

The Central Arkansas Workforce Development Area Regional Plan

PY 2024—PY 2027

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Central Arkansas PY 2024 – PY 2027 Regional Plan

1.1 WIOA requires regional planning– a broad strategic approach to planning focused on the overarching vision, goals, alignment and shared responsibilities within the region that meets the definition of a planning region, as defined in WIOA §3(48) and ADWS Policy No. WIOAI-6.6.

Provide the following:

A. A reference name for the planning region

The Little Rock/North Little Rock Conway Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) Regional Workforce Development Area,

B. Identification of the local workforce development areas that comprise the planning region.

Central Arkansas Workforce Development Area (Central Arkansas Workforce Development Area) and the Little Rock Workforce Development Area (LRWDA).

C. Identification of the county/counties each local workforce development area serves.

Metropolitan Statistical Area and six counties: The Central Arkansas Workforce Development Area serves Faulkner, Lonoke, Monroe, Prairie, Saline, and Pulaski County (excluding Little Rock) The LRWDA serves the City of Little Rock.

D. Identification of the key planning region committee members charged with drafting the regional plan.

See below in section E

E. Identification of the local workforce development area each committee member is associated with.

LRWDA – W. J. Monagle, Executive Director
LRWDA - PTI Learning and Performance – Becky Parkerson
Central Arkansas Workforce Development Area – Central AR Planning and Development District - Carmen Edwards, Director of Workforce Program Administration

F. A list of key planning region committee meeting dates:

The second Wednesday of each month.

1.2 Provide Labor market economic analysis of the workforce development planning region. This analysis must include:

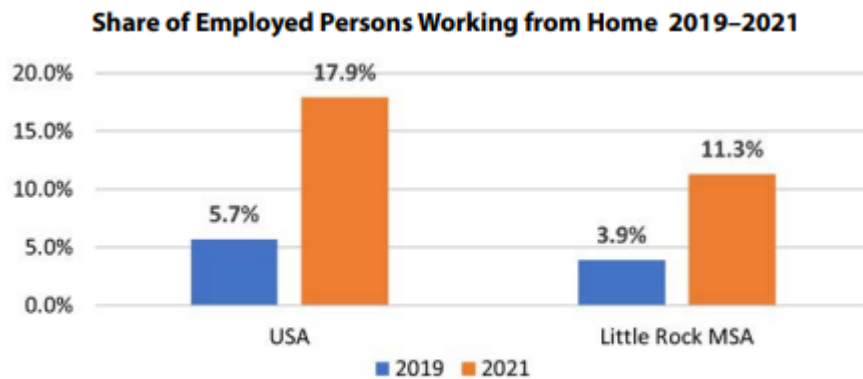
A. The economic conditions.

In the second half of the 1990s, and again from 2005 to 2010, the region was growing by nearly 1.6 percent annually. By the second half of the 2010–2020 decade, growth had slowed to about 0.5 percent annually. Preliminary estimates suggest this trend might have picked up slightly since 2020. Economic growth in sectors like finance and logistics may account for a slight increase in the

regional population trend. The local area’s remarkable housing affordability may also be making Central Arkansas attractive to outsiders. Nonetheless, the region is growing more slowly than in decades as far back as the 1990s. Much of this owes to slower in-migration. Economic factors played a big role. The phase-out of the Alltel corporation correlated with a major slowdown in economic and population growth. The most likely forecast shows the global population reaching approximate stability by 2050, and it could even begin declining after about 2100.

Last year’s report predicted that during 2022, Covid-19 would become less of a drag on economic activity. This proved correct. Most people have acquired a degree of immunity from exposure to the vaccine or the disease itself and have resumed normal activities. However, Covid-19 continues to cause illness and deaths, especially among vulnerable groups.

The rate of deaths from Covid-19 remains below U.S. and Arkansas state averages in Pulaski County and the Little Rock MSA. The Covid-19 pandemic caused a major shift in work and lifestyle patterns. A Census Bureau data release in late 2022, sheds light on the shift toward working from home. Work at home rose both for the U.S. and the Little Rock MSA. The Central Arkansas region still has a lower share of home workers than the U.S. average, but in both cases the share nearly tripled from 2019 - 2021. This change suggests long-lasting implications for Central Arkansas districts hosting large amounts of office space, especially downtown Little Rock.



Source: American Community Survey 2019 and 2021, one-year version.

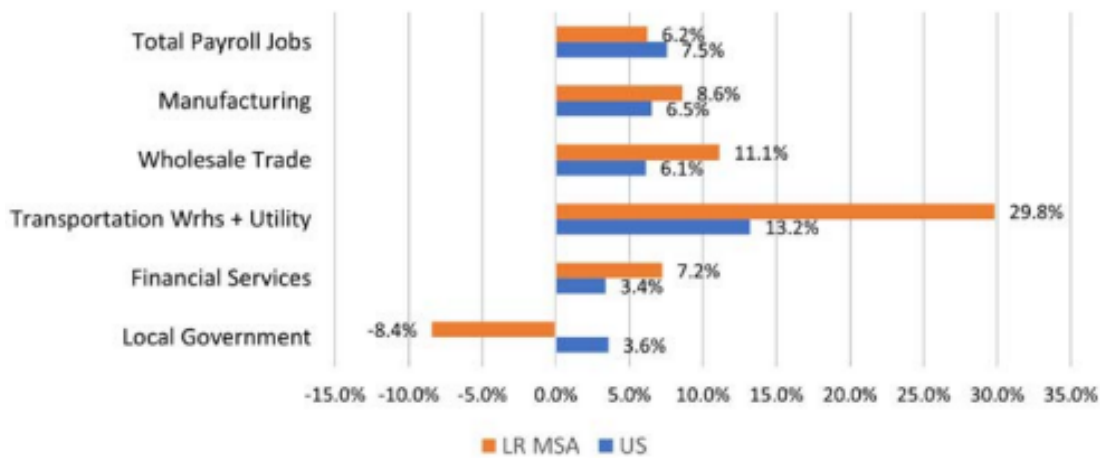
The Little Rock region’s comparative economic diversity, and the presence of sturdy industries like hospitals, universities and state government means that a downturn - even if it happens - will be milder than average. The best bet for the local area is that 2024, will see an unspectacular yet stable economic trend. These trends were expected to occur in 2023, and they did, in fact, occur in 2023, providing legitimacy to these projections into the future.

B. Labor force employment and unemployment data

The region gained jobs a little faster than the U.S. average in manufacturing. In financial services, a sector that has recently shown local competitive advantage, growth is about double the national average. The biggest change, however, was in the Wholesale Trade and especially the Transportation-Warehouse-Utility sectors, which outgrew the U.S. average by more than double overall. A large part of this was the opening of two new Amazon warehouses in Little Rock and North Little Rock during 2021, but numerous other firms followed Amazon’s lead and have added similar jobs. Central Arkansas holds

advantages in lower congestion, centrality, good transportation infrastructure, and cost-competitiveness that have lured firms to the region. There is evidence this trend will continue into 2024, and beyond. The biggest job loss occurred in Local Government, which lost 8.4% compared with 3.6% growth at the U.S. level. Labor shortage probably drove this trend. Better-paying private sector jobs have lured employees away from local government. The problem will likely work itself out, but local governments should beware how labor shortage might impact their delivery of public services. Retail sales have been volatile in recent years. The chart at right shows how retail sales in 2022, declined 1.5% from 2021. However, 2021, had been a strange year, since federal stimulus spending pumped money into households during the Covid-19 crisis. Seen in this light, after a 10.9% hike in retail sales, the downshift in 2022, was comparatively minor.

Job Change in Selected Sectors 2020-2022

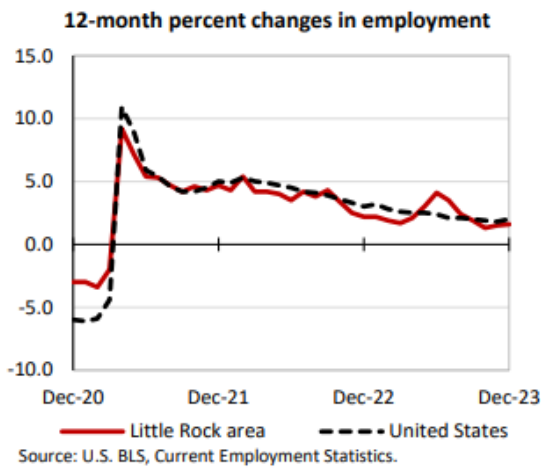


Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Figures represent month of October.

Area	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Rate
Faulkner County	63,590	61,276	1,864	2.9
Lonoke County	34,272	33,281	991	2.9
Monroe County	2,379	2,287	92	3.9
Prairie County	3,432	3,311	121	3.5
Pulaski county	191,517	184,864	6,653	3.5
Saline County	60,643	58,945	1,698	2.8

Source: Arkansas Division of Workforce Services (ADWS) Discover Arkansas: December 2023 Arkansas Labor Force by County, Not seasonally adjusted, preliminary estimates

Over-the-year changes in employment on nonfarm payrolls and employment by major industry sector



Little Rock area employment (number in thousands)	Dec. 2023	Change from Dec. 2022 to Dec. 2023	
		Number	Percent
Total nonfarm	389.1	6.2	1.6
Mining, logging, and construction	21.2	2.0	10.4
Manufacturing	20.0	0.1	0.5
Trade, transportation, and utilities	79.0	-1.1	-1.4
Information	5.5	-0.2	-3.5
Financial activities	24.9	0.0	0.0
Professional and business services	47.1	-0.7	-1.5
Education and health services	67.1	4.1	6.5
Leisure and hospitality	34.3	0.8	2.4
Other services	19.9	0.7	3.6
Government	70.1	0.5	0.7

Source: U.S. BLS, Current Employment Statistics.

The Central Arkansas Statistical Area had an estimated population of 74.025 in 2023 [2023 Arkansas Labor Market and Economic Report].

The population of the six counties included in the Central Arkansas LWDA stood at the following levels:

Area: Central	Population	Growth Since 2010	Area (miles)	Density (/miles)
Faulkner County	131,705	15.5%	250	203
Lonoke County	76,143	10.77%	298	99
Monroe County	6,372	-21.7%	234	10
Prairie County	8,019	-8.1%	250	12
Pulaski County	401,297	4.62%	293	529
Saline County	030,433	22.09%	279	182

Source: Worldpopulationreview.com and the 2020 U.S Census Bureau

The Central Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) saw an increase in labor force of 7,881 to 255,674 from 2021 - 2022, and labor force increased by 4,541 over the 2018 - 2022 period. Employment increased by 9,495 between 2021 and 2022. And increased to over 5,007 over the five-year period. The Central has seen a fluctuation in unemployment over the same time periods. From 2021 - 2022, unemployment decreased by 1,614, and from 2018 - 2022, unemployment decreased by 466. the Central LWDA's employment rate dropped by 0.2% over the five-year period. In 2023, the unemployment rate dropped by half a percent from January to 2.8% in July 2023.

The City of Little Rock's LWDA population increased by 866 between 2021 and 2022, bringing the population to 202,864. The city of Little Rock's population grew by 4,983 between 2018 and 2022. The

area is the county seat of Pulaski County and includes part of the Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway MSA.

Source: 2023 Arkansas Labor Market and Economic Report for State and Local Workforce Development Areas

Civilian Labor Force Estimates (Not Seasonally Adjusted)

	<u>Dec 23</u>	<u>Nov 23</u>	<u>Dec 22</u>	<u>QTM</u>	<u>QTY</u>
Civilian Labor Force	362,716	362,725	359,096	-9	3,620
Employment	351,081	352,008	349,357	-927	1,724
Unemployment	11,635	10,717	9,739	918	1,896
Unemployment Rate	3.2%	3.0%	2.7%	0.2%	0.5%

Source: December 2023, Arkansas Labor Market Report Little Rock-North Little Rock -Conway MSA

C. Information on labor market trends

The Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway MSA is expected to add 18,507 new jobs, 2018-2028. The area’s 10.19 % growth is faster than the state as a whole. Education and Health Services is estimated to be the top growing supersector, with a growth of 4,903, an increase of 13.71%. Central Arkansas is expected to have 23,958 annual job openings during the projection period, with 8,594 created from employees leaving the workforce, 13,513 from changing jobs, and 1,851 from growth and expansion. Personal Care and Service Occupations is estimated to be the fastest growing major group, with an increase of 20.83%

The City of Little Rock WDA is expected to grow by 19,088 jobs during the 2018-2028, projections period, or an increase of 9.19 percent, greater than the state growth rate. Education and Health Services is estimated to be the top growing supersector in the City of Little Rock WDA, adding an anticipated 5,228 new jobs, an increase of 10.24 percent. City of Little Rock WDA employers are expected to have 25,271 annual openings during the projection period. Of these, 8,908 could come from employees leaving the workforce, while 14,454 would be from employees changing jobs. Growth and expansion would account for an additional 1,909 jobs. Personal Care and Service Occupations is expected to be the fastest growing major group, with an increase of 20.94%

Source: State of Arkansas Workforce Development Areas Long-Term Industry and Occupational Projections, 2018-2028.

D. Workforce development activities

The Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway MSA is at the forefront of workforce development activities, and represent Arkansas’s version of “the American Job Centers”. There are six workforce centers spread through the six-county region to ensure access to all Arkansans residing in the region. The Little Rock and Conway Workforce Centers are the region’s comprehensive centers. The workforce centers are managed locally by the Central Arkansas Workforce Development Board and the Little Rock Workforce Development Board, which are both composed of members from both the public and a majority private sector.

Central Arkansas Workforce System Services-Unemployed and Underemployed

The Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway MSA Workforce Centers offer a full array of career services which are outlined in WIOA 134(c)(2) for unemployed and underemployed. The workforce centers have computers, printers, copiers, and resources along with staff to help job seekers. However, digital services are offered as well such as Arkansas Job Link and Discover Arkansas's Labor Market Information portal. These two tools allow job seekers to search for jobs 24/7 and make data informed decisions about which path is best for them.

Jobseeker Services

Career services, found the Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway MSA Workforce Centers, offer a full line of services to prepare job seekers for the regional workforce. Soft skills and technical training are two examples of these services which are provided, and which employers look for in a good candidate for a position.

Labor Market Information is updated regularly to ensure accuracy is provided to individuals seeking services. This data includes information pertaining to job vacancies, skills needed to obtain said jobs, in-demand occupations and related earning potential, along with career ladders which exist within those occupations.

Other career services provided through our one-stop centers are outreach, intake, and orientation. Upon the completion of the initial assessment, eligibility will be determined, and our career coaches will begin to provide recommendations for various programs along with financial aid information. Services are also provided to individuals to assist them in obtaining and retaining employment. Some of these services include:

- Career Planning and Counseling
- Occupational Skills Assessment
- Short-term prevocational services
- Internships and work experience
- English language acquisition
- Financial literacy

Individualized career services within the Arkansas Workforce Centers vary across the region, but all the offices offer a full line of activities to prepare job seekers for the modern workforce. They address many of the soft skills and technical skills training Arkansas employers require such as:

1. Workforce Centers provide the following career services including outreach, intake, and orientation; initial assessment; labor exchange services; eligibility determination; referrals to programs; performance and cost information; information on unemployment insurance; financial aid information and follow-up services.

2. Labor exchange services must also provide labor market information to the individuals seeking services. The information must be accurate and include information on local, regional and national labor markets, such as job vacancies; skills necessary to obtain the jobs. In-demand occupations and related earning potential and opportunities for advancement in those occupations

3. Workforce Centers and partners must provide appropriate services for individuals to obtain or retain employment. These services include, but are not limited to, Individual Employment Plan (IEP); career planning and counseling; comprehensive assessment; occupational skills assessment; short-term prevocational services; internship and work experience, including transitional jobs and industry partnerships; workforce preparation; out-of-area job search; English language acquisition and financial literacy.

Training Services

Career services help equip a job seeker with the skills they need to find sustainable employment, however such skills may not be enough to obtain sustainable employment. In those circumstances formal training may be required. Copious amounts of training opportunities exist through the Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway MSA Workforce Development Area's Workforce Centers, such as occupational skills training which can be obtained from numerous educational opportunities. Registered Apprenticeships are also available in a wide variety of traditional sectors and are in the process of being expanded into non-traditional sectors such as information technology and nursing.

These training services are provided through numerous local and state partners. The Central Arkansas Workforce Development Board and the Little Rock Workforce Development Board have individually established policies for the determination of eligibility, Individual Training Account Limits (ITAs) and targeted training aimed at in-demand industry sectors throughout the region such as transportation logistics and healthcare. Sector strategies have taken on a new role in the region, with the Central Arkansas Workforce Development Board and the Little Rock Workforce Development Board both using data-driven decision making to enhance the likelihood of employment of participants.

Supportive Services

In order to assist job seekers in obtaining or retaining employment through career or training services, Arkansas Workforce Centers offer a variety of supportive services. The Central Arkansas Workforce Development Board and the Little Rock Workforce Development Board are both responsible for establishing a supportive service policy that outlines types, eligibility, limits, etc. Examples of supportive services include childcare; transportation; needs-related payments; housing; tools and equipment; uniforms; and other clothing. In addition to WIOA-funded supportive services, Central Arkansas Workforce Development Board has developed relationships with community partners that assist with utility payments, food, shelter, and other basic needs.

The Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway MSA shall establish a communication platform to ensure coordination of supportive services and prevent duplication. This platform will enhance collaboration between the two Boards and will be "web-based".

Business Services

The focal point of all workforce system activities is business and industry. These activities are taking place statewide and include a broad array of services to employers. Business Services assistance is broad; however, they are tailored to meet the individual needs of each employer. Services provided to businesses can be categorized into three broad categories:

Assessments and Information:

1. Through the Arkansas Workforce Centers, businesses can utilize assessments and tests to measure the skills, interests, or personality traits of job seekers or current employees. Businesses can also receive a variety of information pertaining to incentive programs such as the Work Opportunity Tax Credit. Labor Market Information is available to businesses on market conditions, industries, occupations, and workforce characteristics as well. Also, short- and long-term industry trends and occupational projections are available.
2. Direct Assistance:
3. Businesses have access to any of the Workforce Center locations for the purposes of meetings, trainings, orientations, and interviews. The Little Rock/ North Little Rock MSA Workforce Development Area can also host hiring events which are customized to the specific needs of businesses. Job orders which have been approved by staff can also be placed in the workforce areas, along with job placement assistance and information on unemployment benefits. Businesses can also receive assistance with applicant screening, which involves the initial evaluation of applicants.
4. Response and Training:

The Workforce Areas provide rapid response measures in the event of a business downsizing or restructuring. These include a variety of workshops to assist employees who are in transition. The Little Rock/ North Little Rock MSA Workforce Development Area will also coordinate with the Governor's Dislocated Worker Task Force to assist individuals impacted by layoffs within the region. Training and retraining services are also available for both current and future employees. Customized Training Programs are also available in the Little Rock/ North Little Rock MSA Workforce Development Area. The development of "Customized Training" may be considered when available training programs and/or curricula do not meet the specific training requirements of an employer(s) which are identified as "in demand" occupations within identified industry clusters. The training provider must be competitively procured, and such training must be designed to meet the specific needs of a participating employer.

Employers eligible to participate in Customized training shall be:

- Current in unemployment insurance and workers' compensation taxes, penalties, and/or interest or related payment plan.
- Located within the State of Arkansas.
- Currently liable for Arkansas State Business and Occupation tax.
- In need of assistance in training future and current employees.
- Able to contract for customized, short-term, training services (typically less than 6-9 months);
- Have not laid-off workers within 120 days to relocate.
- Committed to employ all individuals upon successful completion of the training; and
- Identified as "In-demand" as defined by WIOA Section 3(23) and determined by LEVERAGE; or
- Declining, but there is a compelling reason justifying investment in customized training.
- Paid for, in part, by participating employer, who must pay a "significant cost" of the training.

(Customized training will not supersede the individual's rights for consumer choice.) The Little Rock/ North Little Rock MSA Workforce Development Area's partners also offer incumbent worker training programs for existing businesses. For example, the Arkansas Department of Career Education's Office of

Skills Development offers several grant programs which provide training to existing businesses throughout the region.

As a region, the two Central Arkansas and City of Little Rock's Business Services team will begin exploring avenues to share data, collaborate on business assistance, and coordinate outreach efforts in order to avoid duplication of services and provide first-class service. The two Business Service teams met for the first time in April of 2017 to explore web-based platforms for coordination and collaboration. These meetings will continue each quarter (or on an as-needed basis).

Services to Individuals with Disabilities

The Arkansas Department of Career Education, Arkansas Division of Workforce Services and Division of Services for the Blind provide vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities. Currently, there are significant barriers for people with disabilities in relation to attaining employment. Historically, there are significant barriers to the inclusion of people with disabilities into the overall strategy for economic development in Arkansas. ARS, in partnership with the Arkansas Department of Human Services, Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) are leading the charge for providing targeted training and education for people with disabilities to enable them to develop the skills and abilities needed to attain competitive integrated employment in Arkansas.

All of the Workforce Centers in the Little Rock/North Little Rock MSA Workforce Development Area are compliant with the Americans with Disability Act. Each Workforce Center in the region is equipped with the following assistive technology:

- An accessible computer workstation equipped with a CPU, Monitor, Keyboard, Mouse, and software.
- Assistive Devices, including amplifiers, magnifiers, tapes, videos, and calculators.
- Arkansas Relay Service TDD Telephone.
- Access to Sign Interpreters.
- Alternative Format Forms and Information.

Through the Governor's Executive Order 10-17, the Department of DSB coordinates with other state agencies to increase employment of Arkansans with disabilities. The order also aims to focus consumer services first toward the goal of self-sufficiency through employment.

E. The educational skill levels of the workforce; including individuals with barriers; and;

The drop in college enrollments, nationally and locally, is at first sight an alarming sign about the future workforce. However, there has always been a mismatch between education and the job market, one that young people often had to bridge themselves through personal hardship and additional skill training as they adjusted to career development. At the same time, economic evidence is growing that specialized occupations which require separate non-college training areas seeing wage growth, while the college related wage premium has been coming down. The college enrollment drop may thus signal a deeper economic shift.

Firms looking to build high-quality workforces may seek to rethink their hiring and workforce development strategies. In a time of declining youth population and dropping college enrollments, employers might opt to partner with innovative educators to develop apprenticeship programs.

F. The development and implementation of sector initiatives for existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors or occupations for the region.

Little Rock

Top Growing Industry Supersectors

NAICS Code	NAICS Title	2022 Estimated Employment	2024 Projected Employment	Numeric Change	Percent Change
102300	Financial Activities	24,583	26,254	1,671	6.80%
102500	Education and Health Services	55,141	56,789	1,648	2.99%
102100	Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	32,614	33,706	1,092	3.35%
102600	Leisure and Hospitality	13,166	13,918	752	5.71%
101300	Manufacturing	6,462	6,826	364	5.63%

Insurance Carriers and Related Activities are predicted to be the top growing industry, increasing employment by 1,629 jobs, to a total employment of 18,833. Food Manufacturing is slated to be the fastest growing industry, increasing by 25.68 percent during the 2022-2024 projection period. Religious, Grantmaking, Civic, Professional, and Similar Organizations could see a loss of 540 jobs between 2022 and 2024, becoming the top declining industry in the City of Little Rock WDA, bringing employment down to 10,515. Support Activities for Agriculture and Forestry is predicted to lose a quarter of its workforce to become the fastest declining industry. Financial Activities are forecasted to be the top growing supersector, adding 1,671 new jobs between 2022 and 2024, a 6.80 percent rise in employment.

Source: 2023 Little Rock LWDA, Arkansas Labor Market and Economic Report

Central

Top Growing Industry Supersectors

NAICS Code	NAICS Title	2022 Estimated Employment	2024 Projected Employment	Numeric Change	Percent Change
102100	Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	41,214	42,635	1,421	3.45%
102400	Professional and Business Services	14,917	15,909	992	6.65%
102600	Leisure and Hospitality	19,044	19,910	866	4.55%
102500	Education and Health Services	37,851	38,613	762	2.01%
102700	Other Services (except Government)	12,764	13,285	521	4.08%

Restaurants and Other Eating Places are projected to be the top growing industry in Arkansas, gaining 3,714 new jobs between 2022 and 2024, increasing its overall workforce in the state to 93,472. Electronic Shopping and Mail Order Houses could see a 38.81 percent rise in jobs, becoming the fastest-growing industry in the state. Local Governments, excluding Education and Hospitals, are estimated to see a difficult outlook between 2022 and 2024, losing an estimated 941 jobs, or 2.38% of the workforce, decreasing employment to 38,581. Land Subdivision is slated to be the fastest declining industry, cutting its workforce by 46.25 percent to a level of 43. Trade, Transportation, and Utilities are forecast to be the top growing supersector, anticipated to add 7,186 new jobs during the projection period, an increase of 2.71%.

Source: 2023 Central LWDA Arkansas Labor Market and Economic Report

1.3 Based upon the regional labor market and economic conditions analysis and Arkansas Workforce Development Plan (PY24-27) describe the planning regions economic and workforce development-oriented vision and strategic goals

The Little Rock/North Little Rock – Conway MSA Regional Workforce Development Area has adopted the State’s vision and goals and adapted them to the local area.

VISION

The Little Rock/ North Little Rock-Conway MSA Regional Workforce Development Area will have a world-class workforce that is well-educated, skilled, and working in order to keep Arkansas’s economy competitive in the global marketplace.

GOALS:

Strategic Goal 1: Develop an efficient partnership with employers, the educational system, workforce development partners, and community-based organizations to deliver a platform that will prepare a skilled workforce for existing and new employers.

Goal 1 Objectives:

- a. Expand employer partnerships through the support of industry engagement.
- b. Identify and promote best practices (private and public) for developing and sustaining partnerships.
- c. Expand partnership with economic development to refine sector strategies.
- d. Improve communication/participation between education entities, local and state boards, government agencies, community-based organizations, and employers.
- e. Increase accountability and clarity of action between all workforce-related boards.
- f. Increase the utilization of Registered Apprenticeship programs as viable talent development opportunities.
- g. Increase connections with employers and Vocational Rehabilitation agencies to provide support and employment for youth and adults with disabilities.
- h. Partner with K-12 education, higher education, career and technical education, and adult education to provide consistent rules and eliminate barriers to implementing training programs around the State.
- i. Expand small business participation

Strategic Goal 2: Enhance service delivery to employers and job seekers.

Goal 2 Objectives:

- a. Develop a common intake process for job seekers and businesses that will efficiently connect them with services available from all workforce development partner programs and identify any barriers to employment that need to be addressed.
- b. Develop an integrated data system that will enable the sharing of information between partner agencies to more efficiently service both employers and job seekers.
- c. Promote training that leads to industry-recognized credentials and certification.
- d. Support transportable skill sets for transportable careers.
- e. Support career pathways development and sector strategy initiatives as a way to meet business and industry needs.
- f. Expand service delivery access points by the use of virtual services.
- g. Develop a common business outreach strategy with a common message that will be utilized by all workforce system partners.

- h. Develop a menu of services available at each service delivery access point that provides a list of the services and training opportunities available through Arkansas's talent development system.
- i. Utilize customer satisfaction surveys to ensure continuous improvement of the State's talent development system.
- j. Explore data sharing opportunities with non-governmental organizations that are committed partners to the state's workforce center system that will lead to improved intake, referral, and case management for customers served by multiple agencies (both public and private).

Strategic Goal 3: Increase awareness of the State's Talent Development System.

Goal 3 Objectives:

- a. Increase access to the workforce development system through a no wrong door approach to services.
- b. Develop an image-building outreach campaign that educates Arkansans about the services and the career development opportunities available in the State
- c. Utilize technology, including social media and search engine optimization, to better connect job seekers and employers with the talent development system in Central Arkansas.
- d. Develop a user-friendly website that provides a common repository of information about career development opportunities that are relevant to K-12 education, parents, educators, adults, employers, government agencies, and the general public.

Strategic Goal 4: Address Skills Gaps

Objectives:

- a. Conduct a statewide skills and asset analysis to determine the skills gaps present and the resources available to solve the skills issue.
- b. Develop and implement an action plan to close the basic core, technical, and soft skills gaps in Central Arkansas.
- c. Develop and maintain a system for the continuous assessment and alignment of programs with current and future skills demand.

1.4 Describe regional strategies used to facilitate engagement of business and other employers, including small employers and in-demand industry sector occupations. Describe methods and services to support the regional workforce system in meeting employer needs. [WIOA §106(c) and §107(d)]

- Support the expansion of diverse regional partnerships to advance talent pipeline development for critical industry sectors.
- Support further development of integrated career pathways.
- Identify and align resources to support collaborative strategies.
- Align business and job seeker service delivery strategies to the "talent supply chain" vision.

1.5 Describe how the planning region will define and establish regional workforce development service strategies. Describe how the planning region will develop and use cooperative workforce development service delivery agreements. [WIOA §106 (c)(B)]

Utilizing the service delivery agreement the region will:

- Develop sector-based employer engagement.
- Build sustained relationships.

- Build capacity around sector strategies (training for partners).
- Develop data-driven strategies and investments.
- Align training to needs of target sectors.
- Collaborate multi-partner development and implementation of regional sector strategies.
- Utilize apprenticeship and other work-based learning models as a talent development strategy.

1.6 Describe how the planning region will establish administrative cost arrangements, including the pooling of funds for administrative costs, as appropriate, for the region. [WIOA §106€€]

LRWDB and CAPDD Boards currently manage costs separately for common goals but will develop a ways and means to work to align and allocate funding for regional projects. Potential regional allocated funding opportunities include joint recruitment events, regional cohort trainings, and supportive service agreements.

Additional joint funding opportunities exist in regional discretionary grant approaches. The partnering boards will look for future opportunities to engage in regional discretionary grant projects that effectively blend funding streams.

1.7 Describe how the planning region will determine and coordinate transportation and other supportive services for the region. (WOA§106(c)(1)(F))

Each service delivery area will utilize its own supportive service policies and procedures.

The LRWDB and CAPDD will work together to leverage the multiple avenues and access points to provide efficient and effective services and systems for our customers with barriers to employment (i.e. displaced homemakers, ex-offenders, homeless, cultural barriers, disabilities, limited English language, low levels of literacy, low income, veterans and disconnected youth).

The LRWDB and CAPDD will continue to work together to coordinate services and to implement innovative strategies to meet the needs of individuals with barriers throughout the job acquisition, training, and business recruitment processes.

1.8 Describe strategies and services the planning region will employ to coordinate workforce development programs /services with regional economic development services and providers [WIOA§106(c)(G)]

The region will develop and continuously update quantitative talent supply pipeline data for each target sector to ensure seamless delivery of services. Our workforce development areas will act as “brokers” who connect all of the pieces in the talent pipeline at the operational level.

The LRWDB and CAPDD will continue to explore and work to execute several elements of alignment:

- a. Utilizing business services staff, seek and approve private and non-profit training providers for focus industries/occupations

- b. Strategically assist in competency model development and validation for each sector through the provision of “labor exchange” support – candidate screening, assessment, job matching, etc. Investigate co-branding of initiatives Coordinate outreach and business engagement strategies.
- c. Coordinate capacity building for Workforce Board Members, Chief Local Elected Officials.
- d. Partners and staff.
- e. Coordinate Staff and system partners' development activities.
- f. Coordinate regional business advisory groups and employer engagement strategies.
- g. Continuous planning in response to state and federal requirements.
- h. Representatives from the LRWDB and CAPDD will meet to discuss these issues on a monthly basis.

1.9 Describe how the planning region will establish an agreement concerning how the planning region will collectively negotiate and reach agreement with the Governor on local levels of performance for, and report on, the performance accountability measures described in WIOA Section 116(c), for local areas and the planning region. [WIOA Sec. 106(c)(H)]; 20 CFR 677.210(b) & d (c) and 20 CFR 679.510(a)(2)

The Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway MSA currently operates under the same performance accountability measures. The Little Rock Workforce Development Board and the Central Arkansas Workforce Development Board are individually responsible for their own performance accountability measures.