



# CHESTER COUNTY

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

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*Advancing Chester County's Workforce*

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act  
Multi-Year Local Area Plan  
Program Years 2021-2024



# Chester County Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Local Area Plan 2021-2024

Local Workforce Development Area name: Chester

Effective Date: July 1, 2021

## INTRODUCTION

### 1. STRATEGIC PLANNING: Local Area Workforce and Economic Analysis

#### 1.1. Identify the composition of the local area's population and labor force.

According to the U.S. Census American Community Survey (ACS) 2019 1-Year Estimates, Chester County's population is 524,989. While a quarter of the population (25.3%) is under 20, the largest age group of the adult population in the county falls within the 20-44 year age range, with over a quarter of the adult population (27.8%) falling within the 45-64 age range.

Chester County has the highest percentage of population with a bachelor's degree or higher in the commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and significantly outpaces the Southeast Region in percentage of population with a bachelor's degree or higher. The Southeast Region and Pennsylvania as a whole have the highest concentration of educational attainment in the category of high school graduate. Chester County is home to 81,532 adults, age 25-64 with a post-graduate degree, accounting for 22.7% of residents in this age category.

**Educational Attainment, Age 25-64**

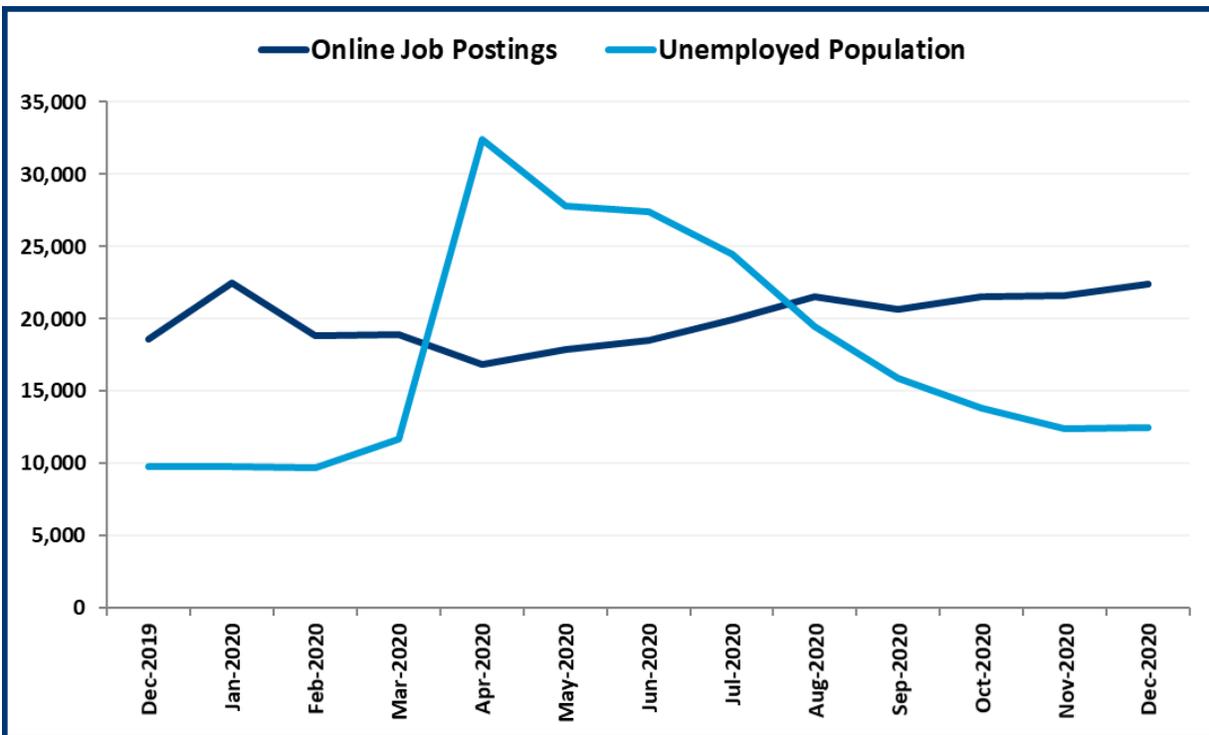
	Chester County, PA	Southeast PA Region	Pennsylvania
No High School Diploma	6.0%	9.4%	9.0%
High School Graduate	20.3%	28.6%	34.4%
Some College, No Degree	12.6%	15.4%	15.7%
Associate's Degree	6.4%	7.1%	8.6%
Bachelor's Degree	32.0%	23.1%	19.5%
Postgraduate Degree	22.7%	16.5%	12.8%

Source:

U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates, 2019 (Table DP02)

According to the below chart, provided by the Central Pennsylvania Workforce Development Corporation (CPWDC), utilizing data from the Center for Workforce Information and Analysis (CWIA) and EMSI, online job postings in Chester County far outpace the number of unemployed persons, indicating that if every online job posting was filled by a Chester County job seeker, the county would have an unemployment rate of 0%. This illustrates the fact that Chester County's primary obstacle to workforce development success is the mismatch between employer needs, and job seeker skills and interest.

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Chester County’s average household income of \$144,892 also exceeds the national and statewide average annual household incomes of \$92,324 and \$87,789 respectively (Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates, 2019). This higher average salary correlates to a higher median home value and significantly high self-sufficiency wage threshold. According to estimates based on the United Way’s ALICE report, the survival wage threshold for a family of one adult and one preschool-age child is \$18.70 per hour, and the survival wage for a family of 2 adults and 2 children is an hourly rate of \$29.23 per adult. The stability wage increases to \$29.00 per hour and \$54.12 per hour respectively (Source: United Way of Pennsylvania ALICE Report 2019) This creates a blend of opportunity and barriers unique to Chester County, with a larger gap to self-sufficiency experienced by those with barriers to employment.

### *Populations with Barriers to Employment*

At the time of development for this plan, there is not a comprehensive data source available regarding Chester County residents with barriers. Data from various sources can be collected to begin creating a picture of individuals with barriers to employment in Chester County.

#### Low-Income Individuals

- 6.2% of Chester County families are below the poverty level (ACS 5 Year Estimates, 2015-2019)
- The largest age group of those below the poverty level is those under 18 years old (ACS 1-Year Estimates, 2019)
- Of those in Chester County below the poverty level, age 16 or older, the Unemployment Rate is 17.7% and the Labor Force Participation Rate is 47.2% (ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2015-2019)

#### Race and Ethnicity

- The Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian population makes up less than 0.1% of the population of Chester County (EMSI Q4 2020)
- In Chester County, 5.8% of the population is African American, 5.9% is Asian, 2.9% identifies as two or more races, and 7.6% is of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity (ACS 1-Year Estimates, 2019)

#### Individuals with Disabilities

- In the 2018-2019 school year, 15,770 students had a disability, of which the majority had a learning disability. (PA Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education)

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- In Program Year 2019, 631 Chester County residents were engaged with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (Source: Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation)
- The 2019 American Community Survey estimates that 9.4% of Chester County's population has a disability.
- The disability categories with the highest percentages are; ambulatory (4.2%), cognitive (4.2%), and independent living difficulty (4.7%). (ACS 1-Year Estimates 2019, Table S1810)
- The Unemployment Rate in Chester County for adults age 16-64 with a disability is 10%, with a 52.1% Labor Force Participation Rate (ACS 5-Year Estimates 2015-2019)

### Older Individuals

- 16.6% of the Chester County population is over 65 years of age (American Community Survey 1-Year Estimate 2019)
- 5.2% of the Chester County population is over 65 years of age and below the poverty level (ACS 1-Year Estimate, 2019)
- 1.7% of Chester County residents age 65-74 and 1.9% age 75 and older are unemployed (ACS 1-Year Estimate, 2019)
- 36.1% of Chester County residents age 65-74 and 11.2% age 75 and older are participating in the labor force. (ACS 1-Year Estimate, 2019)

### Ex-Offenders

- 1,953 people were been released from prison in Chester County from 2015 through 2019. The average age at time of release is 37 (Source: PA Department of Corrections)

### Homeless Individuals

- 522 sheltered and unsheltered Chester County residents were experiencing homelessness during the 2020 Point-In-Time-Count, of which 211 were Veterans. (Source: Chester County 2020 Point In Time Count)
- 2020 saw an unprecedented increase in demand for homelessness and homeless prevention services in Chester County. While this increase is a circumstantial anomaly due to COVID-19, the increased demand is expected to continue and is still being quantified and projected.

### Youth who are in or who have aged out of the foster care system

- In 2018, 102 children left foster care in Chester County, of them, 12.7% aged out of the foster care system (Source: PA Partnerships for Children)

### Individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy

- 20,523 Chester County residents identify as speaking English "Less than very well." (2015-2019 5-Year ACS Estimates)
- 6% of Chester County residents age 25 and over do not have a high school diploma (Source: ACS 1- Year Estimates, 2019)

### Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers

- Past experience and feedback from providers has shown this population as challenging to engage and quantify due to the transient nature of migrant farmwork and issues of distrust within the community.

### Single Parents

- 15.2% of Chester County households are single-parent households (ACS 5 Year Estimates, 2015-2019)
- Nationally, single mothers are bearing a disproportionate burden of the economic impact of COVID-19. The number of single mothers with jobs was 22% lower in April 2020 than a year prior, compared to 9% lower for other parents with children (nonprofitquarterly.org)
- Single-parent families, non-white households with children, and households with children residing in lower-income neighborhoods report particularly high levels of hardship and reliance on social networks and government support. ([Liberty Street Economics](#))

### Long-Term Unemployed Individuals

- The Central Pennsylvania Workforce Development Corporation estimates that there are 2,400 discouraged and other marginally attached job seekers in Chester County, with an additional 7,900 people working part-time who would work full time if possible. (Estimates based on data from the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry and the Federal Bureau of Labor Statistics for the 2019 Q4 – 2020 Q3, October 2019 – September 2020 time period)

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The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) provides services to individuals with disabilities to help them secure and maintain employment and independence. These services are designed to prepare OVR customers to become qualified trained members of the workforce, increasing regional workforce diversity and the overall number of skilled workers available to businesses in the county and region.

Chester County has the second lowest unemployment rate in Pennsylvania, at 4.6% as of December 2020. The majority of Unemployment Compensation exhaustees in Chester County come from the Trade, Transportation, and Utilities industry (Source: Center for Workforce Information & Analysis County Profile, January 2021). This group made up 21.1% of all initial Unemployment Compensation claims in January 2021.

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to unique challenges for employers and job seekers, and data availability hasn't caught up to the current impact, with a complete picture of changes still to be seen. According to the January Economic Outlook report developed by the CPWDC, the Chester County labor force has decreased by 15,000 from December 2019 to December 2020. As of January 2021, there were 35,990 individuals with continued Unemployment Compensation claims in Chester County (Source: Center for Workforce Information Analysis). Low wage earners have taken the most significant hit, as jobs in the hospitality and service industries feel the largest impact nationally, with the Hospitality industry accounting for 17.1% initial Unemployment Compensation claims in January 2021.

## *1.2. How are skills gaps defined in the local area? Provide a description of the skills that are required to meet the needs of employers in region and local area?*

Skills gaps are identified in two ways; through data analysis utilizing information from such sources as the Center for Workforce Information & Analysis (CWIA) and the Central Pennsylvania Workforce Development Corporation, and through tracking employer feedback and requests.

Unanticipated employer need is often discovered anecdotally through stakeholder and partner conversations. For example, the Chester County Workforce Development Board (WDB) has heard from a number of partners that the agriculture industry, particularly the mushroom industry concentrated in the southern part of the county is experiencing significant difficulty in hiring farmworkers. For many varieties of agriculture, this work can be seasonal, but for the mushroom industry, the need is year-round.

Employer demand for skills can also be determined by an analysis of job postings. Eleven of the top 20 required skills are computer programming and software related. Nine of the top 20 requested certifications are in the healthcare sector. (Help Wanted OnLine™ Job Postings, The Conference Board) This is consistent with the emphasis on the IT and Healthcare sectors in Chester County's industry Partnerships, and with projected occupational gaps referenced in the graph on page 6.

Overall educational attainment is not the only indicator of marketable skills or skills gaps in the labor force. Employers have requested the following certifications and trainings through the Incumbent Worker Training portion of the Industry Partnerships, all resulting in a certificate or credential and indicative of marketable skills;

### Health Care

- End of Life Certificate
- Oncology Nursing Certification
- Progressive Care Certified Nurse
- Alzheimer Certification
- Dementia Care Certification
- Gerontological Nursing
- Proper usage of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Wound Care Certification
- CPR

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- Behavioral Health and De-escalation

## Smart Energy Initiative

- Electric Vehicles
- Certified Building Analyst
- Healthy Home Evaluator
- Certified Envelope Professional
- Energy Modeling
- Certified Energy Manager
- Certified Lighting Efficiency Professional
- Certified Water Efficiency Professional
- Geothermal Equipment Training
- Infiltration and Duct Leakage Certification
- LEED Accredited Professional

## Information Technology Action Group (ITAG) – IT/Communications

- Business System Analysis
- Certified Scrum Master
- Certified Sun Java Associate
- Network Administration and Security
- Oracle Database
- ICD-10 Coding
- Business System Continuity Planning & Disaster Recovery

## Manufacturing Alliance

- Reading and Interpreting Blueprints and Technical Documents
- CNC Operations and Programming
- Programmable Logic Controls
- Manufacturing Project Management
- Industrial Automation and Control
- Industrial Drive Systems

The trainings requested by Industry Partnership Employers tie to High Priority Occupations and give a glimpse at shorter term trainings and stackable credentials that can help get job seekers back to work in their previous fields quickly and efficiently, with a marketable certification or an update of skills.

In addition to occupation-specific skills, there is constant feedback from employers on the need for “business critical skills,” formerly referred to as soft skills. Business critical skills shortages are addressed for adults and dislocated workers via workshops and are integrated in program curriculum for WIOA Youth participants at the Career Corps and EARN program participants.

Expanding beyond skills gaps, the Chester County Workforce Development Board (WDB) also monitors projected occupational gaps, which include an overall package of skills or experience to fill specific occupations.

### *1.3. What are the challenges the local area faces in aligning existing labor force skills and education and training activities with the needs of regional employers?*

While the high rate of bachelor’s and postgraduate degrees (cited in Section 1.1) in Chester County is often cited as a point of pride, it does create a wider gap between the education attainment of residents and the education levels needed for employment in Chester County. The overwhelming percentage of employment by training required in the county is for Short- and Moderate- Term On the Job Training (OJT), with little to no experience and no degree required. While 22.7% of people in Chester County ages 25-64 have postgraduate degrees, only 4% of employment in Chester County requires a postgraduate degree (CWIA).

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This disconnect between educational attainment and education needed for employment presents one of the biggest challenges in the Chester County Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA); the underemployed. United States Department of Labor Training & Guidance Letter (TEGL) WIOA No. 3-15, "Operating Guidance for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act" states that;

*"In addition to providing career and training services to individuals who are unemployed, there remains a significant population of job seekers who are underemployed. Individuals who are underemployed may include:*

- *Individuals employed less than full-time who are seeking full-time employment;*
- *Individuals who are employed in a position that is inadequate with respect to their skills and training;*
- *Individuals who are employed who meet the definition of a low-income individual in WIOA sec. 3(36); and*
- *Individuals who are employed, but whose current job's earnings are not sufficient compared to their previous job's earnings from their previous employment, per State and/or local policy"*

The underemployed are a frequently-overlooked population within workforce development who need increased focus in Chester County. The Chester County WDB intends to work to identify and develop best practices to more effectively locate and serve these underemployed workers and implement methods to help them reach their full employment potential. Creative solutions are needed for both job seekers and employers to identify transferrable skills that would allow job seekers to succeed in a position, instead of seeing advanced degrees and credentials and automatically deeming a job seeker "overqualified."

The diversity of industry and population in Chester County make for both unique needs and opportunities. The Chester County WDB has been successfully serving those needs through not only standard workforce development services, but through innovative solutions and initiatives.

Transportation is a constant challenge to services and employment within Chester County. With the county spread out over a large geographic area, as well as a blend of urban, suburban and rural communities, public transportation can be burdensome where it exists at all. This challenge is illustrated by the Job Proximity Index. The Job Proximity Index shows access to employment opportunities for a given neighborhood, utilizing census tract data, with a higher index indicating higher access to opportunities.

According to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the average Job Proximity Index in Chester County is 56.8. While the average is, generally speaking, not a challenge, the challenge comes from the range in indices found within the county. Neighborhoods in Chester County can have Job Proximity Indices ranging from 0 to 99. This disparity of access has the greatest negative impact on individuals with barriers, with areas of higher concentrations of low income residents, migrant and seasonal workers, residents with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), and disabled residents frequently residing in areas of the county with a lower Job Proximity Index. This frequently adds additional barriers such as transportation and accessibility of opportunity to populations already experiencing barriers.

#### *1.4. Provide an analysis of local area workforce development activities, including education and training.*

The Chester County WDB prides itself on innovation. This has brought a number of new programs and partnerships into the workforce development system of Chester County.

The most prominent and overarching innovation has been the integration of the PA CareerLink® Chester County and the United Way Financial Stability Center. This unique partnership brings workforce development services and access to wrap-around supportive services under one roof in a holistic approach to helping Chester County residents on the

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road to self-sufficiency. This multi-directional integrated approach has successfully connected so many job seekers to supportive services that integration was furthered to include the EARN and Work Ready programs, which have been integrated at the PA CareerLink® Chester County and United Way Financial Stability Center for the past four years.

The diversity of industry in Chester County has led to increased innovation in employer engagement and business services. Chester County is home to a variety of Industry Partnerships, including the Innovative Technology Action Group (ITAG) which pre-dates the statewide Industry Partnership program. While the Industry Partnerships serve high priority sectors in the county well, the diversity of industry meant that additional employers were not being reached to the same extent, which led Chester County WDB and Chester County Economic Development Council to launch the Hire One initiative. The initial intent of the Hire One initiative was to convince employers to expand their workforce by one person, or reduce a planned layoff by one person, it has since grown to include a Task Force of employers from a multitude of industries to discuss skills gaps, hiring practices, and other trends, as well as job seeker coaching, networking opportunities, workshops, and trainings.

Chester County is home to seven institutes of higher education, as well as a number of community-based and privately licensed training providers that have long been partners in workforce development activities. The Delaware County Community College is represented on the Chester County Workforce Development Board, but the workforce system also has strong relationships with Cheyney University, Penn State Great Valley, and West Chester University.

The majority of Individual Training Account (ITA) recipients in Chester County have chosen a training provider within Chester County over ten years in a row, speaking to the tendency of the Chester County labor market to remain within the county. In addition to postsecondary education and training partners, Chester County is home to three Technical College High Schools preparing high school students and adults for hands-on work in high priority occupations. Strategically located in central, northern, and southern locations, the three Technical College High Schools are tremendous resources and partners within the workforce system, and the director of their programming is also a member of the Chester County Workforce Development Board.

The Chester County WDB intends to expand connections to and usage of pre-apprenticeship and registered apprenticeship programs, particularly by analyzing employer pipeline needs, with an emphasis on large-scale hiring projections. When employer and industry needs that can be addressed by a pre-apprenticeship and/or registered apprenticeship approach more effectively than an ITA are identified, Title I and WDB staff will work with the Apprenticeship and Training Office (ATO) to identify or create appropriate apprenticeship pathways. These pathways can then be discussed as a placement option with all job seekers in the Chester County Workforce Development System, including EARN, OVR, and youth program participants.

The Chester County Workforce Development Board and its members actively partner with education and training providers in a variety of ways; through Industry Partnerships, Perkins Participatory Planning Committees at both the secondary and postsecondary levels, Adult Basic Literacy Education through Title II provider Chester County OIC, and special projects. The local nature of these work groups make them valuable to each participating member.

### *1.5. Describe strategic planning elements including a regional analysis of economic conditions.*

A full analysis of regional economic conditions can be found in the [Southeast Pennsylvania Regional Workforce Plan](#). The Southeast Region prides itself on the strong collaboration among its six Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs) and with such strong commuter connections between the areas, no one county in the region exists in a workforce development vacuum.

Within the regional plan, an analysis of the June 2020 Location Quotients for the 2-digit NAICS Sectors by Local Workforce Area is included in the below chart:

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NAICS Sector	Berks	Bucks	Chester	Delaware	Montgomery	Philadelphia
11 Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	1.85	.23	2.23	.03	.07	N/A
21 Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	.38	.18	.18	.09	.17	N/A
22 Utilities	1.66	.59	.64	.70	1.32	.63
23 Construction	.83	1.24	.91	1.03	.96	.31
31-33 Manufacturing	2.13	1.22	.85	.77	1.13	.31
42 Wholesale trade	.91	1.37	1.05	.78	1.13	.49
44-45 Retail trade	1.03	1.23	.99	1.02	.93	.63
48-49 Transportation and warehousing	1.00	.73	.67	1.09	.54	.95
51 Information	.25	.74	1.55	.46	1.20	1.17
52 Finance and insurance	.60	.79	2.21	1.36	1.77	1.05
53 Real estate and rental and leasing	.67	.72	.82	.80	1.07	.97
54 Professional and technical services	.62	.92	1.59	.66	1.72	1.29
55 Management of companies & enterprises	2.08	.66	2.45	2.22	1.61	1.06
56 Administrative and waste services	.83	.89	.74	1.01	1.14	.60
61 Educational services	.54	.79	.95	2.75	1.23	4.41
62 Health care and social assistance	1.25	1.46	1.00	1.43	1.21	1.87
71 Arts, entertainment, and recreation	.66	.90	1.15	1.03	.82	.96
72 Accommodation and food services	.70	.84	.61	.74	.58	.62
81 Other services, except public administration	.85	.91	.87	.95	.81	.97

Chester County represents the higher Location Quotients in the region in the Agriculture, Wholesale trade, Information, Finance and insurance, Professional and technical services, Management of companies and enterprises, and Arts, entertainment, and recreation industries. (Bureau of Labor Statistics: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages)

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Chester County’s largest employers, Vanguard and QVC Network, are established businesses with a national presence. However, there is a variety of employers and industries in the county. For example, Chester County has a strong and vibrant agriculture sector with a location quotient of 4.13 when compared to the rest of Pennsylvania (Source: Central Pennsylvania Workforce Development Corporation). Mushroom growers, primarily located in southern Chester County, produce 47% of the nation’s mushrooms (Source: <http://modernfarmer.com/2014/05/welcome-mushroom-country-population-nearly-half-u-s-mushrooms/>) and play a critical role in making agriculture so important in Chester County.

The Finance and Insurance, Professional, Scientific and Technical Services, and Information sectors are also very well represented and growing in the county, which is reflected location quotients of 1.98, 1.68, and 1.66, respectively (Source: Center for Workforce Information & Analysis). The strength of the Information Technology sector can be further observed when reviewing the fastest growing occupations by percent change, with Software Developers and Computer Systems Analysts regularly being in the top ten on the list (Source: EMSI 2020, Quarter 4).

While each individual county of the region experiences change of occupations and industries differently, the overall regional industry and occupational projections affect employers and job seekers throughout the area. Regional industry and occupational projections from the Center for Workforce Information and Analysis are found below:

Long-Term Industry Projections for Southeast Pennsylvania (2018-28)				
Industry	Employment (2018)	Projected Employment (2028)	Employment Change (2018-28)	
			Volume	Percent
<b>Total Jobs</b>	2,252,800	2,387,240	134,440	6.0%
<b>Goods Producing Industries</b>	249,590	255,820	6,230	2.5%
Agriculture, Mining & Logging	13,280	13,540	260	2.0%
Construction	80,380	87,440	7,060	8.8%
Manufacturing	155,930	154,840	-1,090	-0.7%
<b>Services-Providing</b>	1,888,870	2,015,790	126,920	6.7%
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	357,820	361,240	3,420	1.0%
Information	35,840	35,140	-700	-2.0%
Financial Activities	140,060	144,480	4,420	3.2%
Professional & Business Services	328,800	353,380	24,580	7.5%
Education & Health Services	591,820	664,800	72,980	12.3%
Leisure & Hospitality	201,880	220,520	18,640	9.2%
Other Services, Except Public Admin.	104,960	108,640	3,680	3.5%
Federal, State & Local Government	127,720	127,590	-130	-0.1%
<b>Self-Employed Workers</b>	114,350	115,620	1,270	1.1%

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Long-Term Occupational Projections for Southeast Pennsylvania (2018-28)				
Occupational Title	Employment (2018)	Projected Employment (2028)	Employment Change (2018-28)	
			Volume	Percent
<b>Total, All Occupations</b>	2,252,800	2,387,240	134,440	6.0%
Management, Business & Finance	252,360	269,740	17,380	6.9%
Computer, Engineering & Science	132,130	143,920	11,790	8.9%
Education, Legal, Social Service, Arts & Media	247,840	266,880	19,040	7.7%
Healthcare Practitioners, Technicians & Support	232,610	266,630	34,020	14.6%
Protective, Food, Building & Personal Service	425,940	469,250	43,310	10.2%
Sales & Related	210,820	210,290	-530	-0.3%
Office & Administrative Support	351,800	342,810	-8,990	-2.6%
Farming, Fishing & Forestry	7,260	7,370	110	1.5%
Construction & Extraction	76,790	82,650	5,860	7.6%
Installation, Maintenance & Repair	78,160	82,420	4,260	5.5%
Production	98,660	97,450	-1,210	-1.2%
Transportation & Material Moving	137,010	146,350	9,340	6.8%

Southeast Pennsylvania has always found there to be a strength in responding to the needs of job seekers and employers as a cohesive region where appropriate and Chester County anticipates a continuation of that cooperative spirit as the region moves towards COVID-19 recovery and beyond. With the full impact of COVID-19 still to be seen, uncertainty looms over all aspects of the workforce and economic development systems in the region, and these foundations will be more crucial than ever to ensure a response that will return the region to a period of economic growth.

### 2. STRATEGIC PLANNING: Vision and Goals

#### 2.1. What are the local board's strategic vision and goals for preparing its workforce?

The Chester County Workforce Development Board's (WDB) vision is to offer inclusive and comprehensive workforce programs and services to individuals and employers to foster a healthy economy within Chester County and the Southeast Pennsylvania (SEPA) region.

The Chester County WDB prides itself on innovation, with a willingness to try new programs and initiatives and a commitment to pushing providers to look forward and implement pioneering ideas. This desire to be increasingly progressive has led to establishing collaborative partnerships with a strong foundation allowing for mobilization when new opportunities and challenges arise. Most recently, this has been illustrated through the local response to the COVID-19 pandemic, during which partners were able to work together to quickly pivot from a mostly in-person service delivery model to a primarily virtual service delivery model, utilizing the strengths of various staff and organizations to maximize success. Most significantly, the partnership between the PA CareerLink® Chester County and the United Way Financial Stability Center has brought a wider range of supportive services and community connections to job seekers at the one-stop.

Employment opportunities in any community begin with the employers. Fortunately, Chester County is home to many healthy and vibrant employers within a number of different industries. In order to further nurture a thriving employer community, a priority of the Chester County WDB is to ensure that local employers have support that enables them to compete and thrive in the regional and global economy. The Chester County WDB recognizes the importance of employers in the workforce development system and will continue to establish strong relationships with employers

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and remain aware of employer needs.

Our workforce is strong, with job seekers and incumbent workers that possess a wealth of transferrable experiences and quality contributions. Those experiences create a valuable base to fill skill gaps and train workers to fill the openings that exist today and will occur in the future. With the need to get valued workers into fulfilling and family-sustaining jobs, the Chester County WDB is committed to finding new and creative ways to serve job seekers and employers.

The Chester County WDB also understands that the future workforce, our young people, needs to be educated on the future in-demand occupations and industries. These efforts will allow youth and the education system to prepare to meet these future workforce needs. To that end, the Chester County WDB will facilitate on-going dialogue between local education institutions, community-based organizations, private licensed schools and training providers, libraries, industry partnerships, and employers to create career awareness events that communicate future employment opportunities to students and their parents.

Finally, it is a priority of the Chester County WDB to ensure that all customers: employers, job seekers, and incumbent workers are served through an integrated and comprehensive delivery system, which is grounded in the one-stop and utilizes the Pennsylvania workforce system of record to its full extent. The Chester County WDB has created a very innovative delivery system with the PA CareerLink® Chester County and United Way Financial Stability Center, serving employers and job seekers. This system provides financial stability services and linkages to the county-wide system of supportive services, along with the traditional employment and training programs.

The Chester County WDB's Vision will be implemented on a daily basis using the following goals as a guide:

***Goal 1: The Chester County WDB will foster and support the development of individuals' career pathways through providing services inclusive of education, training, workshops, and apprenticeship opportunities.***

- a. The Chester County WDB will promote career pathways and support training that leads directly to meaningful employment with family sustaining wages.
- b. The Chester County WDB will explore the promotion of micro-credentials to close skill gaps and get job seekers to work as quickly and efficiently as possible.
- c. The Chester County WDB will identify career opportunities and pathways with various entry and exit points in collaboration with local education partners and with the assistance of employers and the Industry Partnerships to prepare job seekers for the opportunities of the future.
- d. The Chester County WDB will assist employers in educating job seekers, training providers, students, and teachers regarding job and career opportunities and pathways.
- e. The Chester County WDB will continue to support In School and Out of School Youth programming that promotes equitable opportunities and encourages career pathways across industries, including but not limited to: Girls Exploring Tomorrow's Technology (GETT), multiple TANF youth programs, and the State Local Internship Program (SLIP).
- f. The Chester county WDB will work with the PA CareerLink® Chester County to expand workshops and trainings addressing business critical, or "soft" skills, as well as adaptations and accommodations that can be implemented to increase job seeker competitiveness and success.
- g. The Chester County Business Services Team will continue to bring recruitment events for employers in a variety of industries to job seekers in various geographic areas of the county.

***Goal 2: The Chester County WDB will support industry diversity in Chester County while focusing on the key industry sectors prioritized by the Commonwealth through strategic employer engagement.***

- a. The Chester County WDB will outreach to and engage with employers to better understand their needs through all programs and partners with the leading outreach efforts focused via the PA CareerLink® Chester County's Business Services Team.
- b. The Chester County WDB will continue to engage with the different industries in the region to understand their unique and shared needs.

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- c. The Chester County WDB will continue to support and participate in the Industry Partnership programs and Hire One initiative, administered by the Chester County Economic Development Council (CCEDC) and our regional Workforce Development Boards.
- d. The Chester County WDB will identify skill gaps in occupations through surveys, which request employers share information, particularly relating to positions that they are having problems filling and industry-specific needs.
- e. The Chester County Business Services Team will work with employers to develop strategies for identifying those job seekers with transferrable skills who could succeed in difficult-to-fill positions with specific skill upgrades and short-term training.

### ***Goal 3: The Chester County WDB will monitor and assess the effectiveness of the Chester County Workforce Development System and utilize strategic decision making for continuous improvement.***

- a. The Chester County WDB will proactively identify opportunities to increase customer access, improve outcomes, and deliver an improved customer service experience.
- b. The Chester County WDB will be responsive to changes in job seeker, employer, and economic circumstances.
- c. The Chester County WDB will improve customer service outcomes and focus on overall improvement in customer experience.
- d. The Chester County WDB will continue contingency planning efforts.
- e. The Chester County WDB will continually review feedback to improve programming that addresses the skill gaps and other needs identified.
- f. The Chester County WDB will expand its utilization of reports available through Pennsylvania's workforce development system of record, the Center for Workforce Information and Analysis (CWIA) and other sources of Labor Market Information to make informed strategic decisions about current and future programming.
- g. The Business Services Team will utilize a proactive approach in employer outreach in order to better serve those with an impending layoff of less than the WARN threshold for Rapid Response and those employees affected by those layoffs.

### ***Goal 4: The Chester County WDB will increase opportunities for job seekers, youth, and employers through enhanced access to services, expanded reach, and accessibility.***

- a. The Chester County WDB will make services available throughout the county, making strategic decisions to increase availability across 759 square miles of geographic, industry, and demographic diversity and varied accessibility.
- b. Partners will adapt their programming to ensure expanded reach and delivery beyond the Exton PA CareerLink® location.
- c. The Chester County WDB will maximize the job matching services for job seekers within the PA CareerLink® system and encourage employers to increase their use of the system; creating employer folders, prescreening applicants, and posting employment opportunities.
- d. The Career Corps will become an empowerment program for the youth participants, including those from the Coatesville and West Chester communities.
- e. The Chester County WDB will encourage and require all programs, when applicable, to conduct marketing and outreach to targeted priority areas.
- f. The Chester County WDB will continue to holistically serve job seekers through the partnership with and co-location of the United Way Financial Stability Center, providing connections to community-based organizations and supportive services.
- g. The Chester County WDB will focus on serving the following populations: veterans, persons with disabilities, those experiencing homelessness, low-income job seekers, Individuals with Limited English Proficiency, ex-offenders, and the long-term unemployed.
- h. The Chester County WDB will pursue funding opportunities to enhance access, reach, and accessibility.

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## ***Goal 5: The Chester County WDB will strive to provide services in an equitable and inclusive manner.***

- a. The Chester County WDB will determine a methodology to measure equity, diversity, and inclusion within the local workforce development system.
- b. The Chester County WDB will encourage all providers to enact fair and equitable provision, implementation, and impact of services, programs, and policies.
  - i. To include elimination of practices, attitudes, and cultural messages that reinforce disparate treatment by race, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, ability, sex, gender, sexual orientation, familial status, and age.
  - ii. To ensure all information, communication, and collateral materials utilize inclusive language and visuals representing every aspect of the community.
- c. The Chester County WDB will increase accessibility of career development activities by hosting programs and recruitment events in the federally recognized Opportunity Zones.
- d. The Chester County WDB will work with all applicable partners to deliver services, and make available options and necessary accommodations for those job seekers with disabilities and other barriers.
- e. The Chester County WDB will build upon and share working knowledge of public assistance programs, including cash and non-cash benefits for low-income families and individuals.
- f. The Chester County WDB staff will ensure providers have access to available resources to connect and serve individuals with barriers and articulate program eligibility requirements to assist in acquisition of needed documentation, services, and employment options.

In order to maintain alignment with the Southeast Pennsylvania Regional goals and strategies, the Chester County WDB will also implement the following:

- The Chester County WDB will participate in the creation of a regional framework for micro-credentialing and the positioning of those micro-credentials on Career Pathways.
- The Chester County WDB will participate in and support regional meetings for WDB Directors, WDB Chairs and PA CareerLink® operators and administrators.
- The Chester County WDB will participate in the creation of a regional strategy for leveraging Rapid Response resources.
- The Chester County WDB will participate in the development and leveraging of resources to increase public and employer awareness of services.
- The Chester County WDB will work with regional and local partners to share career awareness messages with parents and young adults.
- The Chester County WDB will work to further coordinate service approaches for key employer programs throughout the region, to allow for expanded awareness and ease of access for employers.
- The Chester County WDB will continue the joint review of High Priority Occupations within the SEPA region to ensure that job seeker and employer needs are met without being constrained by local boundaries.
- The Chester County WDB will continue to promote and support projects that develop career awareness and talent pipelines through youth outreach and engagement.
- The Chester County WDB will participate in the development and execution of a plan to regularly review and leverage resources, best practices, and challenges across the SEPA region.

2.2. *What is the local board's strategy to work with the entities that carry out the core programs to align resources available to the local area, in order to achieve the strategic vision and goals for the local area?*

A primary responsibility of the Executive Committee and Operator/Partner Committee is to ensure the alignment of resources and guide all providers and partners toward the common vision and goals outlined by the Chester County Workforce Development Board (WDB). Progress and efforts toward the goals and strategies outlined in this plan will be part of monitoring and discussions conducted with all contracted providers. The One-Stop Operator will coordinate and implement the strategies necessary for achievement of the vision and goals.

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Representatives of all core WIOA programs are included in the Chester County WDB membership and will be invited to participate on appropriate committees. All required partners will actively participate in quarterly staff meetings held at the one-stop. The PA CareerLink® Chester County, the WDB, and all partners operate in a state of continuous improvement, with active feedback and participation from all partners as a key element in that action and in the daily work toward the goals outlined in this plan.

- 2.3. *How will the local board's vision and goals align with, support and contribute to the governor's vision and goals for the state's workforce development system, as well as any of the goals and strategies articulated in the regional plan?*

The Chester County Workforce Development Board (WDB) is historically one of the lowest-funded Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs) in Pennsylvania. While that is reflective of the higher education attainment levels, higher average wages, and lower unemployment in Chester County, it also creates a large gap to navigate for those experiencing barriers to employment. As dictated by WIOA, the Chester County WDB focuses its funds on those most in need of services. The Chester County WDB and its staff are dedicated to identifying and pursuing supplemental funding opportunities from public and private sources, particularly those that focus on serving job seekers with barriers. To the extent possible with limited WIOA formula funds, the Chester County WDB will support the governor's vision and goals, included in the [state WIOA Plan](#), in the following ways.

***Pennsylvania Goal #1: Develop a comprehensive career pathways system in PA and expand career pathways as the primary model for skill, credential, degree attainment, with an emphasis on assisting individuals to address barriers to employment, earn a family-sustaining wage, and advance their career.***

For the purpose of making sure that training programs lead to career pathways, the Chester County WDB will continue to work with our employers, adult education partners, secondary and post-secondary education partners, and libraries to maintain updated and current listings of high priority occupations and career pathways for the Chester County LWDA and the region, as well as trainings, micro credentials, and certifications related to those pathways. When possible, the Chester County WDB will offer supportive services for key industries such as health care and information technology to enable movement by program participants along career pathways.

The Chester County WDB is committed to support the growth of apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs – especially within the Chester County WDB's youth/young adult programming. The Chester County WDB will follow the Commonwealth's lead and enhance career guidance and navigation services to advise individuals, especially those with barriers to employment and education, on programs and services that will provide them with an effective pathway to their career goals. In order to encourage an open-minded approach to career pathways and options, the Chester County WDB will provide pathways with multiple entry and exit points, various certifications, and consideration of transferrable skills.

The Chester County WDB will convene workgroups consisting of education representatives from the Chester County Intermediate Unit and Delaware County Community College, the secondary and post-secondary Carl D. Perkins providers in the county, as well as representatives from Title I and IV services and Industry Partnerships to better define Career Pathways. These Pathways will be informed by labor market data, training curricula, and the needs of employers to provide multiple entry and exit points, as well as connections to other Pathways and inclusion of job seekers with disabilities and other barriers. Information regarding these Pathways will then be used, not only as job seeker options, but as information for students and parents to inform them of career options.

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***Pennsylvania Goal #2: Engage employers and industry clusters through innovative strategies to improve the connection and responsiveness of workforce programs and services to labor market demand, including recruiting, training, and retaining talent.***

The Chester County WDB understands the importance of knowing the employers' needs for talent in targeted industries within Chester County. The Chester County WDB has supported a variety of Industry Partnerships to better understand the needs of employers in different sectors. These partnerships allow the WDB and its service providers to assist in connecting these employers with job seekers and local educational and training institutions to fill these gaps. The existing Industry Partnerships programming in Chester County has easily transitioned to the Next Gen model, and has seamlessly connected with the Engage! Initiative in Chester County and the SEPA region.

Business Education Partnership-funded programming has increased outreach to young people, engaging youth and businesses in career exploration. This expands student experience of the variety of occupations growing within the county and region, as well as the pathways to success in those occupations.

Moving forward, the Chester County WDB plans to continue our partnership with CCEDC and local employers in offering connections to young people to our local employers. The level of these partnerships are heavily dependent on federal and state funding support.

A designated member of Chester County's WDB staff participates in regularly scheduled Business Services Team (BST) meetings and connects frequently with Title I Business Service Representatives, as well as with staff from partner organizations predominantly focused on serving employers, such as the Chester County Economic Development Council. Board staff is also in regular communication with local educators, training providers, and employers from Chester County's four active Industry Partnerships: Healthcare Connect, Innovative Technology Action Group (ITAG), Manufacturing Alliance of Chester and Delaware Counties, and Smart Energy Initiative (SEI). Feedback from these groups was recently collected and analyzed concerning Chester County's High Priority Occupations and the interest to petition for several relevant occupations with existing or potential apprenticeship offerings. The list of occupations includes Carpenter, Electrician, Pharmacy Technician, and Welder. Employer development remains a top priority for Chester County, and as a result, these routine exchanges of information and strategic planning sessions are of paramount importance and value. This feedback will also be used to connect these employers with existing apprenticeships and work with them and other partners to create apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship program that meets their needs and provides family sustaining wages and career pathway opportunities.

With the encouragement and support of the Chester County WDB, the BST will annually host a minimum of two employer workshops centered on pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeships. WDB staff will work with BST members to ensure employer referrals are received from active and approved training providers, such as the county's three Technical College High Schools, Chester County Intermediate Unit, and Delaware County Community College, among others. Employers from all four of our active Industry Partnerships will also be included on the invitation to participate. Participating employers will be asked to complete a pre-assessment to determine their level of familiarity and understanding of apprenticeships and will complete a post-assessment to show the knowledge gained as a result of their participation in the workshop. Following each workshop, interested employers will be invited to attend small group or 1:1 sessions to extensively review ATO guidance and application requirements in the pursuit of providing registered apprenticeship opportunities for Chester County residents.

***Pennsylvania Goal #3: Increase opportunities for all youth to experience work-based learning through summer employment, pre-apprenticeship, Registered Apprenticeship, internships, job shadowing, mentoring, and other experiences in the workplace, including developing employability skills.***

The Chester County WDB and the Industry Partnerships led by CCEDC have always prided themselves on strong youth outreach with both innovative and consistent activities, such as "What's So Cool About Manufacturing" and Girls Exploring Tomorrow's Technology (GETT). Recognizing the employment challenges faced by older youth and young adults, the Chester County WDB will expand work-based learning opportunities.

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The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act requires that at least 20% of youth funding be dedicated for high quality work experience. The Chester County WDB and its Council for the Workforce of Tomorrow committee are committed to ensuring our youth programs continue to include and expand upon work experience. The first steps that will be taken to expand work experience options will be to combine work experience opportunities with apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs to create more diverse opportunities and stronger connections to career pathways. With the diversity of industry, we also feel strongly that the work experiences should focus on occupations with family sustaining wages and career pathways. The Chester County WDB will continue to foster alignment between Title I Youth staff and the Industry Partnerships.

As a core partner, the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) has the ability to collaborate with the local WDB to provide in-school youth with disabilities opportunities to participate in pre-employment transition services (PETS), such as paid work experience, job shadowing, work place readiness training, and career counseling, to better prepare these students for life after high school. The board will continue to fine tune their collaboration efforts with OVR to serve this population.

***Pennsylvania Goal #4: Identify and enact system changes and improvements that enhance the collaboration and partnership between agencies and partners in the workforce development system.***

The Chester County Workforce Development Board has prioritized continuous system improvement on a local scale in this plan. This includes an increase in data sharing and utilizing all manner of data and feedback to make strategic decisions. We recognize that local improvement can only go so far without the collaboration of various local, regional, and statewide partners.

Since 2017, the Chester County WDB has increasingly used various sources of data to make decisions on the best way to invest valuable workforce development funding in the community. The Chester County WDB currently utilizes the PA Department of Labor and Industry's Center for Workforce Information and Analysis, Central Pennsylvania Workforce Development Corporation (CPWDC), the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, and the Chester County Planning Commission as primary sources of data and analysis. Board staff is currently working with the Southeastern Planning Region workforce boards and Partnership for Regional Economic Performance (PREP) partners toward regional data source consistency.

The Chester County WDB applauds the Commonwealth on its efforts to improve upon Pennsylvania's workforce development system and hopes to utilize staff experience to assist in that effort in any way possible.

***Pennsylvania Goal #5: Implement improvements to one-stop service delivery to better serve all customers, including job seekers and employers.***

The COVID-19 pandemic has called to attention the need for alternative methods of service delivery. Utilizing non-traditional methods can only serve to strengthen the reach, outcomes, and positive experiences of both job seekers and employers now, and in an eventual post-COVID world. The Chester County WDB is committed to continued expansion of service delivery methods and strategies, as well as the trainings and collaborations needed for staff and partners to deliver those services effectively. Expansion of service delivery methods will act as the foundation for continued improvement.

Additionally, one-stop service delivery is only as good as the knowledge base and experience of Workforce Development Board and Title I staff. Continued education and training for staff is necessary for programs to thrive and improve. Staff already participate in a number of trainings throughout the year, but those trainings will be expanded to include those offered by the Apprenticeship and Training Office (ATO) beginning in 2021. These trainings on what apprenticeship is and how to connect participants to them is key to overall system and performance improvement. For those staff and partners who are interested in further deepening apprenticeship knowledge, the Navigator Apprenticeship Program, developed by ATO, will be explored as an option.

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- 2.4. *What are the local levels of performance that have been negotiated with the governor and chief elected officials?  
How will the local board's goals relate to the achievement of these measures?*

The Chester County Workforce Development Board's (WDB's) goals support the negotiated performance levels, found in Attachment 1, in the following ways:

- Providing a holistic approach to job seeker needs by assisting them with needs that distract from and impact their ability to secure and maintain employment
- Ensuring that trainings are targeted to employer needs and driven by data-demonstrated occupational openings and pathways
- Emphasizing transferrable skills while offering training options to bridge skill gaps
- Maintaining focus on high priority occupations and sectors
- Expanding career exploration and work experience options for youth to better prepare them for success in the workforce
- Emphasizing the importance of trainings that result in an industry-recognized credential
- Expanding tracking of employer services to better determine needs and successes

### 3. *OPERATIONAL PLANNING: Local Area Workforce System and Investment Strategies*

- 3.1. *Provide a descriptive overview of the governance structure for the workforce system, including key stakeholders and entities in the local area.*

The Chester County Workforce Development Board (WDB) is staffed by the Chester County Department of Community Development, which also acts as the fiscal agent. This structure has been established by the Partnership Agreement, known as the Local Elected Officials (LEO) Agreement, between the Chester County WDB and the County of Chester. The Chester County Board of Commissioners is an active partner in workforce development.

The relationship between education leaders, government officials, and business leaders in Chester County has led to strong partnerships. Often times, these partnerships are best captured by looking at the Board members from various key organizations. For example, the Chester County Workforce Development Board contains membership from the following organizations;

- Chester County Economic Development Council
- Chester County Intermediate Unit
- Community Based Agencies (Chester County OIC and Life Transforming Ministries)
- Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry Bureau of Workforce Development Partnership
- Private Sector Employers from various industries
- Labor Organizations

This team of high ranking professionals representing business, education, economic development, government, and workforce development has created a synergy that enables a quick response to pressing needs. This collaborative spirit makes the Chester County Workforce Development Area a unique and special place.

Membership of the Chester County WDB follows the guidelines established under WIOA, with the Chair and Vice Chair coming from the 51% of the members representing private industry. Under the Chester County WDB, there are the following standing committees:

***Addressing Barriers:*** The Addressing Barriers Committee's purpose is to focus on the challenges experienced by the job seeker population and determine strategies and modifications needed to ensure those job seekers have the best possible chances at success with the support of all workforce development, social service, and community-based agencies. The Addressing Barriers Committee is chaired by the Board member representing the Title II provider.

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Membership on the Addressing Barriers Committee includes: Board members, Title I and II staff, WDB staff, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR; Title IV) staff, representatives from the Chester County Department of Mental Health/Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (MH/IDD), Adult and Juvenile Probation, the United Way, and representatives of the Decade to Doorways Initiative to End Homelessness. The Committee remains engaged in addressing evolving societal changes and prioritizing services for the most vulnerable populations in need.

***Council for the Workforce of Tomorrow.*** The Council for the Workforce of Tomorrow (CWT) provides information and assists with planning, operations, and other issues related to the delivery of services to youth and young adults. The further purpose of the CWT is to facilitate a workforce development system designed to provide youth and young adults ages 12 to 24 with access to opportunities for educational enrichment and career exploration. The CWT supports youth and young adults during the dynamic transition from adolescence to adulthood through the provision of services offering academic, career, post-secondary preparation, job placement, apprenticeship development, and leadership training. Membership on the CWT includes: Board members, representation from OVR, representation from Chester County Juvenile Probation and Children, Youth, and Families, representation from the Chester County Intermediate Unit, representatives from community-based agencies, education, economic development, and business organizations.

***Executive-Governance.*** The Executive-Governance Committee sets the vision and agenda for the Board, keeps the Board informed of current best practices in corporate governance, reviews governance trends for their applicability to the WDB, updates the WDB's governing principles and governance practices, and advises on the skills, qualities, and professional or education experiences necessary to be effective WDB members. Membership on the Executive-Governance Committee includes: the WDB Executive Director, Chair, Vice Chair, Board attorney, and at least one additional private sector member, and any other WDB members or staff as may be appropriate.

***Fiscal Committee.*** The Fiscal Committee acts as a guide to increase the level of local coordination and responsible use of the multiple grants associated with WIOA's required programs, develop the board budget, and identify resources to leverage support for workforce development activities. Additional activities of the Fiscal Committee include; developing and monitoring the board budget, review program budgets and any modifications of those budgets, and make suggestions to reduce duplicative costs. Membership on the Fiscal Committee includes Board members with fiscal expertise and board staff.

***Operator/Partner Committee.*** The Operator/Partner Committee includes management-level representatives of key one-stop partners to oversee and advise on issues relating to service delivery at the PA CareerLink® Chester County, which includes board-funded programming for job seekers and employers. This committee functions as the one-stop oversight committee and reviews the budget, as well as any challenges or changes affecting the entire location or all staff. This committee is tasked with implementing changes as well as day-to-day integration and partner cooperation. Overarching goals include: ensuring coordination and integration of services, reviewing performance, program oversight, community outreach, and discussion of innovative programming options with an eye toward making recommendations to the Board at large. Membership on the PA CareerLink® Partners Committee includes Board members representing business, education, and economic development, as well as the WIOA core programs.

The Chester County WDB has utilized ad-hoc committees in the past, such as an RFP Committee and a Planning Committee, and will continue to do so in the future as needed.

The Chester County Equal Opportunity Officer is Jeanette Roman, Workforce Development Manager – Department of Community Development and staff to the WDB. 610-344-6900; [jroman@chesco.org](mailto:jroman@chesco.org)

The Equal Opportunity Liaison is Jason Foster, PA CareerLink® Supervisor, Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations (BWPO). 610-280-1019; [jafoster@pa.gov](mailto:jafoster@pa.gov).

Please see the Organizational Chart located in Attachment 2.

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- 3.2. *What are the programs included in the local workforce delivery system and how will the local board work with the entities carrying out all workforce programs to support service alignment?*

For a list of program partners and providers, please see Attachment 3: “Workforce Delivery System Program/Provider List.”

The Chester County Workforce Development Board (WDB) intends to continue existing strong relationships with even more robust connections and collaboration through updated Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with partner entities and through the coordination of the PA CareerLink® Chester County Site Administrator, One-Stop Operator, and Title I provider, among others.

The programs included in the local workforce delivery system provide varied, wrap-around services to job seekers and employers, delivered by experienced providers. Partnership with education providers will further the establishment of career pathways and the educating of youth and parents on the varied career options available to them in the county and region. Hire One bridges the Industry Partnerships to job seeker programming, strengthening the pipeline and sharing opportunities and recommended certifications. Education, vocational rehabilitation, and the United Way Financial Stability Center combine to offer a variety of services and supports for youth, allowing a focus on work-based learning with options for all interests and abilities. For those partners, such as YouthBuild and Job Corps, who do not maintain a presence in the PA CareerLink® Chester County, information is made available and direct referrals to the nearest point of contact are made.

- 3.3. *How will the local board work with the entities carrying out core programs to:*
- *Expand access to employment, training, education and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly individuals with barriers to employment.*

The Chester County Workforce Development Board (WDB) has created an expanded one-stop model that includes the PA CareerLink® Chester County, United Way Financial Stability Center, Chester County EARN Program, Chester County Assistance Office, Adult Basic Education, and other appropriate partners. Related programs and resources within the PA CareerLink® Chester County and United Way Financial Stability Center collaborate with all partners on the delivery of services to individuals with needs beyond workforce development services.

Chester County partners and service providers connect with customers to provide registration into the PA CareerLink® system and assessments to determine barriers to employment, education, and training needs. The United Way Financial Stability Center provides services to address three goals: increase income, increase assets, and decrease debt. The Chester County EARN Program provides services directly to the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients. Being co-located within the PA CareerLink® Chester County and United Way Financial Stability Center allows the program customers and staff to easily access and streamline other available activities, employment opportunities, trainings, and community resources. This partnership and model is a tremendous example of coordination that maximizes and leverages a variety of resources available to all individuals. The referral module within the PA workforce development system of record is utilized to begin the co-enrollment process and to refer participants to providers both within and without the workforce development system, as needed.

WIOA requires that priority of service is provided to eligible program participants regardless of funding levels. The priority of service policy includes recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, those who are basic skills deficient (including English language learners), and veterans. Under WIOA there is a focus on addressing the needs of eligible individuals with barriers to employment. Individual Employment Plans (IEPs) will be developed for persons eligible, in addition to providing career services and training needs, and will address any barriers to employment that are identified through an appropriate service plan or referral. Contracted service providers will be

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prepared to provide interpreting, translation, and language services for anyone in need. At the point of entry, materials will be provided to all individuals to inform them of the available resources and services. The Chester County WDB and PA CareerLink® Chester County recognize the importance and value of dual-enrollment to meet each individual's needs.

Partners and service providers work to increase awareness of local agencies and programs to have a more direct connection with individuals who meet the priority of service definitions. The Chester County WDB and PA CareerLink® Chester County continue to work with local agencies, employers and service providers to seek out eligible individuals for co-enrollment and those individuals that meet the priority of service criteria through brochures, meetings, networking events and the WDB and PA CareerLink® Chester County website. The Chester County WDB is constantly strengthening and targeting outreach techniques to increase engagement of the priority of service populations, and has identified increased reach as a goal in this planning cycle.

The Chester County WDB providers will develop and implement a process to track individuals eligible for priority of service to ensure that a majority of job seekers served fall within the defined categories. Specific methods of determining and tracking priority of service are being updated to improve existing methods and further assist staff in helping those most in need of services without a delay.

Staff development and trainings are provided to ensure knowledge of best practices, both programmatically, and more general staff development. WDB staff is taking part in a variety of social equity trainings presented through a Department of Community Development initiative. These trainings will have broad applicability in service delivery and for addressing the social equity goal included in this plan. Collaboration with cross system partners and providers is key to reducing duplication of efforts. This increases operational efficiency to provide quality and timely service delivery. Individuals with barriers to employment have the opportunity to access all resources, including those associated with career pathways, regardless of eligibility for other program services.

Every effort is made by staff to ensure all Title I eligibility documentation is brought to the initial intake appointment. This includes a phone call to explain documentation needs and answer questions, as well as an email listing required documentation for eligibility. Despite these efforts, participants do occasionally arrive for an eligibility appointment with some required documentation missing. In this instance, staff collects a self-certification form and gives the participant a chance to provide the required documentation. If that documentation cannot be obtained, the action of last resort is to utilize the self-certification combined with any supporting evidence of the statement that can be provided. All participants sign a release of information form at the time of intake. When applicable, staff will reach out to other programs or providers to obtain information utilizing that form. All outreach attempts are recorded in case notes and all documentation obtained is included in the participant file.

Title II eligibility is determined by the partner Title II provider at the PA CareerLink® Chester County, the Chester County OIC. Individuals interested in Title II services are referred to the Director of Workforce Education at OIC who will determine their eligibility for those services. These individuals will have an interview with the Director to determine age eligibility, ability, willingness to commit to regular attendance in the program, and barriers to attendance that may exist. If barriers to attendance exist, the Director of Workforce Education and Student Support Coordinators will work with these individuals to provide any possible solutions to removing the barriers to attendance.

The Chester County OIC holds GED classes and runs the GED testing center on site at the one-stop. The GED instructors and GED testing center administrator make students aware of all OIC Title II programs. The Chester County OIC also works closely with specialists for Title I youth programming, who provide awareness of and refer individuals to the Title II program. Participants in both Title I and Title II programs are provided with information about adult education options at orientation. Students are made aware of the Chester County OIC's Workforce Reintegration program and workshops and are co-enrolled in programs as fits their individual needs.

All participants who self-identify as having a disability are advised of OVR services and offered the opportunity for referral. This referral process is especially strong with our WIOA Youth program. If OVR is determined to be a good fit

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for a participant, a qualified OVR counselor completes all required paperwork and a discussion between the referring staff and the OVR counselor takes place to determine if dual-enrollment is an appropriate choice for the participant. Eligibility to receive services under WIOA Title IV may only be determined by a qualified OVR Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor. OVR Counselors work with customers to develop an Individual Plan for Employment, providing services necessary to meet their specific vocational goal. Examples of services include diagnostic assessment and evaluation, counseling and guidance, restoration, training and placement services. OVR often collaborates with other workforce program partners to provide services, outreach and assessment. Training for OVR staff is at the discretion of the local OVR District Administrator. OVR staff supervision and direction are the responsibility of the local OVR District Administrator.

During orientation and the development of an Individual Employment Plan, participants are encouraged to select a training program that results in a credential. Staff are careful not to infringe on customer choices, while assisting participants in making informed decisions. Additionally, Incumbent Worker trainings are required to result in a credential and credential attainment is built into the structure of the WIOA Youth program as well.

A procedure is currently in place to streamline participant transfer between Title I programs, and will be expanded upon to include dual-enrollment. This procedure will include responsibilities of all programs and providers, as well as a method of oversight to ensure responsible parties are correctly entering participant information into Pennsylvania's workforce development system of record and that information is shared among staff via case notes and other communication. In time, if existing legal concerns regarding privacy can be resolved, the Chester County WDB plans to incorporate Title IV dual-enrollment with OVR services as well.

During the oversight and monitoring process, participant files and system of record View History and Common Measures Activity Log, as well as a review of Case Notes, will be reviewed to ensure that the same services are not being provided by different programs, with the most suitable program providing the primary delivery of services. One of the roles of the Operator is to coordinate all programming to ensure sharing of accurate, up to date information and leveraging of resources.

The Chester County WDB will continue to increase awareness of Title II and Title IV through inclusion and emphasis in the orientation presentations, highlighting programs and services on the PA CareerLink® Chester County website, and referring participants as appropriate.

- *Facilitate the development of Career Pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs (specify on-ramps from adult education).*

Co-enrollments are common between Title I, EARN, and Title II programs at the PA CareerLink® Chester County. When training programs require a GED or high school diploma, Title II participants often have Title I eligibility already completed and are ready to begin training upon completion. For trainings that can be conducted concurrently with a GED program, such as a National Retail Federation certificates, participants are able to participate in both programs at the same time, as their schedule allows. The Chester County WDB will convene workgroups consisting of education representatives from the Chester County Intermediate Unit and Delaware County Community College, as well as representatives from Title I and IV services and Industry Partnerships to better define Career Pathways. These Pathways will be informed by labor market data, training curricula, and the needs of employers to provide multiple entry and exit points, as well as connections to other Pathways and inclusion of job seekers with disabilities and other barriers. These pathways will include post-secondary certifications, preferably that can be stacked as a person progresses through their career. Post-secondary trainings that participate in the Eligible Training Provider List are made available to Title II participants upon completion of their secondary education. Information regarding these options and the career pathways associated are presented to Title II participants as part of their education programming and Title I service orientations. Information regarding these Pathways will then be used, not only as job seeker options, but as information for students and parents to inform them of career options.

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Additionally, students at Title II provider Chester County OIC are interviewed during their initial intake to determine their career goals. They are also made aware of all of the programs that they have and how they can advance from basic adult education classes like ESL classes or ABE classes into specific career pathways, like Certified Nursing Assistant program, GED program, software training programs, manufacturing training programs, and other career pathways. Student support coordinators and other staff work with them over time on SMART goal setting and planning skills to ensure that they have the information and tools they need to move into career pathways that are appropriate for them. Also, the Workforce Reintegration program staff develop relationships with local employers to understand their employment needs and ensure that we can direct clients to appropriate training programs that will align with the requirements of employment opportunities.

3.4. *What strategies will be implemented in the local area to improve business and employer engagement that:*

- *Support a local area workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area;*

The PA CareerLink® Chester County and United Way Financial Stability Center has a history of providing customized workforce development and recruitment for local business customers and is the exclusive initial entry point for all job seekers and employer engagement. The one-stop has provided onsite recruitment for numerous employers throughout Chester County and provides assessment testing for job seekers engaged in training services as well as employers seeking to hire skilled workers.

The Chester County Business Services Team, comprised of service providers, WDB staff, and various business and industry partners, meets regularly to strategize new and best ways to engage employers in and around Chester County. The Chester County Economic Development Council, in its roles with Industry Partnerships and Hire One, as well as the Partnership for Regional Economic Performance (PREP), remains an integral part of employer engagement, leading to the recruitment and retention of a solid workforce and talent pipeline.

The goal of the PA CareerLink® Chester County and the United Way Financial Stability Center is to provide a full range of economic and workforce development services both virtually and in person, to meet the needs of job seekers and employer customers. The one-stop offers on-site and virtual recruitment services to all employers at no charge. Employers may host recruitment events, use office resources, and take advantage of prescreening services from staff.

In Chester County, Industry Partnerships work to address the more specific needs of high-priority industries. Employers from in-demand industries are often initially engaged through the four Industry Partnerships administered by the Chester County Economic Development Council. These partnerships engage employers within manufacturing, IT/Communications, smart energy, and healthcare. Businesses of all sizes and industries are engaged by the Business Services Team, Chester County Chamber of Business and Industry, Board member referral, and the Hire One Task Force. The Hire One initiative and Task Force seeks to “identify and facilitate effective linkages among the job seekers and companies hiring in Chester County and the region.”

In addition to the partnerships funded by the State, the CCEDC also manages the Manufacturing Alliance of Chester and Delaware Counties. Each partnership is driven by the private sector and has a board, executive committee, and subcommittees that currently address the training, pipeline development, recruiting/hiring, and business resource needs of its employers. In addition to the private sector members, the partnerships have significant representation from all levels of education, chambers of commerce, industry associations, economic development organizations, and the PA CareerLink® Chester County, as well as active representation on the local Workforce Development Board. These partnerships not only convene employers and facilitate industry-focused discussion; they also provide incumbent worker training and youth career exploration and maintain a network of volunteers.

The purpose of employer outreach and engagement is to ensure there is a pool of engaged employers, ready to hire job seekers at all skill levels, in all industries. The Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) program remains an active focus

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for the Industry Partnerships. On the Job Training (OJT) in Chester County will continue to be a top priority for the Title I provider as a means of mutual benefit; connecting eligible participants to employment and providing financial compensation to employers as they onboard new staff. The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) also provides OJT for eligible job seekers, as well as employer tax credits and other assistance and employer benefits. Another goal of employer outreach is to determine employer needs and skill gaps so that trainings can be included in WIOA programming to meet those needs. Industry partnership employers, in particular, through their partnership meetings, IWT requests and completion of annual surveys, provide key insight into employer needs and have a direct impact on training and workshop offerings.

The Chester County WDB will ensure that all members of the BST, as well as other Title I and partner staff, are trained and have a clear knowledge of available apprenticeship programs, how to connect existing employer needs to existing apprenticeships or assist in developing new apprenticeships, and how to leverage training and work experience funds to maximize apprenticeship opportunities. This includes building apprenticeship options into service strategies, connecting OJTs and customized training programs to registered apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships, and fitting existing in-demand trainings currently conducted on an individual basis into pre-apprenticeship structures, particularly for youth participants.

➤ *Manage activities or services that will be implemented to improve business engagement;*

While all contracted providers and partners actively participate on the Business Services Team, the lead entity tasked with administration and tracking of employer engagement is Educational Data Systems, Inc. (EDSI) as the Title I provider. The BST continues to work to streamline activities, target outreach while avoiding duplication, determine to what extent employers are engaged, and allow for more effective reporting under the [Chester County Strategic Business Plan, Managing for Results](#). The Chester County WDB has determined that the extent of employer engagement, or the level of participation in workforce development activities and initiatives, is an indicator of employer outcomes in supplement to market penetration and number of business folders in Pennsylvania's workforce development system of record.

With the strongest link to economic development, CCEDC acts as the primary coordinator of employer engagement. Initiatives such as Hire One and the Business Education Partnership have actively increased employer engagement throughout Chester County. Additionally, the Industry Partnerships have increased employer engagement throughout the region as a whole. Local staff to the WDB frequently research employer engagement and connect regularly with local and regional partners to discuss best practices for understanding and fulfilling business needs.

The CCEDC also acts as the regional coordinator for the Engage! Initiative. It is the goal of Engage! To be industry-driven, and proactively listen to businesses to identify opportunities and challenges, as well as offer technical assistance. The CCEDC's work on Engage! has led to a better understanding of employer motivations and needs, which provides a solid foundation for deeper employer engagement. Chester County prides itself on its already strong relationship between workforce and economic development and sees Engage! as an additional tool to further that partnership and target employer services and outreach. These employer relationships also provided a quick snapshot of employer situations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

➤ *Better coordinate regional workforce and economic development strategy, messaging, engagement and programs; and*

The Chester County Economic Development Council (CCEDC) participates in regional activities and initiatives through the PREP, making regional strategies a natural fit into programming. Employers from the region are included in initiatives, meetings, networking, and committees.

Businesses engage with workforce development in a variety of ways. On the PA CareerLink® web site, employers can

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open business folders, list active job postings, and review resumes of job seekers that meet the employer's search criteria. Interested employers are able to participate in Industry Partnership (IP) meetings and serve on IP executive boards and committees like the Hire One Taskforce and the Council for the Workforce of Tomorrow (CWT). Employers are also encouraged to connect regularly with the Business Services Team and Title 1 provider to host on-site and virtual recruitment events and explore opportunities to recruit and hire Individual Training Account (ITA) and On the Job Training (OJT) participants.

- *Strengthen linkages between the PA CareerLink® service delivery system and unemployment insurance (UI) programs.*

Unemployment Compensation (UC) claimants are either referred to report to the PA CareerLink® Chester County as part of the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) or on a walk-in basis. UC Claimants and other members of the general public who walk-in are provided with a video outlining services as part of the PA CareerLink® Chester County Welcome Center. Whether attending an orientation or arriving as walk-ins, participants receive information about the wide array of providers and services offered at the PA CareerLink® Chester County, as well as immediate referrals. Needs are assessed to determine which services may best serve the participant.

RESEA sessions are held daily in our multi-purpose rooms, with 35-45 UC Claimants usually in attendance per week. The full array of services and programs offered by the PA CareerLink® Chester County are detailed in a slide presentation. Partners and employers will occasionally attend RESEA Orientations so they can get the word out about a job opening or new program that is being offered. Once oriented the UC Claimants participate in a 1-on-1 "Personalized Service Meeting" with a staff member to discuss their job search. They are required to participate in at least one follow-up activity, and can or request more information about any programs or services that they have an interest in.

The PA CareerLink® Chester County has a Career Resource Center with multiple computers available for UC Claimants to register on PA CareerLink® and to fulfill their weekly work search requirements. Staff at the one-stop, as well as the Mobile Workforce Navigator, are always made available to help claimants who may have difficulty using the computer. If needed, instruction is also given on how to perform job searches and apply for jobs in the PA CareerLink® system.

For those UC Claimants looking to file an appeal, forms are provided and submitted via fax at no charge and with limited wait. Staff provide copies of the confirmation printout for all faxes sent on behalf of Claimants.

- 3.5. *How will the local board coordinate local area workforce investment activities with regional economic development activities that are specific to a local area? How will the local board promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services?*

Chester County launched the Restore Chester County initiative in May 2020 to support businesses facing hardship and uncertainty. Restore Chester County brings together a diverse representation of leaders, including: workforce and economic development, county government, and business organizations to provide support to area businesses. This mobilization of supports was born of a need related to COVID-19, and expects to continue beyond the initial effects of the pandemic. The Restore Chester County [website](#) contains toolkits for businesses and residents, resources, action steps, regulations, funding opportunities, news and updates. Restore Chester County will continue moving forward as a way to mobilize the partners in an effort to revitalize economic growth.

The Chester County Workforce Development Board (WDB) also has strong connections to the development and implementation of Chester County's Economic Development Strategy, [VISTA 2025](#). Goal 2 of VISTA 2025 speaks directly to workforce development, and the Chester County WDB Executive Director is on the workgroup for that goal to ensure alignment. [VISTA 2025](#), Goal 2 is: "Position Chester County as a magnet for a diversified talent pool and a

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model for building an employer ready workforce.” This goal, and its related strategies, aligns well with those of the Chester County WDB.

The Chester County WDB and other regional Workforce Development Boards have a history of working with the PREP of Southeastern Pennsylvania, including the recent development and implementation of a regional strategic plan for workforce and economic development.

Industry Partnerships in Chester County are regional in nature, and administered by the Chester County Economic Development Council, which is an active PREP partner and ensures regional coordination and sharing of information regarding employer and industry needs.

The Chester County WDB currently measures success in engaging employers based on the number of employers involved with local workforce initiatives, which is tracked on a quarterly basis and reported as part of the [Chester County strategic business plan, Managing for Results](#). Improved tracking and coordination will assist in determining successes and gaps in employer engagement to further strengthen relationships with employers in Chester County and the region.

The Chester County WDB is very supportive of self-employment and microenterprise options for job seekers. Among other services, Hire One has provided guidance to job seekers regarding starting a business and the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) has been providing workshops at the PA CareerLink® Chester County on the topic of starting a business. While the Chester County WDB provides assistance and encouragement to those job seekers looking to start their own business, there is also a gap in reflecting those successful job seekers in performance measures. The self-employed, those involved in the “gig economy” of short-term contract assignments, and those operating on a contract or 1099 basis are not included in job placement and wage measures. It remains the hope of the Chester County WDB and its stakeholders that this disconnect can be explored and addressed with the Commonwealth in the near future. Data regarding “gig” work and income supplementation such as Instacart shoppers and food delivery services will be especially useful throughout and after the pandemic, to determine if trends towards those services are temporary or a permanent change in lifestyle and workforce.

#### *4. OPERATIONAL PLANNING: Local Area Workforce Delivery System*

##### *4.1 Provide a descriptive overview of the local area workforce delivery system, including key stakeholders and entities in the local area.*

The Chester County Workforce Development Board (CCWDB) is staffed by the Chester County Department of Community Development, which also acts as the fiscal agent. This structure has been established by the Partnership Agreement, known as the Local Elected Officials (LEO) Agreement, between the Chester County Workforce Development Board and the County of Chester.

As of July 1, 2017, the CCWDB moved from an Operator Consortium model to a contracted One-Stop Operator. PathStone, Inc. was the first One-Stop Operator and served for a total of three years. Open Hearth Inc. was recently selected as One-Stop Operator following the 2020 Request for Proposal process. Educational Data Systems Inc. (EDSI) continues to serve as the Title I provider for Adult and Dislocated Worker programs in a role it has managed since 2017. Following the 2020 request for proposals (RFP) process, they are now operating as the Title I Youth Provider as well. The Operator is held accountable for the implementation and operations of the CCWDB Local Plan’s service delivery system. Additionally, the Operator further agrees to manage, integrate, coordinate, and conduct oversight of all services and resources in the PA CareerLink® Chester County in cooperation with the CCWDB and in accordance with the CCWDB Local Plan. The Operator’s roles and responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Serve as an intermediary with all of the partners at the PA CareerLink® — Chester County.

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- Establishes and communicates specific and measurable PA CareerLink® performance standards in conjunction with the Chester County Workforce Development Board, the State Workforce Development Board, the PA Department of Labor and Industry and input from PA CareerLink® - Chester County staff.
- In partnership with the PA CareerLink® and United Way, they will create and implement an outreach/marketing plan targeting the community and employers about the resources at the PA CareerLink® - Chester County. This plan must include, but not be limited to: flyers, social media, PA CareerLink® - Chester County website maintenance, e-newsletters, meeting attendance and promotional materials.
- Perform offsite presentations to employers and potential new or existing partners and job seeker groups with a focus on establishing relationships with the local Chambers of Commerce.
- Regularly develop, distribute, and compile satisfaction and interest surveys to jobseekers, employers and PA CareerLink® partners. Assess customer and partner needs and feedback to make recommendations to partners and the Chester County Workforce Development Board for continuous improvement.
- Open Hearth, as the One-Stop Operator, will work with the Title I provider (EDSI) to ensure that an effective partner referral mechanism is in place and utilized for the benefit of individual clients and the partners' performance.
- In collaboration with the Title I provider through the Welcome Center and Orientations, Open Hearth will follow a customer flow to include, but not be limited to, triage of all customers to determine their needs and their applicable Priority of Service status, and ensure service delivery based on that status.
- Constantly assure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Equal Employment Opportunity within the PA CareerLink® - Chester County.
- Schedule workshops and events at the PA CareerLink® - Chester County and coordinate representation by partner staff at outside events such as Orientations and Job/Career Fairs.
- Facilitate quarterly meetings with all staff, partners, and providers at the PA CareerLink® - Chester County.
- Facilitate Operations Strategic Workgroup meetings with the PA CareerLink® Administrator, Title I provider, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), PA Department of Human Services – County Assistance Office, PA Department of Labor and Industry, and CCWDB staff in attendance to review programmatic updates and ensure services are being provided in the best manner for job seekers, employers, and partners. This meeting will maintain quality assurance and help all to understand the parameters under which the partners provide services and each partner's performance measurement goals.
- Ensure the involvement, inclusion, and integration of services with the Title I provider, EARN Program provider, the United Way Financial Stability Center providers, and all other programs at the PA CareerLink® - Chester County.
- Maintain relationships with human service providers and educational / training providers. Specifically, the One-Stop Operator must create regular communication with the following agencies: Charles A. Melton Arts and Education Center, Chester County OIC, Honey Brook Food Cupboard, Kennett Area Community Service, Oxford Area Neighborhood Services Center, and Parkesburg Point for the purpose of making sure that residents in these areas of Chester County are served by the PA CareerLink® - Chester County.
- Recruit additional PA CareerLink® - Chester County partners.
- Supervision of the PA CareerLink® Administrator and Administrative Assistant.
- In collaboration with the Title I provider and the WDB staff, participate in the Business Service Team to ensure the sharing of employer outreach efforts among all service partners.
- Submit all new employers participating in workforce initiatives to the Chester County WDB for inclusion in the Chester County Commissioners; Strategic Business Plan.
- Ensure compliance with One-Stop / PA CareerLink® certification criteria.
- Ensure that the Chester County Workforce Development Board's mission and objectives are carried out and met.

Under the direction of the Chester County Commissioners and the Chester County Workforce Development Board, the Chester County Department of Community Development (DCD) sought proposals from providers interested in providing One-Stop Operator and/or Title I Services in Chester County. The RFP was open from January 27, 2020 until March 6, 2020 at 3:00pm. An application workshop was held, on February 11, 2020 at 2:00pm at the PA CareerLink® Chester County. In addition to the bidder's conferences, questions were accepted in writing until 3:00pm on February

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14, 2020. Answers to these questions were then posted on February 20, 2020.

The RFP received one proposal for One-Stop Operator and three proposals for Title I Services. The proposals were reviewed and scored by a committee of CCWDB members representing the public and private sector. When the review committee reached a decision, their recommendations were brought to the full Board for discussion and approval.

Through the competitive RFP Process, the following providers were selected to begin on July 1, 2020:

- One-Stop Operator: Open Hearth Inc.
- Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker Services: Educational Data Systems, Inc. (EDSI)
- Title I Youth Services: EDSI

The Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker roles and responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Coordinate and work interdependently with other organizations in the PA CareerLink®-Chester County system to ensure the employment and training needs of customers are being met and job seekers are qualified to join the workforce.
- Enter all job seeker information and follow-up services for all Title I customers including dually enrolled participants at the PA CareerLink® Chester County partners into Pennsylvania's workforce development system of record.
- Coordinate and assimilate all functions including specific planned activities in support of the PA CareerLink® Chester County, which will include weekly orientations and offering at least six workshops a month.
- Coordinate with the One-Stop Operator and PA CareerLink® Administrator in the preparation and distribution of all outreach materials about Title I services.
- Participate in community awareness events throughout the program year.
- Coordinate and manage two monthly employer engagement events at the PA CareerLink® Chester County for all job seekers. Staff will be responsible for managing these events by ensuring that employers are registered in the PA CareerLink® system and that the job seekers apply for positions in the system prior to meeting with the employers.
- Determine customer eligibility and conduct intakes.
- Assist in the staffing of the Computer Resource Center (CRC) and front desk.
- Conduct an initial assessment of job seeker's skill sets, provide case management services, develop Individual Employment Plans with customers, and conduct career counseling.
- Provide easy access to services that are responsive to job seeker's needs and makes them competitive in the local and regional labor market.
- Assist unemployed and underemployed job seekers with job development, job placement and job retention services; and follow up with participants in accordance to WIOA regulations.
- Coordinate programmatic activities in accordance with the various funding streams, as applicable and as amended. These funding streams include but are not limited to: Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker, Rapid-Response, and other federal, state and discretionary funds.
- Act as an active member of the Business Services Team.
- Manage and promote the Individual Training Account funds and On the Job Training contracts for eligible job-seekers.
- Comply with all federal WIOA regulations and any directives issued by the US Department of Labor and the PA Department of Labor and Industry.

Providers of the remaining core programs under WIOA are as follows:

- Title II Adult Education and Literacy: Chester County OIC, which runs a full-time GED class at the PA CareerLink® Chester County as well as administers on-site GED testing.
- Title III Wagner-Peyser: PA Department of Labor & Industry, Bureau of Workforce Development Partnership
- Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation: PA Department of Labor & Industry, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

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The Chester County Equal Opportunity Officer is Jeanette Roman, Workforce Development Manager – Department of Community Development and staff to the WDB. 610-344-6900; [jroman@chesco.org](mailto:jroman@chesco.org)

The Equal Opportunity Liaison is Jason Foster, PA CareerLink® Supervisor, BWPO. 610-280-1019; [jasfoster@pa.gov](mailto:jasfoster@pa.gov).

Additional stakeholders in the Chester County workforce development system include:

- The United Way of Chester County, which operates the United Way Financial Stability Center, located at the PA CareerLink® Chester County. This unique approach provides holistic, wrap-around services for job seekers with the goals of increasing savings, decreasing debt, and increasing assets.
- The Chester County Economic Development Council (CCEDC). The CCEDC operates five Industry Partnerships, as well as the Hire One initiative and participates in the Southeast Partnership for Regional Economic Performance (PREP), as well as acting as a strong advocate for the importance of workforce and economic development services.
- Chester County Chamber of Business & Industry and regional Chambers are partners in employer outreach and engagement.
- Chester County Partnership to End Homelessness: this initiative's relationship to workforce development is a two way street, acknowledging that stable housing frequently requires stable employment and that those with stable employment occasionally need assistance obtaining or retaining housing. This connection has led to multi-level successes on the path to self-sufficiency for county residents.

*42 Identify the one-stop partners (required and other) authorized to provide required and other programs within the local area. Describe briefly the role(s) of the one-stop partners (required and other).*

- Adult Employment and Training
  - Educational Data Systems, Inc. (EDSI)
    - Programmatic
- Dislocated Worker Employment and Training
  - Educational Data Systems, Inc. (EDSI)
    - Programmatic
- Youth Workforce Development Activities
  - Educational Data Systems, Inc. (EDSI)
    - Programmatic
- Adult Education and Literacy
  - Chester County OIC
    - Programmatic
- Employment Services under Wagner-Peyser
  - Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry, Bureau of Workforce Development Partnership
    - Programmatic
- Vocational Rehabilitation
  - Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)
    - Programmatic
- Job Corps
  - Philadelphia Job Corps
    - Programmatic, by referral
- Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Programs
  - Pathstone, Inc.
    - Programmatic
- Senior Community Service Employment Program
  - The WorkPlace, Inc.

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- Programmatic
- Native American Programs
  - Council of Three Rivers
    - Programmatic, by referral
- Postsecondary Career and Technical Education
  - Delaware County Community College
    - Programmatic
- Trade Adjustment Assistance
  - Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry, Bureau of Workforce Partnership Operations
    - Programmatic
- Jobs for Veterans State Grant Programs
  - Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry, Bureau of Workforce Partnership Operations
    - Programmatic
- Employment and Training Programs under CSBG (Community Services Block Grant)
  - Chester County Department of Community Development
    - Programmatic
- Employment and Training Programs under HUD (Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development)
  - Chester County Department of Community Development
    - Programmatic
- State Unemployment Compensation Programs
  - Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry
    - Programmatic, via phone and computer
- Reintegration of Offenders Programs
  - Life Transforming Ministries (LTM)
    - Programmatic, by referral
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
  - Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (County Assistance Office)
    - Programmatic
- Employment Advancement and Retention Network (EARN)
  - Pathstone, Inc.
    - Programmatic
- United Way Financial Stability Center
  - United Way of Chester County and partner agencies
    - Programmatic
- Hire One
  - Chester County Economic Development Council
    - Programmatic

Please see Attachment 3: “Workforce Delivery System Program/Partner List” for a full list of partners and contact information.

43 *How will the local board facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop service delivery system?*

With Chester County covering 759 square miles and limited or cumbersome public transportation options, accessing the one-stop can be a challenge for some job seekers. The Chester County Workforce Development Board (WDB) has taken some measures to alleviate the burden of travel to the PA CareerLink® Chester County and plans to expand upon those measures going forward, as reflected in this plan’s goal of expanding reach. By expanding geographic reach, the one-stop service delivery system expands capacity by engaging community partners and libraries and offering services outside the existing physical space.

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The PA CareerLink® Chester County has already taken some initial steps to make services available through technology by developing a new local website that allows job seekers to view workshops, event calendars, register for workshops, and access job seeker tools. The website also provides individuals the opportunity to receive daily job postings via an RSS Feed and allows them to customize the RSS Feed to their job search preferences. Next steps for utilizing technology to improve access include recording workshops to be posted on the website and viewed remotely, interviewing via video conferencing, and exploring workshops in a webinar format. The EARN program has begun providing the necessary equipment, such as hot spots and laptops, to participants so that they are able access services remotely during the COVID-19 crisis and the Chester County WDB and One Stop Operator will explore the feasibility of expanding that assistance to participants who are not engaged with the EARN program.

The Chester County WDB previously funded a Mobile Workforce Navigator. This currently falls under the umbrella of the Title I provider and respective advisory team. Staff ensures basic services and information is accessible to those areas of the county where transportation to the PA CareerLink® is challenging. Access remains a priority for all partners to provide engagement and technical assistance, as well as introductory services. The goal is to increase awareness of the full menu of services available at the one-stop and strengthen partnerships across the county. The primary areas of increased focus are Phoenixville, Coatesville, Kennett Square, Parkesburg, Honey Brook, and Oxford. In order to facilitate access to program services not co-located at the PA CareerLink® Chester County, the contracted Title I provider is tasked with monthly outreach to those partners to confirm contact and referral information and obtain updates on programs and offerings. This information is then made available to interested job seekers and direct referrals are made by Title I staff to interested participants.

Title I participant services are entered into Pennsylvania's workforce development system of record no more than thirty days after the service occurred, with a goal of fourteen days. Service entry is done by the staff member responsible for that service delivery and accompanied by a case note. Staff is responsible for keeping track of the estimated end dates of services and evaluating whether the service is completed or continuing. Employer information under Wagner-Peyser is entered based on the guidance of that program. Employer information and services under Chester County WDB contracts will be entered within 30 days of contact.

The EARN program, Wagner-Peyser, and Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) utilize the PA CareerLink® system according to their program guidance. Title II Adult Education utilizes the Pennsylvania Department of Education's E-Data V.2 to track student enrollment, intake, hours of participation, and test scores.

The Chester County Economic Development Council, as well as other regional PREP partners, utilizes Executive Pulse for the tracking of employer outreach and engagement. The contracted provider for Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker services, Educational Data Systems, Inc., (EDSI) utilizes a proprietary software system called Skilldex to assess customer skills and determine the education or training needed to secure employment. Skilldex is a web-based system that assists customers with collecting job-related information while tracking skill. It breaks down each job held by the customer into keywords and tasks, identifies performance levels of these tasks, and assesses the customer's individual ability in each skill area. This proprietary system captures the customer's responses to an inventory which allows them to identify their own abilities and interests and recommends employment options that may be a good fit.

For the Title I Youth program, EDSI utilizes Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS) for client assessment and tracking. CASAS assesses and identifies basic academic skills and provides information to support youth participants in academic advancement. Assessments are administered by an EDSI certified CASAS administrator; the standardized assessment will be given onsite or virtually; pre-test and post-test scores will be documented in the Pennsylvania workforce development system of record and the participant's file folder.

The PA CareerLink® Chester County Title I provider will convene partner staff from all Titles under WIOA in order to facilitate discussion on the sharing of participant information and co-enrollment, where possible. At a minimum, the Title I provider will ensure that information regarding the availability of Title I services is made available to all participants engaged with Title II and Title IV services, and referrals are made when appropriate.

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The Chester County WDB will convene workgroups consisting of education representatives from the Chester County Intermediate Unit and Delaware County Community College, as well as representatives from Title I and IV services and Industry Partnerships to better define Career Pathways. These Pathways will be informed by labor market data, training curricula, and the needs of employers to provide multiple entry and exit points, as well as connections to other Pathways and inclusion of job seekers with disabilities and other barriers. Information regarding these Pathways will then be used, not only as job seeker options, but as information for students and parents to inform them of career options.

To further the expanded utilization of data, the Chester County WDB will improve partner information sharing through increased co-enrollment, improved collaboration of employer services through a strengthened Business Services Team, and quarterly partner staff meetings to foster integration. It is the intent of the Chester County WDB to work with the commonwealth to facilitate ease of information sharing among additional partners such as EARN and OVR.

There is no “one-size-fits-all” strategy to serve all job seekers with barriers. Each job seeker’s specific barriers and situation must be discussed and examined to determine the course of action and employment solution best suited to them. Two overarching strategies of the Chester County WDB to better meet the needs of job seekers with barriers are through targeted employer engagement and strong integration with supportive services and community-based organizations.

The Business Services Team (BST) and all job developers and employer engagement activities will maintain a list of employers who are adaptable, open to working with job seekers with barriers, located throughout the county or accessible by public transportation, and provide a family-sustaining wage. Having a group of employers willing to work with job seekers with barriers is key to successful placement.

Strong connections with supportive services and community-based organizations are invaluable to the success of job seekers with barriers. Training for more effectively identifying and addressing barriers will be further incorporated in staff development going forward, expanding upon trainings already offered to EARN program staff. Case management generally falls under the program with which the participant initially engaged and services for all participants, regardless of barriers, are expected to provide the same level of information and referral. Some barriers are beyond the scope of workforce development to address single-handedly, but successful employment depends on a support system in place to assist with those barriers. The Chester County WDB has already taken a strong and innovative step towards addressing these needs with the co-location of the United Way Financial Stability Center. This allows for on-site referrals to a large selection of supportive services, from obtaining healthcare to financial and emotional counseling, to applying for public assistance and obtaining clothing for work. Additionally, the Decade to Doorways Plan to End Homelessness is administered out of the Department of Community Development, which also provides staff to the WDB. This proximity and close working relationship allows for expedited referrals and follow-up for those job seekers whose barriers include a need for housing, as well as referrals from D2D providers of those in the county experiencing homelessness or recently housed who are in need of permanent employment.

Job seekers with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) are able to access the full range of PA CareerLink® Chester County services through the use of a language line service. The Chester County WDB website does have translation capabilities in a variety of languages. The Department of Community Development’s Language Access Plan will receive its annual update in 2021 to maintain compliance and access for both workforce development and housing programs. Additionally, both the WDB and the PA CareerLink® Chester County have bilingual English/Spanish speaking staff and provide bilingual informational flyers. For those job seekers who are deaf or hard of hearing, staff engage assistance from the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and assistive technology as listed in section 4.4 of this plan. Justice-involved job seekers are referred to Life Transforming Ministries and Chester County OIC in Coatesville, for assistance in placement into employment and any other services they may need to re-integrate into society or fulfil the requirements of their court orders.

As a mandated partner, OVR has the ability to collaborate with the local Workforce Development Board to provide in-

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school youth with disabilities opportunities to participate in pre-employment transition services and other services to gain skills and knowledge to enter the workforce. In partnership with the Workforce Development Board and Title I providers, OVR may provide both OVR eligible and potentially eligible in-school youth with disabilities services to enter competitive integrated employment. These meaningful opportunities allow in-school youth with disabilities to assess their own strengths and skills, while exploring vocational possibilities and removing barriers from employment. Work based learning is an important experience for in-school youth with disabilities to engage in so that they may be afforded opportunities to discover career paths. Other services that may be provided to OVR in-school youth with disabilities include:

- Counseling and guidance from professional vocational rehabilitation staff to explore career and training options as well as understand VR services.
- Independent Living Skills training will allow students to gain knowledge to perform the daily tasks essential for maintaining or obtaining independence. Independent Living Skills can include the following: household budgeting and financial management; utilizing public transportation; and navigating through the social services system.
- Self-Advocacy Training to assist students with disabilities to gain knowledge on disability awareness, advocating during an IEP process, understanding transition processes, and advocating for themselves in post-secondary education, employment, and coordinating social services.
- Workplace Readiness Training will provide students with knowledge needed to find and maintain competitive integrated employment. Curriculums can include soft skills training, interview skills, job readiness, job-seeking skills, HR practices, and other skills needed to become “workplace ready”.
- Job Shadowing will provide students with disabilities a one to five-day job shadowing experience, for a maximum of 25 hours per school year, in an occupation of interest within a community integrated setting. Students will be provided an opportunity to shadow employees and obtain an overview of the knowledge, tasks, and abilities needed to work in this field.

The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) provides services to individuals with disabilities to help them secure and maintain employment and independence. These services are designed to prepare OVR customers to become qualified trained members of the workforce, increasing regional workforce diversity and the overall number of skilled workers available to businesses in the county and region. Working closely with OVR, we can determine special needs of our disabled youth and young adults, as well as adults and dislocated workers, and work together to help them overcome barriers to their future career success. A variety of adaptive technologies are available for individuals with disabilities, including a dedicated TTY phone and connection to an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter is made for those job seekers who need it.

44. *How will entities within the one-stop service delivery system, including one-stop operators and the one-stop partners, comply with WIOA Sec. 188 (as applicable), and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101, et seq.) regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities?*

### *EO/ADA Certification*

The PA CareerLink® Chester County and United Way Financial Stability Center is fully committed to providing accessibility and services to individuals with disabilities. In October 2020, the Office of Equal Opportunity, Department of Labor and Industry conducted a virtual Equal Opportunity (EO)/Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Accessibility Compliance Review of the PA CareerLink® Chester County. The purpose of the compliance review was to ensure that the PA CareerLink® Chester County was operating within the guidelines to determine whether services to applicants, participants, and registrants are provided in accordance with the Equal Opportunity and nondiscrimination

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requirements of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (Section 188 of WIA, 20 U.S.C. 2938) and its implementing regulations (29 CFR Part 37).

2021 Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) compliance certification is currently in the review process and will be conducted annually. As part of the certification review, the OEO provided technical assistance to the current WDB Executive Director, EO Officer, PA CareerLink® Site Administrator, and EO Liaison. This technical assistance included: review of the responsibilities of the EO Officer and Liaison, Equal Opportunity and non-discrimination statutes, guidance on the development of a training plan for staff and partners, requirements for printed and electronic media, affirmative outreach, language access, technology accommodations, and monitoring templates. Chester County WDB staff are currently participating in a series of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion trainings, and training opportunities in this topic will be offered to board members and partner staff on a more frequent basis, beginning in the coming months.

### *Language Assistance Plan*

The PA CareerLink® Chester County has developed a Language Assistance Plan for Limited English Proficiency (LEP) persons. This document addresses the five elements critical to an effective language assistance plan:

- Identifying LEP individuals who need assistance
- Language assistance measures
- Training staff
- Providing notice of services to LEP individuals
- Monitoring and updating the plan

PA CareerLink® Chester County's Language Assistance Plan for LEP persons will be reviewed and updated annually and will be provided to the Office of Equal Opportunity for approval. The approved LEP plan is then provided to all Partners and Partner staff. PA CareerLink® Chester County uses Language Line to provide translation services for individuals accessing services at our center. Language Line provides over the phone interpretation and document translation in more than 150 languages for individuals in need.

Spanish-English bilingual partner staff frequently assist with translation services. Additionally, the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation staff provide services to those who are deaf or hard of hearing. Training is provided to staff on an annual basis as it relates to the local Language Assistance Plan. Subsequent training will be provided annually as part of the Disability Awareness Training agenda.

### *Staff Disability Awareness and Equal Opportunity Training*

The PA CareerLink® Chester County EO Officer and EO Liaison, along with technical assistance and training provided by the PA Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) conducts annual Oversight Monitoring and Disability Awareness Training for all PA CareerLink® Chester County partner staff.

PA CareerLink® Chester County works closely with OVR and will continue to use them as a resource to provide annual Disability Awareness Training for partner staff. PA CareerLink® Chester County is equipped to provide handouts/information in Braille and in alternative formats such as large print and audiotapes. Assistive technology is available in the Career Resource Center (CRC).

Additionally, beginning in 2016, all PA CareerLink® Chester County staff were required to participate in an Equal Opportunity (EO) orientation/training provided by the PA Department of Labor and Industry's Office of Equal Opportunity staff. Topics surrounding protected classes, non-discrimination statutes, policies on sexual harassment, disability-related employment and equal opportunity are covered as part of this training. The Chester County WDB is committed to continue staff trainings as part of the Department of Community Development's commitment to furthering social equity, and the related goal of this plan.

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The Operator will perform annual reviews to ensure continual monitoring of resources and determine any necessary enhancements to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities who access our services. Going forward, this review will include running a sample of materials through the Flesh-Kincaid readability index, or a similar resource.

The following assistive technology is available daily at the PA CareerLink® Chester County:

Item	Purpose	Location
Adjustable Height Table for computer workstation	Physical and visual access	Consumer Resource Center (CRC)
Adjustable height chair with adjustable arm rests	Physical and visual access	CRC
Alternate mini-keyboard	Physical access	CRC
Alternate track ball mouse	Physical access	CRC
Foam wrist rest	Physical access	CRC
19-21" monitor	Large screen for enlargement	CRC
Low glare screen filter	Visual access to monitor	CRC
Monitor arm	Adjustable positioning to increase viewing position	CRC
Screen Magnification Software	Enlargement of screen info	CRC
Lynx Browser	Text Browser	CRC
Speech Output Software	Voice for Browser	CRC
Dedicated Telephone Line	Operation of TTY	Staff Area

The combined outreach networks of workforce development and community services under the purview of the Department of Community Development (DCD) has led to affirmative outreach to groups and populations that neither system would fully reach independently. Some examples are: the homeless and disability populations are engaged via the Chester County Partnership to End Homelessness; Spanish language outreach is done through LCH and the Maternal Child Health Consortium, as well as the mushroom industry; numerous religious groups engage via community services and receive workforce development information and outreach. The strong connections between workforce development and community services has led to advanced levels of information sharing, and the rapid sharing of populations' need and ability to respond to those needs in a timely and positive manner. Affirmative trainings regarding equity and implicit bias is being conducted for all DCD and WDB staff.

45. *Describe how the local board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers through the system and that such providers will meet the employment needs of local area employers, workers and job seekers.*

Continuous improvement is a goal of the Chester County Workforce Development Board (WDB). Currently, a range of mechanisms is utilized to determine the variety, quantity, and quality of workforce services. Information and feedback is gathered from job seekers and employers via surveys to determine training and workshop needs. This feedback is then utilized by WDB committees and staff, and PA CareerLink® Chester County staff in determining programming needs and scheduling. Informal feedback is also shared with the PA CareerLink® Chester County administrator and WDB staff via word of mouth and implemented when appropriate. The frequency of workshops and trainings is impacted by the demand. Workshops with a higher demand for registrations are scheduled more frequently, with the schedule and calendar being adjusted throughout the year to provide the most current offerings possible.

The Chester County WDB PA CareerLink® Partner meeting reviews provider reports and outcomes bimonthly. These reviews lead to requesting additional information when questions remain as well as recommendations from the committee to improve performance where needed. Implementation of those recommendations is then overseen by WDB staff. File monitoring reports, conducted semi-annually, and provider monitoring reports, conducted per the local monitoring policy, are utilized to record areas of concern, request improvement plans, and identify best practices

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that can be shared or duplicated. Dialogue with eligible training providers remains open throughout the program year, so that any participant or provider issues can be addressed swiftly. When an area of concern is noted across the local system, recommendations are made by the committee regarding multiple areas of improvement or change.

Annually, upon the release of the draft High Priority Occupations (HPO) List, a review by stakeholders is completed with feedback given to Chester County WDB staff. Stakeholders taking part in the review include the Technical College High Schools, Delaware County Community College, and the Industry Partnerships. The Industry Partnership review includes a comparison between the HPO list and the list of Incumbent Worker Trainings requested by employers in recent funding cycles to determine any gaps. Feedback from these reviews determine what, if any, petitions are needed for inclusion on the HPO list. WDB staff also conduct research on industry and occupation trends to determine if any projections include occupations that are not reflected in the draft list.

As part of the review and approval process for every request for training, WDB program coordinators review the ETPL application in Pennsylvania's workforce development system of record for the related HPOs listed. During that review, program coordinators check to ensure that the training ties to the High Priority Occupations list for Chester County. If the training does link to an HPO in Chester County, that request moves to the next round for approval. If the training does not link to an HPO in Chester County, staff will discuss willingness to relocate with the participant. Those participants who do not indicate a willingness to relocate will not have their training request approved. Those who indicate a willingness to relocate will indicate that willingness and the reasons for it in a written statement, which will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Internal processes for Title I staff and contracted providers are reviewed and updated throughout the year to allow for the most seamless and timely provision of services possible. Needs of job seekers and employers not being addressed by the more active programs on the eligible training providers list are addressed by reaching out to additional providers to expand that list, or working with current providers to adjust offerings to meet those needs. Annual review allows Board members and staff an opportunity to review deliverables and proposed changes for existing providers for each new Program Year. Through various levels of reporting, reviewing, and monitoring, the Chester County Workforce Development Board operates in a state of continuous improvement.

The Chester County Workforce Development Board issues a Request for Proposals on an ad hoc basis in order to solicit innovative job seeker services. Creative best-practices and targeted services for specific job seeker populations, as well as employer services, are encouraged. Each proposal is scored objectively by a committee of WDB members. After two rounds of scoring and discussion, recommendations from the scoring committee are presented to the full Workforce Development Board for discussion, review, and approval. This method of issuing Requests for Proposals and emphasizing a desire for innovative services with proven job seeker or employer need has resulted in the implementation of some of the most successful workforce development services within Chester County.

The PA CareerLink® Partnership as well as WDB subcommittees and staff meet regularly review reports and deliverables from each contractor, requesting additional information, offering technical assistance, or adjusting deliverables as needed. Contractor reports are also shared with the entire WDB as part of each meeting packet. This ongoing review allows for open discussion throughout the program year and a more timely intervention with technical assistance when an issue is identified. All orientations and workshops include a customer survey, which are reviewed regularly by staff in order to determine best practices and enact change when necessary. This ongoing review and analysis makes responses proactive rather than reactive and allows for a constant state of programmatic improvement.

For those providers who fall under the Eligible Training Provider List and not the competitive proposal process, an annual review of performance during the ETPL initial application period and throughout the year is conducted. Where gaps in job seeker and employer need are noted, WDB staff reaches out to additional providers to engage them and encourage them to apply for the ETPL. This broadening of opportunity will allow the Chester County workforce development system to better fill gaps that were previously left out of the training provider options.

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- 4.6 *Provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area.*

Adult and Dislocated Worker employment and training activities in Chester County include:

## Career Services

- Provision of Labor Market Information (LMI), including job vacancies, skills gaps, High Priority Occupations, Career Pathways
- Outreach and Orientation
- Intake and eligibility determination
- Assessment
- Referrals to appropriate services
- Performance and cost information for training programs
- Follow-up services
- Development of an Individual Employment Plan
- Career Planning and Counseling
- Short-Term prevocational services and workshops
- Internships, work experiences, and transitional jobs
- Connections to apprenticeships
- Job Location Services
- Workshops (Including, but not limited to, the following)
  - Technology demonstrations
  - Modern Interviewing in the Virtual Age
  - Resume Revival
  - Cover Letter Writing
  - Market Yourself
  - Time Management & Your Job Search
  - Successful Networking
  - Job Search Strategies for Veterans
  - Overcoming the Age Barrier

## Training Services

- Individual Training Accounts
- On the Job Training
- Incumbent Worker Training

## Other Services

- Adult Basic Literacy Education services through Title II provider, Chester County OIC
- Financial Counseling and other Supportive Services through the United Way Financial Stability Center
  - Financial Education
  - Benefit enrollment
  - Budgeting and coaching
  - Credit counseling and debt management
  - Free tax preparation
  - Counseling, including the “Coping with Job Loss” support group
  - Legal clinics
  - Health workshops

COVID-19 has led to adjustments and additions to be made to the workforce development offerings. Some, such as the addition of a “Job Search Strategies During a Pandemic” workshop, were temporary, while others, such as

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increased virtual and distance workshops and hiring events, will continue beyond the COVID-19 () to further the WDB goal of expanded reach.

Activities are assessed in a variety of ways; through the local oversight and monitoring process, via the collection and review of job seeker surveys, and through contractor performance reporting. The oversight and monitoring process includes programmatic and file reviews to ensure compliance with contractual and programmatic requirements. Surveys and performance reports give a narrative and numerical view of the programming, to determine areas of success and areas of improvement.

Workforce Development Board staff and board members as well as WDB board committee members regularly review and discuss performance reports in detail throughout the program year. The ad hoc Request for Proposals Review Committee reviews workforce programming proposals submitted annually, providing scores and feedback, determining any gaps in service that need to be addressed, and ultimately recommending program and provider selections to the Board as a whole.

The Board utilizes data and anecdotal evidence to determine the need for future programming. Utilizing data to determine that a large portion of unemployed job seekers with advanced degrees and experience were not utilizing PA CareerLink® Chester County services, the Hire One initiative expanded to include job seeker outreach and engagement of that population. Analyzing job seeker need led to the implementation of the Economic Transition Grant (ETG) program

Requests for Proposals utilize a multi-part electronic application. These applications are scored using a rubric, with the total available points equaling 100. The sections and questions asked are reviewed and adjusted each time by the RFP Committee and adjustments are made based on feedback received and the vision for the upcoming proposal period. The scoring committee receives the applications electronically for review and the committee meets at least twice to discuss applications, ask questions, and determine a recommendation for the board.

For providers of Individual Training Accounts, Chester County has a representation of most private licensed schools in the county on the Eligible Training Provider List, as well as the Chester County Intermediate Unit and Delaware County Community College, the Perkins providers in the county. Engagement with other postsecondary institutions and training providers will be expanded through further development of Career Pathways and the expansion of micro-credential options.

The Chester County WDB follows the state's Priority of Service Policy, WSP 05-2015, as follows;

### Basic Career Services

*Basic Career Services will remain available for all individuals regardless of eligibility requirements as long as funding is available to support such services.*

### Individualized Career Services and Training Services

*Priority of service shall be given to Title I Adult-Eligible Participants, in the following order, as long as funding is available to support such services:*

*1. Veterans and spouses who fall into one or more of the following categories:*

- *Recipient of public assistance*
- *Other low-income individuals*
- *Individuals who are basic-skills deficient*
- *Underemployed and low-income*

*2. All other persons who fall into one or more of the following categories:*

- *Recipient of public assistance*
- *Other low-income individuals*
- *Individuals who are basic-skills deficient*

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- *Underemployed and low-income*

3. *Veterans and spouses who do not fall into the above categories*

4. All other Title-I Adult Eligible Participants who do not fall into the above categories

The Chester County Council for the Workforce of Tomorrow and Chester County WDB have been prioritizing older and out of school youth for a number of years, before the implementation of WIOA emphasized this population. The Career Corps program has successfully focused on older and out of school youth since their inception.

Should a request for the transfer of funds between adult and dislocated worker be identified by WDB staff or contracted providers, that information is conveyed to the Fiscal Committee for review. If the committee approves the transfer, the process as outlined by the state is followed by staff to complete the funds transfer.

The Chester County WDB is committed to engaging with education and business partners on the development of Career Pathways with multiple entry and exit points, including considerations of job seekers with barriers and the use of micro-credentialing. With the diversity of industry in the county, this is a large task, and a sector approach will be utilized to further the development of viable local and regional pathways. On the Job Training programs have had varied success in Chester County, but are always included as options in employer outreach and job seeker assistance. The Chester County WDB intends to convene an ad hoc apprenticeship workgroup, to collaborate with state and regional partners to expand the usage of apprenticeships in the county.

4.7. *How will training services be provided using individual training accounts, or ITAs, that fund programs of study, or through the use of contracts for training services that fund work-based trainings.*

Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) are used for occupational skills trainings that include all or part of a program of study, result in a credential, and are approved and conducted on an individual basis. All Individual Training Accounts must connect to schools and programs on the statewide Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). ITAs are issued to eligible participants who have utilized career services, including the development of an Individual Employment Plan and career planning and counseling, and determined that they are unable to compete in the local and regional labor market without a skill upgrade or credential.

The ITA cap for Chester County is \$4,000 per participant. This cap is reviewed regularly by the Workforce Development Board's Executive and Governance Committee which considers the cost of popular trainings, historical levels of allocations, and level of demand. The ITA cap was decided upon in order to serve the most job seekers in an efficient manner without requiring a personal financial burden for the majority of programming.

Training contracts are used for On the Job Training and customized training. On the Job Training is an immediate placement for a job seeker, with a training plan developed with the new employer to fill any skills gaps and help ensure employee success. Customized training is most frequently used for a larger-scale hire under a single employer, with a need to train a group of new employees quickly in a specific skill or set of skills.

Customer choice in ITAs is never infringed upon, provided the training selected by a participant is found on the ETPL. Staff work with the participants to assist in informed customer choice, so that a participant is aware of the opportunities for growth and expectation for wages in the fields relating to their selected training program. Participants seeking training that cannot be included on the ETPL, due to such factors as poor performance or a lack of connection to High Priority Occupations, are provided labor market information to assist them in making a new choice that fits the parameters necessary. No customer is forced to accept a job or be placed into On the Job or customized training.

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- 48 *Provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of youth workforce investment activities in the local area.*

Unemployment rates for older youth and young adults in Chester County remain substantially higher than those for the population as a whole. For example, although Chester County's overall unemployment rate is 3.4%, the rate for 20-24 year-olds stands at 5.7%, and at 14.4% for 16-19 year-olds. (Source: 2019 American Community Survey 1 year estimates) Further, because the likelihood of employment correlates with educational levels, rates of employment and labor market participation for individuals with secondary credentials or less are substantially lower than for those with postsecondary credentials. This disparity is particularly strong in Chester County, where the advanced degree rate outpaces the educational need for most occupations.

Recognizing the employment challenges faced by older youth and young adults, particularly those without postsecondary credentials, WIOA prioritizes employment, education and training services for 16-24 year-old out-of-school youth (OSY), establishing an expenditure floor of 75%, reducing the burdens of income determination, and extending automatic eligibility for services to a range of high-risk populations. The Chester County WDB will place a strong emphasis on ensuring that eligible OSY have access to a full range of services across core programs, as appropriate. To ensure a strong and continuing focus on youth employment, the Chester County WDB has a youth standing committee, known as the Council for the Workforce of Tomorrow (CWT). In Chester County, the youth serving workforce development program is known as Career Corps and is currently run by EDSI. The mission of Career Corps is *"To provide youth and young adults with career exploration and skills based training that leads to gainful employment."*

WIOA youth activities will focus on young people with barriers to employment, including those who are in foster care and/or juvenile justice systems, are homeless, have a disability, are involved in the public mental health system, or are pregnant or parenting. Local youth serving agencies will work together to build coordinated approaches in efforts to enroll and retain these young people.

WIOA also places an emphasis on providing eligible youth with high-quality work experiences, requiring that at least 20% of youth funding be dedicated to this activity. This requirement is consistent with a growing body of research which demonstrates that young people who have access to jobs in their teens tend to graduate from high school, earn secondary and postsecondary credentials, and earn at higher levels than their peers who do not work (Source: Employment Policies Institute). Therefore, the WIOA work experience requirement represents a powerful tool to help lower-income youth, particularly those with barriers to employment, to gain invaluable and potentially life-changing experience in work places. In support of this priority, the Chester County WDB will increase partnerships with employers to provide access to high-quality work experiences for eligible youth, including internships, workplace learning, transitional jobs, pre-apprenticeships, and summer jobs, with particular emphasis on OSY. Additional efforts will be made around career exploration strategies to provide students and their parents access to key information in making decisions about secondary and postsecondary education options and employment goals.

As we increase opportunities for Pennsylvania's out-of-school youth population, we must also develop strategies that align career pathways with HPOs in targeted industry clusters, encourage partnerships that align state agencies and inspire co-enrollment in multiple programs. This will help to ensure youth have the opportunity to pursue the skills, training, and education they need to obtain employment that will lead to financial stability and economic security for themselves and their families. All of our TANF youth programs are tasked with supporting Career Pathways for our youth participants. Our local Board determined youth from ages 12 to 24 (or has completed the 5<sup>th</sup> grade and 24 years at time of enrollment). We partner with a number of providers who focus on providing workforce exposure activities by way of workshops, information sessions with guest speakers, site visits, paid and unpaid work experiences, and the development of pre-apprenticeship opportunities.

As out-of-school youth are one of WIOA's primary focuses, it is imperative that we work together with our partners to develop and build new models for recruitment, retention, performance, co-enrollment, partnerships and career

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pathways. Recognizing the priority of OSY, best practice models are identified to better assist Chester County WDB staff to successfully meet the needs of those individuals. While out of school youth is the primary focus, the WIOA youth program, as well as partner TANF youth and Industry Partnership-based programs, also serve in school youth (ages 12-17 years).

In the meantime, Chester County has had much success with self-developed strategies and best practices that have been implemented, such as the following;

- **75% OSY/25% ISY:** Since PY 2009, youth workforce development services have been serving 70% OSY and 30% ISY, which was opposite of WIA's minimum requirements and allowed a seamless transition from WIA to WIOA populations.
- **Case Management/Follow-Up Services:** This combines both a programmatic and outcome-oriented approach, providing all parties with a documented account of what, why, and how success is achieved. Participants are presented with a clear and achievable selection of training choices designed to lead them to self-sufficiency. Services offered include education, training, job placement, and other resources designed to assist participants in achieving self-sufficiency. The case manager is involved daily with participants to meet specific needs. A 12 month follow-up is not only a requirement, but it is thoroughly beneficial for the participant. Through case management, participants are provided an integrated system of challenges, achievements and rewards on the path to individual success.
- **Transportation:** EDSI will continue to work closely with the CCWDB's Addressing Barriers Committee to address transportation barriers throughout Chester County. Transportation incentives/support will be available to aid customers in attending interviews, and for travel to and from work. Transportation as a supportive service can include bus fare, Uber gift cards, and other ride share options. EDSI uses Uber Central as needed for program participants when other options are not available. Uber Central is a service that allows staff to arrange rides for participants to and from whatever locations are needed for rides to the program, interviews, employment or other appointments related to gaining or maintaining employment. Through Uber Central, Title I staff can set up an account and all charges are handled by the program. These business accounts have no minimum so rides can be set up and paid for as needed. Participants only need to have a phone capable of sending text messages.. Transportation, as a barrier, will be continuously monitored and supportive services will be provided as needed to ensure each participant can travel safely to the program as well employment opportunities. The Youth Career Specialist will work with each participant to create stable transportation so that their focus can be on successful transition to work.
- **Job Readiness:** Job Readiness Activities, which combine life skills, job preparation, job readiness, and job search, assist participants in locating appropriate employment. Self-Directed Job Search skills are provided within this framework. The objectives of the classroom training curriculum are: verbal communication skills; self-awareness/self-help images; decision-making concepts pertaining to employment barriers; resume writing skills; completion of employment applications; practical interviewing techniques; and individualized counseling. Staff provides job development for each participant, while maintaining labor market information on high priority occupations, industry partnerships, the regional career education partnership, new employers, interview arrangements, and direct follow-up with employers following interviews.
- **Vocational Training:** Vocational education training provides youth with skills in specific occupations. These trainings are offered based on the labor market needs of Chester County and the High Priority Occupations list.
- **Academic Enrichment:** All levels of education, High School Diploma, GED, ABE, and ESL are coordinated with remedial math and reading, computer instruction, workplace readiness, and GED when needed. At specific intervals, work experience/vocational training may be incorporated to connect the participant to the ultimate goal of unsubsidized employment and post-secondary education.
- **Dual Enrollment:** There has been a significant increase in co-enrollments between the EARN program and the WIOA Title I Adult and Youth programs. Providers are encouraged to place an emphasis on dual enrollment / co-enrollments across programs. This includes participants from EARN and WIOA Title I Adult and Youth programs.

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As a core partner, OVR has the ability to collaborate with the local Workforce Development Board to provide in-school youth with disabilities opportunities to participate in pre-employment transition services (PETS) to better prepare these students for life after high school. PETS services include, but are not limited to, paid work experiences, job shadowing, and workplace readiness trainings. These skills gains will help to meet one of the intentions of WIOA, to better prepare in-school youth with disabilities to graduate high school, and work toward meaningful careers. OVR is working with the local youth program to assist with services and referrals for youth with disabilities. The youth program also implements any possible accommodations and modifications that may be included in a participant's IEP to help develop the best service delivery.

Youth participants seeking employment meet with the Youth Career Specialist to develop a customized plan addressing each of the 14 WIOA program elements. Each participant's IEP will guide planning while identifying and documenting the appropriate combination of services required for the participant to achieve their employment goals. Progress toward these goals will be shared with the participant, Career Corps staff, and the PA CareerLink® Chester County. All case management must be entered into Pennsylvania's workforce development system of record and placed in each participant file on a monthly basis.

The current youth program provides work-based learning experiences to participants with disabilities by assisting the individuals with finding a work experience that relates to their interests and strengths. Participants are motivated by a clear and achievable selection of training choices designed to lead them to their self-sufficiency goal. Career Corps staff members are intensely involved every day with each participant to meet specific, individual needs. Our participants, often overwhelmed by their predicaments and unsure of their goals, require on-going assistance to maintain a broader focus. Objective assessment will bring together the results of counseling sessions, the assessment package, and the need for training services while reviewing the specific qualifications necessary for the youth participants to participate fully in their selected training services.

The Chester County Council for the Workforce of Tomorrow (CWT) consists of active members from a variety of youth-serving organizations and perspectives. Members on the CWT include: representation from the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR); the Chester County Department of Children, Youth and Families (CYF) the Chester County Intermediate Unit; Chester County Juvenile Probation; the Chester County Economic Development Council (CCEDC); a parent advocate; and community volunteers with youth-serving experience.

The CWT meets bi-monthly to review performance reports from the Title I Youth provider and TANF Youth providers, discuss programming, and ask questions of the provider. In this way, the guidance of the CWT is reflected in every aspect of youth workforce development programming.

The youth program incorporates all aspects of the 14 youth program design elements as listed below, and is always in search of best practices in order to improve and expand upon them:

*1. Tutoring, study 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*

In addition to the group classroom instruction, Career Corps staff will provide individual and classroom tutoring to youth who are identified as needing further remediation. A module introducing study skills has been incorporated into the revised career services component to insure that all participants are exposed to this information. This is significant since many youth may have barriers to employment inclusive of language barriers, homelessness, lacking work history, or be a parenting teen, to name a few.

With regard to dropout prevention and recovery strategies, Career Corps will establish strong working relationships with the Chester County Intermediate Unit and schools with a particular investment of time

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within the Coatesville and West Chester School Districts. While it is anticipated that the vast majority of youth who enroll have left school prior to graduation and are not interested in returning, staff will connect and advocate for the return to school of any youth whose Individual Service Strategy includes this goal.

### *2. Alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate*

Referrals to the participant's respective high school will be facilitated.

### *3. Paid and unpaid work experiences that have as a component academic and occupational education, which may include:*

- *Summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout school year*
- *Pre-apprenticeship programs*
- *Internships and job shadowing*
- *On-the-job training opportunities*

Pre-Apprenticeship programs will be implemented to prepare youth to enter employment or be coordinated with a registered apprenticeship program or followed by OJT. Paid and unpaid work experience opportunities will be provided to at least 20% of all enrolled participants. Career Corps will, whenever possible, develop the sites in key industries. Youth will be offered this opportunity for a minimum of 20 hours per week for six weeks. Job shadowing opportunities are coordinated by Career Corps staff and staff at the Chester County Economic Development Council.

### *4. Occupational Skills Training (OST), which shall include priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials aligned with in demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area involved*

Occupational Skills Training enable youth participants to compete in the labor market by providing them with the technical skills and knowledge required to perform specific jobs. Occasionally, youth who have completed the work experience and the career planning segments of the program identify on a trade or occupation that they wish to pursue and entry-level positions which require additional skills training/certifications. Staff carefully assess the participant's program progress, motivation, and commitment. If indicated, staff will refer youth participants to the PA CareerLink® Chester County for access to OJT and/or Individual Training Account funding. Career Corps will set aside budgetary dollars for short-term certifications.

### *5. Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster*

Career Corps offers Adult Basic Education (ABE) and GED preparations as a component of the Out of School Youth program. Youth who do not possess a diploma or test below an eighth grade level are referred to complete these classroom activities, possibly in coordination with Work Experience or other workforce directed activities. To further assure the likelihood of success, staff also assist participants who could better access other Title II community-based programs to enroll and complete this requirement within the PA CareerLink® Chester County or in close proximity to their home.

### *6. Leadership development opportunities, which may include community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors*

The Career Corps program incorporates leadership development activities that are grounded in a positive, strengths-based approach, including team-building exercises and small group projects that build effective communication, problem-solving and cooperation abilities. We will invite community leaders and employers to talk to participants about a variety of topics that will broaden their understanding of community and employer expectations. Other leadership activities may include attending conferences and events where youth learn about public speaking, business etiquette, and other professional behaviors.

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Career Corps participants will build leadership skills through workshops, collaborative projects, and volunteer experience. The workshops will enable participants to build skills in employability, customer service, and leadership and life skills training, and will facilitate positive, professional, and meaningful relationships naturally by building a caring support system around the youth. Career Corps staff will cultivate the participants' innate strengths; these approaches build confidence, self-esteem, and personal worth.

### *7. Supportive Services*

Career Corps makes every effort to connect the youth and community based organizations that can assist with support services that will allow a youth to reach their workforce potential. This will begin with connections to the United Way Financial Stability Center and other community agencies that provide supportive services.

### *8. Adult mentoring for a duration of at least 12 months that may occur both during and after program participation*

Career Corps offers positive role models for participants to help develop positive social relationships and achieve program outcomes such as job or post-secondary school retention. Mentors are thoroughly vetted for appropriateness and matched with participants facing barriers/issues familiar to the mentor. Volunteer mentors are recruited through local employers, businesses, and educational institutions.

### *9. Follow-up services for not less than one year after the completion of participation*

Follow up services will be provided to all participants on a bi-weekly basis following program exit. These services will be provided by Career Corps program staff.

### *10. Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral, as appropriate*

Youth with mental health or substance abuse issues will be referred to appropriate local agencies and encouraged to seek treatment. Career Corps staff is also prepared to guide the youth participant in their job search effort through workshops, job fairs, video-taped practice interviews, resume preparation, and other activities keyed to gaining employment. More importantly, Career Corps will provide job development for each youth participant, while maintaining labor market information on high-growth industries, new employers, interview arrangements, and direct follow-up with employers following interviews.

### *11. Financial Literacy Education*

Financial Literacy Education is provided as part of Career Corps' career services components. Career Corps also has certified internal staff to provide financial literacy. Additionally, Career Corps partners with Open Hearth through the United Way Financial Stability Center.

### *12. Entrepreneurial Skills Training*

Career Corps incorporates an overview of entrepreneurial skills into its career planning component. Interested participants are given access to the internet-based Seeds of Success website that provides a ten module course in Business Development. Additionally, Career Corps connects with SCORE for education on entrepreneurial opportunities for starting a business.

### *13. 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*

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Career Corps incorporates these services within the career services component and assists each youth in registering for PA CareerLink® and familiarizes them with the local labor market for continued use after program participation and to make educated decisions pertaining to the future.

### *14. Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to post-secondary education and training*

Both the career planning and career readiness program components of the Career Corps program incorporate activities that will assist youth in preparing for and transitioning to post-secondary school and/or certification bearing training programs.

Case Management staff at the Career Corps are trained to complete eligibility as directed under WIOA and the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry. Applications are entered into the PA CareerLink® system and all applicable eligibility paperwork is collected in the participant file. For those youth, both OSY and ISY, who are determined to “need additional assistance to complete an education program or to secure and hold employment,” staff collect a letter of recommendation from a reputable source detailing why the youth requires additional assistance. This source can be a community organization such as the Coatesville Youth Initiative, a school teacher or counselor, or a pastor, among other sources.

Connections with YouthBuild, JobCorps, and AmeriCorps are referral-based with regularly-scheduled presentations to participants. Neither YouthBuild nor JobCorps have a full-time presence in Chester County. The Chester County Department of Community Development maintains a strong connection with AmeriCorps and has hosted AmeriCorps Vista participants in previous years.

Youth outreach activities through the Industry Partnerships are done on a regional level. The largest regional impact comes through the Girls Exploring Tomorrow’s Technology (GETT) event sponsored by the Innovative Technology Action Group (ITAG) Industry Partnership. The 2019 GETT event hosted 957 girls from 215 schools in nine counties and included representatives from 67 companies, universities, and professional organizations, providing 121 hands-on STEM activities led by women in STEM careers, with a geographic reach far beyond the Southeast PA region. In 2020, GETT was re-engineered into an eight month video series from November 2020 to June 2021. The 20th anniversary video series offers over 30 prerecorded videos and livestream events with STEM activities and demonstrations. A new video will be released each week, with anticipated views reaching over 2,500 for the series.

To date, we have had minimal co-enrollment of youth into partner programming. We will address co-enrollment in our Council for the Workforce of Tomorrow committee meetings and continue to recommend proactive collaboration across programs. We are encouraged by the recent efforts of our newly selected Title 1 Youth provider to engage with TANF Youth providers across the county. Going forward, we will co-enroll eligible youth participants into partner programming by reviewing the needs and services that apply to the youth as it relates to their service strategy and goals. With co-enrollment, we enroll the eligible youth into Adult/ DLW funded programs, and this will allow us to leverage youth funds to expand the reach in serving more youth. Activities such as the State Local Internship Project (SLIP), and our TANF Youth providers summer programming is made available and offered to the youth to participate.

**The Chester County Economic Development Council STEM Innovation’s Career Connections Academy (CCA)** has delivered afterschool programming for 40 college-bound, TANF eligible high school students. The recruitment model is designed to reduce barriers, which contribute to poverty, crime, and low-educational attainment.

In addition to the weekly professional training workshops, students will attend one field trip to enhance the learning process. Students earn at least one nationally recognized healthcare certificate in HIPAA, Blood Borne Pathogens, or Healthcare Ergonomics. The Career Connections Academy is designed to provide at-risk youth ages 14-17 with the following WIOA Youth Program Elements: (1) Occupational Skills Training (2) Leadership Development (3) Adult Mentoring (4) Follow-up services for 12 months after program completion (5) Integrated education and training in healthcare and healthcare technology (6) Entrepreneurial skills training (7) Services that provide labor market

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information about in-demand industry sector and occupations (8) Postsecondary preparation and transition activities.

All milestones, such as, gaining exposure to in-demand careers and hands-on industry specific experience, completing healthcare certifications, improving presentation and public speaking skills, attending career exploration activities, and participating in leadership training, will be completed in the program year.

Specifically, this program seeks to reach the following outcomes for its Level 1 participants:

- 40 TANF students will gain exposure to in-demand careers and gain hands-on experience in STEM education programs (CASD – 20 students; OASD – 20 students)
- 25% of participants will complete a healthcare certification
- 20% of participants will improve their presentation and public speaking skills

**The Garage Youth Center (GYC)** serves students from the Kennett and Avon Grove School Districts. Students range from 11-18 years old (grades 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>). GYC annually serves approximately 40 TANF youth on a rolling basis. Career Compass, which provides youth with paid work experience, would be utilized throughout the year for TANF youth.

GYC youth are at risk of dropping out of school, have been in trouble with law enforcement, English language learners, skills deficient, foster care youth, and migrant/immigrant youth. Students face substantial struggles and multiple barriers and have a need for support to navigate through complex issues. GYC provides the resources needed for students to continue to engage in school in a meaningful way, complete their high school education successfully, explore post-high school choices, and navigate the transition to their lives after high school including workforce opportunities and postsecondary education and training.

GYC programs target the following 14 elements, tutoring (1), alternative secondary school offerings or dropout recovery services (2), paid and unpaid work experiences with an academic and occupational education component (3), leadership development activities (5), supportive services (6), adult mentoring (7), comprehensive guidance and counseling (9), financial literacy education (11), services that provide labor market information about in-demand industry sectors and occupations (13), postsecondary preparation and transition activities (14).

**Young Men and Women in Charge (YMWIC)** refers to their participants as scholars and targets approximately 85 youth ranging in age from 12-24 for TANF programming. The scholars are served during their After School STEM and Leadership Program, Summer Enrichment Programs, and Career Readiness Programs for In-School and College Scholars.

Through academic support, challenging research inquiries, exposure to high tech equipment, and experiences at local STEM-focused corporations, YMWIC's Work Readiness Program provides Chester County TANF/FW eligible youth with a wraparound STEM enrichment experience that helps them overcome barriers and prepares them to be successful in college and career.

YMWIC programs target the following 14 elements, tutoring (1), alternative secondary school offerings or dropout recovery services (2), paid and unpaid work experiences with an academic and occupational education component (3), leadership development activities (5), supportive services (6), adult mentoring (7), follow-up services for at least 12 months after program completion (8), financial literacy education (11), entrepreneurial skills training (12), services that provide labor market information about in-demand industry sectors and occupations (13), postsecondary preparation and transition activities (14).

There are many organizations that are responsible for the TANF Youth Development program participants. We are actively working with the local County Assistance Office, the Department of Human Services' Employment and Training providers, PA CareerLink®, and other WIOA funded programs. TANF Youth work experience enhanced by high academic and workforce development programming will be aligned with Chester County high priority occupations. We prioritize the TANF Youth by engaging them into available activities and programming, creating access points to the resources being offered within our Workforce Development System. TANF Youth work experience opportunities will be offered at employer sites to give the youth hands on experiences and job skills needed to be successful.

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TANF programs have individuals who specifically engage in employer outreach for work experience, building and maintaining connections. The programs use a variety of communication outlets for instance, social media, e-mails, phone calls, flyers, newsletters, etc. We will use our current platforms to recruit eligible youth into programs. The Title I provider and partners, when working with clients will offer the programs and services that an individual is eligible for. We will also recruit into the youth program by using the reverse referral method and door to door outreach in communities where the youth reside. We will also outreach to the school to get eligible youth engage in program and services. All paid work experiences meet the minimum of \$10.35/hour.

There are no monetary contributions from local businesses from TANF youth programming. However, local business do contribute site for youth work experiences, no cost workshops to the youth programs (for example virtual tours to get a better understanding of the employer), and financial literacy programs.

The names, phone numbers and email addresses of the LWDB staff member responsible for implementation, tracking, and reporting TANF Youth activities and expenditures are:

Tracey Dougherty  
(610) 344-6263  
[tdougherty@chesco.org](mailto:tdougherty@chesco.org)

Jeannette M. Roman  
(610)344-5311  
[jroman@chesco.org](mailto:jroman@chesco.org)

TANF Youth Development providers are:

The Chester County Economic Development Council  
Patti VanCleave  
Director, STEM Innovation Initiatives  
The Chester County Economic Development Council  
Eagleview Corporate Center, 737 Constitution Drive, Exton, PA 19341  
Office: (610) 458-5700 Fax: 610-458-7770

The Garage  
Kristin Proto  
Executive Director  
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The Garage Community & Youth Center  
115 S. Union St. Kennett Square, PA 19348 / 610.444.6464  
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49. *How will the local board coordinate workforce investment activities and ensure they are carried out in the local area with statewide rapid response?*

PA CareerLink® Chester County staff participates on the Rapid Response team that is led by the PA Department of Labor and Industry's Rapid Response Coordination Services. The local Rapid Response team includes staff from PA Labor and Industry Rapid Response Coordination Services, Unemployment Compensation, PA CareerLink® Chester County staff, and United Way Financial Stability Center staff as needed.

When a WARN notice has been issued, the staff from PA Labor and Industry's Rapid Response Coordinator Services will reach out and mobilize the local staff from the agencies listed above. Based on the employer's preference, the group will convene to provide on-site or virtual information sessions for employees impacted by a layoff or plant closure. Information surrounding the eligibility and process for applying for Unemployment Compensation (UC) benefits as well as resources available to impacted employees are provided at the initial Rapid Response orientation. Additionally, information regarding workshops, training opportunities, staff-assisted job search, counseling services for those affected by the loss of their job, and information surrounding financial planning and navigation services are made available at the orientation.

Affected employees are encouraged to utilize programming and visit the Computer Resource Center (CRC) on site at PA CareerLink® Chester County, when able. Provided there is a need, PA CareerLink® Chester County staff make arrangements to provide special PA CareerLink® orientation and registration sessions for impacted employees to ensure that they are in compliance with the work search requirements to receive unemployment compensation.

Whenever possible, local staff acts proactively and is available to provide similar assistance to employers and employees impacted by a layoff of less than the WARN threshold.

410. *How will the local board coordinate relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities with workforce investment activities to support strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of service(s).*

The Chester County Workforce Development Board actively partners with the three Technical College High Schools in the county, as well as Delaware County Community College. These partnerships extend to sharing of data, committee participation, grant collaboration, program development, High Priority Occupation petitions, and much more. Activities include: increased active partnership between WIOA Youth programming and the Technical College High Schools, meetings and workgroups regarding career pathways, exploration of apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs, and expansion of certification programs to meet job seeker demand. The Chester County WDB also maintains an active partnership with the Chester County OIC, which provides Title II Adult Basic Education in Chester County. The Chester County OIC is a partner in the PA CareerLink® Chester County and currently operates the only GED test center in the county, which is also located at the PA CareerLink® Chester County and readily accessible to participants in all workforce programs.

Beyond those ongoing active partnerships, the Chester County WDB frequently collaborates with other education entities for special projects and programs. Student engagement is conducted by all Industry Partnerships in Chester County, as well as educator outreach and industry visits to demonstrate workforce needs and opportunities to educators. All Industry Partnership boards include at least one representative of education. Staff of the Chester County WDB and PA CareerLink® Chester County present to middle and secondary schools, staff and students, in the county regarding High Priority Occupations and other valuable information, such as how to interview for a first job.

The Chester County Economic Development Council (CCEDC), which administers Industry Partnerships in Chester County, also administers the Business Education Partnership (BEP) grant, leveraging already strong relationships with employers to make connections for education. This grant aims to complete the following activities;

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- Bring together representatives from industry, school districts, youth-serving agencies, and local colleges to act as an advisory committee.
- Provided training for up to ten high school counselors regarding the development of effective school counseling plans incorporating PA Career Education and Work Standards.
- Offer career events for up to thirty high school counselors and teachers to visit three to four employer sites to learn about industries and high priority occupations.
- Deliver up to six career showcase events for high school and out-of-school youth.
- Annually offer three to five parent/student Industry Focus nights to provide relevant industry and career information.
- Collaborate on up to three career fairs for high school students.
- Development and maintenance of the CareerReadyChesco website to provide labor market and career information to students and their families.

The secondary Perkins provider, the Chester County Intermediate Unit (CCIU), has a seat on the WDB with the Director of Career, Technical, and Customized Education. The postsecondary Perkins provider, Delaware County Community College (DCCC)'s Dean of the division of Workforce Development and Community Education, also has a seat on the WDB and is also a partner in the PA CareerLink® Chester County. Chester County WDB and PA CareerLink® Chester County staff participate on the Perkins V Stakeholder Meetings, currently being held twice a year, and an expanded group of staff participate in the Comprehensive Needs Assessment every two years.

All Industry Partnerships administered by the Chester County Economic Development Council in Chester County share the results of their employer training requests in order to assist Perkins providers in meeting employer and job seeker needs. As per Perkins guidelines, these active partnerships create a critical teacher and workforce link through professional development, including visits and occupational advisory participation, technology donations, and advisory group participation. The secondary and post-secondary Perkins providers listed also create a link for parents and students regarding the path from secondary school to a post-secondary opportunity and then to a career.

Representatives from both the Chester County Workforce Development Board and PA CareerLink® Chester County attend all regularly-scheduled Perkins committee meetings at the Chester County Intermediate Unit. During the biennial career and technical education comprehensive needs assessment that participation increases to include the provision and selection of labor market data resources, more in-depth data analysis, and connections to the expanded list of partners required to participate. For Chester County's postsecondary Perkins provider, Delaware County Community College, the Chester County WDB will coordinate with the Delaware County Workforce Development Board to ensure complete coverage and participate, as both LWDA's are covered by a single institution.

Industry certifications offered in both levels improve the rate of employability for the students. The Chester County WDB will continue to increase information sharing and engagement with these crucial partners through the increase in workshops and information sessions relating to Perkins Programs of Study and other education options for youth and job seekers. Through these partnerships, job seekers will have more opportunities for continuing education relating to Perkins programs of study and training coupled with job search skills.

411. *Describe the plans, assurances and strategies for maximizing coordination, improving service delivery and avoiding duplication of Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.) services and other services provided through the one-stop service delivery system.*

It is the responsibility of the Operator to convene one-stop partners and work toward maximized coordination. The Operator is held accountable for the implementation and operations of the CCWDB Local Plan's service delivery system. Additionally, the Operator further agrees to manage, integrate, coordinate, and conduct oversight of all

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services and resources in the PA CareerLink® Chester County in cooperation with the CCWDB and in accordance with the CCWDB Local Plan. The Operator roles and responsibilities which relate to the goal of maximizing coordination include, but are not limited to:

- Serve as an intermediary with all of the partners at the PA CareerLink® Chester County.
- Develop, distribute, and compile customer satisfaction and interest surveys. Assess customer needs and feedback to make recommendations to partners and the WDB for continuous improvement.
- Work with all partners to ensure that an effective referral mechanism is in place and utilized for the benefit of individual clients and the partners' performance.
- Develop and follow a customer flow to include, but not be limited to, triage of all customers to determine their needs and their applicable Priority of Service status, and ensure service delivery based on that status.
- Ensure the involvement, inclusion, and integration of services with the Title I provider, Youth provider, EARN, Program provider, the United Way Financial Stability Center providers, and all other programs at the PA CareerLink® Chester County.
- Ensure compliance with One-Stop / PA CareerLink® certification criteria.

Additionally, with respect to Wagner-Peyser services, supervisory staff from the Bureau of Workforce Development Partnership was included in the selection of the Operator, is a member of the Chester County WDB and is invited to participate on various WDB committees. Wagner-Peyser staff are also active members of the Business Services Team.

When a job seeker connects with the PA CareerLink® Chester County for the first time, they are directed to the "welcome center" and introduced to the career navigator. This career navigator assists with registration in PA CareerLink® utilizing a form to determine the interests and service needs of the job seekers, and determine their Priority of Service level. Once these have been determined, the participant is referred to the most appropriate entry point for services. During participation in any workforce development program, co-enrollment and partner referral will be seamless to the participant to the degree possible. All appropriate programming will be made available to leverage resources and ensure participant success. Partner integration and customer experience is in a state of continuous improvement. The orientation, referral process, and customer flow will be evaluated quarterly and updated as necessary.

Mandatory meetings are held for all staff with the purpose of ensuring that staff remain up to date on the various services and programs available through individual agencies. Team building exercises and staff training activities on topics such as Disability Awareness; Violence Prevention; Dealing with Customers with Tact and Skill; Managing Multiple Priorities; and Customer Service are among the topics included regularly on the meeting agendas.

### *4.12 How will the local board coordinate WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with adult education literacy activities under WIOA Title II?*

The local Title II provider, Chester County OIC, has participated in various stages of the local planning process. The Executive Director of the Chester County OIC is a member of the Chester County Workforce Development Board (WDB), the chair of the Addressing Barriers Committee, and participates in all PA CareerLink® partnership activities.

The local board will carry out the review of adult education and literacy applications as directed by the Department of Education and on the timeline indicated. This review will include the creation of a volunteer ad hoc committee of Board members and staff, which will review the applications and meet to discuss prior to the submission of feedback. WDB staff will ensure that no members of the committee have a real or perceived conflict of interest and will provide any guidance or additional reference materials the committee may need. The committee will review the sections of the applications designated by the Division of Adult Education and provide feedback as requested, including any recommendations for further alignment and return their feedback by the date designated.

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Title II Adult Education is a partner in the PA CareerLink® Chester County, maintaining a full-time classroom, and part-time GED testing services. The Title I provider will ensure that, as appropriate, job seekers are referred between Title I and Title II programs to further integration. Chester County OIC staff work closely with the Title I program providers to determine when particular individuals may benefit from these programs. They provide updated information on all Title I programs in a weekly newsletter that is sent via email to students in all of their education programs. This is updated weekly and includes information about job fairs provided by the PA CareerLink® Chester County and their partners, manufacturing or other industry bootcamps and workshops, soft skills workshops provided by Title I programs and other work-related programs that would benefit any Title II clients. Title I providers are updated on education programs on a regular basis via email flyers, constant contact updates about class schedules and offerings, and by instructors who are based in the PA CareerLink® Chester County and work closely with Title I providers daily.

*4.13 What services, activities and program resources will be provided to participants, including those outlined at WIOA Sec. 3(24), Individuals with a Barrier to Employment, in the local area?*

Every job seeker that engages with the PA CareerLink® Chester County and United Way Financial Stability Center is presented with the same options and universal service selections upon initial contact and intake. A full list of those services can be found in section 4.6 of this plan. Should a job seeker be determined to have barriers to successful employment or self-sufficiency, accommodations and adjustments such as those listed below will be made to help assure the most appropriate services are delivered in a way that leads to positive outcomes.

The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) provides diagnostic, counseling and guidance, training, job search, and restoration services for eligible participants. Eligible OVR customers receive multiple services from qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors that may include but not be limited to: diagnostic, vocational counseling and guidance, vocational evaluation, restoration, training, job placement and pre-employment training services for eligible and potentially eligible high school students with disabilities.

Efforts are made to expand access to “individuals with barriers” population in the following way:

- **Displaced Homemakers:** Displaced homemakers are referred to trainings and other services that fit within the schedule needed to accommodate any children. Additionally, referrals are made for childcare and other supportive services that will help the participant succeed. Workshops are recommended to help displaced homemakers polish their resumes and explain gaps and transferrable skills during the interview process.
- **Low-income individuals:** Low-income individuals receive priority of service at the PA CareerLink® Chester County. Additionally, low income individuals are referred to the United Way Financial Stability Center for guidance in obtaining public assistance, housing, and other supportive services.
- **Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians:** This population only comprises 0.1% of the population in Chester County, with less than 700 people of all ages county-wide. With such a small portion of the local area population, there have not been dedicated efforts to engage this population to date.
- **Individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities:** Various assistive technologies are available at the PA CareerLink® Chester County. Staff receives Disability Awareness Training from OVR staff. Additionally, IEPs for youth who are individuals with disabilities are collected by Career Corps staff for use in adaptations in programming to accommodate disabilities whenever possible.
- **Older Individuals:** Older individuals are frequently engaged through the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), which maintains a presence at the PA CareerLink®. Older individuals are encouraged to take advantage of the workshops and other services that the PA CareerLink® Chester County and United Way Financial Stability Center offers. Specialized workshops such as “Overcoming the Age Barrier” are targeted to assist older individuals.
- **Homeless individuals:** The connection between the PA CareerLink® Chester County and the homeless provider network in Chester County is particularly strong. A referral mechanism is in place for shelters to directly refer clients to job seeker services. Additionally, presentations are done for shelter and other community-based organization staff on an annual basis to discuss the services available. Homeless individuals also frequently

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connect with PA CareerLink® Chester County services through an initial engagement with the United Way Financial Stability Center.

- Youth who are in or who have aged out of the foster care system: The Chester County Department of Children, Youth, and Families (CYF) has representation on the Council for the Workforce of Tomorrow. This representation ensures information sharing between CYF and the Career Corps and results in direct referrals of youth who are in or who are aging out of the foster care system.
- Individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers: 20,523 Chester County residents identify as speaking English “Less than very well” (2015-2019 5-Year ACS Estimates). This population is able to receive assistance through a phone-based translation service, as well as enabling Google Translate on the PA CareerLink® Chester County and Chester County Workforce Development Board websites. Most programming has bilingual English-Spanish staff available. Adult job seekers with low levels of literacy are referred to the Title II provider, Chester County OIC, located at the PA CareerLink® Chester County for concurrent services. The Youth program at Career Corps incorporates academic remediation in regular programming for participants who need it.
- Eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers: The EARN provider , PathStone, Inc., also operates the county’s migrant and seasonal farmworker program out of its location in Kennett Square. This allows PathStone to make referrals and connections where eligible and appropriate.
- Individuals within two years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act: The EARN program is co-located at the PA CareerLink® Chester County and United Way Financial Stability Center. Referrals to job seeker and financial stability services are already strong with a shared goal of self-sufficiency prior to nearing exhaustion of benefits. We anticipate stronger integration between EARN, WIOA Youth, financial stability, and other PA CareerLink® Chester County services with having a single provider for most contracted services.
- Single Parents, including single pregnant women: While historically, the majority of single parents and pregnant women have engaged through the EARN and Work Ready programs or the WIOA Youth program, additional referrals have come through the Chester County Domestic Relations Office, both for custodial and non-custodial parents. This is a relationship and connection the Chester County WDB and PA CareerLink® Chester County hope to continue to strengthen over the coming years.
- Long-term unemployed individuals: This population has been difficult to engage. While we continue to work to improve outreach to the long-term unemployed, the Economic Transition Grant has expanded awareness of PA CareerLink® Chester County programs. This population is only expected to grow through the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### *4.14. What services, activities and program resources will be provided to businesses and employers in the local area?*

The PA CareerLink® Chester County has partnered with the Chester County Chamber of Business and Industry to meet new employers in Chester County and with the Chester County Economic Development Council to engage a varied business population. Specific staff members have been assigned to provide services to individual business customers. Increased collaboration of employer services is a goal for the Business Services Team (BST) and tracking of these services is coordinated by the Title I provider.

The PA CareerLink® Chester County and the United Way Financial Stability Center’s goal is to provide a full range of economic and workforce development services through our partnering agencies to meet the needs of our job seekers and employer customers. The office offers on-site recruitment services to all employers at no charge. Employers may have recruitment events, as well as pre-screening services from staff. A comprehensive calendar is kept to schedule employers. This process has prevented employer conflicts and overlap, providing quality service to both the employer and the job seeker. OVR also provides multiple services to the business community designed to assist businesses with onboarding pre-screened qualified employees with disabilities. OVR on-boarding supports for a qualified new hire can

## Chester County Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Local Area Plan 2021-2024

include reasonable accommodation consultation, initial probationary period wage reimbursement (On-the Job Training-OJT), referral on tax credits or deductions. OVR also offers no-cost consultation on the Americans with Disability Act (ADA), accessibility standards and helping a business to retain current employees following an accident, injury or disability.

The Business Services Team in Chester County consists of representatives from Title I, Title III, and Title IV programming at the PA CareerLink® Chester County, the Chester County Economic Development Council through the Hire One Initiative and Industry Partnerships, and the workforce developers of the EARN and WIOA Youth programming. While all contracted providers and partners actively participate on the Business Services Team, the lead entity tasked with administration and tracking of employer engagement is the current Title I provider, EDSI. Providers use programs including Executive Pulse, Sales Force, and Pennsylvania's Workforce Development System of record, to track employer engagement and retention. For the Title I provider and the employer programs conducted by the CCEDC, the Chester County WDB requires monthly qualitative and quantitative reports detailing employer outreach and engagement. Additionally, Chester County requires quarterly reporting for the strategic business plan. Reports and employer engagement information are shared amongst the members of the BST both electronically and through regularly scheduled meetings and discussions. This tracking helps to streamline BST activities, target outreach while avoiding duplication, determine to what extent employers are engaged, and allow for more effective reporting under the [Chester County Strategic Business Plan, Managing for Results](#). The Chester County WDB has determined that the extent of employer engagement, or the level of participation in workforce development activities and initiatives, is an indicator of employer outcomes beyond that of market penetration or number of business folders in the PA CareerLink® system.

Chester County employers within the in-demand industries are often initially engaged through the Industry Partnerships. Businesses of all sizes and industries are contacted by the Business Services Team, Chester County Chamber of Business & Industry, Board member referral, and the Hire One Task Force.

The Chester County WDB and PA CareerLink® Chester County, with all partners, will continue to stay attuned to the hiring methods being used by employers and adjust programs to meet the needs of the job seekers to compete for these jobs. The PA CareerLink® Chester County and United Way Financial Stability Center supports employers and job seekers with an understanding of the hiring processes through open communication and dialogue. The staff will facilitate conversations with business partners regarding services that may assist them in achieving the fulfillment of customer needs. One of the goals of employer outreach and engagement is to ensure that there is a pool of active employers ready to hire job seekers at all skill levels and in all industries to provide the most effective services possible.

In Chester County there are industry partnerships that work to address the needs of high-priority industries. Those partnerships are administered by the Chester County Economic Development Council (CCEDC). Each partnership is driven by the private sector and has a board, executive committee, and sub-committees that currently address the training, pipeline development, recruiting/hiring, and business resource needs of its employers. In addition to the private sector members, the partnerships have significant representation from all levels of education, chambers of commerce, industry associations, economic development organizations, and the PA CareerLink® Chester County, as well as active representation on the local Workforce Development Board. These partnerships not only convene employers and facilitate industry-focused discussion, they also provide incumbent worker training and youth career exploration, and maintain a network of volunteers.

The PA CareerLink® Chester County offers the following staff-assisted services for employers:

- Assess and test the skills of potential employees prior to hiring
- Coordinate job fairs and recruitment events
- Identify funding to assist with On-the-Job Training for new hires and Incumbent Worker Training for existing employees
- Staff-assisted job postings, resume screening and job referrals
- Employer Folder Management
- Employer Tax Credit Information and Referrals

## Chester County Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Local Area Plan 2021-2024

- On-the-Job Training Reimbursement for New Hires
- Industry Partnership/Incumbent Worker Training opportunities
- Employer Workshop Series
- Labor Market Information for Employers
- Facility Rental

Hire One, a partnership between the Chester County Economic Development Council and the Chester County Workforce Development Board, started as an initiative to encourage employers to hire “just one” person or reduce a layoff by one position. It has since engaged over 200 employers as “Champions,” coached more than 400 job seekers, and engaged in excess of 400 committed private/public organizations. A goal of Hire One is to develop new and innovative strategies for connecting job seekers to hiring employers by leveraging available resources. Through the Hire One Task Force and other networking opportunities, employers also provide valuable insight into the skills and tools that are needed from prospective employers. Armed with this information, Hire One assists the region’s businesses to establish strong, competitive workforces.

The Business Services Team, under the coordination of the Title I provider, is working to maximize data collection and tracking to allow for more effective business engagement without duplication of services.

*4.15. How will the local board coordinate WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with the provision of transportation and other appropriate supportive services in the local area?*

The Financial Stability Center model is a tremendous example of coordination, along with maximizing and leveraging resources. Appropriate partners within the Financial Stability Center will not only co-locate services, but also collaborate on the delivery of services to individuals who need more than workforce development resources. Among the many facets of the Financial Stability Center is the acknowledgment that those who have been out of work often end up facing a number of obstacles beyond their job search, such as financial and emotional challenges that are new to them.

This collaboration offers Chester County residents a core set of employment, financial education, and coaching services, as well as public benefit access in an integrated fashion. The goal is to assist individuals and families in achieving greater economic stability by increasing income, decreasing debt, and building savings and assets. Data collection continues to be refined so that it may be reported as both real-time and accrued data as accurately as possible.

The Financial Stability Center offers three levels of services: core, supportive, and educational. The core services offered to families include two distinct programs: first, navigation and financial coaching and second, counseling to address emotional barriers interfering with employment and the impact of economic hardships and financial worry. Financial coaching and navigation services are offered at either brief or full service levels. These services range from guiding individuals to available health and human services to individualized assessment and planning, financial goal setting, assistance in bundling services to meet individual needs, and on-going guidance through complicated health and human service systems.

In addition, the Financial Stability Center provides individual and group counseling to overcome the stress and emotional burden due to financial hardships and addresses issues interfering with financial stability success. Master level counselors offer group sessions one day per week for one hour, and individual counseling is offered twelve hours per week in one-hour sessions and are available at the one-stop and various locations throughout Chester County.

Supportive services provided at the PA CareerLink® Chester County and United Way Financial Stability Center one-stop location include but are not limited to:

- Family benefit enrollment assistance (CHIP, Medicare, SNAP)

## Chester County Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Local Area Plan 2021-2024

- One-on-one legal clinic (civil matter issues)
- One-on-one interviewing clinics
- One-on-one computer training
- Senior job training
- One-on-one adult English language tutoring
- Free tax preparation services
- Access to work appropriate clothing – off site with transportation available
- Educational sessions on financial, legal and health topics are held monthly

To further the collaboration under the PA CareerLink® Chester County and United Way Financial Stability Center model, all staff attend quarterly information sharing meetings and participant orientations are co-facilitated by both Title I staff and Financial Stability Center staff whenever possible. Collaborative projects have increased, with the Platform to Employment program integrating supportive services through the United Way Financial Stability Center and the community-based partnership grant bringing services to the more difficult to reach areas of the county.

Transportation continues to be a challenge in some areas of the county, but the recent Community Partnership grant will allow the local providers to be mobile and take some PA CareerLink® Chester County services on the road to provide services to the more challenging geographical areas of the county. The Transportation Management Association of Chester County (TMACC) and the Chester County Planning Commission actively participate on the Addressing Barriers committee to continue to discuss transportation-related challenges and address them where possible. Measures taken to alleviate transportation challenges so far include the addition of a bus stop for the Route A bus just across from the PA CareerLink® Chester County and United Way Financial Stability Center, as well as vans utilized by the Career Corps program for participant transportation to the one-stop and other program-related locations.

The workforce development system in Chester County maintains a close relationship with the Chester County Partnership to End Homelessness. This relationship allows for swift referrals and addressing of emergency housing needs on an accelerated basis, leading to the remediation of a housing barrier and a more open path to success in the workforce. As an example of how this unique model works, Diane is a fifty-two year old single women residing in Chester County. Diane was laid off from her former employer due to COVID-19 causing a financial strain on employer. Diane previously provided advertisement and sales services to small businesses. With COVID-19 causing many shutdowns, advertisement and sales were not a priority and caused projects to be suspended and/or cancelled. Diane connected with the PA CareerLink® Chester County and was approved for the Economic Transition Grant.

Diane began training for Project Management to enhance her current skill set and completed her skill set in July 2020. During that time, Diane received financial navigation services and coaching. Supportive service dollars from the Economic Transition Grant allowed Diane to maintain focus on her training and job search. In the months that followed, Diane encountered personal set backs and needed to regain focus on her health; her job search was placed on hold. Diane still struggled to make ends meet and was seeking assistance with her rent. The Financial Navigator referred Diane to the Housing Authority of Chester County for rental assistance. She was quickly approved and encountered the synergy from collaborative efforts and ease in referral processes. As of today, Diane continues to recover from her health concerns and remains in contact with her support systems at the PA CareerLink® Chester County and Open Hearth, Inc.

# Chester County Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Local Area Plan 2021-2024

## 5. COMPLIANCE

- 5.1. *Describe the cooperative agreements that define how all local area service providers will carry out the requirements for integration of and access to the entire set of services available in the local area one-stop delivery system.*

The Memorandum of Understanding, effective July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2023, is executed between the Chester County Workforce Development Board (CCWDB), the PA CareerLink® Chester County One-Stop Partners, and the Board of Chester County Commissioners, collectively known as the "Parties."

This MOU is developed to confirm the understanding of the Parties regarding the operation and management of PA CareerLink® Chester County, which includes a single PA CareerLink® center in the Chester County Local Workforce Development Area (the "Area"). CCWDB provides local oversight of workforce programming for the Area. The One-Stop Operating Budget and Infrastructure Funding Agreement establish a financial plan, including terms and conditions, to fund the services and operating costs of PA CareerLink® Chester County. The Parties agree that joint funding is an essential foundation for an integrated service delivery system and necessary to maintain PA CareerLink® Chester County.

The Vision, Mission, Values, System Structure, Terms and Conditions, One-Stop Operating Budget, and Infrastructure Funding Agreement outlined in the MOU reflect the commitment of the Parties to their job seekers, workers, and business customers, as well as to the overall success of the PA CareerLink® Chester County.

CCWDB seeks to establish a system that stands in stark contrast to the "traditional"/historical transaction-based model, whereby each agency operates its own business and job seeker services functions, and participants move from place to place seeking services. Instead, the goal is to create integrated locations and a unified structure and process of proactive, transparent, and effective job seeker and business services, orchestrated by a seamless collaboration of talent development and support agencies.

The purpose of the MOU is to define the parameters within which education, workforce, economic development, and other Partner programs and entities operating in the Area create a seamless, customer-focused service delivery system that aligns service delivery across the board and enhances access to program services. By realizing one-stop opportunities together, partners are able to build community-benefiting bridges, rather than silos of programmatic isolation. These partnerships will reduce administrative burden and costs and increase customer access and performance outcomes.

Each Partner commits to cross-training of staff, as appropriate, and to providing other professional learning opportunities that promote continuous quality improvement. The center's workforce development front line staff will strive to achieve Certified Workforce Development Professional (CWDP) certification. Partners will further promote system integration to the maximum extent feasible.

Partners agree that the use of high-quality, integrated data is essential to inform decisions made by policymakers, employers, and job seekers. Additionally, it is vital to develop and maintain an integrated case management system, as appropriate, that informs customer service throughout customers' interaction with the integrated system and allows information collected from customers at intake to be captured once. Partners further agree that the collection, use, and disclosure of customers' personally identifiable information ("PII") is subject to various requirements set forth in Federal and Pennsylvania privacy laws. Partners acknowledge that the execution of the MOU, by itself, does not function to satisfy all of these requirements.

The MOU also outlines budgetary and cost-allocation methods and requirements, as well as equal opportunity and non-discrimination clauses. Descriptions of services and additional information for each signatory is also included within the complete document.

## Chester County Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Local Area Plan 2021-2024

5.2. *What is the process the local board uses to ensure the collection of the debts of lower-tier sub-recipients, because of audits?*

Due to a robust fiscal monitoring process, this is not an issue that Chester County has encountered with its workforce providers. Under this process, corrective action plans are requested and utilized as a first step towards resolving any issues or perceived high risk activities. If an audit indicates a debt owed or disallowed cost, staff will follow-up with an on-site monitoring of the issue. Should the monitoring confirm the finding in the audit, a letter would be issued indicating the finding, the amount due to be returned, and a due date. Should this occur, a provider would be noted as “High Risk” in the Risk Assessment stage of monitoring for the next year and monitored accordingly. Non-compliance with the initial disallowed cost letter will result in referral to the Chester County Controller’s Office for next steps and the potential action of no longer contracting with the provider concerned.

5.3. *What action(s) is the local board taking (or will take) towards becoming or remaining a high-performing board?*

The Chester County Workforce Development Board will implement the actions necessary to become or remain a high-performing board once related guidance has been issued by the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry. Staff will continue to routinely monitor federal and state best practices to identify possibilities to further the continuous improvement goal of this plan.

The Chester County WDB is proud of having a very active board, with an 80% participation rate. There are five standing committees under the WDB, all of which are chaired by a Board member and which take an active role in the guidance and oversight of programming and administration. Requests for ad hoc committee participation, such as the RFP Committee, are met with engaged and detail-oriented volunteers who contribute their time and energy to ensuring activities that complement the WDB’s mission and forward-thinking vision, as well as determining detailed expectations for selected providers.

The desire for continued innovation has always guided the Chester County WDB in its choices and activities, including the incorporation of the EARN program within the one-stop, the partnering with and co-location of the United Way Financial Stability Center to offer holistic services to job seekers, and strong economic development partnerships leading to robust employer engagement and youth career exploration opportunities. This spirit of innovation has carried the local workforce development system through the COVID-19 crisis and will be essential to adapt to post-COVID challenges.

5.4. *What is the process the local board uses to provide an opportunity to have input into the development of the local plan, particularly for representatives of business, education, labor organizations, program partners, public agencies and community stakeholders?*

The Chester County Workforce Development Board (WDB) held a strategic planning session via Zoom on Friday, January 15, 2021. This session included volunteers from the WDB. The Chester County WDB reviewed, discussed, and approved the Vision statement and Goals at the January 27, 2021 public meeting.

During the plan development, the following committees, comprised of board members and system stakeholders, met to discuss and offer feedback to relevant aspects of the plan:

- Executive Committee, January 12 and February 9
- Business Services Team, January 12 and February 9
- Council for the Workforce of Tomorrow, February 10
- Addressing Barriers, February 10

## Chester County Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Local Area Plan 2021-2024

5.5. *What is the process the local board uses to provide a 30-day public comment period prior to plan submission?*

Notification of the public comment period was given via the Chester County Daily Local News and the Chester County WDB's electronic newsletter, which reaches 785 people, including representatives of business, education, labor organizations, program partners, public agencies, and community stakeholders. Information regarding the plan and public comment period was also posted on the Chester County Workforce Development Board website, and the Facebook page of the Chester County Department of Community Development. The public comment period ran from Wednesday, February 24, 2021 through Friday, March 26, 2021. An additional opportunity for public comment on the plan was a public hearing embedded in the March 24, 2021 WDB meeting. A presentation highlighting the plan and opportunity for discussion was included in the agenda.

For received public comments and responses regarding the regional plan, refer to the Fiscal Years 2021-2024 WIOA Regional Plan – Southeast PA Attachment 1 – Regional Plan Public Comment

The Chester County WDB received two public comments, which are attached. One, from The Wardrobe, which requests additional regional coordination of services for the clothing insecure, and one from the Vice President of the Coatesville Community Education Foundation. Staff will meet with the commenters to discuss his feedback.

# Chester County Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Local Area Plan 2021-2024

## ATTESTATIONS

By checking the box adjacent to each line item, the local board attests to ensuring the compliance components and documents listed are (or will be) in place and effective prior to June 30, 2021.

The following components and documents, including local workforce system policies, must be reviewed and revised as to be aligned with WIOA for the current planning cycle. Each item must be available to L&I at any time during the planning process and monitoring or auditing processes. L&I is not requiring copies of such documents to be attached to regional or local area plans at this time.

- ✓ The Chester County Local Workforce Development Area attests that each of the below referenced policies contain any required language or content and were last revised, if necessary, by this plan's effective date.
- ✓ Agreement between all counties and other local governments, if applicable, establishing the consortium of local and chief elected officials.
- ✓ Agreement between the chief elected official(s) and the fiscal agent, if a fiscal agent is designated.
- ✓ Agreement between the local area elected official(s) and the LWDB.
- ✓ LWDB policy and process that provides for nomination, appointment and removal of board members; resolutions; bylaws; code of conduct; and conflict of interest.
- ✓ Financial management policy and process including cost allocation plan; internal controls; cash management; receipts of goods; cost reimbursement; inventory and equipment; program income; travel reimbursement; audit requirements and resolution; annual report; property management; debt collection; and allowable costs.
- ✓ Local area procurement policy that must describe formal procurement procedures.
- ✓ Local area MOU.
- ✓ Program management policies and processes addressing, at a minimum, layoff assistance; equal opportunity for customers; complaints and grievances; supportive services; needs related payments; incentives; file management; eligibility determination and verification; self-sufficiency criteria; self-attestation and certification random sampling; priority of service; stipends and incentives; training verification/refunds; individual training accounts; contracts for training services; statewide training providers list and eligibility verification; local area training provider list and eligibility criteria and process; "additional assistance" definition; transitional jobs thresholds; work-based training policies including incumbent worker training, OJT, CT, and apprenticeship.
- ✓ Risk management policy and process including records retention and public access; public records requests; monitoring, grievance; incident; and disaster recovery plan.
- ✓ Human resources policy and process including employee classification; benefits; holidays and PTO; recruitment and selection; employee development; discipline; layoffs, terminations and severance; sexual harassment; and equal opportunity and non-discrimination.
- ✓ Professional services contract(s) for administrative services such as staffing and payroll, if applicable.



## Chester County Workforce Development Board

Government Services Center  
601 Westtown Road, Suite 365  
West Chester, PA 19380-0990  
Office: (610) 344-6900 | fax: (610) 344-6925  
[www.chesco.org/wib](http://www.chesco.org/wib)

April 1, 2021

Sheila Ireland  
Deputy Secretary for Workforce Development  
PA Department of Labor & Industry  
651 Boas Street, Room 1700  
Harrisburg, PA 17121-0750

On behalf of the Chester County Workforce Development Board (WDB), I approve the submission of the Program Year 2021-2024 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Regional and Local Plans for the Southeast Region and Berks, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia counties. These documents are being submitted for your review with the concurrence, support, and approval of the Chester County WDB at its meeting on March 24, 2021, as per WIOA regulations WSP# 109-01, Change 1. The regional and local plans provide the framework in defining how a designated area's workforce development system will achieve the purposes of WIOA. Therefore, regional and local working sessions were scheduled and local committees and stakeholders were consulted in the development and drafting of the plans. The Chester County WDB approved the vision statement and goals drafted by an ad hoc committee of Board volunteers at their January 27, 2021 meeting.

The Chester County WDB solicited public input in accordance with WIOA Sec. 107 and 20CFR Part 679 for the period of February 24, 2021 to March 26, 2021. The plans were available for review on the [www.chesco.org/wib](http://www.chesco.org/wib) webpage and a public legal notice was published in the Daily Local News. Electronic notice also went out to newsletter subscribers. Proof of online posting and publication of the legal notice are included in the submission. Information regarding any comments received can be found in section 5.5 of the plan.

If you have any questions or need additional assistance, please do not hesitate to contact Patrick Bokovitz by telephone at 610-344-6959 or via email at [pbokovitz@chesco.org](mailto:pbokovitz@chesco.org).

Our signatures below certify that we approve the submission of the PY 2021-2024 WIOA Regional and Local Plans to the PA Department of Labor & Industry.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Marian Moskowitz'.

Marian Moskowitz  
Chair  
Chester County Board of Commissioners

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Jennifer Duff'.

Jennifer Duff  
Chair  
Chester County Workforce Development Board



# THE COUNTY OF CHESTER



COMMISSIONERS  
Marian D. Moskowitz  
Josh Maxwell  
Michelle Kichline

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONERS  
313 W. Market Street, Suite 6202  
P.O. Box 2748  
West Chester, PA 19380-0991  
(610) 344-6100

June 30, 2021

Sheila Ireland  
Deputy Secretary for Workforce Development  
PA Department of Labor & Industry  
651 Boas Street, Room 1700  
Harrisburg, PA 17121-0750

Dear Ms. Ireland;

I have reviewed the submitted revisions to the 2021-2024 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Regional and Local Plans for the Southeast Region and Chester County, as well as the minutes from the May 26, 2021 Chester County Workforce Development Board meeting, indicating the Board has approved the submitted revisions.

I approve of the updated submission of the Southeast Region and Chester County 2021-2024 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act plans.

If you have any questions or need additional assistance, please do not hesitate to contact Patrick Bokovitz by telephone at 610-344-6959 or via email at [pbokovitz@chesco.org](mailto:pbokovitz@chesco.org).

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Marian Moskowitz".

Marian D. Moskowitz, Chair  
County of Chester, Board of Commissioners'

Pennsylvania WIOA Plans Submission Checklist  
Fiscal Year 2021-2024 WIOA Regional and Local Area Plans

This checklist is used to ensure completeness; indicate each submitted item prior to emailing this form and items listed below to [RA-LI-BWDA-Policy@pa.gov](mailto:RA-LI-BWDA-Policy@pa.gov) .

X	Cover Letter <i>(see submission cover letter template and page 4 of guide for additional details)</i>
X	Regional Plan <i>(if in a planning region)</i> and Local Area Plan saved in Microsoft Word
X	Provided documentation of public notice/public comment <i>(see pages 3-5 of guidance for additional details)</i>
X	Attestations Completed
X	Attachment 1: Local Area WIOA Title I Programs Performance Accountability Table
X	Attachment 2: Local Workforce Development System Organizational Chart
X	Attachment 3: Local Workforce Development System Program Partner-Provider List
X	Attachment 4: Local Workforce Development System Supporting Data
	Option 1 or 2 is only used when submitting a planned two-year <u>modification</u> :
	Option 1: WIOA Plan Review and Modification Form (Local Area Plan)
	Option 2: If in a planning region, the designated point of contact will complete the <u>WIOA Plan Review and Modification Form</u> (Regional Plan) <i>and will disperse</i> the <u>Planning Region CEO and LWDB Chair Dated Signatures Supplemental Form</u> (Regional Plan) to the rest of the planning region.  WIOA Plan Review and Modification Form (Local Area Plan)
	Only use Option 3 when submitting a modification <u>NOT within a two-year modification period</u> :
	Option 3: If in a planning region <i>and</i> the LWDB's Local Area Plan modification is deemed to provide a minor impact on the Planning Region, the <u>Planning Region CEO and LWDB Chair Dated Signatures Supplemental Form</u> (Local Area Plan) is used.  WIOA Plan Review and Modification Form (Local Area Plan)

Chester County Local Area  
2021-2024  
WIOA Multi-Year Local Plan

**ATTACHMENT 1**  
**Performance Measures**

## Attachment 1: WIOA Title I Programs Performance Accountability Table

The Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry, or L&I, negotiates WIOA Title I programs performance goals with the U. S. Department of Labor on a two-year program cycle, which aligns with the WIOA planning requirement of reviewing WIOA Local Area Plans every two years. In an effort designed to meet or exceed the state WIOA performance goals, PA negotiates these same goals with PA’s local workforce development areas, or LWDA, to optimally set each local area’s WIOA Title I performance goal levels so that, collectively, the state negotiated performance goals are met or exceeded.

The *WIOA Title I Programs Performance Accountability Table* is for the benefit of the public and must be updated accordingly. Local boards must edit the table’s two columns with the appropriate program year(s) to correctly match the most recent\* LWDA-negotiated performance goals and attained performance results. This completed table must be publicly posted with the local area plan. The LWDB does not need to perform a WIOA plan modification as this table is revised; email notification to local area workforce development stakeholders will suffice.

LWDA Name: Chester County		
WIOA Title I Programs (Adult-Dislocated Worker-Youth) Performance Measures	LWDA’s WIOA Title I Programs <u>Negotiated Performance Goals</u> - *Program Year(s): 2020 – 2021	LWDA’s WIOA Title I Programs <u>Attained Performance Results</u> - *Program Year: 2020 Q2
<b>Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)</b>	<b>Negotiated Goals</b>	<b>Attained Performance</b>
Adult	73%	89.5%
Dislocated Worker	82%	82.1%
Youth	60%	62.2%
<b>Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)</b>	<b>Negotiated Goals</b>	<b>Attained Performance</b>
Adult	72%	66.7%
Dislocated Worker	76%	68.8%
Youth	60%	55.4%
<b>Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)</b>	<b>Negotiated Goals</b>	<b>Attained Performance</b>
Adult	\$6,000	\$7,368
Dislocated Worker	\$8,600	\$12,797
Youth	\$2,750	\$3,370
<b>Credential Attainment Rate</b>	<b>Negotiated Goals</b>	<b>Attained Performance</b>
Adult	65%	92.9%
Dislocated Worker	65%	91.2%
Youth	72%	66.7%
<b>Measurable Skill Gains</b>	<b>Negotiated Goals</b>	<b>Attained Performance</b>
Adult	38%	12.5%
Dislocated Worker	32%	50%
Youth	57%	0.0%

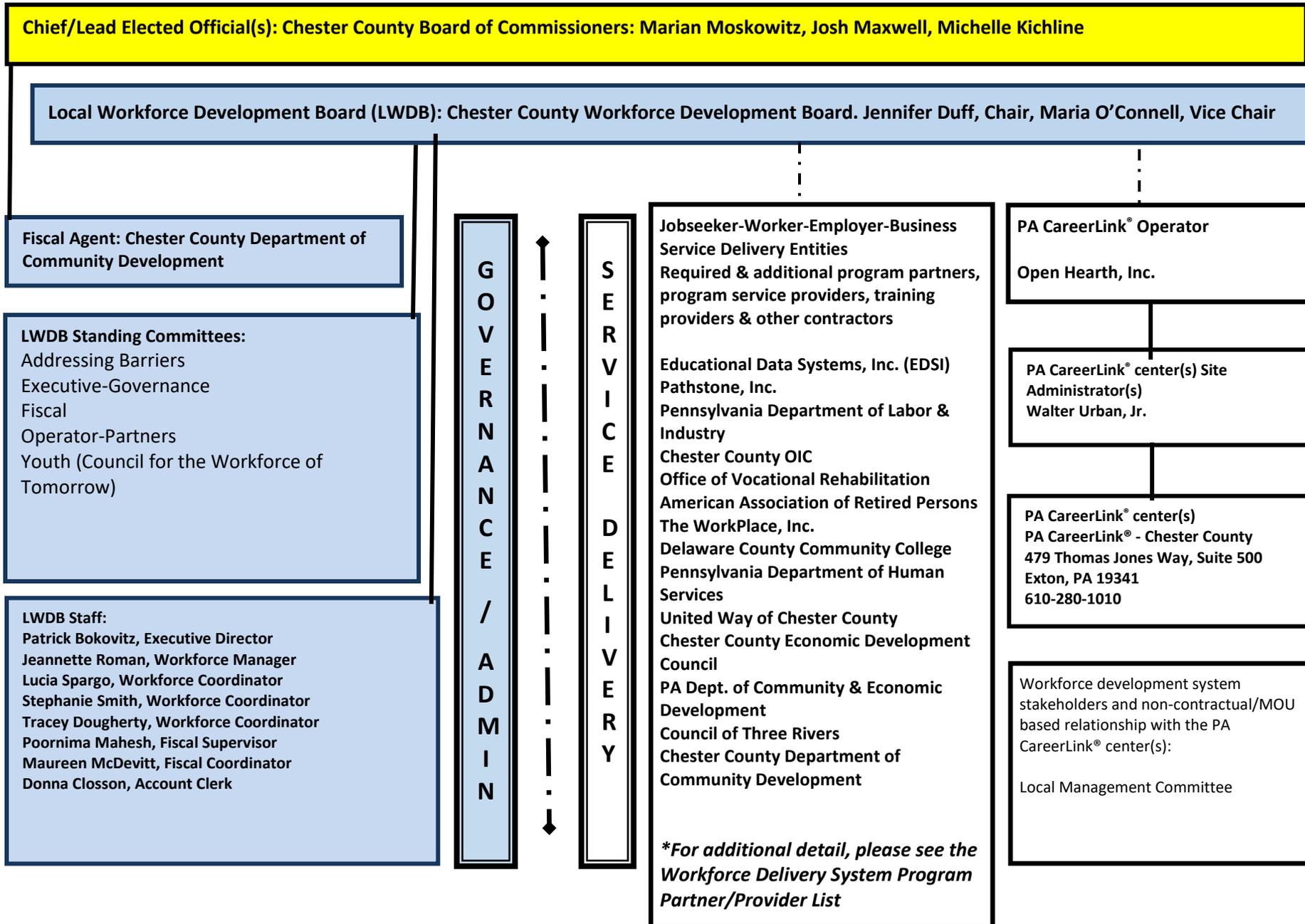
Chester County Local Area  
2021-2024  
WIOA Multi-Year Local Plan

**ATTACHMENT 2**  
**Organizational Chart**

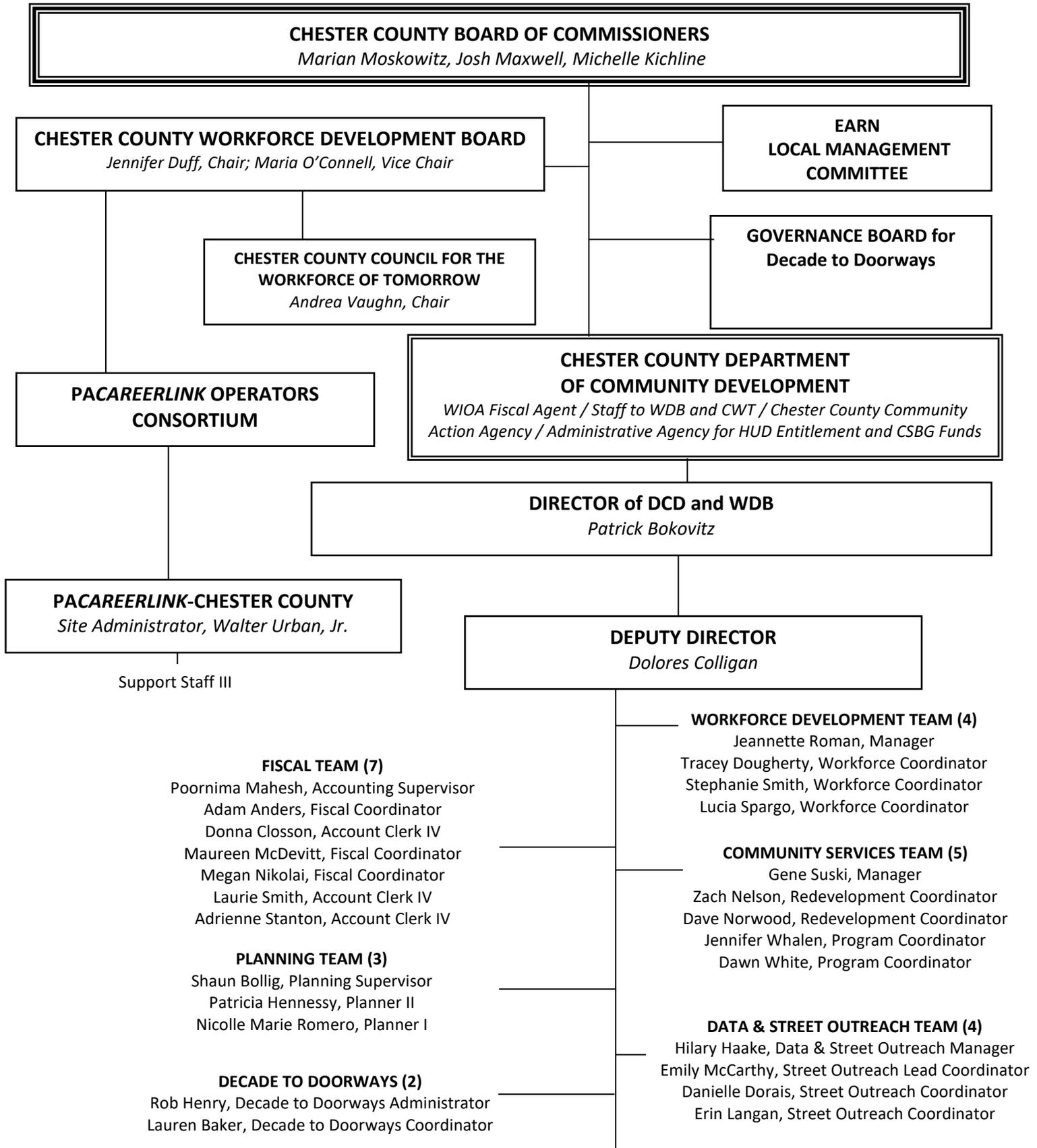
**PY 2021-2024 WIOA Multi-Year Regional/Local Area Plan  
Local Workforce Development Area Workforce System Organizational Chart**

Local Workforce Development Area name: Chester County

Effective Date: July 1, 2021



# CHESTER COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



Chester County Local Area  
2021-2024  
WIOA Multi-Year Local Plan

**ATTACHMENT 3**  
**Workforce Delivery System**  
**Program Partner/Provider List**

## Chester County Partner/Provider List

Partner Program	Partner Organization	Authorization/Category	Most Recent Signatory Official	Contact Information	Locat ed
Adult Education and Literacy Activities	<b>Chester County Opportunities Industrialization Centers, Inc.</b>	WIOA Title II	Maryann Stravous, Director of Workforce Education	22 North 5 <sup>th</sup> Avenue Coatesville, PA 19320 610-692-2345 <a href="mailto:mstravous@cc-oic.org">mstravous@cc-oic.org</a>	YES
Employment and Training Activities Carried out under Community Service Block Grant	<b>Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development</b>	Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. §9901 et seq.)	Neil Weaver, Executive Deputy Secretary for the CE Executive Office	Patrick Bokovitz, Executive Director 601 Westtown, Road, Suite 365 West Chester, PA 19380-0990 610-344-6900 <a href="mailto:pbokovitz@chesco.org">pbokovitz@chesco.org</a>	YES
Jobs for Veterans State Grant	<b>Pennsylvania Department of Labor &amp; Industry, Bureau of Workforce Programs and Operations</b>	Activities authorized under Chapter 41 of Title 38, United States Code	Ruben Pachay, Director	Marybeth Ferguson, Assistant Regional Director 610-280-1027 <a href="mailto:maryfergus@pa.gov">maryfergus@pa.gov</a>	YES
Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Program	<b>PathStone Corporation</b>	WIOA Title I, §167	Nita R. D'Agostino, CWDP Executive Director, Program Development Administration	610-925-5600 <a href="mailto:ndagostino@pathstone.org">ndagostino@pathstone.org</a>	YES
Native American Programs	<b>Council of Three Rivers</b>	WIOA Title I, §166	Lauren Garret, WIOA Employment & Training Counselor	120 Charles St. Pittsburg, PA 15238 412-782-4457 <a href="mailto:lgarret@cotraic.org">lgarret@cotraic.org</a>	NO
Postsecondary Career & Technical Education – Programs Authorized under Carl D. Perkins Act of 2006	<b>Delaware County Community College</b>	Carl D. Perkins Act	Susan Rapp	901 South Media Line Road, Media, PA 19063 610-359-5040 <a href="mailto:srapp@dccc.edu">srapp@dccc.edu</a>	YES
Senior Community Service Employment Program Employment and Training Activities	<b>AARP Foundation</b>	Activities authorized under Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. §3056 et seq.)	Veronica Brown	610-375-2576 <a href="mailto:vbrown@aap.org">vbrown@aap.org</a>	YES
Senior Community Service Employment Program Employment and Training Activities	<b>The Workplace</b>	Activities authorized under Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. §3056 et seq.)	Michael Stokes, SCSEP Manager The Work Place	350 Fairfield Avenue Bridgeport, CT 06604 203-610-8588 <a href="mailto:mstokes@workplace.org">mstokes@workplace.org</a>	YES
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program	<b>Pennsylvania Department of Human Services</b>	Programs authorized under Part A of the Title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. §601 et seq.)	Michelle Livingston, Executive Director of the Chester County Assistance Office at the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services	717-243-4431 <a href="mailto:dkuba@pa.gov">dkuba@pa.gov</a>	YES
Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)	<b>Pennsylvania Department of Labor &amp; Industry, Bureau of Workforce Programs and Operations</b>	Activities authorized under Chapter 2 of Title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. §2271 et seq.)	Ruben Pachay, Director	Marybeth Ferguson, Assistant Regional Director 610-280-1027 <a href="mailto:maryfergus@pa.gov">maryfergus@pa.gov</a>	YES
Unemployment Compensation Programs	<b>Pennsylvania Department of Labor &amp; Industry</b>	Programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws (in accordance with applicable Federal law)	William Trusky, UC Deputy Secretary	Karen Campbell, UC Fiscal Management Specialist 717-783-7107 <a href="mailto:karencam@pa.gov">karencam@pa.gov</a>	NO
Vocational Rehabilitation State Grant Programs	<b>Pennsylvania Department of Labor &amp; Industry, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation</b>	WIOA Title IV – Programs authorized under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. §720 et seq.) (other than Section 112 or Part C of Title I of such Act (29 U.S.C. §§732 and 741))	Shanae Stallworth, Acting District Administrator/ Transition Coordinator	Norristown District Office 1875 New Hope Street Norristown, PA 19401-3146 484-250-4340 ext. 145 <a href="mailto:stallwort@pa.gov">stallwort@pa.gov</a>	YES
Wagner-Peyser Employment Services, Rapid Response, and Foreign Labor Certification	<b>Pennsylvania Department of Labor &amp; Industry, Bureau of Workforce Programs and Operations</b>	WIOA Title III – Programs authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. §49 et seq.)	Ruben Pachay, Director	Marybeth Ferguson, Assistant Regional Director 610-280-1027 <a href="mailto:maryfergus@pa.gov">maryfergus@pa.gov</a>	YES
Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker Employment and Training Activities	<b>Chester County Department of Community Development (EDSI: Provider)</b>	WIOA Title I, Subtitle B - Programs authorized under Workforce Investment Activities and Providers	Patrick Bokovitz, Executive Director	601 Westtown, Road, Suite 365 West Chester, PA 19380-0990 610-344-6900 <a href="mailto:pbokovitz@chesco.org">pbokovitz@chesco.org</a>	YES
Job Corps	<b>Philadelphia Job Corps Science Institute Center</b>			2810 S 20th St Bldg 12 Philadelphia, PA 19145-5001 800-733-5627(JOBS) Website: <a href="https://philadelphia.jobcorps.gov">https://philadelphia.jobcorps.gov</a>	NO
EARN Program	<b>Chester County Department of Community Development (PathStone: Provider)</b>	Additional Partner	Patrick Bokovitz, Executive Director	601 Westtown, Road, Suite 365 West Chester, PA 19380-0990 610-344-6900 <a href="mailto:pbokovitz@chesco.org">pbokovitz@chesco.org</a>	YES
GED Test Center	<b>Chester County Department of Community Development (CC OIC: Provider)</b>	Additional Partner	Patrick Bokovitz, Executive Director	601 Westtown, Road, Suite 365 West Chester, PA 19380-0990 610-344-6900 <a href="mailto:pbokovitz@chesco.org">pbokovitz@chesco.org</a>	YES
	<b>Sector Partnership</b>	Additional Partner	Patrick Bokovitz, Executive Director	601 Westtown, Road, Suite 365 West Chester, PA 19380-0990 610-344-6900 <a href="mailto:pbokovitz@chesco.org">pbokovitz@chesco.org</a>	YES

Chester County Local Area  
2021-2024  
WIOA Multi-Year Local Plan

**ATTACHMENT 4**  
**Supporting Data Form**

Attachment 4: Local Workforce Development System Supporting Data

Template:

LWDA Name: Chester County

Section \_\_: ALL DATA IS CITED IN THE LOCAL PLAN NARRATIVE \_\_\_\_\_

*Input Data Graphic*

*Note: under data graphic, cite data source.*

Chester County Local Area  
2021-2024  
WIOA Multi-Year Local Plan

**ATTACHMENT 5**  
**Public Participation and**  
**Board Approval**

## PUBLIC NOTICE

### Chester County Department of Community Development

Notice is hereby given that the Chester County Department of Community Development (DCD) and the Chester County Workforce Development Board (CCWDB) have issued a Draft Local Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Multi-Year Plan, as well as the Southeast Pennsylvania Regional WIOA Multi-Year Plan in accordance with the requirements set forth by the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry. These plans outline strategies for service delivery among local boards and partners, at a local and regional level, within the public workforce development system. The Southeast Pennsylvania Planning Region, consists of six single-county Local Workforce Development Areas: Berks, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia.

The Local and Regional WIOA Plans can be accessed online at [www.chesco.org/wib](http://www.chesco.org/wib)

DCD and the CCWDB will accept public comments on this plan for 30 days, from Wednesday, February 24th through 4:00 p.m., Friday, March 26, 2021.

Written comments should be addressed to:

Patrick Bokovitz, Director

**Department of Community Development**

601 Westtown Road, Suite 365

P.O. Box 2747

West Chester, PA 19380-0990

[ccdcd@chesco.org](mailto:ccdcd@chesco.org)

**PHILADELPHIA GROUP**

**AFFIDAVIT OF PUBLICATION**  
307 Derstine Avenue • Lansdale, PA 19446

**CHESCO DEPT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**  
**601 WESTTOWN RD, STE 365**  
**WEST CHESTER, PA 19382**  
**Attention:**

**STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA,**  
**COUNTY OF MONTGOMERY**

The undersigned Sharon Dietz, being duly sworn the he/she is the principal clerk of Daily Local News, Daily Local News Digital, published in the English language for the dissemination of local or transmitted news and intelligence of a general character, which are duly qualified newspapers, and the annexed hereto is a copy of certain order, notice, publication or advertisement of:

**CHESCO DEPT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

**Published In the following edition(s):**

Daily Local News                    02/21/21  
Daily Local News Digital        02/21/21

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
NOTARIAL SEAL  
MAUREEN SCHMID, Notary Public  
Lansdale Boro., Montgomery County  
My Commission Expires March 31, 2021

Sworn to the subscribed before me this 2/23/21.

Maureen Schmid  
**Notary Public, State of Pennsylvania**  
**Acting In County of Montgomery**

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

Chester County Department  
of Community Development

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Written comments should be addressed to:  
Patrick Bokovitz, Director  
Department of Community Development  
601 Westtown Road, Suite 365  
P.O. Box 2747  
West Chester, PA 19380-0990  
[ccdcd@chesco.org](mailto:ccdcd@chesco.org)  
DLN 2/21; 1a

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## PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the Chester County Workforce Development Board will meet via ZOOM on Wednesday, March 24, 2021, at 8:30 am, Eastern Time (US and Canada), to discuss issues relevant to the oversight of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) programs in Chester County. To review the meeting agenda, please visit:

<https://www.chesco.org/3803/Board-Meetings>

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/93306848038?pwd=VmliYTVtRE1kRFZuTIRMVUViMDBUdz09>

Meeting ID: 933 0684 8038

Passcode: 090361

One tap mobile

+19292056099,,93306848038#,,,,\*090361# US (New York)

+13017158592,,93306848038#,,,,\*090361# US (Washington DC)

During this meeting, a presentation regarding the WIOA Plan 2021-2024 will be given and public comment accepted.

The Local and Regional WIOA Plans can be accessed online at [www.chesco.org/wib](http://www.chesco.org/wib)

Please contact the Department of Community Development (DCD) at 610-344-6900 in advance of the meeting if you plan to attend and are in need of an interpreter. In addition, if you are a person with a disability who wishes to attend the meeting, or provide comments, and you require an auxiliary aid, service, or other accommodation to do so, please contact DCD to discuss how your needs may best be accommodated. The location of the meeting is accessible to persons with disabilities.



**From:** [Chester County Workforce Development Board](#)  
**To:** [Hennessy, Patricia W.](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] - WIOA Plan Public Comment Period  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 24, 2021 9:30:45 AM

**EXTERNAL:** Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

# Workforce Developments



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## Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act 2021-2024 Local Plan Posted February 2021

[Visit WDB Website](#)

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The Chester County Workforce Development Board (CCWDB) has issued a Draft Local Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Multi-Year [Plan](#), as well as the Southeast Pennsylvania Regional WIOA Multi-Year [Plan](#) in accordance with the requirements set forth by the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry. These plans outline strategies for service delivery among local boards and partners, at a local and regional level, within the public workforce development system. The Southeast Pennsylvania Planning Region, consists of six single-county Local Workforce Development Areas: [Berks](#), [Bucks](#), [Chester](#), [Delaware](#), [Montgomery](#), and [Philadelphia](#).

The CCWDB will accept public comments on these plans for 30 days, from Wednesday, February 24th through 4:00 p.m., Friday, March 26, 2021.

Written comments should be addressed to:  
Patrick Bokovitz, Director  
Department of Community Development  
601 Westtown Road, Suite 365  
P.O. Box 2747  
West Chester, PA 19380-0990  
[ccdcd@chesco.org](mailto:ccdcd@chesco.org)

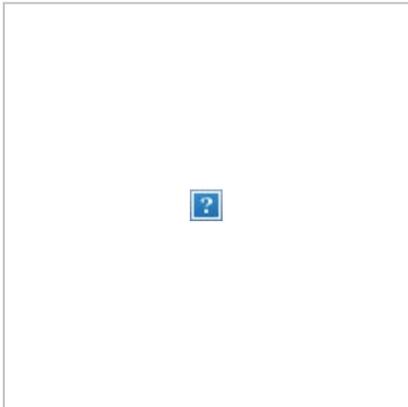
[Click Here to View Plans](#)

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In need of a referral for accessing services or other resources in Chester County? Please call 2-1-1 for free, confidential assistance that is available 24/7.

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### **Board of Commissioners**

Marian D. Moskowitz, Chair  
Josh Maxwell  
Michelle H. Kichline

**STAY CONNECTED**

Three small square icons arranged horizontally, each containing a white question mark on a blue background. These icons represent social media links for Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.

Chester County Department of Community Development | 601 Westtown Road, Suite 365, 601 Westtown Road, Suite 365, West Chester, PA 19380

[Unsubscribe phennessy@chesco.org](mailto:phennessy@chesco.org)  
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---

## Public Comment for 2021-2024 Southeast Pennsylvania Regional and Local Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) Plans

The Plans listed below are posted for a 30 Day Public Comment Period, beginning February 24, 2021 and ending at 4:00 p.m. on March 26, 2021. Written comments should be addressed to:

Patrick Bokovitz, Director  
Department of Community Development  
601 Westtown Road, Suite 365  
P.O. Box 2747  
West Chester, PA 19380-0990  
[ccdcd@chesco.org](mailto:ccdcd@chesco.org)

- [Southeast Pennsylvania Regional Plan](#)
  - [Berks County Local Plan](#)
  - [Bucks County Local Plan](#)
  - [Chester County Local Plan](#)
  - [Delaware County Local Plan](#)
  - [Montgomery County Local Plan](#)
  - [Philadelphia County Local Plan](#)
-

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## Public Comment for 2021-2024 Southeast Pennsylvania Regional and Local Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) Plans

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  - [Chester County Local Plan](#)
  - [Delaware County Local Plan](#)
  - [Montgomery County Local Plan](#)
  - [Philadelphia County Local Plan](#)
-

Workforce  
Development  
Board



ACTIONS



**Patricia H** Last modified on Feb

24, 2021 8:54 AM

Workforce Development Board

## **Chester County Workforce Development Board (WDB) Meeting Minutes**

**Date of Meeting: January 27, 2021**

Location of Meeting: Zoom Video Conferencing Call

**Quorum Present – Yes**

**32 participants**

**Board Members in Attendance:** Bill Adams, Kathi Cozzone, Joyce Chester, Jennifer Duff, Marybeth Ferguson, Erik Gudmundson, Diana Kimmich, James Lee, Matt Meile, Claire Mooney, Maria O’Connell, Chris Saello, Bill Shaw, Shanae Stallworth, Butch Urban, Kirk Williard

**Staff and Public in Attendance:** Patrick Bokovitz, Jeannette Roman, Tracey Dougherty, Stephanie Smith, Shaun Bollig, Trish Waters Hennessy, Maureen McDevitt, Andrea Vaughn, Evelyn Rodriguez, Kelly Raggazino, Katelyn Malis, Jeanne O’Brien, Adam Torr, Bob Steininger, Rick Roberts, Adrienne Cooper

### **I. Call to Order**

The virtual Zoom meeting was called to order by Chair Jennifer Duff at 8:32 a.m. Pat reminded everyone of participation and rules of engagement.

### **II. Welcome and Introductions**

Pat Bokovitz welcomed James Lee, Matt Meile, and Claire Mooney to their first CCWDB meeting.

### **III. Public Comment on Agenda - None**

### **IV. Review and Approve Meeting Minutes from the December 2020 Board Meeting**

- Janet Moran requested an edit be made to the minutes. The approval of the minutes was written as, “A Roll Call was completed. All approved.” Janet arrived late and was not present to approve the October Meeting Minutes.
- Bill Shaw requested an edit be made to the minutes. Bill Adams had been listed in the December minutes as discussing the VITA initiative. The minutes should have read it was Bill Shaw.
- Chris Saello requested an edit be made to the minutes. The minutes read “Chris Saello shared, 3.5 million was recently awarded to local non-profits.” The minutes were edited to the following: “Chris shared, the Chester County Commissioner’s through the Community Foundation awarded 3.5 million dollars to local non-profits.”
- All requested edits were made to the December 2020 minutes. Virtual meetings will now be recorded to help alleviate errors.
- **Janet Moran motioned to approve the December 2020 minutes with recommended edits. Kirk Williard provided the second.**

### **V. Action Items, Discussion and Update Topics**

- 1. Chester County WDB’s 2021-2024 WIOA Local Plan (Jennifer Duff and Trish Hennessy)**
  - a. Jennifer and Pat recently participated on a call with regional directors and chairs.
  - b. The current due date of the Local/Regional Plan is April 2, 2021.
  - c. The Local Plan will be posted mid to late February for a 30 day public comment period.
  - d. The Vision and Goals workgroup met on January 15, 2021 to establish the local goals.
  - e. Vision and Goals (PowerPoint presentation) – Reference page 28 in the packet

- i. We are expected to connect to goals set by the State. The Local goals are as follows:
    1. Career Pathways & Apprenticeship
      - a. Inclusive of education, training, workshops, apprentice opportunities
    2. Industry Diversity
      - a. Focusing on key industry sectors prioritized by the Commonwealth through strategic employer engagement
      - b. Kirk asked if industry diversity
    3. Continuous Improvement
      - a. Local RFP re-design
      - b. Emphasis on partnerships
        - i. Jennifer commented, a lot of emphasis has been placed on the Partnership (PACL UWFSC) and enabling providers to promote new and innovative ideas; slightly different from the State's recommendations in their plan. This goal is reflective of our work on the recent RFP and how we want to leverage the data and partnerships we have and the inputs and information we regularly receive.
    4. Customer Outreach and Experience
      - a. Increase opportunities for job seekers, youth, and employers access to services
    5. Equity and Inclusion
      - a. The Chester County WDB will strive to provide services in an equitable and inclusive manner.
        - i. Trish commented, this goal was initially woven in to the other goals but the group quickly realized this was best to serve as a stand-alone goal.
        - ii. This goal is closely aligned to active efforts within the County's Department of Community Development.
        - iii. Jennifer added, we want to be focused on addressing and eliminating barriers.
        - iv. Pat added, within the Department of Community Development, we have established a working group and a year of planned activities to address Equity and Inclusion as it pertains to internal activities and our external providers.
  - ii. Trish and staff drafted strategies for the goals. All of the active WDB committees will review, update, revise, and provide feedbacks over the next few weeks.
- f. Current Vision Statement: The Chester County Workforce Development Board's (WDB) vision is to offer inclusive and comprehensive programs and services to employers and individuals to foster a healthy economy within Chester County and the Southeast Pennsylvania (SEPA) region.
- i. Jennifer asked for thoughts or comments on the vision statement.
    1. Joyce Chester asked if we should be more definitive on the types of programs and services to keep it in the business and economic vein.
      - a. Erik Gudmundson agreed and suggested the addition of "workforce."
        - i. Kirk Williard emphasized his agreement.
    2. Kathi Cozzone recommended restructuring the sentence so 'individuals' is referenced before 'employers.'

- **Motion to approve the Current Vision statement with the recommended edits made.**
  - Erik Gudmundson moved to approve the motion. Kathi Cozzone provided the second.
  - Pat completed a roll call to approve the motion. All Board Members in attendance at the time of the vote approved.
  
- **Motion to approve the five local goals as presented in the PowerPoint presentation and outlined in the Board packet materials.**
  - Joyce Chester moved to approve the motion. Kathi Cozzone provided the second.
  - Pat completed a roll call to approve the motion. All Board Members in attendance at the time of the vote approved.
  
- **PA CareerLink<sup>(R)</sup> and Career Corps Lease Options (Pat Bokovitz, Jennifer Duff)**
  - a. We have an active lease for each property; Suite 500 & Suite 350, 479 Thomas Jones Way, Exton
    - i. Suite 500 (CareerLink) is set to expire October 31, 2021
    - ii. Suite 350 (Career Corps) is set to expire December 31, 2021
  - b. Pat is seeking feedback and approval to reach out to the Landlord to suggest extending the lease for Suite 500 through June 30, 2022 and to acknowledge the end of the Career Corps lease.
    - i. The Career Corps physical location has been under-utilized as a result of the Pandemic.
      1. Jennifer suggested the two requests be addressed separately.
      2. There were no questions, concerns, or comments related to the extension of the CareerLink lease.
      3. Chris Saello asked what the square footage was for the Career Corps site.
        - a. 5,000+
      4. Chris asked if the intention was to have satellite sites across the County.
        - a. Yes.
      5. Joyce Chester asked if the CareerLink would be the physical address of the Career Corps program.
        - a. Yes.
      6. Joyce asked if YMWIC was still utilizing the Career Corps space.
        - a. Yes. Pat added there's still some time ahead for planning as the lease runs through December 31, 2021.
      7. Jennifer added the Career Corps space saw a decrease in activity prior to COVID-19. This would have likely been a recommendation regardless of current circumstances.
      8. Shanae Stallworth commented she agrees with the recommendation but emphasized the need to take the next few months to determine the best option to locate a facility that would extend reach for Youth programming in Chester County.
  
- **Motion to approve discussion with the Landlord to extend the lease for the PA CareerLink Chester County United Way Financial Stability Center.**
  - Shanae Stallworth moved to approve the motion. Joyce Chester provided the second.
  - Pat completed a roll call to approve the motion. All Board Members in attendance at the time of the vote approved.
  
- **Motion to approve not renewing or extending the Career Corps lease beyond December 31, 2021.**
  - Diana Kimmich moved to approve the motion. Kirk Williard provided the second.

- o Pat completed a roll call to approve the motion. All Board Members in attendance at the time of the vote approved.

### **3. CareerLink Updates (Butch Urban)**

- a. Butch referenced pages 9-18 in the WDB meeting packet.
- b. Chester County is one of the few CareerLink locations in the state to offer in-house activities and services at this time.
- c. To date, 58 participants have attended Full Circle virtual workshops
  - i. 52 participants engaged in some sort of technology workshops
    - a. Jim Lee asked if this is individual participants or if these numbers reflect repeat attendees.
    - i. It's likely that there are repeat attendees.
- d. RESEA shut down late March. The program re-launched earlier this week. It involves an initial orientation and some sort of follow-up activity for participants who are likely to exhaust their unemployment benefits.
- e. EDSI will be offering a Manufacturing Careers Boot Camp. Applications are being accepted through February 12, 2021 for a February 15, 2021 program start.
  - i. Butch asked partners to promote the opportunity.
  - ii. This program is a direct response to employer feedback and an increase in job postings in the manufacturing industry.
  - iii. Please distribute the flyer and follow-up with the contacts listed for more information on the eligibility requirements.
  - iv. Pat asked to provide a shout out to EDSI and Jim Lauckner with the Manufacturing Alliance of Chester and Delaware Counties. Jim engaged employers as a lead-in and there's interest in making direct hires at the conclusion of the program.
- f. Expanding Wi-Fi Capabilities inside and outside of the physical office in Exton. People will have improved Wi-Fi access from the parking lot areas.

### **4. YouthBuild Grant Application (Pat Bokovitz)**

- a. US DOL Employment and Training Administration allocated competitive YouthBuild grant funding for pe-apprenticeship services that support education, occupational skills training, and employment services to at-risk youth, ages 16 to 24, while performing meaningful construction work throughout Chester County.
- b. Chester County will be submitting an \$1 million application for YouthBuild by February 9, 2021 due date. 60 people would be served over a 3 year period and would include 12 months of post-program support.
- c. The partners combining on the project application include Andrea Vaughn and Kirk Williard, Joyce Chester, and trade expertise contributed by Bill Adams.
- d. Sample projects could include Good Works and Habitat for Humanity

## **VI. General Updates, Announcements and Member Comments**

- a. Pat shared the County has established a Social Equity initiative and all departments are addressing the initiative as a priority with the formation of a committee/taskforce.
  - i. We will address what we are doing now and what we will do moving forward in our Local Plan.
  - ii. Jennifer Duff commented, The RFP committee touched on this with making sure there is equitable access to programs; to ensure programs are providing access to all.
- b. Joyce shared Chester County OIC continues to provide GED classes at the CareerLink.

- c. Kirk shared an update on the availability of CCIU trainings like Fork Lift Certs and Welding.
- d. Diana Kimmich provided an update on GETT. The YouTube videos have gotten lots of attention and views and new connections have been made, even internationally.
- e. YMWIC is hosting a February 18<sup>th</sup> panel presentation for youth on the COVID-19 vaccine. In early February there will be a presentation on Civics and the branches of government.

**VII. Public Comments:**

- None

**VIII. Adjourn**

- Bill Shaw moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:52 A.M. Diana Kimmich provided the second.
- Next Zoom meeting: Wednesday, March 24, 2021

## **Chester County Workforce Development Board (WDB) Meeting Minutes**

**Date of Meeting: March 24, 2021**

Location of Meeting: Zoom Video Conferencing Call

**Quorum Present – Yes**

**38 participants**

**Board Members in Attendance:** Jennifer Duff, Maria O’Connell, Bill Adams, Joyce Chester\*, Kathi Cozzone, Marybeth Ferguson, Erik Gudmundson, Karen Kozachyn, Diana Kimmich\*, James Lee\*, Clark McHenry, Claire Mooney, Mike Reese, Chris Saello, Bill Shaw, Stephanie Sherwood, Amanda Sundquist, Butch Urban

**Staff and Public in Attendance:** Patrick Bokovitz, Jeannette Roman, Tracey Dougherty, Stephanie Smith, Lucia Spargo, Shaun Bollig, Trish Waters Hennessy, Maureen McDevitt, Jason Foster, Victoria Smith, Larry Melf, Adam Torr, Patti VanCleave, Andrea Vaughn, Stephanie Miller, Jeanne O’Brien, Katelyn Mallis, Evelyn Rodriguez, Adrienne Cooper, Denean Williams

### **I. Call to Order**

The virtual Zoom meeting was called to order by Chair Jennifer Duff at 8:31 a.m. Pat reminded everyone of participation and rules of engagement.

### **II. Welcome and Introductions**

Jennifer Duff welcomed all in attendance. The proposal today is to record today’s meeting to support the collection of meeting minutes.

### **III. Public Comment on Agenda - None**

### **IV. Review and Approve Meeting Minutes from the January 2021 Board Meeting**

- Kathi Cozzone moved to approve the January 2021 minutes with recommended edits. Stephanie Sherwood provided the second.
- Pat completed a roll call and all members present at the time of review (8:35AM) approved the January 2021 minutes. (Board members with an asterisk\* next to their name were not present at the start of the meeting and therefore did not approve the meeting minutes).

### **V. Action Items, Discussion and Update Topics**

- Jennifer Duff acknowledged Marybeth DiVincenzo with thanks and appreciation for her hard work and contributions as a long-time Board member for approx. 15 years. Marybeth stepped down from the board and left her position with Chester County Economic Development Council in early March. A formal acknowledgement will be sent to Marybeth on behalf of the Workforce Development Board.

#### **1. Statement of Financial Interests for 2020 (Amanda Sundquist)**

- a. Amanda reminded Board members Statement of Financial Interests forms are due May 1<sup>st</sup>.
- b. The State Ethics Act applies to the County and anyone formally elected to a board.
- c. There are consequences for the Board and personal consequences if the forms are not completed and turned in.
- d. Please reference the e-mail Jeannette sent with the formal request and instructions.

- e. When you utilize the electronic form from the State's Ethics web site, the form goes directly to the State. The WDB does not automatically receive a copy. You need to also print a copy to be able to forward it to Jeannette to complete the submission process.
- f. Amanda shared the link in the Zoom Chat window: Hard copy PDF of the Financial Interest form [https://www.ethics.pa.gov/SiteAssets/Pages/Forms-Library/Statement%20Of%20Financial%20Interests%20Rev%2001\\_21.pdf](https://www.ethics.pa.gov/SiteAssets/Pages/Forms-Library/Statement%20Of%20Financial%20Interests%20Rev%2001_21.pdf)
- g. Amanda shared the following in the Zoom chat window: Link to Electronic Form--If you use this method, you still have to send a copy of the form to us as we do not receive copy of the electronic filing. <https://www.ethics.pa.gov/Pages/Online-Filing.aspx>

## 2. Chester County WDB's 2021-2024 WIOA Local Plan (Jennifer Duff and Trish Hennessy)

- a. The due date for this plan is next week: Submission Date of April 2, 2021
- b. This meeting is part of the Public Comment period. Please use the chat for comments you would like to have incorporated into the Public Comment section of the Plan.
- c. Approved plans go into effect on July 1, 2021 and will go on for two years before there is a need for a required modification with the State.
- d. The Public Comment Period window opened February 24<sup>th</sup> and will be open until March 26<sup>th</sup>
- e. Chester County is acting as the point of contact and will be submitting the Regional Plan (for the Southeast Region) as well.
- f. The Vision of the Chester County Workforce Development Board is to offer inclusive and comprehensive workforce programs and services to individuals and employers to foster a healthy economy within Chester County and the Southeastern Pennsylvania (SEPA) region.
- g. The State Plan has 5 goals:
  - i. Career Pathways & Apprenticeship
  - ii. Sector Strategies & Employer Engagement
  - iii. Youth
  - iv. Continuous Improvement of the Workforce Development System
  - v. Strengthening the One-Stop Delivery System
- h. The Southeast Pennsylvania Regional Plan
  - i. The regions are designated by the State and match a PREP region (economic development region). Our region consists of Berks, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia counties.
    - 1. Largest region by population
- i. The Regional Plan has 31 individual goals; a sampling:
  - i. Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on long-term economic outlook
  - ii. Addressing skills gaps
  - iii. Connecting households living in poverty to social safety net and career pathways to sustainable wages
  - iv. Addressing the needs of immigrant populations (the region hosts 58% of immigrant populations)
  - v. Unique needs of returning citizens
  - vi. Access to broadband internet
  - vii. Literacy and Numeracy skills
  - viii. Transportation
- j. The Local Plan has 5 local goals
  - i. Career Pathways
  - ii. Sector Strategies
  - iii. Continuous Improvement

- iv. Customer Reach & Experience
  - v. Equity and Inclusion
- k. The overarching themes include a focus on overall improvement in customer service, improving outcomes, expanding reach, and equity and inclusion
- l. Additional highlights include expansion of apprenticeships, increased regional Title 1 collaboration, furthering co-enrollment to leverage resources for success, improved utilization of data
- m. Trish presented a Chester County Data Sampling
  - i. 2019 population of 524,989
  - ii. 22.7 postgraduate degree rate – the highest in the state
  - iii. 1,953 people were released from prison between 2015-2019
  - iv. 9.4% of Chester County’s population has a disability
  - v. 2,400 discouraged and marginally attached job seekers in Chester County of Chester - DCIS Chester County labor force decreased by 15,000 from December 2019 to December 2020 (primarily COVID-19 related as far as we are able to tell)
    - 1. No longer employed and no longer looking to obtain employment
- n. WIOA and the Local Plan speaks to how we will reach out to individuals with barriers to employment; we use the language of the WIOA act
  - i. Displaced homemakers, low-income individuals, Indians, Alaskan Natives, and Native Hawaiians, Individuals with disabilities, older individuals, homeless individuals, single parents, youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system, individuals with limited English proficiency, migrant or seasonal farm workers, and the long-term unemployed.
    - 1. We use the language of the Act (WIOA).
- o. Important Dates: Public Comment Period – February 24, 2021 – March 26, 2021
- p. Public Presentation, Board Discussion & Approval – March 24, 2021
- q. Submission to Labor & Industry – April 1, 2021
- r. Jennifer Duff thanked Trish and team for their work and contributions to the Local Plan and the Regional Plan for submission.
- s. Jennifer called for comments on the presentation and the Regional Plan – none.
- t. Jennifer called for comments on the Local Plan.
  - i. Claire Mooney asked for clarification on how the data will be used.
    - 1. Trish responded: There’s a lot of available data and the State is also committed to increasing in the availability and enhanced sharing of data.
    - 2. Trish referenced sub-sections in CWDS including EARN program and OVR access.
    - 3. The Center for Workforce Information and Analysis (CWIA) is a state entity working to increase data sharing & analysis based on feedback from the Boards.
    - 4. Locally we utilize a data consultant who provides monthly reports on various labor market information and workforce-related topics.
      - a. The sources are posted on CCWDB web site.
    - 5. Data can be requested from WDB staff at any time.
    - 6. Jennifer added the 2020 RFP Committee called for providers to enhance utilization of the Commonwealth Workforce Development System (CWDS).
    - 7. Pat referenced recent sharing of a manufacturing e-mail to highlight the availability of shared data and approved and financed projects taking place around data.
  - ii. Mike Reese asked if 2020 data was being weighed heavily or if there was a shared understanding and view that 2020 was essentially an anomaly.

1. "Yes." 2020 data is present and addressed but the Plan was written most heavily based on pre-COVID-19 experience and data.
  2. The Board can make adjustments to the plan across a four year period and revisions can be submitted to the State for review and approval if there are any glaring disparities in the data or the path being taken.
    - a. The Board will be submitting a required revision after two years.
- **Motion to approve the Regional Plan for submission and its related components.**
    - Marybeth Ferguson made the motion to approve. Kathi Cozzone provided the second.
    - Pat completed a roll call to approve the motion. All Board Members in attendance at the time of the vote approved.
  - Prior to the vote of the Local Plan, Pat asked Trish to share any received public comments. There was one comment from 'The Wardrobe.' The Wardrobe recommended further local and regional addressing of clothing insecurities for individuals. This comment will be included in our submission and will be addressed by the region and each local area.
    - Pat added we have worked locally with Wings for Success for many years.
  - **Motion to approve the Local Plan for submission including any comments that come in during the Public Comment Period.**
    - Marybeth Ferguson made the motion to approve. Claire Mooney provided the second.
    - Pat completed a roll call to approve the motion. All Board Members in attendance at the time of the vote approved. (9:05AM)
3. **Chester County WDB Provider Update (Jennifer Duff, Jeanne O'Brien, Evelyn Rodriguez, Adam Torr)**
    - a. Providers will be presenting on the current state of their programming and will be opening it up to the Board to ask questions or provide feedback.
    - b. Today or at the next meeting we will be taking a motion to approve provider's contracts for another year; most likely the next meeting.
    - c. Jeanne O'Brien, One Stop Operator at the PA CareerLink Chester County (Open Hearth)
      - i. Jeanne shared examples of outreach to external partners: like visits to the Honeybrook Food Pantry and expanded partnership with the Chester County Food Bank
      - ii. **Overall 3 Key Objectives for the teams**
        1. Focus on overall improvement in customer experience
        2. Improve outcomes: Articulate the quality, quantity, and benefit of services provided
        3. Expand reach: maximize access to Workforce Development services
      - iii. **EARN Programming Overview** – emphasizing a focus on Customer Service Experience – presented by Evelyn Rodriguez, oversees the EARN program operations at the PA CareerLink (PathStone)
        1. Confronting a new reality: while maintaining a high level of engagement allowing individuals to focus on measures to protect themselves, their families, and their communities from the spread of COVID-19
        2. Adjusting to a virtual training platform: providing activities that offer meaningful engagement while reducing the likelihood of long-term disconnection
        3. Emphasizing preparation for future employment
        4. Collecting and applying participant feedback for on-going improvement
        5. Training staff on diversity and inclusion

6. Outcomes: Chester County's EARN program is one of the top 5 performing areas in the State.
  - a. Offering access to programs at nontraditional hours
  - b. Aggressively outreached referrals from the County Assistance Office
  - c. Provided thorough assessments to all participants to set and meet personal goals
  - d. Focus on education and training activities with short term credentialing
  - e. Access to individualized coaching and mental health counseling services
  - f. Stability, through job placement, increase in wages and retention
7. Challenges – We need to rethink our current format of service and become more innovative to assure customer service needs are at the forefront of service provision.
  - a. Acknowledging “Learners “do not need to transition from basic proficiency to expert proficiency in a given area
  - b. Evaluate the needs of current participants
8. Upcoming Strategies
  - a. PathStone staff are now on site in the CareerLink at 40 hours per week
  - b. Connected with Med Certs and Delaware County College for vocational training certification/credentialing
- c. Incentives for EARN participants approved by the State of Pennsylvania (DHS) in which other areas are emulating our models that we've shared collectively.
- d. Success Story: 2021 Governor's Achievement Success Story Nomination was shared; Ashley, single-mother, EARN participant, completed an Individual Training Account (ITA), obtained employment as a Certified Nursing Assistant in the Cardiac Unit earning a sustainable wage of \$18.70 per hour at 40 hours a week.
- iv. **Title 1 Programming Overview** - expressing a focus on Improving Outcomes: Articulating the quality, quantity, and benefit of services provided; Presented by Adam Torr, Program Manager, Title 1 operations at the PA CareerLink (EDSI)
  1. Workshops & Orientation
    - a. Job-related skills, technology, networking
  2. Training Programs
    - a. Adult/Dislocated Worker
    - b. Economic Transition Grant (for Dislocated Workers only at this time)
  3. Staff-Assisted Job Search
    - a. Customized job search support: virtual appointments with Career Advisors to aid and assist in their job search and job preparation
    - b. Referrals to and from the Hire One program
  4. Economic Transition Grant (ETG)
    - a. Customer-catered collaboration among partners
      - i. Eligible participants can select a training from the Eligible Training Provider List with a larger grant than a typical ITA (up to \$10,000)
      - ii. As part of the ETG enrollment, the participant has access to supportive service funds
        1. Meet with Financial Navigator
        2. Help with bills and expenses while in training
        3. Helps to eliminate a barrier many participants face like worry and concern over how to cover bills while





## **Chester County Workforce Development Board (WDB) Meeting Minutes**

**Date of Meeting: May 26, 2021**

Location of Meeting: PA CareerLink Chester County

479 Thomas Jones Way, Exton, PA 19431

Zoom Video Conferencing Call

**Quorum Present – Yes**

**42 Participants**

**Board Members in Attendance in Person:** Jennifer Duff, Maria O’Connell, Bill Adams, Joyce Chester, Kathi Cozzone, Marybeth Ferguson, Janet Moran, Diana Kimmich, James Lee, Clark McHenry, Matthew Miele, Mike Reese, Chris Saello, Bill Shaw, Stephanie Sherwood, Amanda Sundquist, Butch Urban (17)

**Board Members in Attendance Virtually:** Erik Gudmundson, Karen Kozachyn, Claire Mooney, Kirk Willard (4)

**Staff and Public in Attendance in Person:** Patrick Bokovitz, Jeannette Roman (2)

**Staff and Public in Attendance Virtually:** Tracey Dougherty, Stephanie Smith, Lucia Spargo, Poornima Mahesh, Maureen McDevitt, Shaun Bollig, Trish Waters Hennessy, Larry Melf, Trevor Stout, Patti VanCleave, Jim Lauckner, Kelly Raggazino, Katelyn Mallis, Jeanne O’Brien, Evelyn Rodriguez, Yajaira Alarcon, Adrienne Cooper, Denean Williams (18)

### **I. Call to Order**

The board meeting was called to order by Chair Jennifer Duff at 8:40 a.m. Pat reminded everyone of participation and rules of engagement.

### **II. Welcome and Introductions**

Jennifer Duff welcomed all in attendance.

### **III. Public Comment on Agenda - None**

### **IV. Review and Approve Meeting Minutes from the March 2021 Board Meeting**

- Kathi Cozzone moved to approve the March 2021 minutes as written. Janet Moran provided the second.
- Pat completed a roll call and all members present at the time of review (8:45AM) approved the March 2021 minutes.

### **V. Action Items, Discussion and Update Topics**

#### **1. Chester County WDB’s 2021-2024 WIOA Local Plan and SEPA Regional Plan (Pat Bokovitz)**

- a. The plan was submitted to the state and returned with a request for edits
- b. Chester County submitted the Regional Plan (lead by/prepared by Montgomery County) and each local workforce development area’s Local Plan on behalf of the six counties the Southeast PA region: Berks, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, Philadelphia
- c. Each area was provided with feedback and a request for necessary revisions

- i. Revisions will be discussed today and require WDB approval before they can be submitted to the state for review and approval
  - d. The Regional Plan request for edits were very minimal – 2 requests for additional information
    - i. Apprenticeship information on a regional level
    - ii. Additional information for how the region determines the fiscal agent for regional or multi-county initiatives
  - e. The Local Plan request for revisions focused on 3 areas:
    - i. Apprenticeships
    - ii. Title II Adult Education
    - iii. Office of Equal Opportunity
  - f. Revisions include:
    - i. We were asked for additional detail on connecting apprenticeship opportunities to employer needs
    - ii. Staff awareness and Business Service Team training on how apprenticeships work and how to make those connections
      - 1. We added language about employer apprenticeship workshops and staff apprenticeship workshops and making connections with on the job training
    - iii. We were asked to elaborate on technology access for workshops and training programs
    - iv. Tracking and reporting for the Business Services Team
      - 1. We clarified that each member of the BST tracks their own data and can share that as needed and as requested
    - v. Supplemental funding opportunities
      - 1. We were asked to include language that we would pursue other funding opportunities whenever possible
    - vi. Connection to off-site workforce programs like Youth Build and Job Corps; there are locations across the state where we can provide referrals and we confirmed we make sure participants are aware of that programming
    - vii. Title II Adult Education
      - 1. Joyce Chester provided additional detail on eligibility, how participants connect to existing workforce programming and co-enroll, and how board members and board staff review applications when requested from Title II providers
    - viii. The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) made the request that very specific language be included in the Local Plan
    - ix. We were asked for additional language on how Chester County is a high-performing Board, including language on how active and participatory board members are in Chester County
    - x. The Office of Equal Opportunity asked that we include reference to their recent monitoring review and technical assistance provided
      - 1. Adjustments to the language access plan
      - 2. Request for an annual review
    - xi. Some small edits like “Appendix 1-5” should be “Attachment 1-5”
    - xii. The version that was sent out yesterday for review included edits in yellow highlight so they can be found quickly
    - xiii. Once all areas have received their approval, the state will request a clean copy with highlights and strike-outs
    - xiv. Chester County as the point of contact will post the Local Plan of all individual areas on the web site

- g. We are requesting Board approval for the Local Plan with the inclusion of edits and the Regional Plan with the inclusion of edits as a final step locally, prior to the state sending their approval
    - i. Any questions?
      - 1. Janet asked if there were any material edits that would have changed the intent of the original plan
        - a. "No." Just an inclusion of additional details.
          - i. Pat added emphasis that much of the expansion was around Apprenticeships
- **Motion to approve the revised Regional Plan for submission and its related components.**
    - Motion by Kathi Cozzone and a second by Janet Moran
    - Pat completed a roll call to approve the motion. All Board Members in attendance at the time of the vote approved.
  - **Motion to approve the revised Local Plan for submission and its related components.**
    - Motion by Kathi Cozzone and a second by Janet Moran
    - Pat completed a roll call to approve the motion. All Board Members in attendance at the time of the vote approved with the exception of Chris Saello who abstained.
- 2. Chester County 2022 Funding Recommendations (Pat Bokovitz)**
- a. A PowerPoint presentation was reviewed: Program Year 2020-2021 RFP Funding Vision
    - i. Focus on Improving Customer Experience (Employers and Job-Seekers)
    - ii. Improve Outcomes
    - iii. Expand Reach
  - b. 2021 Funding Recommendations
    - i. DCD Administration and Programming (\$770,000) – includes staff salaries, operating expenses and indirect costs
    - ii. CareerLink Costs (\$175,301) – includes rent, CareerLink Administrator, and receptionist
    - iii. Youth space rent (\$61,000)
    - iv. Chester County GED Program (\$30,000)
  - c. We will continue to fund our existing partners with the following recommendations:
    - i. One Stop Operator – Open Hearth Inc.
      - 1. Program Services \$104,225
      - 2. Marketing and Outreach \$50,000
        - a. Collect information around "Consumer Satisfaction"
        - b. Continuation of Integration
    - ii. Title 1 Programming (Adult/DW) Educational Data Systems Incorporated (EDSI)
      - 1. Program Services \$764,383
      - 2. Adult Training \$200,000
      - 3. Dislocated Worker/Rapid Response \$200,000
      - 4. Title 1 Youth (youth space lease ends December 31, 2021)
        - a. Program Services \$335,055
        - b. Including emphasis in their contract on
          - i. Pre-Apprenticeships
- 1. Larry Melf included a message in the Zoom chat: "Any agency who would like to partner with us regarding WIOA Title 1 Youth services in the community, please

send me a text at (570) 301-2253 or an e-mail at [lmelf@edsolutions.com](mailto:lmelf@edsolutions.com) to discuss a collaboration moving forward.”

- iii. EARN – PathStone
    - 1. Program Services \$373,052
    - 2. Top priorities include:
      - a. Reverse Referrals
      - b. Increase enrollment and participation
      - c. Wrap-around services
      - d. Counseling/therapy services
      - e. Revised incentive plan
  - iv. Hire One – Chester County Economic Development Council
    - 1. Program Services \$150,000
    - 2. Partnership with BST
    - 3. Working jointly on job fairs and employer engagement
    - 4. Additional notes of CCEDC Workforce funds
      - a. Business Education Partnership \$135,000
      - b. Industry Partnerships (Healthcare, ITAG, Manufacturing Alliance, and Smart Energy Initiative) \$784,294
  - v. TANF Youth – Chester County Economic Development Council, The Stone Garage, YMWIC Foundation
    - 1. Chester County Economic Development Council \$68,000
    - 2. The Stone Garage \$55,000
    - 3. Young Men and Women in Charge (YMWIC) \$75,951
    - 4. Trellis for Tomorrow \$40,161
      - a. Bob Steininger included a message in the Zoom chat: “Trellis also has an environmental stewardship
- d. Questions or Concerns
- i. Kathi Cozzone asked if roll-over funds were factored into the funding recommendations
    - 1. “Yes.” The budget document included in the WDB packet was referenced.
    - 2. Per the budget sheet, the “oldest funds” are always used first and the current unappropriated funds are always factored in as the start of the new budget.

- **Motion to approve DCD funding recommendation, as presented and discussed, in the amount of \$770,000 and CareerLink funding for \$175,301.**
  - Motion by Michael Reese and a second provided by James Lee.
  - Pat completed a roll call to approve the motion. All Board Members in attendance at the time of the vote approved with the exception of Amanda Sundquist, who abstained.
- **Motion to approve the Open Hearth funding recommendation for One Stop Operator, as presented and discussed, in the amount of \$154,225.**
  - Motion by Michael Reese and a second provided by Kathi Cozzone.
  - Pat completed a roll call to approve the motion. All Board Members in attendance at the time of the vote approved with the exception of Jennifer Duff who abstained.
- **Motion to approve the EDSI funding recommendation for Title 1 programming, as presented and discussed, in the amount of \$763,383, \$200,000, and \$200,000.**
  - Motion by Kathi Cozzone and a second provided by Michael Reese.

- Pat completed a roll call to approve the motion. All Board Members in attendance at the time of the vote approved with the exception of Joyce Chester who abstained.
  - **Motion to approve the PathStone funding recommendation for EARN, as presented and discussed, in the amount of \$373,052.**
    - Motion by Stephanie Sherwood and a second provided by Butch Urban.
    - Pat completed a roll call to approve the motion. All Board Members in attendance at the time of the vote approved.
  - **Motion to approve the Chester County Economic Development Foundation funding recommendation for employer outreach programming under Hire One, as presented and discussed, in the amount of \$150,000.**
    - Motion by Michael Reese and a second provided by James Lee.
    - Pat completed a roll call to approve the motion. All Board Members in attendance at the time of the vote approved with the exception of Claire Mooney who abstained.
  - **Motion to approve the Chester County OIC funding recommendation for GED programming, as presented and discussed, in the amount of \$30,000.**
    - Motion by Butch Urban and a second provided by Marybeth Ferguson.
    - Pat completed a roll call to approve the motion. All Board Members in attendance at the time of the vote approved with the exception of Joyce Chester who abstained.
  - **Motion to approve the funding recommendation for TANF Youth programming, as presented and discussed, in the amount of \$68,000 to Chester County Economic Development Council, \$55,000 to The Stone Garage, \$75,951 to YMWIC, and \$40,161 to Trellis of Tomorrow.**
    - Motion by Michael Reese with a second provided by James Lee.
    - Pat completed a roll call to approve the motion. All Board Members in attendance at the time of the vote approved with the exception of Jennifer Duff who abstained.
3. **Chester County CareerLink Re-Opening Update (Butch Urban)**
- a. Begin to re-open doors without appointment
  - b. Workshops will be offered in person beginning June 10, 2021
  - c. Slowly reintroduce workshops on-site and continue to provide workshops virtually
  - d. EDSI as the Title 1 provider will begin to identify technologies to offer simultaneous offerings of live/in-person and virtual services
  - e. The new UC system will be implemented this month
  - f. Individuals should have more success connecting with UC regarding claims
  - g. The system will be shut down and unavailable the first week of June
  - h. We want to open following that week to avoid any confusion or issue with the CareerLink often being referred to as the Unemployment office
  - i. Health and safety of staff and the public remain a top priority
  - j. Questions or concerns
    - i. Janet Moran asked if there were any issues with staff returning to the office
      - 1. Commonwealth staff will be returning to work full-time on June 9<sup>th</sup>
      - 2. EDSI will ensure adequate staffing
      - 3. Up to the providers to determine their own staffing needs and requirements
  - k. On-site recruitment with 7 employers last week had a great turn-out

- l. GED program continues to operate on-site with great attendance in the classroom and test site
- m. Maintaining masks be worn until there is a mandate statewide recommending otherwise
- n. Security is contracted to be on site thru the end of 2021
- o. Discussion around mask-wearing took place among the in-person attendees
- p. 2021-2022 Budget – Program year is July 1 – June 30<sup>th</sup>
  - i. CareerLink budget was approved within 3 weeks without any modifications

**4. High Priority Occupations (Pat Bokovitz)**

- a. Topic moved to the July meeting in the interest of time

**VI. General Updates, Announcements and Member Comments**

**VII. Public Comments:**

- o None

**VIII. Adjourn**

- Kathi Cozzone moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:02 A.M. Marybeth Ferguson provided the second.
- Next meeting: Wednesday, July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021

March 22, 2021

Patrick Bokovitz, Director  
Department of Community Development  
601 Westtown Road, Suite 365 - P.O. Box 2747  
West Chester, PA 19380-0990  
Email: [ccdcd@chesco.org](mailto:ccdcd@chesco.org)

**RE: WIOA Regional Plan Comments**

Dear Mr. Bokovitz:

As Executive Director of The Wardrobe (formerly known as Career Wardrobe), I am writing to submit public comment on the WIOA Regional Workforce Development Plan. As I reviewed the WIOA local and regional plans for the coming years, I invite you to dream big with me so we can address clothing insecurity effectively in our region.

For 25 years, The Wardrobe has been partnering with Philadelphia Works to assist job seekers with the professional clothing and presentation needed to successfully transition to work. As the regional provider of PA WORKWEAR services since 2016, we provide or oversee this program for the TANF population in Philadelphia, Delaware, Bucks, Berks, Chester, and Montgomery Counties. In areas where The Wardrobe does not have a physical site, we partner with local nonprofit organizations providing them with funding and technical assistance, including data collection. Our partners are: Wings for Success (Chester County), Montgomery County SAAC (Montgomery County), and Opportunity House (Berks County). Together, our agencies can provide both professional and casual attire to meet any clothing need a job seeker has in the region.

The Wardrobe and our partners have a joint mission to eliminate clothing insecurity. Clothing is not just fashionable, but essential. Like food and housing insecurity, someone is clothing insecure when they cannot afford to purchase the clothing they need. And like food and clothing, even if someone is living at or near poverty, they still need to find money in their budget to clothe themselves and their children. In fact, the average family spends \$1,800 per year on clothing and economists suggest people budget 5% of their annual income for clothing.

One of the clearest illustrations of clothing insecurity is when a job candidate doesn't have the right thing to wear for an interview. But it's also evident when new employees who are living paycheck to paycheck don't have the extra income necessary to purchase a uniform or specialty shoes required to accept a job offer and report to work. Sometimes clothing insecurity is less recognizable, like when someone is released from incarceration or leaves an abusive home with the clothing on their back and doesn't even have a change of clothing, let alone something to wear for the next week.

**While I recognize that the regional Workforce Investment Boards and CareerLink operators cannot provide every service that low-income job seekers need, I do want to advocate for including ways to combat clothing insecurity into our regional plan.** Currently The Wardrobe partners with CareerLink and the EARN Centers to provide professional clothing. But access to our services varies widely from county to county, and indeed even program to program within the CareerLink. I encourage you to consider how we can work together to build a comprehensive system of support to address clothing insecurity and help job seekers transition not just to work, but independence.

**It is my suggestion that we use PA WORKWEAR as a model but build a regional workwear program tailored to the specific needs of each county and the entire region.** Since 2008 the Department of Human Services has funded the PA WORKWEAR program to provide professional attire for job seekers. This program, however, is only available to TANF recipients. Because of declining TANF enrollments, the PA WORKWEAR program is seeing less than half the clients it did when it was created and funding for the PA WORKWEAR program has been threatened repeatedly. The Wardrobe and our regional partners have the capacity to serve anyone referred through CareerLink under an expanded program which could be funded by more than DHS and, therefore, open to other CareerLink consumers.

By pooling supportive services funding from all workforce development partners, CareerLink operators would have access to a professional clothing program anywhere in the region which is offering similar services for anyone who is unemployed and striving to move out of poverty.

When the CareerLink and EARN Centers merged several years ago, I was excited about the opportunities that the “no wrong door” framework provided for the city and region. While there may be one place where all job seekers entering the workforce or building their careers can go for assistance, there are still services that only unlock for people based on somewhat arbitrary standards.

- PA WORKWEAR is only open to people receiving TANF benefits and enrolled at the EARN Center. This leaves out other DHS customers such as those on SNAP benefits who utilize CareerLink assistance to improve their skills or conduct a job search to find a better paying job to lift their families out of poverty.
- Because there is not a similar referral system for CareerLink’s WIOA customers, each CareerLink provider can choose to partner with their local clothing agency to independently refer clients for their clothing needs. This can lead to an inequity of services if all CareerLink sites do not have these relationships.

If I allow myself to think big about how to truly combat clothing insecurity in the region, I imagine...

- **The Wardrobe @ CareerLink:** More than a “clothing closet,” clothing services would be co-located at CareerLink sites and serve as a showroom where clients can meet with a consultant, pick out their outfit types, and be measured. Then a Wardrobe Box can be ordered and sent directly to them within 2-3 days, or available for onsite pickup. If clients have an immediate need, they always have the option of visiting one of our physical locations in the region to choose their own outfits and have the full shopping experience.

The Wardrobe has seen how co-locating our clothing service in the CareerLink space has the potential to lead to more collaboration and use of the service. In Bucks county, our PA WORKWEAR program is co-located with the CareerLink, providing a convenience for customers who need clothing for onsite job interviews or just eliminating the need for yet another appointment they must remember and add to their already hectic schedule.

- **Shopping Experience Without Referrals:** The Wardrobe in Philadelphia and Delaware Counties has been working on transitioning our services from a traditional referral and appointment structure to open shopping or shopping by appointment which are experiences that provide more respect and convenience to our clients. The CareerLink’s diverse audience – from those who are eligible for WIOA support, to EARN Center customers, to generally unemployed people just looking for assistance on their job search – are perfect for this new philosophy.

In our service vision, The Wardrobe (Philadelphia, Delaware, Bucks), MontCo SAAC (Montgomery), Wings for Success (Chester), and Opportunity House (Berks) are essentially clothing stores that are welcoming to everyone regardless of their ability to pay. We are aiming to break the social service mold of needing someone to “prove their poverty” when all they need is the opportunity to shop without the cost.

If having a structured appointment is a barrier to service, someone can receive a Wardrobe Pass at CareerLink. The Wardrobe Pass is then valid to make their first shopping trip at their local provider free. At the point when someone redeems their Wardrobe Pass, we would track their usage, enrollment in various programs offered by the CareerLink, and report back on how people are using and responding to our services.

I hope you are as excited about this vision for a new partnership as I am. We have the opportunity to create a partnership that provides free clothing for whatever someone needs, eliminating the stress and cost this brings. This helps someone living at or near poverty and struggling with employment to focus on their goals instead of how they are going to pay for the clothing lost in a fire or left behind when they had to move to a new house suddenly due to eviction or violence. If this pilot with adults and young adults is successful, there is even the opportunity to expand into family clothing needs for children.

In closing, thank you again for your attention and invitation to provide public comment. I invite you to dream big with me and create a system where Southeastern Pennsylvania can again be a leader in our state by creating a new partnership that is flexible and impactful, meeting people where they are with the clothing they need for work and life.

Sincerely,



Sheri K. Cole  
Executive Director



# COATESVILLE COMMUNITY EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Patrick Bokovitz, Director  
Department of Community Development  
601 Westtown Road, Suite 365  
P.O. Box 2747  
West Chester, PA 19380-0990

March 25, 2021

Subject: SEPA Regional Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) Plan

Dear Program Planners,

I am the Vice President for the Coatesville Community Education Foundation, a non-profit 501 (c) 3, organization located in Coatesville Area School District. Our Foundation has a long term interest in providing support for the implementation of workforce development strategies for students (K-12), youth (12+); as well as dislocated and education non-completers. The City of Coatesville is experiencing an economic and cultural revitalization and needs smart economic development, including workforce development for its success. The tenacity and resilient nature of our citizenry are the key ingredients that are driving the public-private partnerships for the rejuvenation of our mile long commercial corridor located on Lincoln Highway. Despite this sustained growth of the employment market much remains to be accomplished in workforce development and human resource management. To sustain the economic growth of the City the Regional Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act Plan for 2021- 2024 can help increase our communities understanding of our talent pool's workforce training needs and help to build a workforce that is prepared for a transformation into a more digital economy.

Recently I have collaborated on a NSF proposal submitted by Dr. Youakim Badr and Dr. Robin Qiu of Penn State-Great Valley entitled "SCC-PG: Intelligent Community Area Network (ICAN) to Enhance Workforce Education in a Small Rust Belt City" to the NSF (see addendum A). I believe this proposal provides a planning framework for smart workforce development through:

- 1) Building a strong consortium of researchers (in both social sciences and platform technologies) to identify challenges and research questions for a smart workforce data management system.

- 2) Engaging additional stakeholders across the community by performing data analyses, disseminating results, and propose recommendations.
- 3) Evaluating regional and Philadelphia-centric training programs and assess challenges and expectations from incumbent worker/learner's perspective.
- 4) Conduct a pilot studies with groups of local incumbent workers/learners to predict for work engagement, job satisfaction, and decreased turnover intention.
- 5) Conduct a survey on technical and post pandemic learned lessons and best practices, identify viable platform technologies, and specify socio-technical requirements for prospective data analytics architecture.

The development and implementation of this intelligent community area network I believe addresses sector initiatives for in-demand industry sectors or occupations for the region. The re-generated system requires comprehensive data collection and integration, and transparency. The U.S. Department of Labor's guidance for Workforce Development Boards is very compatible with this guidance. The DoL provides the following guidelines for Workforce Planning and Service provision:

“Establishment of guidance for the implementation and continuous improvement of the workforce development system. For example:

- 1) developing career pathways within industries and sectors
- 2) defining sector partnerships identifying regions and local areas
- 3) engaging and understanding business needs
- 4) identification and removal of system barriers for customers
- 5) improving outreach and customer access
- 6) addressing coordination and alignment of partners, stakeholders, state and local areas
- 7) providing technical assistance
- 8) developing a shared case management information system
- 9) Improvement in access and quality of services for all one-stop programs and customers using technology such as: common intake, data collection, case management information, and report processes.”

These recommendations have been partially fulfilled by the WIOA Plan in SEPA, but much of this effort remains siloed and inaccessible to the worker or business owner trying to navigate the WIOA system.

The *Engage!* Program goes a long way to identify business needs and provide matching resources and building business capacity to sustain growth. In order to build on the successes of the *Engage!* Program I would hope that the SEPA Workforce Development Plan would propose that residents access a variety of tools either on smartphones or by laptops to gain training and certification in a variety of job skills. The idea would be to bring all training and opportunities to people in their homes so they can learn

and create jobs through accessing programs through the internet. Now there is a disjointed conglomeration of job development strategies that lacks accessibility, cohesion and effectiveness. For example the Career Ready initiative matching companies with prospective apprenticeships and interns has been rolled out with a limited county by county approach which is not coordinated within the SEPA region. Through data integration and interoperability trainees, startup entrepreneurs, and business managers throughout the SEPA region can in the future generate business ideas and workforce solutions to help the economy grow. For example, a virtual business incubator with internships, apprenticeships, and mentoring opportunities could be created for different types of startup businesses, to inform workers about jobs in various industries. Of course, the project will be reshaped by the successes and shortfalls of its program segments, but the project will remain robust by providing opportunities for participants to delve deeper into their areas of workforce training and business interest through specialty tracks and extended experiential learning opportunities. This regional workforce learning platform can be a way for participants to build relationships with their peers to address social, environmental, or civic infrastructure problems. Businesses could be informed of these initiatives and find ways to address these issues. The outcomes could be measured using publically available for workforce development and social determinants of health data sets.

The SEPA WIOA Strategic Plan needs to utilize a full range of data outcomes to track each One-Stop client through the use of skills assessment, job training, placement, retention, and client and employer engagement in a collaborative learning environment. Metrics and assessment methods to evaluate activities of SEPA regional workforce development processes and to support policy makers' decision making need to be further developed. In addition to data collected in these domains: social context (e.g., age, race/ethnicity, veteran status), economic context (e.g., income, unemployment rate), education, transportation; need to be expanded to include data on physical infrastructure (e.g., housing, crime, transportation), and healthcare context (e.g., health insurance) need to be collected. Outcomes will inform decision makers on which areas of the program are showing the most efficacies and improvement in the social determinates of health.

An effective workforce systems plan should aim to improve how the system serves employers and workers by coordinating or improving organizations, policies, or practices. To some extent this approach has been neglected in the WIOA's 2021-2024 Strategic Plan. A glaring omission is overlooking the huge amount of investment in the biosciences currently occurring in Philadelphia and the surrounding five county region. With this in mind the Partnerships for Regional Economic Performance (PREP) needs to be revitalized and continuously updated to reflect changes in new industry development, patent generation, and investment climate. This change on industry status has even outpaced investors. A report by Colliers on the Philadelphia Life Sciences indicates a rise in investment in the bioscience businesses in the Philadelphia region. The reports states that, "In Colliers previous market report, we noted that the Philadelphia Cluster lacked coherent organization as a Life Sciences ecosystem. In this newest report (11/23/2020), we note how this has changed dynamically with the emergence of clear "neighborhoods" of Life Sciences activity in Philadelphia and a flight path for the continued development and expansion of each of these neighborhoods. In addition, the landscape outside of the City has also seen the emergence of several important centers where life science companies can locate, expand and create vibrant communities."

The employer needs in a high growth industry like the biosciences cannot be forestalled and these business needs, including building a trained employee pipeline, requires immediate attention so not to lose new businesses to other competing regions. The Collier's report indicates that "The long-term, complex nature of systems change work makes it difficult to track progress and measure outcomes toward goals. Because of the complexity and size of target systems and the slow pace of changing organizations, behaviors, and policies, the outcomes of systems change work are generally not immediately evident. Attributing systems change to a particular initiative is difficult. In addition, rigorously measuring how a system has changed may be resource intensive. Researchers and analysts agree that measurement is a major challenge, but still an imperative for programs. By tracking their initiatives' outcomes, practitioners, funders, and policymakers can generate evidence to inform programming and funding decisions and document the outcomes of their work." A further analysis by the Urban Institute indicates that: "In workforce development, *systems change* describes efforts and initiatives that go beyond providing direct services to individual jobseekers and aim to transform how organizations effectively support employers and the workforce. Practitioners and funders involved in such efforts may be working to foster collaboration, quality and accessibility, industry engagement, data-driven decision making, or scale and sustainability in their local workforce systems."

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the SEPA's Workforce Development Plan 2021-2024 by indicating its strengths and weaknesses prior to adoption. I look forward to collaborating further as appropriate with the SEPA Regional Workforce Development Boards on the implementation of the WIOA plan. The changes and re-emphasis I have suggested are essential to address the technological, health welfare and social aspects of the region's growth and its worker education demands. If called upon it is my intent to collaborate and/or commit resources to enhance the workforce development environment in the SEPA region. Please contact me if you have any questions.

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Submitted by:

John L. Hall, Ph.D.

VP Coatesville Community Education Foundation  
Director, Pennsylvania Alliance for STEM Education

## **Appendix A**

### **“Smart and Connected Communities Planning Grant (NSF 21-535): Intelligent Community Area Network (ICAN) to Enhance Workforce Education in a Small Rust Belt City”**

Dr. Youakim Badr and Dr. Robin Qiu of Penn State-Great Valley Principal Investigators

#### **1. Integrative Research**

The economy globalization has largely adversely impacted the Rust Belt, an economic region in the northeastern United States that consists of Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, and Illinois, and Wisconsin. Since 1970s, this formerly dominant steel industrial region has lost much of its manufacturing base. A reproduction of manufacturing jobs is now rarely possible because many, if not most, of these jobs have disappeared. A resulting process of uneven development and an outmigration of talented youth, in particular, have profoundly negative implications for the social and economic sustainability of communities [1]. As a result, these communities have shifted from being healthy to possessing chronic problems, such as perpetual poverty including extended unemployment, increases in substance abuse, and an overall degradation of the quality of life [2]. Rust Belt communities must transform and “reinvent” the identity of their communities. By converting a blue-collar community to a white-collar community, "Pittsburgh Renaissance" has been one of some successful socio-economic revitalizing stories [3]. However, most Rust Belt communities, especially small cities, are still much distressed and struggled with their socio-economic development. Literature shows that blue-collar communities have often been experiencing a “brain drain” challenge, which worsens the economic hardship of these areas [4]. In addition to this alarming socioeconomic situation, the consequences of COVID-19 caused significant public health burden and loss of jobs in Rust Belt cities, affecting residents’ physical and mental well-being in profound ways. The pandemic and its economic impact are disproportionately affecting low-wage workers and people of color, especially in hard hit retail, restaurant and hospitality businesses.

##### **1.1. Sociotechnical Challenges for Workforce Education and Development in Rust Belt Cities**

It is well-recognized that the prosperity of a community is intrinsically linked with its workforce with the knowledge and knowhow to develop and produce innovative and competitive goods and services. Hence, workforce education plays an indispensable role in restructuring and revitalizing their economics. When the workforce education is examined from collective and public perspectives, a deep understanding of challenges faced by community stakeholders, residents and existing training and education programs leads to deeper and fundamental understandings of obstacles of workforce development and employment. To this end, this project proposal identifies and investigates three common challenges in Rust Belt cities:

Firstly, like many booming communities, Rust Belt cities have established a variety of workforce education programs supported by a variety of learning/training entities, including but not limited to STEM & ICT training firms, vocational schools, community colleges, and corporate training units. Despite their efforts and noteworthy initiatives, community stakeholders and their learning/training

programs remain highly fragmented, leading to divergence in objectives, methods and limited impacts on employments. Moreover, the workforce development remains balkanized without an integrative approach that digitally interconnects stakeholders, provides them with data-driven decisions making, and assists them in developing collaboratively strategies and tactics to make measurable impacts and progress.

Secondly, trainees and unemployed residents are not satisfied with provided curricula as learned skills are not fully aligned with the needs of local businesses and markets. Nevertheless, individuals are often not motivated due to their financial stresses and feel completely hopeless. Hope with opportunities has been found to be a decisive factor in enhancing job commitment, academic achievement and vocational identity, goal attainment, and life and job satisfaction [6-9]. Given its impact on human performance, hope can be developed, integrated in workforce development programs, measured with indicators, and utilized as a central mechanism in the functioning of human systems at the individually and collectively.

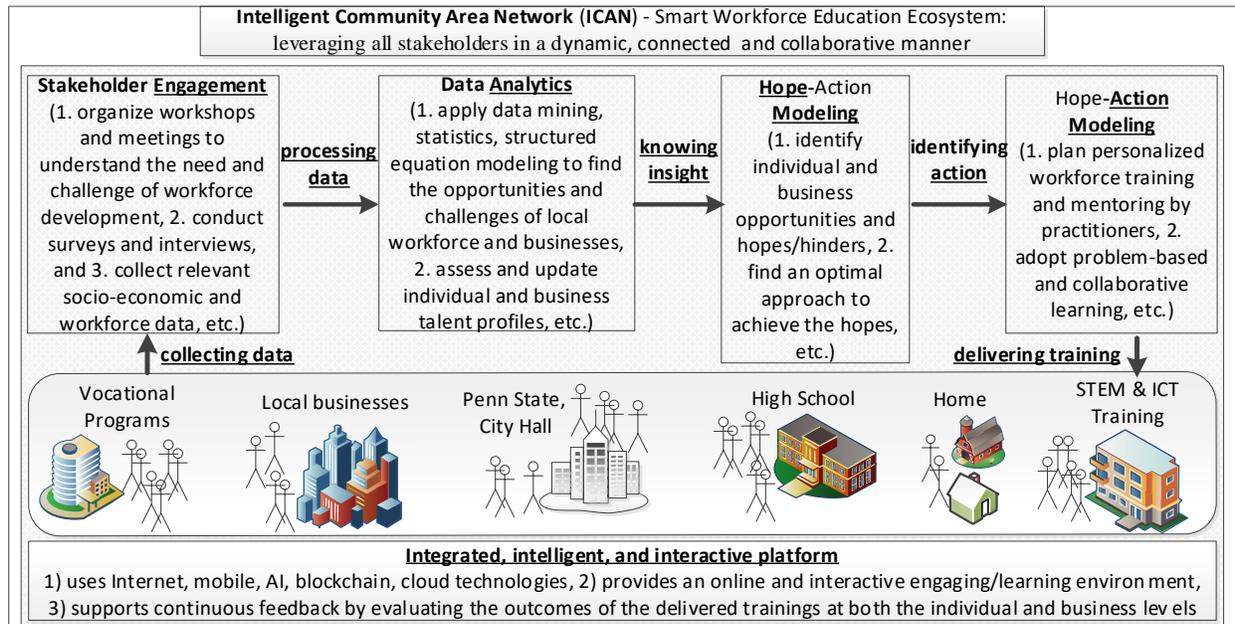
Thirdly, community stakeholders and local governments should take the opportunity of combating the Covid-19 to not just make it through the pandemic but also to address workforce development in the post Covid-19 era. Society has learned many lessons from the pandemic on how to set-up education environments for remote teaching, engage students, and improve their learning experience. Remote teaching and training in the post-pandemic era have many advantages for a paradigm shift in workforce development to bring education and training to every home (and smartphone) as well as build a sustainable education ecosystem, including residents, schools, start-ups, and the county. Benefits include (but not limited to): reducing cost, engaging high skilled instructors regardless their time zones, different delivery modalities of high-quality content, offering virtual mentorships to develop business ownerships, and supporting local job markets and needs. Nevertheless, the landscape of building remote learning platforms for community stakeholders in the post pandemic era remains largely undefined and arises sociotechnical challenges on how to support predictive data analytics and collective decision making, integrate hope-action competencies, assess learning objectives, advise and mentor virtually, ensure scalability, cybersecurity, and interoperability. While we are aware of the complexity of these challenges we face, remote learning platforms for Rust Belt cities have not yet emerged, appealing for theoretical insights from various disciplines (education, organization development, social science, computer science).

As the world becomes more and more connected economically, technically, and socially through advanced ICT and smart devices, there is an urgent need to develop an innovative workforce education system [5], particularly one for a small Rust Belt city due to its distressed job market and struggled socio-economic development status, which must be able to tackle local obstacles in workforce education. A smart workforce education ecosystem by leveraging stakeholder resources in a dynamic, connected, and collaborative manner can tackle these challenges and inspire new research efforts.

## **1.2. Project Objectives**

In our long-term vision for an integrative research project, we embrace sociotechnical Research & Development activities, and a multidisciplinary approach to implement an Intelligent Community Area Network (ICAN) as a backbone for smart workforce education ecosystem, leveraging all stakeholders in a dynamic, connected, and collaborative manner (see Figure below). The collaborative community is the city of Coatesville of Chester County in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Coatesville is a typical Rust Belt city, located in approximately 40 miles west of Philadelphia, and boomed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century with the fast growth of the iron and steel industry. Today, the city is much depressed and struggled with its socio-economic development. ICAN will enable the city of Coatesville with intelligent remote learning

platform with interactive data analytics capabilities that reinforce hope and engagement for residents who can easily and conveniently access high-quality job skill training and certifications adapted to local jobs.



This project will serve as feasibility and planning study, supported by inclusive and cohesive community stakeholders, and a solid theoretical foundation to build integrative research spanning smart technologies and socioeconomic dimensions. The main objectives are summarized as follows:

- O1) Build a strong consortium of researchers (in both social sciences and platform technologies), policy-makers from county and city levels, community and local businesses (including residents, workforce educators, skilled workers, business managers, industrial and community representatives, human resource representatives) to identify challenges and research questions for the prospective ICAN.
- O2) Engage additional stakeholders across the community by organizing workforce workshops, meetings, surveys, and interviews to collect data on residents, local job market, business, and environment (including policy, investment, and life style), perform data analysis, disseminate results, and propose policies and recommendations.
- O3) Evaluate three local training programs respectively developed by the Coatesville Youth Initiative (a problem-based training), Nth Innovation Center (an industry-mentoring program) and Organization for Industrial Centers (incumbent worker training) assess challenges from learner's perspective.
- O4) Conduct a pilot study based on the Hope-Action Theory on a group of local learners, evaluate the Hope-Action Inventory (HAI) outcome measure and the Hopeful Career State (HCS), which is known to be a predictor for work engagement, job satisfaction, and decreased turnover intention.

O5) Conduct a survey on technical and post pandemic learned lessons and best practices, identify viable platform technologies with a focus on removing the digital divide in low-income communities, and specify socio-technical requirements for prospective ICAN architecture.

### 1.3. Research Questions

For many years, researchers, educators, community stakeholders and local governments have paid keen attention to the workforce development and professional training as a disruptive change to renew the prosperity of people who live and work within these cities. According to a recent publication by Harvard Kennedy School [5], barriers in the workforce development can be summarized in four aspects, including *infrastructure, culture, measures & targets*, and *technical challenges*. As more disruption is predicted with the advances of digitalization in the Post-Covid era, change will continue to hit the Rust Belt communities particularly hard [4-5]. The project involves high-risk high-reward research questions to improve the workforce education and development. Our approach investigates the merits of hope and engagement as a central mechanism in the functioning of human systems to achieve a sense of a meaningful life and achieving a desired goal. Given its impact on human performance, integrating hope and engagement as a crucial component of workforce education and training programs at the collective levels, such as a team, organization, and community requires a rigorous scientific method to empirically approve or disapprove the positive impacts of the Hope-Action Theory (HAT). The HAT initially developed by Dr. Yoon (Co-PI) and his colleagues depict hope-centered competencies including **self-reflection, self-clarity, visioning, goal setting and planning, implementing, and adapting** [6-8]. HAT has been found to be effective in assisting individuals with their career development and employment situations (i.e., immigrants trained in the health care field, refugees in British Columbia, young adults with an autism spectrum disorder) [6-9]. We are particularly interested in the HAT and its applicability (or not) to the workforce development in the post pandemic era, at the collective level and under remote learning programs [10-11]. In addition, specific aims that may need to be addressed under research questions are the measures or predictors such as the Hopeful Career State (HCS) indicator for work engagement, job satisfaction, and decreased turnover intention. Do we need new specialized predictors to online learning? This planning project provides a unique opportunity to answer these research questions with the community stakeholders along with experimental group participants from the *Nth Innovation Center*, the *Coatesville Youth Initiative*, and *Organization of Industrial Centers* with an IRB approval.

To enable smart communities with insights from their socioeconomical ecosystem and job markets, ICAN aims to provide data analytics capabilities to inform stakeholders with actionable strategies. To this end, the planning project will apply a bottom-up data analytic approach to discover novel, non-trivial, undetected patterns from large volumes of data collected from engaging the community. The data analytics approach aims to analyze and study the community and its neighborhood (county) and identify issues, challenges and opportunities and support socioeconomical studies with data collected from local workforce development programs, local businesses and job markets and online job announcements etc. The application of unsupervised learning techniques to discover unknown facts will help us to formulate research questions to be addressed in the prospective integrative research proposal. Several specific research questions that will be addressed are: 1) to identify the current and projected generalized workforce competency requirements of knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors, 2) to discover the key recruitment strategies, selection techniques, or training programs that will engage unemployed youth and displaced workers, 3) to pinpoint personalized predictors of learner's performance and engagement in this

workforce education ecosystem, and 4) to generalize an approach for transferrable development and deployment of this smart workforce education ecosystem in other cities, especially other Rust Belt cities. t

## **2. Community Engagement**

The City of Coatesville has ideal characteristics to conduct transformative research in social science, education and build scalable smart learning platform. In 2020, the total population is 13,147 residents; 45.7% of residents are white and 45.4% are African American. The growing Hispanic community accounts for 23.8% of residents. The median income for a household in the city is \$39,577 and 28.2% of residents live below the poverty level. Among residents under the age of 18, the poverty rate is 42.3%. Coatesville's unemployment rate is 11.8% versus 4.6% for Chester County as a whole. The City of Coatesville is the only city in Chester County and contains the highest concentration of poverty in the county due to a prolonged period of disinvestment and lack of localized economic opportunities. The city has an ideal landscape for a successful smart and connected communities project with stakeholders like Lockheed Martin, Urban Outfitters, and Communications Test Design, community non-profits and Penn State-Great Valley. The Co-PIs and stakeholders involved in this project include the City of Coatesville, Chester County, the Nth Innovation Center, Coatesville Youth Initiative, and the Chester County Organization for Industrial Centers will be engaged in this project as follows:

**John L. Hall** – Pennsylvania Certified School Psychologist (PDID #7264031) and Licensed Psychologist (# PS 006506L) will serve as a project consultant: As a vice president Coatesville Community Education Foundation and director of Pennsylvania Alliance for STEM Education Dr. Hall will pilot and chair round tables discussions, advise on prospective stakeholders and local STEM training programs.

**James Logan** – As the City of Manager, Mr. Logan connect PI and Co-PIs with local businesses and stakeholders, advised on the city, chair two (2) roundtable discussions about workforce development.

**Patrick Bokovitz** - As the Director of the *Chester County Workforce Development Board*, Mr. Bokovitz will provide access to business and demographic datasets and local information about workforce training.

**Susan Springsteen** – As the CEO of the *Nth Innovation Center*, Ms. Springsteen will pilot two(2) virtual workshops on STEM internships and product incubation and provide access to trainees and facilities to evaluate the Hope-Action Theory.

**Jarvis Berry** – As the Executive Director of the *Coatesville Youth Initiative*, Mr. Berry will connect PI and Co-PIs with the apprentices from the Summer Service and leadership Program (ServiceCorps) in a meeting to evaluate their feedback with the Hope-Action Theory measures.

**Joyce Chester** – As the CEO of *Chester County Organization for Industrial Centers (OIC)* Ms. Chester will host four (4) virtual workshops on job seeking and career pathways for OIC clients from Coatesville.

All stakeholders will participate in roundtable discussions to address the priorities of incumbent worker training, increasing diversity and inclusion, youth career exploration and increasing job seeker support services. Participants will share success stories and identify challenges they are facing in their local businesses and workforce education. All meetings mentioned above are open to public and de-identified notes will be available on the project website. PIs and research assistants will actively participate in all planned activities and conduct the planned research. At the end of this project period, PIs

and stakeholders will organize a plenary meeting to share major results from this project and make recommendations for the integrative research project.

### **3. Project Team, Expertise, and Responsibilities**

**Youakim Badr (PI) - Data Analytics and Trustworthy Service Systems:** Dr. Badr has expertise in applied machine learning, data analytics, IoT, service computing, and blockchains. Dr. Badr is teaching courses related to the project proposal (i.e., Data Mining, Predictive Analytics). He leads the research study in O2, supervises Research Assistant (RA1), contributes to O1 and O5, and manages the project.

**Robin Qiu (Co-PI) – Predictive Analytics and Service Sciences:** Dr. Qiu has pioneered the education program on Cyber Threat Analytics and Prevention, professor-in-charge of Master of Information Science. He also has extensive work on healthcare predictive data analytics problems. Dr. Qiu leads the research study in O5, supervises Research Assistant (RA2), and contributes to O1 and O2.

**Hyung Joon Yoon (Co-PI) – Workforce Education and Development:** Dr. Yoon's research and practice focuses on empowering individuals and organizations with human agency and hope. He developed the Hope-Action Theory and Inventory, which are used in different countries as a framework to help individuals live fulfilling lives. He leads research activities in O3 & O4, and contributes to O1.

**Prior Collaboration:** Drs. Badr and Qiu have joint publications on topics related to smart city data analytics [12] and collaborated on different projects funded by the Center for Security Research and Education @ Penn State (2021) and the Franco-American Rhône-Alpes funding program (2015-2017).

### **4. Broader Impacts**

The project will have the following broader impacts. 1) **Promoting interdisciplinary research in workforce education:** Besides its novelty of bringing training to residents' anywhere, this project will engage an interdisciplinary research in workforce development, social science, pedagogy, and data analytics. The synergy between these disciplines will provide abundant research topics to build next Workforce Education driven by community collective intelligence and local job markets. 2) **Building foundation for new research challenges and breakthroughs:** This project stands out from the status quo with a pilot study with two pillars: 1) Apply data-driven analytics approach to gain insights from socioeconomical, pedagogical and intelligent technologies surveys and research studies on post pandemic workforce developments obstacles, and 2) Investigate and extend the "Hope-Action Theory" to the Coatesville. The integration of hope in remote learning with measurable results will be a paradigm shift in workforce education to help distressed individuals with a sense of a meaningful life and goal attainment.

3) **Contributions to the workforce development research:** The project will consider "high risk – high payoff" by covering three emergent and impactful workforce education topics in our society: viable solutions to remote teaching/learning, remote work, and remote mentorship in the post Covid era. 4)

**Reducing gap between academia, community stakeholders and local job markets:** The project will create invaluable opportunities to bring participants from Penn State, Chester County, the City of Coatesville, nonprofit and philanthropic organizations to co-establish a holistic strategy for workforce development supported by data analytic results and latest advances in remote teaching/learning and smart and connected technologies. Routable discussions and joint studies brings mutual benefits by assessing the role of emerging technologies to workforce development and identifying challenges and opportunities.

5) **Research Assistantship:** The project provides excellent opportunities to train motivated graduate students as Research Assistants in data analytics to discover state of the art research methods integrating social science, economics, and remote teaching evaluation, and learn how to be well engaged with community stakeholders to tackle real-life challenges in a socio-physical system.

## 5. Scope and Scale

In order to achieve the proposed socioeconomical, pedagogical and technological studies, the project relies on end-to-end data analytics pipelines to collect and preprocessed data from the community stakeholders and the Web, build and evaluate predictive models, and interpret results. These pipelines can be easily transferred, scaled and applied to other communities regardless the population size and collected data. The scientific methodology and hypotheses testing of research questions in the Hope-Action Theory can also be applied to any cities and workforce development programs. The project also includes representative community stakeholders, covering a large scope in the workforce ecosystem in a balanced manner. The project will easily scale up by engaging new research collaborators and community stakeholders to work towards the a vision of a sustainable workforce development. Expanding the number of learners is aligned with project's holistic approach of problem-solving. In our long-term objectives, ICAN architecture will be supported by the CloudBank with elastic computational and storage resources.

## 6. Intellectual Merit

If successful, ICAN as a transformative workforce education ecosystem at the community level results. The ICAN approach to enriching workforce development at the community level will prove effective in facilitating the wellbeing improvement and economy revitalization in a small rust belt city. The adopted hope-action approach that is focused on hope-centered competencies will prove effective when well supported by the community with opportunities, motivation, and engagement. Moreover, the collected evidence and conducted analysis from the project will result in insights into a solution to the digital divide in low-income community education, and more importantly new findings and knowledge of the transfer of digital and networked collaboration for business growth and human resource development in general.

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