

Southwest Alabama Partnership for Training and Employment Four-Year Plan 2021-2024

What follows is the initial four-year plan for the Southwest Alabama Partnership for Training and Employment (SWAPTE). Attachment A provides an organizational chart that depicts the relationships between the agencies making up this workforce system. Attachment B is a list of the Officers and members of the Board,

Local Area Governance

- i. **Signatory Official - Mr. Sydney G. Raine, President**
- ii. **Grant Recipient - Chief Elected Officials Council made up of the President/Chair of each County Commission for the nine-county area including Baldwin, Choctaw, Clarke, Conecuh, Escambia, Mobile, Monroe, Washington, and Wilcox counties in southwest Alabama.**
- iii. **Chief Elected Official - President of the Mobile County Commission, Merceria Ludgood, Chair of the Chief Elected Officials Council**
- iv. **Workforce Development Board Chair – Mr. Mike Hare, Workforce Development Coordinator, Infirmary Health Systems**
- v. **Chief Fiscal Officer - Ms. Lisa Thomas, V.P. Finance, SWAPTE**
- vi. **One-Stop Delivery System Regional Supervisor - Ms. Laura Bethea, Alabama Department of Labor**

**Local Workforce Development Board See
Attachment B**

**Chief Elected Officials Council See
Attachment C**

Career Centers

The Southwest Alabama Partnership for Training and Employment has six Career Centers. There are currently three Satellite Career Centers operating within the area. The Career Centers are managed based on the agreement between the Alabama Department of Labor which serves as the One-Stop Operator and WIOA service provider for all Career Centers other than Mobile, and SWAPTE which provides the WIOA services at the Mobile Career Center and serves as the fiscal agent for the region. The co-location of partners in the career centers in the region is coordinated based on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and the Infrastructure Cost Sharing Agreement. Each partner underwrites costs associated with the percentage of dedicated square footage occupied at each location.

The following individuals are the signatories to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that details the services provided via the Career Center system;

Alabama Department of Labor -
Secretary Fitzgerald Washington
[Fitzgerald.
Washington@labor.alabama.gov](mailto:Fitzgerald.Washington@labor.alabama.gov)

Alabama Community College System - Adult Basic
Education Chancellor Jimmy H. Baker
iimmv.baker@accs.edu

Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services
Commissioner Jane Elizabeth Burdeshaw
JEBurdeshaw@rehab.alabama.gov

Southwest Alabama Partnership for Training and Employment (SWAPTE)
Connie Hudson, Chair, Chief Elected Officials Council
mludgood@mobile.countv.net

SOUTHWEST ALABAMA PARTNERSHIP FOR TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT - CAREER CENTERS

Bay Minette Career Center

201 Faulkner Drive
Bay Minette AL 36507
Phone: (251) 937-4161 FAX: (251) 937-2859
Counties Served: North Baldwin

WIOA Programs: Individual Training Accounts (ITA's) Adults, Dislocated Workers, Youth On-The-Job Training (OJT) Adults, Dislocated Workers, Youth, Work-Based Learning Youth 18-24 Years of Age. Partners include ADOL, WIOA, Adult Ed, and Ala. Dept, of Rehab Services. Youth Provider - Goodwill Easter Seals

Brewton Career

Brewton@alcc.alabama.gov

1023 Douglas Avenue Suite 314

Brewton AL 36426

Phone: (251) 867-4376

Counties Served: Escambia and Conecuh

WIOA Programs: Individual Training Accounts (ITA's) Adults, Dislocated Workers, Youth On-The-Job Training (OJT) Adults, Dislocated Workers, Youth, Work-Based Learning Youth 18-24 Years of Age, Partners include ADOL, WIOA, Adult Ed, and Ala. Dept, of Rehab. Youth Provider - Hope Place Family Resource

Foley Career Center

Foley@alcc.alabama.gov

200 West Michigan Avenue Foley AL 36535

Phone: (251) 943-1575 FAX: (251) 943-8867 Counties Served: South Baldwin

WIOA Programs: Individual Training Accounts (ITA's) Adults, Dislocated Workers, Youth On-The-Job Training (OJT) Adults, Dislocated Workers, Youth, Work-Based Learning Youth 18-24 Years of Age. Partners include ADOL, WIOA, Adult Ed, and Ala. Dept, of Rehab Services. Youth Provider- Goodwill Easter Seals.

Jackson Career Center

Jackson@alcc.alabama.gov

3090 Highway 43 Jackson AL 36545

Phone: (251) 246-2453 FAX: (251) 246-4797 Counties Served: Clarke, Washington, Choctaw

WIOA Programs: Individual Training Accounts (ITA's) Adults, Dislocated Workers, Youth On-The-Job Training (OJT) Adults, Dislocated Workers, Youth, Work-Based Learning Youth 18-24 Years of Age. Partners include ADOL, WIOA, Adult Ed, and Ala. Dept, of Rehab Services. Youth Providers - DESI Career Training Center.

Mobile Career Center

Mobile@alcc.alabama.gov

515 Springhill Plaza Court Mobile AL 36608

Phone: (251) 461-4146 FAX: (251) 461-4443

Counties Served: Mobile

WIOA Programs: Individual Training Accounts (ITA's) Adults, Dislocated Workers, Youth On-The-Job Training (OJT) Adults, Dislocated Workers, Youth, Work-Based Learning Youth 17-24 Years of Age. Partners include ADOL, WIOA, Adult Ed, and Ala. Dept, of Rehab Services. Youth Providers - Goodwill Easter Seals, Dearborn YMCA, DESI Career Training Center, Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services.

Monroeville Career Center

Monroeville@alcc.alabama.gov

Monroeville AL 36460

Phone: (251) 575-3894 FAX: (251) 575-3351

Counties Served: Monroe and Wilcox

Itinerant Office:

Camden Career Center 7588 9:00 a.m. -

3:00 p.m., Every Tuesday 223-A Claiborne

Street Camden AL 36726

Phone: (334) 682-9428 FAX: (334) 682-9613

WIOA Programs: Individual Training Accounts (ITA's) Adults, Dislocated Workers On-The-Job Training (OJT) Adults, Dislocated Workers, Youth, Work-Based Learning-Youth 17-24 Years of Age. Partners include ADOL, WIOA, Adult Ed, and Ala. Dept, of Rehab Services. Youth Providers - Reid State Community College.

Analysis of Local Area Conditions and Needs

The Southwest Alabama Partnership for Training and Employment represents a nine county Workforce Development Area in the southwest region of the state. This area consists of Baldwin, Escambia, Choctaw, Clarke, Conecuh, Mobile, Monroe, Washington, and Wilcox counties. The latest population estimate for this region as of 2017 is 751,884. The mean per capita income for the area as of 2017 was \$19,903. Manufacturing employment has grown over 11.0 percent. Primary metal manufacturing has grown 15.0 percent, and transportation equipment manufacturing has grown over 40.0 percent, with most of the growth being in ship manufacturing. Entry level employment in hospitality and service jobs show increases while retail jobs are declining.

By sector the top five employers in the region are health care and social assistance; retail trade; manufacturing; accommodation and food services; and educational services. The top five high- demand occupations are Registered Nurses; Computer User Support Specialists; Personal Care Aides; Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians; and Home Health Aides. The primary areas of wage and job growth are projected to be in areas including Aviation and Aerospace; Construction; Healthcare; Advance Manufacturing; Maritime; Airframe and Power plant Mechanic; Assembler; Electrical Maintenance/ Electrician Engineer; Lab/Med Technician; Mechanical Maintenance/Mechanical Engineer; Millwright; Pipefitter/Pipe welder; Registered Nurse and Ship-fitter.

Employers have ranked the following skills and abilities as critical for workforce success:

English Language 12.2%	Active Listening 8.93%	Production and Processing 7.5%	Speaking 8.14%
Critical Thinking 10.42%	Oral Expression 5.44%	Operation Monitoring 6.29%	Written Comprehension 5.27%
Problem Sensitivity 7.10%	Customer & Personal Service 9.8%	Monitoring 9.57%	Coordination 6.18%
Mathematics 8.9%	Reading Comprehension 9.01%	Oral Comprehension 6.31%	Mechanical 8.2%
			Computers and Electronics 5.2%

Region 7 has a current labor force of 323,544 as of April 2018. There are 303,425 individuals employed and 20,119 individuals who are unemployed for a regional unemployment rate of 6.6% which is above the national rate of 4.4%.

Within the current labor force, 83.9% hold a high school diploma while only 20.7% have a bachelor's degree. Labor market trends indicate that while most jobs will continue to be available to individuals without a college degree, these jobs will require skills training specific to the industry including computer literacy, strong reading and math skills and the ability to learn and apply new concepts.

Workforce development will continue to be challenged by barriers to employment including lack of reliable transportation, lack of childcare, and financial blockades that make participation in training extremely difficult, if not impossible, without substantial support.

Local Workforce Development Activity

The Southwest Partnership for Training and Employment has multiple providers of training including Bishop State Community College, Coastal Alabama Community College, a variety of occupational skill trainers such as Premier Truck Driving, Cardiovascular Ultrasound Institute, several Certified Nursing Assistant programs and apprenticeships through Austal ship building, Airbus USA and training through Union locals. There are also several four-year institutions offering key training in healthcare, engineering and other careers and occupations.

These resources offer a variety of choices to those seeking training but are limited in availability to WIOA eligible trainees. With a state cost cap of \$20,000 for total program cost, partnerships with four-year colleges and private for-profit training providers are extremely limited and many of the courses offered by community colleges have low performance results, limiting programs available for WIOA student enrollment.

At present, apprenticeships tend to be focused on skilled trades. This focus makes recruiting women into these careers more difficult. Some women have chosen to enter these trades, but many women do not desire to work in these jobs. Opportunities for On-the-Job training (OJT), Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) and Custom Training are available strategies that we will continue to apply when strong partnerships with area businesses can be formed. SWAPTE will continue to work with our current providers to develop and provide training that reflects area skill demands and will work to identify new providers to meet the wide variety of needs within the business community. We will also work with local industries to create training resources such as apprenticeships and OJT placements to assure that skills learned in training match those most in demand in the workplace.

Vision

The SWAPTE Workforce Development Board (SWAPTE WDB) envisions providing the structure and leadership needed in our region to bring together leaders in business, industry, education, economic development and community services to continually analyze, evaluate and address the challenges and barriers to economic growth. Working in partnership with the many entities that are focused on workforce development and the growth of business and industry, the LWDB believes that there is great potential for southwest Alabama to achieve consistent growth and provide employment opportunities for a diverse and growing workforce.

Goals

The local area is focused on several specific goals related to better preparing and educating a skilled workforce. First, we hope to identify and develop strategies to address key barriers to employment. We will also work with the K-12 school system and the community to reduce the high school drop-out rate and maximize the number of students who complete their secondary education and who have the opportunity to benefit from dual enrollment to access postsecondary and apprenticeship training. Expanding the credentialing options for jobseekers will also include expanding the number of options available through our Eligible Training Provider list.

Local Area Strategy

The overall strategy to work with our partners that carry out the core programs includes the alignment of available resources. This includes working with secondary schools to identify career paths for high school students that link effectively with post-secondary education in areas where job creation and demand are high. This also includes linking local apprenticeship opportunities to career tech curriculum to allow students to achieve a journeyman's status more quickly.

Identifying industries with aging labor forces, new skill needs or increasing demand and partnering with area community colleges to develop skills training for these industries will also be important to achieve our strategic vision and goals for southwest Alabama.

Collaboration with our partners who are charged with providing direct service to jobseekers will allow us to assure that all jobseekers receive the most holistic assessment and are provided with effective support and follow-up to prepare them for and link them to key career building resources. The LWDB will work to provide staff development to allow for cross training of case management staff. This will improve communication among partners. It will also improve our ability to assure that individuals are referred to appropriate providers who are positioned to address each participants' needs as identified in the Individual Employment Plan (IEP).

Programs included in the local area's workforce development system include;

The Southwest Alabama Partnership for Training and Employment (SWAPTE)- Serving as the administrative agent for the Workforce Development Board, SWAPTE coordinates WIOA training programs for Adults, Dislocated Workers and Youth and works with area business and industry through On-the-Job training and Incumbent Worker programs.

Alabama Employment Service - As the One Stop Operator for the Career Centers and manager of the State Labor exchange system, employment service staff are the initial point of interaction for Career Center customers seeking employment, veteran's services, job readiness information and referral to services provided by other system partners.

Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (APRS) -Individuals with physical, learning or mental disabilities are referred to ADRS for expert assessment and customized assistance aimed at identifying and resolving barriers to employment.

Adult Basic Education (ABE) - Provided through the Alabama Community College System, ABE allows individuals who need academic assistance or who need help with English as a second language to improve their skills. Participants receive tutoring and access to practice tests for the GED so that they can prepare to take the exam if they need this credential.

In 2014, the Southwest Alabama region applied for a U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC) designation as a nationally recognized "Manufacturing Community" through the Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnerships (IMCP). The Southwest Alabama region was named one of the first twelve (12) Manufacturing Communities in the U.S. and Advancing Southwest Alabama was born.

The Manufacturing Community designation allows the region to receive coordinated support from nearly a dozen federal agencies with \$1.3 billion available in economic development assistance. The focus of Advancing Southwest Alabama is workforce development and creating a strong innovation ecosystem.

Partnerships

The SWAPTE WDB will collaborate with core program providers, workforce development programs and programs of technical education to support service alignment and will implement strategies that reflect the statewide approach to improving the continuity of these efforts.

The Workforce Development Board will work with entities carrying out core programs to find strategies that will expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals including those with barriers to employment. Examples of these strategies include meeting with partners to identify and prioritize barriers that can be addressed through supportive services resources. Once this list has been reviewed, the board will develop policies and procedures that expand our ability to address the most common barriers more effectively. These barriers may include access to transportation, personal identification and appropriate attire. The board will also continue to identify and facilitate applications for eligible training providers who offer training for skills needed in local high growth, high wage industries. Numerous actions will take place to achieve our goals.

The SWAPTE board will support the development of career pathways and co-enrollment in core programs when such strategies improve outcomes for the participant. The board will implement policies where needed to facilitate the use of dual enrollment and career pathway strategies among core program providers.

In order to improve access to recognized post-secondary credentials and/or a portable or stackable certificate, the board will identify courses of study offered by both post-secondary and through apprenticeship programs that are able to increase the number of students who can secure these credentials. The WDB will assist in promoting these programs and will work to have them included on the Eligible Training Provider list.

In order to facilitate engagement of employers in workforce development programs, the LWDB will utilize community outreach strategies such as our weekly e-news, speaking to business groups and associations and developing opportunities to interact with representatives of in- demand industry as well as with small businesses. Utilizing outreach such as this, our goal will be to increase the number of businesses that are aware of the resources that are available in Mobile.

Meeting the needs of the local business requires a workforce development system that is easy to communicate with, accessible and convenient to partner with. We will seek feedback from local area businesses regarding their needs on a regular basis to facilitate focus on putting policies and procedures in place to assure that the system meets the needs of our region.

The SWAPTE board will serve as a clearing house where representatives from business, industry, labor, education and government can share ideas, update all sectors of the workforce community on programs aimed at economic development and identify strategies to assure that efforts are coordinated and well planned. The WDB will work to make OJT and IWT resources available as part of the industry recruitment and retention strategy for the region.

Strengthening linkages between the One-Stop delivery system and the unemployment insurance programs will be a goal of the WDB. Strategies that provide better access to job search and training resources for individuals receiving unemployment will be developed and implemented with a goal of moving individuals back into the workforce as quickly as possible.

SWAPTE currently offers initiatives including incumbent worker training, on-the-job training, and the development of industry specific short-term training in partnership with local business and industry along with post-secondary education. The board will continue to support these strategies to serve the needs of this area. The board will also work to develop programs patterned on best practices that make career pathways, direct business service representatives and other strategies as effective as possible for meeting the needs of the business community.

The local board will work closely with all regional economic development activities. The WDB will provide awareness and information on such activities to the community as well as offering logistical support. When appropriate staff will be provided to implement activities related to workforce and economic development initiatives targeting this region.

The SWAPTE Workforce Development Board will work closely with the area Chambers of Commerce as well as local Universities to support and promote initiatives aimed at providing training and support for the skills needed to design and start businesses in the region. When possible, these initiatives will be promoted via the E-news and within the Career Center System. Entrepreneurial training programs will be evaluated for inclusion on the Eligible Training Provider list.

The One-Stop Delivery System

The SWAPTE WDB prioritizes providing services that demonstrate the ability to meet the needs of employers and job seekers. SWAPTE currently has six comprehensive One-Stop Career Centers in compliance with Section 121(e) (2) (A) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. In order to assure that all Career Centers meet or exceed our criteria for quality, accessibility, and performance, the One-Stop committee of the WDB will schedule and carryout initial assessments for each center and issue a determination regarding Certification. Steps to improve any deficiencies will be taken as needed and each center will be reviewed no less than every three years per Section 101(d) (6) and 121 (g) (1).

The SWAPTE Board will address and comply with all applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities, including providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities who seek services from system partners and programs.

Area training sites will be provided with regular feedback regarding their results and will be given support as needed to ensure their ability to demonstrate continuous improvement and meet or exceed negotiated performance goals. Employers and jobseekers will be given opportunities to provide feedback on their impressions of the training and will be able to offer suggestions on ways to make these programs more effective.

The SWAPTE WDB will review current resources with a goal of providing the best access to services for rural areas in southwest Alabama. Strategies such as regularly scheduled outreach initiatives in targeted communities or for specific Industries will be reviewed. The utilization of available technology to connect jobseekers and businesses with one-stop system services will be implemented when possible.

Career Center Partners

Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (APRS) - The Department of Rehabilitation Services Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) provides specialized employment and education related services and training to assist teens and adults with disabilities to become employable. Services include skill assessments, counseling, training programs, job placement, assistive technology and transportation.

Adult Basic Education Activities - Adult Education services are offered through the Alabama Community College System. The services include literacy as well as GED preparation courses and assessment of skills including testing jobseekers to assure that they are prepared for success if they are seeking training.

Alabama Department of labor - Wagner-Peyser, Unemployment Insurance, Trade Act, and Veterans Services - The Alabama Department of Labor (ADOL) houses the Wagner-Peyser program (Employment Service), Unemployment Insurance, Trade Act, and Veterans Services programs. Alabama Job Link is the online job seeker and employer registration system that provide job seeker skills, abilities and work history with employers posting job openings in the system. ADOL provides Trade Act services and Veterans employment representatives in the Career Centers.

The Southwest Alabama Partnership for Training and Employment, Inc. (SWAPTE) - SWAPTE provides the administrative support to the Workforce Development Board (WDB) and administers the funding for WIOA services in Region 7. These funds are utilized to provide occupational skills training for Adults and Dislocated Workers, and to provide programs for Youth focused on meeting the educational, job readiness and occupational skill needs for WIOA eligible youth age 17-24. SWAPTE also provides funding to support On-the-Job training and Incumbent Worker Training in partnership with local businesses and industries.

Alabama Department of Human Resources - TANF and SNAP - The Alabama Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) are operated by the

Alabama Department of Human Resources. TANF provides family assistance including income to low income one parent families needing support to meet the basic needs for dependents. The welfare to work component of family assistance is known as the JOBS program. All clients receiving assistance are referred to the JOBS Unit for assessment regarding their skills, prior work experience and employability. Individuals on family assistance determined to ready to engage in work activities are placed in a work-related activity such as subsidized/unsubsidized employment, job search, job readiness classes, skills training, or GED classes.

Service to Adults and Dislocated Workers

Adults and Dislocated Workers who are WIOA eligible can seek assistance at the Career Centers or online via the Alabama Job Link system. Individuals can register online from any internet accessible site and have their profile made available to employers seeking workers to hire. They can also come to the Career Center that is most convenient to them and receive assistance with registration, job search, resume creation and job readiness skills as needed. In the event they need training to obtain employment, SWAPTE will work with individuals to identify training opportunities including On-the-Job training (OJT) or will provide financial support for occupational training through our Individual Training Accounts (ITA's).

The current training supported by WIOA funding continues to expand via apprenticeships and outreach to local programs serving In-school Youth. OJT is currently utilized frequently and offers the most flexible training options. The success of OJT can be expanded as we work to make more businesses aware of the opportunity to hire and train individuals in the specific skills needed by a successful employee. With the low unemployment numbers in many of our communities, finding eligible individuals to fill open positions for our OJT partners has become more challenging.

Rapid Response

The SWAPTE Board will identify appropriate staff representatives to support rapid response activities and will assure that those staff are trained and aware of all available resources in southwest Alabama that may be needed to support individuals impacted by a WARN notice. These staff will attend all rapid response activities affecting the region and will facilitate the provision of services to individuals who are facing dislocation.

Youth Activities

Youth workforce investment activities are provided by a variety of training providers. Most programs are designed to serve youth that have dropped out of school or who have completed secondary school but who have substantial barriers to securing and maintaining employment. These programs focus on remediation of academic skills and preparation for taking the GED test. These programs also focus on work experience for who have never been employed. These youth receive job readiness training, financial literacy skills and are assisted with entry to postsecondary training or employment.

These programs have been effective in serving a very difficult to reach population of young people who would be very limited in their career choices without their GED. We also provide a work experience and skills training program for youth who are severely disabled due to a loss of hearing or vision. This program operates in partnership with the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services and offers tailored job development designed to utilize the skills and abilities of each participant. This program has resulted in many disabled youth gaining employment or identifying the type of career they wish to prepare for.

Beginning in 2019, SWAPTE will put in place providers to serve at-risk, low income In-School Youth. These services will be targeted at drop-out reduction and will include career exploration and support to help this population more effectively access jobs and occupational training after high school.

Education

The Southwest Alabama Partnership for Training and Employment will prioritize the goal of coordinating secondary and post-secondary education programs and activities with education and workforce investment activities. We will provide regular opportunities for leaders from each system to offer reports on their ongoing efforts to develop strategies, enhance services and avoid duplication in their programs. Board members will be able to learn about education system goals and outcomes and will be able to bring their ideas and input to the discussion in the ongoing effort to streamline partnerships and communication across platforms.

Supportive Services

The SWAPTE WDB will periodically review the availability of transportation and other supportive services in the region and will identify positive and negative impacts experienced by those seeking training and employment. Board members will be able to learn about challenges faced by these individuals and will be able to advocate for new or expanded resources to address the challenges as needed.

Service Coordination

The SWAPTE WDB will maximize coordination and ongoing improvement of service delivery within the system by facilitating ongoing interaction between system managers and when appropriate system customers. This will assure effective communication of the policies and practices that have been implemented to minimize duplication of services between one-stop partners.

The board will work to assure coordination between Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act programs with Adult Basic Education and literacy activities. If needed, the board will establish a committee to review local applications submitted under Title II and will promote concurrent enrollment in programs and activities as appropriate.

Memorandums of Understanding - See Attachment D

Performance

SWAPTE will continue to negotiate levels of performance consistent with WIOA sec. 166(c) with the Workforce Development Division (WDD). These performance levels will be included in each year's Grant Agreement. These levels will be negotiated when the U.S. Department of Labor and other applicable federal agencies finalize performance levels for the State. In order to remain a high-performing board, the Local Board will review the factors developed by the State Board and will implement any required actions to address any identified deficiencies.

Provision of Services

SWAPTE, Inc. will utilize Individual Training Accounts (ITA's) as the primary method for providing training services to adults and dislocated workers. ITA funds will be allocated to training providers based on performance, demand and cost. Individuals seeking training will apply at the training provider of their choice and when accepted will bring a letter of acceptance to a Career Center in the region. At that time the individual will be screened for WIOA eligibility and if deemed eligible, they will be assigned one of the allocated training slots for that training provider.

SWAPTE, Inc. may contract for services in special circumstances where a special credential is needed by the business community and when securing a dedicated class for eligible trainees is the most efficient method for making such training available.

Individuals receiving an ITA or who participate in a contracted class may not be eligible for additional ITA based training and may not be eligible to participate in both.

Career Center Service Coordination

Data Management

At present, SWAPTE uses the Geo-solutions AlabamaWorks data system to track workforce development services for individuals in our area. We anticipate a wider range of partners to be linked as the data system becomes more widely utilized going forward.

Priority of Service

SWAPTE has established policies that ensure priority for adult career and training services will be given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient. Individuals who seek training are screened for economic eligibility and if fewer openings for training exist than applicants, those who meet this criterion are served first.

Career Center policy addresses the Jobs for Veterans Act in several ways. As jobseekers enter the facility, signs indicating that veterans receive priority service are prominently posted. Individuals who identify as veterans are screened by the staff and are referred to veteran's services staff if available. If appropriate, veterans are then referred to SWAPTE/WIOA or other Career Center partners to receive service and if fewer openings for training exist than applicants, those who meet the veteran criteria are served first.

Service Provider Selection Policies

The Competitive Proposals method is used to secure Youth Training Providers/vendors who will provide ongoing services over a specific period and with a specific scope of work. SWAPTE issues a Request for Proposals (RFP) to solicit offers from entities qualified to provide the services at a reasonable price, in accordance with specifications. The RFP process is preferred because it allows proposers flexibility in their responses and allows SWAPTE to fully evaluate both the technical and cost/price aspects of any proposal. It also allows for a close evaluation of proposer responsibility. In competitive procurement actions, SWAPTE takes steps to assure full and open competition to the extent practicable.

SWAPTE maintains a list of potential service providers that can be notified in the event an RFP is released. In general, any entity can be placed on our list upon written request. SWAPTE imposes no standing pre-qualification procedures. If there are instances where some restrictions concerning who may compete might be appropriate (or required by WIOA), SWAPTE will document that fact in its procurement planning and address it in the RFP packages.

Entities that do not respond after being notified of three or more RFP/ITB opportunities may be dropped from the standing service provider list. Any RFP released by the SWAPTE WDB is publicized through advertisements in local newspapers. Usually, ads are placed in the daily newspaper, and in at least one of the weekly newspapers published in the area. Other means of publicity may be employed, if determined by the WDB to be appropriate in order to enhance the prospects for more and better competition. It is the SWAPTE WDB policy that interested parties have adequate time to respond to any solicitation. In most circumstances the time period between the release of an RFP and the response deadline date/time will be no less than three (3) weeks.

Once an RFP is released, it is the WDB's usual policy to continue to provide copies to any interested entity throughout the response time. If circumstances warrant, the LWIA may waive this policy if it has determined that competition should be restricted to pre-qualified competitors. Any such decision will be made during the procurement planning and addressed in the RFP package. The WDB may elect to conduct a proposers or bidders conference during an RFP process in order to assist interested proposers/bidders in the preparation of their responses. The decision to hold, or not hold, a conference will be made during procurement planning and addressed in the RFP packages. In general, prospective responders are not required to attend any such conference. If the WDB were to determine it to be appropriate to require attendance at any RFP conference(s), the rationale for such a determination will be documented in the procurement planning and addressed in the RFP packages. Procurement instruments released by the SWAPTE WDB contain, as a matter of routine, disclaimers to note that the WDB may cancel and/or amend a procurement action and may reject any or all offers. Further disclaimers also note that the board is not obligated to award any contract or to pay any cost incurred by an offeror in undertaking a response to any RFP. In solicitation offers and response evaluations the WDB considers Community Based Organizations (CBO). A CBO may be placed on the list(s) of potential providers upon written request. The WDB reviews its list(s) of potential providers from time to time to assure that an adequate number of CBO entities are represented.

in any evaluation of an offer from a CBO, the SWAPTE WDB considers the CBO's record of past performance in the delivery of similar or related employment & training services, even though the services may or may not have been provided with WIOA funding.

The Southwest Alabama Partnership for Training and Employment provides appropriate education agencies with the opportunity to submit offers to provide education services or other employment & training services. Area education agencies are represented on the WDB's lists of potential service providers. In any determination by the WDB to use other entities for educational services for Youth, the WDB will document that the use of another entity to provide such services would be more effective.

Youth Grants

The local board criteria for awarding grants for youth activities are established based on the target population to be served. Grants designed to serve youth are procured based on a competitive process. Successful proposers must demonstrate their ability to recruit eligible participants and provide the required service elements to those they enroll. Grants are awarded to organizations or businesses that provide evidence that they have the capacity and experience to manage federal funding, provide accurate reporting and achieve success in meeting the performance goals as required by SWAPTE, Inc.

Eligible Training Providers

Training providers interested in offering services to WIOA eligible students in region 7 will be provided with information regarding the application process as outlined by the Alabama Department of Commerce. Once a provider has been approved for inclusion on the State Eligible Training Provider List, SWAPTE will provide them with information regarding the allocation of available funds, student eligibility and the process for student enrollment.

SWAPTE will consistently communicate with all service providers regarding the need for timely reporting of program outcomes. Staff will also work to verify reported results via contact with participants to assist providers in collecting all performance information. Staff will also utilize the Unemployment wage records to track and verify participant employment post program exit for all providers.

Monitoring & Oversight Policy

See Attachment - E Grievance

Procedures and Policies

See Attachment - F

Comment Period

The 4 Year Plan 2021-2024 for the Southwest Alabama Partnership for Training and Employment has been developed on a very short timeline that limited public input prior to submission of the plan. Following a review of the initial plan by the Workforce Development Board, the plan will be made available for a period of public input. Any revisions that result from that input will be integrated into the plan and the modified plan will be reviewed by the local board and submitted to the State for approval.

Assurances

See Attachment - G