



CareerSource  
NORTHEAST FLORIDA



CAREERSOURCE NORTHEAST FLORIDA

# WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT LOCAL WORKFORCE PLAN

JANUARY 1, 2025 – DECEMBER 31, 2028

Local Workforce Development Area 8

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# INTRODUCTION

CareerSource Northeast Florida (NEFL) is the workforce development organization for the Northeast Florida region. CareerSource NEFL forges working partnerships with local communities, elected officials, business, labor, and education leaders to improve workforce education, employment and training opportunities in Baker, Clay, Duval, Nassau, Putnam, and St. Johns counties. Our mission is to connect workers to careers and businesses to the talent they need to thrive. We focus on providing innovative services that build a talent pipeline for the jobs of today and the future.

CareerSource NEFL's plan is consistent with the requirements of Federal and state law. We worked with our core and combined partners to create a plan with an emphasis on expanding Florida's labor force to meet employer demand while identify and addressing barriers to employment through:

- Streamlining services: coordinating with partners to ensure the most efficient and effective services for our customers.
- Empowering individuals: eligible participants make informed decisions, choosing the qualified training program that best meets their needs.
- Enabling universal access: ensuring all individuals have access to our services.
- Promoting increased accountability: ensuring we consistently meet or exceed performance goals and respond to areas that require improvement.

Our region has experienced unprecedented low unemployment – the recent employment report showed the region at 3.6% unemployment compared to 4.3% country-wide. With low unemployment, we have seen an increase in individuals with significant barriers to employment seeking our services and requiring intensive one-on-one assistance and supportive services. Our business customers are seeking additional support to recruit and retain their talent. Simultaneously, we have seen, first-hand in working directly with our economic development partners, a significant increase in businesses interested in relocating or expanding within our region with talent as a key factor for their decision.

At CareerSource NEFL, we understand that meeting the talent development needs of NEFL cannot be successfully done by one organization. In developing this plan, we worked in partnership with our core partners and economic development, education, industry and community-based organizations to inform how we can leverage our services and resources to best serve the individuals and businesses in NEFL. Three significant board-driven initiatives conducted with our partners informed the key goals of this plan.

First, we hosted, in partnership with JAXUSA Partnership (JAXUSA) and the Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM) Jacksonville, the 2023 Talent Forum: Innovative Solutions to Overcome Talent Shortages. This forum built upon the learnings of the previous year's Talent Forum

and highlighted panels of local businesses and organizations who shared their talent shortage solutions. Panel topics included: Work-based Learning Solutions – Train and Retain Your Own Talent; Hiring Justice Involved – Expanding a Talent Pipeline; and Hiring Individuals with Disabilities – Diversifying Your Workforce Talent. This plan incorporates the outcomes from the forum including insights from our education, community-based, economic development, and industry partners.

Second, in January of 2024, the Board appointed members to the Talent Advancement Network (TAN) for Northeast Florida. The TAN is an education and industry consortium composed of educational and business representatives within our region. The TAN provides reports to inform the board and staff on programs, services and partnerships that align educational programming with industry needs. The TAN leverages existing education systems and leadership, industry strengths and leadership, and pockets of workforce excellence to create a stronger talent pipeline focused on the youth, adults, and veterans currently living in Northeast Florida. The TAN is managed in partnership with JAXUSA.

Third, CareerSource NEFL was a key member of the regional economic development planning process for the 2023-2028 JAXUSA strategic plan – The Future is Now. This planning process included leadership across Northeast Florida's seven counties (Baker, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Nassau, Putnam and St. Johns). The plan acknowledges that talent is, and will continue to be, the most important driver of economic success for the region. Goal 1 of the plan is Talent Development: Promote the development of accessible career pathways that create a robust talent pipeline reflective of employer needs. Further, CareerSource NEFL has aligned our industries of focus to those within the plan which include Transportation and Logistics; Advanced Manufacturing; Life Sciences; Technology Services; and Financial Services.

**COMMON THEMES THAT SURFACED FROM THESE COLLABORATIVE PLANNING INITIATIVES INCLUDE:**

- Build strong partnerships with regional and core partners that leverage multiple sources of funding and resources to meet the needs of industry and jobseekers.
- Inform potential customers about our services and the positive impact we have made in the lives of individuals and in meeting industry's talent needs.
- Increase labor force participation within our region by providing intensive support to those with significant barriers to employment.
- Diversify the talent pipeline by considering those that are new or re-entering the workforce.
- Provide robust career counseling for youth and job seekers with barriers to better understand career opportunities.

- Ensure accessibility of services so that all customers have access to our services.
- Prioritize services around the growth sectors in our region that are aligned with economic development.
- Support businesses in building work-based learning opportunities such as apprenticeships and internships to upskill and retain their own talent.

These themes are woven into this plan and will drive how CareerSource NEFL operates and provides services to our business and job seeker customers. CareerSource NEFL will continue to provide streamlined services for the greatest efficiency and effectiveness, empower individuals to make informed decisions to best meet their career needs, increase prosperity of workers and employers while reducing welfare dependency, and provide universal access to all customers. Implementation of this plan will further our vision of Northeast Florida being a world-class workforce development system that enables our businesses to be leaders in the global economy.

## A. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

### 1. CHIEF LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS – FIRST COAST WORKFORCE CONSORTIUM

First Coast Workforce Development Consortium ("Consortium") is made and entered into pursuant to the authority under Section 163.01, Florida Statutes, and Public Law 113-128 the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA), by and between the Counties of Baker, Clay, Nassau, Putnam and St. Johns, and the City of Jacksonville, of the State of Florida, each passing resolutions to that effect.

#### Current membership is:

<b>BAKER</b>	The Honorable Mark Hartley Baker County Commissioner 55 North 3rd Street, MacClenny, FL 32063 904-259-3613 <a href="mailto:mark.hartley@bakercountyfl.org">mark.hartley@bakercountyfl.org</a>
<b>CLAY</b>	The Honorable Jim Renninger District 3, Clay County Commissioner P.O. Box 1366, Green Cove Springs, FL 32043 904-269-6375 <a href="mailto:jim.renninger@claycountygov.com">jim.renninger@claycountygov.com</a>
<b>DUVAL</b>	Vacant*
<b>NASSAU</b>	Commissioner A.M. "Hupp" Huppmann District 2, Nassau County Commissioner 96135 Nassau Place, Suite 1, Yulee, FL 32097 (904) 319-0686 <a href="mailto:ahuppmann@nassaucountyfl.com">ahuppmann@nassaucountyfl.com</a>
<b>PUTNAM</b>	The Honorable Larry Harvey, Chair FCWD Consortium Putnam County Commissioner 2509 Crill Avenue, P.O. Box 758, Palatka, FL 32178-0758 386-329-0213 <a href="mailto:larry.harvey@putnam-fl.gov">larry.harvey@putnam-fl.gov</a>
<b>ST JOHNS</b>	Roy Alaim St. John's County Commissioner 500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine, FL 32084 904-209-0303 <a href="mailto:Bcc3ralaimo@sjcfl.us">Bcc3ralaimo@sjcfl.us</a>

*\*The FCWD Consortium seat for Duval County (City of Jacksonville) is currently vacant. We are working with our City of Jacksonville partners to secure an appointment for this position.*

The Consortium is established as a multi-jurisdictional consortium for the express purpose of carrying out the individual responsibilities of each county that is part of the Agreement under the Workforce Investment-2000, WIOA and Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reform Act-1996.

The First Coast Workforce Development Consortium Agreement, available on our website at: <https://csnefl.wpenginepowered.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/First-Coast-Workforce-Development-Consortium-Interlocal-Agreement-2016.pdf>, describes in detail the bylaws established by the consortium which fully conform to Section 163.01, Florida Statutes, and Public Law 113-128, WIOA.

Since its establishment in 1996, the Consortium has been instrumental in providing vision and leadership in the delivery of workforce development services to the citizens of Northeast Florida. Through their involvement and direction, staff have developed this plan which articulates their vision. Consortium members were provided the final plan draft on August 20, 2024 for review and voted to approve the document.

The Honorable Larry Harvey is the FCWD Consortium Chair and has the authority to sign on behalf of the consortium.

## **2. THE LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD IS FIRST COAST WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, INC. DBA CAREERSOURCE NORTHEAST FLORIDA BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Chair** Kevin Doyle  
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**Vice Chair** Tim Hinson  
Corporate Training Director, Miller Electric  
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Term of Appointment as Vice Chair: 7/1/2023 – 6/30/2025

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During board meetings, board members provide strategic guidance of how to ensure we are meeting our mission and vision. Further, several CareerSource NEFL senior staff members were very engaged in the development of the JAXUSA “The Future is Now” Regional Economic Development Plan. The Future Is Now Executive Summary - JAXUSA. This plan identified Talent as the number one economic development goal within the region. This regional planning process involved multiple focus groups of education, workforce, industry, and community-based organizations discussing the talent needs of the region. This plan incorporates the outcomes of those regional focus groups. The Board was regularly updated and provided feedback on that plan which lays the foundation for how we are approaching economic development in this 4-year plan.

In October 2023, CareerSource NEFL, in partnership with JAXUSA and the Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM), held a Regional Talent Forum. This forum brought together nationally recognized experts in talent development, regional partners and local businesses and organizations that are taking proven, innovative approaches to meet their talent needs particularly

while faced with a national labor shortage. This plan incorporates the outcomes from the forum including insights from our education, community-based, economic development, and industry partners.

During each phase of developing our 4-year plan, the Board has offered guidance and a strategic vision. During the July 2024 full Board meeting, the Board was engaged in the planning process with the Board provided feedback on key strategic items to be incorporated into the plan. The Board was provided with a final version of the document. During the August 2024 Executive Committee meeting, the plan was approved by a unanimous vote. Our approach simultaneously refines and forwards successful local initiatives while aligning our vision with the essential imperatives identified in the strategic and state unified plans developed by CareerSource Florida.

In preparation for developing this plan, we purposefully sought out the input from our community partners, our designated Education and Industry Consortium, the Talent Advancement Network (TAN). More importantly, we leveraged the regional and comprehensive strategic planning that had already been completed by our partner, JAXUSA and others. We provided numerous opportunities for stakeholders including industry, education and those representing individuals with significant barriers to employment to provide feedback – both through structured means like providing the opportunity for public comment as well as incorporating important information the CSNEFL team gathered through meetings with key stakeholders.

### **3. LOCAL GRANT SUBRECIPIENT**

First Coast Workforce Development, Inc. (FCWD) DBA CareerSource Northeast Florida (CareerSource NEFL) has been designated the local fiscal agent by the First Coast Workforce Development Consortium.

First Coast Workforce Development, Inc. (FCWD) DBA CareerSource Northeast Florida (CareerSource NEFL) has been designated to staff the LWDB and serve as the local administrative entity by the First Coast Workforce Development Consortium.

### **4. ONE-STOP OPERATOR AND ONE-STOP CAREER CENTERS**

LDW Group, LLC was selected via a competitive process to provide services as the local One-Stop Operator. Our current agreement with LDW Group, LLC became effective July 1, 2023 with annual options for renewal through June 30, 2026.

To ensure a competitive process for selecting the current one-stop operator, a Request for Proposals for One-Stop Management Services was publicly noticed and completed in April 2023.

The LWDB does not serve as the one-stop operator.

The role and responsibility of the One-Stop Operator, LDW Group, LLC is to assist with leading the design and coordination of service delivery of the One-Stop partners and providers in the FCWD Gateway One-Stop Center. Under WIOA the roles and responsibilities of our partners are found at WIOA§121(b)(1)(A); these activities include but are not limited to:

- Entering a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with FCWD relating to the operation of the One-Stop Center consistent with the requirements of authorizing laws, the Federal cost principles, and all other applicable legal requirements.
- Providing access to its programs or activities through the One-Stop Center, in addition to any other appropriate locations.
- Jointly funding the One-Stop system through infrastructure contributions that are based upon:
  - A reasonable cost allocation methodology by which cash or in-kind infrastructure costs are contributed by each partner in proportion to the relative benefits of their participation.
  - Federal cost principles.
  - Any local administrative cost requirements in the Federal law authorizing the partner's program.

CareerSource NEFL has designated its Gateway Career Center located at 5000 Norwood Avenue, Suite 2, Jacksonville, FL 32208 as the comprehensive American Job Center for LWDA 8. One-Stop partners work together to provide access to services. Our One-Stop partners are co-located in the Gateway Career Center to administer their separately funded programs in an integrated and streamlined manner to individuals who the Center. LWDA 8 partners include:

- WIOA (Adult, Dislocated and Youth formula grants)
- National Black Council on Aging SCSEP
- Jacksonville Job Corps
- Florida State College at Jacksonville – Adult Education and Family Literacy
- Wagner-Peyser
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Jobs for Veterans
- Division of Blind Services
- AARP SCSEP
- Northeast Florida Community Action Agency
- Unemployment Compensation
- Jacksonville Housing Authority

Hours of operation for our centers are Monday through Friday, 8:30am until 4:30pm. All affiliate sites are open 8:30am until 4:30pm, unless closed due to partner's operational schedules and service delivery agreements.

#### **AFFILIATE SITES INCLUDE:**

**CareerSource NEFL Career Development Center – Deerwood Campus**

9911 Old Baymeadows Road, Room D2420, Jacksonville, FL 32256

**CareerSource NEFL Career Development Center – Downtown Campus**

101 W. State St., Room A-1120, Jacksonville, FL 32202

**CareerSource NEFL Career Development Center – Kent Campus**

Student Success Center, 3939 Roosevelt Blvd., Annex, F124, Jacksonville, FL 32205

**CareerSource NEFL Career Development Center – North Campus**

4501 Capper Road, Bldg. E, Room 150, Jacksonville, FL 32218

**CareerSource NEFL Career Development Center – South Campus**

11901 Beach Blvd., Room U-106, Jacksonville, FL 32246

**Jacksonville Housing Authority (Multiple Locations)**

#### **ADDITIONAL CAREER CENTERS**

**Baker County Career Center**

1184 South 6th Street, Macclenny, FL 32063

**Clay County Career Center**

1845 Town Center Blvd., Suite 150, Fleming Island, FL 32003

**Duval County – Southside Career Center**

11160 Beach Blvd. Ste. 111, Jacksonville, FL 32246

**Nassau County Career Center**

96042 Lofton Square Court, Yulee, FL 32097

**Putnam County Career Center**

400 State Road 19, Ste. 53, Palatka, FL 32177

**St. Johns County Career Center**

525 State Road 16, Suite 109, St. Augustine, FL 32084

To facilitate access to required America's Job Centers partners, services are provided on-site, and through direct linkage, using paper and electronic referrals.

CareerSource NEFL maintains one comprehensive One-Stop center located at 5000 Norwood Avenue, Suite 2, Jacksonville, FL 32208. We certify that this comprehensive center meets the certification requirements as defined by CareerSource Florida Administrative Policy 093 – One-Stop Delivery System and One-Stop Career Center Certification Requirements.

In addition to the required partners co-located and offering direct linkage, CareerSource NEFL works in collaboration with special community partners to offer training to staff and customer referrals. Examples include the Florida Department of Health and Operation New Hope.

CareerSource NEFL deploys mobile career centers to provide services to regional businesses and career seekers in support of special events or in areas where access can be challenging. With major emphasis on providing on-site services at employer sites and direct service delivery to underserved communities and other locations throughout the region, the use of the mobile career center continues to serve as a cost-effective and customer-friendly service solution. The mobile career center also played an integral role in delivering services and assistance during hurricanes and other disasters.

## **5. PROVIDER OF WORKFORCE SERVICES**

CareerSource NEFL and core partners provide all services within the local one-stop delivery system. The local one-stop operator does not provide any workforce services.

Basic career services are available throughout the region for all seeking services in the CareerSource NEFL one-stop delivery system, and include:

- Eligibility determinations for receiving assistance through adult, dislocated worker, or youth programs.
- Outreach, including identification through the CareerSource NEFL Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment Program (RESEA) and/or the state's reemployment assistance claimants likely to exhaust benefits, and connection to suitable career services available through the one-stop delivery system.
- Assess skill levels including literacy, numeracy, and English language proficiency, as well as aptitudes, abilities (including skill gaps), and support service needs.
- Labor exchange services, including career coaching, career networking, and connecting with employment opportunities.
- Deliver information on in-demand industry sectors and occupations (as defined in sec. 3(23) of WIOA).
- Deliver information on nontraditional employment (as defined in sec.3(37) of WIOA).

- Deliver referrals to and coordination of activities with other programs and services, including those within the one-stop delivery system and, when appropriate, other workforce development programs within CareerSource NEFL's regional planning area.
- Deliver workforce and labor market employment statistics information, including information relating to local, regional, and national labor market areas, job listings in labor market areas, and information on skills necessary to advance career.
- Provide information relating to regional occupations in demand and the earnings, skill requirements, and opportunities for advancement.
- Deliver performance information and program cost information on eligible providers of training services by program and type of providers.
- Deliver information about how the local area is performing on local performance accountability measures and any additional performance information relating to the region's One-Stop delivery system.
- Deliver information relating to the availability of support services, and referrals to those services, including childcare; child support; medical or child health assistance available through the State's Medicaid program and Florida's KidCare Program; benefits under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); assistance through the earned income tax credit; housing counseling and assistance services sponsored through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD); and assistance under a State program for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).
- Provide assistance in establishing eligibility with financial aid assistance programs for training programs not provided under WIOA.
- Deliver assistance with filing claims under reemployment assistance programs.
- Individualized career services appropriate for career seekers to obtain or retain employment are available through CareerSource NEFL career centers or partners. These services include:
  - o Assessments of the skill levels and needs of adults and dislocated workers, which may include diagnostic testing and use of other assessment tools, in-depth interviewing and evaluation to identify employment barriers and goals.
  - o Development of an individual employment plan for identifying goals, achievement objectives, and services needed for the career seeker to advance his or her career.
  - o Group and individual coaching and mentoring
  - o Career planning and modeling
  - o Short-term pre-vocational services, including development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct to prepare individuals for the labor market.

- o Internships and work experiences linked to careers
  - o Workforce preparation activities that help an individual acquire a combination of basic academic skills, critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills, and self-management skills, including competencies in utilizing resources, using information, working with others, understanding systems, training, or employment.
  - o Financial literacy services
  - o English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs.
- Follow-up services are offered as appropriate for participants placed in unsubsidized employment, for up to 12 months after the first day of employment.
  - Counseling about the workplace is an appropriate type of follow-up service.

During the June 7, 2023, CareerSource Florida Board meeting, the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors granted approval for LWDA 8, CareerSource NEFL, to provide direct services starting July 1, 2023, and ending June 30, 2026.

## **6. YOUTH SERVICE PROVIDER**

CareerSource NEFL utilizes a procurement process that ensures the purchase of goods and services is conducted in an open manner resulting in competitive pricing, proper management, and oversight controls to ensure financial accountability, efficiency, prevent waste, fraud and abuse and avoid acquisition of unnecessary or duplicative items. An Invitation to Negotiate (ITN) for Out of School Youth Services was published on CareerSource NEFL's website and sent by email to all CareerSource NEFL interested agencies and organizations that registered for notification. CareerSource NEFL required youth service provider(s) have the professional experience, prior training, and applicable professional judgement within their staff/organization to perform/accomplish contract obligations, which include, but are not limited to WIOA eligibility/suitability, offering the 14 elements, etc. CareerSource NEFL Youth Services Providers were selected to provide services from July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025. Agreements may be extended, in one-year increments for four (4) additional years, contingent upon successful performance and funding availability. Currently there are 3 providers:

- Eckerd Youth Alternatives, Inc.
- St. Johns County School District designated for First Coast Technical College (FCTC)
- Wealth Watchers, Inc.

CareerSource NEFL has historically operated a highly successful youth program that has witnessed thousands of at-risk youth graduate high school. These youth then moved toward economic self-sufficiency through further education and training and found gainful employment. Our providers are strategically positioned throughout Northeast Florida, which will expand the reach of services offered throughout the region. Based on our assessments the following services will be offered, which directly mirror those mandated through WIOA are, but not limited to:

- Tutoring
- Study skills
- Training
- Paid/ Unpaid Work Experience
- Leadership activities
- Support services
- General education development (GED)/ high school diploma concurrent with Workforce prep activities
- English to speakers of other languages (ESOL)
- Financial counseling/ coaching
- Accommodation supports

**THE FOLLOWING PROGRAM ELEMENTS ARE PROVIDED BY PROVIDERS AND PARTNERING AGENCIES:**

Element	Providing Agency/Partner	Referral Needed
<p>Tutoring, studying skills training, instruction and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized postsecondary credential.</p>	<p>Baker County Adult Education Center                      Biscayne High School                      Clay County Adult &amp; Community Education                      Literacy Alliance of Northeast Florida                      Community Action Agency                      First Coast Technical College                      FSCJ Adult Education &amp; Family Literacy Program                      Job Corps                      Nassau County Adult Education                      St. Johns River Adult Education</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Alternative secondary school services or dropout recovery services, as appropriate.</p>	<p>Baker County Adult Education                      Clay County Adult &amp; Community Education                      First Coast Technical College                      FSCJ Adult Education &amp; Family Literacy Program                      Gaines Alternative &amp; Transition Schools                      Jacksonville Job Corps                      PACE Center for Girls</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Paid and unpaid work experiences that have as a component academic and occupational education, which may include (i) summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year; (ii) pre-apprenticeship programs; (iii) internships and job shadowing; and (iv) on-the-job training opportunities.</p>	<p>Year Up                      Jacksonville Job Corps                      Fresh Ministries                      Operation New Hope</p>	<p>Yes</p>

Element	Providing Agency/Partner	Referral Needed
Occupational skill training, which includes priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that align with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area involved.	Baker County Adult Education Clay County Adult & Community Education First Coast Technical College Year Up Jacksonville Job Corps	No
Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster.	A-Step (Goodwill) Jacksonville Job Corps Operation New Hope Year Up	No
Leadership development opportunities, which may include community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors, as appropriate.	Fresh Ministries Jacksonville Job Corps Year Up	No
Support Services	CareerSource NEFL Partnering Agency	Yes
Adult mentoring for the period of participation and a subsequent period, for a total of not less than 12 months.	Fresh Ministries 100 Black Men	No
Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation, as appropriate.	CareerSource NEFL Partnering Agency	No
Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral, as appropriate.	Clay Behavioral Health Operation New Hope	Yes
Financial literacy education	Family Foundations	No
Entrepreneurial skills training	Small Business Administration SCORE.org	No

Element	Providing Agency/Partner	Referral Needed
Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services.	CareerSource NEFL	No
Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to post-secondary education and training.	CareerSource NEFL	No

**7. CAREER CENTER STAFF**

CareerSource NEFL does not have any staff that are local county or municipality employees.

## **B. ANALYSIS OF NEED AND AVAILABLE RESOURCES**

### **1. EXISTING AND EMERGING IN-DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTORS AND OCCUPATIONS**

In today's competitive economy characterized by the global nature of business, simply creating jobs is less important than in the past. Further, due to the labor shortage we face in Northeast Florida and nationally, the type and quality of jobs being created is more important than ever when addressing the talent needs of industry. To provide an overview of the Northeast Florida labor market sectors, we will present information on:

- a. Sector Employment
- b. Healthcare and Social Assistance Employment
- c. Manufacturing Employment
- d. Transportation and Warehousing Employment
- e. Finance and Insurance Employment
- f. Sector Earnings and Wages
- g. Location Quotients
- h. Non-farm Proprietorships
- i. Number of Business Establishments
- j. Major Employers
- k. Occupations
- l. Opportunities and Challenges in the Labor Market Sector

We will separately summarize the opportunities and challenges in the region's labor market sectors.

#### **1A. SECTOR EMPLOYMENT**

The data we use to examine the region's sector employment covers all people employed in a particular sector regardless of whether they are covered by unemployment insurance or not. Total employment for the region has increased in the last three years by 13%. The sectors with the highest total employment in the region have remained consistent since the last data review in 2021. The relative share of employment by sector remains constant with the largest shares of total employment within Healthcare and Social Assistance (13.6%), Retail Trade (10.1%), Accommodation and Food Services (9.1%), and Transportation and Warehousing (6.9%). Two industries have lost employment since our last report, Educational Services and Utilities. Also of mention, Government (including Public Administration) is just under 12% of jobs in our region, posting the second highest sector employment.

**TABLE 1 CAREERSOURCE NEFL EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY**

Industry	2024 Employment	% of Total Employment
Accommodation and Food Services	78,805	9.1%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	59,054	6.8%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	3,332	0.4%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	17,722	2.0%
Construction	58,411	6.8%
Educational Services	15,589	1.8%
Finance and Insurance	58,522	6.8%
Government (includes Public Administration)	101,382	11.7
Health Care and Social Assistance	117,819	13.6
Information	13,975	1.6%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	8,287	1.0%
Manufacturing	38,404	4.4%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	260	0.0%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	44,445	5.1%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	55,463	6.4%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	15,934	1.8%
Retail Trade	87,662	10.1
Transportation and Warehousing	59,888	6.9%
Unclassified	1,702	0.2%
Utilities	1,095	0.1%
Wholesale Trade	26,943	3.1%
<b>Total - All Industries</b>	<b>864,694</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Lightcast Q2 2024

**TABLE 2 – INDUSTRY - CHANGE IN EMPLOYMENT**

Industry	CareerSource NEFL Employment		% Change
	2021	2024	
Accommodation and Food Services	72,071	78,805	8.55%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	55,153	59,054	6.61%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	2,949	3,332	11.49%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	14,033	17,722	20.82%
Construction	54,970	58,411	5.89%
Educational Services	14,340	15,589	8.01%
Finance and Insurance	57,336	58,522	2.03%
Government (includes Public Administration)	100,730	101,382	0.64%
Health Care and Social Assistance	105,371	117,819	10.57%
Information	8,686	13,975	37.85%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	6,896	8,287	16.79%
Manufacturing	34,579	38,404	9.96%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	229	260	11.92%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	43,185	44,445	2.83%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	51,636	55,463	6.90%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	14,887	15,934	6.57%
Retail Trade	84,815	87,662	3.25%
Transportation and Warehousing	55,822	59,888	6.79%
Unclassified	283	1,702	83.37%
Utilities	1,096	1,095	-0.09%
Wholesale Trade	25,258	26,943	6.25%
Total - All Industries	804,694	864,694	6.98%

Source: Lightcast Q2 2024

Between 2021 and 2024, we saw a resurgence of growth region wide as compared to the minimum growth we saw between 2019 and 2021. We saw some considerable changes in defined sectors. Significant industry increases occurred in Information (37.9%), Arts, Entertainment and Recreation (20.8%), Management of Companies and Enterprises (16.8%), and Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction (11.9%). None of these industries were among the industries with the largest growth between 2019 and 2021. There was negative employment growth in only one industry, as compared to twelve industries in the last report. Industries with the lowest growth were Utilities (-0.09%), Government (including Public Administration) (0.6%), Finance and Insurance (2.0%) and Other Services (except Public Administration) (2.8%).

The last report highlighted industry growth and decline that were COVID related. From 2021 to 2024 we saw overall growth in all industries except for one, balancing out the industry employment shifts we saw following COVID. Thirty percent of industry growth during this time was attributed to our four targeted industries. Similar to what we reported in 2020, the (national) number of open jobs each month has been higher than the number of people looking for work. The lack of available skilled labor will impact employment in the foreseeable future.

**TABLE 3 - SECTOR EMPLOYMENT COMPARISON**

Industry	% of Total Employment	% of Total Employment	% of Total Employment
	CareerSource NEFL - Workforce Region 8	Florida	USA
Accommodation and Food Services	9.1%	9.7%	8.3%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	6.8%	7.7%	6.1%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	0.4%	0.9%	1.2%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	2.0%	2.7%	1.8%
Construction	6.8%	7.0%	5.7%
Educational Services	1.8%	2.1%	2.4%
Finance and Insurance	6.8%	4.7%	4.1%
Government (includes Public Administration)	11.7%	11.0%	14.2%
Health Care and Social Assistance	13.6%	12.2%	13.1%
Information	1.6%	1.6%	1.9%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	1.0%	1.3%	1.5%
Manufacturing	4.4%	4.0%	7.7%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	5.1%	5.3%	4.9%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	6.4%	7.7%	7.2%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1.8%	2.6%	1.8%
Retail Trade	10.1%	10.8%	9.3%
Transportation and Warehousing	6.9%	4.4%	4.4%
Unclassified	0.2%	0.3%	0.2%
Utilities	0.1%	0.2%	0.3%
Wholesale Trade	3.1%	3.6%	3.6%

Source: Lightcast Q2 2024

As evidenced in the graph above, the total composition of the region's employment sectors varies slightly from both the state and national sectors, although the relative size of the sectors has remained stable over the past three years. Of mention, two CareerSource NEFL industries have employment at least two percentage points higher than Florida and the United States in Finance and Insurance as well as Transportation and Warehousing.

## **1B. HEALTHCARE AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE**

The healthcare sector has evolved swiftly over the last five years, particularly as the world faced a pandemic and the public health challenges that followed. The medical breakthroughs and innovation taking place in the Jacksonville region increase its recognition as a medical hotspot in the country. Northeast Florida's healthcare ecosystem is one of the largest and most innovative in the nation. With one of only three Mayo Clinics, one of six Baptist MD Anderson Cancer Centers, the UF Proton Therapy Institute and cutting-edge biomedical companies across all disciplines, the Northeast Florida region is seen as an attractive destination for healthcare investment and talent.

Because the Healthcare and Social Assistance sector is one of the most dominant and growing part of the region's total employment, it is necessary to examine this sector in further detail.

Most recent data from Lightcast and JobsEQ shows the CareerSource NEFL area with approximately 118,000 sector jobs, which is just above the state and national average for an area our size. Earnings per job in this industry is \$74,600, slightly above the national average of \$69,900. Competition from online job postings in our area is high.

The Healthcare and Social Assistance Sector makes up 14% of employment, so it is one of the most important parts of the regional economy. Using Lightcast data from Q2 2024, the chart below shows the components of this sector. In this chart, we can clearly see the strength of Ambulatory Healthcare Services employment in our region, making up 45% of employment, compared to 47% of Florida's sector and 40% of the national sector.

Region 8 has more employment in both hospitals (30%) and social assistance services (13%) than Florida, while there is less employment in nursing and residential care facilities than Florida and the United States.

**TABLE 4 – MAJOR COMPONENTS OF THE HEALTHCARE AND SOCIAL SERVICES INDUSTRY**

Industry	CareerSource NEFL Workforce Region 8		Florida		USA	
	Employment	% of Employment	Employment	% of Employment	Employment	% of Employment
Healthcare and Social Assistance	117,819		1,353,187		22,812,417	
Ambulatory Healthcare Services	52,656	44.69%	640,950	47.37%	9,175,671	40.22%
Hospitals	35,851	30.43%	353,876	26.15%	5,375,637	23.56%
Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	13,766	11.68%	183,398	13.55%	3,198,517	14.02%
Social Assistance	15,546	13.19%	174,963	12.93%	5,062,591	22.19%

Source: Lightcast Q2 2024

During the past five years, we can see how the employment landscape changed leading up to and through the pandemic and now post-pandemic. At this point, employment for the Healthcare and Social Assistance Industry is beyond pre-pandemic numbers. The annual demand for most healthcare related positions has increased as have the wages per occupation groups below. From 2021 to 2024, Healthcare salaries have increased significantly, most notably, Registered Nurses wages have increased from \$67,300 to \$80,100 (19%) and Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses have increased from \$46,800 to \$56,300 (20%).

**TABLE 5 – STAFFING PATTERN**

Occupation Groups	Employment	Ave Annual Wages	Annual Demand
Registered Nurses	16,242	\$80,089	368
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	6,321	\$30,342	141
Nursing Assistants	6,894	\$36,775	100
Medical Assistants	4,928	\$38,620	164
Receptionists and Information Clerks	2,988	\$34,800	71
Medical Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	7,077	\$37,506	134
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	2,636	\$56,324	40
Physicians, All Other; and Ophthalmologists, Except Pediatric	1,600	\$283,994	43
Childcare Workers	1,959	\$27,697	(14)
Dental Assistants	1,821	\$47,045	47

Source: Lightcast Q2 2024

### 1C. MANUFACTURING EMPLOYMENT

Manufacturing employment is often touted as a key sector to target in many economic and workforce development strategies. Historically, these jobs have provided relatively high-paying jobs for less-educated individuals. The industry also contributes significant capital investment within the region.

The region's location as the westernmost location along the East Coast and its logistics and transportation infrastructure allows products to be shipped anywhere in the world and offers companies same-day access to more than 98 million customers. Large-scale industrial parks, including Cecil Commerce Center, the largest aviation industrial park in the Southeastern United States, and Crawford Diamond Industrial Park, offer shovel-ready land and speculative structures.

Most recent data from Lightcast and JobsEQ shows the CareerSource NEFL area with approximately 34,600 sector jobs, which is below the national average for an area our size (65,600). Earnings per job in this industry is \$97,800, slightly below the national average of \$98,800, and 7% higher than in 2021. Competition from online job postings in our area is comparably low.

The Manufacturing Sector makes up 4.4% of employment, so it is an important sector within the regional economy. Using JobsEQ data from Q2 2024, the chart below shows the components of this sector. In this chart, we can clearly see the strength of Transportation Equipment Manufacturing employment in our region, making up over 15% of employment, compared to just over 13% of Florida's employment and 13.5% of national employment.

Region 8 has more employment in Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing (10.1%) and Paper Manufacturing (8.1%) than Florida, while we have fewer Computer and Electronic Product Manufacturers and Food Manufacturers than Florida and the United States.

**TABLE 6 – INDUSTRY DATA - MAJOR COMPONENTS OF MANUFACTURING SECTOR**

Industry	CareerSource NEFL Workforce Region 8		Florida		USA	
	Employment	% of Employment	Employment	% of Employment	Employment	% of Employment
Textile Mills	35	0.1%	1,086	0.2%	96,781	0.7%
Apparel Manufacturing	147	0.4%	3,807	0.9%	100,346	0.7%
Leather and Allied Product Manufacturing	165	0.4%	1,386	0.3%	31,825	0.2%
Textile Product Mills	281	0.7%	4,459	1.0%	109,499	0.8%
Petroleum and Coal Products Manufacturing	388	1.0%	3,623	0.8%	109,507	0.8%
Furniture and Related Product Manufacturing	903	2.4%	15,266	3.4%	387,408	2.9%
Printing and Related Support Activities	922	2.4%	17,454	3.9%	384,586	2.9%
Primary Metal Manufacturing	946	2.5%	6,237	1.4%	380,690	2.8%
Computer and Electronic Product Manufacturing	957	2.5%	48,013	10.8%	1,132,499	8.4%

Industry	CareerSource NEFL Workforce Region 8		Florida		USA	
	Employment	% of Employment	Employment	% of Employment	Employment	% of Employment
Chemical Manufacturing	1,188	3.1%	29,457	6.6%	931,359	6.9%
Plastics and Rubber Products Manufacturing	1,375	3.6%	15,357	3.5%	754,850	5.6%
Electrical Equipment, Appliance, and Component Manufacturing	1,529	4.0%	11,473	2.6%	433,386	3.2%
Wood Product Manufacturing	1,780	4.6%	16,437	3.7%	456,093	3.4%
Nonmetallic Mineral Product Manufacturing	2,374	6.2%	26,121	5.9%	439,472	3.3%
Food Manufacturing	2,442	6.4%	40,142	9.0%	1,821,768	13.5%
Machinery Manufacturing	2,451	6.4%	34,208	7.7%	1,168,781	8.7%
Beverage and Tobacco Product Manufacturing	2,813	7.3%	14,612	3.3%	356,808	2.6%
Paper Manufacturing	3,126	8.1%	8,410	1.9%	370,245	2.7%
Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	3,868	10.1%	48,062	10.8%	1,493,485	11.1%
Miscellaneous Manufacturing	4,782	12.5%	39,633	8.9%	686,351	5.1%
Transportation Equipment Manufacturing	5,931	15.4%	58,872	13.3%	1,820,621	13.5%

Source: Lightcast Q2 2024

**TABLE 7 – MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES**

Occupation	Employment	Median Ave Wages	Annual Demand
Miscellaneous Assemblers and Fabricators	2,045	\$36,560	21
First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	1,445	\$62,523	21
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	1,135	\$36,525	19
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	1,027	\$60,819	11
Packaging and Filling Machine Operators and Tenders	984	\$37,794	7
Industrial Machinery Mechanics	899	\$60,567	27
Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	872	\$45,916	19
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	793	\$50,246	9
Shipping, Receiving, and Inventory Clerks	785	\$39,035	3
General and Operations Managers	766	\$98,984	12
Remaining Component Occupations	27,092	\$55,000	2,883
<b>Total</b>	<b>37,843</b>		

Source: Lightcast Q2 2024

## 1D. TRANSPORTATION AND WAREHOUSING EMPLOYMENT

The Transportation and Warehouse Industry continues to be an important industry in Northeast Florida. With a logistics and transportation infrastructure that includes rail, air, maritime and highway, products can easily be shipped anywhere in the world from our prime location in Northeast Florida. The region's two deep-water ports, three major interstates - I-95, I-10, and I-75, four railroads, including two Class I lines, and an international airport system help Jacksonville rank as one of the best cities for logistics infrastructure according to Global Trade Magazine.

Our region is an international leader in the production and export of liquefied natural gas (LNG). JAXPORT boasts the world's first LNG-powered container ships and North America's first LNG bunker barge. Our strong public/private sector partnerships foster a collaborative environment that promotes continued growth and development.

From energy storage and solar power to renewable energy, LNG, and Compressed Natural Gas, Jacksonville is a leader in the market and focuses on innovation to sustain future growth. The region is making sizable investments to become the nation's preeminent smart region, with plans for investment in next-generation transportation and communications technologies.

Most recent data from Lightcast and JobsEQ shows the CareerSource NEFL area with approximately 58,000 sector jobs, which is far above the national average for an area our size (36,900). Earnings per job in this industry are \$71,700, slightly below the national average of \$74,900.

Competition from online job postings is high in our area. The national average for an area the size of our region is 319 job postings per month, while there is an average of 381 industry postings per month in our region.

The Transportation and Warehousing Sector makes up 6.8% of employment, so it is an important part of the regional economy. Using Lightcast data from Q2 2024, the chart below shows the components of this sector. In this chart, we can clearly see the strength of Warehousing and Storage employment, which is almost 29% of the employment in this sector, higher percentages of employment than both Florida and the nation. We should also mention Truck Transportation, making up 19.5% of employment, is one percentage point of employment higher than Florida but is lower than national employment.

**TABLE 8 – MAJOR COMPONENTS OF TRANSPORTATION AND WAREHOUSING**

Industry	CareerSource NEFL Workforce Region 8		Florida		USA	
	Employment	% of Employment	Employment	% of Employment	Employment	% of Employment
Air Transportation	1,069	1.78%	60,714	12.59%	573,803	7.46%
Rail Transportation	3,726	6.22%	6,612	1.37%	218,153	2.83%
Water Transportation	2,629	4.39%	19,780	4.10%	70,199	0.91%
Truck Transportation	11,702	19.54%	88,849	18.42%	1,897,485	24.65%
Transit and Ground Passenger Transportation	3,209	5.36%	33,854	7.02%	663,610	8.62%
Pipeline Transportation	0	0.00%	489	0.10%	54,181	0.70%
Scenic and Sightseeing Transportation	376	0.63%	4,412	0.91%	34,883	0.45%
Support Activities for Transportation	10,379	17.33%	83,578	17.33%	906,566	11.78%
Postal Service	125	0.21%	741	0.15%	15,988	0.21%
Couriers and Messengers	9,427	15.74%	80,483	16.69%	1,294,688	16.82%
Warehousing and Storage	17,246	28.80%	102,798	21.31%	1,966,740	25.55%
<b>Total</b>	<b>59,888</b>		<b>482,308</b>		<b>7,696,296</b>	

Source: Lightcast Q2 2024

**TABLE 9 – TRANSPORTATION AND WAREHOUSING INDUSTRY  
EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES**

Occupation Groups	Employment	Ave Ann Wages	Annual Demand
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	8,809	\$50,246.94	152
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	8,467	\$36,525.77	226
Stockers and Order Fillers	3,728	\$36,069.22	163
Light Truck Drivers	3,140	\$38,124.53	115
Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	2,728	\$40,189.34	87
First-Line Supervisors of Transportation and Material Moving Workers, Except Aircraft Cargo Handling Supervisors	2,087	\$60,113.67	39
Bus Drivers, School	1,699	\$40,204.95	(4)
Packers and Packagers, Hand	1,674	\$26,223.51	23
Captains, Mates, and Pilots of Water Vessels	1,166	\$79,622.16	19
Railroad Conductors and Yardmasters	1,071	\$91,594.72	(4)
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	23,196	\$50,246.94	152
<b>Total</b>	<b>38,153</b>		

Source: Lightcast Q2 2024

## 1E. FINANCE AND INSURANCE

Known as an international banking and fintech powerhouse, Jacksonville has more than twenty institutions on the Fortune Global 500 list. The lower cost of living compared to traditional financial markets is leading to substantial growth in the region as a financial services hub.

Global companies have moved executives to our area and hired locally, as more than 58,000 employees work in the financial services industry. The region's wealth of young, experienced talent offers a broad range of financial services and fintech expertise, including banking, investments, insurance, mortgage, and cybersecurity.

While our companies enjoy a corporate-friendly tax structure and low operating costs, employees enjoy a lower-than-average commute time, low cost of living, year-round sunshine, and proximity to surrounding water, among other attributes professionals look for when choosing to relocate.

Most recent data from Lightcast and JobsEQ shows the CareerSource NEFL area with approximately 58,000 jobs, is far above the national average for an area our size (34,700). Earnings per job in this industry is \$116,000, below the national average of \$151,400.

Competition from online job postings is high in our area. The national average for an area the size of our region is 551 job postings per month, while there is an average of 812 industry postings per month in our region.

The Finance and Insurance Sector makes up 6.8% of employment, a significant part of the regional economy. Using Lightcast data from Q2 2024, the chart below shows the components of this sector. In this chart, we can clearly see the strength of Credit Intermediation and Related Activities, which is almost 42% of the employment in this sector, above both Florida and national percentages of employment. We should also mention Insurance Carriers and Related Activities, making up just over 45% of employment, is below the percentage of Florida employment (45.4%) and similar to that of national employment (44.6%).

**TABLE 10 – MAJOR COMPONENTS OF FINANCE AND INSURANCE SECTOR**

Industry	CareerSource NEFL Workforce Region 8		Florida		USA	
	Employment	% of Employment	Employment	% of Employment	Employment	% of Employment
Monetary Authorities Central Bank	134	0.23%	688	0.13%	23,493	0.33%
Credit Intermediation and Related Activities	24,339	41.59%	187,967	36.04%	2,693,898	37.70%
Securities, Commodity Contracts, and Other Financial Investments and Related Activities	7,382	12.61%	69,924	13.41%	1,211,600	16.96%
Insurance Carriers and Related Activities	22,080	40.4%	205,084	45.8%	2,597,006	40.4%
Funds, Trusts, and Other Financial Vehicles	114	0.20%	2,819	0.54%	32,603	0.46%
<b>Total</b>	<b>58,522</b>		<b>521,572</b>		<b>7,144,902</b>	

Source: Lightcast Q2 2024

**TABLE 11 – FINANCE AND INSURANCE INDUSTRY EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES**

Occupation Groups	Employment	Median Annual Wages	Annual Demand
Customer Service Representatives	6,083	\$39,112	2
Insurance Sales Agents	5,182	\$48,832	147
Securities, Commodities, and Financial Services Sales Agents	4,174	\$63,762	18
Loan Officers	2,992	\$70,182	0
Claims Adjusters, Examiners, and Investigators	2,190	\$64,738	7
Personal Financial Advisors	2,139	\$113,451	10
Loan Interviewers and Clerks	1,890	\$54,225	(11)
First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers	1,727	\$62,880	(2)
Insurance Claims and Policy Processing Clerks	1,583	\$43,710	8
Tellers	1,509	\$41,099	(5)
Remaining Component Occupations	16,392	\$51,269	65
<b>Total</b>	<b>45,605</b>		

Source: Lightcast Q2 2024

## 1F. CONSTRUCTION EMPLOYMENT

In addition to the targeted industries which are aligned with JAXUSA, our region also focuses on the Construction Industry as it is a critical component of all industry growth. The Construction Industry in Northeast Florida is thriving and plays a crucial role in the region’s economy. It is the second largest and most important industry in Northeast Florida today. New homes, commercial and industrial developments are being built at record rates. Skilled construction workers are needed now more than ever to fulfill the demands of the area’s growth. With the increased projection of retirements of the current workforce, it is projected that job opportunities will rise steadily over the next decade alongside development in our area.

Our area is a hotspot for Construction talent. The national supply average for an area this size is 49,264 employees, while our local supply is 57,468. This higher-than-expected supply makes it easier for our employers to find candidates. Earnings per construction job are about the same as the national average. The national average salary for Construction in an area our size is \$83,576, while in our area it is \$77,620. Competition from online job postings is high in our area as well. The national average for an area our size is 340 job postings per month, while there are 604 job postings per month in Northeast Florida.

The Construction Sector makes up 6.8% of employment in our region, so it is one of our most important sectors. Using the Lightcast data from Q3 2024, the chart below shows the components of this sector. In this chart, we can clearly see the strength of Residential Building Construction employment in our region, making up almost 14% of sector employment, just under Florida's employment at almost 15% and national employment at the same rate. Areas where we exceed the state and national average for employment is in Highway, Street and Bridge Construction as well as Building Equipment Contractors. It is also important to note that the highest occupational wages in the construction industry are in Nonresidential Building Construction at \$114,182.

There is also a strong emphasis on training and developing a skilled workforce in our region. Programs through community partners like the NEFBA Apprenticeship offer hands-on training and job placement assistance in areas such as carpentry, electrical, plumbing, sheet metal and HVAC. The redevelopment of the Jacksonville Shipyards, construction of the Miller Electric Center as well as other stadium enhancements has also partnered CareerSource NEFL with Construction Ready, a four-week, free, instructor-led workforce readiness training designed for Northeast Florida residents.

**TABLE 12 –INDUSTRY DATA - MAJOR COMPONENTS OF CONSTRUCTION SECTOR**

Industry	CareerSource NEFL Workforce Region 8		Florida		USA	
	Employment	% of Employment	Employment	% of Employment	Employment	% of Employment
Residential Building Construction	8,097	13.8%	115,902	14.9%	8,097	13.8%
Nonresidential Building Construction	4,462	7.6%	59,339	7.6%	4,462	7.6%
Utility System Construction	2,769	4.7%	40,169	5.2%	2,769	4.7%
Land Subdivision	631	1.1%	5,344	0.7%	631	1.1%
Highway, Street, and Bridge Construction	3,001	5.1%	26,377	3.4%	3,001	5.1%
Other Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction	1,283	2.2%	14,019	1.8%	1,283	2.2%
Foundation, Structure, and Building Exterior Contractors	7,811	13.3%	118,669	15.3%	7,811	13.3%
Building Equipment Contractors	17,489	29.9%	205,988	26.5%	17,489	29.9%
Building Finishing Contractors	6,965	11.9%	107,000	13.8%	6,965	11.9%
Other Specialty Trade Contractors	6,006	10.3%	83,480	10.8%	6,006	10.3%

Source: Lightcast Q3 2024 Data Set

**TABLE 13 – CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES**

Occupation Groups	Employment	Average Wages	Annual Demand
Residential Building Construction	8,097	\$86,331	160
Nonresidential Building Construction	4,462	\$114,182	34
Utility System Construction	2,769	\$89,542	61
Land Subdivision	631	\$95,886	(16)
Highway, Street, and Bridge Construction	3,001	\$87,717	(23)
Other Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction	1,283	\$102,379	29
Foundation, Structure, and Building Exterior Contractors	7,811	\$62,000	59
Building Equipment Contractors	17,489	\$77,869	310
Building Finishing Contractors	6,965	\$57,170	36
Other Specialty Trade Contractors	6,006	\$64,456	95
Total	58,515		745

Source: Lightcast Q3 2024 Data Set

## 1G. SECTOR EARNINGS AND WAGES

Certain business sectors invariably offer higher wages than others. If a region is gaining jobs in only low-paying sectors, the economic vitality in the area may suffer.

In this section, we look at both wages and earnings. The data used when discussing wages covers only those employees covered by unemployment insurance whereas the data used when discussing earnings covers all employees. The average wage and earnings in each business sector are other important aspects of the labor market's business sectors. The chart below shows the average annual wage by sector for CareerSource NEFL, Florida and the United States.

For the four-year plan, we aggregated data into industry groups. For this update we are breaking the data into distinct industries, which will make it easier to understand each industry's impact. In 2021, Northeast Florida showed higher wages in Construction, Manufacturing, Transportation, Communication and Utilities, and FIRE. The National sectors had higher wages across the board.

In Q4 of 2021, our highest average annual wages were in the Management of Companies and Enterprises Sector (\$156,800), followed by the Utilities Sector (\$155,600), Information Sector (\$142,900), and Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction (\$129,400). The regional wages

for the Management of Companies and Enterprises Sector and Utilities Sector are lower than both Florida and national wages. Both the Information Sector and the Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction sector were higher than the Florida average but significantly lower than national wages.

Other average annual wages of interest include the Construction Sector, the Manufacturing Sector, the Transportation and Warehousing Sector, the Healthcare and Social Assistance Sector and the Finance and Insurance Sector. The Construction Sector average wages were at \$76,100, higher than the average Florida wages, but lower than national wages. The Manufacturing Sector average wages were \$97,800, higher than the average Florida wages and just lower than the average national wages. The Transportation and Logistics Sector average wages were at \$71,700, higher than the average Florida wages and lower than the average national wages. The Finance and Insurance Sector average wages were \$116,100, lower than the average Florida wages and the national wages. Lastly, the Healthcare and Social Assistance Sector average wages were \$81,000, higher than both the Florida and national average wages.

Even though our actual wage may be lower than the United States average in some sectors, our lower cost of living makes us competitive for companies considering expanding or relocating from across the country.

The gaps in earnings between the Northeast Florida and national sectors in industries such as Manufacturing, Construction, Transportation and Warehousing, Wholesale Trade, as well as a few other industries, can be attributed in part to our low rate of unionization (about 2% in the private sector) compared to the rest of the nation. Although, this factor creates lower average wages, it is a significant business advantage, and we find that many companies in those sectors look at Northeast Florida as a cost-effective place to relocate or expand operations. We believe our sectors will grow and create more opportunity for workers than they would see in places like the northeastern United States.

**TABLE 14 – AVERAGE ANNUAL WAGES BY SECTOR**

Industry	CareerSource NEFL Workforce Region 8	Florida	USA
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	\$48,212	\$46,425	\$52,998
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	\$129,402	\$110,451	\$143,212
Utilities	\$155,625	\$156,267	\$172,510
Construction	\$76,132	\$72,568	\$82,459
Manufacturing	\$97,815	\$92,538	\$98,774
Wholesale Trade	\$103,706	\$114,217	\$112,436
Retail Trade	\$47,313	\$49,795	\$48,580
Transportation and Warehousing	\$71,678	\$73,037	\$74,866
Information	\$142,920	\$126,129	\$167,545
Finance and Insurance	\$116,059	\$131,576	\$151,443
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	\$77,505	\$75,024	\$84,598
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	\$107,662	\$112,555	\$131,229
Management of Companies and Enterprises	\$156,818	\$160,280	\$169,776
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	\$55,183	\$58,592	\$61,608
Educational Services	\$51,543	\$59,484	\$62,104
Health Care and Social Assistance	\$80,996	\$78,224	\$74,994
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	\$57,728	\$55,417	\$53,913
Accommodation and Food Services	\$30,374	\$35,257	\$32,346
Other Services (except Public Administration)	\$43,981	\$42,649	\$44,642
Government	\$82,947	\$85,909	\$90,582
Unclassified Industry	\$60,214	\$83,140	\$89,680
<b>Total - All Industries</b>	<b>\$74,588</b>	<b>\$75,347</b>	<b>\$82,574</b>

Source: Lightcast Q2 2024 (End of year 2023)

Another way to comprehend the impact that each sector's earnings have on the regional economy is to compare earnings and employment to produce a ratio as demonstrated in the chart below. If the percentage of total earnings for a business sector is higher than the percentage of employment it provides for the area, that would be considered a "positive" ratio and reflect a business sector that generates wealth for the region.

In 2024, all but three sectors below had positive ratios, with their earnings exceeding employment. For the Agriculture, Forestry Fishing and Hunting Sector, Utilities Sector and Management of Companies and Enterprise Sector, employment exceeded earnings.

**TABLE 15 – NONFARM PROPRIETORSHIPS AS PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL EMPLOYMENT**

	% of Total Earning	% of Total Employment
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	0.4%	1.94%
Utilities	0.1%	19.0%
Construction	6.8%	0.2%
Manufacturing	4.4%	0.3%
Wholesale Trade	3.1%	0.5%
Retail Trade	10.1%	0.1%
Transportation and Warehousing	6.9%	0.2%
Information	1.6%	1.4%
Finance and Insurance	6.8%	0.3%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1.8%	0.7%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	6.4%	0.3%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	1.0%	2.5%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	6.8%	0.1%
Educational Services	1.8%	0.4%
Health Care and Social Assistance	13.6%	0.1%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	2.0%	0.4%
Accommodation and Food Services	9.1%	0.1%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	5.1%	0.1%
Government	11.7%	0.1%
Unclassified Industry	0.2%	4.7%

Source: Lightcast Q2 2024

## 1H. LOCATION QUOTIENTS

A location quotient can be used to measure the importance and relative competitiveness of individual business sectors. Location quotients are calculated by comparing the percentage contribution of each business sector to local employment versus the percentage contribution of that sector nationally. A location quotient of 1.0 indicates that a specific sector is providing the same percentage of total employment locally and nationally, while scores above or below represent relatively larger or smaller industries

**TABLE 16 – LOCATION QUOTIENTS - FIRST COAST, FLORIDA & UNITED STATES**

Industry	CareerSource NEFL Workforce Region 8	Florida	USA
Accommodation and Food Services	1.12	1.19	1.00
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	1.12	1.24	1.00
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	0.28	0.71	1.00
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1.06	1.44	1.00
Construction	1.22	1.21	1.00
Educational Services	0.73	0.77	1.00
Finance and Insurance	1.72	1.11	1.00
Healthcare and Social Assistance	0.97	0.92	1.00
Information	0.56	0.77	1.00
Management of Companies and Enterprises	0.61	0.79	1.00
Manufacturing	0.55	0.51	1.00
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	0.08	0.11	1.00
Other Services (except Public Administration)	1.10	1.09	1.00
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	0.98	1.07	1.00
Public Administration	0.90	1.00	1.00
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1.06	1.43	1.00
Retail Trade	1.09	1.14	1.00
Transportation and Warehousing	1.49	0.96	1.00
Unclassified	0.22	0.41	1.00
Utilities	1.11	0.57	1.00
Wholesale Trade	0.89	1.01	1.00
<b>Total - All Industries</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>1.00</b>

Source: JobsEQ 2021

**TABLE 17 – LOCATION QUOTIENTS - FIRST COAST, FLORIDA & UNITED STATES**

Industry	CareerSource NEFL Workforce Region 8	Florida	USA
Accommodation and Food Services	1.10	1.17	1.00
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	1.12	1.27	1.00
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	0.33	0.82	1.00
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1.15	1.53	1.00
Construction	1.17	1.21	1.00
Educational Services	0.74	0.86	1.00
Finance and Insurance	1.66	1.15	1.00
Government	0.83	0.78	1.00
Health Care and Social Assistance	1.04	0.94	1.00
Information	0.86	0.84	1.00
Management of Companies and Enterprises	0.64	0.83	1.00
Manufacturing	0.58	0.52	1.00
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	0.08	0.11	1.00
Other Services (except Public Administration)	1.05	1.08	1.00
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	0.90	1.08	1.00
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1.04	1.46	1.00
Retail Trade	1.08	1.16	1.00
Transportation and Warehousing	1.57	0.99	1.00
Unclassified Industry	0.95	1.23	1.00
Utilities	0.38	0.69	1.00
Wholesale Trade	0.86	1.01	1.00
<b>Total - All Industries</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>1.00</b>

Source: Lightcast Q2 2024

The graph above demonstrates the location quotients for major business sectors in the region and Florida, compared to the United States. Industries with the lowest location quotient are Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction, Agriculture, Forestry and Hunting, and Utilities. The Finance and Insurance Sector and Transportation and Logistics Sector both show the most competitive advantage for Northeast Florida. Florida also makes a strong showing in most industry sectors.

One of the most interesting data points is the location quotient for Accommodation and Food Services. Northeast Florida is almost even with the state (1.10 versus 1.17), even though the region's economy is generally less dependent on tourism than the rest of the state. These numbers are consistent with the same data from 2021. Of the 21 industry sectors, in only 6 sectors does Northeast Florida have a more competitive edge than the state of Florida.

From 2021 to 2024 data, we see consistent location quotients numbers in all our targeted industries, however the LQ for the Finance and Insurance Sector did decrease over this time and the LQ for the Healthcare and Social Assistance Sector, the Manufacturing Sector and Transportation and Warehousing Sector all decreased. All of targeted industries have a higher LQ than the state of Florida.

## 11. NON-FARM PROPRIETORSHIPS

Non-farm Proprietorships allow us to gauge the level of entrepreneurial activity occurring in a region because this is essentially a measure of small and locally owned establishments. Employment at non-farm proprietorships can be a significant portion of the labor market.

Non-farm proprietorships account for 24.1% of total employment in the Jacksonville MSA, up from 20.6% in 2020. As shown in the chart below, this percentage is below Florida's (30.9%), which is an 4.5% increase from the percentage of non-farm proprietorships in 2020.

Duval County, despite having the largest percentage of establishments, has the lowest percentage of proprietorships compared to the other counties in the region. This is unchanged since our 2016 research. The percentage of non-farm proprietorships saw the largest increase in Clay County (5.6% Increase).

**TABLE 18 – NONFARM PROPRIETORSHIPS AS PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL EMPLOYMENT**

	2020	2022
Baker	20.4%	24.8%
Clay	28.0%	33.6%
Duval	17.0%	20.0%
Nassau	29.9%	34.7%
Putnam	24.3%	27.7%
St. Johns	32.5%	36.2%
First Coast	19.4%	24.2%
JAX MSA	20.6%	24.1%
Florida	26.4%	30.9%
United States	21.9%	24.8%

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis Last Updated: November 16, 2023

Putnam County has seen an increase in its percentage of employment for non-farm proprietorships, from 10.57% in 2014 to 27.7% in 2018, almost tripling its percentage. St. Johns (36.2%), Putnam (27.7%), Nassau (34.7%) and Clay (33.6%) counties are all above the national average. St. Johns, Clay, and Nassau also have higher levels than the state average of 30.9%. St. Johns still has the highest level of entrepreneurial activity in the region.

While the number of non-farm proprietorships is important in assessing the level of entrepreneurial activity, studying the earnings of these individuals helps measure the success of local entrepreneurs. The chart below shows the average income of non-farm proprietors within each of the comparison areas. The regional average has been consistently higher than the state average, with a slimmer margin back in 2018 than we see now where the average is over \$7000 more in the region than statewide.

The national average in 2020 was \$37,833, up from its 2018 average of \$35,027. But in 2022, the national average dropped by over \$5000 to \$32,448, a 14% decrease. Our region's business owners saw only a 4.5% decrease, faring better than both state and national income in 2022.

For owners of regional proprietorships, average incomes range from \$10,638 in Baker County to \$30,152 in Duval County, remaining first in income among Northeast Florida counties. While Nassau County led the region in growth (17%) all other counties in our region experienced income loss, with the most significant loss being in Baker County which decreased the average income of non-farm

proprietors by 27%. While we do not yet have 2023 or 2024 data, we anticipate that average income has increased since 2022.

As we mention in the section on Entrepreneurial training, with the JAX Chamber's Bridges program's continual growth throughout the region, we anticipate this program will help boost income for those proprietors.

**TABLE 19 – AVERAGE INCOME OF NONFARM PROPRIETORSHIPS**

	2018	2020	2022	Percent Change from 2020 to 2022
Baker	\$12,919	\$14,568	\$10,638	-27.0%
Clay	\$15,731	\$17,237	\$14,196	-17.6%
Duval	\$20,635	\$31,707	\$30,152	-4.9%
Nassau	\$20,982	\$24,393	\$28,585	17.2%
Putnam	\$15,023	\$16,038	\$14,686	-8.4%
St. Johns	\$17,445	\$18,972	\$14,686	-22.6%
JAX MSA	\$19,318	\$26,454	\$25,353	-4.2%
Florida	\$19,158	\$22,194	\$18,379	-17.2%
United States	\$35,027	\$37,833	\$32,448	-14.2%

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis Last Updated: November 16, 2023

## 1J. NUMBER OF BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENTS

The number, type, and size of business establishments in the region offer some understanding of the competitiveness in the labor market. Essentially, the number of business establishments is the number of places in the private sector where an individual can seek employment. The number of places for potential employment that suits an individual's preference will change, depending on the type and size of business in which an individual wants to work.

We have seen steady growth in business establishments in the region since 2015. This data adds to the narrative of how competitive the local job market has become and why companies are having to pay higher salaries to attract and retain talent.

It is no surprise that Duval County dominates the number of business establishments in the region at 63%. Duval is the region's economic engine, and most business establishments are there. St. Johns has 19% of the region's establishments which also represents the largest increase in establishments from 2020 to 2021.

Virtually unchanged since our 2020 report, Clay County is at 9.5%, Nassau County is at 5.0%, Putnam County is at 2.8%, and Baker County is at just under 1% of the region's business establishments.

**TABLE 20 – CAREERSOURCE NEFL BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENTS**

	2019	2020	2021	2022	3rd Qtr. 2023	% change from 2019
<b>Region</b>	<b>Establishments</b>					
Baker County, Florida	458	474	492	511	502	9.6%
Clay County, Florida	4,723	4,863	5,042	5,336	5,510	16.6%
Duval County, Florida	31,334	31,960	33,365	34,933	36,284	15.8%
Nassau County, Florida	2,337	2,456	2,614	2,806	2,885	23.5%
Putnam County, Florida	1,463	1,470	1,507	1,552	1,611	10.1%
St. Johns County, Florida	8,133	8,691	9,471	10,448	10,923	34.3%
CareerSource NEFL Workforce Region 8	48,448	49,914	52,491	55,586	57,715	19.1%

Source: JobsEQ 3rd Quarter 2023

Using the JobsEQ data from previous years in the table above, we note that the number of business establishments in our region have increased since 2020 from 49,914 to 57,715 to date this year, a 15.6% increase. In the industry specific data below, which only includes data through 2022, there were decreases since 2018 in Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting (-3.2), Wholesale Trade (-0.3), and Public Administration (-5.1). There were double digit increases in Information (11.4), Management of Companies and Enterprises (10.4%), Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services (19.3%), and Healthcare and Social Assistance (14.1%) establishments.

**TABLE 21 – NUMBER OF BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENTS BY INDUSTRY**

Industry	2019	2020	2021	2022	% change from 2019
	Establishments				
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	212	213	215	214	0.5%
Accommodation and Food Services	3,723	3,754	3,942	4,042	7.7%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	4,394	4,427	4,953	5,304	19.8%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	733	739	756	773	4.6%
Construction	5,691	5,801	5,921	6,141	5.9%
Educational Services	610	635	669	712	12.1%
Finance and Insurance	2,366	2,462	2,669	2,747	11.6%
Healthcare and Social Assistance	4,699	5,187	5,463	5,700	9.9%
Information	629	687	845	924	34.5%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	249	267	319	374	40.1%
Manufacturing	1,182	1,195	1,285	1,362	14.0%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	20	21	27	26	23.8%
Other Services					
(except Public Administration)	3,948	3,805	3,952	4,057	6.6%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	6,245	6,565	7,206	7,744	18.0%
Public Administration	314	296	291	294	-0.7%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	2,592	2,695	2,923	3,074	14.1%
Retail Trade	5,719	5,711	5,924	5,893	3.2%
Transportation and Warehousing	1,623	1,672	1,846	1,977	18.2%
Unclassified	538	700	639	1,231	75.9%
Utilities	114	112	120	132	17.9%
Wholesale Trade	1,962	1,947	2,006	2,057	5.6%
<b>Total - All Industries</b>	<b>47,563</b>	<b>48,896</b>	<b>51,971</b>	<b>54,778</b>	<b>12.0%</b>

Source: JobsEQ

The numbers above support what we see throughout our region. Nursing facilities, hospitals, and other healthcare establishments provide strong career paths in one of our key industry sectors. Professional services from IT support and consulting to landscaping and waste management are established and growing in response to business demand, providing opportunities for employment and entrepreneurship. Overall, the region has shown strong business growth from 2018 to 2020. This data does not show the full effect of the pandemic, however.

Looking at businesses by employment size shows that most business establishments have few employees. As shown above, more than half (63%) of all establishments have only nine or fewer employees and 96.3% of establishments have fewer than 50 employees. Only 1.5% of establishments in the region have 100 employees or more.

**TABLE 22 – BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENTS BY SIZE UPDATED**

	Percentage	Business Count
1 to 4 employees	33.0%	20,369
5 to 9 employees	30.1%	18,595
10 to 19 employees	21.9%	13,517
20 to 49 employees	11.3%	6,957
50 to 99 employees	2.3%	1,420
100 to 249 employees	1.1%	686
250 to 499 employees	0.2%	124
500+ employees	0.2%	109
Florida	26.4%	30.9%
United States	21.9%	24.8%

Source: Business Data by DatabaseUSA.com 2024

## 1K. MAJOR EMPLOYERS

While small firms offer a large share of employment opportunities in an area, the largest firms often indicate the most identifiable type of business in a region. As the table below indicates, Government, Finance/Insurance and Healthcare (Life Sciences) sectors provide most of the major employers in the area. These industries are such a large part of the region's economy in that it provides jobs in many large and small establishments. This is among the many reasons we invest so much time in these "targeted" industries.

In the past two years we have seen some changes to our region's top employers. In 2022, Amazon reported approximately 16,000 employees in the Northeast Florida region. The most recent JAXUSA data now reports Amazon with 8,000 employees and moved from number two on the list of largest employers to number five. This decrease is indicative of employment trends in transportation and logistics post COVID.

**TABLE 23 – MAJOR EMPLOYERS**

Company Name	Northeast Florida Employees	Primary Target Industry
Duval County Public Schools	13,110	Government
Baptist Health	12,000	Life Sciences
Mayo Clinic	8,450	Life Sciences
Bank of America	8,000	Financial Services, Technology Services
Amazon	8,000	Transportation & Logistics
City of Jacksonville	7,260	Government
UF Health Jacksonville	6,600	Life Sciences
Florida Blue	5,700	Corporate Operations, Financial Services, Technology Services
Southeastern Grocers	5,700	Corporate Operations, Other, Transportation & Logistics
Fleet Readiness Center Southeast	5,350	Advanced Manufacturing, Space & Defense Technologies
Ascension St. Vincent's	5,050	Life Sciences
UPS	4,500	Transportation & Logistics
Citi	4,000	Financial Services, Technology Services
JPMorgan Chase	3,900	Financial Services
Johnson & Johnson Vision	3,500	Advanced Manufacturing, Corporate Operations, Life Sciences, Technology Services
GATE Petroleum	3,000	Corporate Operations, Other
AT&T	2,600	Technology Services
CSX Corporation	2,530	Corporate Operations, Technology Services, Transportation & Logistics
Deutsche Bank	2,400	Financial Services, Technology Services
Intercontinental Exchange	2,400	Corporate Operations, Financial Services, Technology Services
HCA Florida Memorial Hospital	2,370	Life Sciences

Source: JAXUSA

## 1L. OCCUPATIONS

**TABLE 24 – LARGEST OCCUPATIONS 2024-2028 ESTIMATES**

Occupation	2020 Jobs	2030 Jobs	2020 - 2030 Change	2020 - 2030 % Change	Avg. Hourly Earnings
Stockers and Order Fillers	23,730	24,816	1,086	0.9%	\$17.34
Retail Salespersons	23,533	23,898	364	0.3%	\$14.65
Fast Food and Counter Workers	21,817	22,406	589	0.5%	\$13.19
Registered Nurses	20,272	21,449	1,178	1.2%	\$38.50
Customer Service Representatives	21,628	21,378	(250)	-0.2%	\$18.80
Cashiers	16,618	16,110	(508)	-0.6%	\$13.20
General and Operations Managers	15,411	16,096	685	0.9%	\$47.59
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	15,193	16,059	866	1.1%	\$17.56
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	14,702	15,236	534	0.7%	\$24.16
Office Clerks, General	14,979	14,940	(39)	-0.1%	\$18.73

Source: Lightcast Q2 2024

The chart below represents the highest paying occupations in our region. All occupations are in the healthcare targeted sector. In 2020, General Internal Medicine Physicians were at the top of the list and in 2022 is no longer in the top ten. Judges, Magistrate Judges, and Magistrates, Airline Pilots, Copilots, and Flight Engineers and Chief Executives are also no longer in the top ten. Of the occupations listed below, all are looking at growth over the next 10 years.

**TABLE 25 – HIGHEST PAYING OCCUPATIONS**

Description	2024 Jobs	2028 Jobs	2024-2028 Change	2024-2028 % Change	Avg. Hourly Earnings	Median Hourly Earnings
Cardiologists	150	159	8	6%	\$286.48	\$267.12
Orthopedic Surgeons, Except Pediatric	180	188	8	5%	\$178.02	\$163.33
Surgeons, All Other	75	83	8	11%	\$153.82	\$161.00
Ophthalmologists, Except Pediatric	46	51	5	11%	\$177.24	\$145.77
Emergency Medicine Physicians	131	143	12	9%	\$152.10	\$140.95
Physicians, All Other	2,032	2,162	130	6%	\$134.21	\$136.54
Obstetricians and Gynecologists	123	131	8	6%	\$125.86	\$135.66
Anesthesiologists	250	266	16	7%	\$132.08	\$132.82
Radiologists	102	115	12	12%	\$138.31	\$126.89
Family Medicine Physicians	1,031	1,084	53	5%	\$128.74	\$120.99

## FASTEST GROWING OCCUPATIONS

For this data, we looked at the top 100 occupations by total employment. From those occupations, we looked at those that had the largest annual percentage growth over the past five years.

In 2024, several of the fastest growing occupations include our targeted industry sectors of Transportation and Warehousing and Healthcare. The occupation with the greatest change is Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators, followed by Miscellaneous Managers, and Logisticians and Project Management Specialists. The list below has changed in the last two years and now is comprised of primarily Transportation and Warehousing Industry Occupations.

**TABLE 25A – FASTEST GROWING OCCUPATIONS**

Occupation	Employment 2024	Mean Annual Wages	Annual % Change	Total Demand
Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	3,512	\$47,700	10.8%	402
Miscellaneous Managers	3,259	\$131,700	9.1%	289
Logisticians and Project Management Specialists	4,701	\$96,400	6.7%	435
Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	3,215	\$78,800	6.7%	380
Human Resources Workers	3,530	\$72,400	5.9%	356
Physicians	4,485	\$295,700	5.3%	174
Laborers and Material Movers	30,518	\$38,800	5.2%	5,141
Medical and Health Services Managers	2,331	\$131,000	5.1%	259
Computer and Information Systems Managers	1,644	\$162,900	5.1%	152
General and Operations Managers	11,306	\$131,500	4.8%	1,088

Source: Lightcast Q2 2024

Below we looked at the top 100 occupations by total employment and identified those who are predicted to have the highest growth over the next five years.

Software Developers are predicted to have the highest annual growth over the next 5 years, 14% over the next five years. While all these occupations are not high wage, they provide an entry point to in-demand industries for workers with only a high-school education. They also lead to opportunities to work for companies who will invest in education and training, allowing these workers to move up into higher skill and higher wage occupations. Also on the list are Medical Assistants (10%), Cooks (Restaurants) (8%), Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand (6%) and Registered Nurses (6%). Over the next five years, Registered Nurses will grow by almost 1,200 jobs.

**TABLE 25B – FASTEST GROWING OCCUPATIONS**

SOC	Occupation	5-Year Forecast	
		Total Demand	Annual % Growth
15-1252	Software Developers	954	14%
31-9092	Medical Assistants	513	10%
35-2014	Cooks, Restaurant	810	8%
31-1128	Home Health and Personal Care Aides	653	7%
29-1141	Registered Nurses	1,178	6%
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	534	6%
53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	1,086	5%
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	534	4%
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	685	4%
35-3023	Fast Food and Counter Workers	589	3%

Source: Lightcast Q2 2024

## OCCUPATION LOCATION QUOTIENT

Location quotient is a way of quantifying how concentrated a particular industry, cluster, occupation, or demographic group is in a region as compared to the nation. It can reveal what makes a particular region "unique." Industries that account for a larger than average "share" of total jobs have a Location Quotient over 1.0. The chart below represents the 10 highest Occupation Location Quotients for our region.

The chart below shows our highest Occupation Location Quotients, most of which are in the transportation/manufacturing industries. But simply having the highest Location Quotient in the past has not necessarily meant the occupations are experiencing growth employment.

**TABLE 26 – HIGHEST OCCUPATIONS LOCATION QUOTIENTS**

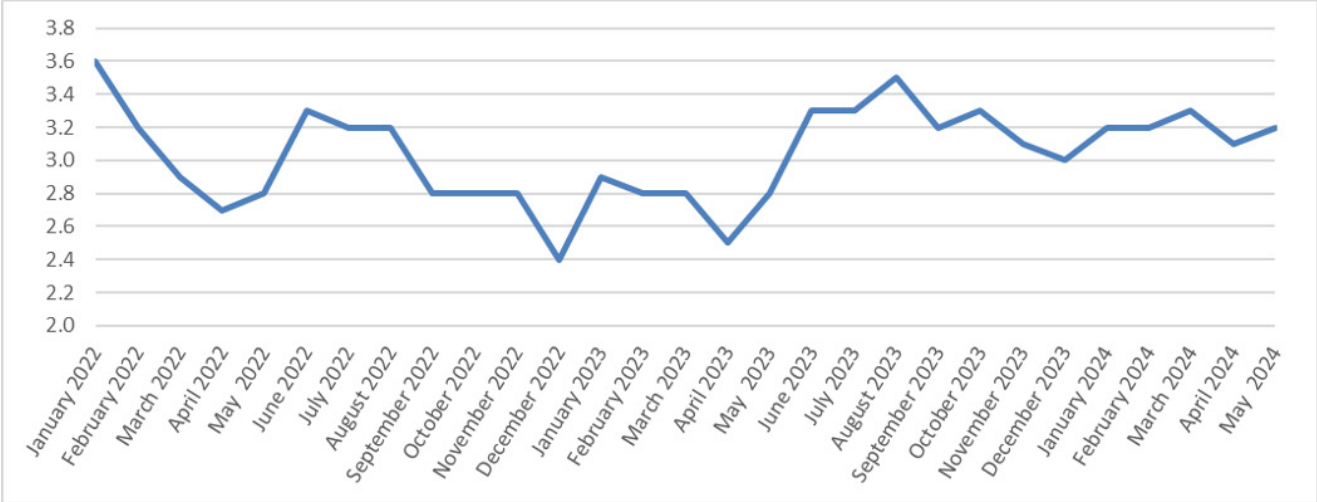
Occupation	LQ	Employment
Aerospace Engineering and Operations Technologists and Technicians	2.46	140
Airfield Operations Specialists	2.78	218
Bridge and Lock Tenders	3.01	60
Captains, Mates, and Pilots of Water Vessels	4.15	851
Dental Laboratory Technicians	2.44	420
Locksmiths and Safe Repairers	2.57	233
Motorboat Mechanics and Service Technicians	2.52	375
Security and Fire Alarm Systems Installers	2.55	1,086
Ship Engineers	4.17	206
Signal and Track Switch Repairers	2.91	112

Source: JobsEQ

### 1M. OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES IN THE LABOR MARKET

According to Florida Commerce Labor Market Information, the unemployment rate in the CareerSource NEFL region (Baker, Clay, Duval, Nassau, Putnam, and St. Johns counties) was 3.6% in June 2024. This rate is similar to what we saw two years ago when collecting data for the last 2-year-update.

**TABLE 27 – UNEMPLOYMENT RATE**



Source: Florida Commerce June 2024

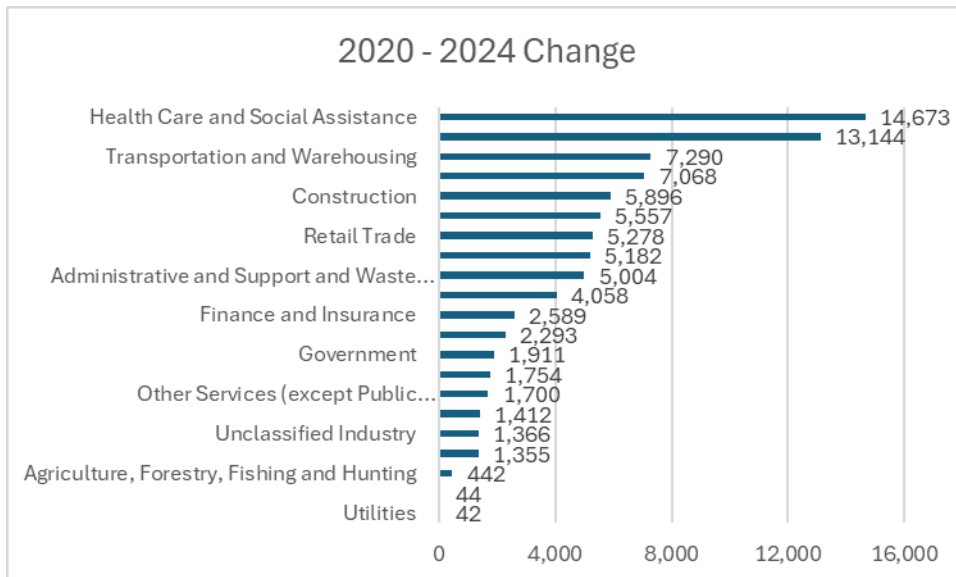
The unemployment rate in the CareerSource Northeast Florida region (Baker, Clay, Duval, Nassau, Putnam, and St. Johns counties) was 3.6 percent in June 2024. This rate was 0.3 percentage point greater than the region's year ago rate of 3.3 percent. The region's June 2024 unemployment rate was 0.1 percentage point above the state rate of 3.5 percent. The labor force was 880,454, down 571 (-0.1 percent) over the year. There were 31,764 unemployed residents in the region.

St. Johns County had the lowest unemployment rate (3.2 percent) in the CareerSource Northeast Florida region followed by Nassau County (3.3 percent), Baker County (3.5 percent), Clay County (3.5 percent), Duval County (3.7 percent), and Putnam County (4.3 percent).

**The Northeast Florida region is still experiencing strong growth in many sectors.**

**Highlights include:**

- In June 2024, nonagricultural employment in the Jacksonville MSA was 798,300, an increase of 12,100 jobs (+1.5 percent) over the year.
- The Government (+3.6 percent); Education and Health Services (+3.1 percent); and Leisure and Hospitality (+2.5 percent) industries grew as fast or faster in the metro area than statewide over the year.
- The Jacksonville MSA had the second highest annual job growth compared to all the metro areas in the state in the Leisure and Hospitality (+2,300 jobs) industry.
- The Jacksonville MSA had the third highest annual job growth compared to all the metro areas in the state in the Government (+2,700 jobs) industry.
- The industries gaining jobs over the year were Education and Health Services (+3,900 jobs); Trade, Transportation, and Utilities (+2,700 jobs); Government (+2,700 jobs); Leisure and Hospitality (+2,300 jobs); Mining, Logging, and Construction (+2,100 jobs); Other Services (+1,100 jobs); and Manufacturing (+200 jobs).
- The industries losing jobs over the year were Financial Activities (-1,600 jobs) and Professional and Business Services (-1,300 jobs).
- The Information industry was unchanged in jobs over the year.



*Florida Department of Commerce, Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research*

Our strong job growth is good news for jobseekers in the region, but employers continue to feel pressure to increase wages to attract the available talent. They are also concerned about finding and retaining qualified applicants. This is especially true for small businesses, which struggle to compete with large companies for starting salaries and benefits.

Despite the booming economy and growth in many industries, we continue to see segments of the labor force who struggle to find employment. Populations with significant barriers to employment, such as the lack of transportation, workers with disabilities, and those with criminal backgrounds, are not finding work in some of the highest paying and fastest growing sectors. CareerSource NEFL continues to advocate for these groups, and we hope that more companies will consider employing non-traditional candidates as part of their talent strategy.

The labor market sectors, and the changes experienced over recent years, also present the region with many unique opportunities and challenges.

**Opportunities in the labor market sectors are:**

- We are still promoting Finance and Insurance, Wholesale Transportation and Warehouse, Healthcare and Social Assistance, and the Manufacturing Industries. These industries offer higher wages and solid career paths. Manufacturing is an industry to watch with concern about the coming wave of Baby Boomer and Gen X retirements.
- Data indicates that the average age of the manufacturing workforce is 44.1 years (2020 BLS data.) The industry is very interested in creating a pipeline of younger workers.
- Some of our largest and fastest growing occupations are directly tied to our targeted industries including Healthcare and Logistics. Of the highest paying occupations, almost all are in the Service Sector and are directly tied to our Healthcare Targeted Industry.

**Challenges in the region's labor market sectors include:**

- Virtually every industry is experiencing challenges finding and retaining a qualified workforce. Economic development prospects over the last twelve months have expressed strong reservations about Northeast Florida's capacity to provide workers for large projects.
- Trade issues are causing uncertainty in the manufacturing and trade industries.
- Tariffs are causing rising prices for components and raw materials and may soon affect consumer spending if prices increase. Threatened tariffs on international foods and wines will have ripple effects in hospitality, food services, and other industries related to leisure.
- In addition to trade talks, there is uncertainty around immigration issues, including H1B visas and guest worker programs. The very low end (agriculture) and the very high end (IT) of our labor force will be impacted by any new constraints on immigration.
- Healthcare employers feel upward wage pressure to obtain and retain the needed workforce in this occupational group.

## 2. THE LABOR FORCE – IDENTIFICATION OF EMPLOYMENT NEEDS

The individuals who comprise our region's workforce are of foremost importance in creating a valuable workforce profile. Through a careful analysis of several demographic characteristics, we can help determine the preparedness of CareerSource NEFL's labor to meet the current and future needs of the economy.

**In this section, we will examine:**

- a. Population
- b. Future Workforce
- c. Individuals with Barriers to Employment
- d. Educational Attainment
- e. Military Service
- f. Poverty Rates
- g. Opportunities and Challenges

### 2A. POPULATION

According to JobsEQ 2024 population data, the CareerSource NEFL area population was just under 1,826,918 a 163,918 increase from 2020. Approximately 58% of our region's population lives in Duval County which includes Atlantic Beach, Baldwin, Jacksonville, Jacksonville Beach, and Neptune Beach.

According to JAXUSA, the CareerSource NEFL region has a labor force of 877,247 and the second highest concentration of veterans in Florida at 9.3%. The median age of 39 makes the region's population four years younger than the state average.

Below depicts the diversity of the Northeast Florida region as compared to Florida and the United States. According to this data, we have a significantly higher population of Black or African Americans than both Florida and the United States and a significantly larger population of Hispanic or Latinos (of any race) than both Florida and the United States.

**TABLE 1 – POPULATION**

Race	CareerSource NEFL - Workforce Region 8	Florida	USA
White	60.4%	51.7%	58.1%
Black or African American	21.6%	15.4%	12.7%
American Indian and Alaska Native	1.1%	0.3%	0.7%
Asian	2.5%	3.1%	6.3%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.1%	0.2%
Two or More Races	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	4.3%	1.9%	2.5%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	9.3%	25.8%	18.2%

Source: Lightcast Q2 2024

**TABLE 2 – POPULATION GROWTH**

Location	2020-2023	4 years	Past 12 Months
Baker	252	0.9%	2.1%
Clay	13,488	6.2%	2.6%
Duval	33,038	3.3%	1.4%
Nassau	10,470	11.5%	3.8%
Putnam	2,583	3.5%	1.6%
St Johns	43,011	15.5%	4.2%
Northeast FL	1,122,269	4.8%	1.7%
Florida	1,019,427	4.7%	1.6%
United States	3,387,962	1.0%	0.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division March 2024

According to U.S. Census data since 2020, the six counties that comprise CareerSource NEFL have ranged from .9% growth (Baker County) to 15.5% growth (St. Johns County). The highest local rates of growth over the past twelve months are in the counties of Nassau (3.8%) and St. Johns (4.2%). Note that these counties also have the highest growth rates over the last four years. Clay and Duval have grown at a 6.2% and 3.3% rate respectively over the past four years. Clay has continued to grow at a 2.6% rate over the last year while Duval has grown at a much slower rate (1.4%). Baker County has shown stronger growth over the past year (2.1%) than the previous four years (.9%). Putnam County gained population over the four years and grew slightly over the past year. Over the last 12 months Northeast Florida has grown at a more rapid rate than the United States and slightly more than Florida.

## 2B. FUTURE WORKFORCE

A simple forecast of the region's workforce provides us with trend information regarding our future workforce in Northeast Florida as well as each county. We utilize this information to drive our services to best meet the needs of the businesses and job seekers.

### AGE DISTRIBUTION

By looking at the population's age distribution, we offer additional insight into how the region's workforce will age in the future. The table below depicts regional age distribution by group in 2018-2022. This table shows the number of workers who have left or will be leaving the workforce over the next five to ten years. Nassau, Putnam, and St. Johns counties have the highest populations over the age of 65; these counties will need a relatively greater influx of young workers to support local industry growth. Northeast Florida is closely aligned with the United States and Florida. Our workforce is closely aligned with both Florida and the United States in both age groups.

**TABLE 3 – AGE DISTRIBUTION**

	Baker County	Clay County	Duval County	Nassau County	Putnam County	St. Johns County	Career-Source NEFL	Florida	USA
18 to 64 Years	61.6%	60.6%	62.9%	57.5%	55.3%	57.8%	61.1%	59.5%	61.4%
65 to 74 Years	8.9%	10.3%	9.0%	13.8%	14.0%	12.5%	10.2%	11.5%	9.7%

Source: JobsEQ (ACS 2018-2022)

## 2C. INDIVIDUALS WITH BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT

According to the U.S Census American Community Survey (ACS) data for 2018-2022 CareerSource NEFL residents between the ages of 20 - 64 years have self-disclosed that they have a disability (about 23.9% of the population.) This is lower than the U.S. Census American Community Survey (ACS) data for 2012-2016, which indicated that approximately 15% of Region 8's population had a disability.

The poverty level for people with disabilities is significantly higher than those without a disability. Of those below the poverty level, 23.5% are individuals with disabilities. While only 9.3% of the population with incomes at or above the poverty level have a disability.

**TABLE 4 – BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT**

Population Age 20 to 64	General Population	Income below 100 percent of the poverty level	Income at or above the poverty level
<b>Total</b>	<b>975,711</b>	<b>109,392</b>	<b>866,319</b>
<b>Total With a Disability</b>	<b>26,162</b>	<b>23.9%</b>	<b>9.4%</b>
Total In labor force	5,604	21.4%	54.3%
In Armed Forces	0	0.0%	1.1%
Civilian Employed	3,751	14.3%	92.5%
Civilian Unemployed	1,853	7.1%	7.5%
Total Civilian Not in labor force	20,558	78.6%	45.7%
<b>Total Without Disability</b>	<b>83,230</b>	<b>76.1%</b>	<b>90.6%</b>
Total In labor force	44,248	53.2%	86.0%
In Armed Forces	339	0.8%	4.7%
Civilian Employed	35,666	81.2%	96.9%
Civilian Unemployed	8,243	18.8%	3.1%
Total Civilian Not in labor force	38,982	88.8%	14.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2018-2022

## 2D. EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

A strong indicator of the quality of an area's labor force is educational attainment. The most recent county-level data available on educational attainment is from the 2018-2022 United States ACS 5-year Estimates. This data shows that 22.4% of persons 25 and over in the region obtained an Associates degree. The same attainment level was 21.5% for Florida and 22.4% for the United States. On another positive note, 90.7% of persons in the region had received a high school degree or higher, compared to 90% in the state and 89.9% in the nation.

Northeast Florida has room for improvement in post-graduate degrees (10.9%), trailing the state (11.6%) and the United States (13.4%).

**TABLE 6 – EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT**

	Career-Source NEFL	Career-Source NEFL %	Florida	Florida %	United States	United States %
Population 25 years and over	1,173,132		15,579,847		226,600,992	
Less than 9th grade	74,250	8.3%	1,100,916	10.0%	17,373,867	10.1%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	238,426	26.8%	2,978,879	26.9%	43,176,248	25.1%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	187,821	21.1%	2,104,160	19.0%	33,916,989	19.7%
Some college, no degree	93,444	10.5%	1,216,834	11.0%	15,886,884	9.2%
Associates degree	199,032	22.4%	2,377,784	21.5%	38,451,123	22.4%
Bachelor's degree	96,950	10.9%	1,280,627	11.6%	23,058,233	13.4%
Graduate or professional degree	119,223	10.7%	1,721,353	11.3%	28,321,709	12.7%

Source: 2024 American Community Survey 2018-2022

### EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

The region is closely aligned to the education attainment rate within Florida and the United States regarding citizens who attain a high school diploma (26.5%), associate degree (10.5%), or bachelor's degree (22.4%). Our region has a postgraduate degree attainment at 10.9%, compared to 10.7% for Florida and 13.7% nationally.

As seen in the table below, St. Johns County has the highest educational attainment in Northeast Florida, with 48.2% of the population having a bachelor's degree or above. Clay, Duval, and Nassau Counties are competitive, at 27.6%, 32.9% and 28.4% respectively.

Baker County, with 14.6% of the population having a bachelor's degree or higher, and Putnam County, with 11.3%, trail the other counties in Educational Attainment. This statistic will make it harder to attract companies with high skill, high-paying jobs to those counties and increase the risk of skilled workers relocating to other counties to find employment.

**TABLE 7 – EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, AGE 25-64**

Educational Attainment	Baker County	Clay County	Duval County	Nassau County	Putnam County	St. Johns County	Career-Source NEFL	Florida	USA
No High School Diploma	16.0%	7.6%	8.7%	6.9%	18.0%	4.9%	8.3%	10.5%	10.1%
High School Graduate	39.6%	26.1%	27.0%	32.4%	42.0%	19.7%	26.8%	27.5%	25.1%
Some College, No degree	21.1%	25.8%	21.1%	21.8%	20.6%	17.0%	21.1%	19.8%	19.7%
Associate Degree	8.7%	12.9%	10.3%	10.4%	8.2%	10.1%	10.5%	11.1%	9.2%
Bachelor's Degree	9.2%	19.2%	22.4%	19.1%	8.6%	30.8%	22.4%	20.4%	22.4%
Postgraduate Degree	5.4%	8.4%	10.5%	9.3%	2.7%	17.4%	10.9%	10.7%	13.4%

Source: 2022 American Community Survey 2018-2022

## HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUT RATE

The High School Dropout Rate, shown in the table below, is another key indicator concerning education levels. The trend in Northeast Florida is mostly positive, with slight variations over the past five years. Duval County has the lowest dropout rate in the region at 1.2%, followed closely by St. Johns and Clay Counties at 2.0% and 2.5% respectively.

Putnam County has maintained progress over the past five years, going from a dropout rate of over 7.1% in 2016-17 to a rate of 3.5% in 2022-2023. Baker County had been making good progress until the 2020-21 school year. Baker County is still struggling. Nassau County has shown a significant increase since the pandemic.

**TABLE 8 - HIGH SCHOOL DROP OUT RATE**

	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Baker	3.7%	3.2%	4.5%	3.9%	2.4%	2.0%	7.9%	6.9%	7.4%
Clay	3.6%	3.4%	2.8%	3.4%	3.0%	2.1%	2.1%	3.6%	2.5%
Duval	5.1%	4.5%	5.3%	4.5%	3.0%	3.7%	2.5%	1.9%	1.2%
Nassau	1.2%	1.6%	0.9%	1.6%	0.5%	1.6%	0.7%	1.2%	3.8%
Putnam	13.9%	11.1%	7.1%	5.8%	5.2%	5.3%	3.8%	4.0%	3.5%
St Johns	2.6%	2.0%	2.9%	2.2%	1.8%	2.1%	2.1%	2.7%	2.0%

Source: Florida Department of Education

## 2E. MILITARY SERVICE

An additional, yet often overlooked, indicator of a workforce's quality is the percentage of the population having served in the military. Individuals with military service often possess additional training and skills that are highly marketable. According to the Lightcast Q2 2024 Data Set, Census's API, using the ACS 5-year estimates there are approximately 149,324 people in the Northeast Florida population who have served in the armed forces. This represents 9.0% of the area's total population. The State and National averages are 6.5% and 5.3% respectively.

While this is a relatively small percentage of the population, it indicates that the region's businesses have an additional highly trained resource to draw upon when searching for potential employees. Furthermore, military spouses are a valuable addition to the labor force.

## 2F. POVERTY RATES

Area poverty rates can serve as an indicator of various social problems negatively affecting the workforce's quality and performance. For instance, teenage mothers, single parents, and persons with low levels of education are all at greater risk of falling into poverty. Individuals in poverty face immense obstacles as they seek to contribute positively to the labor force.

Poverty creates challenges with transportation, access to healthcare, mental health treatment, and other issues. According to 2016-2020 Census data, the poverty rate for Northeast Florida has declined to 12.8% (from 13.9% in 2015-2019), lower than the Florida rate of 13.3% and equal to the U.S. rate of 12.8%.

The rural county of Putnam has poverty rates significantly above the regional average at 22.1%. For those in poverty under age 18, the number is much higher at 33.7%. This higher-than-average poverty rate presents an additional obstacle for residents of the county if they are to be valuable participants in the region's labor force. As expected, the poverty rates in the suburban counties of Clay, Nassau, and St. Johns are lower than the regional average. St. Johns County has the lowest poverty level for those under age 18 at 7.4%.

The table below shows the total percentage of the population in poverty as well as those under the age of 18 living in poverty.

**TABLE 9 – POVERTY RATES**

Those in Poverty	Baker County	Clay County	Duval County	Nassau County	Putnam County	St Johns County
Total Population in Poverty	12.2%	9.0%	13.7%	8.5%	22.1%	6.1%
Under age 18	18.5%	13.4%	20.3%	13.0%	33.7%	7.4%

Source: 2022 American Community Survey 2018-2022

## 2G. OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES IN THE NORTHEAST FLORIDA LABOR FORCE

To understand the employment needs of our in-demand industry sectors and occupations we must continually monitor advantages and opportunities to help ensure the long-term economic health of the region.

**Advantages and opportunities in the Northeast Florida labor force are as follows:**

- As of 2023 the region's population increased by 11.3% since 2018, growing by 182,566. Population is expected to increase by 10.2% between 2023 and 2028, adding 181,989.
- From 2018 to 2023, jobs increased by 9.8% in LWIA 8 from 777,794 to 853,748. This change outpaced the national growth rate of 4.3% by 5.5%. As the number of jobs increased, the labor force participation rate increased from 62.0% to 62.3% between 2018 and 2023.
- Concerning educational attainment, 22.2% of the selected regions' residents possess a bachelor's degree (1.0% above the national average), and 9.8% hold an Associate's Degree (0.9% above the national average).
- Northeast Florida currently has 536,408 workers aged 55 and older and who are at risk of retiring soon.

- The top three industries in 2023 are Restaurants and Other Eating Places, General Medical and Surgical Hospitals, and Offices of Physicians.
- Northeast Florida has 147,380 veterans, 39% higher than the national average for an area our size.
- Average earnings per job for our region is currently \$74.6K, below the national earnings average by \$8.0K
- Due to the high percentage of residents with military service, the region has an additional supply of individuals who have acquired training and marketable labor skills.
- Comparatively, fewer people are in poverty in Northeast Florida than in the state of Florida.

The challenges facing the workforce need to be acknowledged and addressed before true advancements can be made.

**The major challenges currently facing the region are:**

- Through aging and domestic migration, people of retirement age are moving into the region, especially in Putnam and St. Johns counties. This trend can strain the region's labor supply and its resources. Affordable housing also remains an issue amongst areas in Nassau and St. Johns counties.
- Although the region's total poverty rate has been dropping, 22.8% of Putnam County residents live in poverty and over 20% of households receive SNAP benefits. This is an area where we and our partners should focus resources to ensure those able to work are given the training and resources to be successful. We must also work closely with area schools to ensure in-school youth understand the career opportunities in our region.
- Local businesses are having trouble finding and retaining qualified workers. The competition for talent is becoming fierce. This puts small businesses at a disadvantage, since they struggle to compete with larger companies that offer better benefits and higher starting salaries.
- Each county in our region exceeds the state labor force participation rate, with the exception of rural Putnam (48.5%), Nassau (53.4%), and St. Johns counties (56.2%). Rural residents have less access to transportation to commute to hubs with strong employment, have less access to healthcare and mental health services, and are more likely to live in poverty. These issues must be resolved so we can bring all residents into our thriving regional economy.
- Transportation is a barrier for many workers to get to where high paying jobs are located. Without a stronger public transportation system, residents will be restricted to jobs within their neighborhoods. This means that residents of economically challenged communities will have trouble moving into better paying jobs in other parts of town.

- The migration of wealthy people to suburban counties in the region has led to greater demand for lesser-skilled low-paying jobs to service these new residents (personal services, fast food, and landscaping, for example.) However, those individuals who are willing to work in these lesser-skilled jobs are priced out of living in these increasingly wealthy areas, making transportation a barrier to employment. Getting people to these opportunities will become progressively more difficult, and the cost of gas for the commute will cut into the higher hourly pay they may earn in these jobs.
- There are additional issues currently facing our workforce. Inflation is at a historic high, demonstrated by higher costs for fuel, housing, and food. Potential employees are seeing the increase in hourly wages being eliminated by inflation. Employers are finding higher costs in doing business and are passing costs along to customers.

### **3. A LABOR MARKET SUPPORTED BY A STRONG ECONOMY**

A strong performing economy is vital for the region's labor market to function effectively. As the economy improves, job opportunities for an area's residents will increase. Several factors help determine if Northeast Florida's economy is providing the local labor force with a sufficient number of jobs at reasonable wages.

**In this section, we will examine:**

- a. Total Employment
- b. Labor Force Participation Rates
- c. Unemployment Rates
- d. Real Per Capita Income
- e. Average Wages
- f. Sources of Income
- g. Commuting Patterns

#### **3A. TOTAL EMPLOYMENT**

Since 2022, our regional labor force has grown by 2.50%, less than Florida's growth of 4.24% and higher than the U.S rate of 1.91%. Putnam County has seen the most significant increase in employment. Baker, Clay, Duval, Nassau and St. Johns have ranged between 2.23% and 2.85% since 2022. All 6 counties have seen a consistent working age population between 2018 and 2022,

with Putnam’s working age (18-64) population at 55.3% and Duval's at 62.9%. Even though we are growing at a higher pace than the national average, we continue to see a labor shortage as compared to employment growth.

**TABLE 1 – TOTAL EMPLOYMENT**

Region	Historical Labor Force 2022	Labor Force 2024	Percentage Change
Baker County, FL	12,581	12,894	2.49%
Clay County, FL	112,308	115,513	2.85%
Duval County, FL	510,441	521,817	2.23%
Nassau County, FL	44,503	45,649	2.58%
Putnam County, FL	27,784	29,243	5.25%
St. Johns County, FL	148,631	152,721	2.75%
CareerSource NEFL	856,248	877,837	2.52%
Florida	10,626,660	11,076,700	4.24%
United States	164,157,172	167,285,374	1.91%

Source: Lightcast Q2 2024 Data Set – Feb 2024

### 3B. LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATES

The labor force participation rate (LFPR) indicates the percentage of the total working age population (16 + years old) that is employed or unemployed and currently seeking a job. The LFPR reflects not only the percentage of people who are working, but also the percentage of those who are willing to work. While the LFPR can reflect changing attitudes towards work in our culture, it can also indicate the availability of workers. A region with a high LFPR and a low unemployment rate will have fewer people who are willing and able to work than a region with a low LFPR and a high unemployment rate. As unemployment rates drop and wages rise, we see trends develop that affect the labor force participation rate. For example, more parents of young children may decide to stay home and/or spouses may elect not to work if the family can get by on one income.

In 2022, the LFPR in the region was 63.5%, above the rates for Florida (58.6%), and the United States (62.2%). Today, our regional LFPR is 60.97%. Florida's LFPR is 59.34 and the United States LFPR is 62.30. Florida and the United States have had a slight recovery since the Covid 19 impact but the region has had a decrease in the last two years.

Three counties in our region exceed the state rate and the national rate. The counties that do not are: Putnam (48.2%); Nassau (53.4%); and St. Johns (56.1%) counties. Rural residents in Putnam and Nassau have less access to transportation to commute to hubs with strong employment. Putnam County have less access to healthcare and mental health services and are more likely to live in poverty. These issues must be resolved so we can bring all residents into our thriving regional economy.

Putnam County's low LFPR is another indicator that we must focus resources to ensure residents in that county have access to the career paths available in the region.

**TABLE 2 – LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION**

Region	Labor Force (May 2024)	Participation Rate (May 2024)
Baker County, FL	12,894	70.69%
Clay County, FL	115,513	62.98%
Duval County, FL	521,817	63.66%
Nassau County, FL	45,649	53.35%
Putnam County, FL	29,243	48.24%
St. Johns County, FL	152,721	56.11%
CareerSource NEFL	877,837	60.97%
Florida	11,076,700	59.34%
United States	167,285,374	62.30%

Source: Lightcast Q2 2024 Data Set

### 3C. UNEMPLOYMENT RATES

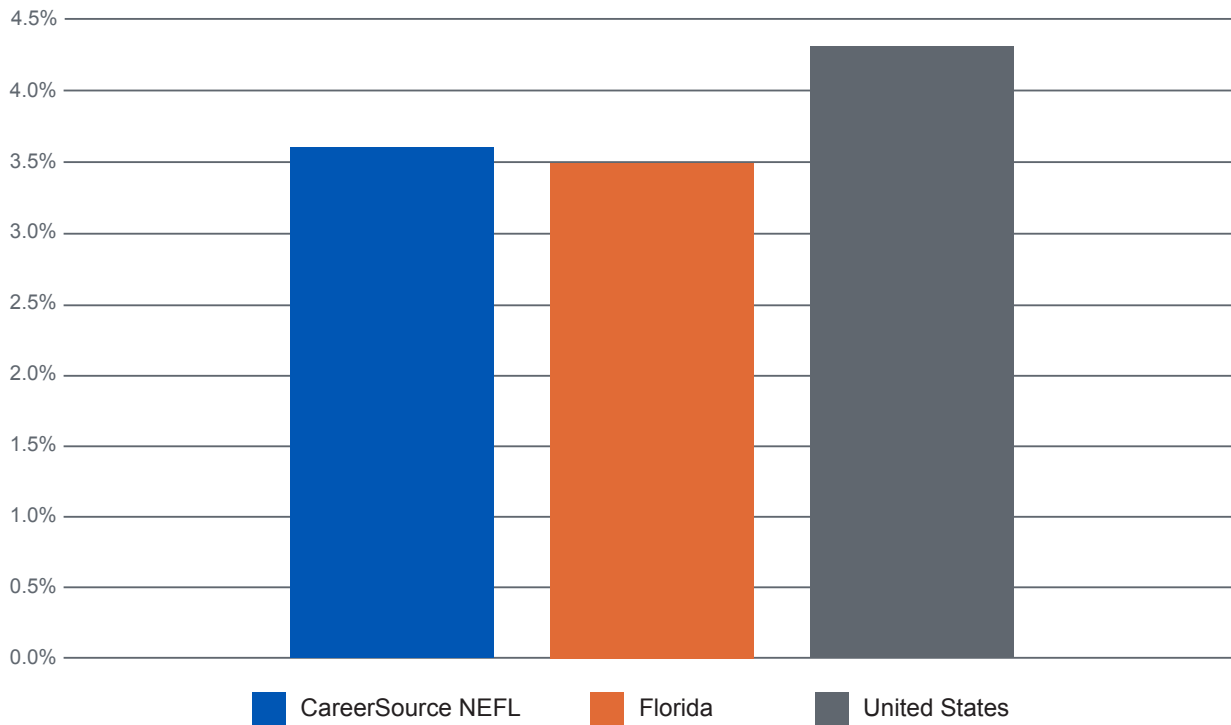
Unemployment rates are often cited as indicators for the health of an area's labor market. By any measure, the region's unemployment rate is low, far below what many economists consider to be "full employment." The Northeast Florida unemployment rate for June 2024 was 3.6%, up from 3.3% in 2019, above Florida's at 3.5% and below the United States at 4.3%.

Although very low unemployment rates are an indicator that the region's residents are finding work, which is generally good news, the data can be concerning for regional businesses. Very low unemployment means that businesses have a smaller labor pool to recruit from. The region's businesses are finding it difficult to find employees as shown by the number of job-opening advertisements and in some cases signs in business windows with now hiring and offering higher than minimum wages. This coincides with rising prices for goods and services with food and fuel

topping the list.

A low unemployment rate can also be a concern for companies considering locating or expanding in the region as there may be concerns of needing to compete for talent in such a competitive environment.

**TABLE 3 – UNEMPLOYMENT RATE COMPARISON - JUNE 2024**

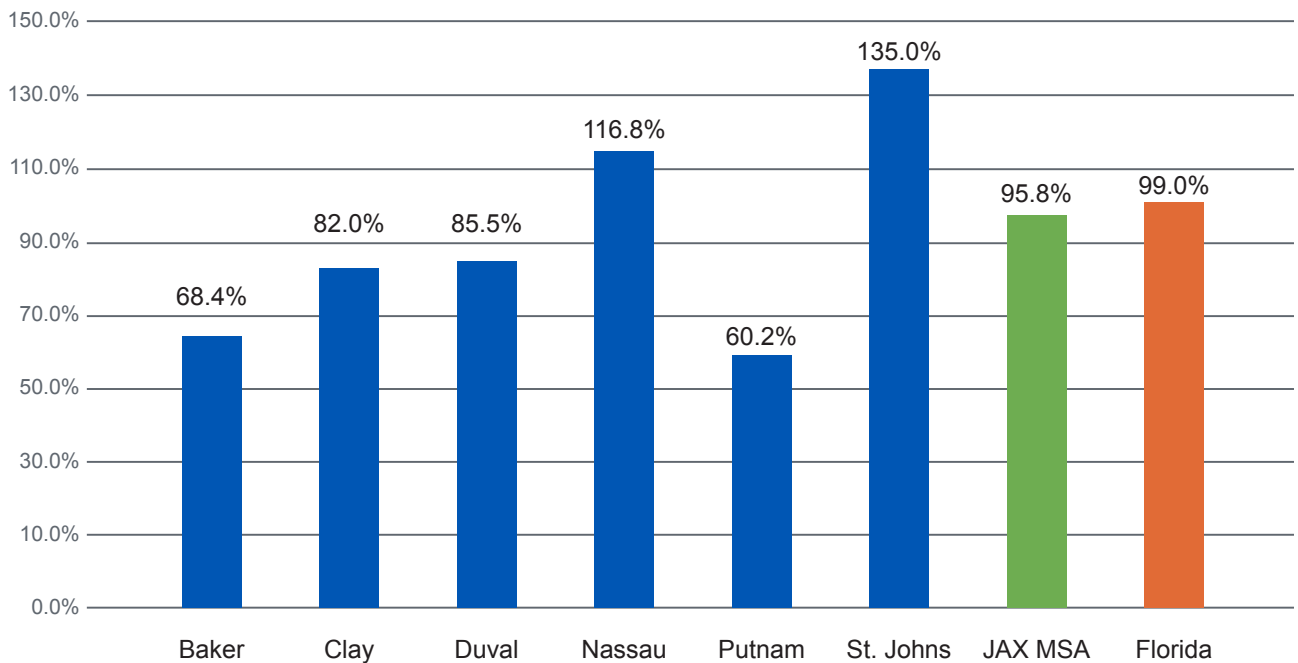


Source: Florida Department of Economic Opportunity

### 3D. REAL PER CAPITA INCOME

In 2022, the Jacksonville MSA (6 counties) Real Per Capita Income (RPCI) was \$62,729, showing a healthy growth of 13.5, up from \$54,280 in 2020. The State RPCI was \$64,805 in 2022 and \$55,675 in 2020, so the regional position remains relatively unchanged. The United States RPCI was \$59,510 in 2020 and \$62,729 in 2022. Nassau and St. Johns counties continue to exceed the National RCPI for 2022.

**TABLE 4 – REAL PER CAPITA PERSONAL INCOME AS PERCENTAGE OF NATIONAL AVERAGE: 2022**

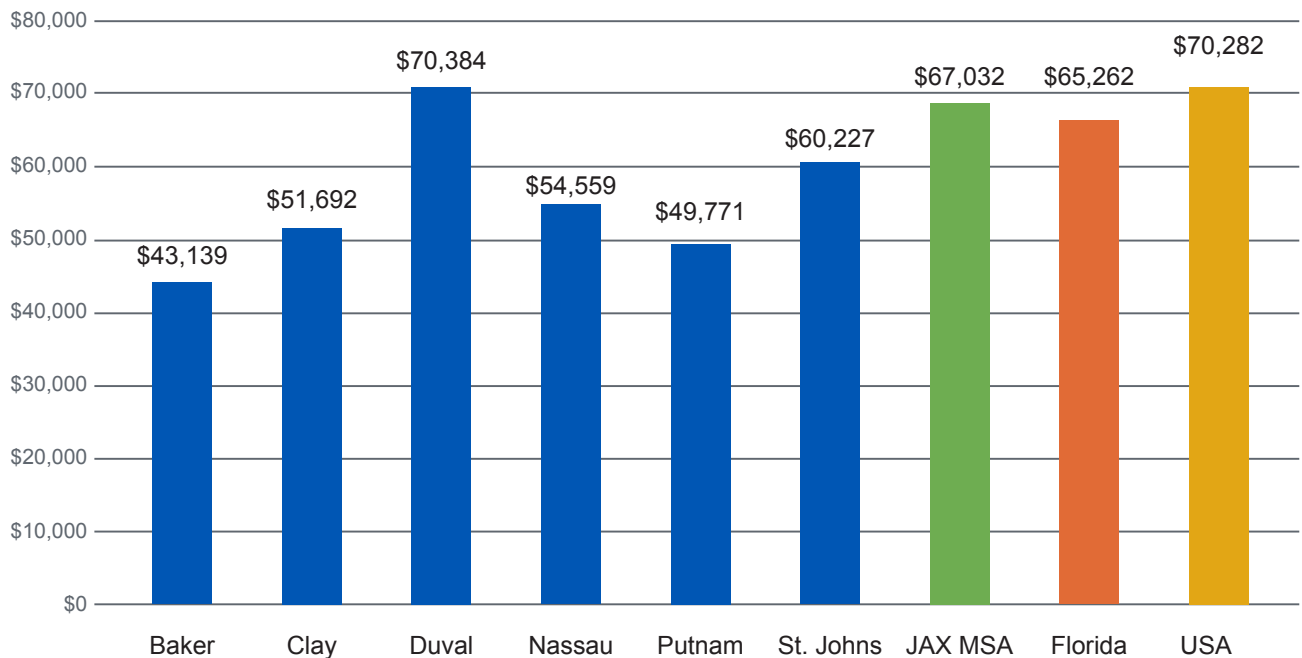


Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

### 3E. AVERAGE WAGES

Like RPCI, looking at average wages offers insight into the level of wealth in the region. However, where RPCI looks at income by person, the average wage looks at income by employment as covered by unemployment insurance. For privacy reasons, this data does not disclose wages in sectors with fewer than three establishments in the county. Because of this different approach, we find different results between comparison areas. The Jacksonville MSA (6 counties) 2022 average wage, \$67,032, shows growth over the 2020 average wage of \$58,988. The MSA average wage was above Florida's \$65,262 but below the national average of \$70,282. Its relative position to state and national averages remain unchanged from our 2016 comparison.

**TABLE 5 – AVERAGE WAGE COMPARISON 2022**



Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

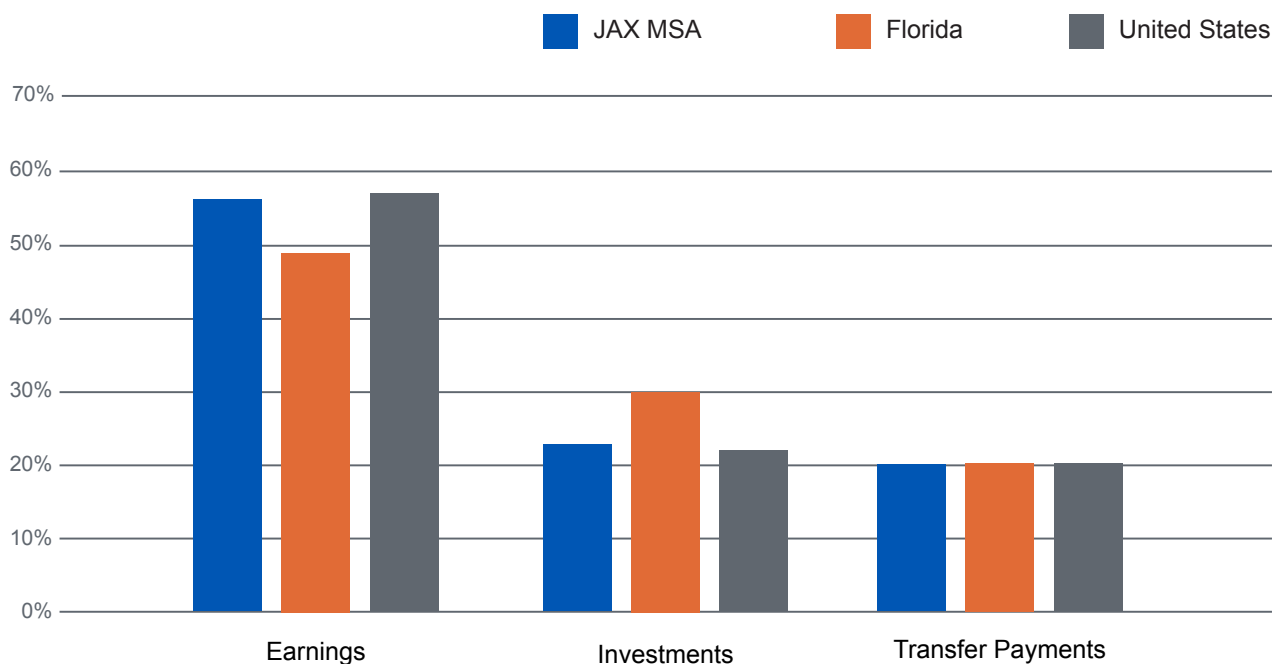
### 3F. SOURCES OF INCOME

The population receives income from three general sources: earnings, investments, and transfer payments. Earnings are the wages and salary people receive from their employment. Investments include income from sources such as stocks, bonds, rents, and royalties. Transfer payments include governmental financial assistance such as Social Security and Medicare.

If people in an area receive a greater portion of their income through transfer payments, that area would most likely have a large number of retired or unemployed individuals.

Comparing the region against Florida and the United States (see chart below), we see relatively low levels of investments as sources of income. Transfer payments accounted for 20% of the region's income, down from 24% in our 2022 data, 1% lower than Florida's rate of 21% and the United States' rate of 21%. Northeast Florida residents rely on income at 56%, compared to Florida's 48% and the United States' rate of 57%. Investments have increased for the region by 2% compared to Florida's increase of 2% and the United States' increase of 1% from 2020 to 2022.

**TABLE 7 - SOURCES OF INCOME 2022**



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis

### 3G. COMMUTING PATTERNS

How people get to work and the options they have to get there can affect their ability to locate and find employment. If a region's population is highly mobile, its potential labor force's size can increase significantly. The availability and accessibility of mass transit can also broaden the area in which an individual looks for work. The table below depicts the number of people who work in their county of residence or commute to another county within Florida or work outside our state.

Across our region in 2021, a significant number of the Northeast Florida population worked in their county of residence (73.5%%). Nassau County had the greatest percentage working in county at 80.1%. Clay County has the most residents working outside Florida at 16.8%; this may be attributed to the county's population of military personnel.

Clay, Nassau, and Putnam counties see more residents commuting out of county than work in county. Putnam County residents commute out of county at a rate of 71.0%% as Putnam County is surrounded by counties with greater employment opportunities.

**TABLE 8 – COMMUTERS**

	Baker	Clay	Duval	Nassau	Putnam	St Johns	CSNEFL
In County	75.7%	72.5%	80.0%	80.1%	77.0%	55.5%	73.5%
Florida Counties	11.0%	10.8%	6.5%	3.3	9.4%	31.7%	12.5%
Outside Florida	13.3%	16.8%	13.5%	16.7%	13.6%	12.8%	14.0%

Source: IRS Individual Master File, 2020-2021 Statistics of Income, April 2023

#### 4. SKILLS DEMANDED BY BUSINESS AND WORKFORCE ACTIVITIES

Each indicator we have previously discussed provides valuable insight into the people and businesses that work and operate in the region. The population of the region is changing in many ways. It is becoming more ethnically and racially diverse. Although people do retire to the region, the population is still relatively young and will provide additional workers for the future labor force.

Education is key to the success of the region's labor force as knowledge and information become increasingly valuable in the marketplace. An analysis of the largest, highest paying, and fastest growing occupations in LWDA 8 consistently lists Customer and Personal Services, English Language and Mathematics in the top three knowledge competencies that are required. As we evaluate the Skill Competencies that support these occupations, we quickly see that all require Reading Comprehension, Active Listening, Critical Thinking, and are included again in the top three across all jobs, which are surprisingly diverse.

Our regional educational attainment rate is steadily improving. At 31.2%, we now exceed Florida's rate of 30.6% for those with a bachelor's degree or higher. This progress can be credited in part to the efforts of a local initiative called Earn Up. Led by JAXUSA, the Jacksonville Regional Chamber, Earn Up is a result of six months of collaboration and work by leaders of the region's private colleges and public universities, K-12 school districts, local governments, business communities, and nonprofit

organizations. The goal of Earn Up is that 60% of the adults living in Northeast Florida will have an in-demand market certification or college degree by 2030.

As we have seen, Northeast Florida has a richly diverse economy that has performed better than the U.S. average for many years, only dropping to the U.S. level during the recession.

**The diverse employment base is enviable; however, it also means that our mission to develop the workforce is challenging as the emerging industry ecosystems widely differ in their infrastructure and talent needs:**

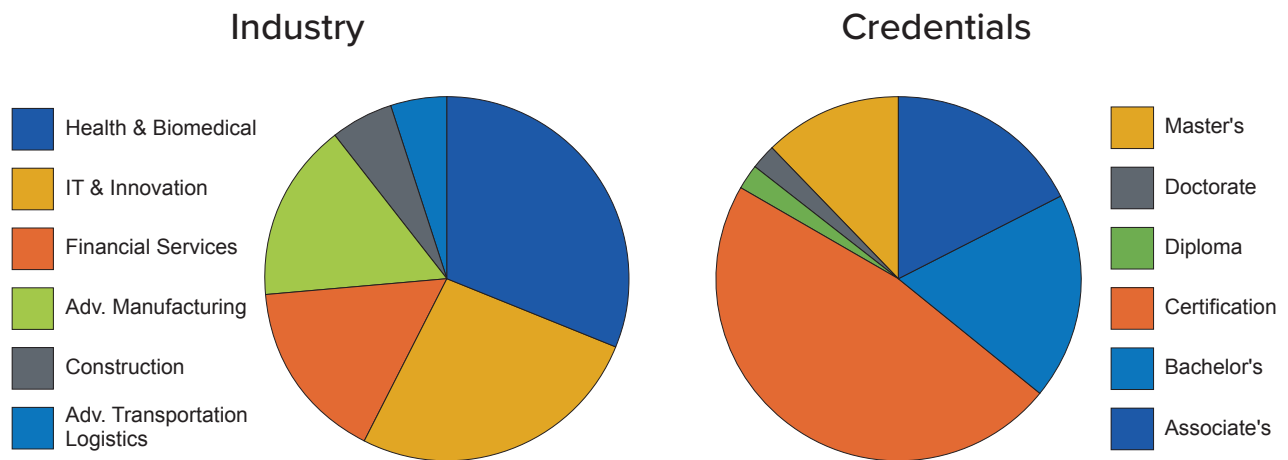
- Advanced transportation, including aviation, clean fuels (including taking a lead role in Liquid Natural Gas fuel for shipping), rail and port logistics, power storage, propulsion systems, tracking devices and security systems, distribution centers, and supply chain management and IT.
- Financial services, making Northeast Florida one of the country's most prominent locations for financial services support, data centers, insurance, financial software, trade financing and wholesale banking.
- Health and life sciences, ranging from human healthcare and wellness to medical technologies, food safety, agricultural sciences, marine sciences, health insurance, administrative services, complex regulatory compliance, and health Information technology.

## AVAILABLE TRAINING AND CREDENTIALS

As part of the Elevate Northeast Florida planning process, consultants performed a study of educational resources and a detailed skills gap analysis.

The data shows that Northeast Florida has a variety of training programs and certifications available to students and companies who want to invest in training their workforce. The graphic below shows the training available for so-called "middle skills" job as well as four-year and post graduate education.

## INDUSTRY & CREDENTIAL BREAKDOWN



*Of the regional target Industries, Health & Biomedical is the most present, at 31%, followed closely by IT & Innovation at 26%. Following that is Financial Services at 16% and Advanced Manufacturing at 16%.*

*Within these industries, the most prevalent credential available in the region is a certification, taking up almost 50% of the total available credentials followed by an almost equal split between bachelors (18%) and associate degrees at 18%.*

*\*Construction educational offerings has been added to the regional analysis due to the foundational nature of this skill set and its importance to all the industry sectors.*

In addition, the study analyzed the demand for occupations and certifications in our region, considering projected growth, turnover, and retirements. The analysts then looked at the projected number of graduates of training programs and workers currently in the workforce and came up with occupations where we have an excess number of workers and those which will experience a shortage over the next 5 years. The results are in the graphic below.

## GAP ANALYSIS IN TARGET INDUSTRIES

### Severe Shortage

Accountants & Tax Examiners  
Financial Managers, Analysts & Advisors  
Software Developers  
Doctors, Pharmacists, Surgeons & Psychiatrists  
Banking Analysts  
Industrial Engineers

### Balance

Registered Nurses  
Environmental Science Technician  
Computer Support Technicians  
Civil Engineers  
Supply Chain Managers & Analysts  
Mechanical Drafters  
Surgical Technologists  
Medical & Lab Techs  
Medical Records & Health Information Technicians

### Shortage

LPNs and LVNs  
Rad. Tech/MRI/Sonographers  
Industrial Production Technicians  
Aerospace Engineers  
Industrial Engineering Technicians  
Computer Systems & Info Security Analysts  
Environmental Scientists & Engineers  
Computer Network Administrators  
Dental Hygienists  
Web Developers  
Electrical & Electronics Engineers

### Surplus

Welders  
Chemical Technicians  
Mechanical Engineering Technicians  
Commercial Divers & Instructors  
Biological Technicians  
Medical & Health Services Managers

Source: Elevate NEFL

## C. LWDB VISION AND STRATEGIC GOALS

### 1. VISION AND STRATEGIC GOALS

CareerSource NEFL is laser-focused on working with employers to find new and innovative ways to recruit, retain and reskill their workforce, while at the same time, providing individuals in the Northeast Florida region, particularly those with significant barriers to employment, the career information, support services and training to launch them onto a career path.

CareerSource NEFL continues to embrace the board's vision that Northeast Florida will have a world-class workforce development system that enables our businesses to be successful in the global economy and individuals have access to careers that lead to economic self-sufficiency. CareerSource NEFL will continue to provide streamlined services for the greatest efficiency and effectiveness, empower individuals to make informed decisions to best meet their career needs and provide universal access to all customers. CareerSource NEFL will work with our core and other partners to meet the following goals.

### GOALS

#### CAPACITY GOALS

- Continue to develop staff and align training with the requirements of WIOA, focusing on strategic employer sectors and targeted jobseeker populations.
- Increase the investment in and utilization of technology and other tools to enhance the accessibility of our services for all customers.
- Continue to look for ways to diversify revenue streams to support the mission and strategic priorities and create sustainability, including more aggressively approaching grant opportunities, foundation funding and pursuing fee-for-services based on employer and labor market needs.
- Find innovative ways to inform potential customers in NEFL about our services and the positive impact CareerSource NEFL has made in the lives of individuals and in meeting the talent needs of industry.

#### SECTOR GOALS

- Prioritize our service delivery around sectors that have the most growth opportunities throughout our region: life sciences, advanced manufacturing, transportation and logistics, finance and technology services. These sectors are aligned with the JAXUSA Regional Economic Development Plan.
- Maintain a strong focus on work-based learning and employer-based training to grow a qualified workforce to meet the needs of business and industry today and in the future.

## SERVICE GOALS FOR YOUTH AND INDIVIDUALS WITH BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT

- Increase labor force participation within our region by providing intensive support to those with significant barriers to employment.
- Diversify the talent pipeline by considering those that are new or re-entering the workforce.
- Ensure accessibility of services so that all customers have access to our services.
- Reach out to the community (using strategies such as Mobile Access Points) and bring partners into our career centers and/or where our customers are located. This strategy will lead to providing added basic jobseeker services on-site so we can serve those who may not possess the skills to access services online.
- Provide robust career counseling to youth and job seekers with barriers to employment to ensure they are informed of the career path opportunities available in NEFL including apprenticeships and other work-based learning opportunities that do not require a college degree.

## CONVENING GOALS

- The board staff will continue to play an active role as a regional convener of workforce development discussions, including taking a more prominent role in existing groups such as the TAN, the JAXUSA Partnership, TAP, Career Academies, STEMM, Earn Up, and more. We will continue to engage in regional committees, activities, and events (regular partner groups, forums, summits).
- We will specifically focus on sector convening in targeted industries to foster and support the establishment of Career Pathways. We will also convene partners regularly to enable collaboration, communication and to discuss ways to provide more effective services for key customer group.
- We will continue to build strong partnerships with regional and core partners that leverage multiple resources to meet the needs of industry and jobseekers.

## 2. OUR STRATEGY TO WORK WITH OUR CORE PROGRAM PARTNERS

CareerSource NEFL and its core partner programs are aligned to create a seamless, customer-focused delivery system that integrates service delivery across all programs and enhances access to program services. The local workforce delivery system includes, as required by WIOA, six core programs (Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs; Title II Adult Education and Literacy

programs; Title III Wagner-Peyser program; and Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation program), as well as other required and optional partners, such as TANF.

CareerSource NEFL has established procedures with partners that address integration of resources and services for the region's career centers that support a customer-centered, fully integrated, service delivery system. Customers, both job seekers and employers, have maximum access to the full range of education, employment, training, supportive services, and employer services offered through the programs and services available.

**CareerSource NEFL's strategies to work with core and combined partners to contribute to the statewide goals include:**

**Increase local labor force participation:** CareerSource NEFL understands that increasing the labor force participation is a complex issue, involving a range of economic, social and educational factors. We continue to focus on strengthening access, alignment, and collaboration across the Northeast Florida region by partnering with core and combined partners, to prepare an educated and skilled workforce that will increase labor force participation. Our strategic efforts include:

## 1. Education and Training Programs

- a. **Collaborating with K-12 and Vocational Training:** Develop and expand vocational training programs to equip workers with skills that are in demand by local employers through the Master Credentials List.
- b. **Partnerships with Educational Institutions:** Collaborate with local colleges, universities, and technical schools to create curricula that match the needs of the local job market.
- c. **Adult Education:** Offer adult education and GED programs to improve basic skills and provide pathways to higher education.

## 2. Economic Development Initiatives

CareerSource NEFL partners with JAXUSA to offer a regional strategy that includes:

- a. Competitive Analysis - providing a detailed evaluation of our region's competitive strengths and areas for improvement.
- b. Target Sub-Cluster Definition Report - containing detailed profiles of each target cluster and sub-cluster.
- c. Education Infrastructure Assessment - containing an evaluation of all educational programs in the seven-county region, and a comparison of those programs with the talent needs of the target clusters.

- d. Target Implementation Plans - recommending specific community development, workforce development, business development and marketing actions for each target audience, including a timeline, budget, and metrics.

The result of this strategic effort is a regional, people-centric economic development strategy. This focus acknowledges that talent is, and will continue to be, the most important driver of economic success for the region and will yield increased labor force participation.

### 3. HOPE Florida

CareerSource NEFL's workforce development system strongly aligns partner initiatives, while also revealing opportunities to coordinate cross-partner performance objectives, leverage efficiencies and economies, and minimize duplication and gaps in multi-partner efforts aimed at creating stronger customer outcomes. The top five barriers for job seekers experiencing a crisis in providing for their immediate needs and implementing long-term goals for prosperity and economic self-sufficiency include homelessness or imminent risk of being homeless; food shortages; pending disconnection of utilities; mental health or substance abuse; and unmet medication or medical care needs. Hope Florida is an initiative that offers a comprehensive approach to addressing poverty and promoting economic mobility. Through this partnership, we are able to address barriers to employment and promote wage progression through rapid attachment to the workforce, continual skill gains, and personal development activities

The program utilizes Hope Navigators to guide Floridians on an individualized path to prosperity, economic self-sufficiency and hope by focusing on community collaboration between the private sector, faith-based community, nonprofits, and government entities including DCF and the Florida Workforce System. The goal is to break down traditional community silos, maximize support, and uncover opportunities.

Implementing these strategies requires a collaborative effort between government agencies, educational institutions, businesses, and community organizations. By addressing the diverse needs of the labor force and creating an environment conducive to employment, Northeast Florida can improve labor force participation and drive economic growth.

#### **Ensure local jobseekers and employees aged 25-70 have a credential of value.**

Through a system-wide approach to improving access to credentials of value including postsecondary credentials our Income Growth model embraces incremental income goals achieved through labor market advancement. In our model, job seekers are not necessarily terminated from career development services at job placement. Success is measured by the ongoing skill development and wage growth of the job seeker. This can be accomplished by obtaining badges and credentials of value while on the job or through individual training.

## **Median wages greater to or equal to 75% of the median hourly wage in Florida.**

In partnership with education and economic development, CSNEFL ensures that our training investments and industry support are focused on the highest growth positions with career pathways and self-sufficient wages. CareerSource NEFL does not stop its support once an individual gets hired, we often work with employers to create customized training to further increase the skills of entry-level employees and move them along a career pathway with wage increases.

## **Increase the second quarter after exit employment rate by 10% for each of the following populations: Individuals 55 years and older; Youth; Individuals receiving SNAP and TANF benefits; Individuals without a high school diploma or speakers of other languages; and Individuals with disabilities.**

As a leader in workforce education and talent development, we are committed to fostering economic prosperity for all residents. Our commitment to good jobs is embodied in our career development methodology resulting in income growth. The Income Growth Strategy promotes wage progression through rapid attachment to the workforce, continual skill gains, and personal development activities. As a strategic framework, this approach builds upon a program design generally referred to as “post-employment”: placement, retention, advancement and/or rapid re-employment services. CareerSource NEFL has a robust follow-up and retention system that contacts all employed participants by text, phone or email. We will continue to use all means accessible to increase second quarter employment rate by 10%. Furthermore, we will partner with core and combined partners to ensure the needed supports are in place for retention. Specific strategies targeting each individual population are outlined below.

### **(a) Increase the second quarter after exit employment rate by 10% for Individuals 55 years and older**

While we utilize several resources to assist the 55 and older population, our primary focus is working with our two partnering agencies AARP (American Association of Retired Persons) and NCBA (National Council on Black Aging). Both agencies address the unique needs and challenges of older jobseekers. We often refer our customers to these agencies as well as partner with these agencies by allowing their clients to provide services to our customers by working in our centers.

Through these partnerships, we can offer various resources and programs for older adults, including career development and financial services. For example:

**AARP:** AARP offers a Work for Yourself @ 50+ program that assists our customers who may want to start their own business or freelance, AARP’s Job Search Assistance Tools directs older job seekers to AARPs online resources for job search tools, resume reviews and job postings specifically aimed at older workers, AARP’s Employer Partnership Program we collaborate on employer education and recruiting events to help connect our older job seekers with employers who value their experience.

AARP's Virtual Job Fairs we promote these virtual job fairs to our job seekers, especially those who may have transportation or mobility challenges.

**NCBA:** The NCBA Focuses on improving the well-being of older adults, including economic security, health, and access to social services. CareerSource NEFL uses this program to address barriers our older job seekers face in the workforce as well.

Like AARP, NCBA has several programs that our jobseekers benefit from NCBA's Economic Security Program, we can guide our customers to these resources on financial literacy and benefits programs. NCBA'S Senior Employment Program, we refer jobseekers to this program as well as provide opportunities for NCBA's customers to work in our career center as greeters. These participants are paid minimum wage by the agency for up to 20 hrs. per week. This partnership is a win-win for both CareerSource NEFL and NCBA, as these clients gain work experience and an opportunity to refresh their skills.

By combining the strengths of AARP and NCBA programs with our placement and training services we offer a comprehensive support system that addresses the diverse needs of our older job seekers. This approach allows us to help increase senior employment outcomes, enhance senior employment security, help them gain new skills and re-enter the workforce.

### **(b) Increase the second quarter after exit employment rate by 10% for Youth**

To increase the second quarter after exit employment rate for Youth, a strategic and targeted approach occurs, leveraging both workforce development and the income growth strategy. By focusing on these strategies, the second quarter after exit employment rate for youth can be increased by 10%, ensuring sustainable employment and career growth for the youth population.

#### **1. Strengthen Employer Partnerships for Youth Opportunities**

- Expand industry partnerships: Develop partnerships with employers willing to create Youth-friendly work environments. Focus on industries like retail, technology, healthcare, and hospitality that offer entry-level positions with clear pathways to advancement.
- Sector-based programs: Focus on high-growth sectors with opportunities for wage progression. Sector strategies targeting industries that offer upward mobility will ensure youth have the opportunity to grow into sustainable, higher-wage positions.

#### **2. Enhance Career Counseling and Support Services**

- Ongoing career coaching: Ensure youth participants continue receiving personalized career coaching and support for at least two quarters after employment. This includes regular check-ins, guidance on navigating the workplace, and support in accessing additional training or educational resources.

- Financial literacy and personal development: Provide workshops that focus on financial literacy, personal budgeting, and long-term career planning. Educating youth on managing earnings and savings can help them see long-term value in employment retention.

### **3. Focus on Skill Gains and Certifications**

- Stackable credentials: Encourage participants to pursue stackable credentials during employment, offering them the ability to build their skills and increase their value to employers. Industry-recognized certifications in high-demand sectors will improve long-term employability and wages.
- Continuous learning opportunities: Partner with local community colleges, technical schools, and online learning platforms to offer skill-building opportunities to employed youth, either as part of their job or in their own time. Skill development programs focused on technology, soft skills, and leadership training will improve job retention.

### **4. Increase Retention through Wraparound Services**

- Provide supportive services: Ensure youth have access to necessary support services such as transportation assistance, childcare, mental health resources, and financial assistance. Many Youth drop out of employment due to personal barriers; removing these barriers will support their continued participation in the workforce.
- Mental health and wellness: Mental health services are critical for youth. Ensure access to counseling, stress management workshops, and wellness programs to help youth maintain stability in their jobs and personal lives.

### **5. Leverage Technology and Data for Follow-Up and Engagement**

- Communication: Calls, text, email, and social media to stay connected with youth during the second quarter, providing reminders, encouragement, and job retention tips.
- Retention Resources: Provide access to online tools that help youth manage their career goals, track their progress, and set new goals for wage progression and skills development.

### **6. Foster a Positive Workplace Culture**

- Youth-centered workplace environments: Encourage employers to create supportive and inclusive workplaces that appeal to young employees. This includes flexible scheduling, mentorship opportunities, and creating a culture that promotes diversity and inclusion.
- Incentives: Incentivize youth who demonstrate strong performance or dedication, helping to foster a sense of achievement and belonging in the workplace.

### **(c) Increase the second quarter after exit employment rate for Individuals Receiving SNAP or TANF Benefits by 10%**

We will engage in a strategic and targeted approach, leveraging both workforce development and the income growth strategy. These strategies include:

#### **1. Workforce Preparation and Retention Services**

- Using Florida Ready to Work Soft Skills Training Program as well as other programs and platforms to improve basic employability skills.
- Partner with local adult education providers such as the Literacy Alliance to offer GED preparation and basic literacy courses with embedded employment services.
- Ensure participants can study while working to increase job retention and future employability.
- Using the Benefits CLIFF tool to prepare participants for the employment – benefits change.

#### **2. Ongoing Career Support and Skill Development**

- Career Coaching: Provide one on one coaching and resources to assist participants with retaining employment.
- Up-Skills Opportunities: Provide access to free or low-cost skills training, including certifications in areas relevant to job skills that increase employability and wages.

#### **3. Transitional Support Services**

- Transportation and Childcare Assistance: Address common barriers by providing transportation stipends for up to two years, access to childcare services one up to one year using one of our patterning agencies such as ELC Early Learning Coalition to ensure participants can maintain consistent employment.
- Financial and Social Support: Offer access through our community partners and other resources to financial literacy programs, housing support, and other social services that help stabilize participants' personal lives, reducing the likelihood of job loss due to external factors.
- Assist tools and materials needed to obtain/ retain employment.
- Offer special circumstances support such as car repairs or other circumstances that would hinder employment (funding available)

#### 4. Technology and Retention Tools

- Follow-Up and Retention Monitoring: Use technology (calls, text, email, and social media) for regular check-ins to track progress, offer encouragement, and provide guidance.

#### **(d) Increase the second quarter after exit employment rate for Individuals Without a High School Diploma or Speakers of Other Languages by 10%**

We will engage in a strategic and targeted approach addressing specific barriers to employment and retention helping individuals without a high school diploma or English proficiency gain stable, long-term employment and career growth opportunities.

##### 1. Workforce Preparation Programs

- Basic Skills and GED Preparation: Partner with local adult education providers to offer GED preparation and basic literacy courses alongside employment services. Ensure participants can study while working to increase job retention and future employability.
- ESL and Job-Related Language Training: Provide industry-specific English language training for speakers of other languages, focusing on the vocabulary and communication skills required for success in the workplace.

##### 2. Ongoing Career Support and Skill Development

- Bilingual Career Coaching: Offer coaching in participants' native languages to help them navigate challenges, understand workplace expectations, and set career goals.
- Upskilling Opportunities: Provide access to free or low-cost skills training, including certifications in areas like forklift operation, food handling, or other relevant job skills that increase employability and wages.

##### 3. Wraparound Support Services

- Transportation and Childcare Assistance: Address common barriers by providing transportation vouchers, access to childcare services to ensure participants can maintain consistent employment.
- Financial and Social Support: Offer access to financial literacy programs, housing support, and other social services that help stabilize participants' personal lives, reducing the likelihood of job loss due to external factors.

##### 4. Technology and Retention Tools

- Follow-Up and Retention Monitoring: Use technology (calls, text, email, and social media) for regular check-ins to track progress, offer encouragement, and provide guidance if participants are at risk of losing their jobs.

## **(e) Increase the second quarter after exit employment rate by 10% for Individuals with Disabilities**

It is essential to implement strategies that address accessibility, ongoing support, and skill development tailored to their unique needs. By implementing these strategies, the second quarter after exit employment rate for individuals with disabilities can be increased by 10%, fostering long-term employment success and wage growth.

### **1. Accessibility and Accommodations in the Workplace**

- **Workplace Accommodations:** Ensure that all jobs identified for participants offer necessary accommodation, such as assistive technology, modified workspaces, flexible schedules, or remote work options to support long-term employment.
- **ADA Compliance Training for Employers:** Provide training for employers on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and best practices for accommodating employees with disabilities. This will create more supportive workplaces, improving retention rates.
- **On-the-Job Support:** Provide job coaches or workplace advocates who can help individuals with disabilities navigate challenges, communicate their needs, and succeed in their roles.

### **2. Vocational Rehabilitation Partnership**

- **Skill Development and Vocational Training:** Partner with vocational rehabilitation services to provide training that matches participants' abilities with career pathways. Focus on technical skills, certifications, or roles that offer flexibility and upward mobility.
- **Supported Employment Programs:** Use supported employment models that provide continuous support, including job coaching, assistive technology, and training, to ensure participants maintain employment beyond the initial placement.
- **Soft Skills Training:** Offer training on workplace communication, time management, and problem-solving to help individuals with disabilities overcome any interpersonal challenges and thrive in their jobs.

### **3. Wraparound Services and Continuous Support with Partnering Agencies**

- **Accessible Transportation and Housing Assistance:** Provide resources such as transportation vouchers or accessible transit options for individuals with mobility challenges. Offer housing support to stabilize participants' lives, reducing external barriers to employment.
- **Health and Wellness Support:** Ensure individuals have access to healthcare, mental health services, and disability-related support (e.g., physical therapy, counseling), which are critical for sustaining employment.

- Ongoing Case Management: Maintain regular follow-ups through phone, text, or in-person meetings to check on job satisfaction, workplace accommodations, and any emerging challenges. Early intervention can prevent job loss.
- Personal Development Activities: Providing financial literacy, advocacy training, and goal-setting workshops helps individuals with disabilities manage their finances, communicate their needs, and plan for long-term career growth.

#### **4. Leveraging Technology for Engagement and Retention**

- Digital Tools for Accessibility: Provide individuals with access to assistive technology such as screen readers, speech recognition software, or other tools that enhance their ability to perform job duties.

#### **5. Fostering a Supportive Work Culture**

- Disability Awareness Training: Provide disability awareness and sensitivity training for coworkers and supervisors to create a more inclusive and supportive workplace environment. This helps to foster a culture of understanding, reducing potential stigma and improving retention.

### **Increase total newly registered apprentices annually, increase registered apprenticeship programs, and increase registered pre-apprenticeship programs:**

CareerSource NEFL works closely with local employers, training partners, the Florida Department of Education Office of Apprenticeship Programs, CareerSource Florida, Florida state leaders, Florida's Department of Commerce, and local community support networks, to support and grow apprenticeship opportunities in Northeast Florida. We currently work with 21 Registered Apprenticeship Programs in our counties, training apprentices in 42 different occupations. Additionally, we work with programs registered statewide that have employers in our region, as well as in-house “earn-as-you-learn” programs that offer strong OJT opportunities; all aligning with our Regional Demand Occupation List.

CareerSource NEFL annually invests funding in our registered apprenticeship programs. These funds support the training of populations that may not otherwise have the opportunity to participate in programs of study that provide industry-recognized credentialing while earning a paycheck. The design of the registered apprenticeship training opportunities particularly lends themselves to providing the greatest chance for success for our most disadvantaged job seekers.

The “earn while you learn” apprenticeship process can fill gaps by providing a model that unites classroom instruction (theory) and hands-on-learning (skill development) with a mentor to tie theory and skills together while earning increased wages. In addition, the apprenticeship model provides extensive opportunities to practice skills and exposure to experts who can talk through the logic needed to troubleshoot occupational challenges.

It is the goal of CareerSource NEFL to support the growth of registered apprenticeships by leveraging robust existing service delivery mechanisms. We are actively working to expand apprenticeship awareness and outreach mechanisms, capitalize on successful workforce development strategies and support our apprenticeship program partners in the design and delivery of innovative training programs. A complete list of State of Florida approved Registered Apprenticeships offered in our area (region 3) can be found at: <https://www.fldoe.org/academics/career-adult-edu/apprenticeship-programs/contacts.shtml>

In 2021, CareerSource NEFL hired a full-time Apprenticeship Navigator (AN) to develop community relations and educate employers and job seekers on the benefits of apprenticeship. The AN continues to work with individual sponsors, associations, colleges, and other entities as a liaison to assist with registering apprenticeship plans with the state of Florida and connects businesses with the CareerSource NEFL Industry Sector Managers for assistance with training funding. The AN will continue to implement a robust communication strategy to ensure job seekers are made aware of apprenticeship and work-based-training opportunities and businesses understand the benefits of supporting apprenticeship programs.

#### **Increase percentage of 12th grade secondary career and technical education enrollment.**

CareerSource NEFL has strong partnerships with the region's CTE programs to ensure youth are enrolled in the programs. For instance, our youth services and industry managers are active members of the Talent Advancement Partnership (TAP). The TAP strives to increase cooperation among the business, community and education stakeholders, increase communication among school districts and educational institutions to advance learning and better coordinate and align our learning ecosystem. TAP consists of Career and Technical Education (CTE) Directors from the 7 counties of the region (including Flagler), post-secondary decision-makers, and community partners such as CareerSource NEFL, and JAXUSA Talent/Workforce staff. This partnership allows the members to gain labor market information, facilitate business connectivity, share best practices, and engage in pilot projects that support talent advancement.

CareerSource NEFL will also expand our services within the high schools to provide students information regarding career pathways and high demand occupations within the NEFL region and how CTE programs can help students to quickly get onto these career pathways leading to fulfilling careers.

#### **Build talent pipeline for targeted new and emerging industries of focus by assisting individuals to earn credentials that directly support the sector.**

CareerSource NEFL will continue to strategically support our target sectors and aligned to the 'The Future Is Now' regional plan. We will continue to focus our training resources, including WIOA Individual Training Accounts and Customized Training, on industry-recognized training that result in credentials and lead to in-demand occupations and career pathway advancements within our targeted sectors.

## D. DESCRIPTION OF STRATEGIES AND PROGRAM SERVICES

### (1) THE LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM:

CareerSource NEFL focuses on strengthening access, alignment, and collaboration across the Northeast Florida region by partnering with core and combined partners, to prepare an educated and skilled workforce that meets the needs of local businesses and the global economy. By aligning goals and strategies across all core and combined partners, CareerSource NEFL ensures resources are optimized to enhance services for businesses and job seekers alike.

Programs included in the systems are basic career services, intensive services, and follow-up services. These services are seamlessly integrated through the following formula and core programs:

- WIOA (Adult, Dislocated and Youth formula grants)
- National Black Council on Aging SCSEP
- Jacksonville Job Corps
- Florida State College at Jacksonville – Adult Education and Family Literacy
- Wagner-Peyser
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Jobs for Veterans
- Division of Blind Services
- AARP SCSEP
- Northeast Florida Community Action Agency
- Unemployment Compensation
- Jacksonville Housing Authority

As a leader in workforce education and talent development, we are committed to fostering economic prosperity for all residents. Our commitment to good jobs is embodied in our career development methodology resulting in income growth. The Income Growth Strategy promotes wage progression through rapid attachment to the workforce, continual skill gains, and personal development activities. As a strategic framework, this approach builds upon a program design generally referred to as “post-employment”: placement, retention, advancement, and/or rapid re-employment services. The foundation of this approach is that all employment and training services are delivered within the framework of the business community's skills needs.

The Income Growth Strategy involves designing a planned sequence of service interventions, which target the needs of the job seeker in the larger context of serving our business customer. The model

embraces incremental income goals achieved through labor market advancement. In our model, job seekers are not necessarily terminated from career development services at job placement. Success is measured by the ongoing skill development and wage growth of the job seeker. This model requires integration and collaboration with core partners and is modeled on US Department of Education's **"Career and College Pathways in Action: Top Takeaways from Experts in the Field."** The study supports the foundational interdependence of education, workforce development, and economic development and shared best practices to cultivate, strengthen, and grow the ecosystem necessary for employers and youth to thrive.

CareerSource NEFL's workforce development system strongly aligns partner initiatives, while also revealing opportunities to coordinate cross-partner performance objectives, leverage efficiencies and economies, and minimize duplication and gaps in multi-partner efforts aimed at creating stronger customer outcomes. Agency and other partners incorporated into the 2024-2028 WIOA Four-Year Plan include:

- WIOA (Adult, Dislocated and Youth formula grants)
- National Black Council on Aging SCSEP
- Jacksonville Job Corps
- Florida State College at Jacksonville – Adult Education and Family Literacy
- Wagner-Peyser
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Division of Blind Services
- AARP SCSEP
- Northeast Florida Community Action Agency
- Unemployment Compensation
- Jacksonville Housing Authority
- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
- Trade Adjustment Assistance
- Jobs for Veterans State Grants
- HOPE Florida - Department of Children and Families
- Operation New Hope
- North Florida Literacy Alliance

The Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act creates new opportunities to expand services to “special populations” to include homeless individuals, foster youth and those who have aged out of the foster care system, and youth with a parent who is on active duty in the armed forces. The law also allows flexibility in serving those who are enrolled in Career and Technical Education.

CareerSource NEFL partners to provide strategic customer-focused collaborative outreach and public information services related to career and technical education courses, postsecondary credentials, and work-based learning programs. These partners include:

- Jacksonville University and the University of North Florida
- State Colleges such as Florida State College at Jacksonville, St. Johns River State College, and First Coast Technical College
- Continuing Education and certification programs at the University of North Florida
- Private for profit and non-profit training programs that have been evaluated and placed on our approved training partners list.
- Career Academies within our regional K-12 school districts.

## **(2) ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKER EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES**

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) is designed to help career seekers advance their careers through high-quality career services, including career coaching, support services, and training opportunities. It also aims to connect employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the regional and global economy. Through the regional one-stop center system, WIOA targets the following employment and training activities:

- **Connecting career seekers with skills and credentials** necessary for advancing their careers with self-sufficient and sustaining wages.
- **Providing access and opportunities for all career seekers**, including individuals with barriers to employment such as persons with disabilities, low-income or disadvantaged individuals, the homeless, justice-involved individuals, those with basic skills deficiencies, and those with limited English proficiency.
- **Enabling employers to easily connect and hire qualified, skilled workers** and access other supports, including training for their current workforce.
- **Engaging in continuous improvement of the regional one-stop system** by identifying the best strategies for servicing various populations.
- **Ensuring high-quality integrated data informs decisions** made by regional policymakers, board members, leadership, employers, and career seekers across core and other partners.

The CareerSource NEFL one-stop delivery system offers a comprehensive array of basic career services throughout the region, available to all individuals seeking assistance. These services include:

- **Eligibility Determinations:** Assessing eligibility for receiving assistance through adult, dislocated worker, or youth programs.
- **Outreach and Connection:** Reaching out to and connecting individuals identified through the CareerSource NEFL Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment Program (RESEA) and/or those identified as state reemployment assistance claimants likely to exhaust benefits with suitable career services.
- **Skills Assessments:** Evaluating skill levels, including literacy, numeracy, and English language proficiency, as well as assessing aptitudes, abilities (identifying skills gaps), and support service needs.
- **Labor Exchange Services:** Providing career coaching, career networking, and connecting individuals with employment opportunities.
- **Industry Information:** Providing information on in-demand industry sectors and occupations (as defined in sec. 3(23) of WIOA).
- **Nontraditional Employment Information:** offering information on nontraditional employment opportunities (as defined in sec. 3(37) of WIOA).
- **Referrals and Coordination:** referring individuals to and coordinating activities with other programs and services within the one-stop delivery system and, when appropriate, with other workforce development programs within Northeast Florida.
- **Labor Market Information:** delivering accurate information related to local, regional, and national labor market areas, job listings, skills necessary for career advancement and information on regional occupations in demand, including earnings, skill requirements, and opportunities for advancement.
- **Performance and Program Cost Information:** Providing performance and cost information on eligible providers of training services by program and type of provider.
- **Local Performance Information:** Sharing information on and referrals to support services, including childcare, child support, medical or child health assistance (Medicaid and Florida's KidCare Programs), SNAP benefits, earned income tax credit assistance, housing counseling and assistance services (HUD), and TANF assistance.
- **Financial Aid Assistance:** Helping individuals establish eligibility for financial aid assistance (Pell Grant) programs for training programs not provided under WIOA.
- **Reemployment Aid Assistance:** Assisting with filing claims under reemployment assistance programs.

These services are designed to support career seekers in advancing their careers and achieving self-sufficiency while ensuring employers have access to skilled workforce.

Individualized career services designed to help career seekers obtain or retain employment are available through CareerSource NEFL career centers or partners. These services include:

- **Skill Assessments:** Conducting assessments of skill levels and needs for adults and dislocated workers, which may include diagnostic testing, use of other assessment tools, in-depth interviewing objectives, and the services needed for career advancement.
- **Individual Employment Plans:** Developing individual employment plans to identify career goals, achievement objectives, and services needed for career advancement.
- **Coaching and Mentoring:** Providing group and individual coaching and mentoring to support career development.
- **Career Planning and Modeling:** Offering career planning and modeling to help career seekers visualize and plan their career paths.
- **Short-term Pre-vocational Services:** Developing learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct to prepare individuals for the labor market.
- **Internships and Work Experiences:** Providing internships and work experiences linked to career paths.
- **Workforce Preparation Activities:** Helping individuals acquire a combination of basic academic skills, critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills and self-management skills, including competencies in utilizing resources, using information, working with others, understanding systems, and engaging in training or employment.
- **Financial Literacy Services:** Offering services to improve financial literacy.
- **English Language Acquisition:** Providing integrated education and training programs for English language acquisition.

These services are tailored to address the specific needs of career seekers, helping them overcome barriers and achieve their employment goals.

Follow-up services are provided for participants placed in unsubsidized employment for up to 12 months after the first day of employment or program exit, whichever occurs later. These follow-up services do not extend the date of exit in performance reporting.

**CareerSource NEFL Business Services identifies and assists with the talent management needs of local employers. These initiatives include:**

- Service delivery for target sector employers.
- Proactively partnering with employers, Chamber of Commerce, economic developers, and other organizations to identify current and future skill requirements and gaps.

By engaging in these activities, CareerSource NEFL Business Services ensures that both carer seekers and employers receive the support they need to succeed in the regional economy.

The Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVERs) assist in contacting and engaging federal contractors and employers to coordinate hiring events, creating more opportunities for veterans. Veterans assessed through the one-stop system to have significant barriers to employment, as defined by FL Commerce directives, are referred to the CareerSource NEFL Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) team. Veterans who do not have significant barriers are referred to and served by the CareerSource NEFL career development team.

Section 134(c)(3)(E) of WIOA establishes a priority requirement for funds allocated to a local area for adult employment and training activities. CareerSource NEFL prioritizes recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient in the provision of individualized career services and training services, regardless of the level of funds available.

**Veterans and eligible spouses continue to receive priority of service for all CareerSource NEFL services. Priority is provided in the following order:**

- **First**, to veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient. These veterans and eligible spouses receive priority for services provided with WIOA adult formula funds.
- **Second**, to non-covered persons who are included in the groups given priority for WIOA adult formula funds.
- **Third**, to veterans and eligible spouses who are not included in WIOA's priority groups.
- **Last**, to non-covered persons outside the groups given priority under WIOA.

When past income is an eligibility determinant for federal employment or training programs, any amounts received as military pay or allowances by any person who served on active duty, and certain other specified benefits, will be disregarded for the veteran and other individuals for whom those amounts would normally be applied in making an eligibility determination. Military earnings are not included when calculating income for veterans or transitioning service members for this priority, in accordance with 38 U.S.C. 4213.

### (3) TRAINING SERVICES

#### Individual Training Accounts (ITA)

CareerSource NEFL provides vocational skills training to adults and dislocated workers through an Individual Training Account (ITA) process. This process enables individuals seeking new career opportunities to acquire the necessary skills to enter a new career path or to enhance their skills within an existing in-demand career path.

#### ITA Funding Priorities

When using ITA funds, priority is given to applicants who:

- **Priority Groups:** Are recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, individuals who are basic skills deficient, veterans, military spouses, and dislocated workers.
- **Lack of Other Assistance:** Are not eligible to receive other training assistance (e.g., Pell grants, scholarships) or, if such assistance is received, the additional funding is insufficient to cover training costs.
- **Assessment and Suitability:** Are determined through assessments to be appropriate for and capable of completing the chosen employment training program.
- **Training Program Alignment:** Select a training program linked to a Regional Demand Occupation List (RDOL) in the local area and commit to seeking employment in the field once trained.
- **Approved Training Providers:** Choose a training provider from the CareerSource NEFL approved list.
- **Financial Resources:** Provide evidence that they have the financial resources to cover all other living expenses and can complete the training period without additional support from CareerSource NEFL Career Center Individual Training Account Committee.

By adhering to these priorities, CareerSource NEFL ensures that ITA funds are allocated effectively, helping those most in need and those most likely to succeed in their chosen training programs. This approach maximizes the impact of vocational skills training and supports the region's workforce development goals.

#### Individual Training Account (ITA) Process

Once awarded, an individual may access their ITA account for a period specified in the scholarship award. All applicants must demonstrate efforts to secure training funds from all available sources.

## Funding Prioritization

If an applicant qualifies for funding from multiple sources, the priority of use will be as follows:

1. Pell Grants and Other Scholarships: Including the Montgomery G.I. Bill.
2. CareerSource NEFL Partner Funding
3. TANF Funds.
4. Dislocated Worker Funds
5. Adult Funds.

## Eligibility Criteria for ITA

To be eligible for an ITA, an individual must:

- **Employment Potential:** Be unlikely or unable to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than previous employment through career services alone.
- **Training Necessity:** Need training services to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than previous employment through career services alone.
- **Skills and Qualifications:** Have the skills and qualifications to successfully participate in the selected program of training services.

## Employment and Training Guidelines

- **Suitable Employment:** Defined as an occupation that pays at least \$30 per hour for adults and 80% layoff wage replacement for dislocated workers.
- **Training Period:** Limited to 24 months, contingent on funding availability and satisfactory progress. Extensions require well-documented justification and prior approval from the CareerSource President or designee.
- **Satisfactory Progress:** Completion of all authorized coursework with a minimum 2.75 GPA on a 4.0 scale. Trainees must maintain a full-time student schedule as defined by the educational institution. Deviations require prior approval from the CareerSource NEFL President or designee.

## Degree Programs and Investment Thresholds

- **Degree Programs:** Two-year and four-year degree programs not on the RDOL will be considered on a case-by-case basis, aligned with local labor market demands, requiring a bona fide employment offer.
- **Investment Thresholds:** ITA's will be categorized based on fair market value and potential earnings upon entering employment.
  - **Tier 1:** Non-HSHW occupations listed on the RDOL with a starting hourly wage of at least \$ 13.46 and a mean wage of \$16.57. Maximum investment: \$7,000 for tuition, books, and training fees.
  - **Tier 2:** HSHW occupations listed on the RDOL with a starting hourly wage of at least \$16.57 and a mean wage of \$25.94. Maximum investment: \$10,000 for tuition, books, and training fees.

## Special Provisions and Exceptions

- **Trade Adjustment Assistance:** Training funded under the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), Trade Reduction Assistance, and Trade and Globalization Adjustment Assistance are exempt from these cost limitations.
- **Exceptions:** Must be approved in advance by CareerSource NEFL. If a job seeker chooses a vendor whose costs exceed the value of the ITA, they must provide proof of sufficient financial resources to cover the difference. CareerSource NEFL will reimburse the training vendor upon receiving written notification that the job seeker has paid the differing costs.

This structured approach ensures that ITA funds are allocated effectively to support job seekers in obtaining the skills necessary for high-demand, high-wage occupations, while also maximizing the impact of available training resources.

Customized Training and Individualized Training Accounts (ITAs) play important roles in workforce development, offering different needs within the labor market.

Customized Training is designed to meet the specific requirements of an employer or group of employers. It is employer-driven, flexible in terms of content, duration, and delivery method, and often involves collaboration between employers, training providers, and workforce development agencies. Employers also share the costs of the training.

ITAs provide funding for individuals to access training programs from a variety of eligible training providers. The goal is to improve the individual's employment prospects and earning potential. Individuals must meet eligibility criteria, often based on employment status, income level, or other

factors. Individuals have the freedom to choose from a range of eligible training programs that best meet their career goals; however, training must be provided by institutions approved by local workforce boards.

Under our LWDB, both approaches are seldom utilized together to address the diverse needs of employers and job seekers.

### **Ensuring Informed Customer Choice**

The CareerSource NEFL ETPL ensures informed customer choice for individuals eligible for and seeking training. In administering the ETPL, CareerSource NEFL has ensured that qualified providers offering a wide variety of job-driven training programs are available. The ETPL is made publicly available online through the CareerSource NEFL website and through local office staff who disseminate the information to customers.

Training and employment opportunities for job seekers are determined using the Regional Demand Occupations List (RDOL), which reflects the needs of the local labor market. To support this goal, the RDOL serves as the catalyst for establishing approved occupational training programs in Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) 8. CareerSource NEFL emphasizes a philosophy of focusing on High Skill/High Wage benchmarks to establish a fair market value for investment in training programs and incentive performance payments to training providers. The goal is to increase the offerings available to job seekers, maximizing their choices.

### **RDOL Development Process**

CareerSource NEFL develops the RDOL by taking the following steps:

- **Starting Point:** Utilize the statewide and Regional Demand Occupations List (RDOL).
- **Business Input:** Solicit input from business and industry representatives in the region regarding the need to add or remove occupations from these lists.
- **Additional Resources:** Use additional resources such as Help Wanted Online List (HWOL), Supply/Demand list, and other available labor market resources.

### **RDOL Development Process**

The RDOL is published on the CareerSource NEFL website and is readily available to job seekers. Career Academy partners use the list to align programs of study with the needs of the growing labor market.

Through this process, CareerSource NEFL has developed partnerships with over 30 educational institutions, both publicly funded and private for-profit, offering over 200 courses of study that lead to academic and technical degrees or industry-recognized certifications. These educational institutions

and training programs are listed on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). In-depth counseling concerning the ETPL is provided to customers as part of the service strategy, and the ETPL is also available to Career Academy partners.

Work-based training is an effective service strategy used to help participants enter and progress along their career pathways. This approach not only benefits participants, but also supports employers by allowing them to train their employees while maintaining productivity. Through work-based training, participants enhance their skills, which makes them more competitive and may lead to career advancement. Participants can also earn wages while they learn. Employers gain by developing a skilled workforce tailored to their specific needs, which improves their productivity and efficiency. Investing in employee training can increase job satisfaction and loyalty, leading to higher employer retention rates. Data has consistently demonstrated that this strategy yields the highest return on investment, particularly in terms of cost-effectiveness and wage growth.

#### **(4) YOUTH WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES**

CareerSource NEFL is committed to creating a service delivery system that sets a national standard for workforce development. We believe that youth accessing our career services are best served when they are provided with the same comprehensive opportunities available to all job seekers. In addition, we ensure that youth receive tailored support and services to address their unique needs and challenges, empowering them to achieve economic self-sufficiency.

Through strategic partnerships and contractual agreements, CareerSource NEFL has strengthened its ability to serve youth more effectively. We help young adults attain a high school diploma or recognized equivalent, transition to postsecondary education, and develop the skills needed for career success. This is achieved through the delivery of all fourteen (14) WIOA-designated program elements, offered both directly and in collaboration with local and contracted partners across all six counties we serve.

Through strategic partnerships, the framework of the 14 WIOA elements are made accessible to youth through a variety of platforms, enhancing Awareness, Accessibility, and Availability. Youth contractors and community partners are made aware of the 14 elements to ensure they can effectively communicate available services to youth and young adults in our communities. CareerSource NEFL actively promotes the program through social media and community outreach efforts, engaging with nonprofit, partner agencies, faith-based organizations, and training providers. This outreach helps inform the broader community about the program and available services. Information, such as youth-friendly brochures, digital platforms, and the CareerSource NEFL's website, where a Resource Guide is offered; <https://careersourcenortheastflorida.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/CSNEFL-Menu-of-Services-061521.pdf> and a youth flyer is distributed, directing customers to the youth services webpage, which encompasses the WIOA 14 elements and the corresponding available services.

In addition, CareerSource NEFL partners offer personalized one-on-one meetings with potential youth and young adults to explain the program in detail. All 14 WIOA elements are incorporated into the Individual Service Strategy document, allowing case managers and youth/young adults to select services tailored to their needs based on the objective assessment.

## **THE 14 WIOA YOUTH ELEMENTS:**

- **Tutoring, Study Skills Training, and Dropout Prevention:**
  - Youth/young adults are enrolled in tutoring, study skills training, and resources like GED prep to improve literacy, numeracy, and prevent dropouts. The CASAS and TABE assessments are utilized. Adult Basic Education is being offered through Penn Foster, Florida State College at Jacksonville, and First Coast Technical College.
- **Alternative Secondary School and Dropout Recovery:**
  - Connects youth/young adults with alternative high school options, adult education centers, and charter schools to help them achieve a diploma. Adult Basic Education is being offered through Penn Foster and First Coast Technical College.
- **Paid and Unpaid Work Experience:**
  - Where appropriate career exploration is offered through work experience, internships and job shadowing with public or private sectors, providing an average of 20 hours per week, established through worksite agreements.
- **Occupational Skills Training:**
  - Provides training in various fields, such as hospitality, health sciences, construction, and more, leading to industry-recognized credentials.
- **Education Offered Concurrently with Workforce Preparation:**
  - Combines education with workforce skills development through workshops personalized like the Ready to Work, Xello, A-Game, and Develop U for employment readiness. The contractor ensures all youth/young adults participate in scheduled visits or virtual tours with CareerSource NEFL to familiarize themselves with available services, staff, and operations. Throughout the program, youth can attend employability seminars, job fairs, and motivational presentations, as well as conduct job searches and interviews. These activities, led by trained professionals, focus on career exploration, job search techniques, and retention strategies, providing a strong foundation for future workforce success.

- **Leadership Development:**
  - Offers leadership training and engagement opportunities like community service, motivational workshops, decision making, life skills training and problem-solving skills.
- **Support Services:**
  - Provides assistance like transportation, interview clothing, childcare, tools, uniforms for employment, and other support identified as needs.
- **Adult Mentoring:**
  - Mentors guide youth/young adults in understanding workplace norms and being effective employees, and acts as an advisor and motivator for their success.
- **Follow-Up Services:**
  - Tracks youth/young adults for 12 months post-program, monitoring job progress and supporting retention and success. Assist with additional support services as needed.
- **Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling:**
  - Provides referrals for counseling, including mental health, drug/alcohol counseling, pregnancy prevention, and career guidance. Referrals to such counseling is individualized and handled in accordance with the specific needs of each youth/young adult.
- **Financial Literacy Education:**
  - Offers workshops on budgeting, credit management, checking/savings, and long-term financial planning to make informed wealth building decisions.
- **Entrepreneurial Skills Training:**
  - Provides youth/young adults with opportunities to learn about entrepreneurship through workshops, business plan development, site tours of entrepreneurial centers, and lectures from experienced business professionals and guest speakers. These activities aim to build foundational skills for starting and managing a business.
- **Services That Provided Labor Market Information:**
  - Provides youth/young adults with up-to-date labor market data and connects them to high-growth industries and career pathways. Youth/young adults are trained to utilize resources such as Career One Stop, O\*NET, and Employ Florida to explore career options, understand industry trends, and identify in-demand occupations, helping them make informed career decisions.

- **Post-Secondary Preparation Transition Services:**

- Assists youth/young adults in transitioning to post-secondary education and training by providing support with scholarships, FAFSA applications, and identifying additional financial aid opportunities. Participants receive guidance on registering for and preparing for standardized testing such as the ACT/SAT. The program also offers job placement services, resume assistance, and career counseling to align education with career goals. It helps youth/young adults navigate the enrollment process for colleges, vocational schools, or training programs, ensuring a smooth transition to their next steps in education or employment.

By effectively communicating and integrating these 14 WIOA program elements into youth programming, along with strong counseling and partner engagement, we can ensure that youth/young adults are fully aware of and benefit from the full range of WIOA services available to them. This approach will help them achieve educational success, career advancement, and long-term economic self-sufficiency.

### **1. Youth Communication**

- **Initial Orientation:** During program enrollment, all youth/young adults receive an orientation session outlining each of the 14 WIOA elements. This session is mandatory for both in-school and out-of-school youth.
- **Accessible Information:** The 14 elements are clearly communicated through youth-friendly brochures, digital platforms, and posters at career centers. Information will be available in multiple languages and formats to accommodate all participants, including those with disabilities.

### **2. Individualized Counseling and Case Management**

- **Case Management:** Youth/young adults receives an Individual Service Strategy (ISS) and assessments from case managers, during which the 14 elements are reviewed. Based on the youth's needs and goals, specific services will be recommended. Case managers will maintain regular check-ins to ensure participants are engaging with these services.
- **Counseling Sessions:** Ongoing career and educational counseling sessions emphasizes available services such as tutoring, mentoring, and work experience, tailoring advice to the youth/young adults progress and aspirations.

### **3. Partnership and Engagement**

- **Training for Partnering Organizations:** Youth/young adults service contractors and partners receive training on the 14 WIOA elements to ensure they can effectively communicate

- these services to participants. This training is included in their statement of work, and contractors will be responsible for integrating the elements into their programming.
- Service Integration Plans: Contractors will elaborate in their proposals and statements of work how each of the 14 elements will be made available, such as hosting career fairs, educational workshops, or job shadowing opportunities.
  - Referral System: A robust referral system is established to connect youth to the appropriate service providers within the WIOA framework. Contractors and partners collaborate to ensure youth can easily access services such as occupational skills training or supportive services.

#### 4. Workshops and Youth-Focused Events

- Workshops: Youth/young adults are invited to workshops focused on different WIOA elements. For example, financial literacy workshops, leadership development activities, and entrepreneurship training these events are held regularly, with youth/young adults encouraged to participate in topics relevant to their career and educational goals.
- Career Pathway: Organized career exploration events where youth can meet with employers, attend panels on in-demand occupations, and learn about labor market information, postsecondary transition opportunities, and leadership roles.

#### 5. Digital Outreach and Follow-Up

- Communication: Calls, texts, emails, and social media will remind youth/young adults of available services and upcoming events related to the 14 WIOA elements. These reminders are customized based on the youth's progress, interests, and program engagement.
- Follow-Up Services: Upon exiting the program, youth will continue receiving follow-up services for at least 12 months to ensure sustained success. This includes check-ins on employment, further education, and connections to other resources such as comprehensive guidance and counseling or labor market information.

### BASIC-SKILLS DEFINITION

CareerSource NEFL defines basic skills deficient as an individual who computes or solves problems, reads, writes, or speaks English at or below the eighth-grade level or is unable to compute or solve problems, read, write, or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or in society.

## (5) SELF-SUFFICIENCY DEFINITIONS

**Self-sufficiency for a job seeker applying for services through Adult Services is defined as:**

- Having an hourly income of \$30.00 or more for the one-month period immediately prior to application for training services, which is more than 250% of the Lower Living Income Standard Level (LLISL).

**Self-sufficiency for a job seeker served through Dislocated Worker Services is defined as:**

- A worker who has been given notice of lay-off or is laid-off and at the time of eligibility determination has an income of no more than 80% of the wage at the job of dislocation.
- Employed Worker Skills Upgrade: An employed worker who is identified by an employer to be in need of skills upgrade training to retain employment and will receive an income of no less than 100% of the current wage upon successful completion.

**Self-sufficiency for a job seeker served through Welfare-Transition is defined as:**

- Earning an income sufficient to meet their family needs, thereby no longer requiring assistance in the form of Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), or Childcare assistance. Specifically, this means a family income in excess of 200% of the poverty rate for Welfare-Transition job seekers.

CareerSource NEFL defines self-sufficiency as the ability to earn enough income to cover all basic living expenses without relying on external assistance. This benchmark has evolved significantly since the last 4-year plan.

According to a recent ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) report by United Way of Northeast Florida, more than a third of households in the region continue to face financial instability. While wages for low-income jobs in Florida have risen, 38.7% of households in Northeast Florida are still living paycheck to paycheck or below the poverty line. Based on 2022 U.S. Census data, this includes over 72,000 households in poverty and more than 187,000 households classified as ALICE.

The cost of living in Northeast Florida has been steadily increasing. As of September 2024, the Consumer Price Index for the region rose by 3.4% from the previous year. This increase was driven by a 4.2% rise in housing costs and a 2.4% increase in food prices. Additionally, childcare costs have been a growing burden on families. In 2023, the average annual cost for infant care at a center-based facility in Florida was approximately \$12,639, while toddler care averaged \$11,133. These costs can consume a substantial portion of a family's income, especially for single parents. The situation is compounded by a decline in the number of licensed childcare providers in Florida, further limiting availability and putting additional strain on families.

CareerSource NEFL aligns its self-sufficiency standards with the income thresholds outlined in the United Way ALICE Florida Report and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). These benchmarks help define when an individual or family is considered self-sufficient. Considering rising living costs such as the Consumer Price Index, housing, and childcare expenses, CareerSource NEFL established a local self-sufficiency threshold of \$30 an hour (\$62,400 annually) for business clients and employed workers. This figure not only meets HUD standards but also surpasses the ALICE threshold, enabling us to prioritize upskilling middle-career workers and creating more opportunities for middle-skilled jobs that can better support our target population.

Another key factor in determining self-sufficiency is the median hourly wage for employed individuals. According to the MIT Living Wage Calculator, the living wage for an adult with one child is \$36.97 per hour. This figure represents the amount needed to cover basic living expenses, including housing, food, childcare, and other essentials, without relying on public assistance. It serves as a benchmark for assessing whether individuals in our region are earning enough to support themselves and their families.

Increasing our local self-sufficiency wage in 2022 has allowed us to better support both job seekers and employers in our region's target industries. At that time, several employers approached us to share that, due to rising costs, they had raised their employee wages, making some of the programs we had been supporting through Customized Training funds no longer align with our wage guidelines. When First Coast Manufacturing, representing multiple manufacturing employers, reached out to us, it became clear that we needed to reevaluate our local wage criteria.

This adjustment not only addressed the evolving needs of local businesses but continues to strengthen our commitment to building stronger community connections and helping individuals overcome employment barriers. By aligning our wage standards with current industry realities, we are fostering a more skilled, engaged, and economically stable workforce.

These self-sufficiency definitions are applicable to all programs offered through CareerSource NEFL.

## **(6) SUPPORTIVE SERVICES**

Supportive services are services that are necessary to enable a customer to successfully participate in activities authorized under WIOA. The term supportive service is defined under WIOA to mean services such as transportation, childcare, dependent care, housing, and needs-related payments that are necessary to enable a customer to participate in activities authorized under this Act.

Supportive services are for eligible customers, particularly eligible customers with barriers to employment. WIOA section 133(b)(2)(B) defines funds allocated to the local area for dislocated workers may be used to provide supportive services to adults and dislocated workers, respectively (A) who are participating in programs with activities authorized and (B) who are unable to obtain such

supportive services through other programs providing such services. Section 134(d)(2)(A) of WIOA requires that adults and dislocated workers must be participants to receive supportive services. Support services are provided based on need and eligibility.

Support services may only be provided to adults, dislocated workers or youth who are participating in career or training services authorized under WIOA sections 129(c)(2) or 134(c)(2)(3) and who are unable to obtain supportive services through other programs providing such services. Adults and dislocated workers must be provided with accurate information about the availability of supportive services in the local area, as well as referral to such activities. Based on an individual assessment and availability of funds, supportive services may be awarded to eligible program customers.

Supportive services are intended to enable a customer to participate in workforce funded programs and activities and to secure and retain employment. Supportive services are provided based on need as determined by the CareerSource NEFL staff working with the customer and may include:

- Transportation including support services cards, reloadable transportation cards or bus passes
- Clothing including general interview clothing
- Uniforms
- Certification and other fees
- Books, tools, supplies, and necessary items for occupational skills training or work-related needs
- Assistance with education-related testing, background checks, fingerprinting, and licensing

WIOA Youth programs can provide supportive services during post-exit follow-up services for up to twelve months after completion of program services. The supportive services listed above may only be provided to customers who are: 1.) participating in programs with activities authorized under WIOA and TANF; and 2.) unable to obtain supportive services through other programs providing such services. CareerSource NEFL staff must ensure that the customer is in need and eligible for all requested supportive services and that the supportive service is necessary for ongoing participation in the program.

## **(7) INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES**

Our regional career locations will meet the needs of a diverse range of individuals including individuals with disabilities by enhancing accessibility through:

- Job Access with Speech (JAWS)
- Zoom Text and MAGic
- Staff trained to use Relay systems for Deaf, Hard of Hearing and job seekers with speech impairments.

- Video Relay Equipment
- Wheelchair accessible facilities - adjustable table height and access pathways.
- Language Assistance - Sign Language and Limited English Proficient Interpreters
- Document Translation
- Alternate formats - i.e., large print
- Assistive Technology to assist those who have a low literacy or comprehension level, Limited English Proficient Language, Dyslexia/Dysgraphia, or illiteracy.
- Assistive Technology Referrals to Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology
- Large screen talking calculators with contrast options.
- Reading assistance (staff reader) to help with forms as needed.
- Technology - Website accessibility meets Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) standards (a set of guidelines for making content accessible, primarily for people with disabilities).
- Additional time provided for Assessments and computer equipment usage.
- Information and counseling on disability disclosure, Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act, reasonable accommodation, and Schedule A Federal Employment
- Providing services and programs specifically designed to address the special needs of disabled and other protected populations (i.e., Ticket to Work, the NEFL Community Action Agency, ICARE of Northeast Florida, Adult Education and English as a second language provider.)
- Personalized assistance as needed to accommodate disability.
- Collaborating actively with partners, such as Legal Aid of Northeast Florida, to provide services to job seekers who feel they have been denied employment and training opportunities.
- Providing every job seeker a full orientation to the CareerSource NEFL system which includes an overview of their rights under WIOA, and how they can receive redress through our complaint system.
- Providing direct services through our Mobile Access Points units at homeless shelters, Department of Vocational Rehabilitation offices; regional conferences focused on serving individuals with disabilities, community centers and educational events geared to students with disabilities transitioning from school to work.
- Co-locating staff at organizations that serve the homeless such as the Jacksonville Veteran Services offices.
- Actively partnering with programs such as Operation New Hope, the Department of Corrections, and the Department of Juvenile Justice to provide career services to those who are re-entering the labor force.
- Providing bonding services to offenders and others.

CareerSource NEFL provides targeted services for Social Security Beneficiaries with Disabilities. The Ticket to Work program provides Social Security beneficiaries, "real choices in obtaining the services and technology that they need to find, enter, and maintain employment" by expanding the universe of service providers. Many people receiving disability benefits from Social Security want to work, and could work, but face several significant barriers that prevent them from reaching their goals.

Under the Ticket to Work program, the Social Security Administration (SSA) issues a ticket to Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipients. As a voluntary program, each person who receives a Ticket to Work has the option of using his or her ticket to obtain services from a provider known as an employment network (EN).

ENs provide, without charge, employment services, vocational rehabilitation services, and other support services to assist in obtaining and retaining self-supporting employment. All our centers are fully ADA compliant and provide a wide array of assistive technologies. CareerSource NEFL has been an SSA approved Employment Network since 2002.

Coordinated planning and service delivery strategies result in formal and informal referral and collaboration to enhance success for individuals with disabilities. CareerSource NEFL provides formal referrals to customers who may benefit from services provided by Florida Division Vocational Rehabilitation and/or Division of Blind Services, and other community agencies. The Integrated Resource Team will form a person-centered plan of collaborative action to provide workforce assistance to the job seeker. Integrated Resource Teams (IRTs) are formed with staff members from multiple backgrounds and agencies to identify if complimentary services are needed. Areas of responsibility are aligned IRT services, and proper agencies and the job seeker benefits from braided efforts. Informal referrals to a myriad of partner and community agencies are a common occurrence, as most job seekers with disabilities and barriers require support in several areas, including mental health services, financial literacy associations, housing providers, tax filing organizations, supported employment providers, and others.

Coordination of employer services occurs between CareerSource NEFL, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and other community partners. Resource coordination events are held each year to gather and share information with agencies and community partners who provide workforce-related services to job seekers with disabilities. These events encourage collaboration and use of CareerSource NEFL job connection services and products.

**We partner with state-level and local groups and agencies to provide coordination and service to our disabled and protected job seekers. Our partnerships include:**

- CareerSource Florida, Inc.
- City of Jacksonville Disabled Services
- Florida Agency for Persons with Disabilities

- Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology
- Florida Association of Rehabilitation Facilities, Inc.
- Florida Attorney General, Office of Civil Rights
- Florida Commerce
- Florida Commerce Office of Civil Rights
- Florida Department of Children and Families Refugee Services
- Florida Department of Children and Families, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Office
- Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services
- Florida Department of Education, Career & Adult Education
- Florida Department of Education, Division of Blind Services
- Florida Department of Education, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Florida Department of Education, English Language Learners - Bureau of Student Achievement
- Florida Department of Elder Affairs
- Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, Inc.
- Project Search
- Supported Employment Providers
- The Social Security Administration (SSA)
- Work Incentive Planning and Assistance Project

## **(8) LINKAGE WITH UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

The Unemployment Insurance (UI) Reemployment Assistance program, as a required partner, is not physically located in the One-Stop Career Center but is a direct-linkage partner. Cross-trained AJC and one-stop staff assist in providing information and assistance to the Reemployment Program and help claimants navigate the Reemployment Assistance (RA) program. Strengthening linkages between the One-Stop Delivery System and RA program is essential for providing seamless services to job seekers and ensuring that individuals have access to the necessary resources to return to work. Strategies and services utilized by CareerSource NEFL to strengthen linkages include:

1. **Integrated Case Management:** CareerSource NEFL implements a unified case management system to help ensure that individuals receiving RA services also have access to WIOA services, such as job training and career counseling. Case managers coordinate services across programs, track an individual's progress, and provide tailored guidance. Case managers work with clients to assess barriers to employment, develop an individualized employment

plan (IEP), and provide referrals to RA programs, job training, career workshops, or supportive services (e.g., childcare, transportation).

2. **Cross-Training of Staff:** Cross-training between WIOA and RA program staff helps to enhance collaboration and communication, making sure all team members understand the full scope of services available to job seekers. Staff from both systems are trained to inform individuals about the resources available in each program, such as reemployment services, skills training, and labor market information. Cross-trained staff can provide a more holistic set of services to clients, ensuring they are aware of and can navigate the full range of available support.
3. **Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA):** Florida commerce implemented RESEA programs, which are designed to assess the eligibility of RA claimants and offer reemployment services. These services are delivered in partnership with local workforce development systems. RESEA services in CareerSource NEFL typically includes workshops, individual assessments, and reemployment plans that are jointly administered by the RA program and WIOA providers. Claimants who are required to participate in RESEA often receive job search assistance, career counseling, and referrals to additional training or supportive services through the One-Stop system.
4. **Coordinated Referral Systems:** Referral systems between the RA program and CareerSource NEFL help ensure that job seekers receive the full range of support services. For example, an RA applicant who needs additional training can be referred directly to WIOA-funded training programs. A well-functioning referral system ensures that individuals receiving RA benefits who are actively looking for work are quickly connected to job readiness services, skills training, educational programs, or special support for individuals with barriers to employment (e.g., disabilities, language barriers).

CareerSource NEFL's strategy for enhancing the linkages between the One-Stop Delivery System and the RA program employs a comprehensive range of approaches aimed at integrating services, optimizing coordination, and providing holistic support to job seekers.

## **(9) HIGHEST QUALITY OF SERVICES TO VETERANS AND COVERED PERSONS**

### **VETERAN STAFFING REQUIREMENTS**

One of the strategies used by the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) to serve veterans is the Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) program, which provides funds to states to exclusively serve eligible veterans, as defined in 38 U.S.C. 4101(4) and 4211(4), and other eligible spouses as defined in 38 U.S.C. 4101(5), and to perform outreach to employers.

JVSG funds are provided to states to fund two staff positions:

**Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialists** - Under 38 U.S.C. 4103A(a), a DVOP Specialist provides intensive services and facilitates placements to meet the employment needs of veterans, prioritizing service to special disabled veterans, other disabled veterans, and other categories of veterans in accordance with priorities determined by USDOL.

**Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVER)** - Under 38 U.S.C. 4104(b), the LVER's principal duties are to: (1) conduct outreach to employers in the area to assist veterans in gaining employment, including conducting seminars for employers and, in conjunction with employers, conducting job search workshops and establishing job search groups; and (2) facilitate employment, training, and placement services furnished to veterans in a state under the applicable state employment service delivery systems.

DVOP Specialists and LVERs are an essential part of and fully integrated into the AJC network. They are included among the AJC partner staff, which consists of all staff employed by programs or activities operated by AJC partners listed in 29 U.S.C. 2841(b) that provide online and/or in-person workforce development or related support services as part of the workforce development system.

## SERVING VETERANS WITH SIGNIFICANT BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT

DVOPs are committed to serving Veterans and eligible spouses with significant barriers to employment. CareerSource NEFL is fully committed to serving the veteran community through employment and training activities.

CareerSource NEFL provides intensive services to both unemployed veterans who require such services to obtain employment and to employed veterans who require such services to obtain or retain employment leading to self-sufficiency. In accordance with 38 U.S.C. 4103A(a),

DVOP Specialists must provide intensive services to eligible veterans and eligible spouses to meet their employment needs, prioritizing services to special disabled and other disabled veterans, as defined by 38 U.S.C. 4211, and to other eligible veterans in accordance with priorities determined by USDOL. The statute also requires that DVOP Specialists place maximum emphasis on assisting veterans who are economically or educationally disadvantaged.

To ensure that DVOP Specialists can fulfill their statutory responsibilities to provide intensive services to these categories of veterans, USDOL has developed the following guidance to identify the veterans prioritized and emphasized by the DVOP statute.

**USDOL directs DVOP Specialists must limit their activities to providing services to eligible veterans and eligible spouses who:**

- Meet the definition of an individual with a Qualifying Employment Barriers (QEB) specifically listed below.

- Are members of a veteran population identified by the Secretary under 38 U.S.C. 4103A(a)(1) (C) as eligible for DVOP services, as explained in separate guidance from DOL.

An eligible veteran or eligible spouse is determined to have a QEB if he or she attests to belonging to at least one of the listed criteria below:

- Receiving a VA disability compensation or have a claim pending to receive compensation.
- Having a disability as defined by the Americans with Disability Act.
- Being referred to employment services by a representative of the Department of Veteran Affairs.
- Experiencing homelessness, endanger of being homeless, or dangerous conditions.
- Being discharged from active duty within the last 36 months
- Experiencing justice involvement.
- Lacking a high school diploma or equivalent certificate.
- Being 18-24 years old.
- Being discharged through Reduction in Force (RIF).
- Receiving care in a Warrior Transition Unit (WTU) or Military Treatment Facility (MTF).
- Retiring with 24 months or separating within 12 months from the US Military.
- Being a Vietnam-era Veteran who served in the active US Military between 02/28/1961 - 05/07/1975.
- Being low income or receiving public assistance.

While the DVOP Specialists' provision of intensive services to these veterans and eligible spouses may include some core services, serving a more limited population will allow DVOP Specialists enough time to devote a majority of their time to providing intensive services. The veterans who do not fall into one of the categories that are served by DVOP Specialists are eligible to be served by other AJC Staff, including WIOA, Wagner-Peyser, and other AJC program staff, and are eligible for priority of service.

## PRIORITY OF SERVICE

Priority of service is first applied to Veterans and affected spouses. It is the policy of CareerSource NEFL to provide priority of service as defined in section 2(a) of the Jobs for Veterans Act (JVA) (38 U.S.C. 4215(a)). This means that a covered person shall be given priority over a non-covered person for the receipt of employment, training, and placement services provided through the CareerSource NEFL system, notwithstanding any other provision of the law. Depending on the type of service or

resource being provided, taking priority may mean: the covered person receives access to the service or resource earlier in time than the non-covered person; or if the service or resource is limited, the covered person receives access to the service or resource instead of or before the non-covered person.

Our goal is to ensure the CareerSource NEFL system identifies covered persons at the point of service entry, and they are given an opportunity to take full advantage of priority of service. Operational procedures have been implemented to ensure that covered persons who are physically or virtually accessing CareerSource NEFL services are aware of their entitlement to priority of service. CareerSource NEFL has implemented priority of service at all career centers and access points, and for service delivery by locally contracted workforce preparation and training providers. All operational procedures ensure covered persons are identified at the point of entry, so they can take full advantage of priority of service. These processes ensure covered persons are aware of their entitlement to priority of service, the full array of employment, training, and placement services available under priority of service and any applicable eligibility requirements for those programs and services.

CareerSource NEFL also mandates their service and training contractors collect such information, maintain such records, and submit reports containing information as may be required related to the provision of priority of service.

## SERVING SEPARATING SERVICE MEMBERS AND MILITARY SPOUSES

Service members exiting the military, including, but not limited to, recipients of Unemployment Compensation for Ex-Military members (UCX), generally qualify as dislocated workers.

Dislocated Worker funds under Title I can help separating service members enter or reenter the civilian labor force. A separating service member needs a notice of separation, either a DD-214 from the Department of Defense, or other appropriate documentation showing a separation or imminent separation from the Armed Forces qualifies as the notice of termination or layoff to meet the required dislocated worker definition.

In most instances, an individual will have to be eligible for or exhausted entitlement to unemployment compensation, to receive dislocated worker services. In the case of separating service members, because they may be on a terminal leave from the military, it may make sense to begin providing career services while the service member may still be part of the Active-Duty military but has an imminent separation date. It is appropriate to provide career services to separating service members who will be imminently separating from the military, provided their discharge will be anything other than dishonorable.

## MILITARY FAMILY EMPLOYMENT ADVOCACY PROGRAM

The State of Florida has the fifth highest population of active-duty military spouses in the United States with more than 88,000 dependents and spouses currently residing in Florida.

The Military Family Employment Advocacy Program is a state program designed to deliver priority workforce services to active-duty military spouses and family members through Military Family Employment Advocates located in local career centers throughout Florida.

Services include, but are not limited to, job searches and placement assistance, career planning and counseling, case management, resume assistance, assessment and testing services, interviewing skills training, referral to educational and training programs, job fairs, and job clubs. Military Spouses are also eligible to receive training and other support services under the Federal Workforce Investment Act and may be eligible to collect unemployment compensation if they need to quit their jobs to relocate with their active-duty military spouse.

### **Persons eligible for assistance through this program include:**

- Spouses and dependents of active-duty military personnel.
- Activated Florida National Guard members.
- Military reservists whose units have been activated.
- Military family members are also eligible to receive training and other supportive services under WIOA.

### **(10) CORE PROGRAMS AND COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS:**

CareerSource NEFL is committed to expanding and ensuring access to workforce services for eligible participants. Eligible individuals with barriers are given priority. To reach our most vulnerable and marginalized communities we have developed partnerships with community partners to offer multiple points of access, with a “no wrong door” philosophy.

### **These partners include but are limited to:**

- Operation New Hope – Operating with a four-pronged approach (case management, life coaching, job training and job placement assistance) Ready4Work ensures clients receive wrap-around care. Clients have no violent or sexual charges and are required to be drug-free while participating in the 4 to 6-week career development training course that focuses on employment and life skills. A dedicated job coach works with the clients and employers to place individuals in jobs where there is a match for both parties. The Ready4Work staff remains in contact with the clients for a full year after intake.

- Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) – VR, a federal-state program, helps people who have physical or mental disabilities get or keep a job. VR is committed to helping people with disabilities find meaningful careers.
- Jacksonville Housing Authority (JHA) – JHA offers a variety of programs to fit the needs of low and moderate-income families, senior adults, and adults with disabilities in the greater Jacksonville, Florida area. JHA offers many programs to assist the residents' quest to move up and out of public housing.
- Jacksonville Area Legal Aid – a non-profit law firm, dedicated to providing free civil legal assistance to those who could not otherwise afford it.

CareerSource NEFL is committed to expanding and ensuring access to workforce services for eligible participants. Eligible individuals with barriers are given priority. To reach our most vulnerable and marginalized communities we have developed partnerships with community partners to offer multiple points of access.

- Division of Blind Services (DBR) – DBR, helps blind and visually impaired individuals achieve their goals and live their lives with as much independence and self-direction as possible.
- HOPE Florida – partnerships with the private sector, faith-based communities, and nonprofits bridge the gap between Floridians in need and local community resources available to them move up and out of public housing.

Our mobile access points team brings services to communities where access can be challenging. With major emphasis on providing direct service to underserved communities and other locations throughout the region, the use of the mobile career center continues to serve as a cost-effective and customer-friendly service solution. The mobile career center also has played an integral role in the delivery of services and assistance during hurricanes and other disaster events.

CareerSource NEFL brings together required core partners in a seamless customer-focused service delivery network designed to give job seekers access to programs, services, and other resources to improve their prospects of long-term employment through career pathways. Based on our income growth strategy, our core partnerships are dedicated to developing strong strategic alliances linking employers and job seekers to quality services including employment, training, education, assistance to employers, and career and business development which improve the economic growth. This allows for a collaborative service delivery model that supports coordination, co-enrollment and greater collaboration across programs that align with participant needs.

As part of our strategic service delivery model, through our One Stop Operators, core partners meet frequently to increase collaboration and co-enrollments to ensure shared goals, performance, and accountability.

Through a system-wide approach to improving access to credentials of value including postsecondary credentials our model embraces incremental income goals achieved through labor market advancement. In our model, job seekers are not necessarily terminated from career development services at job placement. Success is measured by the ongoing skill development and wage growth of the job seeker. This model requires integration and collaboration with core partners and is modeled on US Department of Education's "**Career and College Pathways in Action: Top Takeaways from Experts in the Field.**" The study supports the foundational interdependence of education, workforce development, and economic development and shared best practices to cultivate, strengthen, and grow the ecosystem necessary for employers and youth to thrive. And offers the following takeaways:

### USE DATA STRATEGICALLY

Understanding student interests, needs, and the economy are central to the development of a rich career pathways system. The ability to understand and address system biases, address equity gaps, and align pathways to current and future careers that are high-quality is essential for stakeholders to see their role in shaping a just education system.

### ELEVATE STUDENT AND PARENT VOICES

Similarly, we need to understand student assumptions, expectations, and values as it pertains to their future lifestyle and their goals. Students and families need to be at the center of this work and in designing pathways that support and meet their needs.

### EMBRACE CAREER-CONNECTED LEARNING

Career-connected learning should be an opportunity multiplier for students, exposing students to many different career paths and not in any way limiting students' choices for their futures.

### EMPOWER STUDENTS TO OWN THEIR FUTURES

Our education system should provide students with exposure to and engagement in a wide array of high-growth, quality career areas throughout middle and high school. Career exploration and personalized career advising are part of student identity development.

Navigation supports are essential for students and their families to make informed decisions about what they want to do.

## DISCOVER AND APPLY INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES

In everything we do, it is often easier to stick with the familiar rather than explore new ways to work. By cultivating a culture and commitment to innovation, we can break from traditional silos and work across our public and private sectors to apply diverse and innovative strategies that engage students and keep pace with shifting economies.

## BRAID OR BLEND FUNDING TO CREATE SUSTAINABLE PATHWAYS

Pathways ecosystems should leverage and braid different sources of funding, including state and federal funds (e.g., WIOA, Perkins, and Every Student Succeeds Act) as well as private and philanthropic funds. A diverse financial portfolio helps to ensure that programming is not dependent on just one funding stream and allows stakeholders to leverage human and fiscal resources differently.

## INTERTWINE COLLEGE AND CAREER-CONNECTED LEARNING

For too long, our schools have had an either/or mindset regarding college and careers, rather than a both/and approach. Postsecondary credentials are and will continue to be essential for students to access good jobs. Every student should have the opportunity to engage in college coursework while still in high school through dual enrollment, and every student should be academically prepared to advance in postsecondary education and their career.

## ENGAGE AND BUILD CONSENSUS

There is commonality and community in this work. Find places where trust can be established to develop an initial model and then build to an even greater scope of impact. There is also an opportunity for a wide range of stakeholders with diverse perspectives and roles to engage and lead the development of pathways that span secondary, postsecondary, and work as well as cut across formal and informal education models.

**As we continue to collaborate and partner with economic development, educational institutions and community partner our strategic focus will continue to support:**

- Alignment of educational offerings with the Framework of Quality developed and approved by the Credentials Review Committee.
- Alignment of educational offerings at the K-12 and postsecondary levels with credentials or degree programs identified on the statewide MCL.

- Performance measured by student outcomes such as academic achievement, college readiness, postsecondary enrollment, credential and certification attainment, job placement, and wages.

## **(11) EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT**

### **THE BUSINESS RELATIONSHIP DELIVERY SYSTEM**

The Business Relationship Management Plan is a consolidated outreach, relationship management, and business service plan. This is a comprehensive regional plan that allows centers and regional staff to coordinate their efforts and share promising ideas. As part of this concept, each CareerSource NEFL team member has a vital part to play in the delivery of services to our business customer. Each team member understands where they fit into the service scheme, and how their work impacts other team members, and ultimately our business customers.

The adoption of this strategy has resulted in the effective coordination of our service efforts. No team stands alone, but each group overlaps and shares team members. This means the teams communicate about supply and demand. It means not duplicating our efforts or communication with the customer, making sure we do not give conflicting messages, verbally or in our written communication. By carefully reviewing marketing materials, we plan our marketing efforts strategically and share the plans and information we gather.

Our industry teams collaborate with internal and external partners to meet the needs of our business customers. We do this through basic services, such as job postings and job notifications to job seekers registered in the Employ Florida system. For employers who need further assistance, we offer virtual and in-person single and multiple employer recruitments and job fairs. These events are widely marketed throughout the region via our CareerSource NEFL team, including the use of customer outreach tools as well as social media. Virtual Information Sessions allow job seekers to learn more about the jobs in our region while at the same time learning about employers that are hiring, presenting the opportunity for individual and group interactions with hiring managers. New this year is Recruitment Wednesdays which are located at our Duval County Southside location. The goal is to convene multiple employers once a week in a format which will increase the return on investment for both job seekers and employers. Proven successful, our goal is to replicate these events at other career centers throughout the region.

These goals are also achieved through our Virtual Job Fair tool which we have been using monthly to connect job seekers with employers in a convenient and safe way. In addition to filling immediate needs through recruitment, we also focus on helping businesses grow their existing employees to move them along their career path. This is one of the best ways to ensure retention of existing team members, which in turn allows the employer to recruit new team members. In addition to employers

within our targeted industries, we also target small businesses, with a focus on those who might be at risk of closure. Our Rapid Response program has grown this past year, with the goal of serving more small and at-risk businesses.

## COMPONENTS OF THE BUSINESS RELATIONSHIP

Economic Development (delivered by Industry Managers) consists of a sector strategy in partnership with the regional economic development organizations. These efforts focus on targeted industries and companies in the industry cluster that provide essential services, products, and support.

Service Delivery (delivered by Business Specialists) is about increasing our penetration in the regional market and delivering services to companies as needs arise. Service delivery is reactive; the team responds to the current needs of the company and evaluates the company's potential for deeper and more strategic engagement.

Relationship Management (also delivered by our Business Specialist Team) is the ongoing process of communication with the customer. While it fulfills the customer's needs, by communicating and follow-up, problems are fixed as they arise. It is also asking periodically how we are doing, and what we could do better. It is also being proactive in seeking out qualified applicants to fill the jobs, through our online systems and other employment databases.

Quality Assurance (delivered by the Business Services Manager) is tasked with monitoring the quality of postings, compliance with local and state processes and follow-up.

Outreach (delivered by the corporate communications staff) consists of presenting our message to the business customer. Key components of outreach include advertising and public relations and targeting business customers. Outreach means understanding customer needs, then working together as partners to solve problems and create value.

The Economic Development Team's performance is measured by the level of engagement and market penetration in general and specifically within targeted industry sectors. By bringing in new companies within a sector, they influence the employer penetration rate for the region. We also put a strong focus on business retention. It is important to us that we gain business trust resulting in their transition to customer, but it is equally important that we keep them as our customer.

### **The Economic Development Team influences the employer involvement rate through:**

- i. Making presentations to business and community groups and attending industry association meetings and events. These organizations include:
  - Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM)
  - First Coast Manufacturers' Association (FCMA)

- FloridaMakes - Manufacturing Extension Partnership
  - JAX Chamber Councils (IT, Health, Transportation & Logistics, Professional Women's Network, Area Councils)
  - Other professional targeted industry groups in our region.
- ii. Developing new business relationships in accordance with a sector strategy plan
  - iii. Working with economic development projects in partnership with JAXUSA
  - iv. Meeting with companies who request information about CareerSource NEFL services.
  - v. Serving as the primary resource for information, company hiring needs and trends in the labor market
  - vi. Serving as a regional team to respond to special events and other business-related needs.
  - vii. Providing information about the Employ Florida tool

## PARTNERSHIPS TO BETTER SERVE INDUSTRY

CareerSource NEFL works closely with the JAX Chamber, regional chambers, and other business support programs to determine the needs of business and respond to changing workforce trends.

### **We have close ties to several key regional initiatives, including:**

- i. JAX Bridges program (JAX Chamber). JAX Bridges is a program to connect small businesses with mentoring, capital access and contacts with larger companies to help earn business with established corporations. The program is designed to be the facilitator of supplier quality and development in Northeast Florida, helping smaller companies grow and promoting supply chain diversification among corporations.
- ii. The Jacksonville Women's Business Center advances the success of women entrepreneurs at every stage of business development. The services and programs are designed to provide business owners with education, information on how to access capital, resources, and networks to help them become successful.
- iii. UNF's Small Business Development Center provides no-cost consulting, low-cost trainings and extensive information resources offer entrepreneurs, both start-ups and second stage, access to the business solutions that help them grow and succeed.
- iv. Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM) provides CareerSource NEFL access to connect with business hiring managers to evaluate the ongoing need for talent. We organize joint events and have initiated partnered events such as "CareerTalk."

We also have strong links with regional economic development organizations. We provide information on local labor market factors, workforce availability, local, state, and federal training programs and hiring incentives, and available recruiting support to companies seeking to locate or expand in Northeast Florida.

## TRAINING PARTNERSHIPS - CUSTOMIZED TRAINING

CareerSource NEFL helps companies develop talent through training partnerships. One of the ways we partner with companies is through customized training. This service is designed to help a company with specific training needs to advance the skills of their workforce, while offsetting some of the costs associated with training. This training is available to companies within our Northeast Florida region and is usually focused on our targeted industry sectors (manufacturing, healthcare, finance, IT, and logistics and transportation), but depending on the project, can sometimes extend beyond those industries.

Customized training allows our companies to overcome one of the biggest issues facing companies today: The Skills Gap. The companies identify their training needs based on the skills they required for their positions and determined who will instruct their employees. This could be an outside organization such as a State College or Training vendor or an internal expert. CareerSource NEFL can reimburse employers up to 50% of the cost of eligible for an approved project.

## EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT THROUGH THE TALENT ADVANCEMENT NETWORK

One of the initiatives to come out of the Elevate Northeast Florida strategy, our previous Northeast Florida Regional Economic Development Strategy, was the development of the Talent Advancement Network (TAN.) The TAN was formed in 2019 to leverage the knowledge of human resource professionals to help generate workforce pipeline change. CareerSource NEFL is part of the steering committee leadership. This year, the CSNEFL Board appointed the TAN members to fulfill the state's Education and Industry Consortium requirement. The TAN submits quarterly reports to the board to inform the board of workforce trends, challenges, and opportunities within NEFL.

The TAN leverages existing educational systems and leadership, industry strengths and leadership, and pockets of workforce excellence to create a stronger talent pipeline focused on the youth, adults, and veterans currently living in Northeast Florida. The group meets every other month to discuss innovative programs for workforce recruiting, training, and retention.

TAN also shares articles of interest within a LinkedIn group that can be found at <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12202942/>. The group is led by HR professionals from key targeted industries. Each high-

growth industry is represented, as well as non-target community-based organizations, educators, and other employers. Agenda items often include partner updates on project announcements, education, and employment as well as guest speakers from area programs.

**TAN projects included:**

- i. Providing the regional school districts employer validated information on meaningful industry certifications.
- ii. Supporting the development and/or expansion of workforce development programs in our targeted industries through employer/educator engagement activities to include data analytics/business intelligence, engineering support specialist for aviation and Fintech programming.
- iii. Conducting Quarterly Targeted Industry Forums for Educators with employer representatives connecting approximately 130 educators with business and industry representatives.
- iv. Connecting employer partners with educators through field trips to include Manufacturing Month with First Coast Manufacturing Association, connections for business to school mentoring, employer referrals for local career fairs, classroom presentations for the manufacturing industry and development of an internship inventory.

**FACILITATING EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT WITH THE FUTURE WORKFORCE**

CareerSource NEFL collaborates with our area schools to connect graduates with prospective employers. Working with area businesses, and in concert with local school systems, the Business Services Team helps employers reach graduating seniors at job fairs at area high schools.

**(12) ENHANCING APPRENTICESHIPS**

CareerSource NEFL works closely with local employers, training partners, the Florida Department of Education Office of Apprenticeship Programs, CareerSource Florida, Florida state leaders, Florida's Department of Commerce, and local community support networks, to support and grow apprenticeship opportunities in Northeast Florida. We currently work with 21 Registered Apprenticeship Programs in our counties, training apprentices in 42 different occupations. Additionally, we work with programs registered statewide that have employers in our region, as well as in-house "earn-as-you-learn" programs that offer strong OJT opportunities; all aligning with our Regional Demand Occupation List.

CareerSource NEFL annually invests funding in our registered apprenticeship programs. These funds support the training of populations that may not otherwise have the opportunity to participate in programs of study that provide industry-recognized credentialing while earning a paycheck. The design of the registered apprenticeship training opportunities particularly lends themselves to providing the greatest chance for success for our most disadvantaged job seekers. The "earn while

you learn" apprenticeship process can fill gaps by providing a model that unites classroom instruction (theory) and hands-on-learning (skill development) with a mentor to tie theory and skills together while earning increased wages. In addition, the apprenticeship model provides extensive opportunities to practice skills and exposure to experts who can talk through the logic needed to troubleshoot occupational challenges.

It is the goal of the CareerSource NEFL career system to support the growth of registered apprenticeship by leveraging robust existing service delivery mechanisms. We are actively working to expand apprenticeship awareness and outreach mechanisms, capitalize on successful workforce development strategies and support our apprenticeship program partners in the design and delivery of innovative training programs. A complete list of State of Florida approved Registered Apprenticeships offered in our area (region 3) can be found at: <https://www.fldoe.org/academics/career-adult-edu/apprenticeship-programs/contacts.stml>

In May 2021, CareerSource NEFL hired a full-time Apprenticeship Navigator (AN) to develop community relations and educate employers and job seekers on the benefits of apprenticeship. The AN works with individual sponsors, associations, colleges, and other entities as a liaison to assist with registering apprenticeship plans with the state of Florida and connects businesses with the CareerSource NEFL Industry Sector Managers for assistance with training funding. Just over a year ago, we mobilized additional staff towards this effort in order to align job seeker outreach with the needs of employers.

Our current Business Services structure was designed to effectively support the addition of our Apprenticeship Navigator (Manager) and remains well-suited for this role. Our region benefits from strong, established relationships with employers across key industries, providing an excellent foundation for expanding apprenticeship opportunities. The Apprenticeship Manager collaborates closely with our Industry Managers—across sectors such as Healthcare, Manufacturing, Aviation and Aerospace, Finance, Information Technology, and Transportation and Logistics—to enhance services and assist employers in developing clear career pathways for their employees.

To build on and expand the impact of our apprenticeship initiatives, we will implement a series of targeted strategies moving forward. These efforts are designed to increase access, enhance diversity, and strengthen partnerships, ultimately ensuring that apprenticeships continue to serve as a powerful pathway to sustainable careers for individuals and a vital talent pipeline for employers. Our strategies will focus on broadening opportunities, reducing barriers for both employers and apprentices, and highlighting the success of apprenticeship programs as a model for workforce development. While we actively engage all employers, we will focus our efforts on our targeted industries – Healthcare, Advanced Manufacturing, Aviation and Aerospace, Information Technology, Finance and Transportation and Logistics. Specifically, we will:

**Expand Access and Diversity:** We will increase opportunities for underrepresented groups, including women and minorities, by focusing on targeted outreach and support. This includes raising

awareness of apprenticeship programs in industries with low diversity and where also individuals lack information about the benefits of work-based learning. By fostering a more inclusive apprenticeship pipeline, we aim to create equitable opportunities for all individuals while helping employers access a broader, more diverse talent pool. For instance, the need to diversify the talent pool within the manufacturing industry is a topic of ongoing discussion among industry professionals year after year.

**Educate Employers about Supportive Wraparound Services:** We will educate employers on the wide range of wraparound services available to enhance apprentices' success, including mentorship programs, subsidized transportation, childcare assistance, and access to professional support networks. These services are designed to address the challenges apprentices may face outside the workplace, helping them stay focused and engaged. By encouraging employers to leverage these resources, we aim to create a more supportive environment that fosters greater retention, skill development, and long-term career success for apprentices.

**Highlight Success Stories:** We will actively showcase the impact of apprenticeship programs by developing compelling case studies and gathering testimonials from businesses that have experienced measurable success. These success stories will highlight how apprenticeships have contributed to workforce development, increased employee retention, and enhanced business outcomes. By sharing these real-world examples, we aim to demonstrate the value of apprenticeships and use successful outcomes as a powerful tool to inspire other employers and attract future apprentices.

One of our recent success stories is the Surgical Technologist Apprenticeship program launched by UF Health St. Johns in collaboration with CareerSource NEFL. This program, the first of its kind for surgical technologists in Northeast Florida, was designed to address the growing demand for skilled professionals in the field. Starting in August 2022, five employees who were already working in other hospital roles participated in the 12-month program, which combined classroom instruction with on-the-job training.

The apprentices, who only needed a high school diploma or GED to qualify, remained full-time employees throughout the training, receiving both pay and benefits while acquiring new skills. This innovative approach allowed them to "earn while they learn," helping to create a pipeline of skilled surgical technologists who can assist in surgeries and prepare operating rooms.

The success of the program has garnered attention beyond UF Health St. Johns, with Hospital President Carlton DeVoght noting interest from other hospitals across Florida and beyond, eager to replicate the model. CareerSource NEFL was instrumental in securing state approval, managing the program's development, and securing funding to offset training costs.

Not only did the apprenticeship program help fill workforce gaps, but it also enhanced employee retention, improved productivity, and strengthened quality assurance at UF Health St. Johns. Additionally, it supported the hospital's diversity goals by providing an "earn-as-you-learn" opportunity

for job seekers. This program stands as a model for other employers looking to invest in new talent while addressing critical staffing needs.

**Collaborate Across CareerSource Regions:** We will strengthen partnerships with other CareerSource regions to expand support for registered apprenticeships that hire individuals across multiple areas. This collaboration will help create a more interconnected workforce development system, providing employers with access to a broader and more diverse talent pool. By working together across regions, we can enhance apprenticeship opportunities, share best practices, and ensure that both job seekers and employers benefit from a more robust, regionally integrated workforce pipeline.

The Industry Managers play a key role in identifying potential employer partners, specifically targeting healthcare, advanced manufacturing, aviation and aerospace, information technology, and other emerging industries, who could benefit from apprenticeship programs. If they encounter businesses or organizations with a workforce development need that could be addressed through the apprenticeship model, they refer these employer partners to the Apprenticeship Manager. This proactive approach ensures that companies have access to valuable workforce training opportunities that align with industry standards, while also helping them grow and develop skilled talent.

The Apprenticeship Manager is responsible for a broad range of activities designed to promote apprenticeship programs and build strong industry partnerships. One of their primary strategies for connecting with employers is attending community, industry, and chamber of commerce events. By participating in these gatherings, the Apprenticeship Manager is able to network directly with business leaders, industry professionals, and other stakeholders. These events also provide an opportunity to stay up to date on trends, challenges, and workforce needs within specific industries, helping to tailor apprenticeship programs that address those requirements.

Additionally, the Apprenticeship Manager cultivates and maintains relationships with local colleges and educational institutions that have an interest in offering Related Training Instruction (RTI) for apprenticeship programs. These institutions are crucial partners, as they provide the classroom-based training that complements the on-the-job experience apprentices gain with their employer partners. By working closely with these colleges, the Apprenticeship Manager ensures that the educational component of the apprenticeship program is aligned with industry needs and standards, thereby helping to produce a highly skilled, job-ready workforce.

By implementing these strategies, we aim to enhance the effectiveness and reach of apprenticeship programs, benefiting both job seekers and employers across the region.

## E. DESCRIPTION OF THE LOCAL ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM

### (1) GENERAL SYSTEM DESCRIPTION

CareerSource NEFL brings together required partners in a seamless customer-focused service delivery network designed to give job seekers access to programs, services, and other resources to improve their prospects of long-term employment. CareerSource NEFL has designated its Gateway Career Center located at 5000 Norwood Avenue, Suite 2, Jacksonville, FL 32208 as the comprehensive American Job Center (AJC) for LWDA 8.

One-Stop partners work together to provide access to services. Our One-Stop partners are co-located in the Gateway Career Center to administer their separately funded programs in an integrated and streamlined manner to customers.

#### **LWDA 8 partners include:**

- WIOA (Adult, Dislocated and Youth formula grants)
- National Black Council on Aging SCSEP
- Jacksonville Job Corps
- Florida State College at Jacksonville – Adult Education and Family Literacy
- Wagner-Peyser
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Jobs for Veterans
- Division of Blind Services
- AARP SCSEP
- Northeast Florida Community Action Agency
- Unemployment Compensation
- Jacksonville Housing Authority

The One-Stop Operator has involved all partners listed above (with exception of Unemployment Compensation) in the planning of all processes relative to customer intake, internal referral between partners, and creation of an Information Center to provide customers with information on the AJC services and programs, and individual partner services.

One-Stop partner meetings are conducted monthly, and partners work in a collaborative manner to make decisions on a consensus basis. The One-Stop Operator established subcommittees where

partners participated in focusing on mapping processes (i.e., data sharing and reporting performance, internal referral, customer service survey) and then shared outcomes from those meetings with the overall group of partners. The One-Stop Operator ensures each partner has equal input on the continuous process improvement of the overall delivery system.

In addition, several of CareerSource NEFL's goals to achieve its strategic vision speak to promoting maximum integration of service delivery within our career centers for our customers, both the job seekers and employers. Beyond our career centers, CareerSource NEFL is committed to deploying our resources into underserved areas and communities.

**CareerSource NEFL plans to accomplish these goals by continuing, improving, and/or implementing the following objectives:**

- Convening reoccurring meetings of the core programs' key staff to discuss and determine how we can best coordinate and complement our service delivery, so job seekers acquire the skills and credentials to meet employers' needs.
- Holding periodic strategic meetings with the business community to ascertain the skills and credentials employers need. All core programs' key staff will be invited to participate in these strategic meetings and work with CareerSource NEFL to determine what changes, if any, are needed based on this input from local employers.

**These additional partners include but are not limited to:**

- JAX USA
- Legal Aid
- Local Housing Authorities
- Episcopal Children Services
- The Early Learning Coalition
- Community Transportation
- Jacksonville Transportation Authority
- Operation New Hope
- The Literacy Alliance
- Goodwill Industries International, Inc.

## (2) CUSTOMER ACCESS

CareerSource NEFL has been, and remains, a leader in providing services to disabled job seekers. We were the first workforce board in the nation to become an EN under the Ticket to Work program. Each of our career centers fully embraces a universal design that meets the accessibility needs of job seekers. All CareerSource NEFL staff members are expressly trained to serve job seekers with disabilities and are familiar, and compliant, with ADA rules and regulations. The Disability Services Program Manager operates at the management level, providing direction and training to frontline staff throughout the career system. All staff assist all customers; in addition, each career center has at least one Disability Services Liaison assigned to assist those with disabilities. Accommodations have been made to allow wheelchair accessibility and designated workstations have been designed to facilitate use by individuals in wheelchairs. Large font computers are available, as is access to the Florida Relay System and Virtual Relay System.

CareerSource NEFL strives to meet the diverse needs of business and career seeking customers, including individuals experiencing barriers to employment. CareerSource NEFL employs universal design of environments, products, and communication practices, as well as the delivery of programs, services, and activities to meet the needs of all customers of the workforce development system. Our goal for any member of the public (including those with disabilities) is to experience easy access to our services, a welcoming atmosphere and exceptional customer service. CareerSource NEFL develops services that are accessible to the largest number of people, thereby reducing the need for specialized assistance. CareerSource NEFL provides a range of options for inputting information in a computer, including a keyboard, trackball, or a mouse. We provide information through both online self-directed methods and in group workshop settings. Our staff is prepared to assist and accommodate a range of literacy and language skills and provide effective prompting and feedback during and after task completion. Additional examples include providing information in multiple languages, presenting information during trainings and workshops verbally and in writing, and incorporating graphics to illustrate information so individuals can receive information in the manner that best suits them. In the resource rooms, all signage uses graphics and pictures combined with text, and resource materials are available in places and at heights that are highly accessible. CareerSource NEFL provides the option of registering and/or signing up for orientation, workshops, and classes online or by telephone ahead of time so that orientation can be accomplished upon the first visit.

To ensure we reach job seekers who have mobility limitations, CareerSource NEFL has developed and deployed a service delivery system that uses Mobile Access Point teams which take our services to the area of need in a community. Each team is supported by a scheduler and numerous employment workshop trainers. Each of the three vehicles are outfitted with twenty wireless-enabled laptops, marketing displays and other materials that support staff as they regularly visit our community partner facilities throughout the region.

In addition to our high touch services, our website, which is fully ADA compliant and WCAG 2.0 AA certified, provides a packaged service offering specific to the needs and status of our job seeking and business customers. Many of our services can be delivered online, creating a virtual career center that enhances the value of the website for job seekers who cannot come in to access our services.

### **(3) INTEGRATION OF SERVICE**

CareerSource NEFL utilizes the data systems provided by the state, which include the Employ Florida, the One-Stop Tracking System – My Florida, the SUNTAX Portal Production System, and the Department of Commerce Data Store. Continuous improvement of how these systems function will require continued collaboration, coordination, and re-assessment.

CareerSource NEFL staff stands ready to assist the state in a review of all core and partner program services, programs, and policies to identify duplicative efforts and potential solutions to better align agency resources and efforts.

All partners are co-located in the Gateway Center except Unemployment Compensation (UC), Job Corps and Jacksonville Housing Authority (JHA). Customers will continue to access UC through telephone; a direct linkage via Teams will be used for customers who need services from Job Corps and JHA.

A SharePoint page has been established to share data and other pertinent information between partners. The Internal Self-Referral Form indicates a customer's interests in one or more partner's services, as well as case notes to be distributed to partners via SharePoint. Partner meetings are conducted on a regular basis.

### **(4) SUB-GRANTS AND CONTRACTS**

Sub-grants and contracts are awarded through competitive processes. CareerSource NEFL utilizes a procurement process that ensures the purchase of goods and services is conducted in an open manner resulting in competitive pricing, proper management, and oversight controls to ensure financial accountability, efficiency, prevent waste, fraud, and abuse, and avoid acquisition of unnecessary or duplicative items. **Attachment:** [Local Administrative Plan](#).

### **(5) SERVICE PROVIDER CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

To ensure we respond to labor market, economic and demographic conditions, and trends, CareerSource NEFL utilizes an oversight, monitoring, and system performance improvement evaluation process which includes:

- Periodic on-site monitoring visits to ensure programmatic and statutory compliance of all funded programs.
- Ongoing review and assessments of service providers' performance
- Periodic independent monitoring for programmatic and fiscal compliance by a qualified certified public accounting firm
- Ongoing assessment of labor and economic data and trends

While these activities/services are required to fulfill CareerSource NEFL's mandated oversight responsibilities as LWDB 8, they also provide a means to respond to labor market, economic and demographic conditions, and trends in our area.

This system improvement process serves as an outreach tool for both CareerSource NEFL and its service providers to provide feedback to management, the board, and chief elected officials through findings and recommendations. The system improvement process allows managers and program operators to know what is happening at any given time in the system.

This process provides warning signals of developing problems, allowing management to implement improvement measures or take corrective action in a timely manner. CareerSource NEFL performs system improvement as a regular and systematic review of program activities, administrative systems, and management practices to determine appropriateness, effectiveness, and compliance with the terms of the contract, regulations/guidelines, and CareerSource NEFL policies and procedures.

## F. COORDINATION OF SERVICES

### (1) COORDINATION OF PROGRAMS/PARTNERS

CareerSource NEFL's strategy is designed to blend and braid separate programs and funding streams, providing single points of access to workforce services for both employers and job seekers. Through its One-Stop provider, CareerSource NEFL regularly meets with our core, mandatory and local partners to develop the framework for services and outcomes. Our joint vision for the WIOA integration of service is to create a framework for an effective career service system that goes beyond the simple co-location of programs, personnel, resources, and agencies. As envisioned by WIOA, funding streams and services are being integrated through signed MOUs and Infrastructure Funding Agreements (IFA) providing seamless delivery that makes the separate agencies and programs invisible to both businesses and job seekers. In addition, all partners work together to ensure our local plans meet the needs of local business and local sector strategies.

The MOU is the cornerstone of service integration in this environment. We currently are operating with agreements that have been developed with all cores, mandatory, and local partners. Our partners meet monthly to discuss the AJC/One-Stop system. Included in these meetings are issues that arise through operation and governance, service delivery strategy and future program delivery direction. This structure has been foundational to the success of our local workforce system.

In addition, several of CareerSource NEFL's goals to achieve its strategic vision speak to promoting maximum integration of service delivery within our career centers for our customers, both the job seekers and employers. Beyond our career centers, CareerSource NEFL is committed to deploying our resources into underserved areas and communities.

**CareerSource NEFL plans to accomplish these goals by continuing, improving, and/or implementing the following objectives:**

- Convening reoccurring meetings of the core programs' key staff to discuss and determine how we can best coordinate and complement our service delivery, so job seekers acquire the skills and credentials to meet employers' needs.
- Holding periodic strategic meetings with the business community to ascertain the skills and credentials employers need. All core programs' key staff will be invited to participate in these strategic meetings and work with CareerSource NEFL to determine what changes, if any, are needed based on this input from local employers.
- Promoting the AJC brand to ensure all core, mandatory and local partners are represented on promotional information.

## **(2) COORDINATION WITH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES**

Workforce development is the talent component of economic development, so it is critical that the two partners work closely together to ensure the success of a region. CareerSource NEFL works very closely with our economic development partners, and particularly JAXUSA, the regional economic development partner. JAXUSA is Jacksonville and Northeast Florida's regional economic development initiative. JAXUSA is a private, nonprofit division of the JAX Chamber. Its purpose is to facilitate the creation and retention of quality jobs and significant capital investment, resulting in a higher standard of living and a better quality of life in Northeast Florida.

JAXUSA works in partnership with the City of Jacksonville, JEA, the regional county partners - Baker, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Nassau, Putnam, and St. Johns, CareerSource NEFL, JAXPORT, the Jacksonville Aviation Authority, the Jacksonville Transportation Authority, and more than 135 private-sector investor corporate entities in the area. JAXUSA partners with CareerSource NEFL to help site consultants, relocation prospects, and local companies considering expansion understand the local labor market trends.

CareerSource NEFL provides information on average salaries, job growth trends and other factors affecting a company's ability to locate, recruit and train talent. We also help companies after the decision is made to locate or expand in the area with recruiting, screening, and assessment of prospective workers.

CareerSource NEFL also has a contractual agreement with JAXUSA to strengthen our industry sector partnerships. Under the agreement, JAXUSA will develop a baseline evaluation of existing regional sector support groups and provide a menu of strategies for each group, whether via alignment and partnership with existing groups, or creation of a new body. Our regional targeted industry sector categories are advanced manufacturing and aviation, financial services, health and biomedical, logistics and transportation, and information technology.

JAXUSA also hosts several workforce briefings throughout the year convening industry leaders, educators, workforce, and economic development staff to exchange information and report on industry trends. In addition, CareerSource NEFL has developed a workforce survey that queries companies about their future hiring and training needs as well as well as potential barriers to success. The survey is delivered in our counties by the local economic development entities. Each county organization is responsible for conducting company surveys every quarter. The results are delivered almost immediately via an internet survey tool and can be forwarded to CareerSource NEFL business services staff for action if a company has an immediate need for staffing or training support. For the upcoming year, we have increased this outreach to make a bigger impact on layoff aversion.

In lieu of separate sector MOUs, CareerSource NEFL has elected to create an agreement with JAXUSA, the regional economic development partnership.

**Under this agreement and contracted services, JAXUSA delivers or facilitates:**

- i. Regional forums to bring together employers, educators, and workers from targeted sectors to discuss workforce challenges and trends in recruiting, training, and talent retention,
- ii. Reports on employment by sector and trend, and
- iii. A 5-year regional strategy that has included:
  - Competitive Analysis - providing a detailed evaluation of our region's competitive strengths and areas for improvement.
  - Target Sub-Cluster Definition Report - containing detailed profiles of each target cluster and sub-cluster.
  - Education Infrastructure Assessment - containing an evaluation of all educational programs in the seven-county region, and a comparison of those programs with the talent needs of the target clusters.
  - Target Implementation Plans - recommending specific community development, workforce development, business development and marketing actions for each target audience, including a timeline, budget, and metrics.

We recently released an updated regional strategy, “The Future Is Now,” which focuses on extensive data analysis and an inclusive stakeholder engagement process.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

### 1 COMPETITIVENESS

*Northeast Florida continues to maintain a high quality of life and favorable business environment that attracts and retains top-tier talent and businesses.*

### 2 REGIONALISM

*Northeast Florida communities work in coordination with all of their partners to leverage one another's strengths and capitalize on opportunities leading to greater economic prosperity for all.*

### 3 ECONOMIC MOBILITY

*Northeast Florida recognizes the region's unemployed, underemployed, and underserved populations face barriers to fully participating in and recognizing the benefits of a robust economy and will intentionally address these systemic issues.*

### 4 INNOVATION

*Northeast Florida engages entrepreneurs, business leaders, higher education, and economic development partners to create a dynamic environment that fuels cross-sector partnerships and leads to cutting-edge technology.*

### 5 RESILIENCE

*Northeast Florida is not only prepared to withstand economic shocks, but also to quickly recover from economic impacts through regional collaboration and coordination.*

## THE FUTURE IS NOW

### GOAL 1

#### TALENT DEVELOPMENT

*Promote the development of accessible career pathways that create a robust talent pipeline reflective of employer needs.*

- 1.1. Grow career exploration and training programs that expose youth and adults to job opportunities across Northeast Florida.
- 1.2. Deepen partner engagement across workforce and talent development initiatives to ensure talent is retained in Northeast Florida.
- 1.3. Prioritize the workforce support ecosystem through collaborative partnerships.
- 1.4. Bolster talent attraction and marketing initiatives to grow a diverse pool of top-tier talent.

### GOAL 2

#### BUSINESS GROWTH

*Attract, retain, and grow businesses while cultivating an inclusive, supportive ecosystem for innovation and entrepreneurship.*

- 2.1. Make critical investments to support startups and entrepreneurs, a segment which often represents the future of a regional economy.
- 2.2. Drive business growth, retention, and expansion efforts throughout Northeast Florida.
- 2.3. Implement a regionally collaborative and coordinated approach to target sector development to grow future niche industries in Northeast Florida.
- 2.4. Support the growth and vitality of small businesses across Northeast Florida.
- 2.5. Recruit new companies to Northeast Florida that offer high-quality jobs and are invested in the future of the region.

### GOAL 3

#### QUALITY OF PLACE

*Elevate quality of place projects that spur investment and create a desirable location for businesses and talent.*

- 3.1. Invest in Northeast Florida's downtowns and central business districts to spur investment and development, including downtown Jacksonville.
- 3.2. Expand the number of housing units across Northeast Florida to meet the region's growth patterns.
- 3.3. Maintain an authentic sense of community identity as new development and investment occurs.
- 3.4. Invest in connectivity infrastructure and systems to support the regional economy and its residents.

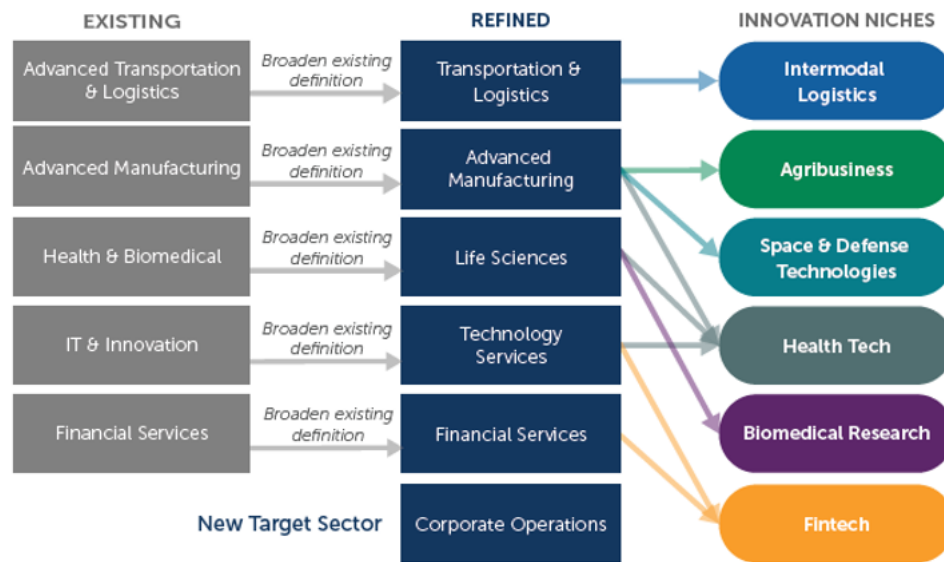
### GOAL 4

#### INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORKS

*Prioritize place-based real estate development projects that spur investment and position the region as a preferred location for businesses and residents.*

- 4.1. Identify and focus development on commercial and residential corridors that link communities across Northeast Florida.
- 4.2. Ensure a long-term supply of commercial and industrial employment ready sites across Northeast Florida.
- 4.3. Proactively address permitting processes across the region to ensure sites and projects can be moved forward at a competitive pace.
- 4.4. Approach connectivity from a holistic and regional perspective that includes the movement of information as well as the physical mobility of freight and commuters.

## REFINED TARGETED INDUSTRIES



### (3) COORDINATION WITH RAPID RESPONSE

CareerSource NEFL provides comprehensive, proactive local Rapid Response activities to assist adversely affected employers and workers as quickly as possible following the announcement of a permanent closure, layoff, or natural or other disaster resulting in a mass job dislocation. Additionally, we strive to identify and plan to prevent or minimize the impacts of layoffs on workers, businesses, and communities. Our Rapid Response Team is truly a team to provide the most comprehensive services as it includes a Rapid Response Coordinator, Industry Managers and Coordinators, Business Specialists and Career Coordinators.

#### Some of the key strategies we deploy include:

**Layoff Aversion:** Employ strategic planning, business intelligence data gathering, and analysis to predict and mitigate layoff events. Our Rapid Response Team (which includes industry managers) proactively reaches out to employers of all sizes including small businesses through surveys and works in close collaboration with our economic development partners to better understand business needs and provide solutions to companies that want to save jobs well in advance of layoffs. We are utilizing the information gathered to establish early warning systems to identify businesses that might be at risk of closing so immediate support may be provided to avoid layoffs. Information provided to employers that may be at risk includes Short-Term Compensation information, federal emergency grant and loan programs, local assistance programs, and customized training.

**Business Engagement:** CareerSource NEFL industry managers develop strong relationships with businesses and industry leaders through active memberships in associations and proactively providing information regarding CareerSource NEFL's services. Further the industry managers work closely with the Rapid Response Coordinator as key members of the Rapid Response team.

**Reemployment Assistance:** CareerSource NEFL provides workers with comprehensive information on how to file for reemployment assistance and what to expect from the claims process.

**Community Services to Aid Laid-Off Workers:** We help connect laid-off workers to community services like Florida KidCare, which provides affordable health coverage for children based on family income.

**Tax Implications of Job Loss:** We help laid-off workers get information from the Internal Revenue Service about how their taxes are affected by job loss.

**CareerSource NEFL Job Preparation Services:** CareerSource NEFL provides a variety of tools that job seekers can use to prepare for their next job such as career transition services, veteran services, and the CareerSource NEFL Professional Network.

**Outreach to Small Businesses:** CareerSource NEFL will further develop outreach materials that are particularly focused to small businesses regarding the services CareerSource NEFL can provide to avoid layoffs as well as when a layoff does occur. This will be done in partnership with the Small Business Administration and associations that focus on small to medium size business membership.

**Using Tools to Engage Business:** We have begun using Dunn and Bradstreet's EconoView tool to be more strategic with our employer outreach. EconoView is an intuitive data visualization platform offering multi-dimensional views of a region's business, workforce, and sector data for targeted business outreach. It allows us to evaluate businesses using a financial stress index to see what their potential for a layoff or closure might be. This tool will allow us to be more strategic in our business outreach approach.

## (4) INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS

### a. Key Industry Sectors

CareerSource NEFL focuses our resources on supporting high demand industry sectors. CareerSource NEFL and JAXUSA are aligned to support the same sectors throughout the Northeast Florida region. JAXUSA selected the sectors based on a regional study. The sectors include aviation and advanced manufacturing, health and life sciences, technology services, finance, transportation, and logistics.

The regional strategic planning process, updated every five years, includes an in-depth Competitive Analysis providing a detailed evaluation of our region's competitive strengths and

areas for improvement, a Target Sub-Cluster Definition Report - containing detailed profiles of each target cluster and sub-cluster, an Education Infrastructure Assessment - containing an evaluation of all educational programs in the region, and a comparison of those programs with the talent needs of the target clusters. JAXUSA and CareerSource NEFL use a variety of economic data tools to inform our work with sectors on a day-to-day basis.

The objective of the partnership between CareerSource NEFL and JAXUSA is to foster collaboration among key stakeholders in the region to grow jobs and provide a highly skilled workforce matched to employer demand.

**JAXUSA and CareerSource NEFL will partner to:**

- i. Provide a baseline evaluation of existing sector support groups in the region and delivery of recommendation of strategies for each, whether via alignment and partnership with existing group or creation of a new body. Targeted industry sector categories: aviation and advanced manufacturing, financial services, health and biomedical, logistics and transportation, and information technology.
- ii. Create an evaluation report and specific recommendations for each of the five targeted industries to include an existing inventory of convening bodies, current and projected employer demand in each sector, ten interviews with executives representing top employers in these sectors and specific recommendations for a strategy for each.
- iii. Develop a plan to transition from the current Career and Technical Ed (CTE) – driven regional group convening to one driven by industry sector rather than pipeline geography. To include jointly developed transition plan and launch of high-level annual convening – a Career and Technical Education Summit – with key CTE directors, college and university leaders, business representatives and legislative advocates.
- iv. Alignment to CareerSource NEFL strategic plan and regional college attainment Earn Up strategy to include employer engagement points up to 15 interviews/focus group participants, etc.
- v. Workforce events with education to demonstrate:
  - connections with CTE to each of the five targeted sectors,
  - business partnerships facilitated between K-12/college and employers to include the development of two new early college partnerships, and
  - participants engaged and surveyed.
- vi. Workforce briefing in each of our targeted industry groups annually with key employers and education leaders.

- vii. Host employer-driven conversations (to include 15 of the region's largest employers) across all sectors regarding increasing the industry certificate and college completion rate of targeted sectors. Create a plan to address barriers and needs and pursue the development of external programs.
- viii. Documentation of convening events for each targeted industry with defined content and convening outcomes.
- ix. Provide connections, data and content needed to fully support CareerSource NEFL driven build-out of online career centers around two key sectors. To include internal meetings with CareerSource NEFL staff and any contracted service providers, any data support services, employer quotes, higher education provider responses, event and convening pictures, business executive background information and photos.

#### **b. Sector Strategies that are founded on a Regional Vision**

In spring 2022, JAXUSA Partnership (JAXUSA) launched its most ambitious regional economic development planning process to date. Leadership from across Northeast Florida's seven counties (Baker, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Nassau, Putnam, and St. Johns) recognized that for economic development to be successful, it needed to represent the region as a whole. Therefore, it is imperative that the organizations and partners who assisted in the development of this plan serve as thought leaders and contributors throughout plan implementation. The result of this planning effort is a regional, people-centric economic development strategy. This focus acknowledges that talent is, and will continue to be, the most important driver of economic success for the region.

#### **Plan Framework:**

*The Future Is Now—Northeast Florida* economic development strategic plan is anchored by a strong, regionally focused vision statement. The vision statement and the guiding principles were crafted with input from a 30-member steering committee and regional leaders. They form the framework on which the strategic action plan goals were formulated. The plan goals, strategies, and actions emerged from an extensive planning process.

Although the strategic plan is designed to be implemented over a 5-year planning horizon, the vision statement sets the economic direction for the next 20 years. The Future Is Now plan speaks to the desire of regional leaders to prioritize economic opportunity and to align resources in support of economic mobility for all residents.

The plan's guiding principles are the unmeasured, qualitative roles and functions that intersect the primary areas of the strategic action plan. Each principle is forward looking and helps orient goals and strategies toward regional growth and improvement.

## Catalytic Initiatives

### TALENT

Migration data demonstrates that the region is **connected by talent**, and talent remains one of the most **pressing concerns** for employers across Northeast Florida. **Workforce development investments** are needed to ensure economic prosperity for all as well as investments in **talent attraction and retention**.

### EMPLOYMENT CENTERS

Northeast Florida has the opportunity to take a regional approach to planning for future employment centers to ensure **businesses are able to expand and relocate** in a timely manner as well as to ensure **transportation networks** align between residential and job centers.

### INNOVATION NICHES

Innovation niches are the **targets of the future** and must be developed with a longer-term vision and a deeper investment commitment than traditional industry growth. **Significant regional investments** include physical infrastructure, educational programming, talent pipeline development, and cross-pollination of institutional relationships.

### DOWNTOWNS

Vibrant and dynamic downtowns in every corner of Northeast Florida are essential to creating high quality of life that attracts business and talent. Investments are needed to invigorate central business districts and Main Street corridors, with a focus on **residential and commercial infill**.

### OUTDOOR ECONOMY

**Northeast Florida has incredible natural resources and outdoor assets that can be leveraged** for talent attraction and recruitment and **as a catalyst for** community development.

**A Strategy driven by our industry partners.**

We have developed several methods of communication with industries so we can gather intelligence about the regional labor pool and the methods employers use to recruit, train, and retain workers.

CareerSource NEFL has a contractual agreement with JAXUSA to strengthen our industry sector partnerships. Under the agreement, JAXUSA has developed a baseline evaluation of existing regional sector support groups and provided a menu of strategies for each group, whether via alignment and partnership with existing groups, or the creation of a new body.

Our regional targeted industry sector categories are aviation and advanced manufacturing, financial services, life sciences, logistics and transportation, information technology, and corporate operations.

JAXUSA also hosts several workforce briefings throughout the year, convening industry leaders, educators, workforce, and economic development staff, to exchange information and report on industry trends.

CareerSource NEFL has developed a close relationship with the regional chapter of SHRM, the Society for Human Resources Management. CareerSource NEFL staff members attend every SHRM meeting to connect with local recruiters and gain feedback and to learn about trends in HR from speakers. CareerSource NEFL partners with SHRM and the Jacksonville Urban League to present quarterly events titled Career Talk: A Job Seeker Speaker Series. These are done as virtual sessions to help jobseekers level up their skills.

In addition, CareerSource NEFL has developed a workforce survey that queries companies about their future hiring and training needs. The survey is delivered in our counties by the local economic development entities. Each county organization is responsible for conducting quarterly company surveys. The results are delivered almost immediately via an internet survey tool and can be forwarded to CareerSource NEFL business services staff for action if a company has an immediate need for staffing or training support.

#### **d. Alignment of our service delivery system with sector strategies**

To better serve business in our targeted industries, a staffing realignment was necessary. As a result, Industry Managers were hired for our four main industry groups. These managers came with direct experience and deep knowledge within their industries and manage a small team to assist with each industry's plan. Recently, we added a fifth Industry Manager, whose responsibility is to manage all feeder and support industries.

The Relationship Management Plan is a consolidated outreach, relationship management, and business service plan. The plans for each center are rolled into a comprehensive regional plan allowing centers and regional staff to coordinate their efforts and share best practices.

As part of this concept, each CareerSource NEFL employee has a vital part to play in the delivery of services to our business customer. Each member of the CareerSource NEFL team understands where they fit into the service scheme, and how their work impacts other CareerSource NEFL employees, and ultimately, our business customers.

The adoption of this strategy has resulted in the effective coordination of our service efforts. No team stands alone, but each group overlaps and shares team members. This means the teams communicate about supply and demand, both formally and informally. It means not duplicating our efforts or communication with the customer. It also means making sure we do not give conflicting messages, verbally or in our written communication. It means carefully reviewing marketing materials, both inside and outside the center for consistent messaging and graphics. It means we plan our marketing efforts strategically and share the plans and information we gather.

Economic Development (delivered by Industry Sector Managers) consists of a sector strategy in partnership with the regional economic development organizations. These efforts focus on targeted industries and the industries and companies in the industry cluster that provide essential services, products, and support. They communicate weekly with the regional career services staff through weekly email blasts with information about recruiting needs, training projects and new companies with which we have connected.

**e. Transforming our services to customers through sector strategies**

Effective Coordination of Efforts means the team communicates about supply and demand in industries, both formally and informally. It means not duplicating our efforts or communication with the customer. It also means making sure we do not give conflicting messages, verbally or in our written communication. It means carefully reviewing outreach materials, both inside and outside the center for consistent messaging and graphics. It means we plan our marketing efforts strategically and share the plans and information we gather.

We divide our time among all our targeted industries. Through robust and candid conversations and workshops with partners, we are working with local businesses and training providers to identify training needs, training solutions and eligible candidates for training to move into or advance in careers in these growing industries.

We also host regional events to inform job seekers, educators, and the public about opportunities in key targeted industries. For example, CareerSource NEFL has hosted

multiple industry-focused events such as Manufacturing the Future, Prescription for the Future and Banking on the Future, Certificates of Value and Resources to Prepare Students for the Modern Workforce, all forums designed to bring together industry and local colleges to expose K-12 educators to the wide variety of career options available to their students in these industries.

These events connect individuals from industry/business, secondary education, and higher education. This intersection supports our mission of building the talent pipeline in NEFL. The attendees from secondary education tell us that these events are a great resource that supports the career services and counseling they provide their students. Employers tell us that they appreciate speaking to the educators and students because it is a direct venue to share current information on industry, including required skill sets, career paths, and salaries. The colleges tell us that they appreciate these events because they connect them to potential students.

CareerSource NEFL has worked diligently with our six school districts to create a unified and seamless Career Academy Model across our entire region. Built on the vision provided by the Florida Career and Professional Academies Act, each is research-based and integrates rigorous academic and industry-specific curriculum that aligns directly with the priority workforce needs of our local labor market and targeted sectors.

**Each academy:**

- Provides a rigorous standards-based academic curriculum integrated with a career theme that is directly tied to a high skill/high wage occupation represented in targeted industries and the local labor market.
- Maintains partnerships with post-secondary institutions, businesses, industry, economic development, and community organizations.
- Incorporates maximum use of private sector facilities and personnel resources.
- Provides personalized student advisement.
- Provides opportunities for students to earn Bright Futures Scholarships.
- Provides instruction in high-growth, high-demand, and high-pay careers.
- Delivers instruction relevant to the applicable career, including intensive reading and mathematics intervention.
- Offers applied courses that combine academic content with technical skills.
- Provides instruction resulting in obtaining the highest industry-recognized credential available at the high school level.

- Provides opportunities for students to obtain the Florida Ready to Work Certification.
- Includes an evaluation plan.
- Includes a plan to sustain career and professional academies.
- Redirects appropriated career funding to career and professional academies.
- Provides articulation agreements to institutions of higher technical or academic learning.

This is the real purpose of a workforce development system - to create a talent pipeline that engages students at an early age to think about work and the relationship between learning and earning that is reflected in our labor market. We have always been committed to serving students at risk; to be competitive in the global economy, we must also be sure to include the entire workforce of tomorrow.

The results of this strategy have been outstanding. In every case, the students enrolled in the career academies have higher grade point averages, better school attendance rates, higher FCAT scores and most importantly higher graduation rates.

**The Industry Sector Team also works to increase connections between schools and businesses by:**

- Helping increase business participation in individual school job fairs and countywide job fairs. Beginning in 2022 we have partnered with JAXUSA and Duval County Public Schools to establish an annual countywide job fair for high school seniors.
- Presenting at high school events including Parent Academy Classes and Senior Nights.
- Encouraging businesses to join high school advisory boards,

We will continue to work closely with the school systems in our region to ensure students understand the opportunities in Northeast Florida, and within our high growth sectors. CSNEFL Staff attend and participate in many Career Academy Advisory Board meetings across the region.

**f. Measuring, improving, and sustaining sector strategies.**

As our regional focus shifted to spotlight our targeted industries, we created innovative ways to serve and measure the impact on employers while assisting job seekers seeking careers in these target areas. As part of a regional reorganization, an assessment was completed to better understand business needs, not just current but projected needs as well. Four Industry Manager positions were created to become our regional industry experts. In 2023, we added

a Business Manager who also oversees Corporate Operations. Our Industry Managers are required to have extensive experience in their assigned industry and the right skills to meet the needs of our partner employers. The four industry teams led by these managers are providing specialized services to ensure our targeted industry employers' needs are met. While providing a higher level of service to our employer customers, we are then able to specialize our services provided to individuals seeking employment in these areas.

**These services include:**

- Targeted Industry events including recruitments and informational sessions for job seekers. While open to all job seekers, our Industry Teams search through our database to find and invite qualified candidates.
- Industry Portals - We have gathered information on the fastest growing and highest paying jobs, training opportunities and the latest industry news to help job seekers fast track their career. The industry portals include the ability for job seekers to explore occupations, including salary information, job growth projections and more.
- Industry Days in the region's career centers were created a few years ago to create an environment for information sharing between the industry teams and the career center staff as well as between the industry teams and job seeker. While we do not currently host regular Industry Days due to staffing, this is a model that was of benefit, and we hope to host again moving forward.

**Our Targeted Industry Teams create sector plans to include strategies for action such as:**

- Developing the future workforce and improving current labor pool.
- Identifying critical cluster occupations and suggesting new and adjusting existing workforce development efforts to target critical cluster needs.
- Connecting the region's residents to training those addresses known skills gaps and aggregating local demand for workforce programs.
- Informing youth of opportunities in the targeted industries through a variety of activities including job/career fairs, parent nights and educational forums.

On a regular basis we pull economic data regarding employment data for each industry and the occupations/skills in greatest demand. Further, we track the effectiveness of our services provided through industry surveys after each recruitment or information event. We utilize this on-going source of information to update our plans as well as inform service delivery.

## **(5) COORDINATION WITH RELEVANT SECONDARY AND POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION**

CareerSource NEFL believes that the K-12 system is the beginning of our worker pipeline, and we have developed a strong and lasting partnership with all our local school districts. While career academies are a vital component of our worker development strategy, this is not our only involvement with our school districts. CareerSource NEFL actively supports specialized services to the most in-need youth in our region, which are delivered through our schools. Our post-secondary education partners have ensured students who graduate from our career academy systems are prepared to enter their institutions. Each college and university have actively entered into articulation agreements that award advance college credit and align high school studies with the entry requirement of their institutions.

CareerSource NEFL has developed partnerships with over thirty educational institutions, both publicly-funded and private for profit. These institutions offer well over two hundred courses of study leading to academic and technical degrees or industry recognized certifications. The majority of career study offerings are provided by more than one educational institution, which supports job seeker choice, both in cost, frequency of classes, program placement success and location. In addition, offered courses of study fully support our RDOL and Master Credentials List.

While the above-mentioned educational partners mostly support our scholarship training job seekers, our work experience trainees are equally important. Our employer-based training strategy allows CareerSource NEFL to partner with business by sharing costs. In many instances, these same education partners create and provide training programs at business facilities as part of the workday.

Each year, our education partners work diligently with us to ensure the right training programs are in place to support the skills training needed in our region. As noted above, the resulting programs are offered not only on our college campuses but are often customized and taken right to the worksite to be offered to our employed trainees.

### **Our education partners include, but are not limited to:**

- Jacksonville University and the University of North Florida
- State Colleges such as Florida State College at Jacksonville, Florida Gateway College, St. Johns River State College, and First Coast Technical College
- Continuing Education and certification programs at the University of North Florida
- Private for profit and non-profit training programs that have been evaluated and placed on our approved training partners list.
- Career Academies within our regional K-12 school districts.

### **Additional coordination efforts are evident through the following strategies:**

- Designing and implementing practices that actively engage industry sectors and use economic and labor market information, sector strategies, Career Pathways, Registered Apprenticeships, and competency models to help drive skill-based initiatives.
- Creating Career Pathways that lead to industry-recognized credentials, encourage work-based learning, and use state-of-the-art technology to accelerate learning and promote college and career success.
- Provide access to internships and work experiences linked to careers.
- Training and equipping career center staff in an ongoing learning process with the knowledge, skills, and motivation to provide superior service to job seekers.
- Cross-training center staff to increase staff capacity, expertise, and efficiency. This allows staff from differing programs to understand every program and to share their expertise about the needs of specific populations so that all staff can better serve all customers.
- Inviting education partners and their staff to our staff training to learn more about WIOA, workforce development programs, and present an overview of their programs/services to CareerSource NEFL staff.
- Participating in outreach events including college nights, open houses, and job fairs at education providers.
- Participating on secondary and post-secondary educational advisory boards.
- Exploring opportunities for ongoing data sharing to maximize performance outcomes under WIOA.

Annually, CareerSource NEFL reviews the Carl D. Perkins grant applications submitted to the Department of Education by our training partners. A list of our training vendors and programs of study can be found at: [https://careersourcenortheastflorida.com/partner\\_vendor\\_list/](https://careersourcenortheastflorida.com/partner_vendor_list/).

## **(6) COORDINATION OF TRANSPORTATION AND OTHER SUPPORTIVE SERVICES**

We partner with a variety of organizations to ensure we can provide the right supportive services to job seekers. The Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD) is an independent agency responsible for the coordination of transportation services for older adults, persons with disabilities, persons of low income and children at risk. The Transportation Disadvantaged Program (TD) enhances the mobility of Floridians to achieve independence by providing medical, employment, education, and other life sustaining trips to people with disabilities. The TD population includes persons who are unable to transport themselves or to purchase transportation, those who are unable to transport themselves because of a disability, and those who are unable to do so because of income status.

## **Our staff actively participates in local and regional Transportation Disadvantaged Boards:**

- Baker – Baker County Council on Aging
- Clay – Clay Council on Aging
- Duval – North Florida Transportation Planning Organization

## **(7) COORDINATION OF WAGNER-PEYSER SERVICES**

In 2000, Florida placed Wagner-Peyser (WP) state merit staff under the day-to-day supervision of CareerSource NEFL. While always an important partner in our career service system, this action led to full integration and coordination of services.

Labor exchange services are the primary services provided by WP staff; however, all Basic Career Services are available through WP staff in coordination with our career center partners. In addition, WP staff also make available the Individualized Career Services as outlined below.

Basic Career Services are made available to all individuals seeking services served in the One-Stop delivery system, and include:

- Determinations of whether the individual is eligible to receive assistance from the adult, dislocated worker, or youth programs.
- Outreach, intake (including identification through the state's Worker Profiling and Re-employment Services system of unemployment insurance (UI) claimants likely to exhaust benefits), and orientation to information and other services available through the One-Stop delivery system by phone or via other technology if the assistance is provided by trained and available staff and within a reasonable time.

The costs associated in providing meaningful assistance may be paid for by the State's Re-employment program, the WIOA Adult or Dislocated Worker programs, the Wagner-Peyser Employment Service, or some combination thereof through these funding sources. Individualized Career Services may be made available by WP in coordination with our career center partners.

### **Comprehensive and specialized assessments of the skill levels and service needs of adults and dislocated workers may include:**

- Diagnostic testing and use of other assessment tools.
- In-depth interviewing and evaluation to identify employment barriers and appropriate employment goals.

- Development of an individual employment plan, to identify the employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives, and appropriate combination of services for the participant to achieve his or her employment goals, including the list of, and information about, eligible training providers.
- Group and/or individual counseling and mentoring.
- Career planning (e.g., case management).
- Career exploration in our region's targeted industries.

We align ourselves with the sector industries identified by JAXUSA and provide targeted services to our job seekers based on the identified industries, and available at any CareerSource NEFL Career Center or Access Point. This includes access to targeted industry teams who work in partnership with employers throughout the region, industry portals, as well as special job postings and events in these industries as well.

- Short-term pre-vocational services, including development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training. In some instances, pre-apprenticeship programs may be considered as short-term pre-vocational services.
- Internships and work experiences that are linked to careers.
- Workforce preparation activities that help an individual acquire a combination of basic academic skills, critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills, and self-management skills, including competencies in utilizing resources, using information, working with others, understanding systems, and obtaining skills necessary for successful transition into and completion of postsecondary education, or training, or employment.
- Financial literacy services.
- Out-of-area job search assistance and relocation assistance.
- English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs.

CareerSource NEFL has developed and maintains operational policies and procedures for the delivery of programs and program services to include WP employment services under the Wagner-Peyser Act. Staff training and development is seamless across board, partner, and state staff.

## **(8) COORDINATION OF ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY**

Adult Education and Literacy services are provided through the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA), Title II of WIOA. AEFLA presents an extraordinary opportunity to improve the quality of life for individuals with low skills. Literacy and numeracy are fundamental skills necessary for workforce success and for personal and social well-being. Services provided under AEFLA can lead

to further education, training opportunities, and work, derived from best practices used in the most rigorous research available. The diversity of individuals who possess low literacy skills requires a broad approach to skills development.

As one of six core programs under WIOA, the AEFLA program plays an integral role in the workforce development system by providing access to educational services for adult learners through the One-Stop system. The program seeks to advance the educational and workforce development of adults as workers, parents, and citizens. While playing a critical role in adult attainment of a secondary school diploma, the program also aims to assist in the transition to postsecondary education and training using Career Pathways.

CareerSource NEFL counts our local AEFLA program providers as key to the success of the Career Services System. They provide critical services and activities to support adult learners with the goal of improving access to education and training opportunities and employment by:

- Continuing to develop and refine our transition plan to guide implementation of WIOA requirements and to consider job seeker impacts.
- Assisting adults in becoming literate and obtaining the knowledge and skills for employment and economic self-sufficiency. Programs use Career Pathways, integrated education and training, and workforce preparation activities as hallmarks of excellent work-relevant instruction.
- Supporting the educational and skill achievement of parents and family members to participate in the educational development of their children and improve economic opportunities for families. Family literacy programs provide parents and family members with foundational skills that boost their knowledge and confidence. They support the educational development of parents and help them become educational advocates for their children.
- Assisting immigrants and English learners in improving their English and math proficiency and understanding the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. English learners have access to services to help them achieve competence in reading, writing, speaking, and understanding English. These competencies allow them to obtain secondary school credentials and succeed in further education and training. Immigrants acquire an understanding of what it means to be a citizen and to participate in civic responsibilities.
- Assisting incarcerated individuals in strengthening their knowledge and skills to promote successful re-entry into society. Incarcerated individuals have access to educational services that prepare them for employment, economic self-sufficiency, family roles, and responsible citizenship upon their release. They can access adult education and literacy activities that support post-release transition to higher levels of education and training and meaningful employment.

To ensure that CareerSource NEFL and our local AEFLA providers coordinate our efforts to provide integrated effective services to our system users, we will:

- Assess the One-Stop delivery system, core programs, and One-Stop partners to determine how to best achieve seamless service delivery models that place the job seeker in the center of program design and delivery.
- Manage an MOU between our chief elected officials, CareerSource NEFL and AEFLA providers to address One-Stop center infrastructure funding, physical and programmatic accessibility requirements, and the vision of WIOA and state established goals, among other issues.
- Assist our AEFLA providers to collaborate with new or existing youth services contract operators to increase services to disconnected and out-of-school youth and reconnect them to education and jobs.

## **(9) REDUCTION OF WELFARE DEPENDENCY**

In keeping with our income growth strategy, CareerSource NEFL has developed a holistic three-pronged approach to reducing multi-generation welfare dependency. This approach understands that families must build human, financial and social assets to move them from a life of poverty to a life of self-sufficiency.

### **Specifically, these assets entail the following:**

- Human Assets: Assets to attain knowledge, skills, and abilities to earn adequate income.
- Financial Assets: Assets to effectively manage money and build wealth.
- Social Assets: Assets required for taking care of themselves, their children and building productive relationships with others.

To assist job seekers in managing these assets, all Welfare Transition and SNAP staff use various resources and tools to assist with achieving this goal. Specifically, to further assist our customers CareerSource will use the CLIFF tools to assist customers in understanding how changes in employment (like a promotion or a new, higher-paying job) will affect their access to benefits, based on where they live, their income, and their family situation. The tools used will assist our customers in advancing their careers by providing information about:

- How changes in their employment may affect the public assistance they receive
- How workforce strategies can help workers cope with public assistance loss as they advance
- In-demand career pathways that lead to quality jobs and that can compensate for a loss of public assistance

All CareerSource NEFL front line staff have completed the “CLIFF Suite of Tools” training to understand the “Benefits Cliff” and the magnitude it has on the customers we serve.

Hope Florida is an initiative that offers a comprehensive approach to addressing poverty and promoting economic mobility. Through this partnership, we are able to address barriers to employment and promote wage progression through rapid attachment to the workforce, continual skill gains, and personal development activities. The program utilizes Hope Navigators to guide Floridians on an individualized path to prosperity, economic self-sufficiency, and hope by focusing on community collaboration between the private sector, faith-based community, nonprofits, and government entities including DCF and the Florida Workforce System. The goal is to break down traditional community silos, maximize support, and uncover opportunities.

CareerSource NEFL works in close partnership with agencies including Legal Aid, local Housing Authorities, Episcopal Children Services, The Early Learning Coalition, Community Transportation, Jacksonville Transportation Authority, local mental health and substance abuse agencies, The Literacy Alliance, Goodwill Industries international, Inc., and FSCJ to help reduce or eradicate some of the barriers this population faces. Partnership with organizations such as Goodwill Industries and FSCJ means customers can earn industry certificates and credentials as well as provide employment opportunities through Goodwill Temps, the temporary employment division of Goodwill. While training and employment opportunities are available, recent research conducted by CareerSource NEFL shows that over 60% of this population is functionally illiterate. CareerSource NEFL has collaborated with Florida Literacy Alliance and FSCJ to create and deliver a GED readiness program which implements career coaching and career pathing using contextualized instructional material provided through various educational and workforce development programs such as Career Shines and O\*NET. This in addition to the CLIFF tools introduces our customers to various career paths and sectors which support our regional economies while engaging them in relevant and informative instruction.

## G. PERFORMANCE & EFFECTIVENESS

### (1) LOCAL LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE

The LWDB 8 levels of performance negotiated with the Governor and CLEOs as used to measure local performance are outlined in **Attachment:** [LWDB 8 Indicators of Performance](#).

### (2) ACTIONS TO REMAIN A HIGH-PERFORMING BOARD

As demonstrated in **LWDB 8 Indicators of Performance**, our local workforce board exceeded 'greater than 100% of negotiated' on the majority of the performance measures. Further, when there is any indication that a performance goal may not be met, CareerSource NEFL takes immediate steps to correct areas of concern.

CareerSource NEFL also received the highest letter grades in the state 103.36 (A+) for 2022-2023 and 94.41 for 2021-2022. We continue to be a leader among the regions with our latest letter grade at 96.88 (A).

To remain a high-performance board, CareerSource NEFL takes numerous actions to ensure we are providing high quality services within the WIOA requirements and will continue to do so as described below.

#### Measuring Effectiveness and Performance

To ensure the performance and effectiveness of our service providers, One-Stop delivery system, and fiscal responsibilities, we use an oversight, monitoring, and system performance improvement evaluation process which includes:

- Periodic on-site monitoring visits to ensure programmatic and statutory compliance of all funded programs.
- Ongoing reviews and assessments of service providers' performances.
- Periodic independent monitoring for programmatic and fiscal compliance by a qualified and certified public accounting firm.
- Ongoing assessment of labor and economic data and trends.

While these activities/services are required to fulfill CareerSource NEFL's mandated oversight responsibilities as LWDB 8, they also provide a means to respond to labor market, economic and demographic conditions, and trends in our area.

The system improvement process serves as an outreach tool for both CareerSource NEFL and its service providers to provide feedback to management, as well as the board and chief elected officials through findings and recommendations. The system improvement process will continue to allow

the managers/program operators to know what is happening at any given time in the system. This process will also continue to provide warning signals of developing problems, allowing management to implement improvement measures or take corrective action in a timely manner. CareerSource NEFL performs system improvement as a regular and systematic review of program activities, administrative systems, and management practices. The goal is to determine appropriateness, effectiveness, and compliance with the terms of the contract, regulations/guidelines and CareerSource NEFL policies and procedures.

## INDEPENDENT MONITORING

An independent certified public accounting firm conducts periodic programmatic, procurement, and fiscal monitoring using federal and state monitoring instruments, which outline both programmatic and fiscal compliance and quality improvement factors. The CareerSource NEFL monitoring contractor evaluates each sub-recipient at least once during the Fiscal Year. Monitoring reports identifying findings, observations, and recommendations are generated at the completion of each monitoring visit. A monitoring schedule is developed by CareerSource NEFL staff at the beginning of each program year.

## INTERNAL MONITORING

Compliance monitoring of program activities and services to participants are performed by in-house staff. CareerSource NEFL monitoring staff troubleshoot problems identified through compliance and performance reviews, provide technical assistance during their on-site monitoring visits, issue recommendations for corrective action in their monitoring report(s), and follow-up on the recommendations to ensure that corrective action has been taken properly and expeditiously.

CareerSource NEFL is responsible for system improvement to include program activities and services, management systems, and practices in LWDA 8. This process ensures legal, fiscal, administrative, and programmatic compliance. Compliance monitoring will ensure thorough desk review and on-site visits that Service Providers comply with legislative and contractual requirements.

CareerSource NEFL's system improvement staff establishes a schedule of regular scheduled and periodic on-site monitoring reviews of service providers in LWDA 8. These visits are designed to ensure that any abuses in program operations are immediately identified and eliminated and to prevent any misuse of funds by Service Providers, subgrantees, etc.

Performance monitoring is conducted to validate actual program performance against performance standards as established in the contract. The results of the review are used to assess progress toward goals and objectives, to identify existing or emerging problems, and to trigger explanations, corrective actions, and/or contract actions, as appropriate.

Performance monitoring is conducted through a desk-review and on-site visits. At a minimum, the monitoring tools reflect the state monitoring tool provided by FL Commerce. Other elements are added to this tool as appropriate. Program Managers ensure contract providers provide a monthly report to them and to the executive leadership. This monthly report clearly indicates progress toward program goals/ outcomes.

Staff prepares written monitoring reports following their on-site visits. The reports are the official records of the administrative entity's staff review of Service Providers' programs up to that point in time during the period of performance. The monitoring reports constitute the basis for future program assessment and make the monitor's findings available for federal, state, and public inspection. The report provides the background of the program, the follow-up on previous findings, the current findings (positive or negative), and the recommendations (if any) for corrective action with a timeline for implementation. Any regular or special review and any technical assistance provided to the Service Provider is also included in the report.

## REPORT AND CORRECTIVE ACTION

The monitoring report is issued within twenty days, to make the information available for timely consideration and action by the management of both the administrative entity and its service providers. CareerSource NEFL monitoring staff provide follow-up on corrective action recommendations, as well as the results of technical assistance which may not necessarily relate to the required corrective action.

Upon receipt of the monitoring report, the CareerSource NEFL President (or designee) reviews the corrective action plans and determine the appropriateness of such plans to effectively correct discrepancies noted within reports. If the Service Provider and the President cannot resolve such issues, the Service Provider may request a hearing before the CareerSource NEFL Board for final resolution.

## CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF CENTERS AND SYSTEMS

CareerSource NEFL Continuous Improvement Model will oversee the certification and constant advancement of centers and systems throughout LWDA 8. In consultation with the local board, the continuous improvement team will certify Centers and Systems every three years. Certification criteria will include evaluations of effectiveness of how well the centers and systems:

- Integrates available services for businesses and participants.
- Meets the workforce development needs of employers and participants.
- Operates in a cost-efficient manner.

- Coordinates services among core and recommended One-Stop partner programs.
- Provides maximum access to partner program services even outside regular business hours.
- Ensures equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities to participate in or benefit from center and system services.
- Considers job seeker feedback.
- Supports the achievement of the negotiated local levels of performance for the performance indicators.

## DATA TO BE COLLECTED

### PERFORMANCE

- Performance for Individuals with Barriers to Employment
- Performance for Individuals by Race, Ethnicity, Sex and Age

### SERVICES

- Number of Participants receiving Career and Training Services
- Number of Participants exited from Career and Training Services
- Percentage of Participants employed 2nd and 4th quarter after exit

### PARTICIPANTS

- Total Number served by each Core Program
- Number of Individuals with Barriers to Employment served by each Core Program
- Number of Participants enrolled in more than one Core Program

### COSTS

- Average Cost Per Participant for Career and Training Services
- Percentage of training budget spent on participant training and training related services

If CareerSource NEFL determines the Service Provider's performance to be unsatisfactory, CareerSource NEFL may act in any of the following ways:

- Requiring corrective action within specific time frames
- Withholding payment
- Disallowing inappropriate claims, payments, or costs
- Terminating or suspending the contract

Each in-house system, program component/area and service provider is monitored at least once per program year. The monitoring staff provides any technical assistance necessary for the expedient implementation of recommended corrective action(s) when program deficiencies and/or noncompliance issues are cited. All corrective action(s) will be satisfactorily completed within 15 to 30 days of notification of the deficiencies and/or violations, and a follow-up monitoring visit will be done to assure the corrective action plan has been implemented.

CareerSource NEFL utilizes a performance driven cost reimbursement and performance expected contracting system for the award of contracts. Monitoring staff will review/monitor, on a continuous basis, service providers, bidding procedures/process, and property in accordance with the monitoring procedures stated in the Administrative Plan.

The previous stated description provides CareerSource NEFL procedures for the monitoring, oversight, and evaluation of systems, program operators, and service providers in LWDA 8. All system performance is directly benchmarked against the common measures, federal and state regulation/guidance, and CareerSource NEFL Board guidance. The Executive Committee will be the deciding body for all discrepancies, which cannot be resolved by the President and Service Providers.

### **(3) EVALUATING CUSTOMER FEEDBACK**

CareerSource NEFL is committed to creating customer-centered career centers. This is accomplished through jobseeker, employer, and partner focused surveys. In addition to surveys, the One-Stop Operator also solicits customer input as part of the one-stop center continuous improvement and certification process.

**To ensure the performance and effectiveness of our One-Stop delivery system, CareerSource NEFL uses an oversight, monitoring, and system performance improvement evaluation process which includes:**

- Periodic on-site monitoring visits to ensure programmatic and statutory compliance of all funded programs.
- Ongoing reviews and assessments of service providers' performances.

- Periodic independent monitoring for programmatic and fiscal compliance by a qualified and certified public accounting firm.
- Ongoing assessment of labor and economic data and trends.

The system improvement process serves as an outreach tool for both CareerSource NEFL and its core partners to provide feedback to management, as well as the board and chief elected officials through findings and recommendations.

#### **(4) USE OF WIOA WAIVERS**

CareerSource NEFL has designed a WIOA service model that places a priority on out-of-school youth ages 16–24. Seventy-five percent (75%) of funding at the State and Local level must be spent on this population. There is an increased focus on Career Pathways for youth, drop out recovery, education, and training to lead to high school diploma and a recognized postsecondary credential. The act also includes a strong emphasis on work-based learning activities.

CareerSource NEFL has designed its service model for youth based on these guidelines. Our goal is to provide a service delivery system that serves as a model for the national workforce system. We believe youth who access the CareerSource NEFL career service system are best served when they receive the full array of opportunities that all our job seekers are provided. In addition, to ensure youth receive the support and services required to meet their unique needs and challenges, and move them to economic self-sufficiency, CareerSource NEFL has assembled partnerships and contractual agreements that will ensure effective WIOA youth performance measurements of regional goals. The five measures are:

- Employed 2nd Quarter after exit
- Median Wage 2nd Quarter after exit
- Employed 4th Quarter after exit
- Credential Attainment Rate
- Measurable Skill Gains

As of July 1, 2023, through April 30, 2024, one hundred and fifty-six (156) out of school youth have been served through the contractual providers. The performance outcomes are:

- 153 youth obtained measurable skills gain.
- 50 youth entered post-secondary education, employment, and/or military.
- 124 youth earned a nationally recognized credential.
- 76 youth entered work experience.
- 141 youth exited with positive outcomes.

CareerSource NEFL specifically supports the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, entry into postsecondary education, and career readiness for participants through the provision of all 14 WIOA designated program elements directly or in partnership with local organizations.

CareerSource NEFL does not currently offer ITA's to youth but is providing other resources to aid students in career exploration. CareerSource NEFL created a webpage and developed an In-School Youth partnership with the local school districts, partners and community organizations serving all six counties to provide informational opportunities beyond high school. The goal is to support, prepare, and teach young adults transitioning into the workforce. The information provided on CareerSource NEFL's website is readily available to youth and parents within our region.

In-School Youth Services help develop the talent pipeline needed to create more and better future workers. These services focus on, but are not limited to:

- Career readiness workshops
- Preparing for college and career fairs
- How to pay for college
- Military information (including ROTC)
- Interviewing skills
- How to evaluate job offers
- Networking workshops
- Virtual workshops

## CLOSING

CareerSource NEFL will utilize this plan to guide our delivery of services to best meet the needs of Northeast Florida. We look forward to working with our core and regional partners over the next four years to bring this plan to fruition and ensure that Northeast Florida has a world-class workforce development system that enables our businesses to be successful in the global economy and individuals have access to careers that lead to economic self-sufficiency.

## ATTACHMENTS FOR 4-YR PLAN

**A. Executed Interlocal Agreement**

<https://csnefl.wpenginepowered.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/First-Coast-Workforce-Development-Consortium-Interlocal-Agreement-2016.pdf>

**B. Executed agreement between the chief local elected official(s) and the local workforce development board.**

<https://csnefl.wpenginepowered.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/First-Coast-Workforce-Development-Consortium-Interlocal-Agreement-2016.pdf>

**C. Evidence of designation of the fiscal agent by the chief local elected official(s), if other than the chief local elected official.**

Not applicable to Region 8.

**D. Current bylaws established by the chief local elected official.**

[https://careersourcenortheastflorida.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/FCWD-By-laws\\_20240725.pdf](https://careersourcenortheastflorida.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/FCWD-By-laws_20240725.pdf)

**E. Current board member roster, meeting minutes for the local plan agenda item, discussions about the plan, and the board's vote on the local plan.**

- Board of Directors Roster: [https://careersourcenortheastflorida.com/board\\_of\\_directors/](https://careersourcenortheastflorida.com/board_of_directors/)
- [Board Meeting Minutes July 25, 2024](#)
- [Executive Board Meeting Minutes Aug. 28, 2024](#)
- [Consortium Meeting Minutes August 20, 2024](#)

**F. Organizational chart outlining the organizational structure of the local area.**

[LWDB 8 Organizational Chart](#)

**G. Agreements describing how any single entity selected to operate in more than one of the following roles: local fiscal agent, local board staff, one-stop operator, or direct provider of career services, will carry out its multiple responsibilities, including how it develops appropriate firewalls to guard against conflicts of interest.**

Not applicable to Region 8. Policies and procedures outlined in our [Local Administrative Plan](#) and [Governance Policies](#).

**H. Executed Memoranda of Understanding for all One-Stop partners.**

[One-Stop Partner MOU documents 2023-26](#)

- I. **Executed Infrastructure Funding Agreements with all applicable WIOA required partners.**  
[One-Stop Partner IFA Documents 2024-25](#)
  
- J. **Executed cooperative agreements which define how all local service providers, including additional providers, will carry out the requirements for integration of and access to all services available in the local one-stop delivery system.**  
Interagency Cooperative Agreement: <https://csnefl.wpenginepowered.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/First-Coast-Workforce-Development-Consortium-Interlocal-Agreement-2016.pdf>
  
- K. **A description of the process used by the LWDB to obtain input and comment by representatives of business and labor organizations for the development of the plan.**  
[Public Input](#)
  
- L. **Planning Region Agreements between the participating LWDBs of the planning region and agreements between the planning region and regional partners to include cooperative service agreements, memoranda of understanding, regional policies, etc.**  
Not applicable at this time
  
- M. **LWDB Performance**  
[LWDB 8 Indicators of Performance](#)
  
- N. **Plan Approval**  
[Execution of 2025-28 Local Plan LWDA 08](#)