



LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA

2016-2020 STRATEGIC PLAN

**MODIFICATION
NUMBER 1**

Table of Contents

Introduction5

Public Comment Requirements..... 5

A. Local Workforce Development Area Overview 5

B. Regional Strategic Planning..... 7

C. Local Area Planning..... 23

D. WIN Job Centers (One-Stop Delivery System) and Programs 34

E. Sector Strategy Plan 45

F. Business Plan 47

G. Policies 52

Appendices54

List of Acronyms

AE	Adult Education
CBO	Community-based Organizations
CEO	Chief Elected Official
CJC	Community & Jr. Colleges
CMPDD	Central Mississippi Planning and Development District
DOL	United States Department of Labor
DVOP	Disabled Veteran Outreach Service Program
DUNS	Data Universal Numbering System
EDA	Economic Development Associations
FBO	Faith-based Organizations
IHL	Institutions of Higher Learning
ITA	Individual Training Account
LWDA	Local Workforce Development Area
LWDB	Local Workforce Development Board
MCCB	Mississippi Community College Board
MDA	Mississippi Development Authority
MDE	Mississippi Department of Education
MDES	Mississippi Department of Employment Security
MDHS	Mississippi Department of Human Services
MDRS	Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
OGM	Office of Grant Management
OJT	On-the-Job Training
SAM	System for Award Management
SBDC	Small Business Development Center
SCSEP	Senior Community Service Employment Program
SMW	Southcentral MS Works
SNAP	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
SWIB	State Workforce Development Board
TANF	Temporary Assistance to Needy Families
UI	Unemployment Insurance
WET	Workforce Enhancement Fund
WIOA	Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

List of Tables

Table 1. SMW LWDA and MDA Target Industries.....	9
Table 2. Economic Variability within SMW LWDA.....	10
Table 3. Combined Plan Programs.....	28
Table 4. Strategic Programs.....	28
Table 5. Descriptions of WIN Job Centers.....	38
Table 6. Timetable for Plan Milestones.....	49
Table 7. Matrix of Resources and Services Provided by Each Stakeholder.....	51

List of Figures

Figure 1. Local Mississippi Workforce Development Areas.....	8
Figure 2. Number Employed.....	13
Figure 3. Unemployment Rate.....	14
Figure 4. Workforce Participation Rate.....	16
Figure 5. Workforce Participation Rate by Education.....	17
Figure 6. Workforce Participation Rate by Age.....	17
Figure 7. In-Commuters by County in Mississippi.....	21
Figure 8. Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway Model.....	25
Figure 9. WIOA Common Intake & Reporting System.....	27
Figure 10. State Workforce Partner Agency Organization.....	29

Introduction

Program Year 2015 marked the first year of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). WIOA requires each local workforce development board (LWDB) to develop a comprehensive four-year plan, in partnership with the local chief elected official (CEO). The Southcentral MS Works (SMW) Local Workforce Development Area's (LWDA) WIOA four-year plan is effective for the period July 1, 2016 - June 30, 2020. As required, at the end of each year of the four-year local plan, the SMW LWDB shall review the local plan and prepare and submit any necessary modifications to the local plan to the MDES Office of Grant Management (OGM). This modification reflects changes in labor market, economic conditions, workforce initiatives and other factors affecting the implementation of the local plan.

The local plan supports the Career Pathway and Sector Strategy alignment described in the state plan in accordance with WIOA Section 102(b)(1)(E), and is otherwise consistent with the state plan. The SMW LWDB complies with WIOA, Section 108 regarding the preparation and submission of the plan.

The plan updates include discussion of new initiatives as well as technical changes such as the new CEO and LWDB chairpersons and a revised LWDB membership list.

Public Comment Requirements

In accordance with the WIOA, Section 108(d), the LWDB shall make copies of the proposed local plan modification available to the public through electronic and other means, such as public hearings and local news media; allow for public comment not later than the end of the 30-day period beginning on the date the proposed plan is made available; and, include with submission of the local plan any comments that represent disagreement with the plan. The plan is made available for public comment beginning May 11, 2018.

Plan Outline

A. Local Workforce Development Area Overview

A.1. Local Workforce Development Area's official (legal) name established to administer the WIOA:

Southcentral MS Works Southcentral Mississippi Works Local Workforce
Development Area

See Appendix A, page 56, for *Local Workforce Development Area Re-designation Approval Letter*.

A.2. Local Area Workforce Development Director:

Southcentral MS Works Mary Powers, Workforce Director
Central Mississippi Planning and Development District
P.O. Box 4935
Jackson, MS 39296-4935
601-981-1511
mpowers@cmpdd.org

A.3. Local Workforce Development Area's Chief Elected Official:

Southcentral MS Works Angela Hutchins, Adams County Supervisor
P.O. Box 1008
Natchez, MS 39121
601-442-2431
hutchins0818@bellsouth.net

A.4. Individuals authorized to receive official mail for the Chief Elected Official:

Southcentral MS Works Michael Monk
Chief Executive Officer
or Mary Powers
Workforce Director
Central MS Planning & Development District
P. O. Box 4935
Jackson, MS 39296-4935
601-981-1511
mmonk@cmpdd.org / mpowers@cmpdd.org

A.5. Administrative/Fiscal Agent responsible for disbursing Local Area WIOA grant funds:

Southcentral MS Works Central Mississippi Planning and Development District
1170 Lakeland Drive
P.O. Box 4935
Jackson, MS 39296
601-981-1511

A.6. Administrative/Fiscal Agent's signatory official:

Southcentral MS Works Michael Monk, Chief Executive Officer
Central Mississippi Planning and Development District
1170 Lakeland Drive
P.O. Box 4935
Jackson, MS 39296
601-981-1511
mmonk@cmpdd.org

A.7. See Appendix B, page 58 for Administrative Entity/LWDA/Fiscal Agent's Organizational Chart.

A.8. Administrative Entity's Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number and Assurance of 'System for Award Management' (SAM) status is current.

Southcentral MS Works	DUNS 07-352-2906	SAM status is current
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A.9. LWDB Chairperson's Information:

Southcentral MS Works	Benny Hubbard Hubbard Financial Services, Owner 702 Prominence Drive Flowood, MS 39232 601-260-5449
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A.10. See Appendix C, page 59 for the LWDB Membership List.

A.11. See Appendix D, page 64 for the LWDB Operating Procedures (By-laws) including date adopted/amended.

A.12. See Appendix E, page 74 for the Local Area Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, and other Responsibility Matters – Primary Covered Transactions.

A.13. See Appendix F, page 76 Local Area Signatory Submission Page.

B. Regional Strategic Planning

B.1. For the purpose of this section, planning regions are identified as the LWDA's. The Delta, Mississippi Partnership, Southcentral Mississippi Works, and Twin Districts comprise the four LWDA's. The four LWDA's in Mississippi were defined in the Comprehensive Workforce Training and Education Consolidation Act of 2004, were designated as LWDA's by the Governor and were identified in the WIOA State Plan. The boundaries follow significant demographic and economic boundaries (See Figure 1). SMW includes the following seventeen (17) counties in west central and southwest Mississippi: Adams, Amite, Claiborne, Copiah, Franklin, Hinds, Jefferson, Lawrence, Lincoln, Madison, Pike, Rankin, Simpson, Walthall, Warren, Wilkinson, and Yazoo.

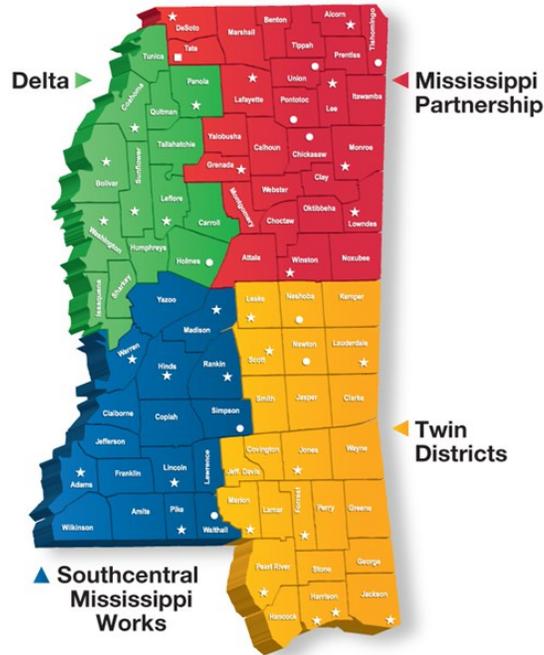


Figure 1. Local Mississippi Workforce Development Areas

B.2. Southcentral MS Works LWDA has adopted the Smart Start Pathway vision defined in the Mississippi WIOA State Plan. The state’s strategic vision is a workforce system that acts and functions as an ecosystem where all parts are connected and line up to achieve common goals and wherein every opportunity is made available to be work- or career-ready and to enable individuals to secure their dream job right here at home. From the moment one enters the education and workforce system, he or she is presented with the necessary tools to choose and pursue a career pathway that is relevant to current and future labor markets. Similarly, from the moment current and prospective businesses access Mississippi’s education and workforce system, resources have been aligned to cultivate the sustainable, high-performance workforce critical for maintaining and expanding businesses’ long-term economic viability, in turn creating better and more sustainable employment opportunities for Mississippians.

Key aspects of the strategic vision are to:

- Provide every Mississippian the opportunity to be work- or career-ready and to secure his or her dream job right here at home.
- Create a workforce ecosystem where all parts are connected and line up to achieve common goals.

- Develop a career pathway model that integrates programs and improves efficiency in service delivery across partners, with particular focus on individuals with barriers to employment.
- Strategically align programs with current and emerging high demand sectors.

B.3. An analysis of SMW LWDA’s regional economic conditions include: a) existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations; and, b) knowledge and skills needed to meet the employment needs of employers in those industry sectors and occupations. The SMW LWDA contributes to Mississippi’s economic sector goals, identified by the Mississippi Development Authority’s (MDA) target industries (See Table 1).

Table 1. SMW and MDA Target Industries

MDA Target Industries									
	Industry	Advanced Manufacturing	Agri-business	Aerospace	Automotive	Energy	Healthcare	Shipbuilding	Tourism and Film
South-central MSWorks	New and Emerging	Automotive							Casinos Gaming
	Established	Healthcare	Forestry/ Logging			Oil & Gas	Services & Education		Hospitality

A Description of the SMW Workforce Development Area

The SMW LWDA includes the state capital and is known for industry sectors such as healthcare, energy, and agribusiness. Eleven of the top 20 Mississippi counties for forestry and logging; wood product manufacturing; oil and gas extraction; hospitals, nursing and residential care facilities; and social assistance fall within the SMW LWDA. Because of a strong hospital system and medical education focus, the SMW LWDA serves as a healthcare hub for the entire state, particularly around the Jackson metropolitan statistical area. The presence of oil and natural gas deposits in the southwestern part of the state give SMW its strength in the energy sector. The SMW LWDA is rapidly growing as a key hub for the automotive industry with large manufacturers such as Nissan and Continental Tire.

SMW has a strong overall economic identity. Within SMW, entities such as economic development associations and public utilities target industries. With vital information on available sites,

buildings, and workforce demographics, EDAs encourage the development of new industries and assist companies considering Mississippi as a potential location. The presence of EDAs can be useful in identifying differences of economic or industry focus within the LWDA.

Table 2. Economic Variability within Southcentral MS Works LDWA

		MDA Target Industries							
		Advanced Manufacturing	Aerospace	Agri-business	Automotive	Energy	Healthcare	Shipbuilding	Tourism and Film
South-central MS	Greater Jackson Alliance	X		X	X		X		X
	Southwest MS Partnership	X		X	X		X		X

Emerging Sectors

SMW maintains a fairly diverse economy. In 2016 the sectors with the most employment were: Healthcare and Social Assistance 18%; Transportation and Warehousing 5%; Leisure & Hospitality 10%; and Manufacturing 9%. SMW is a major transportation hub. The Mississippi river borders the western part of the area. SMW also includes the intersection of I-55 and I-20, and has the state’s major airport. The SMW area has a high concentration of hospitals and health care facilities which continues to show growth. Leisure & Hospitality is a growing sector due to the river, casinos, historical sites, and other recreational opportunities.

Manufacturing makes up 9% of the total employed workforce and growth in this area continues to increase. SMW is home to the first automotive plant to locate in the state which continues to expand. A major tire manufacturing plant is being built in the area, which will offer a large number of employment opportunities. These, along with other manufacturing employers, are contributors to the overall economy.

Occupations in Emerging Industries

Occupations consistent with the sectors identified are expected to show continuing growth. Ten-year job growth projections for healthcare occupations, such as nurse practitioners, nursing assistants, personal care aides, registered nurses, and home health aides; for manufacturing occupations, such as industrial machinery mechanics, team assemblers, operations managers; and

transportation occupations, such as heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers, laborers and freight, stock and material movers are all expected to grow in large numbers.

Employers' Employment Needs

Information on employers' employment needs was derived from the following three sources of data as described in the State Plan.

1. A focus group of representatives from established and emerging industries. More than 20 employers participated in the focus group.
2. The state's Priority One project administered by the Mississippi Development Authority.
3. In a monthly survey, more than 100 employers were contacted to identify pressing workforce needs. This survey asked relevant questions about the skills and knowledge required for the business to succeed.

The SMW supports these findings. Across these three sources of data, a general consensus is that businesses are expecting to grow and that recruitment and retention of qualified workforce is a critical issue for sustainability, viability, and growth. On the whole, businesses reported needing workers with labor and trade skills and those with basic work skills (e.g., reading, writing, appropriate workplace conduct). The general consensus among businesses is that employees, across the board, lack core competency skills such as:

- Critical Thinking/Problem Solving—Exercise sound reasoning and analytical thinking; obtain, interpret, and use knowledge, facts, and data; demonstrate originality and inventiveness.
- Oral/Written Communication—Articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively; demonstrate public speaking skills; communicate new ideas to others through writing and editing.
- Teamwork/Collaboration—Build collaborative relationships; work in team structure; negotiate and manage conflicts.
- Information Technology Application—Select and use appropriate technology; apply computing skills to problem solving.
- Leadership—Leverage the strengths of others; use interpersonal skills and emotions effectively; organize, prioritize, and delegate work.
- Professionalism/Work Ethic—Demonstrate personal accountability, effective work habits, integrity, and ethical behavior; act responsibly; learn from mistakes.

- Career Management—Identify and articulate skills, strengths, and experiences; identify areas for professional growth and self-advocacy; explore job options and pursue opportunities.

Specifically, when asked about the competencies desired in a potential employee at low-, middle-, and high-skill levels, dependability and reliability were rated as the most important qualities for low-skill employees, initiative and a willingness to learn were rated as the most important qualities for middle-skill employees, and leadership, communication, and interpersonal skills were rated as the most important qualities for high-skill employees.

Employers also indicated that they are not fully aware of the resources and services available to them. A large number of employers stated that their employees receive training from community colleges, technical schools, or vocational schools; many reported that their employees receive training from universities; and the remainder indicated that their employees receive external training from other federal programs. Mississippi employers would like to expand their use of community colleges and universities in the delivery of training for basic trades and skills along with fundamental competency skills for low-, middle-, and high-skill workers.

B.4. Southcentral MS Works Labor Market Analysis

During the early 2000's SMW's unemployment rate ranged from 4.9% to 6.6%. During the Great Recession, the state, like the entire nation, experienced a dramatic loss of jobs. According to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) for the 2009-2014 period, the number of employed Mississippians hit a low in 2010 but increased slightly in 2011 before starting a consistent upward trend (See Figure 2). At the beginning of the nationwide recession SMW's unemployment rate was 5.9% but rose as high as 9.5% in 2010. This rate has shown a steady decline to 6.0% in 2015 and currently stands at 4.1%. The civilian labor force also saw a decline of nearly 20,000 between 2008 and 2014. This factor has failed to return to the levels experienced in the late 2000's.

After struggling with a high unemployment rate, Mississippi is now experiencing a recovery that offers new economic opportunities for workers and job seekers. According to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Mississippi's unemployment rate has dropped from 10.4% in 2010 to 6.7% in May 2015 (See Figure 3). Similar unemployment rate trends can be found in Mississippi's LWDA's. The current unemployment rate in the SMW LWDA is 4.1%.

Figure 2. Number Employed

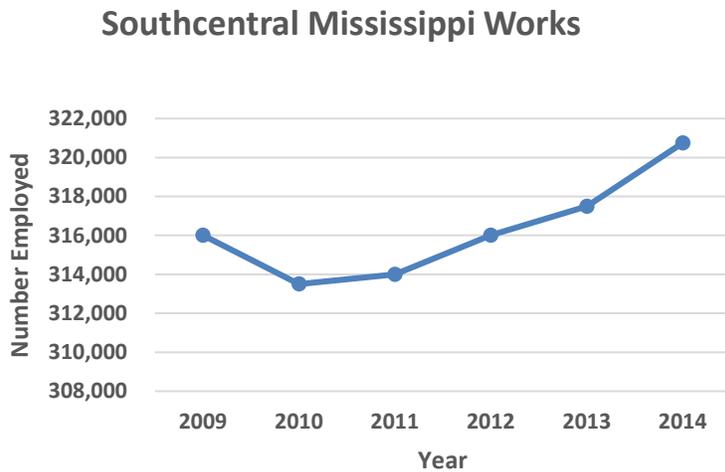
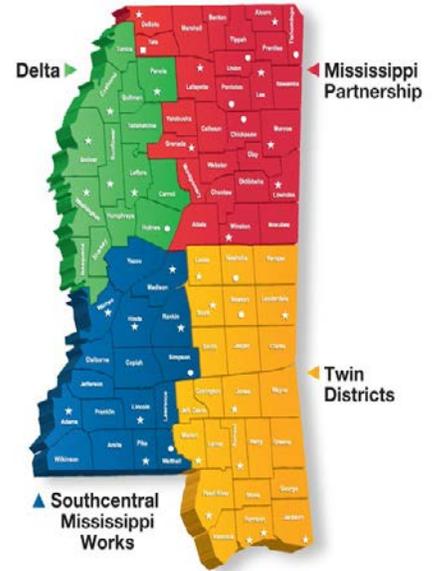
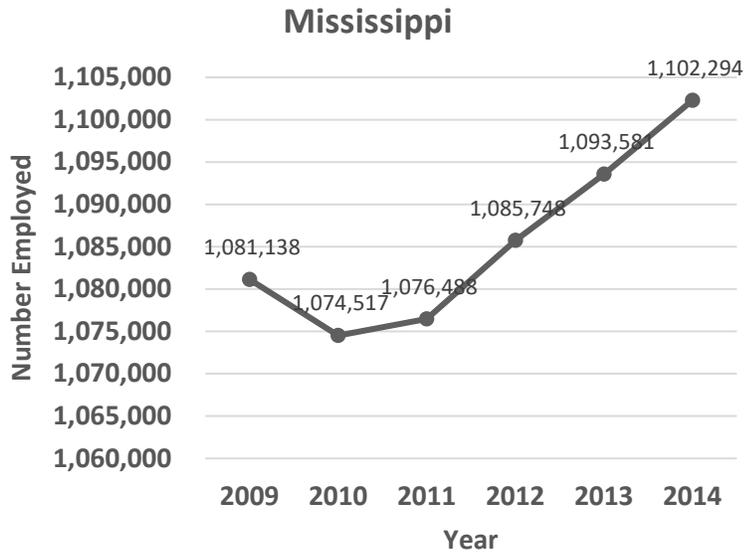
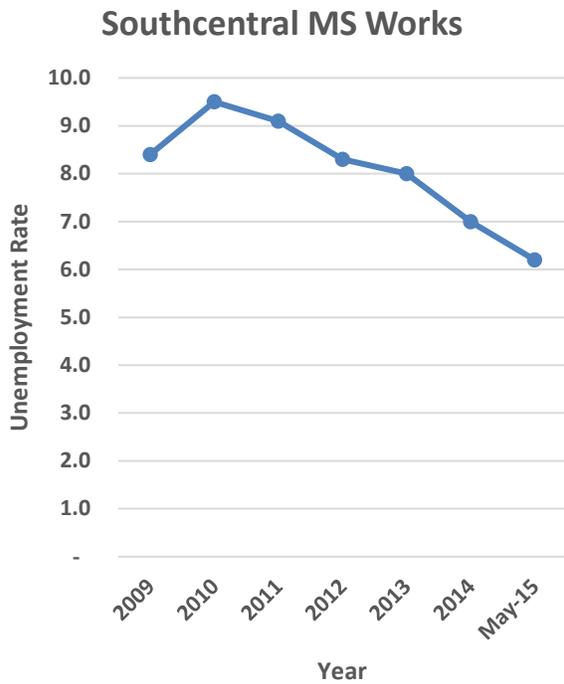
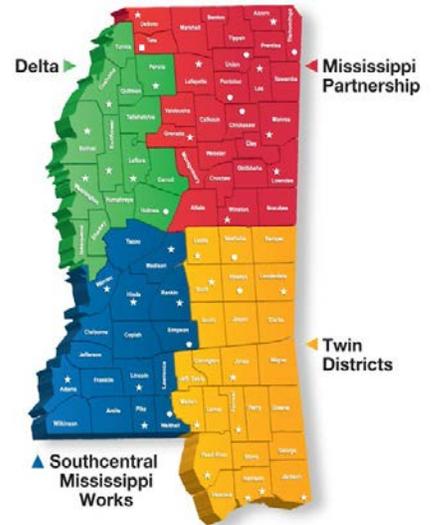
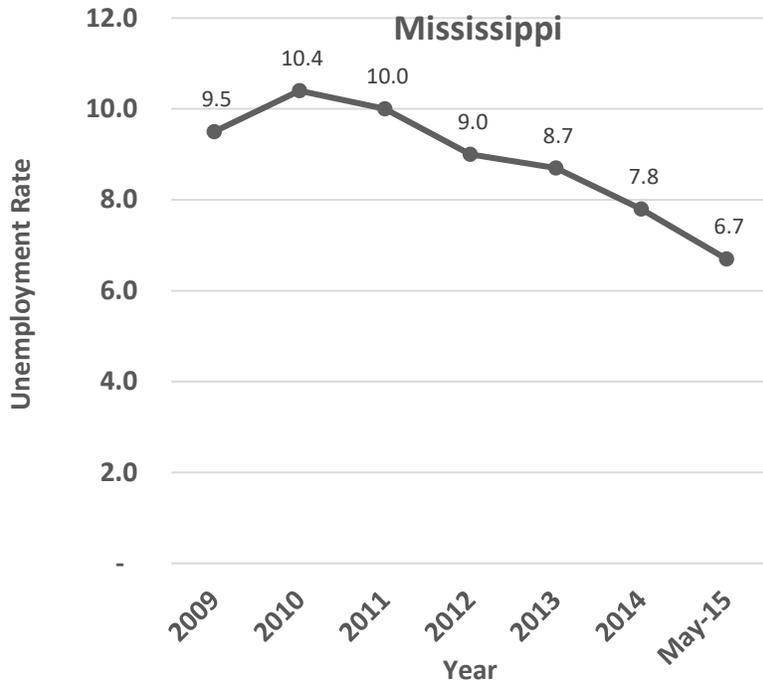


Figure 3. Unemployment Rate



Following a trend similar to that of the unemployment rate, Mississippi's under-employment rate reached a peak of 17.6% in 2010 but trended downward, reaching a low of 13.4% in May 2015. The declining under-employment rate indicates that more Mississippians are finding employment, moving out of low-wage jobs into gainful employment, finding jobs that match their skill level, and/or benefiting from workforce training services. A decreasing share of under-employed workers also potentially indicates that employers are showing confidence in Mississippi's workforce, establishing new jobs and looking for qualified employees.

Despite an improved economic outlook, Mississippi faces some vulnerabilities that provide challenges for its progress. As is the case in other states, the long-term unemployed in Mississippi become discouraged and drop out of the workforce, contributing to the decline of the rate of workforce participation in the state (See Figure 4). The SMW LWDA has a workforce participation rate of 59.3%.

Workforce Participation Rate by Education

Upon further analysis, data shows that those with less than a high school education are the most vulnerable and most likely to become discouraged workers. Those with any credentials beyond high school in Mississippi, as in the rest of the country, are more likely to be attached to the labor market (see Figure 5).

Workforce Participation Rate by Age

Additionally, the workforce participation rate varies by age group. In Mississippi, youth (ages 16 to 19) have one of the lowest workforce participation rates at 24.6%, while young adults (ages 20 to 24) have a 58.8% workforce participation rate. These findings likely reflect the barriers that young people face in finding employment, even among those who are enrolled in education or training programs (see Figure 6).

Figure 4. Workforce Participation Rate

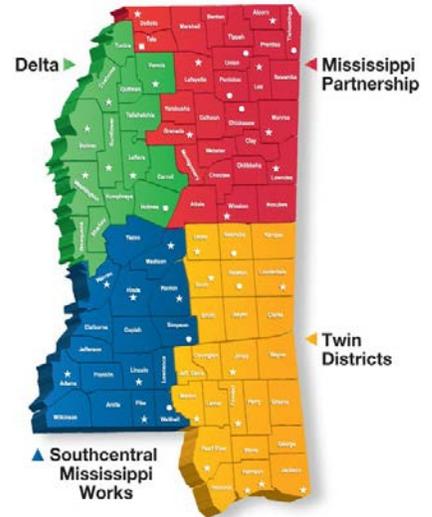
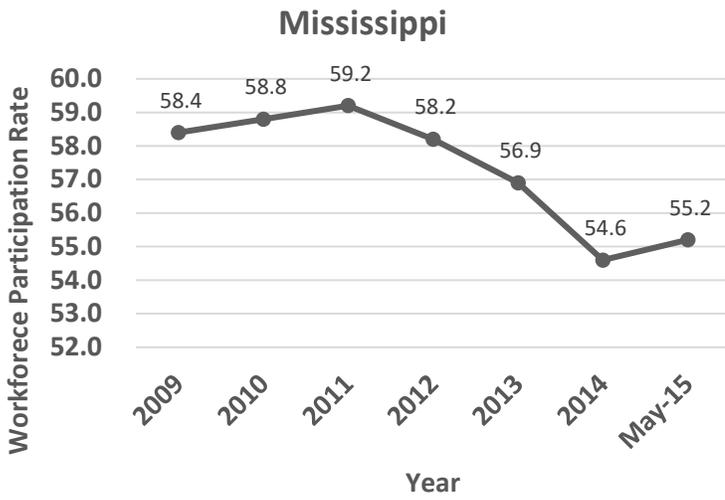


Figure 5. Workforce Participation Rate by Education

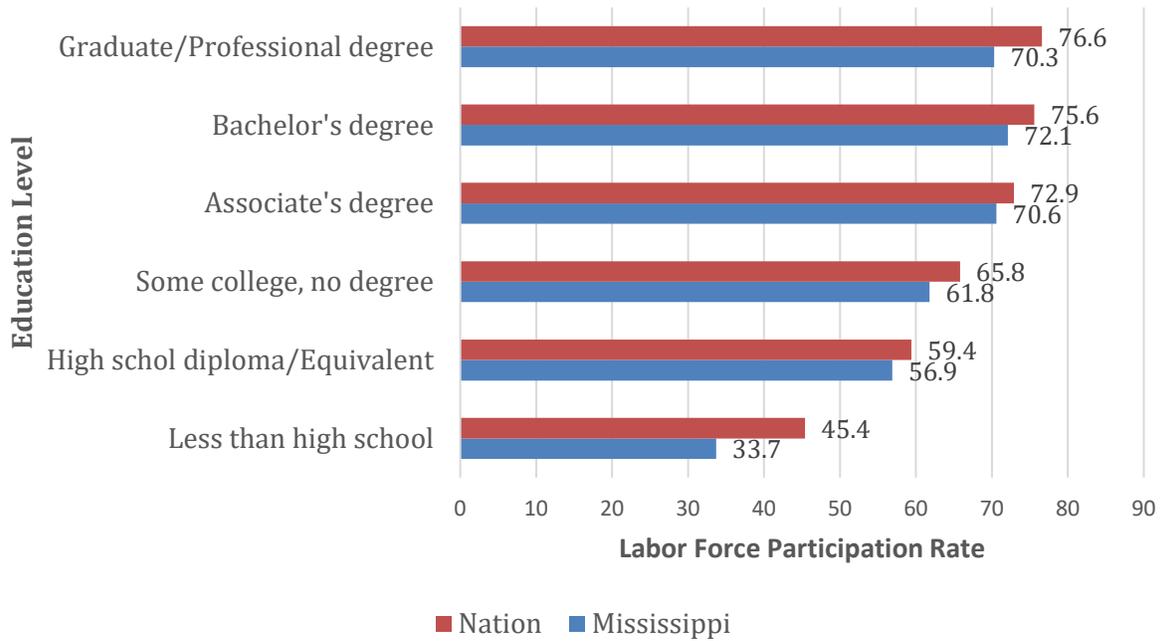
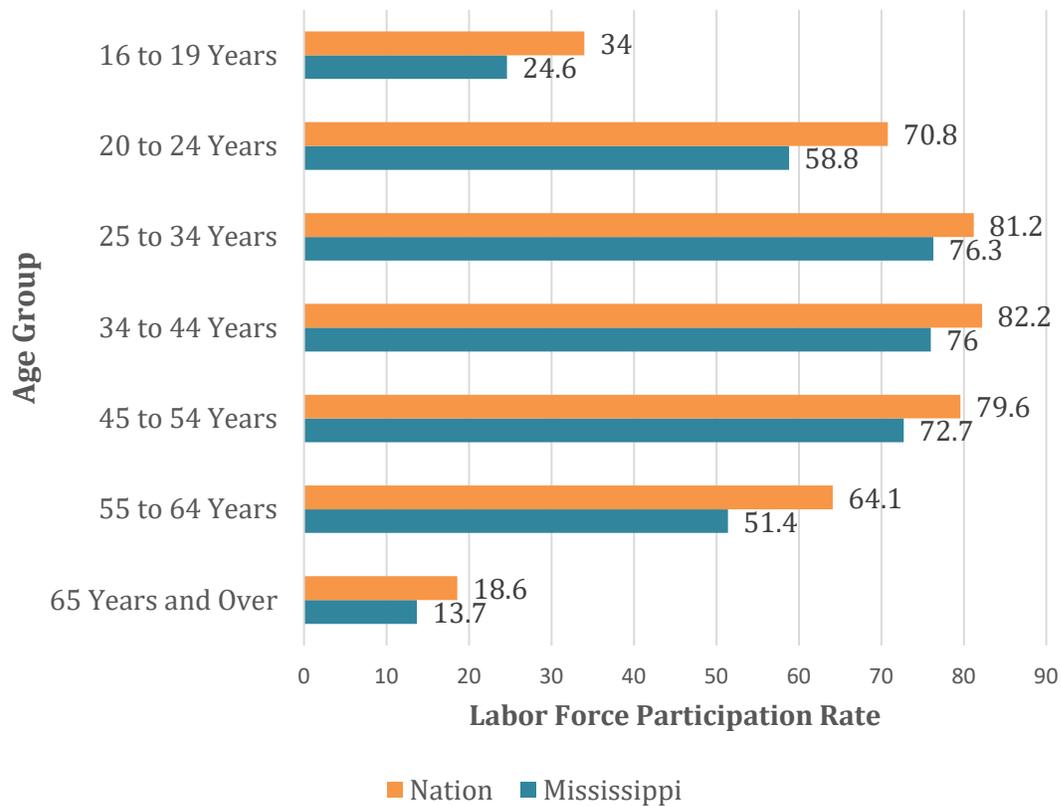


Figure 6. Workforce Participation Rate by Age



B.5. The SMW LWDA engages with representatives of business in the local area, including small business. CMPDD provides a conduit for SMW staff to participate in this engagement by maintaining memberships in multiple business advocacy organizations such as the Mississippi Economic Council, the Mississippi Economic Development Council, and the Greater Jackson Alliance. Networking at various sponsored business functions keeps the SMW staff attuned to the needs of area businesses as a whole, but also allows opportunities to open up dialogue with a business individually to discuss the specific needs of that business. When training is an identified need, SMW partners with the four local community colleges to best determine how to incorporate this training need into the community colleges' programs. Several funding resources are available to meet the training needs of employers. Employers are offered On-the-Job Training through WIOA; assistance is provided by SMW in making application for MS Works funds; and employers can apply through one of the area's community colleges for WET funds assistance. SMW also works to assist community college representatives who have identified a business need other than training and comes to SMW with that need indicating a true partnership at all levels.

Utilizing funding made available by the SWIB, SMW is currently engaging counties within the workforce area and assisting with their efforts to achieve the ACT Work Ready Community designation. A Work Ready Community designation enhances the appeal of these locales to business and industry who are attempting to identify sites for expansion and development. Of the 17 counties included in SMW, five are certified Work Ready Communities and the other 12 counties range from 49% to 94% in reaching their county goals to become a Work Ready Community.

In 2017, under the direction of the SWIB, developed a local area Sector Strategy Plan. A convener was identified and an analysis of local industries and labor market data was performed. As a result of the analysis, three sectors were identified as those that provided the greatest employment opportunities and also the greatest need on the part of the employers. Those three targeted industry sectors are Healthcare, Manufacturing and Transportation/Distribution/Logistics. Leadership Teams for each of the sectors were formed, consisting of secondary and post-secondary education, economic development, and industry leaders. The Leadership Teams identified skill gaps, objectives and goals included in the final Sector Strategy Plan.

Subsequently, SMW designated a Sector Coordinator to ensure continual review, adjustment, refinement, and implementation of the goals of the sector strategy plan. The coordinator's duties

include acting as the point of contact for targeted industry sectors, coordinating workforce systems to better align state resources, crafting tailored workforce solutions and training, following up with businesses, and reporting to the SMW sector Leadership Teams.

The Sector Coordinator meets with employers, trade associations related to the SMW targeted sectors, human resources associations such as the Society for Human Resource Management as well as its local chapters, and economic developers to provide information on available workforce services and training resources. These services include WIOA funded on-the-job training, internships, incumbent worker training, and apprenticeships, as well as information and assistance on applying for MS Works and WET funds.

WIOA programs and activities within the SMW LWDA are planned and overseen by the LWDB that meets several times per year to review the LWDA WIOA programs, activities and performance. Programs and services to support the workforce system are aligned with regional economic development needs and with industry sectors. The MDA's staff coordinate with LWDA staff to assist in connecting them with businesses and industries with whom they come in contact.

As the SMW LWDA continually works to identify the needs of in-demand occupational sectors, the area will engage appropriate representation of those sectors in the design of its programs and activities to ensure that the needs of those sector employers are met.

B.6. Collaboration between workforce and economic development partners is essential for economic growth and competition in the global economy. SMW LWDA works together with both public and community based economic development efforts to leverage resources and strengths.

The SMW LWDA works closely with representatives of the public and private sectors in the area on a continual basis to foster economic and community development throughout the area.

Widespread support among local elected officials, business leaders, and other stakeholders works to foster and cultivate innovative workforce approaches.

B.7. Due to the rural nature of SMW LWDA, transportation issues exist in some areas of some counties. A system of mass public transit does not exist except within the larger cities in the area. However, transportation assistance is available through various community based organizations

and referral is made to those resources as needs of individuals are identified. CMPDD also serves as a Metropolitan Planning Organization and is therefore aware of transportation needs and challenges within the area.

Low-income populations, especially those individuals who are unemployed or underemployed, are usually not financially able to own a vehicle to drive to work. They rely on walking, biking, carpooling, or using public transit as affordable alternatives to owning a vehicle. Workers in more rural counties commute to more urbanized areas for work because, generally, that is where the jobs are (see Figure 7). Transportation also presents a challenge in education and training activities that must take place to develop a workforce.

Some degree of public or specialized transportation services is available in the SMW area. However, the lack of adequate transportation continues to be cited as an obstacle to education, training, and employment, especially for older adults, persons with disabilities, and low-income individuals. To assist in addressing this issue, the Mississippi Department of Transportation instituted six regional coordinated transportation planning groups in the state to improve mobility options. These groups network together to find transportation solutions. The 17-county SMW area encompasses three of the six regional transportation groups, including one county in Delta Rides, six counties in Trans-Con, and 10 counties in SMART. SMW staff provides WIOA Smart Start partners with contacts for these resources and at least three of these partners have joined the groups, including MDHS, MDRS, and the Senior Community Service Employment Program administered by MDES.

In order to meet transportation barriers, the SMW and the area's community colleges work with local support organizations to assist with transporting individuals to training. In some instances, WIOA funds may be used to offer transportation assistance in the form of gas cards or public transit passes. As individuals are able to access training to acquire skills and gain employment, the issue of transportation can resolve itself as those individuals are then able to afford some reliable means of transportation.

B.8. The SMW LWDA works closely with the area’s secondary education entities, community colleges and universities to articulate career pathways built around in-demand occupations and business demands. Regular meetings are held with community college workforce representatives in an effort to design programs that meet the needs of both job seekers and employers, with emphasis on creating career pathways, which in turn, create a pipeline for the workforce. A lack of an adequate number of individuals in the pipelines was a major skill gap identified by the Leadership Teams involved in the Sector Strategy Plan development. The community colleges’ District Workforce Councils provide additional input into the pipeline and career pathway creation. The Mississippi Works MSGradJobs.com and MSTechJobs.com are available to help connect four-year secondary and technical students with work opportunities.

The SMW Sector Coordinator visits local high school career and technical centers to educate students about the area’s targeted sectors and the job opportunities that exist within them. He also visits regularly with the workforce directors and career and technical directors for the area’s four local community colleges to coordinate activities and discuss potential collaborations.

B.9. The SMW LWDA provides services targeted for individuals regardless of geographic location. The area includes urban, suburban and rural areas, primarily rural. Labor market information, as well as geographic and demographic information is utilized in program planning to ensure that citizens of the entire LWDA have access to and can be served by the workforce system. The SMW LWDA utilizes information from the Corporation for a Skilled Workforce which is a national nonprofit that partners with government, business, and community leaders to support the creation of good jobs and the highly skilled workers to fill them.

The SMW area is governed by a Local Workforce Development Board that works in coordination with the Chief Local Elected Officials Board or Board of Commissioners (BOC). SMW staff works closely with the BOC to address their concerns regarding workforce issues in their respective counties.

SMW is actively involved in assisting each of its 17 counties in becoming an ACT Work Ready Community. The counties’ economic developers are heavily involved in this activity as well, which has provided the opportunity for SMW staff to develop strong working relationships with these individuals.

B.10. The SMW LWDA supports the WIOA State Plan and provides priority of services for veterans and their families seeking employment opportunities, and connects military skills with occupational demands using the Mississippi Works profile process. In addition, the SMW LWDA supports the Jobs for Veterans State Grants.

Disabled Veteran Outreach Program Specialists (DVOPs) are integrated into the WIN Job Center service delivery system at the local job center level. Veterans and eligible spouses continue to receive priority of service for all DOL-funded job training programs, which include WIOA programs. However, as described in TEGE 10-09, when programs are statutorily required to provide priority for a particular group of individuals, such as the WIOA priority, priority must be provided in accordance with the WIOA State Plan. Efforts within the SMW LWDA connect veterans' with military skills with employers through crosswalks of professional skills and job opportunities. DVOPs are cross trained to understand the full component of WIOA and Combined Plan Partner programs that may be available to assist veterans. In instances when a DVOP is not available or has reached the predetermined caseload, another WIN Job Center staff will provide services to veterans and eligible spouses as appropriate.

C. Local Area Planning

C.1. The SMW LWDA supports the State's strategic vision for achieving the following seven sustainable, high-performance employment goals:

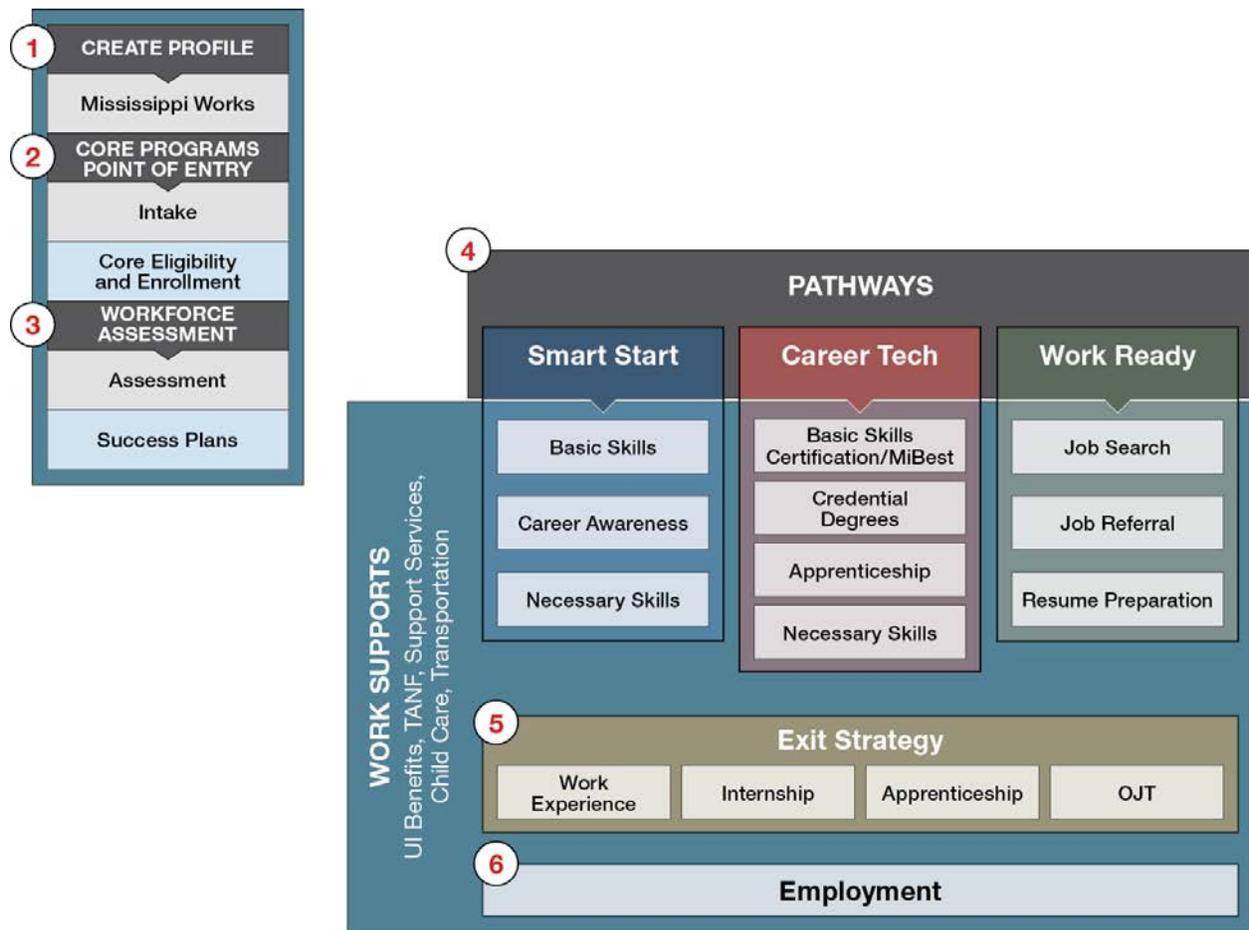
1. Work together to develop policies that will coordinate service delivery among all WIOA Combined Plan Partners.
2. Strengthen interagency partnerships.
3. Develop defined, articulated career pathways across educational sectors (K-16+) to create a pipeline for the workforce.
4. Develop cross-program performance metrics.
5. Continue to invest in integrated technology to meet the unified technology requirements of the WIOA and other federal initiatives.
6. Engage partners to remain abreast of changing industry needs and the metrics to measure outcomes to realize the potential of the state's workforce programs and delivery systems.
7. Draft and communicate a unified vision/message.

Under the guidance of the LWDB and in concert with permanent and ad hoc committees and in partnership with system partners, the SMW LWDA strives to build programs and services that carry out these goals. Goals are continually reviewed and updated as necessary.

SMW LWDA performance is reviewed quarterly against performance standards to ensure that programs and activities meet those standards. The area's efforts in support of these goals are designed to meet the performance standards.

C.2. The SMW LWDA ensures that its local workforce service providers carry out the core programs aligning available resources in order to achieve the strategic vision and goals of the Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway Model. This is accomplished by SMW LWDA staff who have the responsibility to closely monitor inter-partner referrals, coordinated service delivery and outcomes. The Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway model is presented in Figure 8.

Figure 8. Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway Model



Participants may enter the Career Pathway Model through different on- and off-ramps provided among agency partners through a “No Wrong Door” ideology. An abbreviated description of the steps is:

Step 1: Point of Entry - All participants enter the Career Pathway Model through a Combined Plan Partner's intake process.

Step 2: Workforce Assessment – The Intake Partner works with the individual to assess the individual’s work-ready status and develops a Career Pathway Success Plan for employment. The results of the individual’s work-ready status assessment determine which pathway activity is appropriate for the individual. Depending on the assessment results and the success plan steps, the individual may receive subsequent services from the intake agency, if that agency has the resources and capacity to provide the services. If that

is not the case, he/she is referred to the appropriate system partner service entity for service.

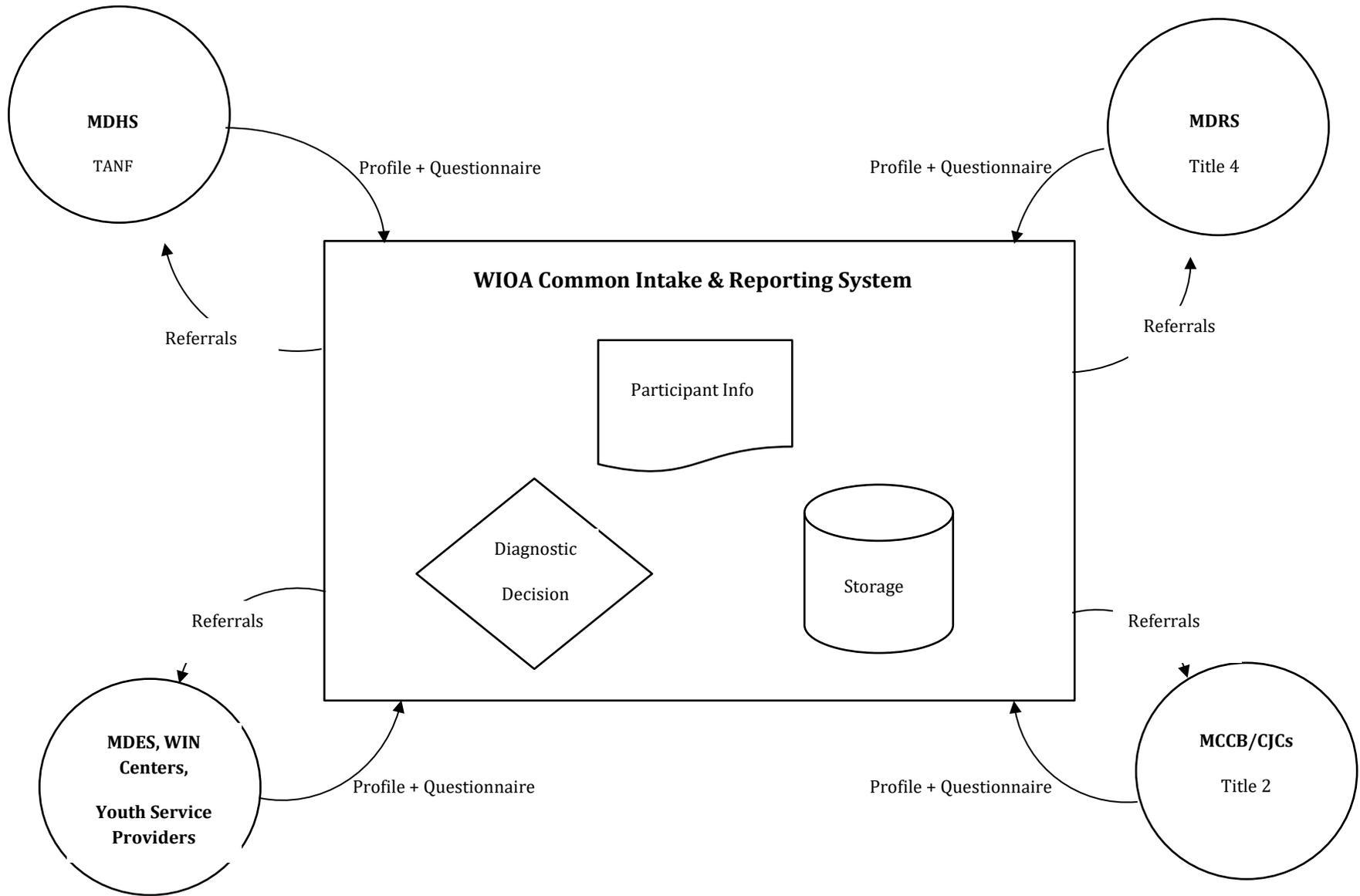
Step 3: Pathway Activities – The Career Pathway Model includes three main pathways:

- Smart Start Pathway – Participants who lack basic skills and those requiring the most intensive assistance to become job-ready are referred to the Smart Start Pathway for the provision of basic skills and services.
- Career Tech Pathway – Individuals who are determined to possess basic skills, but who need training to obtain career-specific skills are referred to the Career Tech Pathway. The Career Tech Pathway is designed to provide technical and career training and education in high-demand job skills or specific job skills that fit the current or future needs of local labor markets.
- Work-Ready – The Work-Ready Pathway is designed for individuals who possess both basic skills and a level of academic and/or technical skill that place them in a position to enter directly into the workforce. This pathway connects the individual with permanent unsubsidized employment.

Step 4: Exit Strategy – Upon completion of each pathway activity, participants may move into the next pathway activity or they may be directed to an exit strategy such as transitional employment programs or postsecondary degree programs.

Step 5: Unsubsidized Employment – Participants secure unsubsidized gainful employment.

Figure 9. WIOA Common Intake & Reporting System



C.3. The SMW LWDA works to support the State Plan’s two major components: 1) Combined Plan Programs and 2) Strategic Programs to increase the impact of the Combined Plan (Tables 1 and 2). The SMW LWDA held a meeting of the combined plan partners to gather input into the initial development of this local plan. Meetings are continually held with the partners to develop processes and procedures for providing services to individuals and to employers using a combined approach. Partners are committed to engaging with each other to create a cohesive system of unduplicated services.

Table 3. Combined Plan Programs

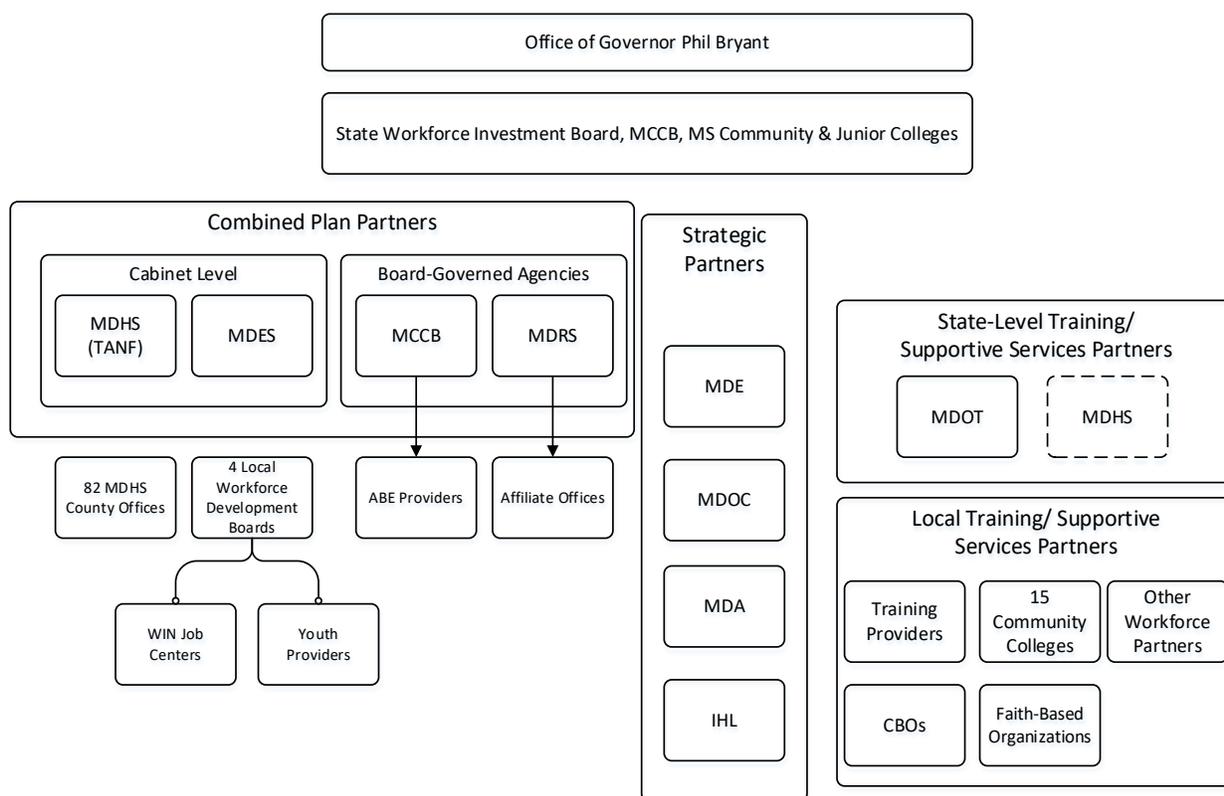
Agency	Program
LWDA	Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs (WIOA Title I)
MDES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wagner-Peyser Act Program (Wagner-Peyser Act, amended by WIOA Title III) • Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers Program (authorized under Title II-Chapter 2 of the Trade Act of 1974) • Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program (authorized under Chapter 41 of Title 38 United States Code) • Unemployment Insurance Programs (authorized under state unemployment compensation laws) • Senior Community Service Employment Programs (authorized under Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965)
MCCB	Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program (WIOA Title II)
MDRS	Vocational Rehabilitation Program (Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA Title IV)
MDHS	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

Table 4. Strategic Programs

Agency	Program
MDHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment and training programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (authorized under section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008) • Work programs authorized under section 6(o) Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 • Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act
MDE & MCCB	Career and technical education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins and Technical Education Act of 2006
MDA	Employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development

Figure 10 depicts the state agency structure under which combined partner workforce-related services are administered. The Office of the Governor administers the highest level of authority and leadership in fulfilling the federal WIOA requirements.

Figure 10. State Workforce Partner Agency Organization



C.4. The SMW LWDA MOUs with core program provider partners specify responsibilities of each and goals are developed in coordination with each provider that serve to increase individuals' access to training, education and support services resources. The provision of these services, in addition to utilization of the core program provider partners, serves to expand opportunities to connect individuals with employment. Co-enrollment of individuals is accomplished where appropriate. Based on an applicant's assessment, the development of his/her individual success plan includes, where appropriate, the attainment of a recognized postsecondary credential, an

industry-recognized certificate or a certification. Preference is given to such credentials or certifications that are portable and stackable and provide for progression along the career pathway.

C.5. The SMW LWDA uses a variety of services and programs to meet the needs of businesses, including but not limited to, the following:

1. Connect to job seekers—Employers who want to electronically connect to potential job candidates can do so through an integrated, technology-based workforce system, Mississippi Works. Through use of this system, employers can post job openings, search for potential candidates, send an individual a request to submit a resume, and much more. The LWDB encourages employers to utilize this tool. For employers who do not have access to or the means to use the technology, additional services are available at WIN Job Centers, including WIOA funded OJT training and Work Experience/Internship opportunities.
2. Expand employment opportunities—SMW LWDA provides employers with WIOA OJT and Work Experience/Internships to assist in their development of a technically-skilled workforce. The LWDA utilizes relationships with area industry associations, economic development entities, human resource directors' associations, and other community business groups to ensure that the programs' designs are structured to meet the needs of businesses and employers and also to ensure that businesses and employers are aware of these opportunities for assistance with developing their workforce. Programs that align training opportunities with employment within the identified in-demand industries and sectors are given priority. At the forefront of all program design is the goal of providing for appropriate career pathways for job seekers.

In addition to WIOA-funded programs that are available through the SMW LWDA, employers may also utilize other available training resources, including:

Short-term training programs—Employers can utilize the Workforce Enhancement Training (WET) Fund to customize pre-employment training, post-hire training, or evaluate applicant skills through local community colleges.

Job creation incentive—Employers who create new jobs and make corporate investments in Mississippi may be eligible for a number of tax incentives.

C.6. The SMW LWDA coordinates with and makes referrals to the community college Small Business Development Centers and other small business-focused service providers to promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services.

C.7. The SMW LWDA promotes the use of apprenticeships to support the regional economy and individuals' career advancement through referral to and collaboration with entities such as the DOL Office of Apprenticeship, the Mississippi Apprenticeship Program (MAP), and other registered apprenticeship programs. SMW also provides pre-apprenticeship training, which is available through ITAs. In order to promote the establishment of apprenticeship programs, the Sector Coordinator meets with employers regularly to encourage them to identify apprentice-able occupations.

SMW, in conjunction with Southern Mississippi Planning and Development District and Pearl River Community College, is supporting a utility lineman apprenticeship program. The program is a first of its kind effort as three Mississippi utility construction companies agreed and are participating in the joint training of employee apprentices. The program is scheduled for two years and is funded through Mississippi Works. Apprentices attend onsite training two weeks per year and participate in defined on-the-job training throughout the remainder of the year. The program began in January 2018 and is scheduled to conclude in December 2019.

One of the largest workforce challenges for employers in the targeted healthcare sector is keeping qualified nurses. The first step SMW took to address this issue was to establish the Nurse Externship Program, which has shown to increase recruitment and retention in hospitals and other healthcare providers. The next step is to move towards a Nurse Apprenticeship Model, which will focus on assisting nurses in their first year to deal with the struggles of learning the job after the formal education phase ends. SMW is currently working with DOL and MAP to develop a nurse apprenticeship model using the state of Montana's Nurse Apprenticeship Program as the basis for this model. Once the model is established, the Sector Coordinator will recruit hospitals and other healthcare providers to participate in this apprenticeship program.

C.8. The SMW LWDA supports and participates in rapid response activities as described in the Mississippi WIOA Combined Plan to offer individuals affected by layoff or closure individualized comprehensive reemployment benefits and services. When any WIOA partner receives information concerning a layoff or closure, that information is shared with both state and local rapid response team members. The SMW LWDA coordinates Rapid Response activities with the state, to quickly respond to the needs of those affected by a layoff or closure of any type. The Rapid Response Team includes representatives and/or resource information from the appropriate local WIN Job Center, Community or Junior College, MDHS, Home Saver Program, Small Business/Entrepreneurial Program, MDES, MDRS and the SMW LWDA to provide information to those facing a job loss. Information is provided to and reviewed with individuals affected and includes help on "Surviving a Layoff", a personal tool kit, tips on developing a resume, interviewing tips, how to obtain Career Readiness Certificates, how to apply for Unemployment Benefits, how to register for employment services, training services available for dislocated workers, job leads, upcoming job fairs, housing assistance, mortgage assistance, insurance options, utility bill assistance, prescription assistance, and child care.

C.9. The SMW LWDA fully maximizes the coordination of services provided under the Wagner-Peyser Act and WIOA services provided in the local area through the WIN Job Center system. SMW LWDA utilizes the area's WIN Job Centers to deliver its WIOA services. A list of the SMW WIN Job Center locations is found in Appendix G, page 77. WIOA Career and Training services are provided to customers in addition to services that are available through the MDES Wagner-Peyser program. WIN Job Center staff is fully integrated in that each staff person has the knowledge and ability to provide Wagner-Peyser services as well as WIOA services. This serves to prevent duplication of services of the two programs. When fully developed, the state's technology system for registering and tracking services provided to individuals will also serve to prevent the duplication of services.

C.10. The SMW LWDA supports and works with the Adult Education and Literacy Program operated through the Mississippi Community College Board and the Mississippi Department of Education. The intake process in the Career Pathway Model, whereby individuals are assessed for basic and work ready skills, will connect adults needing these services. Where appropriate, Adult Education programs and services are made available at WIN Job Centers or at facilities in close proximity to the centers. Individuals seeking WIOA training services who do not currently possess

a high-school diploma or a high-school equivalency are connected with Adult Education programs in the area.

C.11 The SMW LWDA supports and works with the MDRS to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities through flexible, customized services. The State Plan outlines the details of how services are administered including cross training of staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers, and other efforts at cooperation, collaboration, and coordination. MDRS has been an active workforce partner in the SMW LWDA for many years. The SMW LWDA works closely with MDRS staff to provide WIN Job Center and WIOA services to their clients, and when appropriate, WIOA services are combined with MDRS available services to meet the client's needs. The MOU includes a detailed description of this coordination of service provision.

C.12. The SMW LWDA follows the competitive procurement process used to award sub-awards and contracts in the local area for activities carried out under WIOA Title1 in accordance with the Uniform Administrative Requirements for Federal Grants 2 CFR 200, which outlines requirements for entities receiving and administering federal funds. All WIOA funded services are procured in this manner.

C.13. The SMW LWDA developed and implemented a diagnostic checklist for information that is to be collected from individuals during the intake process. The checklist serves to assist intake staff in performing a work ready assessment, in developing the individual's success plan, and with making referrals to other workforce partner programs and services that may be utilized by the individual. The state is currently working on a Combined Plan Partner system which will automatically generate a recommended referral to specific services. This formalized referral process will enable greater accuracy and ease of referral for participants and service providers. The current system allows the tracking of services provided to individuals and allows OGM to generate a quarterly performance report for the SMW LWDA indicating actual performance as compared to the negotiated performance measures. These reports enable the SMW LWDA to manage programs and make adjustments as necessary to affect performance outcomes.

C.14. The SMW LWDB is an active, involved board, not just a “rubber stamp” board. Meetings are well attended and members are engaged in the programs, activities and performance of the LWDA. These are the characteristics of a high-performing board. An excellent example of this board reaching towards high performance is the Chairman’s goal for every SMW county to become an ACT Work Ready Community. He took the ACT WorkKeys assessment himself to earn a National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) which, in turn, will assist his home county of Rankin in becoming work ready. Additionally, he challenged the other LWDB members to earn an NCRC (which many of them did) and has even recruited employers in the area to support the NCRC as a Work Ready Community Goal.

The SMW LWDB has adopted policies and operating procedures as required and in accordance with the State Plan. A list of the SMW LWDA policies and operating procedures is provided in the appendices of this plan.

C.15. The SMW LWDA places emphasis on the SMW targeted Sector Strategy industries as well as Mississippi’s economic sector goals as identified by the MDA. The SMW LWDA prioritizes programs and service delivery taking into account these target industry sectors which support economic developers in attracting these industries to Mississippi. SMW LWDB members are individuals who are active in their communities and have existing relationships with local economic developers. In this way, they are connected to the local economy and work with the economic developers to bring new business into their respective areas.

C.16. The SMW LWDA performs an annual review of the local plan in coordination with workforce partners and prepares and submits any necessary modifications that reflect change in local and or/state priorities, target industries and local area initiatives on an as needed basis.

D. WIN Job Centers (One-Stop Delivery System) and Programs

D.1. The SMW LWDA contains seven full-time WIN Job Centers, one of which is a comprehensive center and one specialty center serving a very specific population group. The seven WIN Job Centers are currently operated by MDES under subaward from SMW LWDA.

The SMW LWDA ensures that the WIN Job Center operator is properly monitored, evaluated and audited based on performance goals and other subaward criteria.

Periodic partner meetings along with meetings with WIN Job Center managers and staff are scheduled to explore ways to improve services and share successful practices.

D.2. The SMW LWDB has developed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with workforce system partners and service providers. The purpose of the MOU is to establish the design framework and partnerships of the SMW LWDA. While this document is a requirement of WIOA and is consistent with the directive of the State Plan, the intent of the MOU is to create and foster an atmosphere of cooperation and collaboration among partners. Current Consortium Agreements/Infrastructure Funding Agreements are available for review at the office of the Central MS Planning & Development District. See Appendix H, page 79 for the SMW Local Area Memorandum of Understanding, Modification Number 1.

D.3. The SMW LWDA WIN Job Centers uses the state's participant and service tracking system and Mississippi Works integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information system to administer programs carried out under WIOA and WIN Job Center partners. Training is provided as needed to workforce partner staff regarding the use of the tracking system and the MS Works technology.

D.4. The SMW LWDA WIN Job Center staff and other workforce partner staff is trained in integrated case management processes and workforce services delivery.

D.5. The SMW LWDA conducts audits, monitoring and program oversight of the WIN Job Center system. All sub-awardees are audited in at least one in-depth review during the program year. Generally, eight focus areas for the audit review include:

1. General Compliance
2. Cash receipts
3. Non-payroll cash disbursements
4. Payroll disbursements

5. Property and equipment
6. General administrative
7. Programmatic performance and compliance
8. Equal opportunity compliance

OGM has conducted reviews of customer service quality. Data for the WIOA Customer Satisfaction Survey were collected through a telephone survey of job seekers and businesses in Mississippi who participated in WIOA programs and services. Data were collected during the month of January 2018.

Results indicate that both the businesses and job seekers were satisfied with the services they received from the local WIN Job Centers. The results reveal a relatively high level of satisfaction among job seekers whereas customer satisfaction among business owners improved when compared to 2016 customer satisfaction survey.

Job Seeker Satisfaction

Three Questions were used to determine how satisfied job seekers were with the services they received. Question 1 asked job seekers to rate their overall satisfaction with the services received. Question 2 asked how closely the services received met the expectation of the job seeker. Question 3 asked how closely the services received were ideal for an individual in the same circumstances. The average score for each question, on a scale from 1 to 10 (with 1 indicating the lowest level of satisfaction and 10 indicating the highest level of satisfaction), was approximately 8.3. The average state weighted index was 82.40 with SMW at 86.90.

Employer Satisfaction

Three questions were used to determine how satisfied businesses were with the services they received. Question 1 asked the businesses to rate their overall satisfaction with the services received. Question 2 asked how closely the services received met the expectation of the employer. Question 3 asked if the services received were ideal for businesses in the same circumstances. The average score for each question, on a scale from 1 to 10 (with 1 indicating the lowest level of satisfaction, and 10

indicating the highest level of satisfaction), was approximately 8.0. The average state weighted index was 80.37 with SMW falling slightly below at 79.65.

WIN Job Centers are monitored routinely for WIOA program compliance, documentation, and timeliness of service. Corrective action is initiated if necessary and technical assistance is provided as needed.

D.6. WIN Job Center location(s) including Sector Training Plus Comprehensive, Comprehensive, Affiliate, and Virtual-Access sites are defined in the table below.

Table 5. Descriptions of WIN Job Centers

Comprehensive Centers	Affiliate Centers	Sector Training Plus Comprehensive Center	Virtual (e-WIN) Access Sites
Canton (Madison County WIN Job Center) 152 Watford Parkway Canton, MS 39046 601-859-7609	Brookhaven 545 Brookway Blvd. Brookhaven, MS 39602 601-833-3511 Jackson 5959 I-55 North Frontage Rd. Jackson, MS 39212 601-321-7931 McComb 1002 Warren Krout Road McComb, MS 39648 601-684-4421 Natchez 107 Col. John Pitchford Pkwy. Natchez, MS 39120 601-442-0243 Pearl 212 St. Paul St. Pearl, MS 39208 601-321-5441 Vicksburg 1625 Monroe St. Vicksburg, MS 39181 601-638-1452	Currently under development in Jackson, MS	City of Jackson 1000 Metro Center Jackson, MS 39209 The Opportunity Center 845 West Amite St. Jackson, MS 39203 The Village Apartments 386 Raymond Rd. Jackson, MS 39204 Prosperity Center of Greater Jackson 215 McTyere St. Jackson, MS 39202 MS Regional Housing Authority VI 2180 Terry Rd. Jackson, MS 39204 Commonwealth Village Apartments 3930 Skyview Dr. Jackson, MS 39213 Stewpot Community Services 1100 W. Capitol St. Jackson, MS 39203 Claiborne Co. Economic Development District 510 Market St. Port Gibson, MS 39150

Comprehensive Centers	Affiliate Centers	Sector Training Plus Comprehensive Center	Virtual (e-WIN) Access Sites
<p>Services Provided at Each Type Center</p> <p>Services of all Required Workforce Partners Wagner-Peyser Veterans Unemployment Compensation Vocational Rehabilitation TANF SNAP WIOA Smart Start Classes CRC testing</p>	<p>Wagner-Peyser Veterans Unemployment Compensation WIOA</p>	<p>All Services currently provided at the Comprehensive Center plus career tech training</p>	<p>Jefferson Economic Development District 137 Medgar Evers Blvd. Fayette, MS 39069</p> <p>Franklin Co. Public Library 106 1st St. Meadville, MS 39653</p> <p>All MDHS county offices in the SMW area</p> <p>Virtual access to Unemployment Compensation Virtual access to any partner on-line services Information regarding WIOA services</p>

WIN Job Center operators and the providers of WIOA career and training services and youth services are selected using a competitive procurement process. Currently, the MDES serves as the one-stop operator for the above listed WIN Job Centers. They also are a provider for WIOA career and training services for Adults, Dislocated Workers and Youth. MDRS and Warren County Association for Retarded Citizens provide specialized services to individuals with disabilities. Hinds, Copiah-Lincoln, and Southwest Mississippi Community Colleges provide career services to Adults and Youth. The Madison County Youth Court provides services to youth. SMW may be a provider of career services as described in Section 107 (g)(2).

D.7. The SMW LWDA will have at least one Sector Training Plus Comprehensive One-Stop Center within the area. A Sector Training Plus Comprehensive One-Stop Center will provide access to all Combined Plan Partner services and also provide in-house career and technical education. Planning for the center is underway to include cross-program alignment of services in a seamless, coordinated, service-delivery model that accommodates all job seekers and employers. The SMW LWDA is currently working with Hinds Community College in the development of the area's Sector Training Plus Comprehensive Center. Other discussions are on-going with Copiah-Lincoln and Southwest MS Community Colleges in regard to the feasibility of establishing similar centers on a smaller scale.

D.8. Career services are provided in the SMW LWDA WIN Job Centers by the one-stop operator, MDES, under subaward from CMPDD. WIN Job Center staff utilizes local labor market information, training information, career pathway information and guidance to assist individuals.

D.9. The SMW LWDA MOU contains a description of the processes for providing services to individuals through the Smart Start Career Pathway. The individual assessments, which are completed during face-to-face interviews, include the development of an individual's success plan. The individuals are introduced to the MS Works system and assisted with registration and the development of a profile. The flow chart of services is found previously in this plan in section C.2.

D.10. All job seekers, even those restricted to remote areas, can connect to employers through an interactive website (www.mississippiworks.org) and integrated iPhone and Android mobile applications, both referred to as Mississippi Works. Job seekers can 1) build a profile; 2) generate a

resume; 3) search for job openings and apply for them online; 4) receive emails or text messages when new openings match the job seeker's criteria; 5) receive real-time feedback on how well matched the job seeker is for a particular position; and 6) access easy-to-understand labor market information. For job seekers who lack computer skills, WIN Job Center staff can also log into the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange to assist job seekers in applying for positions through a "staff-assisted referral" or other Wagner-Peyser services.

D.11. The SMW LWDB authorizes WIOA funds to cover the WIOA fair share of the cost of operation and infrastructure of the WIN Job Center system in the subaward with the one-stop operator. These costs are an evaluation factor in selecting the one-stop operator and the location of the WIN Job Centers.

D.12. The SMW LWDA MOU identifies the role and activities of each partner agency including an inventory of all services directly delivered or accessible through each and referral mechanisms. Non-WIOA resources, whether cash or in-kind, are identified in the MOU.

D.13. Adult and Dislocated Worker employment and training activities include but are not limited to, ITA, Work Experience/Internships, and OJT.

Descriptions of employment and training activities include:

Individual Training Account (ITA) - is a scholarship award established by a WIN Job Center on behalf of a WIOA eligible individual. ITAs are available to eligible adults, dislocated workers and youth as authorized under Title I of WIOA and are used to purchase training services through community colleges and some private training facilities who have been approved as training providers and have been placed on the state's Eligible Training Provider List. ITAs will fund the cost of tuition and select other costs, but may be utilized only after other available financial aid has been applied. The goal of the ITA program is to provide unskilled individuals with a level of training appropriate to obtaining unsubsidized permanent employment upon completion of the training.

Work Experience/Internship - is used to help eligible adults, dislocated workers and youth gain practical work experience and sharpen their leadership skills while working and

getting paid with the goal of unsubsidized permanent employment at the conclusion of the Work Experience/Internship period. Work Experience/Internships are available to eligible adults, dislocated workers and youth.

On-the-Job Training (OJT) - is training provided by an employer to workers during a prescribed period, the length of which is based on the difficulty and complexity of the skills that are to be learned by the WIOA program participant. The goal of OJT is unsubsidized permanent employment at the conclusion of the training period. OJT is available for eligible Adults and Dislocated Workers.

The SMW LWDB regularly reviews the type of services offered within the area to ensure that they are the most appropriate allowable by law to meet the needs of the job seekers and employers and that they align with the area's in-demand occupational sectors.

Youth Services

D.14. The SMW LWDA has a standing Youth Committee to assist with planning, operational, and other issues relating to the development and the provision of services to youth. The LWDB appoints the committee's membership. It ensures at least one community-based organization representative is on the committee who has a demonstrated record of success in serving eligible youth. The committee makes recommendations to the LWDB regarding youth activities, and ensures that the programs provided meet the needs of the SMW LWDA youth and serve to meet the area's negotiated performance measures. The SMW Youth Committee meets on an as-needed basis. A list of the current members of the Committee is found at Appendix U, page 167.

The available WIOA funded youth workforce activities, including activities for youth with disabilities, are included below:

1. Paid Internships which have as a component academic and occupational education and on-the-job training opportunities.
2. ITAs (occupational skills training) which shall include priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that are aligned with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area.

3. Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster.
4. The SMW LWDA does not currently provide supportive services. Youth are referred to community agencies if services are needed.
5. Follow-up Services for not less than 12 months after exiting the program to ensure continuity of services and progress toward performance outcomes.
6. Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling
7. Labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area.
8. Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training.

The SMW LWDA's approach to meeting the WIOA required 75% minimum youth expenditure on out of school youth is to serve out of school youth at 100%. In-school youth will not be served, unless the Youth Committee and LWDB approve programs for this population.

The SMW LWDA's approach to meeting the required 20% minimum youth expenditure for work experience is to design programs that ensure 20% of their allocated funds are spent in the category of Youth Work Experience/Internships.

D.15. The SMW LWDA utilizes the state's intake and assessment system to maximize linkages between the WIN Job Center system and unemployment insurance program requirements. This intake and assessment system is part of the Smart Start Career Pathway Model, which requires a close working relationship among workforce partner agencies and staff to help Mississippians navigate the workforce system.

A committee of workforce partner agency representatives developed a diagnostic assessment questionnaire to determine partner referrals. Each one of the five questions is targeted towards a specific core program to easily determine if an individual should be referred to that program's services based on the individual's response. One of the diagnostic questions asks if the person has worked in the last 18 months. Based on the individual's response(s), he/she may be provided information on how to apply for UI.

Individuals receiving unemployment benefits are required to register for and actively seek employment, which they can do utilizing an online job search training tool (OJST) made available by MDES. The OJST allows customers to strengthen their marketability during the early stages of their employment pursuit without the expense of traveling to a WIN Job Center location multiple times. The goal is to increase customer engagement and preparedness while decreasing the average weeks an individual is unemployed. Rapid response services respond to mass layoffs and plant closings in coordination with the state Dislocated Worker unit and the SMW staff to decrease long-term unemployment.

Conversely, individuals entering the WIN Job Center seeking employment and/or training services are assessed and if the need indicates, they are instructed in the process for filing for unemployment benefits. Re-Employment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) is a service provided by MDES through the WIN Job Center system that focuses on individuals who may exhaust their 26 weeks of unemployment benefits before they return to work. RESEA concentrates on those Mississippians re-entering the workforce in less time.

D.16. In support of the Mississippi Combined Plan, TANF activities are coordinated through the Comprehensive WIN Job Center and may be coordinated through some Affiliate Sites. TANF requires all participants to register with MS Works and conduct job search at WIN Job Centers as a requirement for receiving TANF services.

D.17. The SMW LWDA supports the State Plan dropout prevention and recovery initiatives. The MDE coordinates partnership initiatives to prevent dropouts, including but not limited to career academies, dual-enrollment, occupational diploma program, and work-based learning experiences.

D.18. The SMW LWDA is fully committed to the integration and provision of services to the target groups indicated below. The service integration has been developed through the diagnostic questionnaire and referral process discussed above in D.15, and is detailed in the MOUs with each workforce partner. Referrals to assistance offered by workforce partners to help overcome barriers such as childcare and transportation are made to individuals who need such assistance. Continued training and networking between the workforce partners to build relationships and keep

up with resources also ensure the integration and provision of services to the target groups. The target groups are:

- a) persons with disabilities;
- b) veterans;
- c) Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) recipients;
- d) Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) participants;
- e) individuals with other barriers to employment; and,
- f) additional specific populations, if applicable.

D.19. The SMW LWDB supports the State Plan for providing services for individuals who qualify under the 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. ADA compliance is evaluated during the WIN Job Center certification process.

E. Sector Strategy Plan

E.1. The SMW Sector Strategy Plan developed in 2017 is attached as Appendix V, page 170. The plan identifies needs, objectives, and goals for the major employment providers and economic driving workforce sectors of Healthcare, Manufacturing, and Transportation/ Distribution/ Logistics. The sector strategy plan identifies current and emerging skill gaps and other workforce issues through the partnership of industry, government, education, training, economic development, and community organizations. The plan was developed through a collaborative effort with the objective of aligning state resources to better address industry demands.

E.2. The SMW LWDB membership contains at least 51% private sector membership as required by law. These business representatives are used as a catalyst for encouraging employers to not only participate in the public workforce system, but more importantly, to voice their needs and the ways in which the local workforce area programs, activities and processes can better meet those needs. Local economic developers serving on the LWDB are involved in employer engagement activities and also participated in developing the SMW Sector Strategy Plan.

SMW has contracted with the Mississippi Hospital Association (MHA) for implementation of the Sector Strategy Plan. The Sector Coordinator is employed by MHA and he conducts quarterly meetings of the two sector strategy leadership teams, Manufacturing (including Transportation/Distribution/Logistics) and Healthcare. The Healthcare Leadership Team is exploring the feasibility of establishing a Nurse Apprenticeship Program. MHA works with key employers and encourages them to apply for WET Funds to address some of the needs listed in the Sector Strategy Plan. WIOA funds are also utilized where appropriate.

E.3. As the SMW LWDA MOU was developed and the workforce partners became fully engaged in the workforce system and the provision of services, the partners' corporate knowledge and expertise has allowed the area to develop a map of local assets and resources, and identify the critical stakeholders and their roles. In addition, local economic development entities, foundations, school districts, community colleges and community based organizations have been brought into the resource pool to ensure that the local area's workforce is afforded all available avenues for improvement and advancement.

E.4. Increasing public awareness of services offered at the WIN Job Center requires routine, on-going initiatives at the state and local level. At the local workforce area level, all partners of the workforce system actively participate in efforts to increase employer and job seeker awareness of services available through the system and how to access them. The SMW staff regularly markets WIOA services through participation in Work Ready Community events, local job fairs, community awareness events scheduled by various partners in various counties, and also in making presentations to business group. Many times the LWDB chairperson participates in these activities, either along with the SMW staff or on his own. Marketing of the WIN Job Centers services is a responsibility of the one-stop operator, who is required to have staff participate in local business events and organizations in their communities. Other SMW WIOA service providers are also given the responsibility to educate businesses and others regarding the available programs and opportunities.

E.5. The SMW LWDA has formed relationships with both public and private educational institutions and other eligible training providers to provide short-term, credential-based training

programs and two-year degree programs intended to develop a qualified and quantifiable labor pool. As a result of the development and implementation of the Sector Strategy Plan, SMW revised the local area ITA, Work Experience/Internship and OJT policies to place emphasis on training in the area's targeted sectors. Additionally, SMW has implemented specific criteria for funding for training in these targeted sectors.

E.6. The workforce system provides information to individuals regarding occupations, including what training is needed for that occupation, job requirements, salaries and wages, opportunities for advancement in the field, working conditions, etc. so that individuals fully understand the occupation and can make informed decisions regarding the selection of a career pathway. Attainment of a credential or certificate is one of the basics of the Smart Start Career Pathway. The SMW LWDA will not expend WIOA funds on training that does not produce a certificate or an industry-recognized credential that is stackable and portable. Completion of certain modules of the Mississippi Smart Start Pathway Class and attainment of the National Career Readiness Certificate at no less than a bronze level is an application requirement for an ITA, and is strongly encouraged for those individuals desiring an OJT.

F. Business Plan

F.1. The SMW LWDA has adopted and continues to implement the seven goals identified in the State Plan:

Goal 1: Work together to develop policies that will coordinate service delivery with all WIOA Combined Plan Partners.

Goal 2: Strengthen interagency partnerships.

Goal 3: Develop defined, articulated pathways across educational sectors (K-16+) to create a pipeline for the workforce.

Goal 4: Develop cross-program performance metrics.

Goal 5: Continue to invest in integrated technology to meet the unified technology requirements of the WIOA and other federal initiatives.

Goal 6: Engage partners to establish the plan to remain abreast of changing industry needs and the metrics to measure outcomes to realize the potential of the state's workforce programs and delivery systems.

Goal 7: Draft and communicate a unified vision/message.

The SMW LWDA intended outcomes are 1) to increase the labor force participation rate in the area; 2) to promote economic growth by engaging employers and providing training and education to meet their needs; 3) to reduce the dependence on public assistance; and 4) to increase the wealth of and provide a self-sufficient wage to SMW LWDA citizens.

F.2. The goals and intended outcomes are to be achieved in accordance with the Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway Model. This model will provide opportunities for education, not only that of basic and occupation specific skills, but also industry and occupational knowledge so that individuals can be trained in and matched with appropriate careers and pathways. Once individuals are subsequently connected with unsubsidized employment, the above goals can be realized. MDHS and MDRS are now providing Smart Start Pathway Class training so that Smart Start can be administered at more sites, making this training more accessible to all partner participants. Smart Start Pathway Classes are offered at either a WIN Job Center or a community college campus.

F.3. The SMW LWDA MOU defines the procedures for how local partners will work together to achieve Goals 1, 2, 4 and 7 (Section F.1. above). Creating a pipeline for the workforce (Goal 3 in Section F.1.) is accomplished through the career pathway model. Goal 5 is established by the SWDB regarding quality control procedures for data input and output accuracy. The SMW LWDA continues to support, both financially and otherwise, the state's integrated technology development. Goal 6 is accomplished through the SMW LWDA annual review of local services.

F.4. The following timetable ensures timely review of outcomes and achievements of the workforce goals and outcomes for the SMW LWDA.

Table 6. Timetable for Plan Milestones

Milestone	Schedule
LWDB meetings	As Needed
Partner Staff Training	5/25 – 27, 2016 & 6/20 - 22, 2016 On-going
Development of MOUs	No later than 9/30/16
On-going partner meetings and coordination	Continual
Initial Analysis of Sector Strategies	No later than 9/30/16 – (has been completed)
Review of emerging sectors	Annually
Employer engagement directed at industry sectors	No later than 12/31/16 – (has been completed and is on-going)
Development of Sector Training Plus Comprehensive Center	On-going
Local Area Plan Review	Annually

The SMW LWDB meets 3 times per program year, usually in October, December and May. Additional meetings may be called from time to time, if the need warrants.

F.5. The SMW LWDA assesses, on a quarterly basis, progress toward meeting the milestones established above. Status of milestones is reported to the LWDB at their regularly scheduled meetings. Areas where progress is not being achieved will be given priority and will be immediately addressed by SMW LWDA staff and appropriate partner agencies.

F.6. Population Totals

The table below shows the estimated population in the SMW LWDA, as per the most recent census, for the 2000-2010 time period.

Area Name	2000 Estimated Population	2010 Estimated Population	Estimated 2000-2010 Population Percent Change
South Central Mississippi Works	763,780	802,166	5.03%
Mississippi	2,844,658	2,970,316	4.42%
United States	281,421,906	309,346,863	9.92%

The table below shows the labor force, employment and unemployment in the SMW LWDA. These figures are not seasonally adjusted.

<u>Time Period</u>	<u>Civilian Labor Force</u>	<u>Number Employed</u>	<u>Number Unemployed</u>	<u>Unemployment Rate</u>	<u>Preliminary Data</u>
March, 2016	355,238	335,884	19,354	5.4%	No
June, 2016	361,666	338,380	23,286	6.4%	No
September, 2016	354,551	335,910	18,641	5.3%	No
December, 2016	357,149	339,059	18,090	5.1%	No
March, 2017	357,618	340,207	17,411	4.9%	No
June, 2017	361,959	340,669	21,290	5.9%	No
September, 2017	356,331	340,226	16,105	4.5%	No
December, 2017	358,812	343,761	15,051	4.2%	No
March, 2018	356,865	342,154	14,711	4.1%	Yes

These charts reflect historical data comparisons of the workforce area's population compared to the labor force and the number of employed/unemployed individuals in the area.

The table below shows the number of job openings advertised online in the SMW LWDA on May 8, 2018.

Area Name	Job Openings
South Central Mississippi Works	6,779

WIOA funded programs are developed in such a manner as to be consistent with the WIOA Smart Start Pathway model and in an effort to engage a higher percentage of the overall population to enter the labor force. Training programs are offered that will afford individuals employment opportunities in in-demand occupations within the local area.

F.7. This matrix identifies the types of resources and services offered by each stakeholder to ensure appropriate alignment of services.

Table 7. Matrix of Resources and Services Provided by Each Stakeholder

	Stakeholder Agency					
	MDES	MCCB & CJs	MDRS	MDHS	MDE	SMW LWDA
Services						
Enroll new participants (intake)	X	X	X	X	X	
Career assessment	X	X	X	X	X	
Create success plan	X	X	X	X	X	
Job referral	X	X	X	X		
Provide Individual Training Account (ITA)						X
Provide employability training		X	X	X	X	X
Provide employer (customized) training		X				
Provide internships			X			X
Provide on-the-job-training (OJT) contracts			X			X
Assess changing workforce needs	X	X				X

	Stakeholder Agency					
	MDES	MCCB & CJCs	MDRS	MDHS	MDE	SMW LWDA
Services						
Provide youth development services		X	X	X	X	X
Provide transportation services			X	X		
Provide childcare services				X		
Provide supplemental nutrition services				X		
Provide workforce certifications (1 and 2-year degrees)		X				X

G. Policies

Oversight and Monitoring

G.1. The SMW LWDA performs fiscal audits of subawardees and contractors on a yearly basis. Programmatic monitoring is conducted on an on-going basis. A copy of the monitoring policy and documents are attached at Appendix J, page 100.

G.2. The SMW LWDA service providers are monitored on an on-going basis to ensure that they are meeting or exceeding the goals established in the subaward or contract. In the event that it is determined that any service provider is not meeting the employment needs of the local employers and job seekers, immediate steps will be taken to implement corrective action. The service provider will be notified in writing of the required action to be taken and must then submit a timetable for accomplishing the corrective action.

Equal Opportunity

G.3. All subawards and contracts contain language prohibiting discrimination against any individual on the basis of age, disability, sex, race, color or national origin. Audit and monitoring visits, including EO monitoring, review service providers' actions to ensure that no discrimination has occurred. Service providers are required to submit a quarterly report on any EO complaint that is received. The Equal Opportunity Policy is attached as Appendix K, page 119.

G.4. The SMW LWDA’s current Equal Opportunity Complaint Grievance Procedure is attached. The EO Grievance Form is given to participants at the time they are enrolled into the WIOA program. A signed copy of the form is maintained in the participant folder. The Form is attached as Appendix L, page 141.

G.5. The CMPDD Equal Opportunity procedures are reviewed regularly by the EO Officer, Mr. Thelman L. Anderson, and updated as necessary.

Other Policies

G.6. The SMW LWDA Supportive Services policy is attached as Appendix M, page 143.

G.7. The SMW LWDA does not provide Needs-Related Payments and therefore, has no Needs-Related Policy.

G.8. The SMW LWDA does not provide Incumbent Worker Training and therefore, has no Incumbent Worker Training Policy.

G.9. The SMW LWDA Internship Policy (Transitional Jobs) is attached as Appendix N, page 145.

G.10. The SMW LWDA uses OJT as a source of training assistance for the area’s employers. The SMW LWDA OJT Policy is attached as Appendix O, page 148.

G.11. The SMW LWDA Priority of Service Policy is attached as Appendix P, page 151.

G.12. The SMW LWDA uses ITAs as a source of training assistance for individuals in the area who need skills training in order to obtain and retain employment. The SMW LWDA ITA Policy is attached as Appendix Q, page 153.

G.13. The SMW LWDA Conflict of Interest Policy is attached as Appendix R, page 159.

G.14. The SMW LWDA Sunshine Provision Policy is attached as Appendix S, page 163.

G.15. The SMW LWDA Youth Incentive Policy is attached as Appendix T, page 165.

G.16. The SMW LWDA One-Stop Operator Procurement Policy is attached as Appendix W, page 222.

G.17. The SMW LWDA One-Stop Infrastructure Funding Policy is attached as Appendix X, page 225.

**Appendices
Table of Contents**

Appendix Item	Document Name	Page #
A	Local Workforce Development Area Re-designation Approval Letter	56
B	Administrative Entity/Local Workforce Development Area/Fiscal Agent Organizational Chart	57
C	Local Workforce Development Board Membership List	58
D	Local Workforce Development Board Operating Procedures (By-laws)	63
E	Local Area Certification Regarding Debarment	73
F	Local Area Signatory Submission Page	75
G	Local Area WIN Job Centers	76
H	Local Area WIN Job Center Memorandum of Understanding	78
I	Local Area Services Flow Chart	98
J	Local Area Oversight Monitoring Policies and Tools	99
K	Local Area Equal Opportunity Procedures	132
L	Local Area Complaint Grievance Procedure	154
M	Local Area Supportive Services Policy	156
N	Local Area Transitional Jobs Policy (Internship Policy)	158
O	Local Area OJT Policy	161
P	Local Area Priority of Service Policy	164
Q	Local Area ITA Policy	166
R	Local Area Conflict of Interest Policy	172
S	Local Area Sunshine Provision Policy	176
T	Local Area Youth Incentive Policy	178
U	Local Area Youth Committee Membership List	180
V	Local Area Sector Strategy Plan	182
W	Local Area One-Stop Operator Procurement Policy	
X	Local Area One-Stop Infrastructure Funding Policy	

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