



PY 2021-2024 WIOA Multi-Year Local Area Plan

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Luzerne/Schuylkill Workforce Development Board

Introduction

The Luzerne-/Schuylkill Workforce Development Board (L/S WDB) oversees workforce development activities for Luzerne and Schuylkill counties. The WIOA Multi-Year Plan or Local Plan provides details that will guide workforce activities over the next four years (July 1, 2021-June 30, 2025) in the local workforce area (LWDA). The plan was written during a severe economic decline due to the Covid-19 pandemic. All of the PA CareerLink® offices in our LWDA are currently open for limited hours and virtual services are available for all customers. The plan was drafted with input from L/S WDB members, staff and community partners and provides a vision for guiding the area's activities with innovative programming, resource development and development of partnerships. We utilize current and projected data as we look to the future growth of the area.

1. STRATEGIC PLANNING: Local Area Workforce and Economic Analysis

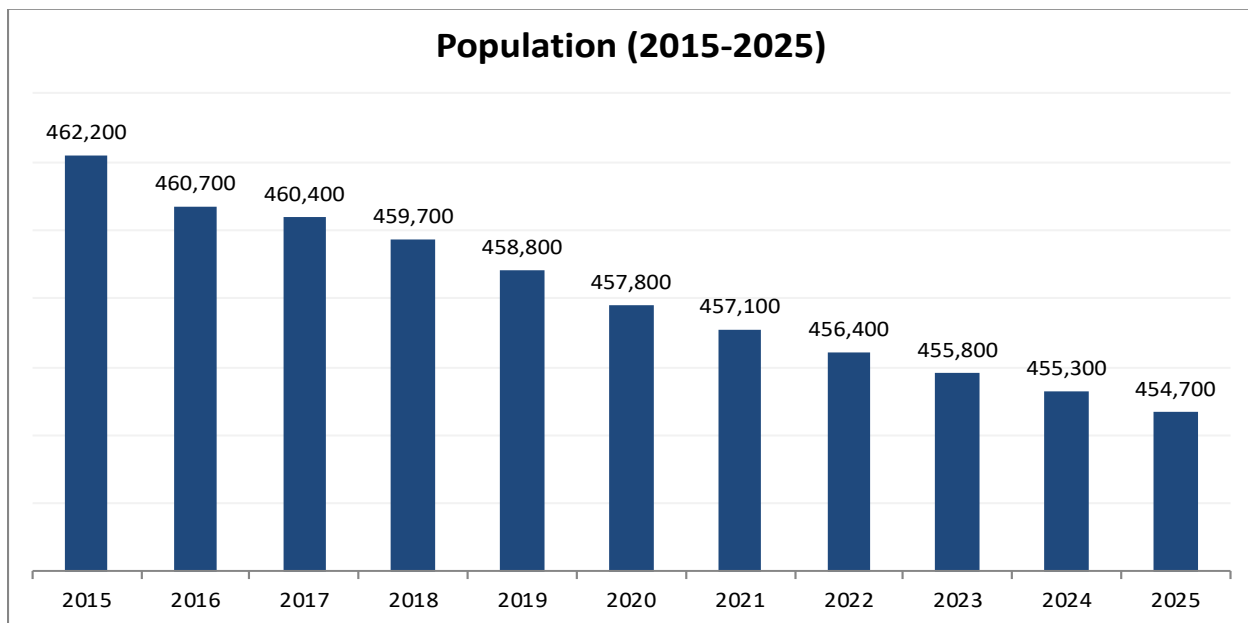
1.1 Identify the composition of the local area's population and labor force.

The Luzerne/Schuylkill Workforce Development Area is comprised of Luzerne and Schuylkill counties located in Northeastern Pennsylvania. The Luzerne/Schuylkill Workforce Development Board (L/S WDB) serves as the local connector between the PA Department of Labor and Industry and the region's PA CareerLink® offices.

POPULATION

The population in the Luzerne/Schuylkill area in 2020 was 457,800, a decline of .9% over the past 5 years¹. Over the next five years, the population is projected to decrease by an additional .7% (*Figure 1*).

Figure 1: Population Decline over Time



Nearly all of the area's population decline occurred in Schuylkill County over the past 5 years (-1.8%), and that trend looks set to continue for the next 5 (-2.4%). This makes Schuylkill County an

¹ Source: EMSI (Economic Modeling Specialists, International), 2020.4

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outlier in the Northeast PA (NEPA) region as a whole, whose 7-county region grew .2% over the same time period, and is expected to grow another .3% by 2025. Only Lackawanna County and Luzerne County also experienced population declines since 2015, but not as significant (-.8% and -.2% respectively).

In 2020, the median age for Luzerne/Schuylkill was 43.3 years, though higher in Schuylkill County (44.4) than Luzerne (42.8). The median age is in line with the NEPA planning region as a whole (43.7)². People in their 70s grew the fastest (18%) since 2015, and are expected to grow by another 10% by 2025³. The aging demographic highlights the workforce challenges as the baby boomers continue to retire, increasing the shortage of skilled labor across industries. It also increases the necessity for apprenticeship programs, where senior workers play an important mentorship role to new apprentices, and in doing so are able to transfer institutional knowledge to them before they retire, increasing the shortage of skilled labor across industries. It also increases the necessity for apprenticeship programs, where senior workers play an important mentorship role to new apprentices, and in doing so are able to transfer institutional knowledge to them before they retire.

While still predominantly white (92%), the Luzerne/Schuylkill area also is becoming increasingly diverse. The White population declined by 2.6% (9,978) between 2015 and 2020, greater than the total population decline in the region during that time. At the same time, the Black population increased 14.7% (1,068) and the Hispanic population grew 18.2% (1,147).

EDUCATION

In 2020, 54.1% of the population in the Luzerne/Schuylkill area had a High School education or lower, while 19.5% had a Bachelor's degree or higher. Generally, the former is increasing and the latter is decreasing over time (*Figure 2*). At the same time, the number of people with Some College or an Associate's Degree is increasing over time, highlighting the potential for short-term trainings that lead to industry-recognized credentials that are an alternative to a four-year degree to finding a career pathway that leads to family sustaining wages.

Figure 2: Educational Attainment⁴

Educational Attainment			
Level	2015	2020	2025
Less Than 9th Grade	3.1%	4.1%	4.4%
9th Grade to 12th Grade	7.8%	8.3%	8.6%
High School Diploma	41.9%	41.8%	41.7%
Some College	17.0%	16.7%	16.7%
Associate's Degree	9.6%	9.3%	9.1%
Bachelor's Degree	13.0%	12.6%	12.4%
Graduate Degree and Higher	7.6%	7.2%	7.1%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
High School or Lower	52.9%	54.1%	54.8%
Bachelor's or Higher	20.6%	19.9%	19.5%

² Source: <https://data.census.gov/>

³ Source: EMSI (Economic Modeling Specialists, International), 2020.4

⁴ Source: EMSI, 2020.4

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Fewer residents in the Luzerne/Schuylkill area have earned a bachelor's degree or higher (19.5%) when compared to the larger NEPA region (22.1%). Conversely, the Luzerne/Schuylkill area has a higher percentage of individuals who did not graduate high school (12.4%) compared to the region (11.2%). These trends look to continue over the next 5 years.

INCOME

In 2019, the median household income in the Luzerne/Schuylkill area is estimated to be \$53,099⁵, which is close to 5% below that of the NEPA region (\$55,699).

Median household income grew 17.8% between 2014 and 2019. The majority of income gains were among higher income households. While households making less than \$50,000 dropped by about 13%, households making more than \$100,000 increased by 34%. Households making between \$50,000 and \$100,000 stayed relatively steady (*Figure 3*).

Figure 3: Household Income⁶

Households and Household Income				
Income	2014	2019	Change	Percent Change
Total Households:	188,457	187,409	-1,048	-0.6%
Less than \$24,999	52,525	43,993	-8,532	-16.2%
\$25,000 to \$49,999	49,558	45,196	-4,362	-8.8%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	57,718	59,783	2,065	3.6%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	19,278	24,645	5,367	27.8%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	5,572	8,303	2,731	49.0%
\$200,000 or more	3,806	5,489	1,683	44.2%
Median Household Income	\$45,087	\$53,099	\$8,012	17.8%

EMPLOYMENT

In 2019, the Luzerne/Schuylkill area had a labor force participation rate of 59.8%, a relatively small increase from 2014 when the labor force participation rate was 59.3%.⁷ Closures and job losses in March led to a spike in the April unemployment across the Luzerne/Schuylkill area (*Figure 4*). Unemployment peaked at 18.3% in April of 2021 and has been steadily decreasing since then, though it still remains well above its pre-COVID lows.

⁵ Source: American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables: S1901

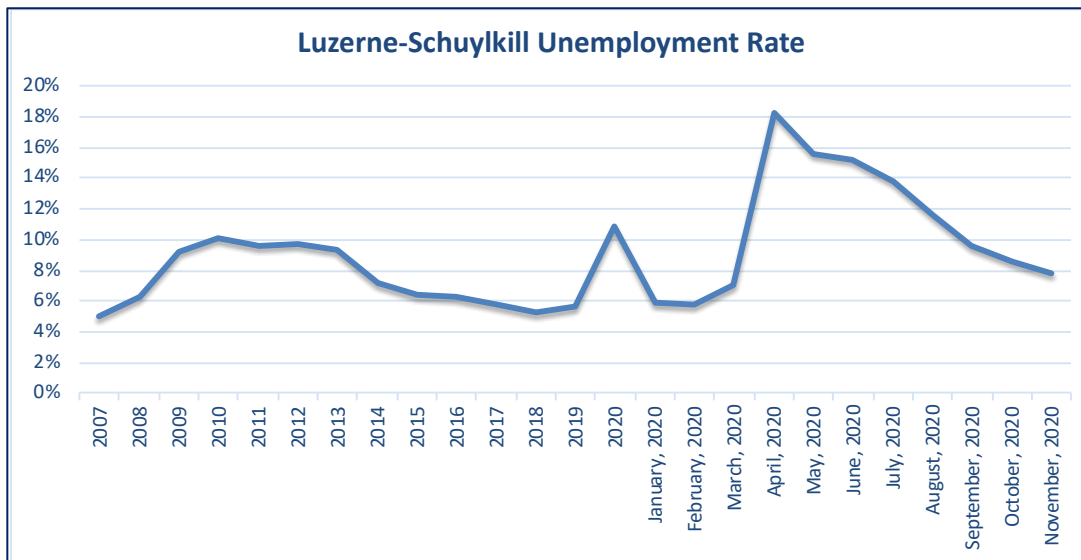
⁶ Source: 2010-2014 ("2014") and 2015-2019 ("2019") 5-Year American Community Surveys

⁷ Source: 2010-2014 ("2014") and 2015-2019 ("2019") 5-Year American Community Surveys

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Figure 4: Unemployment Rate over Time⁸



Prior to this recent increase, unemployment was decreasing across education levels (*Figure 5*).

Figure 5: Unemployment by Education Level⁹

Unemployment Rates by Educational Attainment Level		
Educational Attainment Level	2014	2019
Total:	7.2%	4.8%
Less than high school graduate	13.9%	9.8%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	8.6%	6.4%
Some college or associate's degree	6.6%	4.1%
Bachelor's degree or higher	4.3%	2.1%

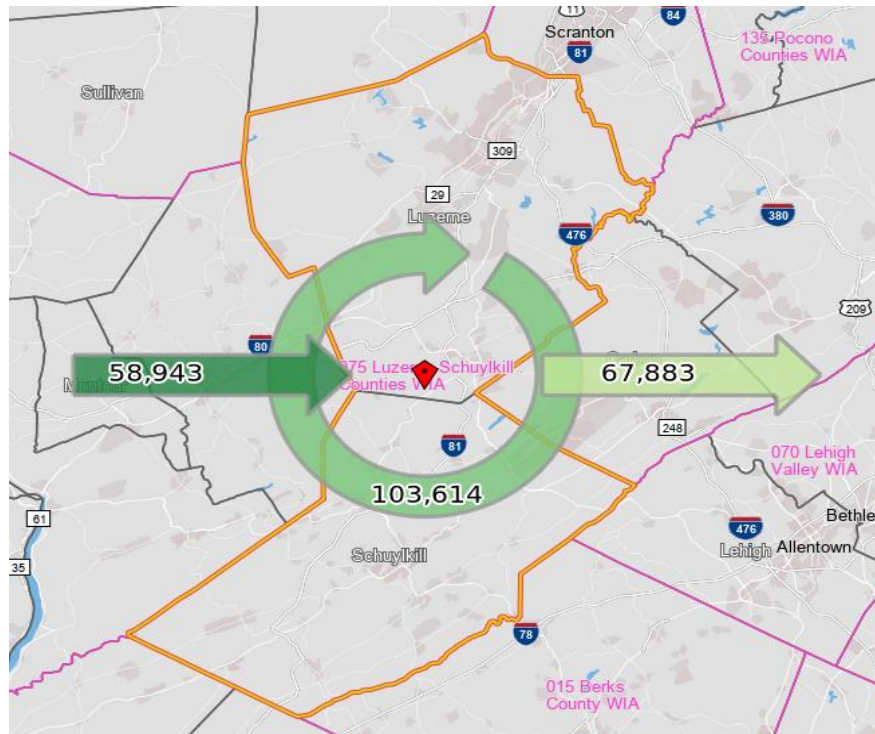
COMMUTING PATTERNS

The Luzerne/Schuylkill area is in a Shared Labor Market (*Figure 6*). About 59K people work in the WDA but live elsewhere, while 68K people live in the WDA but travel outside the region to work. The inflow and outflow of labor is significant, highlighting the need for the region's LWDBs to work together to meet the workforce needs of employers and job seekers.

⁸ Source: PA Department of Labor and Industry

⁹ Source: PA Department of Labor and Industry

Figure 6: Regional Commuting Patterns¹⁰



POPULATION WITH BARRIERS

Populations with barriers remain a particular focus of the Luzerne/Schuylkill workforce system and the WIOA services delivered through the region's PA CareerLink® offices. These barriers include:

Poverty - Among the factors that often contribute to poverty are unemployment and under-employment. Many people live in poverty because they are unable to find a job that pays a living wage or have the skills to take the jobs that are available. In the Luzerne/Schuylkill area, the poverty rate was 12% in 2019, a drop of .8% from 2014. Unemployment in this group dropped from 30.7% in 2014 to 28% in 2019.¹¹ Although current data is not yet available, these gains have likely been reversed due to COVID. Many of those most effected were in retail and the service industry which often pay lower than average wages, exacerbating poverty among those who were already most vulnerable.

Disabilities - Those with disabilities face a number of barriers to employment, including individual and systemic perceptions and prejudice that make employers hesitant to hire people with disabilities. In the Luzerne/Schuylkill area, individuals with disabilities accounted for 13.1% of the population in 2019, unchanged over the previous 5 years. In 2019 average earnings for an individual with a disability in the region were \$23,021, 34% lower than individuals with no disabilities. These individuals are much more likely to be in poverty than individuals who have no disability (22.1%), and more than twice as likely to be unemployed (11.9% to 5.3%).¹² This combination of barriers makes this population particularly hard to serve.

¹⁰ Source: Center for Workforce Information & Analysis (CWIA)

¹¹ Source: 2010-2014 ("2014") and 2015-2019 ("2019") 5-Year American Community Surveys

¹² Source: 2010-2014 ("2014") and 2015-2019 ("2019") 5-Year American Community Surveys

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Reentry Populations - Reentry populations are also difficult to serve. According to the Urban Institute, most individuals released from prison held some type of job prior to incarceration and want legal, stable employment upon release. Some criminal justice research suggests that finding and maintaining a legitimate job can reduce former prisoners' chances of reoffending, and the higher the wage, the less likely it is that individuals will return to crime. However, most former prisoners experience difficulty finding a job after release. During the time spent in prison, many lose work skills and are given little opportunity to gain useful work experience. Moreover, the availability of job training programs in prison has declined in recent years. A large proportion of former prisoners have low levels of educational attainment and work experience, health problems, and other personal characteristics that make them hard to employ. Once in the community, not only are many employers reluctant to hire convicted felons, but many former prisoners are legally barred from certain occupations.

In the Luzerne/Schuylkill area, in 2020 there were 593 individuals released from a state prison, 151 completing sentences and 442 paroled (*Figure 7 and Figure 8*).¹³

Figure 7: Returning Citizens in Luzerne County (2019)

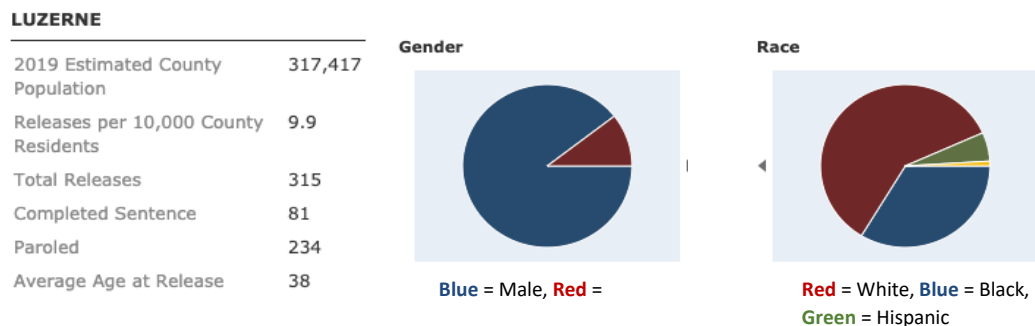
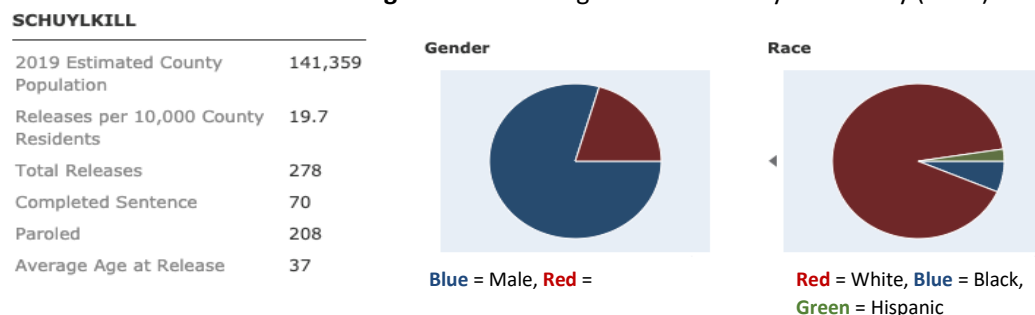


Figure 8: Returning Citizens in Schuylkill County (2019)



Ability to Speak English - The inability to speak English while living in the U.S. can be a barrier to employment. The Luzerne/Schuylkill area has seen a steady increase in its Hispanic population over the past decade. During 2019, there were 16,326 individuals ages 5 and over "who speak English less than very well", an increase of 22% over the previous 5 years.

¹³ Source: PA Department of Corrections Calendar Year Releases

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Single Parent Households - During 2019 there were 18,006 Single Parent Households with children under 18 years of age (15.1% of all family households), a 3.3% increase since 2014.¹⁴

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?

ANALYSIS OF REGIONAL JOB POSTINGS

Over the past year, the vast majority of job postings required no prior experience or had a set education requirement (*Figure 9*). These are primarily positions in the Transportation & Warehousing, Food Preparation and Retail sector which generally pay below family sustaining wages.

Figure 9: Education & Experience Level Required in Job Postings¹⁵

Education Level	Unique Postings	% of Total
No Education Listed	63,590	69%
High school or GED	16,801	18%
Associate's degree	5,599	6%
Bachelor's degree	7,702	8%
Master's degree	2,233	2%
Ph.D. or professional degree	1,941	2%
Minimum Experience	Unique Postings	% of Total
No Experience Listed	62,352	68%
0 - 1 Years	16,197	18%
2 - 3 Years	9,965	11%
4 - 6 Years	2,447	3%
7 - 9 Years	383	0%
10+ Years	341	0%

When comparing the educational requirements of the jobs available in the Luzerne/Schuylkill region with the Educational Attainment levels highlighted in Section 1.1, there is a clear mismatch between those possessing a 4-year degree or higher (19.5%) and jobs requiring advanced credentials (12%). The result is that the labor pool is not effectively meeting the demands of the job market.

Regular feedback from regional employers across industries confirms that they are facing a lack of skilled labor. They need employees with technical and trades skills that can best be gained through an apprenticeship program or a short-term training program like those offered by community colleges.

The top 8 qualifications in-demand by employers are in the Transportation and Healthcare sectors (*Figure 10*). Workers with a Commercial Driver's License are twice as in demand as the next 7 credentials

¹⁴ Source: 2010-2014 ("2014") and 2015-2019 ("2019") 5-Year American Community Surveys: B06007, B17005, B11003

¹⁵ Source: Economic Modeling Specialists, Incorporated 2020.4 Class of Worker; QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees & Self-Employed

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combined. Once again, all of the most in-demand occupations require short-term training rather than a 4-year degree.

Figure 10: Certifications Required in Job Postings¹⁶

Qualification	Postings with Qualification
Commercial Driver's License (CDL)	15,465
Licensed Practical Nurse	2,073
Certified Nursing Assistant	1,556
Hazmat Endorsement	785
Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN)	716
Nurse Practitioner	630
CDL Class B License	559
Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) Card	514

Among employers in the Luzerne/Schuylkill, top in-demand hard skills include Warehousing, Nursing, Merchandising, Flatbed Truck Operation, and Basic Life Support. Top soft skills in demand by employers include Communications, Customer Service, Management, Sales and Operations.

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL REQUIREMENTS FOR IN-DEMAND SECTORS AND OCCUPATIONS

The service industry accounted for the bulk of the area's employment opportunities, accounting for 172,749 jobs in 2020 (81.7% share of all jobs), and this is expected to remain steady over the next 5 years. Many of the occupations in this industry will rely heavily on Proof of Experience, Short-Term On-the-Job training and/or State Licensing, Post-Secondary Degrees, and Industry Credentials as job requirements.

For example, the **Healthcare** industry employed 33,033 (15.6% share) workers in the region in 2020. Many of the new positions will require job seekers to possess a post-secondary degree and/or state licensing. In the case of Nursing Care Facilities, many workers (aides) are required to complete an in-house training program and pass a test within a few months of employment. Non-service sectors also require short-term trainings. **Advanced Manufacturing** accounts for 27,681 job opportunities in the region (13.1%). To be competent in these positions, workers need to possess a combination of math, computer, engineering and diagnostics skills that can be trained in local community colleges, or obtained through registered apprenticeship programs.

PATH TO CAREERS

The L/S WDB is moving to adopt the *Path To Careers* platform, an innovative new interface that helps businesses connect with schools, schools learn what businesses need, and students see career opportunities first-hand. Path to Careers allows businesses to easily register with information highlighting who they are, what they do and how they'd like to connect with schools and students by providing career awareness experiences. Schools register so educators and students alike can easily learn about local

¹⁶ Source: EMSI (Economic Modeling Specialists, International), 2020.4

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businesses and then connect with them in ways that allow them to see, feel, and understand first-hand the opportunities that exist and the skills and abilities it takes to secure them. Path to Careers helps schools focus on what matters — students — while relieving the burden of trying to research where the businesses are, what they have to offer, and who to contact. Similarly, it is designed with businesses in mind, allowing connections to happen within a streamlined process that works for them. The end result is that students are more easily able to find and access the career development opportunities near them while employers have more chances to get their future potential workforce in their doors to better understand the career opportunities available.

The platform was originally developed by the Central PA WDB (CPWDC) with support for the PA Department of Labor & Industry, and can be viewed here: <https://pathtocareers.org/>. L/S WDB will work with CPWDC to adapt the platform for the Luzerne/Schuylkill region.

NEXT GENERATION INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS

The Regional Boards in NEPA collaborate in order to enhance employer engagement through the Next Gen Industry Partnership model. The L/S WDB works closely with the Northeast PA Advanced Manufacturing Partnership that transitioned into a Next Generation Employer-led model in 2018. The underlying goal of the Next Generation Advanced Manufacturing Partnership is addressing industry needs based on a business-led model process to better understand industry priorities. The partnership identified three areas of concentration:

- Establish and grow a sustainable partnership
- Promote business-to business networking; and
- Develop and market career pathways.

Currently, the partnership engages 57 individuals from 32 unique public partners. Included are 4 northeast workforce development boards, 8 economic development agencies, 8 educational providers, and 4 additional workforce organizations. Several public partner meetings have taken place over the past year. The Next Gen Partnership received a new round of new funding in 2019 that will support incumbent worker training opportunities.

The NEPA Boards realize that resources and regional boundaries need to be flexible to meet employer needs. The northeast regional workforce partners work collaboratively and meet, quarterly to discuss current workforce trends, to share best practices, and any potential partnering opportunities to address employer need.

The employer partners of the NEPA Manufacturing Partnership identified filling open job positions as one of their highest priorities and biggest challenges. In response, the Partnership formed a Marketing Committee made up of business leaders and public partners. The committee oversaw a project that recently resulted in the development of a series of four videos to reach job seekers and to make them aware of manufacturing career opportunities in Northeastern PA.

Another priority identified by our Partnership's business leaders was discovering our region's public partners who offer resources and support for our local manufacturing employers. This project started simply by asking local workforce and economic development boards, chambers of commerce, PA CareerLink® offices, education partners, industry associations and others to enter information about their

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organizations in an Excel spreadsheet. From there this project, also led by our Partnership's Marketing Committee, evolved to become the NEPA Manufacturing Merge Resource Guide.

The **NEPA Manufacturing Merge** is a digital resource guide created exclusively for NEPA manufacturers. It is designed to make it easy for employers to find the support and resources they need. Our goal is to update this information annually.

Links to the resource guide and all of the videos can be found in **Attachment 5**.

WORKFORCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN LUZERNE/SCHUYLKILL

The L/S WDB's Business Services Teams based in the area's PA CareerLink® One-Stops continually validate and update the labor market information cited in the figures above through its real-time interactions with area employers, including data received during Rapid Response interactions. Using this information, the Board supports the enrollment of individuals into a variety of education and training programs, including work-based learning opportunities that bridge skills gaps and prepare qualified candidates to meet employer demands.

The Board emphasizes training and education programs that are aligned with its targeted industries, including Advanced Manufacturing, Logistics and Transportation, Food Processing, and Healthcare. The L/S WDB and our PA CareerLink® One-Stops strategically utilize available WIOA funded training resources including Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) and On-the-Job Training (OJTs) funds to support the region's workforce development needs.

The L/S WDB has meaningful relationships with its neighboring Local Workforce Development Boards, local economic development organizations, training providers and community and faith-based organizations to form a community of practice to improve their understanding of the region's training needs. The L/S WDB recognizes that the growth and success of the regional economy relies and benefits greatly from the communication and collaboration with the above-mentioned organizations.

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?

The local area faces two primary challenges in aligning its labor force skills and education and training activities with the needs of regional employers: (1) Development of Soft Skills for youth and (2) Development of educational and occupational skills for jobseekers.

Soft Skills for Youth. Through direct feedback from employers, the Board knows that many youth do not possess the necessary soft skills that are required to secure and retain jobs, as well as to help them further advance in their careers. Examples of these soft skills include: communication, customer service, teamwork, leadership, problem solving, critical thinking and other positive employment traits.

The Board will meet this challenge through the YES (Your Employability Skills) program. As detailed further in the responses below, YES is a 120-hour curriculum that focuses on the employability skills that are mandatory in today's business environment. The Board's strategic goal is to have this program implemented in every school district in the local area.

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Educational and Occupational Skills for All Jobseekers. Additional enrollments and completions of short-term trainings are needed to fill numerous openings identified in Section 1.5. As outlined in *Figure 2*, 59% of the area's population have a high school degree or some college. The challenge to the Board is to recruit individuals from these two groups and enroll them into education and/or training programs to provide them with the skills and certifications needed to meet employer demand.

The L/S WDB will meet this challenge by prioritizing its employment and training investments in the targeted industries of Advanced Manufacturing, Logistics and Transportation, Food Processing, and Healthcare. The Board places particular emphasis on enrolling eligible jobseekers into training programs that are aligned with the hiring needs of regional employers in these sectors.

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

The Board analyzes and interprets labor market information and other relevant data that provides the framework for its decisions. Local policy drives the quantitative goals and desired outcomes for specific workforce programs funded through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). These programs offer workforce development services to the region's employers and jobseekers targeting core programs – Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Adult Basic Education and Literacy, Wagner-Peyser Programs, and Vocational Rehabilitation. The goal is to prepare jobseekers for jobs that are in-demand locally and that lead to family sustaining wages.

PA CAREERLINK® ONE-STOPS

The Board offers career and training services through the assistance of well-trained professional staff. Its three PA CareerLink® centers, proud partners of the American Job Center network, are located in Hazleton, Pottsville, and Wilkes-Barre. Each center is customer-focused with goals for preparing the workforce with education and skill advancement in meeting employer needs to spur economic growth.

The Luzerne/Schuylkill area PA CareerLink® centers have co-located partners that are responsible for the delivery of the services listed above including partners funded through:

- WIOA Title I: Adult, Dislocated Worker, National Emergency Grant/Opioid Program, Rapid Response
- WIOA Title I: Youth (In-school and Out-of-School youth ages 14-24) and TANF Youth, Business Education Partnership, State Local Internship Program
- WIOA Title II: Adult Basic Literacy Education
- WIOA Title III: Wagner Peyser; Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA); Trade Readjustment Allowance (TRA)
- WIOA Title IV: Office of Vocational Rehabilitation – Services to persons with disabilities. The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation assists Pennsylvanians with disabilities to secure and maintain employment and independence under Title IV-Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Eligible OVR customers receive multiple services that may include but not be limited to; diagnostic, vocational counseling and guidance, vocational evaluation, restoration, training, job placement, individualized support services; and pre-employment training services for eligible and potentially eligible high school students with disabilities. OVR also provides multiple services to the business community designed to assist businesses with onboarding pre-screened qualified employees with disabilities.

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- US DOL Veterans
- Community Development Block Grant programs
- WIOA Title V: Senior Employment Services

Workforce Development activities offered, include but are not limited to: Basic Career Services, Individualized Career Services, Career Resource Centers, Training Services, Employer Services and Youth/Young Adult Workforce Development Services, Work-Based Training, Work Experience, promotion of Pre- Apprenticeship/Apprenticeship information and outreach events.

The One-Stop Operator, and WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth services are contracted using separate competitive procurement process conducted at staggered terms. Typically, contracts are awarded on a three to five-year basis and are reviewed annually for renewal. The procurement process is comprehensive and in compliance with established policies. EDSI and Equus (formerly known as ResCare) are currently contracted to provide these services in the region.

INCREASING ACCESS TO WIOA SERVICES

During these unprecedented times, job seekers and employers alike increasingly need our services. Given the increased workforce challenges due to COVID, the L/S WDB recently updated its Program Policy PP 104 to make WIOA services available to those earning up to 258% above federal poverty levels (*Figure 11*). The change will provide much needed WIOA training services to a population that would otherwise not be eligible.

Creating a fourth (4th) priority of services income eligibility guidelines will allow the L/S WDB to place more job seekers into On-the-Job (OJT) training opportunities with local employers. The benefit to employers is a reduction in their payroll expenses due to the reimbursement of WIOA funds. Use of the 258% above Federal Poverty Level guidelines will allow a greater number of individuals to be served that otherwise would not be WIOA eligible. To date, the L/S WDB estimates it was unable to assist a minimum of 30 – 35 individuals with training opportunities under the current Federal Poverty Levels. The 4th priority will open the door to families in dire need of help.

Figure 11: Updated Income Eligibility for WIOA Participants

Size of Family Unit	CURRENT	FUTURE
	Federal Poverty Levels (Annual)	258% ABOVE Federal Poverty Level (Annual)
1	\$12,760	\$32,921
2	\$17,240	\$44,479
3	\$21,720	\$56,038
4	\$26,200	\$67,596
5	\$30,680	\$79,154
6	\$35,160	\$90,713
7	\$39,640	\$102,271
8	\$44,120	\$113,830

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EMPLOYER & JOB SEEKER HELPLINES

In an effort to better address the community's workforce needs, the L/S WDB has created immediate support with a "Job Seeker Help Line" and an "Employer Help Line." The Help Lines are available Monday through Friday, from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm by calling Hazleton at 570.599.2100, Pottsville at 570.453.7054 and in Wilkes-Barre at 570.453.7053. Staff help individuals find work and match local employers with qualified workers. The new resource has expanded the reach of the L/S WDB, and to date the program has served 26,000 participants.

ENHANCED JOB SEEKER OUTREACH

For the last decade, the L/S WDB and local PA CareerLink® offices have utilized Constant Contact to communicate with job seekers as well as employers. Recipients receive a communication via email regarding programs and services offered by the PA CareerLink®. While communication to employers in this manner is relatively successful, job seekers are harder to reach. The "open" and "click" rates on these communications have steadily declined in recent years. Many of today's job seekers and the majority of younger individuals prefer to receive communications via text rather than email.

To improve our communication with these job seekers, the L/S WDB will integrate new technology to improve the interface process between the PA CareerLink® offices and job seekers. The integration will incorporate mobile technology to improve communication to job seekers in a virtual world, helping employers in filling their vacant positions without relying solely on the brick and mortar model.

Mobiniti, a text marketing agency, will be retained to introduce mobile messaging to promote job opportunities listed on the PA CareerLink® website, train PA CareerLink® employees on the Mobiniti platform, and coordinate with the PA CareerLink® Digital Outreach Team to promote the texting initiative to job seekers. The PA CareerLink® Digital Outreach Team will create content for the text messages, send the test messages, and make appropriate referrals to PA CareerLink® staff and partners when participants engage in response to the text messaging campaigns.

Several metrics will be measured to identify the impact of improving the communication between the PA CareerLink® offices and job seekers. The overall goal is to increase the open and click rates of these new communications, drive more traffic to the www.pacareerlink.pa.gov website, increase job referrals, and job placement rates in the local workforce development area.

YOUTH REENTRY DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

L/S WDB is piloting a Youth Reentry Demonstration Project through which a full-time Life Coach/Family Advocate provides mentoring and support to youth reentering the workforce. This professional helps an individual make a healthy, positive transition to self-sustaining employment through group and individual coaching sessions. The Life Coach/Family Advocate provides guidance and encouragement while modeling pro-social behavior in a mentoring environment that includes both individual and group sessions. In addition to the Life Coach/Family Advocate, an Intake/Outreach Coordinator in each county assists participants in the enrollment process, provides them with an overview of PA CareerLink® services, and connects them with the tools to obtain and sustain meaningful employment. The Intake/Outreach Coordinator and Life Coach/Family Advocate are employed by L/S WDB's incumbent WIOA service provider, Educational Data Systems, Inc. (EDSI).

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As a team, the reentry staff regularly collaborates to develop and update program structure and curriculum, research evidence-based interventions, and establish & maintain a virtual platform to deliver services in adherence to the Governor's guidelines in response to COVID 19. The team has built a 3-tier outreach strategy to connect with criminal justice partners, community organizations and agencies, and is implementing a digital outreach plan to engage clients directly.

FOCUS ON APPRENTICESHIP

In January 2019, the L/S WDB in partnership with Lackawanna and Pocono Counties Workforce Development Boards received additional funding support from the State's Apprenticeship Expansion Grant project to expand awareness of how Registered Apprenticeship (RA) programs can be utilized as a strategic workforce development plan for the region's employers. This initiative affords the L/S WDB and their project partners the resources to meet with employers, unions and other organizations to provide RA informational sessions and technical assistance in the development and registration of apprenticeship programs. L/S WDB and their project partners also meet with the region's training providers to help them understand how they fit into the Registered Apprenticeship and Pre- Apprenticeship ecosystem. A well-developed Registered Pre-apprenticeship ecosystem provides industry with a dependable pipeline of skilled workers.

This project also supports employer awareness of the Innovation in Management Registered Apprenticeship program. This program is portable and transferrable across multiple industries. The Greater Pittston Chamber of Commerce recently registered their Innovation in Management Apprenticeship training program in the Commonwealth with the support of the PA Apprenticeship and Training Office. Individuals who complete this program earn a nationally recognized Journey Worker certificate, 16 college credits and a Small Business Skills diploma from Luzerne County Community College, and are highly skilled to meet the needs of their employers. This RA program trains individuals to be more productive and prosperous in the workplace, which benefits both the employer and the worker. Outcomes to date include:

- The L/S WDB and its project partners have engaged 47 employers
- The L/S WDB and its project partners have engaged 14 Public Partners
- The L/S WDB and its project partners have met with 5 current or potential RA sponsors
- At least 4 employers committed to join the Innovations in Management Group Sponsored RA
- At least 8 employees were scheduled to begin their Innovations in Management RA as new apprentices
- The L/S WDB and their project partners have hosted several in-person and virtual Registered Apprenticeship (RA) informational employer forums to promote the expansion of RA.

Because of the need for virtual training due to COVID, the L/S WDB and project partners worked with the Luzerne County Community College to develop online Related Technical Instruction for the Innovations in Management RA.

EDUCATIONAL PROVIDERS

The Board partners with local organizations and has strong relationships with education leaders. Its PA CareerLink® offices have distinguished relationships with the schools and training providers in the area. Jobseekers and employers have access to a variety of training services. The Board maintains the quality of the training programs listed on the State Eligible Training Provider's List (ETPL) with training offerings that are aligned with business hiring needs in High Priority Occupations (HPOs).

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The Board has formative relationships with key education providers which includes community colleges, state colleges, local private colleges and universities, technical schools, local school districts and numerous other training providers. These relationships allow us to explore and identify skill gaps that exist between jobseekers and industry. Training programs must meet performance benchmarks such as program completion, employment rates, median earnings and credential attainment. Staffs are knowledgeable of the great opportunities that can come from a 2-year degree, technical training, or apprenticeship, and are able to guide job seekers towards many different career pathways.

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

IN-DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTORS

The top 5 industries in the Luzerne/Schuylkill area accounted for 63% of all jobs in the region. With the exception of the Government sector, each had a location quotient greater than or equal to '1'. Transportation and Warehousing has an LQ of 2.18, with jobs projected to grow 8.5% over the next 5 years. The top sector by jobs, healthcare, is expected to grow 4.8% by 2025 (*Figure 12*).

Figure 12: Employment Outlook by Top Industry Sector¹⁷

Industry Sector	2020 Jobs	2020 Percent	2020 State Location Quotient	Projected Change 2020-2025		Average Earnings per Job
Health Care and Social Assistance	33,033	15.6%	1.22	1,598	4.8%	\$58,033
Manufacturing	27,681	13.1%	1.67	237	0.9%	\$69,130
Government (includes public education)	26,030	12.3%	0.82	-358	-1.4%	\$76,903
Retail Trade	22,984	10.9%	1.11	-826	-3.6%	\$34,043
Transportation and Warehousing	22,766	10.8%	2.80	1,924	8.5%	\$51,014

Other top sectors included Food Services (6.9%), Administrative and Waste Management Services (5.8%), Construction (4.1%), and Other Services (3.7%). With the exception of Construction, none of these jobs pay family sustaining wages.

Location quotient (LQ) is a way of quantifying how concentrated a particular industry, cluster, occupation, or demographic group is in a region as compared to the nation. It can reveal what makes a region “unique” in comparison to the national average. An LQ of 1.0 means that a region has the same employment as the nation, while an LQ greater than 1.0 has a greater share of employment than the nation.

Job postings by industry indicate a similar demand for workers, with all the sectors above (with the exception of Government) among the top posters to online job boards in the region (*Figure 13*). The *Transportation and Warehousing* sector had the most postings, nearly 100,000, and almost 50% more than the next highest sector (Retail, 69,603 postings).

¹⁷ Source: Economic Modeling Specialists, Incorporated 2020.4 Class of Worker; QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees & Self-Employed

Figure 13: Job Postings by Industry¹⁸

Industry	Total Postings (Nov 2019 - Nov 2020)
Transportation and Warehousing	99,683
Retail Trade	69,603
Health Care and Social Assistance	60,507
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	50,288
Manufacturing	23,913
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	22,269
Finance and Insurance	11,636
Other Services (except Public Administration)	9,780
Accommodation and Food Services	8,870

IN-DEMAND OCCUPATIONS

Top in-demand occupations align with the in-demand sectors highlighted above. Healthcare Support and Transportation Occupations will see hiring equivalent to nearly the current size of the workforce over the next 5 years. Manufacturing, (e.g. Production), Administrative Support, and other service industry occupations will also experience strong hiring.

Figure 14: Demand for Top Occupational Groupings¹⁹

Occupational Grouping	Jobs		State Location Quotients	Job Openings 2015-2020		Job Openings (Projected) 2020-2025	
	2020	2025		Net	Percent	Net	Percent
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	31,848	33,352	1.84	30,187	109.0%	26,931	84.6%
Production Occupations	19,980	19,918	1.65	18,501	95.1%	14,563	72.9%
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	9,604	9,779	1.17	7,339	81.8%	6,002	62.5%
Healthcare Support Occupations	10,061	11,177	1.11	9,650	96.9%	10,053	99.9%
Community and Social Service Occupations	4,132	4,182	1.14	3,323	82.9%	2,770	67.0%
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	13,021	13,316	1.12	6,528	51.8%	5,166	39.7%
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	27,757	26,989	1.03	22,609	76.8%	19,356	69.7%

Overall, between 2020 and 2025 a total of 181,999 positions will be filled, representing 86% of the 211,567 jobs currently available across all industries. This total includes turnover within existing positions as well as the creation of new ones, and further indicates the strong need for additional short-term trainings to prepare the area's workforce for local jobs.

¹⁸ Source: Economic Modeling Specialists, Incorporated 2020.4 Class of Worker; QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees & Self-Employed

¹⁹ Source: Economic Modeling Specialists, Incorporated 2020.4 Class of Worker; QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees & Self-Employed

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The top two dozen positions advertised locally are all in the Transportation & Warehousing or Healthcare sectors (*Figure 15*).

Figure 15: In-Demand Occupations²⁰

Job Title	Total Postings (Nov 2019 - Nov 2020)
CDL-A Truck Drivers	20,000
Flatbed Truck Drivers	9,212
CDL-A Flatbed Truck Drivers	8,978
CDL Truck Drivers	6,933
Licensed Practical Nurses	5,863
Owner-Operator Truck Drivers	5,747
Registered Nurses	5,485
Solo CDL-A Flatbed Truck Drivers	5,349
Warehouse Team Members	4,446
Company CDL-A Truck Drivers	4,309
Warehouse Workers	4,206
Team CDL-A Truck Drivers	3,914
Delivery Drivers	3,635
Forklift Operators	3,261
Local CDL-A Truck Drivers	2,910
Certified Nursing Assistants	2,786
Warehouse Production Workers	2,744
Warehouse Associates	2,719
OTR CDL-A Truck Drivers	2,462
Medical Surgical Registered Nurses	2,026
Pickers/Packers	1,992
Medical Surgical Travel Registered Nurses	1,753
Customer Service Representatives	1,651
Dedicated CDL Truck Drivers	1,637

The Luzerne-Schuylkill WDB's initiatives described in Sections 1.2 and 1.4 are aligned to address the skills gaps in growing industries. Top sectors including healthcare, manufacturing, construction and logistics are ideal for apprenticeship programs, as many of the skills needed can best be trained through a combination of classroom and on-the-job training. The LSWDB's Next Gen Manufacturing further supports these efforts, aligning employers to collaborate on meeting the training needs of the industry. The upcoming Path to Careers website will connected individuals to opportunities in these sectors, while the WIOA-supported ITA and OJT funding helps to fund training for individuals looking to pursue one of the in-demand occupations listed above. Together, these initiatives are part of a comprehensive strategy to provide employers with the skilled labor they need while providing job seekers with pathways to family-sustaining wages.

2. STRATEGIC PLANNING: Vision and Goals

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

²⁰ Source: Economic Modeling Specialists, Incorporated 2020.4 Class of Worker; QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees & Self-Employed

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The Board's strategic vision and goals for preparing its workforce support closing the skills gap and improving worker quality by integrating economic development, workforce development, and education initiatives. Specifically, the vision and mission are ***"to ensure a demand driven, world-class competitive workforce aligned with economic development and education"***.

The economic future of Northeast Pennsylvania is dependent on a workforce that is globally competitive. A skilled workforce united with initiatives that directly support current business/industry needs translates to economic growth. The Board is committed to building a workforce system that is accountable, market driven, and aligned with economic development and education.

The crisis for employers who require employees with the skills needed to fill jobs is real. Prior to and during 2019 & 2020 employers have struggled to fill positions left vacant due to the COVID 19 pandemic and the aging workforce. Businesses need to attract younger workers to fill the positions that are being vacated by retiring employees. The vacated occupations are diverse as are the skill requirements for these jobs. There is a focus on career pathways for skill, credential, and degree attainment targeting youth and individuals with barriers.

The Board supports work-based learning through summer employment programs, pre- apprenticeship and apprenticeship initiatives and other related activities specifically pursuing youth, individuals with barriers and non-traditional participants.

The Board is committed to a regional strategy of cooperative partnerships with the Lackawanna and Pocono Workforce Development Boards as well as the Northern Tier Workforce Board, to support both local and regional economies through training, retraining, and addressing the demands of the future workforce.

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?

The Board continuously analyzes the effectiveness of its customer-friendly services, as well as the organizations who deliver these services, to ensure strategic objectives are being met. Currently, under the oversight of the WDB, the staff of the three PA CareerLink® centers work cohesively in the delivery of services and in meeting the Board's goals. The One-Stop Operator with assistance from Site Administrators/Site Managers provide the WDB with the opportunity to better coordinate required Partners' services with those of the Title I Providers, further promoting the seamless delivery of services.

The Board's strategies to work with the core programs to align available resources include:

1. Building on its customer-focused design to better connect partners, providing improved access to those services that are most frequently used by customers.
2. Meeting the needs of special populations, including those with basic skills deficiencies and barriers to employment.
3. Streamlining talent delivery and business services of the core partners and exploring opportunities to reduce the administrative burden for employers who work with the core partners.
4. Exploring sector-based strategies based on industry demand through a coordinated model that focuses on skills, recruitment, retention, and advancement with all core partners' resources.
5. Increasing access to literacy/numeracy services through clear referrals and tracking.
6. Increasing work-related opportunities for youth, improving the youth talent pipeline, and collaborating on the development of career pathways.

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7. Establishing performance benchmarks to support and promote the achievement of the WIOA performance accountability measures.
8. Supporting the regional initiatives articulated in the Northeast PA Consortium Regional WIOA Plan to further increase the economic vitality of the region.
9. Focusing the PA CareerLink® Luzerne/Schuylkill One Stop Operator and Partner meetings to include discussion of the workforce delivery system as a whole, and the progress toward the strategic vision and goals of the local workforce development area.

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 Board's vision and goals align with the Governor's five broad goals which include development of career pathways and Apprenticeship, sector strategies and employer engagement, an increase in employment opportunities for youth, continuous improvement of the workforce system, and strengthening the One-Stop delivery system.

The Board's Strategic Initiatives include:

1. Focus on Career Pathways, Registered Apprenticeships and Pre-apprenticeships
2. Focus on Employer Engagement
3. Focus on Youth
4. Focus on Continuous Improvement in the Workforce Development Area and the Region
5. Focus on Strengthening the One-Stop Delivery System

The Board continues to support and augment the Commonwealth's goals through its local planning initiatives. Activities and results are overseen by the Board's Planning and Development Committee that convenes quarterly. Board staff, Site Administrators, and partner personnel meet monthly to discuss strategies to ensure planned outcomes are achieved. Each PA CareerLink® office has formed teams to support attainment of local goals as well as meeting the Commonwealth's goals.

In alignment with goal # 1: The Board utilizes data which identifies targeted industry clusters in the local workforce area in establishing career pathways models. They address the required skill sets, credential and degree achievement for businesses and employment needs. The Board is concentrating on four targeted industries: **Manufacturing, Healthcare, Transportation/Distribution, and Food Processing**. These career pathways will provide direction to individuals seeking employment in High Priority Occupations (HPO), will assist individuals with barriers and assist incumbent workers looking to advance their careers. The Board is engaged in Next Generation Regional Industry Partnerships with neighboring Workforce Development Boards in NEPA which offer skilled training to the incumbent workforce. We will continue the promotion of employment opportunities that pay viable wages for self-sustainability.

As highlighted in **Section 1.4, "Focus on Apprenticeship"** the NEPA Consortium of Regional Boards received funding to support Registered Apprenticeship (RA) programs. This initiative affords the L/S WDB to meet with employers, unions, and other organizations to provide RA sessions and technical assistance in the development and registration of apprenticeship programs.

In partnership with Greater Pittston Chamber of Commerce and Luzerne County Community College, curriculum for "Innovations in Management Registered Apprenticeship," was developed that is portable

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and transferable across multiple industries for online instruction. This RA program is designed to train individuals to be more productive and successful in the workplace, which benefits both employer and the worker.

PA CareerLink® staff conduct apprenticeship program workshops and employer forums promoting the benefits of earning and learning while being mentored by a co-worker and supervisor. Customers are encouraged to apply and participate if their interest lies in any of the program offerings or other Apprenticeship programs currently on the PA ETPL.

Through the Board's Priority of Service Policy, we are committed to assisting individuals with barriers to employment through WIOA Title I programs. A minimum of 51% of WIOA Title I Adult training funding helps those with employment barriers. The Board also seeks alternative forms of funding such as local, state, federal and foundation grants to assist special populations in need. These external grants supplement and diversify training opportunities for clientele in all areas described in goals # 1 through # 5.

In alignment with goal #2: The Board focuses on employer engagement by continually outreaching to employers in the region to discuss their respective needs. Outreach activities includes virtual and/or in person meetings and/or employer forums. The Board solicits feedback during these planned outreach activities to assist in improving relations in fulfilling labor market needs, industry-related specific needs and in meeting the business demands for a skilled workforce.

Additionally, the Board informs employers about labor market data, sector strategies within industry clusters in targeted industries of Manufacturing, Healthcare, Transportation/Distribution, and Food Processing and business services at the One-Stop Centers.

The Board offers specific workshops and seminars on a variety of topics that are of interest to employers. We partner with OVR to include workshops that center on disability awareness and the benefits of hiring individuals with disabilities. The Board serves as a conduit with school districts to assist them in developing partnerships with businesses as a means to exposing students to high priority occupations. The Board also partners with economic development's **Engage!** Program, a business retention and expansion program to seek referrals and develop relationships with local and regional businesses in need of One-Stop services.

In alignment with goal #3: The Board recognizes the importance of education and addressing the need to increase employment opportunities for youth, particularly 18 to 24-year old's, youth with barriers, and youth with disabilities. Age demographics for the Northeast indicate an aging workforce. As a result, there is a need to recruit younger workers to fill the skilled positions that are being vacated by retiring workers. The Board is prioritizing services to Out-of-School Youth for work-based learning via year-round employment, pre-apprenticeship programs, and apprenticeships.

The PA CareerLink® offices reach out to businesses through cold calling, Constant Contact and other social media venues for interest in sponsoring youth work-experience. There are approximately 65 businesses who are committed to be work experience sites. The Title I Youth Providers are focused in engaging youth with work-based training that offers enhanced training opportunities, career awareness, exposure to peer- to-peer, peer-to-authority interaction, and high school equivalency/literacy

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instruction. Businesses agreed to utilize students in work experience activities throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. All employers are required to comply with CDC and Commonwealth requirements to protect the students, employees and customers.

The Board expands the youth pipeline through a number of strategies for in-school and out of school youth. These strategies include: Promotion of the YES (Your Employability Skills) Program and workshops to students enrolled in GED training, youth activity programs and TANF programs; working closely with Job Corps to co-enroll, refer and educate Job Corps students about the services and programs available in the One-Stop Centers; partner with Junior Achievement; NEPA Manufacturers and Employers Council; PA Partners in Education; Educational Opportunity Centers; Advantage Credit Counseling Services; local chambers of commerce and other entities to ensure youth are offered the required 14 WIOA program elements.

In alignment with goal #4: The Board engages employers through a variety of workforce partnerships to elicit their knowledge and expertise to improve connections and response time of workforce programs; fulfill labor needs; enhance expansion of critical skills development through public-private investment; and encourage employment practices that support jobs that pay. The Board seeks to improve offerings to job seekers and employers through virtual, on-site workshops and recruitment events, data sharing and employer-focused seminars.

In addition, the Board frequently evaluates training programs and employment outcomes and seeks training providers that have diverse offerings due to customer interest, industry needs, high priority occupations and labor market data. A variety of data sources are utilized to inform and evaluate the workforce development system including CWIA, EMSI and the Bureau of Labor Statistics in order to make changes to meet the labor market and economy demands.

In alignment with goal # 5: The Board is focusing on strengthening the One-Stop Delivery System by developing a robust on-line presence that offers employers and participants a means to connect with the One-Stop Delivery System online with access to workshops and other services virtually. These services are available outside of regular business hours and at the convenience of the employer and participant.

The Board works with community partners to better serve job seekers and employers through referrals and leveraging resources.

The Board is exploring innovative ways to connect with job seekers through texting initiatives, social media campaigns and other digital platforms.

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 Luzerne/Schuylkill Workforce Development Board's negotiated local levels of performance are exhibited in the Performance Table in Attachment 1. Historically, the Board meets and/or exceeds the WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth negotiated levels.

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The Board closely monitors the local performance levels throughout the program year which allows staffs to adjust strategies in the event of a borderline level and/or to ensure outcomes continuously improve. The measures include employment, median earnings, credential attainment, measurable skill gains, and effectiveness in serving employers. The negotiated levels provide a method to gauge the success rate of the local system in providing quality workforce services to the general public and businesses and helping the unemployed obtain jobs. Board staff reviews performance results with the Performance and Evaluation Committee at a minimum, quarterly, to ensure results are being attained. In addition, the Board staff prepares a report that is distributed to Board members quarterly containing performance data as well as other information.

Key strategies for achieving local area goals in support of the measures include:

Employment 2nd & 4th quarter after exit:

Emphasis is placed on connecting customers to training opportunities and providing fiscal resources including supportive services, to reduce barriers in achieving a positive retention. On-The-Job-Training (OJT) is promoted to job seekers looking for immediate employment. When customers choose an OJT they are hired by an employer and begin earning wages. Customers also have the assurance for sustained employment upon successful completion of the training.

The L/S WDB tracks the following primary indicators of performance:

- The percentage of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program.
- The percentage of WIOA Title I Youth program participants who are in education or training activities, or in unsubsidized employment, during the second quarter after exit from the program.
- The percentage of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program. The percentage of program participants who are in education or training activities, or in unsubsidized employment, during the fourth quarter after exit from the program.
- The percentage of program participants who are in education or training activities, or in unsubsidized employment, during the fourth quarter after exit from the program.

Median Earnings:

The Board strives to place job seekers into occupations that pay family sustaining wages. Staffs provide labor market and high priority occupation information to customers. In the end, customer choice leads the decision to pursue an OJT, ITA or a job. Attainment of stackable credentials will increase the customers' median earnings.

The L/S WDB tracks the following primary indicator of performance:

- The median earnings of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program.

Credential Attainment:

Directing customers to strive for credential attainment will benefit the customer by reducing barriers to employment and will help to achieve a basis for advancement in employment through a career pathway.

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The L/S WDB tracks the following primary indicators of performance:

- The percentage of those participants enrolled in an education or training program (excluding those in OJT and customized training) who attain a recognized postsecondary credential or a secondary school diploma, or its recognized equivalent, during participation in or within one year after exit from the program. A participant who has attained a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent is included in the percentage of participants who have attained a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent only if the participant is also employed or is enrolled in an education or training program leading to a recognized postsecondary credential within one year after exit from the program.

Measurable Skill Gains:

Successful achievement of this measure is centered on the ability to connect job seekers to high priority occupations that also are based on individual customer choice. Customer success is determined by satisfactory progress made in training. Staff coordinates with training providers and customers to ensure that progress is being made. Supportive services are provided if warranted for the customer to help them successfully complete the training.

The L/S WDB tracks the following primary indicators of performance:

The percentage of program participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains, defined as documented academic, technical, occupational, or other forms of progress, towards such a credential or employment. Depending on the type of education or training program, documented progress is defined as one of the following:

- Educational functioning level gain (below post-secondary level);
- Diploma or recognized equivalent (secondary school);
- Secondary or postsecondary transcript or report card;
- Satisfactory or better progress report, towards established milestones; or
- Successful passage of a knowledge-based exam that is required for a particular occupation or progress in attaining technical or occupational skills.

Effectiveness in Serving Employers:

Strategies for this measure are focused on getting input and feedback from employers. For example, are Job Centers providing skilled workers that an employer needs and are staff effectively and satisfactorily engaging employers? Employers are kept informed of new and current services available through our Business Services Team (BST). Based on feedback from employers and job seekers the L/S WDB increased the OJT reimbursement rate to employers up to \$10,000 per new hire to encourage them to participate in training. Employer seminars are offered frequently in both a virtual platform or on-site depending on employer request and need. Upon identifying employer need, staff can then make a connection and referrals are provided seamlessly to other partners in the Job Center. Staff to the Board and BST staff continually monitor employer engagement through PA's workforce development system of record entries and reports.

The L/S WDB tracks the following primary indicators of performance:

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Approach 1 - Retention with the same employer - addresses the programs' efforts to provide employers with skilled workers;

Approach 2 - Repeat Business Customers - addresses the programs' efforts to provide quality engagement and services to employers and sectors and establish productive relationships with employers and sectors over extended periods of time.

Determining Success:

The negotiated levels of performance will be used to determine performance success or failure. The threshold for performance success is 90% or above for the overall program. The threshold for performance success on any individual indicator is a minimum of 50%.

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.

Organization Chart. An Organization Chart that depicts the structure of the Luzerne/Schuylkill Local Workforce Development Area is included as **Attachment 2: Local Workforce Development System Organizational Chart.**

Local Elected Officials. Luzerne and Schuylkill Counties' Executives are the Chief Elected Officials who are responsible for board appointments that oversee the workforce delivery system.

Fiscal Agent and Administrative Entity. The Board is the grant recipient, fiscal agent (FA) and signatory in the administration of WIOA and other grant funds. The Board manages and oversees all the FA responsibilities. The accounting services are under contract with Service Access and Management, Inc., (S.A.M.). S.A.M. employs a local individual to perform the day-to-day fiscal operations, in addition to other personnel who offer accounting advice, support for information technology and human resources services.

The Board also serves as the Administrative Entity under a 501(c)(3) non-profit structure. It serves as the employer of record and is responsible for hiring and managing the local board staff.

Workforce Development Board. Fifty-one percent of the volunteer members of the Board are from private industry organizations; all members are leaders in their field; each have optimum policy-making authority; and carry out regional and planning responsibilities for workforce development, employment, and training needs.

The Board is responsible for governance, developing and oversight responsibilities of the public workforce system and for the procurement and selection of WIOA Title I Youth, Adult and Dislocated Worker Providers for Career Services and the One Stop Operator.

The Board's **Executive Committee** consists of nine Directors of the L/S WDB, the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, the Member At-Large and the Chairperson of each of the "Standing" Committees. The Executive Committee acts on behalf of the Board in the absence of a regularly scheduled meeting of the Directors and conducts all business of the L/S WDB except those specific functions, powers, and duties reserved by the L/S WDB. The actions of the Executive Committee need not be ratified by the Board of Directors. The Executive Committee is responsible for the continuity of all programs and functions of the Board as they present themselves.

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The Board's **Standing Committees** and responsibilities are as follows:

- **Finance Committee** functions as the representative of the Board and is responsible for the administrative services and fiscal oversight, contracting, and monitoring of the WIOA and DHS funded programs and services offered at the PA CareerLink® One Stop Centers in the workforce development area.
- **Performance and Evaluation Committee** establishes and negotiates the local performance measures for approval by the appropriate Commonwealth of Pennsylvania agency acting on behalf of the Governor; works with Board staff and PA CareerLink® representatives in the development of performance standards and evaluation policies; oversees monitoring and oversight activities.
- **Planning and Development Committee** encourages regional planning efforts that facilitate economic and workforce development partnerships within the Luzerne/Schuylkill Workforce Development Area and the surrounding counties; promotes regional coordination of workforce resources, endorses the public workforce system and provides guidance on the Board's strategic goals and initiatives.
- **Youth Committee** provides a forum for stakeholders who offer youth leadership expertise; actively engages in advocating youth program goals and strategies; and focuses efforts on the expansion of the emerging workforce. and The Committee strategically aligns with state and federal priorities of the public workforce system. Their involvement and commitment are intended to broaden the delivery of youth services at the local level.

Equal Employment Opportunity and Civil Rights Protections. The name, organization, and contact information of the designated equal opportunity officer for each PA CareerLink® center within the local area is as follows:

Teresa Travis, Supervisor, BWPO
PACL Hazleton Equal Opportunity Liaison
75 North Laurel Street
Hazleton, PA 18201-5950
Phone: (570) 459-3854
tetravis@pa.gov

Joseph Miscannon, Supervisor, BWPO
PACL Pottsville Equal Opportunity Liaison
201-203 East Arch Street
Pottsville, PA 17901-3512
Phone: (570) 622-5253
jmiscannon@pa.gov

Alex Braley, Supervisor, BWPO
PACL Wilkes-Barre Equal Opportunity Liaison
32 East Union Street
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18701-0651
Phone: (570) 822-1101
abraley@pa.gov

Marla Dodd, EO Officer
Luzerne/Schuylkill Workforce Development Board

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Luzerne/Schuylkill Workforce Development Board

32 East Union St., 2nd Floor

Wilkes-Barre, PA 18701

Phone: (570) 822-1101, ext. 296

marladoddo@lswib.org

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?

The Board works collaboratively with the entities that are carrying out workforce programs to support service alignment in the local area. A One-Stop Location and Program Services Chart that identifies the workforce programs, providers, and locations is included as **Attachment 3**.

The L/S WDB strategic goals align with both the state plan's strategies and regional plan's strategies to enhance workforce initiatives. The L/S WDB accomplishes by collaborating with WIOA mandated partners and additional partners who holistically make up the PA CareerLink® system representing the workforce community. L/S Board members and partners are experts in numerous sectors in the business/private industry, education, labor, vocational rehabilitation, economic development, adult literacy and community-based organizations who are actively engaged and contribute to the local plan narrative and the strategic plan development. Their contributions are invaluable, by offering guidance towards productive goals and strategic alignment. This collaboration continues throughout each year as partners discuss strategies at quarterly Board/One-Stop Operator and Partner meetings; at Standing Committee meetings and monthly Board meetings. The workforce area also conducts outreach to the community through electronic messaging via email, Constant Contact, PA CareerLink® newsletters, Facebook and similar outlets. Because of the popularity of new technology, **Zoom**, we conducted *virtual* face-to-face meetings with our workforce partners by offering videotelephony and online chat services where information is shared about programming trends, best practices and PA CareerLink® services. The Board, PA CareerLink® staff, Partners and the public are made aware of the local and regional plans through published public notices in local newspapers and a posting on our website at www.lswib.org.

We encourage staff and partners to participate in professional development offerings made available at the local level and through participation in statewide and national conferences and convenings.

Service Alignment. The Board procured and selected its One-Stop Operator (OSO) in accordance with WIOA, the Uniform Guidance and its implementing regulations, and local procurement policy. The OSO is a single entity model with EDSI currently under contract. The OSO works with the Site Administrators/Site Managers at each location to coordinate local PA CareerLink® activities and coverage. It functions as the liaison between the Board and the Partners in the system, ensuring that all services and available resources are properly aligned to carry out the vision of the Board. Additional details about the programmatic and administrative functions of the OSO are included in the **response to 4.1 below**.

As discussed in the **response to 1.4 above**, partner staff provide seamless service delivery to all clients—from the initial intake assessments and direct referrals to partner services and programs—recognizing that services must be guided by the policies of the designated funding streams. Staff are available to assist individuals in enrolling on the Internet-based system, browsing written material and signing up for scheduled workshops and events. A team approach is utilized to assist customers, which involves the cooperation and collaboration of staff from multiple departments (i.e., case managers, workshop facilitators, etc.). Staff from partner organizations, such as Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), also

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participate directly in work that is specifically related to their target populations. The special populations and services include:

- **Veterans** and other eligible persons are given priority of service. A triage form is used to help identify those veterans who may have special needs. The form is provided to the Disabled Veterans' Outreach Employment Program (DVOP) representative and the person is called in for specialized services. Based on individual need, the staff may refer the veteran to training options and/or job placement. Staff may also refer a veteran to the OVR or other social service agencies for help with disabilities or more comprehensive needs.
- **Individuals that are basic skills deficient** have their education needs met through a variety of system partners as detailed in the **response to 3.3 below**. Services include basic adult education, remediation, and high school equivalency preparation services.
- **Individuals who receive public assistance** are referred to the Employment, Advancement, and Retention Network (EARN) program for employment and training assistance. EARN services and staff are fully-integrated and co-located within the center for job search, job development services, and training programs.
- **Older individuals** who may be eligible under Title V are referred to the Senior Employment Programs in the area. In addition, the PA CareerLink® centers may serve as host agencies or may hire older workers as greeters. Moreover, older workers have additional resources available to them through the Social Security Administration Office and OVR.
- **Returning citizens** receive guidance and counseling to prepare for employment. PA CareerLink® staff encourage them to participate in workshops to help reinstate their driver's license, health insurance, and social security benefits, as well as to have their record expunged, when applicable. Workshops geared to returning citizens focus on financial literacy, credit rebuilding, and fair housing.
- **Individuals with disabilities who are eligible under WIOA Title IV** access services provided by OVR. It helps them secure and maintain employment and independence; helping them become qualified trained members of the workforce. Eligible vocational rehabilitation (VR) customers receive multiple, individualized services such as, diagnostic testing, vocational counseling and guidance, vocational evaluation, restoration, occupational training, and job placement. **Underemployed individuals** are referred to staff for individualized services including testing, provision of labor market information, assistance in defining marketable and transferrable skills and development of an individual employment plan. They are informed about State Civil Service job opportunities to pursue while still employed, and other existing training.
- **Unemployed individuals** are also served through the system. Staff participate in Rapid Response activities. They provide assistance such as Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) workshops and Trade Adjustment Act services to help impacted workers return to work as quickly as possible.
- **Low-income individuals** may access Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) home assistance and weatherization programs that help eligible families make minor home repairs and/or reduce energy consumption and overall energy bills through the installation of cost-effective energy conservation measures. Luzerne County's Commission on Economic Opportunity and Schuylkill Community Action administer these programs in the local area.
- **LEP persons** are provided with access to English as a Second Language (ESL) classes instruction, a translator, and/or information provided in other languages as may be required. ESL providers in the local area include the Hazleton Integration Project and Luzerne County Community College programs.

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- **Migrant or Seasonal Farm Workers (MSFW)** are not a significant population in the Luzerne/Schuylkill Area. However, these individuals can access services through the centers. They receive the full range of employment services, benefits and protections, including counseling, testing, and job and training referrals. In providing such services, staff will consider the preferences, needs, and skills of the individual MSFW.

Overall, this strategic alignment of workforce programs under the PA CareerLink® Luzerne/Schuylkill umbrella helps the Board maximize the resources available in the community and promote increased accessibility for employers and individuals, including those who may have barriers to employment.

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

The Board is working with organizations throughout the local area to expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services, particularly to those individuals who have barriers to employment; and to facilitate the development of Career Pathways and co-enrollment processes within the PA CareerLink® system. An overview is described below.

Eligibility Validation. Individuals must be determined “eligible” prior to enrollment into any type of WIOA-funded services. The Board understands the importance of correctly documenting this eligibility, and requires 100% verification of all documents.

Staff members help customers gather the required eligibility paperwork by giving them a detailed listing of the forms and materials that meet programmatic standards. Additionally, they offer advice on how individuals can secure required documents, such as contacting Vital Records offices for birth certificates or checking on-line for selective service registration.

As needed, the staff also provides more intensive assistance to help individuals with barriers to employment gather the required information. In certain instances, staff may accept an individual’s self-certification to support specific eligibility criteria; however, hard-copy documentation is always preferred.

As eligibility information is provided by the customer, staff verifies it by examining it, or by speaking with official representatives of authorized agencies. They also document eligibility information in case files by maintaining physical evidence such as copies of documents (where legally permitted) and completed and signed telephone records and/or document inspection forms.

Of importance, staff refers any customer who is determined ineligible for WIOA services to an appropriate partnering agency or other community organization that may be able to provide alternative services or assistance.

On-Ramps. The Board shall continue to develop its HPO list to align career pathways to in-demand occupations that have higher skill needs and pay self-sustaining wages. The Board, through its providers in the PA CareerLink® system, consult with employers in the region to discuss implementing additional training programs that will satisfy the open positions they are having difficulty filling.

Working with employers and entrepreneurs to develop the HPO list ensures that the Board is focusing its training dollars on occupations that will lead to employment in the region. Most of the occupations

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listed on the HPO list have a career pathway attached to them, some with entry-level positions and some requiring high technical skills. Employer engagement in this process helps identify career pathways that have quality entry-level positions that will serve as “on-ramps”.

Referrals and Co-Enrollment. The Board collaborates with the six core programs: WIOA Adult, WIOA Dislocated Worker, WIOA Youth, Adult Education and Literacy, Wagner-Peyser, and Vocational Rehabilitation as well as the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) and leverages resources and services to serve jobseekers and employers in the region. Most partners are co-located in the PA CareerLink® center or offer services in concert with the PA CareerLink® center, as needed or as referred. Co-enrollment in programs is encouraged to best meet a customer’s needs in order to be successful in their employment and careers. Leveraging resources and direct communication with the partners promotes non-duplication of services. Staff utilize PA’s workforce development system of record to refer customers and also utilize a warm hand-off approach with partners in the PA CareerLink®.

Co-enrollment is defined as the alignment of complementary services to comprehensively serve customers and to encourage shared roles for guidance and support services within each career pathway program to prevent duplication of services. Reducing duplication of services can free up programs’ time and allows for each program to focus on what they do best. Co-enrollment in programs is encouraged to best meet a customer’s needs to be successful in their employment and careers. Leveraging resources and direct communication with the partners promotes non-duplication of services.

Training is currently available for Title II staff to gain knowledge on all WIOA core programs and to be able to develop best practices around referrals. One such training is titled *Intro to the PA CareerLink® System: Referrals and Best Practices*.

Title II staff have created a contact list of all WIOA programs and services that is updated on a periodic basis to ensure that referrals in PA’s workforce development system of record to partner agencies is effective. Emails are received by the Title II point of contact when referrals have been made through PA’s workforce development system of record from PA CareerLink® and other WIOA programs. PA CareerLink® offices can track the referrals through this system as well. The Title II program works with their participants to complete WIOA eligibility paperwork in order provide a smooth referral to the PA CareerLink®. Staff work with participants to determine what additional services they may qualify for (covering GED testing fees, training assistance, job search, etc.). Title II program staff follow up with the partner agencies within 1-3 days to verify if there was a successful referral and/or co-enrollment.

All program partners share how co-enrollment will benefit the customers and why it is important. Warm referrals are made whenever possible among WIOA programs. This means that it is the agencies’ responsibility to make sure that the customers’ needs are met and therefore contact information is shared among the agencies in order to make a smoother referral.

- **WIOA Adult.** The Adult program targets individuals 18 years of age and older who are in need of services to become employed or to advance their careers. Eligible Adult individuals are recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, individuals who are basic skills deficient and individuals who are both underemployed and low-income.
- **WIOA Dislocated Worker.** The Dislocated Worker programs assist individuals who are being laid off from employment or have lost their jobs and could benefit by assistance through On-The-Job (OJT) or customized training or apprenticeship to help them become reemployed quickly. During

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intake an individual develops a service strategy plan with their case manager to include core reemployment activities.

- **WIOA Youth.** Youth services are provided to youth aged 14-24 that support educational attainment and career guidance, an opportunity for a summer or year-round work experience, internship or pre-apprentice component, skills training focused on a career pathway that is based on in-demand occupations and industries. Supportive services are also offered to eligible youth. Goals for youth in this programming are to advance into postsecondary training, or employment leading to a self-sustaining wage or the military. Services are available for youth who are deemed out-of-school (e.g., a high school dropout, a youth possessing a barrier such as a disability, a pregnant or parenting youth, a youth who is in foster care, or a youth involved with the juvenile or adult justice system).
- **Wagner-Peyser.** Employment services are provided to jobseekers and employers. Jobseeker services include: job search and job placement assistance; needs and interest assessments, counseling on careers, employment workshops, creation of an individual employment plan, and case management. Employer services include posting job orders, referral of qualified jobseekers to job openings and job fairs. Labor market information is provided to jobseekers and employers in order for them to make decisions based on reliable information.
- **Adult Education and Literacy.** WIOA Title II Partner provides adult basic education and skills development programs that focus on achievement through credentials and diplomas among people with barriers to employment, including English language learners, low-income individuals, and immigrants. Programming is designed to offer education and literacy activities together with workforce preparation to adults who are basic skills deficient. WIOA Title II Partner coordinates education activities with other WIOA core programs, including the development of career pathways. Career pathways are a workforce development strategy used to support workers' transitions from education into the workforce. The Board works in tandem with Title II staff supporting the alignment of core programs and other workforce system partners. Extensive case management is offered to participants that help them address barriers to employment such as; transportation, childcare, housing, and healthcare. Additional information regarding the Board's efforts to increase awareness and access to Title II services is provided in the responses to 4.10 and 4.12 below.
- **Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR).** OVR is the WIOA Title IV core partner and provides services and helps prepare eligible individuals with disabilities to obtain and maintain employment and independence. Eligibility to receive services under WIOA Title IV may only be determined by a qualified Vocational Rehabilitation VR Counselor. They 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. VR Counselor often collaborates with other workforce program partners to provide services, outreach and assessment. Training for Vocational Rehabilitation staff is at the discretion of the local OVR District Administrator. OVR staff supervision and direction is the responsibility of the local OVR District Administrator.

Eligible customers are also provided information and referral services to other appropriate federal and state programs, including programs carried out by other components of the Statewide Workforce Development System (e.g., PA CareerLink®), that are suited to address the specific employment needs of the individual.

Additional information regarding the Board's efforts to increase awareness and access to Title IV services is provided in the **response to 3.2 above and 4.3 below**.

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- **SCSEP.** The Mature Worker Program, Area Agency on Aging for Luzerne/Wyoming Counties operates the SCSEP in Luzerne County and the AARP Foundation operates the SCSEP in Schuylkill County. SCSEP targets economically disadvantaged individuals aged 55 and over. The two providers offer on-the-job training, referrals for additional classroom training, and referrals to employers in the community. They also offer assessment, testing, and counseling, services if desired or needed.

Postsecondary Credentials. With respect to postsecondary credentials, the Board endorses the WorkKeys® National Career Readiness Certificate and the YES Northeast Initiative. These programs were implemented based on employer feedback and a skill gap analysis of the workforce area that revealed a **strong need for basic soft skills** across all industries and occupations.

The Board formally adopted WorkKeys® National Career Readiness Certificate as a *strategic initiative*, an evidence-based credential that measures essential workplace skills which addresses immediate business need. It provides qualified certificate-bearing labor to local employers who have committed to hiring through the PA CareerLink® system. WorkKeys® is a reliable workplace initiative for both jobseekers and employers. This service is offered in the PA CareerLink® centers free of charge by professionally trained staff responding to workforce needs. Employers also endorse the WorkKeys® National Career Readiness Certificate in the local area.

The Board also formally adopted the **Y**our **E**mployability **S**kills (YES) Northeast Initiative which addresses workforce *skill gaps*. The YES program provides the youth population with basic skills training for the foundation of employability skills that are mandatory in today's business environment. The Board's strategic goal is to have this program implemented in every school district in the local area.

The YES Northeast Initiative addresses the talent pipeline of youth; the future workforce of the region and nation. The 120-hour curriculum coursework focuses on employability skills, which include the following: communication; customer service; writing skills; interview training; resume writing; career exploration; health and safety; personal development; goal setting; quality and technology; teamwork and leadership; entrepreneurship; financial literacy; plus many more beneficial and relevant workforce topics. It also conducts on-sight business tours providing participants with a first-hand look of how industry functions and the employment opportunities available. The Yes Program modules meet and exceed PA Chapter 4 Academic Standards for career education and work.

All school districts in Schuylkill County with the exception of one, utilize the YES Northeast program. A total of 10 districts use the curriculum, as well as the Schuylkill Technology Center. In Luzerne County, five of the 12 districts utilize the YES Northeast program - Crestwood, Hazleton, Pittston, Wyoming Valley West, Lake Lehman and Wilkes-Barre Area Career and Technology Center. Approximately 330 Northeastern Pennsylvania businesses endorse the program and have agreed to offer preferred hiring to YES Northeast graduates.

NEPA Manufacturers and Employers Council who administers the YES Northeast initiative partnered with Penn College (an affiliate of The Pennsylvania State University), a national leader in applied technology education and is offering YES Certificate Program graduates annual renewable scholarships to first-time, full-time degree seeking students. Students pursuing associate degrees are eligible for up to \$4,000; bachelor's degree students are eligible for up to \$8,000. This opportunity is addressing critical skills-gap shortages in numerous businesses and in the pipeline of workforce.

All customers are provided with information on the ETPL and programs of study. Luzerne/Schuylkill ETPL currently has 88 programs on it. Many are certificate programs that offer stackable post-secondary

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credentials preparing students for careers or to transfer to an associate degree. Due to customer choice, customers may research and consider enrollment in other programs that are on the State Training Provider List, if they do not appear on Luzerne/Schuylkill. Training providers also provide presentations on their respective programs and PA CareerLink® staff are kept up to date on any new or emerging training opportunities.

Career Pathways. The Board has established relationships with institutions, industry partnerships, and the PA Office of Apprenticeships to support placement of individuals with barriers to employment into quality entry-level jobs that provide the work experience and non- technical skills necessary to lead to employment in HPOs. This collaborative effort identifies career pathways that provide specific on ramps for quality entry level jobs.

Career guidance and navigation services are enhanced to guide individuals, particularly individuals with barriers to employment and education, into programs and services that provide an effective pathway to their career goals. These strategies evaluate and incorporate the skills and abilities of individuals with barriers to employment, including individuals with disabilities, veterans, ex-offenders, TANF recipients, and those who do not speak English well or at all, to meet present workforce needs and future demand.

The Board utilizes innovative strategies to implement its operational requirements. It has implemented Welcome Centers where every new customer receives a staff-assisted service and is introduced to career-track employment. This model provides any new customer to the PA CareerLink® center with an opportunity to work with the Intake and Assessment staff in the Welcome Center, which is located in or near the Career Resource Center at each PA CareerLink® location. Individuals complete a full registration on PA CareerLink® <https://www.pacareerlink.pa.gov/jponline>

The Intake and Assessment staff help jobseekers sign up for various workshops and a WIOA information session, if applicable. It is the Board's intent to provide the customer with the service level they require and the services that meet his/her needs. Some individuals require minimal oversight while others need more intensive services, such as immediate job placement, job upgrading, training, remediation, etc.

Program design is a customer-friendly, step-by-step, systematic approach that provides job or training-seeking customers with an integrated "seamless" service delivery system. The Board believes that this method engages customers in a process that offers many services in a convenient manner.

3.4 How will the local board work with the entities carrying out core programs to:

- **Support a local area workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area;**
- **Manage activities or services that will be implemented to improve business engagement;**
- **Better coordinate regional workforce and economic development strategy, messaging, engagement and programs; and**
- **Strengthen linkages between the PA CareerLink® service delivery system and unemployment insurance (UI) programs.**

Overview. The Board's integrated Business Services Team (BST) focuses on a two-tier business services system to facilitate engagement of employers. It consists of a Business Services Team Lead (BSTL) who

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is employed by the Title I Provider, and a team of Business Services Representatives (BSR) that are made up of staff from many different partners, including L&I that helps with layoff aversion and Rapid Response activities. OVR also offers enhanced services to employers who hire individuals with disabilities.

Collectively, BSR is responsible for establishing and maintaining employer relationships with small, mid-size and large employers. Each BSR carries a full employer caseload that is based on all industries in the area including the Board's targeted industry sectors.

The BSTL aligns employer relations across all partners and the BSR partner with the PA CareerLink® staff in matching the skills of jobseekers to available position openings. The BSTL acts as an ambassador and concierge to the business community, including lead relationships with the Chambers of Commerce, Manufacturers and Employers' Associations, Economic Development, and industry targeted sectors that include **Manufacturing, Food Processing, Healthcare, Transportation/Distribution, Energy and Utilities** and other business-oriented groups.

The BSR work directly with employers to determine their needs and collaborate closely with the PA CareerLink® staff to coordinate services and referrals. When recruiting employers, BSR discuss the benefits of services and they communicate information about employers' job requirements to all PA CareerLink® staff responsible for making jobseeker referrals. Additionally, they maintain employer contacts regularly by telephone, email, in person, or through a newsletter or card; update Constant Contact; conduct on-site Job Fairs; and distribute employer satisfaction surveys to a diverse selection of employers. The BSR also inform employers about all PA CareerLink® services, such as pre-screening, job matching, job fairs, tax incentives, rapid response, training availability, customized and OJT training opportunities, vocational rehabilitation assessments and literacy services.

They constantly follow up with employers regarding customers' interviews, job offers, and job opportunities. After a customer is hired, the BSR remains in contact with the employer to monitor satisfaction. If a customer is not hired, the BSR will determine the reason and share that information with the customer as well as his/her Career Navigator/Advisor. Follow-up may include the completion of a customer post-interview debriefing form and an employer feedback form. The data from these documents ensures feedback is received from both the customer and employer. This information is used to improve preparation for future candidates and to present employers with better qualified candidates for their open positions.

To enhance the quality of services to employers, the BSTL develops a quarterly business plan and recruitment strategy that addresses outreach services with employers and community partners and identifies what high-priority occupations we are targeting based on local economic data. The BSTL also conducts research on job postings that are over 60 days old to determine how to better meet employer needs. In conducting this research over the past few years, the local area has successfully increased the number of employer relationships and valid open positions.

The Board requires new job postings to be approved within 24 hours. Additionally, it limits the Fully Referred and Hold Job Postings to 20 days. Full utilization of PA CareerLink® reports ensures job orders are managed and customers are being matched to the most appropriate opportunities system-wide to improve the fill rate. BSR and BSTL work with PA CareerLink® Functional Leadership Team in developing a fill rate and cycle time for filling all staff-assisted job orders and monitor these goals monthly.

The Business Services Teams (BSTs) within the PA CareerLink® One-Stop Center across the local area have been trained to initiate discussions regarding Pre-Apprenticeship and Apprenticeship opportunities as they infiltrate business and industry, most commonly through the internal human resources departments. Staff are made available to provide presentations to business owners and/or representatives and provide

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informational material on establishing apprenticeships as part of their overall outreach campaigns. Having assisted the local workforce area for many years, the various Northeast PA institutions of higher learning are well aware of the viability of apprenticeships and have been progressive in their development of courses of study to support apprenticeship usage. The mechanisms are in place to promote apprenticeship development; however, the challenge has always been the engagement of business and industry for participation. The Board recognizes the qualitative results that can be recognized from apprenticeship development; therefore, have developed a strategic initiative based on a ***Focus on Career Pathways, Registered Apprenticeships and Pre-apprenticeships:***

- Increase awareness of the Career Pathways model to individuals seeking employment and those looking to advance their careers.
- Promote Registered Apprenticeships and Pre-Apprenticeships to job seekers. Focus outreach to participants in the Reentry Program and to non-traditional populations such as women, minorities, and persons with disabilities.
- Promote apprenticeships to employers in our area through our partnership with local chambers of commerce, manufacturers and employers' associations and economic development organizations. Focus on non-traditional occupations as well as traditional ones.
- Participate in employer events that highlight career pathways and training programs such as Apprenticeships and Pre-Apprenticeship programs.
- Promote opportunities for employment in industry sectors in the region that provide viable wages for self-sustainability.
- Partner with local school districts on Career Exploration/Career Pathways activities and promote the benefits of apprenticeship programs to K-12 students.

With these efforts the Board seeks to expand pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship models to serve as a feeder to existing and/or development of new apprenticeship programs.

The WIOA-supported ITA and OJT funding helps to fund training for individuals looking to pursue a Pre-Apprenticeship/Apprenticeship in one of the in-demand occupations in the region. Together, these initiatives are part of a comprehensive strategy to provide employers with the skilled labor they need while providing job seekers with pathways to family-sustaining wages.

Rapid Response. It is important to note that the state-assigned Rapid Response (RR) representative works with the BST to identify the labor needs of new and existing employers. During layoff events, BST representatives often attend initial fact-finding meetings to learn about the dislocating workforce and identify suitable new employment opportunities for that group. Knowledge of the skill sets of the available dislocated workers is valuable to the BSRs in helping them to market to those employers who are hiring. Business Service Teams also assist the Rapid Response staff to coordinate dedicated job fairs for large groups of dislocated workers with the goal of returning the dislocated workers to suitable new employment as soon as possible. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic RR activities are being conducted virtually.

Unemployment Insurance Linkages. L/S WDB encourages unemployed individuals to comply with the Commonwealth's Register for Work and Work Search law (*waived during COVID 19 pandemic*) by helping unemployed individuals register on the PA CareerLink® system. Staff also direct (UC) Claimants to call the statewide toll-free UC number or visit the UC website regarding any benefits questions they may have. Through the COVID-19 pandemic, PA CareerLink® staff assist UC Claimants by accepting a UC Intake Form (provided by UC) to be completed by the claimant either in person or by phone. Staff then forward the form to the assigned Wagner-Peyser staff at the PA CareerLink® centers in Luzerne/Schuylkill.

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UC Claimants are provided with an orientation of services and are given an initial assessment to determine their specific workforce needs. Based on their unique circumstances, they may be referred to additional services and resources, such as job search workshops, staff- assisted job search activities, partner programs, supportive services, and/or training activities to help them secure a new job, or begin a new career.

Any potential UC eligibility issues identified during Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) or any other UC Claimant interaction are referred to the State's Unemployment Insurance Department for resolution.

RESEA

The Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) Program was suspended in the spring of 2020 and was recently reinstated using a virtual platform on January 19, 2021.

RESEA identifies UC claimants who are expected to exhaust their UC benefits before becoming reemployed. It is designed for engaging targeted customers in reemployment services or activities early in the claim cycle, currently the fifth week of UC benefits. RESEA funding restricts service delivery to Bureau of Workforce Partnership & Operations (BWPO) staff. A RESEA *Personalized Service Meeting* (PSM) must be conducted by BWPO staff. The PSM are currently being conducted virtually and include an assessment, résumé review, sharing of Labor Market Information, and development of an Individualized Employment Plan.

RESEA participants must:

- Register at www.pacareerlink.pa.gov;
- Self-schedule for and attend a PSM within 21 days;
- View the RESEA Orientation online;
- Provide documentation to BWPO staff prior to or during the PSM;
- Participate in one additional follow-up activity. (e.g., workshops, job fair, follow up meeting, etc.) which can/must be verified by BWPO staff;
- Conduct follow-up phone consultations with BWPO staff at 30 and 60 days after the PSM.

As a result of the pandemic and the reduced office hours of many of the PA CareerLink® offices, fewer individuals are profiled for RESEA than had been before. Currently, 32 participants per week are profiled in PA CareerLink® Luzerne County offices and eight in PA CareerLink® Schuylkill.

Exemptions to RESEA are only granted if the participant has returned to work or is participating in training under the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program. Participating in WIOA training will not result in a waiver. Participants who fail to complete all required RESEA activities risk the denial of UC benefits.

The Local Board has also developed and implemented another initiative for UC. The intent is to contact and engage UC claimants. This program focuses on UC claimants who have exhausted their benefits. Staff receive data from UC that includes name, address, telephone number, email address, industry and occupation of the UC exhausters. The comprehensive plan was developed across the three PA CareerLink® offices in the LWDA and includes telephone calls, letters, and emails to the UC exhausters. PA CareerLink® staff carefully examine the UC data to determine what type of outreach is most effective as well as what services each individual would benefit most from receiving. Staff from BWPO, Title I Adult/Dislocated Worker and Title I Youth collaborate to perform the outreach in an effort to engage these vulnerable individuals. Basic CareerLink services are offered as well as Title I services including classroom and on-the-job training as well as GED classes.

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As a means of continuous improvement, the Board explores best practices of other workforce areas and meets with PA CareerLink® staff regularly to enhance methodologies for employer engagement in the public workforce development system.

PA CareerLink® Site Administrators, Managers and BST staff review business services metrics every month. Data that is analyzed includes, new employers, services to employers, number of job postings, the number of new hires, referrals to job postings, the number of individuals who attend each in-house recruitment event and the number of employers active in the PA CareerLink® system as compared to the total number of employers in the workforce development area (WDA). Historically, this data is routinely reviewed and used to evaluate BST performance to pinpoint where improvements are needed. The Board continually tracks referrals to job postings as a new measure for tracking employer performance.

The WIOA Title I Adult/Dislocated Worker Provider assigns a Business Services Representative (BSR) to the complement of the PA CareerLink® staff. The BSR works closely with both the BST members and the Career Navigators to coordinate the overall function of the participant recruitment and job fulfillment process. The BSR works to better understand the qualifications necessary in meeting the needs of employers and actively recruits and matches qualified job seekers to open job postings. The BSR provides outreach and follow up services with employers on behalf of job seekers to secure optimal job placement. They implement recruitment and job development processes and initiatives along with screening of applicants to create a pipeline of qualified job seekers for employers.

The BSTL is currently developing plans to attract more job seekers to *virtual and in-house* recruitment events while ensuring those individuals referred have the appropriate qualifications for open positions. Further, through social media, we are launching campaigns to draw job seekers to the *virtual and in-house* recruitment events in an effort to make them productive for employers and assist them in meeting their recruitment needs. By offering Virtual Job Fairs at varying times throughout the day and After-Hours Job Fairs (3:00-6:00 p.m. or 4:00-7:00 p.m.), it allows individuals who are currently employed and/or under-employed to participate. We are expanding the use of social media to connect job seekers with employers and working with several regional chambers of commerce exploring other means of technology to broaden outreach to the public.

For the last decade, the Luzerne/Schuylkill Workforce Development Board (L/S WDB) and local PA CareerLink® offices have utilized Constant Contact to communicate with job seekers as well as employers. Recipients receive a communication via email regarding programs and services offered by the PA CareerLink®.

While communication to employers in this manner is relatively successful, we experience less success with job seekers. The “open” and “click” rates on these communications have steadily declined in recent years. Many of today’s job seekers and the majority of younger individuals prefer to receive communications via text rather than email. To improve our communication with these job seekers, the L/S WDB will integrate new technology to improve the interface process between the PA CareerLink® offices and job seekers. The integration will incorporate mobile technology. Several metrics will be measured to identify the impact of improving the communication between the PA CareerLink® offices and job seekers. The overall goal is to increase the open and click rates of these new communications, drive more traffic to the www.pacareerlink.pa.gov website, increase job referrals, and job placement rates in the local workforce development area.

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The Board, partnered with the Greater Wyoming Valley Chamber of Business and Industry who received funding to pilot a mobile messaging system to promote job opportunities listed on the PA CareerLink® website. The original pilot was launched through the PA CareerLink® Luzerne County, Wilkes-Barre. The Board determined to expand this offering to the PA CareerLink® Hazleton and Pottsville and secured funding through a Statewide Activity Grant to expand this initiative.

Upon awarding the Statewide Activity Grant, PA Department of Labor & Industry commented that the agency has been exploring similar texting functionality for PA's workforce system of record. They encouraged the Board to reach out to the regional directors and express our interest in this functionality being added to PA's workforce system of record. PA DOL also requested Luzerne/Schuylkill to partner with the agency to share our experiences and expertise should this functionality be added to PA's workforce system of record.

The project improves communication to job seekers in a virtual world. This project assists employers in filling their vacant positions without relying solely on the brick and mortar model. The project supports the following objectives:

1. Developing and implementing innovative programs and strategies designed to meet the needs of all employers;
2. Implementing promising practices for workers and businesses as described in WIOA sec. 134(a)(3)(A)(x).

Mobiniti, a text marketing agency, was retained to introduce the mobile messaging to promote job opportunities listed on the PA CareerLink® website, train PA CareerLink® employees on the Mobiniti platform, and coordinate with the PA CareerLink® Digital Outreach Team to promote the texting initiative to job seekers. The PA CareerLink® Digital Outreach Team will create content for the text messages, send the test messages, and make appropriate referrals to PA CareerLink® staff and partners when participants engage in response to the text messaging campaigns. The program is being piloted in the Luzerne County Wilkes-Barre PA CareerLink® with plans for expansion into the Hazleton and Pottsville PA CareerLink® offices in Q4- PY2020.

Employer/Industry events are held both virtually and *on and off-site* to promote PA CareerLink® business services along with other workforce opportunities, such as, the Incumbent Worker Training program, apprenticeship programs, On-The-Job Training and/or other funding prospects to assist businesses.

"State/Local Internship Program" or **SLIP** program over the course of the past three years permitted the Board to interact with approximately 96 offering paid internship; both repeat businesses from prior years and some new to the program. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania awarded funding to the LSWDB that assisted businesses with their employment needs. The funding also helped 308 young adults engage in real-world work experiences during the spring and summer months. The grant reimbursed the wages of students/young adults who were matched with local businesses for employment-related internships in their field of study, some of whom were offered employment during college breaks and/or following graduation.

Board and PA CareerLink® staff attend meetings and/or sit on boards of numerous organizations throughout the workforce area that are community-based, private for-profit, private non-profit, economic development, and advisory councils, which allow outreach opportunities to educate larger audiences about business/workforce services available at the PA CareerLink®.

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The Board recognizes the need to expand new business relationships, particularly in areas forecasted with workforce gaps and where employer demands exceed the pipeline of skilled workers. The Board took advantage of grant funding offered by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for the promotion of pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship grants. The L/S WDB received grant funding to assist local companies in Capacity Building and Apprenticeship initiatives. Hershey Company and Greiner Packaging both benefited from this funding which helped them sustain and grow Registered Apprenticeship programs.

The L/S WDB was awarded a Capacity Building Grant in partnership with The Greater Pittston Chamber of Commerce (GPCC). GPCC worked with the PA DOL Apprenticeship & Training Office to register their *Innovation in Management Apprenticeship* training program in the Commonwealth. The *Innovation in Management Apprenticeship* is portable and transferrable across multi industries.

The L/S WDB and the Greater Pittston Chamber of Commerce (GPCC) collaborated with the Lackawanna and Pocono County WDB to pool funds and we are launching the *Innovation to Management Apprenticeship Program*. This regional approach maximizes resources and serves more customers than a single workforce development board initiative. The program focuses on advancement in career pathways, with a curriculum that is transferable to many industries. The success of the program is also due in part to Apprenticeship Ambassadors, who promote the program to employers in the Northeast Region. The Ambassadors will actively build employer relationships in the seven-county region to promote management apprenticeships.

The Innovation to Management Apprenticeship management curriculum was developed by GPCC with Luzerne County Community College (LCCC) and focuses on five critical components: First Line Supervisory Principles; Psychology: The Person and the Workplace; Management/Supervisory/Skills; and Business Communications. Program participants who complete the course receive 15 college credits and the equivalent of the LCCC Small Business Skills specialized diploma. These credits can be applied toward a Certificate of Specialization in Business Management and/or to the Business Management Technology Associates of Applied Science Degree at LCCC.

This RA program trains individuals to be more productive and prosperous in the workplace, which benefits both the employer and the employee.

- The L/S WDB and its project partners have engaged 47 employers
- The L/S WDB and its project partners have engaged 14 Public Partners
- The L/S WDB and its project partners have met with 5 current or potential RA sponsors
- At least 4 employers committed to join the Innovations in Management Group Sponsored RA
- At least 8 employees were scheduled to begin their Innovations in Management RA as new apprentices

The L/S WDB and their project partners have hosted several in-person and virtual Registered Apprenticeship (RA) informational employer forums to promote the expansion of RA.

In addition, the L/S WDB and project partners worked with the Luzerne County Community College and developed a contingency plan to address the need to offer online Related Technical Instruction for the Innovations in Management RA. The urgency to develop online training was due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Regional Boards in NEPA also collaborate in order to enhance employer engagement through the Next Gen Industry Partnership model. The L/S WDB works closely with the Northeast PA Advanced

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Manufacturing Partnership that transitioned into a Next Generation Employer-led model. The underlying goal of the NextGen Advanced Manufacturing Partnership is addressing industry needs based on a business-led model process to better understand industry priorities. The partnership identified three areas of concentration:

- Establish and grow a sustainable partnership;
- Promote business-to business networking; and
- Develop and market career pathways.

Currently, the partnership engaged 57 individuals from 32 unique public partners. Included are four Northeast Workforce Development Boards, eight economic development agencies, eight educational providers, and four additional workforce organizations. Several public partner meetings have taken place over the past year. The NextGen Partnership received a new round of new funding in 2019 that supports incumbent worker training opportunities.

The NEPA Boards realize that resources and regional boundaries need to be flexible to meet employer needs. The Northeast Regional Workforce Partners work collaboratively and meet, at a minimum, quarterly to discuss current workforce trends, to share best practices, and any potential partnering opportunities to address employer need.

The employer partners of the NEPA Manufacturing Partnership identified filling open job positions as one of their highest priorities and biggest challenges. In response, the Partnership formed a Marketing Committee made up of business leaders and public partners. The committee oversaw a project that recently resulted in the development of a series of four videos to reach job seekers and to make them aware of manufacturing career opportunities in Northeastern PA.

Another priority identified by our Partnership's business leaders was discovering our region's public partners who offer resources and support for our local manufacturing employers. This project started simply by asking local workforce and economic development boards, chambers of commerce, PA CareerLink® offices, education partners, industry associations and others to enter information about their organizations in an Excel spreadsheet. From there this project, also led by our Partnership's Marketing Committee, evolved to become the NEPA Manufacturing Merge Resource Guide.

The **NEPA Manufacturing Merge** is a digital resource guide created exclusively for NEPA manufacturers. It is designed to make it easy for you to find the support and resources you need. Our goal is to update this information annually. **See Attachment 5**

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?

Regional Economic Development Activities. The Board is actively connected to regional economic development activities through its workforce system partners, including chambers, industrial development authorities, manufacturers and employer associations, trade associations, community college/education providers, and community-based organizations. Specifically, it works in close cooperation with the lead organization for the Commonwealth's Partnerships for Regional Economic Performance Program (PREP), NEPA Alliance.

The NEPA Alliance includes members who promote economic development across the seven counties of the Northeast Region. Its services include Business Financing, Government Contracting Assistance,

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International Trade Assistance, Non-Profit Assistance, Transportation Planning, Research and Information, and Local Government Services. Collectively, NEPA PREP partners provide a powerful network of regional experts who help business owners address nearly every type of challenge facing their companies. They also help businesses access critical state and federal resources, such as loans, grants, technical assistance, or other support.

The Board's employment and training services are designed to support and complement these regional economic development efforts. To assist with business attraction, expansion, and retention activities, the Board provides information about the available labor pool and skill sets. The Board also conducts outreach, including mass recruitments and job fairs to further assist with economic development.

Additionally, as part of its strategy to support economic growth, the Board is developing policies to include incumbent worker training programs, OJT training programs, work-based learning programs, apprenticeship models, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies, career pathways initiatives, and utilization of effective business intermediaries.

Training for Self-Employment. Entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services should provide the basics of starting and operating a small business. Some examples of such skill development include, but are not limited to, the following abilities:

- Taking initiative;
- Creatively seeking out and identifying business opportunities;
- Developing budgets and forecasting resource needs;
- Developing a customer-centered environment;
- Understanding various options for acquiring capital and the tradeoffs associated with each option; and
- Communicating effectively and marketing oneself and one's ideas.

Although the Board provides a variety of workshops each week that cover employment related topics, the Board has not identified a specific career track for entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services. Rather, individuals who are interested in self employment are referred to community partners, such as the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at Wilkes University, to receive specialized assistance that includes:

- Entrepreneurship education that introduces the values and basics of starting and running a business. These programs often guide individuals through the development of a business plan and may also include simulations of business start-up and operation.
- Enterprise development which provides support and services that incubate and help individuals develop their own businesses. Enterprise development programs go beyond entrepreneurship education by helping individuals access small loans or grants that are needed to begin business operation and by providing more individualized attention to assist in the development of viable business ideas.

- **Describe the resources the local board will use to promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services**

The local Board is cognizant of utilizing resources in a way that is not cost prohibitive, duplicative and involves established agencies that focus on serving our customer's needs. Every effort is made to provide customers with viable options, current pertinent information and resources to help them in the step-by-step process of starting a business. With this in mind, the local Board leverages resources to promote and provide entrepreneurial training and microenterprise services with unique community partners, some

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specific to each county. Board staff and PA CareerLink® staff have established relationships with these community partners, many deliver workshops onsite in the PA CareerLink®.

In the Greater Hazleton region of Luzerne County customers are directed to two sources that provide entrepreneurial guidance, business incubator services, access to academic university-based resources and opportunities to network with start-up businesses. ***The Community Association for New Business Entrepreneurship, CAN BE*** (<https://www.canbe.biz/>), formed by CAN DO (Greater Hazleton's economic development organization) as a small business incubator to help aspiring entrepreneurs start new businesses in the Greater Hazleton area. CAN BE is located in a 15,000-square foot facility in Valmont Industrial Park, lower Luzerne County. CAN BE provides leased space at affordable rates and a program that helps to nurture new businesses through the difficult start-up years. The program offers on-site resident consultation and management assistance, access to financing opportunities, networking with other start-up companies experiencing similar early stage problems and access to technical support services. Clients share office services, office equipment and conference room space - all are included in the modest lease rates.

The Hazleton LaunchBox (<https://hazleton.psu.edu/launchbox>)

is a community collaboration with partners including the Downtown Hazleton Alliance for Progress, CAN DO, CAN BE (industrial/economic development corporation), the Greater Hazleton Chamber of Commerce, the Society of Hispanic Business Professionals, Penn State Hazleton, and other partners through The Hazleton Innovation Collaborative (THInC). The Hazleton LaunchBox is located in downtown Hazleton. The LaunchBox is a part of Penn States Invent program, a Commonwealth-wide initiative to spur economic development, job creation and student career success. A key strategy of Invent Penn State is the establishment of innovation hubs, commonly known as business incubators, to blend entrepreneurship-focused academic programs, business startup training, mentoring, funding for commercialization, and university-community collaborations to facilitate the challenging process of turning research discoveries into valuable products and services that can benefit Pennsylvanians and others. LaunchBox offers a summer camp for students interested in entrepreneurship. The six-week program for high school students 14-18 years of age is designed to assist participants with getting their ideas formulated in order to focus on starting a business.

Also based in Luzerne County is the Wyoming Valley Chamber of Commerce ***Wilkes-Barre Connect*** (<https://wilkesbarreconnect.org>) Its team is comprised of strategic sponsors and partners (SBDC- Wilkes University, Allan P. Kirby Enterprise Center at Wilkes University, the Family Business Alliance, Wilkes University and Penn State Scranton, The Institute for Public Policy & Economic Development, Diamond City Partnership, Berkshire Hathaway-Guard, Willary Foundation, Penn State Wilkes-Barre, and Invent Penn State). This group serves as a catalyst for business development in Northeastern Pennsylvania. Connect is housed in the THINK Center in downtown Wilke-Barre; a 6,900-foot media and technology center. Wilkes Barre Connect offers monthly educational courses led by Connect partners tailored to meet each group's specific needs. Connect offers events to the public designed to connect peers and executives within a specific industry. The Pitch program is a formalized process to introduce entrepreneurs, start-ups and existing businesses to a regional investor network. Pitch hosts live events on a quarterly basis at the THINK Center. Prior to the event each applicant is vetted and then guided through a training program prior to participating in the event. Connect and its partners, the Small Business Administration, NEPA Alliance, the Small Business Development Center at Wilkes University, and Northeastern Pennsylvania PTAC, PA CareerLink® Luzerne County offer a *Boots to Business*, day-long program, inviting veterans and spouses of veterans. The training offers information about resources available to them and how to access the resources they need to successfully grow a business. Additional offerings at the THINK Center are speaking events, start-up support, networking opportunities, business development, employment

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outreach, conferences and business space. The Wilkes-Barre THINK Center offers free meeting space to nonprofit organizations.

Customers in Schuylkill County are directed to two business development organizations who also offer services at low or no cost.

Penn State Schuylkill Lion Launch

<https://schuylkill.psu.edu/community-engagement/entrepreneurship-lionlaunch>

Penn State *LionLaunch* is a community-based entrepreneurship program that provides funding and mentorship to start and grow businesses. *LionLaunch* utilizes economic development partners, business partners and nonprofits to serve the startups in Schuylkill.

One of the unique offerings is a Boot Camp that is a ten-week course that consists of tips on marketing, finances, and business law. As a follow on to the Boot Camp, *LionLaunch* conducts a Business Plan competition where participants pitch their plan or an idea to improve an already existing small business to a panel of judges. Winners have the prospect of a monetary award, and/or a small, incubator-style office space in the community for six months.

SCORE Berks-Schuylkill

<https://link.zixcentral.com/u/9334e4f3/RBOL3C2q6RGgUjk0NC1kxg?u=https%3A%2F%2Fberksschuylkill.score.org%2F> supports business development in Berks and Schuylkill Counties through free mentoring and low cost workshops. *SCORE* has a national network of over 13,000 volunteers who donate their time to help entrepreneurs. Mentors are highly successful and experienced business professionals and entrepreneurs who deliver valuable, timely, and practical advice. They consult one on one in person, by telephone, email, or video. Mentors work with start-ups or an existing business, will help a business open new markets, reach new customers, and achieve new goals. Most services are free and you can obtain confidential business advice online and at in person meetings. *SCORE* and the US Small Business Administration offer a monthly workshop at the PA CareerLink® Pottsville titled, “*Is Now the Right Time to Start a Business?*”.

Youth participants in Schuylkill are encouraged to enroll in the **YEA!** Program (**Y**oung **E**ntrepreneurs **A**cademy!) offered by the Schuylkill Chamber of Commerce and partners through a partnership with Penn State Schuylkill. This year long, after school initiative targets and engages middle and high school youth who are interested in starting their own business. *YEA!* has had many successes in helping students get their business started. Business leaders are an integral part of the *YEA!* classes, as they are asked to participate in a variety of ways such as speaking/teaching classes, offering advice, mentoring and opening their business for field trips. Students research and develop business plans then pitch their business to an Investment Panel, composed of sponsors who may choose to invest in these new businesses. Students launch their business and then introduce the businesses at a Trade Show in the spring. For more information view link:

<https://link.zixcentral.com/u/fb29e3e8/zqeK3C2q6RGgUjk0NC1kxg?u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.schuylkillchamber.com%2Fmembership%2Fbenefits-programs-services%2Fb-p-view%2F%3Fpermalink%3Dyea-schuylkill>

WIOA Title I Out of School Youth Program supports the YES Program which provides onsite Entrepreneurship Workshops at each of the three PA CareerLink® locations in WDA. Entrepreneurship Workshops are available to out of school youth who are attending GED training. PA CareerLink® staff also conduct an annual Entrepreneur Day in Schuylkill County. Youth participants visit small businesses to experience a successful new start-up in their community. Participants are prepped prior to their interaction with business leaders and are engaged in asking pertinent questions about running a small

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business. Participating businesses include Wheel Restaurant, Bake Shop IV, and Martian Materials Meteorite Store, all prosperous businesses who work closely with PA CareerLink® in Pottsville.

In addition to above listed programs, two regional organizations offer entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services to customers in Luzerne and Schuylkill Counties.

Ben Franklin Technology Partners (<https://benfranklin.org>) offers capital investments to promising, technology-oriented companies throughout the Commonwealth to fund and develop activities that helps with growth needs. They provide hands-on business expertise and a network of resources that nurture innovation, growth and success for both early stage startup companies and established businesses. Ben Franklin provides business plan reviews, technical assessments, intellectual property counsel, marketing advice, operations and fund-raising strategies.

The Wilkes University Small Business Development Center (Wilkes SBDC)

<https://www.wilkes.edu/about-wilkes/centers-and-institutes/small-business-development-center/index.aspx>

is a member of the Pennsylvania Small Business Development Centers statewide network. They provide quality, no-cost, confidential business consulting and training to small business owners and entrepreneurs. When funding permits, the Wilkes SBDC presents free workshops at PA CareerLink® offices in Wilkes-Barre and Pottsville. PA CareerLink® staff refer customers to the Wilkes SBDC on an ongoing basis. Appropriate referrals are made to the U.S. Small Business Administration (<https://www.sba.gov>) which has an office in Luzerne County.

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.

PA CareerLink® One Stop Operator. The Board initiated a competitive procurement process to secure the One-Stop Operator (OSO) for services July 1, 2021-June 30, 2025 in compliance with the WIOA and related federal and state regulations. The Board utilizes the single entity model. The PA CareerLink® One Stop Operator for the L/S WDB region is EDSI.

Under the leadership of the L/S WDB and with guidance from the Board's staff, the selected Operator will be tasked with the coordination of the service delivery with one-stop partners and related service providers in the region's multi-centers, one-stop public workforce system.

Duties of the One-Stop Operator include, but are not limited to, support for the following:

- Fiscal oversight of the PA CareerLink® offices One-Stop Operating Budgets in concert with the PA CareerLink® Site Administrator(s) and the L/S WDB, serving as fiscal agent;
- Serving as an intermediary with all one-stop partners;
- Communicating of strategic objectives of the L/S WDB;
- Guiding the partners plan in supporting the L/S WDB's strategic plan to meet the needs and expectations of all key stakeholders;
- Seamless integration and availability of comprehensive services by PA CareerLink® partners;
- Oversight of the performance metrics/outcomes relative to PA CareerLink® operations;
- Oversight of the performance management system relative to WIOA Performance metrics;
- Evaluation of customer needs and satisfaction; Continuous improvement through responding to customer needs;
- Compliance and preparation for L/S WDB quality reviews and compliance with PA Department of

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- Labor and Industry and L/S WDB one-stop certification criteria;
- Serving as the liaison with the L/S WDB to include participation in L/S WDB and pertinent committee meetings;
- Guiding marketing and outreach for the PA CareerLink® sites and system to jobseekers and employers;
- Recommending for approval of internal/external operational services (i.e. security services; PA CareerLink® weekday closings, or delays, etc.); disbursement of any earned income in excess of \$500.00, etc. and professional development of PA CareerLink® staff;
- Ensuring compliance with Agreements, through signatory compliance, the negotiated One-Stop Partner Memoranda of Understanding (MOU);
- Supporting the PA CareerLink® Site Administrators who shall be retained and remain employees of their current employers. The Operator will act as the functional supervisor of the Site Administrators;
- Providing oversight of the Business Services Team and ensure the sharing of information and resources among all service partners.

The selected Operator shall have a vested interest in the public workforce system at each of the PA CareerLink® sites. The Operator's success will be its ability to work cooperatively with the Local Workforce Development Board, Site Administrators and Partners. Several of the WIOA core partners include but are not limited to: Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs, and including all required Commonwealth of Pennsylvania WIOA required partners, Adult Education and Literacy, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Unemployment Compensation, Dept. of Human Services and Wagner-Peyser Programs. The Operator shall work closely with all partners in order to implement service delivery that fosters an integrated service model. The Operator will need to inspire others and lead change; demonstrate extremely high levels of professionalism, integrity, and collaboration; and enhance and develop partnerships.

Procurement Process

The L/S WDB has adopted the following processes with respect to the competitive procurement of its One-Stop Operator:

The PA CareerLink® System Operator Procurement process will be conducted at least every four (4) years with an initial one (1) year contract, an option to renew the duration, up to a total of four (4) years, to promote efficiency and effectiveness; to assure continuous improvement through evaluation of the Operator's performance; and to ensure compliance with all applicable federal and state laws, guidance and procedures regarding procurement of the One-Stop Operator. The mandatory role the system Operator is charged with is the coordination of service delivery of One-Stop partners and service providers in the One-Stop delivery system.

Proper procurement processes as described in accordance with Training and Employment Guidance Letter WIOA No. 15-16, Workforce System Policy No. 121-04, February 27, 2017, Financial Management Guide, and the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards.

WIOA Providers. The entities providing WIOA Title I, Title II, Title III, and Title IV services are detailed in the WIOA Local Workforce Development Delivery System Program Provider-Partner List included as **Attachment 3**.

Competitive Procurement Summary. The following narrative provides an overview and timeline of the

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Board's procurement of its One-Stop Operator-

- The Board was notified of the One- Stop Operator procurement December 2020.
- The Performance and Evaluation (P&E) Committee reviewed the process for the One-Stop Operator procurement at their meeting January 13, 2021. After discussion and careful consideration, the P&E Committee recommended the single entity model currently in place.
- Public Notice was published on January 15, 2021 and notice posted on Board website www.lswib.org.
- Deadline for proposals February 12, 2021.
- Finance Committee reviewed proposals February 16 – 19, 2021 with recommendations.
- The Executive Board meeting is scheduled on March 3, 2021 for OSO selection.
- OSO effective date July 1, 2021.

The L/S WDB has adopted the same process as described above to competitively procure WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth services.

Key stakeholders that compose the L/S WDB workforce delivery system network include : WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker & Youth, EDSI & Equus Workforce Solutions; WIOA Title II, Adult Literacy, Luzerne County Community College & Schuylkill Intermediate Unit 29; WIOA Title III, PA Department of Labor & Industry; BWPO, Wagner-Peyser Act Programs, Labor Exchange, TAA, Veterans, RESEA; Title IV, PA Department of Labor & Industry, Vocational Rehabilitation; EARN, EDSI; State Unemployment Insurance programs (e.g. RESEA); Title I National Programs (Job Corps-Native American-MSFW-YouthBuild); SCSEP; CTE; Reintegration of Offenders; National & Community Service Act; TANF; SSA, SBA, SNAP, Rehab, HUD and Community Services Block; DCED; UC; Business Service Team – EDSI; Additional Program-Schuylkill Technology Center.

All core partners are comprehensively identified in Attachment 3 – *Luzerne/Schuylkill WDA Program Partners-Provider List*.

Listed below are the designated equal opportunity liaisons for each PA CareerLink® and the EO Officer for the L/S WDB area. These individuals are responsible for ensuing equal opportunities and civil right protections in the LWDA.

Teresa Travis, Supervisor, BWPO
PACL Hazleton Equal Opportunity Liaison
75 North Laurel Street
Hazleton, PA 18201-5950
Phone: (570) 459-3854

Joseph Miscannon, Supervisor, BWPO
PACL Pottsville Equal Opportunity Liaison
201-203 East Arch Street
Pottsville, PA 17901-3512
Phone: (570) 622-5253
jmiscannon@pa.gov

Teresa Travis, Supervisor, BWPO
PACL Wilkes-Barre Equal Opportunity Liaison
32 East Union Street

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Luzerne/Schuylkill Workforce Development Board

Wilkes-Barre, PA 18701-0651

Phone: (570) 822-1101

tetravis@pa.gov

Marla Doddo, EO Officer

Luzerne-Schuylkill Workforce Development Board

32 East Union St., 2nd Floor

Wilkes-Barre, PA 18701

Phone: (570) 822-1101, ext. 296

marladoddo@lswib.org

4.2 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).

A listing of the PA CareerLink® partners that are authorized to provide services in the local area is found in the Local Workforce Development System Program Partner-Provider List Chart included as **Attachment 3**.

The Memorandum of Understanding Agreement (MOU) and Infrastructure Agreement (IFA) is inclusive of the One-Stop Operating Budget between the Board and the PA CareerLink® partners that defines the expectations, service levels, and resource contributions of each organization. They are effective July 1st of every program year. The Agreements and Operating Budgets comply with all federal and Commonwealth directives regarding WIOA.

Adult Education and Literacy Activities (WIOA-Title II)- The Adult Education and Family Literacy agency (WIOA Title II) provides instruction for all six adult basic education (ABE) and adult secondary education (ASE) educational functioning levels (EFL), plus English language acquisition (ELA) activities where there is a need. The Title II Program supports a tutoring program that offers one-on-one and/or small group instruction or volunteer classroom aides. The Title II Program prepares students for and supports them in achieving successful transition to postsecondary education/training or employment. The Program integrates digital literacy, employability skills and workforce preparation activities into program services. Basic skills instruction incorporates activities that require the use of technology, promotes critical thinking, and builds self-management skills, such as utilizing resources and information, understanding systems, and working with others.

The Adult Education and Family Literacy agency (WIOA Title II) provides monetary contributions to the One-Stop Operating Budget.

Carl D. Perkins – Career and Technical Education-The purpose of the Carl D. Perkins Program under the PA Dept. of Education located at Luzerne County Community College (LCCC) is to develop more fully the academic and career and technical skills of secondary and post-secondary students who elect to enroll in career and technical education programs by:

- Building on the efforts of states and localities to develop challenging academic and technical standards and to assist students in meeting such standards, including preparation for high skill, high wage, or high demand occupations in current or emerging industries;
- Promoting the development of services and activities that integrate rigorous and challenging academic and career and technical instruction, and that link secondary education and postsecondary education for participating career and technical education students;

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- Increasing state and local flexibility in providing services and activities designed to develop, implement, and improve career and technical education, including Tech Prep education;
- Conducting and disseminating national research and disseminating information on best practices that improve career and technical education programs, services, and activities;
- Providing technical assistance that promotes leadership, initial preparation, and professional development at the state and local levels;
- Improving the quality of career and technical education teachers, faculty, administrators, and counselors;
- Supporting partnerships among secondary schools, postsecondary institutions, baccalaureate degree granting institutions, area career and technical education schools, local workforce development boards, business and industry, and intermediaries; and
- Providing individuals with opportunities throughout their lifetimes to develop, in conjunction with other education and training programs, the knowledge and skills needed to keep the United States competitive.

Carl D. Perkins – Career and Technical Education provides monetary contributions.

Wagner Peyser- Wagner-Peyser staff provides employment services to job seekers and employers through PA CareerLink® centers. Services to job seekers include, but are not limited to: job search and job placement assistance; career counseling; needs and interest assessments; proficiency testing; workshops; development of an individual employment plan; and case management. Services to employers include assistance in developing and posting job orders, referral of qualified job seekers to job openings and organizing job fairs. Both job seekers and employers are also provided with labor market information to help inform their activities.

Wagner Peyser provides monetary contributions.

Trade Act Services-Trade Act (TAA) programs are focused on assisting participants to obtain reemployment and ensuring those individuals maintain employment. The TAA Program includes training, employment and case management services, job search and relocation allowances, Trade Readjustment Allowances (TRA), Reemployment Trade Adjustment Assistance (RTAA) and Alternative Trade Adjustment Assistance (ATAA), and the Health Coverage Tax Credit (HCTC) (a benefit available to eligible TAA recipients which is administered by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS)).

The TAA program was first established at the USDOL by the Trade Act of 1974, and has been amended several times. Individual workers who are members of the certified worker group apply for benefits and services at a PA CareerLink® office. Individual workers who meet the qualifying criteria may receive: job training; income support in the form of Trade Readjustment Allowances (TRA); job-search and relocation allowances; Health Coverage Tax Credit (HCTC) as determined by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS); and for workers age 50 and older, a wage supplement in the form of Re-Employment Trade Adjustment Assistance (RTAA; (ATAA)). Additionally, all workers covered by a certification are eligible for employment and case-management services, including basic and individualized career services either through the TAA program or through and in coordination with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the Wagner-Peyser Act (reference TEGl No. 3-15).

Trade Act Services provides monetary contributions.

Rapid Response-Rapid Response is an early intervention business service that assists workers and

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employers during the entire business cycle. Rapid Response coordinates layoff aversion and outplacement services for employers and workers affected by layoffs, plant closures, or natural disasters. It is not always event-driven; it is a pro-active approach to planning for and managing economic transitions. At its best, Rapid Response assist employers with their layoffs by coordinating outplacement services prior to layoff, while supporting the business by working with other state and local stakeholders who can then assist in job expansion. Rapid Response provides an introduction to the Workforce and Economic Development Systems and helps workers and employers navigate the Commonwealth's system of user-friendly resources and information to help transition workers into reemployment and assist businesses.

- a. The primary objective of Rapid Response is to provide workers with the resources and services needed to obtain new jobs or get the training and education needed for new careers so they can return to work quickly.
- b. Rapid Response Services (RRS) also helps communities develop proactive and coordinated strategies to access Pennsylvania's economic development systems that help businesses at risk of closing to remain open.

Rapid Response provides monetary contributions.

Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG)-JVSG is a BWPO-administered program which assures the commonwealth provides special individualized services to disabled veterans. Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) staff work in conjunction with PA CareerLink® partners to identify veterans and establish an appropriate plan to meet the individuals' employment and training needs. These specialized counselors work directly with disabled veterans in the provision of labor exchange services, securing appropriate training services, and obtaining appropriate employment at a family- sustaining wage. In addition, the JVSG allows for Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER) to perform employer outreach and promote veterans as job seekers who have highly marketable skills and experience.

Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) provides monetary contributions.

Foreign Labor Certification-The H2A (Temporary Agricultural Program) and H2B (Temporary Non-Agricultural Program) help U.S employers fill jobs while protecting U.S. and foreign workers. Hiring foreign workers for employment in the U.S. normally requires approval from several government agencies. First, employers must seek labor certification through the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). Once the application is certified (approved), the employer must petition the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS) for a visa. Approval by DOL does not guarantee a visa issuance. The Department of State (DOS) will issue an immigrant visa number to the foreign worker for U.S. entry. Applicants must also establish that they are admissible to the U.S. under the provisions of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA).

Although each foreign labor certification program is unique, there are similar requirements that the employer must complete prior to the issuance of a labor certification. In general, the employer will be required to complete these basic steps to obtain a labor certification:

- a. The employer must ensure that the position meets the qualifying criteria for the requested program.
- b. The employer must complete the Employment & Training Administration (ETA) form designated for the requested program. This may include the form and any supporting documentation (e.g., job description, resume of the applicant, etc.).
- c. The employer must ensure that the wage offered equals or exceeds the prevailing wage for

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- the occupation in the area of intended employment.
- d. The employer must ensure that the compliance issues affected upon receipt of a foreign labor certification are completely understood.
- e. The completed ETA form is submitted to the designated Department of Labor office for the requested program (e.g., SWA, processing center or the national office).
- f. The employer is notified of the determination of the Department of Labor.

Foreign Labor Certification provides monetary contributions.

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)-As a core partner OVR provides Vocational Rehabilitation services for people with disabilities. Eligible OVR customers receive multiple services that may include but not be limited to; diagnostic, vocational counseling, guidance, and evaluation, restoration, training, job placement and pre-employment training services for eligible and potentially eligible high school students with disabilities. These individualized services are designed to prepare OVR customers to become qualified trained members of the workforce. OVR 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 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 guidance to businesses to retain current employees following an accident, injury or disability. Business services staff identify resources to assist any organization on how to improve access, ensure compliance, and establish steps to diversify their workforce to include citizens with a disability.

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) provides monetary contributions.

PA Department of Community and Economic Development-The PA Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) is the commonwealth agency that provides the required One-Stop (PA CareerLink® partner) employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act (42. U.S.C. 9901 et seq.) at the state level.

The mission of the Community Services Block grant (CSBG) is to provide a full range of services and activities having a measurable impact on the causes of poverty is a particularly acute problem. Only federally designated Community Action Agencies (CAA) receive funding. In PA, there are 44 CAAs that cover all 67 PA counties.

Ameliorating the causes and conditions of poverty is a goal of CSDB. To meet this goal, CSDB conducts a variety of community engagement activities and collaborative activism to remove obstacles that block the achievement of self-sufficiency; i.e. employment and training resources; community stakeholder collaboration; literacy activities; obtaining adequate housing; grassroots activities that provide intervention to the causes of poverty; addressing the needs of youth through programming or coordination; and increased engagement in community planning and improvement activities.

CSBG has been in existence since 1965, always with the same mission: to improve the causes and conditions of poverty. Initiatives have included, but are not limited to: neighborhood linkages, leverage of community resources, conduction of Volunteer Income Tax Assistance sites, building housing capacity, provision of family self-sufficiency and case management, facilitation of Results-Oriented Management and Accountability. For every \$1 of CSBG funds, the PA network leveraged \$16.82 from other federal, state, local and private sources, including the calculated value of volunteer hours.

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DCED will participate in the local workforce service delivery system via the local CSBG agencies. CSBG agencies located in this local workforce development area may:

- Participate on local and regional planning groups;
- Engage in Business Service Teams activities;
- Have print materials available in the PA CareerLink® centers;
- Provide links to local workforce websites on computers;
- Potentially hold meetings at PA CareerLink® centers;
- Conduct joint employer outreach sessions as necessary; and
- Seek to leverage grant funding opportunities.

DCED provides monetary contributions.

The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)-Mature Worker Program, Area Agency on Aging for Luzerne/Wyoming Counties operates the Senior Community Service Employment Program in Luzerne County. AARP Foundation operates the Senior Community Service Employment Program in Schuylkill County.

The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is a community service and work-based job training program for older Americans. Authorized by the Older Americans Act, the program provides training for low-income, unemployed seniors. Participants also have access to employment assistance through the American Job Centers/PA CareerLink®

SCSEP provides in-kind contributions.

The National Farmworker Jobs Program-The National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) is a nationally-directed, locally-administered program of services for migrant and seasonal farmworkers (MSFWs). In Pennsylvania, the NFJP is administered by PathStone Corporation. This program partners with community organizations and state agencies to counter the chronic unemployment and underemployment experienced by farmworkers who depend primarily on jobs in agricultural labor performed within Pennsylvania and other states. The NFJP is an integral part of the public workforce system and a required partner in the nationwide network of One-Stop Career Centers. In addition, NFJP partners with State Monitor Advocates to provide services to farmworkers and their families working in agricultural employment.

Under the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title 1- Section 167, on the date of application, an individual must meet the following criteria to be eligible for NFJP services:

First, a Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker (MSFW) within the most recent 24 months be an:

- Eligible seasonal farmworker or
- Eligible migrant farmworker or
- Eligible Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker (MSFW) Youth, and
- Be a United States Citizen or Work Authorized, and
- Selective Service Registered

Second, a MSFW must be:

- A low-income individual who faces multiple barriers to economic self-sufficiency.

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- A dependent of an eligible farmworker may also qualify if they are a United States citizen or work authorized and selective service registered.

The National Farmworker Jobs Program is not local; however, PA CareerLink® staff offers relative information for assistance.

Unemployment Compensation Program (UC)-In accordance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the Unemployment Compensation (UC) Program is responsible to provide meaningful assistance to individuals in filing an unemployment claim in PA CareerLink® sites. The meaningful assistance will be provided at PA CareerLink® sites by offering claimants dedicated access to UC service center staff as well as access to important UC information.

Staff from the Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations (BWPO) provide some direct assistance to UC claimants and employers at the PA CareerLink® sites. BWPO staff are required to keep records of time spent assisting UC claimants and employers and there are certain identified personnel services that BWPO staff provide that are reimbursed by the UC Program. The reimbursable services and requirements are defined in a separate document entitled Memorandum of Cooperation between the Unemployment Compensation Programs and Workforce Development within the Department of Labor & Industry. BWPO staff will continue their processes for referral with approved activities they conduct on UC's behalf. This would include opportunities for referral through partner collaboration.

Unemployment Compensation Program (UC) provides monetary contributions.

Jobs Corps- Job Corps is a no-cost education and career technical training program administered by the U.S. Department of Labor that helps young people ages 16 to 24 improve the quality of their lives through career technical and academic training. The Job Corps program is authorized by Title I-C of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014.

Job Corps provides monetary contributions.

Commission of Native American Affairs- Commission of Native American Affairs purpose is to reduce unemployment among Native Americans, traditionally the least serviced and poorest group in the United States. Toward this goal, the Council of Three Rivers American Indian Center has operated an employment and training program since 1976. The current program is funded through the U. S. Department of Labor.

Commission of Native American Affairs is not local; however, PA CareerLink® staff offers relative information for assistance as needed.

Housing & Urban Development (HUD)-Housing & Urban Development program requires that recipients of certain HUD financial assistance, to the greatest extent possible, provide training, employment, contracting and other economic opportunities to low and very low-income persons, especially recipients of government assistance for housing, and to businesses that provide economic opportunities to low and very low-income persons.

Housing & Urban Development provides in-kind services.

PA Department of Human Services (DHS)- PA Department of Human Services is committed to ensuring all Pennsylvanians have access to high quality services such as physical and behavioral health care that fits

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a customer's needs, quality of health care providers, and access to safe and reliable child care.

PA Department of Human Services provides monetary contributions.

YouthBuild- YouthBuild provides education, counseling and job skills to unemployed young American adults (between ages 16 and 24), generally high school dropouts. There are 273 YouthBuild programs in the United States with a total capacity of about 10,000 students yearly, and there are similar programs underway in over 15 countries. The YouthBuild program has five components: construction, education, counseling, leadership, and graduate opportunity. Students spend every other week on a job site, learning the construction trade by building homes for their own communities. This creates housing for low-income people and also gives the students marketable job skills. The alternate weeks are spent on education in the YouthBuild classroom, with the goal of attaining a GED or completing their high school diploma.

YouthBuild is not local.

Reintegration of Ex-Offenders (REO)-Reintegration of Ex-Offenders program targets court-involved youth, young adults, and adult ex-offenders through a variety of discretionary grant awards. Organizations partner with juvenile and adult justice systems to assist in providing employment and training to this population of individuals who may find it difficult to obtain employment or training without additional assistance. Projects support a comprehensive strategy for serving youth in a local area to which many are returning from juvenile correctional or detention facilities. Both the adult and youthful offender grants serve as demonstration projects for improving communities with high rates of crime and poverty.

Reintegration of Ex-Offenders provides monetary contributions.

Schuylkill Technology Center/Schuylkill Intermediate Unit 29-Schuylkill Intermediate Unit 29 provides assistance to customers who want to go into post-secondary training by providing information on their respective programs and information regarding the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) program. They also provide information on GED preparation classes that are offered throughout the county.

Schuylkill Intermediate Unit provides monetary contributions.

4.3. How will the local board facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop service delivery system.

The Board facilitates access to services provided through the PA CareerLink® System as follows:

Strategically Located Centers. The Board provides access to services throughout the local area at three comprehensive PA CareerLink® locations. Addresses are as follows:

- PA CareerLink® Luzerne County at Wilkes-Barre, 32 East Union Street, Wilkes-Barre, PA 18701
- PA CareerLink® Luzerne County at Hazleton, 75 North Laurel Street, Hazleton, PA 18201
- PA CareerLink® Schuylkill County at Pottsville, 203 East Arch Street, Pottsville, PA 17901

Overall, the hours of operation and services are varied and flexible based on customer need. Evening and other alternative hours may be utilized. Factors which influence hours include, but are not limited to, availability of public transportation, the needs of under-employed and unemployed individuals, and employer hours of operation. Currently hours at each center are limited due to the COVID-19 pandemic,

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with partner staff working staggered schedules. All services including registration, workshops and meeting one-on-one with partner staff are available virtually in a variety of online formats including Zoom and Google classroom. A **Helpline** was developed in early April, 2020 to address public inquiries including those related to Unemployment Compensation. All calls are fielded by PA CareerLink® staff and directed to the appropriate partner staff for outreach to each individual customer. Approximately 26,000 inquiries have been fielded by PA CareerLink® staff.

Providing Access in Remote Areas. In addition to the three One Stop Centers, the Board also provides and expands services in remote locations of local area through the following strategies:

- Promoting use of the PA CareerLink® services available at <https://www.pacareerlink.pa.gov/jponline>
- Forming partnerships with the library system to provide service in remote areas of the counties.
- Encouraging and allowing the use of technology, including text messaging, social media, on-line video conferencing, Internet searches, and other state-of-the-art methods to locate, communicate, and contact jobseekers and industry personnel.
- Expanding its existing network community partnerships to include additional community-based entities, faith-based organizations, employer-sponsored groups, and government organizations to increase access throughout the local area.

Utilizing Case Management Systems. The system as a whole utilizes the PA's workforce system of record and PA CareerLink® to provide specific information to jobseekers and employers in their respective efforts to obtain employment and find the best employees. Additionally, the local area also utilizes Constant Contact to provide timely notice of new job postings, training opportunities and other services to customers who register for these services. To promote the timeliness and accuracy of information, Case Managers and BST personnel are required to enter information into the systems within 24 hours of customer interaction.

Coordinating with Adult Education. To ensure that individuals participating in basic education and English learning programs have direct connections to career pathways leading to high-quality jobs, the Board works with its Adult Education partners to identify strategies that improve access. For example, it implemented the creation of a cross-referral process as well as the development of coordinated outreach efforts.

All staff are trained to have a basic understanding of the other core WIOA programs, they can guide customers to the programs and services that best support meeting their job goals. The "No Wrong Door" policy helps to identify potential referrals to any program no matter whether they come through the standard enrollment process or not. Questions on the PA CareerLink® intake form help to identify what type of services a customer may need. For instance, if a job seeker enters the PA CareerLink® looking for services but it is determined that they don't have a high school equivalency, the customer would be referred to the Title I Dislocated Worker and the Title II Adult Education program by CareerLink staff through the referral system on PA's workforce development system of record. If a customer was not identified at intake as needing a particular service, they may be referred at any point while possibly taking advantage of other career workshops. Once a staff person is aware that a customer may need additional services, they may have a conversation with that customer about how they may benefit by co-enrolling in another core program. Career Pathways are developed with input from Title I, Title II, partner staff and employers. Staff identify "on-ramps" for each individual customer to coincide with their skill levels and training needs. A discussion takes place with the customer to explain the pathways. At that point, an

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individual training plan is developed focused on increasing literacy skills, employability skills and study skills. Title II staff contextualize coursework to better prepare a student for a specific on-ramp.

Data is collected on a small sampling of Title II students. A summary of these reports is shared yearly with partners on the Career Pathways Team. Information on the interventions and services provided is collected along with students' accomplishments. Title II program success stories are also shared during Workforce Development Board quarterly meetings along with yearly performance reports.

Meeting the Needs of Individuals with Barriers to Employment. The Board's approach for meeting the needs of individuals with barriers to employment, including improving digital literacy skills is detailed in **the response to 3.2 above.**

Improving Access to Services for English Language Learners and Individuals Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. As part of its service strategy, the Board requires that the PA CareerLink® centers provide translation and/or interpretation services. It encourages partners to staff each location with highly-qualified personnel who mirror the center's demographics; utilizing bi-lingual and multi-lingual personnel as needed. Telephone-based translation services may be used for languages other than English, and the Board encourages the PA CareerLink® centers to provide workshops in Spanish. Individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing are afforded equal communication and programmatic access, including the scheduling and use of a PA certified American Sign Language interpreter.

Providing Access to a Variety of Programs. When deemed appropriate, partner staff may refer customers to other partner programs within the system that provide additional/ancillary services that may be beneficial. For example, if an EARN participant can benefit from training programs offered under WIOA, then co-case management occurs. The WIOA case manager determines eligibility and both WIOA and TANF case managers work together with the client to make sure they receive all services for which they are determined eligible.

PA CareerLink® staff provide resources and referrals to a variety of program partners including Job Corps, Native American programs, HUD programs, Mature Workers programs and Second Chance Act programs. For instance, Job Corps provides regular presentations and has a presence in our PA CareerLink® offices and the Board has secured funding for a Second Chance Act program for young adults in the region. Native American program resources, Mature Workers program resources and HUD resources are available to all participants.

4.4. 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?

The Board requires that the PA CareerLink® centers are fully accessible to any individuals who may be interested in receiving employment and training services. Each site is certified annually for compliance with the Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO), PA Department of Labor and Industry (L&I). The OEO officer receives quarterly reports from the OEO manager regarding any complaints. Overall, the Board promotes full accessibility by requiring that its One-Stop Operator, Partners, and Site Administrator:

- Conduct and participate in training of staff members and partner personnel regarding services to individuals with disabilities.
- Provide outreach and referral to agencies within the local area, including OVR, that offer

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services to individuals with disabilities.

- Maintain an updated list of resources available within the local area for use by staff and customers in accessing needed services.
- Advocate for individuals with disabilities and barriers to employment by advising and informing them about resources available within the PA CareerLink® center and throughout the local area and coaching them on how to apply for needed resources.
- Utilize a Limited English Proficiency policy, including the use of bi- and multi-lingual personnel in the Center as well as providing access to language interpretation services, including the language services provided by Propio, a system with whom L&I has contracted.
- Provide assistive technology items for persons with disabilities, such as adaptive keyboards and/or adjustable work stations.
- Conduct a physical inspection of all assistive technology/equipment to ensure functionality on an annual basis.
- Coordinate staff training on assistive technology and equipment to ensure that personnel are fully-trained in usage and application. Training on ADA compliance is provided through OVR. It also provides information regarding its programs and services during monthly staff meetings and staff development trainings. Partner staff from BWPO, OVR; UC; Veterans; Rapid Response; Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth; and EARN participate in these sessions.
- Help individuals with disabilities who may require additional assistance with the registration process.
- Maintain required federal and state notices and postings.

To ensure Equal Opportunity for all the L/S WDB and our three PA CareerLink® centers the Board completed the Office of Equal Opportunity LWDA survey on August 26, 2020 to determine compliance. Additionally, Equal Opportunity training is conducted for WDB staff, PA CareerLink® staff, and the Board on an annual basis. Training logs are submitted to PA DOL Office of Equal Opportunity, which detail the specific training topics, at the conclusion of each calendar year. Additionally, all staff participate in training annually to ensure communications for individuals with disabilities within the PA CareerLink® system are just as effective as communications with others. Training is provided by a number of entities including the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Center for Independent Living (CIL) and Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRC).

The Board displays EO Law posters in English and Spanish in common public access areas of all One Stop Centers; we display Pennsylvania Mandatory Postings in all centers and the L/S WDB EO Organizational Chart is displayed in all centers in addition to Equal Opportunity Policy training.

All customers complete a Customer Information Form that inquires about disability. Applicants are not required to provide details about their disabilities. If a customer requests accommodation, we provide auxiliary aids and services in accessible formats based on the individual's needs. LWDA ensures members of the public with disabilities, including those with impaired vision and/or hearing are either read the Equal Opportunity Policy or provided a sign language interpreter. We also utilize several speech to text software programs with hearing impaired participants including Google Gboard, Just Press Record, Speechnotes, and Transcribe. Customers sign a document stating that they have received and understand their rights and are provided information on their rights to file a complaint at enrollment.

In order to ensure services and other information are provided to Limited English Proficient persons, the Board provides a Language Line to Limited English Proficient customers. The predominant non-English language speaker seeking services is Spanish. We have bi-lingual staff in each office.

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We utilize Propio, whom the state contracts with, to provide over-the-phone language interpretation for customers whose first language is not English. We utilize the county demographics to determine what language we need documents translated into and by knowing our customer base. For example, in Luzerne, we know we have a high population of Hispanics living in the county and that many of the customers who use the PACL Hazleton speak Spanish. Therefore, we have documents translated in Spanish that are utilized for Spanish speakers.

Taglines are utilized on PA CareerLink® and L/S WDB websites, staff emails, and all brochures and flyers noting that we are an equal opportunity employer/program; auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities; and TTY information is included in all email, brochures, pamphlets, and flyers.

The Board informs employers of the PA ATO Incentive funds available to specifically support Registered Apprenticeship (RA) programs for new apprentices from diverse backgrounds. The Board works with Keystone Development Partnership (KDP) who manages two USDOL funded grants that provide incentive funding for new manufacturing industry apprentices from diverse backgrounds. These grants also support the costs of KDP and project partners to provide technical assistance to employers, unions, and other organizations in the development and registration of RA programs.

While not exclusive, our recruiting efforts intentionally focus on reaching underserved, underrepresented, displaced, and veteran groups.

4.5. Describe how the local board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible training providers through the system that such providers will meet the employment needs of local area employers, workers, and jobseekers.

The Board ensures continuous improvement of eligible providers of services for WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth through its competitive procurement process. The extensive RFP process is assessed on a variety of criteria, including: past performance, organizational capacity and experience, ability to establish organizational partnerships, program design, program budget, and capacity to join, manage and lead the PA CareerLink® staff in efforts to outreach to employers and jobseekers. Each proposal is required to demonstrate an in-depth understanding of customer needs, both jobseekers and employers, and service gaps in each county, and that propose additional activities beyond the minimum requirements to meet those needs. Proposers are required to provide an oral presentation to the local Board.

The Board's Executive Committee reviews proposals and evaluates oral presentations using an evaluation tool that facilitates the ordinal ranking of proposals in each county. The full Board then considers the Executive Committee's recommendations when making its decision to award the contract in part or in whole, or to reject it.

To track provider results, Board staff conducts program monitoring on an annual basis and fiscal monitoring on a quarterly basis. The PA CareerLink® One-Stop Operator meets weekly with the Executive Director and Deputy Director and quarterly with partners to discuss strategies for continuous improvement, including opportunities for cross training and collaboration across program partners. Meeting minutes are captured and distributed to all partners.

Additionally, the Board ensures the quality of providers on the statewide ETPL, and certifies that such providers meet the employment needs of local employers, workers, and jobseekers based on the list of requirements to be approved for initial eligibility. Specifically, training providers must be authorized by

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the Commonwealth to operate programs in Pennsylvania, provide documentation that confirms financial capability, licensing, and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), as well as WIOA nondiscrimination and equal opportunity requirements. ETPL training programs must also meet performance benchmarks related to program completion, job placement rates, median earnings, and credential attainment.

ETPL applications must include program-specific information, such as a program description, length of program, costs of tuition, any prerequisites, and the type of credential offered. This detailed application process helps to advise the customer in choosing a program that fits his or her particular interests and needs. All programs on the ETPL must be training in a HPO. Program providers are required to annually apply to have their programs placed on the ETPL.

The Board seeks training providers that offer diversity in their programming and considers online, distance learning, classroom training or a combination of all three. If a customer discovers a training program that is not currently on the ETPL, they are free to request that a provider submit an application for WDB review and the L&I approval. The Board reviews and considers applications submitted to the ETPL that are submitted by training providers outside of the local workforce region. For example, if a customer has completed a search in coordination with their case manager and finds that a training program is not available in the Commonwealth, but can be found in another state, the Board will consider the application for approval.

All training providers are required to submit their respective applications according to the requirements outlined in the *WIOA Title I Statewide Eligible Training Provider List, Desk Guide*.

PA CareerLink® staff and staff to the Board meet with training providers and employers to discuss industry needs and types of training several times throughout the program year. Training providers can tweak their programming to reflect the needs of employers based on the High Priority Occupation List for the region.

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. [20 CFR § 679.560(b)(6)]

The Board regularly reviews the type of programs available to Adult and Dislocated Workers in the local area, including training services available through the ETPL as described in the **response to 4.5 above**. This process is completed through an analysis of WIOA, a review of current activities related to performance, surveys of local employers and their intermediaries, and a comparison of program delivery type/availability to peer best-in-class local workforce development areas both within the Commonwealth as well as in other states. Through review, the Board identifies service gaps, confirms the need for specific services with employer and sector groups, and adjusts policies and programming to address identified needs as may be required.

The Board provides access to workforce services at the PA CareerLink® centers. In addition to partner programs, the Board also competitively procures services as needed to meet local labor market needs.

Upon entry in the system, individuals are directly referred to the specific services that best meet their particular needs. As may be required, interpretation and/or translation services may be utilized to assist customers who do not speak English well.

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Adult and Dislocated Worker workforce activities are provided under the broad categories of Basic Career Services, Individualized Career Services, and Training Services. Basic Career Services are available to any customer, while Individualized Career Services and Training Services are reserved for individuals who meet WIOA eligibility requirements. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Board has improved its online presence through virtual workshops and one-on-one consultation with career navigators via telephone calls and Zoom video chats. All virtual options are available for customers. Details of these services are provided in the **response to 4.13 below**.

Priority of Service. The Board's priority of service policy aligns with the Commonwealth's performance goals for the targeted groups as outlined in the State Plan. Adult priority is determined for the targeted groups during eligibility and enrollment and individuals must meet the general eligibility criteria shown below:

- Age (18 years or older)
- U.S. Citizen or Eligible-to-Work
- Selective Service (if applicable)
- Resident of the Luzerne-Schuylkill Workforce Development Area
- Priority is given to residents of Luzerne-Schuylkill Counties for WIOA Individualized Career and Training Services. To be eligible, individuals must satisfy at least one of the following barriers to employment:
 - Recipients of Public assistance
 - Other *low-income* individuals
 - Individuals who are basic skills deficient
 - Individuals who are both underemployed and low-income

Luzerne-Schuylkill residents receive priority services for enrollment into WIOA programs. However, non-residents may be considered on a case-by-case basis pending funding availability with the approval of the WIOA Title I Adult Program Manager and Board staff. Enrollment of non-residents will require coordination with other PA CareerLink® centers and Boards to prevent potential duplication of services. Management approval and coordination with all parties must be documented in the participant's file and case notes.

The PA CareerLink® centers use TABE, CASAS or WorkKeys® assessments to identify individuals who are basic skills deficient. Case notes must provide an auditable trail to the source of verified information.

Veterans and other eligible persons-within these targeted groups receive priority over non- veterans. Priority of services for veterans and eligible spouses applies across all qualified employment and training programs. The priority of service for public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals, individuals who are basic skills deficient, and individuals who are both underemployed and low-income is a statutory priority that applies only to the receipt of individualized career services and training services with respect to WIOA Title I Adult program. With regard to the priority of service for veterans and other eligible persons, priority of service for WIOA Title I Adult program must be applied in the following order:

1. Veterans and eligible spouses who meet the *statutory* priority (public assistance recipient, other w-income individuals including the underemployed, or basic skills deficient) and Adult program eligibility must receive the highest level of priority for services;
2. Other individuals (not veterans or eligible spouses) who meet the *statutory* priority (public assistance recipient, other low-income individuals including underemployed, or basic skills efficient) and Adult program eligibility then receive the second level of priority for services;
3. All other veterans and eligible spouses who meet Adult program eligibility, then receive the third level of priority for services;

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4. Priority populations established by the Commonwealth or the Luzerne/Schuylkill Workforce Development Board as provided for in WIOA § 3(24) and described below.
5. Individuals who do not meet the priorities

The WIOA barriers to employment for purposes of priority II and IV are as follows:

Displaced homemakers as defined in WIOA sec. 3(16)
Low-income individuals as defined in WIOA sec. 3(36)
Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians as defined in WIOA sec. 166(b)
Individuals with documented disabilities including individuals who are in receipt of Social Security Disability Insurance
Older individuals age 55 and older as defined in WIOA sec. 3(39))
Ex-offenders as defined in WIOA sec. 3(38)
Homeless individuals
English language learners (WIOA sec. 203(7)), (2and (3)
Individuals who have low levels of literacy (an individual is unable to compute or solve programs, or read, write, or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, or in the individual's family, or in society
Individuals facing substantial cultural barriers
Eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers as defined in WIOA sec. 167(i)(1-3
Individuals within two years of exhausting lifetime TANF eligibility
Single parents including single pregnant women
Long-term unemployed individuals unemployed for 27 or more consecutive weeks
Individuals with a family income at 258% of the federal poverty level (established by LSWB Barrier)

Overall, the Board strives to ensure that a minimum of 51% of Adult program participants are from the priority targeted groups. Monitoring is conducted quarterly to track compliance.

The Board continually seeks to attract new training providers based on customer choice and training programs that align to high priority occupations. In this regard, the Board reviews and considers applications submitted to the ETPL that are proposed by training providers outside of the local workforce region. For example, if a customer has completed a search in coordination with their case manager and finds that a training program is not available in the Commonwealth but can be found in another state, the Board will consider the application for approval. The Board also reviews and approves applications for training programs that may be online training, classroom training, distance learning, or a combination of all three. All training providers are required to submit their respective applications according to the requirements outlined in the *WIOA Title I Statewide Eligible Training Provider List, Desk Guide*.

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

Overview of Training Services

The Board has historically used ITAs to fund occupational skills training for its customers. Use of these accounts and training dollars provide the mechanism for adult and dislocated worker customers to access occupational skills training. The workforce development system established under WIOA emphasizes

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informed applicant choice. Therefore, in consultation with PA CareerLink® Title I Staff, the eligible applicant requesting training will make an informed choice. Centered on customer choice and on a customer's specific needs, he/she may choose to enroll in an ITA or work-based learning program. An ITA funded training may also be completed in conjunction with other work based learning activities, such as OJT, customized training, and apprenticeships.

Each customer is given the option of choosing the training provider from the numerous entities that are on the approved ETPL as well as any organizations that have been deemed appropriate for work-based learning activities. This selection is based on best meeting the individual needs of each customer.

ITAs. Before processing an ITA, PA CareerLink® Title I staff ensures potential participants have researched the local labor market and that there are suitable job opportunities for individuals with that training.

ITAs are awarded to eligible applicants interested in attending quality training programs that appear on the Pennsylvania ETPL and prepares them for occupations appearing on Pennsylvania's HPO List. ITAs are intended to support training that will enable participants to reenter the labor force quickly. To that end, Bachelor's Degree or higher levels of education programs are not eligible to receive ITA funding, except under the circumstances as described in A and B below:

A. If a customer can be deemed WIOA eligible, and is enrolled in a Bachelor's Degree program at an accredited school, the PA CareerLink® staff can consider processing an ITA if all of the following conditions are met:

1. The degree can be achieved within the two-year timeframe of an ITA,
2. The customer must provide proof how the remaining costs of training will be funded,
3. The degree program is on the Pennsylvania ETPL,
4. The training is directly related to gaining employment in an occupation listed on Pennsylvania's HPO List, and
5. A waiver request must be submitted to, and approved by the L/S WIB.

B. If a customer can be deemed WIOA eligible, and is enrolled in a semester based, credentialed program, less than two years in length, at an accredited school, the PA CareerLink® staff can consider processing an ITA if all of the following conditions are met:

1. The credentialed program can be achieved within the two-year timeframe of an ITA,
2. The customer must provide proof of how the remaining costs of training will be funded,
3. The degree program is on the Pennsylvania ETPL,
4. The training is directly related to gaining employment in an occupation listed on Pennsylvania's HPO List, and
5. In this circumstance, it is not necessary to request a waiver from L/S WIB.

The following standards are used to determine ITA funding eligibility:

- The target job, (based on course title and corresponding Standard Occupation Code (S.O.C. code) is nestled within a recognized Industry Cluster.
- The target job is on the High Priority Occupation list.
- The target job has projected annual openings and or quantifiable growth potential through emerging job creation/economic development activity.
- The target job has an annual average wage that is self-sustaining.
- The customer's Career Readiness Component (WorkKeys®, WIN, Tabe, CASAS, or aptitude assessment recognized by trainer*) indicates an aptitude necessary for academic success.

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**Under certain circumstances, training provider's entrance testing or other relevant form of assessment is acceptable.*

A Level One grant maximum of \$10,000 will be awarded to applications meeting each of the aforementioned five standards. A Level Two grant of \$7,500 will be awarded to applications meeting all but one or four of the preset standards. A Level Three grant of \$5,000 will be awarded to applications meeting three or fewer of the preset standards. Additionally, a participant will be awarded at a level of funding not to exceed the approved tuition costs on the State Training Provider List.

Priority in ITA funding is given to eligible applicants interested in attending training programs that provide an industry-recognized credential. Registered Apprenticeships listed on the Pennsylvania ETPL qualify for ITA funding; participants are encouraged to consider an Apprenticeship as a viable career pathway.

ITAs should align with key industry sectors identified by L/S WDB. L/S WDB and the WIOA Title I contractor will work to align training funds across programs to ensure a broad portfolio of strong training options are available to potential training participants.

Work-Based Learning. The Board is exploring the expansion of work-based learning programs, such as OJT, work experience, co-op programs, apprenticeships, and transitional jobs to meet unique skill needs of employers in the area. Its current work-based learning guidelines include the following stipulations:

- Prioritized for occupations that are considered HPOs and occupations in a Targeted Industry Cluster
- Allowable for occupations that are determined to be in sectors that have a high potential for demand or growth in the local area
- Occupations which do not require extra-ordinary training will not be considered, unless they involve the training of customers with limited skill potential (e.g. learning disabilities).
- Work-based training for incumbent workers must relate to the introduction of new technologies, introduction to new production, services, or procedures, upgrading to new jobs that require additional skills, and/or work place literacy or similar skills
- Trainee wages must be a minimum of \$10 per hour
- Employer receives a reimbursement of 50% of the trainee's base wage rate, not to exceed \$10,000 (which is in line with the Board's maximum for an ITA as described above) during a fixed training period of six to 26 weeks
- Trainee must be scheduled for at least 32 hours per week (or 64 hours per two weeks); however, reimbursable hours to employer cannot exceed 40 hours per week
- Employer is expected to retain the trainee as a regular full-time employee who is provided benefits and working conditions at the same level and to the same extent as other employees working a similar length of time and doing the same type of work
- Length of work-based training contracts will be reduced by 50% when the prospective employee has had past experience or training in the proposed occupation within the last year.

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

The Board recognizes that producing an educated and skilled workforce is critical to economic development, growth and prosperity in the region. Availability of workforce services to youth/young adults is one critical component of this broad view.

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The local Board utilizes its **Youth Committee (YC)** to develop youth services programming and define a vision. The committee is comprised of L/S WDB board members and members of the community. Many members work for organizations that provide services to youth, are employers or are interested in developing a pipeline of skilled workers for current and future growth. Members represent chambers of commerce, secondary schools including career and technical schools, post-secondary institutions, Title I and Title II providers, labor unions, Job Corps, local county assistance offices, juvenile probation, vocational rehabilitation and youth service organizations in the nonprofit sector that provide programming and services for youth. YC has developed a vision for providing comprehensive services to as many youth as possible that includes goals and objectives to attain that vision.

The Board first and foremost focuses youth services programming on Out-of-School Young Adults (OSY) in order to meet the 75% WIOA expenditure rate for OSY young adults, older youth and young people who are most at risk of not acquiring the necessary skills and abilities to attain meaningful employment, including individuals with a disability. It acknowledges that in order to be successful a young adult first needs to obtain a high school equivalency diploma before pursuing a career, post-secondary education or the military. It ensures that high school equivalency training classes are available on site at the PA CareerLink® centers and online virtually through a variety of platforms such as ZOOM, Google classroom and GED Academy.

Work Experience. The Board is successful in meeting the WIOA 20 percent work experience expenditure requirement and works to secure high quality work sites that directly relate to the participants Individual Service Strategy (ISS), career exploration activities and assessments. All participants are encouraged to complete a work experience that directly aligns with their individual goals. Part of the training prior to a work experience is the **YES Northeast** program that provides youth with numerous soft skills and entrepreneurship workshops. Each of the YES workshops provide high quality instruction on what is needed to be successful in a job or career including interacting with co-workers and supervisors, financial literacy, and occupational skills training.

The Board also utilizes the industry recognized *ServSafe* certificate for participants that helps open the door to employment in the food service industry. This certificate has been useful in securing employment for young adults, many times the first job for OSY. The food service industry provides a variety of entry-level positions that aligns with the boards career pathway in the Food Processing industry.

All participants receive information on the 14 WIOA Youth program elements and may access each element that are applicable to their needs. The participants ISS serves as the guide or tool for services and is developed by the participant and case manager. The ISS identifies the steps and actions required to connect the individual to his or her education, training, and career goal.

The local youth program provides a variety of opportunities to guide participants to meet their individual goals such as attainment of a high school diploma or equivalency, work experience, learning new skills such as employment skills and life skills, acquiring an industry credential and transitioning to post-secondary training or a job.

Co-enrollment and Referral of young adult participants into partner programs are promoted by the Board. Co-enrollment in TANF programming is encouraged. TANF eligible youth have completed grade five or are 12 -24 years of age and are provided with a year-round program that includes life skills; job searching skills; and career awareness activities. Life skills focus on such things as financial literacy (i.e. budgeting,

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credit card usage, etc.), community service, substance abuse and wellness, diversity, sexual harassment, time management, conflict resolution, getting along with co-workers, respecting supervisors, and leadership. Job searching skills activities include how to apply for a job, put a resume together, interview for a job, and keep a job.

Career awareness activities help prepare TANF-eligible youth for life after high school. Youth are exposed to career interest inventories, exploration of various careers, O*Net Interest profiler, and high priority occupations in the region. Participants learn the differences in apprenticeships, vocational-technical training, community college and university/college programs of study.

Participants are exposed to information about the local business community and labor market information. Youth are given an opportunity to participate in job shadowing activities as well as campus tours. Additionally, work experience opportunities are available to eligible participants, ages 14-24. Most work experiences occur during the summer months and worksites are chosen as close to the participants' homes as possible so that transportation is minimal.

Youth with disabilities are provided with information on the services available through the OVR. It is helpful that OVR staff are co-located within the PA CareerLink® centers as referrals are easily made and facilitate a much shorter turnaround time for service.

Additionally, the Board supports Job Corps' monthly presentations to WIOA OSY at PA CareerLink® One-Stop Centers providing them with opportunities to interview and visit the Luzerne Job Corps location.

WIOA Youth Eligibility. The Board in concert with the Youth Committee evaluate, outline and approve tools for WIOA Youth/Young Adult requirements regarding documentation. They also have outlined the policy for "requires additional assistance to complete an education program or to secure and hold employment" for eligibility and enrollment for WIOA Title I Youth services". In order to enroll in WIOA Youth programming, a youth must provide documentation to determine eligibility. The following requirements must be met:

- Age (In-School Youth are 14-21 years old and Out-of-School Youth are 16-24 years old)
- Authorization to Work
- Residency
- Selective Service Registration (if applicable)
- School Status
- Low-Income Determination (if applicable)
- Barrier Status (School drop-out; pregnant/parenting; youth with a disability; individual in foster care/aged out; homeless or runaway; offender; basic skills deficient; English language learner; requires additional assistance)

The Board has adopted the following criteria as its definition for an eligible youth: *"requires additional assistance to complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment"*:

- Underemployed or Poor Work History
 - o Fired from one or more jobs, or has a history of sporadic employment (i.e., held three or more jobs within the last 12 months and is no longer employed)
 - o Has actively been seeking employment for at least three months, but remains unemployed or underemployed. This includes a youth with no employment history, with limited work experience, and/or actively seeking full-time employment, but have only achieved part-time employment

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- o Held several jobs in a year
- o Aged 22-23 and making \$7.25 hour
- o Aged 21-24 and never had a job
- o Youth who lacks a significant work history, defined as meeting one of the following:
 - § Has no unsubsidized work history
 - § Has been unemployed for more than 15 weeks of the last six months
 - § Lacks meaningful work experience and/or general job search, basic entry level or employment readiness skills
- Education/Skills Deficient
 - o Received a low score on a pre-employment assessment
 - o Has received a rejection letter from an employer stating that the participant does not meet the required skills needed or employment
 - o Currently at-risk of dropping out of school (Documentation provided by a school counselor, or other school staff, probation officer, or another person who can provide documentation demonstrating chronic poor attendance and/or discipline problems during the last current and/or last school year or has a low-grade point average)
 - o Currently credit deficient (i.e., one or more grade levels behind) and/or currently enrolled in math/reading extra supports
 - o Currently attending a high school where economically disadvantaged rate is 50% or greater
- Transportation Barriers
 - o Lack of consistent and available public and/or personal transportation as identified in their Individual Service Strategy (ISS)
- At Risk Youth
 - o Mentally challenged, learning disabled, non-cash recipient or
 - o Possessing no marketable skills (i.e., no meaningful unsubsidized work experience of at least two years cumulative or has not completed postsecondary training that has resulted in a degree, license, or certificate in a demand occupation)
 - o Has an incarcerated parent

Criteria for inclusion under this category will be verified by the Case Manager and clearly documented in the individual's case file to demonstrate that it is reasonable, quantifiable, and evidence-based. Examples of such documentation include copies of pay check stubs, school records, assessment results, and court documents.

Enrollments under this category will be approved on a case-by-case basis by the Executive Director. This important step will ensure that documentation is complete and that the 5% limitation for in school youth is not exceeded.

Leveraging TANF. L/S WDB leverages TANF Youth Services funding with WIOA Title I Youth, Business Education Partnership (BEP) and State Local Internship Program (SLIP) funds to offer additional opportunities for youth. Staff collaborate with community partners to co-sponsor events and build relationships that benefit students as they explore various career pathways. Tours to colleges and universities (Luzerne County Community College, Penn State-Schuylkill) are arranged for participants to learn about the variety of programs of study, discuss financial aid with a financial aid representative and

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learn about the admissions process from an admissions counselor. Networking events are planned with employers, members of the youth committee, Job Corps and chambers of commerce. Some of these partners provide refreshments and or meeting space for these events.

L/S WDB provides the 14 WIOA Youth Program Elements to TANF participants indicated in the table below. Each element is provided either by Board contracted Youth Providers or by school districts, nonprofit organizations and career and technical schools. The Board has sets goals for each of the activities that are offered on a year-round basis.

WIOA YOUTH PROGRAM ELEMENT	LOCAL PROVIDER ORGANIZATION	ACTIVITY TIME
1. Tutoring, study skills training, instruction & dropout prevention strategies	Luzerne County-Equus Schuylkill County-EDSI , Educational Opportunity Center	Year-round
2. Alternative secondary school services	Luzerne County- Equus, Job Corps, local school districts Schuylkill County-EDSI , Schuylkill Intermediate Unit, Title II Lifelong Learning Center, Job Corps, local school districts	Year-round
3. Paid and Unpaid work experience	Luzerne County-Equus Schuylkill County-EDSI	Year-round
4. Occupational Skills Training	Luzerne County-Hazleton Career Center Schuylkill County-EDSI, Schuylkill Technology Center & North East PA Manufacturers & Employers Council Inc	Year-round
5. Education offered concurrently w/ workforce preparation & training	Luzerne County-Equus, Hazleton Career Center and local school districts Schuylkill County-EDSI, Schuylkill Technology Center & North East PA Manufacturers & Employers Council Inc, local school districts	Year-round
6. Leadership Development Opportunities	Luzerne County-Equus, Educational Opportunity Center, Greater Hazleton Partners in Education, Greater Wilkes-Barre and Hazleton Chambers of Commerce Schuylkill County-EDSI , North East PA Manufacturers & Employers Council Inc., local non-profits	Year-round
7. Supportive Services	Luzerne County-Equus Schuylkill County-EDSI, Service Access Management, Schuylkill Community Action, Servants to All Homeless Agency	Year-round
8. Adult Mentoring	Luzerne County- Equus, Work Experience Site Supervisors, Youth Committee, Greater Wilkes-Barre & Hazleton Chambers of Commerce Schuylkill County-EDSI, Youth Committee, PA CareerLink® Partners	Year-round
9. Follow-up Services	Luzerne County-Equus Schuylkill County-EDSI	Year-round

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10. Comprehensive Guidance & Counseling	Luzerne County-Equus & Luzerne Intermediate Unit 18 Schuylkill County-Clinical Outcomes Group, Schuylkill County Drug and Alcohol, Sexual Assault Resource and Counseling Center	Year-round
11. Financial Literacy Education	Luzerne County- Equus & Educational Opportunity Center Schuylkill County-EDSI, Schuylkill Community Action, Educational Opportunity Center, Northeast Manufacturers & Employers Council Inc	Year-round
12. Entrepreneurial Skills Training	Luzerne County-Equus Schuylkill County-EDSI, Young Entrepreneurs Academy, Schuylkill Chamber of Commerce, Northeast Manufacturers & Employers Council Inc	Year-round
13. Services that Provide Labor Market and Employment Information	Luzerne County- Equus, Work Experience Site Supervisors, Greater Hazleton Partners in Education, PA CareerLink® Partners Schuylkill County-EDSI, PA CareerLink® Partners, Northeast Manufacturers & Employers Council Inc	Year-round
14. Postsecondary preparation and transition activities	Luzerne County-Equus, Educational Opportunity Center, Luzerne County Community College, Greater Hazleton Partners in Education Schuylkill County-EDSI, Educational Opportunity Center, Penn State Schuylkill, Lehigh Carbon Community College, Lifelong Learning Center, Schuylkill Technology Center	Year-round

Luzerne/Schuylkill contracted Youth Providers for TANF and WIOA are Equus Workforce Services in Luzerne County and EDSI in Schuylkill County. Both providers are responsible for developing and designing recruitment tools and activities. TANF staff utilize a number of recruitment tools and have developed relationships/partnerships with the County Assistance Office (CAO) in both counties. Information is provided to CAO staff regarding TANF programming. Staff have relationships with programs that offer support for pregnant and parenting young adults such as Project Mom, ELECT, and Career Transition Specialists at both Luzerne Intermediate Unit 18 and Schuylkill Intermediate Unit 29 and Job Corps Admissions Counselor. WIOA Title I, EARN and OVR programs are all located in our three PA CareerLink® centers and TANF staff regularly communicate with staff from all programs in an effort to secure referrals. TANF staff also have developed relationships with local high schools who provide referrals from guidance counselors and teachers in each respective district.

All TANF participants are highly encouraged to participate in a work experience for at least 6-8 weeks. Participants are provided workforce development programming with workshops on job readiness skills such as softs skills in the workplace that focus on communication skills, time management, respecting others, teamwork, characteristics of a good work ethic and financial literacy. Priority is also given to students who need remediation. Job matching for work experiences shall be prioritized for TANF participants based on their interests/programs of study in school.

Based on Board policy, local work experience sites are eligible to pay up to \$10.35 per hour but not pay more than a direct new hire.

Work Experience Coordinators, Business Service Team Representatives, Career Advisors and Youth Program Managers all contribute in the recruitment of employers/organizations for work experience sites

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and for maintaining those relationships. Staff canvas local businesses on a regular basis to inform about the subsidized work experience program. Presentations, in-person site visits and opportunities to participate in an Annual Youth Networking Event are methods used for recruitment purposes. Community Partners receive updates at regular advisory committee/board meetings that staff members attend. Staff also participate in networking events where they meet and exchange information with local employers or those owning small businesses.

Staff contact supervisors at active sites throughout the work experience, sometimes on a weekly basis. These sessions provide the TANF staff with feedback on a participant's performance and are helpful to engage conversations with participants on ways to improve performance or to encourage when they are doing a good job at the work site. Worksite supervisors also evaluate students throughout the work experience.

Youth providers continually look for partners that will support TANF Youth. In the past, we have utilized non-monetary partners to include city and borough facilities, libraries, school districts, local career and technology centers, for profit small businesses such as restaurants and retail shops, the military, nonprofits, and colleges, ACCESS services, Juvenile Probation, SELECT, Schuylkill County Vision, Schuylkill Chamber of Commerce, Young Entrepreneurs Academy, Educational Opportunity Center (EOC), Penn State Schuylkill, King's College, Luzerne County Community College, U.S. Army, and Job Corps. In the past, EOC has offered to host a trip for participants to tour Bloomsburg University and job fairs, and has provided financial literacy and financial aid workshops to work experience participants. Local businesses and institutions of higher education support TANF Youth Programming by offering tours, guest speakers who discuss in-demand careers and opportunities for employment and/or work experiences.

L/S WDB offers incentives to TANF participants based on meeting specific benchmarks. Participants receive the incentive in the form of a gift card when a benchmark has been met. Incentives are offered for completing TRAITIFY career assessment, obtaining unsubsidized employment, being promoted to the next grade level and high school graduation. Those who graduate or move on to the next grade level must show proof of matriculation or graduation. Participants provide either proof that they are employed, attending post-secondary education, or enrolling in the military after graduating.

Incentive information is provided to each potential enrollee at the initial appointment for enrollment.

The L/S WDB utilizes FP 136-Incentives Policy to guide service providers in awarding incentives to participants.

LWDB staff member responsible for implementation, tracking, and reporting TANF YDF activities and expenditures is Marla Doddo. Doddo also oversees monitoring of local providers through monthly desk reviews, on-site visits and review of participant files, and compiles and submits the DHS qualification Spreadsheet on DocuShare.

LWDB staff: **Marla Doddo, Workforce Planning, Policy & Strategies Manager**
 32 East Union Street, 2nd Floor
 Wilkes-Barre, PA 18701
 570-822-1101, 296
 marladoddo@lswib.org

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TANF Youth Development Programs are co-located in three PA CareerLink® sites in Luzerne/Schuylkill. Contact information of the designated TANF Provider follows:

PA CareerLink® Luzerne County-Hazleton & Wilkes-Barre:

Jerry Fallabel, Program Manager, Equus Workforce Services

PA CareerLink® Luzerne County

32 East Union St.

Wilkes-Barre, PA 18701

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PA CareerLink® Schuylkill County-Pottsville:

Laura Hoppes, Program Manager, EDSI

PA CareerLink® Schuylkill County

203 East Arch Street

Pottsville, PA 17901-3512

570-622-5253, 146

laurah@careerlinkpottsville.org

4.9. How will the local board coordinate workforce investment activities and ensure they are carried out in the local area with statewide rapid response?

Rapid Response (RR) provides services to the community, the employer, and the worker. It is a proactive and coordinated effort that includes access to Pennsylvania's economic development assistance resources, such as helping businesses that are at risk of closing to remain open, as well as helping employers reduce the size of, or prevent, a layoff.

In addition to these proactive services, the Board also serves as the link to services and financial support for major dislocation events. It coordinates activities as news of pending or unexpected layoffs is received, in conjunction with the State Rapid Response Coordinator and PA CareerLink® staff.

Rapid Response activities are initiated when PA Department of Labor & Industry learns of a planned closure or layoff through a notice as required by the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act, through the media, or by contacts in the local area. Rapid Response services may also be offered in the event of a mass job dislocation as a result of a disaster.

The State Rapid Response Coordinator takes immediate action in addressing intervention strategies and services aimed toward rapid and suitable long-term employment for the adversely affected Dislocated Workers. The Rapid Response Coordinator meets with the employer and when appropriate, representatives of the employees, to discuss the services that are available through the program. The Rapid Response Coordinator leads a team of experts to provide workers with information about access to services, such as the following, in a centralized and convenient location before the layoff or closure occurs:

- Unemployment Insurance
- Health and pension benefits
- Job search activities
- Education services

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- Training Program
- Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) and NAFTA/TAA programs
- Social Services programs
- Community and economic development activities
- Emergency assistance
- Crisis counseling

The Rapid Response program helps laid off workers turn the challenge of a layoff into an opportunity by providing information about, and access to, the services that will help put workers back to work. Primary services include:

- Career counseling
- Job search assistance
- Information about education and training opportunities
- Use of computers, telephones, and fax machines for a job search
- Financial support for training
- Income support if a job was lost to foreign trade
- Special services for adults with disabilities and veterans

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Rapid Response Coordination Service staff are directed to immediately cancel all previously scheduled Fact-Finding Meetings, Pre-Layoff Services, Trade Adjustment Assistance Benefits Rights Interviews, Enrollment/Assessment Sessions and other on-site, in person Rapid Response Information Meetings until further notice. This action was effective as of March 12, 2020.

RR staff have continued to provide services through virtual methods, primary utilizing the WebEx platform. In addition, RR staff have delivered hard copy RR Information materials to several companies. All RR materials are converted to an electronic format which can be sent to the affected business and its workforce through e-mail.

If RR staff receive an employer request to conduct an in-person RR Information Meeting, staff are to summarize the details of the request and submit the request to central office for approval. No face-to-face meetings can occur without this approval. In order to expedite the request, the following information must be submitted:

The original request of the employer must be in writing ensuring that the listed bullet points are addressed either in a letter or separately in an email:

- Documented reasons for the request
- Size of the workforce being serviced
- Size of the room where presentation(s) will take place
- Assurances from the employer that all attendees will wear masks and be in compliance with social distancing guidelines

Rapid Response has conducted very few in person sessions at the business location, or at other local sites such as fire halls, libraries and VFW facilities since beginning of the pandemic in March 2020.

4.10. 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).

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The Board's Business Education Partnership (BEP) and Teacher in the Workplace (TIW) programs affect youth, parents and educators in the region with direct opportunities to understand and incorporate career exploration and education that is in line with HPOs and first-hand job shadowing opportunities with employers. Funding provides career-focused awareness and discovery opportunities for youth, educators, and parents. It includes career events, cooperative education for career and technology center students, soft skills development and opportunities to participate in a structured program where they explore a specific job, interacting with staff and through hands-on experiences, and educator in the workplace experiences. A few examples of the Board's efforts for non-duplicated activities and services offered to enrich programming offered to all youth in the workforce area (and not just those constrained to WIOA or TANF funding restrictions) follow:

- **L/S WDB-Invest in Your Future I & II BEP.** *Invest in Your Future I & II* combines job skills training through a 20-hour Workplace Boot Camp curriculum and a paid internship/co-op that boosts students' employability upon graduation. The program runs concurrent with the school year, providing an immersive, fast-track experience that benefits both employers and high-school seniors in a short time frame. Wages are commensurate with those of starting positions in the field (at least \$10/hour), and students work up to 20 hours per week.
- **Leadership Wilkes-Barre TIW.** The *Impact* program develops teachers' career awareness skills. Teachers leave their classrooms to learn firsthand about employer needs, and employment and job shadowing opportunities for students in the workforce development area. Peer-to-peer learning, collaboration, and the exchange of ideas are used to promote positive results and outcomes. As part of the program, teachers complete a School Impact Project (SIP) that is showcased at the end of the program and then established in their schools.
- **Luzerne Intermediate Unit 18 TIW.** Educators experience a detailed schedule of workforce activities from the introduction of career pathways to data sources introducing high priority occupations. Educators experiences include visits to businesses and industry sites and an opportunity for teachers to speak first hand with employers. Participant experiences also paralleled STEM and Computer Science professional development. Their experiences are then shared with their students back in the classrooms
- **Schuylkill Youth Summit.** The Title I Youth Provider and Board staff participate at this annual event. The Title I Youth Provider and Board staff sit on the advisory/planning committee along with numerous community partners. The Summit brings together over 100 high school students from 16 counties each year. Youth learn how communities and democracy works and are challenged to make real changes in their communities while working on goals they design for themselves. Youth focus on career and job awareness, learning about issues in their community, and planning and goal-setting to spearhead transformation in their communities. PA CareerLink® Schuylkill staff provide tours and supplemental information to participants on PA CareerLink®.

Supporting these efforts, the Board also strives to work with school districts to provide career and labor market information to staff and students, and help districts coordinate career events. PA CareerLink® staff have developed relationships within the districts and continue to reach out to provide additional presentations to staff and students. The Board continually seeks grant opportunities to fund programs that encourage partnering with K-12 and post-secondary education.

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Path to Careers

The L/S WDB is moving to adopt the *Path to Careers* platform, an innovative new interface that helps businesses connect with schools, schools learn what businesses need, and students see career opportunities first-hand. Path to Careers allows businesses to easily register with information highlighting who they are, what they do and how they'd like to connect with schools and students by providing career awareness experiences. Schools register so educators and students alike can easily learn about local businesses and then connect with them in ways that allow them to see, feel, and understand first-hand the opportunities that exist and the skills and abilities it takes to secure them. Path to Careers helps schools focus on what matters — students — while relieving the burden of trying to research where the businesses are, what they have to offer, and who to contact. Similarly, it is designed with businesses in mind, allowing connections to happen within a streamlined process that works for them. The end result is that students are more easily able to find and access the career development opportunities near them while employers have more chances to expose their future potential workforce to the career opportunities available within their organizations.

The platform was originally developed by the Central PA WDB (CPWDC) with support from the PA Department of Labor & Industry, and can be viewed here: <https://pathtocareers.org>. L/S WDB will work with CPWDC to adapt the platform for the Luzerne-Schuylkill workforce development area.

Courses to Careers

L/S WDB plans to launch a new initiative, *Courses to Careers (C2C)*, designed to identify, train and place recent college graduates, including Associate and Bachelor degree holders, as well as holders of industry-recognized credentials/certificates/licenses. The intent is to serve young adults between the ages of 18 and 26 who are either unemployed or underemployed within our target demographic. Priority of service will be given to individuals who graduated or obtained their degree/ license within the last two years. Program participants will be processed according to WIOA eligibility guidelines for enrollment and paired with a Career Navigator. After completing enrollment, the young adult will be placed in a transitional paid work experience (TWE) for 12 weeks. While completing TWE, participants will have the unique opportunity to participate in a professional development webinar series, benefit from a subscription to a website for health and self-care, and meet with a local mentor relevant to their field/industry. Participants will also have access to a Licensed Family Advocate (LFA) on staff who will be available for one-on-one sessions, as well as to facilitate a wellness group where participants can check in with each other and participate in group discussions. After completing TWE, program participants will work with their Career Navigator to obtain direct-hire, full-time employment at a sustainable wage with a local employer.

The overall goal is to uplift young adults who have been adversely impacted by the pandemic while retaining a robust talent pool locally. This talent pool consists of young adults who grew up in Luzerne/Schuylkill and attended school locally and young adults who are from Luzerne/Schuylkill, but attended school out of the area. C2C also encourages young adults who may have originated outside the area but attended school in the region to remain a local resident. In addition to WIOA eligibility guidelines, any current Luzerne/Schuylkill resident who is between 18 and 26 and obtained a degree/license will qualify for the C2C Program. The program recruitment is underway in 2021.

Local board actions related to Perkins Act Section 134 biennial “CTE Comprehensive needs assessment”

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The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins Act) is the primary federal law aimed at developing and supporting career and technical education (CTE) programs at the secondary and postsecondary educational levels.

As required per the Perkins Act Section 134, Perkins lead entities must conduct a comprehensive needs assessment that evaluates the progress of CTE programs aligned with employment priorities locally, regionally and state-wide.

Perkins Grant lead entities in L/S Workforce Development Area (WDA), Luzerne County Community College, Lehigh Carbon Community College and CTE sub-contractors have enjoyed a long-standing professional relationship with the Luzerne-Schuylkill Workforce Development Board since the inception with the Workforce Investment Act Legislation in 1998-1999.

The Board's established partnership with the Perkins Grant lead entities and subcontractors allow the Board to effectively contribute workforce expertise for the improvement of CTE programs. Board staff are representatives of a diverse body of Perkin's stakeholders and also participate on the Career Pathways work groups organized by the local Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Program. The Board provides insight into labor market statistics such as current, short and long-term occupation projections and/or career pathways for in-demand industry sectors. Perkin's partners utilize labor market data for training program creations, revision, or elimination.

The PA High Priority Occupation (HPO) list is another component of Pennsylvania's industry-driven approach to guide workforce development. Local boards oversee the HPO list annually. HPOs are job categories that are in demand by employers, have evolving skill needs, and are likely to provide family-sustaining wages. The HPO list also assists with CTE decisions for training and education investments.

The Boards from the Northeast Region along with the lead Perkins Partners participate in business driven Next Gen Industry Partnerships in several of Pennsylvania's targeted industry clusters: Advanced Material and Diversified Manufacturing, Food Processing, Health Care and Logistics & Transportation. Business feedback is essential in planning training programs for workforce development.

The local board collaboration with Perkins Act grantees help with the development of both academic and technical standards for students in the preparation of high priority, high skill, high wage, and in-demand occupations in current and emerging professions.

Additionally, the local area's Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Program provides Adult Basic Education (ABE), Adult Secondary Education (ASE), Educational Functioning Levels (EFL), and English Language Acquisition (ELA) activities where there is a need. It also supports a tutoring program that offers one-on-one and/or small group instruction or volunteer classroom aides.

It prepares students for and supports them in achieving successful transition to postsecondary education/training or employment. It integrates digital literacy, employability skills and workforce preparation activities into its services. Its basic skills instruction incorporates activities that require the use of technology, promote critical thinking, and build self-management skills, such as utilizing resources and information, understanding systems, and working with others.

The Adult Education and Family Literacy Program also integrates career awareness and career planning activities, including using those activities as the context for basic skills instruction. Case management

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activities in support of transition are offered in a variety of ways: integrated into instruction, stand-alone group activities, and one-on-one case management support. The activities include introducing students to and helping them use the resources available through L&I and the PA CareerLink®; helping students identify employment and career pathways that align with their skills and interests and that lead to jobs that pay; and supporting students through the application process for employment or training.

4.11. Describe the plans, assurances and strategies for maximizing coordination, improving service delivery and avoiding duplication of Wagner-Peyser Act services and other services provided through the Coordination of Roles and Responsibilities. The Board's approach to workforce development efforts is centered on quality customer service to jobseekers and employers, the leveraging of various resources and funding streams to eliminate duplication of services, collaboration with other partner agencies, and support for a service delivery structure which maximizes access to all customers within the local area while allowing for flexibility in each county to design service strategies around the needs and resources available in their respective labor markets. The Board has developed close working relationships with the other Boards in the region, supporting regional approaches to the workforce needs of Northeastern Pennsylvania. Regional Rapid Response services and collaboration in a wide variety of Industry Partnership programs are testament to this collaborative approach.

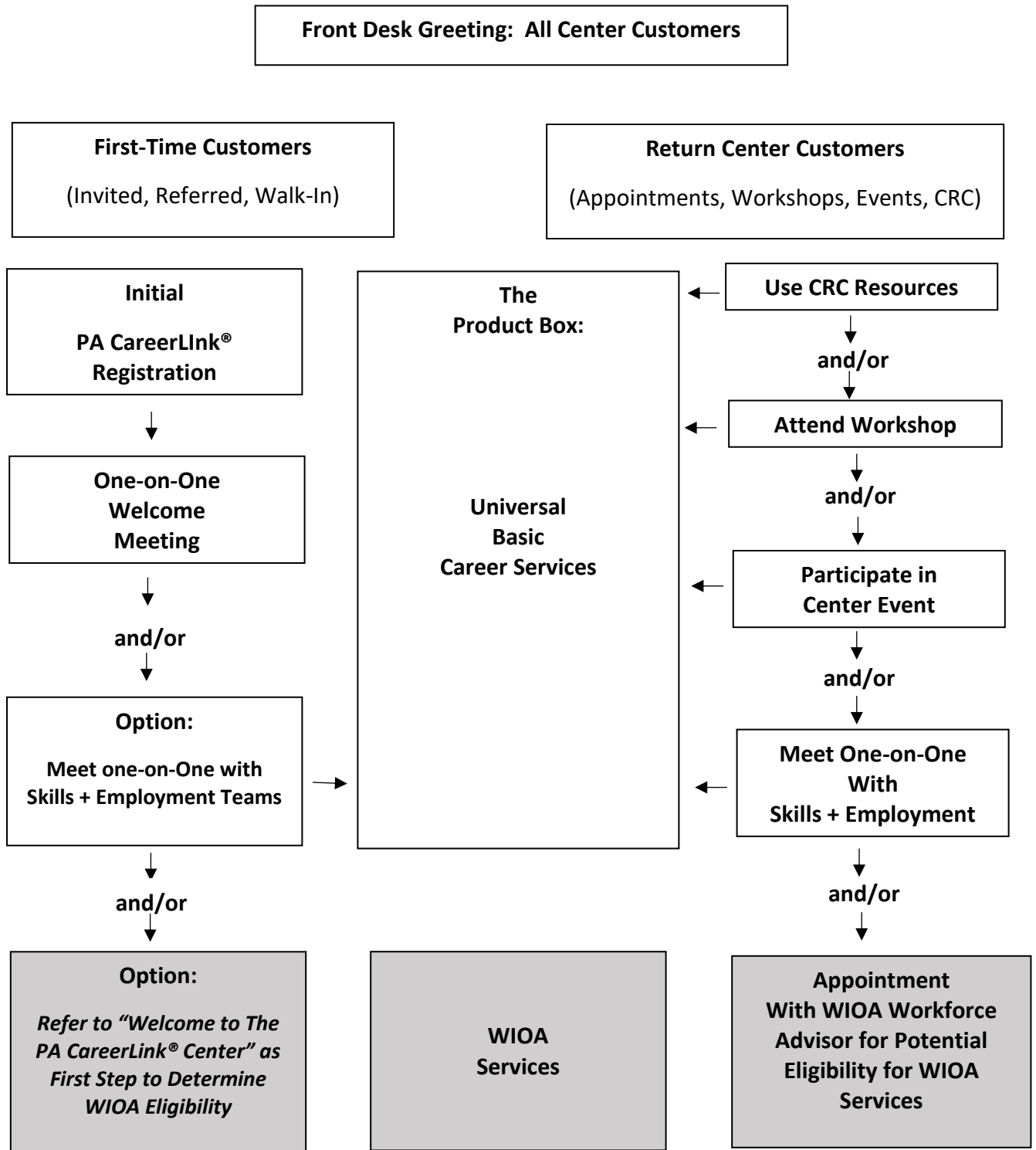
The PA CareerLink® centers use an intake form to capture each customer's contact information, employment history, veteran's status, possible barriers to employment, and reason for the initial visit. This information helps staff easily identify the program(s) and services which may be most beneficial to the customer. Referral to the appropriate partner and/or outside organization is determined jointly by the customer and staff person.

Improving Program Partner Integration. The Board recognizes the importance of the partner coordination and cooperation. It will charge the One-Stop Operator (OSO) to provide this function. OSO is responsible for assessing current gaps in the service delivery system, strengthening current partnerships, and facilitating seamless referrals between partners.

Referral Mechanism. As discussed, a common intake form captures information on each new customer. This data is very helpful in determining which program(s) may best meet the individual's needs. In addition to in-house referrals to partner programs, staff members may also refer customers to outside services for comprehensive help with issues such as child care services; clothing; substance use treatment; local food banks; and housing. All referrals are documented in the customer's case notes on PA's workforce system of record.

Orientation and Customer Flow. A PA CareerLink® orientation is provided to new customers who meet with the Intake Coordinator in the Welcome Center. Customers watch a recording where they learn about the One-Stop concept, the participating partners, the services available, veteran's priority of service; youth activities, and other special programs, services, and events that may be helpful with their employment and training needs. It is highly recommended that every new customer attends an orientation session. Upon completion of this orientation, customers meet with the Intake Coordinator to discuss the orientation and plan next steps.

An overview of jobseeker customer flow is depicted in the chart that follows:



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Staff Development. All partner staff of the PA CareerLink® centers are provided information regarding partner services. Partners report on their programs at regularly scheduled staff meetings. Moreover, formal cross-training on partner services is held annually, or as may be needed when new partners and/or services are made available. The One-Stop Operator is tasked with establishing a formal professional development process for the system on an ongoing basis.

Orientation and workshop activities are conducted virtually in PY2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. All partner programs have developed virtual capacity via Zoom, Google classroom, NeoCertify, Adobe Sign, DocuSign and Microsoft Teams. Customers can fully take advantage of these virtual offerings either scheduled or at their convenience. For example, customers can meet virtually with program staff, youth customers can take General Educational Development (GED) and YES Northeast workshop classes virtually and workshops on Resume Writing, Ace the Interview, Stress Management, Job Searching and Navigating the PA CareerLink® website are available for all customers through an online platform.

PA CareerLink® staff field calls through the **Helpline** which is available for each PA CareerLink®. Prompts ask customers to leave a message for either Adult Dislocated Worker staff, Youth staff or partner staff. The **Helpline** has fielded nearly **26,000** calls since its inception in May 2020.

one-stop service delivery system.

4.12. How will the local board coordinate WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with adult education literacy activities under WIOA Title II? [20 CFR § 679.560(b)(12)]

Board staff and Site Administrators from the PA CareerLink® centers sit on the regional advisory committee for the Title II, Adult Education and Literacy Program at Luzerne County Community College (LCCC). During the bi-monthly meetings, adult education services are discussed, and workforce development staff provides input that is used for strengthening adult education services in the local workforce area.

As stated above, the Board has established relationships with Title II. Currently, adult education services are provided as referrals from the PA CareerLink® sites in tandem with the Title II, Adult Education Provider referring their adults to workforce services. Adult education offers virtual and on-site presentations to customers at the PA CareerLink® centers on an ongoing basis regarding adult education services. Additionally, PA CareerLink® Title I staff are directly involved with receiving referrals from Title II providers who refer youth and adults to Title I staff. For example, if Title II staff receive inquiries and applications from individuals that are under 18 in need of GED training, they refer to Title I Providers. Referrals are conducted through PA's workforce system of record with Title I or Title II Providers.

As a partner in the PA CareerLink®, the Adult Education and Family Literacy agency (WIOA Title II) will:

- Provide and accept referrals for PA CareerLink® partner services.
- Participate in cross training to help strengthen and streamline the referral process.
- Serve on Job Seeker and Business Services teams as appropriate, based on location.
- Have representation on the local Workforce Development Board and committees of the WDB.
- Collaborate with Site Administrators to provide cross-training for access to services through partner staff.
- Provide TABE and/or CASAS assessment to customers, as appropriate, based on location.
- Assist partner staff in proper TABE and/or CASAS administration practices.
- Have access to PA's workforce system of record.

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- Collaborate on additional projects, outside our current scope of work, where our professional services can benefit employers and job seekers (i.e. grant funded Integrated Education and Training projects – similar to the I-BEST model).

The Board was part of the review process of the Title II programming RFP through the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) to attest that educational opportunities align with the targeted employment needs of the region. Specifically, the PDE established procedures and accompanying rubrics for Title II applications for local board's review to ensure alignment with local plans. After reviewing and evaluating the applications, the local boards offered recommendations to PDE for the selection of Title II proposals.

The Board details the Local and Regional Plans process with Title II Providers, who in return, propose feedback and narrative for the Plans.

Title II Providers meet with Board staff, PA CareerLink® staff and additional regional partners on a quarterly basis. Partners present updates on programs and services that are offered locally. A strategy of importance in workforce is career pathway mapping. Also known as *career pathing*, it is the alignment of career development in meeting career objectives for career growth that fulfills current and future business talent priorities.

Adult Education and Family Literacy Title II staff also presents a report highlighting program goals and successes at the Board's annual Quarterly Board meeting.

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?

Outreach and Intake. Outreach, intake, and eligibility, including the identification of an individual's potential barrier(s) to employment are discussed in the **response to 3.3 above**.

Overall, the PA CareerLink® centers offer a wide variety of services to assist customers with job preparation and job search. The Career Resource Rooms offer computers with Internet access, as well as printing, mailing, phone and fax services during regular business hours. Further assistance is available through resume and cover letter development, mock interviewing, job postings and job search tip sheets. Jobseekers can meet with employers conducting on-site interviews and also sign up for job readiness workshops. Specialized information is available on high school equivalency attainment, Unemployment Compensation, Youth programs, and career services for veterans, persons aged 55 and over, and individuals with disabilities. All services are available for customers in a number of virtual platforms. The menu of services available to jobseekers, including those with barriers to employment is as follows:

Basic Career Service include:

- Information about services available through the PA CareerLink® centers
- Initial assessment of needs
- Referral to appropriate services
- Self-directed or staff-assisted job search
- Workshops, such as resume writing, interviewing skills, and job search
- Information:
 - o Labor market
 - o Training provider
 - o Supportive service

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- o Unemployment
- o Financial aid
- o Relocation assistance

Individualized Career Service include:

- Eligibility determination
- Comprehensive assessment
- IEP defining the customer's specific goals and pathway for achievement
- Career counseling and planning
- Short-term prevocational services
- Internships and work experience
- Workforce preparation activities
- Financial literacy services
- Supportive services, including activities designed to eliminate barriers to employment, such as assistance with transportation, work-related tools or clothing, and child care

Training Services include:

- ITA
- OJT
- Customized training
- Job readiness training
- Workplace training/co-op programs
- Skills upgrading and retraining
- Pre-apprenticeship/Apprenticeship
- Transitional jobs
- Incumbent worker training

To be enrolled in a Training Service activity, individuals must meet programmatic eligibility requirements and must also be identified as unlikely to obtain or retain self-sufficient employment or higher wages, need training to obtain or retain self-sufficient employment or higher wages, and have the skills and qualifications to participate in training (i.e., appropriateness for training).

Training must be directly linked to an in-demand industry sector or HPO, or a sector that has a high potential for sustained demand or growth. Such training may be delivered via an ITA, training contract, or a combination of both. Training providers are found through the ETPL which establishes eligibility and provides information about training institutions and their programs.

Services to Individuals with Disabilities. OVR provides eligible WIOA Title IV customers with individualized diagnostic, vocational counseling and guidance, vocational evaluation, restoration, training, and job placement services. Eligible and potentially eligible 14 to 21-year old in-school youth with disabilities receive pre-employment transition services including work-based learning experiences, job shadowing and vocational counseling and guidance. Group training services for youth include workplace readiness, independent living skills, and self-advocacy skills. More information regarding the services provided to individuals with disabilities are described in the **responses to 3.2, 4.3, and 4.4 above**.

Services to Older Pennsylvanians. The Board provides services to Older Pennsylvanians through its relationship with its SCSEP partners, the Mature Worker Program, Area Agency on Aging for Luzerne/Wyoming Counties and the AARP Foundation that target economically disadvantaged individuals aged 55 and over. They provide assessment, testing and counseling, on-the-job training, referrals for additional classroom training, and referrals to employers in the community.

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

The BST is responsible for supporting business engagement activities including the following:

- Support staff-assisted job orders
- Screen and refer qualified job candidates to job openings
- Outreach to employers
- Promote services such as OJT, incumbent worker training, and customized training
- Assist with Rapid Response when companies lay off workers
- Conduct layoff aversion activities

The BST conducts its employer engagement activities with staff from other programs such as veterans, OVR, and Older Worker program (Title V). To avoid duplication of efforts, each team member is assigned to employers within a specific industry cluster. The BSTL and the Veterans Employer Representative serve as the source of direct outreach to employers. Additionally, to coordinate these activities, the Board procured its One-Stop Operator. It will provide guidance on the employment outreach efforts of the BST and its partners. Additionally, when procuring the On-Stop Operator, the Board included a requirement that the Operator coordinate BST activities and provide guidance on the employment outreach efforts of the BST and its partners.

With respect to Title II services, the BST takes the lead on engaging employer inquiries regarding adult basic education and literacy, but coordinates with literacy and education partners through the One-Stop Operator.

Employer customers receive Title III services from Wagner-Peyser partners of the system. These services include:

- Use of PA CareerLink® centers to host employer events
- Job orders placed in PA CareerLink® online
- Priority for veterans for job orders in the PA CareerLink® system

Employer customers receive Title IV services from OVR BST staff. These services include: reasonable accommodation consultation, OJT, referral on tax credits or deductions, consultation on ADA accessibility standards and guidance on the retention of current employees following an accident, injury, or disability.

The PA CareerLink® staff plan an annual series of seminars for employers to address issues which assist them in managing their workforce more effectively. These topics vary from year to year and include seminars offered by UC representatives on a variety of topics, including: UC Updates; Separation Issues; UC Appeals/Hearings: Suitable Work; and, Relief from Charges.

Additionally, the WDB makes full use of its partnership with the NEPA Alliance as discussed in the **response to 3.5 above** to align its workforce development services with economic development resources. Examples include NEPA Alliance's help with loans, grants, technical assistance, and other support, including business financing, government contracting, international trade, non-profit services, and transportation planning.

Services are aligned so that there is no duplication of efforts. Specifically, economic development contacts are focused primarily on long-term strategies for business attraction, retention, and expansion

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while workforce development contacts are concentrated on more immediate needs, such as talent recruitment and screening.

- **Describe how businesses and employers engage with education;**

The Luzerne/Schuylkill WDB has well-established relationships with business and education leaders in the workforce area and collaborates regularly with education and business partners in multiple events, programs and initiatives. Examples referenced in **response 4.10** above describe **how** workforce interacts with business and education throughout the program year. Collaboration with all parties feature career exploration, job shadowing, job fairs, career fairs, business tours, college campus tours, work experience, and educator in the workplace experiences utilizing various funding resources (WIOA Title I, Title II Adult Education and Family DCED and TANF) in addition to less restrictive ancillary grant funding the Board secures from the Commonwealth.

The Board supports the PA Department of Education position that it is imperative students at all educational levels have access to high quality and technical education as well as opportunities to assess interests, build skills, identify and explore careers aligned to interests, skills and business needs. The framework for most of the collaborative projects with business and education align with the PA Department of Education career education and work standards addressing four key areas:

- Career Awareness and Preparation
- Career Acquisition (*Getting a Job*)
- Career Retention and Advancement
- Entrepreneurship

In 2019 and 2020, the Board secured ancillary grants from the Governor's set aside statewide activity reserves supporting a *Business-Education Partnership Grant*, a *Youth Re-entry Demonstration Grant*, a *NEPA State Apprenticeship Expansion Grant* and a *State/Local Internship Grant*.

The Business-Education Partnership Grant (BEP) exposes students, the future workforce, their parents and guardians to high priority occupations, career pathway awareness, and in-demand technical careers for those directly entering the workforce. The Board is collaborating with local career and technical centers and local employers for co-op/work experience that will take place in the fall and spring 2020/2021. A Workplace Boot Camp theme will expose students and their parents to career awareness. A virtual career panel with employers and a virtual career fair are planned. A partnership has been established with four chambers of commerce: Greater Hazleton, Greater Pittston, Greater Wyoming Valley and Back Mountain Chambers and Northeast PA Jr. Achievement to conduct this virtual event.

The Board secured a Youth Re-entry Demonstration grant, titled *Project REAL: Reconnect, Engage, Advocate, Lead*. The funding will be utilized to enroll 50 justice-involved young adults ages 18-24. Staff will work with these individuals to overcome their barriers to employment and embark on a career pathway in high-priority occupations, including manufacturing logistics, health care, and food processing. This will be achieved by establishing close relationships with each county's justice system, parole boards, and community partners that can offer assistance in remediating barriers, and by leveraging WIOA-funded PA CareerLink® resources. Enrollees are provided with individualized services designed to alleviate their particular barriers to employment and one-on-one mentoring. Job-ready young adults will then be placed in a carefully chosen work experience that will lead to unsubsidized employment and self-sufficiency.

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The Board leverages existing staff from WIOA Title I Career Navigators and Business Services Representatives to assist with the project and hired a FTE Life Coach/Family Advocate. Project partners include WIOA Title I staff, the county court systems, the Adult Probation and Parole, Department of Corrections, nonprofits and regional employers who have expressed an interest in hiring these young adults seeking a second chance.

The Board secured three rounds of *SLIP (State/ Local Internship Program)* funding to provide summer internship opportunities to young adults 18-24 years of age who are high school graduates. This ancillary funding does not have the enrollment restrictions in regard to participant barriers that WIOA funding mandates. Over the course of the past three years, the **SLIP** program permitted the Board to interact with approximately 96 new and existing businesses offering paid internships. This funding assisted businesses with their employment needs. The funding also helped 308 young adults engage in real-world work experiences during the spring and summer months. The grant reimbursed the wages of students/young adults who were matched with local businesses for employment-related internships in their field of study, some of whom were offered employment during college breaks and/or following graduation.

Students and employers were provided with an orientation. Due to the ongoing pandemic, PA CareerLink® staff pivoted to hosting a virtual intern seminar via Zoom with a higher education partner who moderated a panel discussion on Diversity and Inclusion and the Prevention of Workplace Harassment. Three employer panelists participated in this roundtable discussion. Business Services Representatives presented on Financial Literacy. A second seminar was provided as a make-up session, via Zoom. Both sessions were recorded and made available to students who weren't able to attend either live session.

Prior to orientation, our first-ever SLIP TikTok Challenge was sponsored by a business partner, a creative agency focused on website, video, social media, and design work. Interns were challenged to create a video on TikTok that promoted summer internships. Criteria used to evaluate submissions included creativity, positivity, and humor/entertainment value. Agency staff judged the contest with the winners receiving a \$50 prize courtesy of the agency.

The L/S Board in collaboration with Lackawanna and Pocono Workforce Boards secured the NEPA State Apprenticeship Expansion Grant to build business awareness about the benefits and opportunities of apprenticeship. The *Innovation to Management Apprenticeship* earn and learn model is beneficial to multiple industries for leadership development and management. This project builds upon the Capacity Building Grant received by the Greater Pittston Chamber who worked with the Apprenticeship and Training Office (ATO) to have the *Innovation to Management Apprenticeship* program registered in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

This initiative affords the L/S WDB and their project partners the resources to meet with employers, unions and other organizations to provide RA informational sessions and technical assistance in the development and registration of apprenticeship programs. LSWDB and their project partners also meet with the region's training providers to help them understand how they fit into the Registered Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeship ecosystem. A well-developed Registered Pre-apprenticeship ecosystem provides industry with a dependable pipeline of skilled workers.

This project also supports employer awareness of the Innovation in Management Registered Apprenticeship program. This program is portable and transferrable across multiple industries. As stated above, the Greater Pittston Chamber of Commerce recently registered their Innovation in Management Apprenticeship training program in the Commonwealth with the support of the ATO. Individuals who

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complete this program earn a nationally recognized Journey Worker certificate, 16 college credits and a Small Business Skills diploma from Luzerne County Community College. They emerge from the apprenticeship as highly skilled employees ready to meet the needs of their employers. This RA program trains individuals to be more productive and prosperous in the workplace, which benefits both the employer and the employee.

Because of the need for virtual training due to COVID-19, the L/S WDB and project partners worked with the Luzerne County Community College to develop online related Technical Instruction for the Innovations in Management RA.

The Board supports career fairs and job exploration fairs that connect youth and young adults in Luzerne and Schuylkill Counties with local employers. The Board and PA CareerLink® staff join forces with high school leaders, career and technical centers' leaders, and with industrial park tenants targeting high school seniors who are not planning to attend college following graduation. Businesses from the industrial park with open positions hold a job fair on site which exposes students to employment opportunities near their hometown. Career Fairs are held on site at local school districts and career and technical centers exposing students in grades 7 through 12 to a variety of career paths in alignment with district's PA Department of Education 339 Plans. Representatives from local businesses, trades, military, community college, higher education and training providers are also invited to attend the fairs. Events included: Schuylkill County Career Fair; Pittston Area Career Exploration Fair; CenterPoint Industrial Park Job Fair; and Wilkes-Barre Career & Technical Center Trades Career Fair. In the past, these events alone attracted over 3,000 students and over 150 employers. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Board has developed a partnership with local chambers of commerce and NEPA Jr. Achievement to provide Virtual Career Fairs via an interactive virtual platform called vFair. This event took place in March 2021.

Additionally, our three comprehensive PA CareerLink® centers conduct on-site job fairs and off-site job fairs to appeal to veterans, veteran's spouses, dislocated workers and individuals who may be currently employed but interested in a possible career change and/or looking for new career opportunities. Training providers are invited to attend the fairs to allow one-on-one interaction with attendees about training and education which may be needed to pursue a career change.

Most employer activities became available virtually for employers and job seekers due to the COVID-19 pandemic including virtual job fairs and recruitment events, events staged in employer parking lots, and recruiting activities in other outdoor venues such as farmer's markets. Constant Contact and texting capabilities are utilized to provide information to employers and job seekers. PA CareerLink® websites have been redesigned for outreach and have features that permit users to sign up for newsletters and other activities being offered at the PA CareerLink®.

A new pilot initiative with **Mobiniti**, a text marketing agency, was introduced, enabling mobile messaging to promote job opportunities listed on the PA CareerLink® website. Training was provided to PA CareerLink® employees on the **Mobiniti** platform, and the PA CareerLink® Digital Outreach Team promotes the texting initiative to job seekers. The PA CareerLink® Digital Outreach Team creates content for the text messages, sends the text messages, and makes appropriate referrals to PA CareerLink® staff and partners when participants engage in response to the text messaging campaigns. The program is being piloted in the Luzerne County Wilkes-Barre PA CareerLink® office with plans for expansion into the Hazleton and Pottsville PA CareerLink® offices in Q4- PY2020.

All of the collaborative engagements with business and education are central to the mission and the vision

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of the Luzerne Schuylkill Workforce Development Board and parallel to the goals of the PA State Workforce Development Board.

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?

Supportive services, including assistance with transportation, work clothing, certifications, and other needs may be made available to WIOA-eligible customers based on documented need and available funding. Customers make a specific request to their Case Manager. Then, in accordance with local policies and procedures, this request is approved (or denied) by the WIOA Title I Manager.

All supportive services requests (both approved and/or denied) are documented in the customer's case file. Quarterly supportive services are forwarded to the Board for review.

Additionally, to augment the WIOA-funded supportive services, customers may also be referred to other partner organizations and community agencies to receive assistance with needs such as childcare, health/wellness, housing, and clothing.

Of key significance, the local area has a diverse geography that includes three urban centers as well as many rural municipalities where public transportation is lacking. In fact, access to public transportation is a principal impediment.

In Luzerne County, there are two separate public transportation systems, the Luzerne County Transportation Authority (LCTA) and the Hazleton Public Transit (HPT). The county has a total area of 906 square miles of which 890 square miles is land with a large portion of it rural. HPT primarily serves lower Luzerne County in the Hazleton area, with limited service to the Mountain Top area (a mostly residential area located between Wilkes-Barre and Hazleton) and the Intermodal Transportation Center in downtown Wilkes-Barre from which riders can transfer to a LCTA bus for further travel. LCTA serves the majority of the balance of Luzerne County. There is an area between Wilkes-Barre and Hazleton that has no bus service at all.

There are large industrial parks in both the upper Luzerne County area (in the LCTA service area) and in lower Luzerne County located in the Hazleton area. Many of the businesses located in the industrial parks run 24/7. Both transit systems provide service to the industrial parks. Unfortunately, the transit systems do not provide robust enough service to address the needs of a 24/7 facility. While LCTA offers Saturday service to the large industrial parks, it does not have any evening services on Saturday nor any service at all on Sunday. HPT does not offer bus service into the evening hours and most routes end service at 6:00 pm. Limited service is provided on Saturdays and Sundays but is not coordinated with the business weekend work shifts but rather geared towards the rider needing to run household errands.

Board staff, PA CareerLink® Site Administrator and multiple partners worked with LCTA to address and identify the county's transportation issues. Surveys were conducted with businesses and employees within the upper Luzerne County CenterPoint Industrial Park and as a result of the survey, LCTA created the new bus routes which were currently in place to assist workers in the industrial park. This service was discontinued due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Schuylkill County has a total area of 783 square miles of which 779 square miles is land and a large percentage is rural with limited public transportation. Transportation continues to be one of the biggest issues effecting jobseekers in Schuylkill County. There is no transportation to the various industrial parks located throughout the area. The Schuylkill Transportation System (STS) is the only provider of busing

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in Schuylkill County. STS provides mainly fixed route busing, including stops at Penn State Schuylkill Campus, and one county mall.

The Shared Ride Program is designed to offer specialized accessible van transportation to Schuylkill County residents who are primarily senior citizens aged 65 and over. Persons with disabilities aged 18-64 who live in areas not served by STS fixed Route or ADA Para Transit services may be eligible to use the service. In some cases there are only specific dates, times, and locations to which shared ride transportation is provided. Recently, Commuter Services of Pennsylvania began including Schuylkill County as one of thirteen counties in which their services can be accessed. The PA CareerLink® Schuylkill County is working with Commuter Services of PA to promote their programs to jobseekers and employers.

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.

Within the PA CareerLink® centers, OVR provides enhanced services for eligible individuals with disabilities, including assessments, assistive technology and service-related reasonable accommodations, as well as many personal use items such as wheelchairs, scooters, eye glasses, and hearing aids. With respect to employer services, OVR recruits candidates for job openings, serves as mentors for employed persons, delivers training on diversity and inclusion, and provides assessment of workplace accessibility.

The Board utilizes OVR expertise for assessment, career pathways development, education, training, and placement services. It also uses OVR's very effective professional development program that promotes proper cross-training of staff, technical assistance between partners, and sharing of information and resources.

Because OVR serves as a full partner in the PA CareerLink® Luzerne-Schuylkill system and holds a seat on the Board, the local area is well-positioned to serve individuals with disabilities.

All PA CareerLink® partners in the One-Stop Center ensure access to services for individuals who have disabilities. Partners undergo training with OVR staff on an annual basis and seek OVR direction.

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?

The Board uses the following process to ensure the collection of debts from its sub-recipients:

1. The board complies with the Policies and Procedures Manual regarding the formulation of its Sub-recipient Audit Plan. In addition, any irregularities disclosed during the monitoring review of a Sub-recipient may result in an immediate audit of the Sub- recipient regardless of the dollar amount involved. This action will be initiated by the Board.
2. Upon issuance of the initial report, a copy will be submitted to the Sub-recipient, by certified mail, for review and corrective action. The Sub-recipient will have a period of thirty (30) days, from the date of mailing, to provide additional documentation supporting any questionable or un-allowed costs. Following receipt of any additional documentation, the Board Chairperson will issue an Initial Determination of all Findings. The Sub-recipient will then have the opportunity to request an informal audit resolution meeting to discuss any findings not yet resolved. Should a

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request be received, an informal meeting will be scheduled. If a request is not received within 30 days, a final determination will be issued. This final determination will list costs that remain disallowed and will explain the Sub-recipient's right to request a hearing before an independent hearing officer within ten (10) days. The independent hearing officer will be required to hold a hearing within thirty (30) days. Both the Board and/or Sub-recipient have the right to appeal this formal decision to the PA Department of Labor & Industry (L&I). This appeal; however, will only be accepted if all local administrative remedies have been exhausted, i.e., informal meeting followed by a formal hearing. This approval by the L&I of this determination, the audit will be considered resolved.

3. Upon receipt of the Hearing Officer's Decision, the Sub-recipient and/or Board shall have a right to formally appeal to the L&I through both informal followed by formal hearings, and only after all local remedies have been exhausted. The Appeal must be submitted in writing with a copy to the Board Chairperson within ten (10) days of the receipt of the Final Determination.
4. Should the Sub-recipient choose not to appeal the Final Determination, payment of the established debt will be due within thirty (30) days of receipt of the determination. Should the amount due not be returned within the required time, a second request will be sent with a twenty (20) day response limitation. Should the second request not result in the payment of the debt, a third request will be sent allowing a ten (10) day response limitation. Interest will be charged, after consulting with the L&I, on the outstanding debt after the initial thirty (30) day period. Should no response be received following the third request, the matter will be referred to legal counsel for appropriate action.

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

The L/S WDB is currently functioning as a high-performing local board in that it consistently achieves the following:

- Attains the Governor's goals as described in the PA Combined Plan;
- Meets the local area negotiated federal performance goals;
- Sustains fiscal integrity;
- Receives successful monitoring reports and other evaluations by federal and Commonwealth oversight staff;
- Researches new and/or improved methods to assist individuals with barriers to employment;
- Achieves training expenditure targets; and
- Develops sector initiatives

In the future, it will implement the actions necessary to remain a high-performing board in accordance with any guidance that may be issued by the Commonwealth. In the meantime, it is researching the following types of activities for action:

- Expanding its collaboration with the other local workforce boards that are contiguous to it, including those in the Northeast Region, to implement broader-based regional workforce initiatives; and
- Increasing the use of technology to further improve access for customers, including returning citizens, those with disabilities, and others with barriers to employment.

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?

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The Board conducted strategy sessions that included Board members, local employers, jobseekers, community partners, educational and training organizations, and others in order to gather their direct input regarding local and regional workforce programs and possible initiatives for the future. The Board make-up is diverse and includes representation of leaders in business, education, labor organizations, program partners, public agencies and community stakeholders. The Board also seeks feedback from LEO's. Their contributions are included in this document and are an integral part of the strategies that are outlined within.

Furthermore, as indicated in the **response to 5.5 below**, the Board also solicited additional feedback and input by publishing the document for a 30-day public comment period.

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

To ensure an open opportunity for public comment, the Board published the Luzerne/Schuylkill Local WIOA Plan as well as the Northeast Regional WIOA Plan on its website for the 30-day period beginning February 26, 2021 and ending March 27, 2021. Additionally, notification of the availability of both the Local and Regional WIOA Plans for public comment was also directly distributed via email to representatives of local businesses, labor organizations, educational institutions, and news media. Public notice was published in the *Citizens Voice* a primary newspaper for the region.

Both the Local and Regional WIOA Plans did not receive any public comments.

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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.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The <u>Luzerne/Schuylkill</u> 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.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agreement between all counties and other local governments, if applicable, establishing the consortium of local and chief elected officials.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agreement between the chief elected official(s) and the fiscal agent, if a fiscal agent is designated.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agreement between the local area elected official(s) and the LWDB.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LWDB policy and process that provides for nomination, appointment and removal of board members; resolutions; bylaws; code of conduct; and conflict of interest.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 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.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local area procurement policy that must describe formal procurement procedures.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local area MOU.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 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.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Risk management policy and process including records retention and public access; public records requests; monitoring, grievance; incident; and disaster recovery plan.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 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.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Professional services contract(s) for administrative services such as staffing and payroll, if applicable.

Effective July 1, 2021

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Attachment 1: WIOA Title I Programs Performance Accountability

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.

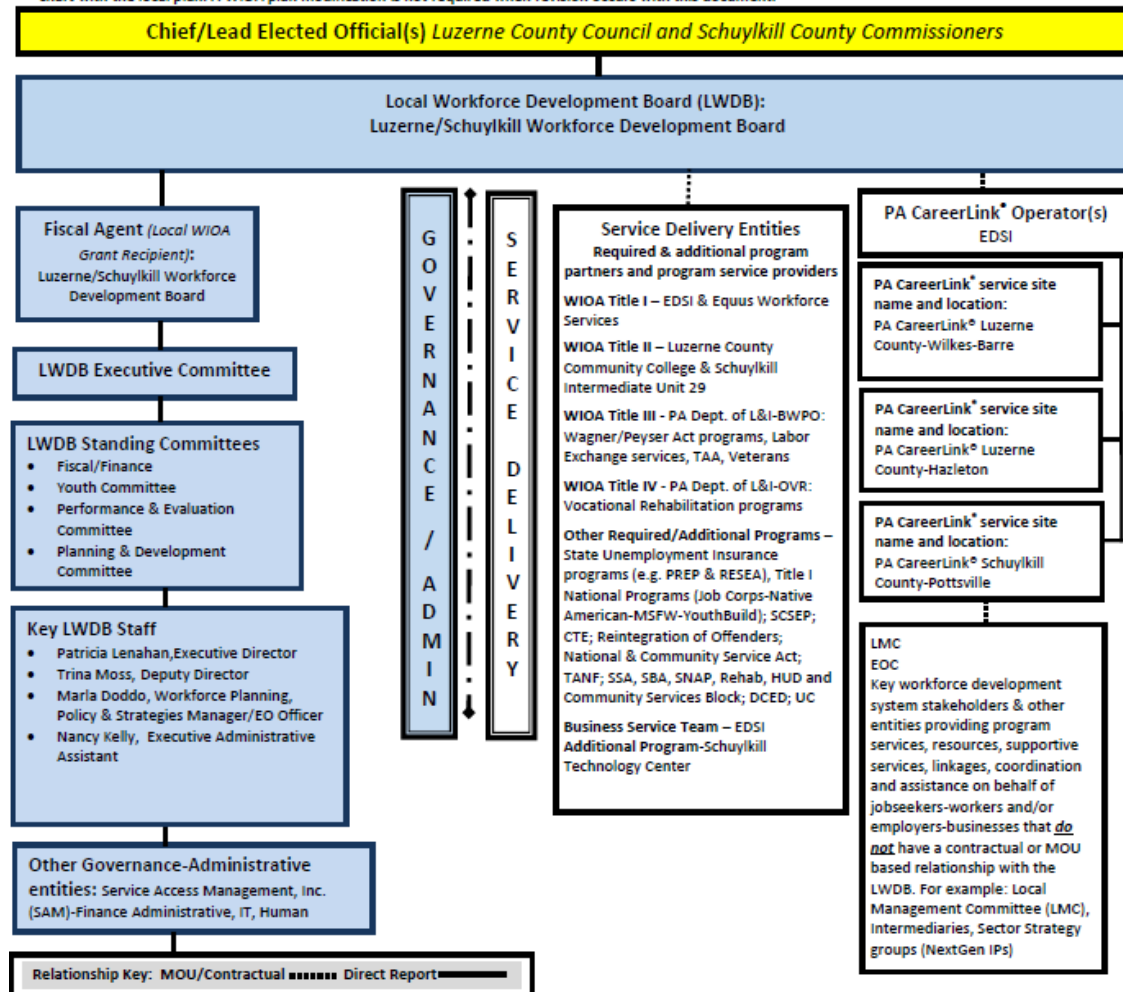
The WIOA Title I Programs Performance Accountability Table is for the benefit of the public and must be updated accordingly. Local boards must edit the table's two columns with the appropriate program year(s) to correctly match the most recent LWDA-negotiated performance goals and attained performance 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: Luzerne Schuylkill Workforce Development Board		
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: 2019
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	Negotiated Goals	Attained Performance
Adult	75%	83.1%
Dislocated Worker	77%	87.3%
Youth	65%	70.5%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	Negotiated Goals	Attained Performance
Adult	75%	84.1%
Dislocated Worker	77%	87.8%
Youth	60%	66.2%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)	Negotiated Goals	Attained Performance
Adult	\$6,000	\$6,766
Dislocated Worker	\$7,400	\$8,160
Youth	\$2,750	\$3,096
Credential Attainment Rate	Negotiated Goals	Attained Performance
Adult	60%	81.9%
Dislocated Worker	63%	80.2%
Youth	69%	88%
Measurable Skill Gains	Negotiated Goals	Attained Performance
Adult	38%	53.6%
Dislocated Worker	30%	30.7%
Youth	55%	57.1%

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Attachment 2: WIOA Local Workforce Development System Organizational Chart model

The organizational chart is for the benefit of the public and must be used to describe the attributes of the local workforce development system. This chart should be reviewed annually for revisions. The local board may supplement this model with clarifying charts. If multiple pages are needed to represent the local system ensure that "Governance/Administrative" and "Service Delivery" information is displayed on separate pages respectfully. Use of model sub-titles is required. Publicly post the organizational chart with the local plan. A WIOA plan modification is not required when revision occurs with this document.



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Attachment 3: Local Workforce Development System Supporting

Local Workforce Development Area name: Luzerne Schuylkill Workforce Development Board

Effective Date: February 2021

Local Workforce Development Boards, or LWDBs, are requested to publicly post the PA CareerLink® Workforce Service Delivery System Program Partner/Provider List to address the public's need for access to service as mandated by the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act, or WIOA. The LWDB should ensure that the Program Partner/Provider List reflects the current PA CareerLink® Memoranda of Understanding(s). Local area plan modifications concerning this subject matter are not required to be submitted to the Department if the list is posted on the LWDB public website.

Program Name	Program Authorization	Local Area Partner/Provider
POC address	POC telephone	POC website/email
Luzerne/Schuylkill WDB	WIOA Title I Adult/Dislocated Worker/Youth Services; EARN (Subcontracted services to EDSI, and Arbor E&T, LLC dba Equus Workforce Solutions[formerly known as ResCare])	Patricia Lenahan, Executive Director, L/S Workforce Development Board
32 East Union St., 2 nd Floor Wilkes-Barre, PA	570.822.1101	patricialenahan@lswib.org
Wagner Peyser Employment Services (ES)	WIOA Title III Wagner-Peyser Employment Services Program –Foreign Labor Certification and Rapid Response Services – L & I, Labor Exchange Services, RESEA	Keith Baker, Director, Assistant Regional Director-South Central Region, Bureau of Workforce Programs and Operations PA DOL
54 Pennsylvania Ave., Huntingdon, PA 16652	814. 641.6408 x 127	kebaker@pa.gov
Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)	WIOA Title IV State Vocational Rehabilitation Program	Heather Nelson, District Administrator, OVR
8 West Market St., Suite 200 Wilkes-Barre, PA 18701	570.826.2011 x 109	hnelson@pa.gov
EDSI	WIOA Title I Adult/Dislocated Worker, WIOA Title I Youth, TANF Youth and EARN	Larry Melf, Regional Director of Operations
15300 Commerce Drive N., Suite 200 Dearborn, MI 48120	570.301.2253	lmelf@edsisolutions.com
Equus Workforce Solutions	WIOA Title I Youth & TANF Youth	Karen Masters, Project Director
805 N. Whittington Parkway, Louisville, KY 40222	570.592.1358	karen.masters@equusworks.com

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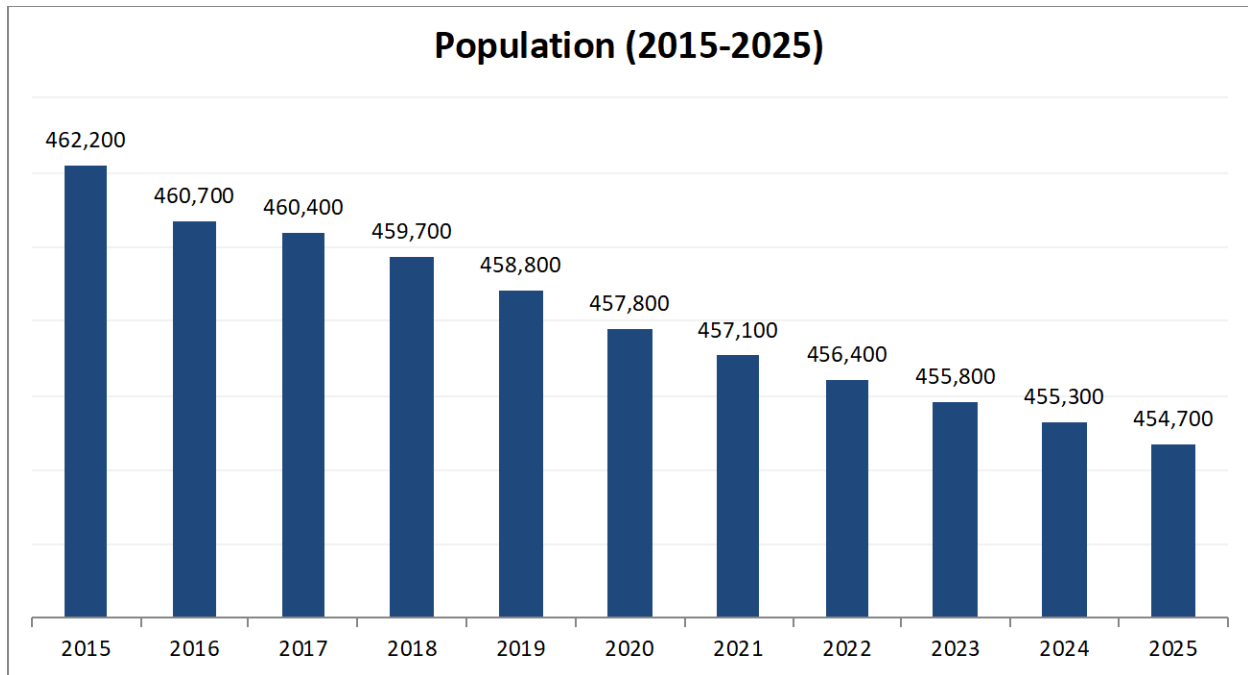
Jobs for Veterans (JVSC)	Jobs for Veterans-L&I	Keith Baker, Assistant Regional Director-South Central Region, Bureau of Workforce Programs and Operations PA DOL
54 Pennsylvania Ave., Huntingdon, PA 16652	814. 641.6408 x 127	kebaker@pa.gov
Trade Adjustment Assistance	Title II Trade Act of 1974-L&I	Keith Baker, Assistant Regional Director-South Central Region, Bureau of Workforce Programs and Operations PA DOL
54 Pennsylvania Ave., Huntingdon, PA 16652	814. 641.6408 x 127	kebaker@pa.gov
Unemployment Insurance (UI)	Unemployment Insurance (UI) under PA Unemployment Compensation Law	William L. Trusky, Jr. Deputy Secretary for UC Programs
651 Boas Street, Harrisburg, PA 17121	717.783.7107	witrusky@pa.gov
PA Department of Human Services	Title IV Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)-Social Security Act	William R. Schabener, Executive Director, Luzerne County Assistance Office PA Department of Human Services
205 S Washington St, Wilkes-Barre, PA 18711	570. 826.2148	wschabener@state.pa.us
Keystone Job Corps Adams & Associates	WIOA Title I Job Corps - Subtitle C	Kelly King, Executive Center Director
235 W. Foothills Dr. Drums, PA 18222	Kelly King 570.708.0400	King.kelly@jobcorps.org
Red Rock Job Corps Adams & Associates	WIOA Title I Job Corps - Subtitle C	Kelly King, Executive Center Director
State Route 487 North Lopez, PA 18628	Kelly King 570.708.0400	King.kelly@jobcorps.org
Luzerne County Community College	WIOA Title II Adult Education & Family Literacy Program	Thomas Leary, President, Luzerne County Community College
1333 South Prospect St., Nanticoke, PA 18634	800.377.5222	tleary@luzerne.edu
Housing & Urban Development (HUD)	HUD - Employment & Training Activities	Judith Kosloski, Executive Director, Wilkes-Barre Housing Authority
50 Lincoln Plaza, Wilkes-Barre, PA 18702	570.825.6657	jkosloski@wbhousing.org
Department of Community & Economic Development (CSBG Funds)	Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) - Employment & Training Activities	Neil Weaver, Executive Deputy Secretary, CE Executive Office
Commonwealth Keystone Building	866.466.3972	neweaver@pa.gov

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400 North Street, 4th Floor Harrisburg, PA 17120-0225		
Luzerne/Wyoming Area Agency on Aging	Title V Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)	Denise Stalica, Mature Worker Program Project Director, Luzerne/Wyoming Area Agency on Aging
111 N Pennsylvania Ave, #100, Wilkes- Barre, PA 18702	570.822.1158	Denise.Stalica@Luzernecounty.org
AARP Foundation Schuylkill County	Title V Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)	Demetrios Antzoulatos, VP Finance AARP Foundation, Elizabeth Stachiw, Project Director, Schuylkill County
2101 N. Front St., Building #3, Suite 100, Harrisburg, PA 17110	570.972.0080 717.234.5961	estachiw@aarp.org
Reintegration of Ex-Offenders (REO) Program/Second Chance Act	Reentry Employment Opportunities under Second Chance Act of 2007	Nita D'Agostino, Senior Vice President, Direct Services, PathStone Corporation
PathStone Corporation 329 Penn Ave., #100 Scranton, PA 18503	570.344.2311	ndagostino@pathstone.org
Youth Build Philly	WIOA Title I Youth Build Sec. 171	Scott Emerick, Executive Director
1231 N Broad St, #3, Philadelphia, PA 19122	215.972.0330	semerick@youthbuildphilly.org
Migrant & Seasonal Farmworker	National Farmworker Jobs Program	Nita D'Agostino
PathStone Corporation 329 Penn Ave., #100 Scranton, PA 18503	570.344.2311	ndagostino@pathstone.org
Commission of Native American Affairs	WIOA Title I Native American National Programs	Kerry Jevsevar, Native American Employment & Training WIOA
120 Charles Street Pittsburgh, PA 15238-1027	800.985.8721	kjevsevar@cotraic.org
Luzerne County Community College	Carl D. Perkins Career & Technical Education Act-Postsecondary Level	Thomas Leary, President, Luzerne County Community College
1333 South Prospect St., Nanticoke, PA 18634	800.377.5222	tleary@luzerne.edu
Schuylkill Technology Center	Training-GED Services	Greg Koons, Executive Director, Schuylkill Intermediate Unit 29
17 Maple Ave, Pottsville, PA 17901	570.544.9131	gkoons@iu29.org

Attachment 4: Local Workforce Development System Supporting Data
Figures – Section 1.1:

Figure 1: Population Decline over Time



Source: EMSI (Economic Modeling Specialists, International), 2020.4

Figure 2: Educational Attainment

Attachment 5: Links to NEPA Manufacturing IP Outcomes

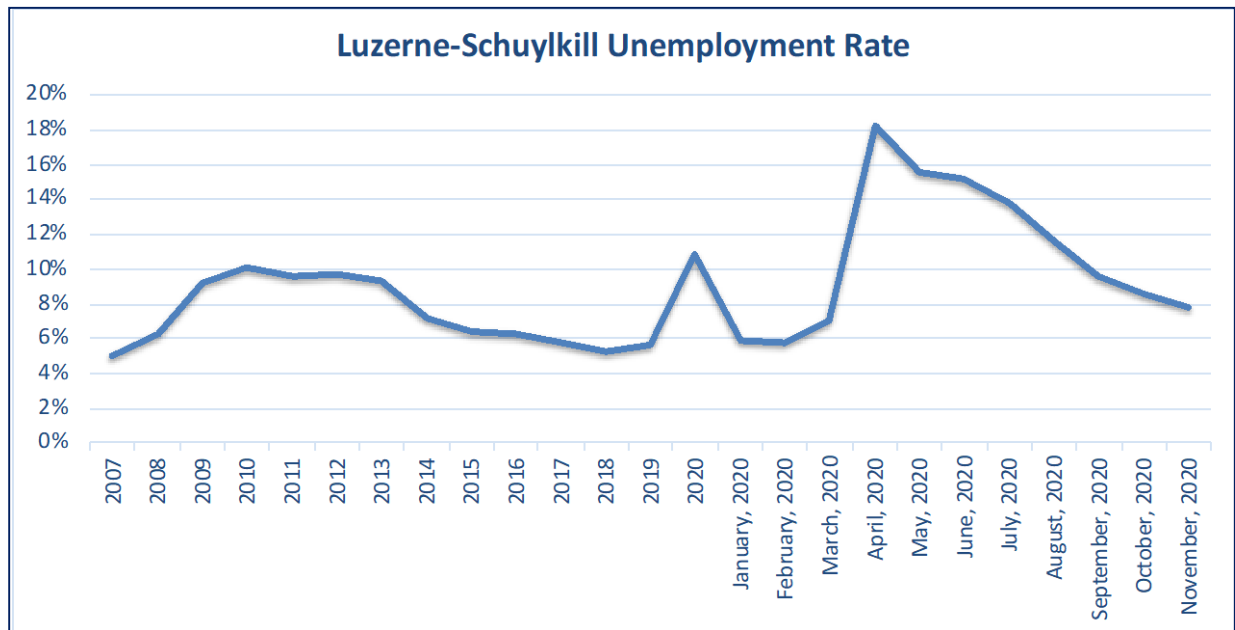
Educational Attainment			
Level	2015	2020	2025
Less Than 9th Grade	3.1%	4.1%	4.4%
9th Grade to 12th Grade	7.8%	8.3%	8.6%
High School Diploma	41.9%	41.8%	41.7%
Some College	17.0%	16.7%	16.7%
Associate's Degree	9.6%	9.3%	9.1%
Bachelor's Degree	13.0%	12.6%	12.4%
Graduate Degree and Higher	7.6%	7.2%	7.1%
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>100.0%</i>
High School or Lower	52.9%	54.1%	54.8%
Bachelor's or Higher	20.6%	19.9%	19.5%

Source: EMSI, 2020.4

Figure 3: Household Income

Households and Household Income				
Income	2014	2019	Change	Percent Change
Total Households:	188,457	187,409	-1,048	-0.6%
Less than \$24,999	52,525	43,993	-8,532	-16.2%
\$25,000 to \$49,999	49,558	45,196	-4,362	-8.8%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	57,718	59,783	2,065	3.6%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	19,278	24,645	5,367	27.8%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	5,572	8,303	2,731	49.0%
\$200,000 or more	3,806	5,489	1,683	44.2%
Median Household Income	\$45,087	\$53,099	\$8,012	17.8%

Source: 2010-2014 ("2014") and 2015-2019 ("2019") 5-Year American Community Surveys

Figure 4: Unemployment Rate over Time

Source: PA Department of Labor and Industry

Figure 5: Unemployment by Education Level

Unemployment Rates by Educational Attainment Level		
Educational Attainment Level	2014	2019
<i>Total:</i>	7.2%	4.8%
Less than high school graduate	13.9%	9.8%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	8.6%	6.4%
Some college or associate's degree	6.6%	4.1%
Bachelor's degree or higher	4.3%	2.1%

Source: 2010-2014 ("2014") and 2015-2019 ("2019") 5-Year American Community Surveys

Figure 6: Regional Commuting Patterns



Source: Center for Workforce Information & Analysis (CWIA)

Figure 7: Returning Citizens in Luzerne County (2019)

LUZERNE

2019 Estimated County Population	317,417
Releases per 10,000 County Residents	9.9
Total Releases	315
Completed Sentence	81
Paroled	234
Average Age at Release	38

Gender



Blue = Male, Red = Female

Race



Red = White, Blue = Black, Green = Hispanic

Figure 8: Returning Citizens in Schuylkill County (2019)



Source for Both: PA Department of Corrections Calendar Year Releases

Figures – Section 1.2:

Figure 9: Education Level Required in Job Postings

Education Level	Unique Postings	% of Total
No Education Listed	63,590	69%
High school or GED	16,801	18%
Associate's degree	5,599	6%
Bachelor's degree	7,702	8%
Master's degree	2,233	2%
Ph.D. or professional degree	1,941	2%
Minimum Experience	Unique Postings	% of Total
No Experience Listed	62,352	68%
0 - 1 Years	16,197	18%
2 - 3 Years	9,965	11%
4 - 6 Years	2,447	3%
7 - 9 Years	383	0%
10+ Years	341	0%

Source: Economic Modeling Specialists, Incorporated 2020.4 Class of Worker; QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees & Self-Employed

Figure 10: Certifications Required in Job Postings

Qualification	Postings with Qualification
Commercial Driver's License (CDL)	15,465
Licensed Practical Nurse	2,073
Certified Nursing Assistant	1,556
Hazmat Endorsement	785
Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN)	716
Nurse Practitioner	630
CDL Class B License	559
Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) Card	514

Source: EMSI (Economic Modeling Specialists, International), 2020.4

Figures – Section 1.4:

Figure 11: Updated Income Eligibility for WIOA Participants

	CURRENT	FUTURE
Size of Family Unit	Federal Poverty Levels (Annual)	258% ABOVE Federal Poverty Level (Annual)
1	\$12,760	\$32,921
2	\$17,240	\$44,479
3	\$21,720	\$56,038
4	\$26,200	\$67,596
5	\$30,680	\$79,154
6	\$35,160	\$90,713
7	\$39,640	\$102,271
8	\$44,120	\$113,830

Source: Luzerne-Schuylkill Workforce Development Board

Figures – Section 1.5:

Figure 12: Employment Outlook by Top Industry Sectors

Industry Sector	2020 Jobs	2020 Percent	2020 State Location Quotient	Projected Change 2020-2025		Average Earnings per Job
Health Care and Social Assistance	33,033	15.6%	1.22	1,598	4.8%	\$58,033
Manufacturing	27,681	13.1%	1.67	237	0.9%	\$69,130
Government (includes public education)	26,030	12.3%	0.82	-358	-1.4%	\$76,903
Retail Trade	22,984	10.9%	1.11	-826	-3.6%	\$34,043
Transportation and Warehousing	22,766	10.8%	2.80	1,924	8.5%	\$51,014

Source: Economic Modeling Specialists, Incorporated 2020.4 Class of Worker; QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees & Self-Employed

Figure 13: Job Postings by Industry

Industry	Total Postings (Nov 2019 - Nov 2020)
Transportation and Warehousing	99,683
Retail Trade	69,603
Health Care and Social Assistance	60,507
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	50,288
Manufacturing	23,913
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	22,269
Finance and Insurance	11,636
Other Services (except Public Administration)	9,780
Accommodation and Food Services	8,870

Source: Economic Modeling Specialists, Incorporated 2020.4 Class of Worker; QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees & Self-Employed

Figure 14: Demand for Top Occupational Groupings

Occupational Grouping	Jobs		State Location Quotients	Job Openings 2015-2020		Job Openings (Projected) 2020-2025	
	2020	2025		Net	Percent	Net	Percent
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	31,848	33,352	1.84	30,187	109.0%	26,931	84.6%
Production Occupations	19,980	19,918	1.65	18,501	95.1%	14,563	72.9%
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	9,604	9,779	1.17	7,339	81.8%	6,002	62.5%
Healthcare Support Occupations	10,061	11,177	1.11	9,650	96.9%	10,053	99.9%
Community and Social Service Occupations	4,132	4,182	1.14	3,323	82.9%	2,770	67.0%
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	13,021	13,316	1.12	6,528	51.8%	5,166	39.7%
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	27,757	26,989	1.03	22,609	76.8%	19,356	69.7%

Source: Economic Modeling Specialists, Incorporated 2020.4 Class of Worker; QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees & Self-Employed

Figure 15: In-Demand Occupations

Job Title	Total Postings (Nov 2019 - Nov 2020)
CDL-A Truck Drivers	20,000
Flatbed Truck Drivers	9,212
CDL-A Flatbed Truck Drivers	8,978
CDL Truck Drivers	6,933
Licensed Practical Nurses	5,863
Owner-Operator Truck Drivers	5,747
Registered Nurses	5,485
Solo CDL-A Flatbed Truck Drivers	5,349
Warehouse Team Members	4,446
Company CDL-A Truck Drivers	4,309
Warehouse Workers	4,206
Team CDL-A Truck Drivers	3,914
Delivery Drivers	3,635
Forklift Operators	3,261
Local CDL-A Truck Drivers	2,910
Certified Nursing Assistants	2,786
Warehouse Production Workers	2,744
Warehouse Associates	2,719
OTR CDL-A Truck Drivers	2,462
Medical Surgical Registered Nurses	2,026
Pickers/Packers	1,992
Medical Surgical Travel Registered Nurses	1,753
Customer Service Representatives	1,651
Dedicated CDL Truck Drivers	1,637

Source: Economic Modeling Specialists, Incorporated 2020.4 Class of Worker; QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees & Self-Employed

Attachment 5: Links to NEPA Manufacturing IP Outcomes

Attachment 5: Links to NEPA Manufacturing IP Outcomes

LWDB Name: *Luzerne-Schuylkill Workforce Development Board*

Videos to reach job seekers and to make them aware of manufacturing career opportunities in Northeastern PA:

View the Videos:

<https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLvbEXKp-vwJD bHZ2qbV69Kuxu3zUu0mlw>

The **NEPA Manufacturing Merge** is a digital resource guide created to help NEPA manufacturers find the support and resources they need.

View the Resource Guide (also available as a downloadable PDF for easy navigation):

[www.ideaworksmarketingassets.com/assets/NEPAManufacturingMerge/ManufacturingMerge.p
df](http://www.ideaworksmarketingassets.com/assets/NEPAManufacturingMerge/ManufacturingMerge.pdf)

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 .

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
	<p>Option 1 or 2 is only used when submitting a planned two-year <u>modification</u>:</p> <p>Option 1: WIOA Plan Review and Modification Form (Local Area Plan)</p>
	<p>Option 2: If in a planning region, the designated point of contact will complete the <u>WIOA Plan Review and Modification Form (Regional Plan)</u> <i>and will disperse</i> the <u>Planning Region CEO and LWDB Chair Dated Signatures Supplemental Form (Regional Plan)</u> to the rest of the planning region.</p> <p>WIOA Plan Review and Modification Form (Local Area Plan)</p>
	<p>Only use Option 3 when submitting a modification <u>NOT within a two-year modification period</u>: Option 3: If in a planning region <u>and</u> 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 (Local Area Plan)</u> is used.</p> <p>WIOA Plan Review and Modification Form (Local Area Plan)</p>