

## Region 6

# 2016-2018 Workforce Development Plan

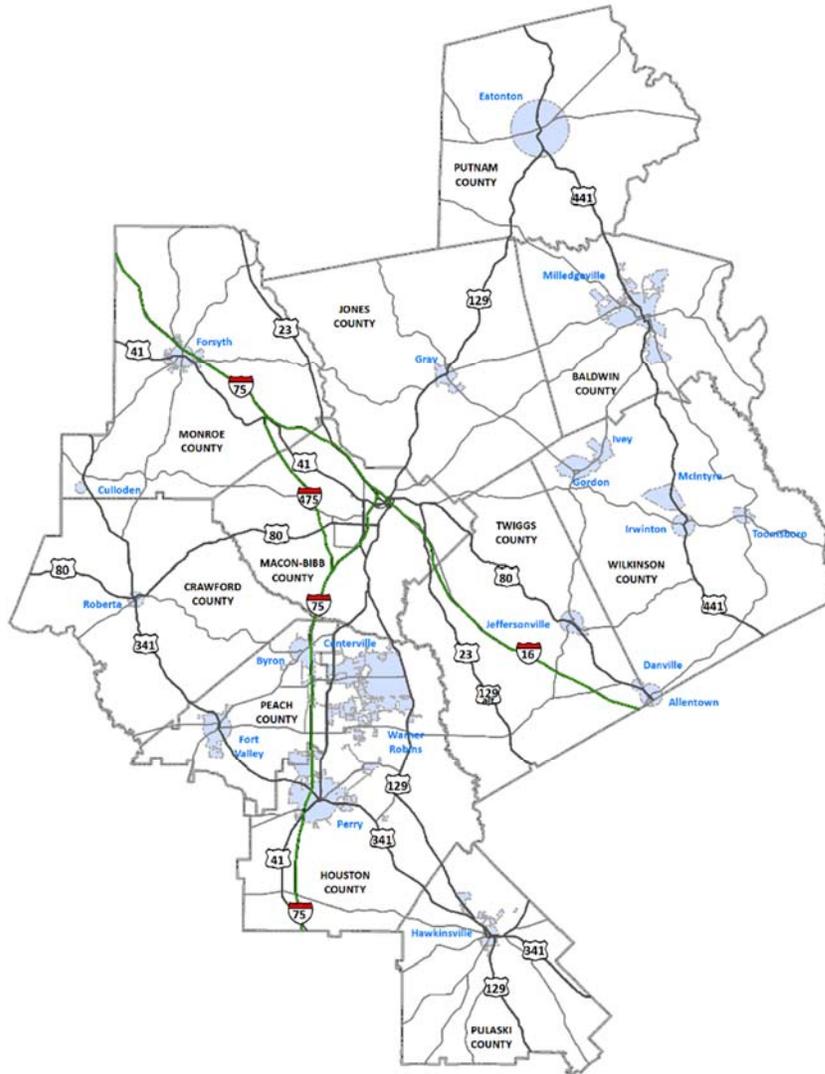
## Draft for Public Comment

August 25, 2016



## Introduction of Region 6

Service Delivery Region 6 consists of 11 counties in the heart of Georgia: Baldwin, Crawford, Houston, Jones, Macon-Bibb, Monroe, Peach, Pulaski, Putnam, Twiggs, and Wilkinson. Region 6 is served by two workforce development boards: Macon-Bibb and Middle Georgia Consortium. This Workforce Development Plan has been developed to be consistent with the Unified Plan of the State of Georgia and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014.



## STRATEGIC ELEMENTS, GOVERNANCE AND STRUCTURE

### *1. Identification of the Fiscal Agent*

**Provide an identification of the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds described in WIOA § 107(d)(12)(B)(i)(III) as determined by the chief elected official.**

Workforce Development Area 10 is a single county workforce area consisting of Macon-Bibb County. There are no other local government jurisdictions in Macon-Bibb County. The Middle Georgia Regional Commission has been designated by Macon-Bibb County Mayor Robert Reichert as the fiscal agent responsible for the disbursement of grant funds described in WIOA § 107(d)(12)(B)(i)(III).

Middle Georgia Regional Commission  
175 Emery Highway  
Suite C  
Macon, GA 31217  
(478) 751-6160  
(478) 751-6517 (fax)

Workforce Development Area 11 consists of 10 counties surrounding Macon-Bibb County: Baldwin, Crawford, Houston, Jones, Monroe, Peach, Pulaski, Putnam, Twiggs, and Wilkinson. Putnam County Commissioner Janie Reid is the Chief Local Elected Official and has designated Baldwin County Board of Commissioners as the fiscal agent responsible for the disbursement of grant funds described in WIOA § 107(d)(12)(B)(i)(III).

Sammy Hall, Chairman  
Baldwin County Board of Commissioners  
121 North Wilkinson Street  
Suite 314  
Milledgeville, Georgia 31061  
(478) 445-4791  
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For the purposes of this plan, when referencing the 11-county economic development region of Middle Georgia, the term “Region 6” will be utilized. If the information is specific to one area, the workforce development area number will be utilized.

## 2. Description of Strategic Planning Elements

Provide an analysis of the regional economic conditions including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations, and the employment needs of employers in those industry sectors and occupations. Include the listing of occupations in demand within the region and describe how the list was developed citing source data.

### Overview by NAICS Code

The 11 counties of the Middle Georgia region, Workforce Development Areas 10 and 11, are part of a relatively well-defined economic region within the central part of the state. Macon-Bibb County serves as a major employment hub for the region, as over 45,000 individuals regularly commute into Macon-Bibb County to reach their primary jobs. Houston County and Baldwin County, home to the second and third largest cities of the region (Warner Robins and Milledgeville, respectively), also see a slight increase in their daytime population, although they both see a greater daily outflow of employees as opposed to inflow. Table 1 and Table 2, below indicate some of these geographic trends in employment.

County	Resident Population	Estimated Daytime Population	Daytime Population Change	Percent Daytime Population Change
Baldwin	46,905	48,063	1,158	2.5%
Crawford	12,821	9,238	-3,583	-27.9%
Houston	134,880	136,760	1,880	1.4%
Jones	28,292	20,409	-7,883	-27.9%
Macon-Bibb	154,810	175,779	20,969	13.5%
Monroe	25,864	21,785	-4,079	-15.8%
Peach	26,883	25,735	-1,148	-4.3%
Pulaski	11,632	10,198	-1,434	-12.3%
Putnam	20,925	19,467	-1,458	-7.0%
Twiggs	9,385	7,910	-1,475	-15.7%
Wilkinson	9,685	9,393	-292	-3.0%
Region	482,082	484,737	2,655	0.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 ACS 5-Year Estimates

County	Commute within County	Commute out of County	Commute into County
<b>Baldwin</b>	5,333 21%	12,118 48%	7,729 31%
<b>Crawford</b>	509 9%	4,417 76%	893 15%
<b>Houston</b>	20,754 34%	20,606 34%	19,754 32%
<b>Jones</b>	1,525 11%	10,663 74%	2,285 16%
<b>Macon-Bibb</b>	31,952 32%	20,985 21%	45,648 46%
<b>Monroe</b>	1,847 13%	7,066 49%	5,623 39%
<b>Peach</b>	1,863 11%	8,704 53%	5,922 36%
<b>Pulaski</b>	839 17%	2,451 49%	1,749 35%
<b>Putnam</b>	2,243 25%	3,770 42%	3,012 33%
<b>Twiggs</b>	376 6%	3,879 58%	2,455 37%
<b>Wilkinson</b>	765 16%	2,207 45%	1,880 39%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies, 2013

Across the region, total employment has shown a moderate increase since 2001. This included a peak employment in 2008, followed by a sharp decline during the ensuing recession. Today, employment has closed back in on its pre-recession peak. With this in mind, however, the region has experienced a number of changes related to employment. This has occurred both within the various types of employment type, as well as within the major industries of the region. While overall employment has continued to increase, certain sectors were hit harder during the recent recession than others. In some of these sectors, the economic recovery might not have occurred at all yet. This means that different parts of the economy will often require a different response with their workforce challenges. Data obtained from the Bureau of Economic Analysis tracks these changes and can be found in Table 3, on the next page.

Description	2001	2003	2005	2007	2009	2011	2013
<b>Total employment</b>	237,892	244,269	256,450	265,552	259,993	259,285	263,828
<b>By type</b>							
<b>Wage and salary employment</b>	202,121	204,316	208,803	212,213	204,844	199,973	203,000
<b>Proprietors employment</b>	35,771	39,953	47,647	53,339	55,149	59,312	60,828
<b>Farm proprietor's employment</b>	2,204	1,898	1,837	1,743	1,711	1,699	1,640

<b>Nonfarm proprietor's employment</b>	33,567	38,055	45,810	51,596	53,438	57,613	59,188
<b>By industry</b>							
<b>Farm employment</b>	3,012	2,688	2,785	2,502	2,511	2,421	2,368
<b>Nonfarm employment</b>	234,880	241,581	253,665	263,050	257,482	256,864	261,460
<b>Private nonfarm employment</b>	181,708	186,366	197,648	205,364	199,836	200,078	207,295
<b>Forestry, fishing, and related activities</b>	354	354	335	303	384	289	114
<b>Mining</b>	1,237	1,048	1,003	1,137	1,020	1,165	1,185
<b>Utilities</b>	174	171	173	188	294	233	(D)
<b>Construction</b>	12,460	13,061	14,366	15,028	12,562	10,957	9,880
<b>Manufacturing</b>	24,185	21,299	20,142	19,059	16,549	15,008	15,096
<b>Wholesale trade</b>	5,209	1,500	1,709	5,536	5,187	4,669	3,979
<b>Retail trade</b>	27,676	28,318	28,723	29,403	27,984	29,661	30,008
<b>Transportation and warehousing</b>	1,248	5,658	2,652	2,672	3,265	3,472	3,555
<b>Information</b>	3,494	3,431	3,366	3,049	2,487	2,399	2,268
<b>Finance and insurance</b>	10,668	11,126	11,709	12,552	13,800	14,412	14,677
<b>Real estate and rental and leasing</b>	6,410	6,618	7,932	8,974	8,498	8,471	8,734
<b>Professional, scientific, &amp; technical services</b>	8,554	9,495	10,652	11,274	11,488	10,414	10,884
<b>Management of companies and enterprises</b>	1,466	1,594	1,810	2,055	2,063	2,464	2,516
<b>Admin. &amp; waste management services</b>	10,584	11,633	14,951	14,911	14,285	14,764	16,467
<b>Educational services</b>	4,054	4,516	4,646	4,550	4,592	4,643	4,774
<b>Health care and social assistance</b>	18,578	22,688	23,540	25,882	26,088	26,359	27,816
<b>Arts, entertainment, and recreation</b>	2,597	2,349	2,699	2,855	2,920	3,016	3,195
<b>Accommodation and food services</b>	14,591	16,290	17,004	17,862	17,575	17,861	18,861
<b>Other services, except public admin.</b>	12,835	14,143	14,247	15,139	15,759	17,648	18,359
<b>Government and government enterprises</b>	53,172	55,215	56,017	57,686	57,646	56,786	54,165
<b>Federal, civilian</b>	14,227	14,605	14,616	15,650	16,366	18,350	16,998
<b>Military</b>	6,448	7,194	7,006	6,364	5,467	5,349	5,168
<b>State and local</b>	32,497	33,416	34,395	35,672	35,813	33,087	31,983
<b>State government</b>	12,337	12,342	12,535	12,685	12,400	10,405	9,750
<b>Local government</b>	20,160	21,074	21,860	22,987	23,413	22,682	22,233

(D) Not shown to avoid disclosure of confidential information, but the estimates for this item are included in the totals.

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2015

One of the first notable and significant trends visible from this data is the change in types of employment seen thus far within the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. While economy as a whole has added jobs since 2001, traditional wage and salary employment has held relatively steady at the regional level. Nearly all new growth in employment has come from an increase in the number of proprietors. This represents a tremendous opportunity for small businesses to play an increasingly significant role in the marketplace. To effectively harness these opportunities, local and regional infrastructure to support investments in entrepreneurship will be required. This includes educational opportunities that focus on business development (within both the

universities and technical colleges), as well as small business incubators and makerspaces where individuals can experiment with new technologies and ideas.

Turning the focus back to employment by industry, another sharp distinction can be seen between private sector and public sector employment. Among those who are employed within Middle Georgia, private-sector employment makes up approximately 79.5 percent of jobs in the region, while public-sector employment comprises the other 20.5 percent. As a whole, this makes the government one of the more significant employers within the region. Federal government employment makes up over two-fifths of this public sector employment, due in large part to Robins Air Force Base (RAFB)—the region’s largest employer and the largest single-site industrial complex in the state. Since 2001, public-sector employment has held mostly steady throughout the region, although the growth rate has varied by sector in recent years. State government employment has been falling steadily since 2001, as has military employment, since around 2004. Within the past five years, local government and federal civilian employment have also begun to decline (7 percent since 2010), following steady growth in the years prior. This trend will require continued monitoring in the years ahead, and may require additional investment in growing the private-sector to offset job losses in the public-sector.

Among private sector employment, the construction and manufacturing sectors have shed the greatest number of jobs since 2001. The manufacturing sector has seen employment decline by 37.6 percent since 2001. While this trend was perpetuated in the recent recession, manufacturing job losses throughout the region preceded the recession by many years. Economic recovery has not reversed this trend, although job losses in manufacturing have at least slowed in recent years. Construction jobs were more stable through the early 2000s, but still have not recovered following the recession. These two sectors make up a majority of job losses since 2001. The information sector, which includes media and publishing, has also seen a decline, particularly in urban areas. In contrast, the farming, forestry, and mining sectors have been hard hit in the rural areas. These job losses present a need for reinvestment, as well as economic diversification in many communities throughout the region.

Much of this work that relates to assisting areas dependent on a single industry, or only on a few businesses, can be discussed under the concept of economic adjustment. Economic adjustment can be undertaken in any variety of areas, or for any type of industry. The goals of this process are long-term diversification of the local or regional economy and short-term response to stabilize local and regional economies that have been heavily impacted by job losses within a major economic sector. In Middle Georgia, one of these significant areas of employment is the aerospace and defense sector. Nowhere is this more significant than Houston County, where one in five employed persons works directly at RAFB. When considering indirect jobs, over half the jobs in Houston County are tied to Robins Air Force Base. Regionally, this trend continues, with approximately 20 percent of all employed persons in Middle Georgia owing their employment to Robins Air Force Base, either directly or indirectly. The result is that as defense-sector employment in Middle Georgia goes, so goes the remainder of the region. Middle Georgia has responded to this challenge by working with the Department of Defense, Office of Economic Adjustment to identify and develop new opportunities for workers who have been displaced from

defense-related industries due to federal spending reductions. This type of economic adjustment work remains vital within the region, especially in some of the rural communities that continue to struggle economically.

Indeed, many of the jobs lost within the region have been offset somewhere in some other sector of the economy. The healthcare and social assistance sector has added the greatest number of jobs since 2001, with over 9,000 new employees, which is likely in response to national trends of an aging populace. With two major hospitals, Navicent Health and Coliseum Medical Center, as well as several smaller hospitals around the region, Middle Georgia can even serve as a hub for those outside of the region's 11 counties. As trends of an aging population are expected to continue in the years ahead, this sector and related industries present more opportunities for sustained employment growth.

The region has also seen significant growth in a variety of professional business, finance, and management sectors. When combined, these sectors now form nearly 18 percent of private non-farm employment for the region. This presents challenges for traditional workforce development efforts, as many of these jobs require higher levels of skill, sometimes in very technical or mathematical aspects. To adequately meet the needs of employers in these businesses, the primary and secondary education systems must also be engaged to prepare students for advanced education and training so they can obtain jobs in these fields of employment.

Employment within Middle Georgia has also increased significantly in the various retail and service sectors of the economy, which have added approximately 18,500 jobs since 2001. Retail trade accounts for 14.5 percent of private non-farm employment, which is the largest share of any single sector by NAICS code. The accommodations sector accounts for 9.1 percent of the same. Meanwhile, the administrative and waste services sector grew by 56 percent from 2001 through 2013, and the other services sector grew by 43 percent over the same timeframe. In terms of workforce development, these positions typically require fewer skills outside of the soft skills many employers require. However, these positions also come with lower levels of pay than some of the jobs that have been lost in manufacturing or construction. This presents a multifaceted challenge for both workforce and economic development within the 11 counties of the region.

### *Overview of Economic Clusters*

The US Cluster Mapping project, developed in coordination between Harvard Business School and the US Economic Development Administration gives additional information on employment, job creation, specialization, and wages by clusters and sub-clusters of the economy. This gives a greater degree of specificity than the NAICS codes listed above. Clusters are organized into two main groups—traded clusters and local clusters. Local clusters are found everywhere and serve the needs of the local community. Traded clusters primarily serve other markets throughout the country, and regions may have many or few traded clusters. Areas will often develop specialties surrounding particular industries. These can sometimes become influential industries that are likely to attract additional industry in the form of either suppliers, competitors, or downstream

users of a manufactured product or raw material. Most employment across the country is in local clusters, but traded clusters account for an equally large share of income and nearly all of the patents issued to businesses.

### *Analysis of Traded Clusters*

Table 4 identifies clusters by a number of different factors, most notably employment, and the changes that the county has seen in employment over the past 16 years. Some clusters are noted as a specialized industry within the region, meaning that they attract a large number of employees relative to other locations within the United States, and that a relatively high potential exists to coordinate production efforts between significant members of a particular industry sector or cluster. Because of this relativity, specialized industries are not solely those with the greatest number of employees, though that is a frequent occurrence. Note, given space considerations within this document, only clusters with high specialization or at least 300 employees within Macon-Bibb County are listed in the table below.

<b>Cluster</b>	<b>2014 Employment</b>	<b>Actual Change in Employment (1998-2014)</b>	<b>Expected Change in Employment (1998-2014)</b>	<b>Over/Under Performance in Job Growth</b>	<b>Local Specialized Cluster</b>
Business Services	8,376	2,467	3,306	(839)	YES
Insurance Services	7,962	3,626	(276)	3,902	YES
Distribution and Electronic Commerce	6,215	2,225	812	1,413	
Food Process & Manuf.	2,660	310	71	239	
Education and Knowledge Creation	2,406	10	1,429	(1,419)	YES
Hospitality & Tourism	2,082	(470)	359	(829)	
Paper and Packaging	1,860	5	(705)	710	YES
Automotive	1,820	(465)	(782)	317	
Transport & Logistics	1,514	462	57	405	
Financial Services	1,513	(887)	77	(964)	YES
Construction Products & Services	1,367	(128)	(32)	(96)	
Wood Products	1,145	(659)	(597)	(62)	YES
Vulcanized and Fired Materials	970	(1,500)	(1,014)	(486)	YES
Production Tech. & Heavy Machinery	850	(1,415)	(504)	(911)	
Power Generation & Transmission	830	700	(3)	703	YES
Nonmetal Mining	825	(470)	(270)	(200)	YES
Aerospace & Defense	820	(1,780)	(643)	(1,137)	YES
Recreational and Small Electric Goods	810	(12,058)	(978)	(11,080)	
Livestock Processing	770	345	(18)	363	

<b>Marketing, Design, and Publishing</b>	565	(417)	206	(623)	
<b>Forestry</b>	561	53	(170)	223	<b>YES</b>
<b>Textile Manufacturing</b>	528	(2,534)	(2,172)	(362)	<b>YES</b>
<b>Plastics</b>	465	(89)	(141)	52	
<b>Communications Equip. &amp; Services</b>	440	270	(26)	296	<b>YES</b>
<b>Upstream Chemical Products</b>	430	280	(33)	313	<b>YES</b>
<b>Furniture</b>	341	(1,694)	(999)	(695)	<b>YES</b>
<b>Downstream Chemical Products</b>	285	(20)	(89)	69	<b>YES</b>
<b>Leather &amp; Related Prod</b>	120	(115)	(113)	(2)	<b>YES</b>

*Source: US Cluster Mapping Project, Harvard Business School and US Economic Development Administration*

Each of the traded clusters within the region is an industry that is currently important to the county's economic vitality, or has held such importance in recent years. Among these clusters, the business services sector stands out as the largest employer within the region. Although it has somewhat underperformed the nation as a whole, job creation has remained strong on the regional level. Within the sub-clusters of business services, some areas like consulting, payroll services, and telemarketing have struggled; however, business services related to the STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) career fields have shown growth. Computer services, such as computer programming and data hosting and processing have far outpaced national averages, adding nearly 2,500 jobs since 1998. Most of these new jobs have located in Houston, Baldwin, and Macon-Bibb counties. Engineering services are also considered a subset of business services and have shown modest gains, near the national rate of job growth, adding just over 400 jobs in the same timeframe.

Overall, the STEM sector, especially within the business services cluster, exhibit regional growth potential, as evidenced by existing trends that generally surpass national averages; however, the region still risks falling behind in this regard, particularly outside of business services. For example, while the education and knowledge creation sector was exhibiting large growth nationally, Middle Georgia lagged behind, and saw a loss of jobs in biotech, physical and life sciences research organizations. Meanwhile, information technology and analytical instruments remains a relatively small sector of the economy despite some growth. As a result, the region may need to consider ways to invest more in the success of STEM fields, particularly as related to primary and secondary educational opportunities that can prepare a future workforce for these high-skill positions.

The insurance services cluster has actually seen the largest job growth in recent years, and has well over performed compared to recent national trends in job growth. Much of this is attributable to the GEICO regional office. As a significant employer in the region and a specialized cluster within the region, jobs in the insurance services sector may be likely to remain in demand for the near future. The financial services cluster (which is often grouped with insurance by NAICS code), has experienced the opposite trend with significant job losses. While financial services

have turned back positive following the recent recession nationally, the banking sector continues to struggle in Middle Georgia, particularly with credit intermediation firms. Potentially, areas exist where the skills required overlap between the growing insurance and contracting financial sectors. If so, displaced employees could be well positioned to benefit without requiring as much assistance in retraining.

The distribution and electronic commerce and transportation and logistics clusters also represent a major component of the local employment pool. While neither of these are specialized industries within the region, they both represent meaningful employment, in sectors that have outperformed the rest of the nation. Currently, these two clusters employ over 7,500 workers in the 15 counties of Middle Georgia, of which more than one-third of these positions have added within the last 15 years. Although the logistics sector was expected to perform well nationwide, job growth in Middle Georgia has outperformed the nation by a rate more than triple other parts of the country. This is also particularly good for the region, as wages in these clusters are higher than average wages within the region. All these factors indicate room for significant growth within these industries—especially when local and state programs are considered, such as the Network Georgia initiative of the Georgia Ports Authority. This will likely create a demand for more workers with the skills necessary to fulfill various shipments and transport them to their appropriate destinations in a timely manner.

While the traditional agricultural activities of Middle Georgia have continued their gradual decline in recent years, the finished products side of food production has only continued to grow throughout the region. Today, nearly 3,500 people are employed in either food processing and manufacturing or livestock processing within Middle Georgia. These numbers have been on the rise regionally, despite remaining relatively constant at the national level. Two of the largest employers within this sector, both of which have contributed to regional growth in employment, are Frito Lay and Perdue Farms, both located in Houston County. Given the proximity of the region to both major agricultural areas as well as distribution networks, it should not be surprising that these clusters continue to do well. While not paying as well as some other sectors, food and meat processing still provide a number of quality jobs within the region, and will require additional workers with the skillsets to meet industry needs.

Forestry, and the related clusters of paper and packaging, wood products, and furniture also contribute significantly to the county's labor force, and all do so with a high degree of specialization within Middle Georgia. The region is home to some incredibly rich forested areas, particularly in the northern and eastern parts of the region. This geographic blessing allowed related industries to traditionally do very well around the region. In recent years, Middle Georgia has generally been able to outperform the rest of the nation in these industries; however, this still represented a decline in employment from previous years, which pales in comparison to the projected declines for the industry, given national trends. While Middle Georgia may have strategic advantages that help sustain this industry in the long-run, it does not appear to be a hotbed for new job growth within the region.

Related to forestry is the other main extractive industry of mining, specifically nonmetal mining. These two clusters are the two most specialized industries within the region. That is to say, Middle Georgia contributes a greater share of the national workforce for these two sectors, than in any other sector; however, in raw numbers, this only equals a little under 1,400 workers across the 11 counties, and this number continues to shrink regionally. The heart of Kaolin mining country has been particularly hard hit. In 1998, nearly 1,000 individuals were employed in Kaolin mining in just the rural counties of Twiggs and Wilkinson alone. Today, that number has been cut nearly in half, to only 550 people. While it is important to recognize the long-term importance of these industries to the region, it is also necessary for these rural communities to identify new ways to adapt and survive economically. Localized strategic planning for economic diversification can go a long way to benefit these communities, and special attention will be needed to assist these displaced workers in identifying new opportunities for work.

The aerospace industry has long been one of the few industries most commonly associated with the Middle Georgia region. This is undoubtedly due in part to the presence of Robins Air Force Base within the region, but also due to the location of major aerospace corporations such as Boeing and Bombardier. As of 2014, 820 people were employed in the aerospace vehicles and defense cluster within Middle Georgia. This represents a significant overrepresentation of this industry compared to other parts of the nation; however, this is also a cluster that has also lost nearly 1,800 jobs in Middle Georgia over the past 16 years. Nationally, the aerospace sector has also declined, but it has been an even more precipitous fall in Middle Georgia than elsewhere. This underscores the need for diversification within the region in response to some of these job losses. While commercial aerospace service can potentially alleviate job losses on the defense side, unless the volume of commercial business increases drastically, this will not be enough to compensate for job losses without new industries elsewhere.

A final interesting sector within the region is the vulcanized and fired materials cluster. Within this cluster are three unique sub-clusters: clay products, rubber products, and glass products. While glass product manufacturing is not a significant part of the regional economy, Middle Georgia is quite specialized for clay products. As mentioned as part of the nonmetal mining discussion earlier, this is possibly due to the region's geographic location and abundant presence of Kaolin; however, regional employment in this sector has plummeted in recent years. The potential opportunity for workforce investment regionally is on the other side of this cluster with rubber products. While available data does not yet indicate growth, the recent opening of a Kumho Tires manufacturing facility in Macon-Bibb County is poised to translate to large job growth in this sub-cluster. As clay products continue to trend downward, this presents a possible transition opportunity for those workers who previously engaged with fired materials in a different way. This also underscores the need in general for skills training to support work in the advanced manufacturing of tires. Potentially, if Kumho and neighboring West Georgia's Kia continue to succeed, the opportunity also opens up for more automotive manufacturing in Middle Georgia to build upon the success that Blue Bird has already had in Fort Valley.

### Analysis of Local Clusters

Table 5 highlights various information pertaining to the local clusters within the Middle Georgia region. Unlike the traded clusters, however, there is little specialization that exists in these clusters, as all local economic areas require these services in some form or fashion.

Cluster	2014 Employment	Actual Change in Employment (1998-2014)	Expected Change in Employment (1998-2014)	Over/Under Performance in Job Growth
Local Health Services	29,831	940	8,574	(7,634)
Local Hospitality Establishments	18,272	4,957	5,150	(193)
Local Commercial Services	10,404	818	1,216	(398)
Local Real Estate, Construction, and Development	9,195	(1,918)	(287)	(1,631)
Local Retailing of Clothing and General Merchandise	8,059	1,718	1,453	265
Local Motor Vehicle Products and Services	7,655	(323)	190	(513)
Local Community and Civic Organizations	5,777	1,171	1,661	(490)
Local Food and Beverage Processing and Distribution	5,426	(1,224)	(24)	(1,200)
Local Personal Service (Non-Medical)	3,812	327	1,146	(819)
Local Financial Services	3,572	(1)	579	(580)
Local Logistical Services	2,904	972	240	732
Local Entertainment and Media	2,743	(76)	(523)	447
Local Household Goods and Services	2,701	56	(30)	86
Local Education and Training	2,043	203	744	(541)
Local Utilities	1,681	(1,413)	(647)	(766)
Local Industrial Products and Services	754	-113	-73	-40

Source: US Cluster Mapping Project, Harvard Business School and US Economic Development Administration

As wage and salary employment in the traded clusters of Middle Georgia has generally declined since 1998, many of the local clusters have experienced job gains; however, this still represents underperformance compared to the rest of the nation in job growth. The health services cluster is the largest employer, by far, employing nearly 30,000 people across the region. Again, this is

likely due to the region's multiple hospitals and the need to service an aging population; however, the sector's growth over the past 16 years is paltry compared to national trends. The cluster, as a whole, added just over 900 net jobs since 1998, whereas the expected job creation given national growth would have been over 8,500 jobs. This could be interpreted as part of the trend of overall sluggishness in the local economy, but it might also indicate possibilities for new employment in those fields to meet local demand from residents. It is also worth noting that a decent amount of the regional sluggishness may be due to the closure of Central State Hospital in Milledgeville; however, this would not account for the full difference, and may indicate an unmet need within the community.

The local logistical services cluster was the greatest over-performer in the region compared to the remainder of the country. This was especially pronounced within the local transportation services and local passenger transportation sub-clusters. While many of these do not compare to the scope of the traded logistics and transportation cluster in terms of long-distance and large-scale transit, it still does emphasize the potential that Middle Georgia holds as a statewide, and even national hub for transportation. As was stated earlier for the traded transportation and logistics cluster, this is another area with job training needs that the region can choose to pursue.

As indicated earlier in the context of NAICS codes, the service industry also performed well in terms of local cluster job growth. Local hospitality establishments recorded the largest increase in employment, adding nearly 5,000 employees since 1998. This was especially pronounced among restaurants. Local merchandise retailing also fared well over that same timeframe, particularly among discount retailers and warehouse clubs. Perhaps not surprisingly, given the effects of the most recent recession, the local real estate, construction, and development clusters have seen the biggest decrease in job creation, particularly among general and specialty contractors. This market may be yet to recover fully within the Middle Georgia region.

### *Occupational Projections*

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>2012 Estimated Employment</b>	<b>2022 Projected Employment</b>	<b>Total 2012-2022 Employment Change</b>
<b>Total All</b>	198,650	219,930	21,280
<b>Architecture and Engineering</b>	4,400	4,560	160
<b>Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media</b>	1,590	1,770	180
<b>Building and Grounds Cleaning &amp; Maintenance</b>	6,920	8,420	1,500
<b>Business and Financial Operations</b>	11,550	12,240	690
<b>Community and Social Services</b>	2,750	2,950	200
<b>Computer and Mathematical</b>	3,160	3,830	670
<b>Construction and Extraction</b>	9,480	10,630	1,150
<b>Education, Training, and Library</b>	14,090	17,370	3,280
<b>Farming, Fishing, and Forestry</b>	1,550	1,300	(250)
<b>Food Preparation and Serving Related</b>	17,290	18,170	880

<b>Healthcare Practitioners and Technical</b>	13,010	15,470	2,460
<b>Healthcare Support</b>	5,970	7,500	1,530
<b>Installation, Maintenance, and Repair</b>	10,310	10,850	540
<b>Legal</b>	980	1,070	90
<b>Life, Physical, and Social Science</b>	680	730	50
<b>Management</b>	10,000	10,820	820
<b>Office and Administrative Support</b>	30,480	33,620	3,140
<b>Personal Care and Service</b>	5,320	6,620	1,300
<b>Production</b>	13,180	14,010	830
<b>Protective Service</b>	5,190	5,250	60
<b>Sales and Related</b>	21,020	21,930	910
<b>Transportation and Material Moving</b>	9,730	10,820	1,090

Source: Georgia Dept. of Labor, Workforce Statistics & Economic Research, Projection Unit

Table 6 supports many of the general conclusions of the sector analysis in an occupational analysis. Through 2022, major occupations expected to see growth (both by percentage and total number) include the healthcare practitioners and technical; healthcare support; personal care and service; transportation and material moving; and the education, training, and library occupations. These occupations refocus on Macon-Bibb County as a hub within the state for healthcare, education, and other similar services that can often not be found elsewhere. In addition, the county's strategic location for transportation affords the potential for additional job growth in those related occupations as well. A number of lower-skill service sector positions, such as office and administrative support, building and grounds cleaning and maintenance, and food preparation and serving are also expected to continue seeing job growth in next few years.

A major challenge for the region is that much of this job growth is in relatively lower-skilled jobs. As a result, Middle Georgia may see a degree of stagnation within wages. Among the skilled jobs where new growth is expected, it becomes vital to train potential employees in the necessary workplace skills. These occupations particularly include the medical, education, and logistics occupations listed above. The region also is expected to see very little growth in some of the advanced STEM careers like architecture and engineering or life, physical, and social science. This may be due in large part to the lack of a workforce that possesses these skills. Additional educational investment at the primary, secondary, and post-secondary levels may be necessary to help reverse this projected trend of sluggish growth.

### *Summary of Industry Trends*

Taken as a whole, Workforce Investment Areas 10 and 11 are expected to continue seeing growth trends that shift employment away from the production sectors of the economy and further into the service sectors of the economy. This is not to say that opportunities are non-existent within manufacturing. In fact, certain industries like the food processing or the automotive industry may continue to see growth in future years in light of successful relocations to the region. In addition, the transportation and logistics sector is a prime area for growth due to the region's strategic

geographic position within the transportation system of the state. Finally, with additional investment in STEM education activities, these industries can have definite room for growth, provided that a well-educated workforce can be recruited to, as well as trained and retained within, Middle Georgia.

It is worth noting that this new job growth may not take the expected form of years past. Wage and salary employment has been stagnant for a significant length of time—even declining in some parts of the region. There is a continued need for job training activities that respond to new occupational opportunities in the context of small business and the entrepreneurial spirit.

Finally, given continued trends in population toward an aging America that is ever more concentrated in the urban and suburban areas of the country, continued investment in job training opportunities for the health and medical services sector may also be necessary. This has the potential to be a strategic advantage for Middle Georgia compared to other more rural parts of the state. The growth of a highly-trained workforce for medical endeavors, as well as in support of the higher education sector that remains a significant contributor to the workforce will only pay long-term dividends for the people of the region.

**Provide an analysis of the knowledge and skills needed to meet the employment needs of the employers in the region, including employment needs in in-demand industry sectors and occupations.**

Among the targeted industry sectors for Middle Georgia are the advanced manufacturing, shared services, logistics, medical, and education sectors. All of these sectors have shown some degree of recovery from the recent economic downturn, and present opportunities for new growth in employment. An analysis of occupations within these in-demand sectors highlights several occupations that can be expected to grow over the next 10 years. A breakdown of this information can be found on the next page in Table X.

The largest share of growth in occupations is expected to occur in the medical sector—both among healthcare practitioners, as well as in healthcare support operations. As previously indicated, the presence of a strong medical sector throughout the region presents many opportunities. Given that job growth within the medical field in Middle Georgia has sometimes lagged behind other parts of the nation, a possible conclusion is that a skills gap exists between the needs of the community and the available labor pool. The need for healthcare workers, especially nurses represents a potential training priority for job seekers within the region.

Similar to nurses, the region is expected to need more teachers over the next 10 years; however, this presents a significant job training challenge considering the typical requirements for school teachers across the state. In this case, potential gaps must be addressed earlier, including within the K-12 education system to prepare students for future careers in education. This is a cycle, which if properly refocused, could produce long-term benefits for the region. This is also the method by which future demands for management positions, computer and mathematical occupations, and financial operations specialists will be met.

Within the advanced manufacturing sectors, employment has gradually begun to show positive movement again in the past couple years. Projections show that there will be some occupational needs going forward in the production sectors of the economy. Some of these needs include maintenance and repair workers, assemblers, packaging and filling machine operators, welders, cutters, solderers, and brazers. To effectively get manufactured products to market, there is also projected to be significant demand within the logistics sector, owing in large part to the region's strategic location. Laborers, truck drivers, packagers, and industrial tractor operators can all present opportunities for additional job growth.

<b>SOC</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>2016 Jobs</b>	<b>Hourly Earnings (inc. benefits)</b>	<b>Projected Growth 2015-2025</b>
29-1141	Registered Nurses	3,831	\$28.14	533
31-1014	Nursing Assistants	3,074	\$9.75	312
31-9092	Medical Assistants	1,309	\$14.00	283
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	3,036	\$13.08	278
39-9021	Personal Care Aides	1,353	\$8.43	261
31-1011	Home Health Aides	714	\$10.01	250
13-2011	Accountants and Auditors	1,108	\$32.03	243
43-4171	Receptionists and Information Clerks	1,874	\$12.38	203
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	3,123	\$44.11	198
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	3,365	\$15.74	181
43-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Office and Admin. Support Workers	1,917	\$23.58	175
29-2061	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	1,781	\$17.39	175
43-5081	Stock Clerks and Order Fillers	2,549	\$11.22	166
25-2021	Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	2,176	\$25.67	165
25-9041	Teacher Assistants	1,853	\$8.69	151
49-9071	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	2,380	\$16.28	140
51-2092	Team Assemblers	1,647	\$15.80	139
35-2021	Food Preparation Workers	1,371	\$9.28	132
43-3021	Billing and Posting Clerks	907	\$15.24	128
43-6013	Medical Secretaries	494	\$12.44	128
43-6014	Secretaries & Admin. Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, Exec.	3,166	\$14.78	115
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	1,625	\$17.44	100
25-3098	Substitute Teachers	1,408	\$9.57	98
29-2041	Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics	450	\$15.43	92
29-1069	Physicians and Surgeons, All Other	450	\$114.80	91
29-1123	Physical Therapists	319	\$39.96	90
15-1121	Computer Systems Analysts	539	\$32.80	85
53-7064	Packers and Packagers, Hand	888	\$10.16	79
51-3022	Meat, Poultry, and Fish Cutters and Trimmers	863	\$11.84	77

29-1171	Nurse Practitioners	228	\$50.37	73
51-4121	Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	387	\$16.32	72
53-3022	Bus Drivers, School or Special Client	796	\$10.18	72
53-7051	Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	838	\$15.46	69
29-2052	Pharmacy Technicians	665	\$12.11	69
51-9111	Packaging and Filling Machine Operators and Tenders	822	\$17.44	68
11-9111	Medical and Health Services Managers	452	\$44.14	65
39-9011	Childcare Workers	1,393	\$8.50	64
11-3031	Financial Managers	513	\$44.44	55

Source: EMSI Q2 2016 Data Set

In addition, the Middle Georgia Regional Commission engaged with Central Georgia Technical College in 2015, to complete a series of job profiles of positions throughout the 11 counties of Middle Georgia using their WorkKeys profiling system. For the 89 positions that were scored during this process, a numerical value was assigned for the skill level required to do the job both at entry level and effectively in terms of applied mathematics, locating information, and reading for information. These positions were evaluated on a number scale going up to seven, with higher numbers indicating greater levels of skill required. The summary of skill rankings, averaged among industry sectors, can be seen in Table X, below.

Sector	Applied Mathematical		Locating Information		Reading for Information	
	Entry Level	Effective Performance	Entry Level	Effective Performance	Entry Level	Effective Performance
Advanced Manuf.	2.88	3.22	3.41	4.00	3.24	3.71
Aerospace	3.60	3.70	3.55	4.20	3.20	3.25
Logistics	1.50	1.50	3.00	3.50	3.00	3.00
Healthcare	3.25	3.75	4.00	4.50	3.25	3.50
Civil Engineering	6.25	6.25	4.75	5.63	5.13	5.38

Source: Middle Georgia Regional Commission; Central Georgia Technical College

The applied mathematical skills category has the greatest variation among required skills. The logistics sector rates very low, as several jobs that were profiled required no substantive mathematical skills. However, the math skills required for engineering positions were exceptionally great. Among the logistics, advanced manufacturing, and healthcare jobs that required low-level skills, employees will typically need to solve simple math problems with single operations and change the forms of numbers, especially in terms of measurement units. The aerospace and defense industry requires somewhat greater mathematical skills, with more jobs requiring the ability to solve problems with multiple operations, calculate averages and ratios, and perform operations with fractions, decimals, and mixed numbers. Some jobs within the engineering field require the highest levels of mathematical skills graded, which include statistical concepts and measures of central tendency, cost comparisons, conversions between systems of measurement, solving nonlinear functions, and identifying mistakes from within other problems.

The locating information skill set contains a narrower range of possible values, as the highest possible score is only six, instead of seven. Within the sectors, we see that logistics and manufacturing jobs score lower, while healthcare and engineering jobs score higher. At the lower levels, employees are required to either locate or fill in a few pieces of information from a chart or graphic. These are generally relatively elementary forms. Employees at higher levels of skill in locating information can sort through irrelevant information on advanced graphics, and can compare information and trends within one graph, or between several graphs. The most highly skilled workers will be required to use this information in decision-making processes.

Reading for information tests the textual comprehension of an employee. Most sectors across the region require a similar, basic level of reading comprehension. This includes identifying main ideas from a text, understanding the correct meaning of common words, can follow basic directions, and choose the appropriate steps for such direction. In the engineering fields, workers will need to interpret the meanings of words, understand technical terms, imply details, and follow more complex instructions, including the application of those to directions to new situations or scenarios.

The basic skills described above will be required for many of the employees seeking jobs in skilled professions within the region. The difficulty that many businesses face in filling these positions can be partially alleviated by focusing on training individuals, particularly those who may not have completed their secondary education, to perform these skills successfully. Beyond this, there remains a need to build soft skills within the regional labor force. This is more difficult to quantify in a statistical method, but has been a major theme among regional employers. An emphasis on professionalism through both the K-12 education system, as well as in the technical colleges would be beneficial to many potential job seekers and employers.

**Provide an analysis of the workforce in the region, including current labor force employment, unemployment data, information on labor market trends and the educational and skill levels of the workforce in the region, including individuals with barriers to employment. List all data sources used to gather this information.**

#### *General Population Trends*

As of 2015, the 11 counties of Middle Georgia, had a population of just under 500,000 individuals. This represents ongoing trend of modest growth that is expected to continue through the first half of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, adding a little over 100,000 people by 2050. Table X, below, provides additional projections of county and regional population.

County	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2040	2050	Annual Prct. Change
Baldwin	45,690	46,160	47,620	49,060	50,450	52,650	54,110	0.46%
Crawford	12,590	12,540	13,400	14,300	15,240	17,060	18,810	1.24%

<b>Houston</b>	140,720	150,730	159,610	168,850	178,250	196,040	212,390	1.27%
<b>Jones</b>	28,660	29,220	31,570	34,080	40,530	41,320	42,320	1.19%
<b>Macon-Bibb</b>	155,630	154,180	156,080	157,840	159,300	160,110	158,530	0.05%
<b>Monroe</b>	26,470	27,420	29,460	31,610	33,850	38,320	42,720	1.53%
<b>Peach</b>	27,770	27,120	28,240	29,380	30,490	32,430	33,970	0.56%
<b>Pulaski</b>	11,920	11,510	11,700	11,870	12,020	12,170	12,140	0.05%
<b>Putnam</b>	21,210	21,350	22,230	23,110	23,950	25,320	26,280	0.60%
<b>Twiggs</b>	8,960	8,320	8,380	8,420	8,440	8,380	8,200	-0.21%
<b>Wilkinson</b>	9,520	9,340	9,420	9,490	9,540	9,520	9,360	-0.04%
<b>Region</b>	489,140	497,890	517,710	538,010	562,060	593,320	618,830	0.66%
<b>Georgia</b>	9,714,460	10,217,410	10,881,160	11,584,430	12,316,810	13,768,670	15,204,610	1.41%
<b>Nation</b>	309,347,060	321,545,080	336,690,430	352,566,430	368,838,290	399,638,130	428,419,800	0.96%

Source: Woods & Poole Economics, 2016

The region is also likely to find itself challenged by an increasingly aging workforce in each and every corner of Middle Georgia. Table X, at left, illustrates these trends. As the rapid aging of the regional workforce continues, more and more employees will begin to near the age of retirement, which will further drain the supply of qualified and skilled workers. In fact, the post-WWII generation of Baby Boomers, which had been the largest generation of Americans in number until 2015, is already at this point, with the youngest of the generation already over age 50. As these workers begin to retire, companies in Middle Georgia can expect the gap in skilled workers to only grow at an accelerating pace. This underscores the need for significant investment to continue in ensuring that the newer generation of workers can fill these positions that are opening with increasing frequency.

Although impending retirements are expected to cause additional job openings to be created, the younger generation of workers are not yet ready to fill these positions. Youth unemployment is particularly high throughout Middle Georgia, as individuals in the labor force under the age of 24 are considerably less likely to be employed than their older counterparts. For example, in Macon-Bibb and Houston counties, unemployment for the 20-24 age bracket is approximately 23 percent. This is likely due to a skills gap, not only among these individuals, but also among older workers who also lack the skills to advance beyond their own entry-level positions. If youth unemployment is left unaddressed, then the impending retirement boom will lead to positions that have to be filled with individuals who lack even entry-level work experience. The natural challenge that will follow this is keeping young adults from becoming increasingly disconnected from society. The longer their challenges persist, the greater difficulty they will face in obtaining employment and job skills later, which can lead to increased rates of crime, worse health, and greater need for welfare and social support.

## Wages and Poverty

<b>Table X -- Wages and Salaries by County (1970 - 2013)</b>							
<b>County</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>1970</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2013</b>
<b>Baldwin</b>	Wage & salary emp.	11,733	15,696	19,455	19,976	16,838	16,389
	Avg. wage/job (non-adjusted)	\$4,869	\$10,942	\$17,750	\$24,130	\$31,058	\$32,987
<b>Crawford</b>	Wage & salary emp.	1,133	1,144	1,240	1,644	1,440	1,471
	Avg. wage/job (non-adjusted)	\$3,355	\$7,592	\$12,603	\$20,409	\$29,685	\$31,554
<b>Houston</b>	Wage & salary emp.	38,594	37,018	44,838	52,181	64,673	64,246
	Avg. wage/job (non-adjusted)	\$7,585	\$14,195	\$21,374	\$31,405	\$44,308	\$44,758
<b>Jones</b>	Wage & salary emp.	2,110	2,140	2,872	3,602	3,981	4,732
	Avg. wage/job (non-adjusted)	\$3,978	\$9,171	\$15,713	\$23,262	\$30,968	\$32,275
<b>Macon-Bibb</b>	Wage & salary emp.	60,006	67,868	84,055	96,641	85,667	86,858
	Avg. wage/job (non-adjusted)	\$5,481	\$11,907	\$21,035	\$29,721	\$38,152	\$40,582
<b>Monroe</b>	Wage & salary emp.	4,164	6,750	6,031	5,539	6,745	7,457
	Avg. wage/job (non-adjusted)	\$3,907	\$11,948	\$16,562	\$25,078	\$36,418	\$36,346
<b>Peach</b>	Wage & salary emp.	4,887	6,728	7,848	9,075	8,388	8,866
	Avg. wage/job (non-adjusted)	\$4,247	\$10,709	\$19,148	\$26,811	\$33,162	\$36,110
<b>Pulaski</b>	Wage & salary emp.	2,775	2,521	2,801	3,499	2,964	2,838
	Avg. wage/job (non-adjusted)	\$3,513	\$8,141	\$14,067	\$24,046	\$32,176	\$34,677
<b>Putnam</b>	Wage & salary emp.	3,030	4,172	4,932	6,926	6,633	5,765
	Avg. wage/job (non-adjusted)	\$4,003	\$11,243	\$17,531	\$25,465	\$30,059	\$33,087
<b>Twiggs</b>	Wage & salary emp.	2,042	2,224	2,163	1,913	1,232	1,271
	Avg. wage/job (non-adjusted)	\$5,842	\$14,315	\$26,633	\$35,278	\$33,284	\$33,581
<b>Wilkinson</b>	Wage & salary emp.	2,674	3,346	3,672	3,568	3,118	3,107
	Avg. wage/job (non-adjusted)	\$5,424	\$13,342	\$24,350	\$32,658	\$43,314	\$47,966
<b>Regional</b>	Wage & salary emp.	133,148	149,607	179,907	204,564	201,679	203,000
	Avg. wage/job (non-adjusted)	\$5,830	\$12,233	\$20,319	\$29,023	\$38,762	\$40,454
<b>Georgia</b>	Wage & salary emp.	1,849,605	2,377,591	3,182,256	4,132,965	4,032,804	4,200,830
	Avg. wage/job (non-adjusted)	\$5,890	\$12,497	\$21,900	\$34,316	\$44,922	\$47,823
<b>United States</b>	Wage & salary emp.	78,793,000	97,646,000	116,544,000	137,610,000	135,526,000	142,173,000
	Avg. wage/job (non-adjusted)	\$6,922	\$13,999	\$23,423	\$35,054	\$46,994	\$50,012

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2015

Over the past 40 years, wages throughout Middle Georgia have continued to grow at a similar rate to wages across the nation and rest of the state; however, Middle Georgia started behind these other locations in terms of average wages and has never actually caught up. Table X, on

the preceding page, indicates this rate of growth. Today, average wages in throughout the region are nearly \$10,000 less than the national average. The urban counties of Houston and Macon-Bibb typically fare somewhat better in terms of average wages. The more rural counties like Crawford and Twiggs often see lower wage rates.

Not unrelated from the lower wage rates in the region, median household incomes are also considerably lower throughout Middle Georgia compared to the State of Georgia or the nation as a whole. Only two counties have income and poverty rates comparable to the national average, and more than one in five Middle Georgians are living below the federal poverty level. In Baldwin County, this number is as high as 32 percent. These data support the assertion that a strong focus on growing economic prosperity throughout the region is an important goal with the potential to benefit many Middle Georgians, and that a continued focus is necessary for the goal of alleviating poverty. This focus must include an understanding of the challenges faced by poverty, and a focus on obtaining employment for residents within sectors that require skilled labor and pay higher wages. Table X, below, highlights these statistics.

<b>Table X -- Poverty (last 12 months)</b>			
<b>County</b>	<b>Individuals Below Poverty Level</b>	<b>Households Receiving Food Stamps/SNAP</b>	<b>Median Household Income</b>
<b>Baldwin</b>	32.1%	15.9%	\$31,758
<b>Crawford</b>	17.3%	17.1%	\$41,910
<b>Houston</b>	16.6%	13.3%	\$55,170
<b>Jones</b>	15.5%	15.9%	\$54,512
<b>Macon-Bibb</b>	26.7%	22.8%	\$36,614
<b>Monroe</b>	13.4%	16.4%	\$47,815
<b>Peach</b>	22.7%	24.6%	\$39,085
<b>Pulaski</b>	13.9%	22.2%	\$35,430
<b>Putnam</b>	14.2%	17.7%	\$44,058
<b>Twiggs</b>	29.7%	14.7%	\$31,285
<b>Wilkinson</b>	19.9%	13.8%	\$37,258
<b>Georgia</b>	18.5%	15.2%	\$49,342
<b>United States</b>	15.6%	13.0%	\$53,482

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 ACS 5-Year Estimates

### *Labor Force Participation and Unemployment*

As of the preliminary numbers from the Georgia Department of Labor for June 2016, there were a total of 216,846 individuals in the workforce who live in the 11 counties of Middle Georgia with a non-seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate of 6.1 percent. The five-year averages from the American Community Survey can be found in Table X.

The labor force participation and unemployment rate both signal that the local economy of the Middle Georgia region is somewhat less favorable for potential employees locally than nationally, where a greater share of workers participate at a lower rate of unemployment. While some measures of labor force participation do not take retirements into account, the increasing pace of retirements is a national challenge, and would be reflected in the same national averages for workforce participation. As such, these data would seem to indicate that within the region either a lack of jobs and/or a lack of skills among the workforce to fill these jobs exists. While these factors represent both challenges in economic development and workforce development, the two are very closely linked. In many cases, the jobs may go unfilled because of a lack of skills. Certainly, the current availability of people and job growth in the service sectors indicate that a skills challenge does exist that inhibits employment.

County	Percent in Labor Force	Unemployment Rate
Baldwin	48.8%	9.4%
Crawford	56.9%	12.5%
Houston	64.3%	10.1%
Jones	59.6%	9.8%
Macon-Bibb	56.8%	12.7%
Monroe	56.2%	10.5%
Peach	60.3%	13.6%
Pulaski	47.1%	11.5%
Putnam	56.5%	7.5%
Twiggs	40.2%	9.8%
Wilkinson	45.5%	6.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 ACS 5-Year Estimates

### *Education and Skills*

Participation in the labor force and unemployment rate also have a strong correlation with educational attainment, suggesting that those with a higher level of education are more likely to participate in the labor force and be actively employed, rather than just seeking employment. Many studies have also shown that these individuals will be likely to earn higher incomes throughout the course of their careers as well. With this in mind, an analysis of workforce skills and relative educational attainment is pertinent to understanding the workforce needs of the Middle Georgia region. Table X, on the next page highlights educational attainment of individuals in Middle Georgia over the age of 25.

County	Less than 9th Grade	Some High School, No Diploma	High School Diploma (or equivalent)	Some College, No Degree	Associate's Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Graduate or Professional Degree
Baldwin	5.4%	12.0%	38.3%	19.3%	6.6%	9.8%	8.5%
Crawford	7.1%	13.8%	39.9%	23.7%	4.5%	8.0%	3.1%
Houston	3.0%	8.1%	30.1%	26.3%	9.3%	14.5%	8.7%
Jones	3.0%	9.4%	39.0%	22.5%	7.7%	11.9%	6.6%
Macon-Bibb	4.9%	12.4%	32.7%	20.8%	5.8%	14.5%	8.9%

<b>Monroe</b>	5.1%	14.6%	34.9%	20.2%	5.5%	11.3%	8.5%
<b>Peach</b>	6.1%	9.5%	32.6%	25.7%	6.5%	11.7%	7.8%
<b>Pulaski</b>	8.4%	14.9%	42.7%	14.6%	8.5%	5.9%	5.0%
<b>Putnam</b>	6.4%	8.9%	37.5%	20.3%	8.8%	12.9%	5.2%
<b>Twiggs</b>	10.6%	20.6%	41.5%	12.8%	4.9%	6.4%	3.2%
<b>Wilkinson</b>	6.8%	12.8%	50.1%	16.5%	5.6%	4.4%	3.8%
<b>Middle Georgia</b>	4.7%	11.0%	34.1%	22.2%	7.2%	12.8%	7.9%
<b>State of Georgia</b>	5.6%	9.4%	28.6%	21.1%	7.0%	17.9%	10.4%
<b>United States</b>	5.8%	7.8%	28.0%	21.2%	7.9%	18.3%	11.0%

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 ACS 5-Year Estimates*

As the data indicate, the region remains far behind the remainder of the state and nation in terms of educational attainment. For example, only 27.9 percent of Middle Georgia residents over the age of 25 have either a 2-year or 4-year degree; however, over 37 percent of Americans at large hold the same. Likewise, 15.7 percent of regional residents over the age of 25 lack a high school diploma, or equivalent, compared to only 12.6 percent of all Americans. Implications of this lagging educational attainment are, and will continue to be, a grave indicator for the regional workforce. As of 2003, when the last National Assessment of Adult Literacy was completed, more than 20 percent of the adult population in seven Middle Georgia counties lacked basic prose literacy skills, and only one county, Houston, outperformed the nation as a whole. This has negative impacts on the workforce and increases the difficulty of breaking the cycle of persistent intergenerational poverty.

In terms of current educational achievement of students, graduation rates of students across the region vary widely, but also frequently underperform the statewide average. As of the 2014 College and Career Ready Performance Index issued by the Georgia Department of Education, only three school systems graduated more students within four years than the statewide on-time graduation rate of 72.6 percent. Twiggs County High School had the lowest graduation rate of any traditional high school within the region at only 54 percent, though, even this rate is an increase from previous years. Table X provides more detailed information.

As alluded to earlier, the low graduation rates within the region not only lessen the educational attainment of the whole populace, but also leads to the challenge of large numbers of disconnected youth, that is, individuals aged 18-24 who are neither enrolled in school nor participating in the labor force. This presents greater challenges for the years ahead.

<b>Table X -- 4-Year Graduation Rate by School and District</b>		
<b>System Name</b>	<b>School Name</b>	<b>Graduation Rate</b>
<b>Baldwin County</b>	Baldwin High School	66.6%
<b>Crawford County</b>	Crawford County High School	56.4%
<b>Houston County</b>	Veterans High School	86.0%
	Houston County High School	92.1%
	Houston County Career Academy	28.6%
	Perry High School	83.4%
	Northside High School	72.7%
	Warner Robins High School	69.2%
	<i>All Houston County Schools</i>	76.8%
<b>Jones County</b>	Jones County High School	71.8%
<b>Macon-Bibb County</b>	Howard High School	71.0%
	Central High School	54.7%
	Westside High School	55.0%
	Rutland High School	59.3%
	Northeast High School	65.0%
	William S. Hutchings Career Center	54.7%
	Southwest High School	56.1%
	<i>All Macon-Bibb County Schools</i>	58.9%
<b>Monroe County</b>	Mary Persons High School	82.9%
<b>Peach County</b>	Peach County High School	68.6%
<b>Pulaski County</b>	Hawkinsville High School	72.3%
<b>Putnam County</b>	Putnam County High School	81.5%
<b>Twiggs County</b>	Twiggs County High School	54.0%
<b>Wilkinson County</b>	Wilkinson County High School	68.9%
<b>Statewide</b>	All Public Schools	72.6%

Source: Georgia Dept. of Education, 2014 College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI)

### *Analysis of Employment Barriers*

These challenges work together in ways that build significant barriers to employment, and increase the probability of young children and adults remaining trapped in poverty like their parents before them. A major barrier to employment for these residents is clearly obtaining education and job skills. Increasingly, the high school diploma is required for almost any job, and the bachelor's degree has become the standard for high-paying jobs. In many impoverished communities of the region, educational attainment is very low, leaving the individuals living there with few employment options. Targeted responses to help residents acquire a GED or equivalent certification can play a significant role in beginning the transition of residents from poverty into self-sustainment. With that said, this is often only the first step, and additional training programs

and certificates that allow individuals to earn credit toward technical college certifications or an associate's degree are invaluable to many job seekers. The presence of Central Georgia Technical College, and Oconee Fall Line Technical College is a significant asset for adult education students throughout the region.

However, beyond the skills and education gap, many of residents who are out of work may also have barriers like finding reliable childcare or transportation. For these individuals to benefit from the resources of the job training programs offered throughout the region, they may also need to find or be provided connections to other social services that can help them overcome other obstacles between them and gainful employment. Taken together, a number of challenges remain for development of the region's human capital in the workforce. Most significantly, this includes addressing lagging educational attainment and a skills gap within the workforce while simultaneously identifying and overcoming obstacles that may prevent an individual from reaching his or her fullest potential.

**Provide an analysis of the workforce development activities (including education and training) in the region, including an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses and capacity of such services to address the identified education and skill needs of the workforce, and the employment needs of employers in the region.**

Several different organizations undertake Workforce Development activities to address the needs of both jobseekers and employers. This section includes an analysis of the activities.

#### *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)*

Jobseekers and employers in Region 6 are served by two Workforce Development Areas for WIOA-funded services:

- Macon-Bibb County job seekers and employers are served by the Middle Georgia Regional Commission in Workforce Development Area 10.
- Baldwin, Crawford, Houston, Jones, Monroe, Peach, Pulaski, Putnam, Twiggs, and Wilkinson County job seekers and employers are served by the Middle Georgia Consortium, Inc. in Workforce Development Area 11.

Services include all services under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, which focuses on (1) comprehensive and specialized assessments of the skill levels and service needs of adults and dislocated workers, (2) individual employment plans to identify the employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives, and appropriate combination of services for the participants to achieve employment goals, (3) group counseling, individual counseling, and career planning, (4) case management for participants seeking training services, (5) short-term prevocational services that include, development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training for those who lack occupational

credential/certification and require short-term continuing education in order to acquire certification/credentialing required for success in growing industries.

### *Employment Services*

The Georgia Department of Labor (DOL) provides essential employment services to jobseekers through the three career centers located in Region 6. Individuals receive career services through Unemployment Insurance and Wagner-Peyser funded activities, including skills assessment, job search and placement assistance. If an individual needs training services to gain employment, they are referred to the appropriate core partner.

The Veterans Education Career Transition Resource (VECTR) is a new resources available to Veterans in Georgia and is a partnership between the Technical College System of Georgia and the University System of Georgia. The center, opening in August 2016, will focus on the unique employment needs of Veterans, and the at-risk population in Georgia.

### *Vocational Rehabilitation*

Education, employment, and training services provided by GVRA include a variety of individual services to persons with disabilities in preparation for employment in the competitive labor market and to employers seeking to retain valuable employees with disabilities or hire qualified individuals. Services provided to jobseekers include, counseling, assistive technology, job placement, vocational assessment, medical evaluations, work adjustments, and physical restoration services. Services focused on employer activities include, candidate identification, jobsite coaching, helping an employer identify the right solutions/accommodations for employee to be effective on the job through onsite job assessments, and providing technical support and training on those accommodations to ensure long-term success.

### *Adult Education*

Adult education services in Region 6 are provided by Central Georgia Technical College (CGTC) in all counties except Wilkinson. Oconee Fall Line Technical College (OFLTC) serves Wilkinson County. Services include, basic skills remediation, GED preparation classes, GED Testing, TABE Testing, Volunteer tutoring, and English as a Second Language; Civics and Citizenship; Online; Hybrid; Fast Track; Family Literacy; Life Skills; Financial Literacy; Job Skills; and Work Ethics classes. In addition, CGTC and OFLTC partner with various organizations including, Certified Literate Community Programs, DFCS (TANF and SNAP), Head Start, Housing Authorities, Family Connections and Georgia Departments of Corrections and Labor.

## Assessment of Services

### Strengths of Services

- The utilization of common regional boundaries between Department of Labor, WIOA, and Vocational Rehabilitation, which also align with Georgia's Economic Development regions has enhanced the ability to coordinate services and to share information across complementary program areas.
- The integration of the WIOA-funded programs in the Georgia Department of Economic Development allows seamless service to prospective businesses who are considering Georgia as a location or expansion opportunity.
- The opening of the VECTR Center in Region 6 places appropriate resources and emphasis on the large veteran's population living in the region.

### Weakness / Challenges of Services

- Separate data systems are operated by the core partners in Region 6. This condition makes coordination and information sharing unnecessarily challenging.
- The full implementation of WIOA will provide an expanded approach to workforce development with a shared understanding of customer service and performance.

### Capacity of Services

The Workforce Development system of Region 6 not only has the capacity to achieve the vision outlined in this plan, it has the desire to thrive. While some items are out of the region's control e.g., separate data systems, the core partners are committed to collaborating and developing solutions for information sharing.

**Provide a description of the local board's strategic vision and goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce (including youth and individuals with barriers to employment), including goals relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance in order to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency.**

### Vision

A thriving Middle Georgia where workforce development programs are aligned with economic development priorities, industry workforce needs and education, and training programs to support economic growth and self-sufficiency.

## Goals

1. Create and maintain a unified workforce system that connects services available through core partners to individuals and industry.
2. Utilize regional labor market and education data and technology to inform and guide workforce development decisions.
3. Increase the value of the working system as a tool for employers by providing relevant business services.
4. Increase jobseekers access to literacy, basic education, and basic workplace skills necessary for educational, and career advancement and services to reduce or eliminate barriers.
5. Serve as the convener of economic development stakeholders to connect individuals, educational systems, and employers.

**Taking into account the analyses described in the previous sections, provide a strategy to coordinate core programs to align resources available to the local area to achieve the strategic vision and goals.**

To achieve the vision and goals outlined above, Region 6 will coordinate programs and align resources through the following strategies:

- Establishment of regular meetings of core partners to share information, address concerns, discuss best practices.
- Coordination of Workforce Development Board meetings to facilitate information sharing and to avoid scheduling conflicts which would limit ability of partners to participate.
- Participation in the Middle Georgia Economic Alliance to share information with the region's economic development organizations in a collaborative manner.

### ***3. Description of Strategies and Services***

**Provide a description of the strategies and services that will be used in the local area in order to accomplish the items listed below.**

**How will the area engage employers in workforce development programs, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations?**

Employers are the foundation of the workforce development programs in Region 6 – without employers there is no need for employees. However, without a qualified workforce, the region cannot attract employers. Therefore, employers must be fully engaged in the workforce development system and the avenues for their engagement must be accessible and relevant.

To accomplish this engagement, Region 6 will:

- Participate in business associations such as chambers of commerce and human resource groups.
- Establish partnerships with industry groups to identify effective programs that will address workforce challenges.
- Conduct workshops and information sessions to explain services available to employers in the region. These workshops may be in collaboration with the UGA Small Business Development Center and other resources.
- Launch a manufacturing sector partnership based on a needs assessment.
- Develop a Middle Georgia HDCI Sector Partnership program that utilizes the resources available to expand work-based learning programs, including incumbent worker training and on-the-job training.

**How will the area support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area? Discuss the area's workforce services to businesses and how business and organized labor representatives on the Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) contributed to the development of these strategies. Provide a listing of business services available through the area(s) such as employer workshops and assessment and screening of potential employees.**

In recognition that employers in Region 6 regularly communicate and that we have a high degree of daytime migration in the region, Workforce Development Area 10 and 11 have a coordinated suite of services available to businesses. Some services are provided directly with the workforce development staff; others are provided through partnerships (such as workplace fundamentals). Available services include:

- General information for businesses include: orientation to the one-stop system for businesses, labor market information, performance information, regulatory information,

ADA compliance and accommodation information, unemployment information, and tax credit information.

- Employee recruitment services including: job fairs, interview space, application processing, screening.
- Downsizing/lay-off services: rapid response; out-placement assistance.
- Work-based learning programs including on-the-job training, incumbent worker training, customized training, and workplace fundamentals.

Businesses and organized labor representatives serve on both Workforce Development Boards, and contribute to the development of workforce services strategies by regularly attending workforce board meetings, actively participating in the discussions and votes on how these services are made available to the business community.

**How will the area better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development? Additionally, identify economic development partners and describe the involvement of the economic development community in developing strategies.**

In Region 6, economic development partners are: Baldwin County Development Authority, Crawford County Development Authority, Houston County Development Authority, Jones County Development Authority, Macon Economic Development Commission, Monroe County Development Authority, Peach County Development Authority, Pulaski County Development Authority, Putnam County Development Authority, Twiggs County Development Authority, and Wilkinson County Development Authority.

As the economy grows and presents opportunities for business expansion and increases the need for additional skilled workers, economic development and WIOA partners are in constant communication discussing new businesses moving into the area, staffing needs and the general economic conditions of the region.

Workforce Development staff regularly attend Development Authority meetings and interact with the professional economic development staff. In addition, since 2012, the 11 counties of Region 6 have cooperated through the Middle Georgia Economic Alliance (MGEA). This group is focused on the marketing of the entire region as the location of choice for industrial prospects. During the regular MGEA meetings, workforce development issues are discussed and opportunities for engagement are explored. MGEA will be engaged in the development of the sector strategies that the region is launching.

During 2017, Region 6 will develop a new Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), as required by the US Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration. This planning effort will be led by the Middle Georgia Regional Commission and will incorporate workforce development strategies.

Workforce Development staff will continue to coordinate and collaborate with economic development by attending meetings where new and existing employer needs are identified and

discussed, and formulate actions to support the workforce mission.

**How will the area strengthen linkages between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs?**

Workforce Development and GDOL staff together work closely, on a daily basis, to re-employ individuals as quickly as possible as it fits their career plan. Workforce Development staff regularly participates in information sessions at the Career Centers. As implementation of WIOA continues, Region 6 will conduct regular meetings of core partners to share information and develop strategies that maximize the resources of all programs. Region 6 will comply with the state and federal mandates and have fully integrated one-stop(s) offices by July 1, 2017.

#### ***4. Regional Service Delivery***

**Describe the plans for the establishment of regional service delivery strategies, including the use of cooperative service delivery agreements.**

Although Region 6 does not have formal agreements on regional service delivery strategies, the two workforce areas coordinate daily on activities to support both employers and job seekers. For example, the OJT policy adopted by the Workforce Development Boards are the same, and a common OJT contract has been developed. Also, staff from both workforce areas participate in job fairs and recruitment events.

**Describe the plans for coordination of administrative cost arrangements including the pooling of funds for administrative costs.**

At this time, Region 6 does not have a plan for the coordination of administrative cost arrangement for the pooling of administrative costs.

## ***5. Sector Strategy Development***

**Provide a description of the current regional sector strategy development for in-demand industry sectors.**

- a. Describe the partners that are participating in the sector strategy development.**
- b. Describe the meetings that have taken place and the strategy by which partners will continue to be engaged.**
- c. Describe the research and the data that was used to identify the sector that was chosen for the sectors strategies training.**
- d. Provide a completed outline of the sector strategy for the previously identified sector that includes the following details:**
  - i. Participating employers;**
  - ii. Target occupations;**
  - iii. Training programs; and**
  - iv. Target Populations.**
- e. Describe the plans for future strategy development for future sectors. If applicable, discuss the next sectors to be targeted.**

UNDER DEVELOPMENT

## ***6. Description of the One-Stop Delivery System***

Provide a description of the one-stop delivery system in the local area that includes the items detailed below.

- a. Provide a description of how the local board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services through the system and ensure that such providers meet the employment needs of local employers, workers and jobseekers.
- b. Provide a description of 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 through other means.
- c. Provide a description of how entities within the one-stop delivery system, including one-stop operators and the one-stop partners, will comply with WIOA § 188, if applicable, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology and materials for individuals with disabilities. This should include the provision of staff training and support and addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities.
- d. Provide a comprehensive description of the roles and resource contributions of the one-stop partners.
- e. Identify the current One-Stop Operator in the local area(s) and describe how the region/local area is preparing for the competitive process for operator selection. Describe how market research, requests for information and conducting a cost and price analysis are being conducted as part of that preparation.

UNDER DEVELOPMENT

## ***7. Awarding Sub-Grants and Contracts***

**Provide a description of the competitive process to be used to award the sub-grants and contracts in the local area for activities carried out under this Title I.**

UNDER DEVELOPMENT

## ***8. EEO and Grievance Procedures***

**Briefly describe local procedures and staffing to address grievances and complaint resolution.**

The name, title, and telephone number of the Equal Opportunity Officer for Title I-funded activities for Region 6, Area 10 is:

Laura Mathis, Executive Director  
Middle Georgia Regional Commission  
175 Emery Highway, Suite C  
Macon, GA 31217  
(478) 751-6160

The name, title, and telephone number of the Equal Opportunity Officer for Title I-funded activities for Region 6, Area 11 is:

MGCI EEO Officer: Amy Varnum  
Middle Georgia Consortium, Inc.  
124 Osigian Blvd., Suite A  
Warner Robins, GA 31088  
(478) 953-4771

Both workforce development areas have adopted EEO and Grievance Policies. The policies are designed to ensure that all contractors, employees as well as individuals applying for or receiving services through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act are treated fairly. If any organization, employee, participant or individual lodges a complaint, the issue will be discussed informally between the parties involved before filing a formal complaint. If a formal complaint is filed, a hearing is conducted within 30 of its filing with and a written decision is rendered no later than 60 days after the filing. If a written decision is not rendered in 60 day of the filing or the complainant is not satisfied with the decision, then the grievance is forwarded to the next level.

## LOCAL BOARDS AND PLAN DEVELOPMENT

### *1. Local Boards*

**Describe how local board members are identified and appointed. Include a description of how the nomination process occurs for adult education and labor representatives. (Proposed § 679.320(g))**

#### ***Workforce Development Area 10 Nomination Process***

The Bylaws of the Macon-Bibb Workforce Development Board outline a process by which board members are identified, nominated and appointed. A Nominating Committee is in place as a standing committee to make nominee recommendations to the Chair, who in turn makes recommendations to the CLEO. Once the Nominating Committee identify nominations, they are submitted to the Workforce Development Board Chair. The Chair, in consultation with the Nominating Committee, reviews nominations and confirms eligibility of the nominee(s). After confirming eligibility of all acceptable candidates, the Chair shall present the name(s) of a recommended nominee(s) for a position to the CLEO for review and appointment.

#### ***Workforce Development Area 11 Nomination Process***

The Formal Agreement Among Chief Elected Executive Officials describes the process used to appoint the Middle Georgia Workforce Development Board. The Chief Elected Executive Officials receives a compiled list of nominations from the Executive Director, in consultation with local area businesses and chambers of commerce from the local area, to appoint members to the Workforce Development Board. The Executive Director presents the nominations to the CLEO for review and appointment.

#### **Region 6 Workforce Development Board Categories**

The Workforce Development Boards for both areas, consist of representatives from the following categories as outlined in WIOA:

##### ***Business Representatives***

Representatives of business and industry are owners of businesses, chief executives or operating officers of businesses, and other business executives or employers. They represent businesses, or organizations representing businesses, that provide employment opportunities, which include high-quality, work-relevant training and development in in-demand industry sectors or occupations.

### *Workforce Representatives*

Representatives of labor organizations, are nominated by local labor federations and may be members of a labor organization, or a training director from a joint labor-management apprenticeship program, or representatives of an apprenticeship program. Representatives of community-based organizations that have demonstrated experience and expertise in addressing the employment needs of individuals with barriers to employment, including organizations that serve veterans, or that provide or support competitive integrated employment for individuals with disabilities; or they have represent organizations that have demonstrated experience and expertise in addressing the employment, training, or education needs of eligible youth, including representatives of organizations that serve out-of-school youth.

### *Education and Training Representatives*

Representatives may be eligible providers administering adult education and literacy activities under Title II; or institutions of higher education providing workforce activities (including technical colleges); or local educational agencies, and of community-based organizations with demonstrated experience and expertise in addressing the education or training needs of individuals with barriers to employment.

### *Government and Economic Development Representatives*

Representatives are from economic and community development entities; or a Georgia employment service office under the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.); or programs carried out under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 720 et seq.), other than Section 112 or Part C of that Title (29 U.S.C. 732, 741), or agencies or entities administering programs serving the local area relating to transportation, housing, and public assistance; or philanthropic organizations serving.

**Describe the area's new member orientation process for board members.**

### ***Workforce Development Area 10 Orientation Process***

Workforce Development staff has developed a new board member handbook that includes the budget, summary of programs, a copy of the current workforce plan, and other reference material. Orientation is conducted in one-on-one sessions with the Workforce Development Director and the Chair of the Workforce Development Board. The board meetings are also used to help board members understand programs and initiatives.

### ***Workforce Development Area 11 Orientation Process***

Workforce Development staff has developed an Orientation Manual that includes Government Issues, Workforce Services to Adult, Dislocated Workers and Youth, Liabilities/Ethics, Board Resources and by-laws. Orientation is conducted by the Executive Director.

**Describe how the local board will coordinate workforce development activities carried out in the local area with regional economic development activities carried out in the region (in which the local area is located or planning region).**

Both Workforce Boards include representatives from the economic development organizations which provide an opportunity for coordination. In addition, Workforce Development staff will regularly engage with economic development partners to develop new programs or initiatives that will meet the changing needs of employers.

**Describe how local board members are kept engaged and informed.**

In Workforce Development Area 10, the Board meets every other month in a regular meeting. The meeting agenda includes reports on WIOA activities and performance. In the “off months” between Board meetings, Committee meetings are held.

In Workforce Development Area 11, there are six regularly scheduled meetings per year. The board meets every other month on Tuesdays, with the first meeting beginning in August of the new program year. Reports on WIOA activities and performance are provided at each Board meeting.

## ***2. Local Board Committees***

**Provide a description of board committees and their functions.**

### ***Workforce Development Area 10 Committees***

The Bylaws adopted January 12, 2016, establish committees necessary and appropriate to ensure maximum policy and oversight of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act services and activities.

- **Executive Committee** consists of the chairpersons designated for each standing committee and the officers of the Board. The function of the Executive Committee is to ensure that the leadership of the Workforce Board is well-informed on WIOA operations.
- **Budget and Finance Committee** develops the proposed annual budget and monitors financial activity to ensure adequate funding to cover all expenditures.
- **Employer Partnerships Committee** facilitates relationships with employers in order to ensure that workforce development services align with current business needs.
- **Quality Assurance Committee** focuses on the one-stop delivery system, rapid response, and operating policies.
- **Public Relations Committee** develops and publishes success stories and marketing of workforce development services.

- **Youth Committee** is charged with ensuring that Macon-Bibb County youth have access to resources which enable them to develop the academic and technical skills necessary for obtaining a high school diploma, career-oriented employment, and/or post-secondary education, and provide oversight of the policies and procedures for diversifying funding, support resources, and unmet needs of program participants. The Youth Committee recommends eligible providers of youth activities to be awarded grants or contracts on a competitive basis by the Board to carry out the youth activities.
- **Nominating Committee** recommends officers for the Board and makes recommendations to the CLEO on possible appointments to the Board.

### ***Workforce Development Area 11 Committees***

There are three standing committees; however, the Board reserves the right to establish ad hoc committees as necessary to support its mission. The following local board committees were established with the certification of the new Workforce Board effective July 1, 2016.

- **Youth Committee.** The function of the Youth Committee is to provide information and to assist in the planning, operational and other issues relating to the provisions of youth. The Committee identifies eligible providers of youth services and make recommendations to the local board to grant awards. In addition, the Committee ensures full and competitive procurement to secure youth services, WIOA youth service providers meet the referral requirements for all youth participants, each of the required 14 youth elements are available to youth participants, that 75 percent of state and local youth funding is for out-of-school youth and that at least 20 percent of youth funds are used for work experience, such as summer and year-round employment, pre-apprenticeship, OJT, or internship and job shadowing.
- **One-Stop Committee.** The function of the One-Stop Committee is to provide information and to assist in the planning, operational, and other issues relating to the provisions of One-Stop. The function of the One-Stop Committee is to provide information, and to assist in the planning, operational and other issues relating to the provisions of One-Stop. The current One-Stop Committee will serve as the One-Stop Implementation Team, which will ensure the continuing implementation of One-Stop system activities. The Committee will oversee the process of developing Memorandums of Understanding and Resource Sharing Agreements with the required One-Stop partners, be the source of regular information about the local One-Stop System and its operations to the Board and other committees. The Committee will further ensure that the system provides comprehensive services in a seamless, integrated, effective, and efficient manner; ensure that knowledgeable, skilled One-Stop staff delivers high quality services resulting in high levels of customer satisfaction; and ensure that the system meets or exceeds performance standard for placement, retention, earnings and job seeker and employer satisfaction.
- **Individuals with Disabilities Committee (IDC).** The function of the IDC Committee is to provide information and to assist with operational and other issues relating to the

provisions of services to individuals with disabilities, including issues relating to compliance with Section 188 of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The committee will ensure full access to individuals receiving WIOA, including opportunities to seek employment and training in competitive, integrated settings, while providing services to the greater community, to the same degree of access as other individuals participating in WIOA.

### ***3. Plan Development***

**Provide a description of the process by which the plan was developed including the participation of core partners, providers, board members and other community entities. Also describe the process used by the local board to provide a 30-day comment period prior to the submission of the plan including an opportunity for public comment, including comment by representatives of businesses and comment by representatives of labor organizations, representative of education and input into the development of the local plan.**

For the development of the Region 6 Workforce Development Plan, several different approaches will be utilized:

- One-on-One Meetings with Core Partners during development.
- Distribution of the Region 6 Plan and direct solicitation of comments from the Workforce Development Board, Core Partners and other stakeholders.
- Publication of the Region 6 Plan on [www.middlegeorgiarc.org](http://www.middlegeorgiarc.org) and [www.mgwib.com](http://www.mgwib.com) websites with email to receive all feedback.
- Promotion of the availability of the Region 6 Plan on Twitter and Facebook.
- Press Release to local media outlets on the availability of the plan for review and comment.
- Development of a presentation of plan highlights to be used for speaking engagements.
- Conduct of at least one Public Meeting during the 30-day comment period for the presentation of the Region 6 plan with notification to board members, core partners, other stakeholders and general public.
- Conduct of informational / listening sessions on a bi-monthly basis with to board members, core partners, other stakeholders and general public.

## SERVICE DELIVERY AND TRAINING

### *1. Expanding Service to Eligible Individuals*

Provide a description of how the local board, working with the entities carrying out core programs, will expand access to employment, training, education and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment. Include how the local board will facilitate the development of career pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs, and how it will improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential, academic or industry recognized.

- Both Workforce Development Boards in Region 6 include representation from the core programs, which ensure that all partners are aware of programs and initiatives.
- Beginning in fiscal year 2017, a Region 6 Core Partners Group will meet regularly to explore mechanisms to expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services and develop recommendations to the Workforce Development Boards.
- Specifically, the Core Partners group will seek opportunities to address barriers to employment in a manner that maximizes resources and eliminates duplication.
- Both Workforce Development Boards in Region 6 are committed to only provided services and programs that provide access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential, academic or industry recognized, and employment.

### *2. Description of Service to Adults and Dislocated Workers*

Provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area.

#### **Region 6 Services**

Career services for adults and dislocated workers in Workforce Development Area 10 and 11 includes three levels of services: Basic career services, Individualized career services, and Follow-up services.

#### *Basic Career Services*

Basic career services are available and, at a minimum, include the following services:

- Determination 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 system
- Initial assessment of skills levels, including literacy, numeracy, and English language proficiency, as well as aptitudes, abilities (including skills gaps), and support service needs

- Labor exchange services, including:
  - job search and placement assistance, and, when needed by an individual, career counseling, including the provision of information regarding in-demand industry sectors and occupations;
  - appropriate recruitment and other business services on behalf of employers, including information and referrals to specialized business services not traditionally offered through the one-stop system;
- Provision of referrals to, and coordination of activities with other programs and services, including programs and services within the one-stop system and, when appropriate, other workforce development programs
- Provision of workforce and labor market employment statistics information, including information relating to local, regional, and national labor market areas, including:
  - job vacancy listings in labor market areas
  - information on job skills necessary to obtain the vacant jobs listed; and
  - information relating to local occupations in demand and the earnings, skills requirements, and opportunities for advancement in those jobs;
- Provision of performance information and program cost information on eligible providers of training services by program and provider type
- Provision of information on how the Workforce Development Area is performing on local performance measures;
- Provision of information on the availability of support services or assistance, and appropriate referrals to those services and assistance, including:
  - child care
  - child support
  - medical or child health assistance available through the state's Medicaid program and Children's Health Insurance Program
  - benefits under SNAP
  - assistance through the earned income tax credit
  - housing counseling and assistance services sponsored through US HUD; and
  - assistance under a state program for TANF, and other support services and transportation provided through that program
- Provision of information and assistance regarding filing claims for unemployment compensation
- Assistance in establishing eligibility for programs of financial aid assistance for training and education programs not provided under WIOA, including HOPE and PELL.

#### *Individualized Career Services*

Individualized career services are available if determined to be appropriate in order for an individual to obtain or retain employment. In accordance with TEGL 3-15, individuals must be declared eligible to receive these services. These include the following services

- Comprehensive and specialized assessments of the skills 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 regarding the ETPL
- Group counseling
- Individual counseling and mentoring
- Career planning
- Short-term pre-vocational services, including development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct services to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training
- Internships and work experience that are linked to careers
- Workforce preparation activities
- Financial literacy services
- Out-of-area job search and relocation assistance
- English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs.

#### *Follow-Up Services*

Follow-up services are available, as appropriate, and include counseling regarding the workplace for adult and dislocated worker participants who are placed in unsubsidized employment. These services must be provided at a minimum of 12 months from the first day of employment.

#### *Training Services*

Training services are provided to equip individuals to enter the workforce and retain employment. Examples of training services include:

- Occupational skills training, including training for nontraditional employment
- On-the-job training
- Incumbent worker training
- Workplace training and cooperative education programs
- Private sector training programs
- Skills upgrading and retraining
- Entrepreneurial training
- Apprenticeship
- Transitional jobs
- Job readiness training provided in combination with other training described above
- Adult education and literacy activities, including activities of English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs, in combination with training
- Customized training.

### **Workforce Development Area 10 Strategy for Delivery of Adult/ Dislocated Worker Services**

The Middle Georgia Regional Commission provides Adult/Dislocated Worker Services through Career Development Specialists:

- One Career Development Specialist located at the Georgia Department of Labor Career Center;
- One Career Development Specialist located at the Macon Campus of Central Georgia Technical College; and
- One Career Development Specialist based at the offices of Middle Georgia Regional Commission.

Outreach and Information Sessions are regularly conducted in Macon-Bibb County at the following locations:

1. WIOA Information Sessions:  
Location: Department of Labor: Macon Career Center  
3090 Mercer University Drive, Macon, GA 31204  
When: Every Friday  
Time: 10:30 a.m.
2. E3 Career Jumpstart Information Sessions  
Location: First Tuesday (Washington Library)  
Second Tuesday (Department of Labor)  
Third Tuesday (Buck Melton Community Center)  
Fourth Tuesday (Goodwill Helms Career Center)  
Time: 10:30 a.m.

In addition to the Outreach and Information Sessions, referrals are received from Core Partners.

### **Workforce Development Area 11 Strategy for Delivery of Adult/Dislocated Worker Services**

The Middle Georgia Consortium provides Adult/Dislocated Worker Services through Career Facilitators and Business Services Specialist.

A Career Facilitator is located at each of the following career centers in the region every Monday.

- Georgia Department of Labor Career Center in Houston County
- Georgia Department of Labor Career Center in Macon-Bibb County\*
- Georgia Department of Labor Career Center in Baldwin County

\*To provide Outreach and Recruitment to individuals who resides in Crawford and Monroe counties and are serviced by Career Center in Macon-Bibb County.

Business Services Specialist and Career Facilitators attend regularly scheduled Outreach and Information Sessions such as SWAT events, job fairs, fundraisers and employer and academic recruitment events.

In addition to Outreach and Information Sessions, referrals are received from Core and other partner agencies.

### ***3. Description of Rapid Response Services***

**Provide a description of how the local board will coordinate workforce development activities carried out in the local area with statewide rapid response activities.**

### ***4. Description of Youth Services***

**Provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of youth workforce development activities in the local area, including activities for youth with disabilities. This description and assessment shall include an identification of successful models of such youth workforce development activities.**

Under development

### ***5. Implementation of Work-Based Learning Initiatives***

**Provide a description of how the area will implement initiatives such as incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies, career pathways initiatives, utilization of effective business intermediaries and other business services and strategies designed to meet the needs of employers in the corresponding region in support of the business service strategy.**

Region 6 is currently building a robust on-the-job training program to continue the efforts initiated under the Sector Partnership NEG grant. Through the development of industry sector strategies to determine specific business needs, Region 6 is currently in the process of collaborating and coordinating with training institutions, Economic Development, Board of Education, Department of Labor, Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Education, DFCS and the business community to develop relevant work-based learning activities such as incumbent worker training, career pathways and customized training activities to meet the needs of the business community.

Region 6 will continue to identify additional industry sectors and coordinate with WIOA partners and industry sector leaders to development additional sector strategies to support the business community. Future strategy development includes industrial maintenance, logistics and certain occupations in the medical field.

### ***6. Provision of ITAs***

**Provide a description of how training services in WIOA § 134 will be provided through the use of ITAs. If contracts for the training services will be used, describe 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 are to be provided.**

Both Workforce Development Boards in Region 6 have adopted the use of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs). The policies are not in conflict with each other and will be updated to include provisions in the ITA Policy adopted by the State Workforce Development Board.

#### **Workforce Development Area 10 Individual Training Accounts (ITAs)**

Education and training for qualified WIOA customers will be administered by means of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) in order to provide formal schooling or training designed to assist these individuals in obtaining or retaining self-sufficiency. Customers must demonstrate; a) a need for formal training and b) the customer has failed to obtain and retain employment that leads to self-sufficiency.

#### **Workforce Development Area 11 Individual Training Accounts (ITAs)**

Training services provided by academic training institutions or institutions providing occupation specific training or activities must be on the eligible provider list and requires a contract to provide services. Individuals attending these institutions must be assigned an ITA account and must comply with the Workforce Development Area 11 ITA policies.

All training must be linked to employment. During initial assessment, customer choice is identified, and training linked to employment and self-sufficiency is addressed. Any training not linked to employment will not be approved. Individuals already possessing marketable skills who merely desire training for the purposes of changing careers will not be approved. ITA approval to enhance current marketable skills may be approved on a case-by-case basis. ITA policies for LWDA 11 further address coordination of funds, termination of financial assistance, training cost limitations, training length and allowable ITA costs.

### ***7. Entrepreneurial Skills Training and Microenterprise Services***

**Provide a description of how the area will coordinate and promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services.**

Region 6 will partner with small business resources such as the UGA Small Business Development Center and Georgia Small Business Lender to host informational sessions on services available to support entrepreneurial development. In addition, the Mercer Innovation Center, FireStarter and SparkMacon are resources that participants will be referred to capitalize on innovation and entrepreneurship.

## ***8. Coordination with Education Programs***

**Provide a description of how the local board will coordinate education and workforce development activities carried out in the local area with relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services and avoid duplication of services.**

As mentioned in other sections, Region 6 is actively engaged in developing work-based learning programs where training will be provided by secondary and post-secondary education programs. Work-based learning programs include To include customized training with postsecondary institutions to help with the talent pipeline i.e. degrees, licensing, (ITA's)

### **Workforce Development Area 10 Education Programs**

The Workforce Development Board will continue coordinating education and workforce development activities in Macon-Bibb County to enhance services and avoid duplication of services. A pilot initiative with Bibb County Board of Education is to provide non-WIOA funds for the provision of essential equipment for students dual-enrolled in welding, CNA and Aerospace programs.

### **Workforce Development Area 11 Education Programs**

Workforce Development Area 11 has contracts with secondary and postsecondary institutions that provides education programs and training activities. The Board and staff will continue to collaborate, coordinate strategies, and cooperate with these and any relevant institution providing training services or activities. LWDA will further coordinate to enhance services and avoid duplication of services.

## ***9. Description of Supportive Services***

**Provide a description of how the local board will coordinate workforce development activities carried out under this title in the local area with the provision of transportation, including public transportation, and other appropriate supportive services in the local area. Describe the coordination of transportation and other supportive services regionally, if applicable. Please include the region/local area Supportive Service Policies.**

### **Transportation**

Region 6 does not have a regional public transportation system, but there is a Mobility Manager program in place at the Middle Georgia Regional Commission to coordinate with human services transportation throughout the region. Workforce Development Area 10 is served by the Macon Transit Authority for public transportation and human services transportation is provided through a contracted provider (Macon-Bibb EOC). Workforce Development Area 11 does not have a public transportation system, but alternative transportation resources have been identified in eight (8) of the ten (10) counties located in Workforce Development Area 11. A Rural

and Suburban Transit Directory (Attachment \_) has been identified. Both Workforce Development Areas plan to coordinate transportation resources when and where resources are available.

### **Supportive Services Policy**

The board adopted policies are used to (1) establish and determine the need for supportive services, (2) establishes a process by which participants are determined eligible and in need of supportive services, (3) complies with federal law that supportive services costs should be necessary to enable an individual to participate in activities authorized under WIOA and (4) indicates who should conduct eligibility and determination and that eligibility and determination should be conducted on a case-by-case basis.

#### *Workforce Development Area 10*

Workforce Development Area 10 has a Supportive Services Policy (see attachment XX). The range of Supportive Services available to workforce development customers includes childcare, transportation, workplace/training accessibility tools, work clothes, minor work tools, and other discretionary items determined by the workforce development staff. Supportive Services are available to customers while they are participating in and completing intensive or training activities.

#### *Workforce Development Area 11*

Workforce Development Area 11 has a Supportive Services Policy (see attachment XX). The range of Supportive Services available to workforce development customers includes childcare, transportation, workplace/training accessibility tools, work clothes, minor work tools, and other discretionary items determined by the workforce development staff. Supportive Services are available to customers while they are participating in and completing intensive or training activities.

## COORDINATION WITH CORE PARTNERS

### ***1. Description of the Workforce System***

Provide a description of the workforce development system in the local area that identifies all relevant programs and how the local board will work with the entities to carry out both core and other workforce development programs to deliver well aligned services in support of the strategies identified in the state plan. This should include programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.).

Under development

### ***2. Coordination with Wagner-Peyser***

Provide a description of plans and strategies for, and assurances concerning, maximizing coordination of services provided by the state employment service under the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.) and services provided in the local area through the one-stop delivery system, to improve service delivery and avoid duplication of services.

Under development

### ***3. Coordination with Adult Education***

Provide a description of how the local board will coordinate workforce development activities carried out in the local area with the provision of adult education and literacy activities under title II in the local area, including a description of how the local board will carry out, consistent with subparagraphs (A) and (B)(i) of section 107(d)(11) and section 232 of the WIOA Law, the review of local applications submitted under title II.

Under development

### ***4. Coordination with Vocational Rehabilitation***

Provide a description of the cooperative agreement between the local Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation office and the local board which describes efforts made to enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities and to other individuals, cross-train staff, provide technical assistance, share information, cooperate in communicating with employers and other efforts at cooperation, collaboration and coordination.

Under development

## PERFORMANCE, ETPL AND USE OF TECHNOLOGY

### 1. *Description of Performance Measures*

**Provide a description of the local levels of performance negotiated with the Governor and chief elected official pursuant to WIOA § 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 subtitle B and the one-stop delivery system, in the local area.**

Workforce Development Areas 10 and 11 will have new performance standards under WIOA; however, targets have not yet been developed. Once this negotiation and further guidance is received, both areas will implement the programs with the appropriate measure engaged.

In establishing performance measurement levels, the following variables will be taken into consideration:

- Expected economic conditions of the local area; AND
- Expected characteristics of participants to be served by the local area; AND
- Program implementation- What programs or policies does the area have in place to guide services? Does these policies impact outcomes in any way?

#### *Adults and Dislocated Workers WIOA Primary Indicators of Performance*

- Percentage of Participants in Unsubsidized Employment During the 2nd Quarter After Exit
- Percentage of Participants in Unsubsidized Employment During the 4th Quarter After Exit
- Median Earnings of Program Participants in Unsubsidized Employment During the 2nd Quarter After Exit
- Percentage of Participants Obtaining a Postsecondary Credential or
- Secondary School Diploma During Participation or Within One Year After Exit
- Percentage of Participants in an Education or Training Program Achieving Measurable Skills Gains Toward the Credential or Employment
- Effectiveness in Serving Employers

#### *Youth WIOA Primary Indicators of Performance*

- Percentage of Participants in Unsubsidized Education or Training Activities, or in Unsubsidized Employment During the 2nd Quarter After Exit
- Percentage of Participants in Unsubsidized Education or Training Activities, or in Unsubsidized Employment During the 4th Quarter After Exit
- Median Earnings of Program Participants in Unsubsidized Employment During the 2nd Quarter After Exit
- Percentage of Participants Obtaining a Postsecondary Credential or Secondary School Diploma During Participation or Within One Year After Exit
- Percentage of Participants in an Education or Training Program Achieving Measurable Skills Gains Toward the Credential or Employment

- Effectiveness in Serving Employers

The following measures will be tracked and reported, but will not be included in performance negotiations for PY16 or PY17.

- Adult and Dislocated Workers: In-Program Skills Gains and Employer Engagement
- Youth: Q2 Median Earnings, In-Program Skills Gains and Employer Engagement

## ***2. One-Stop System Performance and Assessment***

**Provide a listing of locally/regionally developed one-stop performance standards and describe the criteria used to develop the performance standards. Describe how the one-stop system and regional service delivery is assessed by the local board.**

Under development

## ***3. ETPL System***

**Describe the regional Eligible Training Provider System, including the elements listed below.**

- Provide a description of the public notification to prospective providers.**
- Provide a description of how the board(s) evaluates providers and proposed training programs for initial eligibility, based on (at a minimum) criteria of proven effectiveness, local employer/industry demand, accreditation and customer accessibility.**
- Provide a description of the formal appeals process for aggrieved ITA customers and providers of unapproved training programs.**
- Provide a description of the ongoing process used to update the data on the eligible providers list (exclusive of the state-conducted continued eligibility process).**
- Provide a description of any regional policies or agreements for ITAs or training providers.**
- Provide a description of the process to track and manage all ITA activity.**
- Provide a description of local board policy on use of statewide eligible training provider list (including financial and duration limits, out-of-area training, service to out-of-area customers, etc.).**
- Provide a description of how registered apprenticeship programs are added to the ETPL.**

Under development

## ***4. Implementation of Technology***

**Provide a description of the technology used to enhance customer (participant and business) experience and any additional data analytics used to enhance planning and measure outcomes beyond mandated performance measures.**

***Workforce Development Area 10***

The Middle Georgia Regional Commission website ([www.middlegeorgiarc.org](http://www.middlegeorgiarc.org)) provides important workforce development information to job seekers and employers. With the launch of the new WorkSource branding campaign, the website will be updated. Updates will include the addition of data to enhance planning and performance. Twitter and Facebook are also utilized to share the success of the workforce development programs.

***Workforce Development Area 11***

The Middle Georgia Consortium website ([www.mgwib.com](http://www.mgwib.com)) provides important workforce development information to job seekers and employers. With the launch of the new WorkSource branding campaign, the website will be updated. Updates will include the addition of data to enhance planning and performance.

## STATE INITIATIVES AND VISION

### 1. State Branding

**Provide a description for how the area will adopt and utilize the state brand.**

The brands for WorkSource Macon-Bibb and WorkSource Middle Georgia will be implemented in accordance with WIG PS-16-002. Implementation may include but is not limited to the development of:

- Letterhead and envelopes
- Business cards
- Signage, Pull-Up Banners and table cloths
- Website
- Power Point templates
- Brochures and pamphlets
- Video testimonials

### 2. State Initiatives

**Describe how the area will coordinate with WFD state initiatives, including: Go Build Georgia, Operation: Workforce, WorkSmart Georgia and the High Demand Career Initiative.**

Region 6 will seek every opportunity to coordinate GDECD Workforce Development Division initiatives to provide workforce solutions to employers and leverage resources where necessary.

#### *GoBuild Georgia*

GoBuild Georgia is the state's skilled trade initiative, designed to educate students about career opportunities in manufacturing, telecommunications, film, construction, logistics and energy. This program connects students with resources to provide an overview of flexible, well-paying careers in some of Georgia's fastest-growing industries. Given the strong presence of manufacturing and logistics in Middle Georgia, coordination with GoBuild Georgia is essential to meet the needs of the region's employers. The Workforce Development Boards will identify opportunities to support GoBuild Initiatives in partnership with the local boards of education and the two GoBuild Georgia colleges; Central Georgia Technical College and Georgia College and State University.

#### *Operation: Workforce*

Launched in November 2012, *Operation: Workforce* serves as an online one-stop for veteran resources and services in Georgia. This web portal provides resources from various state agencies and private organizations. Veterans are able to utilize these resources to translate their military occupational classifications into civilian occupations that best align with their skillset and training. Through this site, veterans can also create a profile, upload a resume and search and

apply for career opportunities posted by registered Georgia employers who have pledged to hire military heroes.

Coordination with *Operation: Workforce* in Region 6 will be greatly enhanced by Veterans Education Career Transition Resource Center, or VECTR, which is a 32,000 square foot facility and includes computer labs and an industrial lab. Opening in August 2016, discussions are underway to develop partnerships between the VECTR Center and both Workforce Development Areas.

#### *Georgia WorkSmart*

Georgia WorkSmart is a work-based learning initiative operated by the Georgia Department of Economic Development. The initiative promotes work-based learning programs (apprenticeship, internship, on-the-job training, etc.) as a workforce development tool and assists Georgia companies in developing and implementing customized programs to meet their specific hiring and training needs. Work-based learning is a priority of both Workforce Development Boards as evidenced through the on-the-job training program that has been established and the plans to establish apprenticeship programs in the near term. The resources of Georgia WorkSmart will be the foundation of these programs in Region 6.

#### *High Demand Career Initiative*

During the initial launch of the High Demand Career Initiative two years ago, Workforce Development staff attended many of the statewide public meetings, which included more than 120 employers in key industries. Through this process a range of in-demand and difficult-to-fill positions were identified, along with essential workforce skills that are difficult to find in potential employees. As a follow-on to that process, the Workforce Division has launched a HDCI Sector Partnership Grant to support and implement sector strategies.

Region 6 will host, in partnership with the Workforce Division, a HDCI Sector Partnerships Workshop this fall to formally announce the Sector Partnership Grant and region's intent to embrace the sector strategy approach. Region 6 is committed to a successful workshop and a sustainable sector partnership program. This will build upon the work of the Sector Partnership – National Emergency Grant that the region has collaborated with the State of Georgia on since 2015.

The Workforce Development Boards and staff of Region 6 will identify partners, coordinate meetings, assist with development of programs and projects, and engage in other activities to support the High Demand Career Initiative.

### **3. Special Populations**

**Describe how the area will provide services to the special populations specified in the state plan, to include ex-offenders, veterans, at-risk youth, long-term unemployed, adult learners and individuals with disabilities. If the region has identified additional target groups, please list.**

### *Ex-Offenders*

The transition of ex-offenders into the workforce is challenging on two fronts: the individual skill gap and the employer. To address the individual skill gap, Region 6 is collaborating with the transition centers and Central Georgia Technical College to offer the Workplace Fundamentals program to suitable candidates. During this three-week program, participants earn four industry recognized credentials and soft skills training. For ex-offenders, this program has proven successful. On the employer front, Region 6 is in the process of identifying Second Chance Employers who are willing to work with ex-offenders. These employers will be offered business services through Workforce Development and On-The-Job training for eligible individuals.

### *Veterans*

Both Workforce Development Areas have adopted Priority of Services policies for Veterans. With the presence of Robins Air Force Base in the region and the concentration of veterans, it is essential that veterans receive services. The Veterans Education Career Transition Resource Center, or VECTR opened in Warner Robins, Georgia, August 2016. Services available include:

- Career coaching/counseling
- Evaluation of military/civilian transcripts to maximize prior learning credit
- Resume/Interviewing Skills
- Community referrals
- Navigating state/federal financial aid process

Discussions are underway to determine how WIOA funds may be available to support veterans at the VECTR center, including locating staff at the center.

### *At-Risk Youth*

Region 6 will collaborate and coordinate with the other institutions and community agencies to provide support to help minimize and/or eliminate youth at-risk factors, such as emotional and behavioral problems, truancy, low academic performance, showing a lack of interest in academics within the community.

### *Long-Term Unemployed*

Region 6 collaborated with the Workforce Division and the Georgia Department of Labor for a NEG Sector Partnership grant. The services provided through this grant are focused on the work-based learning opportunities for long-term unemployment. In addition, participants receive supportive services if applicable.

### *Adult Learners*

Region 6 will continue its partnership with CGTC to determine how resources may be leveraged to assist Adult Learners. Presently, both Workforce Development Areas provide funding for staff who are housed on CGTC campuses to facilitate the delivery of WIOA-funded services. The Core Partners Group that is being developed, as well as the Sector Strategy work will enhance these efforts. In addition, discussions are underway with other educational resources (Middle Georgia

State University) to determine how WIOA funded programs and services can support more adult learners.

#### *Individuals with Disabilities*

Vocational Rehabilitation is the core partner focused on addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities. Both Workforce Development Boards have representation from Vocational Rehabilitation. In Workforce Development Area 11, the Board recently established an Individuals with Disabilities committee to ensure the needs of this special population are addressed.

### **4. Priority of Service**

**Describe how the region will identify and administer the state's priority of service policy. Identify if the region will add target populations in addition to one's specified by state and federal policy.**

The Workforce Development Areas of Region 6 have adopted Priority of Service policies in accordance with the State of Georgia. The intake and screening process is designed to quickly identify the participants who may qualify for priority service.

Priority for adult services is given to recipients of public assistance or other low-income individuals, with added priority for individuals who are basic skills deficient. Individualized career services and training services are given on a priority basis, regardless of funding levels, to:

- Public assistance recipients and other low-income adults; and
- Individuals who are basic skills deficient.

Veterans under WIOA § 3 (63)(A) receive priority of service as described in the Jobs for Veterans Act (38 U.S.C. 4215 (2)). Veterans and eligible spouses of veterans who otherwise meet the eligibility requirements for adult programs must receive the highest priority for services.

- First, to veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of public assistance, are low-income individuals, or who are basic skills deficient. Military earnings are not to be included as income for veterans and transitioning service members.
- Second, to individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses who meet WIOA priority criteria.
- Third, to veterans and eligible spouses who are not included in WIOA's priority groups.
- Last, to individuals outside the groups given priority under WIOA.

While veterans receive priority through WIOA services, a referral process is in place for directing Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment to the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program to ensure the most effective provision of services.

If the need arises for additional priorities of service, additional target populations will be added to the priority of services criteria after approval by the Workforce Development Boards.