

**Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
Regional Plan
July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2020**

Planning Region Name:

Central

Local Areas within the Planning Region:

Catawba, Lower Savannah and Midlands

Local Area Administrators and Contact Information:

- **Catawba Workforce Development Area:**
Nicole Lawing, Administrator
nlawing@catawbacog.org
- **Lower Savannah Workforce Development Area:**
André Anderson, Administrator
abanderson@lscog.org
- **Midlands Workforce Development Area:**
Kevin Hill, Administrator
khill@mwdb.org

Attachment A: Regional Plan Requirements

The regional plan serves as an action plan to develop, align, and integrate service delivery strategies and resources among multiple local areas within a region. Local boards and chief elected officials in each planning region are required to engage in a regional planning process that results in the preparation and submission of a single regional plan. Regional plans must incorporate the local plans for each local area within the planning region. The regional plan must include:

- 1. A description of how each local area within the region was afforded the opportunity to participate in the regional planning process, along with a description of the planning process undertaken to produce the regional plan. The description must include how the chief elected officials and Local Boards were involved in the development of the plan.**

Regional planning and development of the strategies included were derived through coordination of input from workforce system partners, stakeholders and subject matter experts. Each Local Workforce Development Area (Catawba, Lower Savannah and Midlands) was represented through several sectors on the Central Regional Planning Team. The areas of expertise represented included workforce, Adult Education, Economic Development, Technical College, SC Department of Commerce, SC Department of Employment and Workforce, Community-based Organizations and other key stakeholders. Through this ongoing process, the leadership and other core teams have emerged and will continue to provide guidance to the Region as a collaborative plan is developed and implemented.

The Central Region planning process evolved from collaboration between the member local areas and was initially derived from the framework build by the Regional Team. Using this frame work along with guidance from the South Carolina Unified Plan and each local plan, the blueprint for integrated service delivery between the areas was crafted. A final draft of the Central Region plan was then presented to the respective Local Workforce Development Boards and then Local Elected Officials (as appropriate within each WDA) with an opportunity to provide comments and guidance before release for public comment.

In the Catawba Area, a meeting with all three CEOs was not possible; therefore, to receive input, three individual meetings were held. Prior to the meetings, background information on the plans, an overview of the plans, and links to the draft documents were provided. During each meeting, any questions about the plans were addressed and comments requested. All three felt the WDB, committees, staff, etc. had adequately completed the documents for this point in time. Each CEO understood that the documents are updated annually.

In the Lower Savannah Area, LSWDB staff convened meetings between all SC Works required partners, co-located workforce partners and all Workforce Development partners from across the region. There were a total of 6 meetings in all to include the Workforce Development Board meetings where this plan was one of the primary topics of interest. At these meetings, partners were asked to join us in the creation of a Local Plan that would be very inclusive of workforce programs and services being conducted across the Lower Savannah region.

With input from all stakeholders, the final document was created. A Power-Point presentation was provided during the Public Comment period to the Lower Savannah Workforce Development Consortium (CEOs) as well as the LSWDB Executive Committee officers. Full copies of the plan were provided to those present at the Power-Point presentation prior to their arrival as well as the Lower Savannah Council of Government & Lower Savannah Workforce Development Board members. (E-mail, Minutes, Agenda and PowerPoint presentation attached).

In the Midlands, the CEOs were engaged in planning through the Central Midlands Council of Governments Board meeting. This approach was selected by the WDB to ensure that all CEOs were present to hear consistent information and provided the opportunity to give guidance and input. The required elements of Regional and Local Planning were discussed, and the draft framework was presented. The approach provided an efficient opportunity for discussion, questions and comments. CEOs were provided online access to the draft framework and documents, and request for additional input was requested. All CEOs were supportive of the direction the Region and Area were taking at that point.

After all input was received from CEOs, WDBs, stakeholders, etc. and the public comment period had been offered, the Central Region plan was finalized. Meeting minutes relevant to the planning and presentation of plans are attached.

- 2. An analysis of regional labor market data and economic conditions, to include existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations, and the employment needs of employers in those existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations. The analysis shall include:**
 - The knowledge and skills necessary to meet the employment needs of the employers in the region, including those in in-demand industry sectors and occupations;
 - An analysis of the current workforce in the region, including employment and unemployment data, labor market trends, and the educational and skill levels of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment; and
 - An analysis of workforce development activities in the region, including available education and training opportunities. This analysis must indicate the strengths and weaknesses of workforce development activities necessary to address the education and skill needs of job seekers, including individuals with barriers to employment, and the employment needs of employers in the region.

Existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations

Table 1
Industry Data

<u>Element</u>	<u>Central Workforce Region</u>
New Hires by Industry (10 Highest)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Administrative/Support/Waste mgmt. 2. Accommodation & Food Services 3. Retail Trade 4. Health Care & Social Assistance 5. Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services 6. Manufacturing 7. Construction 8. Educational Services 9. Public Administration 10. Other Services (except Public Admin.)
Turn-over by Industry (10 Highest)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Accommodation & Food Services 2. Administrative/Support/Waste mgmt. 3. Arts, Entertainment & Rec. 4. Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing... 5. Construction 6. Retail Trade 7. Real Estate, Rental & Leasing 8. Other Services (except Public Admin.) 9. Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services 10. Transportation & Warehousing
Labor Market Projections (Total Employment by Industry) 2012 - 2022	Total Employment, All Jobs: 12.65% + <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Construction (27.96% / 2.5%) 2. Health Care (26.54% / 2.38%) 3. Professional, Scientific... (25.19% / 2.27%) 4. Admin./Support (19.55% / 1.80%) 5. Real Estate, Rental & Leasing (16.67% / 1.55%) 6. Transportation & Warehousing (14.23% / 1.34%) 7. Arts, Entertainment & Rec. (13.24% / 1.25%) 8. Mining, quarrying, and oil... (12.87% / 1.22%) 9. Management of Companies & Enterprises (12.60% / 1.19%) 10. Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing... (12.43% & 1.18%)

Table 2
Occupation Data

<u>Element</u>	<u>Central Workforce Region</u>
Projections by Occupation (Openings –Growth, 10 Highest)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Office/Admin Support 2. Health Practitioners & Tech. Operations 3. Food Preparation & Related 4. Sales & Related 5. Education, Training & Library 6. Construction & Extraction 7. Production Occupations 8. Transportation & Material Moving 9. Business & Financial Operations 10. Management
Growing Occupations (Percent Change, 10 Highest)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Interpreters & Translators 2. Home Health Aides 3. Diagnostic Medical Sonographers 4. Physical Therapist Aides 5. Physical Therapist Assistants 6. Medical Secretaries 7. Physician Assistants 8. Radiation Therapists 9. Magnetic Resonance Image Tech. 10. Personal Care Aides
Declining Occupations (Percent Change, 10 Highest)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Data Entry Keyers 2. Textile Knitting/Weaving machine setters... 3. Textile Winding/Twisting machine setters... 4. Postal Service Mail Sorters 5. Postal Service Clerks 6. Computer Operators 7. Textile Cutting Machine Setters 8. Prepress Technicians & Workers 9. Meter Readers, Utility 10. Information & Record Clerks

Table 3
Employment needs of Employers/Business

<u>Element</u>	<u>Central Region</u>		<u>South Carolina</u>	
Job Openings (By Number, PY15)	Jun-16	18,726	Jun-16	61,518
	May- 16	18,212	May- 16	63,126
	Apr-16	19,764	Apr-16	67,021
	Mar-16	20,000	Mar-16	61,889
	Feb-16	19,831	Feb-16	64,238
	Jan-16	19,511	Jan-16	56,427
	Dec-15	18,432	Dec-15	60,418
	Nov-15	20,574	Nov-15	73,219
	Oct-15	21,052	Oct-15	71,138
	Sep-15	20,871	Sep-15	71,372
	Aug-15	20,410	Aug-15	71,760
	Jul-15	20,482	Jul-15	73,050
	Avg. Openings	19,822	Avg. Openings	66,265
	Percent of Openings	29.91% (SC)		
	Avg. UI	5.61%	Avg. UI	5.56%

The areas of in-demand and growth employment are in-line with multiple factors and features that shape the Central Region such location (geographically located in the center of the state), encompasses the capital city, diverse industry, and well connected via the interstate system. Additionally, the region is connected to the Charleston Port, Augusta, GA and Charlotte, NC. These factors put Healthcare, Information Technology, Advanced Manufacturing, Transportation/Distribution/Logistics and Business at the forefront of employment in the Central Region. In many cases, there is a commonality or overlapping connection between two or more of the industries.

The alignment of industry sectors and occupations between the Local Areas in the Central Region is advantageous for our planning. This close correlation has made for an efficient strategy for regional alignment and is synced with the three local area priorities. Employment needs and growth opportunities match, as do those industries which show a decline in worker needs.

Knowledge and Skills Necessary to Meet Needs/Demands

Table 4
Growing Job (2012-2022) by Education for Midlands LWDA

<u>Education/Training</u>	<u>By Number</u>	<u>By Percent</u>
Associate's Degree	2,931	7.9%
Bachelor's Degree	7,162	19.2%
Doctoral or Prof. Degree	1,111	3.0%
High School Diploma/GED	12,641	34.0%
Less than HS/GED	8,991	24.1%
Master's Degree	1,054	2.8%
Postsecondary, Non-Degree	2,843	7.6%
Some College, No Degree	501	1.3%
Total	37,234	100.0%

	<u>Certification</u>	<u>Soft Skills</u>	<u>Hard Skills</u>
1.	Driver's License	Oral/Written Communication	Quality Assurance
2.	Certified Registered Nurse	Integrity	Technical Support
3.	Basic Life Support	Team-orientated/Teamwork	Structured Query Language
4.	Commercial Driver's License	Marketing	Preventive Maintenance
5.	Basic Cardiac Life Support	Microsoft Office	Medicaid
6.	Cert. in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation	Detail Oriented	Quality Control
7.	Continuing Education	Customer Service Oriented	Computer-based Training
8.	HAZMAT	Problem Solving	Preventative Maint. Inspection
9.	Cert. Nursing Administration	Self-starting/Self-motivation	Bilingual
10.	Licensed Practical Nurse	Work Independently	Geriatrics

Table 5
Current Workforce in the Region

<u>Element</u>	<u>Central Region</u>		<u>South Carolina</u>	
Unemployment Rate (Annual, Prior 5 years)	2015	6.0%	2015	6.0%
	2014	6.5%	2014	6.4%
	2013	7.7%	2013	7.6%
	2012	9.2%	2012	9.2%
	2011	10.4%	2011	10.6%
UI Rate Change (%)	5 Year – 56.6% decrease		5 year – 56.6% decrease	
	Jun-16	5.7%	Jun-16	5.6%

Unemployment Rate (Monthly, PY-15)	May- 16	4.9%	May-16	4.8%
	Apr-16	5.2%	Apr-16	5.2%
	Mar-16	5.6%	Mar-16	5.6%
	Feb-16	5.5%	Feb-16	5.6%
	Jan-16	5.5%	Jan-16	5.6%
	Dec-15	5.3%	Dec-15	5.4%
	Nov-15	5.4%	Nov-15	5.3%
	Oct-15	5.9%	Oct-15	5.6%
	Sep-15	5.8%	Sep-15	5.7%
	Aug-15	6.2%	Aug-15	5.9%
	Jul-15	6.3%	Jul-15	6.1%

Table 6
Labor Market Trends

<u>Element</u>	<u>Central Region</u>		
Employment by Industry (10 Highest)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Health Care & Social Assistance 2. Retail Trade 3. Manufacturing 4. Accommodation & Food Service 5. Educational Services 6. Admin./Support/Waste mgmt. 7. Public Administration 8. Finance & Insurance 9. Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services 10. Construction 		
New Startup Firms (8 Prior Quarters)	<u>Quarter</u>	<u>Central Region</u>	<u>South Carolina</u>
	2015 Q4	228	889
	2015 Q3	173	665
	2015 Q2	254	905
	2015 Q1	476	1746
	2014 Q4	212	775
	2014 Q3	189	741
	2014 Q2	176	760
	2014 Q1	351	1384
New Hires by Industry (10 Highest)	<u>Central Region</u>		
	1. Admin./Support/Waste mgmt.		

	2. Accommodation & Food Service 3. Retail Trade 4. Health Care & Social Assistance 5. Professional, Scientific & Technical Services 6. Manufacturing 7. Construction 8. Educational Services 9. Public Administration 10. Other Services (except Public Admin.)	
Turnover by Industry (10 Highest)	<u>Central Region</u>	
	1. Accommodation & Food Services 2. Administrative/Support/Waste mgmt. 3. Arts, Entertainment & Rec. 4. Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing... 5. Construction 6. Retail Trade 7. Real Estate, Rental & Leasing 8. Other Services (except Public Admin.) 9. Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services 10. Transportation & Warehousing	
Educational & Skill Attainments	<u>Central Region</u> <u>(2013 5-year Estimates)</u>	
	4.58% Less than 9 th Grade 9.20% 9 th to 12 th , No Diploma 28.58% High School Graduate 21.44% Some College 8.78% Associate's Degree 17.49% Bachelor's Degree 9.98% Graduate Degree	
Barriers To Employment	<u>Central Region</u> <u>(Combined – Catawba, Lower Savannah & Midlands</u> <u>Total Population: 1,338,713</u>	
	Disability	125,709
	Ex-Offender (2015 Releases)	2,554
	Homeless (2015)	1468 / 27.4% of state total
	Poverty	1,303,641

	Youth not in school(15-24 years old)	71,288
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An analysis of the current data related to the Central Region skills and knowledge needs and level indicates a robust workforce. The Regional Unemployment rate has paced the states reported rate, which is on the decline over the last five (5) years. New hiring trends align with the sectors and industries that have shown significant growth in the Central Region. New firm startups also appear higher for 2015 when compared to the same quarter for 2014 – a trend that was also noted for the state as a whole. Other indicators point to the need for expansion of partnership, development of new ones to address barriers that job-seekers in the region experience. The barriers impacting the largest portion of the region’s workforce are criminal backgrounds and disabilities. These groups will be the focus of targeted leveraging of additional resources.

Table 7
Available Education & Training Opportunities (Central Region)

<u>Institutions</u>	<u>Degrees Awarded (2014)</u>
36	18,223

There are 36 training providers operating in the Central Region, and a total of 18,223 degrees reported as award based upon the SCDEW Community Profile for 2014. This includes the University of South Carolina system campuses, Winthrop University, a strong technical college system and many private providers. It appears that the skills-based training and higher education opportunities available in the Central Region are poised to meet the demands of business in the region, the state and adjacent state job markets. Collaborative efforts and partners should focus on increasing interest in training geared toward critical growth industries is the primary challenge as opposed to increasing training opportunities – for example the South Carolina Manufacturing Certificate (SCMC).

An Emphasis on increasing attainment of stackable and industry recognized credentials is another strategy that the region is implementing. The resurgence of manufacturing in South Carolina is a primary factor in focusing our first sector approach. This strategy will ideally support the talent pipeline needs, as well as offer Career “On and Off Ramps” to job seekers. Partnership(s) with Adult Education will aid our approach to develop a pipeline and ensuring that basic skills are addressed and improve HS/GED credential attainment.

Additionally, these reported numbers do not account for the opportunities available through distance education. As technology makes distance education a viable and cost effective option, this will ensure that the skill training needs of our area can be met.

Strengths and Weaknesses of Workforce Development Activities

Table 8
Education Levels of Projected Jobs

<u>Education/Training</u>	<u>By Percent (Projected)</u>	<u>Education Attainment (2013 5-year Estimate)</u>
Associate's Degree	6.4%	8.78%
Bachelor's Degree	17.5%	17.49%
Doctoral or Prof. Degree	2.1%	*9.98%
High School Diploma/GED	36.9%	28.58%
Less than HS/GED	25.9%	13.73%
Master's Degree	2.2%	*9.98%
Postsecondary, Non-Degree	7.5%	*Specific data not available
Some College, No Degree	1.3%	21.44%
Total	100.0%	100%

*Education Attainment data available is not delineated between Master's Degree, Doctoral or other Professional Degree.

Overall, the education and training need projections are closely aligned with educational attainment data. The main gap identified is High School Diploma/GED attainment. This has historically been a challenge for South Carolina, however the disconnect between High School Diploma/GED attainments and employment needs in the Central Region is under nine (9) percent. Statewide emphasis has been placed on increasing the high school graduation rates which has been beneficial. Additionally, as previously mentioned, the growing focus on industry recognized and stackable credentials appear to be a promising strategy that will ensure employer needs are met.

**Source data and projections cited were obtained from the South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce Labor Market Information Profile reports and information provided by the Business Intelligence Department.*

3. A description of plans for the development and implementation or expansion of sector initiatives for in-demand industry sectors or occupations for the region. Regions should consider:

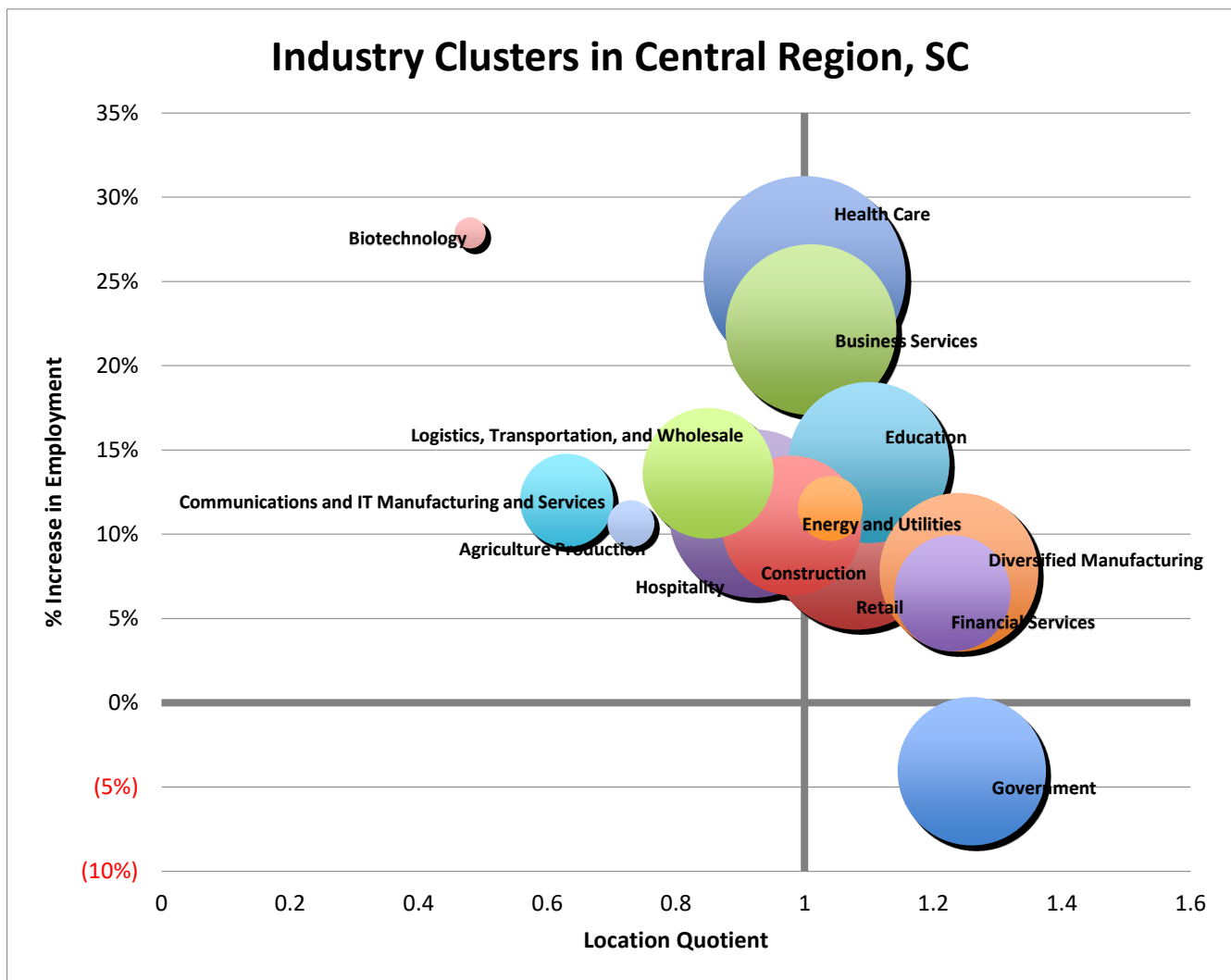
- **Current in-demand industry sectors and occupations within the region;**
- **The status of regional collaboration in support of the sector initiatives;**

- **Current sector-based partnerships within the region;**
- **Data-driven sector priorities within the region;**
- **The extent of business involvement in current initiatives; and**
- **Potential public-private partnerships in the region to support sector strategies.**

The Central Region has committed the South Carolina Sector Strategies initiative currently underway across the state. The Region is made up of 25 team members from across three (3) workforce regions of Lower Savannah, Catawba and Central Midlands, and because the planning process under the guidance of Maher & Maher in June 2016. Team members have been meeting regularly since then to build the framework that will shape the Regions work moving forward in process expected to last 3 – 4 years, yielding outcomes for years to come. The team has set a focus of three primary areas of Workforce Development, which include Diversified Manufacturing, Healthcare, and Transportation/Logistics. To begin the Regional Sector work and develop an effective and scalable strategy moving forward, the Diversified Manufacturing Sector was selected first. This selection came after evaluation of data and guidance from the Maher and Maher team. Additionally, Labor Market Information Data from SC DEW indicates that the top 20 in-demand occupations in the Central Region include:

- Registered Nurses
- Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers
- Computer Systems Analysts
- Computer Occupations, All Other
- First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers
- Retail Salespersons
- Customer Service Representatives
- Computer User Support Specialists
- First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers
- Maintenance and Repair Workers, General
- First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers
- Medical Assistants
- First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers
- Social and Human Service Assistants
- Network and Computer Systems Administrators
- Industrial Engineers
- Accountants and Auditors
- Medical and Health Services Managers
- Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses
- Nursing Assistants

* Source: S.C. Department of Employment & Workforce & The Conference Board's Help Wanted OnLine® data series



Occupations such as First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers, General Maintenance and Repair Workers and Industrial Engineers align with Diversified Manufacturing Sector. The decision to begin with Diversified Manufacturing was also driven by the need to serve an Industry that has consistently sought the assistance of the public workforce system. Through direct engagement with employers, the Region is aware of the need for a talent pipeline to serve entry level Production Operators. All three Workforce Development Areas in the Central Region also have tire manufacturing facilities. While this is a specialized type of manufacturing, it warrants special attention due to the size of the employers and the importance of the growing automotive industry in South Carolina. Additionally, careers that support maintenance of the manufacturing industry must also be a priority. Maintenance Technicians and Industrial Mechanics have been in great demand and the pool of candidates is not increasing. The outlook for these jobs is strong, but generating interest in these jobs has proven difficult.

As stated, the team has set a focus of three primary areas of Workforce Development that encompass the 20 highest in demand occupations. The goal is to increase employment and credentialing in these “Sectors” as they represent High Wage/High Demand occupations within the Central region. To facilitate this workforce transformation model, Sector Strategy Team members are seeking to alter workforce policies, relevant training curriculum, stackable certifications and employer input into the labor market. Team members are from Workforce Development, Economic Development, K-12 Public Education System, Technical College System, employment centric Community Base Organizations and the Department of Commerce. Each of these team members is supported by their governing bodies in this effort.

The current focus of the Central Region Sector Strategy Team is as follows:

- Build ongoing leadership;
- Expand the tent;
- Implement a communication plan throughout the region;
- Take the best cross-agency initiatives to scale in the region;
- Pursue customer-centered design;
- Develop a unified business services strategy; and
- Develop a sustainability plan.
- Greater Employer buy-in across the region

The Region has also deployed our first approach at direct engagement and input of the business community. In an effort to gather as much relevant data and feedback, we developed a hybrid approach to the classic focus group. First, a brief survey was developed and published online (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2RK6L7W>) to solicit input. Each Workforce Area provided the Survey link to variety of employers representing the Manufacturing Sector and invited employers to attend an on-site focus group. The design of the process is to conduct the Focus Groups simultaneously - one in each area - while connecting the groups via technology for an interactive experience. This method was devised as a way to maximize employer’s valuable time and provide an interactive environment. The addition of an online survey and remote access allows more flexibility for participation in the conversation. Our plan is to continue to refine this model as a best practice moving forward as a Region.

The collaborative efforts are going on in each of the three LWDBs, including work to identify potential Public-Private partnerships. Presently, we are exploring the relevant options for our Region. Plans include engagement with groups such as the SC Manufactures Alliance and I-77 Alliance. Partners such as our SC Commerce Regional Workforce Advisors and Education Business Alliances are being engaged to develop contacts and foster meaningful partnerships. The Region is still in the early stages of development, but sees the potential for great progress in this area over the next year.

The key is to take the best cross-agency initiatives to scale in the region. This will create stakeholders in the region and provide concrete opportunities to work collaboratively across partners. This will also support braiding resources as well as aligning resources to effectively meet business and individual customer needs.

4. A description of regional service strategies that may be established as a result of the regionally coordinated delivery of services, including the use of cooperative service delivery agreements, when appropriate. Regions should consider:

- Existing service delivery strategies that will be expanded, streamlined, or eliminated;
- New service strategies necessary to address regional education and training needs;
- Strategies to address geographic advantages;
- Approaches to improve services to individuals with disabilities, veterans, youth, or other hard-to-serve populations;
- Strategies to connect the unemployed with work-based learning opportunities; and
- Strategies to integrate existing regional planning efforts among core partners.

The local workforce areas of the Central Region have and will continue to work “across lines” to serve job seekers and employers. Job seekers are welcome to be served in the SC Works Center that is most convenient to them, regardless of the local area in which they reside. We will continue to work together to serve employers, especially those located close to area lines. One example is providing OJT contracts for an employer located in one local area with a worker from another local area. The region will consider other ways to collaborate on serving job seekers and employers. When a need or opportunity arises, the Central Region will collaborate on shared SC Works satellite centers. We will continue to work together to provide Rapid Response services for an employer layoff or closure that touches more than one area. This may include collaborating to provide workshops, mailing/emailing information on SC Works services, etc.

Local areas refer WIOA participants to training providers in other areas, especially for training not offered “closer to home”. This includes Cell Tower Training at Aiken Technical College and Line Worker Training at York Technical College. We agree that we need to further investigate these types of opportunities, where practical. One idea is for each area to add all technical colleges to their local ETPL.

The Central Workforce Region is a large geographical region extending from the SC/NC border, near Charlotte, to the SC/GA border, near Augusta, and consists of the Catawba, Midlands, and Lower Savannah Local Workforce Areas. The geographic advantages of the Central Region were not necessarily immediately clear as it related to the Region as a whole. However, through planning and exploration we are seeking to evaluate ways to capitalize on the fact that the region is the geographic center of the state with a convenient connection via the interstate system – both with-in and outside of the Region. This allows for expanded commuting patterns that benefit businesses and job seekers, and direct commerce routes into boarder states Georgia and North Carolina. Engagement with the I-77 alliance has begun, and the bordering local areas (Catawba and Lower Savannah) will continue to work with our bordering states and economic development entities to maximize our available LMI data, especially commuting patterns. This information will be shared with Midlands as and with our

regional team, with a plan to expand our communication and data sharing methods. The region will continue to work to explore the methods, and partnerships that can take full advantage of our geographic assets.

Also in the emerging stage is our Regional approach to serving individuals with disabilities, veterans, youth, and other customers that may be harder-to-serve. Each Workforce Area has been operating independently with similar objectives for these customers, and we are in the beginning stages of development of best practices. Our intended strategies include: coordinating the work of Local Area committees, to include Youth and Disabilities. Through collaboration and sharing of information, service delivery and partnership models, the Region should benefit from a more refined and efficient approach. The conversations and initiatives that come out these committee meetings will be shared between the administrators of the three areas. Another consideration is convening Regional/Inter-Area meetings of these committees. Identifying partners and stakeholders in common between the WDAs is another approach that is under evaluation. Potential additional partners for Regional Coordination such as ABLE SC, Job Corps, SC Department of Correction, Probation, Parole & Pardon Services, SC Vocational Rehabilitation and Department of Veterans Affairs are examples of entities with connections to the priority populations that we are seeking to increase our engagement. This will primarily occur through regular Regional-based meetings and updates between Workforce Administrators and other Regional stakeholders to ensure the consistent flow of information and ideas for service strategies.

Working together as a newly defined region on Sector Strategies has brought many regional partners together and opened new lines of communication. While each local area has initiatives and procedures in place to serve “hard to serve” populations, the regional team partners have been valuable resources to help us to begin examining our approach and investigate ways to collaborate more.

Work-based learning is valuable for job seekers. Each local area has their own processes in place but the Central Region will consider ways to collaborate on work-based learning across the region. This may include sharing best practices, success stories, etc.

The Central Region Team has also proven to be a great way to involve core partners in Sector Strategies. We see this as a stepping stone to more regional planning in the future and involving more core partner staff.

5. A description of any administrative cost arrangements that currently exist or that will be established within the region, including the pooling of funds for administrative costs, as appropriate. Regions should consider:

- **Current or proposed resource leveraging agreements.**
- **Establishing a process to evaluate cost sharing arrangements.**

We are exploring the possibility of administrative cost arrangements and are seeking ways that cost can be leveraged across the Central Region while at the same time ensuring efficient use of WIOA and Workforce Development Funding

6. A description of how transportation and other supportive services are coordinated within the region, as appropriate. Regions should consider:

- **How the provision of transportation or other supportive services could be enhanced regionally;**
- **What organizations currently provide or could provide supportive services; and**
- **Establishing a process to promote coordination of the delivery of supportive services.**

The Central Region, like all of South Carolina, struggles to support a regional public transportation system that would cross regional boundaries. Though South Carolina lacks a state wide transit system, a few areas of the state maintain a localized transit system. In the Central Region, the only existing transportation plans that are in place are localized within each individual Local Workforce Area.

The Department of Transportation (DOT) has, in some circumstances, granted funds that were used within Workforce to develop reimbursement assistance for WIA/WIOA participants in the Midlands Area. However, this opportunity was at the availability of funds from DOT. currently there are no funds available for transportation assistance.

For Regional access to transportation, the United Way offers a 211 service to obtain information for organizations that offer transportation assistance in commuting outside of a local area*. Other organizations that offer some type of public transportation access include, DSS, SC Aging program, SC Healthy Connections, and other grant funded or for profit organizations. All organizations that are available are limited in service scope and funding. Most organizations can provide assistance only for specified circumstances such as health care or legal reasons. Others are “on demand,” requiring a reservation days before.

The Central Region will continue to strive toward collaboration of supportive services in the circumstances that the collaboration makes sense and is mutually beneficial. Central Region will seek out ways that will impact Workforce participants in a positive way across borders and share in the promotion of supportive services as it relates the Central Region as well as the State of South Carolina.

The Central Region will strive to leverage services for transportation and other supportive services through organizations within the Central Region as well as outside those boundaries. We will look for leveraging opportunities through many agencies, a few are the I77 Alliance, Economic Development, DOT, Counties, Local Municipal Government funding and others. Though leveraging cannot be guaranteed, every attempt will be made to develop a successful partnership of services.

*According to 211 services there are NO organizations that offer transportation in the midlands area to go outside of the midlands area.

7. A description of how workforce development services are coordinated with economic development services and providers within the region. Regions should consider:

- **Current economic development organizations engaged in regional planning; and**

- **Education and training providers involved with economic development.**

Currently, two economic development entities (York County Economic Development and Aiken Economic Development Partnership) are members of the Central Region Team and their input has been extremely important for Sector Strategies and planning for the future. Others will be asked to participate as needed for planning. Locally, each economic development entity is involved in planning to varying degrees. Many are members of the local WDBs and committees and very involved. As a region, we plan to work toward more collaboration with economic development. Since the nature of their business is very confidential, we agree that working relationships with existing industry coordinators is most beneficial. We also feel it is valuable to work more closely with regional economic development entities such as the I-77 Alliance, which included 4 of the counties in the region.

Economic development is involved with education/training providers to some degree in all areas. One example is York County Economic Development being instrumental in inception of Manufacturing Training in York School District to meet employer needs. The region may investigate ways to better connect economic development and education/training providers throughout the region.

8. A description of the region's plan regarding coordination of local performance negotiations. Each local area will continue to negotiate performance goals with the State and will remain ultimately responsible for ensuring performance meets or exceeds the agreed upon goals.

The Central region will ensure that as a region we will meet the minimum standard of performance negotiated for a single workforce area across the entire region. At present there are some meaningful questions yet to be answered concerning performance. As we become aware of the true performance expectation for our individual workforce areas and the region as a whole we will surely strive not only to meet those standards but exceed them. The Central Region will exercise continual improvement with not only the performance goals set by DOL, but will constantly seek ways to improve Local Area relationships to ensure positive service delivery outcomes that the Regional Team will be seeking to achieve.