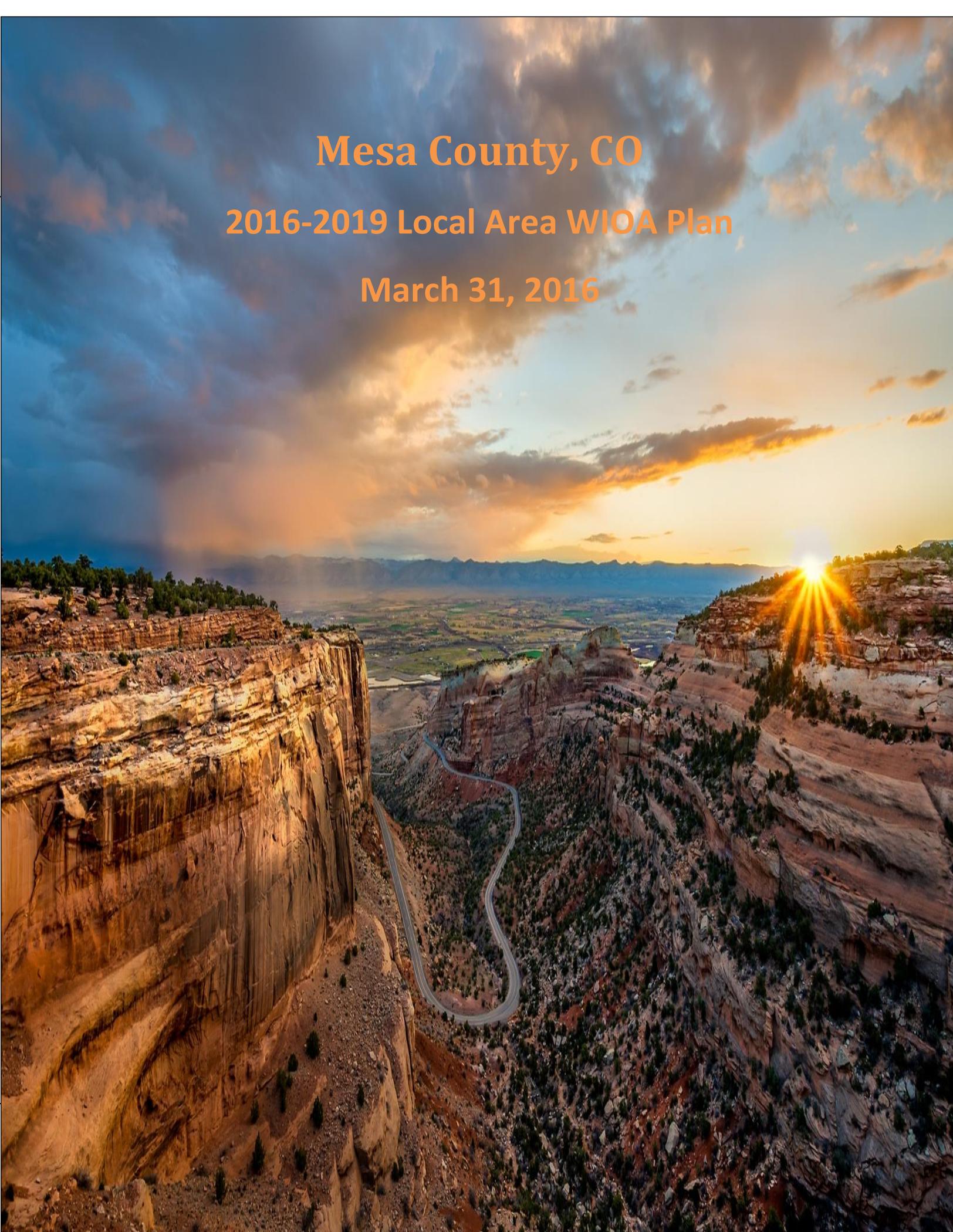


Mesa County, CO

2016-2019 Local Area WIOA Plan

March 31, 2016





This plan represents the Inaugural Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA) local plan for the four year period of July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2019. This plan is respectfully submitted by the Mesa County Chief Local Elected Official, the Mesa County Local Area Workforce Development Board, in partnership with the Mesa County Workforce Center and the Mesa County Department of Human Services, and with input from Hilltop Community Resources, Inc. This plan was published on the Mesa County Workforce Center and Colorado Workforce Development Council web pages, respectively, for public comment. This plan will be reviewed and updated annually if needed.

For public comment on the **Mesa County Workforce Center Website**, Please send page and section number, and email comments to john.flanagan@mesacounty.us



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(1) Provide an analysis of the economic conditions in the local area including:

- a. Existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations; and
- b. The employment needs of employers in those industry sectors and occupations;

(2) Provide an analysis of the knowledge and skills needed to meet the employment needs of the employers in the local area, including employment needs in in-demand industry sectors and occupations

(3) Provide an analysis of the workforce in the local area, including current labor force employment (and unemployment) data, and information on labor market trends, and the educational and skill levels of the workforce in the local area, including individuals with barriers to employment.

The above questions are referenced in the Mesa County Economic and Workforce Overview.

(4) A description of the strategic planning elements consisting of— An analysis of the workforce development activities (including education and training) in the region, including an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of such services, and the capacity to provide such services, to address the identified education and skill needs of the workforce and the employment needs of employers in the region;

The Mesa County Workforce Center is a team oriented concept, working together to provide a continuum of services for jobseekers and employers in Mesa county. Hilltop Community Resources provides the delivery of WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, ReHire, GED, Technology Employment in Colorado Partnership (TEC-P), Sector Partnership National Emergency Grant (SP-NEG), and Mesa County Employment Services staff provide the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) and Trade Readjustment Allowance (TRA) programs. The WIOA team coordinates services with the Employer Services Team (ES) and Professional Service Team (PS), to provide holistic services through its Employment



Services Team, providing Career Services for Job Seekers as well as a comprehensive menu of services for local and regional employers in the Grand Valley area. The ES team works closely with the WIOA team through its Professional Services (PS) team to provide a battery of assessments available to all Mesa County Workforce Center Customers. These teams have the capacity to deliver the following workforce development activities: Core Services, Intensive (Career) Services, and Training under WIOA. Each WIOA enrolled participant works with their Caseworker to engage and create a customized Individual Employment Plan (IEP)/Individualized Service Strategy (ISS). The jobseeker's IEP/ISS accounts for the following factors:

- ✓ resources,
- ✓ challenges,
- ✓ Individualized needs, etc.
- ✓ support services
- ✓ training services
- ✓ employment goal

These are investigated thoroughly as they will likely have an impact on each participant's individual journey to skill gain/job attainment. Through the IEP, the staff works cohesively with participants to create career pathway visions through the use of assessments, counseling, and case management services. The challenge of the Intensive Job Search



Assistance service is that it is time/labor intensive for employee and customer. For best results, both end user and program staff meet on a scheduled basis in order to continually refine the IEP/ISS. Counselors usually employ technology to maintain regular, real-time contact with their participants in an effort to maintain engagement in Intensive Job Search Assistance

Work-Based Learning: The primary work-based learning activity offered by the Mesa County Workforce Center is the Work Experience Program. The Work Experience Program is a comprehensive work experience continuum managed through Hilltop Community Resources and its WIOA team. This team meets the needs of local businesses and job seekers through active worksite development and placement. This is done through a partnership effort with our Employer Service teams, who provide comprehensive outreach to potential employers/ host sites to ensure not only placement into work experience, but ensures that they are targeted to in demand occupations for our current and emerging workforces. These work-based learning services are essential for building opportunities for career advancement, making the field learning applicable to their longer term employment and training goals.

Due to the unique model of the Work Experience Program, there are several access points throughout the Mesa County Workforce Center, through referral from key center partners such as Job Seeker Services, the Colorado Works program, the Employment First program,



GED, and local employers themselves. This ensures that all customers, regardless of program, are well informed of the services provided.

The traditional limitations of the work experience program is the availability of employer worksites, employer time curve for skill development, lack of financial resources, competing staff resources, etc. Every effort will be made to overcome these challenges to Ensure a robust program.

Individual Training Accounts (ITA): WIOA participants have the opportunity to apply for ITA scholarship funds for the development of in-demand work skills or credentials that lead them forward in their identified career pathway. Participants in the Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs may be awarded up to \$5,500 in tuition assistance in High Priority Occupation Career Pathways. Other resources are made available through co-enrollment for applicable job seekers through other WIOA programs, partnerships with collaborative programs through education providers such as Colorado Mesa University, Western Colorado Community College, Mesa County School District 51, Delta Montrose Technical College, proprietary schools such as Western Colorado Area Health Education Center, Larchwood Inns, SAGE Technical Services, CDL College, 5 Star CDL, and CDL Certifiers.



Traditional limitations to the ITA program are limited and fluctuating resources, fluctuating demand in local career fields, and the limitation of the Eligible Training Provider List. The primary difficulty for providing these services in Mesa County is the limited availability of low-cost, time-sensitive, and in-demand skills training in the local area due to limited area providers.

On-the-Job Training (OJT) The Mesa County Workforce Center provides a comprehensive experiential learning system through the On-the-Job Training program. This service creates a partnership between one-stop and employer, looking to on-board job-seekers in a position that will require training to reach and maintain job efficiencies. The Mesa County Workforce Center, and its WIOA team through Hilltop Community Resources, provides employers with a cost reimbursement for training job-seekers into new careers, for as long as 6 months, or 1040 hours, covering up to 75% of associated wages based upon employer size. The WIOA team works with the prospective employer in developing an appropriate training plan. This plan will establish a timeline for training, including the duration for which cost re-imburement will occur. This is based through identification of ONET codes and corresponding training time matched to Mesa County Local Workforce Policy.

Career Pathways. The Mesa County Workforce Center and its partners participate actively in Career Pathway Initiatives. The Healthcare Sector Partnership is a shining example of the strength of our community partnerships and resources in building a strong continuum



of learning and opportunity that affords seamless career navigation in the Healthcare field for Mesa County customers. Currently the healthcare career pathway in Mesa County provides training from entry level careers such as Primary Care with QMAP certification to Certified Nurse Aide, to Licensed Practical Nurse, to Associate in Nursing program with RN to BSN. Other auxiliary healthcare trainings offered in this career pathway are first aid/CPR, phlebotomy, medical office assisting, and medical technician. These training and career opportunities have developed through partnerships with Hilltop Community Resources, Western Colorado Community College, Colorado Mesa University, Larchwood Inns, Western Colorado Area Health Education Center, Delta Montrose Technical College, and local employers in the private sector.

Kickstart was launched in 2015 and is a successful initiative to match employers with 18 to 24 year old out-of-school youth in demand occupations with a focus on supervisors as mentors. This program has been successful in recruiting new employers for our Workforce Center and engaging our emerging workforce in today's job market.

ReHire is a program focused on providing internships for veterans, non-custodial parents, and long-term unemployment workers over the age of 50. Referrals from our TANF, Employment Services, WIOA, and our Veteran service teams provide an additional service for these hard-to-serve populations.



The Mesa County Workforce Center and its Governor’s Summer Job Hunt Employment Specialist work closely with the Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce, Mesa County Valley School District and local businesses to identify summer employment opportunities, pre-apprenticeship programs, cooperative type work experiences, or exposure to industries that will encourage youth to enter occupational skill training.

Mesa County, through the Workforce Center Team(s), is actively engaging employers and jobseekers to ensure that we are providing job seekers with the appropriate skills, through educational attainment, needed for Job-seekers to compete in the marketplace, and for employers to thrive. Through this partnership, we will continue exploring opportunities to learn what business talent needs are going unfilled and our Employer Service Team efficiently address those needs.

Our Employment Services, in combination with our Professional Services team provides Title III services under the Wagner-Peyser Act. This team is responsible for services delivered to job all seekers through in person contact, phone contact, or through virtual contact. Services include job search and career pathway workshops, providing job seekers with career services (i.e., resume assistance, cover letter development, interviewing skills, basic computer skills workforce, Workforce Center Orientation), assessing needs and making appropriate referrals internal or external to the agency and responding to general questions about Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits.



The Employment Services team provides support to onsite hiring events, local and regional job fairs, along with an active and ever-evolving website that offers job search related information and videos, career assessments, and current labor market information. The EST actively offers positive and productive outreach activities including providing job search workshops and related activities onsite at community organizations and events, public libraries, partner agencies such as Catholic Outreach Services, Re-Entry program(s), non-profit agencies serving similar populations, post-secondary institutions, etc. The EST serves as subject matter experts for the job seeker side of Connecting Colorado. The benefit to this service is the ability to serve and meeting the needs of all jobseekers and employers in Mesa County. EST in coordination with the WIOA team provides Rapid Response services for our local employers and coordinates with contiguous regions as needed.

A lack of awareness as to the value of the state job search system of record, Connecting Colorado as the premier point of access for job seekers, and represents a challenge to service provision in Mesa County. The Connecting Colorado Website is most commonly used remotely by both employers and job seekers, ever increasing the need for the teams within the Mesa County Workforce Center to actively market and inform all potential customers of the benefits of using Connecting Colorado. Funding challenges can serve as limitations for individualized needs often needed through the Title III programs. We continue to make every effort to be holistic in our service approach.



In the effort to understand the workforce needs of employers, our Employment Services Team (ES) conduct outreach to employers and coordinate with organizations that provide services to employers, with the goal being to identify each employer’s unique service needs and provide a comprehensive assessment on how we can assist them. In addition to these outreach activities, the ES team will coordinate with our WIOA team to create streamlined process for matching the job seekers with specific career goals with hiring employers. It is the goal of the teams, through appropriate skill matching, to ensure that we are providing the correct matching of job seeker skills to the appropriate position. It will also be very advantageous to have the ability to connect directly with job seekers based on their skills, abilities and career goals to match them with open positions.

(5) A description of the local board’s strategic vision and goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce (including youth and individuals with barriers to employment), including goals relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) in order to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency.

The socio-economic realities in Mesa County are undergoing a radical transformation, as Mesa County, and more wholly the Western Slope of Colorado are continually affected by the declining presence of the Energy Industry. The Energy sector has long been the economic driver of the Mesa County economy. As we realize this new and uncomfortable reality, the Mesa Workforce Development Board (WDB) is working to understand the imminent changes and develop strategies to address them with key community partners,



as we plan to embrace with Spirit, Innovation, and Opportunity that exists in the new workforce legislation.

The overall vision and mission of the Mesa County Workforce Development Board are:

Vision:

Assist in creating and developing a world-class workforce, demonstrating productivity and competitiveness, second to none.

Mission:

The Mesa County Workforce Center is committed to an ongoing partnership with Mesa County workers, employers, and those seeking employment that creates and ensures a self-sufficient community.

The Mesa County Workforce Development Board has identified some key priorities to ensure operational and programmatic efficiencies.

These priorities are:

- ✓ Convening, brokering, and leveraging with local workforce development system stakeholders (partners) to address needs of all end users of the Mesa County Workforce Center;

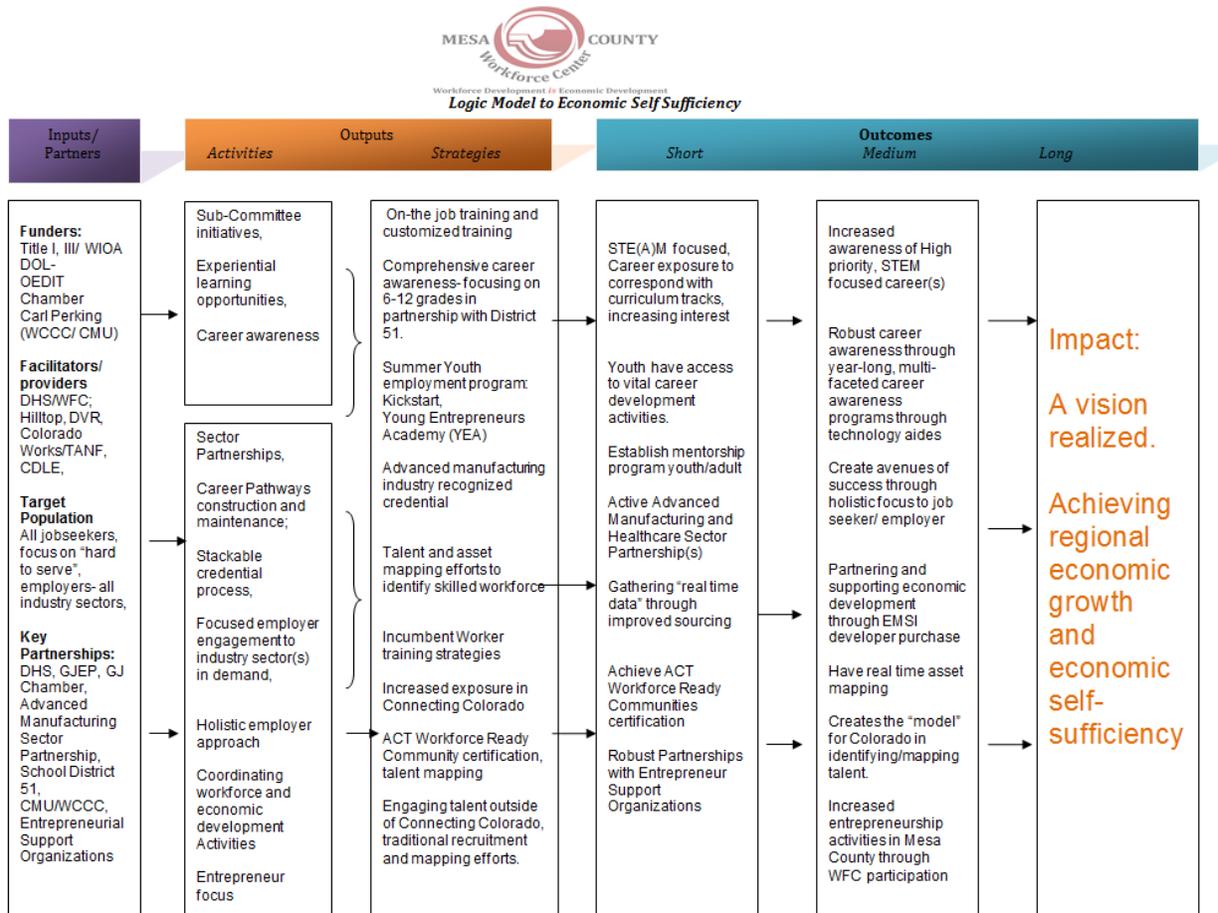


- ✓ Coordinate and convene with the appropriate stakeholders in the community to encourage collaboration and avoid duplication of efforts on activities related to workforce and economic development.
- ✓ Build awareness of the WDB and conduct greater outreach and marketing for the WDB and the Workforce Center with the goal of creating more community engagement.

In 2015, The Mesa County Workforce Center embraced the spirit of how we improve operations and customer experience through the 4 Disciplines of Execution (4DX) method. Through the 4DX process, the Mesa County Workforce Center has created, gained and sustained efficiencies that were previously unimagined. Focusing on our “Wildly Important” has allowed the Mesa County Workforce Center to address key components of success, and has allowed us to focus on targeting the most efficient pathways to success in our overall mission. The 4DX process is simply the most important part of how we gauge the continuous improvement process. It has created a culture of not just teamwork, but inter-team focus with the end goal of providing the best services to our employees, and embracing the value of the professionals that work within the Mesa County Workforce Center, and the Mesa County Department of Human Services.

In February of 2016, the Mesa County Workforce Development Board, with key stakeholders and partners, engaged in a strategic planning exercise to determine the broad based vision of how we will create a robust and dynamic system with the goal of creating a

Healthy Economy in Mesa County that will benefit both job-seeker and employer. Looking at the task through the “Logic Model” process focused the group on the appropriate direction of where we need to go. This document can be seen below:



While it is our mission to serve any resident job-seeker and employer in Mesa County, we will focus on serving the “hard to serve” populations in Mesa County. As it relates to the performance accountability measures that support economic growth and self-sufficiency, the Workforce Center Team(s) will work tirelessly to recruit and enroll customers most



likely to benefit from services—services that can assist customers in becoming equipped with the education and skills necessary to support the economic health and vitality of the Grand Valley.

WIOA establishes common core measures for Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Funding, and Wagner-Peyser, which includes the revision of the three WIA measures and two additional measures. WIOA establishes Youth measures which eliminates one measure, revises three WIA measures and adds two new measures. Still to be determined is an employer measure that is expected to be implemented in year two of the law. WIOA performance measures are designed to measure the effectiveness and continuous improvement of the One-Stop and Youth service delivery systems.

These 5 performance measures are defined in an effort to both serve those most in need and reach our goals relating to the performance accountability measures. Specific categories of the WIOA core measures include: entered into unsubsidized employment upon exit, retention of employment after exit in the second and fourth quarters, median earnings upon exit, credential attainment within one year of exit, measureable skills gain in real time, and indicators of effectiveness in serving employers. Although not exclusively, individuals with barriers to employment are often referred to WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth services via our on-site, internal partners.



These partners currently consist of the Employment Services Team (Wagner-Peyser), Employment First (SNAP), the Colorado Works (TANF) teams, GED, Job Corp, Ability Connections, Veteran Services, Grand Junction Housing Authority, SWAP, Catholic Outreach along with support from co-located eligibility programs to access immediate needs such as healthcare, housing, monetary assistance, and childcare eligibility. Even before the advent of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, the Mesa County Workforce Center and Board understood the need to have all services under one roof, creating the “seamless one-stop” entity where the target populations under hard to serve categories can come and have their needs assessed on a holistic level.

The Mesa County Workforce Development Board is committed to maximizing our mandated partner relationships, leading to success for our target audience. Beyond recruitment and hard-skill acquisition, staff also assist their customers in creating an awareness of current workplace trends and expectations (essential “soft” skills), so that the customers are not only prepared to secure and retain their employment, but also to create new and further economic opportunity for themselves and their families.



(6) Describe the strategies and services that will be utilized to facilitate engagement of employers, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations, in workforce development programs. Specifically:

- a. What outreach activities are planned to increase business engagement in your local area?
- b. How will the Business Services Team be utilized for this purpose?
- c. How will the members (particularly business members) of the LWDB and Youth Council/committee support these efforts?
- d. How will sector partnerships be utilized for this purpose? e. What are your objectives and goals for these activities?

The Mesa County Workforce Center, and all teams operating within are currently engaging in a system redesign in how to better and more efficiently deliver services to customers. One of the goals of this process is to more effectively outreach to area employers and job-seekers by streamlining services. We are currently at the beginning of the value stream mapping process, and will have the process completed by the end of 2016, offering more streamlined services by avoiding duplication, and more cohesive interaction by the fall of 2017.

The Mesa County Workforce Development Board, as the policy guidance and oversight entity of the workforce system, plans to begin having bi-annual or annual stakeholder meetings in an effort to be inclusive of all entities important to the success of workforce and economic development in the region. The Board will begin discussion of these events in June of 2016. The target audience for this event will be employers and business professionals within Mesa County. Members of the Board, or their designee, will plan the event and facilitate conversations about a variety of workforce management strategies



throughout the day. This Workforce Symposium will also provide an opportunity to highlight the work of our Sector Partnerships. The Employment Services Team assists businesses to understand the value-add possible from the services offered through Workforce Center. To this end, the Employment Services Team will use the new brand to refine messaging and employer outreach activities. Outreach activities will include more one-on-one through personal meetings, a web design that provides more focus on business interaction, social media strategies, business engagement through our local Chamber program, increased presence at trade associations such as the Colorado Advanced Manufacturing Alliance, Launch Westco, a unique association that focuses on the advanced technology sector, and engaging in a talent mapping process that assists in identifying specific skill sets within Mesa County, and continued participation in the Western Colorado Human Resource Association. In addition, Mesa County will engage in more focused communication through email contact, print and other interactive media. The Mesa County Workforce Development Board is now acting as the convening body for the emerging Sector Partnership for Advanced Manufacturing. The Workforce Center held its inaugural event on March 8th, 2016, with a focus on building a sustainable career pathway, complete with industry recognized credential for sector employers in Mesa County. It was a very well attended event, with more than 30 employers present and ready to discuss the path forward in creating a sustainable system that will create a skilled labor pool for expanding and newly relocated employers.



Sector Partnerships provide an opportunity to focus on key industry cohorts within Mesa County. The Mesa County Workforce Development Board and the Workforce Center will focus on supporting employers in the healthcare and IT sectors, in addition to advanced manufacturing. A large number of employers in all three sectors are small and emerging employers. Because of this the Mesa County Workforce Development Board is forming strategic alliances with programs such as the Grand Junction Business Incubator, the Grand Junction Economic Partnership, and Colorado Mesa University to ensure that this entity meets the needs of these job creators, who account for nearly 100% of the net job growth in Mesa County, and in the country. According to the Kauffman Foundation, New businesses account for nearly all net new job creation and almost 20 percent of gross job creation.

The Mesa County Workforce Center is a leading presence on the Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce and their Emerging Workforce Committee. The efforts of this committee revolve around employer engagement and outreach activities for the emerging youth workforce. The Mesa County Workforce Development Board, in agreement with the Chamber, has approved a dual committee structure, allowing the Emerging Workforce Committee to act as a WDB standing committee focused specifically on youth pipeline development.



(7) Discuss the implementation of initiatives designed to meet the needs of employers in the local area that support the local board's strategy, including:

a. Work-Based Learning Programs: Explain how you will utilize and promote incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, customized training programs, internships, or other activities for PY16.

A top priority for the Mesa County Workforce Development Board is to ensure that the entire customer spectrum has accurate, palatable and available knowledge in order to make informed choices about career pathways for job-seekers, and real-time, relevant access to labor market data for employers. Armed with quality data and sound interpretation, the board and staff should be able to better navigate the rapidly changing workforce and economic environment in our region.

The Mesa County Workforce Development Board will continue to focus on convening and collaborating with various organizations and workforce stakeholders. The Mesa County Workforce Center and its Employment Services Team will be key players in the collaborative employer engagement process. A current strength of the Mesa County Workforce Center is the implementation of work-based learning programs, including Internships, Youth related Work Experiences and On-the-job Training programs. The Mesa County Workforce Center, through its partnership with Hilltop Community Resources, implements the WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs with total coordination across eligibility related programs (such as SNAP, TANF, and Low-Income Childcare) the Wagner-Peyser labor exchange programs, funded under WIOA, Colorado Works, Employment First, and other DHS programs housed within the WFC to ensure a robust referral network, creating a comprehensive program through Hilltop that places



approximately 150 youth and adult job-seekers annually into work-based learning opportunities.

Although these programs have their own unique rules, regulations, and targeted populations, they share a commonality of aiding local businesses access to a viable talent pool through work-based learning, which in turn supports our participants in obtaining meaningful employment. Again, the keystone to ensuring that these teams are aligned with common mission, in spite on serving different populations, falls squarely into our team structure, and how the framework within that team drives its objective through identifying the “wildly” important under the 4 Disciplines of Execution method. The Wildly Important Goal (WIG) of the WIOA team is to place 120 adult job-seekers, and place 60 youth into work-based learning programs. Through increased contact and collaboration with Colorado Works, Employment First, and Employment Services will ensure more coordinated contact, increased and better information for job seekers, and successful placements with employers.

Career exploration through real-world occupation experience is vital to ensure that our youth based population, as well as adults looking to re-enter the workforce, or those looking for a new career, are equipped with the skills to be competitive in the workplace. Often times clarifying an occupational direction through hands-on learning, prior to starting credential training, helps participants make better career decisions. This is a goal of the Mesa County Workforce Development Board



Often times these types of skills are referred to as “soft skills”. Work-based learning programs are often the first work experience many participants have as they grapple with and understand the responsibilities of work and/or re-enter the workforce after a gap. The ability to have community access to work- based learning programs are vital for all facets of the workforce, none more so than our emerging youth population. In the next 10-15 years, this age cohort will represent an overwhelming sector of our labor force in Mesa County. It is the intention of the Mesa County Workforce Development Board to ensure that these individuals have every access to experiential learning opportunities available, from within the Workforce Center structure and through strategic partnerships. One such opportunity is available through the “Kick-Start” program. The Kick-Start program is an internship program for youth aged 18-24, considered “Out of School” that places a minimum of 60 youth in work-based learning experiences throughout Mesa County. Kick Start has secured commitments from 60 employers, many from Emerging and High Priority industry clusters such as advanced manufacturing, healthcare, and IT. This program will give the targeted population the chance to not only gain access and interest in new career paths, but will give them the opportunity to acquire skills of being “on the job”. As the subsidized internship program continues to experience success, interest in the service has also grown among job seekers and employers.

The Mesa County Workforce Center will continue offering this service and explore ways to grow and laser - focus placements on in-demand and/or sector industries considered vital to the Grand Valley.



The Mesa County Workforce Development Board actively uses the On-the-Job Training opportunity as one of the cornerstones of its experiential learning components. There is simply no other program that exemplifies the success the OJT program has demonstrated. With a high rate of retention (post 365 day follow up after program exit), the OJT program is one that both employers and job-seekers actively inquire about. Hilltop Community Resources, the program operator, philosophically aligns with outcome strategies supported by the Mesa County Workforce Development Board. Current operations align to work directly with industry partners that identify a candidate who may benefit from an OJT.

b. Sector Partnerships Participation: Explain how you will utilize the relationships built by your Business Services Team to enhance or expand participation in Sector Partnerships and also expand business services efforts. Indicate PY16 specific planned objectives and measurable outcomes.

In its inaugural year, the Mesa County Advanced Manufacturing Sector Partnership has convened and will focus on creating a career pathway with multiple entry and exit points. Two initiatives currently ongoing within the Sector Partnership Structure are creating the structure of an Industry Recognized Credential. On March 8th, at the Advanced Manufacturing Roundtable, the Certified Production Technician ®, a program created through the Manufacturing Skill Standards Council ®, was presented to the partnership. The purpose of the Certified Production Technician (CPT) program is to recognize through certification individuals who demonstrate mastery of the core competencies of manufacturing production at the front-line (entry-level through front-line supervisor) through successful completion of the certification assessments. The goal of the CPT certification program is to raise the level of performance of production workers both



to assist the individuals in finding higher-wage jobs and to help employers ensure their workforce increases the company's productivity and competitiveness. The CPT program consists of five individual certificate modules: Safety; ***Quality Practices & Measurement; Manufacturing Processes & Production; Maintenance Awareness and Green Production.*** Candidates must earn the first four certificates to receive the full CPT certification. Currently, more than 13,000 manufacturing firms, employers, educational institutions, and community workforce agencies recognize the CPT credential as the industry standard, and use the credential as their building block for entering through the public and private workforce systems.

Mesa County is currently in process of becoming a Work Ready Community, through participation in the ACT Workforce Ready Communities Academy Process. Key points to the ACT WRC Certification are:

- ✓ Linking workforce development to education
- ✓ Aligning with the economic development needs of communities, regions and states
- ✓ Matches individuals to jobs based on skill levels

The foundation of a community's certification is based on individuals at the county level across the current, transitioning and emerging workforce earning a **National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC)** and **employers recognizing** the NCRC. The NCRC is a portable, industry-recognized credential that clearly identifies an individual's WorkKeys® skills in reading for information, applied math and locating information – skills required for



77 percent of jobs based on ACT Job Pro database. Certification through the ACT Work Ready Communities initiative is based on all participating states and counties adopting the **ACT Common Criteria**. At present, nearly 13,000 employers recognize the NCRC as the Work Ready credential of choice, and more than 3,000,000 work keys certificates have been completed. With more than 20,000 jobs profiled and approximately 13,000 employers actively supporting, the Mesa County Workforce Development Board sees this County based initiative as one that will create a peak position for Mesa County in recognition of its workforce, with Mesa County being the only WRC county recognized in the state of Colorado. It is our plan to begin the process of regional certification for counties within the recognized regional labor shed areas, and hopefully the beginnings of a state-wide initiative for certification.

By participating in ACT's Work Ready Communities initiative, counties, regions and states are helping:

- ✓ Business and industry know exactly what foundational skills they need for a productive workforce – and to easily communicate their needs
- ✓ Individuals understand what skills are required by employers – and how to prepare themselves for success
- ✓ Policy makers consistently measure the skills gap in a timely manner at the national, state and local levels
- ✓ Educators close the skills gap, via tools integrated into career pathways with stackable industry-recognized credentials



- ✓ Economic developers use an on-demand reporting tool to market the quality of their workforce

Initiatives like these are vital for the entirety of Mesa County. With these industry recognized pathway projects underway, more and more employers will see the benefit of the system within the Mesa County Workforce Center, which will allow for stronger relationships with the employer community will allow for the WDB and the Mesa County Workforce Center to work with employers on addressing the needs of incumbent workers.

Mesa County has a long established Career Pathway in the Healthcare Industry, with an active program that addresses employer needs in the areas of Allied Health careers and Nursing. In the coming months and years, the Mesa County Workforce Center will continue to work with Education providers and employers to ensure that this remains a vibrant and active program that serves the needs of job-seekers and employers alike.

These activities will continue to be the work of the Employment Service and WIOA teams. These teams will continue to act in the role of convener and active partner in the regional Sector Partnerships. The Mesa County Workforce Center currently supports the Sector Partnership National Emergency Grant (SPNEG). As explained previously, this grant provides the opportunity to further embed a defined sector approach into work-based learning methods to create customized training activities for eligible workers.

c. Sector Partnerships - Status and Objectives: In your local area or with partner local areas, what sector partnerships are you engaged in or do you plan to engage in during PY16? Indicate the



current status of your partnerships, (active, emerging, or exploring), plus PY16 planned objectives and measurable outcomes.

The Mesa County Workforce Center is actively engaged as the primary convener in one emerging sector partnerships, Advanced Manufacturing, and fills the same role in the established Healthcare Sector Partnership. It is the belief that the Advanced Manufacturing Sector Partnership will be a model program for areas looking to formalize the SP structure, and will match our Healthcare SP in regards to overall effectiveness, community reach, and placement into education and employment.

d. Career Pathways: Explain how you will utilize information gathered through your Workforce Teams to provide a baseline for consideration of new or enhanced Sector Partnerships, and how this information will be used to inform changes to or development of Career Pathways in your Local Area. Indicate specific PY16 planned objectives and measurable outcomes.

As mentioned in previous plan areas, we have used information gathered to identify skills vital for job seekers to compete in the workplace, and for employers to identify and draw talent to create pathways that will target two specific objectives:

- 1) Creating an industry recognized credential through A Certified Production Technician Credential, a nationally recognized certificate, in conjunction with efforts already underway in Partnership with Colorado Mesa University and Western Colorado Community College, :
- 2) Create a larger, and broader system of Workforce Ready Community Certification with the ACT Work Ready Community Initiative, creating an economic development tool that will be vital to our partners in identifying a skilled workforce, as well as business attraction.



These efforts have been a broad based initiative in Mesa County, with employers, educators, and partners at the table to ensure the best foot forward.

Additionally, the Employment Services Team and WIOA will actively work with educational partners and community-based organizations to identify target occupations they can train participants/students to meet current and future workforce needs. The WFC is committed to training staff in Labor Market Information tools, so they can provide customers with detailed information on appropriate career pathways.

(8). Describe how the local board, working with the entities carrying out core programs, will expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment, including how the local board will facilitate the development of career pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs, and improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential (including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable, and stackable);

The Mesa County Workforce Center consistently achieves success in meeting enrollment and performance outcomes and resource allocation in the current service delivery structure of WIOA within the One Stop locations.

The expectation of expanding access for eligible individuals with barriers to employment will require further partnerships with a goal of co-location that identify common resources and allow for seamless co-enrollment. At the Workforce Center, all partners work closely to revolve around the common missions of addressing the needs of Job seekers, through preparation for success in the Workforce, thus fulfilling the goal of providing employers with a skilled workforce. As a result of these previously co-located partners, the Mesa County Workforce Center is uniquely positioned to continue maximizing resources to



expand access to activities that result in meaningful employment through the attainment of education credentials.

All youth-related services at the Mesa County Workforce Center have a strong social media presence. Through the Mesa County Workforce Center Page and Mesa County Workforce Center and Hilltop Community Resources Web pages, information is shared regarding youth services and initiatives that have the ability to reach anyone within Mesa County. The Mesa County Workforce Center has an active and ongoing relationship with local print and video media, with regular segments in the Grand Junction Business Times Magazine, the Grand Junction Sentinel, and 3 local television outlets.

The WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Discretionary Grant programs are well positioned to continue building co-enrollment opportunities outlined by WIOA. Currently, all WIOA programs, along with Wagner-Peyser, are co-located in our Mesa County Workforce Center, and are both active partners at our Fruita, CO satellite location. Access to services and appropriate co-enrollments, particularly for eligible individuals with barriers to employment, will continue to thrive, as the Workforce Center is also co-located with Employment First (SNAP), Colorado Works (TANF), and Veterans Services. The Mesa County Workforce Center continues to serve customers in new and creative ways that promote expanded access, one being the ReHire program. Although the Colorado Department of Human Services funds ReHire Colorado, Mesa County and the Workforce



Center, through programs administration through Hilltop Community Resources, operates the program making the partnership seamless.

The Mesa County Workforce Center, even with no Adult Basic Education Funding until 2017, has partnered with Hilltop Community Resources to ensure much needed services are present within the Mesa County Workforce Center and its Fruita satellite location for access to GED classroom prep. This has established the frame work for successful partnership opportunities to increase access to WIOA services for students enrolled in adult basic education activities in the future.

(9). Describe the strategy to work with adult education providers funded under Title II of WIOA and Vocational Rehabilitation to align resources available to the local area, to achieve the strategic vision and goals described in question 5.

As explained in section above, Mesa County has a unique partnership with our local WIOA/ Employment First provider, Hilltop Community Resources, to ensure GED/ABE activities continue despite the absence of funding until 2017. The provider relationship with the Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) is an active partnership that occurs through a robust referral process. This process is seamless as both partners are co-located within the Mesa County Workforce Center main facility, and have enjoyed a relationship for years through the School to Work Alliance Program (SWAP) Customers served by both partner agencies may be co-enrolled in a number of services in the Mesa County Workforce Center, based on eligibility. The goal is to reach local agreements regarding support of the one stop delivery system, identify the service strengths of each agency, and develop an improved cross-agency referral process and co-enrollment linkages across systems



through on-going meetings leading to the development and implementation of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

(10). Describe the strategies and services that will be utilized to strengthen linkages between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs.

The Mesa County Workforce Center has a dedicated phone line to UI available to customers every Thursday afternoon. Located in the Resource Center applicants can also use our phones and computers any time to contact UI. The Workforce Center currently has 2 Employment Services staff with access to CUBS and locate UI information for customers when necessary (we try to avoid this and refer to UI as much as possible for eligibility/benefit information). These staff can exempt claimants from job search contacts who are currently in school and provide verification; they can also reduce contacts for union connected staff who are currently not working but must remain loyal to the union.

The Workforce Center is an active participant in the UCX program that allows Veterans to substitute job contacts for WFC related activities. The Workforce Center also participates in the Links to Re-Employment program, which provides early intervention to dislocated workers by providing workforce center services orientation, WIOA career service and training information, and information about UI eligibility and work search requirements. Efforts from the recent Job Seeker Lean Project have identified UI Representative training on WFC services as an area of need in order to make better connections for UI claimants. We will stay connected to that effort as it progresses. Employment Services staff also provide Rapid Response services to local employers and workers as layoffs are announced



in Mesa County to connect them to Unemployment Benefit information and WFC employment and training services as quickly as possible in an attempt to shorten the length of time on Unemployment Benefits. Employment Services staff also send communications to all new UI claimants that have not accessed staff assisted services at the WFC in an attempt to educate them of the services offered through the Mesa County WFC.

The WIOA program is currently utilizing funding from the Hire for Colorado and NEG programs to provide career services and training to eligible dislocated workers and long-term dislocated workers in an attempt to shorten the length of Unemployment Insurance these individuals claim.

(11). Describe how the local board will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out in the local area with economic development activities carried out in the planning region, and promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services.

The Mesa County Workforce Development Board recognizes and supports the idea that entrepreneurship is a viable opportunity for citizens and job-seekers looking to increase their options to finding life sustaining, and gainful employment. At the same time, the Workforce Development Board has identified small-medium sized business support as a critical element in the suite of business services provided throughout the community. As mentioned previously, ***new firms less than 5 years old account for nearly 100% of all net new job creation, and approximately 20% of all gross job creation, according to a 2012 Study by the Kauffman Foundation.*** With foresight, the Mesa County Workforce Development Board as always worked hand in hand with the Grand Junction Business Incubator to ensure that opportunities are made available for those looking to be aspiring



job creators. The Mesa County Workforce Development Board has representation in its body from the Grand Junction Business Incubator, which is seen throughout the region as a vital economic development partner. In turn, the Director of the Mesa County Workforce Development Board is an ex-officio member of the Incubator Board, in efforts to ensure linkages that target WIOA based resources to aspiring job creators. The WIOA program funds future entrepreneurs through the twelve week “Leading Edge” course offered at the Business Incubator. During this course, budding entrepreneurs will develop a solid business plan, learn how to obtain capital to get their business off the ground, develop legal and financial strategies to grow their new business.

Also mentioned previously, the Mesa County Workforce Development Board is a strong advocate for the Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce, and it’s Young Entrepreneur Academy.

The **Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!)** is a year-long program that teaches middle and high school students how to start and run their own REAL businesses. **YEA!** was developed at the University of Rochester in 2004 with the support of a grant from the Kauffman Foundation. The Grand Junction Area Chamber is excited to be introducing **YEA!** to Grand Junction and Mesa County!

YEA! guides high school students through the process of starting and running a legitimate business or social movement over the course of a full academic year. **YEA!** has graduated almost 600 students over the past 7 years, who have started almost 450 businesses and



social movements! **YEA!** graduates started as students, and left the program as CEOs of their own companies!

(12). Provide a description of the workforce development system in the local area that identifies the programs that are included in that system. Also describe how you will partner with the required WIOA partners to increase awareness of career pathways and the critical role that workforce development plays in ensuring that all Coloradans have access to educational and career pathways that result in meaningful employment.

The Mesa County Workforce Center provides comprehensive workforce development programs within Mesa County. Mesa County Workforce Center, and its main facility, is centrally located in Grand Junction, CO County Human Services Campus, with a satellite site in Fruita, CO offering the full complement of Title I (WIOA) and Title III (Wagner-Peyser) Services. Partners with the Mesa County Workforce Center are:

- ✓ The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, programs for Youth, Adult and Dislocated Worker Services;
- ✓ Wagner –Peyser Programs , to include Employment Services;
- ✓ Youth Programs such as Governors Summer Job Hunt;
- ✓ Professional Services Division- includes assessment testing for job seekers and employers as well as remedial technology based classes (Basic Computer Literacy, Word, Excel, Google apps, etc.);
- ✓ Technology Employment in Colorado (TEC-P);
- ✓ Sector Partnership National Emergency Grant (SP-NEG) provided by USDOL/CDLE
- ✓ Employment First (SNAP) through Hilltop Community Resources;
- ✓ Colorado Works (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF));



- ✓ Public Assistance eligibility programs;
- ✓ Low-income Childcare eligibility;
- ✓ On Site Domestic Violence Counseling, Drug and Alcohol Evaluation,
- ✓ ReHire Colorado;
- ✓ CDLE Disabled Veterans Opportunity Program (DVOP) and Regional Veterans Employment Representative (RVER) Programs;
- ✓ Veterans Upward Bound
- ✓ Veterans Affairs Officer
- ✓ School to Work Alliance Program (Vocational Rehabilitation)
- ✓ GED prep through Hilltop Community Resources;
- ✓ ESL through Hilltop Community Resources;
- ✓ Drop-in Child Care Services for customers on site;
- ✓ Grand Junction Housing Authority;
- ✓ Ability Connection;
- ✓ Job Corps;
- ✓ Catholic Outreach Support Program;
- ✓ UI Hearing Officer;

As described in previous sections within the Plan, the Mesa County Workforce Center will seek active partnerships required under WIOA in an effort to increase awareness of career pathways and outline the critical role that workforce development plays in ensuring that all



Mesa County residents have access to educational and career pathways that result in meaningful employment, contingent on available resources.

(13). Describe the one-stop delivery system in the local area, in particular:

a. Identify the locations of the comprehensive physical one-stop centers (at least one) within your local area; also list the locations of your network of affiliate sites, both physical and electronically linked, such as libraries.

The Mesa County Workforce Center is located in the center of the Grand Valley with the vast majority of the population of the count living within five miles of the Workforce Center. The facilities are located on a campus with the Department of Human Service and the Mesa County Health Department. Beyond the full array of Human Service and Health Department programs and services, Marillac Clinic, provides medical, dental, and optical no cost or low cost services on site. Both Mind Springs full service psychiatric hospital, Homeward Bound (homeless shelter) and Hilltop's Health Access (Medicaid, CHP+, Affordable Care Act service) is all located within one half mile of the center.

The only connection we have to the public library is through referrals. WIOA consistently refers to their evening computer courses for individuals seeking basic Microsoft Office programs, but don't have enough computer skills to be successful in the courses offered by Professional Services.

b. Identify your key strategies for integrating the core programs (WIOA, Adult Basic Education, Wagner Peyser, DVR), as well as all required partner programs, within the local one-stop system of comprehensive and affiliate offices.

The Mesa County Workforce Center, through Board and Department of Human Services Leadership, have already created well established relationships with our local areas



Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) program. The relationship between the Workforce Center and DVR is a strong referral- based relationship, in addition to an on-site presence from the School to Work Alliance (SWAP) program. The Mesa County Workforce Development Board will make every effort to create stronger linkages through proposed co-location of traditional DVR services in ongoing years.

Hilltop Community Resources provides Adult Basic Education Services for the citizens of Mesa County in spite of no dedicated ABE funding through the Colorado Department of Education until 2017. This is done through a funding partnership and MOU with the Mesa County Department of Human Services and Hilltop Community Resources. The Mesa County Workforce Development Board understands the importance of Adult Basic Education, and while traditional funding may not be available until 2017, Mesa County has served 656 unduplicated participants in GED prep and ESL programs within the last 2 years. .

c. Describe the roles and resource contributions of each of the one-stop partners.

Under the direction of the Mesa County Board of County Commissioners and the Workforce Development Board, The Workforce Center administers, supports and co-locates the following career services: WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth, Wagner Peyser, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Works Program, Employment First (SNAP) Program, Veterans services including Disabled Veterans Outreach Program, Local Veterans Employment Representatives, Trade Adjustment Assistance and Unemployment



Insurance initiatives, and Hire for Colorado, and all co-located partner agencies.. Program Integration is managed through a unified Leadership Team with a coordinated and at times, cross-functional service delivery system that includes common core services including customer orientations, workshops, Customer Resource Center, referrals to targeted programs and co-enrollments as appropriate. Resource sharing is accomplished through an approved Cost Allocation Plan outlining common costs and methodology for cost allocation. Services provided through other one stop partners including Adult Basic Education (in 2017) and Department of Vocational Rehabilitation will be coordinated through the development of a Memorandum of Understanding developed at the State and local levels.

d. Describe how the local board will facilitate access to services provided through the one stop delivery system, including in remote areas, through the use of technology and through other means; include your intended use of virtual job fairs, the upcoming virtual job shadowing capability, and other innovative strategies and initiatives to streamline and enhance services, as well as increase access.

The Employment Services team, Veterans Upward Bound, WIOA team and other services frequently provide off-site services at the Community College, School district, business locations, community job fairs and more to maximize our delivery of services which include virtual job fairs capabilities.

e. Identify the types of assessments and assessment tools that will be utilized within the one-stop delivery system and how these assessments will be coordinated across participating programs to avoid duplication of effort and multiple assessments of customers being served by more than one partner program.



The full array of WorkKeys and ProveIt assessments are available to businesses to assist in their hiring and screening needs, as well as to all partners located in the Workforce center to assist them in their employment and training needs. In addition to WorkKeys, TABE, Professional Services Division provides CAPS, COPS, and COPES, and Computer Literacy for all applicants. These results can, and, are shared with partner agencies to avoid duplication of services and expenses. The Workforce Ready Community Initiative, defined earlier, will maximize WorkKeys assessments, and KeyTrain remedial programs, in customer completion of the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC).

f. A description of how entities within the one-stop delivery system, including one-stop operators and the one-stop partners, will comply with section 188, if applicable, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities, including providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities; and In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

The Mesa County Workforce Center has already taken steps to ensure that all appropriate auxiliary aids and services are made available when necessary to afford an individual with a disability the same opportunity to participate in Workforce Center Services and provide the following notification on our marketing collateral: “Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.”

All Mesa County Workforce Center Facilities are accessible for individuals with disabilities. Yearly training will be conducted with the Employment Services team for the purpose of understanding technology and materials available for customers with disabilities. In addition, The Workforce Center follows greater Mesa County policy, establishing a



standard procedure ensuring that communications with applicants, participants and members of the public with disabilities are as clear and effective communications and identical complaint resolution procedures alleging any action prohibited by regulations implementing the Americans with Disabilities Act. As The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation begins to transition to the Colorado Division of Labor and Employment (CDLE), the Mesa County Workforce Development Board will make every effort to strengthen relationships with DVR, with the goal of co-location on a consistent basis. The Board believes that co-location of programs is the best way to ensure seamless integration of services for all job seekers.

g. A description of how the local board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services through the system and ensure that such providers meet the employment needs of local employers, and workers and jobseekers; The local WDB understands the importance of having eligible providers of services that deliver high quality, relevant training that meets the current and future needs of the business community, while serving the interests of the workers and job seeking population.

The Mesa County Workforce Development Board serves as the policy and programmatic oversight for the Mesa County Workforce Center and its WIOA based programs. Through this relationship, the Board receives regular updates from the Workforce Center Director and management team on program outcomes, successes and challenges. The Mesa County WBD will continue to receive regular updates as it relates to performance outlines in proposed common measures through WIOA legislation. In addition, the Board will continue to be briefed and updated on programmatic initiatives occurring within the Workforce Center as it relates to the Mission, Vision, and Strategic Direction of the Board. This



currently takes place on a quarterly basis. Detailed updates are also given the Executive Committee of the WDB on quarterly basis.

To ensure that programs continue to maintain cross pollination and cooperation, The Workforce Center Administrative Team meet weekly to review program goals and objectives for each department. The team consists of the Workforce Development Board/ Workforce Center Director, Workforce Center Operations Manager, Department Supervisors, Fiscal and Professional Standards Teams. Through this meeting, programs coordination and quality assurance topics are addressed in an ongoing effort to ensure seamless coordination of services.

It is in everyone's best interest to make sure that the providers of services are well informed about the issues facing the workforce and business community. As Mesa County continues under its local area designation, the WBD will make every effort to ensure that input is received from all stakeholders, to ensure that services are beneficial, and the strategic direction of the WBD addresses all identified stakeholders.

h. Provide a description of how training services under chapter 3 of subtitle B will be provided in accordance with section 134(c) (3) (G), including, if contracts for the training services will be used, how the use of such contracts will be coordinated with the use of individual training accounts under that chapter and how the local board will ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training programs regardless of how the training services are to be provided.

The Mesa County Workforce Center, through guidance from the Mesa County Workforce Development Board will continue to support WIOA customer training through Individual Training Accounts in accordance with the law and applicable local policies. Eligible



program participants who seek training services may, in consultation with Workforce Center staff, select a training vendor from the list of providers approved through the Colorado Eligible Training Provider (ETP) process. Upon selection, in accordance with local policies and available funding, The Mesa County Workforce Center will refer the participant to the eligible provider and arrange for payment through an individual training account. At this time, we do not intend to develop contracts for training services. However, should circumstances including customer demand and limited training opportunities warrant the development of customized training, The Workforce Center will work with the Mesa County Workforce Development Board to achieve stated objectives.

i. Outreach to Individuals with Barriers to Employment: Describe how you will engage your LWDB and Youth Council/committee to increase the awareness of the services offered to returning veterans, out-of-school youth, individuals with disabilities, long-term unemployed, and other targeted groups? What additional strategies will be utilized to reach out to these groups? What are your objectives and goals for this effort?

The Mesa County Workforce Center ensures through its central mission to serve individuals with barriers to employment, or the “hard to serve”. We work diligently through Colorado CDLE policy to ensure that we focus on these specific populations. With comprehensive eligibility determination services on site and programs such as Employment First and Colorado Works (TANF), we make every effort to ensure that those looking to enter the workforce have access to programs that stabilize their basic needs, thus allowing each individual to focus on skill gain to ensure a job ready individual, at service exit. Over this data sample size, 23% of youth entered services as disconnected from school, 17% entered services with a documented disability, 9% entered services as



Basic Skills deficient, 16% entered services as offenders, 28% entered services as pregnant or parenting, and 13% reported homelessness. From July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2015, the WIA/WIOA Adult program has provided service opportunity for adults with barriers in Mesa County. Over this data sample size, 78% of adults were verified to enter services attached to low-income households, 5% entered services with an identified disability, and 16% entered services with as an offender.

The Mesa County Workforce Center fully embraces the spirit of WIOA and its focus on the hard to serve. With a new and re-invigorated focus on this population, an opportunity to grow our network presents itself. Through the Workforce Center, we have created new partnerships with Grand Valley Catholic Outreach and Mesa County Probation and Parole Services, to ensure that we capture the holistic needs of our low income and offender re-entry populations, respectively. Both providers will enter into MOU agreement with the Mesa County Workforce Development Board to ensure that these identified populations through WIOA are served through the Workforce Center structure, through partnership, co-location, or referral.

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

Relationships with our educational institutions are critical for many of the services the Mesa County Workforce Center delivers on a regular basis. The first thing the WDB does to help coordinate education and workforce activities with secondary and postsecondary



programs is to ensure that there is regular communication between institutions. The WDB meetings serve as a place to convene education partners to learn about what one another is doing and how the organizations can collaborate with Staff from Western Colorado Community College represented on the Mesa County Workforce Development Board. The WDB also has school district 51 of Mesa County staff on the board, and invites a number of different representatives from the school districts in the region to participate in the WDB.

The School district is encouraged to leverage the WDB to reach out to the community and share what they are doing as it is related to workforce development. Specifically, the Mesa County Workforce Center has made significant investments in providing services, in cooperation with our local secondary education partners.

Other education providers partnering with the Mesa County Workforce Center are Delta-Montrose Technical College, Sage, Western Colorado Area Health and Education Center, amongst others.

(15). Provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area; in particular identify how the local area will expand services to dislocated workers utilizing all sources of formula and discretionary funds targeted to the dislocated worker population.

In addition to the Adult and Dislocated Worker formula grants, the Mesa County Workforce Center also administers a variety of education and training grants intended to serve Dislocated Workers. These grants, each targeted toward serving Dislocated Workers, include TEC-P, Hire for Colorado, and the Sector Partnership National Emergency Grant (NEG). Utilizing appropriate co-enrollment service strategies, the Mesa County Workforce



Center is able to expand the capacity to serve Dislocated Workers through increased Individual Training Account (ITA) and Supportive Service access. In addition, TEC-P customers are not required to use training providers who participate on Colorado’s Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), thereby opening up training opportunities that may not be available to them through traditional WIOA formula grants. The Mesa County WFC administers the Links to Reemployment initiative, connected to recipients of Unemployment Insurance. Customers connected to this initiative are automatically eligible for Dislocated Worker services. Through this initiative, we have developed seminars that introduce the full array of services, including an overview and suggested action steps for this population to consider the additional services provided through the Dislocated Worker program. We expect this initiative to expand our footprint to eligible workers.

(16). Provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of youth workforce investment activities in the local area, including activities for youth who are individuals with disabilities, which description and assessment shall include an identification of successful models of such youth workforce investment activities; in addition, indicate how services to out-of-school youth will be expanded and enhanced to incorporate additional work-based learning opportunities.

The Mesa County Workforce Center actively participates in a wide variety of youth career development endeavors. These activities can be divided into two basic categories; services to all youth ages 14-24 regardless of WIOA eligibility and services to WIOA eligible youth, ages 16-24.

When addressing the youth population considered, or categorized as “Out of School”, we focus on the age group between 16-24 years old, and who are not participating in secondary or post-secondary education at the time of enrollment. In the spirit of WIOA, The



Mesa County Workforce Development Board and Workforce Center has essentially shifted focus and resources to this group, to ensure that this cohort of participants is engaged, despite the difficulties in doing so. The main focus for this age group is the offering of experiential learning through programs such as Kick-Start, an internship program for these specific participants as a mechanism to introduce, or re-introduce them to the workforce. This program not only places participants through internships, but assesses abilities through WorkKeys assessments, and addresses essential “soft skill” development to ensure participant success. We also link our Out of School population to programs such as GED prep, if needed, Individualized Training Accounts, which are certificate and degree based programs in occupational area considered “high priority”, and are present on the Mesa County Approved Training Provider List.

For youth age 14-21, and considered “In School”, The WIOA program has a close working relationship with School District 51, through their guidance counselors, identifying youth at risk of dropout. The WIOA program provides services through incentives and assistance in an effort to steer at risk youth toward graduation/ course completion. One program that focuses on steering youth at risk of dropping out, or youth that have already dropped out is the Key Performance program. The Key Performance program creates a pathway towards a high school diploma program that ensures graduation for youth at risk or dropping out, and re-engages youth who have already left high school. Over the past 2 years, Hilltop Community Resources has shifted significant program resources toward out of school youth, as mandated youth WIOA.



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

As a newly designated local workforce area under WIOA, The Mesa County Workforce Development Board addresses Adult Education and Literacy through various partnerships, the most significant of which is our partnership with Hilltop Community Resources. Hilltop and the Mesa County Workforce Center, despite no available funding through Adult Basic Education, provides GED prep services and ESL for participants in need throughout Mesa County. As a result of the partnership approach and structure within the Mesa County Workforce Center, every effort is made to ensure that referral to location based services are provided if needed. These services can be; Public Assistance eligibility, Low Income Child Care, Colorado Works, Employment 1st and WIOA programs if applicable.

(18). Provide a description of how the local board will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out under this title in the local area with the provision of transportation, including public transportation, and other appropriate supportive services in the local area The WIOA Center including Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth recently updated the Supportive Service policy to include the provision of transportation assistance.

The Mesa County Workforce Center, has adopted a Supportive Services policy that specifically addresses transportation needs for WIOA enrolled participants. Our local WIOA services provider allows a maximum of \$500 annually per adult / dislocated worker participant, and up to \$1,500 per youth participant, to access services needed to attain, and maintain gainful employment, including transportation related costs.



In addition, The Mesa County Department of Human Services and the Mesa County Workforce Center provides funding to the Grand Valley Transportation Authority, which provides public transportation vouchers to TANF eligible participants for employment based services, amongst other client based needs..

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

Our plans and strategies for coordinating Wagner-Peyser funding to improve services and avoid duplication fall into three focus areas; streamlining processes for connecting job seekers and employers, coordinating efforts with external organizations who serve job seekers and students, and coordinating efforts with external organizations who serve employers.

Our Employment Services team intensively interacts with our WIOA and Professional Services Teams to ensure that all teams address common goals; this includes Resume Workshops, Interview Skills Workshops, and Job Search Group exercises. The Employment Services Team currently works primarily with Job Seekers to ensure registration within the state system of record (Connecting Colorado), and assess if a participant is “job ready” or is in need of more intensive services. As previously mentioned, the Workforce Center is in the beginning stages of a transformation project which will fundamentally alter the experience a job seeker has upon entry to the Workforce Center, with a goal to better streamline



services, as well as presenting a job ready individual to our Employment Services teams, in an effort to create a more successful match between job seeker and employer.

(20). Identify the administrator/administrative entity responsible for the disbursement of Title I and III funds in the local area, as determined by the chief elected official or the Governor, and the fiscal agent if different.

Programmatic responsibilities for WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth were awarded to Hilltop Community Resources through a competitive Bidding process in July of 2015. The Wagner- Peyser program, funded through Title III (Wagner-Peyser) of WIOA is a county merit function, and is facilitated by Mesa County Workforce Center Staff, under the umbrella of the Mesa County Department of Human Services. The Mesa County Department of Human Services is designated Fiscal Agent of Title I and Title III services under the direction of the Mesa County Board of County Commissioners, and identified Local Elected Official.

(21). A description of the competitive process to be used to award the sub-grants and contracts in the local area for activities carried out under this title.

The Mesa County Workforce Development Board plans to competitively bid services related to WIOA Youth, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs in addition to One-Stop Operator Services and Coordination. We are currently involved in discussions at a board and LEO level to see if the WIOA/ One Stop Operator through a single, comprehensive Request for Proposal process, or separate the two functions into two separate proposals.



(22). Provide a description of the local levels of performance negotiated with the Governor and chief elected official pursuant to section 116(c), to be used to measure the performance of the local area and to be used by the local board for measuring the performance of the local fiscal agent (where appropriate), eligible providers under subtitle B, and the one-stop delivery system, in the local area.

The Mesa County Workforce Development Board will actively negotiate these proposed new measures through the traditional process with the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment. Given that these measures are new and are not yet subject to the traditional regression model, The Mesa County Workforce Development Board will provide due diligence in researching these benchmarks to ensure that proposed measures accurately reflect realistic labor market conditions in Mesa County. For the purposes of this plan, Mesa County will continue to follow identified Common Measures from PY 2015 until such time as new measures are negotiated and agreed upon.



(23). Provide a description of the actions the local board will take toward becoming or remaining a high-performing board, including but not limited to:

a. LWDB Roles: Identify the role of your Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) and Youth Council/committee in supporting Business Services, Sector Partnerships, Career Pathways, and Work-Based Learning. What actions will they be taking to ensure that these areas are a priority for the local area? What actions and commitments will you ask your LWDB or youth council/committee members (in particular business members) to make to support these initiatives? The WDB and Youth committee recognizes the increased focus on business services, sector partnerships, career pathways, and work-based learning and is committed to advance each one at a high level.

Our role as the Mesa County Workforce Development Board is first and foremost, to leverage the contacts available through Board Membership, and target local area employers. A cornerstone function and responsibility of the Board is not just policy, monitoring and strategic oversight, but also to expand the reach of the Workforce Center and its programs to ensure it has maximum visibility to area employers.

The Mesa County Workforce Development Board approved a standing committee dedicated to the work of Sector Partnerships. As a primary vehicle to address business attraction through identifying Career Pathways through collaboration with local area employers, it was important to the Board that Sector Partnerships not only be a standing agenda item, but have a sub-committee of members dedicated to ensuring that we continue to address the Sector Partnership structure. The development of career pathways is driven by of the sector partnerships, through the convening and coordinating efforts of Workforce Center staff. The Workforce Center and Workforce Development Board is primarily tasked to ensure the information is shared with the entire Grand Valley Community.



As stated numerous times earlier within this document, Work-based and experiential learning is strongly supported by the Mesa County Workforce Development Board.

b. LWDB Participation: Describe how you will market opportunities for participation on your LWDB to businesses in your local area to ensure representation of industry sectors with the greatest labor force demand. Describe how you will maintain a minimum of at least 51% of businesses as active members and participants on your LWDB.

The Mesa County Workforce Development Board, in conjunction with the Local Elected Official, will maintain an active role in Board Recruitment. The recruitment, nomination and approval process begins with conversation through the Executive Committee, in conjunction with the Chief Local Elected Official once a vacancy is formally identified. The Board will take all steps to ensure that at least 51% of Board composition falls within private sector membership, and will make every effort to target high priority and in-demand industry clusters.

(24). Describe how you will use the Workforce Investment Works (WIW) website to increase the awareness of the services and successes for each of the service areas: business, reemployment, and youth. How will you ensure that your local area posts a minimum of three success stories per quarter on WIW?

Another key deliverable for the Mesa County Workforce Development Board is “telling the Workforce Story”. Through Workforce Investment Works, the Board will task Workforce Center Leadership in identifying true system success stories from both the employer and participant side, and share those stories on the WIW website on a quarterly basis.

(25). Describe the process used by the local board, consistent with subsection (d), to provide an opportunity for public comment, including comment by representatives of businesses and comment by representatives of labor organizations, and input into the development of the local plan, prior to submission of the plan. In concert with the Workforce Development Board, The Workforce Center has established a comprehensive process for public comment on the local Plan.



This Mesa County Workforce Development Board Local area plan will be published on Mesa County Workforce Center Website, on or before March 31, 2016. We will also forward our local area plan for review to the Colorado Workforce Development Council Website as a means to further expand visibility. We will implement all public comment related to this plan through a tracking process to ensure that all comment is sufficiently addressed in the final document. To ensure public comment, we will designate an email address, as well as our Workforce Center Address should anyone wish to send their comments in official letter. The document will be available for public comment for a period of 30 days, beginning March 31st, 2016 through April 30th, 2016.

Glossary of Terms



Americans with Disabilities Act: is a wide-ranging civil rights law that is intended to protect against discrimination based on disability. It affords similar protections against discrimination to Americans with disabilities as the Civil Rights Act of 1964,^[4] which made discrimination based on race, religion, sex, national origin, and other characteristics illegal.

Adult Basic Education: means instruction in basic skills, such as reading, writing, mathematics, and other skills required to function in society, offered to persons 16 years of age or older who are not regularly enrolled, full-time pupils for the purposes of ANB computation. Adult basic education may include any subject normally offered in the basic curricula of an accredited elementary or secondary school in the state.

Apprenticeships: An employer-driven program, combining on-the-job training with related classroom instruction targeted to increase employee skill level and wages, and promote employee retention.

Assessment: A judgment of vocational interests, abilities, previous education and work experience, income requirements, and personal circumstances.

Barriers to Employment: Conditions that make finding, and sustain employment or training difficult. Individuals with such barriers may include: single parents, displaced homemakers, youth, pregnant or parenting youth, public assistance recipients, older workers, individual's suffering from additions, veterans, minorities, Individuals with limited English proficiency, a criminal history, or lack of credentialing.



Basic Skills Deficient: means, with respect to an individual, that “the individual has English reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the 8th grade level on a generally accepted standardized test or a comparable score on a criterion-referenced test.”

Board of County Commissioners: A county commission (also known as a board of county commissioners) is a group of elected officials charged with administering the county government in Colorado.

Career Pathways: A series of connected education and training programs, work experiences, and student support services that enable individuals to secure a job or advance in an in-demand industry.

Career Services: Career services for adults and dislocated workers must be available in at least one Job Center in each local workforce development area. There are three types of career services, as identified in §678.430 of WIOA NPRM: Basic career services; Individualized career services; and Follow-up services.

Chief Local Elected Official: The chief elected executive officer of a unit of general local government in a local area.

Connecting Colorado: Colorado “system of record” website, where job seekers can post resumes and search for job openings. In addition, employers can post job listings in the nation's largest online labor exchange, create customized job orders, and search resumes.



Customer: Under WIOA, a customer is any person seeking assistance to find employment or training, whether employed or unemployed, and employers who need qualified workers for their company or training for the workers who are already employed with them

Customized Training: 1. Training that is designed to meet the special requirements of an employer (including a group of employers); 2. Training that is conducted with a commitment by the employer to employ an individual on successful completion of the training; and 3. Training for which the employer pays for not less than 50 percent of the cost of training

Dislocated Worker: An individual who: has been terminated or laid off from their job, or who received a notice of termination or layoff, from their employer; is eligible for or has exhausted their unemployment payments; or has been employed for a duration sufficient to demonstrate, to the appropriate entity at a one-stop center, attachment to the workforce, but cannot get unemployment compensation because of low earnings or having done work for an employer not covered under a State unemployment compensation law; and is unlikely to return to a previous industry or occupation; has been terminated or laid off, or has received a notice of termination or layoff, from employment as a result of any permanent closure of, or any substantial layoff at, a plant, facility or enterprise; is employed at a facility which the employer has made a general announcement that such facility will close within 180 days; or for purpose of eligibility to receive services other than training services, intensive services or supportive services, is employed at a facility at



which the employer has made a general announcement that such facility will close; was self-employed (including employment as a farmer, rancher, or a fisherman) but is unemployed as a result of general economic conditions in the community in which the individual resides or because of natural disasters, is a displaced homemaker; or is the spouse of a member of the Armed Forces on active duty and who has experienced a loss of employment as a direct result of relocation to accommodate a permanent change in duty station of such member; or is the spouse of a member of the Armed Forces on active duty and who meets the criteria.

Economic Development Agencies: Local planning and zoning commissions or boards, community development agencies, and other local agencies and institutions responsible for regulating, promoting, or assisting in local economic development.

Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL): A statewide collection of providers that are approved to give services through the One-Stop system. These lists contain consumer information, including cost and performance information for each of the providers, so that customers can make informed choices on where to use their Individual Training Accounts.

English as a Second Language (ESL): English language education for adults whose inability to understand, speak, read, or write the English language is a barrier to their ability to get or keep employment. This also has effects on their real ability to function in society or successfully complete the citizenship application process.



GED-General Equivalency Diploma: A high school equivalency diploma, which is obtained by passing the General Educational Diploma Equivalency Test that, measures skills and knowledge generally associated with four years of traditional high school instruction.

Individual Service Strategy (ISS) – An agreement of skills and goals decided between a WIA Youth participant and WIA Youth staff counselor (usually a case manager), that sets out a plan for the participant to make progress towards his/her educational and employment goals. The ISS is an ongoing strategy jointly developed by the participant and the case manager, which identifies an age appropriate employment/career goal, appropriate achievement objectives, and appropriate combination of services for the participant to reach these objectives. The ISS must be based on the objective assessment and should reflect the expressed interests and needs of the participant. The ISS should be reviewed and updated periodically to reflect the participant’s progress in meeting the objective of the ISS including progress in acquiring basic, work readiness, and occupational skills and the adequacy of the support services provided.

In-Demand Occupation: An industry sector that has a substantial current or potential impact (including through jobs that lead to economic self-sufficiency and opportunities for advancement) on the State, regional, or local economy, as appropriate, and that contributes to the growth or stability of other supporting businesses, or the growth of other industry sectors; or an occupation that currently has or is projected to have a number of positions (including positions that lead to economic self-sufficiency and opportunities for



advancement) in an industry sector so as to have a significant impact on the State, regional, or local economy, as appropriate

Individual Employment Plan (IEP) - A plan developed by an adult or dislocated worker program participant and the case manager to identify the participant's employment goals, the appropriate achievement objectives, and the appropriate combination of services for the participant to achieve the employment goals.

Individual with a Disability: 1. In general, an individual with any disability (as defined in section 3 of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12`02)).

Individual Training Accounts (ITA): An expenditure account established on behalf of an eligible customer in WIA Title IB adult, youth and dislocated worker programs to purchase training services from eligible providers they select in consultation with the case manager, counselor or coordinator.

Internships: WIOA considers an internship to be a form of paid or unpaid work experience, defined as an opportunity for exposure to the requirements of a particular occupation or industry, the work environment and the behavioral expectations for success on the job. Such work experiences are not expected to provide formal training for occupational skills, although some skills may be learned.

Labor Force: The total of all civilians classified as employed and unemployed and members of the Armed Forces stationed in the United States.



Labor Market Information: Labor Market Information (LMI) must be provided to customers in every program. LMI generally involves four major areas of information, which include national job trends (including supply and demand), local job opportunities, education and skill requirements for jobs, and job seeking skills (writing resumes, job interview techniques, etc.).

Local Area: The local workforce development area(s) designated by a Governor for delivery of WIOA services.

Local Workforce Development Board: A local workforce development board established under section 107 of WIOA, as one of the 10 federally recognized local areas in Colorado.

Occupational Skills Training: Includes both (1) vocational education which is designed to provide individuals with the technical skills and information required to perform a specific job or group of jobs, and (2) on-the-job training.

ONET: The Occupational Information Network for use matching the title of an occupation with its 5 or 6-digit occupational code (<http://online.onetcenter.org/>).

On-the-Job-Training: Training by an employer that is provided to a paid customer while 1. Engaged in productive work in a job that: 2. Provides knowledge or skills essential to the full and adequate performance of job; 3. Provides reimbursement to the employer of up to 50 percent of the wage rate of the customer, for the extraordinary costs of providing the training and the additional supervision related to the training; and 4. Is limited in duration



as appropriate to the occupation for which the customer is being trained; taking into account the content of the training, the prior work experience of the customer, and the service strategy of the customer, as appropriate

Public Assistance: Federal, State or Local government support provided to families for which eligibility is determined by a needs or income test. Includes TANF, childcare, food stamps (SNAP), housing assistance, work subsidies, and allowances or other cash payments to meet living expenses.

Registered Apprenticeships: An employer-driven model that combines on-the-job learning with related classroom instruction that increases an apprentice's skill level and wages and is registered/approved with the US Department of Labor.

Sector Partnerships: Brings together employers, at a regional level, from the same industry with the education, training and other community support programs needed to implement solutions and services that ensure the target industry thrives.

Standing Committee: A component of a local Workforce Development Board that is chaired by a board member, includes other community members, and focuses on a specific issue, such as youth or one-stop operations.

Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF): Is a federal program providing cash, medical or food assistance for parents and children.



Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA): Trade Adjustment Assistance service and allowances provided for achieving reemployment of adversely affected workers, including TRA, training, and other re-employment services, and job search allowance and relocation allowances.

Veteran: An individual who served in the active military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged or released from such service under conditions other than dishonorable.

Vocational Rehabilitation: Is a process/program which enables persons with functional, psychological, developmental, cognitive and emotional impairments or health disabilities to overcome barriers to accessing, maintaining or returning to employment or other useful occupation.

Wagner-Peyser: Employment Service programs – Employment Service basic labor exchange and other services funding source.

WIOA: Is a comprehensive legislation that reaffirms, reforms, and modernizes the public workforce system, bringing together and enhancing several key employment, education, and training programs. WIOA resources, services, and leadership tools for the workforce system to help individuals find and maintain good jobs and improves employer prospects for success in the global marketplace. It ensures that the workforce system operates as a comprehensive, integrated and streamlined system to provide pathways to prosperity for those it serves and continuously improves the quality and performance of its services.



WIOA Adult: An individual who is age 18 or older.

Work-based Learning: Experiential learning opportunities that take place within a business or onsite with an employer.

Workforce Development: Is an American economic development approach that attempts to enhance a region's economic stability and prosperity by focusing on people rather than businesses. It is essentially a human resources strategy.

Youth/Young Adults: Means an individual between ages 16-24 who meets the Title I of WIOA Youth/Young Adult program eligibility.



Workforce Region: Mesa County LWDA	
Address: 512 29 ½ Road	
City/State/Zip: Grand Junction, CO 81504	

This Local Area Plan is required under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (Public Law# 113-128, et. seq), and the terms and conditions of the Executed FY 2016 WDP Agreement covering the period of July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017 for the subsequent program years through June 30, 2019.

This Local Plan moves activities from Transitional to full implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, effective July 1, 2016.

We certify that all planned activities included in the Mesa County Local Area WIOA Plan shall be performed subject to the above provisions.

By: _____

Chief Local Elected Official **Date**

Local Workforce Development Board

By: _____

Local Workforce Development Board **Date**

Chair

By: _____

Local Area Director **Date**

By: _____

Local Elected Official **Date**

Chair, Board of County Commissioners