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*Department of Veterans' Affairs*  
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RE: Follow-up questions from prior subcommittee meetings

- 1) Please state any changes that have occurred at your agency, or are planned at your agency because of the meeting with the Subcommittee (e.g., joining labor force participation rate taskforce after learning about during the meeting, etc.)

As a result of the meeting with the Subcommittee, we will continue to strengthen partnerships with education and workforce development entities to better serve Service Members, Veterans, and their family members (SMVF) as they transition into and throughout the South Carolina workforce. Since the subcommittee meeting, we have added three Chambers of Commerce to our existing employment working group, to include Spartanburg, Greenville, and Columbia. We are also working more closely with the leaders of the South Carolina Department of Commerce as we develop a cooperative strategic plan for Veteran employment. Additionally, we are implementing invitations to employers across the state by region to appear as guest speakers during our monthly employment working groups.

- 2) To determine where the same information is held by multiple agencies and, therefore, may be used to link information in the different agency systems, please provide a data dictionary for all information the agency maintains related to each of the items below.

We do not maintain a formal internal data dictionary. We use the federal definition of the term "Veteran" in order to align with federal and state law.

a. S.C. employer

In seeking employers in South Carolina, we focus on those that 1) either actively seek or are open to hiring Veterans and their family members; 2) have open positions available for hire, and 3) consistently hire Veterans for positions appropriate to the Veteran's skills and experience. Currently, we maintain lists of such employers on a regional basis using simple spreadsheets. We are currently in the process of fielding an initiative called the South Carolina Veteran Coalition to enable a more effective and efficient connection of Veterans to hiring opportunities. At the center of the Coalition is a web-based software solution provided by Combined Arms, a Houston-based company that currently provides this service to a Veteran population in Texas that is roughly the same size as the entire South Carolina Veteran population. Combined Arms has tailored its Salesforce-based platform to meet the needs of South Carolina and is currently fielding it in the Upstate and Low County regions. We expect to have state-wide

coverage by the end of 2023. This technological innovation is joined with the inclusion of multiple non-profit organizations focused on Veteran employment.

b. S.C. job seeker

The department focuses our employment efforts on the following categories of job seekers:

- Service Members transitioning to civilian life
- Unemployed Veterans
- Employed Veterans seeking positions more closely aligned with their skills and experience
- Family members of Service Members
- Family members of Veterans

c. S.C. K-12 school (public)

The department does not typically provide employment services for students in this category.

d. S.C. student

Although the department does not focus on students as a unique category, we do provide employment services for Veterans and their family members as they transition from student to member of the workforce. We typically do this in coordination with the Student Veteran Association and military and veteran success offices found in most of the state's colleges, universities, and technical colleges.

3) Please provide a list of case management and other data systems utilized by your agency and the following for each:

Currently, we maintain lists of qualified employers on a regional basis using simple spreadsheets. We are currently in the process of fielding an initiative called the South Carolina Veteran Coalition to enable a more effective and efficient connection of Veterans to hiring opportunities. (See Question 2.a. for additional details.

Our answers to the subordinate questions below reflect the characteristics of the South Carolina Veteran Coalition, which is currently being fielded and not yet present across the entire state.

a. Does it include information on job seekers?

Yes

b. Does it include information on employers?

Yes



c. Does it include information on students?

Yes

d. Does it include information on teaching entities?

Yes

e. List of agencies with which the system can integrate data:

Although not all-inclusive, the list below indicates the primary partners with which we expect to integrate data from the South Carolina Veterans Coalition:

- South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce
- South Carolina Department of Commerce
- South Carolina Adjutant General
- South Carolina National Guard Service Member and Family Care
- South Carolina Department of Corrections
- South Carolina Department of Administration
- South Carolina Department of Mental Health
- South Carolina Department of Agriculture
- South Carolina Department of Highway Patrol
- South Carolina Law Enforcement Division
- South Carolina Department of Motor Vehicles
- South Carolina Department of Probation, Paroles, and Pardons
- Commission on Higher Education
- South Carolina Technical Colleges

4) What data, outside of the data currently available to your agency, may be helpful to your agency reaching potential customers, if any?

Our primary data shortfall results from the difficulty in gaining access to US Department of Defense data on transitioning service members. While the Department of Defense is typically aware of transition dates a year or more in advance of the service member's actual end of term of service (ETS), there is currently no mechanism by which any state entity can gain access to this data. As a result, we miss the most advantageous time to identify a Veteran – as they begin the transition process from military service. This leads to the all too common outcome – state agencies become aware of a Veteran residing in South Carolina only after the Veteran finds him or herself struggling with employment, housing, and other social determinants of health. A solid advanced data-sharing agreement with the US Department of Defense (a need currently recognized and vocalized by most state Veteran agencies across the nation) would enable much more effective and efficient early intervention programs to enable Veterans to transition smoothly and become thriving and contributing members of the South Carolina community. The US Department of Veterans Affairs and Department of Defense have a requirement to solve this per the National Defense Authorization Act of 2020 but haven't met this goal to date.

- 5) What data, outside of the data currently available to your agency, may be helpful to your agency in determining the results/impact your agency services are having on individuals it serves?

Measuring the effectiveness of our efforts to connect Veterans with resources is a particularly challenging endeavor, as simply gaining visibility on Veterans depends upon their willingness to self-identify as Veterans. We are attempting to enhance our visibility on the holistic health of our Veteran population through a number of initiatives. The first, and most important, is the fielding of the South Carolina Veterans Coalition (discussed in detail in Question 2.a.). This platform will connect not only the state agencies that provide resources for Veterans but a host of non-profit and other organizations that serve Veterans. This web-based platform will greatly enhance our ability to understand not just Veteran needs and the resources available to meet them, but the outcomes associated with each of the resources. As data accumulates over time, our ability to objectively measure the effectiveness of various efforts to address the needs of Veterans should steadily improve. A second and related effort is our outreach efforts to bring as many Veteran-oriented organizations as possible into the Coalition. A third, and supporting effort, is an ongoing initiative to have all state agencies ask all their clients, "Have you or a family served in the military?" This simple measure may significantly improve our ability to measure the holistic health of the Veteran population and to identify trend lines.

- 6) Please list all entities, other than those listed in the attached flow chart, you believe may be involved in the education and workforce ecosystem and role of each.

We are not aware of any additional entities.

- 7) What topics does your agency believe may be helpful to have in a statewide unified workforce plan (e.g., marketing plan, central portal for customers to enter information through which their information could be shared with all applicable entities, etc.)?

We recommend:

- a central portal that has the capability to interface with entity case management programs (such as South Carolina Veteran Coalition)
- a statewide centralized marketing platform for all entities providing education and workforce development opportunities
- a state-wide, comprehensive calendar of employment events coordinated a year in advance with all agencies involved in employment to prevent:
  - regional or chronological gaps in employment services, and
  - oversaturation of employment services in a specific area or time frame
- a comprehensive review of the roles and functions of Operation Palmetto Employment



- 8) What potential obstacles can your agency think of that may have to be overcome to successfully implement a statewide unified workforce plan?

Data concerning employment and workforce development is collected by a range of agencies, using different management systems, different categories, and different definitions of terms. The system, categories, and definitions are not arbitrary; they reflect the legitimate data needs of each agency. For a state-wide workforce plan to be viable, we will need a digital information-sharing capability that includes the ability to translate data from each agency into a common language. A viable workforce plan will need to include a clear definition of responsibilities and authorities for each included agency, along with the commitment of adequate resources. In the absence of this, agencies and entities will compete for available resources, making the requisite openness and active cooperation difficult to sustain in the long term.

- 9) To allow the General Assembly and public to access information related to multiple agencies in a single location, would your agency be willing to contact the Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office (RFA) and provide information necessary for RFA to create and regularly update, through data sharing, maps applicable to your agency?
- i. Below is a list of initial maps for consideration (Note: Not all will be applicable to your agency). Please include others agency leadership believes may be useful to members of the General Assembly or public.

We are prepared to share information regarding education and workforce development for the populations we serve.

Of the categories listed below, only Location/Boundaries - Department of Veteran's Affairs Regional Modules for Service is directly applicable. We would offer to provide data concerning our services by giving the Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office access to our Annual Action Plan, a collection of documents highlighting our strategic and operational objectives, the goals supporting those goals within a specific fiscal year, and the metrics by which we measure progress in each of those goals. We publish each year's Annual Action Plan in June of the preceding fiscal year, report progress quarterly throughout the year, and finalize data-collection at the end of May each year. We can certainly share the results of these endeavors annually or on a quarterly basis.

Location/Boundaries

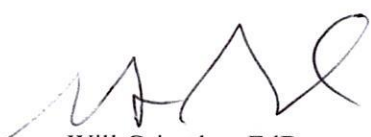
- b. Local Workforce Development Board Areas/Regional Workforce Advisors
- c. S.C. Works Center and Connection Point Locations
- d. Vocational Rehabilitation Facilities and Locations (e.g., job readiness training centers and other facilities)
- e. Vocational Rehabilitation Regions
- f. Commission for the Blind Office Locations
- g. Commission for the Blind Vocational Rehabilitation Office Territories
- h. Department of Veteran's Affairs Regional Modules for Service
- i. First Steps 4K Provider Locations
- j. First Steps Local Partner Office Locations
- k. Public 4K Provider Locations
- l. K-12 School Locations
- m. Local School District Boundaries
- n. SC School Report Card District Comparison

- o. Adult Education Technical Assistance Network Boundaries/Regions
- p. Technical College main and branch campus Locations
- q. Public and Private college and university (non-technical college) Locations
- r. Regional Non-Profit Economic Development Alliance Regions
- s. County Tiers for purposes of incentives
- t. Counties eligible for State Rural Development Grants
- u. Counties eligible for Appalachian Regional Commission Grants

Data by County

Following information by county:

- a. Percent of kindergartners who were
  - i. ready for school based on kindergarten readiness assessment in total and by the following:
    - 1. in poverty
    - 2. race
    - 3. subject
- b. Child care supply v. demand
- c. Percent of children age 0-35 months who have full immunization coverage
- d. Percent of children ages 1-5 who have received at least one preventive dental visit in the past year
- e. Percent of child care providers participating in ABC Quality



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