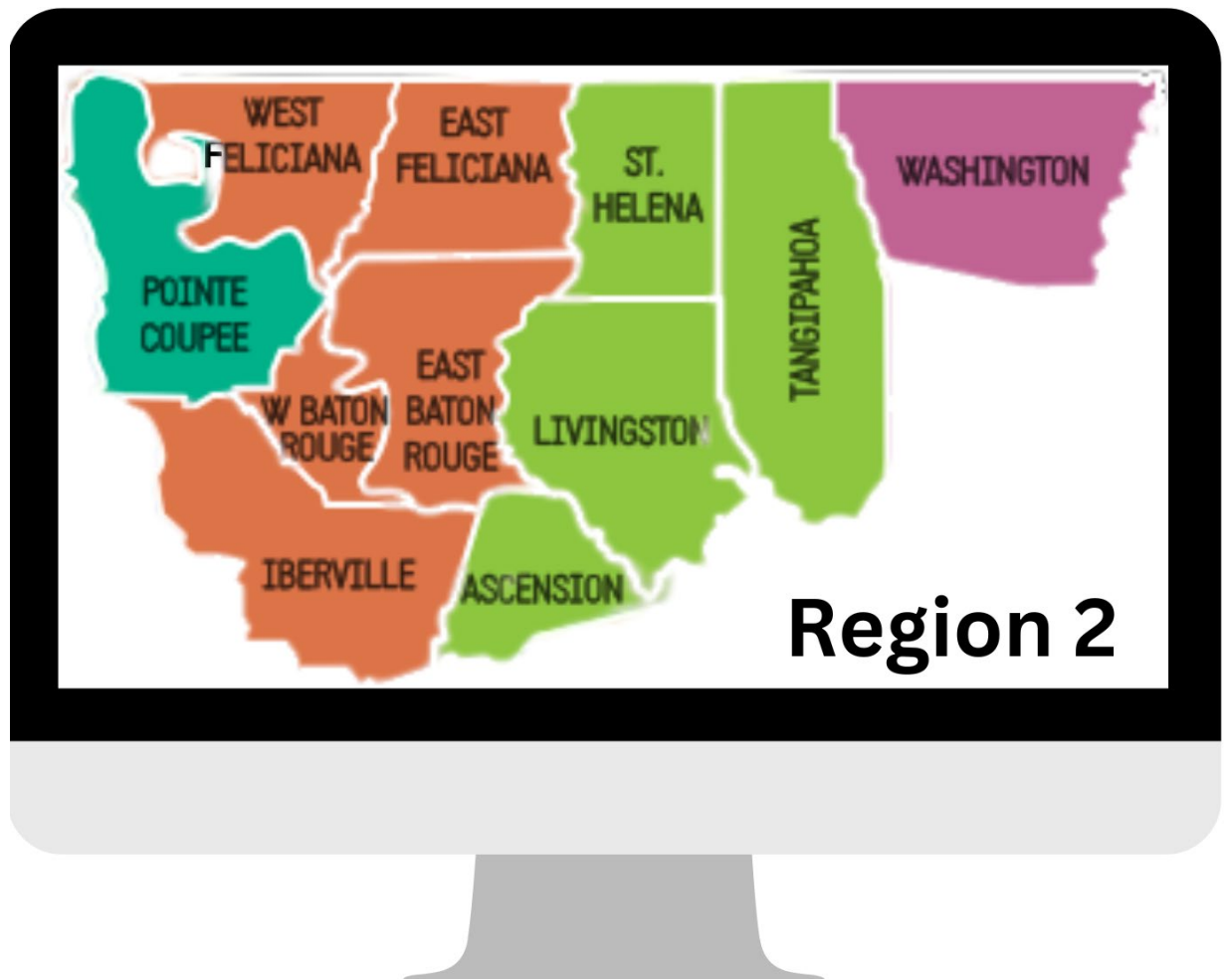




Second Planning District Consortium ~LWDA 20
As part of Region Two
Regional Local Plan
2024~2027

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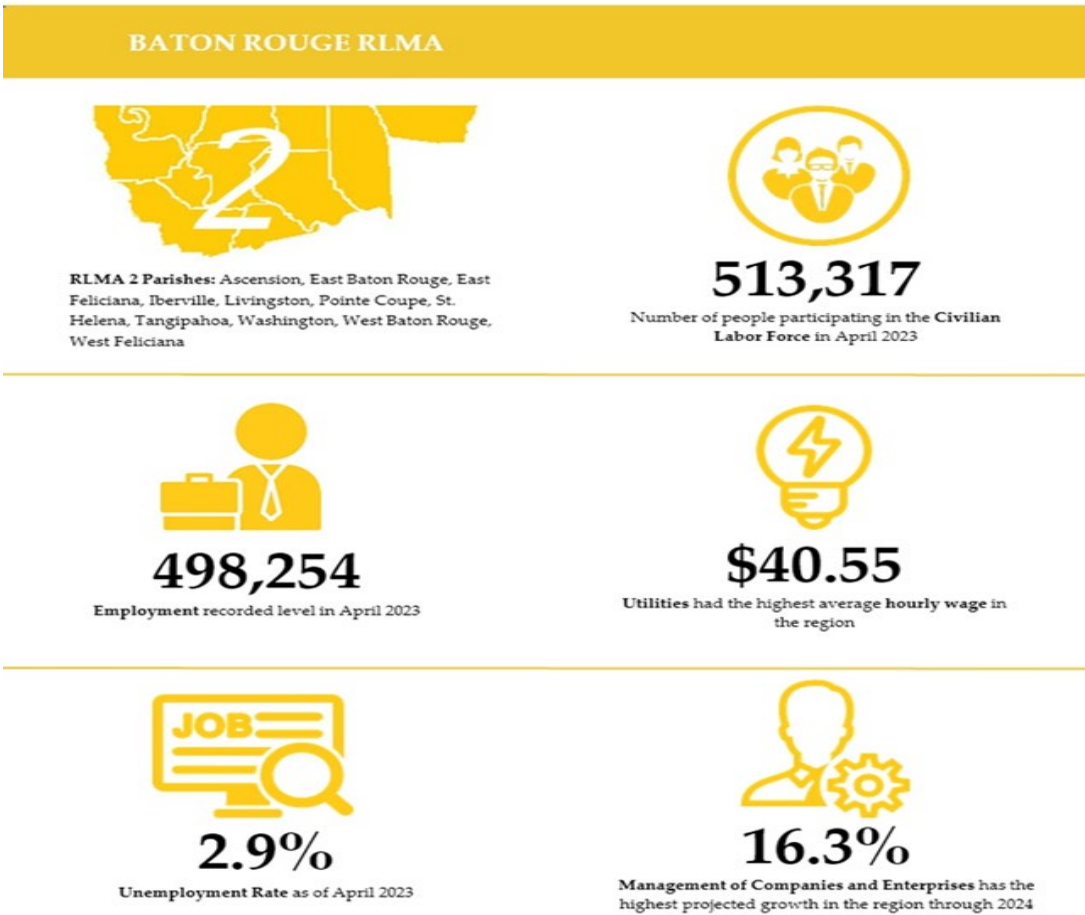
CHAPTER 1: ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ANALYSIS: REGIONAL

1. Provide and Analysis of the Economic Conditions including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations

The Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region (RLMA 2) comprises eleven parishes: Ascension, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Iberville, Livingston, Pointe Coupee, St. Helena, Tangipahoa, Washington, West Baton Rouge, and West Feliciana. Positioned strategically on both sides of the Mississippi River expanding to the Mississippi State southwest line and encompassing the Northshore of Louisiana , this region serves as a vital economic hub for Louisiana. Serving as the Capital Region, this area is heavy in government services and employment. Its natural advantages have historically also supported strong industries such as advanced manufacturing, warehousing, healthcare, transportation and more recently, professional services and information technology.

The region's economy is underpinned by robust infrastructure, including an expansive network of ports, railroads, and highways, which facilitate both domestic and international trade. This foundation, combined with a highly skilled and diverse workforce, positions the Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region (Region 2) as a center of innovation and economic resilience.

Overview of Regional Employment (2023)



Industry Projections 2022 to 2024

Industry Forecast: Total, All Industries

Area	Base 2022 Employment	Projected 2024 Employment	Difference	Percent Change
Statewide	1,956,496	2,015,125	58,629	3.0%
Baton Rouge RLMA	478,010	496,376	18,366	3.8%

Major Industries in the Baton Rouge RLMA

Industry	Base 2022 Employment	Projected 2024 Employment	Difference	Percent Change
Health Care and Social Assistance	67,523	70,600	3,077	4.6%
Other Services, Except Public Administration	49,339	50,606	1,267	2.6%
Construction	45,546	47,245	1,699	3.7%
Retail Trade	46,484	45,899	-585	-1.3%
Educational Services	42,575	43,163	588	1.4%
Accommodation and Food Services	38,977	41,860	2,883	7.4%
Government	34,054	33,906	-148	-0.4%
Manufacturing	32,281	32,713	432	1.3%
Administrative and Waste Services	25,196	26,577	1,381	5.5%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	22,576	23,744	1,168	5.2%

Growing and Shrinking Industries (2022-2024)

Top 5 Growing Industries in the Baton Rouge RLMA

Industry	Base 2022 Employment	Projected 2024 Employment	Difference	Percent Change
Health Care and Social Assistance	67,523	70,600	3,077	4.6%
Transportation and Warehousing	18,582	21,489	2,907	15.6%
Accommodation and Food Services	38,977	41,860	2,883	7.4%
Construction	45,546	47,245	1,699	3.7%
Administrative and Waste Services	25,196	26,577	1,381	5.5%

Bottom 5 Shrinking Industries in the Baton rouge RLMA

Industry	Base 2022 Employment	Projected 2024 Employment	Difference	Percent Change
Retail Trade	46,484	45,899	-585	-1.3%
Government	34,054	33,906	-148	-0.4%
Agriculture, Fishing, Forestry, and Hunting	1,142	1,152	10	0.9%
Utilities	2,454	2,467	13	0.5%
Mining	827	874	47	5.7%

Region Two - Sector Selection Criteria

When evaluating which sectors to prioritize for workforce development in Region Two, several key criteria guide decision-making to ensure maximum economic and social impact. These criteria encompass both workforce dynamics and broader economic considerations. Metrics such as total job share and projected openings due to growth and attrition provide insight into labor market demands. Additionally, the sector's economic influence is assessed through its ability to generate self-sustaining wages, contribute to regional wage totals, and drive industry revenue. The geographic scope of a sector's influence, as well as its potential to address priority occupations, further emphasizes its importance in fostering sustainable regional development. Together, these factors shape a strategic approach to sector selection and investment.

Targeted Industries and Clusters

The economic fabric of the Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region (Region 2) is woven with industries that reflect a strategic alignment with their natural resources, geographic advantages, and demographic trends. These industries, both traditional and emerging, are not only pillars of economic growth but also provide a foundation for sustainable development. Collaborative efforts among economic stakeholders have ensured that the identification of these industries aligns with long-term regional goals, addressing workforce challenges and leveraging opportunities for expansion and innovation. This targeted approach positions the region to thrive in a competitive and rapidly evolving global economy.

Advanced Manufacturing,

- **Economic Impact:** Advanced Manufacturing remains the largest contributor to the Gross Regional Product (GRP), representing 29% of the total GRP.
- **Wages and Workforce Challenges:** While the sector supports self-sustaining jobs, it faces an ongoing shortage of skilled workers, highlighting the need for workforce development initiatives.
- **Regional Significance:** This industry benefits from proximity to the Mississippi River with several oil, gas and chemical manufacturing plants and the crossroad of major interstates, an established industrial infrastructure, making it a cornerstone of the regional economy. It also drives upstream industries like Warehousing and trade, amplifying its economic impact.
- **NAICS Codes:** 32–33 (Manufacturing),

Healthcare

- **Economic Impact:** Healthcare is a cornerstone industry and is growing rapidly with and employment growth of 4.6% anticipated.
- **Wages and Key Occupations:** Offers significant opportunities in roles such as nursing, medical assistants, and healthcare administration, providing sustainable wages and career pathways.
- **Regional Impact:** With the aging population and increasing healthcare needs, this sector plays a critical role in both economic development and quality of life.
- **NAICS Codes:** 621 (Ambulatory Healthcare Services), 622 (Hospitals), 623 (Nursing Facilities), 902622 & 903622 (State and Local Hospitals).

Transportation and Warehousing, Including Wholesale Trade

- **Economic Impact:** Contributing 18% GRP, this sector serves as the backbone of regional and international trade. It is home to over 700 logistics organizations. This industry employment is expected to grow by 15.6%
- **Strategic Importance:** The region's location along the Mississippi River and its proximity to the Gulf of Mexico make it a vital hub for domestic and international trade. Upcoming infrastructure projects, such as major port expansions, will further solidify its position as a Warehousing powerhouse.
- **NAICS Codes:** 4811–4842, 4861–4869, 4881–4889, 4931, 5324, 42.

Construction Sector

- **Economic Impact:** Construction remains a critical driver of infrastructure development, especially with large-scale projects like the expansion of many chemical and manufacturing plants across the region.
- **Strategic Importance:** Major expansions and other developmental infrastructure projects require sustained labor demand, creating significant opportunities for skilled trades and supporting industries like manufacturing and Warehousing.
- **NAICS Codes:** 23 (Construction).

Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (Emerging Sector)

- **Emerging Sector:** This sector represents a cross-cutting group of occupations that drive innovation and operational efficiency across industries, employing more than 31,000 workers, of which nearly 20,000 are technical (engineering, computer, scientific) in nature.
- **Job Share and Growth:** Encompasses roles like business operations specialists, accountants, and environmental scientists, which are essential to industries like manufacturing, healthcare, and Warehousing.
- **Wages and Regional Impact:** These positions often provide competitive wages and opportunities for career advancement, making the sector a key focus for economic development. A job in this category boasts an average wage in excess of \$ 100,000.
- **NAICS Codes:** 54.

Information Technology (IT) as a Cross-cutting Occupation Group

- **Emerging Priority:** IT occupations are increasingly critical, supporting the digital infrastructure required by industries such as healthcare, Warehousing, and energy.
- **Key Roles:** Includes jobs such as computer systems analysts, cybersecurity specialists, and network administrators, which are in high demand as businesses prioritize digital transformation. Some of the highest growth occupations include Data Scientists, Software Q&A Analysts, and Software Developers.
- **Cross-Sector Impact:** IT serves as a foundational sector, enhancing productivity and innovation across all other targeted industries.
- **Occupation Group:** 15-200.

Emerging Infrastructure Projects and Their Workforce Impact

The Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region (Region 2) is poised for significant economic growth, driven by transformative infrastructure projects that will generate substantial job opportunities and enhance the region's competitiveness. These projects align closely with the region's targeted industries, particularly transportation, Warehousing, construction, and hospitality, and are anticipated to create thousands of jobs, both directly and indirectly. These are just a snapshot of the immense growth projects for this region.

Southland Steel Fabrications

Southland Steel Fabricators Inc. announced it is investing \$25 million to add 100,000 square feet of production space and acquire cutting-edge welding technology at its original facility in St. Helena Parish. The expansion will increase robotic welding capacity by 50 percent and double material processing capabilities as industrial mega-projects create surging demand for fabricated steel in Louisiana. The company expects to create 80 new direct jobs over the next three years with an average annual salary of \$60,000 while retaining 340 current positions. This along with their previous expansion in Amite estimates the project will result in 117 indirect new jobs for a total of 197 potential new jobs.

Amazon Distribution Center

Amazon's \$200 million state-of-the-art fulfillment center, known as BTR1, opened on a huge parcel of land once occupied by the city's Cortana Mall. The center's launch in the middle of 2024 has served as a lesson in what the planting of a major logistical hub by a big corporate entity can do to reshape the future of work, life and business in a region. The Amazon facility hired over 1,000 direct full-time jobs and additional part-time jobs. Since last June forty new business licenses have been filed within a one-mile radius of the Amazon fulfillment center, and 197 licenses within a two-mile radius of the hub.

MKS Plastics

MKS Plastics, a Louisiana-based premium industrial pail manufacturer, announced it is investing \$14 million to double the size of its production facility in Tangipahoa Parish. The 48,000 square-foot expansion will increase manufacturing output, allowing the company to better serve its customers in the petroleum and chemical industries. The company expects to create 20 new direct jobs while retaining 82 current positions. MKS also anticipates the creation of about 100 construction jobs at peak construction, the project will result in 34 new indirect jobs, for a total of 54 new jobs.

Total Quality Warehousing (TQL)

Total Quality Warehousing (TQL), the second largest freight brokerage in North America and one of the largest global third-party Warehousing firms, announced it is expanding its presence in Louisiana by establishing a new location in Baton Rouge. The company expects to create 98 direct new jobs and an additional 146 indirect new jobs, for a total of 244 potential new jobs in the Capital Region. With six deep draft ports, six Class 1 railroads, seven primary airports and six interstate highways, no other state can compete with Louisiana's infrastructure advantages

Niagara Bottling

Niagara Bottling, one of the nation's leading beverage manufacturers, invested \$160 million to establish a state-of-the-art production facility near Hammond. The company created 70 new direct jobs with an average annual salary of \$55,000. The company has plans to expand the operations into Phase 2 in the coming years.

Fabricated Steel

Fabricated Steel Products, Inc. announced an expansion of its East Baton Rouge Parish facility that will add state-of-the-art technology, enhance overall productivity and efficiency and create new jobs. The \$3.2 million investment will include a state-of-the-art robotic assembly and welding line that is expected to increase the company's production of structural steel by 50 percent.

FSP expects to create 15 new direct jobs while retaining 75 current positions. Louisiana Economic Development estimates the project will result in 22 indirect new jobs, for a total of 37 potential new jobs in the Capital Region.

John H. Carter Center for Excellence

John H. Carter Co./ControlWorx LLC announced plans to build a \$69 million, 285,000-square-foot facility in Ascension Parish that will house products and services designed to support key industries in Louisiana and nearby states that include oil and gas, refining chemicals, power, renewable energy and pulp and paper production. The company is expected to create 175 direct new jobs over the next 10 years with a projected payroll of \$12.5 million. The company will also retain 741 current jobs across the state. Louisiana Economic Development estimates the project will result in 301 indirect new jobs, for a total of 476 potential new jobs in the Capital Region.

Premier Concrete

Premier Concrete Products, Inc. announced it is investing up to \$10 million to add a state-of-the-art precast concrete pipe production unit at its manufacturing facility in Livingston Parish. The expansion will allow the company to address the shortage of precast concrete products and support infrastructure and drainage projects across the southern United States. The company is expected to create 33 new jobs over the next 10 years while retaining 90 current positions. This expansion will result in 50 indirect new jobs, for a total of 83 potential new jobs

Projected Workforce Impact

These infrastructure projects alone collectively represent a significant investment in the region's economy. Combined, they are anticipated to create:

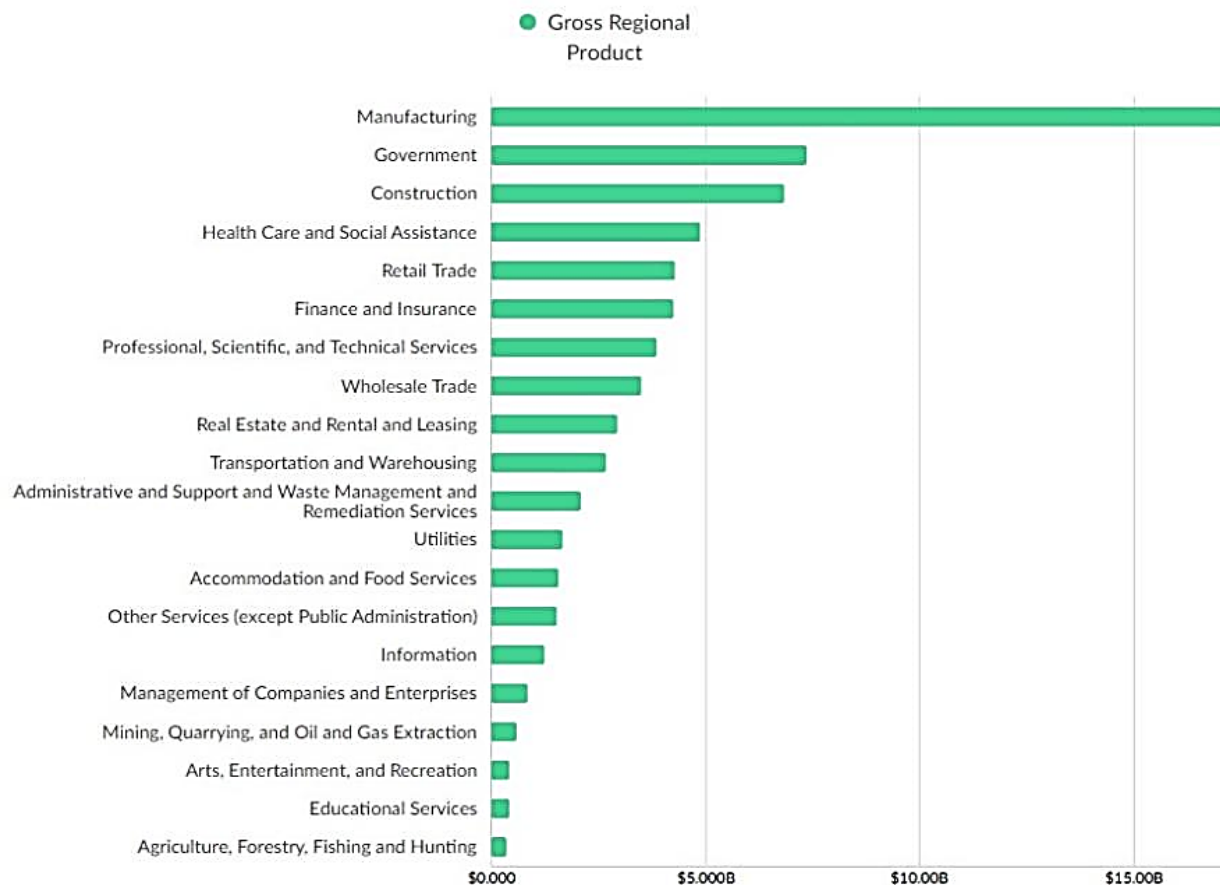
- **Direct Jobs:** approximately 1,491
- **Indirect Jobs:** Additional opportunities in supporting industries such as construction, Warehousing, and retail.
- **Broader Economic Benefits:** Enhanced regional connectivity, increased trade capacity, and revitalized local economies.

By aligning workforce development strategies with these projects, the Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region can ensure a prepared and competitive workforce to meet the growing demands of these transformative initiatives.

The Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region's diverse economic portfolio, anchored by traditional sectors like manufacturing, healthcare, construction, and Warehousing, and bolstered by emerging industries such as IT and professional services, showcases its adaptability to shifting economic trends. Strategic investments in these targeted industries and clusters are essential to ensuring the region's resilience and competitiveness in the years ahead. By addressing workforce challenges, fostering innovation, and maximizing the impact of infrastructure projects, the region is positioned to achieve sustained economic vitality. This forward-looking approach capitalizes on current strengths while preparing for future demands, ensuring that the Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region remains a vibrant hub of economic activity.

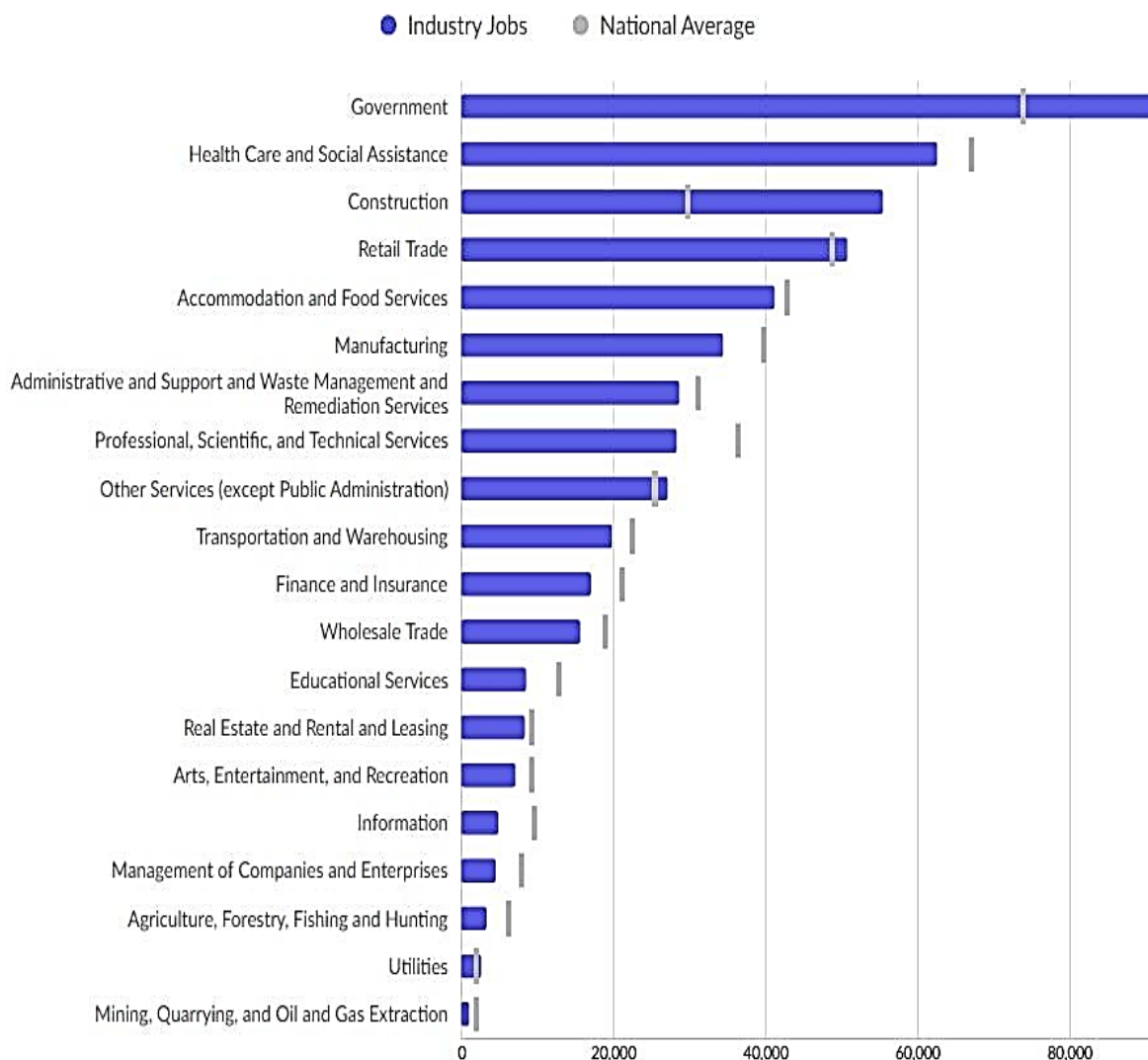
The **Gross Regional Product (GRP) chart** below highlights manufacturing as the leading economic contributor in the Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region, generating the highest GRP across industries, followed by Government, Construction and Healthcare. Retail Trade, Finance and Insurance and Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services, along with Wholesale Trade, also play significant roles, underscoring the diverse economic base. This diversity highlights the region's capacity for sustainable growth by combining traditional industries with emerging sectors like professional services. Such a balanced economic portfolio not only drives current success but also positions the region for future resilience and innovation.

Top Industry GRP



The next chart illustrates the largest occupational sectors in the Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region, highlighting industries by the number of jobs compared to the national average. While sectors like Government, Healthcare and Social Assistance, and Construction dominate in terms of employment. Serving as the Capital Region for Louisiana Government plays a major part in employment opportunities, but the other industries make up a large part of the industries hiring and providing the gross regional product for the area.

Largest Industries



Occupations

The Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region currently has over 16,405 job openings across all occupations. The average number of people employed over the past year was 453,307. The average hourly wage is 29.90. These openings include opportunities for both net new job growth and replacement needs due to workforce transitions and retirements. These roles play a critical role in the region's economic vitality, offering individuals pathways to rewarding careers while driving the expansion of key industries. To meet this demand, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) local workforce development boards and centers prioritize these occupations, aligning training programs with high-demand roles to prepare residents for sustainable, high-growth careers.

Top 20 Occupation Projections for 2022 – 2032

(Since our LMI projects are 2 and 10 years for this we used the 10 year projections)

Star Rating	Occ. Code	Occupational Title	10 Year Growth	Average Hourly Rate	Education or Training
1	31-1120	Home Health and Personal Care Aides	2,208	\$9.95	HS
4	47-2061	Construction Laborers	1,624	\$20.31	HS
5	29-1141	Registered Nurses	925	\$35.82	Bachelor's degree
2	53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	861	\$15.44	HS
1	35-2014	Cooks, Restaurant	678	\$14.14	HS
5	11-1021	General and Operations Managers	645	\$49.53	Bachelor's degree
5	47-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers	641	\$36.13	HSs/Work Experience/Certification
5	47-2111	Electricians	639	\$29.52	Certification
2	53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	610	\$16.77	HS
5	47-2152	Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	554	\$33.41	Certification
5	29-1171	Nurse Practitioners	522	\$55.59	Master's degree
5	51-4121	Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	511	\$33.11	Certification
5	11-9021	Construction Managers	494	\$51.98	Bachelor's degree
5	11-9111	Medical and Health Services Managers	466	\$49.15	Bachelor's degree
4	47-2031	Carpenters	443	\$24.21	Certification
4	29-2061	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	424	\$24.66	Certification
1	31-1131	Nursing Assistants	418	\$14.15	Certification
4	53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	403	\$23.67	Certification
5	49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	395	\$31.60	HS/Experience/Certification
4	49-9071	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	379	\$19.10	HS/Experience

Key Occupations and Their Role in Targeted Industry Sectors

The jobs are in the following key occupations with 15 of the 20 occupation titles carrying a 4- or 5-star job rating. The following are new job openings and do not include replacement job openings that occur annually due to transfers, exits and retirement. Some occupations are not specific to a single demand area.

Advance Manufacturing

General and Operations Managers (11-1021): With 645 projected openings and a median wage of \$49.53, these managers are crucial to improving operational efficiency and productivity across manufacturing and energy sectors.

Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers (53-3032): Supporting supply chains vital to manufacturing and oil and gas industries, these drivers are projected to have 403 openings, earning a median wage of \$23.66.

Industry Machinery Mechanics (49-9041): Projected openings 395 with a median wage of \$ 31.60.

Laborers and Freight, Stock and Material Movers (53-7062): Projected openings 610 with a median wage of \$ 16.77.

Health Care

Registered Nurses (29-1141): Among the most in-demand roles, registered nurses are projected to have 925 openings with a median wage of \$35.82. They are vital to deliver quality patient care and address the region's growing healthcare needs.

Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses (29-2061): Projected to have 424 openings, these healthcare providers play an essential role in patient care, with a median wage of \$24.66.

Nurse Practitioners (29-1171): With 522 projected openings, these serve as medical professionals and diagnosticians, earning a median wage of \$55.59.

Medical and Health Services Managers (11-9111) Projected openings 466 with a median wage of

49.15. These medical professionals serve as administrative health care professionals.

Nursing Assistants (31-1131) Projected to have 418 opening with a median wage of 14.15.

Home Health and Person Assistants (31-1220) This occupation is projected to have the highest growth however it also has the lowest median pay rate at 9.95

Transportation/Warehousing/Logistics

Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers (53-3032): With 403 openings, these roles are indispensable for sustaining regional supply chains and ensuring connectivity across industries.

Laborers and Freight, Stock and Material Movers (53-7062): Projected openings 610 with a median wage of \$ 16.77.

Stockers and Order Fillers (53-7065): Projected openings 861 with a median wage of \$ 15.44

Maintenance and Repair Workers General (49-9071): Projected openings 379 with a median wage of \$ 19.10.

Construction

General and Operations Managers (11-1021): With 3,658 openings, operations managers play a vital leadership role in large-scale infrastructure projects, such as port expansions, earning a median wage of \$50.25.

First Line Supervisors Construction Trades (47-1011): Projected openings 641 with a median wage of \$ 36.13.

Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers (53-3032): With 1,933 openings, these drivers are critical to the transportation of materials and supplies necessary for construction projects, earning a median wage of \$23.66.

Carpenters (47-2031): Projected openings 443 with a median wage of \$ 24.21.

Electricians (47-211): Projected openings 639 with a median wage of \$ 29.52.

Plumber, Pipefitters and Steamfitters (47-2152): Projected openings 554 with a median wage of \$ 33.41.

Welders, Cutters, Solderers, (51-4121): Projected openings 511 with a median wage of \$ 33.11.

Construction Laborers (47-2061): This group has the second largest job openings at 1,624 with a median wage of \$ 20.31.

Summary

The top 20 high-demand occupations and other key occupations near the top 20, driven by total openings from net new growth and workforce replacements, are critical to the Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region's economic success. These roles directly support the four targeted sectors: Advanced Manufacturing, Healthcare, Transportation and Warehousing/Logistics, and Construction. By focusing on these key occupations, workforce development initiatives can align with regional priorities, ensuring a resilient and competitive economy capable of meeting current and future labor market demands.

Industries and Occupations with Favorable Location Quotients

The Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region has notable location quotients (LQ) in various key industries and occupations, indicating a higher concentration compared to the national average. Among industries, Construction, Government, Utilities, Health Care, Manufacturing and Transportation and Warehousing stand out with particularly favorable LQs. The emphasis on Government comes from the Baton Rouge Region also serving as the Capital Region. Similarly, the prominence of Construction underscores the region's strategic advantage in emerging businesses and infrastructure bolstered by its continued growth and expansion into health, manufacturing, transportation, and warehousing.

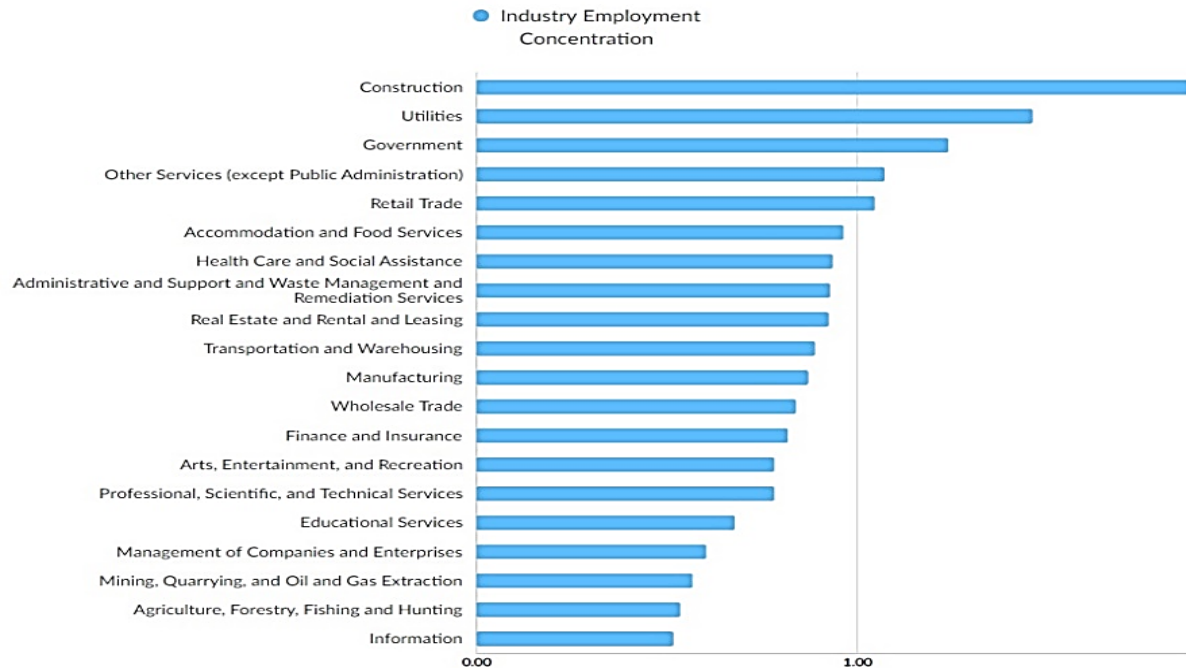
The Construction, Utilities, Government, and Protective Services sectors have high employment concentrations. Construction and Utility work support infrastructure for businesses and community projects. The Construction sector drives regional growth with projects in Manufacturing, Oil, Gas, Chemical, and Warehousing, creating demand for skilled trades like boiler makers, electricians, helpers, and project managers. These industries and occupations enhance the region's physical and economic development, aligning with its strengths for sustained growth and competitive advantage.

Protective Services are essential in addressing the region's unique challenges, including public safety and emergency management, particularly in a geographic area prone to natural disasters. These occupational concentrations illustrate the region's specialized workforce strengths, which underpin both economic resilience and regional competitiveness.

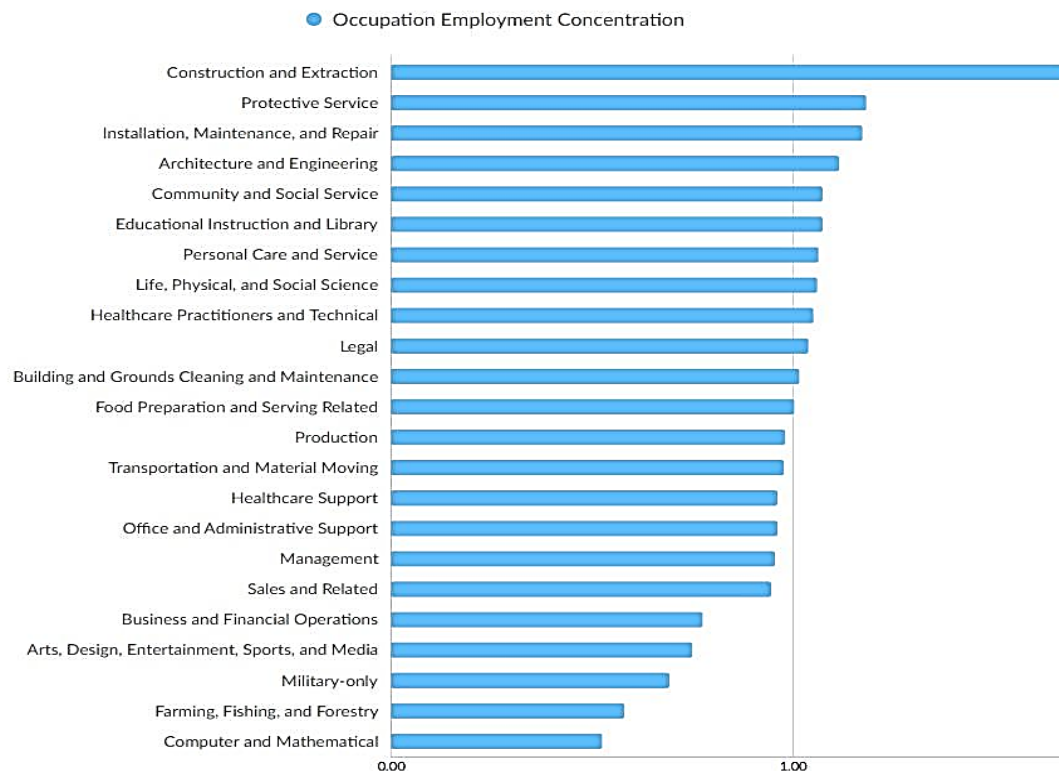
Moreover, industries and occupations with favorable location quotients align seamlessly with the region's targeted sectors and key roles, emphasizing their critical importance to the Greater Baton Rouge economy. Advanced Manufacturing leverages the region's proximity to the Mississippi River and industrial infrastructure, driving high employment concentrations in industrial production, Warehousing, and energy. These sectors depend on a skilled workforce to sustain energy output and industrial growth, further highlighting their strategic importance.

Healthcare, as a cornerstone of the regional economy, reflects strong demand for essential occupations such as registered nurses, medical assistants, and licensed vocational nurses. These roles are indispensable for addressing the healthcare needs of an aging population and expanding access to care. Similarly, Transportation and Warehousing serve as vital connectors for regional industries to national and international markets, with occupations like heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers and captains of water vessels ensuring supply chain efficiency and trade facilitation.

Top Industry Employment Concentration

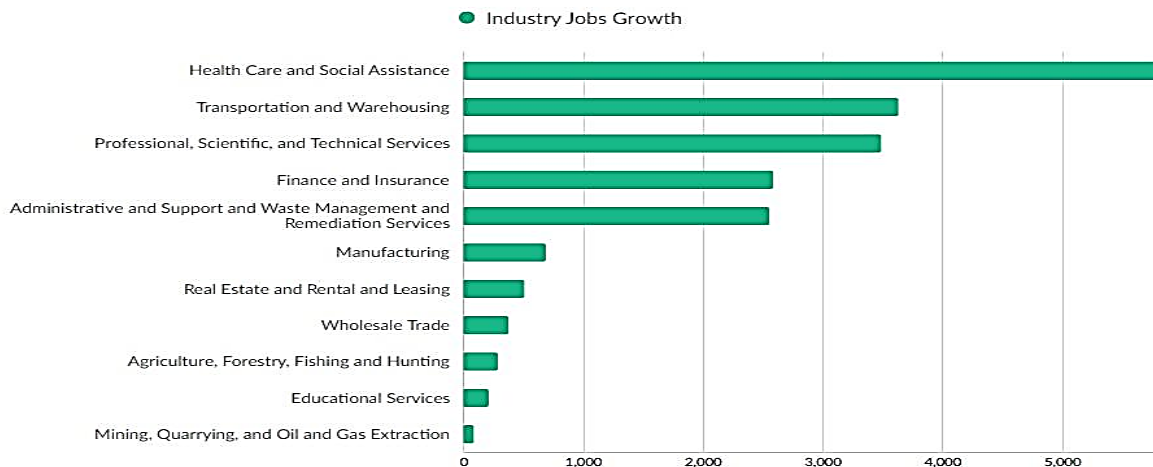


Top Occupation Employment Concentration

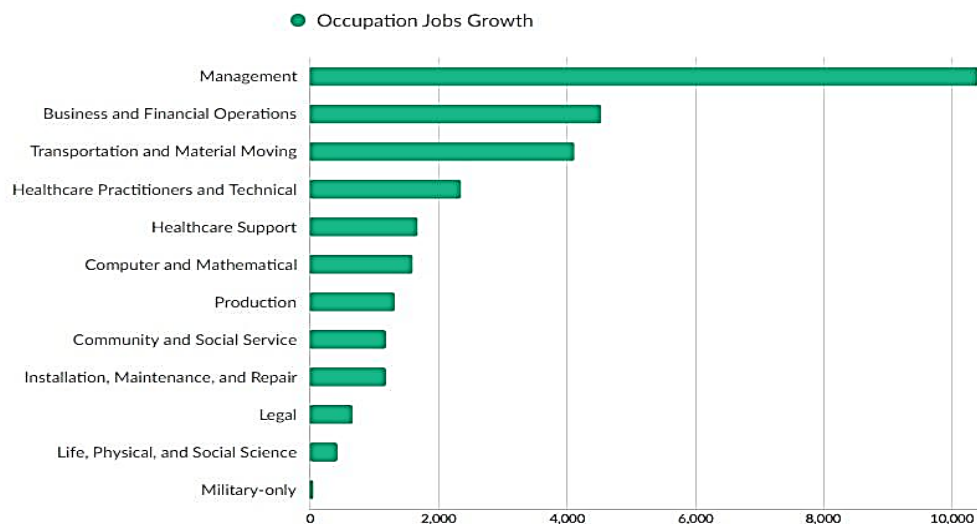


Industries and Occupations with Favorable Demand Projections Based on Growth

Top Growing Industries



Top Growing Occupations



In the Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region (Region 2), several industries show growth projections:

- **Health Care and Social Assistance** leads with the highest net job growth, adding over 6,000 jobs by 2027. This growth reflects the increasing demand for healthcare services, driven by population needs and regional efforts to expand access. High-demand occupations in this sector include Registered Nurses, Licensed Practical and Vocational Nurses, and Medical Assistants, all of which align with growing healthcare needs and provide sustainable career opportunities.

- **Transportation and Warehousing** is second in our area with a net job growth at over 3,500 jobs. This growth reflects the location of this region and its ability to transport goods and services with quad modal transportation services. The crossroads of major interstates like Interstates 10, 55 and 12 allow for east west and north south routes.
- **Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services** show robust growth, with an increase of 3,000 jobs. This sector drives innovation and technical advancements, with key occupations such as Business Operations Specialists, Accountants and Auditors, and Human Resources **Specialists** leading demand. These roles are essential for businesses seeking to remain competitive and align with the region's strategic priorities.
- **Manufacturing** demonstrates growth of nearly 600 jobs, reflecting the region's investment in industrial capacity and energy production. Occupations like General and Operations Managers, Industrial Mechanics, and Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers are critical to this sector's ongoing expansion.
- **Construction**, while not currently reflected in the net growth data, is poised to experience significant demand due to upcoming infrastructure projects related to the expansion of industry. These large-scale developments will create sustained demand for skilled construction workers, such as electricians, heavy equipment operators, and project managers, positioning construction as a key growth sector in the coming years.

The distinction between net growth and total job demand is essential for understanding the dynamics of regional employment. While industries with high total demand (including replacements) indicate where the greatest number of job openings exist, industries with net growth point to areas of economic expansion and innovation. These growing industries, coupled with high-demand occupations, represent key opportunities for workforce development initiatives to strengthen the local economy and provide residents with long-term career pathways.

By strategically aligning workforce efforts with these sectors, the Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region can ensure it remains competitive, resilient, and prepared to meet the demands of a shifting economy.

Connection to Targeted Industries

Replacement jobs are also important as they are those jobs left vacant due to retirement, exits and transfers to other positions or occupations. These occupations highlight their importance in maintaining the strength of the Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region's targeted industries:

- **Transportation and Warehousing** relies heavily on stockers, order fillers, and truck drivers to ensure goods flow efficiently through the region's robust supply chain infrastructure.
- **Construction** benefits construction helpers who aid journeyman in the construction industry and are on a career path for increases wages and skill in this apprenticeship occupation.
- **Hospitality and Retail** depend on roles such as cashiers, retail salespersons, waitstaff, and food preparation workers to support the vibrant service economy that is central to Baton Rouge' global reputation.

The abundance of replacement jobs across these occupations reflects the region's economic diversity and resilience. These opportunities not only provide career pathways for workers but also ensure that critical industries remain well-staffed and capable of meeting the demands of a dynamic and evolving economy. By aligning workforce development initiatives with these replacement needs, the region can sustain its economic vitality while creating accessible opportunities for its residents.

Industries and Occupations that are important to overall growth

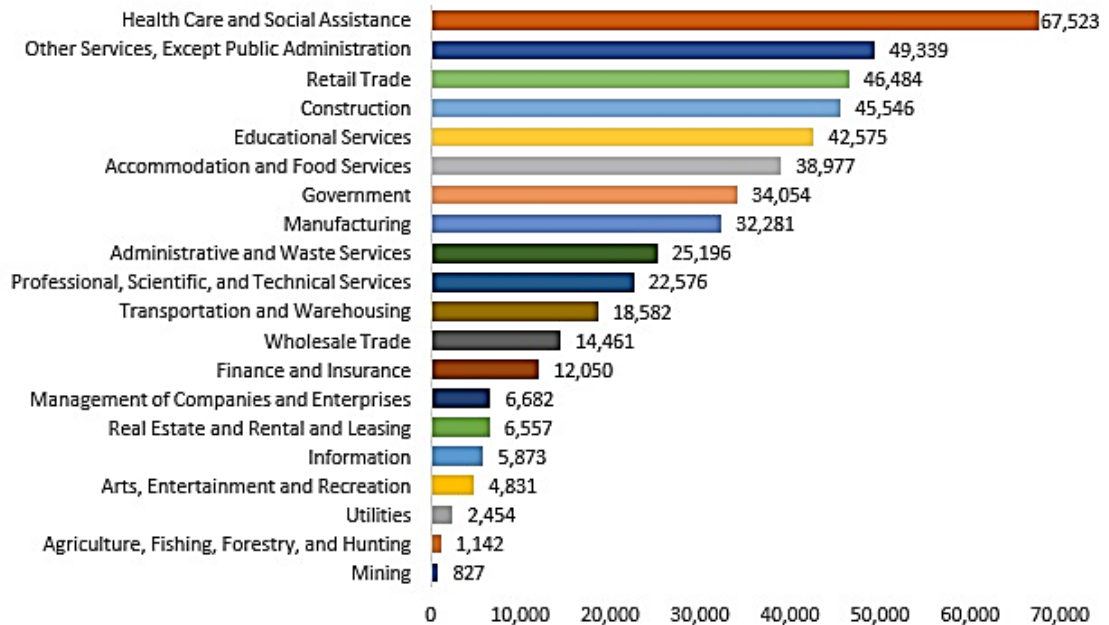
Although experiencing modest or flat growth, certain industries continue to play crucial roles in the economy of the Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region, significantly contributing to the local economy and offering essential services. These industries play key roles in community stability, workforce development, and maintain a robust economic foundation, even as they face challenges and evolve with changing market dynamics.

- **Retail Trade:** The retail trade sector remains a critical pillar of the regional economy. While net growth is modest or even slightly negative in some areas, such as retail salespeople and cashiers, the sector continues to generate a substantial number of replacement jobs, ensuring consistent workforce demand. This resilience underscores its importance in providing goods and services to the community and supporting other economic activities. Retail managers, who play a vital leadership role, are essential for ensuring operational efficiency and adapting to challenges like e-commerce competition and shifting consumer preferences.
- **Public and Private Educational Services:** With a steady upward trend this industry is indispensable for workforce development and long-term economic growth. Educational services not only prepare individuals for high-demand occupations but also foster regional innovation by enhancing skills and knowledge. Roles like elementary and secondary school educators are particularly vital, supporting the next generation of workers and ensuring community stability. This region is also heavy in post-secondary education institutions and training programs. Public Institutions include Louisiana State University, Southern University, Southeastern Louisiana University, Baton Rouge Community College, Northshore Technical and Community College, and River Parishes Community College along with several proprietary training schools.

While the Retail Trade sector adapts to evolving consumer behaviors and technological advancements, and the Educational Services sector responds to growing workforce demands, both industries remain critical drivers of the Greater Baton Rouge economy. Their enduring relevance, even in the face of modest or flat net growth, highlights the importance of these industries in providing employment, community services, and economic stability. Occupations such as retail managers and educators exemplify their contribution, ensuring that these sectors continue to support the regional economy and adapt to future challenges.

Overall Current Industry Employee Numbers

Distribution of Employment by Industry Sector



Employment by Industry Sector in RLMA 2

Source: QCEW

Louisiana Star Rated Occupations

Major Occupations in the Baton Rouge RLMA

Occupation	SOC Code	Base 2022	Projected 2024	Difference	Percent Change	Star Rating
Cashiers	41-2011	12,729	12,668	-61	-0.48%	★
Retail Salespersons	41-2031	10,522	10,233	-289	-2.75%	★
Registered Nurses	29-1141	10,179	10,526	347	3.41%	★★★★★
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	53-7062	8,583	9,153	570	6.64%	★★
General and Operations Managers	11-1021	8,501	8,927	426	5.01%	★★★★★
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	31-1120	8,011	8,579	568	7.09%	★
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	43-6014	7,820	7,806	-14	-0.18%	★★★
Food Preparation Workers	35-2021	7,551	7,939	388	5.14%	★
Construction Laborers	47-2061	7,520	7,819	299	3.98%	★★★
Office Clerks, General	43-9061	6,851	7,003	152	2.22%	★★

Major 5 Star Occupations in the Baton Rouge RLMA

Occupation	SOC Code	Base 2022	Projected 2024	Difference	Percent Change
Registered Nurses	29-1141	10179	10526	347	3.41%
General and Operations Managers	11-1021	8501	8927	426	5.01%
Construction Managers	11-9021	2401	2519	118	4.91%
Financial Managers	11-3031	1932	2044	112	5.8%
Lawyers	23-1011	1928	2001	73	3.79%
Medical and Health Services Managers	11-9111	1550	1674	124	8%
Administrative Services and Facilities Managers	11-3010	1076	1106	30	2.79%
Pharmacists	29-1051	1037	1046	9	0.87%
Registered Nurses	29-1141	10179	10526	347	3.41%
General and Operations Managers	11-1021	8501	8927	426	5.01%

The Star Jobs Rating coincides with the Industry Sectors for high demand and high wages for the Greater Baton Rouge and Northshore Region.

The Region's Economic Evolution and Emerging Sectors

The Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region's economy is undergoing a significant transformation, with the rise of emerging sectors that complement its traditional industries. This evolution is driven by technological advancements, an increased emphasis on innovation, and a strategic focus on building a more diversified and resilient economic foundation.

- Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services:** This sector is at the forefront of the region's economic growth. The increasing demand for technical expertise and innovative solutions has positioned this industry as a critical driver of progress. From business operations specialists and environmental science technicians to accountants and auditors, the sector supports a wide range of occupations that enhance efficiency and sustainability across multiple industries. Its contributions are especially impactful in areas like construction and healthcare, where technical innovation is key to improving processes and outcomes.
- Information Technology (IT):** Expanding rapidly, the IT sector is driven by the growing demand for digital solutions and cybersecurity measures across industries. Occupations such as software developers, IT specialists, and network administrators are increasingly critical to meeting both local and national needs. IT plays a pivotal role in modernizing industries like Advanced Manufacturing and Transportation and Warehousing, enabling these traditional sectors to stay competitive in the global market. Healthcare consistently improves services through automation and robotics requiring IT staff and programmers. Additionally, IT supports the region's workforce development efforts by introducing high-tech career pathways that align with future labor market demands.

Opportunities for Diversification and Resilience

These sectors highlight not only economic growth but also the region's adaptability and workforce strengths. Professional, scientific, and technical services drive innovation and new business opportunities, boosting productivity across industries. The IT sector keeps local businesses competitive in an increasingly digital global economy.

The rise of these sectors also reflects the region's commitment to building economic resilience. By diversifying its economic base, the Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region is better equipped to weather fluctuations in traditional industries such as oil and gas. Workforce development initiatives that prioritize skills in technical services and IT further enhance this resilience, ensuring the region remains a hub for innovation, sustainability, and long-term growth.

As these sectors continue to expand, they create new career opportunities for residents, attract investment to the region, and strengthen its position as a competitive and forward-looking economic center.

Sources for Data Charts and Graphs and Data Numbers

- Louisiana Workforce Commission, LMI
- Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)
- Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW)
- U.S. Census Bureau
- Lightcast
- GNO, Inc. Regional Economic Development Entity
- BRAC, Inc. Regional Economic Development Entity

2. Employment needs of employers in existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations.

The employment landscape in the Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region (Region 2) reflects diverse and evolving needs across existing and emerging industry sectors. With 16,405 openings posted online in January 2025 there is great need for skilled workers in high demand areas. In Manufacturing and Construction, there is a consistent demand for skilled trades such as machinists, electricians, and welders, alongside operations managers capable of overseeing production and integrating advanced technologies. Additionally, Construction is experiencing sustained demand for skilled laborers, project managers, and equipment operators due to major infrastructure projects, including port expansions. Meanwhile, the Healthcare sector urgently requires Registered Nurses, Certified Nursing Assistants Patient Care Techs, and Licensed Practical Nurses to address the needs of an aging population and expanding healthcare infrastructure.

The Transportation and Warehousing/Logistics sector highlight the need for Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers, warehouse supervisors, and warehousing analysts to maintain and optimize supply chain operations. This region has a quad modal transportation design available to it with Multiple Ports, Airports, Rail Service and major interstates makes transportation and warehousing combined advanced manufacturing a prime existing demand industry. Emerging sectors, such as

Information Technology (IT) and Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services, reveal growing opportunities for software developers, cybersecurity specialists, data analysts, and business operations professionals. Employers across all these sectors consistently prioritize technical certifications, critical thinking skills, and hands-on experience with emerging technologies.

Opening in Region Two: There are currently 10,121 job openings posted in HiRE (Louisiana Works) for February of 2025.

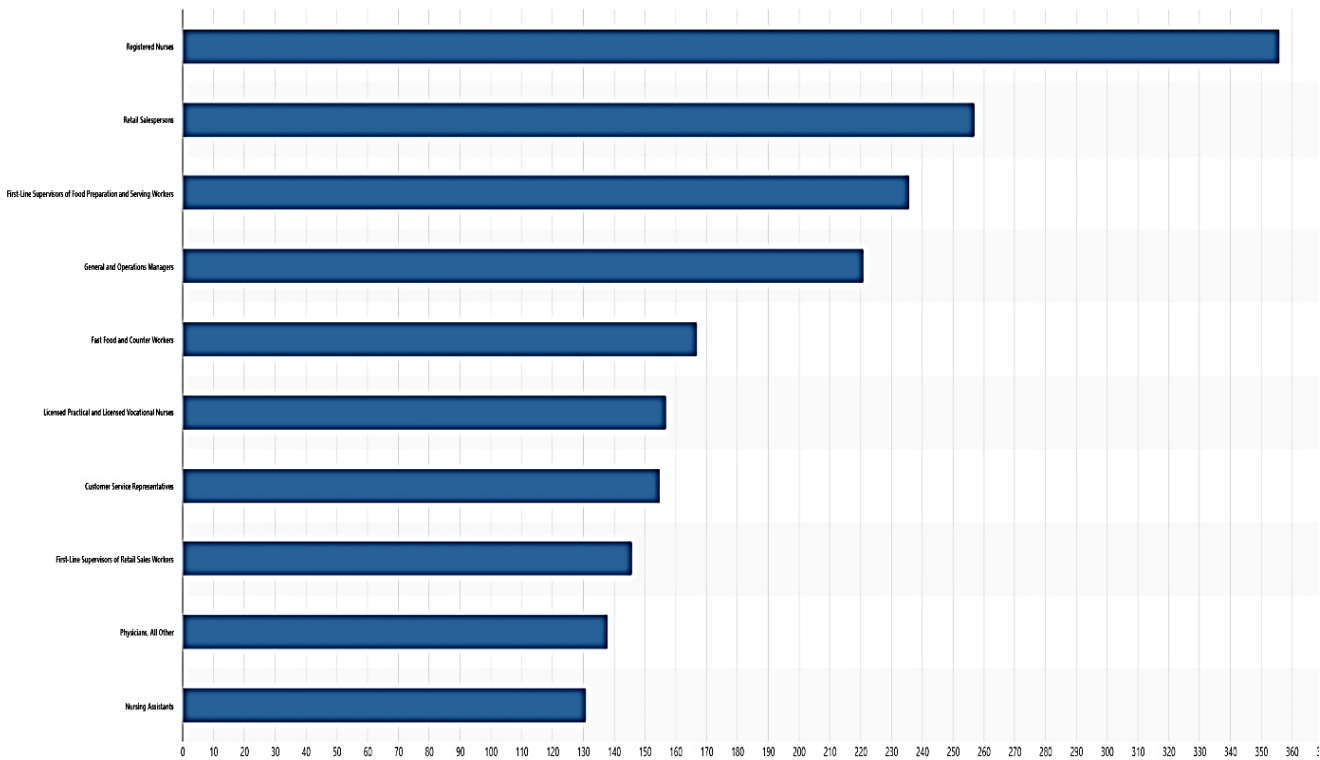
The "Top Posted Occupations" chart further illustrates the region’s dynamic workforce demands. Registered Nurses lead with over 304 Postings in Feb of 2025, underscoring the critical need for healthcare professionals. Retail Salespersons, First-Line Supervisors of Retail Workers, and General and Operations Managers demonstrate the continued importance of healthcare, manufacturing and construction. These jobs fluctuate over time but tend to remain in the areas of demand for the region.

With median posting durations ranging from 19 to 32 days, employers face varying levels of urgency and competition to fill these critical roles. This highlights the importance of targeted workforce development initiatives and accelerated training programs to bridge the gap between job seeker skills and employer needs, ensuring a responsive and resilient labor market.

Occupations by Advertised Jobs ?



This section shows the occupations with the highest number of job openings advertised online in 2nd Regional Labor Market Area, Baton Rouge, LA on February 22, 2025 ([Jobs De-duplication Level 1C?](#)).



3. *Knowledge and skills needed to meet the employment needs of the employers in the region, including employment needs in in-demand industry sectors and occupations:*

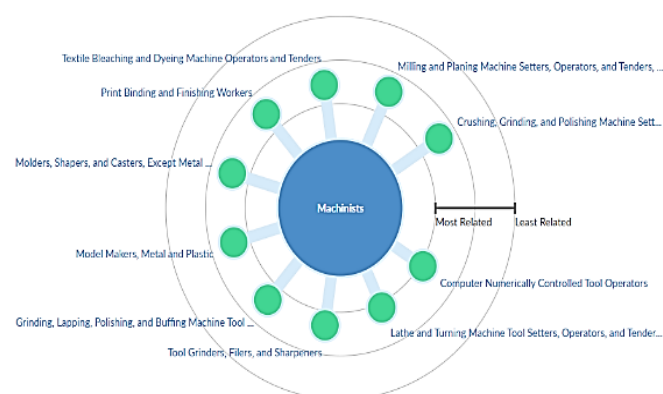
Targeted Career Pathway Clusters in the Region

To meet the workforce needs of in-demand industries and support economic growth, the Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region (Region 2) has prioritized targeted career pathway clusters. These clusters are designed to align training and education programs with high-demand occupations, providing residents with clear and accessible routes to sustainable careers.

Advanced Manufacturing:

The manufacturing sector is advancing with the integration of sophisticated technologies. Career pathways in this field now emphasize advanced manufacturing techniques, robotics, and automation, which equip workers with essential skills for contemporary production environments. Training programs frequently offer certifications in areas such as industrial maintenance, machining, and mechatronics, addressing the rising need for specialized expertise. These pathways bolster regional industries like oil and gas, petrochemicals, and general manufacturing, thereby ensuring a consistent supply of qualified professionals.

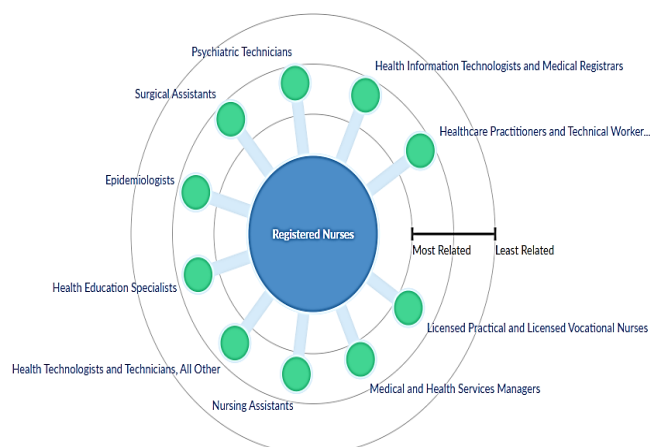
Below are the top listed feeder jobs for Machinists with median advertised salary of \$57,088. Select a job to view additional insight (i.e. Skill Gaps) between Machinists and your selected occupation.



Healthcare:

The healthcare sector serves as a fundamental component of the regional economy, with a rising demand for professionals in various roles. Career pathways in healthcare include Registered Nursing, Licensed Practical Nursing, Medical Assistants, and Nursing Assistants, all of which are essential in addressing the region's expanding healthcare infrastructure. Moreover, pathways in healthcare administration prepare individuals for positions in hospital management and patient access, while medical technology programs provide students with expertise in areas such as medical imaging and laboratory sciences. These pathways benefit from partnerships with prominent healthcare employers ensuring they meet industry standards and requirements.

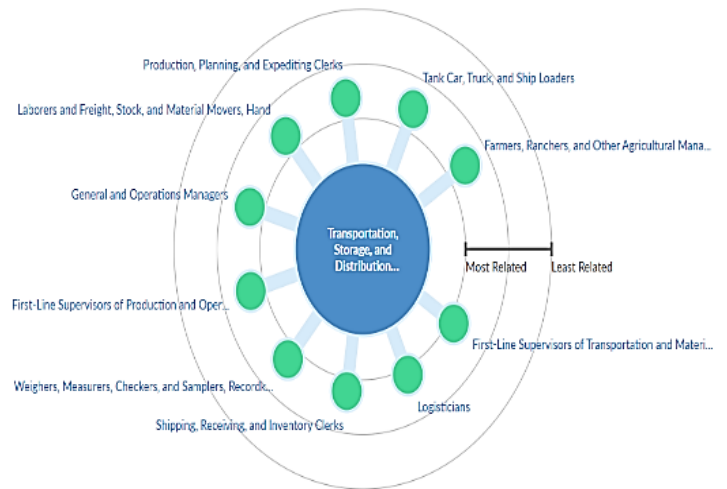
Below are the top listed feeder jobs for Registered Nurses with median advertised salary of \$100,224. Select a job to view additional insight (i.e. Skill Gaps) between Registered Nurses and your selected occupation.



Transportation and Warehousing:

The transportation and warehousing sector presents various opportunities for workforce development as a regional hub for trade and distribution. Career pathways in this field include Commercial Driver's License (CDL) training programs, preparing individuals for roles as Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers. Supply chain management and warehousing certification programs offer additional options for careers in warehousing, freight coordination, and transportation analysis. These programs support the region's infrastructure expansion efforts and the growing need for efficient supply chain operations.

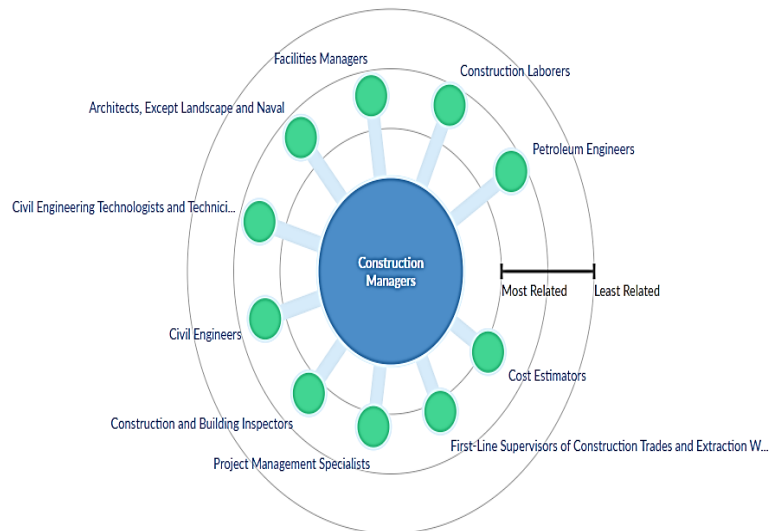
Below are the top listed feeder jobs for Transportation, Storage, and Distribution Managers with median advertised salary of \$60,032. Select a job to view additional insight (i.e. Skill Gaps) between Transportation, Storage, and Distribution Managers and your selected occupation.



Construction:

With considerable infrastructure projects currently in progress, including industrial expansions, the construction sector is identified as a high-priority area for workforce development in the coming years. Career pathways in construction focus on apprenticeships and certifications in trades such as carpentry, electrical work, plumbing, and heavy equipment operation. These programs are typically driven by employers, with collaborations between workforce boards and local unions ensuring that participants receive hands-on training and access to employment opportunities.

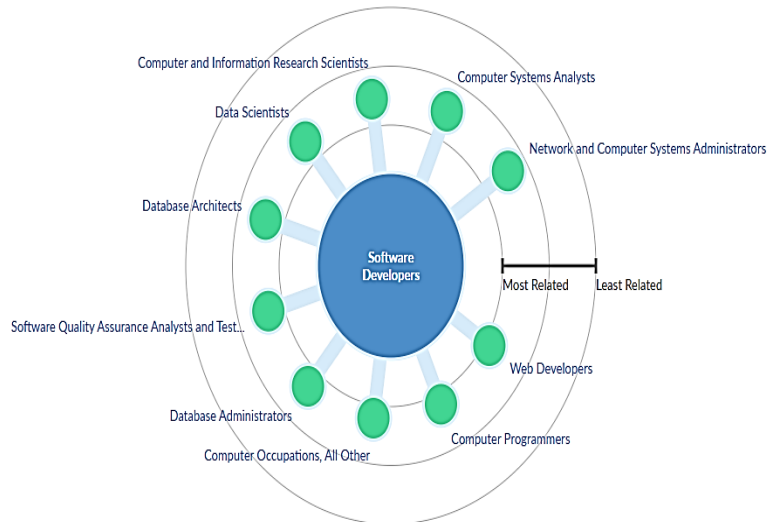
Below are the top listed feeder jobs for Construction Managers with median advertised salary of \$89,984. Select a job to view additional insight (i.e. Skill Gaps) between Construction Managers and your selected occupation.



Information Technology and Technical Services:

The IT and technical services sectors are experiencing significant growth in the region, driven by the increasing digitization across various industries. Career pathways in this sector include areas such as cybersecurity, software development, and data science, which are essential to fulfill both local and national needs. Training programs often offer industry-recognized certifications, such as the Apprenti Apprenticeship Program. Employers like IBM focus on ensuring relevance and applicability. These pathways provide opportunities for both entry-level and advanced roles, contributing to the region's efforts to develop a skilled workforce in technology. Feeder jobs leading to software developer roles are integral to this development.

Below are the top listed feeder jobs for Software Developers with median advertised salary of \$115,072. Select a job to view additional insight (i.e. Skill Gaps) between Software Developers and your selected occupation.



By concentrating on high demand career pathway clusters, the Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region ensures that workforce development initiatives are closely aligned with industry requirements. These pathways not only offer well-defined routes to high-demand occupations but also support the region's broader objectives of economic mobility and resilience. Through collaborations with employers, educational institutions, and workforce boards, these targeted pathways equip residents for meaningful careers while addressing significant labor shortages in key industries.

Skills in Demand in the Region

The Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region (Region 2) needs a workforce skilled in both technical and soft skills to support its diverse economy. Key sectors include healthcare, transportation and warehousing, IT, construction, and manufacturing. Workforce development must focus on providing specialized technical skills and essential soft skills to meet employer demands.

Technical Skills: The Foundation of Regional Employment

The demand for technical skills is evident across key industries, and it reflects the region's reliance on specialized expertise to sustain economic growth:

- **Healthcare Dominance:** The healthcare industry is the region's largest employer, emphasizing the need for nursing and medical support skills. Specialized skills like health assessment and medical privacy are becoming increasingly vital, particularly as advancements in medical technology evolve how care is delivered.

- **Transportation and Warehousing:** The demand for Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers and Warehousing coordinators highlights the importance of CDL licensure and supply chain expertise. With the region's role as a critical transportation hub, these technical proficiencies ensure the seamless movement of goods across national and international markets.
- **Construction and Advanced Manufacturing:** The ongoing infrastructure projects and industrial expansion emphasize the need for workers with certifications in trades such as welding, carpentry, machinists, instrumentation, and occupational safety. These roles form the backbone of industries driving the region's physical and economic development.

Soft Skills: Work Readiness Skill Development

While technical skills are vital, soft skills remain a universal requirement across all sectors. Employers consistently highlight these competencies as critical for workforce success. These skills transcend into all industries and are crucial to employment success.

- **Communication and Leadership:** Verbal and written communication skills can help you convey information and ideas to your peers, supervisors, and managers. Developing your communication skills can help your present data reports, compile work-related emails or complete daily documents. Some ways to develop your communication skills include attending public speaking or writing courses, practicing various written compositions, and creating verbal presentations.
- **Customer Service and Problem-Solving:** Problem-solving can help you discover innovative solutions to challenges. Your critical thinking skills can help a company improve its processes, enhance customer experience, and increase employee satisfaction. Having critical thinking skills can help you identify the cause of a situation, analyze the processes that a problem affects and enable you to think of a potential solution. Some ways to develop your critical thinking skills include identifying lessons from previous challenges, reviewing historical solutions, practicing your active-listening skills and defining the problem.
- **Teamwork and Technical Collaboration:** In precision-based industries like healthcare, manufacturing, and IT, diligence ensures quality and safety, while teamwork facilitates collaboration and innovation. Positions within a company rely on teamwork and collaboration. This can help teams perform their tasks efficiently, complete projects and discover solutions. Effective communication, problem-solving and conflict resolution skills can help you improve your ability to work in a team. Some ways to develop your teamwork skills include delegating tasks, communicating clearly and regularly with others, and fostering a positive mindset.
- **Time Management:** Time management can help you effectively allocate your time to different tasks throughout the day. It can also help you reduce stress, enhance productivity and improve your timeliness. You can practice your time-management skills by setting alarms, developing daily schedules and creating reminders on your computer or mobile device.
- **Basic Reading and Math Skills:** Understanding your responsibilities and information requires strong reading and comprehension skills. You can improve these by reading articles, taking comprehension tests, and attending courses. Math is essential in many workplace tasks and careers, such as understanding finances and customer orders. Enhance your math skills by seeking help, taking courses, and practicing regularly.

Emerging Skills: Preparing for the Future

As industries adapt to technological and environmental shifts, emerging skills are becoming critical for regional competitiveness:

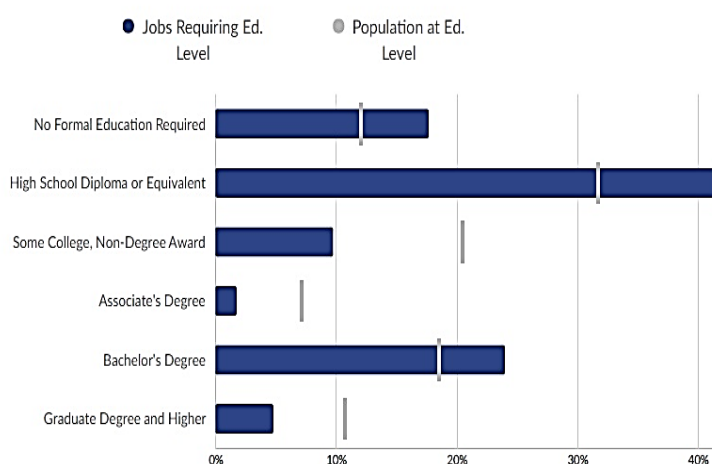
- **Data Communication/Analytics:** In 2025, 70 percent of jobs will involve working directly with data. This means that every organization will need people with the skills to interpret, translate, and communicate what that data means to the people who need to use it .
- **Data Science and Artificial Intelligence:** As artificial intelligence (AI) becomes increasingly integrated into our workforce, AI literacy will be an essential skill for employees, especially in tech-driven industries such as digital banking. Companies can promote hands-on experience with AI tools, establish AI as a core competency and foster a culture of innovation to integrate opportunities for upskilling into their organizations.

Skills Present in the Region

Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce

The underemployment graph shows the gap between the education levels of the workforce and job requirements in the Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region. It covers all jobs, not just those with self-sustaining wages. Most jobs require only a high school diploma or equivalent, but there are many individuals with higher education, especially associate and master's degrees, who struggle to find matching positions. Graduate degree holders also face underemployment due to a lack of advanced roles. In contrast, jobs needing no formal education or just a high school diploma are well-matched with the workforce. These positions often also require experience, highlighting the importance of entry-level opportunities with career advancement and skill certifications. This region has support for educational attainment through higher education institutions. The education-to-work pipeline is strong in Region 2. There are apprenticeship programs that provide skill trades for increased earnings and placement.

Underemployment



Educational Attainment

Concerning educational attainment, **18.4% of the selected regions' residents possess a Bachelor's Degree** (2.7% below the national average), and **7.0% hold an Associate's Degree** (1.8% below the national average).



	% of Population	Population
Less Than 9th Grade	4.2%	28,381
9th Grade to 12th Grade	7.8%	52,816
High School Diploma	31.6%	215,098
Some College	20.4%	138,901
Associate's Degree	7.0%	47,703
Bachelor's Degree	18.4%	125,286
Graduate Degree and Higher	10.6%	72,204

Educational Pipeline

In 2022, there were 15,081 graduates in 11 Louisiana Counties. This pipeline has shrunk by 3% over the last 4 years. The highest share of these graduates come from "General Studies" (Certificate), "Business Administration and Management, General" (Bachelor's), and "Biology/Biological Sciences, General" (Bachelor's).

School	Total Graduates (2022)		Graduate Trend (2019 - 2022)
Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College	7,430		
Southeastern Louisiana University	2,179		
Baton Rouge Community College	1,531		
Southern University and A & M College	1,166		
River Parishes Community College	672		
Diesel Driving Academy-Baton Rouge	448		
Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady University	316		
ITI Technical College	241		
Fortis College-Baton Rouge	189		
Delta College of Arts & Technology	143		

Skills sought by Employers in Targeted Sectors

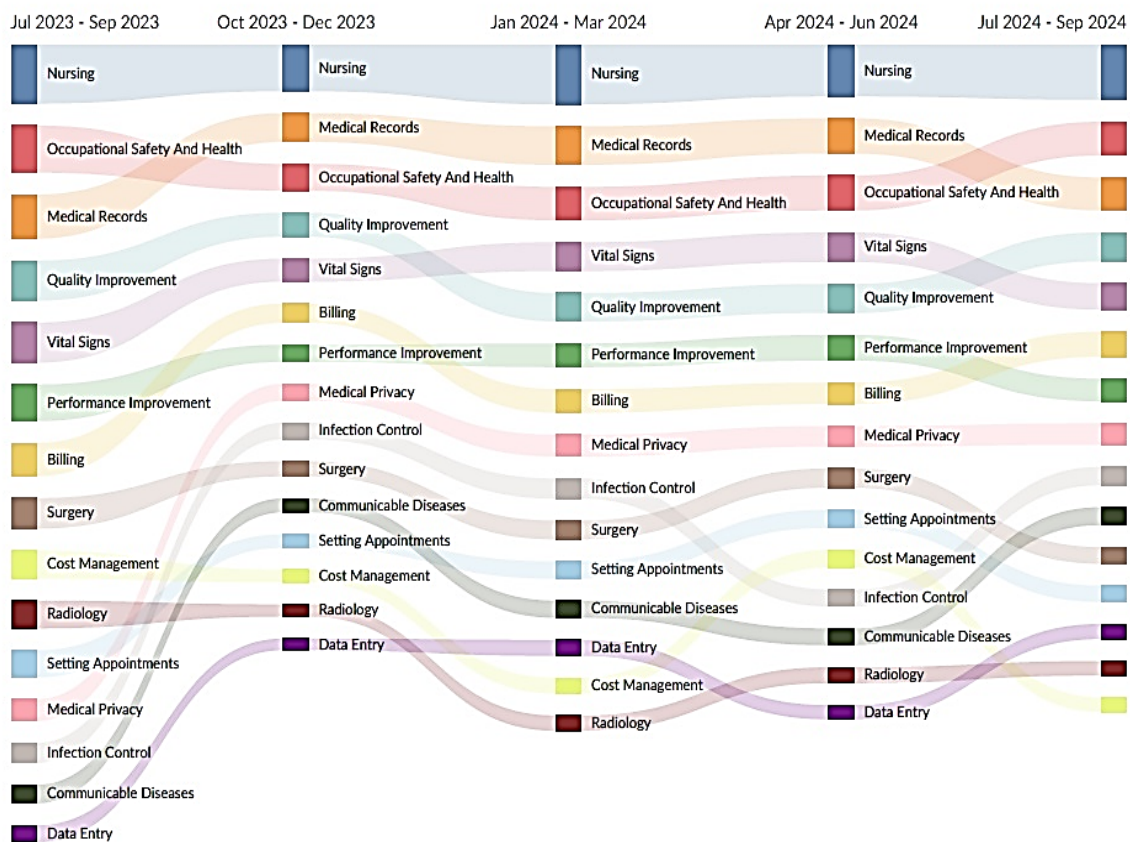
There is an evolving demand for skills across key industries in the Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region, prioritizing the most sought-after capabilities. In healthcare, skills such as Nursing, Registered Nurse (RN) certification, Medical Records, and Vital Signs consistently appear, reflecting the critical need for patient care expertise, regulatory compliance, and public health management. This sector dominates skill demand due to the region's growing healthcare infrastructure and workforce needs.

In construction, skills like Occupational Safety and Health, Performance Improvement, and Quality Improvement are in high demand, emphasizing the importance of safety compliance, and project compliance and improvement. Similarly, the transportation and warehousing industry highlights demand for skills in Occupational Safety and Health, highlighting the need for adherence to safety standards.

The advanced manufacturing industry sector emphasizes skills like data entry, cost management and quality improvement which are critical for organizational strategy, data analysis, and effective communication in high-skill industries.

Top 15 Skills for All Job Types by Quarter

Skills help us understand the direction an industry is headed.



Meeting Employer Needs

To effectively bridge the gap between job seeker skills and employer expectations, regional workforce development initiatives are focused on strategic priorities:

- **Expanding Access to Certifications and Accelerated Training Programs:** Targeted efforts are underway to increase access to certifications to include jumpstart programs in K-12 and dual enrollment with local community colleges. Several apprenticeship programs offer accelerated training combined with work-based learning.
- **Customized Training Design:** Workforce boards are actively partnering with employers to implement customized training programs tailored to address critical skill gaps in high-demand sectors. This collaborative approach ensures that training aligns with real-world business needs by collaborative efforts of employers, workforce development boards and training providers.
- **Promoting Work Readiness Education:** To complement technical training, initiatives emphasize the development of soft/work readiness skills such as communication, problem-solving, and teamwork through workshops, mentorship opportunities, and hands-on experiences.

The Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region by aligning workforce development efforts with the skills required by employers, the region can foster skill training and work readiness opportunities ensuring demand area growth.

Alignment of Job Seeker Skills with Business Demands

While direct connection between the job seekers and the demands of local businesses can occur, there are often gaps in critical sectors. Industries have begun the process of implementing work-based apprenticeship programs that enhance job seeker skills in critical areas. Employers who have difficulties in finding candidates with specialized certifications, technical expertise, and hands-on experience are moving toward on-the-job training and customized training that link academic skills with work-based learning.

This highlights the pressing need for strong collaboration among workforce boards, educational institutions, and employers to close these gaps. Expanding work-based learning opportunities, such as apprenticeships and internships align job seeker skills with industry demands, ensuring that the region's workforce is prepared to meet evolving economic challenges.

4. ***Regional workforce considering current labor force employment and unemployment data, information on labor market trends, and educational and skill levels of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment***

Changing Demographics

The demographic trends in the Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region (Region 2) indicate that the increase trend will continue into 2028 with a projected 2.5% overall increase in the population adding 26,000 citizens. The overall population does not appear to have a deviation from the current demographic representation.

Economy Overview

1,041,828

Population (2023)

Population grew by 28,055 over the last 5 years and is projected to grow by 26,124 over the next 5 years.

512,279

Total Regional Employment

Jobs grew by 9,613 over the last 5 years and are projected to grow by 23,815 over the next 5 years.

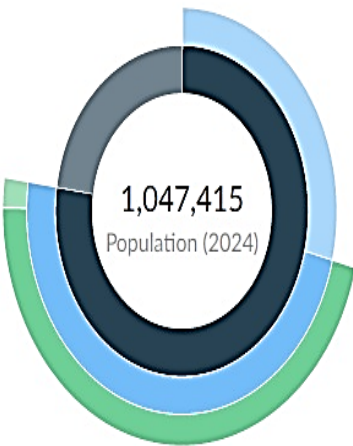
\$70.5K

Avg. Earnings Per Job (2023)

Regional average earnings per job are \$12.9K below the national average earnings of \$83.3K per job.

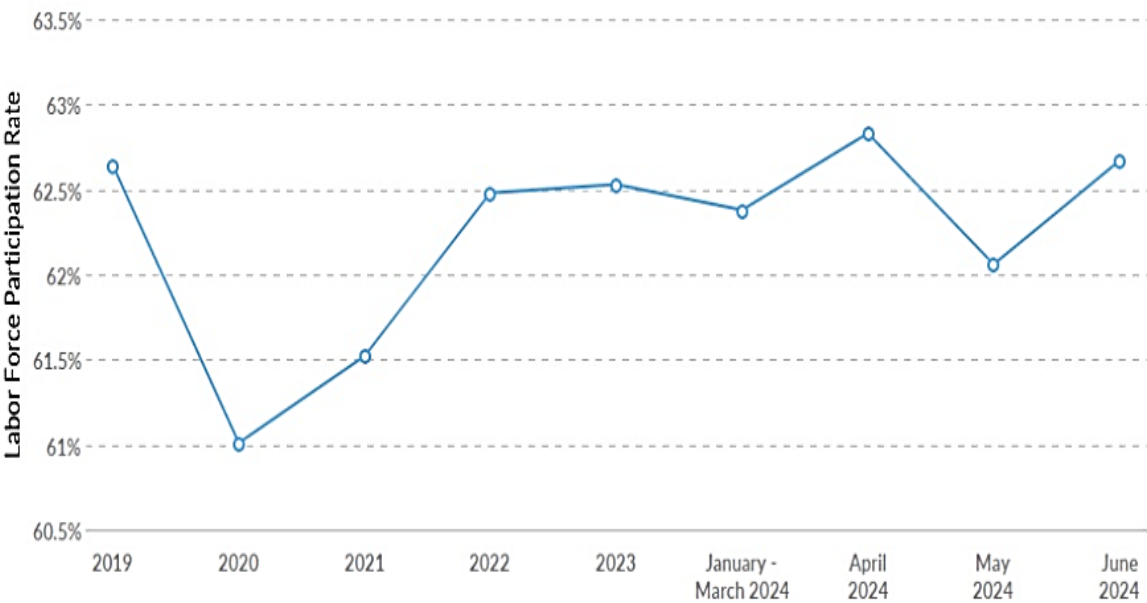
The projected increase will help meet the anticipated demand for employees, estimated at 23,815 jobs over the next five years. Currently, the Labor Force Breakdown indicates that 301,870 citizens aged 16 and older are not part of the labor force. Of these, there are 21,722 individuals receiving unemployment insurance who are actively seeking to rejoin the workforce. The remaining 238,655 citizens are available for skills training and employment initiatives. Region 2's labor market participation rate is approximately 62.5%, which is comparable to the national rate of 65.6% and exceeds Louisiana's state rate of 58.4% as reported in December 2024.

Jun 2024 Labor Force Breakdown



	Population
● 16+ Civilian Non-Institutionalized Population	808,760
● Not in Labor Force (16+)	301,870
● Labor Force	506,890
● Employed	485,168
● Unemployed	21,722
● Under 16, Military, and institutionalized Population	238,655

Labor Force Participation Rate Trends

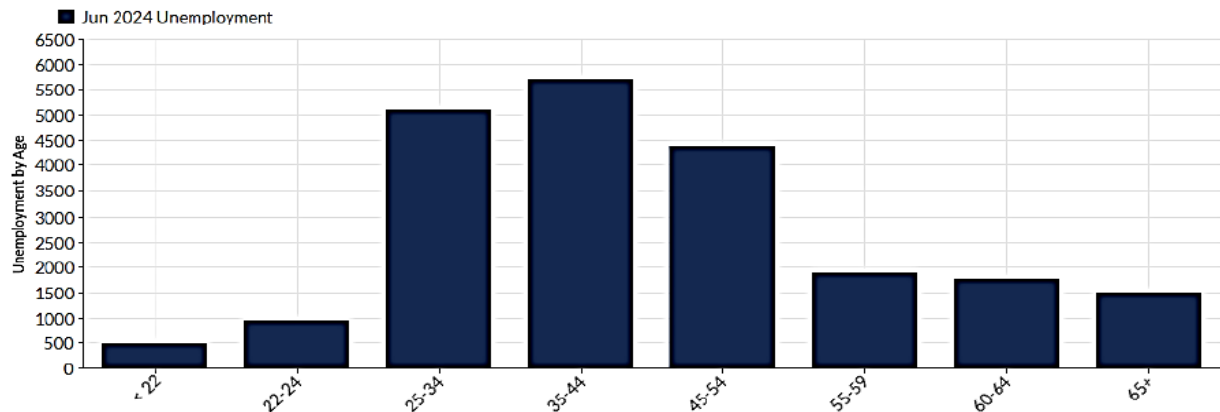


Unemployment In the region

Unemployment data for the Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region (Region 2) shows that 35–44-year-

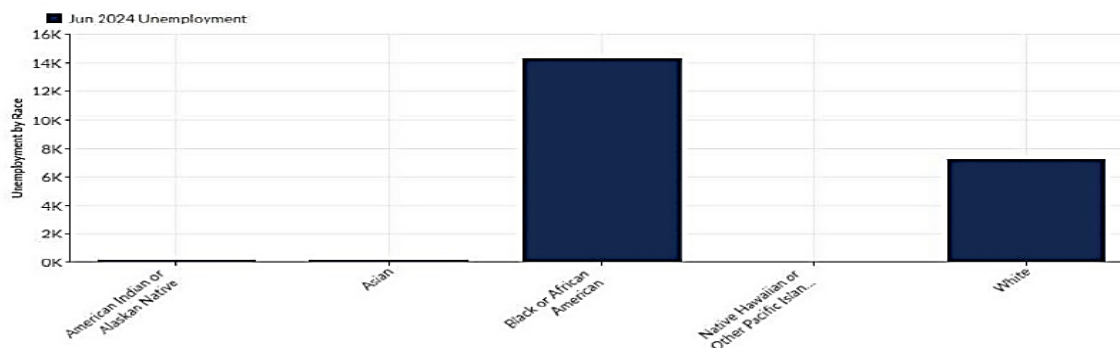
olds are the largest unemployed group, with over 5,714 people. African Americans are significantly overrepresented at 65.6% (14,249), and females make up 62.3% of the unemployed. These statistics indicate a need for targeted reemployment efforts for these groups in Region 2.

Unemployment by Age



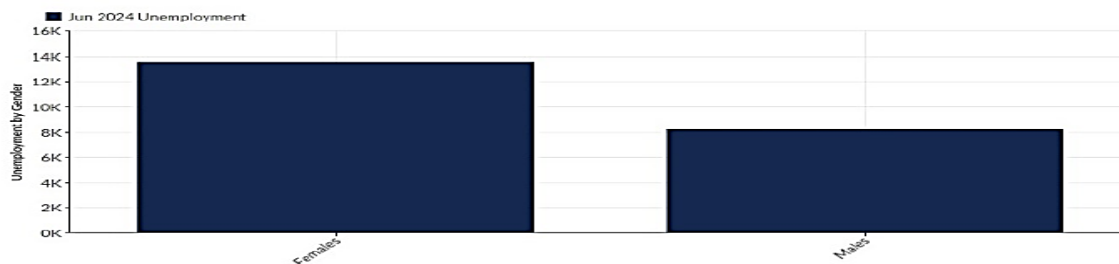
Age	Unemployment (Jun 2024)	% of Unemployed
< 22	477	2.20%
22-24	940	4.33%
25-34	5,102	23.49%
35-44	5,714	26.31%
45-54	4,365	20.09%
55-59	1,885	8.68%
60-64	1,753	8.07%
65+	1,487	6.85%
Total	21,722	100.00%

Unemployment by Race



Race	Unemployment (Jun 2024)	% of Unemployed
American Indian or Alaskan Native	101	0.46%
Asian	124	0.57%
Black or African American	14,249	65.60%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	20	0.09%
White	7,229	33.28%
Total	21,722	100.00%

Unemployment by Gender



Gender	Unemployment (Jun 2024)	% of Unemployed
Females	13,536	62.31%
Males	8,186	37.69%
Total	21,722	100.00%

The data highlights the need to align workforce development with regional economic demands. Investing in upskilling programs for high-demand industries like healthcare, transportation, and warehousing can reduce unemployment and prepare workers for new opportunities in Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region. Unemployed individuals may require reskilling and upskilling to re-enter the labor market.

Special Populations in the Region

Reentry Population

The Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region has a substantial reentry population, estimated to be around 2,340 individuals in 2023. These individuals encounter challenges, including limited access to job training, employer reluctance, and the necessity for supportive services such as housing, transportation, and mental health resources. Workforce boards collaborate with programs like the Louisiana Prisoner Reentry Initiative (LA-PRi) to offer essential services that facilitate a smooth transition into the workforce. As a policy, individuals within the reentry population receive priority service to ensure they have access to job training and placement opportunities.

Policy and Service Implications:

- **Expungement Services:** Continued partnerships with CSBG and TAA agencies to remove employment barriers for reentry individuals.
- **Tailored Job Programs:** Expanding training in high-demand fields such as CDL Drivers, construction, manufacturing, and Warehousing.
- **Employer Engagement:** Incentivizing businesses to hire reentry individuals through tax credits and workforce readiness programs.

Unemployment and Dislocated Worker Population

The total unemployment population in the eleven-parish Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region MSA, 21,722 individuals, represents the potential dislocated worker population. This group includes individuals affected by layoffs, sector transitions, and economic disruptions. Workforce boards support dislocated workers through initiatives such as On-the-Job Training (OJT), targeted job fairs, employer networking events, and enhanced job-matching services. These programs aim to connect dislocated workers with opportunities in growing industries like healthcare, IT, and advanced manufacturing.

Policy and Service Implications:

- **On-the-Job Programs:** Providing paid, hands-on training with regional employers to upskill dislocated workers.
- **Job Fairs and Networking:** Hosting targeted events to connect dislocated workers with hiring employers in high-demand sectors.
- **Job Matching:** Career specialists and business service representatives actively work to "open doors" to employers by making introductions and advocating for job placements.

Youth Population

Louisiana has a dropout rate of 7.4%. This group constitutes a significant portion of the youth population (ages 16-24) who are neither in school nor employed. These young individuals encounter challenges such as limited access to education, mentorship, and career opportunities. Workforce boards have developed youth-specific initiatives outlined in the Youth Services section of regional and local plans, which include apprenticeship programs, GED support, and soft skills training.

Policy and Service Implications:

- **Work Experience:** Creating direct learning opportunities in high-growth sectors providing the opportunity to earn and learn.
- **Mentorship Programs:** Partnering with local employers to provide career guidance and real-world experiences.
- **Expanded Youth Services:** Leveraging regional and local plan frameworks to ensure comprehensive support for disconnected youth.

Veterans

The region is home to approximately 45,756 veterans, many of whom face challenges transitioning into civilian careers. Workforce boards collaborate with local veterans' organizations and initiatives such as LWC Veteran's Services to connect veterans with high-demand jobs in Manufacturing and Warehousing. Veterans receive priority service through all workforce programs, ensuring access to tailored support and job placement services. Core and mandated partners work together to provide seamless assistance for veterans, from skills translation to employment readiness.

Policy and Service Implications:

- **Priority Services:** Ensuring veterans receive front-line access to workforce development programs.
- **Veteran-Specific Initiatives:** Partnering with NextOp, and LWC Veteran's Services and hosting veteran-focused job fairs.
- **Collaboration:** Ensuring all workforce system partners collaborate to address the unique needs of veterans.

Senior Population

The senior population, aged 55 and older, includes 282,289 individuals at risk of retiring without sustainable income. This demographic underscores the need for workforce programs focused on upskilling, flexible work options, and utilizing their experience to meet labor demands.

Policy and Service Implications:

- **Senior Employment Initiatives** like SCSEP help address barriers for senior workers. SCSEP offers part-time community service roles, helping seniors gain work experience.,
- **Employer Engagement:** Encouraging businesses to recognize the value seniors bring to the workforce through experience and reliability.
- **Supportive Services:** Providing technology skills training and addressing other barriers like transportation and healthcare access.

Describe the development and implementation of sector initiatives for in-demand industry sectors or occupations for the planning region

The Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region demonstrates a comprehensive approach to workforce development through sector initiatives that address in-demand industry needs. These initiatives are guided by the collaboration of four local workforce boards, employers, foundations, and regional institutions. Below are detailed responses to the questions, highlighting specific initiatives.

How Workforce Partners Will Convene Employers, Foundations, and Regional Institutions

Workforce partners in the Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region utilize a collaborative and strategic approach to convene employers, foundations, and regional institutions to lead sector partnerships and make coordinated investments. Key strategies include:

- **Sector-Specific Advisory Councils:** Workforce boards establish sector-specific advisory councils comprising employers, educational institutions, and foundation representatives. These councils meet regularly to identify workforce needs, discuss training program design, and align investments with industry priorities.
- **Regional Workforce Summits:** Workforce partners host regional workforce summits and industry forums, bringing together stakeholders to share insights, identify gaps, and foster collaboration. Baton Rouge Area Chamber (BRAC), Greater New Orleans, Inc (GNO, Inc) and the Region 2 Regional Planning District serve as partners hosting regional workforce summits with employers.
- **Public-Private Partnerships:** Collaborations between workforce boards, employers, and foundations are formalized through public-private partnerships. For instance, The North Baton Rouge Industrial Training Initiative (NBRITI) is a collaborative program led by Baton Rouge Community College (BRCC), Employ BR and ExxonMobil, offering free, accelerated training in high-demand trades such as electrical, instrumentation, millwright, pipefitting, process technology, and welding. Participants receive classroom instruction and hands-on experience, culminating in nationally recognized certifications from organizations like the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) and the American Welding Society (AWS). The program aims to equip North Baton Rouge residents with the skills needed for immediate employment in local industries.
- **Educational and Industry Partnerships:** Workforce boards partner with institutions like Northshore Community and Technical College and North Oaks Hospital to address healthcare shortages. Northshore Community and Technical College is part of the three school partnerships with Laitram, LLC, Elmers Candy and Zatarain's (McCormick) Mechatronics program which brings together manufacturers and educators to train workers in robotics and automation.
- **Neutral Conveners:** Organizations such as the Greater Baton Rouge Area Foundation and the Northshore Foundation act as neutral conveners, facilitating dialogue between stakeholders, ensuring alignment across sectors, and identifying opportunities for coordinated investments.
- **Local Chambers and Economic Development Organizations:** Economic Development partners align economic partners with workforce development boards.

By fostering collaboration through these structured approaches, workforce partners ensure that sector partnerships are employer-led, foundation-supported, and aligned with regional priorities, resulting in coordinated investments that meet the workforce needs of both established and emerging industries.

Established and Active Industry Sector Partnerships in the Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region

Healthcare (Northshore Healthscape): Northshore Healthscape collaborates with healthcare providers such as Ochsner Health, St. Tammany Health System, North Oaks Healthcare System, and Our Lady of the Lake, along with local workforce boards and colleges. This partnership addresses workforce needs in nursing, medical assisting, and healthcare administration. Achievements include the annual graduation of hundreds of credentialed healthcare professionals, many of whom occupy critical roles in local hospitals and clinics. Additionally, this initiative has enhanced access to healthcare services in underserved communities.

Advanced Manufacturing (Mechatronics Apprenticeship): The Mechatronics Apprenticeship program, led by Laitram, LLC, Elmers and Zatarain's is based is a partnership with Northshore Technical and Community College and Delgado Community College. The program trains workers in robotics, automation, and mechatronics, addressing critical skill shortages in advanced manufacturing. Outcomes include dozens of apprentices transitioning into full-time roles at leading regional manufacturing firms, strengthening the advanced manufacturing workforce pipeline.

The North Baton Rouge Industrial Training Initiative (NBRITI): is a collaborative program led by Baton Rouge Community College (BRCC) and ExxonMobil, offering free, accelerated training in high-demand trades such as electrical, instrumentation, millwright, pipefitting, process technology, and welding. Participants receive classroom instruction and hands-on experience, culminating in nationally recognized certifications from organizations like the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) and the American Welding Society (AWS). The program aims to equip North Baton Rouge residents with the skills needed for immediate employment in local industries. Region 2 works with the NBRITI program to assist with recruitment, supportive services, and job placement for individuals seeking career opportunities in various industries. This partnership helps connect job seekers with employers, provides essential services, and ensures access to resources such as transportation and childcare.

These initiatives highlight the collaborative efforts of workforce boards, employers, educational institutions, and local governments to address workforce needs across various parishes. Their successes in training, job placement, and economic growth reinforce the Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region's commitment to aligning workforce development with industry demands.

CHAPTER 2: STRATEGIES FOR SERVICE INTEGRATION: REGIONAL

This regional component of the plan must describe the regional service strategies, including use of cooperative service delivery strategies and the connection of job seekers with employers.

- A. *Provide an analysis of workforce development activities, including education and training, in the region. This analysis must include the strengths and weaknesses of workforce development activities and capacity to provide the workforce development activities to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment, and the employment needs of employers*

Analysis of Workforce Development Activities in the Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region

The Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region (Region 2) boasts a dynamic workforce development system that leverages collaboration, innovation, and strategic investments to align with regional and state economic goals. While the region has made significant strides in addressing workforce challenges and fostering economic resilience, opportunities remain to strengthen service delivery, expand partnerships, and address skill gaps to meet the evolving needs of employers and jobseekers.

Strengths of Workforce Development Activities

Regional Collaboration

The region's two Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) work closely with each other and with the local and regional economic development organizations, educational institutions, and industry leaders to align training programs with employer needs. As the region is made up of the eleven parishes in the Capital and Northshore area. Employ BR encompasses East Baton Rouge Parish and Geaux Jobs consist of the ten parishes surrounding Baton Rouge and the Northshore including Ascension, East Feliciana, Iberville, Livingston, Pointe Coupee, St. Helena, Tangipahoa, Washington, West Baton Rouge, and West Feliciana. The workforce population is mobile and travel for employment withing the regional workforce area constantly. Due to the shifting ability for employment the workforce boards share similar policies and processes to assist employers.

Innovative Service Delivery Models

Workforce boards have implemented online tools, such as online appointment setting, interactive chats, pre-screening applications, jobseeker videos, and virtual case management, which enhance accessibility for employers and jobseekers alike. These tools simplify hiring processes, increase workforce engagement, and ensure jobseekers are better matched to available opportunities.

Partnerships

The region collaborates with our workforce partners and economic development partners to assist jobseekers and employers connect. There is a strong academic focus in the region that allows for a multitude of training opportunities to meet the needs of the employer's skill requirements.

Weaknesses of Workforce Development Activities

Funding Limitations

Despite the success of various initiatives, limited funding restricts the scalability and reach of workforce programs. Funding for workforce activities comes specifically from WIOA funding as a passthrough from the LWC as part of the WIOA allocation to the state. These funds limit the number of services directly provided. Over the past five allocations to the State of Louisiana there have been reductions which have been passed down to the local areas. These reductions have amounted to almost 40% of workforce funding. The need to reduce staffing and services has caused the reduction of affiliate sites locally. There is also the increased cost for training services that occurred post pandemic that limits the number of person who can be served.

Coordination Challenges

The region's extensive network of workforce development partners creates complexities in service delivery, sometimes leading to fragmented efforts. Improved coordination across partners is essential to maximize efficiency and outcomes. Though WIOA mandates that partners collaborate jointly with workforce boards on engagement and infrastructure, the siloed state programs limit the ability to share resources. The required shared funding infrastructure costs create an undue burden on administrative services.

Meeting Educational and Skill Needs

Educational Partnerships

The region benefits from strong partnerships with institutions such as Louisiana State University, Southern University, Southeastern Louisiana University, Northshore Technical and Community College, Baton Rouge Community College, River Parishes Community College, and various proprietary training schools. These collaborations ensure that training programs are aligned with employer needs in key industries like advanced manufacturing, healthcare, and IT.

Adult Education and Apprenticeships

Adult Education programs are available at LCTCS campuses, as well as through several local school systems and non-profits. These programs provide resources to help individuals without a high school diploma prepare for the HiSET exam. Programs such as Jump Start 2.0 and registered apprenticeships offer pathways for skill development, beneficial for those entering the workforce or seeking additional training. These programs focus on practical learning and real-world application.

Support for Special Populations

Initiatives such as Reboot Louisiana and the MJ Foster Promise Program provide comprehensive support, including childcare, transportation, and financial assistance, to help individuals with barriers to employment and access sustainable career opportunities. Louisiana Rehabilitative Services (LRS) provide job training and services to those with disabilities to allow them to enter the world of work.

Barriers to Address

Despite these efforts, underserved populations such as individuals with disabilities, veterans, and seniors face challenges. Programs like SCSEP (Senior Community Service Employment Program), LRS and NextOp Veterans require additional resources to expand their impact. LRS could benefit by having more non-federal matching funds to draw down more federal dollars to provide services to our populations in great need. Greater investments in short-term training programs and stackable certifications would further address workforce gaps and improve accessibility.

Persistent Skill Gaps

Employers in sectors report ongoing challenges in finding candidates with specialized technical skills. Expanding access to training in emerging areas requires additional funding resources.

Addressing Employer Needs

Employer-Driven Training Programs and Sector-Based Approaches

Workforce boards collaborate directly with employers to develop customized training programs in healthcare, warehousing, and advanced manufacturing. Programs like NBRITI in construction and the North Oaks in healthcare ensure training aligns with employer demands and addresses skill shortages. Sector-specific initiatives such as Northshore Healthscape for healthcare demonstrate the effectiveness of aligning workforce development with regional economic priorities.

Labor Market Data Utilization

Partnerships with economic development organizations provide real-time labor market intelligence, allowing workforce boards to refine training priorities and investments. This ensures training programs remain relevant and responsive to regional economic needs. The Louisiana Workforce Commission provided current Labor Market information along with short- and long-term occupational forecasts.

Challenges in Meeting Employer Needs

While these efforts have achieved significant successes, employers in emerging sectors still face difficulties recruiting candidates with advanced technical skills and certifications. Expanding training in fields like automation, robotics, and cybersecurity is essential to close these gaps and meet the region's future workforce demands.

Effectiveness of Training Programs

Successes

Training programs in the Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region target high-demand jobs like registered nurses, practical nurses, construction helpers, and CDL/heavy equipment operators. On-the-job training is very effective, with over 90% of participants still employed after 12 months, highlighting the benefits of hands-on learning.

Opportunities for Improvement

Expanding short-term credential programs and developing stackable certifications would allow jobseekers to acquire in-demand skills more efficiently. Allowing dual enrollments to link to internships and stipends will enhance the work being done by K-12. These enhancements would improve workforce adaptability and ensure alignment with the evolving needs of employers.

Partner Commitments

Collaborative Agreements

Workforce boards maintain Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with the sixteen required partners per WIOA requirements. There are also agreements with educational institutions, and economic development agencies maintain and cooperative agreements to streamline service delivery and foster resource sharing.

Focus on Special Populations

Programs such as Louisiana Rehabilitation Services, NextOp Veterans, and SCSEP offer specialized support to underserved populations, promoting equitable access to employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities, veterans, and seniors.

Sector Strategy Investments

Workforce development efforts prioritize high-growth industries such as healthcare and construction. Initiatives like **NBRITI** and **Northshore Healthscape** highlight commitment to aligning workforce development with regional economic priorities and labor market needs.

B. Describe how transportation and other supportive services are coordinated within the region

The Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region has established a comprehensive and well-coordinated system for delivering supportive services that address the barriers jobseekers face in accessing workforce opportunities. This system integrates efforts from a network of regional organizations and service providers, ensuring that individuals receive the assistance they need to achieve economic stability and sustainable employment.

Regional Organizations Providing Supportive Services

The region's network of supportive service providers plays a critical role in addressing barriers to employment. Organizations like United Way of Southeast Louisiana, Council on Aging, and HUD provide essential housing, utilities, and transportation assistance, helping stabilize individuals during transitional periods. Total Community Action agencies (TCA) address significant challenges for families, such as access to affordable childcare and transportation subsidies, making it easier for parents to participate in training or secure employment. TCA also provide services such as drivers licenses, TWIC cards, energy assistance and rental assistance.

Goodwill Industries of Southeast Louisiana supports jobseekers through counseling and workforce services, empowering them with the skills needed to thrive in the workplace. Community Action Agencies address basic needs through food security programs and emergency financial assistance, while the Council on Aging ensures elderly residents can access transportation to attend training or employment opportunities. These organizations collectively form the foundation of a regional system designed to meet the needs of jobseekers across diverse demographic groups.

Policies and Procedures for Coordination

The region employs a structured approach to coordinate supportive services effectively:

Interagency Collaboration: Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) formalize partnerships through Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) to streamline service delivery and reduce redundancies. WIOA requires 16 federally mandated partners to agree to work jointly and share infrastructure needs of the local area in providing services to those looking to become self-sufficient.

Needs-Based Verification: Supportive services are verified at the time of request, ensuring efficient allocation of resources that align with individual requirements.

Regional Partner Meetings: Through regular partner meetings, partners align supportive services with labor market trends and employer needs.

Integrated Service Delivery: Co-enrollment across WIOA, TANF, and SNAP programs allows jobseekers to access multiple services through a single point of contact, enhancing efficiency and accessibility. At this time all TANF and SNAP recipients are required to enroll in HiRE to begin the integration model. Those who are TANF and SNAP recipients are also priority populations for WIOA services and meet eligibility requirements for training.

Examples of Coordination in Action

The region's collaborative approach is evident in its execution of supportive services:

- **Transportation Assistance:** Supportive services through WIOA allow for vouchers and reimbursement of transportation costs for attending training. Subsidized transportation programs through TCA and transit partnerships help jobseekers attend job interviews, training sessions, and employment opportunities.
- **Housing and Utility Support:** Emergency housing including emergency rent and mortgage payment and utility assistance from Catholic Charities and Community Action Agencies provide critical stability for jobseekers facing financial crises.
- **Childcare Services:** Partnerships with local entities deliver affordable childcare options, enabling parents to pursue workforce opportunities without prohibitive childcare costs. Childcare vouchers are also available through the Department of Education for those involved in training or work

C. Describe the coordination of services with regional economic development services and WIOA service providers

The Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region has created a framework to align economic development with workforce services. This approach integrates workforce strategies with regional economic priorities, addressing labor market needs effectively. By partnering with key organizations, WIOA providers, and businesses, the region promotes collaboration for employment and economic growth.

Active Participation in Regional Planning

The Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region benefits from the active participation of a diverse network of organizations that play critical roles in shaping workforce strategies and aligning them with the needs of employers and jobseekers.

Regional Economic Development Organizations

1. **Greater New Orleans , Inc. (GNO, Inc.):**
GNO, Inc. is a leading force in regional planning, driving initiatives that connect industry needs with workforce services. By sharing labor market data, facilitating sector-based strategies, and securing grants, GNO, Inc. ensures that workforce development remains a key driver of economic progress for the parishes of Washington and Tangipahoa in Region Two.
2. **Baton Rouge Area Chamber (BRAC):** is a leading force in regional planning, driving initiatives that connect industry's needs with workforce services. By sharing labor market data, facilitating sector-based strategies, and securing grants, BRAC ensures that workforce development remains a key driver of economic progress. BRAC serves the parishes of East Baton Rouge, West Baton Rouge, Iberville, Pointe Coupee, East Feliciana, West Feliciana, and Ascension.
3. **Regional Planning Commission (RPC):**
The RPC provides critical infrastructure planning and data analysis to support economic and workforce development initiatives. Its focus on transportation and Warehousing aligns closely with workforce strategies for supply chain management and related industries.

Local Economic Development Entities by Parish

1. **Washington Economic Development Foundation:** The Washington Economic Development Foundation serves Washington Parish, located on the Mississippi / Louisiana border in Southeast Louisiana. We provide information and assistance for businesses seeking to locate or expand operations. Washington Parish has two business parks and numerous sites with infrastructure including rail and locations on major highways with easy access to Interstate Highways 55, 59, 10 and 12.
2. **Tangipahoa Economic Development Foundation (TEDF):** TEDF's Mission is to identify opportunities and lead efforts to attract new jobs and investment, enhance the climate for retention and expansion of existing business, address education and workforce development needs, and provide advocacy for economic development public policy on behalf of all

Tangipahoa Parish citizens and businesses. TEDF was instrumental in Latrium, LLC and Medline Industries moving to Tangipahoa Parish.

3. **St. Helena Parish Economic Development Committee:** St. Helena parish Economic Development Committee is a volunteer board of directors and operated by professional staff, this committee works daily to ensure that business have what they need to flourish as they grow. Southland Steel is expanding its manufacturing processes in St. Helena Parish.
4. **Livingston Economic Development Council (LEDC):** The Livingston Economic Development Council (LEDC) is committed to helping businesses thrive in Livingston Parish. For those interested in locating or expanding in Livingston Parish, LEDC assists to showcase our many assets to give businesses a competitive advantage when looking to locate in the region.
5. **East Feliciana Economic Development District:** The office is part of East Feliciana Parish government and focuses on business development in the rural parish.
6. **West Feliciana Economic Development:** The office is part of West Feliciana Parish Government and the largest employers in West Feliciana are Entergy Nuclear Plant and Angola State Penitentiary.
7. **Pointe Coupee Economic Development:** This department supports workforce initiatives for Pointe Coupee Parish government. They work jointly with the Pointe Coupee Parish Chamber to promote Economic Development.
8. **Baton Rouge Area Chamber (BRAC):** Economic development in East Baton Rouge Parish is led by the Baton Rouge Area Chamber (BRAC). Companies interested in the Baton Rouge Area are encouraged to work with BRAC's Business Development team. The team offers a suite of concierge services to companies looking to expand or relocate to the Baton Rouge Area. BRAC meets the high demand employers of Region 2.
9. **West Baton Rouge Chamber Association:** The purpose of West Baton Rouge Chamber is to refine and organize additional industry-specific round tables and events to provide resources that are specific to that constituency's needs. Expand how we educate & inform businesses on the opportunities & challenges regarding economic growth & re-development.
10. **Iberville Environmental and Economic Development:** This parish office works with businesses to ensure environmental compliance. The Iberville Chamber of Commerce is a community partner in economic development. Iberville Parish has a strong employer presence in the chemical industry with Dow Chemical and Shintech Industries.
11. **Ascension Economic Development Corporation (AEDC):** AEDC was created in 2005 by the Parish of Ascension, the Ascension Chamber of Commerce and the City of Gonzales, Louisiana under the state's economic development corporation statutes. AEDC's vision is that Ascension Parish will be the preferred location for quality business and economic development in the worldwide market. A major employer in Ascension are oil and gas manufacturing.

WIOA Service Providers

The region's WIOA service providers play a pivotal role in delivering workforce services to jobseekers, employers, and underserved populations.

- **Workforce Development Boards (WDBs):** The two WDBs in Region Two provide strategic oversight and coordinate service delivery across the region's eight parishes. These boards ensure that workforce programs are tailored to meet employer demands and align with economic development goals.
- **Adult Education Providers:** A network of adult education entities works collaboratively to address foundational skill gaps. These providers focus on improving literacy, numeracy, and digital skills, helping adult learners prepare for high-demand occupations in sectors such as healthcare, construction, and IT.
- **Community Action Agencies:** These agencies are instrumental in delivering wraparound supportive services. By aiding with childcare, transportation, utilities, and emergency financial support, they help jobseekers overcome barriers that might otherwise prevent them from accessing workforce programs.
- **Vocational Rehabilitation Services:** Organizations such as Louisiana Rehabilitation Services ensure that individuals with disabilities have access to tailored training programs and supportive services, enabling them to participate fully in the workforce.
- **Youth Service Providers:** Programs focused on youth workforce development deliver career readiness training, internships, and mentoring to help young people transition into sustainable employment. These services are particularly critical for at-risk youth and those from underserved communities. Region 2 has two YouthBuild programs that focus on high-risk youth services for those out of school youth with a combination of carpentry certification.
- **Community-Based Organizations:** Community-based organizations (CBOs) are essential partners in the region's workforce ecosystem, providing targeted support and connecting jobseekers to vital resources. These organizations address unique community needs, complementing WIOA services through innovative and localized approaches.
 - **Faith-Based Organizations:** Churches and faith-based groups offer job readiness workshops, support networks, and access to emergency assistance for vulnerable populations.
 - **Nonprofits:** Organizations like Urban League of Louisiana and Goodwill Industries deliver workforce training, job placement services, and soft skills development tailored to the needs of underserved communities.
 - **Civic Groups and Advocacy Organizations:** These groups provide mentorship, career counseling, and advocacy for populations facing systemic barriers to employment, such as reentry individuals and single parents.

Business Engagement

Employers in the Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region play a vital role in workforce planning and service delivery, ensuring alignment between workforce programs and industry demands. In healthcare, North Oaks Regional Health System and Ochsner Health lead collaborative efforts with workforce partners, including local workforce boards and educational institutions, to design training programs addressing critical skill shortages in nursing, medical assisting, and healthcare administration. Similarly, the Northshore Healthscape initiative involves healthcare providers across the Northshore, focusing on credentialing and workforce readiness to support the growing healthcare demands of the region.

In advanced manufacturing and IT, companies like Laitram, LLC, Elmers Candy actively contribute to initiatives such as the Mechatronics Apprenticeship Program, which provide training in robotics and automation. These programs are critical for developing a skilled pipeline of workers to support innovative-driven industries.

Both workforce boards have business representatives on their boards, and they serve as representatives for business and industry. They provide the board with information on supply and demand and upcoming industry changes.

Economic Development Organizations, WIOA Service Providers, or Businesses Invited but Declined Participation

The Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region (Region 2) works collaboratively between the two workforce boards to engage stakeholders. While most economic development organizations, WIOA service providers, and businesses have actively participated in shaping regional strategies, some have occasionally been unable to engage due to competing priorities, resource limitations, or timing conflicts.

For instance, smaller businesses and organizations may not have the capacity to fully engage in planning activities, despite being invited. Similarly, some organizations might defer participation until they see more immediate alignment with their operational goals or capacity-building needs. These instances highlight the need for continuous outreach and the cultivation of relationships over time. The region addresses these gaps by fostering an open and transparent environment for communication with the local boards, characterized by robust information sharing with social media and web sites, sector-focused forums, and regular stakeholder meetings. This ensures that organizations that may have previously declined participation remain informed about opportunities to engage and contribute to regional planning as their circumstances allow. By emphasizing collaboration as an ongoing process, the region remains committed to broadening participation and ensuring that workforce strategies are inclusive and responsive to the diverse needs of all stakeholders.

Obstacles for engaging more business on the workforce boards is the lack of the ability to have virtual meetings along with the requirement for members to submit financial disclosure reports. There is also an issue with the use of proxies for business members. These members represent overall business and industry sectors and should be allowed to have designated proxies in their absence.

Mechanisms for Coordination

The region employs mechanisms to ensure effective coordination among its economic development organizations, WIOA service providers, and businesses:

The region employs several mechanisms to ensure effective coordination among its economic development organizations, WIOA service providers, and businesses:

- **Formalized Agreements:** Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and cooperative endeavor agreements establish clear roles and responsibilities, reducing duplication of effort and enhancing collaboration. Each local workforce board is required to have MOUs with the 16 required partners as per WIOA legislation

regarding shared services and customers in the workforce arena. Integrated services between social services (Division of Children and Family Services) and local workforce boards to coordinate services to remove barriers for those who are currently enrolled in public benefit services and moving into workforce and skill training.

- Integrated Data Sharing Platforms: Tools like Lightcast enable stakeholders to access real-time labor market and economic data, ensuring workforce strategies are informed by the latest trends. Employers and Economic Development organizations share access to these reports.
- Cross-Regional Committees: Regular meetings of Workforce Development Board leadership and Business Services Teams foster alignment across sectors and ensure that programs remain responsive to employer needs. The local workforce boards also have business services representatives who work with local and small businesses to address employer needs regarding staffing and demand needs.
- Employer roundtables/meetings: Sector-specific employer roundtables and meetings provide direct input on workforce challenges and priorities, shaping training programs and service delivery models. Workforce directors and staff share resources and shared programs at these meetings when invited.
- Co-Enrolled Programs: Programs that integrate WIOA, LRS, TANF, and SNAP services allow jobseekers to access multiple resources through a single point of contact, enhancing efficiency and reducing administrative burdens.

D. Describe the coordination of administrative cost arrangements, including the pooling of funds for administrative costs, as appropriate

Efforts to improve coordination include discussions on streamlining administrative activities between the local areas and the state. A prior recommendation has been the decentralization of Wagner-Peyser Funds and RESEA funds from the state to the local level, as it is in other states, allowing these funds to be braided with existing resources. This approach currently is not feasible since the new DOL ruling requires those services to be provided by state merit staff only.

Collaborative Cost-Sharing Agreements and Pooling of Funds

This area is for the state's unified plan and not local as we only receive funding from WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Funds. Admin funds are specific to the workforce area. We do assist each other with programs however funds are maintained at the grant authority.

CHAPTER 3: VISION, GOALS, AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES: REGIONAL

This section will describe how the Local Board(s) will align the regional workforce, education, and economic development activities with those conducted in the local areas. The responses should ensure consistency with other plans and demonstrate that businesses, educational institutions, and workforce development stakeholders have contributed input and are engaged in the strategy development process.

A. Describe the local strategic vision to support state and regional economic growth

Region Two's Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region aligns with Louisiana's goals to boost labor market participation and economic independence. This vision focuses on economic mobility, educational excellence, and workforce resilience. It emphasizes collaboration among workforce development, social services, education, and economic development stakeholders to promote regional growth and upward mobility for all residents.

Regional Strategic Vision

The Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region's local workforce boards follow strategic priorities aimed at economic growth, increasing opportunities for education, training, and support services, particularly for individuals facing employment barriers. The Region also focuses on addressing workforce skill gaps and ensuring equitable access to opportunities for all residents. These priorities align with regional and state-level goals and emphasize collaboration and innovation.

Promoting Educational Collaborations

The region collaborates with educational programs from K-12 to adult learning. Programs like Jump Start 2.0, JAG, and expanded dual-enrollment help high school students earn industry-recognized credentials for in-demand jobs. For adults, initiatives such as TOPS, TOPS Tech, Pell Grant, Reboot and the MJ Foster Promise Fund offer targeted training in essential sectors, addressing skill shortages and removing employment barriers. These efforts ensure education remain vital for workforce development.

Sector-Based Workforce Development

The region's strategy is in strong alignment with Louisiana's emphasis on high-growth industries such as manufacturing, healthcare, construction, transportation, warehousing/logistics, and information technology. Existing sector partnerships in healthcare and construction can be further developed to include advanced manufacturing and warehousing/logistics/transportation, ensuring that training programs meet employer requirements. These initiatives establish clear pathways to the skills needed by employers and provide jobseekers with defined career routes, thereby addressing critical workforce shortages.

Enhancing Supportive Services to Underserved Populations

The region focuses on inclusive workforce strategies to enhance economic mobility. Key services provided include transportation assistance, childcare subsidies, and reentry programs for justice-involved individuals. These initiatives, along with targeted outreach to underserved populations, aim to ensure equitable access to workforce development programs, particularly for individuals experiencing poverty or low educational attainment.

Aligning Workforce Development with Economic Development

Collaboration with regional economic development organizations such as Greater New Orleans, Inc. (GNO, Inc.), Baton Rouge Area Chamber (BRAC) and the Capital Regional Planning Commission (RPC) aligns workforce strategies with broader economic priorities. Multi-parish economic development agencies work with local workforce areas on joint processes and programs to address employer needs. These partnerships focus on supporting infrastructure projects and utilizing labor market data to refine workforce initiatives, promoting economic growth across the region.

Investing in Lifelong Learning and Digital Skills

In response to the increasing demand for digital competencies, local initiatives are focused on enhancing residents' skills through digital literacy training programs providing literacy certifications. These programs are important to our collaborations with technological employers such as IBM. Apprenti, Inc is a distinguished registered apprenticeship provider offering digital resources and cybersecurity training. These efforts not only equip the workforce for emerging opportunities but also improve adaptability to the evolving demands of the industry.

Alignment with the State of Louisiana's Vision and Principles

The local regional vision is deeply aligned with the State of Louisiana's workforce principles, ensuring a unified approach to workforce development:

- **Economic Mobility:** Local programs provide pathways out of poverty and move them to economic independence through targeted skills training and credentialing for high-wage, high-demand jobs.
- **Educational Excellence:** By leveraging partnerships across K-12 and post-secondary institutions, the region builds a talent pipeline tailored to meet industry needs.
- **Collaboration:** Focused efforts on individuals with barriers to employment reflect the state's goal of equitable access to economic opportunities. Integration of social services with workforce to provide collaborative case management moving citizens to economic independence.
- **Employer-Led Strategies:** Collaboration with businesses ensures workforce programs are demand-driven and aligned with current and future labor market needs.

Stakeholder Engagement in Strategy Development

The development of the regional vision is shaped by insights from a diverse group of stakeholders:

- **Businesses:** Employers in healthcare, construction, manufacturing, and IT provide critical input on workforce gaps and co-design training programs through sector partnerships.
- **Education:** K-12 systems, community colleges, and universities collaborate on curriculum development, dual-enrollment initiatives, and credentialing programs.
- **Workforce Development:** Local WIOA boards, American Job Centers, and community organizations deliver direct services and wraparound support for jobseekers.
- **Economic Development:** Partnerships with entities like GNO, Inc and BRAC, and the eleven parish economic development agencies along with local chamber of commerce's to ensure workforce initiatives are aligned with regional economic growth strategies.

Commitment to Collaboration and Continuous Improvement

The local workforce boards are dedicated to fostering collaboration, innovation, and adaptability in workforce strategies. Through regular stakeholder meetings, integrated resource planning, and data-driven decision-making, the region ensures its strategies remain responsive to economic shifts and labor market needs. By aligning closely with the State of Louisiana's goals, the Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region positions itself as a leader in economic and workforce development, driving a resilient and inclusive economy that benefits all residents.

B. Describe the local goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce (including youth and individuals with barriers to employment) and goals relating to the performance accountability measures based on performance indicators

The Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region is committed to developing a workforce that is educated, skilled, and prepared to succeed in an evolving labor market. Recognizing the region's economic strengths and the opportunities presented by growing sectors such as healthcare, construction, advanced manufacturing, transportation/logistics and IT, the local workforce strategy emphasizes preparing youth and individuals with barriers to employment. These objectives are supported by a focus on performance accountability measures that monitor progress and ensure effective outcomes for both job seekers and employers.

Preparing Youth for Workforce Success

A primary objective for the Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region is to provide youth with the necessary tools and opportunities to thrive in a competitive and evolving labor market. This initiative emphasizes early exposure to high-demand industries, access to relevant educational pathways, and practical real-world learning experiences. By focusing on collaborative efforts with K-12 and addressing those for any reasons have not earned a high school diploma this region will holistically use the 14 elements in WIOA to provide services to address skill gaps.

Expanding Career Pathways

Programs such as **Jump Start 2.0** and dual-enrollment initiatives offer high school students the opportunity to graduate with industry-recognized credentials, thus preparing them for immediate employment or post-secondary education. These initiatives focus on high-demand fields and industry-based certifications, including healthcare, advanced manufacturing, construction (skilled trades), and transportation and logistics, ensuring that young individuals enter career pathways with ample opportunities. Region 2 will collaborate with businesses and industries to support the K-12 agenda by providing work-based learning opportunities to all students enrolled in Career and Technical Education (CTE) curricula.

Work-Based Learning Opportunities

Local workforce boards are working with employers to establish paid internships and apprenticeships that offer students practical experience in key sectors. These programs aim to connect classroom learning with industry requirements, equipping youth with the necessary skills and exposure for success. Geaux Jobs implemented in-school work-based learning initiatives at AJC sites and collaborated with local school districts to help youth facing significant barriers develop work readiness skills in a structured setting. Employ BR provides summer youth work experience programs to support work-based experiential learning for youth in the Baton Rouge area.

Engaging Underserved Youth

Outreach efforts focus on at-risk and underserved youth to ensure they have access to resources, mentorship, and guidance. Collaborations with community organizations aim to address barriers and create tailored programs for this population. The region hosts three annual career fairs targeting high school seniors, bringing together employers and post-secondary institutions to enhance students' K-12 learning and certifications. This outreach includes collaboration with employers and jobseekers to establish opportunities to engage underserved youth. Geaux Jobs and EmployBR also work with other DOL programs such as YouthBuild and Job Corp to serve underserved youth.

Supporting Individuals with Barriers to Employment

The Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region is focused on creating opportunities for individuals facing employment barriers. By addressing challenges such as lack of education, transportation, and other systemic obstacles, workforce initiatives aim to enhance economic mobility for all residents. This region will also collaborate with families enrolled in DCFS programs to promote employment-based strategies, including training to help them remove barriers that may be preventing them from entering the workforce.

Customized Training Programs

The development of customized training programs in this region has been a priority. Programs with North Oaks Hospital, NTCC, and Geaux Jobs have addressed the shortage of medical assistants. In Baton Rouge, NBRITL, Exxon, BRCC, and Employ BR are collaborating to provide over 100 construction helpers for area industrial plants through customized training. Customized training addresses skill shortage areas effectively, with business and industries playing a significant role. The aim is to continue these activities. These employer partnerships will meet industry needs and ensure that

training aligns with current and future projected requirements.

Supportive Services

Non-skill-related barriers, including childcare, transportation, access to books, training materials, and technology, are mitigated through integrated supportive services. By incorporating these supports into workforce programs, the region ensures that participants can fully engage in both training and employment opportunities.

Incumbent Worker Training Programs

Collaborating with LWC and business and industry to promote incumbent worker training programs is essential to addressing the evolving nature of the economy. A workforce that values continuous learning and adaptability is paramount. The region invests in initiatives that promote lifelong learning and skills advancement to meet the changing demands of industries. Priority is given to training in advanced manufacturing, robotics, and digital learning to cater to the increasing demand for digital and technical skills across various sectors. These programs are designed to prepare participants for emerging opportunities in innovation-driven industries and to retrain current workers, enabling them to advance alongside technological improvements.

Alignment with Performance Indicators

The region's workforce development initiatives are designed to meet and surpass federally mandated performance accountability measures. These benchmarks ensure that programs deliver tangible outcomes beneficial to both jobseekers and employers. The region consistently meets and exceeds the required performance indicators through comprehensive case management efforts and diligent follow-up. By working directly with participants to address their training and supportive service needs, the region aims to optimize performance.

Employment Rate 2nd and 4th Quarter after exit

Programs are designed to facilitate the placement of participants into sustainable employment within high-demand sectors by collaborating with training providers and industry partners. Continuous follow-up by case managers ensures that participants who require assistance receive adequate support in entering the workforce. Additionally, partnerships with employers help to ensure a smooth transition into roles with growth potential.

Median Earnings

Training efforts focus on occupations offering competitive wages, such as skilled trades, registered nurses, crane operation, construction, general and operations managers. Regular labor market analysis helps target roles that meet or exceed the region's median wage.

Credential Attainment

Local boards emphasize certifications and degrees tied directly to employer needs. Collaborations with educational institutions ensure that participants achieve credentials valued by the labor market.

Through the work of case managers career counseling allow participants to chose careers meeting industry needs along with participant interest. This promotes credential attainment.

Measurable Skill Gains

Work readiness and short-term training programs are designed to track progress through the earning of measurable skill gains. These skill gains support the credential achievement and work readiness or participants by preparing participants for incremental career advancement while ensuring adaptability in the workforce.

Employer Engagement

This measure is still specific to individual participant involvement. Our region will work with our employers to get feedback from businesses to help inform us on the needs of the industry and what workforce program can be promoted to meet those needs. With an ever-changing and mobile employee base we will promote job stability to as a way to achieve this measure.

Sustaining our Workforce Goals especially for those with extreme barriers and youth

The region's workforce strategy focuses on ensuring all eligible participants have access to training, earn credentials, and secure employment. Sustainability is also a key focus, with continuous improvement processes utilizing data and stakeholder feedback to refine strategies and address emerging challenges. By addressing barriers and collaborating with our shared partners we vision this will allow for the region to sustain our workforce goals while addressing the need to increase the labor market participation rate and move people from dependance to economic independence.

Emphasizing youth development, support for individuals facing barriers to employment, and alignment with performance measures, the Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region aims to build an inclusive and adaptive workforce. These efforts align with state goals for economic mobility, preparing residents to meet the demands of an evolving labor market while promoting long-term economic resilience.

C. Provide a description of the regional and local strategies that will achieve the vision and principles. This must include a description of the strategies and services that will be used in the local areas:

Key Regional and Local Strategies

The Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region's workforce development efforts are grounded in collaboration, adaptability, and a commitment to meeting the needs of both employers and jobseekers. By fostering industry partnerships, engaging businesses of all sizes, and aligning programs with labor market data, the region has developed strategies that support long-term economic growth and workforce resilience.

1. Industry-Led Collaborations

Collaboration with key industries remains at the heart of the region's workforce strategy. Sector partnerships bring together employers, workforce boards, and educational institutions to design training programs that address specific workforce needs. For example, the **GBRITI Partnership**

focuses on equipping workers with basic construction skills to allow them to enter work in the industrial plants and be mentored by journeymen to advance their careers in a work-based learning environment. In healthcare, collaborations with North Oaks and Ochsner Health address workforce shortages by creating specialized programs in nursing, healthcare administration, and related fields. Engaging Small and Medium-Sized Employers

2. Small and Medium Sized Business Engagement

Small and medium-sized businesses play a vital role in the regional economy, and the workforce development system prioritizes their engagement to ensure they can access the resources needed to remain competitive. Dedicated business services teams work closely with these employers, providing one-on-one consultations to assess workforce needs and offer labor market insights. These teams also connect businesses to workforce incentives such as On-the-Job Training (OJT) and Work Experience (WEX) programs, which subsidize hiring and training costs. Programs like the Incumbent Worker Training Program (IWTP) provide small employers with financial support to upskill their current workforce, helping them adapt to industry changes and increase productivity. Hiring events and use of the AJCs for employer interviews allows those business with out a place to host these events draw larger numbers of jobseekers.

3. Targeted Outreach to In-Demand Industries

The region's targeted outreach initiatives concentrate on identifying high-growth industries by utilizing labor market intelligence tools such as Lightcast and LMI to pinpoint sectors experiencing or anticipated to experience growth within the next 2 to 10 years. Regular employer roundtables facilitate opportunities for businesses and industries to discuss workforce challenges and collaborate with workforce boards on customized solutions. These discussions not only inform workforce planning but also strengthen relationships between employers and workforce development partners.

4. Co-Designing Workforce Solutions

Workforce programs are developed in close collaboration with employers and training providers ensure they are aligned with current and future job requirements. Apprenticeship programs in fields such as the skilled trades, IT, and healthcare combine classroom instruction with hands-on experiential learning and paid learning to create a pipeline of skilled workers ready to meet employer needs. Additionally, work-based learning opportunities, such as paid internships and job shadowing, provide participants with practical, industry-specific experience that bridges the gap between education and employment.

5. Partnership programs and integrated service delivery

This region will initiate an integrated pilot program with the Division of Children and Family Services to align and integrate services aimed at addressing employment barriers. The pilot program will collaborate with businesses, industry, training partners, and social services organizations to help families overcome obstacles that have prevented them from achieving economic stability. The goal is to assist families in attaining economic stability and independence.

Services to Support Employer Engagement

The Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region offers a comprehensive suite of services to employers, designed to facilitate talent acquisition, improve workforce retention, and leverage technology to enhance recruitment efforts. These employer-centered services ensure businesses can access the skilled workforce they need to thrive in a competitive economic landscape.

1. Talent Acquisition Support

Employers benefit from robust talent acquisition services provided through the region's American Job Centers (AJCs). These centers offer pre-screening services, ensuring employers receive candidates who align closely with their specific job requirements. By matching job seekers to positions based on qualifications, AJCs save employers time and resources in the hiring process. Workforce boards also coordinate targeted hiring events and job fairs tailored to high-demand sectors, creating direct connections between job seekers and employers. These events, both in-person and virtual, enable businesses to efficiently meet their staffing needs while promoting job opportunities in critical industries.

2. Customized Workforce Solutions

To support long-term workforce sustainability, workforce boards offer customized solutions that address employers' unique challenges. For example, **employee retention strategies** include leadership development programs and team-building workshops aimed at reducing turnover and improving workplace culture. Additionally, employers receive assistance in navigating funding opportunities such as the Incumbent Worker Training Program (IWTP) and Louisiana's Rapid Response Program for dislocated workers. These grants enable businesses to improve their existing workforce, adapt to changing industry demands, and recover from economic disruptions.

3. Technology-Enhanced Services

Employers in the region have access to technology-driven tools that streamline the recruitment process. The **HiRE (Helping Individuals Reach Employment)** platform allows businesses to post job openings, search candidate resumes, and connect with qualified job seekers, all in one centralized portal. In addition, **virtual job fairs** expand employers' reach by enabling them to engage with candidates across the region without geographic limitations. These online tools enhance efficiency, broaden access to talent, and support employers in meeting their workforce needs.

Alignment with Vision and Principles

These strategies align with the State of Louisiana's vision of fostering economic mobility and resilience by ensuring that employers play an active role in workforce development. By prioritizing sector partnerships, small business engagement, and customized solutions, the region equips employers with a skilled workforce while creating opportunities for job seekers. This collaborative approach ensures that workforce programs are both demand-driven and inclusive, addressing the needs of the economy and the community alike.

1. To support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area

The Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region's local workforce development system is designed to address the evolving needs of businesses while ensuring job seekers are equipped with the skills and resources to succeed. This system prioritizes the alignment between workforce training, employer demands, and regional economic goals through a combination of collaborative partnerships, tailored services, and innovative approaches.

Key Strategies to Meet Business Needs

A. Customized Employer Services

To address specific workforce challenges, the region offers personalized services that connect businesses with the tools and resources they need. Business Service Representatives (BSRs): Dedicated BSRs work directly with employers to identify workforce gaps and develop tailored solutions. These include programs such as On-the-Job Training (OJT), Incumbent Worker Training (IWT), and Work Experience (WEX), all designed to address unique training and hiring needs.

Customized Training Programs: Employers collaborate with training providers and AJCs to create specialized training initiatives. For instance, North Oaks partners with local boards to develop healthcare certification programs.

B. Sector-Based Approaches

Industry-specific strategies ensure that workforce initiatives remain aligned with regional economic priorities.

- Targeted Sector Partnerships: Partnerships in industries such as healthcare, construction, transportation, and IT bring together employers, training providers, and economic development organizations to co-design programs that address current and future workforce needs.
- Rapid Response Services for Employers: Businesses undergoing downsizing or closures receive support from Rapid Response teams, which help workers transition into new roles while maintaining positive employer relationships.

C. Talent Recruitment and Retention Support

Efforts to recruit and retain talent focus on building pipelines that align with employer needs and offering businesses seamless access to qualified candidates.

- Pre-Screened Talent Pipelines: American Job Centers (AJCs) provide businesses with pre-screened candidates tailored to their specific hiring criteria, reducing recruitment time and costs.
- Job Fairs and Hiring Events: Workforce boards coordinate industry-specific events that connect employers with job seekers in high-demand sectors like Warehousing, manufacturing, and professional services.

D. Enhanced Use of Technology

Technological tools enhance workforce development by streamlining employer engagement and expanding access to job seekers.

- **HiRE (Helping Individuals Reach Employment):** This online platform allows businesses to post job openings, search resumes, and access labor market data to refine their hiring strategies.
- **Virtual Workforce Services:** Employers can participate in virtual job fairs, conduct online interviews, and engage with training programs, broadening their reach and simplifying the recruitment process.
- **Digital Literacy training programs:** Support all ages in knowledge attainment around digital literacy

E. Support for Small and Medium-Sized Businesses (SMBs)

Recognizing the unique challenges faced by small and medium-sized businesses, the region offers targeted support to enhance their workforce capacity.

- **SMB Engagement Programs:** Workforce boards dedicate resources to assist SMBs in workforce planning, accessing training funds, and navigating labor market challenges.
- **Shared Workforce Solutions:** Collaborative programs allow SMBs to share resources like training facilities and expert instructors, reducing costs while improving access to skilled labor.

2. To better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development

Coordination of Workforce Development Programs and Economic Development

The Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region prioritizes seamless integration of workforce development and economic development initiatives to ensure alignment between labor market needs and regional economic strategies.

Key Coordination Strategies

- Joint Planning and Data Sharing:** **Workforce** Development Boards (WDBs) collaborate with organizations like Greater Baton Rouge, Inc. (GNO, Inc.), the Baton Rouge Area Chamber (BRAC), and the Regional Planning Commission (RPC) to align workforce training with economic growth priorities. This is done through shared labor market data and industry forecasts guide investments in in-demand sectors such as construction, healthcare, and IT.
- Collaborative partnerships with Local Economic Development Organizations:** Serving 11 parishes means working collaboratively with the various local economic development organizations. We coordinate events with them such as hiring events once new industries are developed. It also includes coordinating with local training providers to meet industry skill-based needs for new and current employers.
- Collaborative Grants and Funding:** Joint applications for state and federal funding support initiatives that simultaneously address workforce and economic development needs, such as DRA

grants to meet health care shortages especially in rural areas or technology-driven manufacturing.

3. Strengthening Linkages Between the One-Stop Delivery System and Unemployment Insurance Programs

The Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region integrates unemployment insurance (UI) services with the one-stop delivery system to provide seamless support for jobseekers transitioning back into the workforce through services provided by state merit staff. WIOA staff have limited access to UI information but can assist customers with filing UI claims.

Key Strategies for Linkage Improvement

- A. Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) Programs: AJCs coordinate with RESEA to provide UI claimants with personalized career counseling, skills assessments, and connections to training programs in high-demand industries.
- B. Technology-Enabled Support: Digital tools and virtual workshops allow UI claimants to access one-stop services remotely, broadening participation and reducing barriers.
- C. WIOA Training Services: Through the Dislocated Worker program UI claimants who meet eligibility criteria can enroll in training to gain initial certification or upskilling to return to employment.

4. To promote entrepreneurial skills training and micro-enterprise services

The region emphasizes fostering entrepreneurship as a pathway to economic self-sufficiency and innovation.

Key Strategies and Services

- A. Entrepreneurial Training Programs: Partnerships with organizations like the Urban League of Louisiana, Louisiana Small Business Development Centers (LSBDCs) provide workshops on business planning, financial management, and marketing.
- B. Targeted Outreach to Youth and Special Populations: Programs such as the Young Entrepreneurs Academy of Baton Rouge engage youth in hands-on entrepreneurial training, while initiatives for veterans and justice-involved individuals provide tailored support for starting small businesses. The ARC of Louisiana also provides micro-enterprise services for people with disabilities.
- C. Incubators and Coworking Spaces: Collaborations with incubators like Louisiana Tech Park, Stephenson Entrepreneurship Institute, BizTech, StartUp Northshore provide entrepreneurs with mentorship, networking opportunities, and shared office space to grow their businesses.

5. *To implement initiatives such as incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies, career pathways initiatives, utilization of effective business intermediaries, and other business services and strategies designed to meet the needs of regional employers*

The region implements a variety of initiatives to address employer needs and ensure a skilled and adaptable workforce.

Key Initiatives

- **On-the-Job Training (OJT) Programs:** OJT programs subsidize wages for new hires during their training period, enabling employers to onboard candidates while reducing financial risk.
- **Incumbent Worker Training Programs (IWTP):** Employers partner with workforce boards to upskill existing employees in fields such as advanced manufacturing, healthcare, and IT. Customized training programs are funded to address specific business needs.
- **Customized Training Programs:** Tailored training initiatives, like those developed for North Oaks Health System and Exxon, ensure that workers are equipped with the skills required for specific roles.
- **Sector Strategies and Career Pathways Initiatives:** Sector strategies align training programs with employer needs, while career pathways initiatives provide clear advancement opportunities in industries like transportation and healthcare.
- **Utilization of Business Intermediaries:** Workforce boards partner with intermediaries such as industry associations and chambers of commerce to strengthen employer engagement and facilitate workforce solutions.
- **Business Services and Support:** Business services teams offer hiring support, pre-screening of candidates, and access to grants for workforce training, ensuring that employers can address their labor needs efficiently.

These coordinated efforts ensure that the region's workforce development system is responsive to business needs, fosters economic growth, and supports jobseekers in accessing sustainable employment opportunities.

6. *Describe regional strategies that will increase apprenticeship and other work-based learning opportunities.*

Regional Strategies to Increase Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning Opportunities

The Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region has implemented a robust set of strategies to expand apprenticeship and work-based learning opportunities. These initiatives are designed to align with the needs of employers in high-demand industries while providing career pathways for job seekers, particularly individuals with barriers to employment. By fostering collaboration among employers,

training providers, and workforce development organizations, the region is building a sustainable model for workforce development.

Key Strategies

Current or Expansion of Registered Apprenticeships

- **Industry-Specific Programs:** The region has successfully registered apprenticeship programs tailored to high-demand industries, such as the Dow Chemical's P-Tech program for advanced manufacturing and apprenticeships in construction trades like electrician, pipefitting and welding, carpentry and heavy machinery.
- **Employer Partnerships:** Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) will collaborate with employers to create customized apprenticeship models, ensuring alignment with specific occupational requirements.

Integration of On-the-Job Training (OJT)

- **OJT programs** offer businesses a cost-effective solution to train workers while ensuring they acquire the practical skills needed to perform effectively. In a study conducted by LWC, they found 92.4% of OJT participants are retained by their employers after 12 months, highlighting the program's success in fostering long-term employment. Our region will continue to promote OJT contracts to enhance work based learning initiative.

Work-Based Learning Pathways

- **Internships and Work Experience:** These opportunities allow students and recent graduates to gain hands-on experience in industries such as government to advance work readiness skills. Employers collaborate with educational institutions to offer structured learning experiences.
- **Youth-Focused Initiatives:** Programs such as Jump Start 2.0 integrate dual enrollment opportunities with career and technical education, providing high school students with pathways to apprenticeships and industry-recognized credentials. We will work collaboratively with K-12 on securing businesses to provide internship opportunities for Jump Start youth.

Streamlined Candidate Recruitment

- **Online Pre-Application Tools:** The region has developed tools to simplify the pre-application process, ensuring a seamless experience for candidates and reducing administrative burdens for employers.

Support for Underserved Populations

- **Second Chance Employers:** Programs are in place to support individuals reentering the workforce after incarceration, including apprenticeships that emphasize skill-building in trades like industrial maintenance and construction.
- **Veterans and Disabled Workers:** Customized apprenticeships and transitional programs cater to the unique needs of veterans and individuals with disabilities, ensuring equitable access to work-based learning.

Public-Private Partnerships Driving Growth

The Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region leverages a variety of public-private partnerships as critical components of its workforce and economic development strategies. These collaborations bring together government entities, private employers, educational institutions, and nonprofit

organizations to address workforce needs and economic priorities. Key initiatives include the Healthcare initiatives, with Ochsner Medical and North Oaks Health System focuses on preparing workers for positions in the health care industry, and the GBRITI and Exxon which supports the oil and gas industry with construction helpers for the industrial corridor.

Other initiatives include the Mechatronics partnership with Laitrum, LLC, Elmers Candy and Zatarain's Seasoning in the advance manufacturing sector. This program partners with Delgado and Northshore Technical for student training.

7. *Describe initiatives to shorten the time from credential to employment and address how the area will work with the education system to begin putting training opportunities in place to meet this strategy.*

Initiatives to Shorten the Time from Credential to Employment

The Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region is committed to reducing the time it takes for individuals to move from acquiring credentials to securing employment. By leveraging innovative training models, regional partnerships, and employer engagement, workforce development efforts focus on equipping job seekers with the skills and connections they need to enter the labor market efficiently and successfully.

Streamlined Training and Credentialing Programs

- **Accelerated Credentialing Programs:** Programs like Jump Start 2.0 allow high school students to dual-enroll in technical education courses, enabling them to graduate with industry-recognized credentials. These initiatives are designed to address skill gaps in key sectors, such as healthcare, construction, and advanced manufacturing and are stackable for further career ladder growth.
- **Fast-Track Career Pathways:** Local training providers, including Northshore Technical and Community College, Baton Rouge Community College, River Parishes Community College offer condensed training schedules for in-demand occupations such as welders, pipefitters, nursing, and various skill trades. These programs are developed in collaboration with employers to align training outcomes with workplace requirements.
- **Employer-Based Training:** On-the-Job Training (OJT) and are integral to connecting job seekers with immediate employment opportunities. These training programs allow for and earn and learn process where the individual is earning while they learn a skill trade. With 92.4% of OJT participants retained after 12 months, these programs emphasize practical skills and employer satisfaction. Customized Training Programs streamline the training for the individual employer so the participant is skill trained for a credential and employer specific skills simultaneously.

Workforce and Education System Collaboration

- **Partnerships with K-12 and Post-Secondary Institutions:** Workforce boards work with schools to integrate career exploration and technical education into curricula. By coordinating with the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) and local employers, these partnerships ensure that student's graduate workforce-ready.
- **Industry-Driven Curriculum Design:** Working with K-12 CTE school district coordinators local the local workforce boards serve on their curriculum alignment committees to assist with tailoring CTE programs to the current regional demand market.
- **Interactive Career Resources:** Comprehensive Centers across the region allow students to come in and utilized our resource centers that provide information on training programs, funding opportunities, and career pathways. These tools empower job seekers to make informed decisions and quickly transition to training or employment. Students can access resources through our websites to access My Life My Way and other resources for youth to assist with career planning.

Innovative Approaches to Address Barriers

- **Support for Special Populations:** Initiatives such as the Re-Entry Program under the Second Chance Act and partnerships with veteran services provide tailored training opportunities, ensuring equitable access to fast-track programs. We also have Louisiana Rehabilitative Services providing services for those with disabilities co-housed in our centers.
- **Comprehensive Support Services:** Wraparound services, including childcare, transportation, and financial assistance for training materials, help job seekers overcome barriers to completing accelerated programs.
- **Digital Tools and Virtual Training:** Online pre-screening tools, virtual classrooms, and video-based job counseling expand access to training and shorten delays caused by logistical challenges. We also offer digital literacy via web-based applications and virtual interview training.

By fostering strong partnerships, integrating employer-driven training models, and addressing individual barriers, the region is positioned to create a seamless pipeline from credentialing to employment, supporting both job seekers and employers in achieving their goals.

8. *Describe the steps that will be taken to support the state's efforts to align and integrate education, workforce and economic development including:*

Steps to Support the State's Alignment and Integration of Education, Workforce, and Economic Development

The Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region implements a strategic approach to integrate education, workforce development, and economic initiatives. These strategies emphasize building employer-driven partnerships, expanding career pathways, addressing skill gaps, and improving accessibility to services for both employers and job seekers.

Fostering Employer-Driven Regional Sector Partnerships

Sector-Based Collaborations

The region engages employers through dynamic sector partnerships that streamline training and hiring efforts in high-demand industries. For example, partnerships with organizations like GNO, Inc., BRAC and local chambers of commerce focus on aligning workforce development with critical sectors such as healthcare, IT, advanced manufacturing, warehousing/logistics and transportation. These collaborations ensure workforce strategies address the needs of both employers and job seekers.

Data-Driven Decision-Making

Working with the Louisiana Workforce Commission and economic development entities local boards leverage labor market intelligence, powered by platforms like Lightcast, to guide investments in training and workforce initiatives. This data-driven approach aligns workforce programs with high-demand occupations and supports strategic decision-making in high-growth sectors. Future Works allows the boards to look at those who have been trained by the board and analyze employment outcomes based on performance to analyze successful training to employment sector outcomes.

Expanding Career Pathway Opportunities

Accelerated Training and Work-Based Learning

Programs like Jump Start 2.0 integrate dual enrollment and technical education, enabling high school students to earn industry-recognized credentials while completing their high school diplomas. Additionally, on-the-job training (OJT) programs and registered apprenticeships provide rapid pathways to employment in key industries like healthcare, manufacturing, the skilled trades and IT. These programs all provide stackable credentials that allow for immediate employment in high demand career fields with the ability to advance the participants credentialing as they work.

Bridge Programs

Training initiatives are paired with comprehensive support services to help individuals with barrier barriers to enter the world of work. These bridge programs are designed to transition participants into high-wage, high-demand careers, particularly in sectors requiring advanced technical skills. Working with the Division of Children and Family Services, SNAP E&T and CS E&T programs and partnering with Baton Rouge Community College the workforce boards area assisting with industry specific training programs.

Addressing Skill Gaps for Special Populations

Targeted Support Services

Targeted supportive services programs are available for priority populations such as veterans, individuals with disabilities, foster care youth, and those with justice-involved backgrounds, developed in collaboration with partners like Louisiana Rehabilitation Services, Veterans Services and Department of Corrections. Programs are tailored to meet the unique needs of these groups, ensuring equitable access to career opportunities

Community Engagement

Efforts to connect underserved populations with job and training opportunities include outreach events like job fairs and industry-specific recruitment sessions. Digital tools and platforms also help bridge gaps by providing access to career resources and job matching services.

Improving Information Access for Employers and Job Seekers

Interactive Tools and Portals

Online platforms, including pre-screening applications and labor market dashboards, enhance transparency and accessibility for both employers and job seekers. These tools provide real-time insights into job openings, training programs, and labor market trends. Workforce Boards also have websites that allow for interactive resources, pre-applications for training services and information on available services.

Comprehensive Career Services

American Job Centers act as centralized hubs offering a range of services, including career counseling, resume workshops, and connections to training providers. These centers ensure job seekers have the resources needed to navigate career transitions effectively. Each workforce board as one comprehensive one-stop center and Geaux Jobs also has four additional affiliate centers to expand services.

Chapter 4: Operating Systems and Policies

A. Coordination of Planning Requirements

1. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

The Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA 21), coordinated by EmployBR, has developed and maintains a comprehensive **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)** with all required one-stop partners in accordance with WIOA regulations (20 CFR Part 678.705). The MOU outlines the roles and responsibilities of each partner agency, describes the integrated service delivery system, delineates cost-sharing agreements, and ensures that workforce development services are provided in a customer-focused and coordinated manner.

This Memorandum of Understanding, including any subsequent modifications, is incorporated by reference into this plan and serves as the foundation for the ongoing collaboration between EmployBR, the One-Stop Operator, and all core and required partners within the Baton Rouge area.

2. **Service Integration Action Plan (SIAP)**

EmployBR has also developed a **Service Integration Action Plan** that outlines how workforce development partners will align services, processes, and staff in accordance with the **Louisiana Integrated Service Delivery Policy (OWD 2-23.2)**. The SIAP ensures consistent, high-quality service delivery across partner programs and locations, prioritizing a seamless customer experience and efficient resource utilization. The plan includes action items for cross-training, shared data usage, customer flow mapping, and integrated referral systems.

The Service Integration Action Plan, and any subsequent modifications, is incorporated by reference into this plan as a guiding document for workforce system alignment and performance improvement in the local area.

B. Use of Technology in the One-Stop Delivery System

1. **Integrated, Technology-Enabled Intake and Case Management (§ 679.560(b)(20))**

EmployBR has implemented an integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management system to enhance accessibility, efficiency, and service coordination across WIOA programs. Through the use of **virtual intake interviews** conducted via web monitors and mobile devices, clients can complete eligibility screenings and enroll in services without needing to visit a Career Center in person.

EmployBR also utilizes the **Voss Greater visitor management system**, streamlining in-person service delivery by allowing customers to self-check-in via iPads, track wait times, and direct visits to appropriate staff members.

All case management and service documentation are captured in the **HiRE (Helping Individuals Reach Employment)** statewide system, ensuring real-time service tracking, co-enrollment, and eligibility documentation that meets federal and state reporting requirements.

EmployBR continuously evaluates system upgrades to ensure technology evolves with client needs, with particular attention to security, accessibility, and efficiency.

2. Facilitating Access to Services Using Technology and Other Means (§ 679.560(b)(5)(ii))

EmployBR facilitates access to workforce services for all residents, including those in remote or underserved areas, through several strategies:

- **Virtual Services:** Clients can access career counseling, job search support, intake, and eligibility determination remotely through the HiRE platform and virtual meetings.
- **Mobile Outreach:** EmployBR brings workforce services into the community by conducting mobile job fairs, workshops, and intake events at libraries, schools, and partner locations.
- **Digital Communication:** Important updates, job announcements, and resources are distributed through EmployBR's website, social media, and email newsletters to reach broad audiences.
- **Assistive Technology:** Workforce centers are equipped with assistive technology including JAWS screen readers, translation devices, and enhanced accessibility software for individuals with disabilities or language barriers.

These approaches ensure that services are accessible across all parts of East Baton Rouge Parish, supporting greater workforce participation.

C. Supporting Combined State Plan Strategies and Collaboration with Core Programs

1. Expanding Access to Employment, Training, Education, and Supportive Services (§ 679.560(b)(2)(i))

EmployBR supports the Louisiana Combined State Plan by expanding access to workforce services for eligible individuals, particularly those with barriers to employment, through the following strategies:

- **Scaling Up Integrated Education and Training (IET):**
EmployBR partners with Adult Education providers and Baton Rouge Community College to promote IET programs. Clients can work toward HiSET (GED) attainment, strengthen basic skills, and simultaneously pursue industry-recognized credentials in high-demand fields such as healthcare, information technology, and skilled trades.
 - **Leveraging Dual Credit Program Successes:**
Building on successful dual enrollment programs between high schools and community colleges, EmployBR is working with education and training providers to expand dual-credit opportunities into sectors like logistics, construction, and digital technology for youth and young adults.
 - **Promoting Prior Learning Assessments (PLA):**
EmployBR works with higher education partners to inform students about the availability of PLAs, which allow for faster credentialing based on prior work or military experience. Information is shared during career advising sessions and outreach campaigns.
 - **Targeted Marketing to Underemployed and Mature Workers:**
EmployBR is refining marketing strategies to reach underemployed individuals and mature workers who may need only minimal upskilling. Social media campaigns, email outreach, and community workshops help connect these groups to short-term credential and direct employment opportunities.
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2. Facilitating Career Pathways Development and Co-Enrollment (§ 679.560(b)(2)(ii))

EmployBR promotes career pathway development and supports co-enrollment across core programs through:

- **Career Pathways Expansion:**
Career pathways are developed with regional employers and training providers, particularly in healthcare, construction, and IT sectors. Pathways are structured to include stackable credentials leading to progressive wage increases and career advancement.
 - **Integrated Service Delivery and Co-Enrollment:**
Clients are assessed at intake for eligibility across multiple programs, and co-enrollment is encouraged when it enhances outcomes. Staff use the HiRE system to manage co-enrollment in Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Adult Education, and Vocational Rehabilitation services.
 - **Cross-Training Staff:**
EmployBR holds regular cross-training sessions among core partner staff to ensure seamless referrals and shared understanding of career pathway opportunities and support services.
-

3. Improving Access to Recognized Postsecondary Credentials (§ 679.560(b)(2)(iii))

EmployBR is committed to increasing credential attainment for local residents by:

- **Expanding Access to Stackable Credentials:**
EmployBR partners with training providers to promote short-term certification programs that are portable, industry-recognized, and lead to employment in in-demand fields.
- **Financial Support through Individual Training Accounts (ITAs):**
EmployBR uses WIOA ITAs to fund tuition, supplies, and certification costs for eligible participants pursuing approved programs on Louisiana's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL).
- **Employer Engagement:**
Business Services staff work directly with employers to identify needed credentials and align training efforts with real-time labor market demand.

Through these coordinated efforts, EmployBR ensures individuals have clear, supported pathways to careers offering long-term economic security.

D. Local Coordination Strategies

1. Coordination of Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Activities (§ 679.560(b)(6))

EmployBR coordinates Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth employment and training activities through a fully integrated service delivery system:

- **Adult and Dislocated Worker Services** include career assessments, individualized employment plans, supportive services, job placement assistance, and training services funded through Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) or On-the-Job Training (OJT) agreements.
- **Youth Services** focus on career exploration, HiSET attainment, work experience, and credentialed occupational skills training for out-of-school youth.
- Staff maintain strong coordination with core and required partners, using shared case management tools and cross-referral processes, to ensure seamless service delivery and co-enrollment where appropriate.

EmployBR's One-Stop Operator plays a critical role in facilitating regular partner meetings and integrated planning.

2. Coordination of Adult Education and Literacy Activities (§ 679.560(b)(12))

EmployBR supports coordination with Adult Education and Literacy providers by:

- **Reviewing Title II Local Applications:**
EmployBR evaluates Adult Education provider applications for alignment with local

workforce needs, ensuring programs support career pathways, integrated education and training (IET), and co-enrollment initiatives.

- **Formal Partnerships:**
EmployBR maintains Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with Adult Education providers to promote co-enrollment and service integration, particularly for individuals needing basic skills development or English language acquisition.
 - **Service Integration:**
EmployBR staff refer eligible participants to Adult Education for HiSET prep, basic literacy, and English as a Second Language (ESL) services, while simultaneously supporting career exploration and credential pathways.
-

3. Coordination of Wagner-Peyser Services (§ 679.560(b)(11))

EmployBR integrates Wagner-Peyser services into the one-stop delivery system by:

- **Co-locating Wagner-Peyser Staff:**
Wagner-Peyser Employment Services staff are located within EmployBR Career Centers and collaborate daily with WIOA-funded staff.
 - **Shared Service Delivery:**
Job seekers are jointly served through job matching, resume assistance, interview preparation, career counseling, and referral to WIOA-funded training where appropriate.
 - **Business Services Alignment:**
Wagner-Peyser and WIOA Business Services teams work together to deliver customized recruitment events, job fairs, and labor market information to employers.
-

4. Coordination of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (§ 679.560(b)(13))

EmployBR coordinates closely with Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) to serve individuals with disabilities:

- **Formal Referral Processes:**
EmployBR and LRS maintain mutual referral systems to ensure individuals receive comprehensive services tailored to their abilities and career goals.
 - **Co-Enrollment:**
Clients are encouraged to co-enroll in WIOA Title I and Title IV programs when appropriate, leveraging resources such as assistive technology, skills training, and job placement support.
 - **Accessibility Commitments:**
EmployBR's Career Centers are fully ADA-compliant, and staff are trained to support accessibility needs, using tools such as JAWS screen readers and translation devices.
-

5. Coordination with Secondary and Postsecondary Education (§ 679.560(b)(9))

EmployBR partners with local school districts, charter schools, and postsecondary institutions to align education and workforce investment activities:

- **Youth Engagement:**
EmployBR staff collaborate with high schools to deliver career readiness workshops, dual-enrollment information, and direct connections to Youth Services programming.
 - **Postsecondary Alignment:**
EmployBR works with Baton Rouge Community College (BRCC), LSU, and Southern University to link job seekers to degree, certification, and apprenticeship programs aligned with regional labor market demand.
-

6. Supporting State Strategies and Perkins Career Pathways Alignment (§ 679.560(b)(1)(ii))

EmployBR supports the Louisiana Combined State Plan and Perkins V Career and Technical Education (CTE) strategies by:

- **Career Pathways Development:**
Working with secondary and postsecondary institutions to design and promote CTE pathways in high-demand industries.
 - **Collaboration with Perkins Planning Teams:**
Participating in Perkins Comprehensive Local Needs Assessments to ensure workforce needs are reflected in local education and training plans.
 - **Dual Enrollment and Early Career Exposure:**
Encouraging youth to pursue dual-credit and early college initiatives aligned with industry-recognized credential pathways.
-

7. Supportive Services Coordination (§ 679.560(b)(10))

EmployBR's Supportive Services Policy ensures that eligible participants receive necessary support to complete employment and training activities, including:

- **Transportation Assistance:**
EmployBR offers gas cards, bus passes, and mileage reimbursement to participants facing transportation barriers.
- **Other Supportive Services:**
Participants may receive assistance with uniforms, tools, licensing fees, childcare referrals, and emergency housing resources.

Coordination occurs through direct service delivery at EmployBR centers, referral partnerships with community-based organizations, and case management within HiRE to track needs and services provided.

E. Adult and Dislocated Worker Employment and Training Activities

1. Description and Assessment of Adult and Dislocated Worker Activities (§ 679.560(b)(6))

EmployBR provides a wide range of employment and training services to Adult and Dislocated Worker populations through its comprehensive One-Stop system, including:

- **Career Services:**
 - Intake and eligibility determination
 - Career counseling and Individual Employment Plan (IEP) development
 - Labor market information and career exploration assistance
 - Job search, placement assistance, and job readiness workshops
- **Training Services:**
 - Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for approved programs listed on Louisiana's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL)
 - On-the-Job Training (OJT) programs
 - Work Experience (WEX) opportunities
 - Apprenticeship connections
 - Customized Training programs based on employer needs
- **Supportive Services:**
 - Transportation assistance, uniforms, tools, licensing fees, and other support to eliminate barriers to employment and training.

EmployBR continuously assesses the effectiveness of these activities through participant performance outcomes, employer feedback, and local labor market demand to ensure services meet the evolving needs of East Baton Rouge Parish residents.

2. Coordination with Statewide Rapid Response Activities (§ 679.560(b)(7))

EmployBR coordinates closely with the Louisiana Workforce Commission's (LWC) Rapid Response Unit to provide timely services to businesses and workers impacted by layoffs or closures:

- **Employer Engagement:**
 - When a layoff is announced, EmployBR Business Services staff immediately coordinate

with LWC Rapid Response teams to schedule on-site meetings and worker orientation sessions.

- **Worker Transition Services:**
Affected workers are offered information sessions on reemployment services, unemployment insurance, skills training opportunities, career counseling, and supportive services available through EmployBR Career Centers.
- **Layoff Aversion:**
EmployBR proactively engages employers to explore options to prevent layoffs, such as retraining existing workers or connecting businesses to economic development incentives.

Through this collaboration, EmployBR helps to minimize the economic impact of layoffs and expedite the transition of dislocated workers back into the workforce.

F. Youth Workforce Investment Activities

1. Description and Assessment of Youth Activities (§ 679.560(b)(8))

EmployBR offers a robust set of Youth Workforce Investment Activities designed to prepare young adults, particularly out-of-school youth (OSY) and individuals with disabilities, for success in education and employment.

Youth Services Provided:

- **Tutoring and HiSET (GED) Preparation:**
Supporting youth to complete secondary education or its recognized equivalent.
- **Work Experience (WEX):**
Providing paid and unpaid work experiences, including internships, job shadowing, and pre-apprenticeship opportunities to expose youth to career pathways.
- **Occupational Skills Training:**
Connecting youth to credentialed programs aligned with local high-demand occupations through Individual Training Accounts (ITAs).
- **Leadership Development Opportunities:**
Offering activities that foster responsibility, leadership, and community engagement.
- **Supportive Services:**
Addressing barriers by providing transportation, uniforms, tools, and emergency assistance as needed.
- **Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling:**
Including drug and alcohol counseling, mental health referrals, and career advisement.
- **Financial Literacy Education:**
Teaching youth budgeting, credit management, and understanding of paycheck deductions.

Successful Models Identified:

- EmployBR has successfully utilized the **Earn and Learn model**—combining work experience with academic instruction—as a best practice for youth workforce engagement.
- **Partnerships with Adult Education providers** have expanded opportunities for youth to pursue basic skills improvement while simultaneously preparing for employment.
- **Co-enrollment with Vocational Rehabilitation Services** supports youth with disabilities by blending educational, career exploration, and assistive services.

Youth activities are assessed regularly for effectiveness through performance indicators such as credential attainment rates, measurable skills gains, and employment outcomes post-program exit.

2. Minimum Expenditure Rate for Out-of-School Youth

EmployBR meets and often exceeds the WIOA requirement that at least **75%** of Title I Youth funding be expended on services to **out-of-school youth (OSY)**.

Strategies to meet this requirement include:

- Prioritizing outreach to disconnected youth populations, including foster youth, youth involved with the justice system, and youth with disabilities.
- Expanding partnerships with community organizations and education agencies to identify and serve OSY.
- Designing program offerings such as occupational training, HiSET preparation, and paid work experiences to meet the specific needs and interests of OSY participants.

EmployBR tracks and monitors expenditures closely through its fiscal system to ensure compliance with federal requirements and effective resource allocation toward youth most in need of workforce services.

G. Services to Individuals with Barriers to Employment

1. Priority of Service for Public Assistance Recipients, Low-Income Individuals, and Basic Skills Deficient Individuals (§ 679.560(b)(21))

EmployBR ensures priority of service is given to the following groups when providing individualized career and training services funded under WIOA Title I:

- Recipients of public assistance (such as TANF or SNAP)
- Low-income individuals (as defined under WIOA guidelines)
- Individuals who are basic skills deficient

Priority of service is embedded into EmployBR's intake, eligibility, and case management processes. Career Center staff verify and document eligibility for priority groups during initial enrollment using the HiRE system and ensure that these individuals are referred first for available training opportunities, supportive services, and employment assistance.

Regular training is provided to frontline staff to reinforce the importance of priority of service compliance, and performance monitoring is conducted to verify consistent application across all Career Centers.

2. Ensuring Equitable Access to Workforce and Educational Services

EmployBR is committed to ensuring equitable access to services for all individuals and actively works to address disparities through the following actions:

- **Data Disaggregation and Analysis:**
EmployBR analyzes participant data by race, gender, age, disability status, and other characteristics to identify gaps in service delivery and outcomes. These insights inform continuous improvement efforts.
- **Equity Goal Development and Action Planning:**
EmployBR collaborates with education partners to develop shared equity goals aimed at improving access and success rates for historically underserved populations. Action plans are incorporated into local operational strategies.
- **STEM Career Exposure:**
EmployBR promotes career pathways in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields to high school students, with a specific focus on young women, minorities, and low-income youth. Career exploration fairs, guest speaker series, and STEM-focused internships are provided.
- **Mentorship Expansion:**
EmployBR is exploring partnerships with local nonprofits and business associations to expand mentoring programs for adults, particularly those who are displaced workers transitioning into new careers.
- **Workforce Staff Training on Equity:**
Career Center and administrative staff receive ongoing professional development focused on data-driven approaches to addressing equity gaps, cultural competency, and inclusive service delivery.
- **Strategic Location of Workforce Services:**
EmployBR ensures Career Centers and service points are strategically located in proximity to high-need communities, with mobile service events used to reach remote and underserved populations when necessary.

Through these deliberate strategies, EmployBR advances equitable service delivery and supports the State's broader equity-focused workforce goals.

H. Training Policies and Activities in the Local Area

1. Meeting the Annual Training Expenditure Requirement

EmployBR is committed to meeting and exceeding the state-mandated training expenditure requirements for WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. The Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB 21) allocates at least 40% of Adult and Dislocated Worker funds to training activities, as required by Louisiana Workforce Commission policy.

To achieve this, EmployBR uses a combination of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs), On-the-Job Training (OJT), Incumbent Worker Training (IWT), and customized training models. Regular monitoring of budget usage ensures funds are being allocated strategically and timely. Staff performance metrics include tracking training enrollments and expenditures to ensure alignment with expenditure goals.

2. Encouraging Use of Work-Based Learning Strategies

EmployBR actively promotes work-based learning as a high-impact strategy for career development. Key activities include:

- **On-the-Job Training (OJT):**
Partnerships with local employers provide hands-on, paid training opportunities, with employers reimbursed for a portion of trainee wages.
- **Internships and Paid Work Experience:**
Particularly used in Youth programs and transitional employment models to help individuals gain relevant experience.
- **Incumbent Worker Training (IWT):**
Helps employers upskill their current workforce, improve retention, and remain competitive in regional markets.
- **Registered Apprenticeships:**
EmployBR works with the Louisiana Workforce Commission and local trade unions to support apprenticeship opportunities in high-demand sectors.

Goals:

- Expand OJT agreements with local businesses by 20% annually.
 - Increase participation in paid internships by youth and re-entry populations.
 - Launch at least one sector-based IWT initiative annually.
-

3. Individual Training Accounts (ITAs)

EmployBR provides training services through ITAs in accordance with WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(G). Eligible individuals can access funds for occupational training in high-demand industries as identified by the Local Board.

Policy Highlights:

- Maximum funding caps and duration limits are established and reviewed annually.
- Participants must select training from the Louisiana Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL).
- Career advisors assist customers in evaluating training options and completing ITA paperwork.
- Training must lead to industry-recognized credentials aligned with regional labor market needs.

Informed Customer Choice:

EmployBR ensures informed customer choice by providing labor market data, performance outcomes of training providers, and access to career guidance counselors before enrollment.

When contracts for training are used (e.g., for cohort-based training), they are coordinated with ITAs to ensure alignment with workforce goals and customer needs.

4. Training Provider Approval and Continuous Improvement

EmployBR follows the Louisiana Workforce Commission's Eligible Training Provider (ETP) policy and contributes to the approval and review of providers on the state's ETPL.

Local Board Responsibilities Include:

- Ensuring training providers meet performance benchmarks.
- Reviewing provider completion and employment outcomes.
- Offering technical assistance to providers not meeting standards.
- Coordinating sector-specific roundtables to align provider offerings with employer demand.

Through regular review and engagement, EmployBR ensures training providers support the employment goals of both jobseekers and local industry sectors.

I. WIOA Title I-B Workforce Fund Transfers and Flexibility

1. Transfer of Funds Between Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs

The EmployBR Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB 21) authorizes the transfer of up to **100%** of funds between the **Adult** and **Dislocated Worker** funding streams annually, in accordance with WIOA Sec. 133(b)(4) and guidance from the Louisiana Workforce Commission.

Transfers are based on:

- Real-time analysis of labor market demand and client need.
- Enrollment trends in each program.
- Strategic planning to optimize resource use and outcomes.

These transfers are documented in the local budget and require Board and LWC approval to ensure compliance.

2. Use of Funds for Incumbent Worker Training (IWT)

EmployBR uses WIOA Title I-B funds to support **Incumbent Worker Training**, particularly for:

- Retention and upskilling of current employees.
- Assisting small to medium-sized businesses in targeted industries.
- Supporting businesses through modernization and technological change.

Eligibility & Criteria:

- Must be for private-sector employers.
- Employees must have an established work history.
- Employers contribute a matching share (cash or in-kind).

EmployBR prioritizes IWT programs that promote equity, regional economic growth, and increased earning potential for participants.

3. Use of Funds for Transitional Jobs

EmployBR supports **transitional jobs** for individuals with barriers to employment, particularly:

- Reentry populations.
- Individuals experiencing chronic unemployment.
- Public assistance recipients with limited work history.

These **time-limited, wage-paid** jobs provide structured, supportive work experience in partnership with local non-profits, public agencies, and community-based employers. Participants also receive wraparound services and career coaching.

EmployBR allocates funds annually for transitional jobs based on projected community need and collaborates with partners to ensure job placements align with real employment pathways.

4. Use of Funds for Pay-for-Performance Contracts

EmployBR may allocate funds for **Pay-for-Performance (P4P) contracts** as outlined in WIOA Sec. 133(b)(2-3). These contracts tie funding to the achievement of specific, measurable outcomes, such as:

- Credential attainment.
- Job placement and retention.
- Wage progression after training.

Potential P4P Focus Areas:

- Long-term unemployed.
- Low-income youth.
- Individuals with significant barriers to employment.

P4P is currently under evaluation for pilot use, particularly in high-need zip codes within East Baton Rouge Parish. Any deployment will be developed in compliance with USDOL guidance and state policies, with Board oversight.

Chapter 5: Performance Goals and Evaluation: Local

A. Local Levels of Performance and Evaluation

1. WIOA Performance Measures

EmployBR negotiates performance targets annually with the Louisiana Workforce Commission and the Chief Elected Official (Mayor-President of East Baton Rouge Parish), in accordance with WIOA Section 116(c). These measures include:

- **Employment Rate (2nd Quarter after Exit)**
- **Employment Rate (4th Quarter after Exit)**
- **Median Earnings (2nd Quarter after Exit)**

- Credential Attainment Rate
- Measurable Skill Gains
- Effectiveness in Serving Employers

These metrics are applied across Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and used to measure the performance of EmployBR's service providers and the One-Stop Operator. EmployBR monitors real-time performance data via the HiRE (Helping Individuals Reach Employment) system and internal dashboards to assess provider compliance and service quality.

**Negotiated Performance Levels for WIOA
East Baton Rouge Parish (LWDA 21)**

	PY 2024	PY 2025
WIOA Title I Adult		
Employment Rate 2 nd quarter after exit	69.9%	69.9%
Employment Rate 4 th quarter after exit	70.7%	70.7%
Median Earnings in the 2 nd quarter after exit	\$6,655	\$6,655
Credential Attainment Rate	71.0%	71.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	66.8%	66.8%
WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker		
Employment Rate 2 nd quarter after exit	70.5%	70.5%
Employment Rate 4 th quarter after exit	68.0%	68.0%
Median Earnings in the 2 nd quarter after exit	\$7,100	\$7,100
Credential Attainment Rate	78.0%	78.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	71.6%	71.6%
WIOA Title I Youth		
Employment Rate 2 nd quarter after exit	68.4%	68.4%
Employment Rate 4 th quarter after exit	69.9%	69.9%
Median Earnings in the 2 nd quarter after exit	\$3,071	\$3,071
Credential Attainment Rate	60.5%	60.5%
Measurable Skill Gains	48.6%	48.6%

2. Additional State Performance Measures

The State Board also monitors additional indicators such as:

- **Customer satisfaction scores**
- **Youth literacy/numeracy gains**
- **Outreach to underserved populations**
- **Sector partnership development**
- **Wage progression**

EmployBR uses these to track internal quality benchmarks, staff productivity, employer engagement levels, and community impact beyond federal metrics.

B. Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

1. Service Delivery Strategies to Expand

EmployBR will continue to expand successful strategies with proven outcomes, including:

- **Integrated Education and Training (IET)** partnerships with adult education providers.
- **Work-Based Learning (WBL)** programs including On-the-Job Training (OJT) and incumbent worker training.
- **Sector-focused hiring events** in high-demand fields such as healthcare, logistics, and skilled trades.
- **Youth internships and pre-apprenticeship programs** supported by business and school district collaborations.

These programs have demonstrated improved employment and retention outcomes, higher employer satisfaction, and credential attainment.

2. Service Delivery Strategies to Curtail

EmployBR is evaluating the scale-down of:

- **Short-term generic career readiness workshops** that are not sector-specific.
- **Non-targeted job fairs** with low employer participation or poor ROI in job placement.
- **Training programs without labor market relevance**, especially where post-training employment rates remain low.

Such strategies will be replaced with demand-driven approaches aligned to industry feedback and performance analytics.

3. New Service Strategies to Address Regional Needs

EmployBR will launch the following new service models based on ROI analysis and stakeholder input:

- **Expanded digital access and virtual coaching** through EmployBR's reimagined website and AI-enabled chat support to reduce geographic and transportation barriers.
- **Industry-informed training programs** co-designed with employer associations and LCTCS institutions to ensure alignment with real hiring needs.
- **Stackable credential pathways** that incorporate soft skills and technical training for emerging workers and career changers.

Data Collection for ROI and Barrier Identification:

EmployBR will collect and analyze the following data:

- Enrollment-to-employment conversion rates.
- Earnings progression post-exit.
- Training program completion rates by demographic.
- Surveys capturing participant challenges (childcare, transportation, tech access).
- Employer hiring satisfaction post-placement.

Cost-Effective Barrier Solutions:

- **Transportation assistance** (e.g., CATS bus passes or rideshare vouchers).
- **Childcare referrals** via partnerships with local providers.
- **Digital literacy training and device loan programs.**
- **Onsite support navigators** at American Job Centers.

These evidence-based investments will be guided by a commitment to equity, efficiency, and employer alignment.

Chapter 6: Technical Requirements & Assurances: Local

A. Fiscal Management

1. Entity Responsible for the Disbursal of Grant Funds

The **East Baton Rouge Parish Mayor-President**, as the **Chief Elected Official (CEO)**, has designated the **City of Baton Rouge / Parish of East Baton Rouge - Division of Human Development and Services** as the **grant recipient and fiscal agent** for WIOA Title I funds. This entity is responsible for the disbursal of WIOA grant funds as per WIOA Sec. 107(d)(12)(B)(i)(III), under the oversight of EmployBR, the Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB 21).

2. **Local Procurement Policies and Competitive Procurement Process**

EmployBR follows the **City of Baton Rouge’s Office of Community Development and Human Services procurement policies**, which align with federal and state regulations including the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (2 CFR Part 200).

Competitive procurement for WIOA-funded subgrants and contracts is carried out through a **Request for Proposals (RFP)** or **Request for Quotes (RFQ)** process. All procurements are publicly posted, and responses are evaluated based on clear criteria such as cost, performance, experience, and ability to deliver services effectively. Contracts are awarded based on best value to the public, in accordance with established thresholds and procedural requirements.

A copy of the current procurement policy is included as an attachment to this plan.

B. Physical and Programmatic Accessibility

1. **Compliance with WIOA Sec. 188 and ADA Requirements**

EmployBR ensures that all One-Stop Career Centers and affiliated sites are fully compliant with WIOA Sec. 188 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This includes maintaining **accessible facilities, assistive technologies, programmatic accommodations, and communications support** for individuals with disabilities. All one-stop partners and operators undergo **regular accessibility assessments** and provide **staff training** on disability awareness, accommodation strategies, and inclusive service delivery. EmployBR also collaborates with organizations such as **Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS)** to enhance supports for individuals with physical, cognitive, or developmental disabilities.

2. **Cooperative Agreements to Support Disability Access**

EmployBR has executed **cooperative agreements and memoranda of understanding** with local agencies including **LRS, Goodwill Industries, and local educational institutions** to ensure the **integration of and access to services** for individuals with disabilities. These agreements support coordinated service delivery, shared referral processes, staff cross-training, and access to assistive technologies.

EmployBR also hosts **joint training sessions** with partners and engages in cooperative efforts to increase employer engagement and work-based learning opportunities for customers with disabilities.

Copies of executed cooperative agreements are attached as part of this submission.

C. Plan Development and Public Comment

1. **Public Comment Period and Stakeholder Engagement**

In accordance with WIOA Sec. 108(d), EmployBR released the draft Local Plan for a **30-day public comment period**, publishing the notice on its official website (www.employbr.com), as mandated, before its final submission to the Louisiana Workforce Commission. Core partners have also been provided with copies of the plan for their review and feedback.

2. Comments and suggestions submitted via email during this period are shared with the Board and considered for incorporation, ensure that the plan reflects the needs and priorities of the broader community

3. **Plan Modification Procedures**

EmployBR adheres to the Louisiana Workforce Commission's (LWC) guidelines for **regional and local plan modifications**. Plan updates are initiated when there are:

- Significant changes in economic conditions or funding.
 - Changes in board membership or structure.
 - Modifications to strategies, goals, or performance measures.
- Modifications are submitted for review to the Local Board and Chief Elected Official before being forwarded to LWC for final approval. Public notification and stakeholder input are obtained for all major changes.

REGIONAL / LOCAL PLAN SIGNATURES

By signing the Regional / Local Plan, all signatories attest that:

1. They submit this plan on behalf of the region and the local areas within that region;
2. The planning was done with leaders throughout the region and represents the collective thinking of those regional representatives;
3. The information contained herein is true and accurate to the best of their knowledge;
4. The regional plan and accompanying local plans represent the local workforce development boards' efforts to maximize resources available under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and to coordinate these resources with other State and Local programs in the planning region;
5. They will operate the local system in accordance with the regional plan, their respective local area plan, and applicable federal and state laws, regulations, policies and rules.

Local Area Name: LWDA 21

Name of Chief Elected Official for the LWDA: Emile "Sid" Edwards, Mayor-President

Signature and Date:

Address: _222 Saint Louis St., Baton Rouge LA 70802

Telephone Number: 225.389.3000

E-Mail Address: sedwards@brla.gov

Name of Local Workforce Development Board Chairman: Elizabeth Beckham

Signature and Date:

Address: 215 Highlandia Dr. Baton Rouge, LA 70810 Telephone Number: 225-300-8157

E-Mail Address: ebeckham@turner-industries.com

Name of Local Workforce Development Board Director: Amanda Stanley

Signature and Date:

Address: 4523 Plank Rd, Baton Rouge, LA 70805

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