways for business engagement.
Alignment Strategy 4: Implement an aligned case management system across people, processes, and technology to streamline and improve delivery of services.
Alignment Strategy 5: Innovate and collaborate to contain costs of field offices.

<mark>*Process for Developing WCCNM WIOA Local Plan*</mark>
In accordance with §679.580(a), the WCCNM Central Region Board approved the development of a "Four-year Plan Ad Hoc Committee." The WCCNM Local Plan Ad Hoc Committee consists of five (5) Board members representing Bernalillo, Sandoval, Valencia and Torrance Counties as well as partner representatives from New Mexico Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (NMDVR), Albuquerque Job Corps, National Indian Council on Aging (NICOA); Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), training providers including CNM, UNM Valencia, Gordon Bernell and Albuquerque Job Corps.

The WCCNM Ad Hoc Committee members worked collaboratively from August 22, 2024, through September 6, 2024, to develop the WCCNM Local Plan, including providing plan input and engaging entities in the development of the WCCNM's WIOA Local Workforce Development Plan for Program Years 2024 -2027. The Ad Hoc Committee's membership is representative of a wide variety of entities, including the WCCNM Full Board Membership, which includes all the WIOA mandated partners as well as all other required members defined. In addition, the Ad Hoc Committee reached out to the WCCNM One-Stops in the Central Region which includes all WIOA required partners as well as affiliated programs and services (internal and external).

Timeline for Local Four-Year Plan

Activity	Target Date
LWDBs Develop Local Plan	April 2024 – August 2024
LWDBs Complete Local Plan	September 15, 2024
LWDBs Post Local Plan for 30-day Public Comment	September 15, 2024 – October 15, 2024
LWDBs Update Plans to reflect Public Comments, as appropriate (and any other necessary changes)	October 15, 2024 – October 23, 2024
Local Boards Approve Final Plan for Submission in an Open Meeting	By October 31, 2024
Local Boards Submit Completed Plan to NMDWS	On or before November 1, 2024
State Review Period	November 1, 2024 – December 15, 2024
NMDWS Notifies LWDBs of Plan Modification Approval (and any requested revisions, if needed)	On or Before December 15, 2024
If Applicable, LWDBs Complete and Submit Requested Local Plan Revisions to NMDWS.	On or Before January 15, 2025

PUBLIC COMMENT PROCESS: Prior to submitting the LWDB Local Plan, the WCCNM must provide an opportunity for public comment on the development of the local plan. To provide adequate opportunity for public comment, the LWDB must: (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)). (2) Include an opportunity for comment by members of the public, including representatives of business, labor organizations, and education (WIOA § 108(d)(2)). (3) The plan must be available for public comment for thirty days and public comments must be provided to the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (NMDWS) as State Administrative Entity (SAE) (WIOA § 108(d)(2)).

WCCNM Local Plan Development Compliance

The WCCNM Local Plan Ad Hoc Committee reviewed, discussed and planned strategies to engage entities (internal and external of the Board and One-Stops) in developing the Central Region's Local Plan. Members of this committee specifically reached out to Indicated Targeted Population Service Providers to coordinate services and to garner information for contribution into the plan, including programs serving Youth, Adult and Dislocated Workers, Individuals with Disabilities, Veterans, Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers, Native Americans, Individual with Low Income, Older Individuals, and Individuals with Low Literacy Levels. Outreach efforts also include coordination of service discussion and planning with programs including Wagner Peyser, Rapid Response, Secondary and Post- Secondary Education, and multiple Supportive Service programs.

The Ad Hoc Committee reviewed and incorporated public comments received during the 30-day public comment period (September 15 through October 15, 2024.) Additional Mandated Partner input was also received during this period. All changes/edits were addressed before presenting the plan for recommendation of approval to the WCCNM Full Board during the 10/21/2024 Board Meeting. The deadline for Full Board approval of the Local Plan is on or before October 31, 2024.

Upon approval by the WCCNM Full Board during the 10/21/2024 Board Meeting, in partnership with the appropriate chief elected officials, who have also reviewed and approved the WCCNM 2024-2027 WIOA Local Plan, the approved plan will be sent to the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions for the State Review Period, which is scheduled for November 1, 2024 – December 15, 2024. Potential final approval from the NMDWS is scheduled on or before January 15. 2025. The Ad Hoc Committee will address any deficiencies as requested and provide updates as needed and required in the future.

Process for Local Plan 2-Year Modifications
At the end of the first 2-year period of any 4-year Local Plan (August 2026), the WCCNM must review the Local Plan and submit modifications to the plan to reflect changes in labor market and economic conditions or other factors affecting the implementation of the WCCNM WIOA Local Plan.

In accordance with §679.580(a), the following describes the process for developing and submitting plan modifications. LWDBs, in partnership with the appropriate chief elected officials, must review the local plan, and prepare and submit modifications to the plan to reflect the following changes.

§679.580(b)(1) and (2)(i)	Economic Conditions (a) Explanation of any changes in regional labor market and economic conditions, particularly any significant changes in local economic conditions.
§679.580(b) (2)(ii)	Funding Explanation of any changes in the financing available to support WIOA title I and partner-provided WIOA services.
§679.580(b)(2)(iii)	Board Structure Updates Any changes to the LWDB structure, including membership and committees.
§679.580(b)(2)(iv)	Performance Updates (a) Include an update to Attachment E of this document to reflect negotiated performance measures for PYs 2024 and 2025. (b) Include a chart of past, current, and expected service

	levels for Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth for PYs 2020 and 2023. Include changes in strategies to meet local performance goals, as well increased service levels.
§679.350, WIOA §106(e)(2) and §107(c)(2)	<u>Subsequent Local Board Certification</u> As a part of the local plan review process, NMDWS will review each local board to assess the extent to which the local board has ensured that workforce investment activities carried out in the local area have enabled the local area to: (i) meet the corresponding performance accountability measures, and achieve sustained fiscal integrity, as defined by Section 106(e)(2). The term "sustained fiscal integrity," used with respect to a local area, means the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor has not made a formal determination, during either of the last two consecutive years preceding the determination regarding such integrity, that either the grant recipient or the administrative entity of the area mis expended funds provided under WIOA Subtitle B due to willful disregard of the requirements of the provision involved, gross negligence, or failure to comply with accepted standards of administration.
§679.560(c)	<u>Required Updates to **Attachment A**</u> Provide on a flash drive, copies of all LWDB policies relevant to the implementation of WIOA (as listed in the local board grant agreement in Exhibit F, Statement of Work, Section VII, Required LWDB Policies).
§679.560(c)	<u>IFA Update</u> Provide a copy of the local board infrastructure funding agreement (IFA). If the IFA is not yet completed, include a detailed description of the steps taken toward progress in completing the IFA, as well as an expected timeline for completion.
§679.560(c)	<u>WIOA Implementation Highlights</u> Include a section highlighting WIOA implementation accomplishments to date.
§679.580(b)(1) and (2)(i)	<u>Economic Conditions</u> (b) Explanation of any changes in regional labor market and economic conditions, particularly any significant changes in local economic conditions.

B. Strategic Planning Elements

1. Economic and Workforce Analysis (§679.560(a)(1)(iii))

a. Regional analysis of economic conditions including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations (§679.560(a)(1)(i)

The New Mexico WIOA State Plan 2024-2027 (page 7) states that traditional employment projections may not keep pace with the rapidly changing economy of New Mexico. By virtue of their methodology, the projections discussed in this section of the State Plan do not take into account massive investments in education, healthcare and infrastructure that began in 2020 and continue to the current time. They also do not consider the emergence of new industries, such as alternative energy and advanced manufacturing.

About half of all New Mexico projected employment growth is anticipated to occur in just three industries — accommodation and food services (24,010 jobs, or 31.8 percent growth), health care and social assistance (22,400 jobs, or 16.8 percent growth), and arts, entertainment, and recreation (10,050 jobs, or 118.4 percent growth). The percentage growth of these three sectors exceeds the all-industry average of 11.6 percent. Four other sectors have percentage growth above the all-industry average, including professional, scientific, and technical services (7,200 jobs, or 12.0 percent), mining and oil and gas extraction (3,320 jobs, or 16.6 percent), other services (2,450 jobs, or 13.3 percent), and information (1,840 jobs, or 20.3 percent). Two sectors are projected to see a decline in employment, wholesale trade (50 jobs, or 0.2 percent) and utilities (80 jobs, or 1.9 percent).

The top three industry sectors projected to grow the most and the top three projected to grow the fastest are, for the most part, the same across all four regions and MSAs.

In the public sector, local government was up 4,000 jobs, or 4.0 percent. Employment in state government was up 2,700 jobs, or 4.9 percent. Federal government employment was unchanged from the previous year's level. Over the year, the Albuquerque MSA or Central Region, grew by 7,100 jobs in total nonfarm employment, representing a gain of 1.7 percent. The private sector was up 4,900 jobs, or 1.5 percent, while the public sector was up 2,200 jobs, or 2.7 percent. The following private sector industries added jobs: professional and business services, up 2,400 jobs, or 3.6 percent; manufacturing, up 900 jobs, or 5.4 percent; private education and health services, up 900 jobs, or 1.3 percent; leisure and hospitality was up 800 jobs, or 1.7 percent; mining and construction, up 500 jobs, or 1.8 percent; miscellaneous other services up 300 job up 300 jobs, or

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2.3 percent; and financial activities, up 200 jobs, or 1.0 percent. Information was down 1,100 jobs, or 17.2 percent. Trade, transportation, and utilities employment was unchanged from the previous employment level. In the public sector, state government was up 1,400 jobs or 5.0 percent, and local government was up 1,000 jobs or 2.6 percent. Federal government employment was down 200 jobs, or 1.4 percent. *Source: NMDWS, New Mexico Labor Market Review May 2024, Volume 53 No. 5 Published July 2, 2024.*

The following graphs provide a comprehensive overview of the regional analysis of economic conditions in Albuquerque MSA or Central Region, with a focus on existing and emerging industry sectors and occupations. The following is an analysis of the key sections.

Exhibit 1 Average Annual Wages From 2022Q1 to 2024Q1
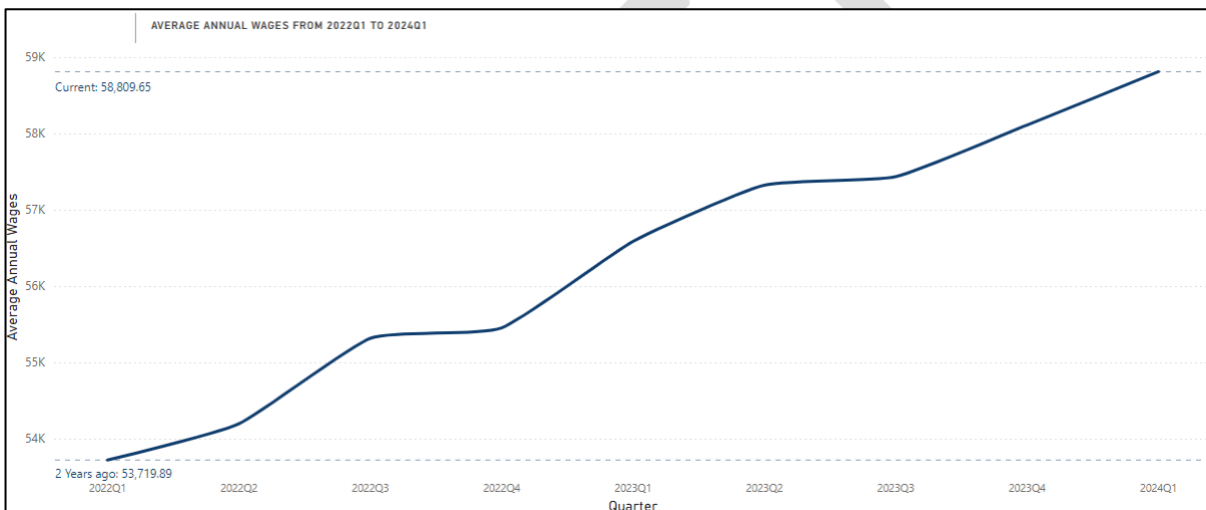
Exhibit 1: Average Annual Wages From 2022Q1 to 2024Q1
Data exported on Monday, August 12th, 2024
Source: JobsEQ - GDP data as of 2023 | Wage and projection data as of 2024 Q1

Average Wages and Purchasing Power

Despite lower wages compared to the U.S. average, Albuquerque MSA/Central Region cost of living allows residents to maintain a relatively high standard of living, with a purchasing power adjusted to $61,942. Adjusted purchasing power, also known as constant or real dollars, is a value that has been adjusted for inflation and purchasing power.

Top Industries by GDP

The data below in *Exhibit 2* reveals that **Real Estate and Rental and Leasing** contributes the most to GDP at 26.06%, yet has low demand for jobs (4K), indicating its capital-intensive nature. ==**Input received stated this GPD is surprising. Is this new or part of a longer trend in the Albuquerque MSA? For comparison, WCCNM is pulling data from 2019-2020 to determine data trend**==.

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Exhibit 2 **Albuquerque MSA/Central Region Top Industries by Gross Domestic Product**
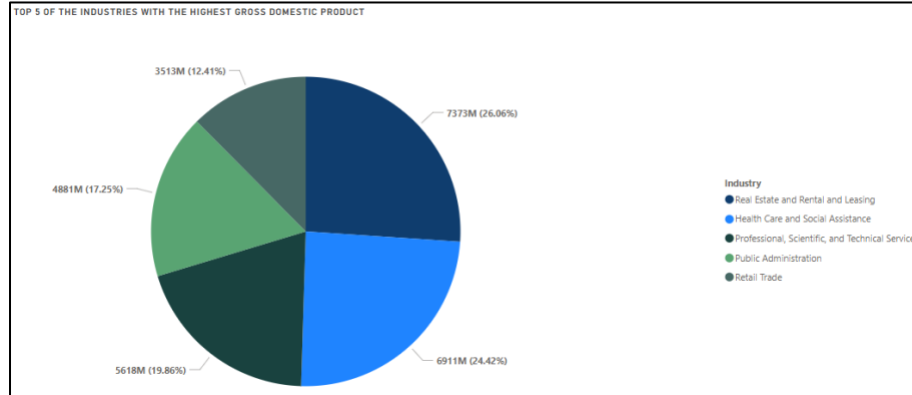
Exhibit 2: Top 5 of the industries with the highest gross domestic product
Data exported on Monday, August 12th, 2024
Source: JobsEQ - GDP data as of 2023 | Wage and projection data as of 2024 Q1

In the Albuquerque MSA/Central Region, **Health Care and Social Assistance** is the top contributor to GDP (24.42%) and the industry with the highest job demand, making it a critical sector for Central New Mexico.

Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services also show strong GDP contribution (19.86%), high average wages, and a high location quotient (LQ), reflecting its economic significance.

Public Administration and **Retail Trade** round out the top five industries, with GDP contributions of 17.25% and 12.41%, respectively.

Total In-Demand Jobs Projection by Industry
As shown below in *Exhibit 3*: **Total Demand by Industry,** the highest Albuquerque MSA/Central Region job demands are projected in **Health Care and Social Assistance** (32K jobs),

Accommodation and Food Services (30K jobs), and **Retail Trade** (23K jobs), highlight the critical role of service-oriented industries in the Central Region's employment landscape.

Exhibit 3: Total Demand by Industry
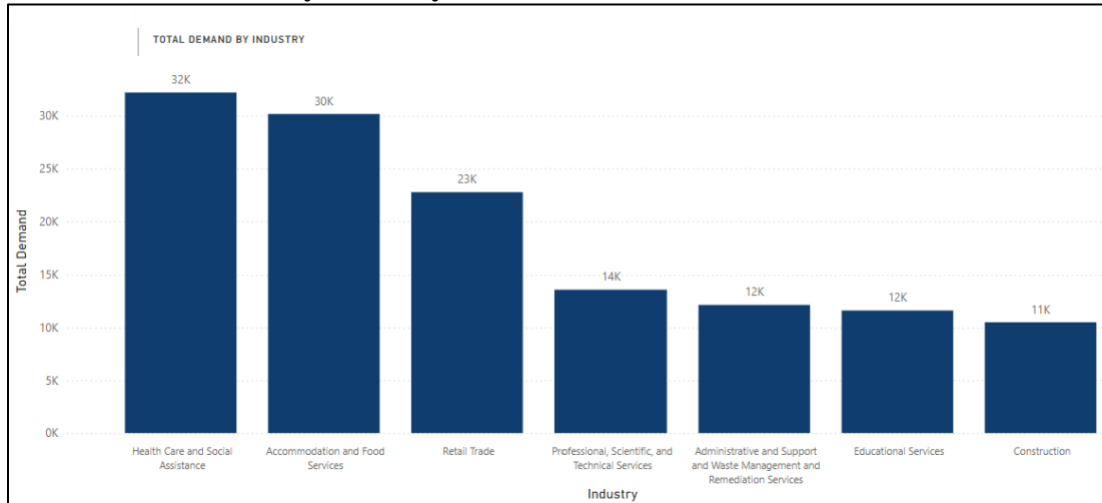
Exhibit 3: Total Demand by Industry
Data exported on Monday, August 12th, 2024
Source: JobsEQ - GDP data as of 2023 | Wage and projection data as of 2024 Q1

Cost of Living Index

The Albuquerque MSA/Central Region cost of living is lower than the U.S. average and slightly higher than New Mexico's overall average, enhancing the purchasing power and affordability for its residents.

Exhibit 4: Cost of living index (Base USA)
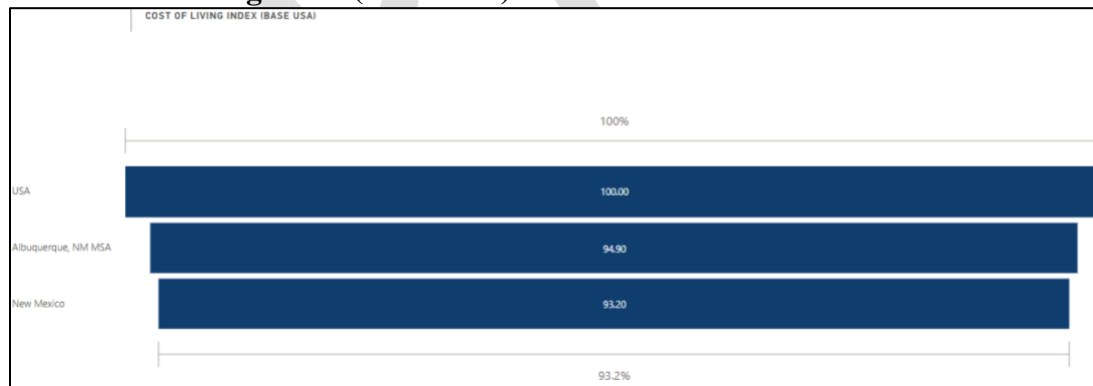
Exhibit 4: Cost of living index (Base USA)
Data exported on Monday, August 12th, 2024
Source: JobsEQ - GDP data as of 2023 | Wage and projection data as of 2024 Q1

Average Wages and Location Quotients vs. Gross Surplus by Industry

The Location Quotient is a measure of how concentrated a particular type of job is in a given region, compared to the rest of the country. *Exhibit 5,* shown below, indicates that industries like **Public Administration**, **Healthcare and Social Assistance**, and **Professional, Scientific, and**

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Technical Services are not only well-paying but also highly concentrated in the Albuquerque MSA/Central Region, contributing significantly to the local economy. The **Real Estate** sector, despite low job demand, aligns with its high GDP contribution, showing good location quotients and economic value generation. <mark>**Per input received – It may be useful to compare to the state as a whole. Is the ABQ MSA unique?**</mark>

Exhibit 5: Average Wages and Location Quotient to Gross Surplus by Industry
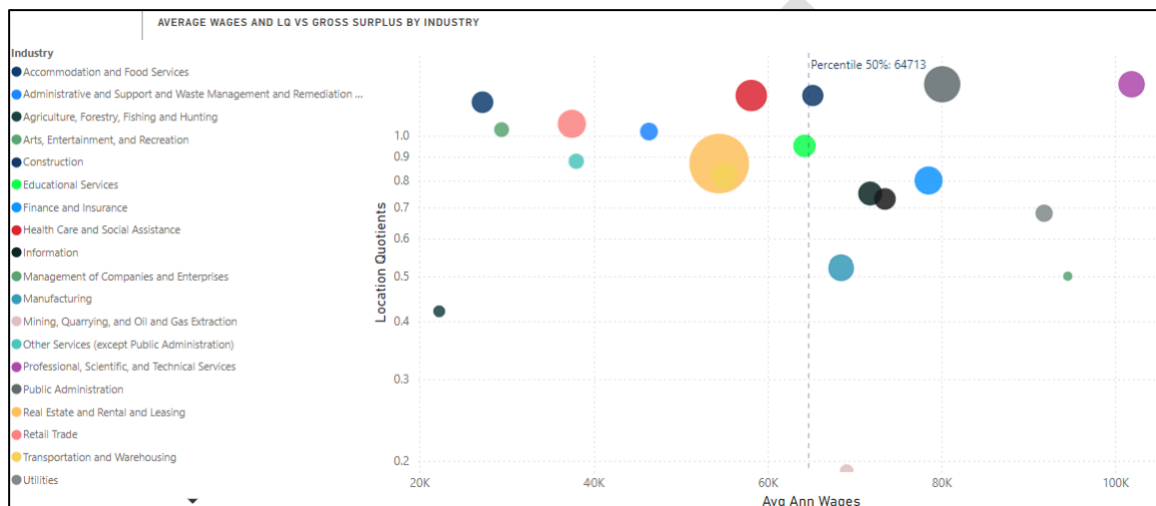
Exhibit 5: Average wages and LQ VS Gross Surplus by Industry
Data exported on Monday, August 12th, 2024
Source: JobsEQ - GDP data as of 2023 | Wage and projection data as of 2024 Q1

Trends in Average Annual Wages
The consistent upward trend in wages from 2022 Q1 to 2024 Q1 reflects positive economic growth and improving living standards in the Albuquerque MSA/Central Region.

The above detailed analysis of the economic conditions in the Central Region highlights strong sectors, the interplay between wages and cost of living, and the overall purchasing power of workers in the region. The analysis emphasizes the Central Region's affordability relative to the national average, showcases key industries driving the economy, and offers insight into wage growth and employment demand.

Notably, the top industries that will contribute to maintaining and potentially increasing the cost of living in the Central Region are Health Care, Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services, Public Administration, and Real Estate and Rental and Leasing. These sectors not only demonstrate significant GDP contributions and Gross Surplus but also offer strong average annual wages and high location quotients (LQ), indicating their concentration and economic importance in the region. Moreover, Health Care and Professional, Scientific, and Technical

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Services are projected to remain in high demand, further solidifying their role as critical pillars of the Central Region's economic landscape.

Real Estate and Rental and Leasing, despite lower direct job demand, plays a crucial role due to its substantial GDP contribution and influence on the region's economic stability and growth. These insights are crucial for understanding which sectors will drive future economic growth and how they will influence the cost of living and overall economic health in the Central Region.

Emerging Industries

The WCCNM routinely collaborates with State and Central Region economic development organizations to help ensure all workforce development partners, including training providers (Central NM Community College and Ingenuity, and University of NM) are represented in economic development initiatives to bring new employers to New Mexico. The WCCNM and its partners work closely with NMDWS and training providers to ensure labor force training and talent pipeline development specifically meets the unique needs of companies considering moving to the Central Region.

The WCCNM and other state LWDBs play a critical role in ensuring the labor force is prepared to meet the needs of existing and emerging industries in Central New Mexico and around the state. To this end, the WCCNM is actively involved with its state and Central Region economic development partners, including, but not limited to the following:

The Mid-Region Council of Governments (MRCOG) works with regional economic development organizations to promote and facilitate coordination among the numerous entities. The MRCOG is designated by the U.S Economic Development Administration (EDA) as an economic development district and assists with preparation of EDA funding applications. In addition, the MRCOG prepares a summary of the region's economic conditions with recommended activities for growth and development in a report known as the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). MRCOG Economic development staff work closely with the WCCNM and many economic development organizations and local governments in the region— providing vital statistical data and technical assistance to identify community development needs.

The New Mexico Economic Development Department (NMEDD) offers services such as the Local Economic Development Act (LEDA) Business, Job Training Incentive Program (JTIP), New Mexico MainStreet, Outdoor Equity Fund, LEADS (Local Economic Assistance & Development Support) Program, New Mexico Film Office, Outdoor Recreation Division, and Collateral Assistance Program (CAP) 2.0. NMEDD supports and promotes the Governors economic objectives including but not limited to the state's Advanced Manufacturing goals and initiatives.

Advanced Manufacturing

New Mexico Partnership, the nonprofit private marketing arm of the NMEDD, reported that manufacturing companies from around the world are realizing the potential New Mexico has to offer. Advanced manufacturing in New Mexico is diverse and includes everything from bioscience and medical manufacturing, food production and value-added agriculture products, to cutting-edge aerospace and space manufacturing.

New Mexico has a skilled workforce that is essential to the advanced manufacturing industry. The talent pipeline in the state spans a broad range of industries and skills, including 180,000 workers employed in relevant manufacturing, production, logistics, and construction roles coming from a range of companies and skills, like Tempur Pedic and Intel.

Training programs at high schools, junior colleges, and universities throughout the state work directly with manufacturing industry partners to provide a pipeline of new talent.

When companies need research and development, engineering, or scientific expertise New Mexico provides one of the highest concentrations of talent in the U.S. New Mexico's long history of innovation and R&D and the presence of two national labs, Sandia and Los Alamos provide the Advanced Manufacturing Industry access to high-level expertise. https://nmpartnership.com/new-mexico-major-industries/advanced-manufacturing/

New Mexico Partnership recently announced **Ebon Solar LLC (Ebon Solar),** a Delaware-based, U.S. solar cell manufacturing company plans to invest a projected $942 million to construct an estimated 834,000-square-foot solar cell manufacturing facility in Albuquerque's Mesa del Sol industrial development area, creating over 900 new jobs. https://nmpartnership.com/ebon-solar-picks-new-mexico-for-major-solar-factory/

For a full list of recent projects announced in New Mexico please go to the New Mexico Partnership website at https://nmpartnership.com/incentives-data/project-announcements/.

In addition, Maxeon Solar Technologies announced that they have selected Albuquerque, NM to be the site of their new 3GW capacity solar cell and panel manufacturing facility. The total cost of the new factory, Maxeon's first in the US, is estimated at over one billion dollars. The 160-acre site located in the community of Mesa Del Sol, will include solar cell fabrication, panel assembly, a warehouse, and administrative offices. It is estimated to create 1,800 new jobs and produce millions of solar panels each year for the US market.

In Sandoval County, Intel celebrated the opening of Fab 9, its cutting-edge factory in Rio Rancho, New Mexico. The milestone is part of Intel's previously announced $3.5 billion investment to equip its New Mexico operations for the manufacturing of advanced semiconductor packaging technologies, including Intel's breakthrough 3D packaging

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technology, Foveros, which offers flexible options for combining multiple chips that are optimized for power, performance and cost. The $3.5 billion investment in Rio Rancho has created hundreds of high-tech Intel jobs, more than 3,000 construction jobs and an additional 3,500 jobs across the state.

Albuquerque Economic Development Department (EDD) serves to promote and facilitate business development, to create and implement economic development strategy, and to strengthen ties with the private sector. The EDD creates opportunities to improve the skills of Albuquerque's workforce, which helps eliminate barriers in underserved communities and advances job seeker skills enhancing careers and earn higher wages.

Key Industries

According to the Albuquerque EDD, key industries in the Albuquerque MSA with economic-base companies in high-tech industries are a top priority for the EDD. Scientific progress via tech-based companies is critical to job creation, higher standards of living, economic mobility, industry diversity, and a healthful community. In collaboration with community partners, the City of Albuquerque works to recruit businesses and industries to Albuquerque that build on existing strengths. To that end, the City of Albuquerque has launched a robust strategy to solidify Albuquerque's position as a hub for five sectors that closely align with those assets in which the Central Region is naturally the strongest and most competitive:

Film and Digital Media

Albuquerque is the nation's leading alternative for film production outside of L.A. and New York – essentially serving as the industry's Third Coast. MovieMaker magazine ranks Albuquerque as No.1 on its list of best big cities in which to live and work as a moviemaker, calling us a "marquis player" in the industry and a "regional powerhouse."

No other state has more attractive or competitive incentives for the Film Industry:
- Albuquerque offers a 25%-30% refundable tax credit on goods and service expenses.
- The Film Crew Advancement Program gives productions a 50% reimbursement of below-the-line (btl) crafts workers' wages for up to 1,040 hours of work if the job trains them in additional skills that will help advance their careers.
- The Non-Resident Below-the-Line Crew Credit is a 15% credit allowed for the payment of wages for BTL crew who are not New Mexico residents.

The Film Industry in the Central Region is heavily supported by the region's Information Technology and Arts and Entertainment pipeline of workforce talent, hundreds of whom directly benefit through their work supporting the needs of the Film Industry in the Albuquerque MSA.

Space Technology (Aerospace)

Five key assets make Albuquerque a premier low-risk, low-cost, high-value location for any company with commercial aerospace interests.

- **Unequaled Concentration of Intellectual Capital and a Highly Skilled Workforce**: Albuquerque's population is saturated with engineering savvy due to the presence of the Air Force Research Laboratory New Mexico (DoD); Los Alamos National Lab (DoE); Sandia National Labs (DoE); state R&D universities; a substantial private sector; and White Sands Missile Range and Spaceport America, both just a few hours' drive south of the city.
- **Friendly Business Environment**: New Mexico has the lowest property tax in the nation, no inventory tax, and offers industry specific incentives for new jobs and investment. For companies operating in the aviation and aerospace industries, there are tax deductions on gross receipts for aircraft maintenance or remodeling, aircraft manufacturing, and directed energy systems/satellites.
- **Reliable Built-in Customer Base**: Billions of dollars in federal funding flow into the state through the national labs annually. A sizeable portion is spent on R&D contracts and materials.
- **Ideal Climate & Geography for Space-Related Testing & Innovation**: Abundant sun means minimal delays due to weather conditions. High altitude and dry air lowers fuel costs and reduces conditions for corrosion. Superior launch opportunities due to low air traffic and restricted airspace adjacent to White Sands Missile Range. Home to one of only 12 FAA licensed commercial launch sites in the country just south of the city at Spaceport America. Low population density of only 17 persons per square mile.
- **Robust Space Ecosystem**: More than 60 companies representing an array of space application areas, including satellite component, design and manufacture; space launch; data analytics; and services have a presence in New Mexico, and the majority are in Albuquerque. Global industry includes The Boeing Co., Virgin Galactic and Fiore Industries Inc. Richard Branson has established headquarters for his Virgin Galactic's commercial space flight operations just south of Albuquerque at Spaceport America. Local startups supporting the Space Technology Industry include: SolAero Technologies Corp, Descartes Labs, RS21, Robotic Skies and 3D Glass Solutions.

Directed Energy

Directed energy weapons (DEW) use concentrated electromagnetic energy to combat enemy forces and assets. These weapons include high energy lasers and other high-power electromagnetics—such as millimeter wave and high-power microwave weapons. Unlike weapons that fire bullets or missiles, DEWs can respond to a threat in different ways. For example, they can temporarily degrade electronics on a drone or physically destroy it. For more information on DEWs go to https://www.gao.gov/assets/830/825926.pdf.

Albuquerque is the nucleus for directed energy in the United States, having more assets that are considered essential to the industry than any other city.

- Albuquerque has a trifecta of sustained federal government presence focused on Directed Energy R&D.
    - ✓ Air Force Research Laboratory New Mexico's Directed Energy Directorate
    - ✓ Directed Energy Joint Transition Office
    - ✓ Directed Energy Professional Society

- Albuquerque has a geography and climate that provide certainty of operations and an ideal testing environment. These favorable conditions include vast swaths of sparsely populated areas, with few trees; sunny and arid weather, with high altitude; and low risk for natural disasters.

- Albuquerque has a robust private sector ecosystem with companies that include SAIC, Ball Aerospace & Technologies, BAE Systems, Aegis, Booz Allen Hamilton, Verus Research, General Atomics, Leidos, Lockheed Martin, Applied Technology Associates, and more.

- New Mexico is home to nationally renowned partnering opportunities and testing facilities including Sandia and Los Alamos national labs, University of New Mexico, and White Sands Missile Range to the south of the city.

For more info go to Albuquerque's Directed Energy Sector at
https://www.cabq.gov/economicdevelopment/documents/directed-energy_new.pdf

Bioscience

Albuquerque is rapidly becoming a vibrant bioscience hub. Our mid-sized city has the bioscience expertise, research base, infrastructure, organized sector-specific leadership and thriving startup ecosystem to support businesses at the forefront of the industry.

The New Mexico Bioscience Authority serves as catalyst to attract venture capital and entrepreneurs to invest in biotech startups spun off from technology developed at New Mexico's research universities and national labs. The New Mexico Bioscience Authority developed a certification program that helps bioscience companies identify locations in terms of infrastructure/utilities, regulatory framework, and workforce and training. Albuquerque is the first city to have qualified for the program.

The Bioscience Center is an incubator/accelerator for Albuquerque's booming bioscience startup ecosystem and contains offices and 10 wet labs (chemistry and microbiology), which regularly have a waiting list for lease space.

The Central Region offers the Bioscience sector world-class R&D, intellectual property and bioscience expertise, which includes six (6) major research institutions throughout the state, with half located in Albuquerque:

- University of New Mexico (ABQ)
- Sandia National Laboratories (ABQ)
- Air Force Research Laboratory (ABQ)
- New Mexico State University (leader in agricultural bioscience)
- New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology
- Los Alamos National Laboratory

The UNM Health Sciences Center in Albuquerque is the Center of Excellence in the state for the biosciences. They helped create 62 bioscience companies via tech commercialization from 2007-2019. Bioscience-related inventions have seen the largest number of awarded patents by industry in New Mexico (U.S. Patent Office).

For more information about the Albuquerque Economic Development Department key industries go to at https://abqedd.com/albuquerque-key-industries/

Albuquerque Regional Economic Alliance, Inc. (AREA) is a private nonprofit association dedicated to supporting existing business and industry and recruiting new employers to generate quality job opportunities for the Albuquerque metro area.

In addition to the industries referenced above from the City of Albuquerque Economic Development Department, AREA also is promoting the following industries:

- **Renewable Energy** - become the green energy capital of the United States, and the model for other markets in the future
- **Corporate & Professional Services** - capitalize on current trends and attract professional jobs to the region.
- **Manufacturing** - focus on reshoring and onshoring opportunities.

b. Regional analysis of employment needs of employers in existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations (§679.560(a)(1)(ii)

Per the State Plan (page 13), Occupational and Industry projections provide a critical component for assessing New Mexico employers' needs, but they do not assess the current demand for workers. Information for current needs can be obtained through analyses of online job postings. Based on information available through the advertised jobs data from the Workforce Connection Online System, online advertised vacancies in New Mexico averaged 90,000 per month in the most recent 12-month period, or an average of 2.6 advertised job listings per unemployed worker.

To build a thriving and healthy economy for all New Mexicans, the State Plan identified the following employer needs:

- Growing the workforce that supports safe and healthy New Mexican families and communities
- Growing the workforce to modernize New Mexico's infrastructure, and
- Developing a workforce system that anticipates and prepares the workforce for changes in the New Mexican economy.

Employers needs for a workforce that supports safe and healthy New Mexican families and communities entail focusing on the following sectors: healthcare providers, behavioral health providers, early childhood workforce, and first responders.

Exhibit 6 below is a detailed view of the employment needs in the Albuquerque MSA/Central Region, focusing on both existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations. A breakdown and analysis of the key elements are as follows:

Exhibit 6 **Employment Growth Projection vs. Employment Change by Industry**
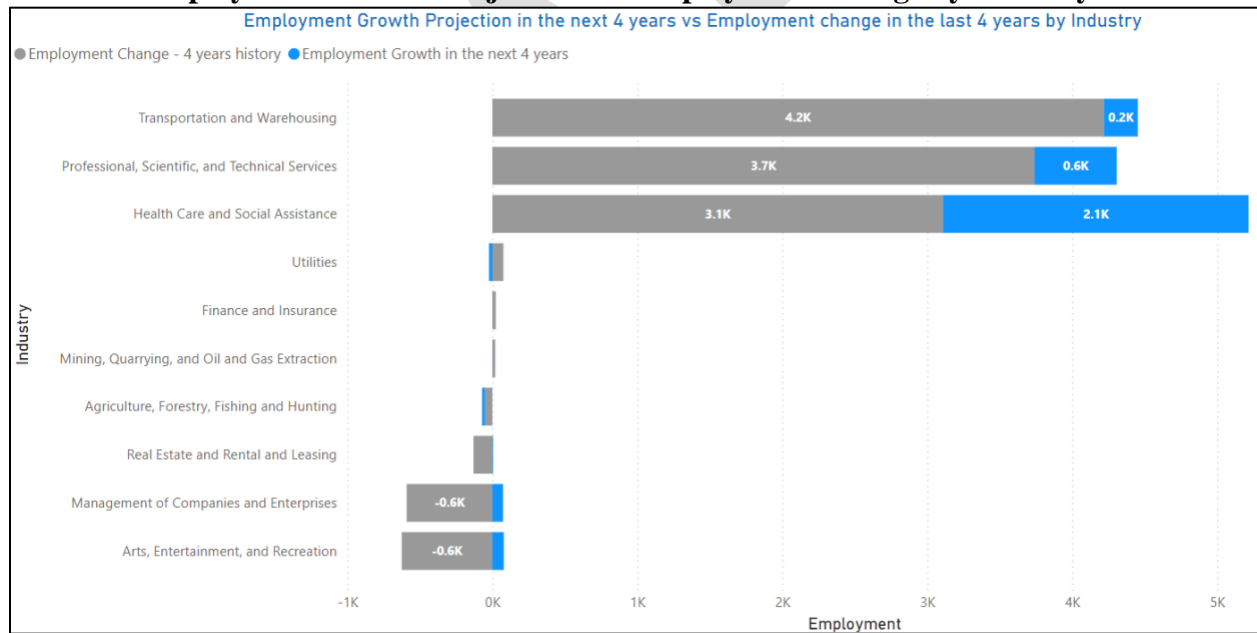
Exhibit 6: Top 10 of Employment Growth Projection vs. Employment Change by Industry
Data exported on Monday, August 12th, 2024
Source: JobsEQ - Employment and projection data as of 2024 Q1

Transportation and Warehousing: As shown in *Exhibit 6* above, over the past four years, this sector showed strong growth potential with an increase of 4,200 jobs, driven by rising demand in logistics and distribution. However, the projection for the next four years indicates a decrease in demand, suggesting a potential plateau or shift in industry dynamics.

Input received asks: Is 4 years being used because of the timeline of the local workforce development plan? With LMI, usually year over year is compared for trend analysis. May be confusing to provide a four-year total of job gains without providing a comparison of the previous 4-year period. Sounds like a dramatic increase in the number of jobs but may be possibly misleading.

Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services: *Exhibit 6* shows this sector experienced substantial growth with 3,700 jobs added over the past four years, highlighting its importance to Albuquerque's economy. However, the projected growth for the next four years is much more modest, with only 567 new jobs expected. This suggests that while the sector remains important, its rapid expansion may slow down.

Health Care and Social Assistance: *Exhibit 6* illustrates this industry continues to show steady growth, with an increase in employment both in the last four years and in the projected future. The sector is expected to add 2,100 jobs in the next four years, reinforcing its critical and stable role in Albuquerque's economy.

Exhibit 7 **Bottom 5 Industries: Employment Growth Projection for the Next 4 Years vs. Employment Change over the Last 4 Years**
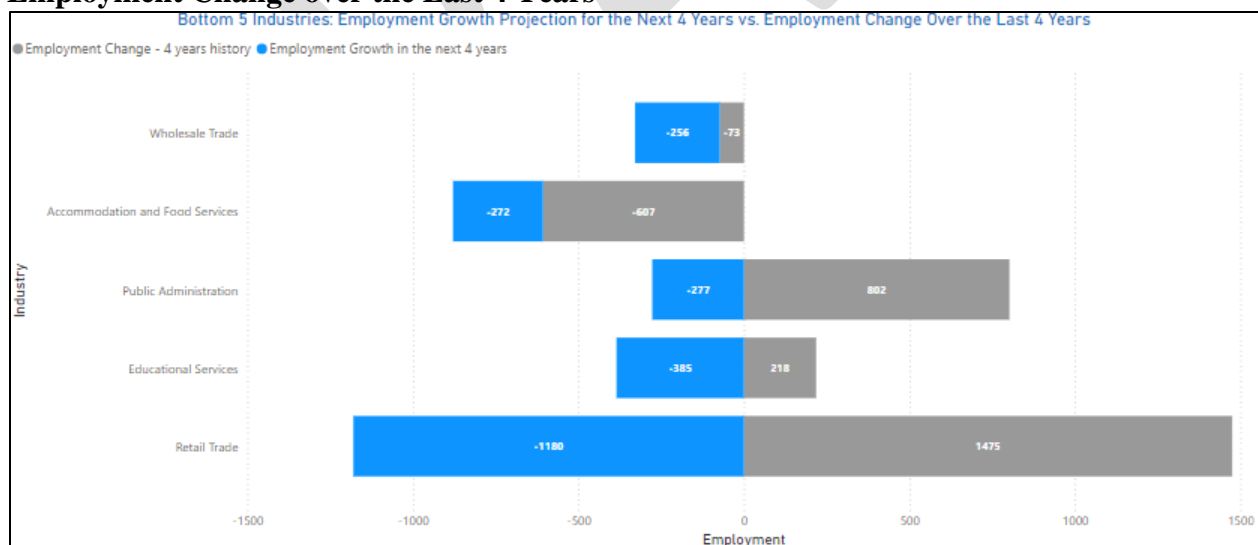
Exhibit 7 Bottom 5 Industries: Employment Growth Projection vs. Employment Change by Industry
Data exported on Monday, August 12th, 2024
Source: JobsEQ - Employment and projection data as of 2024 Q1

Exhibit 7 compares employment growth projections for the next four years with employment changes over the past four years across different industries. This visual focuses on analyzing the five industries with the least growth in Albuquerque MSA. The key observation is that the **Retail Trade** sector, despite a projected recovery, has consistently declined over the past years. This trend is followed by similar patterns in **Educational Services**, **Public Administration**, and **Accommodation and Food Services**. These sectors have experienced job losses historically and, except for a few, are expected to continue facing challenges in the near future.

Current employment by occupation is illustrated in *Exhibit 8* below. As shown, **Office and Administrative Support** lead 2024 Q1 employment numbers with 59,232 jobs. Office and Administrative jobs can cover an impressively wide variety of responsibilities and duties to support an organization. Responsibilities and duties can vary greatly depending on the position and typically include entry level positions such as data entry clerk or receptionist. **Management** at 27,263 jobs, and **Business and Financial Operations** at 24,055 jobs, represent mid- to high-level administrative positions such as operations managers and office managers, to administrative executives like chief operating officers and director of operations, respectively. These jobs dominate the employment landscape, underscoring their broad applicability across multiple industries in Albuquerque, making it difficult to categorize these critical occupations by their specific industry sectors.

Exhibit 8 **Current Employment by Occupation (2024 Q1)**
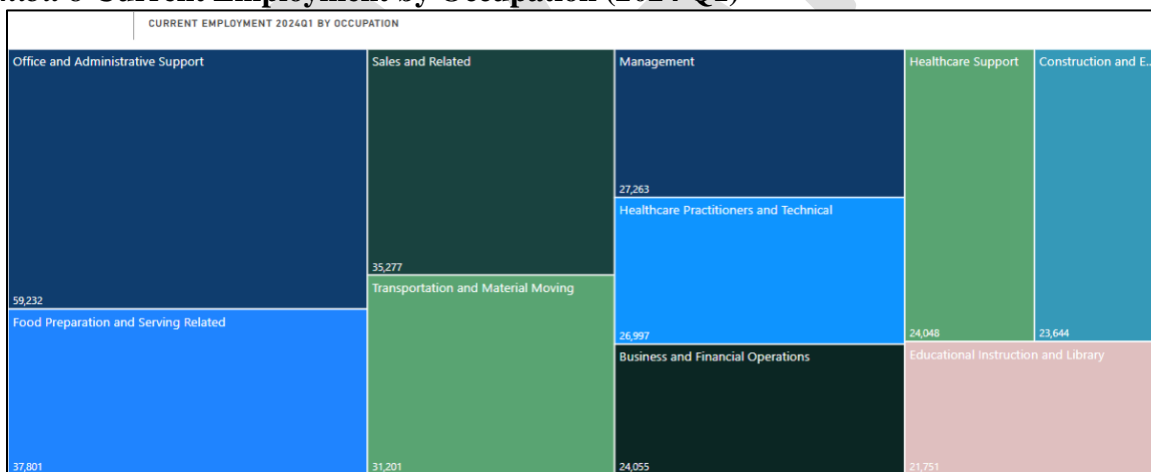
Exhibit 8: Current Employment 2024Q1 by Occupation
Data exported on Monday, August 12th, 2024
Source: JobsEQ - Employment and projection data as of 2024 Q1

As described in *Exhibit 8*, **Food Preparation and Serving Related** jobs in 2024 Q1 represent the second highest employment numbers at 37,801 jobs, with **Sales and Related** Occupations the third highest at 35,277 jobs. Food Preparation and Serving Related occupations, as well as Retail Sales and Related occupations, demonstrate a significant increase in employment, although these roles

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may have less applicability across various industries compared to others. This sector is crucial for the service-oriented aspects of the local economy but often features lower wages and rarely provides job seekers interested in pursuing these fields of work opportunities for WIOA-funded training.

Transportation and Material Moving round out the top four current employment categories with 31,201 jobs in 2024 Q1. The transportation and material moving industry includes many occupations, such as:

- **Transportation workers**-includes drivers for trucks, buses, trains, and taxis, as well as people who operate watercraft.
- **Railroad workers**-includes people who drive trains, coordinate train activities, and operate signals and switches.
- **Material moving machine operators** may use heavy equipment or manual labor to move objects.
- **Port managers** analyze and coordinate supply chains.
- **Highway maintenance workers** maintain roadways, including patching potholes, repairing guardrails, and clearing paths.
- **Air traffic controllers** coordinate the movement of aircraft to keep safe distances between them.
- **Commercial pilots** require a bachelor's degree, a commercial pilot's license, and FAA certification.

Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations (26,997 jobs) combined with **Healthcare Support** (24,048 jobs) represent 51,045 jobs in 2024 Q1. These jobs numbers demonstrate the strong and stable performance of the Healthcare sector, which is a major contributor to the local economy.

Construction and Extraction Occupations, also shown above in *Exhibit 8*, indicate that in 2024 Q1 there were 23,644 jobs in this sector. Although this is a robust representation of current construction and extraction employment in the Central Region, it may not fully represent the current high-demand for all construction and skilled-trades jobs as indicated by job postings.

Per the State Plan, page 19, the construction industries are central to modernizing New Mexico's infrastructure. The construction sector comprises establishments primarily engaged in the construction of buildings or engineering projects (e.g., highways and utility systems). Establishments primarily engaged in the preparation of sites for new construction and establishments primarily engaged in subdividing land for sale as building sites also are included in this sector. Construction work done may include new work, additions, alterations, or maintenance and repairs. According to NMDWS, there were 857 advertised job openings for construction workers across the state in July 2023. Consistently high construction-related job posting data demonstrates the demand for employees in the construction industries. NMDWS

anticipates a marked increase in this number in the coming years because of the national Build Back Better and state infrastructure funding.

Exhibit 9 **Industry Trend of Total Job Openings**
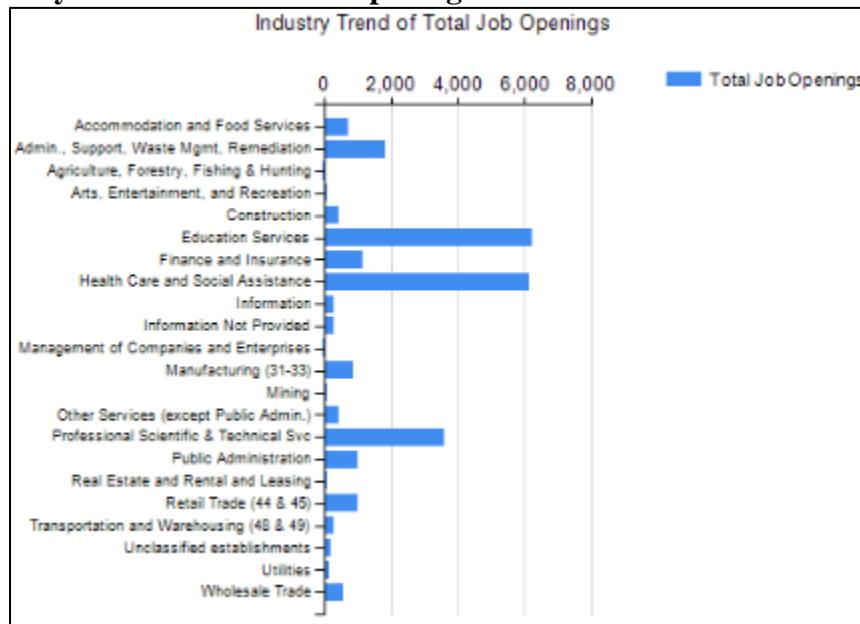
Exhibit 9: Industry Trend of Total Job Openings
Data exported on Tuesday, September 3rd, 2024
Source: WCOS - Total of Job Openings

Through an analysis of job postings from the NMDWS Workforce Connection Online System database (WCOS), it is evident that **Health Care and Social Assistance, Education Services and Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services** continue to exhibit high job openings, reflecting sustained demand in these sectors.

Accommodation and Food Services also show significant job openings, despite being in lower-paying sectors. These jobs are essential for maintaining service-oriented employment in the Albuquerque MSA, contributing to the Central Region's economic diversity and supporting the critical tourism and hospitality industries.

The industries with fewer job openings include **Mining, Management of Companies and Enterprises, Arts, Entertainment and Recreation, and Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting**.

Exhibit 10 Employment by Industry
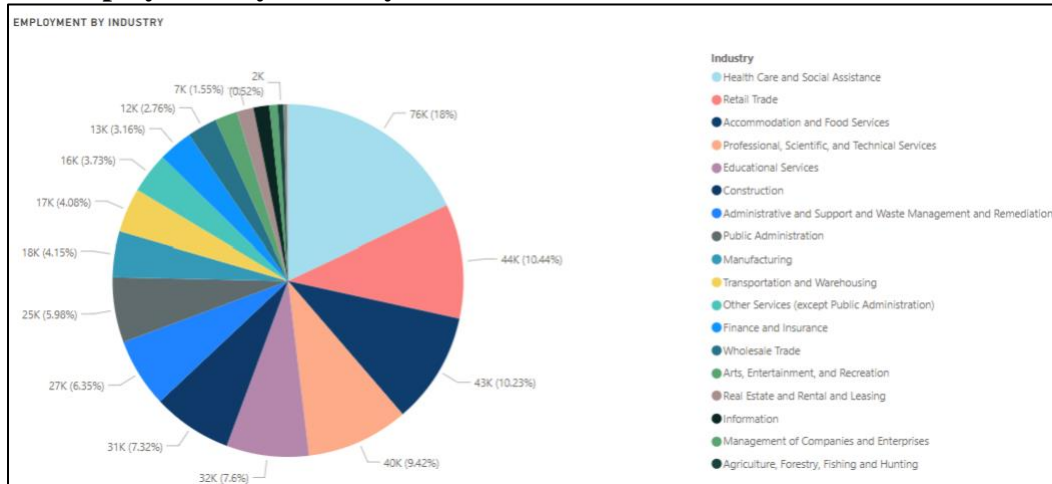
Exhibit 10: Employment by Industry
Data exported on Monday, August 12th, 2024
Source: JobsEQ - Employment and projection data as of 2024 Q1

Exhibit 11 Top 10 of Employment by Industry
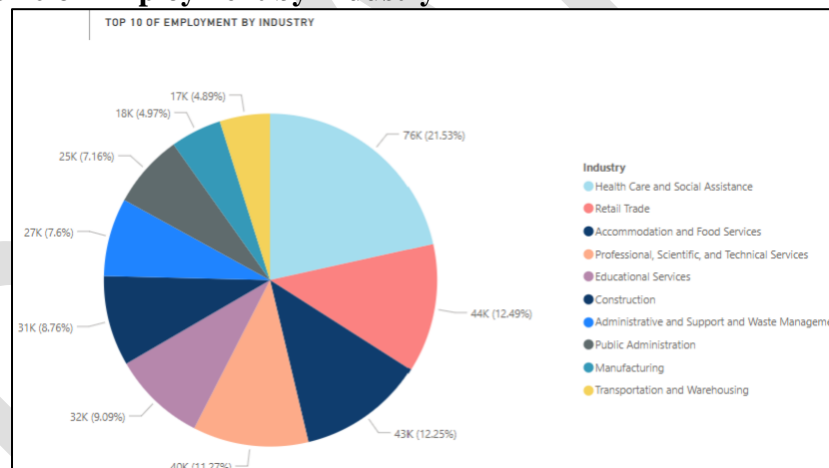
Exhibit 11: Top 10 of Employment by Industry
Data exported on Monday, August 12th, 2024
Source: JobsEQ - Employment and projection data as of 2024 Q1

The pie chart in *Exhibit 11* indicates that **Health Care and Social Assistance leads** the Central Region's employment with 76,000 jobs, underscoring its dominance in the local economy. This is consistent with the trends observed in job postings and overall employment data.

Retail Trade and Accommodation and Food Services also have significant shares of employment as shown in *Exhibit 11* with 44,000 and 43,000 jobs, respectively, and demonstrates

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the importance of these jobs in the local job market and their roles in sustaining Albuquerque's economy.

In the Central Region, employment in the **Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services** represents 40,000 jobs; **Educational Services** represents 32,000 jobs; **Construction** represents 31,000 jobs; and **Administrative and Support and Waste Management** represent 27,000 jobs. **Public Administration** with 25,000 jobs, **Manufacturing** with 18,000 jobs and **Transportation and Warehousing** with 17,000 jobs completes the Central Region's employment numbers in the top 10 Central Region industries.

Exhibit 12 **Industry-Specific Job Data**

Albuquerque MSA

Industry	Jobs	Monthly	Annual	#		%
Total Nonfarm	**423,200**	**300**		**10,400**		**2.5**
Mining & Construction	28,600	400		700		2.5
Manufacturing	17,900	200		1,100		6.5
Trade, Transp. & Utilities	68,400	300		200		0.3
Information	5,300	0		-700		-11.7
Financial Activities	20,800	0		200		1.0
Prof. & Business Svcs	69,300	100		3,300		5.0
Prvt. Ed. & Health Svcs	70,800	300		1,400		2.0
Leisure & Hospitality	48,000	1,400		1,600		3.4
Other Svcs	13,600	100		300		2.3
Government	80,500	-2,500		2,300		2.9

Total Nonfarm Over-the-Year Growth Rates (%)

— US   — NM   — Albuquerque

Exhibit 12: Job Data by Industry
Source: NMDWS Labor Market Review June 2024 – Albuquerque's Employment

Exhibit 12 provides the Central Region's job data by industry and shows the employment growth landscape for the Albuquerque MSA as reported in the NMDWS June 2024 Labor Market Review.

The above chart shows that over the past year, the Albuquerque MSA experienced a growth of 10,400 jobs in total nonfarm employment, representing a 2.5% increase. The private sector saw an increase of 8,100 jobs (2.4%), while the public sector added 2,300 jobs (2.9%).

Notable growth occurred in Professional and Business Services (up 3,300 jobs, or 5.0%), Leisure and Hospitality (up 1,600 jobs, or 3.4%), and Private Education and Health Services (up 1,400 jobs, or 2.0%).

Manufacturing also grew significantly (up 1,100 jobs, or 6.5%), alongside Mining and Construction (up 700 jobs, or 2.5%).

Exhibit 12 shows the Information Industry saw a notable decline, losing 700 jobs (11.7%). This decrease in Information Industry jobs may indicate a need for additional future research to better define and track Information related jobs. It's important to note that Information sector occupations vary greatly and are required at some level within every industry sector. For example, an individual employed within the Healthcare or Film Industry sectors may have a primary role in providing Information Technology and Digital services. As such these Information Industry occupations are likely being tracked and included as Healthcare or Film Industry sector jobs as opposed to Information Industry jobs. The nature of Information related occupations and how they are categorized by industry sector will become clearer as a direct result the work that will be accomplished over the next 4-years to achieve the State Plan Sector Strategy goals.

The public sector growth was driven by local government (up 1,300 jobs, or 3.4%) and state government (up 1,200 jobs, or 4.7%), while federal government employment slightly decreased (down 200 jobs, or 1.3%).

The analysis of Albuquerque, NM MSA's employment landscape reveals a multifaceted economy with both strong growth sectors and areas of potential concern. Key industries such as Health Care and Social Assistance, Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services, and Construction continue to be crucial drivers of economic growth, as evidenced by their significant contributions to employment and their steady demand for workers. These sectors not only provide substantial employment opportunities but also offer stability and resilience, which are vital for sustaining Albuquerque's economic health.

However, the analysis also indicates that while Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services has been a major growth engine in recent years, its future growth is projected to slow, suggesting a need for diversification within this sector or support through targeted workforce development initiatives. The Information sector, which experienced a notable decline, may require closer attention and strategic intervention to prevent further erosion of jobs in this area.

Overall, Albuquerque's economy is bolstered by its strong healthcare sector, growing construction industry, and robust public sector employment. The city's relatively low cost of living continues to enhance the purchasing power of its residents, making it an attractive place for both businesses and workers. To sustain and build upon this momentum, it will be crucial for stakeholders to address emerging challenges, support key industries, and ensure that workforce development efforts are aligned with future job market demands.

c. <mark>**Knowledge and skills needed to meet the employment needs of the employers in the region, including employment need in in-demand industry sectors and occupations (§679.560(a)(2)**</mark>

Throughout the State Plan are references that job seekers lack soft skills. The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) summarized the need all employers have cited as a barrier to hiring: "The [SRC] is concerned about the lack of appropriate soft skills that are increasingly missing in those persons who are seeking to be employed, and most especially amongst younger workers. The Council is concerned that the acquisition of soft skills is necessary to become and remain employed and recommends that the agency provide more training and support in this area." *Source: WIOA State Plan 2024-2027, page 254.*

Per the State Plan, page 36, NMDWS offers a series of free, on demand, on-line, workshops on soft skills in the workplace; however, the lack of effective soft skills training curriculum and providers continues to be a barrier for employers and job seekers alike.

The Future of Work Institute estimates that 65% of children entering primary school today will end up working in completely new job types that don't yet exist. Globally, one billion people are estimated to need reskilling by 2030 because of technology's impacts on work. Over the next 2 years, 48% of the total global workforce will work in a mobile or hybrid arrangement. Our stakeholders took from these facts the need to develop uniquely human foundational skills and the absolute necessity of digital literacy. *Source: WIOA State Plan 2024-2027 Page 73*.

The following provides an overview of the experience, credentials, and skills currently in demand by employers in the Central Region.

Exhibit 13 **Minimum Experience Required**
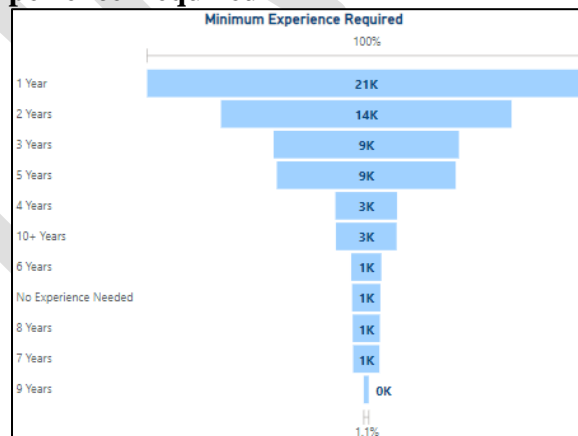
Exhibit 13: Minimum Experience Required
Data exported on Wednesday, August 14th, 2024
Source: JobsEQ – Knowledge and Skills Needed in the Active Job Ads in the Past 12 Months

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The bar chart in *Exhibit 13* indicates that most job postings in the Albuquerque MSA demand candidates with at least 1 year of experience, making it the most common requirement. Interestingly, some positions, though fewer, do not require any experience, indicating entry-level opportunities. However, the prevailing trend suggests that employers increasingly value a minimum of 1 year of relevant experience in the field.

Exhibit 14 **Certificates Needed**

Exhibit 14: Certificates Needed in the Active Job Ads
Data exported on Wednesday, August 14, 2024
Source: JobsEQ – Knowledge and Skills Needed in the Active Job Ads in the Past 12 Months

The pie chart in *Exhibit 14* highlights the distribution of certificates required across job postings. Given that the Healthcare and Social Assistance industry leads in both job demand and employment, it's unsurprising to see certifications related to healthcare dominate the list. The most common certifications include:
  ✓ *Basic Life Support (BLS)*
  ✓ *Registered Nurse (RN)*
  ✓ *Certification in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)*
  ✓ *Advanced Cardiac Life Support Certification (ACLS)*
These certifications are essential for securing positions in the healthcare sector, which continues to be a significant employer in the region.

In addition, the demand for truck drivers remains high across most of the Central Region's top 10 employers by industry (please see above *Exhibit 11*). To gain employment as a commercial truck driver, individuals are required to obtain a Commercial Driver's License (CDL). Commercial vehicles include heavy-duty trucks, buses, and trailers, as well as any vehicle that carries hazardous materials or more than 15 passengers.

Exhibit 15 Top 10 Soft Skills:
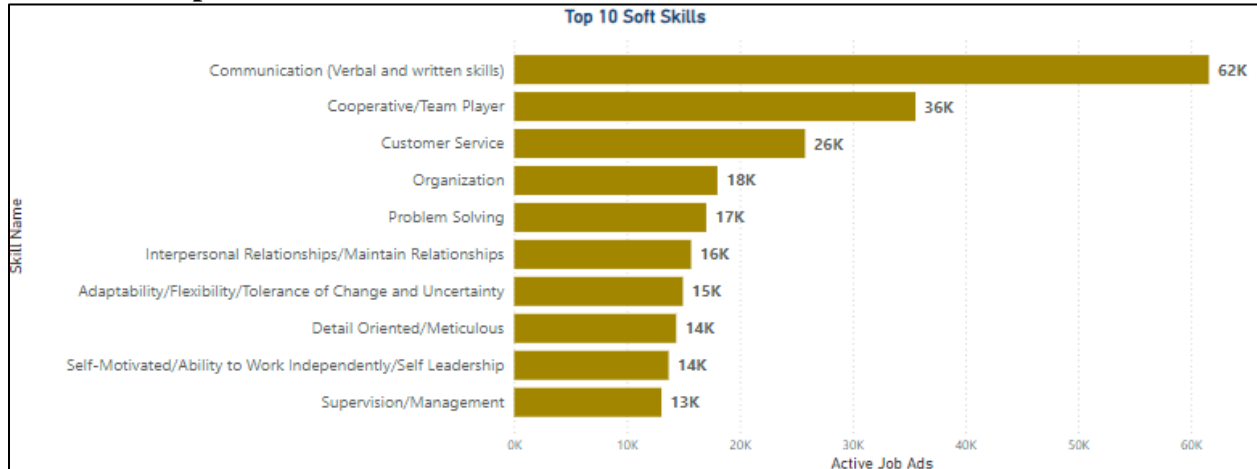
Exhibit 15: Top 10 Soft Skills in the Active Job Ads
Data exported on Wednesday, August 14, 2024
Source: JobsEQ – Knowledge and Skills Needed in the Active Job Ads in the Past 12 Months

The bar chart in ***Exhibit 15*** outlines the top 10 soft skills sought after in Central Region job postings.

- **Communication (Verbal and Written Skills)** emerges as the most sought-after skill, reflecting the high value employers place on clear and effective communication.
- Soft skills like **Cooperative/Team Player** and **Customer Service** are also highly valued, highlighting the importance of emotional intelligence in fostering teamwork, customer relations, and leadership within organizations.
- **Organization and Problem Solving** are crucial for managing tasks and addressing challenges efficiently, which are skills that closely align with critical thinking.
- The emphasis on **Adaptability/Flexibility** suggests that employers are looking for individuals who can thrive in a rapidly changing job market by being resilient and open to change.
- **Team player/cooperative** skills are also highlighted, indicating that leadership and the ability to influence others are essential, even in non-managerial roles.

Exhibit 16 **Top 10 Hard Skills:**
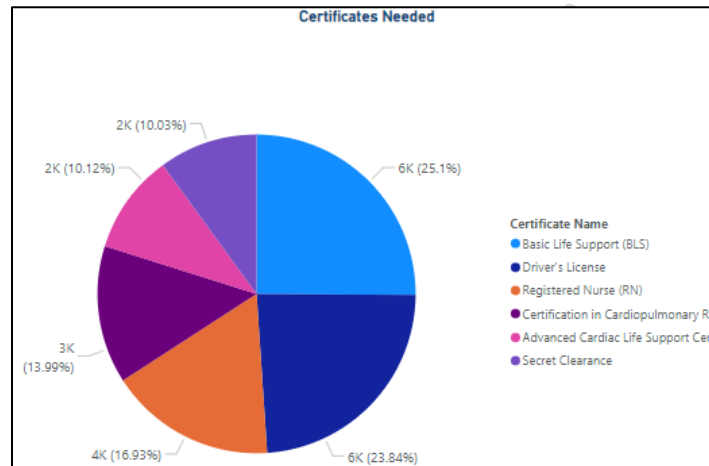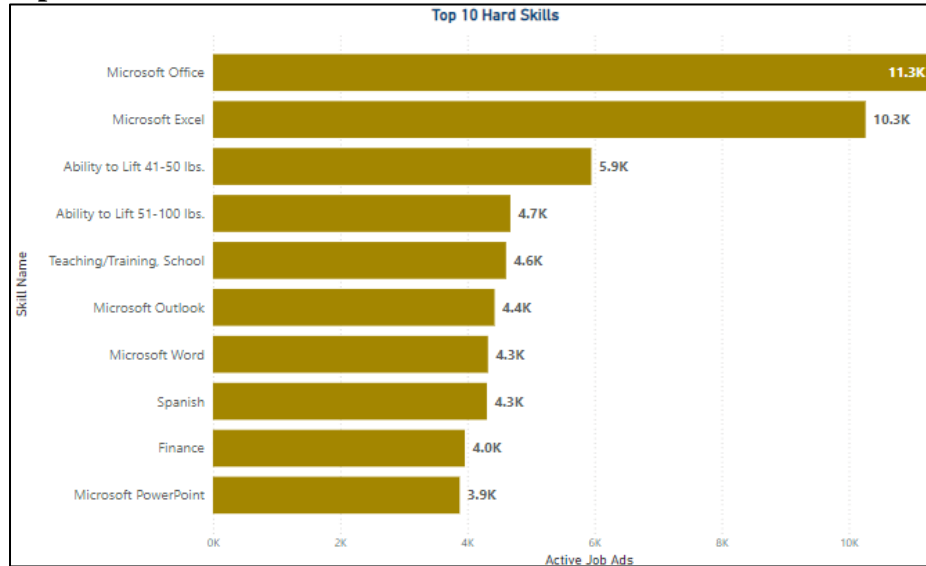

Exhibit 16: Top 10 Hard Skills in the Active Job Ads
Data exported on Wednesday, August 14th, 2024
Source: JobsEQ – Knowledge and Skills Needed in the Active Job Ads in the Past 12 Months

The bar chart in *Exhibit 16* lists the top 10 hard skills required in the Central Region job postings, paired with their associated median wages.

- Computer skills are the most common needed hard skills, with tools like **Microsoft Office, Excel, Outlook, and Word** being in high demand.
- The need for proficiency in these digital tools underscores the growing importance of **data literacy** and the ability to organize, analyze, and present data effectively.
- Although specific AI/ML skills aren't highlighted in this snapshot, the demand for technical proficiency in tools like Excel indicates the foundational role these skills play in the early stages of digital transformation within the region.

The above data highlights the critical skills, experience, and certifications that are currently in demand among employers in the Central Region. To meet these employment needs, it is essential for job seekers to develop and demonstrate proficiency in both soft and technical skills, with particular emphasis on digital tools like Microsoft Office, communication, and customer service. Additionally, for those interested in the healthcare industry, obtaining relevant certifications is crucial for entering and succeeding in these high-demand sectors.

> **d. Analysis of the regional workforce, including current labor force employment and unemployment data, information on labor market trends, and educational and skill levels of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment (§679.560(a)(3)**

Exhibit 17 **Unemployment Rate in Albuquerque (Last 4 Years)**

Exhibit 17 shows unemployment rate trends in Albuquerque NM MSA over the last four years, highlighting a notable decrease from approximately 8% in 2020 to around 3% in 2024. However, a slight uptick is observed towards the end of the period (4.51%), suggesting potential emerging challenges or cyclical changes in the labor market. The general trend indicates a strong recovery and a relatively healthy labor market in Albuquerque. However, the recent increase in unemployment warrants close monitoring to determine if this is a temporary fluctuation or the start of a new trend.
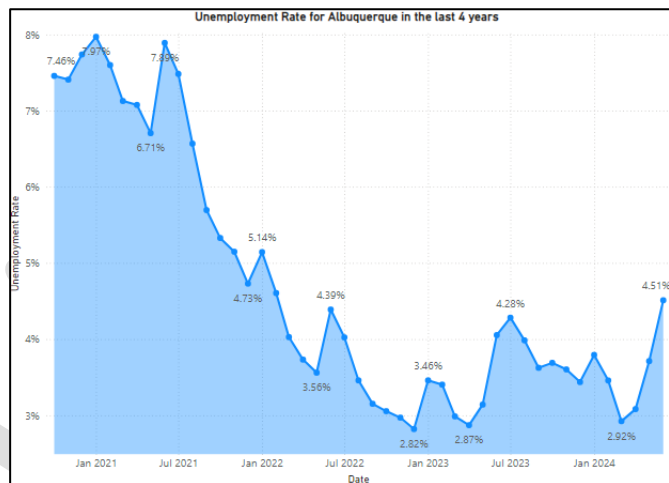
Exhibit 17: Unemployment Rate for Albuquerque in the last 4 years
Source: Labor Market Review June 2024 (DWS)

Exhibit 18 **Unemployment Rate by Area**

Unemployment Rate %				
MSAs	**July 2024**	**June 2024**	**July 2023**	**OTY % Change**
Albuquerque	5.1	4.5	4.3	0.8
Farmington	6.2	5.7	5.1	1.1
Las Cruces	5.8	5.5	4.9	0.9
Santa Fe	4.7	4.1	4.1	0.6

Exhibit 18: Unemployment Rate % by Region
Source: Labor Market Review July 2024 (NMDWS)

The table in *Exhibit 18* shows unemployment rates as of July 2024 for different MSAs in New Mexico, with Albuquerque MSA's unemployment rate (5.1%) being slightly lower than other areas like Farmington and Las Cruces but higher than Santa Fe. Albuquerque's labor market is relatively strong but has increased since June 2024 and July 2023. It's important to note that Albuquerque is the largest region among those compared, with more employment opportunities, which may affect the overall unemployment rate.

Exhibit 19 **Estimate of Population 16 years old and Over in the Labor Force**
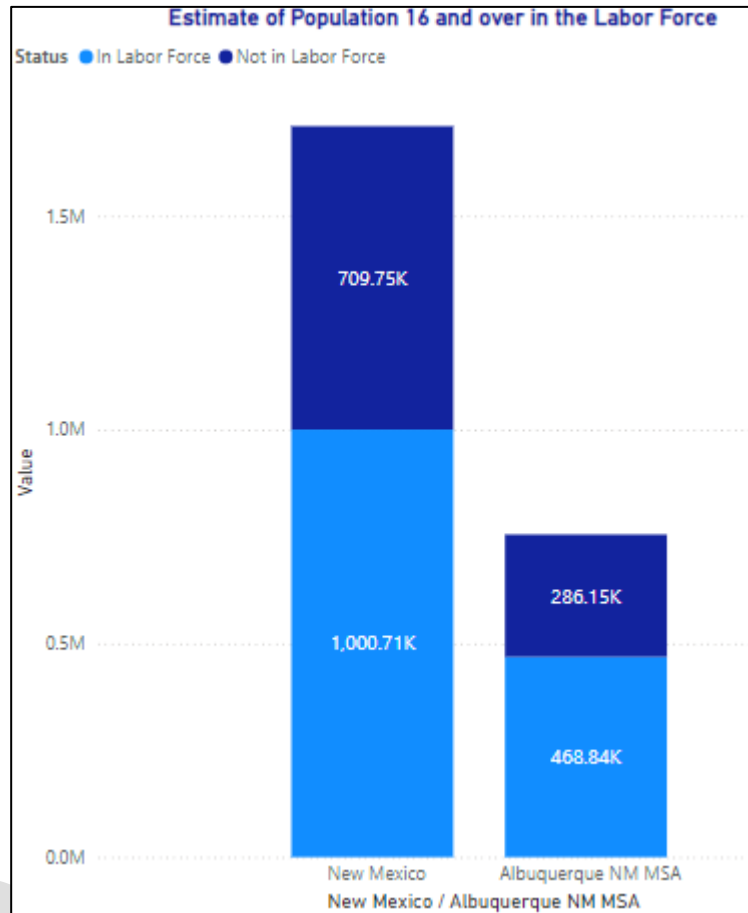
Exhibit 19: Estimate of Population 16 and over in the Labor Force
Source: Census Bureau of NM -
https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDP1Y2022.DP03?t=Employment%20and%20Labor%20Force%20Status&g=040XX0
0US35_310XX00US10740

The bar chart in *Exhibit 19* compares the population in the labor force versus those not in the labor force for New Mexico and the Albuquerque MSA.

In the Central Region the population of the labor force is approximately 755,000 individuals aged 16 years and over. Of these individuals approximately 469,000 are in the labor force, whereas approximately 286,000 individuals aged 16 or older are not participating in the labor force.

In New Mexico there are approximately 1.7 million people in the labor force aged 16 years and over. Approximately 710,000 individuals are not participating in the labor force.

In both the Central Region and the State, the significant portion of the population not in the labor force could be due to a variety of reasons including students unable or unwilling to work, individuals working in the gig economy (a labor market characterized by the prevalence of short-term contracts or freelance work as opposed to permanent jobs), retirees, or individuals unable to work to due to disabilities or incarceration.

Exhibit 20 **Openings by Educational Levels**

Education Levels		
Minimum Education Level	**New Job Ads**	
High school diploma or equivalent	24,113	
Bachelor's degree	19,341	
Associate's degree	4,791	
Master's degree	2,618	
Doctoral or professional degree	1,385	
Unspecified/other	51,171	

Exhibit 20: Source: JobsEQ® Data reflect online job postings for the 12-month period from 7/11/2023 to 7/11/2024, meeting the following criteria: This region: Albuquerque, NM MSA

Exhibit 20 shows the number of job openings by educational level and indicates most job openings require a high school diploma or a bachelor's degree, but a significant portion of job ads do not specify educational requirements. This suggests that many jobs may be accessible to a broader range of applicants, depending on their skills and experience. Also, this data reflects that people without high school diploma or GED will have barriers to finding employment.

The overall employment situation is positive, with high employment rates and a relatively low unemployment rate. However, there are challenges, such as the July 2024 increase in unemployment and the large portion of the population not participating in the labor force.

Exhibit 21 **Population by Year in Albuquerque NM MSA (2017-2021)**
The population in the Albuquerque MSA was 899,000 per American Community Survey data for 2017-2021 and in the 2022 Census the population in the Albuquerque MSA was 923,925.
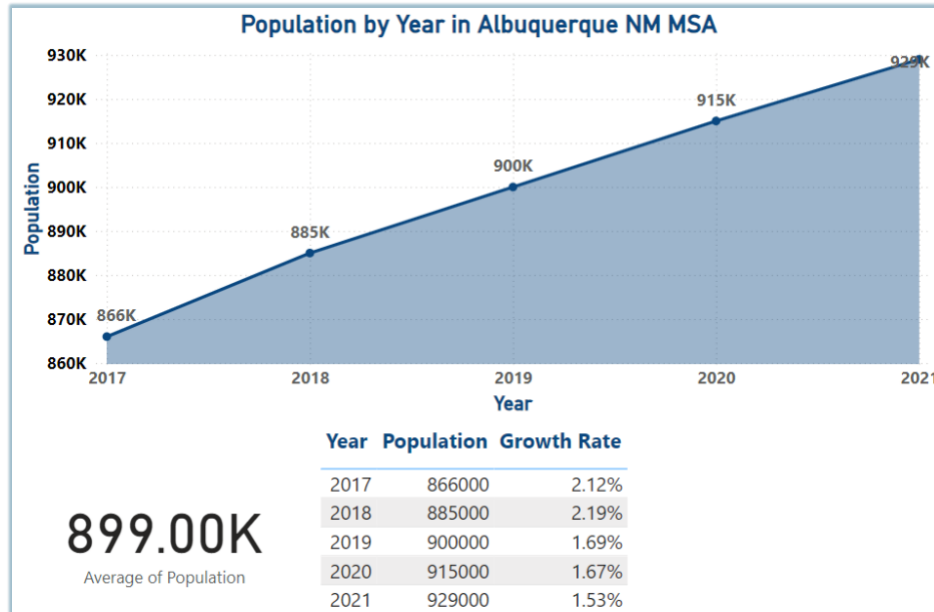
Exhibit 21: Population by Year in Albuquerque NM MSA (2017-2021)
Source: MacroTrends - https://shorturl.at/kwkYb

Please remove the .00 from the 899.00K in the above graphic.

Exhibit 22 **Educational Attainment in Albuquerque NM MSA**
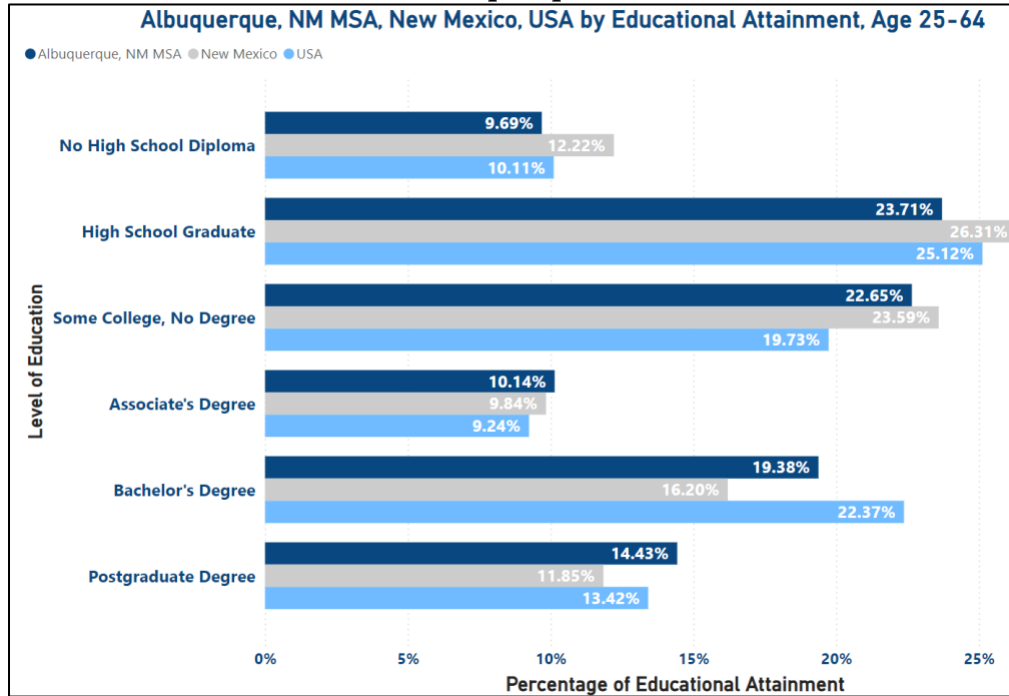
Exhibit 22: Educational Attainment in Albuquerque NM MSA
Exported on: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 12:14 PM
Source: JobsEQ – Demographic Profile - American Community Survey 2018-2022

Exhibit 22 illustrates the educational attainment of individuals aged 25-64 in the Central Region, compared to New Mexico and the USA. The data demonstrates the following:

- **No High School Diploma**: 9.69% of the population in the Albuquerque MSA do not have a high school diploma, which is slightly lower than the state average (10.11%) and significantly lower than the national average (12.22%).
- **High School Graduate**: 23.71% of the Central Region population are high school graduates, which is slightly lower than both the state (26.31%) and national averages (25.12%).
- **Some College, No Degree**: 22.65% of the Central Region population have attended some college but did not earn a degree. This percentage is slightly lower than the state average (23.59%) and the national average (23.56%).
- **Associate's Degree:** 10.14% of the Central Region population hold an associate's degree, which is comparable to the state (9.84%) and national averages (9.24%).
- **Bachelor's Degree:** 19.38% of the population in the Albuquerque MSA hold a bachelor's degree. This percentage is higher than the state average (16.20%) but lower than the national average (22.37%).

- **Postgraduate Degree**: 14.43% of the Central Region population hold a postgraduate degree, which is higher than the state average (11.85%) but slightly lower than the national average (13.42%).

This data suggests that Albuquerque has a relatively well-educated population compared to the state averages, especially in terms of higher education, but slightly lags the national averages in certain categories like bachelor's and postgraduate degrees.

Exhibit 23 Income in the Central Region

As shown in *Exhibit 23* below, the per capita income in the Albuquerque MSA is $37,890, which is about 90% of the national average ($41,804). The median household income is $66,392, also about 90% of the national average ($74,755).
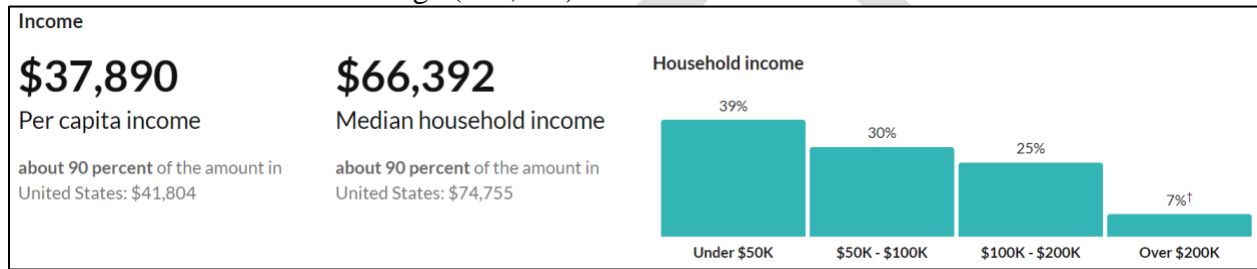
Exhibit 23: Income in the Central Region
Source: Census Reporter - https://censusreporter.org/profiles/31000US10740-albuquerque-nm-metro-area/

Exhibit 24: Housing Units and Median House Value in the Central Region
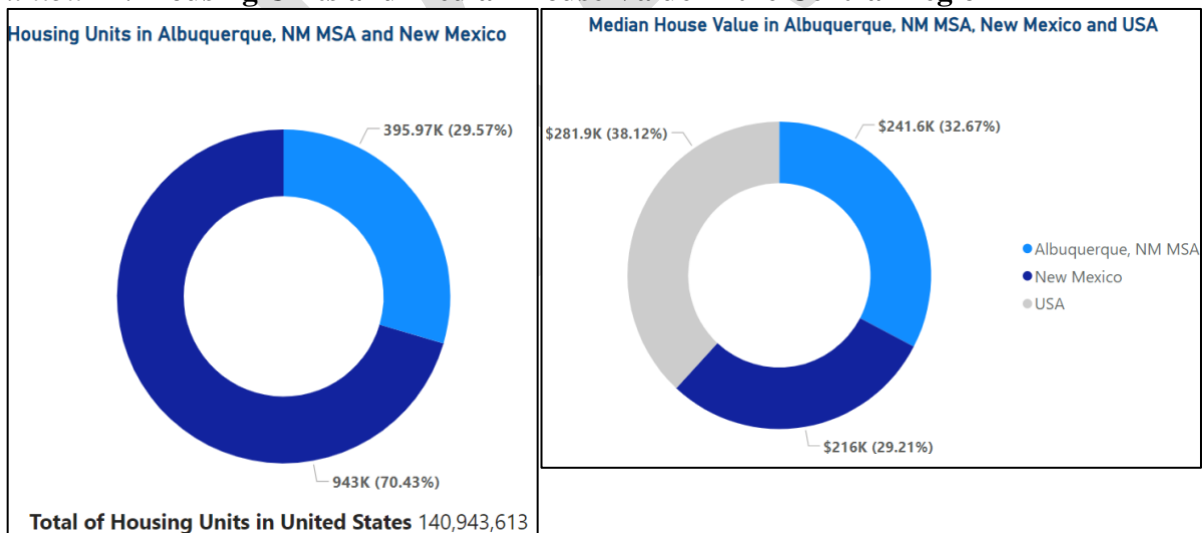
Exhibit 24: Housing Units and Median House Value in Albuquerque NM MSA
Exported on: Wednesday, September 4, 2024, 12:14 PM
Source: JobsEQ – Demographic Profile - American Community Survey 2018-2022

As illustrated above in *Exhibit 24*, the Albuquerque MSA has approximately 396,000 housing units, which represents approximately 30% of the total housing units in New Mexico. New Mexico has a total of 943,000 housing units, representing 36.46% of the nation's housing.

In the Albuquerque MSA, the median house value is $241,600, which is higher than the state average of $216,000 but lower than the national average of $281,900.

These exhibits illustrate that while Albuquerque's income levels are slightly below the national average, the housing market offers relatively affordable options compared to the broader United States, with median house values significantly below the national average. This balance between income and housing costs can impact the overall economic outlook and quality of life in the region.

Exhibit 25 **Demographics Comparisons Central Region, State, and USA**

| Summary						
	Percent			Value		
	Albuquerque, NM MSA	New Mexico	USA	Albuquerque, NM MSA	New Mexico	USA
Demographics						
Population (ACS)				915,968	2,112,463	331,097,593
Male	49.5%	49.8%	49.6%	453,044	1,052,858	164,200,298
Female	50.5%	50.2%	50.4%	462,924	1,059,605	166,897,295
Median Age[2]				39.0	38.6	38.5
Under 18 Years	21.5%	22.4%	22.1%	196,490	473,478	73,213,705
18 to 24 Years	9.1%	9.7%	9.4%	82,904	205,077	31,282,896
25 to 34 Years	13.9%	13.2%	13.7%	127,325	279,478	45,388,153
35 to 44 Years	13.3%	12.5%	12.9%	121,370	264,341	42,810,359
45 to 54 Years	11.8%	11.2%	12.4%	108,149	237,076	41,087,357
55 to 64 Years	13.0%	12.8%	12.9%	118,691	270,341	42,577,475
65 to 74 Years	10.7%	10.9%	9.7%	97,689	229,716	32,260,679
75 Years and Over	6.9%	7.2%	6.8%	63,350	152,956	22,476,969
Race: White	60.6%	59.2%	65.9%	555,140	1,250,614	218,123,424
Race: Black or African American	2.6%	2.1%	12.5%	24,229	44,894	41,288,572
Race: American Indian and Alaska Native	6.0%	9.4%	0.8%	54,872	198,140	2,786,431
Race: Asian	2.4%	1.6%	5.8%	21,590	34,400	19,112,979
Race: Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	984	1,849	624,863
Race: Some Other Race	10.1%	11.1%	6.0%	92,277	233,978	20,018,544
Race: Two or More Races	18.2%	16.5%	8.8%	166,876	348,588	29,142,780
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	49.9%	49.8%	18.7%	456,676	1,051,626	61,755,866

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Summary						
	Percent			Value		
	Albuquerque, NM MSA	New Mexico	USA	Albuquerque, NM MSA	New Mexico	USA
Population Growth						
Population (Pop Estimates)[4]				922,296	2,114,371	334,914,895
Population Annual Average Growth[4]	0.2%	0.1%	0.6%	1,715	2,154	1,885,495
People per Square Mile[4]				99.3	17.4	94.8
Economic						
Labor Force Participation Rate and Size (civilian population 16 years and over)	60.8%	57.2%	63.3%	449,143	962,817	167,857,207
Prime-Age Labor Force Participation Rate and Size (civilian population 25-54)	80.9%	77.2%	82.8%	286,399	596,292	106,380,520
Armed Forces Labor Force	0.6%	0.8%	0.5%	4,370	13,880	1,236,378
Veterans, Age 18-64	5.8%	5.5%	4.3%	31,938	67,738	8,636,019
Veterans Labor Force Participation Rate and Size, Age 18-64	75.4%	73.1%	77.1%	24,095	49,493	6,656,238
Median Household Income[2]				$63,739	$58,722	$75,149
Per Capita Income				$36,043	$32,667	$41,261
Mean Commute Time (minutes)				24.4	23.1	26.7
Commute via Public Transportation	1.0%	0.7%	3.8%	4,424	6,747	5,945,723
Educational Attainment, Age 25-64						
No High School Diploma	9.7%	12.2%	10.1%	46,085	128,413	17,373,867
High School Graduate	23.7%	26.3%	25.1%	112,730	276,543	43,176,248
Some College, No Degree	22.6%	23.6%	19.7%	107,707	247,970	33,916,989
Associate's Degree	10.1%	9.8%	9.2%	48,225	103,426	15,886,884
Bachelor's Degree	19.4%	16.2%	22.4%	92,154	170,333	38,451,123
Postgraduate Degree	14.4%	11.8%	13.4%	68,634	124,551	23,058,233
Housing						
Total Housing Units				395,967	943,149	140,943,613
Median House Value (of owner-occupied units)[2,5]				$241,599	$216,000	$281,900
Homeowner Vacancy	1.0%	1.3%	1.1%	2,424	7,520	931,393
Rental Vacancy	6.1%	6.7%	5.5%	7,777	18,578	2,623,236
Renter-Occupied Housing Units (% of Occupied Units)	32.3%	31.3%	35.2%	118,861	254,673	44,238,593
Occupied Housing Units with No Vehicle Available (% of Occupied Units)	6.0%	5.8%	8.3%	22,212	46,831	10,474,870

Summary						
	Percent			Value		
	Albuquerque, NM MSA	New Mexico	USA	Albuquerque, NM MSA	New Mexico	USA
Social						
Poverty Level (of all people)	15.6%	18.3%	12.5%	140,829	378,651	40,521,584
Households Receiving Food Stamps/SNAP	16.2%	18.1%	11.5%	59,697	147,063	14,486,880
Enrolled in Grade 12 (% of total population)	1.3%	1.4%	1.4%	12,322	29,089	4,476,703
Disconnected Youth[3]	3.9%	4.1%	2.5%	1,855	4,794	430,795
Children in Single Parent Families (% of all children)	42.1%	44.0%	34.0%	77,560	193,748	23,568,955
Uninsured	8.1%	9.5%	8.7%	73,501	197,546	28,315,092
With a Disability, Age 18-64	13.2%	13.9%	10.5%	72,638	169,940	20,879,820
With a Disability, Age 18-64, Labor Force Participation Rate and Size	45.3%	41.8%	45.5%	32,883	71,076	9,492,098
Foreign Born	9.1%	9.2%	13.7%	83,646	194,320	45,281,071
Speak English Less Than Very Well (population 5 yrs and over)	7.2%	8.8%	8.2%	62,153	176,533	25,704,846

Demographic Profile in Albuquerque NM MSA
Exported on: Wednesday, September 4, 2024, 12:14 PM
Source: JobsEQ – Demographic Profile - American Community Survey 2018-2022

Exhibit 26 **Population by age in Albuquerque NM MSA**
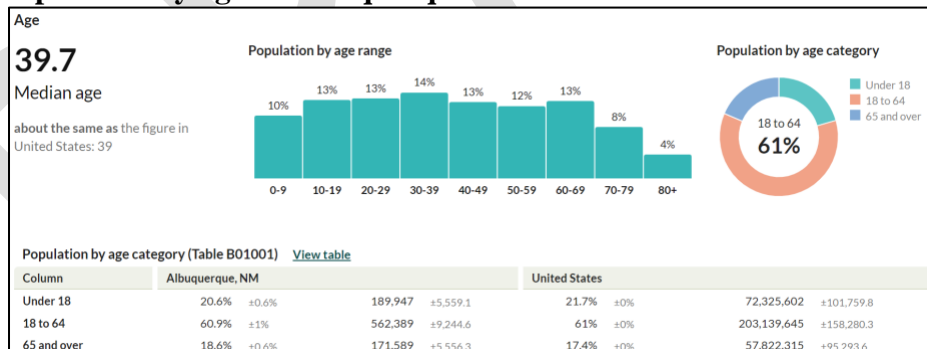
Exhibit 26: Population by age in Albuquerque NM MSA
Source: Census Reporter - https://censusreporter.org/profiles/31000US10740-albuquerque-nm-metro-area/

As shown above in *Exhibit 26*, the median age in the Central Region is 39.7 years. The majority of the population falls within the 18 to 64 age range, making up 61% of the population. Among age groups, the 30-39 range has the largest share, followed by those under 18, who make up 20.6% of the population.

Exhibit 27 **Population by Sex, Race & Ethnicity in the Central Region**
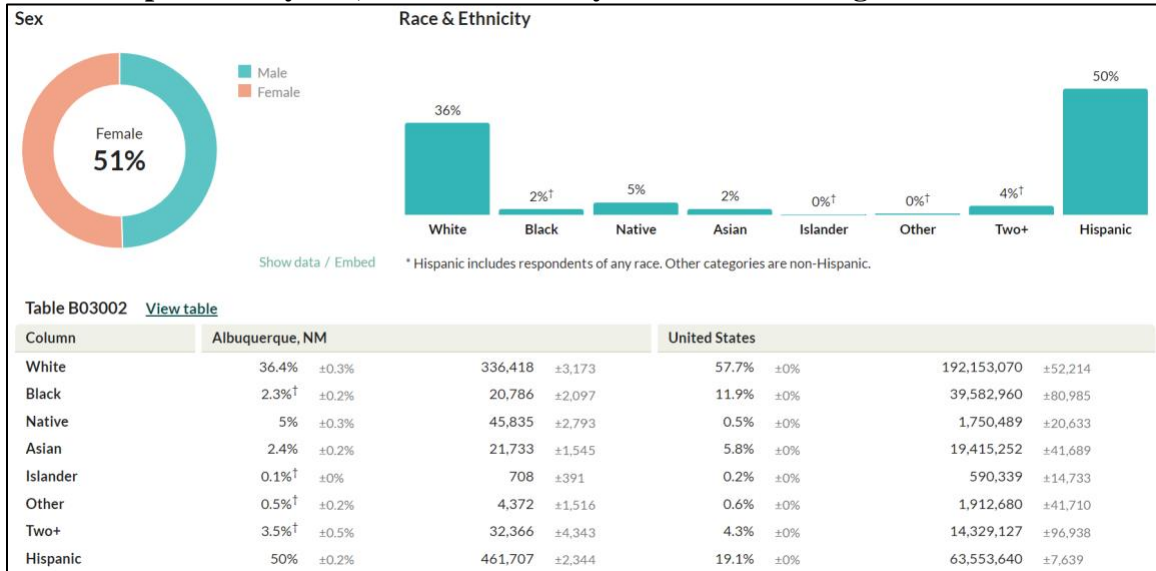
Exhibit 27: Population by sex, race & ethnicity in Albuquerque NM MSA
Source: Census Reporter - https://censusreporter.org/profiles/31000US10740-albuquerque-nm-metro-area/

As shown above in *Exhibit 27*, 51% of the population in the Central Region is female. The population is also notably diverse, with 50% identifying as Hispanic, followed by 36% identifying as White.

2. **Analysis of Workforce Development Activities (§679.560(a)(4)**

   A. **Analysis of workforce development activities, including education and training in the region. Include strengths and weaknesses of workforce development activities and capacity to provide the workforce development activities to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment, and the employment needs of employers (§679.560(a)(4)**

The Workforce Connection of Central New Mexico (WCCNM) connects individuals with career opportunities and partners with employers for workforce success by overseeing the delivery of workforce development services through the New Mexico Workforce Connection (NMWC) Centers, also known as American Job Centers. The NMWC Centers in the Central Region provide a wide range of workforce development activities and programs available to adults, dislocated workers, youth, young adults, individuals with disabilities, and employers. Individuals receiving services must meet specific eligibility requirements as specified in WCCNM Policy, which is available by visiting www.wccnm.org/wccnm-board.

WCCNM Local Workforce Development Plan Program Years 2024-2027

The activities in each NMWC Center in the Central Region are carried out through many different workforce and social services partner programs, each with their own funding sources from federal, state, and/or county grants and each with unique regulations defining the allowable use the funding. With multiple programs having different performance and operating requirements, coordination of all activities is required to help ensure grant-funded employer and participant services are in alignment with WCCNM and WIOA policy and procedure and to eliminate any duplication of federal and state funded program services. The WCCNM Operation Manager's primary role is to provide functional oversight of and communication with each partner to facilitate all program activities, and break down siloed programs, by encouraging collaboration, referrals and co-enrollments among all Central Region workforce programs. All of which maximize limited funding resources and expand access to critical services available to and needed by employers and job seekers. The NMWC Center program activities include but are not limited to the following:

WCCNM Workforce Activities:

- **Career Services**: Wagner-Peyser (Title III services) and other various partners in the Central Region, provide basic and individualized career services, with the majority provided by core partners within the NMWC Centers. Career services include a wide range of service types including those specific to adults, dislocated workers, and youth. Examples include assessments, job search assistance, career counseling, referrals to other programs and services, provision of labor market information, interview and resume workshops, individual employment planning, career planning, financial literacy, mentoring, and more.

- **Supportive and Training Services**: The NMWC Centers in the Central Region offer work-based learning opportunities as well as occupational training through career pathways, stackable credentials, and traditional programs. Multiple programs and partners provide supportive services, which include subsidized transportation, childcare, healthcare/behavioral and substance abuse counseling, housing, clothing and food assistance, and training and education services. Training services are provided through a variety of programs including the WIOA Adult & Dislocated Worker Program, the Youth Program, CHANCES (Pathway Home 3, Reentry Employment Opportunity grant) awarded to WCCNM July 2022), Pathways to Infrastructure Jobs (H1B grant awarded to WCCNM September 2023), Vets, and Trade Adjustment Assistance Act Program.

  As with all workforce development programs, eligibility and program requirements are unique to each funding source. However, the programs and partners work together to coordinate service delivery to effectively maximize resources through referrals and co-enrollments. Examples of training services include tuition assistance for post-secondary education programs, short-term training programs, on-the-job training, adult and youth apprenticeships, and internships.

- **Business Services**: The Business Services teams strive to coordinate activities and services within the workforce system to provide a comprehensive and streamlined approach that reduces duplication and maximizes resources to employers. Business services include but are not limited to recruitment and hiring assistance, assessments for applicants and for existing employees, on-the- job training, apprenticeships and apprenticeship pathway programs, work experiences, internships, incumbent worker training, customized training, and more.

- **Apprenticeships:** Beginning in January 2024, WCCNM has focused on enhancing its understanding of registered apprenticeship programs (RAPs) and on the strategic implementation of RAPs through continued developmental, organizational, and outreach activities. WCCNM participates in collaborative meetings, conferences and hiring events. These engagements provide valuable networking opportunities, foster the exchange of ideas, and allow WCCNM to stay informed on apprenticeship program data management, funding, and resources. WCCNM also participates in various RAP training sessions and webinars in order to enhance understanding of RAP trends, standards, and best practices. These sessions enable WCCNM to explore new resource material, identify potential sponsors, and innovate its approaches to apprenticeship program development, outreach, and recruitment.

  WCCNM's Apprenticeship outreach efforts include employer, sponsor and partner organization site visits, hosting and facilitating National Youth Apprenticeship Week, attending job fairs, career fairs, and the creation of detailed apprenticeship informational documents. These documents help to support and guide Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) participants and individuals interested in apprenticeship program opportunities. RESEA is a voluntary program that helps people who receive unemployment insurance (UI) benefits find jobs and reintegrate into the workforce.

  Moving forward, WCCNM's Apprenticeship activities will focus on expanding apprenticeship opportunities by refining its approach to engage and recruit prospective apprenticeship sponsors as well as by the continued development of informational resources to support both prospective and new apprentices. WCCNM plans to intensify its outreach efforts to ensure effective event execution and community engagement across New Mexico. Participation in job fairs, youth career fairs, and career exploration events will remain a priority in outreach activities. Additionally, WCCNM will continue to develop and create apprenticeship training modules and educational resources, including innovative tools like Oculus headset modules, to enhance career exploration opportunities. The strategic focus will include strengthening partnerships, optimizing data management practices, and identifying new opportunities for collaboration and funding to sustain and grow both registered and non-registered apprenticeship programs.

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- **Common Intake and Referral Initiative:** Many programs and services in the Central Region have their own set of reporting requirements and performance measures. Each program, including some core partners, have their own unique case management systems with different intake and data entry requirements. The lack of a common intake, referral, and shared data collection system across the workforce system creates an additional burden for employers, job seekers, and all NMWC Center customers and staff. For example, the use of different case management systems by multiple partners creates a duplication of effort and services, including the requirement for customers to complete multiple assessments, duplication of program documentation requirements, and conflicting direction for participants and program service providers. In most cases, these various program application, intake and assessment requirements and forms are similar or identical to those required by most service programs, and yet are not shared among partners during program referral or co-enrollment activities. The result is the requirement for customers and service providers to repeat the completion of forms, assessments, and other time-consuming activities that have already been completed. Unfortunately, many program requirements cannot be modified due to federal, state and local requirements, however; the development of a joint intake or referral form could eliminate many of the problems described above.

To this end, the WCCNM is participating in the Statewide JAD/JAR sessions (Joint Application Development/Joint Application Requirement) to identify similar requirements and informational needs that could be shared via a joint referral/intake form while protecting the personally identifiable information (PII) of the applicant.

This effort is in the beginning stages of testing and development, and although showing promising results, still faces challenges in meeting the needs of all partners including the New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (NMDVR). NMDVR is currently unable to participate in a common intake system due to the specific requirements in the Rehabilitation Act that mandate eligibility determination by a qualified rehabilitation counselor. The recently launched New Mexico Longitudinal Data System Projects (NMLDS) is now underway to help address these concerns. NMDVR is a partner in the NMLDS project and will support continued efforts to launch this initiative.

The NMDLS is a high-priority project being developed in collaboration with the New Mexico Higher Education, the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions, the New Mexico Public Education Department, the New Mexico Department of Information Technology, and the engineering partner RESPEC (https://www.respec.com/about-us/). The plan is for the New Mexico Higher Education Department to house the new data base. **DWS, HED, PED, anyone – please provide any updates on the New Mexico Longitudinal Data System Projects (NMLDS) and any other Common Intake, Referral, and Data Systems being explored and developed.**

The WCCNM fully supports the implementation of a joint customer application/intake document and plans to continue working in close collaboration with the NMDWS and all partners to keep this initiative moving forward. The WCCNM and its many workforce partners strive to develop a joint customer intake process that will enable seamless service delivery to all customers. The WCCNM has developed plans for an incremental implementation of the joint customer application/intake process over the next four years.

- **Ticket to Work**: WCCNM has partnered with **Adelante of New Mexico's** Ticket to Work Program and assists Adelante by connecting people with disabilities to the Ticket to Work program for assistance in gaining jobs in the community. Ticket to Work is a free, voluntary national program run by the Social Security Administration through employment networks. The Ticket to Work program can help Social Security beneficiaries go to work, get a good job that may lead to a career, and become financially independent. Additionally, participants of the program can keep their Medicare or Medicaid benefits. Adelante has one of the highest rated Ticket to Work services in the nation, in the top 4%, and provide this service across the United States. This program is a non-co-located partner.

- **CHANCES Grant Program**: Through the WCCNM's Pathway Home 3, Reentry Employment Opportunity (CHANCES) grant was awarded to the WCCNM in July 2022. Through this grant, the WCCNM is serving incarcerated individuals who are within 20 to 270 days of release to ensure they receive pre-release job readiness and occupational training. Prior to participants being released, CHANCES case managers work with incarcerated participants to begin planning and arranging needed reentry supportive services, and leveraging additional post-release training with the goal of participants being placed in jobs very quickly after they are released. Through WCCNM's work on the CHANCES program, we have identified and coordinated a network of reentry service providers in Bernalillo County to facilitate the programs sustainability plan. WCCNM plans to continue providing WIOA-funded, and partner services, as well as leveraging critical reentry services provided through our recently developed reentry partner network after the CHANCES grant period of performance ends. In addition, WCCNM plans to identify future reentry grant opportunities to continue building on the foundation and successes achieved through the CHANCES grant. Formerly incarcerated individuals seeking employment have difficulty finding jobs or steady employment. Many suffer from behavioral health and substance abuse issues, and they are high risk for recidivism. Through the CHANCES grant these individuals receive the reentry services they need including housing, food, clothing, healthcare, behavioral and substance treatment and counseling, incentives, and training stipends to help ensure they successfully complete WIOA Adult funded training and job placement.

- **Pathways to Infrastructure Jobs Grant Program**: This US Department of Labor ETA grant was awarded to WCCNM September 2023 as a 5-year development grant.

WCCNM's work through this grant aims to leverage established existing partnerships to lower the barriers to quality infrastructure jobs in the sectors of broadband, transportation and renewable energy. The Pathways to Infrastructure Jobs Grant Program in collaboration with NMDWS, CNM and WCCNM's WIOA service providers is developing sector strategies and career pathways policies and processes to support the federal and State goals and objectives to fill in-demand infrastructure jobs. This partnership targets un- and underemployed individuals who are 17 and older and out of secondary school and focuses on recruiting individuals who are underrepresented in targeted sectors, including veterans, people of color, and women.

- **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program**: TANF is known in New Mexico as NM Works Wage-Subsidy & Career Link Programs. This program is located in the NMWC Center offices and provides a monthly cash benefit used to meet basic family needs such as housing, utilities, and clothing. This program is administered through the Health Care Authority through their Income Division.

- **Trade Adjustment Assistant (TAA) Program**: The Trade Adjustment Assistance Program is federally funded and was created to assist workers dislocated due to foreign imports or the transfer of production to Mexico or Canada. The program offers benefits including money for retraining, and reimbursement of job search and relocation expenses. It also provides monetary benefits, also known as TRA, for those who enroll in TAA approved training. Trade Readjustment Allowance (TRA) - Special income benefits are available to workers who lose their jobs or whose hours of work and wages are reduced as a result of trade imports from other countries.

- **Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA):** helps people who are on unemployment insurance find a job faster. RESEA program combines unemployment compensation eligibility assessments with reemployment services, such as: Developing an individual reemployment plan, providing career and labor market information, enrolling in the Wagner-Peyser Employment Service, and Providing job search assistance and referrals. These workshops are held every week for participants, and they are co-located at the One-Stop.

- **Veteran Services Programs**: Veteran Services ensures that job and training services are offered to veterans on a priority basis. Veterans have priority over non-veterans regarding job placement, counseling, testing, referral to supportive services, job development, and job training. Local veteran employment representatives (LVERs) LVERs primary duties are conducting outreach to employers, facilitating job search workshops, and providing employment and training services to veterans and disabled veterans outreach program representatives (DVOPs) provide these services to veterans in New Mexico. DVOPs focus

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on providing intensive services with priority to special disabled, disabled veterans, and other eligible veterans in accordance with priorities determined by Public Law 107-288.

- **Central Region Apprenticeship Expansion Team**: This team has been developed to support and promote apprenticeship models to business and participants interested in apprenticeships. This expansion team is tasked with engaging in outreach activities, assisting business to build and launch registered apprenticeships to meet their needs, market RA to career development staff, work with WIOA Title I case manager to refer and place individuals in an RA program.

- **Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP):** The Senior Community Service Employment Program is a community service and work-based job training program for older Americans. Authorized by the Older Americans Act, SCSEP provides training for low-income, unemployed older adults age 55+ and helps them gain skills and confidence to re-enter the workforce. SCSEP plays a vital role in helping older adults remain active, engaged, and financially independent. Through community service and job training, SCSEP job seekers gain valuable experience and skills that open doors to new employment opportunities and a better quality of life.

WCCNM Strengths Include:
- **Performance:** The WCCNM has a history of meeting and exceeding performance measures. This reflects the high-quality programs and services delivered as well as skilled workforce development professionals and service providers operating the programs.

- **Partnerships**: The WCCNM has many long-standing and newly developed collaborations and partnerships with community-based organizations, employers, chambers of commerce, industry associations, local government, and more. These have allowed the WCCNM to explore and pursue additional funding and program opportunities, leverage additional programs, and increase capacity to improve services for individuals and employers.

- **Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI):** The WCCNM continues to use CQI in all aspects of service delivery to ensure system weaknesses are proactively identified and addressed through improvement processes that help elimination any unwanted reoccurrences. This practice requires identification of a problem, analyzation of that problem and testing of possible solutions. As an example, we recently implemented a CQI Plan to increase service to the Central Region's dislocated worker population. This plan identifies the various types of venues and methods to be used along with the expected outcomes. This process ensures a focused, well thought out plan for improvement in an identified area of weakness and enables a learning process that helps the WCCNM clearly identify what works and what does not.

- **Work-Based Learning Opportunities**: The WCCNM has increased the number of work-based learning opportunities available through the public workforce system in the Central Region. The WCCNM passed multiple policies to increase apprenticeships, internships, transitional jobs, and work experiences in the region.

  Projects such as the Facebook Career Connections program, have resulted in successful internships, and in many cases, resulted in participants receiving full-time permanent employment supported by WIOA funded on-the-job training opportunities. Opportunities afforded via the WCCNM Transitional Jobs policy as well as the CHANCES and H-1B grants may be significant for disadvantaged individuals, such as former prisoners and long-term unemployed, with a goal to reduce recidivism and poverty within the Central Region.

  The WCCNM Youth Program continues to provide work-based learning opportunities with most work experience placements occurring in the Central Region's in-demand industries. Youth participants are placed in occupations based on their individual career goals with many of these experiences resulting in training as automotive technicians, home health aides, social service aides, welding assistants and laborers, marketing and media assistants, veterinary assistants, teaching assistants, medical assistants, and dental assistants. These work-based learning opportunities lead to full-time employment or with participants acquiring the work skills to be competitive in other opportunities.

- **Apprenticeships:** There has been increased support for apprenticeship in the Central Region as the WCCNM promotes that the "earn and learn" approach to assist workers start new careers and helps businesses recruit and retain a highly skilled workforce. The Adult and Dislocated Worker Program, and the Youth Program will continue to work with trade associations and apprenticeship programs to use WIOA funds in a variety of ways to help individuals prepare for, enter, and complete apprenticeship programs. Additionally, in partnership with the NMDWS State Apprenticeship Office, the NMWC Central Region Apprenticeship Coordinators work closely with employer/sponsors to review and prepare their program standards for submission and approval of formal registered apprenticeship programs.

- **Referral and Inquiry Tracking:** As outreach to employers, current apprentices, and prospective apprenticeships increases, the WCCNM has leveraged a new referral and inquiry tracking system to capture the ROI of various outreach methods contact information, program referrals, and many other data elements. The referral and inquiry tracking system are built into the WCCNM intranet that is available to all Central Region partners, both co-located and non-co-located.

- **Education and Training Provider Collaboration**: The WCCNM has strong partnerships with the Central Region's postsecondary schools, including CNM, CNM Ingenuity, UNM

Valencia, and SIPI, and numerous technical training schools. WCCNM and all training provider partners share the goal to provide educational programs and training opportunities that meet employer demands by providing industry specific training and a labor force that is prepared to meet the Central Region's emerging and in-demand industry needs.

Collaboration activities include WCCNM and its training partners regularly assessing employer needs and working together to ensure the available trainings support those needs, including focused areas of studies, degree plans, as well as certificates. Through the Sector Strategy and Career Pathway development work planned to take place over the next four years, greater collaborative efforts will be needed to facilitate and align with the State Plan goals and achieve the desired outcomes.

The WCCNM began its Sector Strategy and Career Pathway development in 2016 through its TechHire New Mexico grant, which focused on the Information Technology Sector. WCCNM is continuing this work through its H-1B Pathways to Infrastructure Jobs grant, which was awarded in September 2023. WCCNM is partnering with CNM on this 5-year development grant to develop Sector Strategies and Career Pathways in the broadband, transportation and renewable sectors.

CNM is exploring the possibility of developing microcredentials for the Advanced Manufacturing and Healthcare Sectors. Microcredentialing is a way to earn short, focused credentials that demonstrate knowledge and skills in a specific area. Microcredentials are a good way to enhance skills, achieve career pathway goals, and demonstrate expertise to employers. Microcredentials are designed to be completed quickly and flexibly and are usually less expensive than degrees or certifications. In certain situations, microcredentials can be stacked together to earn a certificate or degree later. Microcredentials are often awarded as digital badges and designed to fill skills gaps to keep up with the changing needs of industries. Some examples of microcredentials include Project Management Professional (PMP), Six Sigma, Salesforce Certification, and Cybersecurity Professional Bootcamp.

WCCNM Weaknesses Include:
- The WCCNM has made significant improvement in overcoming challenges and issues related to the use of the New Mexico Workforce Connection online system (WCOS) (www.jobs.state.nm.us). Policy and procedure have been developed to assure consistency in the application of function, activity, and service codes. With many new initiatives, approaches, and strategies quickly moving forward over the next several program years, the Central Region is challenged with finding ways to incorporate data collection requirements for all new initiatives into the WCOS. These challenges include the ability to capture data elements and performance data. The WCCNM is dependent on data analysis, beyond federal performance measures, for adopting additional continuous

improvement processes and improve data informed decisions within operations as well as at the WCCNM Board level.

- **Repeat Business Customers**: The WCCNM business services recognize many successes; however, it is important that the WCCNM and NMWC partners pursue business services with strategic intent to ensure that the system is addressing business needs from a workforce system-wide perspective versus individual partner program goals and performance criteria. The WCCNM is building additional capacity, expertise and dedicating significant investments in technology and partner training. Opportunities for improvements is possible by leveraging industry sector strategies and "work and learn" initiatives, and with significant investments in technical solutions to promote quality business engagement and increased customer satisfaction.

  Continuous quality improvement efforts focused on business engagement help WCCNM produce high-quality business services. WCCNM regularly monitors the performance of its NMWC Centers and all partners services, including Wagner-Peyser services. The NMWC Operations Manager tracks key performance indicators, conducts customer satisfaction surveys, and analyzes service delivery data to identify areas for improvement. Feedback from clients and partners is used to refine processes and ensure that services are delivered efficiently and effectively.

- **Silos and Competing Outcome Measurements**: The WCCNM is fortunate to have a variety of service providers, funding streams, grant opportunities, and programs and services; however, there are sometimes obstacles that many of the programs and funding streams have their own unique set of eligibility requirements and outcome measurements which can be limiting as well as create confusion for the customer. The WCCNM requires an operational approach in the NMWC Centers that promotes collaboration, strengthens programs, and encourages innovation in the delivery of services to individuals and employers in the Central Region.

  NMDWS – Can you please update this? The NMDWS has sponsored a New Mexico State WIOA Evaluation team with all core WIOA Titled Programs represented, along with industry, as participants in a Learning Cohort with a focus of addressing such Silos and Competing Outcome measures.

3. **Strategic Vision and Goals**
    a. **Description of the local board's strategic vision to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. Include goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce (including youth and individuals with barriers to employment), and goals relating to the performance accountability measures based on performance indicators described in §677.155(a)(1) of the WIOA Joint Rule.**

This section specifically addresses the NMDWS goals and strategies that WCCNM must support in their Local Plans as defined in the State Plan pages 72-89.

WCCNM Vision
Every Central New Mexico resident has access to a meaningful career pathway and the support needed to fulfill their aspirations. Every business in Central New Mexico has access to a skilled workforce.

WCCNM Mission
To build the systems, teams, and approaches that will make Central New Mexico an environment that attracts, motivates, and equips individuals and employers to achieve their highest potential.

WCCNM's focus is on serving under- and un-employed individuals in the Central Region. Individuals with barriers to training and employment including individuals from historically disadvantaged communities are part of the WCCNM's routine outreach activities. WCCNM understands that each participant has different levels of knowledge and skills. As such, WCCNM service providers routinely assess participants to ensure their participation in any workforce program addresses the new skill sets and training the participant needs to achieve their career pathway goals and self-sufficiency. WCCNM demonstrates its successful performance in the delivery of services to individuals with barriers to employment through data-driven outcome measures including program completion rate; attainment of skills, attainment of certificates or degrees the program is designed to provide; placement after training in unsubsidized employment; and retention in employment.

B. **Taking into account analyses described in Sections 1 and 2 above, describe the local board's overall strategy for working with the entities that carry out the core programs and required partners to align resources available to the local area, to achieve the strategic vision and goals.**

The WCCNM Board routinely engages in strategic planning processes to establish the direction and alignment of resources to efficiently manage operations in support of the Board's vision, mission, and goals. The WCCNM Board's goals are broadly aligned with the goals of the

Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA) and reflect goals identified in the State Plan. These State and WCCNM goals include the following strategic areas of focus:

==Strategic Areas of Focus:== In addition to the WCCNM program activities and CQI mentioned above in section *2. Analysis of Workforce Development Activities*, the WCCNM supports the SWDB's goals and strategies as described in the State Plan and beginning in PY24 will utilize S.M.A.R.T. goal action plans to develop, implement, and measure the Central Region's progress in achieving the State's and WCCNM's new goals and objectives. The S.M.A.R.T. framework sets clear objectives, emphasizing the importance of measurable and achievable goals and includes the following criteria:

- ✓ Specific: Targeting a particular area for improvement.
- ✓ Measurable: Quantifying, or at least suggesting, an indicator of progress.
- ✓ Assignable: Defining responsibility clearly.
- ✓ Realistic: Outlining attainable results with available resources.
- ✓ Time-related: Including a timeline for expected results.

With the release of the State plan, the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) developed goals and strategies that each of the four state LWDB's are required to align with and support. Per the State Plan the NMDWS will lead the process by developing a shared vision and process for the implementation of each goal/strategy. Although the State Plan does not indicate a timeline for NMDWS to develop and implement the State goals and strategies defined, it clearly identifies the NMDWS' leadership role, goals and strategies for guiding the LWDB's in the implementation of activities that align with the State Plan. Please see SWDB Goals, Cross-Goal Strategies and Alignment Strategies above under *SWDB Local Plan Development Guidance.* Please also refer to the New Mexico WIOA State Plan 2024-2027. The four goals identified in the State Plan and the WCCNM's strategies to align with the State Plans goals and strategies are further defined in the following Cross-Goal Strategies:

Developing S.M.A.R.T. goals and action plans require a shared partner commitment to developing, owning, and completing activities and timelines. To be successful S.M.A.R.T. goals need people and resources. The WCCNM S.M.A.R.T. goals proposed in the following cross-goal strategies not only align with the State Plan, but they are actionable and manageable. Upon approval of the WCCNM Local Workforce Development Plan, the WCCNM will prioritize the development of S.M.A.R.T goals based on partner collaboration and feedback, availability and commitment level of the required partner resources, and timelines. S.M.A.R.T goals and action plans will then be developed and implemented with progress updates included in the 2 Year Local Plan Modification.

The following NMDWS and WCCNM Cross-Goal Strategies directly support the State's **Alignment Strategies** defined above on page 8. In collaboration with the NMDWS, the WCCNM has and will continue to demonstrate its ongoing support of the State's goals and strategies.

Cross-Goal Strategy 1: NMDWS plans to collaborate across WIOA partners, workforce regions, education providers, and employers to develop comprehensive strategies for priority sectors that are tailored to each workforce region and detail actionable plans for outreach and recruitment.

Historically, sector strategies have long been part of the WIOA State Plan. In practical terms, concrete sector strategies have been elusive. Stakeholders identified the root causes of this dynamic as a lack of shared vision on what a sector strategy is and a lack of true ownership of the sector strategy process. SWDB activities within this strategy are designed to fix these problems.

Per the State Plan, pages 76 and 77, the NMDWS will provide a shared vision on what a sector strategy is and provide direction of the sector strategy process. NMDWS plans to lead the following activities:

- NMDWS will develop template for sector outreach. We do not need each Title, program and local board to invent its own approach to sector outreach. Working collaboratively and through rapid experimentation, NMDWS will lead the process of developing a shared vision and process for preparing a sector strategy.

   WCCNM, through its H-1B Pathways to Infrastructure Jobs Grant program, continues to work with the NMDWS and stakeholders to move toward achieving an employer-driven sector strategy model. WCCNM will continue to work with NMDWS to facilitate the development of a statewide sector strategy model template that identifies employer needs with a focus on employer-driven training and career pathways development for each in-demand sector. Once NMDWS releases their sector outreach template, WCCNM is prepared to modify, if needed, its sector outreach tools as necessary to align with NMDWS.

- NMDWS will train WIOA partner staff to conduct meaningful sector outreach. In many of the trainings the SWDB attended on sector strategies, stakeholders saw a heavy reliance on contractors and outside expertise. In contrast, our partners want to build internal capacity to create and maintain sector strategies. Our emphasis will be on pulling in outside expertise to train our workforce system staff to be their own sector strategy experts. This will increase investment in the sector strategy process and foster ownership of the final product.

   As an integral workforce development partner, WCCNM has worked closely with NMDWS over the past years on many initiatives aimed to help prepare underserved individuals with barriers to training and employment prepare for sustainable careers within New Mexico. Sector Strategy development remains a high priority for the Central Region. Since 2016, WCCNM has worked with professional consultants

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who have demonstrated their capacity and competence in successfully developing Sector Strategy and Career Pathway initiatives in other States. The WCCNM has provided recommendations for NMDWS to consider as possible candidates for New Mexico's Sector Strategy and Career Pathway development. WCCNM will continue to support NMDWS as they develop their plans to implement a sustainable sector strategy model for workforce development staff training.

- NMDWS will work with employers and using proven sector outreach techniques, develop specific, achievable, measurable, and time-bound goals for each sector. Another historical weakness in our sector efforts have been a reliance on general principles (like "build a pipeline of electricians") rather than specific measures (like, "enroll double the number of electrician apprentices in the state on an annual basis, starting in 2024"). Successful sector strategies will culminate in SMART goals.

  WCCNM began developing the IT/Tech Sector Strategy in 2016 through the TechHire New Mexico grant. Through this work the WCCNM has developed valuable Lessons Learned and Best Practices and will continue to work with NMDWS as they begin developing their employer outreach strategies. WCCNM will support and facilitate a state sector strategy model that meets employers needs and demonstrates clear career pathways guidance and trainings that lead to certifications required by existing and near future in-demand sector employers.

- NMDWS will develop sector strategy roadmaps that outline activities, timelines, and owners. S.M.A.R.T. goals need people and resources. The sector strategy roadmaps will include realistic activities and timelines that the State Workforce Development Board can use to drive accountability across the workforce system.

  As mentioned above, the WCCNM has been at the forefront of Sector Strategy development and implementation since 2016 through the TechHire New Mexico grant IT Sector development efforts. With the COVID-19 shutdown and the end of the TechHire New Mexico grant, the WCCNM's Sector Strategy and Career Pathway approach has focused more on general business engagement and employer outreach to promote various individual programs including Apprenticeships, OJT's, Work Experience, Incumbent Worker and Customized Training, etc.

  These employer outreach efforts are routinely made by both state and WCCNM program personnel and resources. As a result, employer outreach and engagement efforts are often
    - poorly coordinated and tracked, which increases the risk of duplication of resources;
    - programs are siloed, which creates direct competition between programs;

- and employers are burnt out on being pitched to by so many state and federal programs.

In addition, the employer outreach efforts are typically specific and limited to the single program being presented. Instead, a successful approach would include:
- a coordinated effort that begins with one program contacting the employer and identifying the employer's industry sector and all the employer's needs;
- then collaborating with all the programs that provide those needs to develop a meaningful and streamlined solution for the employer, including identifying other promising practices developed for and by employers in the same industry sector.

Not only will this collaborative partner approach benefit the employer, but the state and the WCCNM would be better able to leverage the resources of and/or co-enroll with multiple programs, which would facilitate in breaking down the silos. The measurable outcomes of this WCCNM S.M.A.R.T. goal should also include 1) identifying and tracking employers and their needs by their respective industry sectors, 2) developing roadmaps that outline activities, timelines, and owners; and 3) the creation of the WCCNM Sector Strategy and Career Pathway policy. The policy would provide guidance for all WCCNM service providers and partners to develop for their respective programs, Sector Strategy and Career Pathway procedures that ensure the WCCNM achieves their sector strategy and career pathway goals.

Through WCCNM's H1-B grant, the Central Region will develop S.M.A.R.T goals for and work with NMDWS to help define sector strategy development in the Broadband, Transportation, and Renewable Energy industry sectors. When NMDWS develops their sector strategy roadmaps and S.M.A.R.T. goals, the WCCNM will modify as needed its methodology, activities, and timelines to align with NMDWS' guidance, and demonstrate to the SWDB accountability in the Central Region.

- NMDWS will work within each sector to identify specific connections between that industry and difficult to engage and historically underserved populations. In order to achieve Goal 3 (see State Plan page 73) we must engage difficult-to-reach residents as we engage in sector strategies. As we articulate career pathways, we need to recognize that people will be starting their journeys in different areas. Sector strategies must draw on vocational rehabilitation and adult education resources to ensure that all New Mexicans benefit.

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WCCNM's focus is on serving under- and un-employed individuals in the Central Region. Individuals with barriers to training and employment such as reentry citizens and individuals from historically disadvantaged communities are part of the WCCNM's routine outreach activities. Each participant brings different levels of knowledge and skills to the workforce programs they are participating in. The WCCNM service providers routinely assess participants to ensure their participation in any workforce program addresses the new skill sets and training the participant needs to achieve their career pathway goals and self-sufficiency.

The WCCNM's Pathway Home 3, Reentry Employment Opportunity (CHANCES) grant activities have expanded to include NMCD Correctional Facilities. NMCD-Roswell, as well as NMCD-Las Cruces. WCCNM and CHANCES staff are now working with the Eastern Area Workforce Development Board (EAWDB) in Roswell, NM and have implemented a co-enrollment process that will provide a continuation of services for the EAWDB's incarcerated participants who will be released in Bernalillo County. These individuals are currently receiving EADWB WIOA Adult funded CDL training within the NMCD-Roswell facility. Through co-enrollment with CHANCES, these participants will also receive pre-release job readiness training and a defined and coordinated reentry services plan when they are released in Bernalillo County. Through the NMCD, CHANCES is positioned to expand its participant recruitment, training, and reentry services to more NMCD facilities throughout New Mexico. CHANCES plans to duplicate its EAWDB co-enrollment process with the Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board and co-enroll their NMCD-Las Cruces incarcerated participants scheduled to be released in Bernalillo County.

In addition, the CHANCES program is collaborating with the NMDWS as part of their Be Pro Be Proud Mobile Workshop services to correctional facilities, schools, and community centers across the state to support workforce development. The Be Pro Be Proud mobile unit delivers a ground-breaking set of resources to help individuals explore, plan, and launch careers in today's technical roles. Individuals discover which skilled professions spark their interests as they dig, drive, and weld using custom developed, highly interactive Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) simulators. The CHANCES staff is currently working with NMDWS to schedule concurrent correctional facility visits and conduct recruitment activities in conjunction with the Be Pro Be Proud Mobile Workshop.

- NMDWS will ensure that all workforce programs are integrated into sector strategies as appropriate. This will fortify the efforts to keep equity at the forefront of all sector strategies.

WCCNM has worked diligently for many years to develop an integrated functional management plan to ensure that all WCCNM, state, and partner service providers are informed of and collaboratively participating in all programs provided through the New Mexico Workforce Connection (NMWC) One-Stop Centers. The Functional Management Plan defines the WCCNM Board's expectations of each partner's participation and provides WCCNM Board Policy guidance, including the Sector Strategy and Career Policy referenced above. The WCCNM Functional Management Plan and WCCNM Policies apply to all co-located and non-co-located partners and require everyone provide employers and job seekers with access to all resources, as needed, through co-enrollments and referrals with all co-located and external partners. WCCNM's work on integrating industry sector strategy and career pathway development is included in the WCCNM Functional Management Plan, is ongoing throughout the Central Region, and reflects the importance of incorporating employer-driven strategies in its functional and service delivery methodology. When NMDWS develops its guidance on integrating sector strategies into all workforce programs, the WCCNM will modify, if needed, its Functional Management Plan to ensure alignment with NMDWS guidance.

- NMDWS will identify and implement strategies to market New Mexico jobs and careers in in-demand and emerging sectors to out-of-state audiences. In order to achieve Goal 4 (see State Plan page 74), sector strategies must identify opportunities to recruit people to New Mexico. This can be as simple as identifying jobs in each sector that are strong candidates for out-of-state recruitment.

    WCCNM's social media outreach in conjunction with its success in H1-B grant awards focuses on training and careers in in-demand industries and has attracted job seekers from many of New Mexico's rural areas and neighboring states. While accelerated training models, such as CNM Ingenuity's Deep Dive Bootcamps, contributed greatly to many individuals gaining quick employment in the IT/Tech sector, many TechHire New Mexico participants moved out-of-state for higher paying IT/Tech jobs. WCCNM will continue to support NMDWS as they develop strategies to market New Mexico jobs and careers in in-demand and emerging sectors to out-of-state audiences.

    In addition, WCCNM's connection to the MRCOG, which serves as the Economic Development Administration (EDA) Central Region Economic Development District Representative is responsible for developing the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). The CEDS serves as the Central Region's blueprint for growing a regional, local, collaborative economy and provides valuable insight into employer growth and needs within the Central Region. As a living document, the Central Region CEDS is adjusted annually and reevaluated fully every five years. The process builds leadership, enhances

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cooperation, and fosters public ownership and enthusiasm and includes the voices of nearly 200 diverse stakeholders from rural and urban communities, public and private sectors, and multiple industry sectors in the region.

The WCCNM will continue working with the MRCOG (CEDS), Albuquerque Regional Economic Alliance (AREA), and state and county economic development entities to identify and address the employer workforce needs of existing and new businesses considering moving to New Mexico. In addition, through WCCNM's social media promotion, the Central Region will highlight sector strategy and career pathway development initiatives through social media outreach that promotes well-paying industry sector jobs that are attractive to out-of-state job seekers.

- NMDWS will convene quarterly sector check-in meetings to review progress. Sector strategies must remain living documents, with continued progress and accountability. For those strategies being undertaken at the local level, communication is also key to efficiency and making sure our local initiatives are not at odds with one another. Quarterly meetings will keep everyone on track and in sync.

  WCCNM is prepared to participate in any NMDWS meetings to share best practices and ensure alignment with NMDWS' sector strategy and career pathway development initiatives. In addition, WCCNM will continue to ensure NMDWS has a role in all meetings and convenings as it further develops its H1-B sector strategy and career pathway development initiatives. **Please provide content related to establishing a WCCNM Board Sector Strategy Ad-hoc committee.**

  The WCCNM has been working with NMDWS to facilitate the WCCNM's H1-B Pathways to Infrastructure Jobs grant, which focuses on Sector Strategy and Career Pathway Development in the Broadband, Transportation, and Renewable Energy. WCCNM's work on this grant aligns with our understanding of the NMDWS sector strategy process mentioned above.

  The H1-B Grant awarded by the US Department of Labor is a development grant that allows for WCCNM to collect appropriate data on how to strengthen and expand the workforce in Broadband, Transportation and Renewable Energy. There are two main goals of the H1-B Grant, WCCNM first goal is to develop a sector strategy and career pathways for the three sectors listed above. WCCNM will do this with the guidance of our Sector Advisory Council that will consist of local economic developers, training providers, business representation in each field and importantly worker voice. A successful sector strategy requires substantial collaboration to change how the workforce system works. WCCNM's goal is to align the regional understanding that a successful sector strategy and sector-focused career pathways approach needs to engage high-demand employers to ensure

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system relevance. Moving towards that goal, WCCNM plans to measure this performance outcome through the success of employers expanding their pipeline of skilled workers with a strong emphasis on helping low-skilled individuals successfully completing occupational and soft skills training, gaining employment with a clear career pathway plan that will allow them to achieve self-sufficiency. Our second main goal in the grant is to meet our performance, this will include enroll at least 250 participants over the performance period of four years with a year of follow up.

In addition, WCCNM's Operations Manager will continue to communicate the WCCNM guidance and partner requirements as S.M.A.R.T goals and action items are implemented. In addition, the Operations Manager will hold quarterly convenings of all Central Region partners to share sector strategies undertaken, ensure effective communication and make sure our local initiatives are not at odds with one another or with NMDWS.

Cross-Goal Strategy 2: NMDWS will coordinate with education and training providers and employers in priority sectors to create flexible pathways, certification programs, short-term credentialing, and work-based learning opportunities to prepare for the workforce.

Between siloed funding and mismatched eligibility and program requirements, we often struggle to stay in step with our partners in education and training. The SWDB stakeholders emphasized that greater coordination in this area is absolutely essential to achieving all of our goals

- NMDWS plans to grow the number of programs certified on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) to support both in-demand and emerging industries. The ETPL has grown stagnant and is not clearly tied to career pathways in priority sectors. We need to communicate the value of being on the ETPL and fill any gaps that we identify through the lens of our sector strategies.

  WCCNM understands the importance of ensuring employers and job seekers have access to the training and credentials employers need to sustain and grow their businesses and find the right job seeker talent to fill vacant and emerging occupations. Through its H1-B grant sector strategy and career pathway development, WCCNM is working with Broadband, Transportation, and Renewable Energy employers, CNM and other training providers to identify the knowledge, skills, credentials, and associated training programs these employers need. Training programs that meet these specific employer needs, as well as other industry sector employer needs will continue to be developed as the Central Region moves closer to its goal of an employer-driven regional workforce training system that supports sectoral partnerships. As new trainings are developed, training providers will be required to ensure their programs are approved for ETPL

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inclusion and follow all training performance data outcome measures to remain on the ETPL and receive WIOA-funded training dollars.

- NMDWS plans to improve the quality of data from ETPL providers through technical assistance and quality control initiatives, including those reporting through the Higher Education Department and those reporting directly to NMDWS. ETPL data can paint a powerful picture of the impact of our work and the places we can improve. This strategy includes working closely with providers to improve the quality and timeliness of ETPL data.

  NMDWS is currently working on a new ETPL policy that aligns with the USDOL guidance. Training providers and their programs must be approved on the ETPL in order to receive funds for training jobseekers enrolled in New Mexico's WIOA programs. To be approved for the ETPL, training programs must meet state and local requirements, which includes completion of the program resulting in a federally recognized credential or skills progression toward one and being related to target industry sectors and in-demand occupations in New Mexico.

  NMDWS is required to develop and operate the ETPL in partnership with Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDB). The ETPL is designed to collect relevant performance data and display useful information to WIOA customers on training providers, their services and the quality of their programs. NMDWS is working on new training provider requirements to populate the ETPL with training program data that demonstrates training providers are successful and remove those programs that fail to achieve positive results for training customers.

  WCCNM's Administrative Entity is currently working with NMDWS on ETPL policy development and training provider guidance to collect and report USDOL required performance data. Once complete, the new NMDWS ETPL Policy and resulting WCCNM ETPL Policy will be distributed to all Central Region partners along with additional training provider process and reporting training meetings, guidance and collaboration to assist training providers in getting on and staying on the ETPL based on their performance reports.

- NMDWS will identify and encourage/fund programs that have additional supports for difficult to engage and historically underserved populations. Our education and training partners have many programs to connect and support the underserved populations that are key to the success of Goal 3 (see State Plan page 73). We need to connect the dots between our services and theirs to create a strong safety net.

Please read the following and ensure your input was correctly interpreted.

The WCCNM is developing partnerships to leverage general fund appropriations provided to higher education and public education institutions for work-based learning opportunities, and tuition for credit and credential-based programs. CNM is a strategic partner in this initiative to develop a plan to leverage these funds to expand education and training partners work-based and credential-based learning opportunities. These types of training opportunities are in high demand among the Central Region's underserved populations. CNM has potential funding through 2027 and is interested in collaborating in the development and implementation of this plan and stated that working together with WCCNM and WIOA will be critical.

The WCCNM is working with NMDWS to seek opportunities to co-enroll eligible participants in WIOA Title I, (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Program service delivery) to provide funding supportive services that may include needs related payments, internships, apprenticeship, and work experience (transitional jobs).

The WCCNM Functional Management Plan identifies the importance partner collaboration to ensure all partners are familiar with and in compliance with the Central Regions Functional Management goals and partner requirements. The Functional Management Plan describes partner programs and focus areas and demonstrates the benefits of sharing best practices, partner referrals, co-enrollments, and leveraged resources.

Each program, including our Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act partners, provide opportunities for WCCNM, NMDWS, and partner program service providers to share best practices and resources to streamline customer service delivery, whereby providing the best collaborative solutions that focus on eliminating duplication of multiple program funds and efforts, encouraging all programs to share relevant data and practices that allow all partners to connect and support one another, including sharing data and resources that facilitate connections to underserved populations. The WCCNM Functional Management Plan provides guidance and goals to assist all program partners in maximizing their program specific funding and resources by collaborating with partners to facilitate participant and employer co-enrollments and coordinated referrals, by leveraging services, and developing a cohesive service delivery model that puts the needs of employers and job seekers first.

The overarching goal of all WCCNM's ongoing work is to provide priority populations with increased and guided access to needed and meaningful services. All WCCNM WIOA and other discretionary grant award programs focus on helping low income and disadvantaged populations. The NMWC partners in the

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Central Region operate within an integrated system, complete with co-located partners, procured service providers, and shared resource leveraging. However, funding and available public resources are still finite and limited, so populations with significant or multiple barriers to employment receive priority for services. Sometimes these populations will be referred to as "hard-to-serve" or "hard-to-employ" clients. Some special or priority populations the Central Region workforce system serves include, but are not limited to:

- Veterans and eligible spouses
- Individuals with disabilities, both youth and adults
- English language learners (limited English proficient)
- Migrant and seasonal farmworkers
- Out-of-school youth
- Adult and youth ex-offenders (justice-involved)
- Public assistance recipients (TANF, SNAP, SSI, Medicaid, etc.)
- Youth in, or previously in, foster care
- Homeless individuals, both youth and adults
- Runaway youth
- Pregnant and parenting youth
- The long-term unemployed
- Low-income workers earning wages below self-sufficiency
- Basic skills deficient individuals
- The over 55 age group

The WCCNM recognizes the importance of seeking discretionary grant funding for programs that compliment and support the WIOA-funded programs. Successful discretionary grant funding provides opportunities that allow the Central Region to focus even more on providing supportive and wrap-around services to support USDOL and NMDWS initiatives and goals for employers and priority populations. For example, the WCCNM's CHANCES grant is helping fill the need for better reentry services that focus on employment and reducing recidivism in the Central Region. Additionally, the WCCNM's H1-B Pathways to Infrastructure Jobs grant supports the USDOL and NMDWS sector strategy and career pathways initiatives, as well as the SWDB's goals to meet current and emerging demand industry sectors and occupations in the following sectors:

- Alternative Energy
- Advanced Manufacturing
- Vertical and Horizontal Construction
- Water Infrastructure and Natural Resource Management

The WCCNM will continue to identify grant opportunities that directly support priority and hard-to-serve populations in the Central Region,

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- NMDWS will support and coordinate the marketing of sector-specific New Mexico educational and training programs to out-of-state audiences. New Mexico has cutting edge programs in niche priority areas like broadband expansion. Part of this strategy is collaborating to spread the word about these programs to our rural areas and out of state, so that we can achieve Goal 4 (see State Plan page 74) by drawing people to New Mexico education and training venues.

  In addition to using social media to promote New Mexico jobs out-of-state, as mentioned above, WCCNM is able use social media outreach to attract job seekers in rural and neighboring states by promoting specific and unique industry sector training programs leading to jobs that are in high demand in New Mexico and throughout the nation. With employer-driven training programs and sector specific career pathways that include Pre-Apprenticeships, Apprenticeships, micro-credentialing, and other accelerated occupational training models, the WCCNM is positioned to lead the state through the H1-B Pathway to Infrastructure Jobs grant by offering employer-driven training in Broadband, Transportation, and Renewable Energy.

  Employer-driven trainings developed by WCCNM's partner training providers, such as CNM, provide new and unique sector specific trainings attractive to individuals in rural areas and neighboring states. Similarly, the WCCNM's Skilled Trade Union partners provide nationally recognized, state-of-the-art trainings and Apprenticeships in in-demand construction trades that attract individuals from across the nation. Through combined social media outreach and participant/student recruitment strategies the Central Region is positioned to develop outreach strategies to expand efforts to attract individuals from out-of-state and provide them good post-training employment opportunities here in New Mexico.

==Please provide any write ups about analysis of excess labor sheds in other states and targeted advertisement and social media to recruit to Rio Rancho.==

Cross-Goal Strategy 3: NMDWS will work with the NM Public Education Department (PED), WIOA partners, and employers to increase outreach in middle and high schools and help students explore available career paths in priority sectors by streamlining and clearly defining the path among work-based learning programs. New Mexico has done a great job of investing in programs to connect youth to work. Unfortunately, those programs are not connected to each other or our sector strategies. This strategy aims to address this challenge.

- NMDWS's first step in this strategy is coming to a shared definition of terms like "work-based learning," "internship," "pre-apprenticeship" and related terms. We also

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need a comprehensive statewide budget that quantifies our investment in these programs.

- Through the state planning process, SWDB stakeholders identified many programs that can be matched to priority sectors and underserved populations, including:

  - ✓ Summer Enrichment Internship Program
  - ✓ New Mexico Career Pathways
  - ✓ Careers2Communities
  - ✓ High School Career Counselors
  - ✓ New Mexico Job Corps
  - ✓ Pre-Apprenticeship Programs
  - ✓ Workforce Pathways for Youth
  - ✓ WIOA Youth Program
  - ✓ NM Internship Plus
  - ✓ New Mexico Graduation Reality and Dual-role Skills (NM GRADS)

- NMDWS requires all partners with work-based learning programs to track the demographics and outcomes of participants. NMDWS is also working on developing educational outcomes for these programs. Agency leadership and the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) will monitor these data regularly to identify opportunities for expansion or refocusing programs as needed.

  WCCNM supports the need to increase outreach in middle and high schools to expose students to different career options and associated career pathways that provide step-by-step training and certification guidance, including work-based learning programs that support in- demand industry sectors. WCCNM's WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth service providers track the demographics and outcomes of work-based learning participants and work with these participants to continue their career pathway development beyond their work-based learning experiences.

  WCCNM is working to develop stronger collaboration with the NM Public Education Department (NMPED) to find ways to increase the engagement of in-school youth in its Career Technical Education (CTE) programs. CTE provides students of all ages with the academic and technical skills necessary to succeed in future careers and to become lifelong learners. WIOA requires that 20% of WCCNM 's in-school youth participants include those within the Central Region's CTE programs to further enhance their chosen career pathway goals.

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WCCNM's Youth Service Provider, Youth Development, Inc. (YDI), conducts robust youth outreach on an ongoing basis. Working with secondary education partners, the Youth Program meets with middle school students to facilitate trainings exposing this age group to resume writing, mock interviews, introducing them to the "Why I Work" NMDWS website tutorial, and career guidance at NMcareersolutions.com. All outreach activities include a brief orientation on the Youth Program services available at the NMWC Centers.

The Youth Program coordinators also regularly attend local high school College & Career Fairs and Resource Fairs and provide workshops to local high school students. High school students are also presented with the Youth Program's BEST pre-employment training, labor market information including career exploration and knowledge of in-demand occupations and fields, and work experience opportunities to build work skills. The Youth Program participates in Charter School Council meetings regularly at Rio Grande, Atrisco Heritage Academy, and Mark Armijo Academy high schools. These schools are also interested in being developed as worksites to allow in-school youth the opportunity to gain important work skills. The Youth Program outreach also focuses on students in CTE programs where students can receive training to continue building skills in their chosen field. The Youth Program carefully monitors the in-school youth services it provides and their recruitment efforts to ensure they do not exceed their 25% maximum limit on-school youth service expenditures.

The WCCNM Youth Program routinely provides youth participants with services including pre-employment training, financial literacy, paid work experience, and funding for occupational skills training. The Youth Program leverages services with other community partners to address the needs and skill development of the participants to support successful outcomes.

WCCNM Board Membership includes executive level representation from Albuquerque Job Corps and Youth Development, Inc., which greatly enhances the Board's understanding of the youth and young adult needs. These Board members serve on the WCCNM Youth Standing Committee, which is committed to assist with planning, operational, performance and other issues related to the provision of youth services. WCCNM's Youth Standing Committee assists local communities to identify gaps in services, recommend youth policy, ensure quality services, leverage financial and programmatic resources and recommend eligible youth service provider. The Youth Standing Committee reviews and makes recommendations to the Executive Committee on matters related to WCCNM's youth provider program and other youth related projects and initiatives.

Cross-Goal Strategy 4: NMDWS plans to enhance outreach efforts around incentives and programs available to employers in priority sectors that support them with finding and retaining qualified talent.

A recurring theme in the SWDB planning process is that we have programs to meet a wide variety of populations where they are and engage them in training and work. Unfortunately, much like work-based learning programs, these programs are largely unknown, often underutilized, and disconnected from each other and from the business community.

- NMDWS will develop and promote shared communication tools to increase the reach of workforce programs, including but not limited to:

  ✓ Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)
  ✓ Job Training Incentive Programs (JTIP)
  ✓ Step Up
  ✓ Federal Bonding
  ✓ Veteran Tax Exemption and Disabled Veteran Tax Exemption
  ✓ On-the-job Training
  ✓ Custom Training Programs
    ✓ Additional NMDWS Business Services
    ✓ Student Loan Repayment Programs

Is this a correct summary of Aligned Case Management? DWS / Anyone - please provide any updates.

As part of its effort to develop and promote shared communication tools, in collaboration with its partners, NMDWS began developing a new **Aligned Case Management (ACM)** system. The ACM is accessible through the New Mexico workforce connection online system (WCOS), which is a web-based system for employment services. From August to December of 2023, workforce partners came together in strategic planning sessions and began the development of an ACM Gap Analysis. The Gap Analysis effort was led by the Workforce Information Technology Support Center (WITSC), the ACM Institute led by the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA).

In January 2024, NMDWS received the preliminary reports and recommendations needed to begin developing the new ACM system. Three projects were identified to start this process:

1. Geographic Solutions - WCOS Reinitialization: This effort reviews the configuration of WCOS (all the switches, structure and modules), conducts review sessions with core team members, determines optimization to improve functionality to meet the front-line service requirements, makes those changes in a 'sandbox' copy in WCOS, and tests and trains staff with the goal to deploy an updated system by the beginning of July 2024. This effort is led by Geographic Systems under a contract with NMDWS.

2. Unified Partner Information Network (UPin) - The UPin focuses on the development of a hub for referrals to be accessible by all partners. The ACM Institute facilitated the initial deliverables for the project charter, requirements, and wireframes. The NMDWS evaluated technical alternatives and is working on selecting and implementing a solution with the project team.

3. Other support work: NMDWS in collaboration with NM Human Services Department (HSD) is continuing to develop an ACM solution for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Workpath Salesforce. HSD is working on their Closed Loop Referral system, and engagement with WITSC continues to provide oversight for the two projects above, and to ensure the ACM system stays true to addressing the needs of front-line staff and customers.

WCCNM service providers have actively participated in the development and implementation of the ACM system. As WCCNM will continue to be an integral part of the ACM system through its successful implementation.

To further support the NMDWS goals to improve shared communication, the WCCNM provides Business Career Center (BCC) services through its NMWC One-Stop centers in Bernalillo, Sandoval, Valencia and Torrance Counties. The Business Service Consultants are both NMDWS and WCCNM employees and are responsible for the following:

- Establishing linkages with employers and local businesses;
- Marketing the BCC services to employers to create job opportunities and job placements for Central Region participants.

The Business Service Consultants are specialized in community-based socioeconomic development; possess a knowledge of local needs and trends in workforce development and establish linkages with business leaders.

The Business Service Consultants serve as liaisons between employers and the NMDWS, WCCNM, and the Central Region BCC and promote the services of the BCC to local employers in need of hiring qualified employees, including the employer and workforce programs listed above.

In addition, the consultants are responsible for:

- Working with area chambers of commerce;
- Working with higher education institutions, and all local employers, regarding economic and employment trends;
- Coordination, development, recruitment, maintenance, and outreach activities to prospective employers;
- Representing WCCNM at local/regional Job Fairs;

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- Conducting outreach and job search workshops for customers and community civic groups, and
- Working with WCCNM staff to facilitate the identification of mentors or job coaches for hard-to-serve clients.

The NMDWS and WCCNM BCC staff play an integral role in facilitating sector strategy and career pathway strategy implementation in the Central Region and work closely with the NMDWS and WCCNM program managers responsible for developing and implementing sector strategy and career pathway goals in the Central Region. Sector Strategy and Career Pathway development and implementation go together and as stated in the U.S. Department of Labor, Social Policy Research Associates Career Pathways Toolkit, the process begins by engaging employers, identifying their industry sector, and then developing the career pathway that meets the employer's staffing needs.

In addition to the BCC services above, and as discussed under Section B. Strategic Planning Elements, all employers have identified the lack of soft skills as a major barrier to employers finding and retaining qualified talent.

Throughout the State Plan there are references to employers citing the lack of job seeker soft skills as a major barrier to hiring. To facilitate programs available to employers in priority sectors and support them with finding and retaining qualified talent who possess the soft skills needed by employers, the NMDWS has partnered with New Mexico State University (NMSU) and developed the following 4-hour online Microlearning courses:

The Department of Workforce Solutions has partnered with the New Mexico State University (NMSU) Global Campus. Two (2) FREE online courses are available:
1) Soft Skills: Mastering Personal and Professional Success (4-hour course)
2) Management: Leadership for Success (4-hour course)

Soft Skills: Mastering Personal and Professional Success
The course will cover a variety of important skills and concepts. You'll learn about things like how to be proactive, plan strategically, manage stress, and solve problems. We'll also focus on effective communication, working well in teams, and continuously improving ourselves. By the end of the course, you'll have a better grasp of these areas and be able to apply them in practical situations.

Upon completion, learners will receive a digital badge that serves as proof of the individual's competencies.

Management: Leadership for Success
Created for Managers and Supervisors. Its purpose is to provide you with practical knowledge, skills, and competencies to effectively lead your team to their full potential.

Upon completion, participants will receive a digital badge that serves as proof of the individual's competencies.

In addition, the NMDWS training department is available to provide in person training upon request for a variety of different trainings. Training does need to be requested ahead of time to ensure proper time to prepare. The NMDWS Training Department is prepared to deliver soft-skills training upon request

Central New Mexico Community College (CNM) is responding to recent employer surveys that highlight the need for graduates to possess both technical skills and durable skills, such as communication, critical thinking, and teamwork. To address this, CNM is exploring micro-credentialing and badging opportunities to formally recognize these skills in both academic and workforce training programs. There is significant potential for incorporating and highlighting durable skills provided through liberal arts curriculum and general education requirements, ensuring that students gain valuable, well-rounded competencies alongside their technical training. This will also include exploring current programs and offerings such as CNM Ingenuity's "Professional Skills Academy" and incorporating into the larger CNM cross-enterprise strategy.

Through the WCCNM's H-1B Pathways to Infrastructure Jobs grant, employers needed soft and hard skills will be identified as part of the programs development of Sector Strategy and Career Pathways Development process.

C. Operational Elements
1. Local Workforce System Structure
   a. Describe the geographical workforce development area, including the LWDA's major communities, major employers, training and educational institutions (technical and community colleges, universities, etc.), population, diversity of the population, and relevant growth trends (§679.550(c).

WCCNM is the local Workforce Development Board in the four-county region of Central New Mexico (which includes Bernalillo, Sandoval, Torrance and Valencia Counties). WCCNM was established July 1, 2000, under the authority of the New Mexico Workforce Development Act.[1] The local Workforce Development Boards in New Mexico are governmental entities, and therefore are placed under greater scrutiny than nongovernmental workforce boards in other states. With over 40% of the state's population residing in the central region, WCCNM is the largest workforce development board in New Mexico.

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[1] Chapter 50, Article 14 NMSA 1978; and the federal Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and currently the 2014 reauthorized Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA)

The Central New Mexico region is also referred to as the Albuquerque Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). In the center of this region is Albuquerque, the largest city in the state. The top seven major communities in Central New Mexico are:

1. Albuquerque
2. Rio Rancho
3. Los Lunas
4. Bernalillo
5. Socorro
6. Corrales
7. Belen

The largest municipalities among the 18 incorporated communities within the Central Region are Albuquerque, Rio Rancho, Los Lunas, Bernalillo, Corrales, and Belen. The area also includes eight Indian pueblos - Sandia, Isleta, Cochiti, Jemez, San Felipe, Santa Ana, Santo Domingo, and Zia - as well as portions of the Navajo, Jicarilla, and Laguna Pueblo Indian reservations.

The Albuquerque Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) has many large employers, including government, education, healthcare, and manufacturing companies. The Albuquerque MSA is also home to Sandia National Laboratories, Kirtland Air Force Base, and the NM Veterans Affairs Healthcare System.

In addition, Albuquerque's economy includes television and film production, which has been growing due to tax incentives and the city's scenic landscapes.

The Albuquerque MSA largest employers by county are as follows (**Source: New Mexico Partnership https://nmpartnership.com/incentives-data/new-mexico-largest-employers/)**:

10 Largest Bernalillo County Employers	Number of Employees
Presbyterian Healthcare Services	13,456
Sandia National Laboratory	12,206
Albuquerque Public Schools	10,297
University of New Mexico Hospital	6,772
City of Albuquerque	5,800
University of New Mexico	4,210
Lovelace Hospital	3,589
Bernalillo County	2,494
Walmart	2,200
Central New Mexico College (CNM)	2,111

10 Largest Sandoval County Employers	Number of Employees
Rio Rancho Schools	1,960
Sandia Pueblo Casino	1,800
Intel	1,200
Safelite Autoglass	800
Hewlett Packard	750
Convergys	684
Santa Ana Casino	606
City of Rio Rancho	600
Sandoval County	495
US Government	362

10 Largest Valencia County Employers	Number of Employees
State of New Mexico	1,097
Los Lunas Schools	868
Belen Schools	455
Zuni Schools	417
Clarionet Packaging	300
Walmart	275
Valencia County	265
Smith's Foods	100-249
Albertsons	100-249
Town of Los Lunas	181

10 Largest Torrance County Employers	Number of Employees
Moriarity Schools	294
County of Torrance	105
State of New Mexico	94
US Government	62
Clines Corners Travel Center	50-99
Travel Center of America	50-99
Central New Mexico Electric Co-Op	50-99
Mountainair Schools	37
Town of Moriarty	32
Town of Estancia	14

The Albuquerque MSA is home to the best training and educational institutions (technical and community colleges, universities, etc.) in New Mexico:

Technical Schools (include but are not limited to the following):
Albuquerque Job Corps
Pima
Carrington
IntelliTec
UNM Continuing Ed
CNM Ingenuity
Phoenix Truck Driving School
ABQ Truck Driving School
JB CDL Training School
American Institute of Dental Assisting
New Mexico Institute of Dental Assisting
Adult Learning Center

4-Year Universities

UNM – Albuquerque
The main campus of UNM has more than 29,000 students with major schools of engineering, education, business, medicine, and law. More than 130 undergraduate degrees are offered, along with master's degrees in 94 fields and doctoral degrees in 44 areas. UNM is a nationally recognized Class I research institution. UNM's Continued Learning program drives a culture of lifelong education in the area.

2-year Community Colleges

CNM Albuquerque
CNM is the largest higher education institution in New Mexico in terms of undergraduate enrollment. Representatives from local businesses and industries help CNM develop programs to ensure that students acquire skills needed for success in the workplace. The college has many transfer articulation agreements with four-year institutions around the state, including the University of New Mexico.

Authorized by the New Mexico Legislature in 1963, CNM was approved by district voters in 1964 to provide adults with the skills necessary to gain employment and succeed in the workforce. Accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools in 1978, degree-granting power was approved for CNM by the State Legislature in 1986, signaling the college's transformation into a full-fledged community college.

Since its inception, CNM's career-technical programs in business, health, technologies, and trades have continually been redesigned to provide students with the most current and relevant skills needed by local employers.

2-Year Branch Community Colleges
UNM - Valencia
UNM Valencia is considered a key partner in the workforce development system. The Workforce Training Center (WTC) effectively trains the local workforce to meet the demands of the economic development in Valencia County. Non-degree programs and credential-focused course offerings will focus on building soft skills and enhancing work readiness.

Tribal Colleges
Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute (SIPI) – Albuquerque
SIPI is a proud participant of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC). SIPI is one of 37 Tribal Colleges and Universities in the nation that are part of the AIHEC family. SIPI students represent Alaskan Native Communities and American Indian tribes from across the United States.

SIPI first opened its doors in 1971 and embarked on a journey of changing lives through the power of education. To this day, SIPI is a trail blazer, pushing the envelope and raising the bar in higher education. SIPI's motto is EXPECT SUCCESS, that along with STUDENT SUCCESS is paramount to our mission and vision.

Diversity of the Population

The Albuquerque, NM Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) exhibits significant ethnic diversity, with distinct variations across its counties. As shown in *Exhibit 28* below, the Central Region is predominantly White, with 60.6% of the population identifying as such. This percentage is slightly above the New Mexico state average but below the national average of 65.9%. Notably, the area also has a substantial Hispanic or Latino population, accounting for nearly half (49.9%) of the Central Region's population. This reflects New Mexico's broader demographic trends, where the Hispanic or Latino community represents 49.8% of the state's population, a figure significantly higher than the national average of 18.7%, where White remains the predominant group.

Exhibit 28 **2018-2022 Racial & Ethnic Composition of the United States, New Mexico, & Central Region Counties**

Summary[1]							
Ethnicity	**Bernalillo County**	**Sandoval County**	**Torrance County**	**Valencia County**	**Central Region**	**NM**	**USA**
Percent							
White	60.30%	60.30%	66.10%	63.10%	60.6%	59.2%	65.9%
Black or African American	2.90%	2.30%	2.20%	1.50%	2.6%	2.1%	12.5%
American Indian and Alaska Native	4.90%	12.20%	2.30%	4.10%	6.0%	9.4%	0.8%
Asian	2.70%	1.60%	0.80%	0.80%	2.4%	1.6%	5.8%

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WCCNM Local Workforce Development Plan Program Years 2024-2027

Summary[1]							
Ethnicity	**Bernalillo County**	**Sandoval County**	**Torrance County**	**Valencia County**	**Central Region**	**NM**	**USA**
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.10%	0.20%	0.00%	0.00%	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%
Some Other Race	10.50%	7.20%	14.90%	10.70%	10.1%	11.1%	6.0%
Two or More Races	18.60%	16.20%	13.70%	19.80%	18.2%	16.5%	8.8%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	50.70%	40.60%	44.70%	61.10%	49.9%	49.8%	18.7%
Value							
White	406,649	90,123.00	10,047.00	48,321	555,140	1,250,614	218,123,424
Black or African American	19,377	3,391.00	340.00	1,121	24,229	44,894	41,288,572
American Indian and Alaska Native	33,180	18,214.00	357.00	3,121	54,872	198,140	2,786,431
Asian	18,517	2,369.00	115.00	589	21,590	34,400	19,112,979
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	597	357.00	-	30	984	1,849	624,863
Some Other Race	70,948	10,830.00	2,265.00	8,234	92,277	233,978	20,018,544
Two or More Races	125,424	24,176.00	2,079.00	15,197	166,876	348,588	29,142,780
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	342,361	60,690.00	6,800.00	46,825	456,676	1,051,626	61,755,866
Total Population	1,071,053	210,150	22,003	123,438	1,372,644	3,164,089	

Exhibit 28 2018-2022 Racial & Ethnic Composition of the United States, New Mexico, & Central Region Counties
Exported on: Wednesday, September 4, 2024
Source: JobsEQ - American Community Survey 2018-2022

Among the counties within the MSA, Bernalillo County is the most populous, with a total population of 1,017,053, where the White race is predominant. Sandoval County follows with a population of 210,150, with 60.3% identifying as White. Valencia County ranks third in population with 123,438 residents, where 63.1% are White. Torrance County, the least populated with 22,003 residents, has the highest percentage of White individuals at 66.1%. In all four counties, the White population is predominant, which is consistent with the overall 60.6% White population in the Central Region.

Across the Albuquerque MSA, other racial groups such as Black or African American (2.6%) and Asian (2.4%) are represented in smaller proportions compared to national figures, highlighting the

unique ethnic composition of this region. The Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander population remains minimal across the MSA, particularly in Torrance and Valencia Counties where it is not represented at all, reflecting broader trends within New Mexico.

In terms of absolute numbers, the White population remains the largest demographic group across the MSA, with over 555,000 individuals (60.6%), followed by the Hispanic or Latino population, which totals approximately 456,000 individuals (49.9%).

Statewide, the percentages shift slightly, but the White race maintains its predominance, followed closely by the Hispanic or Latino population, reflecting similar trends to those observed nationally.

Exhibit 29 **Population Projections, All Ages, Both Genders**

Population Projections, All Ages, Both Genders					
Year	Albuquerque, NM MSA	Bernalillo County, New Mexico	Sandoval County, New Mexico	Torrance County, New Mexico	Valencia County, New Mexico
2024	925,858	671,398	158,235	15,991	80,234
2025	928,769	670,670	160,542	16,255	81,302
2026	931,459	669,800	162,797	16,516	82,346
2027	933,923	668,769	165,011	16,774	83,369
2028	936,188	667,597	167,186	17,032	84,373
2029	938,208	666,264	169,312	17,283	85,348
2030	939,980	664,757	171,396	17,531	86,296
2031	941,506	663,077	173,422	17,775	87,232
2032	942,764	661,219	175,396	18,012	88,137
2033	943,786	659,201	177,325	18,247	89,015
2034	944,580	657,030	179,211	18,476	89,863

Exhibit 29: Population Projections, All Ages, Both Genders.
Source: JobsEQ - Data Explorer Exported on: Wednesday, September 4, 2024

The Central Region is expected to experience slow population growth over the next decade, with the total population increasing from 925,858 in 2024 to 944,580 by 2034 increasing 1.98% in a decade. This slow rise reflects the overall trend of expansion in the region, though the growth is not uniform across all counties within the Central Region.

Bernalillo County, the most populous county within the Central Region, is projected to see a slight decline in population over the decade, dropping from 671,398 in 2024 to 657,030 in 2034. This decrease, while modest, indicates a potential shift in population dynamics, possibly due to urban outmigration or other socio-economic factors that may be influencing the county's growth.

In contrast, Sandoval County is expected to experience significant growth, with its population increasing from 158,235 in 2024 to 179,211 in 2034. This growth rate of approximately 13%

makes Sandoval County the fastest-growing area within the MSA, reflecting its increasing attractiveness, possibly due to factors such as more affordable housing, expanding infrastructure, and economic opportunities.

Valencia County is also projected to see steady growth, with its population rising from 80,234 in 2024 to 89,863 in 2034, an increase of about 12%. Like Sandoval, Valencia County may be benefiting from suburbanization trends, with more residents choosing to live outside the more densely populated urban centers.

Torrance County, while the least populous, is anticipated to grow modestly from 15,991 in 2024 to 18,476 in 2034. This steady growth, though smaller in absolute numbers, reflects the consistent, population increase in the more rural areas of the MSA.

Overall, the Albuquerque MSA is expected to continue expanding, with notable growth in Sandoval and Valencia counties, while Bernalillo County, despite being the largest, may see a slight population decline. This shifting demographic landscape highlights the evolving nature of the region, with suburban and rural areas gaining more prominence as attractive places to live and work.

See also population data above in *Exhibits 19, 21, 25, 26, and 27.*

a. **Provide a full roster of local board membership, including the group each member represents (see Attachment B). Include a list of all standing committees, along with a description of the purpose of each committee (§679.550(c).**

WCCNM Board Roster Attachment B In Progress

The WCCNM Board currently has XX members and represents Bernalillo, Sandoval, Valencia and Torrance Counties. These four counties comprise the Central Region of New Mexico, which is also known as the Albuquerque Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). Please see Attachment B for the current WCCNM Board Roster.

The WCCNM maintains the following Standing Committees:

- **WCCNM Executive Standing Committee**
  The Executive Committee has the authority to act on behalf of the WCCNM on issues that cannot be deferred to the next WCCNM meeting. The Executive Committee serves as the Board of Finance for the WCCNM, acting on all financial matters including the budget, lease and contracts.

- **WCCNM Disability Standing Committee**
  The Disability Committee reviews, advocates, and make recommendations for New Mexicans with Disabilities to the WCCNM Full Board and or Executive Committee on matters related to WCCNM's operations.

- **WCCNM Finance Standing Committee**
  The WCCNM Finance Standing Committee assists the WCCNM Board in fulfilling its oversight responsibilities related to funding, expenses, and procurement consistent with the WCCNM's fiscal policies, vision, mission, and goals.

- **WCCNM Operations Standing Committee**
  The Operations Standing Committee reviews and makes recommendations to the WCCNM Full Board and or Executive Committee on service delivery, and all workforce partner matters related to WCCNM's Regional One-Stop services, performance, monitoring activities, training provider approvals and related activities.

- **WCCNM Youth Standing Committee**
  The Youth Council reviews and makes recommendations to the WCCNM Full Board and or Executive Committee on matters related to WCCNM's youth provider program.

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

Attachments In Progress
Attachment C: list of all One-Stops with phone, and address and for each One-stop list the program partners, indicate if co-located or non-co-located and provide a description of the services provided by each of the listed partners.

The local workforce development system in the Central Region is designed to address the needs of both job seekers and employers by offering a comprehensive suite of programs and services. The system is strategically aligned with regional economic and workforce analyses to ensure that it effectively meets the current and future needs of the local labor market.

Programs Included in the WCCNM Workforce Development System
 WIOA Title I Programs:
- **Adult and Dislocated Worker Services**: These services provide job training, career counseling, and employment assistance to adults and dislocated workers.
- **Youth Services**: Programs aimed at providing educational support, career exploration, and skill development for youth.

 WIOA Title II Adult Education and Literacy:
- Programs offering basic education, literacy training, and GED preparation to help individuals improve their academic skills and attain secondary credentials.

 WIOA Title III Wagner-Peyser Act Services:
- Employment services, including job placement assistance, career counseling, and labor market information.

 WIOA Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation:
- Services provided by the New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (NMDVR) to support individuals with disabilities in obtaining and maintaining employment.

 Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA):
- Programs designed to assist workers who have lost their jobs due to foreign trade. Services include training, job search assistance, and income support.

 TANF and SNAP Employment and Training:
- Programs aimed at helping individuals receiving public assistance to gain employment and achieve economic self-sufficiency.

 Veterans Services:
- Services for veterans, including job placement assistance, career counseling, and training opportunities.

 Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP):
- Provides job training and placement for older workers, helping them gain new skills and secure employment.

 CHANCES Reentry Grant Program:
- Provides pre- and post-release job readiness, occupational training, supportive services and incentives to incarcerated individuals.

 Pathways to Infrastructure Jobs Grant (H-1B)

Alignment with Regional Economic and Workforce Analysis
The programs within the local workforce development system are aligned with regional economic needs and workforce analysis through several strategies:
- **Regional Economic Analysis**: The workforce system integrates findings from regional economic analyses to identify key industries and sectors with growth potential, ensuring that training programs and services are targeted toward these areas. Please see Emerging Industries section on page 18.

- **Labor Market Information**: By using labor market information (LMI), the WCCNM tailors its training and employment services to address skills gaps and meet the demand for specific occupations. To develop data-driven solutions, the WCCNM utilizes LMI and other data from multiple reputable sources including NMDWS, JobsEQ, the U.S. Census Bureau, and the Bureau of Labor Statistics just to mention a few.
- **Sector Partnerships**: Collaboration with industry leaders and employers helps in developing sector-specific training programs and ensuring that the skills taught are relevant to current job market needs. Please see Cross-Goals X on page XX for more information.
- **Career Pathways**: The system supports career pathways initiatives that help individuals progress from entry-level jobs to higher-skilled positions within targeted industries.

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

WCCNM is working to develop stronger collaboration with the NM Public Education Department (NMPED), the New Mexico Higher Education Department (NMHED), and CNM to find ways to increase the engagement of in-school youth in its Career Technical Education (CTE) programs.

The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (Perkins IV) was reauthorized by the United States Congress in 2018 and is now named the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V). Like Perkins IV, Perkins V supports the expansion of Career and Technical Education (CTE). It challenges students with rigorous academic and CTE instruction, a method that prepares students for high-skill, living-wage or in-demand and emerging professions.

Perkins incorporates national research and information to continuously improve CTE programs and activities, while providing services such as professional development for educators at the State and local levels. This full circle framework also advocates for strong partnerships between secondary schools, postsecondary institutions and the local workforce.

With the use of resources such as the **Career Cluster Guide Book** and **New Mexico Career Pathways**, schools and institutions can guide students to a successful career path within New Mexico. Career Clusters and recommended programs of study help students of all backgrounds find a career path that not only meets their interests, but also ensures a sustainable living.

WCCNM will continue to strengthen program relations and continue to include programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.) to support service alignment. WCCNM plans to strengthen its service alignment through continued coordination and planning with Carl D. Perkins staff and program leadership, as well as utilizing results from the Perkins V - Comprehensive Local Needs Assessments.

Input received states a need to speak to PED for their input regarding CTE collaboration and the potential to leverage existing funds to assist with Internship, apprenticeship etc. Need input from PED CTE and HED CNM CTE representatives.

2. **Local Workforce Development System Alignment**
    a. **Describe how the local board will work with entities carrying out core programs to expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment (§679.560(b)(2)(i)).**

The WCCNM utilized data analysis, policy analysis, and program evaluation to continue to drive strategies to expand access to employment, training, education and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment. These strategies include:

- Assessment of the geographic coverage of existing service delivery system;
- Evaluation of current training strategies and best practices from other regions across the country, especially as integrated with sector strategies;
- Review of existing business engagement strategies; and
- Operational evaluation of ongoing efforts to integrate service delivery with all WIOA core partners, including Adult Basic Education and the NMDVR.

A critical component of the WCCNM Continuous Quality Improvement Plan (CQI) is to evaluate and analyze existing service strategies for priority populations and ensure ongoing work supports continued participant access to needed programs and resources. WIOA funded and other partner programs focus on serving low income and disadvantaged populations. The NMWC partners in Central Region operate within the integrated system, complete with co-located partners, procured service providers, and shared resource leveraging.

    b. **Describe how the local board will work with entities carrying out core programs to facilitate the development of career pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs (§679.560(b)(2)(ii)).**

Please see above section B. Strategic Planning Elements. This section details WCCNM activities to facilitate the development of career pathways and co-enrollments in the Central Region.

c. **Describe how the local board will work with entities carrying out core programs to improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential (including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable, and stackable) (§679.560(b)(2)(iii))).**

A critical component for WCCNM service integration is to ensure that coordination and planning is performed with involvement and active participation of all partners. The quarterly partner gatherings facilitate the transfer of knowledge between the core partners, enhanced training and a basic understanding of programs, services and responsibilities of all partners. Furthermore, governance of the workforce system service delivery methods and strategies are consistent with the local workforce board's Objective and Operational Goals. Quarterly partner meetings comprised of all partners within the Central Region, ensure that partner's priorities, responsibilities and performance measures are fully addressed in the delivery of workforce services and integration. Such coordination and planning with all partners enhance and promotes the development of career pathways and opportunities for co-enrollment for eligible participants.

In addition to quarterly gatherings, the NMWC Centers Operations Manager will work with partners carrying out core programs to improve access to activities leading to recognized postsecondary credentials through a variety of strategic initiatives, coordination efforts, and service integration practices.

The NMWC Center facilitates **collaborative case management** across partner agencies to ensure participants can access multiple services concurrently. Through **co-enrollment**, individuals can participate in multiple programs simultaneously (e.g., WIOA Title I, Adult Education, and Vocational Rehabilitation), allowing them to receive workforce training while completing educational courses that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials. This coordinated effort reduces service duplication and accelerates credential attainment.

To support credential attainment, the NMWC collaborates with core program partners and employers to develop and expand **work-based learning opportunities**, such as apprenticeships and on-the-job training (OJT). These programs provide participants with hands-on experience while earning credentials. The OSO helps coordinate these efforts by connecting participants to employers offering credential-linked training opportunities, ensuring that participants gain both practical skills and recognized qualifications.

The WCCNM's My Hub Intranet is an advanced intranet platform designed to enhance communication, collaboration, and efficiency within organizations. It provides a central hub for NMWC staff and partners to access essential information, resources, and tools, fostering a connected and informed workplace.

The MyHub Intranet plays a critical role in improving access to activities that lead to a recognized postsecondary credential by serving as a centralized platform for information, resources, and collaboration.

Partners, regardless of co-located or non-co-located are invited to take part in the WCCNM bi-weekly partner meetings as well as the Bi-Weekly Event Sub Committee meetings. Minutes of the meetings are recorded and will be sent out to all Central partners for review. Monthly WCCNM all staff meetings occur where partners can educate staff by discussing their specific programs.

All partners have access to MyHub as requested. Co-located partners utilize this platform in many ways such as requests for services like ASL interpretation, Event Kit Requests, and trainings on other programs. Non-co-located partners also have the ability to take part in all of these functions but mostly use MyHub for referrals to another partner in our network.

3. Local Strategy Implementation
The plan must include local strategies and the implementation of initiatives to support those strategies relative to the elements below. Strategies may include incumbent worker training programs, OJT programs, Registered Apprenticeships, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies, career pathways initiatives, utilization of effective business intermediaries, and other business services and strategies designed to meet the needs of regional employers.

> **a. Describe the strategies and services that will be used in the local area to facilitate engagement of employers in workforce development programs, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations (§679.560(b)(3)(i)).**

To effectively support local workforce development strategies, the plan will incorporate a range of initiatives designed to address the needs of both job seekers and employers in the region. The strategies outlined below will be implemented to enhance workforce development and align with regional economic demands:

Incumbent Worker Training Programs
Objective: Enhance the skills of current employees to improve productivity, retention, and career advancement.

Strategies:
- **Partnerships with Employers**: Collaborate with local businesses to identify skills gaps and develop targeted training programs that will enable enhanced competitiveness within their respective industry.
- **Customized Training Solutions**: Offer flexible training options that can be tailored to specific industries or job roles to minimize or eliminate skill gaps.
- **Funding Opportunities**: Utilize available funding sources such as WIOA and employer contributions to support training programs.

Implementation:
- Develop training modules in collaboration with industry experts.
- Schedule regular training sessions and workshops at convenient times for businesses.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of training programs through feedback and performance metrics.

On-the-Job Training (OJT) Programs
Objective: Provide hands-on training to new employees in real work environments, enhancing their skills while meeting employer needs.
Strategies:
- **Employer Engagement**: Work with local businesses to design OJT programs that address specific job requirements.
- **Subsidies for Employers**: Offer financial incentives to employers who provide OJT opportunities, covering a portion of training costs.
- **Supportive Services**: Provide additional resources such as mentoring and coaching to ensure successful training outcomes.

Implementation:
- Establish agreements with employers outlining the terms of OJT programs.
- Coordinate with businesses to identify suitable candidates and develop training plans.
- Track the progress of trainees and gather feedback to refine OJT programs.

Registered Apprenticeships
Objective: Develop a skilled workforce through structured apprenticeship programs that combine on-the-job training with classroom instruction.
Strategies:
- **Sector-Based Approaches**: Focus on high-demand industries such as manufacturing, healthcare, and information technology to create apprenticeship opportunities.
- **Partnerships with Educational Institutions**: Collaborate with community colleges and technical schools to provide the necessary academic training. **Input received suggests "provide the necessary academic or workforce training.** "RI for apprenticeship does not necessarily have to be through the academic school for-credit.
- **Promotion and Outreach**: Increase awareness of apprenticeship opportunities through community engagement and targeted marketing efforts.

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Implementation:

- Work with industry partners to design apprenticeship programs that meet current and future workforce needs.
- Develop apprenticeship curricula in collaboration with educational institutions and employers.
- Monitor apprenticeship programs to ensure they meet quality standards and provide value to both apprentices and employers.

Customized Training Programs

Objective: Address specific training needs of businesses and industries through tailored programs that align with their unique requirements.

Strategies:

- **Business Needs Assessment**: Conduct assessments to determine the specific training needs of local employers.
- **Flexible Training Options**: Offer customized training solutions that can be delivered on-site, online, or through a combination of methods.
- **Evaluation and Adjustment**: Continuously assess the effectiveness of training programs and make adjustments as needed based on feedback and performance outcomes.

Implementation:

- Develop customized training proposals in collaboration with employers.
- Implement training programs based on agreed-upon schedules and formats.
- Evaluate training outcomes and make improvements to ensure alignment with business objectives.

The WCCNM plans to expand its H1-B sector strategy and career pathway development strategies described above to additional in-demand industries as more Sector Strategy guidance becomes available from NMDWS. Please also see S.M.A.R.T. goals and action plans as described above under the Cross Goal Strategy 1 on page X.

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

Industry and Sector Strategies

Objective: Foster economic growth and workforce development by focusing on key industries and sectors that drive regional economic activity.

Strategies:

- **Industry Partnerships**: Build relationships with industry leaders to understand their workforce needs and develop targeted strategies.
- **Sector-Based Initiatives**: Implement programs that support growth and innovation within specific sectors, such as technology or healthcare.

- **Regional Collaboration**: Work with regional economic development agencies and business associations to align workforce strategies with economic goals.

Implementation:
- Develop industry-specific strategies and action plans based on input from industry stakeholders.
- Coordinate with regional partners to implement sector-based initiatives and projects.
- Monitor industry trends and adjust strategies to address emerging needs and opportunities.

Career Pathways Initiatives

Objective: Create clear and accessible pathways for individuals to advance their careers through education, training, and work experience.

Strategies:
- **Pathway Development**: Design career pathways that outline the steps individuals need to take to achieve specific career goals.
- **Educational and Training Opportunities**: Provide access to educational programs and training resources that support career advancement.
- **Career Counseling and Support**: Offer career counseling services to help individuals navigate their career pathways and make informed decisions.

Implementation:
- Collaborate with educational institutions and employers to develop career pathways for key industries.
- Provide guidance and support to individuals as they progress through their career pathways.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of career pathways initiatives and make improvements based on feedback and outcomes.

Utilization of Effective Business Intermediaries

Objective: Leverage the expertise of business intermediaries to connect job seekers with employers and facilitate workforce development initiatives.

Strategies:
- **Partner with Intermediaries**: Engage with business intermediaries to enhance connections between job seekers and employers.
- **Resource Sharing**: Collaborate with intermediaries to share resources, such as job leads and training opportunities.
- **Program Development**: Work with intermediaries to develop and implement programs that address specific workforce needs.

Implementation:
- Identify and partner with effective business intermediaries in the region.
- Coordinate efforts to align intermediary activities with workforce development goals.
- Monitor the impact of intermediary partnerships and make adjustments as needed to improve outcomes.

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Other Business Services and Strategies

Objective: Provide a range of services and strategies to support the needs of local businesses and enhance workforce development.

Strategies:

- **Business Services**: Offer services such as recruitment assistance, job fairs, and workforce planning support to local businesses.
- **Training and Development**: Provide training programs and workshops to help businesses build a skilled workforce.
- **Economic Development Initiatives**: Support economic development projects that create new job opportunities and enhance regional growth.

Implementation:

- Develop and deliver business services that address the specific needs of local employers.
- Coordinate with economic development agencies to support regional growth and job creation.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of business services and strategies and make improvements based on feedback and results.

By implementing these strategies in conjunction with the WCCNM Sector Strategy and Career Pathway Policy and service provider guidance as described above under Cross Goal Strategy 1, the local workforce development system will effectively support regional employers and job seekers, fostering economic growth and ensuring a skilled and prepared workforce.

> **c. Describe the strategies and services that will be used in the local area to better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development (§679.560(b)(3)(iii).**

Please see Emerging Industries above on page 18.

> **d. Describe strategies and services that will be used in the local area to strengthen linkages between the one-stop delivery system and the unemployment insurance programs (§679.560(b)(3)(iv)).**

To ensure a strong and customer focused linkage with the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program, the WCCNM has considered the partnership with the NMDWS program to be critical. The Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program staff in the centers provide the Adult & Dislocated Worker Program with the needed connection to the front line of unemployment services. The Adult & Dislocated Worker Program continues to expand outreach efforts and explore strategies to engage more dislocated workers including strengthening the partnership with the RESEA program, utilizing reporting via the UI Tax & Claims System, developing more tailored and measurable marketing efforts and initiating needs-related-payments

for dislocated workers that remain in training after exhausting Unemployment Insurance benefit payments.

To create a seamless, integrated system that supports job seekers and maximizes employment opportunities, strengthening the linkages between the one-stop delivery system and Unemployment Insurance (UI) programs is essential. The following strategies and services will be implemented in the local area to ensure effective coordination and support for individuals receiving UI benefits as they transition back into the workforce:

The local area will collaborate with UI programs to increase engagement in the **Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA)** program, which is specifically designed to assist UI claimants at risk of long-term unemployment. UI claimants participating in RESEA will receive enhanced services, including one-on-one career counseling, job search planning, and enrollment in training programs that lead to in-demand credentials. Strengthening the integration of RESEA within the one-stop delivery system will ensure UI claimants receive targeted, individualized assistance aimed at reducing the duration of unemployment.

One-stop centers will offer **enhanced job matching** and **work search assistance** for UI recipients, ensuring they have access to tailored job leads and employment opportunities. **Labor market information** and **skills assessments** will help claimants understand the local demand for specific skills and occupations, guiding them toward high-demand industries and jobs that match their experience. The one-stop system will also offer **resume building** and **interview preparation** workshops, ensuring that UI claimants are well-prepared for the job market.

For UI claimants in need of additional skills or education to reenter the workforce, the one-stop system will provide access to **training programs** and **postsecondary credential opportunities**. UI claimants will be assessed for eligibility for programs like **WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker** training funds, which can be used to support participation in short-term training programs or apprenticeships in high-demand fields. By connecting UI recipients with training and education, the one-stop system will enhance their employability and reduce their likelihood of long-term unemployment.

> e. **Describe how the local board will coordinate local workforce investment activities with regional economic development activities that are carried out in the local area and how the local board will promote entrepreneurial skills training and small business services (§679.560(b)(4).**

Need input

> **f. Describe how the local board will develop and implement training across systems for all core partners to ensure a unified approach to service delivery, including vocational rehabilitation (§679.550(c)).**

Training across all workforce systems is integral to ensuring all service providers and case managers understand the critical nature of adherence to WIOA, NMDWS and WCCNM regulations and policies.

NMWC Center Sector Strategy and Career Pathway Training:
Please provide write up on the NMWC Center *Sector Strategy and Career Pathway Development* training plan including provider/partner training strategies the plan will include. Are you using training newsletters, Zoom or in-person training meetings? How do you deliver partner trainings and at what frequency to inform partners of new policies and requirements?

WCCNM's WIOA service providers maintain program quality control programs and procedure manuals and ensure their staff receive program specific training at regular intervals.

Adult/Dislocated Worker: The Team and Program Analyst regularly review/monitor the Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker Program files within the WCOS to assure clean data entry and uploading of required supporting documentation. This process aids in identifying areas of weakness and general systemic or individual needs for training. Any identified issues become the training/update topic during our bi-monthly, in-person staff meetings. In addition, if individual patterns surface during file review, an Employee Improvement Plan is established with that individual inclusive of an intensive training plan with timelines and on-line learning tools for topics such as Time Management and Customer Service. This helps give that Team member the "jump start" they need to get back on track with service provision. In most cases, it is customary to continue to review their files for two subsequent quarters to assure that healthy work patterns have been well incorporated into their work requirements. Additionally, as new TEGLs/TEINs emerge, with or without State and Local policy guidance, our Team takes a proactive approach and begins to address potential modification to service provision to assure compliance and eliminate future concerns for quick implementation. It is our experience that staff are more receptive when they fully understand the requirement, participate in the solution and have ample time for implementation.

Youth Program: Please provide training process.

4. **One-Stop Delivery System**
   a. **Describe how local board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers through the system and how such providers will meet the employment needs of local employers, workers, and job seekers (§679.560(b)(5)(i)).**

The WCCNM maintains a **Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Plan** that ensures all workforce providers, including state one-stop staff, are fully informed and aligned with WCCNM policies and requirements. The CQI plan is integral to meeting the employment needs of local employers, workers, and job seekers by promoting excellence, efficiency, and responsiveness across the workforce system.

WCCNM ensures that all policies, operational guidelines, and requirements are disseminated promptly to providers and staff through regular communication channels, including email updates, intranet postings (such as on My Hub), and staff meetings. This guarantees that one-stop staff and all partner providers are aware of the latest developments in policies and compliance requirements that impact service delivery.

The CQI process fosters a collaborative approach to problem-solving by engaging all providers and one-stop staff in identifying challenges and developing solutions. Quarterly meetings, workshops, and cross-functional teams bring together providers, WCCNM leadership, and local employers to discuss how to better meet the needs of the workforce community. This collaboration ensures that policies and services remain relevant and effective.

WCCNM ensures that all providers, including state one-stop staff, are consistently informed and aligned with the organization's policies and performance requirements. This structured approach enhances the ability to meet the evolving needs of employers, workers, and job seekers, fostering a dynamic and effective workforce development system.

Providers of training programs are an essential component for a successful workforce investment system. The WCCNM recognizes the important role training providers serve in ensuring that all employers in Central New Mexico have a qualified workforce readily available, and that all jobseekers in our area have the opportunity to gain and maintain the skills they need for successful careers. The workforce development system established under WIOA emphasizes informed consumer choice, job-driven training, provider performance, and continuous improvement.

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careers. The workforce development system established under WIOA emphasizes informed consumer choice, job- driven training, provider performance, and continuous improvement.

> **b. Describe how the local board will facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system, including in remote areas, through the use of technology and other means (§679.560(b)(5)((ii)).**

The WCCNM is committed to facilitating broad and equitable access to services through the one-stop delivery system, ensuring that individuals in both urban and remote areas can effectively connect with the resources they need. To achieve this, the board has implemented a multifaceted approach that leverages technology and other innovative methods.

WCCNM will continue to utilize all of our social media platforms to engage and inform rural populations, promoting events within the communities where these residents reside. We continue to participate in outreach and hiring events throughout the region as well as promote these events within the community.

- **Online Platforms:** The WCCNM utilizes user-friendly online platforms that allow individuals to access a wide range of services, including job search tools, career counseling, and training resources, from any location. These platforms are designed to be accessible via computers, tablets, and smartphones, ensuring flexibility for users.
- **Community Engagement Events:** Regular community events, such as job fairs and information sessions, are held in remote locations to raise awareness of available services and provide direct support to those who may not have regular access to the one-stop centers.
- **Resource Distribution:** The WCCNM distributes guides and resources that explain how to navigate the one-stop system's online tools, making it easier for individuals with limited tech experience to engage with services.

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

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Compliance with WIOA Section 188 and Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) (ADA)

Section 188 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) prohibits discrimination in programs and activities that receive financial assistance under WIOA Title I. The section prohibits discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, political affiliation or belief, and citizenship status for beneficiaries. It also requires covered entities to take positive actions to assist qualified individuals with disabilities, including providing reasonable accommodations.

The WCCNM One-Stops utilize the U.S. Department of Labor's WIA Section 188 Disability Checklist that helps organizations comply with the law. The checklist covers topics such as registration, universal access, and service delivery and coordination. It also references specific CFR sections, such as those that cover definitions, remedial action, and designation of responsible employees as described below:

Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity:
- **Policies and Procedures**: One-stop operators and partners adhere to the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity policies outlined in WIOA Section 188, ensuring that all services are accessible to individuals regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or political affiliation.
- **Monitoring and Compliance**: Regular audits and compliance reviews are conducted to ensure adherence to these policies. Non-compliance issues are addressed promptly through corrective action plans and adjustments.

Physical and Programmatic Accessibility:
- **Facility Accessibility**: All one-stop centers are maintained to meet ADA standards for physical accessibility. This includes providing ramps, elevators, accessible restrooms, and designated parking for individuals with disabilities.
- **Programmatic Accessibility**: Services are designed to be accessible to all individuals, including those with disabilities. This involves adapting program delivery methods to accommodate various needs, such as offering materials in alternative formats (e.g., large print, Braille) and ensuring that assistive technology is available.

Technology and Materials:
- **Accessible Technology**: All technology used within the one-stop system, including websites and online resources, is designed to be accessible according to WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines). This ensures that individuals with visual impairments or other disabilities can effectively use online services.
- **Assistive Devices**: One-stop centers provide assistive devices and technologies, such as screen readers and adaptive keyboards, to facilitate access to services for individuals with disabilities.

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Staff Training and Support:
- **Training Programs**: All staff receive mandatory training on ADA requirements, disability awareness, and best practices for serving individuals with disabilities. This training is updated regularly to reflect new developments and practices.
- **Support Systems**: A dedicated team or individual within each one-stop center is responsible for addressing specific needs related to disability accommodations. This role includes providing guidance to staff on how to effectively support individuals with disabilities and ensuring that all resources are used appropriately.

Collaboration with Disability Organizations:
- **Partnerships**: The one-stop system partners with local disability advocacy groups and organizations to enhance service delivery and ensure that the needs of individuals with disabilities are met. This collaboration includes joint training sessions and shared resources.

Feedback and Improvement:
- **Feedback Mechanisms**: A process is in place for individuals to provide feedback on the accessibility of services and facilities. This feedback is used to make continuous improvements and address any barriers or issues.
- **Regular Reviews**: Accessibility and nondiscrimination practices are reviewed periodically to ensure compliance with legal requirements and to incorporate best practices.

Documentation and Reporting:
- **Record Keeping**: Documentation related to compliance with ADA and WIOA Section 188 is maintained, including records of accessibility improvements, training sessions, and any incidents of non-compliance.
- **Reporting**: Reports on accessibility and nondiscrimination efforts are prepared and submitted as required by WIOA and ADA regulations. These reports help track progress and highlight areas for further improvement.

This comprehensive approach ensures that the WCCNM One-Stop delivery system is compliant with nondiscrimination requirements and provides a fully accessible environment for all individuals, including those with disabilities.

> d. **Describe the specific roles and resource contributions of the one-stop partners, to date. Please include your process for updating any cooperative agreements, resource sharing agreements, and memoranda of understanding relevant to the WIOA. If any of these documents have already been updated or are even still in draft form, please provide copies as part of Attachment D (§679.560(b)(5)(iv)).**

Attachment D in progress - cooperative agreements, resource sharing agreements, and memoranda of understanding

Roles and Resource Contributions of WCCNM Partners

New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (NMDVR):
- **Roles**: Provides technical assistance to workforce partners and individuals with disabilities, offers career counseling, and delivers employment and training services tailored for individuals with disabilities.
- **Resources**: Contributes expertise in disability services and participates in cross-training. NMDVR staff are actively involved in job fairs, training on disability awareness, and collaborative case management efforts.

WIOA Title I Providers:
- **Roles**: Deliver career services, training, and job placement assistance to eligible individuals. They also manage on-the-job training (OJT) and other work-based learning opportunities.
- **Resources**: Provide funding and resources for training programs, career services, and other workforce development activities. They collaborate with other partners to ensure comprehensive service delivery and avoid duplication.

TANF Program:
- **Roles**: Refers recipients to workforce services, provides support through work experience programs, and offers wage subsidies.
- **Resources**: Facilitates access to financial assistance, childcare, and other supportive services. TANF funds and services are integrated with WIOA programs to enhance employment outcomes for low-income individuals.

Adult Education Providers:
- **Roles**: Offer basic literacy, GED preparation, and ESL classes. They support individuals in obtaining secondary credentials and transitioning to postsecondary education or employment.
- **Resources**: Provide educational materials, instructors, and curriculum aligned with the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) and Common Core. They also participate in joint-enrollment and cross-training initiatives with WIOA programs.

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SCSEP Program:
- **Roles**: Refers recipients to workforce services, provides support through additional training services and employment opportunities in the community.
- **Resources**: SCSEP offers job readiness training to low-income older adults 55+ ensuring they have basic workplace skills and are prepared for employment.

Economic Development Agencies:
- **Roles**: Assist in aligning workforce development with local economic needs, support business engagement, and facilitate job creation.
- **Resources**: Contribute data on labor market trends, provide business connections, and collaborate on workforce planning and development strategies.

Process for Updating Agreements

Review and Update Cycle:
- **Frequency**: Agreements are reviewed annually, or as needed, to ensure they remain current with WIOA requirements and local workforce needs.
- **Process**: Each agreement undergoes a review process involving relevant stakeholders, including one-stop partners, to assess effectiveness and make necessary updates.

Updating Cooperative Agreements and MOUs:
- **Drafting**: Revisions are drafted based on feedback from partner meetings, performance reviews, and changes in regulatory requirements.
- **Approval**: Updated documents are circulated for approval among all partners and then formally adopted by the local workforce development board (LWDB).

Documentation:
- **Attachments**: Copies of updated agreements, resource-sharing agreements, and MOUs are provided as part of Attachment D. If any documents are still in draft form, they are included for review with notes on expected completion dates.

Communication:
- **Sharing**: Updated documents and changes are communicated to all partners through formal channels such as meetings, emails, and shared platforms to ensure transparency and alignment.

This systematic approach ensures that all WCCNM One-Stop partners are aligned in their roles and contributions, and that cooperative agreements are consistently updated to reflect current needs and compliance with WIOA regulations.

> e. **Describe how the entities within the one-stop delivery system, including one-stop operators and the one-stop partners, will provide Accessibility for English Language Learners (ELL) (§679. 560(c).**

English Language Learners have access to multiple programs and classes through the WCCNM partner network. Partners such as Catholic Charities and CNM provide ESL classes. These programs are publicized on a WCCNM flyer as well as the WCCNM website.

English Language Learners are connected to other Central Region partners through the referral system in MyHub. These referrals are submitted by a partner and are communicated to the ELL partner via email by the operations staff. Referrals are tracked and updated in MyHub to ensure follow up and services are completed.

> **5. Service Implementation for Indicated Populations**
>> 1. **Youth**
>>> a. **Provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of youth workforce investment activities in the local area including activities for youth with disabilities and other barriers such as homeless youth, foster, and former foster youth, and/or expecting and parenting youth (§679.560(b)(8).**

Youth workforce activities include access to the 14 Youth Elements under WIOA, including support services to assist youth in achieving their education and employment goals. The 14 Youth Elements include:

1. Financial Literacy;
2. Entrepreneurial skills training;
3. Services that provide labor market and employment information in the local area;
4. Activities that help youth transition to post-secondary education and training;
5. Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster;
6. Adult Mentoring;
7. Supportive Services (transportation, childcare, housing, medical);
8. Guidance and Counseling;
9. Leadership Development;
10. Alternative Education;
11. Dropout Prevention/Tutoring;
12. Paid/Unpaid work experience including internships & summer employment;
13. Occupational Skills Training; and
14. Follow-up Services

Additional activities that support the WIOA 14 Youth Elements include but are not limited to the following:

- Comprehensive work readiness training and career exploration;
- Development of quality work experience sites to provide meaningful work experience and skill development;
- Co-enrollment with WIOA Title II and Title IV programs to provide secondary education and support services for youth with disabilities; and
- Co-enrollment with adult WIOA program for OJT and further training opportunities.

Special attention is paid to the hardest to serve, most in need youth: youth with disabilities, and other barriers such as homeless youth, foster and former foster youth, offenders, and/or expecting and parenting youth. In an effort to reach these populations, outreach is conducted on a consistent basis throughout the urban, rural and pueblo areas of the region to public, alternative and charter high schools, juvenile justice facilities, community centers, AE programs, homeless shelters, transitional living programs, colleges and universities, and other youth serving community agencies. The WCCNM youth provider has established strong and effective partnerships with all schools, agencies and programs that serve this population.

Youth services provided to all participants include:

- Objective assessment of literacy and numeracy skills, English language proficiency, aptitudes, and abilities, and support service needs;
- Development of an Individualized Educational Plan to establish education and employment goals and objectives;
- Referrals and coordination of activities to service needs including the WIOA fourteen youth elements, other one-stop delivery services, and other workforce development programs as appropriate. Referrals are also made to support services including medical, housing, food, childcare, and transportation assistance, and prevention and intervention services including mental health and substance abuse counseling;
- Case management to work through barriers, obtain support service needs and monitor referrals to internal and external services and programs;
- Work experiences, internships and apprenticeships linked to career interest; Labor market services including job search and placement assistance, information on in-demand industry sectors and occupations, and performance and program cost information on eligible training providers for training services;
- Work readiness training to develop soft and foundational employability skills required for successful attainment and retention of employment;
- Workforce preparation activities to develop a resume and acquire digital literacy, business etiquette, communication, interviewing and financial literacy skills;
- Assistance in college entry, including establishing eligibility for programs of financial aid assistance for training programs not provided under WIOA, and completion of placement assessments;

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- Enrollment in occupational skills training in a demand field for certification and credential and career pathways; and
- Quarterly follow-up services for up to one year after program completion to offer support services and obtain performance outcome information.

a. Describe how the local board is planning or working to fulfill specific Youth requirements as laid out in the WIOA including (§679.560(c):

1. How the board is providing for the 14 required youth service elements;

The 14 youth elements are made available to youth participants through direct service or partnerships. Half of the youth elements are provided directly including paid work experiences, financial literacy, labor market research, post-secondary transition, supportive services, and follow-up. For elements that are not provided directly by the program, partnerships are developed with other programs and providers for referrals. Referral systems are in place to ensure youth receive the services and coordinated planning with partners provides effective communication and sharing of progress and achievements.

2. Approach towards meeting the 20% work experience, including the use of Registered Apprenticeships as a service strategy;

The Youth Business Practitioner has a consistent presence in the business community engaging employers as worksites for work experience placements. The program maintains a job bank of worksites for placements or employment opportunities. Twenty percent (20%) of the total youth budget is allocated for work experience activities, which include wages for youth work experience hours and staff time for all activities related to work experience. These activities include the delivery of work readiness training, development of worksites, placement, and monitoring of the worksite throughout the authorized hours.

3. Approaches toward meeting the 75% OSY minimum expenditure;

Effective approaches in meeting the OSY requirement include developing partnerships, community presence, and use of technology and social media. Partnerships are developed with other youth serving agencies, primarily those serving out-of-school youth. These partners include the Juvenile Justice Probation/Parole, Teen court programs, adult education programs, foster care programs and other community organizations working with out-of-school. Youth staff engage in presentations and attend staff meetings to provide program information for recruitment. Community presence is essential in reaching out of school youth. Recruitment is conducted at community events, job fairs, and community centers where out-of-school youth are more likely to be. Lastly, the use of technology and social media are powerful methods to reach and recruit out of school youth. These platforms are ideal for advertising, communication and provide the opportunity for peer-to-peer recruitment through the sharing of content. The Youth provider also

a large applicant pool of out of school youth through its various internal programs to include behavioral health, transitional living, violence intervention, reentry, and home visiting programs.

4. A description of changes in the youth provider's service delivery models;

The youth programs service delivery is individualized and tailored to meet the needs of youth participants by maintaining two best practice service delivery models that assist youth in effectively addressing barriers, meeting goals, and remaining engaged. The client-centered approach places the youth at the forefront of their care and ensures they are involved in their plan and control of their progress and success from the beginning. The Positive Youth Development (PYD) framework is an intentional, pro-social approach that engages youth within their communities, schools, organizations, peer groups, and families in a manner that is productive and constructive. PYD recognizes, utilizes, and enhances youths' strengths; and promotes positive outcomes for young people by providing opportunities, fostering positive relationships, and furnishing the support needed to build on their leadership strengths. Involving youth in the planning, implementation and accountability efforts to achieve meaningful change is essential. Youth engagement is a central principle of PYD as young people are agents of their own development and deserve the right to represent their interests.

5. A description of any changes in outreach activities around Youth;

The youth program utilizes two powerful methods of outreach activities; the use of technology and social media and community-based outreach. The use of social media platforms that youth actively use like Facebook, Tik Tok, YouTube, and Instagram has the ability to reach a larger number of youth and foster engagement through interactive content while providing the opportunity for communication and the ability for peer-to-peer outreach by sharing the information with friends and family. The use of technology also allows for targeted messaging and feedback. Community-based outreach takes staff and services outside of the center and into the community where interaction and engagement with youth are more likely to occur. Youth staff participate in various community and school events to recruit and engage with youth and families.

6. Any changes in Youth case management approach, including the use of supportive services (§679.560(c).

Case management is an essential service that is ongoing throughout the program. Case management identifies barriers and service needs and creates education and employment goals for effective progression through the program elements. Partnerships are developed with other programs and providers for referrals and are monitored by youth staff to ensure receipt of services. Youth staff utilize the DAP (Data, Assessment, Plan) format to ensure delivery of and documentation of all case management services. DAP is a best practice method that is client-centered and ensures youth receive the best care possible. Case management is provided at a minimum of once per month but as often as needed by the youth. A tiered case management model is utilized to ensure the occurrence of case management is aligned to the needs of the youth.

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The basis for the development of a training plan leading to employment goal attainment begins with assessment, both initial and intensive. Based on results, inclusive of one-to-one discussion with our customers to ascertain their talents, hobbies and basic needs, a training plan is developed to outline the path required. Some targeted populations, such as those listed in this section, often have multiple barriers to employment and in many cases lack work experience or have outdated skill sets that make it difficult to compete in today's labor market. Some just need a little help to get back to work. In these cases, it may be determined that the use of our Transitional Jobs Programming can be the best plan for movement back to self-sufficiency.

Transitional jobs are a type of work-based training that is allowed under WIOA. Transitional jobs are time-limited and provide a work experience that is subsidized in the public, private, or nonprofit sectors for individuals with barriers to employment who are chronically unemployed or have an inconsistent work history. This service is always combined with comprehensive career and supportive services. The goal of transitional jobs is to establish a work history for the individual that demonstrates success in the workplace and develops the skills that lead to entry into and retention in unsubsidized employment.

Unlike OJT, there is no assumption that the individual will be retained in their transitional job at its completion, however, that is always the desired outcome. However, this program can also transition into an OJT contract to enable further training in the given occupation leading to permanent unsubsidized employment. Under section 134(d)(5) of WIOA, local boards may use up to 10 percent of their adult and dislocated worker funds to provide transitional jobs to individuals.

WIOA authorizes "career services" for adults and dislocated workers, rather than "core" and "intensive" services, as authorized formerly by WIA. There are three types of "career services": basic career services, individualized career services, and follow-up services. These services can be provided in any order; there is no sequence requirement for these services. Career services under this approach provide local areas and service providers with flexibility to target services provision to the needs of each customer inclusive of those with multiple barriers to employment. In an effort to reach community members with multiple barriers, outreach is conducted to local and nearby correction facilities, Metropolitan Detention Center, Fathers Building Futures, Pueblos within the region, Healthcare for the Homeless, Veterans Integration Center, VA Medical Center, CABQ Community Safety Department, Albuquerque Housing Authority, HELP NM, Regional

Development Corporation, Diersen Charities, State Probation and Parole , Federal Probation and Parole, Gorden Bernell Charter School, Goodwill, Roadrunner Foodbank, TANF (Career Link), Lutheran Family Services, Catholic Charities, and Crossroads Services geared toward women (pregnant, substance abuse, and/or incarceration). The Dislocated Worker population is also targeted through Department of Workforce Solution's UI Bureau and Re- employment Services. The three categories of career services offered are defined as follows:

Basic Career Services

Basic career services must be made available to all individuals seeking services served in the one stop delivery system, and include:

- Determinations of whether the individual is eligible to receive assistance from the adult, dislocated worker, or youth programs;
- Outreach, intake, and orientation to information and other services available through the one-stop delivery 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 an individual, career counseling, including the provision of information on in-demand industry sectors and occupations;
- Provision of information on nontraditional employment;
- Provision of referrals to and coordination of activities with other programs and services, including those within the one-stop 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;
- 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 the area's one-stop delivery system;
- Provision of information relating to the availability of supportive services or assistance, and appropriate referrals to those services and assistance, including childcare and 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

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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

Once Workforce Connection Center staff determine that individualized career services are appropriate for an individual to obtain or retain employment, these services must be made available to the individual at the Centers. BCC center staff may use recent previous assessments by partner programs to determine if individualized career services would be appropriate. 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 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;
- 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
- English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs.

Adult/Dislocated Worker Follow-up Services

The WCCNM has developed an Administrative Directive regarding follow-up services that will be offered as appropriate for participants who are placed in unsubsidized employment, for up to

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12 months after the first day of employment. This directive provides guidance to service providers in the provision of this non-funded service and now has become Board policy.

Training Services
In addition to the three categories of career services offered, Training services can be used to upgrade the current skill sets of eligible adults and dislocated workers. Training service can be critical to the employment success of many adults and dislocated workers assuring that their skills are competitive with those required of the respective industry.

There is no longer a sequence of service requirement for "career services" and training. This means that WCCNM workforce center staff may determine training is appropriate regardless of whether the individual has received basic or individualized career services first. Under WIOA, training services may be provided if Title I, WIOA staff determine, after an interview, evaluation or assessment, and career planning that determines the individual:

- ✓ Is unlikely or unable to obtain or retain employment, which leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment through career services alone;
- ✓ Is in need of training services to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment, through career services alone; and
- ✓ Has the skills and qualifications to successfully participate in the selected program of training services.

Training services must be linked to in-demand employment opportunities in the local area or planning region or in a geographic area in which the adult or dislocated worker is willing to commute or relocate. The selection of training services should be conducted in a manner that maximizes customer choice, is linked to in-demand occupations, informed by the performance of relevant training providers, and coordinated to the extent possible with other sources of assistance (see WIOA sec. 134(c)(3)).

Registered Apprenticeship (RA)Training Programs
These programs are made up of employers and unions. They have an apprenticeship training school where the instructional portion of the apprenticeship program is delivered. The training schools are usually administered by the union, in which case the union would be the Eligible Training Provider.

Given the unique nature of RA, there are several ways in which training services may be used in conjunction with these programs:
- An ITA may be developed for a participant to receive RA training;

- An OJT contract may be developed with a RA program for training participants. OJT contracts are made with the employer, and RA generally involves both classroom and on-the-job instruction. The OJT contract may be made to support some or all of the OJT portion of the RA program;
- A combination of an ITA to cover the classroom instruction along with an OJT contract to cover on-the-job portions of the RA is allowed; and
- Incumbent worker training may be used for upskilling apprentices who already have an established working/training relationship with the RA program.

On-the-Job Training

OJT continues to be a key method of delivering training services to adults and dislocated workers. WIOA provides for States and local Areas to provide up to 50 percent of the wage rate of the participant to employers for the costs of training while the participant is in the program. Additionally, State and local areas have the flexibility under WIOA to increase the reimbursement level to up to 75 percent taking into account the various factors established within local policy.

Individual Training Accounts (ITAs)

ITA's are the primary method used for procuring training services under WIOA and are primarily used to increase the skill levels of eligible participants as deemed appropriate by WCCNM WIOA-Title I Staff. ITAs must be linked to in-demand employment opportunities in the local area or planning region or in a geographic area in which the adult or dislocated worker is willing to commute or relocate. It should maximize customer choice, linked to in- demand occupations, on the Eligible Training Provider Listing (ETPL), and coordinated to the extent possible with other sources of assistance

Transitional Jobs

Transitional jobs are a newer type of work-based training that is allowed under WIOA. Transitional jobs are time-limited work experiences that are subsidized and are in the public, private, or nonprofit sectors for individuals with barriers to employment who are chronically unemployed or have an inconsistent work history and are combined with comprehensive career and supportive services. The goal of transitional jobs is to establish a work history for the individual that demonstrates success in the workplace and develops the skills that lead to entry into and retention in unsubsidized employment. Unlike OJT, there is no assumption that the individual will be retained in their transitional job after the experience is over, though that would be a successful experience and outcome. Under section 134(d)(5) of WIOA, local boards may use up to 10 percent of their adult and dislocated worker funds to provide transitional jobs to individuals.

Incumbent Worker Training

Incumbent Worker training provides both workers and employers with the opportunity to build and maintain a quality workforce. Incumbent Worker training can be used to help avert potential layoffs of employees, or to increase the skill levels of employees so they can be promoted within

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the company and create backfill opportunities for the employers. Under section 134(d)(4) of WIOA, local boards can use up to 20 percent of their adult and dislocated worker funds to provide for the federal share of the cost of providing Incumbent Worker training.

Supportive Services and Needs-Related Payments.
A key principle in WIOA is to provide local areas with the flexibility to tailor the workforce system to the needs of the local community. To ensure maximum flexibility, this guidance provides local areas the discretion to provide the supportive services they deem appropriate, subject to the limited conditions prescribed by WIOA.

Supportive services may be made available to anyone participating in Title I career or training services. Supportive Services may include, but are not limited to:
- Transportation;
- Child Care;
- Dependent Care;
- Housing; and
- Needs-Related Payments (available only to individuals enrolled in training services).

3. **Individuals with Disabilities**
   a. **Describe how individuals with disabilities will be served through the one-stop center system in the local area, including copies of executed cooperative agreements which define how all local service providers, including additional providers, will carry out the requirements for integration of and access to the entire set of services available in the local one-stop delivery system. This includes cooperative agreements (as defined in WIOA sec. 107(d)(11)) between the LWDB or other local entities described in WIOA sec. 101(a)(11)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 721(a)(11)(B)) and the local office of a designated State agency or designated State unit administering programs carried out under title I of the Rehabilitation Act(29 U.S.C. 720 et seq.) (The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation within the NM Public Education Department and the Commission for the Blind) (other than sec. 112 or part C of that title (29 U.S.C. 732, 741) and subject to sec. 121(f)) in accordance with sec. 101(a)(11) of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. 721(a)(11)) with respect to efforts that will enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities and to other individuals, such as cross training of staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information and resources, cooperative efforts with employers, and other efforts at cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, such as improving or creating referral processes, joint enrollment and case management. §679.560(b)(13) and §679.560(c)**

All partners in the WCCNM network are bound by MOUs that mandate the integration and accessibility of the full range of services available within the local one-stop delivery system in the Central Region. This includes a concerted effort to enhance the inclusion of individuals with disabilities across all programs.

Under the MOU, partners collaborate on capacity-building activities aimed at improving the effectiveness and performance of workforce programs serving individuals with disabilities. This includes the following:

- **Technical Assistance**: The New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (NMDVR) offers technical assistance to both workforce partners and individuals with disabilities, supporting employment, training, and career opportunities.
- **Cross-Training**: NMDVR, along with other partners, engages in cross-training on all workforce programs, which fosters cross-referrals and collaborative case management. This ongoing training is supported by bi-weekly Team Coordination Meetings and Quarterly Gatherings with workforce partners, facilitating the sharing of assessment tools, employment leads, job fairs, and hiring events.
- **Disability Committee Participation**: NMDVR has representation on the WCCNM Disability Committee, which meets bimonthly to provide recommendations for improving employment outcomes for persons with disabilities.
- **Online Referral Process**: The NMDVR's online referral system has been effectively utilized by Metro DVR offices to refer individuals to WCCNM, streamlining the referral process.
- **Training and Awareness**: NMDVR collaborates with WCCNM to deliver training on disability awareness and ADA resources. They have also worked to introduce training on performance measures and shared exit measures.
- **Job Fairs and Initiatives**: NMDVR actively participates in job fairs and other WCCNM initiatives and supports promotional efforts through NMDVR's social media platforms.

Overall, these coordinated efforts ensure that individuals with disabilities receive comprehensive support and increased opportunities for employment and career advancement within the WCCNM network.

4. **Veterans**
   a. **Describe the board's strategic approach to serving Veterans to improve employment outcomes for this population, including priority of service efforts. §679.560(c) and §680, Subpart E**

The One-Stop Centers in the Central Region have enhanced their screening and assessment process to ensure that veterans receive the full range of services and benefits to which they are entitled. This process is designed to address each veteran's individual needs through thorough assessment and case management. At every point of entry—whether in-person or remote—NMWC Center staff actively encourage veterans and eligible spouses to self-identify. Once a customer self-

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identifies as a veteran or eligible spouse, they are immediately referred to a Career Services Team member (Wagner-Peyser) for further screening. The customer is then informed that they may qualify for additional, specialized services from a Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialist within the Veterans Services Team.

The notification provided to veterans and eligible spouses includes the following key points:
- As a veteran or eligible spouse, they are entitled to receive Priority of Service.
- They may be eligible for personalized employment services from a DVOP Specialist.
- DVOP Specialist services may be available in addition to other standard services.

If the veteran or eligible spouse expresses interest in DVOP services, they will complete the screening process with the Career Services Team member. If they choose not to pursue DVOP services, staff will continue to provide all other appropriate services and programs, ensuring compliance with Priority of Service requirements.

Veteran's priority and related issues are further outlined in the WCCNM Veterans & Priority of Service Policy and the Veterans Services Program manual/SOP. The WCCNM adheres to the Jobs for Veterans Act Public Law 107-288 of 2002, Title 38 of the U.S. Code 4215, which mandates that veterans be given priority of service over non-veterans for employment, training, and placement services under any covered program, provided they meet the program's eligibility requirements. This priority of service includes a 24-hour hold on job postings for veteran applicants.

In addition to the current process and customer flow for veterans, WCCNM is committed to increasing outreach efforts through its website, community partners, organizations that serve veterans and their families, and targeted social media campaigns. These efforts will also extend to employers, highlighting the valuable skills that veterans bring to the workplace. Special outreach strategies will continue to focus on veterans who face significant challenges in accessing services, such as those who are incarcerated or homeless. Through these initiatives, WCCNM aims to ensure that veterans receive the comprehensive support they deserve.

5. **Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers**
   a. **Describe as appropriate the board's approach to serving migrant seasonal farmworkers within its respective area to increase education and employment outcomes for this population (679.560(c, Parts 653 and 685).**

The Workforce Connection of Central New Mexico (WCCNM) shares a strong commitment to helping migrant seasonal farmworkers (MSFW) and their families achieve greater economic stability. As part of this commitment, WCCNM partners with Motivation, Education, and Training New Mexico Inc. (METNM), the provider of the National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP), which has successfully delivered MSFW services through a competitive grant for several years.

The NFJP plays a crucial role in helping farmworkers develop new skills to pursue careers with higher wages and more stable employment prospects. This partnership adopts a comprehensive three-fold approach to support MSFWs:

1. **Basic Career Services:** MSFWs receive an initial assessment of their skill levels, including literacy, numeracy, and English language proficiency, as well as an evaluation of their aptitudes, abilities, skills gaps, and supportive service needs.
2. **Individualized Career and Training Services:** Participants work with staff to develop an Individual Employment Plan (IEP), identifying employment goals, achievement objectives, and the necessary services to reach those goals. This includes providing information about and access to eligible training providers.
3. **Related Assistance:** The program offers short-term assistance to help MSFWs overcome barriers. This may include emergency assistance, remedial education, and Pesticide Safety Training.

In addition to these services, the NFJP provides supportive services that help farmworkers retain and stabilize their current agricultural jobs and enable them to participate in training programs that can lead to new career opportunities. While these programs are operated by METNM, the coordination of services through WCCNM offices ensures that individuals can access the full range of resources available within the Central Region's workforce system.

WCCNM will continue its partnership with the NFJP grantee for New Mexico, recognizing the importance of clearly defined roles and responsibilities to enhance education and employment opportunities for MSFWs in the Central Area service delivery counties. To formalize this collaboration, WCCNM has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the grantee, who is also co-located in the Torrance County Workforce Center. This MOU outlines the shared efforts to increase educational and employment opportunities for migrant and seasonal farmworkers, ensuring they receive comprehensive support to achieve economic stability and career growth.

6. **Native Americans**
   a. **Describe as appropriate the board's approach to serving Native Americans within its respective area to increase education and employment outcomes for this population (§679.560(c) and Part 684).**

In New Mexico, 31% of the Native American population live in poverty, highlighting significant economic challenges within these communities. Other measures of economic security, such as savings, interest from investments, and rental income, are inaccessible to most tribal families. To better serve the Central Region's Native American population, the National Indian Council on Aging (NICOA) recommends the WCCNM implement the following activities:

Cultural Competency and Sensitivity

- **Cultural Competency Training:** Provide ongoing cultural competency training for workforce board members, staff, and partners to ensure understanding and respect for Native American traditions, values, and social structures.
- **Culturally Appropriate Services:** Design services and programs that are culturally appropriate and respect Native American customs, languages, and practices.

Building Trust and Relationships

- **Engage Tribal Leaders:** Establish and maintain strong relationships with tribal leaders and councils. Regularly consult with them to understand the community's needs, priorities, and receive their guidance and support.
- **Consistent Presence:** Maintain a consistent and visible presence in Native American communities through regular visits, participation in community events, and continuous engagement.

Education Initiatives

- **Early Childhood Education Support:** Invest in early childhood education programs that incorporate Native languages and cultural teachings to foster a strong sense of identity and community.
- **Support for K-12 Education:** Provide resources and support for K-12 education, including tutoring, after-school programs, and culturally relevant curriculum development.
- **Higher Education Scholarships:** Offer scholarships and financial aid for Native American students pursuing higher education. Work with colleges and universities to provide additional support services and mentorship programs.
- **Vocational Training and Apprenticeships:** Develop vocational training and apprenticeship programs that provide hands-on experience and skills development in high-demand fields.

Employment Services and Workforce Development

- **Job Training Programs:** Develop job training programs tailored to the specific needs and skills of Native American job seekers, focusing on both traditional skills and modern job market demands.
- **Career Counseling and Job Placement:** Provide career counseling and job placement services to help Native Americans navigate the job market and secure meaningful employment.
- **Entrepreneurship Support:** Offer training, grants, and low-interest loans to support Native American entrepreneurs and small business owners in starting and growing their businesses.

Holistic Support Services

- **Wraparound Services:** Provide comprehensive support services such as transportation assistance, childcare, healthcare access, and financial literacy programs to address barriers to education and employment.
- **Personalized Case Management:** Assign dedicated case managers to work closely with individuals, providing personalized support and guidance throughout their education and employment journey.

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Community Engagement and Participation

- **Feedback Mechanisms:** Establish regular feedback mechanisms such as surveys, focus groups, and town hall meetings to understand community needs and preferences and adjust programs accordingly.
- **Community-Led Initiatives:** Support community-led initiatives and projects that align with the workforce board's goals of increasing education and employment.

Partnerships and Collaborations

- **Local and Tribal Organizations:** Partner with local Native American organizations, non-profits, and tribal governments to leverage existing resources and networks.
- **Educational Institutions:** Collaborate with schools, colleges, and universities to provide educational opportunities and support services tailored to Native American students.
- **Government and Private Sector:** Work with government agencies and private sector employers to create job opportunities and promote inclusive hiring practices.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- **Performance Metrics:** Establish clear performance metrics to monitor the effectiveness of education and employment programs. Use data to inform decision-making and program adjustments.
- **Regular Reporting:** Provide regular reports on the progress and impact of initiatives to stakeholders, including tribal leaders and community members.

Examples of Outreach Activities

- **Job Fairs and Career Workshops:** Organize job fairs and career workshops specifically for Native American job seekers, featuring local employers and offering on-the-spot interviews and job readiness training.
- **Education and Training Programs:** Offer education and training programs in high-demand industries such as healthcare, technology, construction, and environmental conservation.
- **Mentorship and Internship Programs:** Develop mentorship and internship programs that connect Native American students and job seekers with professionals in their fields of interest, providing guidance and hands-on experience.

7. **Individuals with Low Income**
   a. **Describe how the board will identify and work with low-income individuals including any plans to coordinate locally with the TANF program to serve this population, as well as to serve individuals no longer eligible for TANF (§679.560(c) and §680, Subpart E).**

The WCCNM One-Stops actively collaborate and partner with TANF, Creative Work Solutions, and other agencies to serve low-income individuals. This interagency partnership focuses on transitioning TANF recipients into sustainable employment through a variety of targeted WCCNM WIOA and other partner programs and services.

Referral and Transition Services

WCCNM receives referrals from TANF, Creative Work Solutions, and similar agencies that focus on assisting low-income individuals. Within the TANF program, WCCNM works closely with the Career Link program to transition recipients from paid work experience into WIOA On-the-Job Training (OJT) or direct work placements. This process supports the move to permanent, full-time employment while allowing participants to continue receiving childcare and other essential support services.

Wage Subsidy Program

WCCNM also participates in a Wage Subsidy program that enables TANF participants to work 40 hours a week in paid positions, providing them with valuable experience and training. These positions are available across various state agencies and businesses, helping TANF participants gain the skills needed for long-term employment.

Skill Assessment and Job Matching

The Workforce Connection Centers collaborate with local businesses to identify job openings and assess the skill levels required for these positions. All participants, including those referred by Creative Work Solutions, undergo WorkKeys testing to determine their occupational skill levels. The test scores are then matched against the job criteria provided by employers to identify suitable employment opportunities. If a participant does not meet the necessary WorkKeys skill level, they can access Career Ready 101, an online skills remediation program designed to help them reach the required proficiency. Additionally, Creative Work Solutions offers an in-person job readiness curriculum, providing classroom training for participants needing more hands-on guidance to prepare for their careers.

Intensive Services and Training Programs

Participants may be referred to other intensive services, including adult basic education programs or vocational training through workforce system partners. These services aim to enhance participants' skills, making them more competitive in the job market and helping them secure meaningful employment, ultimately reducing their reliance on public assistance.

ACCE Program Collaboration

WCCNM partners with Adult Education programs and the Human Services Department (HSD) to serve TANF clients through the Accelerated College & Career Education (ACCE) program. ACCE classes focus on strengthening core academic and workplace readiness skills, helping participants work toward earning a secondary credential. The HSD/Title II partnership in New Mexico is formalized through an agreement with UNM Valencia and other local Adult Education programs statewide. ACCE classes are available at the Albuquerque center, where UNM Valencia provides both the curriculum and instructors. These services are also accessible to older individuals.

Enhanced Job Matching Capabilities
In collaboration with the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (NMDWS), the TANF program is improving the ability to match TANF clients with online job vacancies. TANF staff are provided access to the New Mexico Workforce Connection Online System, enhancing the effectiveness of job placement efforts and ensuring that TANF clients are matched with suitable employment opportunities.

Through these coordinated efforts, WCCNM and its partners are working to provide comprehensive support to low-income individuals, particularly TANF recipients. By leveraging programs like Career Link, the Wage Subsidy program, and the ACCE partnership, WCCNM is committed to helping participants develop the skills needed for sustainable employment and reducing their dependence on public assistance. This approach not only empowers individuals but also strengthens the workforce and contributes to the overall economic well-being of the region.

8. **Older Individuals**
    a. **Provide description of how the board will coordinate WIOA Title I workforce investment activities the SCSEP Program (Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965) to serve the employment needs of older individuals (§679.560(c)).**

The Workforce Connection of Central New Mexico (WCCNM) maintains a strong partnership with the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), which is administered in our state through Goodwill New Mexico, the New Mexico Aging and Long-Term Services Department, and the National Indian Council on Aging. Recognizing the potential changes in SCSEP contractors due to a recently released USDOL funding opportunity, WCCNM is committed to facilitating a smooth transition, should such changes occur.

Program Participation and Support
WCCNM hosts SCSEP participants in our offices, offering them valuable skills training and access to job placement services. Through our collaboration with the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (NMDWS) and service providers, we ensure that SCSEP participants receive the support they need to enhance their employability. Many participants are successfully hired into permanent positions within our offices as opportunities arise, while others are placed with local employers who benefit from their experience and training.

Board Engagement and Advocacy
The State Director of the SCSEP program actively participates as a member of our local workforce development board. This involvement ensures that the needs and challenges of older workers are consistently represented and addressed in our workforce planning and decision-making processes.

Commitment to a Smooth Transition

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WCCNM is fully prepared to collaborate with new contractors and partners to ensure continuity of services for SCSEP participants in the event of a transition. Our priority is to maintain the high level of support and opportunities that older workers have come to expect from the program, minimizing any disruption to their training and employment pathways.

In summary, WCCNM's ongoing commitment to the SCSEP program reflects our broader mission of providing inclusive, comprehensive workforce development services to all members of our community, including older workers. We will continue to support and advocate for the success of SCSEP participants, ensuring they have the resources and opportunities needed to thrive in the workforce.

9. **Individuals with Low Literacy Levels**
   a. **Provide a description of how local board will coordinate WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with adult education and literacy activities under WIOA Title II. Describe the joint planning processes planned or underway that will enhance the provision of services to individuals with receiving adult education services such as cross training of staff, technical assistance, sharing resources, sharing of information, cooperative efforts to improve or create referral processes, joint enrollment and case management. This description must also include how the LWDB will carry out the review of local applications submitted under Title II consistent with WIOA secs. 107(d)(11)(A) and (B)(i) and WIOA sec.232.sec. §679.560(b)(12)**

The Workforce Connection of Central New Mexico (WCCNM) is committed to enhancing the integration and delivery of Adult Education services within the Central Region, focusing on improving literacy, workforce preparation, and educational advancement for individuals seeking to increase their employability and economic stability.

Please confirm this is the current list of all WCCNM Title II partners
Central Region Adult Education Programs including Gordon Bernell, Catholic Charities, Albuquerque Adult Learning Center (community-based organizations), CNM, Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute and UNM Valencia are available programs in the Central Region and funded by WIOA Title II. As specified in section 231(e) of WIOA, each eligible provider establishes or operates programs that provide adult education and literacy activities as identified in section 203 of WIOA including:

Adult Education and Literacy Services
- **Adult Education Academic Instruction**: WCCNM works closely with local Adult Education providers to offer instruction and educational services below the postsecondary level. These services aim to improve individuals' abilities to read, write, speak English, perform mathematical tasks, and attain a secondary school diploma or its equivalent. The

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goal is to facilitate transitions to postsecondary education and training, as well as to secure employment.

- **Literacy**: The region's focus on literacy encompasses the ability to read, write, and speak English, along with the skills needed to function effectively on the job, within the family, and in society.

Workplace and Family Literacy

- **Workplace Adult Education and Literacy Activities**: Collaborating with employers, WCCNM facilitates Adult Education and literacy activities designed to improve workforce productivity. These activities can be conducted at the workplace or an offsite location, providing a practical approach to workforce development.
- **Family Literacy Activities**: WCCNM supports family literacy programs that integrate Adult Education, interactive literacy activities between parents and children, training for parents to be primary educators, and age-appropriate education for children. These programs are designed to enhance economic prospects for families and support children's educational needs.

English Language Acquisition and Civics Education

- **English Language Acquisition Activities**: WCCNM supports programs aimed at helping English language learners achieve competence in reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension of English. These programs also prepare individuals to attain a secondary school diploma or its equivalent and transition to further education, training, or employment.
- **Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education**: WCCNM ensures that English language learners, including professionals with degrees from their native countries, receive education services that include literacy and English language acquisition, alongside instruction on citizenship rights and civic participation. These services are crucial for enabling participants to function effectively as parents, workers, and citizens.

Workforce Preparation and Integrated Education

- **Workforce Preparation Activities**: WCCNM provides activities, programs, and services to help individuals acquire basic academic, critical thinking, digital literacy, and self-management skills. These competencies are essential for transitioning into and completing postsecondary education or training, and for successful employment.

Integrated Education and Training (IET): WCCNM promotes a service approach that concurrently and contextually combines Adult Education and literacy activities with workforce preparation and training for specific occupations. This approach involves collaboration with postsecondary institutions, employers, and/or trade associations offering courses that are team-taught by Adult Education and Career and Technical Education instructors. Several adult education programs just had IETs approved by New Mexico Higher Education Department (NMHED). For example, the Adult Learning Center just launched a solar training program. Additionally, Gordon

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Bernell has two applications with NMHED pending. WCCNM regularly checks for updates on NMHED IET approvals in the Central Region.

- Participants of IET programs are working towards secondary credentials while earning industry recognized certifications and focusing on employment readiness (soft skill development).

Coordination and Integration

- **Identification and Referral**: WCCNM, through its Operator, identifies students in need of basic literacy skills through tools like WorkKeys testing. Those lacking high school equivalency diplomas or credentials are referred to Adult Education providers for basic skills training.
- **Co-Enrollment**: WCCNM aims to improve the co-enrollment process for WIOA-eligible clients in Career Services and Adult Education programs, addressing the current gap where many adult education clients are not co-enrolled until they are referred for WIOA services. Efforts to integrate Title II services within the WCOS system are ongoing, with cross-training among staff to avoid duplication and enhance service delivery.
- **Technical Assistance and Resource Sharing**: WCCNM and its partners are equipped to provide technical assistance through web-based learning and assessment tools like WorkKeys and Key Train. Resource sharing ensures that all clients are served efficiently at both the workforce centers and Adult Education locations.
- **Review and Evaluation**: During the RFP cycle, WCCNM will conduct a review process of Adult Education local applications consistent with WIOA regulations. This will involve forming an Ad Hoc Committee from the Local Board Membership with relevant expertise to ensure a thorough and informed evaluation process.

Through the above coordinated efforts, WCCNM is dedicated to supporting the educational and career advancement of individuals Adult Education in the Central Region, enabling all participants to enter the workforce well-prepared to achieve long-term economic self-sufficiency.

6. **Coordination of Services Across Programs**
   1. **Coordination with Wagner Peyser Services**
      a. **Provide description of plans, assurances, and strategies for maximizing coordination, improving service delivery, and avoiding duplication of Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.) services and other services provided through the one-stop delivery system. §679.560(b)(11)**

The WCCNM is committed to ensuring seamless coordination between Wagner-Peyser services and other services provided through the one-stop delivery system. This approach is designed to maximize service delivery, improve outcomes for job seekers and employers, and avoid duplication of efforts. Below is a description of the plans, assurances, and strategies WCCNM employs to achieve these goals:

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Integrated Service Delivery

- **Co-Location of Services**: Wagner-Peyser staff are co-located at Workforce Connection Centers throughout the Central Region. This physical integration ensures that job seekers have access to a comprehensive array of services in one location, including job search assistance, resume workshops, career counseling, and labor market information. Co-location fosters close collaboration between Wagner-Peyser staff and other service providers, allowing for streamlined referrals and enhanced coordination.
- **Cross-Training of Staff**: WCCNM ensures that all front-line staff, including those from Wagner-Peyser, WIOA, and other partner programs, are cross-trained in the services available through the one-stop system. This training equips staff with the knowledge needed to provide accurate information and make appropriate referrals, thereby enhancing service delivery and reducing redundancy.

Collaborative Case Management

- **Shared Case Management Systems**: WCCNM utilizes shared case management systems that allow Wagner-Peyser staff and other service providers to access and update client records in real-time. This integrated approach ensures that all service providers are informed of the client's progress and any services they have already received, reducing the likelihood of duplication and enabling a more personalized service experience.
- **Joint Planning and Service Delivery**: WCCNM promotes the development of individualized service plans that involve multiple programs, including Wagner-Peyser, WIOA Title I, Adult Education, and others. By coordinating efforts across these programs, WCCNM can ensure that clients receive comprehensive support that addresses their specific needs without unnecessary overlap.

Strategic Partnerships

- **Employer Engagement**: Wagner-Peyser staff work closely with WCCNM's business services team to engage local employers and understand their workforce needs. By coordinating employer outreach efforts, the one-stop system can offer a unified approach to connecting job seekers with employment opportunities, job fairs, and recruitment events. This collaboration also helps to avoid duplicative contact with employers and enhances the overall responsiveness of the one-stop system to labor market demands.
- **Collaboration with Other Workforce Programs**: WCCNM fosters partnerships between Wagner-Peyser and other workforce programs, including Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), Veterans Services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs, and Youth programs. These partnerships facilitate the sharing of resources and expertise, ensuring that clients receive the full spectrum of services they need to achieve their employment goals.

Technology Integration

- **Use of New Mexico Workforce Connection Online System (WCOS)**: WCCNM leverages the New Mexico Workforce Connection Online System to integrate services, track client

progress, and facilitate communication among service providers. The system allows Wagner-Peyser and WIOA staff to schedule appointments, share case notes, and monitor outcomes, thereby improving coordination and avoiding duplication of services.

Continuous Improvement and Accountability

- **Performance Monitoring and Evaluation**: WCCNM regularly monitors the performance of its one-stop system, including the coordination of Wagner-Peyser services. This includes tracking key performance indicators, conducting customer satisfaction surveys, and analyzing service delivery data to identify areas for improvement. Feedback from clients and partners is used to refine processes and ensure that services are delivered efficiently and effectively.
- **Compliance with Federal and State Guidelines**: WCCNM is committed to complying with all federal and state guidelines regarding the provision of Wagner-Peyser services. This includes adhering to the requirements set forth in the Wagner-Peyser Act and ensuring that services are delivered in a manner that is equitable, accessible, and aligned with the broader goals of the one-stop system.

Avoiding Duplication of Services

- **Coordinated Service Delivery**: WCCNM ensures that all services provided through the one-stop system are coordinated to avoid duplication. This is achieved through regular communication between program staff, joint planning sessions, and the use of shared data systems that provide a comprehensive view of client interactions across programs.
- **Streamlined Referrals**: WCCNM has established streamlined referral processes between Wagner-Peyser and other programs to ensure that clients are directed to the appropriate services without redundancy. This approach helps to maximize the impact of available resources and provides clients with a cohesive service experience.

WCCNM is dedicated to fostering a well-coordinated and efficient one-stop delivery system that effectively integrates Wagner-Peyser services with other workforce programs. Through strategic planning, partnership development, technology integration, and continuous improvement, WCCNM ensures that job seekers and employers receive high-quality, non-duplicative services that meet their needs and support the economic growth of the Central Region.

> **2. Coordination with Rapid Response Activities**
> **a. Provide a description of how the local board will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out in the local area with statewide rapid response activities. §679.560(b)(7)**

The WCCNM is committed to effectively coordinating local workforce investment activities with statewide rapid response efforts. The goal is to provide timely and comprehensive support to workers affected by layoffs or business closures, helping them transition to new employment

opportunities as quickly as possible. Below is a detailed description of how the local board will achieve this coordination:

Collaboration with Statewide Rapid Response Teams
- **Active Participation in Statewide Rapid Response Efforts**: WCCNM collaborates closely with the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (NMDWS) Rapid Response Team to ensure that local workforce activities are aligned with statewide rapid response initiatives. The local board actively participates in planning and coordination meetings to discuss upcoming layoffs, business closures, and the deployment of rapid response services across the state.
- **Shared Information and Resources**: WCCNM ensures that there is a seamless exchange of information and resources between the local area and statewide rapid response teams. This includes sharing data on at-risk businesses, workforce trends, and potential layoffs to enable proactive planning and resource allocation.

Rapid Response Team Deployment
- **Immediate Response to Layoffs and Closures**: When a business in the Central Region announces layoffs or closures, WCCNM, in partnership with NMDWS, deploys a Rapid Response Team to the affected site. The team typically includes representatives from WCCNM, NMDWS, and other relevant agencies such as the New Mexico Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (NMDVR) and the New Mexico Human Services Department (HSD).
- **Customized Services for Affected Workers**: The Rapid Response Team provides on-site or virtual services tailored to the specific needs of affected workers. These services include career counseling, job search assistance, resume preparation, interview skills workshops, and information on unemployment insurance benefits. The team also offers guidance on training and retraining opportunities available through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) programs and other local resources.

Coordination with Employers
- **Employer Engagement and Support**: WCCNM works directly with employers facing the prospect of layoffs or closures to coordinate rapid response activities. This includes helping employers understand their obligations under the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act and offering guidance on how to support their workforce during transitions.
- **Layoff Aversion Strategies**: In collaboration with the statewide rapid response team, WCCNM offers layoff aversion services to employers. These strategies might include identifying training programs that could upskill existing employees, connecting businesses with state incentives for workforce retention, or exploring potential partnerships with other local businesses that could mitigate the need for layoffs.

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Integration with Local Workforce Services

- **Seamless Transition to WIOA Programs**: WCCNM ensures that workers affected by layoffs are smoothly transitioned into WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs as appropriate. The Rapid Response Team facilitates direct referrals to these programs, ensuring that affected workers can quickly access training, education, and supportive services needed to re-enter the workforce.
- **Utilization of Workforce Connection Centers**: WCCNM leverages its network of Workforce Connection Centers to provide displaced workers with ongoing support. These centers offer access to job postings, career workshops, occupational skills training, and other resources designed to help workers find new employment. The centers also provide connections to community resources that can address any additional needs workers may have during their transition, such as housing, childcare, and transportation assistance.

Follow-Up and Continuous Improvement

- **Monitoring and Follow-Up**: WCCNM, in coordination with the statewide rapid response team, conducts follow-up with affected workers to monitor their progress and provide additional support as needed. This follow-up ensures that workers are successfully transitioning to new employment or training opportunities and that any barriers to re-employment are promptly addressed.
- **Continuous Improvement through Feedback**: WCCNM gathers feedback from both employers and affected workers on the effectiveness of rapid response services. This feedback is used to continually refine and improve the coordination between local workforce activities and statewide rapid response efforts. Lessons learned from each rapid response event are integrated into future planning and service delivery.

Communication and Outreach

- **Proactive Communication Strategy**: WCCNM implements a proactive communication strategy to ensure that all stakeholders, including businesses, workers, and community partners, are aware of available rapid response services. This strategy includes the use of social media, newsletters, and partnerships with local chambers of commerce and economic development organizations to disseminate information about rapid response resources.
- **Outreach to At-Risk Industries**: WCCNM, in partnership with NMDWS, identifies industries and businesses that may be at risk of layoffs due to economic downturns, technological changes, or other factors. Targeted outreach is conducted to these businesses to offer support and resources that could prevent layoffs or mitigate their impact on workers.

The WCCNM is dedicated to effectively coordinating local workforce investment activities with statewide rapid response efforts to ensure that workers affected by layoffs or business closures receive timely and comprehensive support. Through collaboration with NMDWS, customized services for affected workers, employer engagement, integration with local workforce services,

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continuous improvement, and proactive communication, WCCNM aims to minimize the impact of layoffs and help workers transition smoothly to new employment opportunities.

> **3. Coordination with Secondary and Post Secondary Education System**
> **a. Provide a description of how the local board will coordinate relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities with education and workforce investment activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services. §679.560(b)(9)**

New Mexico has embraced the Common Core Standards for its K-12 education system, and this commitment extends to adult education through the adoption of the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) by the New Mexico Higher Education Department (NMHED). Effective from the 2016-2017 program year, all courseware used by Adult Education programs statewide must align with CCRS, ensuring consistency with Common Core. This alignment supports the development of high-quality educational programs that prepare students for high school equivalency tests, postsecondary education, and workforce demands.

Professional Development and Standards Alignment
NMHED emphasizes quality professional development for educators, focusing on standards-based lesson design to enhance teaching efficacy. Professional development is guided by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) "Standards to Action" model. This model supports excellence in teaching within the CCRS framework and equips teachers to prepare students for Webb's Depth of Knowledge measures, which are integral to high school equivalency tests such as GED and HiSET, as well as other secondary school credential routes like the National External Diploma Program (NEDP), which New Mexico is adopting.

Funding and Program Support
NMHED provides funding to eligible providers for establishing or operating programs that offer various adult education and literacy activities as outlined in Section 203 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). These activities include:
- **Adult Education**: Instructional services that improve basic skills.
- **Literacy**: Proficiency in reading, writing, and speaking English, and solving problems.
- **Workplace Adult Education and Literacy Activities**: Training to enhance workforce productivity.
- **Family Literacy Activities**: Services that improve economic prospects and support children's learning.
- **English Language Acquisition Activities**: Programs helping English language learners achieve proficiency.
- **Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education**: Education services for English learners, including civic education and workforce training.

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- **Workforce Preparation Activities**: Programs to develop basic academic, critical thinking, digital literacy, and self-management skills.
- **Integrated Education and Training**: Concurrent provision of adult education, workforce preparation, and training for specific occupations.

Coordination and Collaboration

To ensure effective coordination and avoid duplication of efforts, the WCCNM has established a Training and Service Provider Committee. This committee includes representatives from postsecondary institutions, NMHED, economic development organizations, and the Board's Administrative Entity. This collaborative body works together to align education programs, strategies, and resources.

Additionally, the Title II Adult Education partnership with Jobs for the Future (JFF) aims to systematically address coordination and planning issues, even though the initiative is still in its early stages. Title II Adult Education, alongside secondary schools, Mission: Graduate, the College and Career Readiness Bureau at the Public Education Department (PED), and other stakeholders, will play a crucial role in bridging education and workforce development. These collaborative efforts are designed to enhance integration and ensure that educational and workforce development programs meet the needs of students and the demands of the labor market.

New Mexico's approach to adult education, driven by CCRS and supported by NMHED's funding and professional development initiatives, ensures that adult learners are well-prepared for high school equivalency tests, postsecondary education, and employment. By fostering coordination through the Training and Service Provider Committee and partnerships with organizations like JFF, New Mexico is working to integrate educational and workforce services effectively, avoiding duplication and enhancing overall program effectiveness.

> **b. Describe how the local board will work with entities carrying out core programs to improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential (including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable, and stackable). §679.560(b)(2)(iii)**

To enhance access to activities leading to recognized postsecondary credentials, including industry-recognized certifications that are portable and stackable, the local board will implement a comprehensive strategy that involves collaboration with core program entities and alignment of educational and workforce development efforts. Here's a detailed description of the approach:

Strategic Partnerships and Coordination
- **Engagement with Core Program Entities**: The local board will establish strong partnerships with entities carrying out core programs, including Adult Education, Wagner-

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Peyser Services, and vocational rehabilitation programs. These partnerships will facilitate seamless coordination of services and ensure that individuals can access a continuum of support from education to employment.

- **Alignment with Industry Standards**: The board will work with industry leaders, employers, and education providers to ensure that training programs are aligned with industry standards and demand. This includes integrating feedback from employers about the skills and credentials needed in the workforce.

Integrated Education and Training Programs
- **Developing Integrated Programs**: The board will support the development and implementation of Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs that combine adult education, workforce preparation, and occupational skills training. These programs will be designed to help individuals achieve industry-recognized credentials while gaining practical work experience.
- **Stackable Credentials**: Emphasis will be placed on creating stackable credential pathways that allow individuals to build their qualifications progressively. This approach ensures that learners can start with foundational certifications and advance to more specialized or higher-level credentials.

Accessible Pathways and Support Services
- **Career Pathways Development**: The board will collaborate with educational institutions and training providers to develop clear career pathways that outline the steps to obtaining recognized credentials. These pathways will include information on required coursework, certification exams, and potential career outcomes.
- **Support Services**: To facilitate access to these pathways, the board will ensure that support services such as career counseling, financial aid assistance, and academic advising are available. This will help individuals navigate their educational and career options effectively.

Workforce Development Initiatives
- **Training and Certification Opportunities**: The board will promote opportunities for individuals to obtain industry-recognized certifications through targeted training programs. This includes offering workshops, seminars, and certification prep courses in collaboration with industry partners.
- **Job Placement and Internships**: Collaboration with local businesses and employers will be prioritized to provide job placement assistance, internships, and on-the-job training. These opportunities will help individuals apply their skills in real-world settings and gain valuable work experience.

Data-Driven Decision Making
- **Monitoring and Evaluation**: The board will implement systems to track the progress of individuals participating in credentialing programs. Data on program outcomes, including

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the attainment of credentials and employment rates, will be used to assess effectiveness and make necessary adjustments to programs and services.

- **Continuous Improvement**: Feedback from program participants, employers, and educational institutions will be collected and analyzed to continuously improve the offerings and ensure that they meet the evolving needs of the workforce and industry.

Public Awareness and Outreach

- **Information Dissemination**: The board will engage in outreach efforts to inform individuals about the benefits and availability of recognized postsecondary credentials. This will include public awareness campaigns, informational sessions, and collaboration with community organizations.
- **Success Stories**: Highlighting success stories of individuals who have achieved recognized credentials and advanced in their careers will serve as motivation and encouragement for others to pursue similar pathways.

Through these strategies, the WCCNM aims to improve access to activities leading to recognized postsecondary credentials, ensuring that individuals are well-prepared for successful careers and can meet the demands of the modern workforce.

4. **Coordination of Supportive Services**
   a. **Provide a description of how the local board will coordinate WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with the provision of transportation and other appropriate supportive services in the local area. §679.560(b)(10)**

To ensure that WIOA Title I workforce investment activities are effectively coordinated with transportation and other supportive services, the local board will adopt a strategic approach that integrates service delivery, maximizes resources, and addresses the needs of job seekers comprehensively. Here's how this will be achieved:

Integrated Service Delivery

- **One-Stop Center Coordination**: The local board will ensure that One-Stop Centers serve as a hub where job seekers can access both WIOA Title I services and supportive services. This integration will streamline access to necessary resources, including transportation assistance, childcare, and other support services.
- **Case Management**: Each participant will be assigned a case manager who will coordinate with service providers to assess individual needs. The case manager will help integrate workforce investment activities with supportive services to create a comprehensive service plan.

Transportation Services

- **Partnerships with Local Transportation Providers**: The board will collaborate with local transportation agencies and providers to establish and enhance transportation options for job seekers. This may include subsidized transit passes, vanpool programs, or ride-sharing services.
- **Customized Transportation Solutions**: For areas with limited public transportation options, the board will explore alternative solutions such as local shuttle services or partnerships with community organizations that offer transportation assistance.
- **Transportation Assistance Policy**: A clear policy will be developed to outline eligibility criteria and application processes for transportation assistance. This policy will ensure that support is provided to those who need it most, and funds are allocated efficiently.

Supportive Services Coordination
- **Identifying Needs and Resources**: The local board will work with community partners to identify and address additional supportive service needs, including childcare, housing assistance, and financial support. This will involve establishing connections with local agencies and organizations that provide these services.
- **Service Referrals**: Case managers will refer participants to appropriate supportive services based on their individual needs. This will include coordinating with local social service agencies, non-profits, and other community resources.
- **Funding and Resource Allocation**: The board will allocate funding for supportive services within the WIOA Title I framework. This includes ensuring that resources are available to cover essential needs that enable participants to engage fully in training and employment activities.

Collaboration with Community Organizations
- **Community Partnerships**: The board will build and maintain partnerships with local community organizations that provide supportive services. These partnerships will enhance service delivery and ensure that job seekers receive comprehensive support.
- **Integrated Service Planning**: Collaborative planning sessions will be held with community partners to align services and address gaps in support. This will help ensure that all aspects of a participant's needs are met, from transportation to career counseling.

Monitoring and Evaluation
- **Tracking Service Utilization**: The board will implement systems to monitor the utilization of supportive services. This data will help assess the effectiveness of the services provided and identify areas for improvement.
- **Feedback Mechanisms**: Participants will be encouraged to provide feedback on the effectiveness and accessibility of supportive services. This feedback will be used to make adjustments and improve service delivery.

Outreach and Education
- **Informing Participants**: Job seekers will be informed about the availability of supportive services through outreach efforts and during their initial intake and assessment. This will include providing information on how to access transportation and other support.
- **Awareness Campaigns**: The board will conduct awareness campaigns to educate participants about the supportive services available and how they can benefit from them. This will include workshops, informational sessions, and online resources.

These WCCNM strategies ensure that WIOA Title I workforce investment activities are effectively coordinated with transportation and other supportive services, thereby enhancing the overall success and stability of job seekers in the local area.

5. **Coordination of Follow-up Services**
   a. **Provide a description of the board's follow-up services policy and procedures for each of the targeted groups in Section E. §679.560(c)**

This section is in progress.

6. **Coordination of Service Priorities**
   a. **Describe the direction given by the Governor (NMDWS) and the LWDB to the one-stop operation to ensure priority for adult career and training services will be given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient consistent with WIOA sec. 134(c)(3)(E) and §680.600 of the WIOA DOL Rule. §679.560(b)(21)**

To ensure that priority for adult career and training services is given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient, the Governor and the Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) have established specific directives for the one-stop operations. These directives are designed to align with WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(E) and §680.600 of the WIOA DOL Rule. Here's how this direction is implemented:

Policy and Guidance
- **Priority of Service Policy**: The Governor and the WCCNM have issued a formal policy that prioritizes adult career and training services for public assistance recipients, low-income individuals, and those who are basic skills deficient. This policy is communicated to all one-stop centers and is integrated into their operational procedures.
- **Training for Staff**: One-stop center staff are trained on the priority of service requirements, including how to identify eligible individuals and ensure that they receive priority for services. This training emphasizes the importance of adhering to the policy and understanding its implications for service delivery.

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Eligibility Screening and Referral
- **Eligibility Assessment**: The NMWC Centers use standardized tools and processes to assess the eligibility of individuals for priority services. This includes determining if individuals are recipients of public assistance, meet low-income criteria, or are basic skills deficient.
- **Referral Process**: Once eligibility is confirmed, staff prioritize these individuals for adult career and training services. Referrals to appropriate programs and services are made promptly to ensure that they receive the support needed.

Service Delivery
- **Customized Support**: Services are tailored to meet the specific needs of priority populations. This may include providing additional support such as case management, skills assessment, and personalized career counseling to enhance their access to training and employment opportunities.
- **Targeted Programs**: One-stop centers offer specialized programs and workshops designed to address the needs of public assistance recipients, low-income individuals, and those with basic skills deficiencies. This includes basic skills training, job readiness programs, and career advancement services.

Monitoring and Compliance
- **Regular Audits**: The WCCNM conducts regular audits and reviews of NMWC Centers operations to ensure compliance with the priority of service policy. This includes monitoring the number of individuals served and verifying that priority populations are receiving appropriate services. Please see WCCNM Firewall Policy Attachment X.
- **Performance Metrics**: Key performance indicators are established to measure the effectiveness of the priority service implementation. Metrics include the number of priority individuals served, their progress through career and training services, and their outcomes in terms of employment and skill acquisition.

Coordination and Collaboration
- **Interagency Collaboration**: The Governor and the LWDB facilitate collaboration with other agencies and organizations that serve public assistance recipients and low-income individuals. This ensures a coordinated approach to service delivery and maximizes available resources.
- **Community Outreach**: Efforts are made to outreach to communities and organizations that work with priority populations. This includes building partnerships with local nonprofits, social service agencies, and community-based organizations to enhance service access and support.

Feedback and Improvement

- **Participant Feedback**: Feedback from individuals who receive priority services is gathered to assess the effectiveness of the service delivery and identify areas for improvement. This feedback is used to make necessary adjustments to programs and services.
- **Continuous Improvement**: The WCCNM and the NMDWS use data and feedback to continuously improve the priority service framework. This involves updating policies, refining service delivery strategies, and enhancing staff training to better meet the needs of priority populations.

Documentation and Reporting
- **Record Keeping**: One-stop centers maintain detailed records of service provision for priority populations. This documentation supports transparency and accountability and ensures that services are delivered in accordance with the established priorities.
- **Reporting Requirements**: Regular reports are submitted to the NMDWS and the WCCNM Board detailing the outcomes and effectiveness of priority service delivery. These reports help to ensure that the services are meeting the intended goals and that adjustments are made as necessary.

By implementing these strategies, the NMDWS and WCCNM ensure that priority for adult career and training services is effectively given to public assistance recipients, low-income individuals, and those who are basic skills deficient, thereby enhancing equity and access within the workforce development system.

7. **Coordination of Outreach Efforts**
   a. **Describe how the board will coordinate outreach efforts across partner programs for shared customers and target populations. §679.560(c)**

To effectively coordinate outreach efforts across partner programs for shared customers and target populations, the Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) will implement the following strategies:

Develop a Unified Outreach Strategy
- **Collaborative Planning**: The WCCNM works with partner programs to develop a unified outreach strategy that aligns with the goals of all involved entities. This strategy will ensure that messaging is consistent, and resources are used efficiently to reach shared customers and target populations.
- **Shared Goals**: Establish common goals and objectives for outreach efforts to ensure that all partner programs are working towards the same outcomes. This includes setting specific targets for engaging with shared customer groups and tracking progress towards these goals.

Create a Coordinated Communication Plan
- **Joint Communication Efforts**: Partner programs will coordinate their communication efforts to avoid duplication and ensure that messages are clear and effective. This includes joint marketing campaigns, shared promotional materials, and coordinated social media efforts.
- **Regular Updates**: Implement a system for regular updates among partner programs to share information about outreach activities, upcoming events, and changes in services. This helps to maintain alignment and avoid gaps or overlaps in outreach efforts.

Leverage Data and Technology
- **Data Sharing**: Establish protocols for sharing data among partner programs to identify shared customers and target populations more effectively. This may include using data management systems to track engagement and outcomes across different programs.
- **Technology Integration**: Utilize technology platforms that facilitate coordination among partners. This could involve shared customer management systems, joint scheduling tools for events and services, and collaborative platforms for communication and planning.

Engage in Joint Outreach Activities
- **Collaborative Events**: Partner programs will collaborate on hosting joint outreach events, such as job fairs, workshops, and informational sessions. This approach maximizes the reach and impact of outreach efforts and provides a comprehensive set of resources for attendees.
- **Shared Resources**: Develop and distribute shared outreach materials, such as brochures, flyers, and digital content that highlight the services and benefits provided by all partner programs. This ensures that potential customers are informed about the full range of available services.

Coordinate Referral Processes
- **Seamless Referrals**: Implement a streamlined referral process that allows for smooth transitions between partner programs. This includes establishing clear procedures for referring shared customers between programs and ensuring that referrals are tracked and followed up on effectively.
- **Training and Protocols**: Train staff across partner programs on the referral process and the services offered by other programs. This ensures that all staff are knowledgeable about available resources and can make appropriate referrals to meet the needs of shared customers.

Build Strong Partnerships
- **Regular Meetings**: Schedule regular meetings with partner programs to discuss outreach strategies, share updates, and address any challenges or opportunities. These meetings foster collaboration and ensure that all partners are aligned in their outreach efforts.

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- **Feedback Mechanisms**: Create channels for feedback from both customers and partner programs to continually improve outreach efforts. This includes gathering input on the effectiveness of outreach activities and making adjustments based on feedback.

Target High-Need Populations
- **Focused Outreach**: Identify and prioritize outreach efforts for high-need populations, such as low-income individuals, veterans, and individuals with disabilities. Coordinate across partner programs to ensure that these populations receive targeted and effective outreach.
- **Community Engagement**: Work with community-based organizations, advocacy groups, and other stakeholders to reach target populations. These organizations can help facilitate connections and provide insights into the needs and preferences of specific groups.

Monitor and Evaluate Outreach Efforts
- **Performance Metrics**: Develop and track performance metrics to evaluate the effectiveness of outreach efforts. This includes measuring engagement rates, customer satisfaction, and the impact of outreach activities on service uptake.
- **Continuous Improvement**: Use evaluation data to make continuous improvements to outreach strategies. Regularly review and adjust outreach plans based on what is working well and what needs to be enhanced.

Through these strategies, the WCCNM ensures that outreach efforts across partner programs are well-coordinated, effective, and aligned with the needs of shared customers and target populations. This approach maximizes the impact of outreach activities and enhances access to services for those who need them most.

8. **Coordination of Professional Development Activities**
   a. **Describe how professional development activities will be coordinated across all partner programs staff. §679.560(c)**

Please provide update – the following is from 2019 Local Plan.
The WCCNM and New Mexico Workforce Connection Training Strategy launched at the beginning of PY18 to bolster cross-training opportunities and to ensure more consistency in pre-screening and partner referrals. The strategy includes three levels: LEVEL 1 (Training covering all "core" WIOA programs and legally required/mandated training); LEVEL 2 (Training covering all "participating" partners programs and system training such as the NM Workforce Connection online system); and LEVEL 3 (Professional development, additional partner and program training). Trainings are provided at the Quarterly Gatherings, as requested, and online. The Operations Manager maintains a training database to record all completed training for all Central Region staff. WCCNM also is receiving funding for an initial investment to integrate the Graduate! ABQ curriculum (developed based on the work of the full-time coach) along with a nationally recognized career counselor/workforce development professional certification into the current

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training strategy to build the overall capacity of staff working in counseling roles across the four-county region.

9. Coordination of Referrals
a. Describe how the board will coordinate customer referrals across partner programs. §679.560(c)

To effectively coordinate customer referrals across partner programs, the Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) will implement a structured approach to ensure seamless service delivery and maximize support for shared customers.

Establish Clear Referral Protocols
- **Standardized Procedures**: Develop and document standardized referral procedures that all partner programs will follow. This includes guidelines for initiating referrals, tracking their progress, and ensuring follow-up. These procedures will be designed to ensure consistency and clarity in the referral process.
- **Referral Forms and Systems**: Implement standardized referral forms and a unified tracking system (MyHub Intranet) that allows for easy and efficient referral of customers between partner programs. This system will facilitate data sharing and ensure that all relevant information is communicated effectively.

Create a Centralized Referral Coordination Hub
- **Referral Coordinator Role**: Designate a referral coordinator within the LWDB or partner organizations who will oversee and manage the referral process. This role will be responsible for ensuring that referrals are handled efficiently and that there is clear communication between programs.

Implement Joint Training and Cross-Training
- **Training Programs**: Develop and deliver joint training programs for staff across partner programs to ensure they are knowledgeable about the referral process and the services provided by other programs. This training will help staff make informed referrals and provide appropriate support to customers.
- **Cross-Training**: Engage in cross-training initiatives where staff from different partner programs learn about each other's services and referral procedures. This will enhance their ability to assist customers and make accurate referrals.

Develop a Comprehensive Referral Resource Guide
- **Resource Guide**: Create a comprehensive referral resource guide that outlines the services available through each partner program, including eligibility requirements, contact information, and service details. This guide will be used by staff to make informed referrals and ensure customers are directed to the appropriate services.

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- **Accessible Information**: Ensure that the referral resource guide is readily accessible to all partner programs and staff, either through an online platform or physical copies distributed to relevant locations.

These WCCNM strategies ensure that customer referrals across partner programs are coordinated effectively, leading to improved service delivery and better outcomes for shared customers. This approach fosters collaboration, streamlines processes, and enhances the overall efficiency of the WCCNM workforce development system.

10. Coordination with Other Partner Programs
   a. **Describe any other services provided in the one-stops to support the local workforce development system and customers. Include any coordination plans or activities the board has with any other partner programs such as, AmeriCorps, JobCorps, YouthBuild, Mission: Graduation, Innovate Educate, etc. §679.560(c)**

The WCCNM invites all workforce programs in the Central Region to participate in the WCCNM's network of workforce service providers. The CNM Workforce and Community Success Division recently joined the WCCNM as a new partner. (New MOU coming from WCCNM soon for FY25?)

To support the WCCNM workforce development system and enhance services for customers, the NMWC Centers offer a range of additional services and coordination plans with various partner programs. The following is a detailed description of these services and coordination efforts:

Additional Services Provided in the One-Stops

Career Counseling and Guidance
- **Personalized Counseling**: Provide individual career counseling to help customers identify their career goals, strengths, and areas for development. This includes assistance with career exploration, resume writing, and interview preparation.
- **Career Assessment Tools**: Utilize assessment tools such as WorkKeys to evaluate customers' skills and aptitudes, guiding them towards suitable career paths and training opportunities.

Job Placement Assistance
- **Job Matching**: Match job seekers with available job openings based on their skills, experience, and career interests. Facilitate job placements through partnerships with local employers.
- **Job Fairs and Recruitment Events**: Organize and host job fairs, recruitment events, and hiring events to connect job seekers with potential employers and enhance their job search efforts.

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Training and Education Services
- **Skills Training**: Offer training programs and workshops to enhance customers' job readiness skills, including digital literacy, vocational training, and soft skills development.
- **Educational Pathways**: Provide information and referrals to educational programs, including GED preparation, postsecondary education, and vocational training.

Supportive Services
- **Financial Assistance**: Provide information on financial assistance programs, including scholarships, grants, and subsidies for training and education.
- **Childcare and Transportation**: Assist with access to childcare services and transportation solutions to remove barriers to participation in training and employment.

Access to Technology and Resources
- **Computer Access**: Offer access to computers, internet, and other technology resources to support job searches, online applications, and skills development.

Coordination Plans with Partner Programs
Albuquerque Job Corps
- **Program Referrals**: Refer eligible youth to Albuquerque Job Corps programs for education, vocational training, and job placement services. Coordinate with Albuquerque Job Corps centers to ensure a smooth transition for participants into their programs.
- **Shared Resources**: Utilize Albuquerque Job Corps resources and facilities for joint training events or workshops aimed at youth and young adults seeking career development.

YouthBuild
- **Collaboration on Youth Programs**: Work with YouthBuild programs to provide construction skills training, leadership development, and educational support to youth. Coordinate efforts to offer comprehensive services that address both education and employment needs.
- **Co-Enrollments**: Explore opportunities for co-enrolling YouthBuild participants in additional workforce development programs to enhance their career prospects.

Other Community and Educational Partners
- **Community Organizations**: Coordinate with local community organizations to offer additional support services such as financial literacy, health services, and legal assistance.
- **Higher Education Institutions**: Partner with colleges and universities to provide educational opportunities, internships, and career pathways for students and job seekers.

Coordination Activities
- **Joint Planning Meetings**: Hold regular planning meetings with representatives from partner programs to discuss strategies, share updates, and address any coordination challenges.

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- **Shared Data Systems**: Implement and utilize shared data systems to track referrals, monitor progress, and ensure seamless service delivery across partner programs.
- **Cross-Training**: Conduct cross-training sessions for staff from different partner programs to ensure they are knowledgeable about each other's services and referral processes.
- **Community Outreach**: Engage in joint community outreach efforts to raise awareness about available services and resources, and to promote collaboration among partners.

By offering a comprehensive range of services and fostering strong partnerships with various programs, the one-stop centers aim to provide integrated support to customers and enhance the overall effectiveness of the local workforce development system.

D. Administrative Elements
1. Fiscal and Performance Management
   a. **Identify the entity responsible for the disbursal of grant funds described in WIOA sec.107(d)(12)(B)(i)(III). §679.560(b)(14)**

The Mid Region Council of Governments (MRCOG) is designated as the Administrative Entity for the New Mexico Central Region or WCCNM's WIOA program. MRCOG is the agency responsible for the fiscal and program administration of the core programs listed below as specified in WIOA.

- Adult Program (WIOA, Title I)
- Dislocated Worker Program (WIOA, Title I), and
- Youth Program (WIOA, Title I).

The WCCNM provides oversight of WIOA programs by contracting with two service providers to provide job training and employment services. MRCOG serves the Adult & Dislocated Worker program & YDI serves the youth participants. YDI in serving the youth pays the youth Work Experience wages and all youth transportation support services.

The board's membership represents the WIOA vision and requirements as well as a wide variety of individuals, businesses, and organizations throughout the local area who work to:
- Promote relationships between economic development, education, and workforce partners;
- Develop strategies to improve and strengthen the workforce development system and alignment and improvement of employment, training, and education programs to promote economic growth.;
- Collaborate closely with all partners of the workforce development system, including public and private organizations; and,
- Integrate and align a job-driven workforce development system.

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The CEOs in the local area serve as the local grant recipients for WIOA funds allocated to the WCCNM. The Administrative Entity disburses WIOA funds for services to youth, adults, and dislocated workers, based on receipt of state allocations. While WIOA and other federal funds are utilized, Perkins and NextGen (Legislative State Funding, NMAC 22-1-12) funds are offered to Local Education Agencies that support Career Technical Education. These funds can work in conjunction with the efforts of the Central Workforce Region. For example, NextGen, state funds are offered to strengthen CTE in public schools, districts and state charter schools. Funds from NextGen are used to leverage federal Perkins funding and aligns with statewide labor market priority sections.

The local board adopts policies based on the policy and guidance from NMDWS, thus providing guidance of activities at the Centers. The WCCNM works to improve the quality of workforce development services available to it local job seekers and businesses through coordination of its partners.

> **b. Provide detailed description of the competitive process that will be used to award the subgrants and contracts for the WIOA Title I activities. Please provide a copy of the board's procurement policy or policies, including conflict of interest provisions as a part of Attachment A. §679.560(b)(15)**

Updates In Progress
Need attachment for policies and rewrite to reference policies as attachments.
Procurement Policy has been updated to reflect WIOA requirements and is slated to be introduced for approval on October 19, 2020 to the WCCNM Full Board.
1. SCOPE.
This policy pertains to all procurement initiated by or on behalf of the Workforce Connection of Central New Mexico (WCCNM) including those initiated by a contractor or subgrantee to the WCCNM. All entities involved in procuring items of tangible personal property, services or construction shall adhere to the Workforce Innovative Opportunity Act (WIOA), attendant federal and state laws and regulations including applicable OMB circulars; and WCCNM policies. Except as otherwise provided in the Procurement Code (Code), the policy applies to any procurement with WIOA funds.

2. AUTHORITY & REFERENCES.
The Workforce Innovative Opportunity Act of 2014; the state Workforce Development Act, Sections 50-14-1 through 50-14-8 NMSA 1978; the state Procurement Code, Sections 13-1-21 through 13-1-199 NMSA 1978; WIOA Procurement and Contracting Activities Guidelines, 11.2.28 NMAC; WIOA Procurement, STAG 10-03; and other applicable OMB Circulars, federal, state and laws, regulations, and guidelines and WCCNM policy, including revisions and updates of applicable laws, regulations and guidelines.

OBJECTIVE.

a.   To establish minimum WCCNM requirements for procurements and contracting conducted under the Workforce Innovative Opportunity Act (WIOA). The purpose of the WIOA procurement process is to provide for fair and equal treatment of all persons and organizations involved in a procurement, to maximize the purchasing power or value of WIOA funds, and to provide safeguards to ensure the integrity of all WIOA procurements through the maintenance of a quality procurement system (11.2.28.6 NMAC).

b.   The WCCNM and its contractor or subgrantees must comply with any requirement imposed by federal and state law and regulations, WCCNM policy, and the terms of the federally funded WIOA grant.

c.   Compliance with the standards promulgated in the WIOA, OMB Circulars and the Code and this policy that governs procurement will ensure that procurement practices are acceptable.

d.   The objective of this policy is to have the force and effect of law to implement, interpret or make policy specific as it applies to federal procurement law and the Code, and the purposes stated therein.

A Complete copy of this policy (WFCP-02-14) may be found in Attachment A.

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY NO. AP- 207, Change #1
WCCNM Conflict of Interest Policy Effective: PY18 12/10/2018
SUBJECT: Conflict of Interest Policy under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) governing WIOA Program Operators, designated fiscal agent and administrative entity, American Job Centers, Local Workforce Development Board/Chief Local Elected Officials, other elected officials.
PURPOSE: To ensure that individuals or representatives of organizations entrusted with public funds will not personally or professionally benefit from the award or expenditure of such funds. This policy is established to provide direction for all Grantees, sub- recipients, contractors, staff, and board members of WCCNM conducting services and business within the guidelines that will prevent actual, potential, or perceived and questionable conflicts of interest.

BACKGROUND: Based on the 2014 release of new Uniform Administrative Guidance, WIOA expands the definition of "conflict of interest," from "direct or indirect' under WIOA, to "real, apparent or organizational' conflict of interest. Safeguards must be in place, ensuring that all those served in the program are not only eligible and suitable but also protected from being part of the perception of impropriety or conflict of interest.

The Workforce Connection of Central New Mexico (WCCNM) recognizes that by its very composition, conflicts of interest and issues concerning the appearance of fairness may arise.

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Therefore, it is essential for the Board members and Board staff to be sensitive and err on the side of caution when potential, perceived, or real conflict or matters of fairness occur.

WCCNM is committed to maintaining the highest of standards of ethical conduct and to guard against problems arising from real, perceived, or potential conflict of interest. All partners, providers, and one-stop operators at every level of participation in the Workforce System funded by the WIOA are expected to read, understand and apply this policy to ensure system integrity and effective oversight of the Workforce System.

Rules and Regulations. To accomplish these purposes, the WCCNM establishes definitions, actions, and guidelines for interpretation. A Complete copy of this policy (AP- 207, Change 1) may be found in Attachment A.

> c. **Provide the local levels of performance negotiated with the Governor (NMDWS) and chief elected official consistent with WIOA sec 116(c), to be used to measure the performance of the local area and to be used by the local board for measuring the performance of the local fiscal agent (where appropriate), eligible providers under WIOA Title I subtitle B, and the one-stop delivery system in the local area in Attachment E. §679.560(b)(16)**

In progress

> d. **Describe the actions the LWDB will take toward becoming or remaining a high-performing workforce development board.**
> **Helpful Resource:**
> **Strategic Board Toolkit:**
> **https://ion.workforcegps.org/resources/2016/06/27/09/30/Strategic_Board _Toolkit_Vision §679.560(b)(17)**

In Progress:. The WCCNM will continue to structure Strategic Planning sessions for its Board Members to review and update the Vision, Mission Statement, Goals and Objectives in relationship to WCCNM Board initiatives and to promote efforts for economic strength and recovery. The intent is to provide guidance and establish procedures regarding the preparation the Central Region's strategic plan and to promote individual county plans to fulfill the requirements of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). In addition to WCCNM Workforce Board members, planning sessions will also include input from New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions, New Mexico Economic Development, Chambers of Commerce, Community Based Organizations, One Stop Workforce Partners and Elected Officials. To further this effort, the WCCNM Chair has called for an AD Hoc Strategic Planning/Planning Committee.

Furthermore, the results of these efforts will include a framework to guide the workforce system for continued improvements and methods to measure performance.

WCCNM Goals:

To increase the competitiveness, productivity and growth of our workforce and businesses, WCCNM will coordinate with business to develop a skilled workforce to build talent pipelines that fulfills the needs of area businesses.

1.   Strategic Goals:
•   Connection to high growth Industry/Employers.
•   Review and consider adopting best practice, effective strategies and tactics from successes of other boards and workforce related initiatives.
•   Continue with quality improvements of the Central Regions Talent Pipeline Infrastructure.
•   Integration with area Economic Development organizations
• Improved visibility of WCCNM programs.
• Guidance Driven by Data and Economic Analysis.
• Promote work and learn opportunities, and education for individuals that lead to a career path for self-sufficiency.
• Partner with key community-based organization to reduce barriers to employment and promote career opportunities.

2. Key Objectives:

In order to achieve our vision, WCCNM will focus on these key objectives:
• Augment the current automated and integrated computer intake system (WCOS) by leveraging technology to efficiently and effectively deliver services.
• Implement the web-based Employer Engagement tool which guides the employer to available resources and potential subsidized solutions based upon the employer's current and future workforce needs and assist business representative to collaborate across workforce programs to meet employer workforce needs.
• Develop career technical education program(s) that will bring employers and youth together.
• Reduce and/or eliminate barriers to youth entering workforce.
• Develop a trained workforce to meet industry needs.
• Develop county level planning\advisory councils for both business and participants with barriers.
• Expand outreach efforts for business, participants and workforce partners.

e. **Describe how training services outlined in WIOA sec. 134 will be provided through the use of individual training accounts (ITAs), including, if contracts for training services will be used, how the use of such contracts will be coordinated with the use of ITAs, and how the local board will ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training programs regardless of how the training services may be provided. §679.560(b)(18)**

Attach ITA Policy

WIOA funding for training is limited to participants who are either unable to obtain grant assistance from other sources to pay the costs of their training; or require assistance beyond that available under other grant assistance. Each local board, through the workforce center, must consider the availability of other sources of grants to pay for training costs so that WIOA funds are used to supplement other funding sources. They must coordinate funding for ITAs with funding from other Federal, State, local, or private job training programs or sources, including Federal Pell grants, to assist the individual in obtaining training services. In making the funding determination, WCCNM should take into account the full cost of participating in training services, including the cost of support services and other appropriate costs. A WIOA participant may enroll in WIOA funded training while an application for a Pell Grant is pending as long as the workforce center has made arrangements with the training provider and the WIOA participant regarding allocation of the Pell Grant, if it is subsequently awarded.

ITAs in Conjunction with On-the-Job Training (OJT) and Apprenticeship
ITAs may be provided to individuals in conjunction with On-the-Job Training funds when appropriate, and the ITA may be used before, during, or after an OJT.

- ITAs can be used to support participants enrolled in apprenticeship programs by providing services listed:
- Pre-apprenticeship training- Basic skills preparation; under WIOA funds can be used to fund pre- apprenticeship programs that provide basic skills, work experiences, and other support to help participants obtain the skills needed to be placed into an apprenticeship.
- Related Instruction - Related classroom instruction component of an apprenticeship program, as long as the apprenticeship program or the education/training provider is on the ETPL. Under WIOA, all Registered Apprenticeship programs sponsors are automatically eligible to be on the ETPL.

ITA Requirements and Limits - 5680.310
The WCCNM imposes requirements and limits on ITAs such as:
- Individual needs based on the individual's employment plan, such as the participant's occupational choice or goal and the level of training needed to succeed in that goal;

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- A limit on the maximum amount of an ITA in a five (5) year period: shall be limited for up to $9,000 per participant or up to $15,000 per participant for programs offering stackable credentials and approved by the WCCNM's Training and Service Provider Standing Committee;
- Customers entering into and/or continuing an ITA must maintain a 2.0 grade point average or demonstrate progress to ensure a timely completion of training;
- Customers must apply each year/or semester for Student Financial Aid/Pell Grant;
- Customer must maintain a course load sufficient to complete the program within the standard time frame (at least 6 semester hours), barring unusual circumstances which must be approved by the WCCNM Administrative Entity.
- WCCNM-funded ITA training cannot be duplicated; therefore, for any individual, a class cannot be paid for more than once with WIOA funding.
- An individual may select training that costs more than the maximum amount available for ITAs under a State or local board policy when other sources of funds are available to supplement the ITA. These other sources may include Pell Grants; scholarships; severance pay; and other sources.
- Requirement for Online/Distance Courses:
- All Service Provider staff and customers must follow all the requirements noted above pertaining to the ITA process.

All Service Provider staff and customers will jointly decide upon the recommended/desired training that best fits the customer, while considering the deciding factors. All online/distance training programs must be approved by the Administrative Entity and placed on the Eligible Training Provider List, with all costs outlined. WIOA service providers must ensure that participants have sufficient access (hardware, software and network, etc.) to ensure a successful training outcome. WIOA Support Services may be provided to ensure sufficient access on a case by-case basis.

Exceptions to the ITA Contract for service may be used instead of ITAs, only when one or more of the following five exceptions apply and the local area has fulfilled the consumer choice requirements:

- When the services provided are on-the-job training (OJT), customized training, incumbent worker training or transitional jobs.
- Where WCCNM determines there are an insufficient number of eligible providers in the local area to accomplish the purpose of an ITA.

The determination process must include a public comment period for interested providers of at least 30 days, and be described in the Local c. When the WCCNM determines that there is a training services program of demonstrated effectiveness offered in the area by a community-based organization or another private organization to serve individuals with barriers to employment. The

WCCNM must develop criteria to be used in determining demonstrated effectiveness, particularly as it applies to the individuals with barriers to employment to be served.

The criteria may include:

- Financial stability of the organization;
- Demonstrated performance in the delivery of services to individuals with barriers to employment through such means as program completion rate; attainment of skills, certificates or degrees the program is designed to provide; placement after training in unsubsidized employment; and retention in employment; and
- How the specific program relates to the workforce investment needs identified in the local plan.
- When WCCM determines that it would be most appropriate to contract with an institution of higher education (see WIOA sec. 3(28)) or other provider of training services in order to facilitate the training of multiple individuals in in-demand industry sectors or occupations, provided that the contract doesn't not limit consumer choice;
- When the WCCNM is considering entering into a Pay-for Performance contract, and the local board ensures that the contract is consistent with 5683.510.

> **f. Boards my implement pay-for-performance contract strategy for certain elements, for which the board may reserve and use not more than 10 percent of the total funds allocated to the board under WIOA Section 128(b). Describe any plans the board may have to use pay-for-performance contracts to communicate performance expectation to service providers. §679.560(c)**

WCCNM does not plan to implement a pay-for performance contract strategy for certain elements under WIOA Section 128(b). However, the WCCNM may consider such strategies in the future.

> **g. The local board grant agreements require boards to achieve or exceed a Minimum Training Expenditure Requirements of 60%. Local boards should obligate a minimum of 80% and expend a minimum of 40% of current year funding by the end of the third quarter of the program year. Please report on the local board's expected obligations and expenditure rates for [PY 2023]. §679.560(c)**

The WCCNM budgets for its two contractors, five of the board's discretionary expenses and the Central Regions four Business & Career Centers (Centers) each year. The Board also carves out an amount from each funding stream such as Adult, DW, Youth & Admin for planned carry in for year two of each annual allocation. Once these are calculated, contractors' figures are inserted into the budget template, business centers costs net infrastructure reimbursements, all remaining dollars granted to WCCNM fall into one of two training expenditure categories; the

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Adult/Dislocated Worker and Youth. Since all granted NMDWS formula monies available are places into the budget in full each year & contractors cannot exceed their contracted amounts there is a Board Contingency fund that can subsidize as a cushion in the event any overages or the overages occurring will be taken from the participant training expenditure activities. Further these training activities are monitored by the Administrative Entity throughout the program year including meetings with staff who manage at the service level of each contract and monitoring reviews.

PY24 (7-1-24 to 6-30-25) has a Formula budget of $11,443,221 of its current year total $15,163,518. There are other grants besides NMDWS's.

The two PY24 budgeted client or participants training expense categories of NMDWS formula granted monies to WCCNM are $4,494,142 in Adult/DW and $691,314 Youth. WCCNM reserved $855,000 in addition for participant training to cover for 2nd year (PY25) expenses July 1, 2025, to October 31, 2025. Of this $700,000 are Adult/DW and $75,000 are youth, $80,000 Administrative. Total budgeted training expenses for PY24 are $5,185,456 or 45% of the NMDWS's formula budget of $11,443,221. The $5,185,456 in PY24's training budget is considerably lower than prior years PY23's $5,880,624 & PY22's $6,445,889.

There is a formal requirement of 40% of training is based on the Adult / DW Participant training dollars of $4,494,142 of total Adult DW dollars available, in this case $7,816,102 or meeting at 57%.

At the end of PY23 (7-1-23 to 6-30-24), WCCNM expended $4,392,885 Adult/DW training and $940,479 youth dollars totaling $5,333,364 or 91% of their available budget of $5,880,624. Note this results in a lower carry-in (2nd Year) amount for PY24 year listed above.

At the end of PY22 (7-1-22 to 6-30-23), WCCNM expended $4,516,396 Adult /DW training and $1,399,957 youth dollars totaling $5,916,353 or 92% of their available budget of $6,445,889.

h. Describe how the one-stop centers are planning to implement or transition to an integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information system for programs carried out under WIOA and by one-stop partners. §679.560(b)(20)

To effectively implement or transition to an integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information system for programs under WIOA, NMWC Centers in the Central Region is developing a comprehensive plan that aligns with the both the NMDWS Aligned Case Management (ACM) and the **Common Intake and Referral Initiative**. The NMWC's focus is on ensuring seamless integration, improved data management, and enhanced service delivery.

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Needs Assessment: NMWC is conducting a thorough needs assessment to identify the requirements of various WIOA programs and one-stop partners. This includes understanding current systems, data management needs, and integration requirements.

Interoperability: NMWC is implementing interoperability standards to facilitate seamless data exchange between different programs and partners. This ensures that information can be shared efficiently and accurately across programs.

Staff Training: NMEC is developing training plans to deliver comprehensive training programs for staff to ensure they are proficient in using the processes including both Aligned Case Management and Common Intake and Referral procedures. This includes training on system functionality, data entry, and case management processes.

By implementing these strategies, the one-stop centers aim to establish an integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management system that enhances efficiency, improves service delivery, and supports the effective management of WIOA programs and partner services.

2. **Definitions**
    The Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act requires states to address the usage of certain definitions related to WIOA Title I program. Please answer the following items related to those definitions.

    a. The state does not define "additional assistance" as it relates to WIOA Youth program eligibility. Each local board has the responsibility for determining its own definition of this eligibility category. If the local board wishes to use this eligibility category, a local policy must be developed that specifies what conditions must be met for a youth to require "additional assistance" and what documentation is needed to demonstrate this eligibility category. In each area, not more than five percent of the in-school-youth under WIOA Section 129(3)(B) may be eligible under "individual who requires additional assistance" to complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment. If applicable, provide the definitions the board uses for "requires additional assistance" and a copy of the related local policy as a part of Attachment A.

In Progress Attachment A full OP-428 policy

The WCCNM defines "additional assistance" as it relates to Youth participants to ensure eligibility of those youth using the additional assistance barrier. WCCNM establishes parameters for documentation that is acceptable to verify the barrier in Operational Policy NO. OP-428, Definition of Additional Assistance Barrier for Youth Eligibility.

This policy provides Youth Service Providers contracted by WCCNM, guidance regarding the additional assistance youth barrier, "an individual (including youth who is gifted) who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or secure and hold employment."

    a. **The state defines "basic skills deficient" for Adults and Youths as follows:**

    For Adult – An individual 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.

    For Youth – An individual who computes or solves problems, reads, writes, or speaks English at or below the eighth-grade level on a generally accepted standardized test or comparable score on a criterion-referenced test.

    Please describe the process the board uses to test individuals for basic skills deficiency.

Attach policy

On **enter policy date here**, the WCCNM approved the following Basic Skill Deficiency Definition and policy as well as the process to test individuals for basic skills deficiency as follows:

Under the proposed regulations for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), basic skills deficiency is defined in two parts:

1. A youth who has English reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the 8th grade level on a generally accepted standardized test.
2. An adult 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.

For number 1, "at or below the 8th grade level" will be determined by:

- TABE test score of 8.9 or below (TABE is the only assessment instrument that can be used to calculate the Basic Skills Deficiency for the WCCNM-Central Region).

For number 2, Boards may:

- Select an assessment to determine an individual's inability 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"; and • Set benchmarks for assessment results that determine basic skills deficiency.
- For the Central Region, it has been determined, based on WorkKeys Crosswalks and Conversion Tables (attached), that the Basic Skills determination/definition for Adults will be at or below a Four (4) in Reading for Information or Applied Mathematics or both.

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- NOTE: Documentation of the assessment(s) and results must be maintained in the participant electronic file, in the case notes, and scanned into the WCOS system.

3. Note on Regional Planning

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act identifies specific requirements for any planning that will occur across local areas, i.e. "regional areas." This requirement does not apply in New Mexico as the New Mexico WIOA State Combined State Plan designates our existing four local areas as the regional planning areas; however, LWDB's are encouraged to **describe regional economies in their local area and provide strategies of how unique regional economies will be addressed**.

4. Assurances

Consistent with the NM WIOA State Combined Plan, the local plan must include assurances that:

#	Assurance	Indicate Yes or No
1.	The LWDB obtained input into the development of the Local Plan and provided an opportunity for comment on the plan by representatives of local boards and chief elected officials, businesses, labor organizations, institutions of higher education, the entities responsible for planning or administrating the core programs and other programs included in the Plan, other primary stakeholders, and the general public, and the Local Plan is available and accessible to the general public.	Yes
2.	The LWDB has established a policy identifying circumstances that may present a conflict of interest for a local board member, or the entity or class of officials that the member rep- resents, and procedures to resolve such conflicts.	Yes
3.	The LWDB has established a policy to provide to the public (including individuals with disabilities) access to meetings of local boards and local boards, and information regarding activities of local boards, such as data on board membership and minutes.	Yes
4.	The LWDB has established fiscal control and fund accounting procedures necessary to ensure the proper accounting for funds paid to the local boards for adult, dislocated worker, and youth programs to carry out workforce investment activities under chapters 2 and 3 of subtitle B.	Yes
5.	The Federal funds received to carry out a core program will not be expended for any purpose other than for activities authorized with respect to such funds under that core program.	Yes
6.	Service providers have a referral process in place for directing Veterans with	Yes

#	Assurance	Indicate Yes or No
	Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) to DVOP services, when appropriate.	
7.	The LWDB has implemented a policy to ensure a process is in place for referring veterans with significant barriers to employment to career services provided by the JVSG program's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist.	Yes
8.	The LWDB established procedures that set forth criteria to be used by chief elected officials for the appointment of local workforce investment board members.	Yes
9.	Priority of Service for covered persons is provided for each of the Title I programs; and	Yes
10.	The LWDB has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 2900 and WIOA 184(a)(3).	Yes

5. Attachments

This section is in progress

In Progress - Crosswalk to attachment references in plan and complete this section

Attachment A: WCCNM Policies relevant to the implementation of WIOA (as listed in the local board grant agreement in Exhibit F, Statement of Work, Section VII, Required LWDB Policies). Please go to https://www.wccnm.org/wccnm-board/ and scroll down to Board Policies section. **Attach Conflict of Interest and Firewall policies.**

Attachment B: Full roster of local board membership including the group each member represents.

Attachment C: List of the one-stop centers in your local area, including address and phone numbers. Indicate the one-stop operator for each site and whether it is a comprehensive or satellite center. Include a list of one-stop partners physically located at each of the one-stop centers in the local board area, and the services provided by each of these partners).

Attachment D: Please include any cooperative agreements, resource sharing agreements, and memoranda of understanding relevant to the WIOA. If any of these documents have already been updated or are even still in draft form, please provide copies as part of Attachment D.

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