

# Georgia WIA Annual Report Narrative

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## Program Year 2013

**Executive Director Ben Hames**

**11/14/2014**

GOWD creates the statewide strategy and implementation for Georgia's workforce system to provide Georgia business with a highly skilled, quality workforce.

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**Customer Satisfaction Survey Continued**

**Attachment A**

**Cost Efficiency Measures Continued**

**Attachment B**

**Data Tables**

**Attachment C**

*Dear Fellow Georgians,*

*In January, we launched the High Demand Career Initiative (HDCI), bringing together those involved in training Georgia's future workforce, such as the University System of Georgia and the Technical College System of Georgia, to hear directly from the private sector about workforce needs throughout our state.*

*Through HDCI, employers ranked workforce development and education as the highest priorities among our state's economic regions. We have heard from the private sector and have focused our efforts this year on identifying employer needs and supplying Georgia's growing job market with a skilled and talented workforce.*

*To accomplish this, the Governor's Office of Workforce Development was repositioned under the Georgia Department of Economic Development as the Workforce Division this July. This team helps complement economic development in Georgia by supplying a sustainable workforce to meet the needs of the public and private sector. To close the state's growing skilled labor gap and sustain the competitiveness of our top industries, various programs have been put in place.*

*Go Build Georgia, for example, is a labor-neutral public-private partnership that educates students and the public at-large about the benefits associated with choosing a career in the skilled trades. Operation: Workforce was an initiative that we started in November 2012 to connect our transitioning military heroes with career opportunities in the civilian workforce. Our rapid response program is designed to quickly assist dislocated workers and Georgia companies facing layoffs. This office is committed to maximizing all available resources by focusing on skilled trade education, veterans' services, dislocated workers and at-risk youth programs to eliminate redundancies in effort and funding.*

*I challenge the State Workforce Investment Board and the Local Workforce Investment Boards to continue focusing on Georgia's in-demand occupations and growth sectors to appropriately designate training funds. Through HDCI, we know which industries need the most attention with securing a skilled and trained workforce. The support of the State Workforce Investment Board and the Local Workforce Investment Boards will allow funding to be given to those sectors that bring the most benefit to our state.*

*Now is the time to sharpen our focus on Georgia's workforce development. Providing industry leaders with an unbeatable workforce will bring far-reaching benefits for individuals, communities and the future of our state as a whole. Let's work together to ensure that Georgia remains the No. 1 state in the nation to do business.*

*Nathan Deal*

*Governor Nathan Deal*

## **Introduction**

On July 1, 2014, the Governor's Office of Workforce Development (GOWD) became the Workforce Division of the Georgia Department of Economic Development (WFD). This move represented an effort by the governor to strategically align workforce and economic development in the state. However, the report will continue to reference GOWD as the agency of record for PY13. GOWD was able to assess many aspects of the workforce system and identify ways in which the state can improve the services offered to WIA participants and Georgia businesses. By better serving those two groups, the state will be able to create a more effective, skilled workforce.

## **State Workforce Investment Board and Governor's Office of Workforce Development**

### **State Workforce Investment Board**

The active collaboration of the SWIB, the LWIBs, GOWD and the state's One-Stop Delivery System is a key component of workforce development in Georgia. This collaboration begins with the Governor, who is responsible for the establishment of the SWIB. The SWIB's membership is comprised of state business and community representatives, members of the state legislature, adult and youth service providers, chief elected officials, staff of partner state agencies, and representatives of organized labor. The SWIB's duties include the development of a statewide strategic plan, which establishes the five year strategy for the Statewide Workforce Investment System. The SWIB is also responsible for assisting the Governor with additional functions designated by WIA.

GOWD serves as the fiscal recipient of WIA and also provides support, information and guidance to both the Governor and the SWIB. These tasks allow the Governor and the SWIB to make informed and knowledgeable policy decisions regarding the implementation of WIA in Georgia. Furthermore, the leadership of the SWIB has developed three committees in order to better assist program and LWIA development. Those committees are the following: the youth services committee; the re-employment services committee; and the local workforce investment area guidance committee. SWIB members are assigned to those committees based on their areas of experience and interest. GOWD's staff serves the SWIB's various committees by providing detailed research that enables the committees to make informed policy decisions that are particular to their specific needs.

The Governor and the SWIB are committed to addressing the needs of Georgia's citizens by aligning programs in a way that meets the needs of the state's economy. Governor Deal has made efficiency and integration a top priority, emphasizing the need to develop real skills and career readiness to ensure the future of Georgia's labor force.

### **Go Build Georgia**

To bolster the state's focus on skilled trade education, Governor Deal launched Go Build Georgia on January 17, 2012 at the State Capitol. Go Build Georgia, a labor neutral public-private partnership, aims to educate young people and the public at-large about the skilled trades, and how to pursue a career in these industries.

Studies show that for every four skilled tradesmen that retire only one tradesman enters the field. This has created a skills gap in Georgia which leaves the state in need of young, qualified workers. Go Build Georgia

seeks to show students all of their educational options as well as dispel any myths that the skilled trades do not offer competitive salaries and lifestyle benefits.

By building a broad coalition of key stakeholders, Go Build Georgia aims to increase the number of those entering the skilled trade workforce while increasing our participant level in training programs to fulfill these in demand occupations. Through this strategic focus on the skilled labor supply in our state, Georgia seeks to reduce the skilled labor gap and current unemployment rate by putting more Georgians back to work in these meaningful trade careers.

The Go Build Georgia High School Teams project seeks to establish teams made up of high school educators and administrators, local business leaders and skilled craft professionals, rounded out by students and parents on each of Georgia's public high school campuses. These teams communicate the income and lifestyle benefits of the skilled trade professions to its respective student base and also function as implementation teams for Go Build Georgia initiatives including skilled trade career days, industry site tours and message dissemination. The goal of the Go Build Georgia High School Team Project is to successfully plug students into the skilled trade workforce pipeline either through technical college enrollment, apprenticeship programs, curriculum-based career pathways and clubs that have a skilled trade component. There are currently 271 Go Build Georgia High School teams in the state.

#### **One-Stop and Service Delivery Assessment**

In consultation from the Regional office, GOWD and GDOL outlined a multi-year strategy to coordinate service delivery which would ensure non-duplication of services and enhance colocation of Wagner-Peyser and WIA programs. The primary tasks completed during PY13 included the establishment of a working group of key personnel and the review of local workforce plans.

The working group held several meetings during PY13 to discuss the issues and to begin forming an outline and benchmarks to achieve complete integration of WP and WIA funds. During the initial meetings, this group was comprised of key stakeholders from GOWD and GDOL and primarily focused on the evaluation of local plans. In June, a working group meeting included a workshop at a Tristate Business Services Summit held with North Carolina and South Carolina. At this summit, Georgia's stakeholders held a breakout session with a consultant who worked with transition and coordination of services in Indiana and North Carolina. Attendees included management staff from GOWD and GDOL, and local area directors from several areas of the state. The outcome of this summit provided a framework to guide future discussions, including the identification that a second working group would be beneficial to focus on the integration of data systems.

The working groups are currently having discussions on the impact of reauthorization on colocation and coordination of services, and are awaiting the final report from the USDO-led survey of Reemployment Services, of which Georgia is a participant. Once the final report is provided, the working group will meet and invite local area representatives to provide insight and assistance in implementing WIOA in a way that provides integrated service delivery.

The major task completed by the current working group, and one of the milestones established in the state unified plan, was the approval of local workforce plans and business plans. Once submitted to GOWD, the

plans were shared with GDOL and independently evaluated. The group then met to compare scores and discuss any discrepancies in evaluation or issues which were identified. The group reached a consensus on the status of all nineteen plans and provided feedback to the local areas, offering technical assistance for those plans which required additional information.

### **Rapid Response Transition and Assessment**

On July 1, 2013, GOWD became the designated State Dislocated Worker Unit, providing full administration of all WARN and related Rapid Response activities. Following the assessment that was completed in PY12, the state restructured the Rapid Response program to allocate a greater percentage of resources towards service delivery, dramatically reducing administrative costs.

Under the new Rapid Response structure, the state is leveraging the resources of the local workforce areas to provide services. The state served as the primary point of contact with companies experiencing a layoff and coordinates with a designate representative from local area staff. This format strengthens the relationships between the state office and local workforce areas, as well as relationships between the local areas and their local business community. In order to assist the local workforce staff in allocating time and resources to responding to layoffs, the state began allocating a portion of the Rapid Response budget to local areas using the Dislocated Worker Allocation formula.

In addition to restructuring the method in which the state responds to layoff notices, the state has also reemphasized a layoff aversion strategy. The greatest outcome from the Rapid Response team in PY13 was the establishment of layoff aversion networks. The Rapid Response team has strengthened coordination and cemented relationships with business and industry representatives in an effort to bolster business services. The Rapid Response team has partnered with multiple local governments and business organizations to extend the branches of an early detection network. These partnerships have not only promoted the value of early intervention for the purpose of layoff aversion, but have also promoted general workforce services available to the business customers such as Operation: Workforce, customized and on-the-job training programs, and the state's skilled trade initiative, Go Build Georgia.

One success story from this layoff aversion strategy saved 34 jobs in a rural county with high unemployment and few job openings. A veneer manufacturer needed to update machinery by installing computers into the production line. None of the incumbent workforce had the necessary skills to operate the new equipment, resulting in all 34 jobs being at risk of elimination. Working with the local workforce office, the state applied Rapid Response funds to provide Incumbent Worker Training to all 34 workers. The training protected every threatened job, resulted in higher productivity for the employer, and increased the skill levels of the employees.

### **Case Management System Transition**

In accordance with state regulation, GOWD began the process of reviewing potential options for the state's case management system in the second quarter of PY12. The state's goals for the selection of a vendor were to ensure the efficiency of the case management system, enhance the usability and technological functions of the system, and to ensure cost effectiveness to the state.

With those goals in mind, the state selected Geographic Solutions as the state's case management vendor in the third quarter of PY 2012. Geographic Solutions' case management system, Virtual One-Stop, is a proven system used by dozens of states as their statewide WIA case management system, including multiple states within our ETA region. The system transition took place in the third and fourth quarters of PY12. The final "go live" date was July 1, 2013. Throughout PY13, GOWD staff worked with the LWIAs to transition the existing data. GOWD hosted multiple webinars and in-person sessions throughout the program year to train relevant LWIA staff on the use of the system. While the data migration was not an easy task, local and state personnel have become familiar with the new interface.

### **Veteran Service Collaboration with GDOL and the USDOL UCX Grant**

Georgia has a large military presence with nine military installations. More than 106,000 active duty, reserve, and guard forces live in the state and 773,858 veterans call Georgia home. Georgia has a strong reemployment service delivery strategy that links a network of organizations serving veterans including the Georgia Department of Economic Development, Workforce Division (GOWD), Georgia Department of Labor (GDOL), Georgia Department of Veteran Services, Georgia National Guard and Reserve, Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation and the Georgia Chamber of Commerce. Progress is being made to enhance communication between agencies serving veterans, and to develop a seamless delivery of employment services and data exchange that would offer veterans the most immediate entry into the workforce.

Due to the large veteran population in Georgia, it has been challenging to target ex-service members receiving Unemployment Insurance (Unemployment Compensation Exchange (UCX) customers) for additional intensive services to ensure swift reemployment. On July 1st, 2012, USDOL awarded GDOL, in partnership with GOWD, a \$750,000 grant for reemployment services to recently separated military members. This grant focuses on U.S. Army, Reserves and National Guard veterans.

In PY12 Operation: Workforce (Operationworkforce.com) was launched. Operation: Workforce helps veterans and employers connect within the state. The site allows veterans to create a profile, upload a résumé, and search and apply for job openings within the state of Georgia. It also allows Georgia employers to create profiles, post job listings, review job applicants and search the site for qualified candidates. Employers are able to sign a pledge of commitment to give enhanced hiring opportunities to Georgia's veterans, and veterans are able to find veteran-friendly employers across the state. Operation: Workforce will also allow veterans to translate their military occupational classifications into civilian occupations that best align with their skill set and training. In PY13, the state continued to improve and promote the site to both veterans and employers. The current number of active veterans on the site is 2,674. There are currently 835 employers on the site who have posted a combined total of 382 current jobs.

PY13 saw the launch of the Operation: Workforce Employers Summit. The purpose of the Operation: Workforce Employers Summit is to educate employers on how they can tweak their current recruitment and hiring processes to better find and hire veterans. There were two summits held in Atlanta and Savannah. More summits are scheduled for PY14.

### **Governor's High Demand Career Initiative**

The Governor and GOWD have heard repeatedly from the private sector that one of the greatest challenges facing businesses in Georgia, nationally, and globally is the need for a consistent, trained and reliable workforce. In response, Governor Deal created the High Demand Career Initiative (HDCI) to allow those involved in training Georgia's future workforce to hear directly from the private sector about their specific talent needs, now and in the future. This will allow GOWD and our partners to quickly develop the programs and talent pipelines where they do not currently exist and inform industry about existing assets. GOWD will coordinate this collaborative effort.

HDCI will consist of a series of thirteen meetings. GOWD is partnering with the University System of Georgia (USG) and the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) to schedule and plan the meetings. Each event features public presentations from five to eight different companies, in which they discuss their detailed workforce needs. Following company presentations, there is a roundtable discussion that consists of the company participants and a representative from USG, TCSG, and GOWD. This provides an opportunity for a dialogue among our leaders and the participants to further discuss possible solutions to the needs facing Georgia's business leaders.

To kick off the initiative, Governor Deal hosted three public meetings in Atlanta, Dalton, and Statesboro. These three meetings were regional events that were intended to help raise awareness about the initiative. Additionally, ten industry-focused meetings are planned across the state starting July 1, 2014. The industries were selected to represent the largest and fastest growing industries in the state.

### **Star Academy**

The Pitsco Star Academy program is an effective dropout prevention solution. Designed to serve at-risk students, the Star Academy ensures that each student has the opportunity to experience academic success by presenting required high school curricula in an alternative, hands-on approach. Because 66% of over-age students eventually drop out of school, the Star Academy Program targets the over-age student demographic. Different learning methods, productive communication techniques, integration of workplace skills, healthy school environments, and supplemental support services provide a foundation for student success.

The Star Academy Program addresses national and state standards in four core subjects. Nontraditional methods of instruction engage all student-learning domains. The implementation and integration of a mix of strategies, along with a positive school environment, ensures student engagement and support and provides students the much-needed opportunity to succeed in school. The Star Academy model was implemented as a school within a school in the Coffee County Career Academy through the support of GOWD and LWIA 18. Though the Career Academy as a whole serves high school students, Star Academy serves over-age middle school students, with a goal of accelerating them from 8th to 10th grade during one academic year. The students work individually through hands-on, project-based curricula which concentrate on the four key areas of math, science, language arts, and social studies.

Students participating in the program were WIA eligible and marked as probable dropouts by the Coffee County school system. Many came to the program with severe disciplinary issues; all came with extreme life challenges. The objective of the program was to re-engage the students in learning, to keep them from dropping out, and ultimately to award them with enough credits to get back on track towards high school graduation.

In August 2013, the Star Academy program in Coffee County opened its doors with a total of 84 students enrolled. In the first year of the program, 81% of all students completed the program. Additionally, 66% of the students who completed the program accelerated two grade levels (went from 8th grade to 10th grade). Eight students went above and beyond, obtaining additional course credits not required to complete the program. Five students who completed the program are currently enrolled in honors course for the 2014-2015 school year. Six percent of the students are continuing their education outside of Star Academy, either by attending a traditional high school, alternative education, or are working to obtain their GED. The program is set to continue over the next two years.

## **Annual Report Narrative**

### **Performance Measures**

In PY 2013, Georgia exceeded three of the nine WIA common measures while meeting the other six and one of three Wagner-Peyser performance measures, meeting the other two. While this is a step back from PY 2012 where nine of the twelve performance measures were exceeded, the state considers the results a success due to the slow economic recovery and programmatic and system changes that occurred during the previous program years.

### **State Customer Satisfaction Data**

The sample selection consisted of querying individual participants with exit dates between July 1, 2013, and June 30, 2014, from the Virtual One-Stop database. The total sample size was 3,310. Having received responses from 670 distinct, exited participants, the response rate was 20.24%.

The method of collection utilized a direct email to each exited participant within the sample. The email contained a unique link to a third party survey tool. Anonymity of the survey responses was preserved through the third party's aggregation of responses. The format of the survey was a questionnaire comprised of 3 closed-ended, ordinal-polytomous response scales without requisite responses. Thus, the total answered for each question is different from the total number of respondents with a 1.49% variance.

GOWD lists the responses as well as the corresponding tables in *Attachment A*. The survey indicates that over 70% of participants report to have received better than average service and less than 10% were not satisfied with the service received.

### **State Evaluations of Workforce Investment Activities**

Georgia's annual onsite, weeklong WIA program reviews were conducted at each local workforce area for PY12 from July 2013 to December 2013. The teams conducting the reviews include members of the GOWD

Programs, Finance and Compliance divisions. The reviews focused on program design, policy development, overall effectiveness and financial management, as related to:

- Compliance with relevant laws and regulations;
- Provision of meaningful technical assistance;
- Improvement of outcomes for youth, adult and dislocated worker customers;
- Preparation of grant recipients for state and federal audits and focus on cost effectiveness and return on investment;
- Provision to local workforce boards with tools to assist in managing and integrating workforce services and economic development strategies in local and regional communities; and
- Enhanced knowledge, skills and abilities to promote demand-driven service delivery strategies, and identification of shared best practices.

GOWD identified 68 total findings. This included 39 financial and 29 programmatic findings. Many findings resulted from insufficient LWIA policies, lack of knowledge of regulations, and poor internal controls. GOWD also identified 92 observations for improvement of LWIA operations. The areas that require the most improvement are disbursement testing and program administration. GOWD worked with each LWIA and their LWIB to develop a corrective action plan and provide technical assistance for any lingering issues.

In May of 2013, GOWD began the process of conducting LWIB Certification, which occurs every two years. Through this process, GOWD was able to determine whether or not LWIBs were in full compliance with federal and state board composition standards. The following items were examined:

- LWIB members listings were examined to ensure that the listing contained all of the required membership;
- LWIB minutes were reviewed to ensure compliance with federal and state meeting procedures; and
- LWIB bylaws were reviewed to ensure the inclusion of relevant provisions of law.

LWIB Certification was conducted as a desk review by GOWD programmatic staff. LWIAs were asked to submit a complete board roster, up-to-date board by-laws, a complete list of all one-stop partners, and all board meeting minutes for PY12 by May 20, 2013. The desk reviews were completed and the results were mailed back to LWIA Directors by May 31, 2013. Many areas were required to undergo a corrective action process, but GOWD was able to certify all 19 LWIAs. In May 2015, GOWD will begin the certification process again.

### **Governor's Office of Workforce Development and Local Workforce Investment Boards Adult and Dislocated Worker Services**

With Georgia's unemployment rate above the national average, the Governor and GOWD have sharpened the focus on the services of Georgia's Adult and Dislocated Worker population. All stakeholders have worked together to move the needle on unemployment in order to strengthen Georgia's economy. By pulling together available resources from all stakeholders, Georgia will be able to maintain an effective and

efficient government, as well as reduce the chance of any duplication of efforts. Key partners have been identified to ensure Georgia's Workforce System is working to its full potential. These partners include, but are not limited to GDOL, TCSG, and GDEcD. GDOL provides services to job seekers and employers, through the administration of Georgia's unemployment insurance program and Wagner-Peyser which funds core and intensive services. With 82 campus locations, TCSG has a broad footprint across the state of Georgia and offers countless in-demand training programs. GDEcD works diligently to attract new companies and industries to Georgia. GDEcD also works to connect these new companies, when appropriate, to their LWIAs for use of local services.

The SWIB seeks to build a better educated and more employable workforce by working to enroll and graduate a greater number of Georgians in adult education programs to improve their work readiness. In order to achieve this, GOWD will increase the awareness of GED opportunities throughout the state including remediation and tutoring.

Governor Deal has placed an emphasis on Complete College Georgia, a state-wide effort to increase attainment of a high quality certificate or degree. Complete College Georgia is a subset of Complete College America, which addresses the need for remediation and overall college completion rates. By 2020, it is projected that over 40 percent of job growth in Georgia will require some form of a college education, whether a certificate, associate's degree, or bachelor's degree. Today, only 42 percent of the state's young adults, its burgeoning workforce, qualify. Georgia's level of higher education attainment is not expected to noticeably increase in this time period. To reverse the current path, the state has committed to Complete College America's goal of 60 percent of young adults holding a college certificate or degree by 2020. The goal is for Georgia to have these graduates form a competitive workforce with a mixture of certificates, associate's degrees, and bachelor's degrees. This sentiment rings true for WIA participants, as well. GOWD is committed to decreasing the number of unsuccessful completions by WIA participants, thereby increasing the number of certificates, associate's degrees, and bachelor's degrees successfully attained by WIA participants.

Due to current economic conditions, many Georgia workers are currently under-employed. LWIA staff helps to identify such workers and offer services based on the individual's needs. If the customer has all of the skills necessary to gain better employment, the local area will assist in interview preparation, resume critiques, and job search and placement. If the customer is in need of a skills upgrade, the local area will work with the customer to determine what type of training would be appropriate. Local areas continue to work with the Technical College System of Georgia and the University System of Georgia, as well as other qualified training providers, in order to ensure that customers have a wide variety of training options. For instance, the offering of night and weekend, flexible, condensed, and online classes enables those who are currently working to be enrolled in WIA training services.

One of Georgia's highest unemployment rates is for parolees. Currently, 1 in 13 people in Georgia are under some type of corrections supervision. A large portion of the incarcerated population, serve a time limited sentence, which means the number of paroles will continue to grow. Georgia is working to target this hard-to-serve population through workforce development initiatives designed to reduce the recidivism rate for

parolees and ex-offenders. The state will work closely with the business community to solicit employer feedback to gauge perceived challenges with regard to hiring ex-offenders. In doing so, Georgia will enhance reentry success through increased opportunities for career-oriented employment of ex-offenders. SWIB and GOWD have worked alongside the Governor's Office of Support Transition and Re-entry as well as local transition centers to tighten communication and increase access of eligible participants to the LWIAs. In PY13 GOWD offered grants to all of the LWIAs who had transition centers in their area. Seven of those LWIAs applied for and received the grant. The funds will enable those areas to serve WIA eligible individuals in the transition centers.

The segment of Georgia's labor force that is 55 and older is rapidly growing. Growing life expectancy rates as well as the uncertainty of retirement plans seem to be driving this trend. A broad range of services is provided to older workers through the workforce system. Many LWIBs work closely with the Georgia Council on Aging to develop comprehensive service strategies. Other local senior strategies include partners such as: senior employment services; senior centers; Vocational Rehabilitation; public libraries; arts councils; transportation providers; and others.

GOWD and LWIAs continue to work closely with the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP). The SCSEP program promotes individual economic self-sufficiency and increases the number of persons who may benefit from unsubsidized employment in both the public and private sectors by providing individuals with appropriate training for targeted jobs in the community. All SCSEP grantees have current Memorandums of Understanding with all WIA One-Stops across the states. Grantee and sub-project coordinators are active members of their Local Workforce Investment Boards to ensure that the needs of older adults seeking employment are identified and addressed. A number of One-Stop and Career Centers are active customer service locations for SCSEP participants. These centers help participants to develop soft skills, customer services skills, and other useful skills to equip them in their job search. It also helps to foster a cross-referral system between SCSEP and LWIAs.

With the changing economy, GOWD has focused much of its efforts in developing work based learning opportunities for participants across the state. As technology needs grow, many companies want to be able to train their workforce in-house. GOWD has worked with the LWIAs to create more on-the-job and customized training opportunities. Furthermore, GOWD has laid the groundwork to launch an apprenticeship program in PY2014.

### **Youth Services**

Georgia's 2013 public high school graduation rate increased almost two percentage points over the previous year – from 69.7 percent in 2012 to 71.5 percent in 2013 – and over four percentage points from 2011 (67.5 percent). This is the third year Georgia has calculated the graduation rate using the adjusted cohort rate formula, the method of calculation that is required by the U.S. Department of Education for all 50 states. As a key indicator for the health of a state's workforce, it is important that Georgia's graduation rates continue to increase in the coming years.

Services that have been found to be most effective in increasing high school graduation rates among WIA participants are tutoring, lost credit redemption classes and/or software, mentoring, and entrepreneurship training. Increasing the number of Younger Youth who are enrolled in these types of programs will not only

benefit the state's high school graduation rate and overall workforce health, but will also benefit the participant.

As an alternative to obtaining a traditional high school diploma, the GED remains a viable credential for today's youth. The GED provides individuals the opportunity to demonstrate their competency of high school-level curriculum and to receive their diploma, leading to positive employment status, higher education opportunities, as well as numerous personal, social and financial benefits. On January 1, 2014, a number of changes to the GED went into effect. The first, and biggest, change is the switch to Constructed Item Response. The test now has both short answer and extended item response writing exercises on all four subtests. Secondly, the test is now computer-based, whereas before the test was paper-based. Additionally, the test is now aligned with the Common Core standards shifting the focus to knowledge and skills that most strongly exemplify college and career readiness. Finally, and probably the most significant change, the new test requires candidates to prepare and use prior knowledge in order to successfully complete the test. This means that the GED is no longer just a reading comprehension test. Candidates will have to possess background information in a variety of content areas, for example, social studies and science, in order to pass.

One of the most popular Youth services offered and sought after is GED test preparation and financial support in paying for the exam. As a result of the recent changes to the GED test, many local areas have expressed concerns in meeting their Youth performance requirements, specifically for Attainment of a Degree or Certificate. Local areas are currently working to better train their providers and GED instructors in order to effectively prepare Georgia's youth for the new GED test.

While difficult to quantify, soft skills are becoming increasingly important in today's workplace. Education is necessary to gain employment, but employers continually stress that an applicant's soft skills are tightly correlated to outcomes with regard to assimilation into the larger team, work performance, and retention rates. Georgia employers indicate that they see decreased levels of soft skills in today's youth. In order to avoid these issues and advantage WIA youth participants, local areas are encouraged to supplement the participant's education with soft skills training. While specific soft skill training is available through software and classroom sessions, there are other options that have proven successful. Job shadowing and internships introduce participants to different work environments as well as the customs and practices therein.

While soft skills attainment is a common problem, the problem is especially pronounced with specific populations we target, not the least of which is youth in Youth Detention Centers (YDC). While many of these youth are able to finish high school or attain their GEDs while serving their time, they are not exposed to the work place. This can severely cripple their efforts to attain employment upon release. To further understand and better address this problem, the Georgia Department of Economic Development's Workforce Division currently partners with the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) in establishing a soft skills pilot program in one of seven Georgia YDCs. This program targets youth who are part of the Graduate Education Program (GEP), meaning they have already graduated high school or have attained their GED, and is be overseen by the DJJ and the State Workforce Investment Board Youth Committee.

## Services to Employers

GOWD is committed to leveraging resources and efforts in order to meet the needs of the business customers of the One-Stop System in an integrated fashion. Furthermore, GOWD works with many state entities to inform Georgia employers of the services that are available to them through their LWIA. When new companies relocate or expand in Georgia, GOWD and the LWIAs work with the Georgia Department of Economic Development in order to ensure that those companies are aware of the services offered. The One-Stop delivery system is equipped to support businesses in many different ways. One of those ways is through applicant screening at the One-Stop Centers. This service reduces the time and cost that a business would need in order to find qualified applicants. The LWIAs can also provide applicant referrals and job posting services for businesses that need to hire. This service can increase the qualified applicant pool for employers. Conducting job fairs and letting companies use One-Stop Center space for interviews are also services that local areas can provide. Additionally, LWIAs can provide pre-employment assessments. Local areas use a variety of different assessments in order to screen qualified applicants for a potential employer. The use of these assessments can give an employer greater insight as to where an applicant's competencies and skills gaps lie. LWIAs can also offer employers a variety of different data including: in-demand occupations, labor market information, and economic trends. On-the-job training (OJT) is perhaps the most involved service that an LWIA can offer an employer. Georgia's LWIAs work with local industry and business leaders to determine where there may be a need for OJT. Georgia LWIAs strive to make this process as streamlined and hassle-free as possible for potential employers. OJT serves the employer by paying for a portion of an employee's training cost and wages while that employee is in the training period. Employers are then able to use resources in other ways, while not compromising on the quality of training that their new hires are receiving. OJT provides an infrastructure for large-scale hiring while ensuring that a company is able to train their employees correctly.

## Waiver Usage

Because GOWD has not administered the grant under the pre-waiver conditions needed to draw a comparison, GOWD is unable to draw conclusions about the efficacy of the waivers. GOWD will continue to monitor the usage of the waivers and will have updated outcomes in the future.

The waiver **to provide Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) to youth** has allowed training to youth who would not otherwise receive such training. The waiver allows LWIAs the flexibility to serve youth in the most efficient manner possible taking into account that youth's individual needs. Older and out-of-school youth are afforded additional opportunities to make use of training to pursue training paths as part of their Individual Service Strategy (ISS).

Georgia was also granted a waiver to allow **local workforce areas to use a percentage of formula Dislocated Worker funds for Incumbent Worker Training**. This waiver has provided the LWIAs with the flexibility to better serve the needs of the participant. As each LWIA faces different challenges and demands for labor, the waiver has given them the greatest resource to adapt to changes in the business climate. This resource can be offered to a company as a layoff aversion tool depending on the conditions within the LWIA.

Additionally, the state has also been granted the waiver to transfer **formula funds from the Dislocated Worker to the Adult funding stream**. In keeping with the approved waiver, areas can choose to transfer a percentage of their Dislocated Worker funds to the Adult funding stream. This flexibility made service delivery more effective for parts of the state that were not experiencing major layoffs. Each local area serves a different population group with unique characteristics and needs. This waiver allows local areas a greater amount of control to adapt to the needs of their area. Local areas that serve a greater population attached to one funding stream are able to transfer funds to better serve the needs of those participants.

The waiver allowing **areas to use a sliding scale for employer OJT reimbursements, based on the size of the business' workforce** has added incentives for local businesses to become stakeholders in their local workforce investment system. The sliding scale has also provided greater flexibility for local boards to utilize resources in the most effective manner to serve a greater number of participants and accommodate a greater volume of local businesses.

The waiver to allow areas to **use a sliding scale for employer Customized Training reimbursements, based on the size of the business' workforce** has also added incentives for local businesses to become stakeholders in their local workforce investment system. Local areas with small businesses can take advantage of resources to fill vacancies. It also allows local staff to leverage a greater amount of resources to provide more training opportunities for participants.

For PY12, Georgia requested and received approval of the waiver to report performance on the nine **Common Measures**. The switch to common measures allowed Georgia to be measured with other states, including the other states in Region 3, which promotes greater accountability through comparison. By simplifying the reporting requirements by the state and local workforce areas, the State streamlined service to participants and spent less time on administrative functions. This waiver also allowed for greater tracking of participant outcomes and program improvement.

### **Cost Efficiency Measures**

The Governor and SWIB have encouraged GOWD to reduce the amount of administrative funds spent and improve on overall efficiency. In accordance with this goal, GOWD has transitioned Rapid Response back into GOWD and has transitioned to a new, more cost effective case management system.

GOWD has encouraged the LWIAs to participate in some of the same cost cutting measures by exploring more opportunities for colocation and service integration as recommended by the internal services delivery assessment that was conducted. WIA and Wagner-Peyser funded services must be provided for the universal population in all chartered One-Stop Centers. GOWD is coordinating with GDOL to ensure that Wagner-Peyser funding is available at all American Job Centers. Furthermore, both organizations are collaborating to see that Wagner-Peyser funding is being used as the "front door" to provide core (tier 1) and intensive (tier 2) services to participants at the initial point of entry into the workforce system, and that WIA funds are being utilized largely for training (tier 3) services. This type of integration would allow the state to serve a greater number of participants.

GOWD lists the cost per participant of every local area and for the state as a whole in the table in *Attachment A*. The data for this section was taken from several different reports. The participant data was derived using the same methodology that established the data on ETA Form 9091. The reports were run on a different date than the data presented in ETA Form 9091, which may lead to minor discrepancies between the two reports. These discrepancies are statistically insignificant and should not have an impact on the overall value of the data presented in this section. The financial data for this section was derived from the monthly financial status reports submitted to GOWD by each LWIA. Please note that the expenditure figures in this section do not directly correlate with the federal spending figures found on ETA Form 9091. The federal spending figures on ETA Form 9091 are derived from actual cash requests from LWIAs, as represented in GOWD's financial system. The monthly financial status reports reflect true expenditures and may not directly align with the dates that cash is requested from GOWD. The data presented in this section is meant to provide approximate values for comparison and evaluation only and should not be construed to represent exact figures for any specific LWIA or the state as a whole.

### **Introduction to the Data: Program Year 2013**

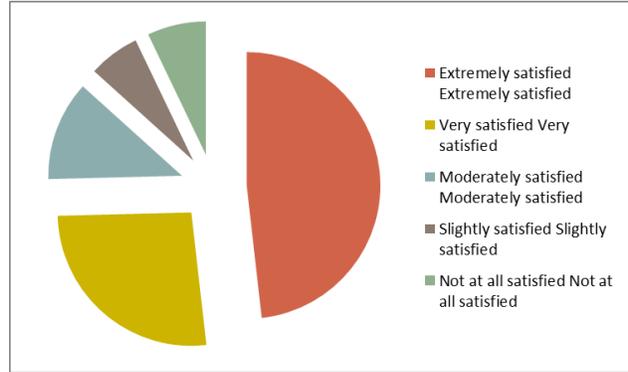
The tables on *Attachment C* represent Georgia's state-level and local area performance data for PY13. All required elements are reported uniformly.

States and LWIAs negotiate performance levels each year. A state is considered to "meet" its target if it attains at least 90% of the negotiated level. The state "exceeds" its target when outcome are higher than the negotiated rates. Georgia uses the same nine measures at the sub-state level but considers a local area to have met its target if it attains at least 80% of its negotiated level. Georgia is reporting on the nine common measures for PY13.

# Attachment A

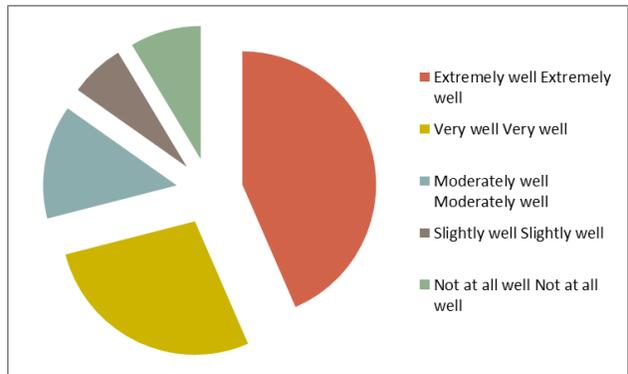
**1. Overall, how satisfied are you with the services provided to you by your Local Workforce Investment Area's Career Center?**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Extremely satisfied	48.2%	318
Very satisfied	26.4%	174
Moderately satisfied	12.1%	80
Slightly satisfied	6.2%	41
Not at all satisfied	7.1%	47
<i>answered question</i>		<b>660</b>



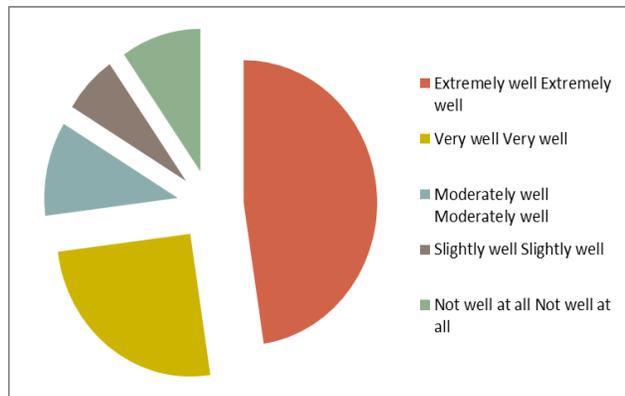
**2. Taking into account all of the expectations you held, have the services you received from your Local Workforce Investment Area's Career Center met your expectations?**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Extremely well	43.5%	289
Very well	27.5%	183
Moderately well	13.8%	92
Slightly well	6.6%	44
Not at all well	8.6%	57
<i>answered question</i>		<b>665</b>



**3. Considering an ideal program for someone in your situation, how well did the services you received from your Local Workforce Investment Area's Career Center compare with that ideal?**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Extremely well	47.6%	315
Very well	25.4%	168
Moderately well	10.7%	71
Slightly well	6.6%	44
Not well at all	9.7%	64
<i>answered question</i>		<b>662</b>



# Attachment B

Local Workforce Investment Area	Adult	DW	Youth	Total	Adult Program Expend	DW Program Expend	Youth Program Expend	Total \$	Cost Per Adult	Cost per DW	Cost per youth	Total Cost per Participant
1 - Northwest Georgia	453	785	434	1672	\$ 1,790,090	\$ 3,698,611	\$ 2,341,498	\$ 7,830,199	\$ 3,952	\$ 4,712	\$ 5,395	\$ 4,683.13
2 - Georgia Mountains	285	348	229	862	\$ 1,111,703	\$ 900,672	\$ 692,186	\$ 2,704,561	\$ 3,901	\$ 2,588	\$ 3,023	\$ 3,137.54
3 - City of Atlanta	523	296	1074	1893	\$ 297,979	\$ 438,013	\$ 1,146,340	\$ 1,882,332	\$ 570	\$ 1,480	\$ 1,067	\$ 994.36
4 - Cobb County	382	448	654	1484	\$ 1,101,614	\$ 1,410,976	\$ 1,690,267	\$ 4,202,857	\$ 2,884	\$ 3,150	\$ 2,585	\$ 2,832.11
5 - Dekalb County	1342	876	795	3013	\$ 1,834,497	\$ 1,454,411	\$ 1,513,908	\$ 4,802,816	\$ 1,367	\$ 1,660	\$ 1,904	\$ 1,594.03
6 - Fulton County	556	591	255	1402	\$ 892,859	\$ 1,166,870	\$ 601,939	\$ 2,661,668	\$ 1,606	\$ 1,974	\$ 2,361	\$ 1,898.48
7 - Atlanta Regional	1324	1328	1320	3972	\$ 3,465,742	\$ 6,441,731	\$ 4,259,757	\$ 14,167,229	\$ 2,618	\$ 4,851	\$ 3,227	\$ 3,566.77
8 - West Central Georgia	1562	1034	667	3263	\$ 1,135,895	\$ 878,425	\$ 1,034,556	\$ 3,048,876	\$ 727	\$ 850	\$ 1,551	\$ 934.38
9 - Northeast Georgia	718	550	468	1736	\$ 1,788,635	\$ 1,311,187	\$ 1,071,084	\$ 4,170,905	\$ 2,491	\$ 2,384	\$ 2,289	\$ 2,402.60
10 - Macon/Bibb	124	79	59	262	\$ 900,935	\$ 526,521	\$ 930,788	\$ 2,358,243	\$ 7,266	\$ 6,665	\$ 15,776	\$ 9,000.93
11 - Middle Georgia	211	204	131	546	\$ 807,333	\$ 630,849	\$ 598,583	\$ 2,036,764	\$ 3,826	\$ 3,092	\$ 4,569	\$ 3,730.34
12 - Richmond/Burke	243	77	240	560	\$ 694,932	\$ 379,547	\$ 631,847	\$ 1,706,326	\$ 2,860	\$ 4,929	\$ 2,633	\$ 3,047.01
13 - East Central Georgia	160	76	184	420	\$ 492,689	\$ 367,208	\$ 592,579	\$ 1,452,476	\$ 3,079	\$ 4,832	\$ 3,221	\$ 3,458.28
14 - Lower Chattahoochee	171	53	236	460	\$ 714,949	\$ 465,384	\$ 619,423	\$ 1,799,756	\$ 4,181	\$ 8,781	\$ 2,625	\$ 3,912.51
15 - Middle Flint	181	79	86	346	\$ 467,257	\$ 216,801	\$ 300,609	\$ 984,667	\$ 2,582	\$ 2,744	\$ 3,495	\$ 2,845.86
16 - Heart of Georgia/Altamah	287	185	441	913	\$ 1,106,828	\$ 1,019,995	\$ 787,418	\$ 2,914,240	\$ 3,857	\$ 5,513	\$ 1,786	\$ 3,191.94
17 - Southwest Georgia	478	383	497	1358	\$ 1,370,365	\$ 792,655	\$ 1,411,513	\$ 3,574,533	\$ 2,867	\$ 2,070	\$ 2,840	\$ 2,632.20
18 - South Georgia	731	311	734	1776	\$ 1,688,796	\$ 877,156	\$ 1,264,684	\$ 3,830,636	\$ 2,310	\$ 2,820	\$ 1,723	\$ 2,156.89
19 - Southeast Georgia				0								
20 - Coastal	390	225	553	1168	\$ 1,350,415	\$ 973,030	\$ 1,384,552	\$ 3,707,997	\$ 3,463	\$ 4,325	\$ 2,504	\$ 3,174.65
<b>Statewide Total</b>	<b>10121</b>	<b>7928</b>	<b>9057</b>	<b>27106</b>	<b>\$23,013,512</b>	<b>\$23,950,039</b>	<b>\$22,873,529</b>	<b>\$ 69,837,080</b>	<b>\$ 2,273.84</b>	<b>\$ 3,020.94</b>	<b>\$ 2,525.51</b>	<b>\$ 2,576.44</b>

# Attachment C