



December 22, 2017

Ms. Joy Sherry, Chairperson
Northwest Workforce Development Board
984 Water Street
Meadville, PA 16335

Dear Ms. Sherry,

The Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry (Department) has approved the Northwest Region Program Year (PY) 2017-2019 Multi-Year Regional Plan *with conditions*. Please see a copy of the "conditions" attached. A regional plan and its associated local plans must be fully compliant with all federal, state and local statutes, regulations, policies, and grant agreements to receive full approval by the Department. In accordance with the Department's Workforce System Policy (WSP) 03-2015, *Financial Management Policy*, and its accompanying *Financial Management Guide*, the Department has determined that the West Central Workforce Development Board did not competitively procure WIOA title I-b Adult/Dislocated Worker career services provider(s). The Department has detailed what is expected from the local board in the attached addendum. If the conditions are met to the satisfaction of the Department, the regional plan and its associated local plans will be fully ratified.

Per the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), this conditional approval extends to the local plans associated with the local workforce development areas that comprise the planning region. Such approval is effective through the end of the program year (i.e., June 30, 2018). The Northwest Region is composed of the following local workforce development areas:

- Northwest Workforce Development Area
- West Central Workforce Development Area

Approval of this plan does not constitute approval of any practice that conflicts with federal, state, and local statutes, regulations, guidance, policy and procedure nor does approval preclude the commonwealth from, at its discretion, readdressing any part of the plan if the content is found to conflict with such statutes, regulations, guidance, policy and procedure.

Please direct specific questions regarding the PY 2017-2019 Multi-Year Regional Plan and associated local plans to Michael White at (717) 214-7173 or michwhite@pa.gov.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eileen Cipriani".

Eileen Cipriani
Deputy Secretary for Workforce Development

cc: The Honorable Kathy Dahlkemper, Erie County Executive
Ms. Janet Anderson, Northwest Workforce Development Board Executive Director

Enclosure

December 22, 2017

Mr. Bruce Denniston, Chairperson
West Central Workforce Development Board
101 Industrial Drive
Grove City, PA 16127

Dear Mr. Denniston,

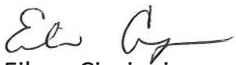
The Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry (Department) has approved the Northwest Region Program Year (PY) 2017-2019 Multi-Year Regional Plan *with conditions*. Please see a copy of the "conditions" attached. A regional plan and its associated local plans must be fully compliant with all federal, state and local statutes, regulations, policies, and grant agreements to receive full approval by the Department. In accordance with the Department's Workforce System Policy (WSP) 03-2015, *Financial Management Policy*, and its accompanying *Financial Management Guide*, the Department has determined that the West Central Workforce Development Board did not competitively procure WIOA title I-b Adult/Dislocated Worker career services provider(s). The Department has detailed what is expected from the local board in the attached addendum. If the conditions are met to the satisfaction of the Department, the regional plan and its associated local plans will be fully ratified.

Per the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), this conditional approval extends to the local plans associated with the local workforce development areas that comprise the planning region. Such approval is effective through the end of the program year (i.e., June 30, 2018). The Northwest Region is composed of the following local workforce development areas:

- Northwest Workforce Development Area
- West Central Workforce Development Area

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Please direct specific questions regarding the PY 2017-2019 Multi-Year Regional Plan and associated local plans, as well as the "conditions" found attached, to Michael White at (717) 214-7173 or michwhite@pa.gov.



Eileen Cipriani

Deputy Secretary for Workforce Development

cc: The Honorable Scott Boyd, Chair, Mercer County Commissioner
Mr. Gregg Dogan, Workforce Development Board Executive Director

Enclosure

Addendum to the PA Department of Labor & Industry's letter indicating conditional approval of West Central Workforce Development Board's PY 2017-2019 Multi-Year Local Plan

The Department encourages local areas to implement strategies that will create a seamless and integrated service delivery environment that provides enhanced customer service and a greater return on investment for the dollars we steward. Towards that end, to gain final approval of the West Central Workforce Development Board's PY 2017-2019 Multi-Year Local Plan, the following conditions must be met:

1. The West Central Workforce Development Board (WDB) is required to provide a written response to the Department no later than January 31, 2018, that includes a plan outlining the competitive procurement process to be used in the selection of the provider(s) who will deliver WIOA title I-b Adult and Dislocated Worker career services in the West Central Workforce Development Area. This plan must include a timetable of the procurement process and stages.
2. The West Central local workforce development area's provider(s) of WIOA title I-b Adult and Dislocated Worker career services must be in place no later than July 1, 2018.
3. Once the competitively procured provider of career services is in place, the West Central Workforce Development Board must provide an update to its WIOA PY 2017-2019 Multi-Year Local Plan that indicates the provider(s) selected to provide such services.

Keystone Edge Workforce Development Region



**Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Lawrence, Mercer,
Venango, and Warren Counties**

Multi-Year WIOA Regional Plan



KEYSTONE EDGE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT REGION

1.1. Identification of the region.

The region is identified as the Keystone Edge Workforce Development Region (hereinafter referred to in this plan as “the region”). It is comprised of the Northwest Pennsylvania Workforce Development Area (NW 170) governed by the Northwest Pennsylvania Workforce Development Board (NW PA WDB) and the West Central Workforce Development Area (NW 145) governed by the West Central Pennsylvania Workforce Development Board (WC PA WDB). The local elected officials of each workforce area share governance authority with the workforce development boards that they appointed.

Counties in the region include:

- Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Venango, and Warren (NW 170)
- Lawrence and Mercer (NW 145).

Regional committee members charged with drafting the regional plan are:

Northwest

Janet Anderson

Joy Sherry

Jill Foy

Laura Hyde

Linda Schell (and West

Central)

West Central

Sam Giannetti

Gail Steck

William O'Brien

Gary Grant

Chuck Jackson

To develop the initial WIOA Transition Plan for the region, the Planning Committee met on *January 28, 2016; February 18, 2016; and April 14, 2016.*

Following the submission of the WIOA Transition Plan, multiple meetings have been held with stakeholder groups and with members of the core planning team of the two workforce areas. The core planning team was able to take advantage, in many cases, of meetings scheduled for other purposes where review of WIOA plans could be added to the agendas. These included:

- *July 15, 2016* – Higher Education (colleges/universities from 8 counties) and Workforce Development Board staff from the two local areas in conjunction with America’s Promise Grant review;
- *November 1, 2016* – Manufacturing representatives from 8 counties in conjunction with planning for American Apprenticeship Initiative and Industry Partnerships;
- *January 24, 2017* – Economic Development/Next Generation Industry Partnerships Summit with Northwest Commission and PREP partners in Meadville, PA;
- *February 2, 2017* – West Central and Northwest area fiscal agents and workforce development board representatives to discuss utilization of shared resources for program monitoring;
- *March 30, 2017* – Local elected officials, economic development officials, workforce development board representatives from two local workforce areas to discuss regional SWOT analysis with U.S. Department of Labor Regional Director.
- *May 11, 2017* – Meeting of joint leadership of partnering workforce development areas in

Hershey, PA at Pennsylvania Workforce Development Conference to discuss plan priorities and further areas of regional coordination.

- *July 19, 2017 – Joint area conference call to finalize regional plan content and related local plan issues to be addressed.*
- *July 20, 2017 – Stakeholder session in Sharon, PA with key partners that provide services in each region; regional plan data elements reviewed and areas of coordination suggested for both regional and local plans.*
- *July 24, 2017 – Meeting of Northwest PA workforce development area planning team to prepare final edits prior to posting of the regional plan.*

1.2. Describe the collection and analysis of regional labor market data (in conjunction with the commonwealth). [WIOA Sec. 106(c)(1)(D); 20 CFR 679.510(a)(1)(iv); 20 CFR 679.560(a)(1)(i) and (ii)]

The Keystone Edge Workforce Development Region has significant opportunities for employment combined with challenges in both the quantity and the skills of the workforce needed to seize the opportunities and to lay the foundation for the attraction of new, high-quality jobs to the region. Manufacturing remains a significant anchor sector in the region for both jobs and wage levels, but continues in slight decline as the sector transitions to advanced manufacturing and higher skill needs. Healthcare and construction are projected to provide increases in employment, with implications for career counseling and skills training programs in the region. The region has experienced overall population decline, which puts increase pressure on increasing the labor force participation rate and the skill levels of the population. With the largest increases in employment projected for jobs requiring post-secondary credentials and long-term training, the region will need substantial increases in the percentage of the adult population with attainment of more than a high school diploma to align with employers' needs.

This section presents pertinent data on industry sector and occupational projections, followed by demographic information for the workforce. Special attention is given to some of the barriers, including geographic pockets of poverty, that will need to be addressed on a regional basis. Insights from the data provide the overlay for the action strategies that follow in subsequent sections. Industry partnership groups, including the new Next Generation Industry Partnerships will continue to drive the collection of deeper information within key sectors, and the individual workforce boards will identify and address cross-sector foundational needs in the process.

OVERVIEW

The Keystone Edge Region is comprised of the Northwest and West Central Workforce Development Areas. It is comprised of eight counties: Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Lawrence, Mercer, Venango and Warren. Overall, it is home to 702,718 citizens¹. With a 2016

¹ Population estimates per Claritas

labor force of 333,700 the largest sector is Health Care and Social Assistance, which employs 55,096 workers, represents 11% of the Gross Regional Product (GRP), with average earnings of \$46,561. The next largest sectors include Manufacturing (employs 48,663 workers, representing 21% of the GRP, with average earnings of \$65,948) and Government (which includes education and law enforcement) (employs 39,273 workers, represents 12% of the GRP, with average earnings of \$67,378)².

High location quotients (LQs) indicate sectors in which a region has high concentrations of employment compared to the national average. The sectors with the largest LQs in the Keystone Edge region include Advanced Manufacturing, Health Care and Wood, Wood Products and Publishing.

The sectors with the largest LQs in the individual Workforce Development Area include:

- Northwest Workforce Development Area: Advanced Manufacturing (LQ=2.23), Health Care (LQ=1.31) and Energy (LQ=1.23)
- West Central Workforce Development Area: Advanced Manufacturing (LQ=1.95), Health Care (LQ=1.37), and Wood, Wood Products, and Publishing (LQ=1.16)

Industry Cluster Statistics for Keystone Edge Region												
	AFP	AM	BC	BM	BSV	ED	ENGY	HC	HLE	LT	REFI	WWP
2015 Employment	7,965	45,622	15,854	929	18,336	26,355	6,815	54,701	30,986	7,301	12,055	4,922
Employment Growth (2010-2015)	803	5,362	146	-224	-136	-2,988	-190	-1,033	1,549	520	18	-140
2010 Employment	7,162	40,260	15,708	1,153	18,472	29,343	7,005	55,734	29,437	6,781	12,037	5,062
Percent Growth (2010-2015)	11.2%	13.3%	0.9%	-19.4%	-0.7%	-10.2%	-2.7%	-1.9%	5.3%	7.7%	0.1%	-2.8%
Northwest Location Quotient	0.77	2.23	0.83	0.35	0.47	0.98	1.23	1.31	0.92	0.66	0.77	1.16
West Central Location Quotient	0.84	1.95	0.98	0.13	0.61	0.95	0.87	1.37	0.88	0.97	0.78	1.16

Source: Center for Workforce Information and Analysis

The shared high LQs of Advanced Manufacturing and Health Care between the two workforce areas in the region lead to shared engagement of employers in these sectors and to the development of industry partnerships.

POPULATION

The population in Keystone Edge Region is estimated to have declined from 721,580 in 2010 to 702,718 in 2017, resulting in a decline of 2.6%. Over the next five years, the population is projected to decrease by 1.1%. The population in Pennsylvania is estimated to have increased from 12,702,379 in 2010 to 12,822,858 in 2017, resulting in an increase of 0.9%. Over the next five years, the population is projected to grow by 0.8%.

In 2017, the median age for the region is 42.3, while the average age is 41.8. Five years from now, the median age is projected to be 42.6. Comparatively, the current year median age for the state is 40.9 (which is younger than the region), while the average age is 41. Five years from now, the median age is projected to be 41.6.

² EMSI, 2017

Most of the region's current estimated population are White Alone (91.0%), 5.0% are Black or African American Alone, 0.2% are American Indian and Alaska Nat. Alone, 1.0% are Asian Alone, 0.0% are Nat. Hawaiian and Other Pacific Isl. Alone, 0.8% are Some Other Race, and 2.0% are Two or More Races. The state is more diverse than the region: 79.8% are White Alone, 11.2% are Black or African American Alone, 0.2% are American Indian and Alaska Nat. Alone, 3.4% are Asian Alone, 0.0% are Nat. Hawaiian and Other Pacific Isl. Alone, 3.0% are Some Other Race, and 2.3% are Two or More Races. The region's current estimated Hispanic or Latino population is 2.5%, which is much lower than the state (7.2%).

HOUSEHOLDS

The number of households in the region is estimated to have decreased from 288,036 in 2010 to 284,350 in 2017, resulting in a decrease of 1.3%. Over the next five years, the number of households is projected to decrease by 0.5%. Comparatively, the number of household in the state is estimated to have increased from 5,018,904 in 2010 to 5,099,166 in 2017, resulting in an increase of 1.6%. Over the next five years, the number of households is projected to increase by 1.1%.

EDUCATION

One in five (21.8%) citizens over the age of 25 in the Keystone Edge region have an advanced degree which is less than the state (28.5%). One in ten residents did not graduate high school in the region (10.5%) and state (10.8%). Currently, it is estimated that 5.7% of the population age 25 and over in the region had earned a Master's Degree, 1.1% had earned a Professional School Degree, 0.8% had earned a Doctorate Degree and 14.2% had earned a Bachelor's Degree. In comparison, for the state, it is estimated that for the population over age 25, 8.0% had earned a Master's Degree, 1.8% had earned a Professional School Degree, 1.4% had earned a Doctorate Degree and 17.3% had earned a Bachelor's Degree.

INCOME

In 2017, the average household income in the region is estimated to be \$61,853.11, which is less than the state \$77,812. The average household income in the region is projected to increase over the next five years, from \$61,853.118 to \$66,534.065. The average household income in the state is projected to increase over the next five years, from \$77,812 to \$84,180.

HOUSING

Most of the dwellings in this area (71.2%) are estimated to be Owner-Occupied for the current year, which is slightly higher when compared to the state (69.5%). The majority of housing units in this area (27.3%) are estimated to have been built between 1939 or Earlier, which is comparable to the state (25.7%).

EMPLOYMENT

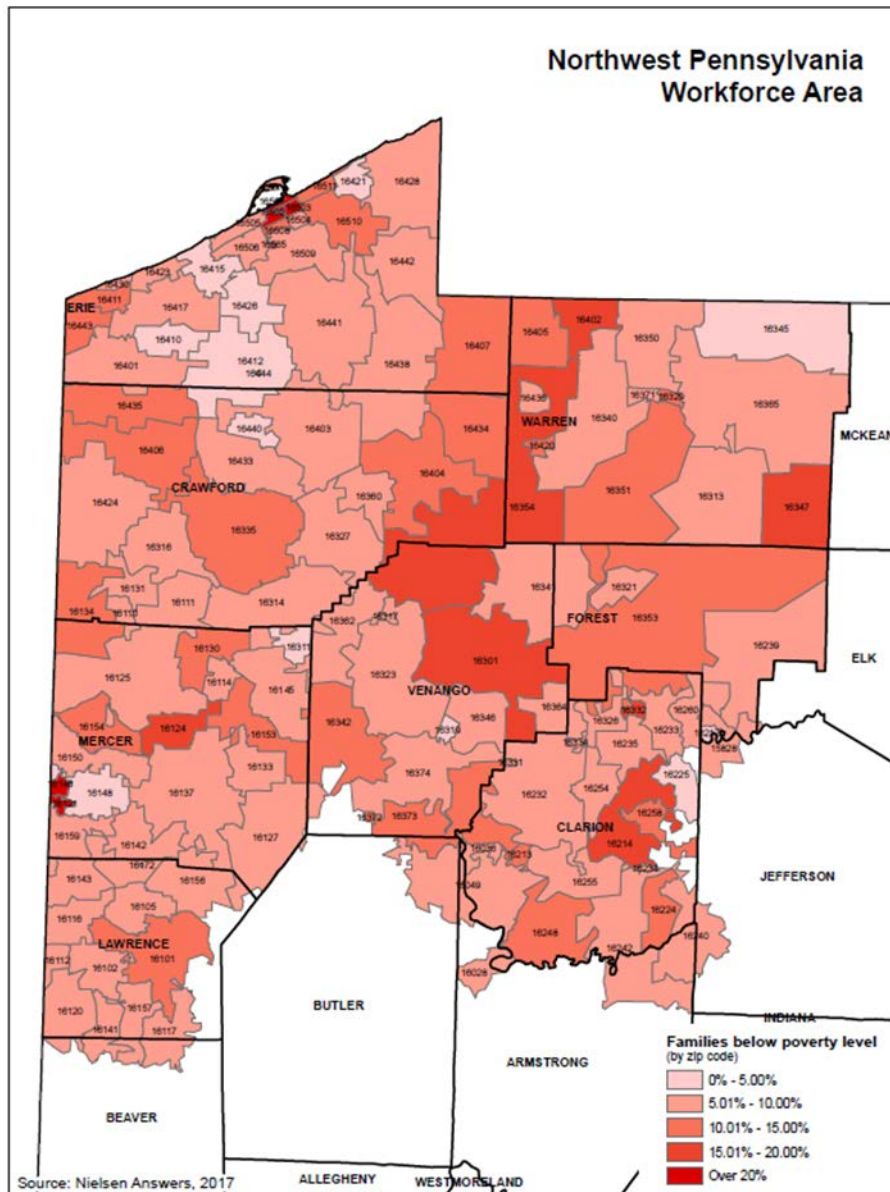
A slightly higher percentage of citizens over the age of 16 are unemployed or not in the labor force in the Keystone Region than in the state. For the region, the employment status of the population age 16 and over is as follows: 0.0% are in the Armed Forces, 54.3% are employed civilians, 4.4% are unemployed civilians, and 41.3% are not in the labor force. For the state, the employment status of the population age 16 and over is as follows: 0.0% are in the Armed Forces, 57.7% are employed civilians, 5.0% are unemployed civilians, and 37.3% are not in the labor force.

Workers in the Keystone Edge region are more likely to hold blue collar occupations when compared to the state. The occupational classification for the region are as follows: 25.3% hold blue collar occupations, 54.3% hold white collar occupations, and 20.4% are occupied as service & farm workers. The occupational classification for the state are as follows: 21.3% hold blue collar occupations, 60.6% hold white collar occupations, and 18.1% are occupied as service & farm workers.

The highest percent of employment in the region and state are employed in Office and Administrative Support (12.8% region, 13.8% state) and Sales and Related Services (10.0% region, 10.3% state) occupations.

POPULATION WITH BARRIERS

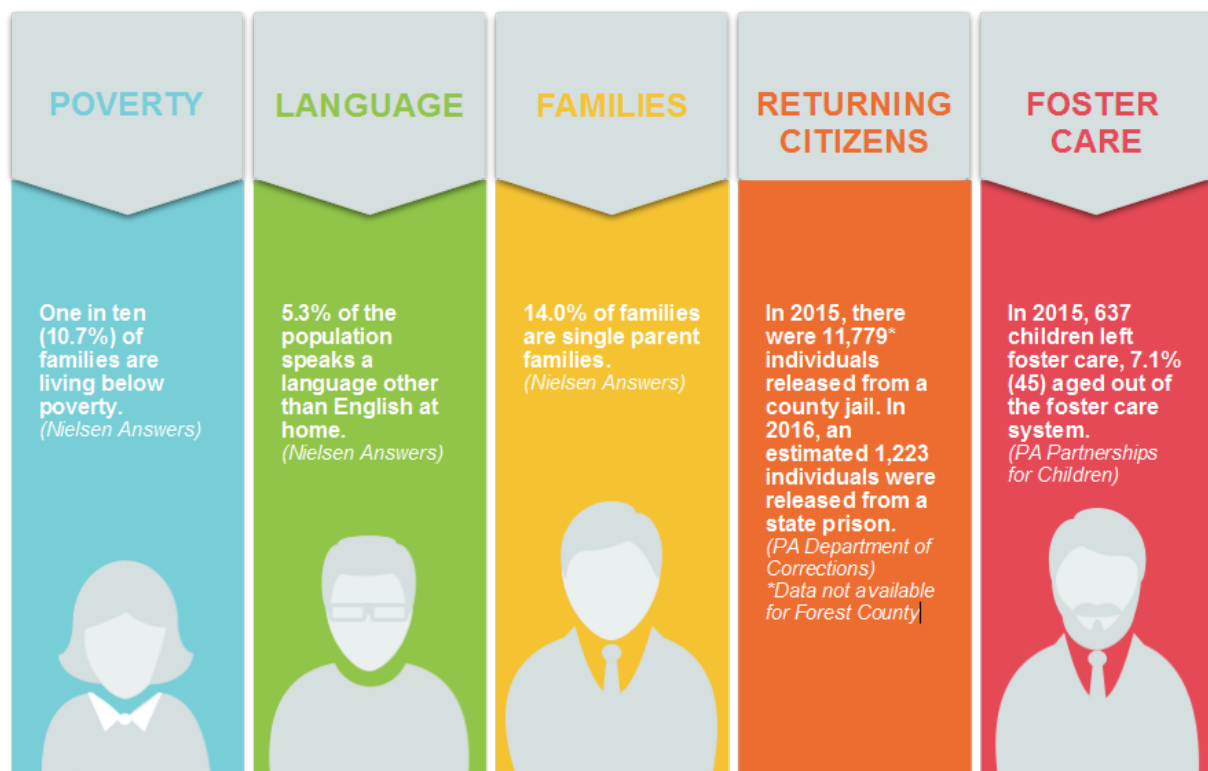
Among the factors that often contribute to poverty are unemployment and underemployment. Many people live in poverty because they are unable to find a job that pays a living wage or to find a job at all. When looking at the region, 10.7% of families are living in poverty. There is a portion of Mercer County (Sharon and Farrell) and Erie County (select zip codes in the City of Erie) with poverty levels greater than 20%. Single parents are more likely to be living in poverty, with 14.0% of households in the county considered single parent households.



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 Keystone Edge region, in 2015 there were 11,779 individuals released from a county jail

(data does not include Forest County. In 2016 there were 1,223 individuals released from a state prison.

Research obtained from Children's Rights has shown that youth who age out of foster care are less likely than youth in the general population to graduate from high school and are less likely to attend or graduate college. By age 26, approximately 80% of young people who aged out of foster care earned at least a high school degree or GED compared to 94% in the general population. By age 26, 4% of youth who aged out of foster care had earned a 4-year college degree, while 36% of youth in the general population had done so. In the region, approximately 45 children age out of foster care each year.



According to the Division for Social Policy and Development Disability, in developing countries, 80% to 90% of persons with disabilities of working age are unemployed, whereas in industrialized countries the figure is between 50% and 70%. Persons with disabilities are frequently not considered potential members of the workforce. Perception, fear, myth and prejudice continue to limit understanding and acceptance of disability in workplaces everywhere. Myths abound, including that persons with disabilities are unable to work and that accommodating a person with a disability in the workplace is expensive. Contrary to these notions, many companies have found that persons with disabilities are more than capable.

When looking at the region, 6.3% of those employed have a disability, while 17.4% of those unemployed have a disability. In the region unemployment is 136% higher for those with a

disability (15.7%) compare to those without a disability (6.7%). There are also 7,521 students receiving services through the local Intermediate Units, with over half (52.1%) of those students having a learning disability, 9.7% have an intellectual disability, 1.1% have a speech/language impairment, 12.3% have emotional disturbances, 14.5% have health implications and 9.6% have autism.

According to Youth.Gov., the high social and economic costs of teen pregnancy and child-bearing can have short- and long-term negative consequences for teen parents, their children, and their community. Through recent research, it has been recognized that pregnancy and childbirth have a significant impact on educational outcomes of teen parents.

- By age 22, only around 50 percent of teen mothers have received a high school diploma and only 30 percent have earned a General Education Development (GED) certificate, whereas 90 percent of women who did not give birth during adolescence receive a high school diploma.
- Only about 10 percent of teen mothers complete a two- or four-year college program.
- Teen fathers have a 25 to 30 percent lower probability of graduating from high school than teenage boys who are not fathers.

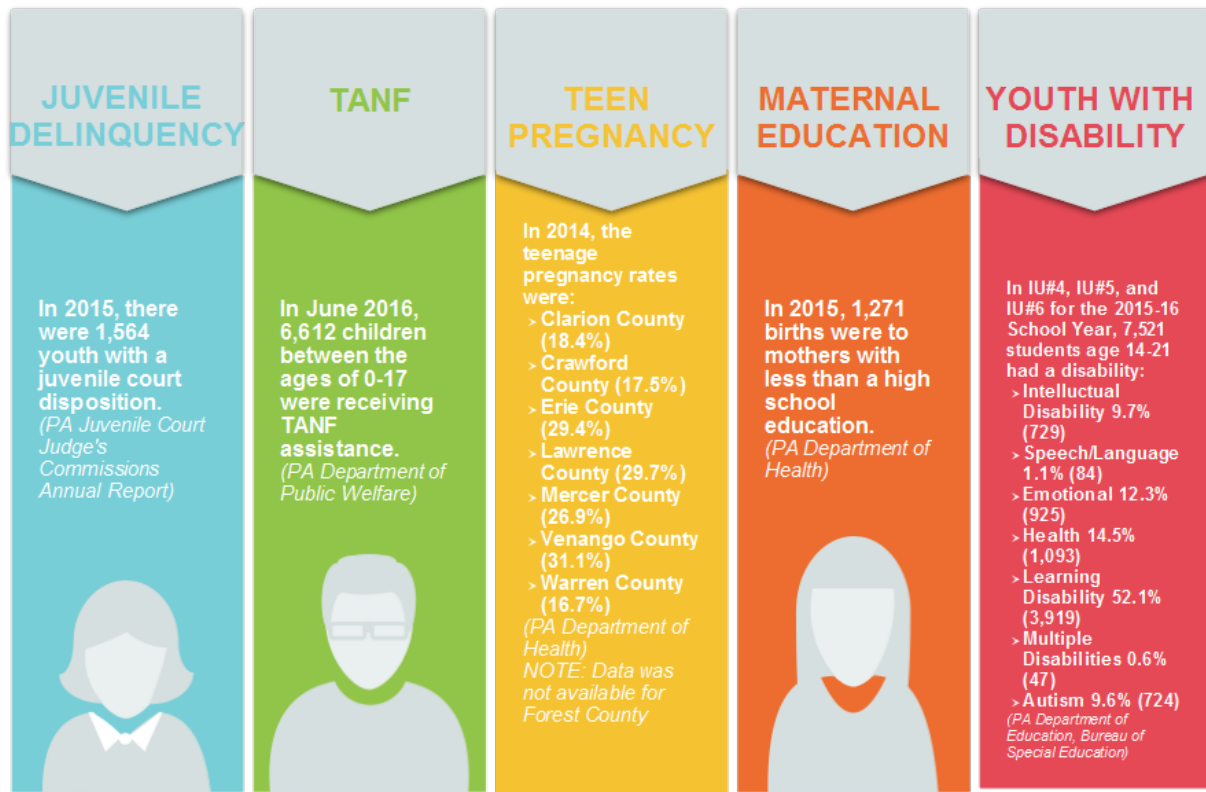
Children who are born to teen mothers also experience a wide range of problems. For example, they are more likely to:

- have a higher risk for low birth weight and infant mortality;
- have lower levels of emotional support and cognitive stimulation;
- have fewer skills and be less prepared to learn when they enter kindergarten;
- have behavioral problems and chronic medical conditions;
- rely more heavily on publicly funded health care;
- have higher rates of foster care placement;
- be incarcerated at some time during adolescence;
- have lower school achievement and drop out of high school;
- give birth as a teen; and
- be unemployed or underemployed as a young adult.

These immediate and long-lasting effects continue for teen parents and their children even after adjusting for the factors that increased the teen's risk for pregnancy—e.g., growing up in poverty, having parents with low levels of education, growing up in a single-parent family, and having low attachment to and performance in school. Teen pregnancy costs U.S. taxpayers about \$11 billion per year due to increased health care and foster care, increased incarceration rates among children of teen parents, and lost tax revenue because of lower educational attainment and income among teen mothers. Some recent cost studies estimate that the cost may be as high as \$28 billion per year or an average of \$5,500 for each teen parent. The majority of this cost is associated with teens who give birth before age 18.

In the region, there were 6,612 children between the ages of 0 and 17 receiving TANF Assistance in 2016, 1,564 youth had a juvenile disposition in 2015, and there were 1,271 births to mothers with less than a high school education. According the PA Department of Health in

2014 the teenage pregnancy rates in Clarion (18.4%), Crawford (17.5%) and Warren (16.7%) counties were significantly lower than the state (27.2%).



According to the National Coalition for the Homeless, meaningful and sustainable employment is the key to creating and maintaining housing stability. Unemployment, underemployment, and low wages relative to rent are frequent causes of homelessness and burden millions of families with the risk of becoming homeless. At the same time, individuals experiencing homelessness face obstacles to finding and maintaining employment.

The Point-in-Time (PIT) count is a count of sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons on a single night in January. HUD requires that Continuums of Care conduct an annual count of homeless persons who are sheltered in emergency shelter, transitional housing, and Safe Havens on a single night. Continuums of Care also must conduct a count of unsheltered homeless persons every other year (odd numbered years). In 2015, there were 1,437 individuals counted in the region.

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act defines youth homelessness as:

- Children sharing housing due to economic hardship or loss of housing;
- Children living in "motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camp grounds due to lack of alternative accommodations"
- Children living in "emergency or transitional shelters"

- Children whose primary nighttime residence is not ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation (e.g. park benches, etc.)
- Children living in "cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations".

In 2016, there were 1,957 students in the region who met the McKinney-Vento definition of homeless.



LABOR MARKET TRENDS & EMPLOYER DEMAND

The overall unemployment rate in the Keystone Edge region in 2016 was 6.4%, with a labor force of 333,700. When looking at the first few months of 2017 the unemployment rate has fluctuated between 5.6% and 6.0%.

Annual Average Labor Force Statistics, 2016, Keystone Edge Region

Annual Average	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
2016	333,700	312,100	21,400	6.4%

Seasonally Adjusted Labor Force Statistics, 2017

Month	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
January	326,900	308,300	18,700	5.7%
February	328,400	308,700	19,700	6.0%
March	328,500	310,100	18,400	5.6%
April	330,200	310,300	19,900	6.0%

Source: Center for Workforce Information and Analysis

Labor Market trends can be examined by looking at Long Term Industry Projections as well as other Labor Market information. Regarding Long Term Industry Projections from 2014-2024, the total employment in the Keystone Edge Region is projected to increase by 4.4% or 13,860 (which is at a rate lower than the state 7.7%). Construction is projected to experience the greatest volume increase while Information is expected to experience the greatest decline. Education and Health Services is projected to experience the greatest volume increase, which accounts for almost half of the overall employment growth.

Long-Term Industry Projections for Keystone Edge Region

Industry	Employment (2014)	Projected Employment (2024)	Employment Change (2014-2024)	
			Volume	Percent
Total Jobs	312,700	326,560	13,860	4.4%
Goods Producing Industries	67,570	68,510	940	1.4%
Agriculture, Mining & Logging	8,350	8,280	-70	-0.8%
Construction	8,990	10,460	1,470	16.4%
Manufacturing	50,230	49,780	-450	-0.9%
Services-Providing	226,230	238,960	12,730	5.6%
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	52,760	55,220	2,460	4.7%
Information	2,530	2,250	-280	-11.1%
Financial Activities	11,990	12,140	150	1.3%
Professional & Business Services	19,330	20,490	1,160	6.0%
Education & Health Services	77,200	85,030	7,830	10.1%
Leisure & Hospitality	28,220	29,710	1,490	5.3%
Other Services, Except Public Admin.	15,110	15,760	650	4.3%
Federal, State & Local Government	19,080	18,400	-680	-3.6%

Source: Center for Workforce Information and Analysis

Looking at long term occupational projections provides insight into the employment needs and provides an opportunity to ensure qualified candidates are being trained to meet employment demand. Occupations related to Healthcare Practitioners, Technicians and Support are projected to experience the greatest growth. Occupations in Farming, Fishing and Forestry as well as Production are declining.

Long-Term Occupational Projections for Keystone Edge Region

Occupational Title	Employment (2014)	Projected Employment (2024)	Employment Change (2014-2024)		Total Openings
			Volume	Percent	
Total, All Occupations	312,700	326,560	13,860	4.4%	9,293
Management, Business & Finance	23,430	24,150	720	3.1%	629
Computer, Engineering & Science	8,160	8,550	390	4.8%	234
Education, Legal, Social Service, Arts & Media	30,110	31,380	1,270	4.2%	826
Healthcare Practitioners, Technicians & Support	31,230	35,360	4,130	13.2%	1,120
Protective, Food, Building & Personal Service	62,540	66,260	3,720	5.9%	2,143
Sales & Related	31,040	31,950	910	2.9%	1,076
Office & Administrative Support	44,090	44,120	30	0.1%	1,010
Farming, Fishing & Forestry	4,850	4,730	-120	-2.5%	131
Construction & Extraction	11,850	12,960	1,110	9.4%	305
Installation, Maintenance & Repair	11,860	12,600	740	6.2%	362
Production	34,530	34,240	-290	-0.8%	893
Transportation & Material Moving	19,060	20,260	1,200	6.3%	561

Source: Center for Workforce Information and Analysis

Opportunity Occupations are employment opportunities that are generally considered accessible to someone without a bachelor's degree and that pay at least the national annual median wage, adjusted for differences in local consumption prices. There are several in the county that only require a high school diploma; although most are part of an apprenticeship program or require on the job training and experience.

SOC	Description	2016 Jobs	2021 Jobs	2016 - 2021 Change	2016 - 2021 % Change	Annual Openings	COL Adjusted Avg. Hourly Earnings	Typical Entry Level Education
13-1031	Claims Adjusters, Examiners, and Investigators	415	423	8	2%	12	\$26.52	High school diploma or equivalent
15-1152	Computer Network Support Specialists	198	198	0	0%	4	\$26.54	Associate's degree
29-2032	Diagnostic Medical Sonographers	118	120	2	2%	3	\$27.50	Associate's degree
33-1012	First-Line Supervisors of Police and Detectives	171	173	2	1%	7	\$32.41	High school diploma or equivalent
33-1021	First-Line Supervisors of Fire Fighting and Prevention Workers	50	51	1	2%	3	\$33.13	Postsecondary nondegree award
33-3021	Detectives and Criminal Investigators	99	101	2	2%	3	\$34.00	High school diploma or equivalent
33-3051	Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers	1,647	1,666	19	1%	61	\$27.88	High school diploma or equivalent
41-4012	Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	2,679	2,685	6	0%	62	\$27.39	High school diploma or equivalent
47-5012	Rotary Drill Operators, Oil and Gas	87	91	4	5%	5	\$26.15	No formal educational credential
49-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers	867	879	12	1%	20	\$29.25	High school diploma or equivalent
49-2095	Electrical and Electronics Repairers, Powerhouse, Substation, and Relay	104	104	0	0%	2	\$31.53	Postsecondary nondegree award

To assist in identifying skill gaps to be addressed at the local level, it is useful to look at current educational attainment and compare that with the expected employment growth by education level at the regional level. Employment opportunities that require an Advanced degree are projected to increase the most. Over half of the employment opportunities require on the job training. The projected need for candidates with a Bachelor's Degree (15.8%) is just above the current attainment level (14.2%).

2017 Est. Pop Age 25+ by Edu. Attainment	488,372	
Less than 9th grade	15,977	3.27%
Some High School, no diploma	35,067	7.18%
High School Graduate (or GED)	214,640	43.95%
Some College, no degree	76,842	15.73%
Associate Degree	38,985	7.98%
Bachelor's Degree	69,289	14.19%
Master's Degree	28,030	5.74%
Professional School Degree	5,415	1.11%
Doctorate Degree	4,127	0.85%

Source: Claritas

**Employment Growth Rates by Educational Attainment Level for
Keystone Edge Region**

Educational Grouping	Employment (2014)	Projected Employment (2024)	Percent Change (2014-24)
On-the-job training	162,260	168,290	3.7%
Long-term training	16,110	17,380	7.9%
PS education or experience	48,020	50,510	5.2%
Associate degree	5,100	5,410	6.1%
Bachelor's degree	45,170	47,550	5.3%
Advanced degree	11,260	12,530	11.3%

Source: Center for Workforce Information and Analysis

Analyzing employer job postings provides insight into the skills and certifications that regional employers are requesting most frequently. The most requested hard skills are recruitment, training and sales. The top requested soft skills are scheduling (project management), leadership, and leading. The most requested certifications are Commercial Driver's License, Registered Nurse and Nurse Practitioner.

Top Hard Skills

Skill	Postings with Skill
Recruitment	42,755
Training	35,483
Sales	33,611
Driving	30,781
Management	30,237
Customer Service	28,029
Retailing	25,627
Insurance	22,496
Cargos	18,534
Road Transport	16,731

Top Soft Skills

Skill	Postings with Skill
Scheduling (Project Management)	38,106
Leadership	10,886
Leading	7,487
Learning	5,156
Ethics	3,521
Listening	3,508
Cleanliness	2,989
Coordinating	2,578
Critical Thinking	1,791
Creativity	1,291

Top Certifications

Certification	Postings with Certification
Commercial Driver's License (CDL)	40,410
Registered Nurse	7,896
Nurse Practitioner	2,325
Licensed Practical Nurse	2,075
Board Certified	1,822
Certified Registered Nurse Practitioner	634
Certified Nursing Assistant	620
Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) Card	616
Certified Benefits Professional	520
Medical License	390

KEY SECTORS

The following sectors account for the largest number of jobs in the region.



Health Care and Social Assistance

- Employs the highest number of jobs and is projected to continue to grow (currently employs 42% above the national average and pays almost \$10,000 less on average)
- Personal Care Aides and Registered Nurses are top occupations in the region and Registered Nurses is a top job posting
- Employs the highest paying occupations
- Personal Care Aides and Home Health Aides, Social and Human Service Assistants, Rehabilitation Counselors, and Mental Health Counselors are among the fastest growing occupations
- Registered Nurse, Nurse Practitioner, Licensed Practical Nurse, Certified Registered Nurse Practitioner, Certified Nursing Assistant, and Medical License are among the top certifications requested by employers
- Currently training employees at a rate faster than needed to meet regional demand

Manufacturing

- One of the top employing industries in the region and employs 98% above the national average (although has been declining and is projected to continue to decline)
- Wages are, on average, \$12,000 less when compared to the nation
- Machinists and Welding, Soldering, and Brazing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders are declining occupations
- Most entry level occupations require a high school diploma or equivalent
- Manufacturing has the greatest economic impact on the region and accounts for the majority of the area's exports
- Electricians, First-Line Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers, and First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers are Opportunity Occupations
- Other Plastics Product Manufacturing and Packaging Machinery Manufacturing are growing industries, while Railroad Rolling Stock Manufacturing is declining

Government

- One of the largest employing industries in the region and is projected to decline over the next several years (currently employs 18% below the national average)
- Teaching and military occupations make up the majority of employment opportunities in this sector
- Bus Drivers, School or Special Client Bus is one of the fastest growing occupation
- Elementary and Secondary Schools are a declining industry
- Accounts for the largest amount of the region's imports
- For teaching occupations, residents are more likely to remain in Erie, Mercer, and Clarion Counties while the others have commuters leaving the area
- Currently meeting regional demand for education occupations with current training providers

Retail Trade

- Has been declining and is projected to continue to decline over the next few years, (currently employs 14% above the national average)
- Retail Salespersons and Cashiers are among the largest occupations
- First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers, Customer Service Representatives, and Stock Clerks and Order Fillers are among the top posted positions
- Sales, customer service, and retailing are among the top skills employers look for
- While this industry tends to hire large numbers of employees and positions are accessible to those with minimal education, they do not offer family sustaining wages

The labor market of the Keystone Edge Workforce Development Region offers opportunities for employment in a diverse economy where Health Care and Construction jobs are increasing at double-digits rates over the next decade and Manufacturing employment remains relatively stable while skill demands are increasing. The Retail and Hospitality sectors continue to provide an adequate supply of jobs for entry-level workers where work ethics and job experience can be acquired and combined with skills training to access higher-skilled jobs in multiple sectors. Work-based learning, emphasized in WIOA, will be particularly useful in advancing workers in the region via apprenticeship-type strategies, incumbent worker training, and on-the-job training. The largest projected industry sector decline is in Information. However, information technology skills are increasingly being desired across all sectors and these skills will need to be incorporated in all sector-based training. Employers have also identified that customer service competency is needed across all sectors, making entry jobs in retail and hospitality a useful training ground for movement to other sectors.

1.3. Based on the analysis of the regional labor market and economic conditions, describe the region's workforce and economic development-oriented vision and goals. [WIOA Sec. 106(c)(1)(D); 20 CFR 679.510(a)(1)(vii)]

To promote coordination and collaboration among economic and community development partners, Pennsylvania's Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) established Partnership for Regional Economic Performance (PREP) regions, which in Northwest PA includes eight county economic development corporations, an incubator association, two industrial resource centers, three small business development centers, a local development district, a Pennsylvania Technical Assistance Program (PennTAP) office, one Benjamin Franklin Technology Partners (BFTP) office, and two Workforce Development Boards, with all partners having a long history of collaboration. This effort is strengthened by the fact that several partners are located in the same offices, allowing easy access for coordination of planning and services.

PREP partners are working more closely than ever through an effective information and referral-sharing process facilitated by Executive Pulse. Executive Pulse is a cloud based customer relation management (CRM) software platform designed to help manage and coordinate partner outreach with employers. The region's economic and workforce development agencies are also engaged in multiple collaborative projects that will provide better service to businesses looking to expand operations or to relocate to Northwest Pennsylvania. Furthermore, the partnership is exploring new ways to involve social media promotion of the region in an effort to enhance client services.

A regional coordinating committee made up of senior staff of the public workforce system representing the boards, Chief Elected Officials, fiscal agents, one stop partners program staff, as well as the Local Development Districts (LDDs) and designated local economic development agencies will be established and meet at least twice annually, or on an as needed basis, to specifically focus on workforce and economic development regional projects. This may be coordinated with the PREP partnership.

In keeping with the commonwealth's goal of making Industry Partnerships and similar multi-employer partnerships the primary means of connecting the workforce development system to the needs of employers, DCED will collaborate with L&I to link the Workforce and Economic Development Network of Pennsylvania (WEDnetPA) more closely to those partnerships during the coming years. This will be accomplished at the regional level by using the PREP partnership as the focal point for alignment of all resources and for planning and implementation of the new Next Generation Industry Partnerships.

In an effort to enhance economic and workforce development in the region, joint planning with regional and local organizations such as chambers of commerce, economic development, and industry based coalitions will be further intensified to ensure the road to prosperity will be paved with relevant workforce, education, and training programs. Through this systematic engagement, both curricula and program design will be infused with the necessary skilled knowledge to develop abilities to support current industry, grow the economy, advance incumbent worker skill sets, as well as facilitate the pipeline for Pennsylvanians' seeking to locate or relocate themselves in jobs. A top priority for the Keystone Edge Region is to align education and training initiatives with current and future regional industry demand. This priority fueled the creation of our regional vision:

The Keystone Edge Region will align education and training initiatives with industry demand and increase outreach to job seekers to form a skilled workforce that is responsive to the current and future needs of the region.

Investments in workforce preparation, skill development, education, and training will be guided by market-based data as well as information derived from employer-driven industry partnerships focused

on high priority and in-demand occupations in order to create innovative workforce development services. Our regional goals align with the five goals highlighted by the Governor. The Governor's goals strive to improve the state's workforce through five focus areas: improving career pathways, developing industry partnerships, increasing work-based learning opportunities, engaging employers to help close skills gaps, and strengthening data sharing across state agencies. Through alignment with the Governor's goals and our desire to develop a demand-driven workforce development system, our region identifies four key goals that cross various actionable areas within the greater strategic initiatives:

Regional Goal #1: Create and grow a competitive workforce by engaging knowledgeable, employer-focused leadership that promotes and advocates for business and industry to address the critical workforce challenges of the region.

- Aligns with the Governor's goals of increasing employer engagement to help close skill gaps, assist with curriculum development, increase work-based learning opportunities, and develop industry partnerships to address in-demand skill needs.

Regional Goal #2: Continually enhance the workforce development pipeline by promoting high-demand industry sectors, career pathways, and building a pipeline of talent through outreach.

- Aligns with the Governor's goals of developing the workforce pipeline, improving career pathways, and increasing work-based learning opportunities.

Regional Goal #3: Maintain a commitment to continuous improvement of the workforce development network by increasing data sharing across various WIOA and partner programs.

- Aligns with the Governor's goal of strengthening data sharing between state agencies.

Regional Goal #4: Increase the alignment of education and training programs with employer demand.

- Aligns with the Governor's goals of improving career pathways and engaging employers to help close skills gaps.

Plans for sharing employer information that are being developed in the Next Generation Industry Partnership model will assist in providing all partners with shared demand-side insights and in coordinating solutions to sector-based needs.

1.4. Describe the regional service strategies aimed at achieving the vision and goals established for the region. [WIOA Sec. 106(c)(1)(B); 20 CFR 679.510(a)(1)(ii)]

The Region identifies various strategies to help achieve each regional goal and ensure the Governor's goals are accomplished. Additionally, these strategies aim to maximize and leverage resources and increase coordination to develop a high-demand, skilled workforce which will support the needs of business and industry across the region. While some strategies may help achieve more than only one goal, the following breakdown helps identify how each goal will be met.

Regional Goal #1 Create and grow a competitive workforce by engaging knowledgeable, employer-focused leadership that promotes and advocates for business and industry to address the critical workforce challenges of the region.

- **Strategy 1.1:** Continue to build on employer-driven partnerships with industry in the region - This will be achieved by engaging employers to continuously analyze and identify the skills and

occupational needs of targeted industry clusters and emerging industries as a focus toward developing a competitive workforce.

- **Strategy 1.2:** Develop a demand-driven implementation structure – Developing a cohesive and unified employer engagement strategy will bring industry and education, workforce, and economic development partners together and will build credibility over time. Demand-driven structures also tend to hold all partners accountable. The existing sector partnerships (described in Section F) can serve as a foundation and, with a concerted effort to engage and empower additional industry leaders, can realize greater impact. The Advanced Diversified Manufacturing Industry Partnership in Northwest Pennsylvania, the Erie Regional Manufacturer Partnership, and the Advanced Manufacturing Industry Partnership of Lawrence and Mercer Counties are in place and will work together on joint projects, identify opportunities to share information and best practices, and leverage resources as appropriate. These partnerships should be revisited to explore ways they can re-energize and evolve further by continuing to identify common needs, build additional relationships with industry, and lead solutions at a grassroots level. When solutions are suggested from within the partnerships, members have a vested interest to see the success, encourage colleagues to join in the solution, and become more demand-driven. Recommendations include identifying and engaging industry champions, employing a peer-to-peer approach to elicit additional employer involvement, defining roles and responsibilities, drafting and implementing a formalized action plan, adopting “strategic doing” practices, and replicating this approach with other industries.
- **Strategy 1.3:** Collapse and re-energize Advisory Committees – Educational providers can garner more effective and comprehensive feedback from employers by partnering with one another and forming regional sector oversight committees with one committee for each sector in each Local Workforce Area. This will allow the educational providers to obtain consistent feedback, exhibit its partnership to employers, and potentially engage additional employers because of the reduced time commitment. Furthermore, it will enhance coordination among educational partners along the educational spectrum (e.g., K-12, career and technical centers, community colleges, universities) to create more seamless career pathways. Additionally, partners should focus on the most in-demand career pathways and identify opportunities to strengthen and streamline the pathways (e.g. merge competing but unfilled training programs).

Regional Goal #2 Continually enhance the workforce development pipeline by promoting high-demand industry sectors, career pathways, and building a pipeline of talent through outreach.

- **Strategy 2.1:** Ensure career planning for every K-12 student – The region should aim to provide academic and career plans for all students by the 8th grade and update them on an annual basis. Creation of a spectrum of community-based, employer-based and connected learning experiences via school districts would serve as a strong awareness and recruitment tool for employers. Career exploration activities should be embedded throughout the school experience. Ninth grade career exploration is recommended as a curriculum requirement. In the 11th/12th grade an introduction elective course (at least ½ year) is recommended for industry exploration including a mix of career understanding and core skills and technology in respective fields, industry connections, guest speakers, and site visits. The course could be designed in conjunction with local employers, providing opportunities for employer engagement. Key concepts in engineering, manufacturing, and technology that relate to local industries could be explored. Each high school could offer “Engineering by Design” and “Careers in Health” courses.
- **Strategy 2.2:** Increase adult education and training opportunities – Expand the availability of Associate Degrees of Applied Science across the region, including the use of Career and Technical Center (CTC) facilities for remote lab space. The Northwest Pennsylvania Technical

Education and rural community college initiatives can be further explored to address the issue of increasing adult education and training opportunities. Also, the Butler County Community College campuses in Mercer and Lawrence Counties will be encouraged to expand offerings based upon employer need and, when necessary, partner with the CTCs for lab space and equipment.

- **Strategy 2.3:** Coordinate a regional career awareness campaign – Each Workforce Board already develops an “In-demand Occupation List”. This list can serve as a starting point and can be vetted with employers to ensure it represents the most current industry trends. Partners should create a regional awareness campaign to promote it widely throughout the community, linking from partner web sites, partner e-newsletters, and other publications. Furthermore, partners should organize professional development opportunities for teachers and guidance counselors to not only ensure they are aware of the list, but also understand the jobs that are on it and the career pathways for individuals to become prepared for those jobs. Additionally, cross-sector career development working groups could be created to coordinate career development activities among K-12, post-secondary education and training, workforce system, and other community-based organizations.

Regional Goal #3 Maintain a commitment to continuous improvement of the workforce development network by increasing data sharing across various WIOA and partner programs.

- **Strategy 3.1:** Making informed decisions - This will be a basic principle at all levels of the system. PA CareerLink® staff, business and job seeker customers, program participants, one-stop operators, managers and mandated partners, Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) administrators and staff, Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) board members, education and economic development agencies, local elected officials, contracted organizations, as well as other community partners, will be responsible for working toward the goal of responsible stewardship in their dealings related to the workforce development system.
- **Strategy 3.2:** Establishing aggressive communication - Communication is not a unidirectional movement but requires that all parties engage respectfully in the interaction. The end product should be a result that is in the best interest of all parties involved although not necessarily the desired outcome of any one party of the interaction.
- **Strategy 3.3:** Promoting a culture of continuous quality improvement - Expediency, traditional bias toward a specific habitual approach or mere unwillingness to change in the face of diminished returns should not hinder the transformational processes undertaken to elevate the workforce system to higher levels of achievement. Keystone Edge Workforce Development Region will strive to meet or exceed all state-negotiated Common Measures performance standards.
- **Strategy 3.4:** Empower a convener – To address the region’s thirst for action, the region should identify, empower, and stand behind a convener to act as an intermediary among education and training providers, employers, and workforce and economic development partners. The role of the convener is paramount to the success of implementation of recommendations; the region is ready for a strong entity to lead the region to the next phase.
- **Strategy 3.5:** Select initial initiatives to build momentum – The initial action plan should prioritize a few key initiatives, allow partners to focus on initial small steps, and gain momentum. By focusing on a small set of initial priorities, the partners will be able to witness progress, gain credibility, and move forward to the next initiative. Funding streams from various resources should be explored to determine where alignment and braided funding is possible. Funds can be linked and leveraged for greater collective impact.

- **Strategy 3.6:** Leverage the *Industry Needs You* campaign – To Increase youth’s awareness of career pathways in manufacturing across the region using an online website. This campaign can also serve as a model to support non-manufacturing sector partnerships.

Regional Goal #4 Increase the alignment of education and training programs with employer demand.

- **Strategy 4.1:** Enhance workforce development services to meet employers’ needs - This will be achieved through the implementation of innovative design and technology. This includes creating data-driven, innovative workforce strategies to: support regional economic competitiveness, engage employers, build career pathways, and increase work-based learning opportunities across the region.
- **Strategy 4.2:** Ensuring cooperative workforce development service delivery - This will be achieved via the Commonwealth Workforce Development System (CWDS) which serves as the primary database and system of record for numerous workforce development programs tracking and recording services, activities, and outcomes. The region uses data collected through CWDS to generate performance reports for programs. Regional efforts will be centered on aligning itself with statewide service delivery efforts.
- **Strategy 4.3:** Link and leverage resources – Build upon existing strengths and pockets of innovation by partnering with regional partners with similar goals and aligning existing services and resources. As partners begin planning together, they may identify gaps in services/resources, and pursue funding to support innovation. Linking the efforts could assist with grant funding requests, reflecting the unity of the region—minimizing competition within the region for similar funding opportunities and strengthening the competitiveness of those submitted.
- **Strategy 4.4:** Develop a strategy to support foundational skill development (basic skills and employability skills) - Many best practices exist in readiness, pre-apprenticeship, and contextualized remediation programs. Partners should explore additional ways to address this critical gap by leveraging existing partner resources, including Community Education Councils, Adult Basic Education, WIOA, and TANF funding. Particular focus should be given to those industries that provide the most opportunity for individuals to enter into and advance along career pathways.

The two workforce development boards of the region embrace the framework presented in the Next Generation Industry Partnerships model of the Commonwealth as a means of achieving the regional goals. The work begins with sharing of employer contact information across all workforce development, economic development and educational partners so coordinated actions can be taken to address needs and opportunities that are identified. Employing the model in the broader region will help to facilitate economies of scale.

1.5. Describe the development and implementation of sector initiatives for in-demand industry sectors or occupations for the region. [WIOA Sec. 106(c)(1)(C); 20 CFR 679.510(a)(1)(iii)]

Three industry sector initiatives exist in the region to address manufacturing workforce skills shortages:

The Advanced Materials and Diversified Manufacturing Industry Partnership of Lawrence and Mercer Counties was formed in 2004 in order to advance the efforts and increase the competitiveness of the Manufacturing Industry throughout the region. The focus for the collaborative is to develop human resources internally and to track and support local educational initiatives toward the development of a highly-skilled local workforce that will continue to keep Western Pennsylvania competitive in the increasingly global marketplace.

The Advanced Diversified Manufacturing Industry Partnership in Northwest Pennsylvania is dedicated to bringing together employers from the Metals, Plastics, Electronics and Food Industries in order to improve our regions manufacturing competitiveness. Through industry partnership, businesses fully understand that a better-educated workforce means a more competitive company and more competitive companies create a stronger economy. The industry partnership concept is not just about worker training; it is about constantly evaluating labor-market data and information to stay competitive on the local, state, national and global levels. It focuses on:

- Youth Development: Providing exposure of manufacturing careers to today's youth
- Pipeline Development: Providing career pathways to today's existing workforce
- Industry Advocacy: Providing a collective voice for regional manufacturers.

The Erie Regional Manufacturer Partnership (ERMP) was self-formed in 2014 by a group of local manufacturers to develop and implement a plan that will result in the ability to identify, qualify, and recruit individuals for employment and training to meet the skilled workforce needs of regional manufacturers and to create greater opportunities for individuals in the community to enter into and advance along manufacturing career pathways. This grassroots effort is led by industry to collectively identify needs and champion solutions as it relates to developing a robust pipeline and producing a skilled workforce. The founding companies contributed \$6,000 each as seed funding to support the initial formation and coordination. The partnership is now opening up to additional supporters and envisions a more regional, demand-driven collaboration that also will include a variety of organizations—including other manufacturers, suppliers, education and training providers, workforce and economic development agencies, government and others interested in addressing manufacturing workforce issues.

As mentioned earlier, these three groups are collaborating in a number of ways, including a focus on apprenticeships through the American Apprenticeship Initiative (AAI) grant project as well as sharing best practices and exploring sustainability strategies. Additionally, the Advanced Materials and Diversified Manufacturing Industry Partnership (AMDMIP) of Mercer and Lawrence Counties continues to coordinate efforts across the state border with the Mahoning Valley Manufacturers Collaborative under the joint umbrella brand, Oh-Penn Manufacturing Collaborative.

Industry Partnerships in Construction and Building Trades are also active in Northwest PA. In West Central PA, the Building Trades and Healthcare Industry Partnerships have sustainability funding remaining. They are working on pre-apprenticeship programs for these industries, coupling basic skills training with entry-level technical training.

The three initiatives point to some common occupational needs that include electrical/mechanical maintenance and machinists with mechanical and electrical knowledge. These skills are often acquired within career pathways where work-based learning approaches can move workers with production knowledge to higher skill levels within the sector. Thus, another identified need is attracting qualified

production workers who can advance via on-the-job training and additional classroom training. This has led to the need to increase awareness of K-12 students and their parents about the opportunities available in manufacturing, including the pathways in career/technical education (CTE) that provide skills for immediate employment and for advanced training. WIOA, with its emphasis on work-based learning, provides an excellent opportunity to showcase advanced manufacturing and CTE programs as an affordable route to higher education and high-quality jobs.

The two workforce development boards are currently pursuing new sector-based initiatives as part of the Next Generation Industry Partnership program of the Commonwealth. Manufacturing continues to be a focus area, but new partnerships are also being built in Healthcare and Construction. The Next Generation initiative provides the framework for skill and wage advancement within sector with employers as full partners in training curriculum and on-the-job training. The region's workforce development boards serve as focal points for cross-sector discussions with employers to identify common needs across all sectors and specific needs within sectors. In some cases basic skills can be built in one sector with technical skills allowing for advancement in another sector.

1.6. Describe how the region will connect employer labor force requirements and occupational demands with the region's workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment.

Partners in the Keystone Edge Region have identified and formed innovative partnerships for multiple workforce development initiatives. The following, at a minimum, will form a solid base for continuing to expand the connections between job seekers and employers on a regional basis:

- ***Skills Gap Analysis*** – Funded by the Northwest Commission, a regional economic development partner, this study is a good illustration of the strong collaboration that exists between workforce and economic development partners in the region. The analysis identified areas of economic opportunity and related industry and occupational demand as well as disconnects between skill needs and programming available. Much of this work is now being applied to inform the WIOA regional plan.
- ***Oh-Penn Interstate Region*** – Lawrence and Mercer Counties are part of the first interstate region in the nation, which was created in 2009. The designation of this region—and the relationships that were developed and strengthened as a result—created a platform that continues to identify a common regional workforce and economic development agenda and successfully attract additional resources to support identified priorities and innovation. The Interstate Region most recently invited others to participate in what is now known as the Greater Oh-Penn Interstate Region (adding NW PA WDA and three additional counties in Ohio), to expand the footprint to a total of 14 counties.
- ***USDOL investments*** – The region has received three large federal grants over the past three years to support innovation. They include the Oh-Penn Workforce Innovation Fund grant administered by West Central Job Partnership, the NW PA WDB Workforce Innovation Fund Grant and, most recently, the Greater Oh-Penn Network's American Apprenticeship Initiative (AAI) grant, which includes the entire Keystone Edge region plus six counties just across the border in Ohio.
- ***Strong Sector Partnerships*** – As mentioned in section F below, the region boasts a number of sector partnerships, including three in manufacturing. The strong level of employer engagement

has enabled the region to tackle manufacturing workforce skills shortages on a number of fronts, including:

- *Pipeline Development* – including IndustryNeedsYou.com, Industry Career Fairs, occupational videos as well as Guidance Counselor Boot Camps, Educator in the Workplace programs, etc. A recent Educational Partnership grant in Mercer and Lawrence Counties will support some of these activities moving forward.
- *Career Pathways* – Through the Oh-Penn Workforce Innovation Fund grant, partners laid out a comprehensive career pathway model that depicts a progression of skill acquisition as related to wage progression and corresponding job titles. Grant staff worked with education and training providers to address programmatic gaps, incorporate industry-recognized credentials to validate skills, and improve curriculum. This work will continue under the American Apprenticeship Initiative grant.
- ***American Apprenticeship Initiative (AAI)*** – Through this five-year USDOL grant project, five sector partnerships will work with manufacturers to create new apprenticeship programs resulting in 300 apprentices across 14 counties.
- ***Oh-Penn Manufacturing Readiness Program*** – The Manufacturing Readiness Program (MRP) was designed to prepare individuals with the basic, fundamental competencies needed to enter into a manufacturing career pathway. The program combines “soft skills” training and contextualized remediation with four weeks of skill training, which includes OSHA-10 and Certified Production Technician critical production functions. Participants receive training in Safety, Manufacturing Processes and Production, Quality Practices and Measurement and Maintenance Awareness. In addition, each participant will also earn a WorkKeys National Career Readiness Credential. The program is now being updated and repurposed to act as a pre-apprenticeship program throughout the region as part of the AAI grant and being considered as a potential strategy relative to the Northwest Pennsylvania Workforce Development Board’s Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) grant, and additional partners are committed to leveraging funding to support the sustainability of the program.
- ***Mobile CareerLink*** – The Mobile CareerLink (MCL) is a strategy to increase outreach to targeted populations by bringing services to customers through partnerships with community agencies. The MCL staff goes to the location where clients are comfortable and have support systems to ensure their progress when the MCL staff is not on site. Gainful employment is the goal of the MCL. Funding of the MCL is shared by WIOA Title I and the partnering service organizations.
- ***Career Street*** – Career Street is a comprehensive program that helps Erie County youth consider their career interests, explore various careers, and understand what is necessary to pursue, obtain and maintain a career they are interested. Manufacturers in the region found such value in the organized “speakers bureau” type approach that they included it as one of their initial three priorities and gained 100% participation by all 20 founding companies.
- ***Summer JAM*** – The JAM Program is a collaborative effort of Erie County, Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority, the Erie Community Foundation, the NW PA WDB, and supportive individuals who have recognized and are willing to address the lack of job readiness and employment opportunities for the disconnected youth population. The program connects youth with summer employment opportunities.
- ***Area Blueprint Initiatives*** – Area Blueprint Communities work to develop stronger local leadership, engage local residents and businesses, develop a clear vision and strategic plan for change and attract investments to build healthier, sustainable communities. The six communities include: the City of New Castle, Clarion Borough, the Curwensville Group (Bloom Township, Curwensville Borough, Penn Township and Pike Township), the Huntingdon County

Group (Mapleton Borough, Mount Union Borough and Shirley Township), the Oil Region Group (the City of Parker, Emlenton Borough and Foxburg Borough) and Reynoldsville Borough.

- **Crawford County Roundtable** – Crawford County Roundtable develops an action plan to improve the foundation skills of all its citizens. The Roundtable discusses ways business, industry, government, educational institutes, and community organizations may explore the economic and social case for reskilling adults so they may enter the workforce.
- **Erie Together** – Erie Together is a movement of hundreds of local individuals, organizations, and businesses working together in strategic ways to prevent and reduce poverty, elevate prosperity, and make the Erie region a community of opportunity where everyone can learn, work and thrive.
- **Coal BURN (Business United Regional Network) Partnership** – The southern portion of the region have been connected to a broader effort, led by Southwest PA, to address coal-impacted workers and employers in a three-state region (Pennsylvania, Ohio and West Virginia). The initiative has received a planning grant that will enable partners to explore the use of the Business Resource Network (BRN) employer outreach model that was developed and initially championed by Oh-Penn area workforce development and economic development partners, including Mercer and Lawrence Counties.

In its WIOA state plan, Pennsylvania identified the goal of investing in talent and skills for targeted industries. The Commonwealth will use data and will work with employers to identify the skills and competencies necessary to attain family-sustaining employment and will offer high quality training to individuals to obtain those skills.

Today, it is estimated that just 48 percent of Pennsylvanians have a college credential or industry-recognized certification. By 2025, it is projected that fully 60 percent of good-paying, reliable Pennsylvania jobs will require such credentials. Governor Wolf has established a goal of 60 percent of Pennsylvanians in the labor force will have postsecondary credentials or certificates by 2025 in order to meet expected demand. Concerted efforts will be made to ensure opportunities are available to all individuals with barriers who are seeking employment.

Career Pathways

A number of outreach efforts to educate the community regarding in-demand career pathways are being conducted throughout the Keystone Edge Region. The Youth Program and Youth Council in Northwest Pennsylvania are increasing career awareness through efforts such as Industry Club, Industry Club Expo, and Career Camp as well as the development of a video for youth that highlights area industries, in an effort to educate youth on the various career opportunities available in the region. Through the Oh-Penn Workforce Innovation Fund grant, partners refreshed the Industry Needs You website, which includes a wealth of information regarding manufacturing career pathways to help guide career decisions. Additionally, there are multiple post-secondary efforts to align skills training with industry demand already underway across the region.

NW PA Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) Grant

Northwest PA is aligning modular, stackable training with in-demand career pathways. Through this WIF grant initiative, the region will increase co-enrollments of job seekers between partnering funding

streams to create a more seamless service delivery experience for participants who need help from multiple programs.

The region will utilize this grant initiative to increase and advance intensive case management, mentoring, and wrap-around support services for job seekers with multiple barriers, as well as Job Readiness and Manufacturing Readiness in partnership with ABLE (originally funded by Oh-Penn WIF, now being re-examined as potential pre-apprenticeship model).

PA CareerLink®

The PA CareerLink® offices throughout the region maintain working relationships with organizations that provide services to individuals with barriers and targeted populations. Both local areas will designate points of contact within the PA CareerLink® Centers in their respective jurisdictions for specific targeted populations to facilitate and aggregate information regarding occupational demands and establish a network of advocates that may provide support to members of such targeted groups within the region. This may be a function of each board by way of a standing committee.

As with other regions of the state, as best regional practices are shared via the Pennsylvania Workforce Development Association and with neighboring workforce areas in multiple directions, the Keystone Edge region is working diligently to maximize the collective impact of service partners for addressing the needs of both employers and job seekers. The identification of pockets of poverty in the region and of specific sub-populations with significant barriers to employment is leading to new levels of coordinated effort and new venues for coordination to occur. Several initiatives for joint action provide models for the region to build on, including the Business Resource Network collaboration between the region and the neighboring area in Ohio and the Pittsburgh Works model for bringing service partners together to identify priority occupations and connect them with regional demand. The introduction of a new, nationally-engaged, one-stop operator in the Northwest local area provides another opportunity to explore and implement best practices for service coordination.

<p>1.7 Describe the coordination of transportation and other supportive services for the region. [WIOA Sec. 106(c)(1)(F); 20 CFR 679.510(a)(1)(vi)]</p>
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With more than 44,500 workers commuting in and just under 65,000 commuting out, NWPA is a net exporter of workers. The region sends the most workers working outside of the area to Butler County (8,077, 2.9 percent), Beaver County (4,132, 1.5 percent), and Mahoning County, Ohio (2,883, 1.0 percent). Most of the workers coming from outside of the region are from Allegheny County (5,629, 2.2 percent), Butler County (4,753, 1.8 percent), and Trumbull County, Ohio (1.4 percent). Over 258,000 workers are employed in the region, with over 214,500 workers both living and working in the area.

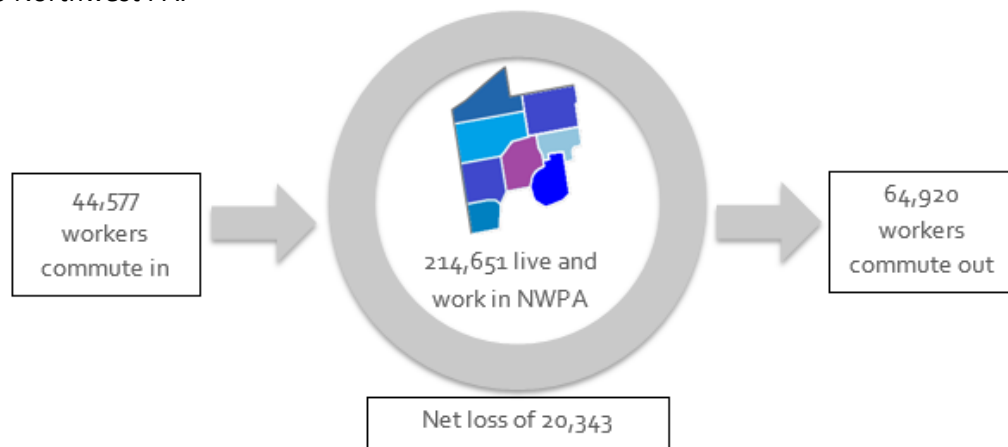
Workforce System guidance No. 02-2014 provided guidance to Pennsylvania's local workforce development areas on how to evaluate their local areas. Capacity and access to public/private transportation resources was identified as a factor for consideration. Certain populations within Pennsylvania are adversely affected due to transportation issues. This has been identified as a barrier to employment for farmworkers and youth workers, which limits their access to jobs, training, and supportive services. Public and mass transit options are minimal and the region has very little funding to expand mass transit at this time. Currently there are no public transportation options to the east or west

of Erie. Much of the region's non-car transportation options provide access from the southern end of the region to and from Pittsburgh rather than to and from areas within the region.

The region includes Interstates 79, 80, 86, 90, and 376; however, gaps in transportation still exist for persons without reliable methods of personal transportation.

Improving the transportation system within the region is integral to improving the overall economic health and promoting both economic and workforce development opportunities. The two workforce boards along with the Local Development District which acts as the fiscal agent for the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) for the Northwest Partnerships for Regional Economic Performance (PREP) Region has convened a task group to address publicly funded mass transportation issues and to interact with transportation agencies throughout the eight counties—including PennDOT District 1—and other relevant parties. This group has begun to analyze and strategize on the problems and possible means for addressing linkage for both rural and high poverty areas with centers of mass employment such as retail outlets and concentrated industrial parks in order to facilitate transport bridging supply and demand. A consortium proposal for federal transportation funding from US Health and Human Services, Department of Transportation, and/or private foundations may be targeted to create busing route runs and schedules that are conducive to servicing individuals in entry level, first step pathway jobs.

The following graphic shows the net loss of talent on a daily basis for the region, including commuting both in and out of the bordering states of Ohio and New York. This provides an economic development opportunity, as a pool of talent exists that can be kept in the region if high-quality jobs are created or attracted to Northwest PA.



³ U.S. Census Bureau 2008-2012

⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap, 2012 (most recently available). <http://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>

1.8. (Planning Regions Only) Describe how the region established administrative cost arrangements, including the pooling of funds for administrative costs, as appropriate,

for the region. [WIOA Sec. 106(c)(1)(E); 20 CFR 679.510(a)(1)(v).

The region has created a process to define and establish administrative cost arrangements on a case by case basis. The Northwest and West Central Boards, in agreement with their respective Chief Elected Officials, will designate individuals to negotiate and obtain the required approvals to establish a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that defines cost arrangements for ongoing collaborative activities as well as ad hoc projects that will institute a framework based upon need, scope of work, and benefits received. This may include ongoing shared functions such as monitoring and/or planning, as well as provisions for emerging regional projects.

A joint committee will be responsible for reviewing and crafting opportunities for increased efficiencies. The committee will meet quarterly to evaluate its processes to ensure that all measures aimed at decreasing inefficient processes are being met. The process will begin with the identification of processes that are high priority for joint action by the two workforce development boards. High priority may include items where cost saving can occur as a result of more efficient processes or items that result in better customer services for job seekers and employers who would be better served with consistency in policies and procedures in the broader region. The first steps in collaboration can occur prior to formal pooling of funds, as “barter” arrangements can be put in place where each workforce board takes on specific responsibilities on behalf of the region. As the process continues, the two workforce boards of the region may find it desirable to pool funds for certain activities and will select a fiscal agent at that time. The current regional plan does not call for any formal pooling of funds from the separate workforce areas that are partners in the plan.

The two workforce boards of the region have a successful history of collaboration in joint planning and implementation, both within the region and with neighboring workforce areas outside the region when needed. This typically occurs as partnerships are developed for application and receipt of competitive grants that involve multiple local workforce areas. A fiscal agent is identified by mutual agreement of partnering workforce boards during the process, based on activities that will be supported by the funds. The West Central Job Partnership, Inc. currently serves as fiscal agent for a U.S. Department of Labor American Apprenticeship Grant with the neighboring Ohio workforce area, and for a current state Industry Partnership grant. Both of the partner workforce boards of the region has Next Generation Industry Partnership implementation grants pending with an identified fiscal agent for each of the applications.

In all cases of joint work and/or pooling of funds, state and federal rules for cost allocation will be followed with allowable methods based on Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) of the Office of Management and Budget circulars and guidance.

1.9. (Planning Regions Only) Describe the agreement between the local boards that describes how the planning region will collectively negotiate and reach agreement with the Department on local levels of performance for, and report on, the

performance accountability measures described in section 116(c), for each of the local areas within the planning region. [WIOA Sec. 106(c)(1)(H); 20 CFR 679.510(a)(1)(viii)]

The Department currently has no plans to create formal regional performance standards. It will continue to negotiate performance standards on a workforce area basis while monitoring differences that occur among local areas within a region. The region's two workforce development boards will also monitor progress in meeting and exceeding standards and will share best practices to maximize performance levels on a region-wide basis.

PY2017 - PY2019

NORTHWEST PENNSYLVANIA

WIOA MULTI-YEAR

LOCAL PLAN



Workforce Area: Northwest Pennsylvania Workforce Development Area

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

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

The local area's population and labor force participants are viewed in light of employer demand and specific occupational opportunities identified in the Keystone Edge Regional Plan. The Healthcare and Manufacturing sectors, in particular, continue to provide high-quality jobs, with Healthcare occupational employment projected to expand at double-digit rates during the next decade and Manufacturing jobs remaining at close to current levels but with rapidly changing skill levels and an aging workforce that will need to be replaced. For the local area's population to be able to seize the opportunities for employment at family-sustaining wage levels, significant increases in education and training levels beyond high school will be needed. Approximately 22% of the local area's adult population has a bachelor's degree or higher, with another 8% possessing an associate's degree. Employment projections point to the highest increases in skill needs will be for candidates who possess post-high school credentials or long-term training. The challenge faced by the local area is one of both quantity and skills quality of workers needed by employers. The overall population of the local area has been, and is projected to be, in decline, and over 40% of the adult population is not participating in the labor force. That leads to the need for an extensive analysis of the barriers to participation in the labor force that is presented in this section. New strategies will be needed to expand access points and incentives to move those with barriers into the labor force, along with new approaches to integrating basic education, occupational skills training, and work-based learning in ways that allow skills advancement and income simultaneously. The region continues to have high demand for entry-level jobs in retail and hospitality that can serve to launch career paths in multiple sectors. Curriculum development and work-based learning will continue to be addressed by expansion of industry partnerships, particularly with the availability of funds and guidance from the Commonwealth such as through the Next Generation Industry Partnerships or other similar funds. The Northwest Pennsylvania Workforce Development Board will be a focal point for convening employer champions from each key industry sector and for identifying and addressing needs that cut across all sectors, including basic literacy, work ethic, computer literacy, and customer service.

OVERVIEW

The Northwest Workforce Development Area is comprised of Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Venango and Warren counties in Northwest Pennsylvania. Overall, it is home to 502,001 citizens¹. With a 2016 labor force of 239,000, the largest sector in the Northwest is Health Care and Social Assistance, which employs 38,985 workers, represents 11% of the Gross Regional Product (GRP), with average earnings of \$47,396. The next largest sectors include Manufacturing (employs 36,825, represents 21% of the GRP, with average earnings of \$65,935) and Government (which includes education and law enforcement) (employs 30,195 workers, represents 12% of the GRP, with average earnings of \$67,939).

High location quotients (LQs) indicate sectors in which a region has high concentrations of employment compared to the national average. The sectors with the largest LQs in the region include Advanced Manufacturing (LQ=2.23), Health Care (LQ=1.31) and Energy (LQ=1.23).

POPULATION

¹ Population estimates per Claritas

The population in the Northwest is estimated to have decreased from 513,834 in 2010 to 502,001 in 2017, resulting in a decline of 2.3%. Over the next five years, the population is projected to decline by 1.0%. The population in the Keystone Edge is estimated to have decreased from 721,580 in 2010 to 702,718 in 2017, resulting in a decline of 2.6%. Over the next five years, the population is projected to decrease by 1.1%.

In 2017, the median age for the Northwest is 41.5, while the average age is 41.2. Five years from now, the median age is projected to be 41.8. Comparatively, the median age for Keystone Edge is 42.3 (which is older than the region), while the average age is 41.8. Five years from now, the median age is projected to be 42.6.

Most of the Northwest's current year estimated population are White Alone (90.7%) ,5.0% are Black or African American Alone, 0.2% are American Indian and Alaska Nat. Alone, 1.1% are Asian Alone, 0.0% are Nat. Hawaiian and Other Pacific Isl. Alone, 0.9% are Some Other Race, and 2.0% are Two or More Races. The population in the region is comparable: 91.0% are White Alone, 5.0% are Black or African American Alone, 0.2% are American Indian and Alaska Nat. Alone, 1.0% are Asian Alone, 0.0% are Nat. Hawaiian and Other Pacific Isl. Alone, 0.8% are Some Other Race, and 2.0% are Two or More Races. The Northwest's current estimated Hispanic or Latino population is 3.0%, which is comparable to the Keystone Edge (2.5%).

HOUSEHOLDS

The number of households in the Northwest is estimated to have decreased from 204,468 in 2010 to 202,538 in 2017, resulting in a decrease of 0.9%. Over the next five years, the number of households is projected to decrease by 0.4%. Comparatively, the number of household in the Keystone Edge is estimated to have declined from 288,036 in 2010 to 284,350 in 2017, resulting in a decrease of 1.3%. Over the next five years, the number of households is projected to decrease by 0.5%.

EDUCATION

One in five residents over the age of 25 in the Northwest WDA (22.6%) and the Keystone Edge region (21.8%) have an advanced degree. One in ten residents in the WDA (10.3%) and region (10.5%) did not complete high school. Currently, it is estimated that 6.0% of the population age 25 and over in the Northwest had earned a Master's Degree, 1.2% had earned a Professional School Degree, 0.9% had earned a Doctorate Degree and 14.5% had earned a Bachelor's Degree. In comparison, for the Keystone Edge, it is estimated that for the population over age 25, 5.7% had earned a Master's Degree, 1.1% had earned a Professional School Degree, 0.8% had earned a Doctorate Degree and 14.2% had earned a Bachelor's Degree.

INCOME

In 2017, the average household income in the Northwest is estimated to be \$62,438.773, which is just above that of Keystone Edge (\$61,853.118). The average household income in the Northwest is projected to change over the next five years, from \$62,438.773 to \$67,399.316. The average household income in the Keystone Edge is projected to change over the next five years, from \$61,853.118 to \$66,534.065.

HOUSING

Most of the dwellings in the Northwest (70.0%) are estimated to be Owner-Occupied for the current year, which is comparable to the Keystone Edge (71.2%). One in four housing units in the Northwest (27.5%) are estimated to have been built between 1939 or Earlier for the current year, which is comparable to the Keystone Edge.

EMPLOYMENT

A comparable amount of civilians are employed in the Northwest as the region. For the Northwest, the employment status of the population age 16 and over is as follows: 54.7% are employed civilians, 4.6% are unemployed civilians, and 40.7% are not in the labor force. For the Keystone Edge, the employment status of the population age 16 and over is as follows: 54.3% are employed civilians, 4.4% are unemployed civilians, and 41.3% are not in the labor force.

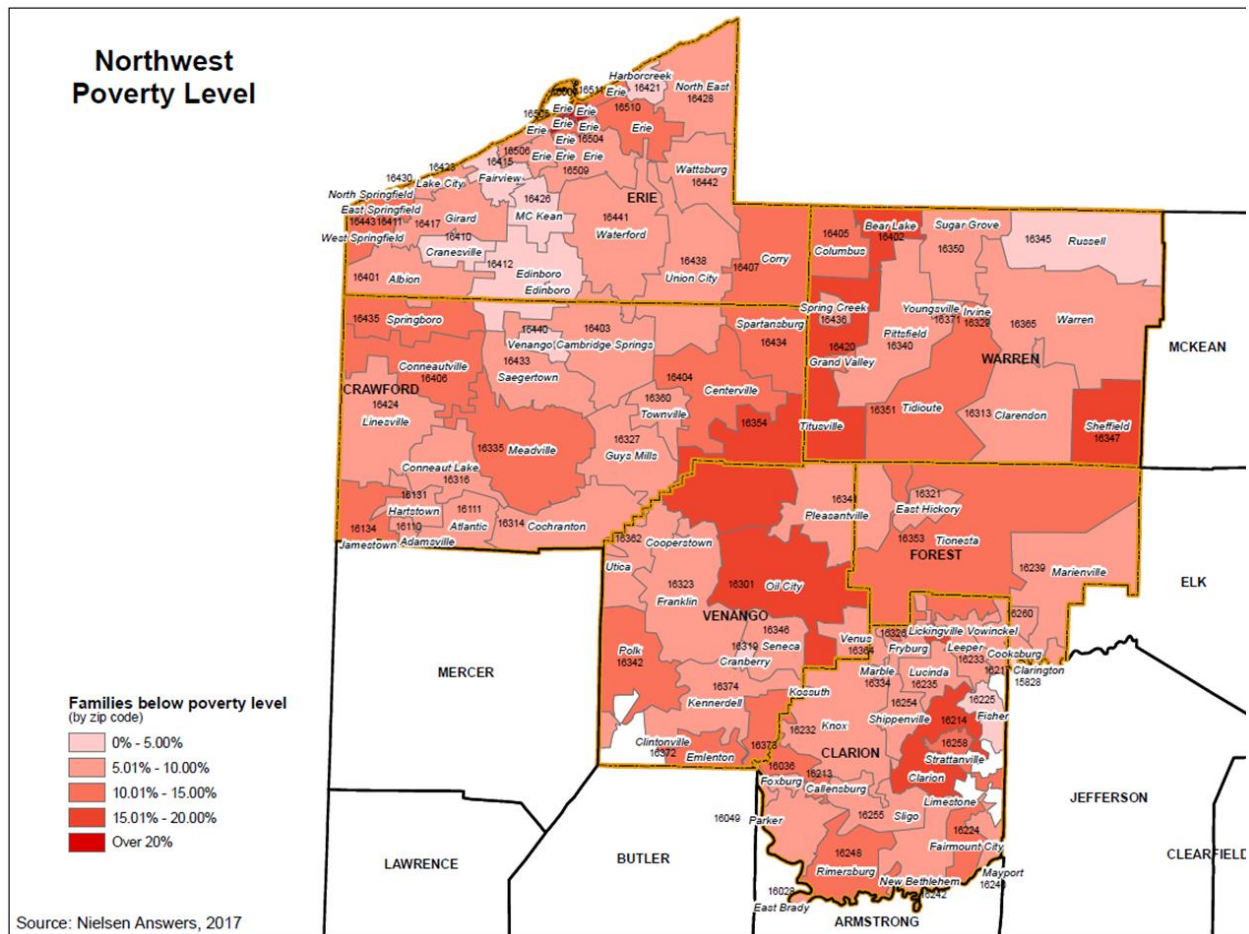
The breakdown of occupational classifications is comparable in the WDA and region. The occupational classification for the Northwest are as follows: 25.1% hold blue collar occupations, 54.5% hold white collar occupations, and 20.4% are occupied as service & farm workers. The occupational classification for the Keystone Edge are as follows: 25.3% hold blue collar occupations, 54.3% hold white collar occupations, and 20.4% are occupied as service & farm workers.

The highest percent of workers in both the Northwest and Keystone Edge are employed in Office and Administrative Support (12.5% WDA, 12.8% region) and Sales and Related Services (9.9% WDA, 10.0% region) occupations.

Most of the employed population in the Northwest (78.9%) and Keystone Edge (80.2%) drives alone to work with an average travel time of 22 minutes in the WDA and 23 minutes in the region.

POPULATION WITH BARRIERS

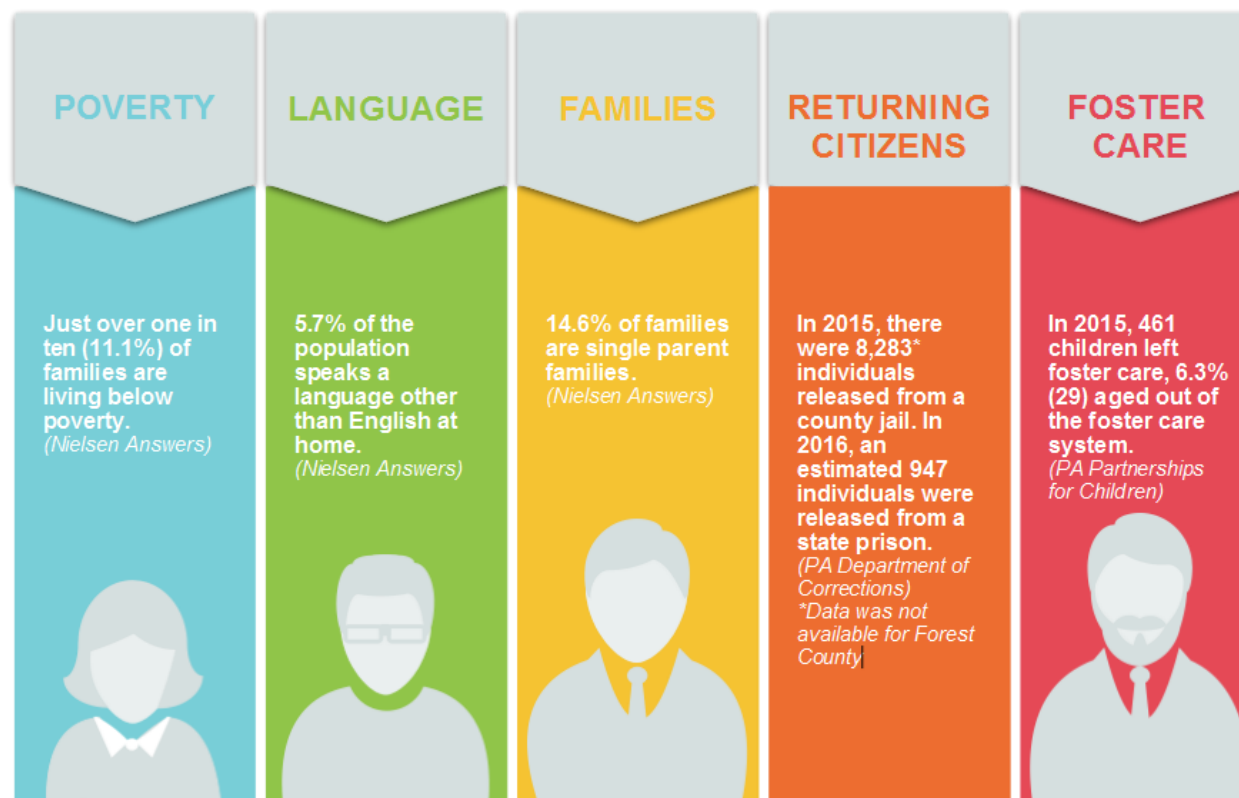
Among the factors that often contribute to poverty are unemployment and underemployment. Many people live in poverty because they are unable to find a job that pays a living wage or to find a job at all. When looking at the Northwest, 11.1% of families are living in poverty. There are select zip codes in the City of Erie where over 20% of the families live below poverty. Single parents are more likely to be living in poverty, with 14.6% of households in the county considered single parent households.



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 Northwest, in 2015 there were 8,283 individuals released from a county jail (data was not available for Forest County). In 2016 there were 947 individuals released from a state prison.

Research obtained from Children's Rights has shown that youth who age out of foster care are less likely than youth in the general population to graduate from high school and are less likely to attend or graduate college. By age 26, approximately 80% of young people who aged out of foster care earned at least a high school degree or GED compared to 94% in the general population. By age 26, 4% of youth who aged out of foster care had earned a 4-year college degree, while 36% of youth in the general

population has done so. In the Northwest, approximately 29 children age out of foster care each year.



According to the Division for Social Policy and Development Disability, in developing countries, 80% to 90% of persons with disabilities of working age are unemployed, whereas in industrialized countries the figure is between 50% and 70%.

When looking at the Northwest, 6.4% of those employed have a disability, while 16.8% of those unemployed have a disability. In the Northwest unemployment is 122% higher for those with a disability (15.4%) compared to those without a disability (6.9%). There are also 4,796 students receiving services through the local Intermediate Unit, with just over half (52.7%) students having a learning disability, 11.2% have an intellectual disability, 14.1% have emotional disturbances, 12.4% have health implications and 9.0% have autism.

According to Youth. Gov., the high social and economic costs of teen pregnancy and childbearing can have short- and long-term negative consequences for teen parents, their children, and their community. Through recent research, it has been recognized that pregnancy and childbirth have a significant impact on educational outcomes of teen parents.

- By age 22, only around 50 percent of teen mothers have received a high school diploma and only 30 percent have earned a General Education Development (GED) certificate, whereas 90 percent of women who did not give birth during adolescence receive a high school diploma.
- Only about 10 percent of teen mothers complete a two- or four-year college program.

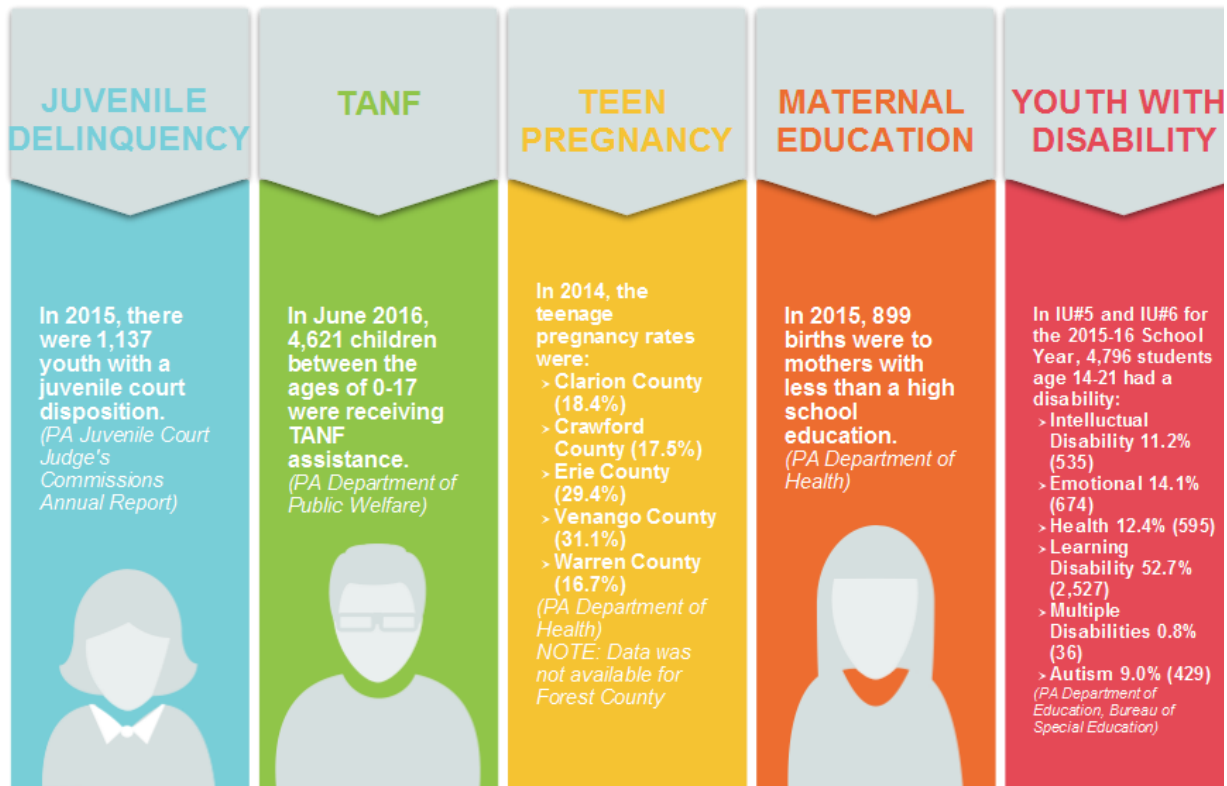
- Teen fathers have a 25 to 30 percent lower probability of graduating from high school than teenage boys who are not fathers.

Children who are born to teen mothers also experience a wide range of problems. For example, they are more likely to:

- have a higher risk for low birth weight and infant mortality;
- have lower levels of emotional support and cognitive stimulation;
- have fewer skills and be less prepared to learn when they enter kindergarten;
- have behavioral problems and chronic medical conditions;
- rely more heavily on publicly funded health care;
- have higher rates of foster care placement;
- be incarcerated at some time during adolescence;
- have lower school achievement and drop out of high school;
- give birth as a teen; and
- be unemployed or underemployed as a young adult.

These immediate and long-lasting effects continue for teen parents and their children even after adjusting for the factors that increased the teen's risk for pregnancy—e.g., growing up in poverty, having parents with low levels of education, growing up in a single-parent family, and having low attachment to and performance in school. Teen pregnancy costs U.S. taxpayers about \$11 billion per year due to increased health care and foster care, increased incarceration rates among children of teen parents, and lost tax revenue because of lower educational attainment and income among teen mothers. Some recent cost studies estimate that the cost may be as high as \$28 billion per year or an average of \$5,500 for each teen parent. The majority of this cost is associated with teens who give birth before age 18.

In the Northwest there were 4,621 children between the ages of 0 and 17 receiving TANF Assistance in 2016, 1,137 youth had a juvenile disposition in 2015, and there were 899 births to mothers with less than a high school education. In 2014, according to the PA Department of Health the teenage pregnancy rate in Clarion (18.4%), Crawford (17.5%) and Warren (16.7%) counties were significantly lower when compared to the state (27.2%). Teenage pregnancy data was not available for Forest County.



The Northwest receives services from the following Intermediate Units:

IU#5 includes: Crawford, Erie and Warren Counties

IU#6 includes: Clarion, Forest and Venango Counties

According to the National Coalition for the Homeless, meaningful and sustainable employment is the key to creating and maintaining housing stability. Unemployment, underemployment, and low wages relative to rent are frequent causes of homelessness and burden millions of families with the risk of becoming homeless. At the same time, individuals experiencing homelessness face obstacles to finding and maintaining employment.

The Point-in-Time (PIT) count is a count of sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons on a single night in January. HUD requires that Continuums of Care conduct an annual count of homeless persons who are sheltered in emergency shelter, transitional housing, and Safe Havens on a single night. Continuums of Care also must conduct a count of unsheltered homeless persons every other year (odd numbered years). In 2015, there were 1,317 individuals counted in the Northwest.

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act defines youth homelessness as:

- Children sharing housing due to economic hardship or loss of housing;
- Children living in "motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camp grounds due to lack of alternative accommodations"
- Children living in "emergency or transitional shelters"
- Children whose primary nighttime residence is not ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation (e.g. park benches, etc.)

- Children living in "cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations".

In 2016, there were 1,544 students in the Northwest who met the McKinney-Vento definition of homeless.



LABOR FORCE AND UNEMPLOYMENT

The overall unemployment rate in the Northwest WDA in 2016 was 6.5%, with a labor force of 239,000. When looking at the first few months of 2017 the unemployment rate has fluctuated from 5.6% to 6.1%.

Annual Average Labor Force Statistics, 2016

Annual Average	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
2016	239,000	223,500	15,400	6.5

Seasonally Adjusted Labor Force Statistics, 2017

Month	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
January	233,600	220,400	13,300	5.7
February	235,200	221,100	14,100	6.0
March	235,400	222,300	13,100	5.6
April	236,700	222,400	14,300	6.1

Source: Center for Workforce Information and Analysis

- 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/local area?*

An analysis of skill gaps begins with a look at current and projected skills demanded by employers in the region and the local workforce development area. Labor Market trends can be examined by looking at Long Term Industry Projections as well as other Labor Market information. Regarding Long Term Industry Projections from 2014 to 2024, employment in the region is projected to increase by 4.3% which is comparable to the region (4.4%). Both the Northwest WDA and region are growing at a rate lower than the state (7.7%). Construction is expected to experience the greatest percent increase. Education and Health Services is expected to experience the most volume growth and accounts for over half of the overall growth. The local workforce development board (LWDB) uses a number of resources to collect data including the U.S. Census, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), and the PA Center for Workforce Information and Analysis (CWIA). Private sector business members of the LWDB serve as sources of real time data and members of the local Advanced Diversified Manufacturing Industry Partnership and Great Lakes Building and Construction Trades Industry Partnership. Please refer to the Keystone Edge Workforce Development Region's Multi-Year WIOA Regional Plan, section 1.6, for additional information on partnerships and initiatives that support the connection between the region's job seekers and employers.

Funded by the Northwest Commission, a regional economic development partner, the skills gap analysis report is a good illustration of the strong collaboration that exists between workforce and economic development partners in the region. The analysis identified areas of economic opportunity

and related industry and occupational demand as well as disconnects between skill needs and programming available. Much of this work is being applied to inform the WIOA local plan.

Another approach to defining the skill gaps in the local area has been hearing directly from employers through the local industry partnerships including the Advanced Diversified Manufacturing Industry Partnership, the Erie Regional Manufacturing Partnership, and the Great Lakes Building and Construction Trades Industry Partnership. Next Generation Industry Partnerships or other similar tools may be used as another way of engaging area employers to define skill gaps in the local area.

Long-Term Industry Projections for Northwest WDA (2014-24)

Industry	Employment (2014)	Projected Employment (2024)	Employment Change (2014-2024)	
			Volume	Percent
Total Jobs	226,380	236,040	9,660	4.3%
Goods Producing Industries	49,920	50,590	670	1.3%
Agriculture, Mining & Logging	6,090	6,060	-30	-0.5%
Construction	5,900	6,920	1,020	17.3%
Manufacturing	37,920	37,620	-300	-0.8%
Services-Providing	162,830	171,750	8,920	5.5%
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	36,840	38,680	1,840	5.0%
Information	1,780	1,590	-190	-10.7%
Financial Activities	8,810	8,930	120	1.4%
Professional & Business Services	13,360	14,270	910	6.8%
Education & Health Services	55,030	60,340	5,310	9.6%
Leisure & Hospitality	20,730	21,680	950	4.6%
Other Services, Except Public Admin.	11,200	11,790	590	5.3%
Federal, State & Local Government	15,070	14,490	-580	-3.8%

Source: Center for Workforce Information and Analysis

Looking at Help Wanted Online job postings provides insight into current employment demands our employers are facing. Industries with an increased number of postings include Employment Placement Agencies, Administrative Management and General Management Consulting Services, Temporary Help Services, Commercial Banking, and Elementary and Secondary Schools. The occupations with an increase in postings include First Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers, and Nursing Assistants.

Top 10 Help Wanted On-Line Job Postings by Industry, May 2016 & 2017

Industry Title	NAICS	May-2017	May-2016
Employment Placement Agencies	561311	279	257

General Medical and Surgical Hospitals	622110	226	283
Administrative Management and General Management Consulting Services	541611	225	153
Temporary Help Services	561320	207	175
Colleges, Universities, and Professional Schools	611310	90	96
Commercial Banking	522110	81	70
Home Health Care Services	621610	67	84
Elementary and Secondary Schools	611110	67	54
Supermarkets and Other Grocery (except Convenience) Stores	445110	61	104
General Freight Trucking, Long-Distance, Truckload	484121	45	109

Source: Center for Workforce Information and Analysis

Top 10 Help Wanted On-Line Job Postings by Occupation, May 2016 & 2017

Occupation	SOC	May-2017	May-2016
Registered Nurses	29114100	308	347
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	53303200	244	509
Retail Salespersons	41203100	194	206
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	41101100	141	117
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	29206100	88	91
Customer Service Representatives	43405100	85	97
First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	35101200	75	130
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	49907100	74	88
Personal Care Aides	39902100	70	88
Nursing Assistants	31101400	65	52

Source: Center for Workforce Information and Analysis

The industries that are projected to experience the most growth by volume include Offices of Physicians and Restaurants and Other Eating Places, while Home Health Care Services and Building Foundation/Exterior Contractors will experience the greatest percent increase.

Fastest Growing Industries in Northwest WDA (2014-24)

By Volume Change:

Industry Title	Employment Change (Volume)
Offices Of Physicians	570
Restaurants & Other Eating Places	440
Home Health Care Services	390
Colleges, Universities & Professional Schools	370

By Percent Change: (min. employment of 500)

Industry Title	Employment Change (Percent)
Home Health Care Services	28.5%
Building Foundation/Exterior Contractors	19.0%
Building Finishing Contractors	18.3%
Community Care Facilities For The Elderly	17.1%

Community Care Facilities For The Elderly	300	Offices Of Physicians	14.3%
Automobile Dealers	290	Automobile Dealers	12.2%
Residential Mental Health Facilities	280	Personal Care Services	12.1%
Personal Care Services	140	Other Amusement & Recreation Ind.	8.8%
Traveler Accommodation	140	Traveler Accommodation	8.2%
Building Finishing Contractors	130	Colleges, Universities & Professional Schools	8.2%
Other Amusement & Recreation Ind.	130	Residential Mental Health Facilities	7.8%
Building Foundation/Exterior Contractors	120	School & Employee Bus Transportation	7.3%
Utility System Construction	100	Commercial Machinery Repair/Maintenance	6.9%
School & Employee Bus Transportation	90	Automotive Parts, Accessories & Tire Stores	6.8%
Activities Rel. To Real Estate	80	Automotive Repair & Maintenance	6.5%
Building Material & Supplies Dealers	80	Coating, Engraving & Heat Treating Metal Mfg	5.2%
Automotive Repair & Maintenance	80	Other Professional & Technical Services	5.1%
Religious Organizations	70	Rubber Product Mfg	5.0%
		Building Material & Supplies Dealers	5.0%
		Accounting & Bookkeeping Services	4.3%

Source: Center for Workforce Information and Analysis

Opportunity Occupations are employment opportunities that are generally considered accessible to someone without a bachelor's degree and that pays at least the national annual median wage, adjusted for differences in local consumption prices. There are several in the county that only require a high school diploma; although most are part of an apprenticeship program or require on the job training and experience.

SOC	Description	2016 Jobs	2021 Jobs	2016 - 2021 Change	2016 - 2021 % Change	Annual Openings	COL Adjusted Avg. Hourly Earnings	Typical Entry Level Education
13-1031	Claims Adjusters, Examiners, and Investigators	330	333	3	1%	9	\$26.17	High school diplom or equivalent
15-1152	Computer Network Support Specialists	150	150	0	0%	3	\$26.74	Associate's degree
29-2032	Diagnostic Medical Sonographers	81	84	3	4%	2	\$28.34	Associate's degree
33-1012	First-Line Supervisors of Police and Detectives	125	127	2	2%	5	\$32.40	High school diplom or equivalent
33-1021	First-Line Supervisors of Fire Fighting and Prevention Workers	43	44	1	2%	2	\$33.10	Postsecondary nondegree award
33-3021	Detectives and Criminal Investigators	89	92	3	3%	3	\$34.32	High school diplom or equivalent
33-3051	Police and Sheriffs Patrol Officers	1,107	1,131	24	2%	43	\$30.63	High school diplom or equivalent
41-4012	Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	1,980	1,988	8	0%	45	\$26.94	High school diplom or equivalent
49-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers	677	687	10	1%	16	\$28.78	High school diplom or equivalent
53-1031	First-Line Supervisors of Transportation and Material-Moving Machine and Vehicle Operators	284	285	1	0%	10	\$26.12	High school diplom or equivalent

One way to measure the skill gap is to compare current educational attainment levels with the expected employment growth by education level. Employment opportunities that require an Advanced degree are projected to increase the most. It is estimated that in 2024, 15.8% of the occupations will require a Bachelor's Degree, while currently 14.2% of the population holds that degree. Over half of the employment opportunities require on the job training.

2017 Est. Pop Age 25+ by Edu. Attainment	488,372	
Less than 9th grade	15,977	3.27%
Some High School, no diploma	35,067	7.18%
High School Graduate (or GED)	214,640	43.95%
Some College, no degree	76,842	15.73%
Associate Degree	38,985	7.98%
Bachelor's Degree	69,289	14.19%
Master's Degree	28,030	5.74%
Professional School Degree	5,415	1.11%
Doctorate Degree	4,127	0.85%

**Employment Growth Rates by Educational Attainment Level for Northwest
WDA**

Educational Grouping	Employment (2014)	Projected Employment (2024)	Percent Change (2014-24)
On-the-job training	116,770	121,060	3.7%
Long-term training	11,910	12,850	7.9%
PS education or experience	35,080	36,780	4.8%
Associate degree	3,790	3,990	5.3%
Bachelor's degree	33,030	34,680	5.0%
Advanced degree	8,630	9,550	10.7%

Source: Center for Workforce Information and Analysis

Looking at the projected employment demand for knowledge areas and work activities provides insight into training opportunities. The highest knowledge area is of the English Language. In the Northwest, 14.6% of households speak a language other than English at home. Other knowledge areas required of top occupations include Customer and Personal Service and Administration and Management. The most needing work activities include getting information, communicating with supervisors, peers or subordinates and performing for or working directly with the public.

Top 20 Knowledge Area and Projected Needs, 2014-2024

Knowledge Area	Number of Occupations	Total Annual Openings Needing this Skill	Growth Annual Openings Needing this Skill	Replacement Annual Openings Needing this Skill
English Language	445	5,991	1,162	4,829
Customer and Personal Service	414	5,622	1,106	4,516
Administration and Management	364	4,599	1,036	3,563
Mathematics	354	4,499	778	3,721
Public Safety and Security	292	3,758	852	2,906
Education and Training	341	3,551	797	2,754
Computers and Electronics	331	3,235	634	2,601
Clerical	293	3,086	572	2,514
Psychology	183	2,564	650	1,914
Production and Processing	209	2,405	403	2,002
Sales and Marketing	151	2,376	318	2,058
Law and Government	196	1,937	422	1,515
Personnel and Human Resources	168	1,888	399	1,489
Communications and Media	154	1,537	321	1,216

Mechanical	191	1,525	293	1,232
Sociology and Anthropology	96	1,188	264	924
Therapy and Counseling	82	1,176	288	888
Medicine and Dentistry	81	1,106	378	728
Transportation	97	1,051	269	782
Engineering and Technology	157	1,041	224	817

Source: The Center for Workforce Information & Analysis

Top 20 Work Activities and Projected Needs, 2014-2024

Work Activity	Number of Occupations	Total Annual Openings Needing this Skill	Growth Annual Openings Needing this Skill	Replacement Annual Openings Needing this Skill
Getting Information	352	3,812	869	2,943
Communicating with Supervisors, Peers, or Subordinates	258	3,086	662	2,424
Performing for or Working Directly with the Public	95	2,224	375	1,849
Making Decisions and Solving Problems	220	1,785	385	1,400
Interacting With Computers	201	1,702	328	1,374
Documenting/Recording Information	144	1,606	463	1,143
Identifying Objects, Actions, and Events	150	1,604	385	1,219
Establishing and Maintaining Interpersonal Relationships	138	1,381	319	1,062
Organizing, Planning, and Prioritizing Work	143	1,378	313	1,065
Assisting and Caring for Others	75	1,370	460	910
Updating and Using Relevant Knowledge	169	1,306	320	986
Evaluating Information to Determine Compliance with Standards	103	1,046	216	830
Monitor Processes, Materials, or Surroundings	81	887	173	714
Performing General Physical Activities	47	853	250	603
Inspecting Equipment, Structures, or Material	89	759	162	597

Processing Information	112	723	148	575
Thinking Creatively	89	661	147	514
Handling and Moving Objects	58	627	102	525
Communicating with Persons Outside Organization	96	615	106	509
Analyzing Data or Information	86	609	162	447

Source: The Center for Workforce Information & Analysis

Workers will also need to be able to order materials, supplies or equipment, calculate costs of goods or services and sell products or services. They need to be able to use a computer and associated software.

Top 10 Detailed Work Activities

Detailed Work Activity	2024 Employment	Percent of Annual Openings	Annual Openings
Order materials, supplies, or equipment	36,890	16.5%	1,104
Calculate costs of goods or services	28,350	14.6%	977
Sell products or services	27,900	14.5%	967
Clean work areas	27,200	13.7%	913
Greet customers, patrons, or visitors	25,020	11.9%	797
Record operational or production data	28,480	11.7%	784
Monitor inventories of products or materials	25,160	11.2%	751
Maintain records of sales or other business transactions	20,660	10.9%	727
Answer customer questions about goods or services	19,640	10.4%	697
Cook foods	17,250	10.1%	674

Source: The Center for Workforce Information & Analysis

Top 10 Tools & Technologies

Tools & Technologies	2024 Employment	Percent of Annual Openings	Annual Openings
Spreadsheet software	181,820	75.2%	5,029

Data base user interface and query software	166,290	70.6%	4,721
Personal computers	164,380	69.1%	4,622
Word processing software	163,140	65.2%	4,359
Desktop computers	150,790	63.6%	4,254
Office suite software	142,280	59.3%	3,964
Electronic mail software	128,450	51.2%	3,421
Notebook computers	121,800	48.0%	3,212
Internet browser software	113,920	45.6%	3,048

Source: The Center for Workforce Information & Analysis

Analyzing job postings provides insight into the skills and certifications our employers are requesting in their candidates. The most frequently posted skills include freight, flatbed scanners and blueprints. The most requested certifications include Driver's License, Commercial Driver's License, and Certified Registered Nurse.

Top 10 Help Wanted On-Line™ Skills

Skills	On-Line™ Job Postings
Freight+	213
Flatbed scanners	149
Blueprints	112
Pediatrics	98
Quality Assurance	96
Forklifts	86
Preventive maintenance	67
Mathematics	64
Quality control	64
Tractor-trailers	58

Source: The Center for Workforce Information & Analysis

Top 10 Help Wanted OnLine™ Certifications

Certifications	OnLine™ Job Postings
Driver's License	613
Commercial Driver's License	416
Certified Registered Nurse	374
Certification in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation	307
Basic Life Support	197
Licensed Practical Nurse	137
HAZMAT	124
Advanced Cardiac Life Support	119
Board Certified	112
Occupational Safety & Health Administration Certification	103

Source: *The Center for Workforce Information & Analysis*

Review of the labor market data has led to several insights that will be used by the Northwest Pennsylvania Workforce Development Board in developing policies, programs, and collaborations in the context of the regional and state WIOA plans:

- Employers in multiple sectors are using the staffing services and temporary jobs agencies to address skill needs, particularly at the entry level. Direct engagement with staffing services will be needed to facilitate their engagement in the career pathways for each key sector.
- While Information as a sector in the region is projecting declines in employment, information technology as an occupational skill requirement is increasing in all sectors. Programs will need to incorporate basic computer skills in all occupational training, including introduction to sector-specific software as appropriate.
- Pockets of high poverty exist throughout the region, often in areas presenting transportation barriers for access to program services and high-quality jobs. Outreach will need to include new partnerships with community-based organizations to reach target populations, and entry-level jobs in these areas will need to be combined with creative approaches to skill building, including on-line connections and work-based learning certifications.
- On-the-job training remains a primary means for qualifying for jobs in the region. Additional work will need to be done on processes for documenting and certifying competencies acquired on the job, as a way to qualify for better jobs and for receiving credit needed for acquiring new degrees and certificates.

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?*

Analysis of the data, input from local employers, and insights from local stakeholders point to several challenges that will be addressed during implementation of this plan:

Declining Population

The local workforce development area has seen a 2.3% decline in its population between 2000 and 2017, and is projected to have a further decline of 1.0% over the next five years. This is exacerbated by

similar population declines in the broader Keystone Edge Region. Employers will be challenged to find new solutions to filling skill gaps through both attraction of workers and advancing the skills of the workers they have.

Raising Educational Attainment Levels

Jobs that pay family-sustaining wages and salaries will increasingly require credentials beyond the high school level. Data from the Lumina Foundation show county rates of attainment for 2-year and 4-year degrees ranging from a low of 13.67% in Forest County to a high of 37.06% in Erie County. All county attainment rates fall below the Pennsylvania average of 40.8% and the U.S. average of 40.4%. While these rates are a concern for economic development purposes in attracting new jobs, a number of high-quality jobs in the area require post-secondary credentials below the 2-year attainment level. The challenge is to create specific micro-credentials that are validated and valued by employers in their hiring and promotions processes.

Engaging Employers

With the backdrop of declining population levels, it is critical that employers engage directly with educators and others in finding creative solutions of filling key skill gaps. Educators will need to promote high quality job opportunities along with affordable pathways for acquiring the skill, starting with partnership with K-12 schools to expand thinking about career options. In addition, employers will need to expand work-based training partnerships including internships, on-the-job training, apprenticeships, and other solutions. Such work-and-learn programs will meet employers' needs for skills while also meeting job seekers' needs for income while learning.

Promoting Multiple Career Pathways

High quality jobs can be accessed by a wide array of Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs available at Career and Technical Centers (CTCs) in the local area. A primary challenge is increasing public awareness, particularly among students and their parents, of the benefits of CTE as both immediate value for employment and an affordable route to traditional college for those who desire that. Changing public perceptions that CTE is "non-college" remains a daunting task, but one that is crucial for building the talent pipeline for multiple local industry sectors.

Addressing Barriers to Employment

The poverty map for the local area shows pockets of poverty throughout the area. Further, the analysis of barriers quantifies key populations including TANF recipients, persons with disabilities, returning offenders, and others. Job seekers with barriers face challenges of geographic access and access to a wide array of supportive services needed to address their needs. Geographic access is being addressed by the Board via new, creative mobile outreach approaches. The access to broader services is being addressed through expanded partnerships of service providers under the leadership of the new one-stop operator. The challenge will be to optimize access and outcomes through braiding of funding sources under the control of multiple collaborating organizations.

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

The LWDB currently contracts the WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth program services to ResCare Workforce Services for the six-county LWDA following award via a competitive bid process conducted in 2017. ResCare Workforce Services is a two billion dollar company with over 400

locations across the United States. ResCare Workforce Services brings over 49 years of experience, expertise and best practices to deliver a pipeline of talented workforce professionals to local businesses through coordinated training and support services for Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth customers with a business-driven approach. Partnerships have been developed and collaboration occurs with other community agencies which help to connect job seekers to the business community (i.e. the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, adult education and literacy agencies, housing authorities, Veterans counselors, Job Corps, community service agencies, employer on-the-job training programs, Erie Together, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, and Girl Scouts/Boy Scouts). Program service providers in the community are active partners in the workforce development system in the region. Data analysis is conducted to ensure continuous improvement and to assist the LWDB in strategic decision-making. Methods of referrals exist to ensure that access to needed services is available. Where possible, Next Generation Industry Partnership or similar models can be used to support the local workforce development system to gather input from private sector employers in identifying and meeting the needs of businesses in the local area. The Board embraces the framework developed by the Commonwealth under Next Generation Partnerships and will use the key concepts to continue to advance work with employer on a sector basis.

Our strengths include increased focus on proactive off-site outreach services to customers, especially individuals with barriers to employment, through enhanced collaboration, coordination and partnership development with our local community agencies. These efforts provide a more mobile and tactical PA CareerLink® system that provides improved access to workforce development services for our customers, including targeted populations such as ex-offenders and disengaged, out-of-school youth. This is especially beneficial for individuals with barriers to employment who might be less likely to come into the PA CareerLink® centers but will avail themselves of services when they are approached in a setting where they are more comfortable with their surroundings. Additionally, such mobile services will benefit the local workforce development system with a reduction in both infrastructure costs and duplication of effort. Additional program development being funded by a Workforce Innovation Fund grant will provide opportunities for the creation of wrap-around programs to supplement our existing structure and broaden the services that we can provide to employers. Key benefits of the grant are the development of short-term training with “stackable credentials” by industry, incorporating employer input and specifications, job readiness training, as well as stronger cooperation and collaboration across programs and funding streams.

Additionally, development of improved employer outreach strategies incorporating local economic development partners benefits both employers and job seekers in the local area. Tapping into the experience and skill of our local economic development partners, we can more effectively engage with employers in key, high-demand industries and better coordinate on-the-job training programs to provide training in these high priority occupations. Committees of the LWDB have been tasked with evaluating and implementing sector strategies and career pathways to provide accelerated pathways to employment in in-demand occupations and post-secondary education credentials. This is being achieved in collaboration with adult education and literacy partners and there are plans to bring in subject matter experts such as the Workforce Development Liaison with the PA Department of Education to provide information and advice to assist the LWDB and its partners on the development of effective career pathways. Data from a regional skill gaps analysis conducted through a Jobs1st Regional Partnership Grant is being reviewed and analyzed to increase our ability to provide meaningful and current labor market analysis information to benefit the local workforce development system, as well as assist in our collaboration with the West Central LWDA for the development of our Regional Plan.

The work of the NWWDB committees will also include discussions regarding incumbent worker training opportunities to continue, as well as increase, the number of incumbent workers that have received training as a result of our LWDA's manufacturing and building trades industry partnerships. Such sector partnerships benefit the community and local business and industry through supporting the skill development of their existing employees and, in many instances, providing a career ladder within the industry that promotes current employees, thereby opening up opportunities for the hiring of additional entry-level workers.

Opportunities for improvement include the development of a soft skills program for K-8 to assist with preparing youth for employment. The LWDB, through its committees, is working collaboratively to enhance the youth workforce system that builds a youth pipeline to support employer need. They understand the importance of boosting youth interest, education, and skills for the current occupational openings as well as the emerging occupations of the future. The Youth Committee will work to support the WIOA Title I program services contractor to expand outreach and recruitment of out-of-school youth. Strengthening partnerships and coordination with adult literacy and education providers will be a focus of the LWDB to provide eligible individuals with job readiness and life skills necessary to transition them into post-secondary education or employment. In addition, providing education and training to the LWDB on the requirements of changing legislation will also be an important focus in the coming year. We are working on additional initiatives to increase digitization of services such as YouTube videos, Ice House Entrepreneurial Program training, as well as an effort partnering with Title II adult education and literacy providers to coordinate TABE assessments. TABE assessments will enable additional focus on career pathways and skill development for job seekers to increase the number of skilled employees to meet the needs of employers.

2. STRATEGIC PLANNING QUESTIONS: Vision and Goals

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

The Northwest Workforce Development Board (NWWDB), appointed by the local elected officials of the six counties of Northwest Pennsylvania, is charged with strategic planning, policy development, oversight of the workforce system, and establishing priorities for serving employers and job seekers in the local area. The shared vision of the NWWDB and the local elected officials is:

Vision: Northwest Pennsylvania will have a skilled workforce that is responsive to the current and future needs of the region.

To achieve the vision, the NWWDB maintains a strategic plan with multiple goals including:

Goal 1: Visionary Leadership

- Educate WDB members and stakeholders as to the changes in the legislation while implementing a structure for ongoing education
- Identify types of convening sessions (workforce discussions and forums) among stakeholders that should occur. Then be the convener/hold the convening sessions
- Ensure the administrative office has adequate resources, has knowledgeable staff, is visible, and is held to results-oriented performance measures for policy development

Goal 2: Establish Identity as the Workforce Experts

- Brand the workforce system
- Advertise and celebrate successes to promote the brand
- Review service delivery to allow the one-stop centers to become the flagship product
- Participate in partner events that are workforce development related
- Comply with all new requirements for WIOA, aligned with state, regional, and local plans

Goal 3: Partnership Development

- Needs analysis – gather from economic developers, state employment data, to evaluate current data to identify the location of stakeholders in the six county area to determine the “supply and demand” needs and bring the stakeholders to the table to develop action steps
- Board development – provide training in the foundation of the WDB to be more knowledgeable about the WDB’s goals and purpose in order to make these members advocates of the WDB and its future in order to make informed decisions
- Committee structure – to have board members serve on a minimum of one committee and a minimum of one “champion” or liaison to the board
- Encourage and seek non-board members to serve as information experts

Goal 4: PA CareerLink® Improvement

- Review and reassess labor market needs (e.g. employment services) - eliminate old, unnecessary ones
- Clean up, update, redact outdated policies / procedures
- Enhance efficiency of services for jobseekers (improved customer service), especially individuals with barriers to employment
- Strengthen collaboration between WDBs in the region and state (e.g. training list) - even across state borders whenever possible

Goal 5: Sector Strategies

- Provide purposeful education and training to develop meaningful career paths in coordination with employers
- Provide baseline cognitive assessment for all jobseekers (i.e. WorkKeys, WIN, Proveit, etc.)
- Identify acceptable attainment levels for targeted industries in conjunction with employers in those industries
- Develop a soft skills program and implement in the K-8 grades
- Develop a sector advisory committee to meet regularly

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 primary strategy prior to full implementation of WIOA has been to offer high-quality, highly coordinated services of all program partners and funding sources via the PA CareerLink® centers covering the six counties of Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Venango and Warren. As a result of recent strategic planning, discussions with partners are currently underway to increase outreach to customers through a more mobile PA CareerLink® system that brings the workforce development services to the customer through partnership development with community agencies, rather than waiting for the customer to enter the PA CareerLink® centers for services. This will reduce the number of “bricks and mortar” facilities and reduce infrastructure costs, allowing more funding for direct services to the

customer. Workforce development services provided to the public through the service delivery network are funded by a combination of WIOA funds, partner funds, and other grant funds that are applied for by the NWWDB.

The Board's strategies include partnerships with multiple community-based and other organizations. A few examples of the many partnerships include the Crawford County READ Program and Domestic Relations in Crawford County; St. Benedict Education Center, Northwest Tri-County Intermediate Unit, the Multicultural Community Resource Center, Dr. Gertrude Barber Center, and Steel Valley Authority in Erie County; the Community Education Councils in the six-county region; and the Warren Forest Higher Education Council in Warren County. These relationships reduce duplication and enhance services provided to job seekers and employers.

The PA CareerLink® offices also work collaboratively with various other local Chambers of Commerce, economic development agencies, community action agencies, County Assistance Offices, County Office of Drug and Alcohol, OEO, Laurel Technical Institute, Precision Manufacturing Institute, our local career and technical centers, local high schools, colleges, as well as Title II adult education and literacy providers to name a few.

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 commonwealth's workforce development system, as well any the goals and strategies articulated in the regional plan?*

Governor Wolf's Strategic Vision for Workforce Development in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

On July 22, 2014, President Obama signed the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) providing a framework for Governors and states to make changes to their workforce systems. The federal law sets the parameters for the workforce system which is an integral part of the commonwealth's ability to serve jobseekers and employers. WIOA will enable the commonwealth to align workforce priorities across multiple partners, training providers, employers and others to ensure we are creating a skilled workforce for today and the future.

An effective workforce development system will be built on a foundation of alignment, innovation, employer engagement, accountability structures and improved data. Pennsylvania will look beyond WIOA to set broad goals for a comprehensive workforce development system that ensures access for all to "jobs that pay, schools that teach, and government that works." We will do this by providing the highest quality of service to jobseekers and employers through well-coordinated approaches at the state and local levels. System access will be enhanced through the use of technology and creative partnerships with community organizations and other service providers. While access will be improved for all jobseekers, the provision of services and training will be focused on those most in need and hardest to serve.

The NWWDB's efforts converge with the Governor's vision through a desire to be a demand-driven workforce development system, focused on:

- Implementation of a Workforce Innovation Fund grant focused on training individuals with barriers to employment for self-sustaining job opportunities

- Recently created partnerships with Erie Housing Authority and HANDS community agencies to enhance outreach and service delivery to individuals with barriers to employment who are often some of the hardest to serve
- The continued development and support of our employer-led industry partnerships for Advanced Diversified Manufacturing and the Great Lakes Building & Construction Trades
- The elimination of duplication of effort, services and costs within the PA CareerLink® system as well as reduction in “bricks and mortar” infrastructure costs while increasing services
- The development of affordable, effective and stackable training programs designed to produce skill sets in high priority occupations while developing and expanding career pathways that are responsive to the needs of local employers
- The refinement and strengthening of an improved employer outreach strategy which partners with local economic development agencies designed to listen and respond to current business needs, as well as plan for future investments

The NWWDB’s goals, initiatives and effort that align with and/or support the Governor’s vision of the commonwealth’s workforce development system include the following (alignment with Keystone Edge Regional Plan goals and strategies in support of each of the Governor’s goals are also shown under each goal):

Goal 1: Establish career pathways as the primary model for skill, credential and degree attainment and provide all Pennsylvanians, with an emphasis on Pennsylvanians with barriers to employment, an opportunity to a job that pays.

The NWWDB is focused on providing the needed skills and training for employment in high-priority occupations for the area’s job seekers and employers. The Board is aware that not all job seekers come to the workforce development system prepared to enter such high-skill occupations. In support of this, the Board recently formed committees to develop and expand the career pathways concept. The committee composition includes private sector business leaders, adult literacy and education coordinators, post-secondary education leaders and other community agency members and partners. The committees will work collaboratively on this effort, with additional focus on the development of soft skills that are a necessary foundation of career pathways. Career pathways will be developed in collaboration with adult education and literacy partners to align and integrate education, job training, counseling and support services to create accelerated pathways to post-secondary education credentials and employment in in-demand occupations, especially for individuals with barriers to employment. Also, committees have been charged with supporting and advising the Board in the enhancement and delivery of services to individuals with employment barriers.

Keystone Edge Regional Plan Goals and Strategies:

- Goal 2: Continually enhance the workforce development pipeline by promoting high-demand industry sectors, career pathways, and building a pipeline of talent through outreach.
- Goal 4: Increase the alignment of education and training programs with employer demand.
- Strategy 2.1: Ensure career planning for every youth.
- Strategy 2.3: Coordinate a regional career awareness campaign.

Goal 2: Expand the state’s pipeline of workers for targeted industry sectors from entry level skills to middle skills through Industry Partnerships, WEDnet PA, and other innovative strategies.

Using learning from the skills gap analysis completed in conjunction with the West Central Workforce Development Board in 2015 through a JOBS1st PA Regional Partnership Grant with the Northwest Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission (the Local Development District), the committees of the NWWDB will evaluate and develop targeted industry sectors and identify region-specific career pathways with a focus on those targeted sectors. This will be accomplished through leveraging existing resources such as adult literacy and education partners, Workforce Innovation Fund grant dollars, post-secondary education, WIOA Title I funding, as well as TANF funding. Particular focus will be given to those industries that provide the most opportunity for individuals to enter into and advance along career pathways. Additionally, efforts will be invested into growing existing industry partnerships and developing new industry partnerships that support building a vibrant talent pipeline. Partnerships with Mobile Service Delivery, re-entry populations, informational YouTube videos, Ice House Entrepreneurial Program strategies, along with the efforts of the Board's committees will further support the growth of customer skill levels from entry level skills to middle skill advancement, creating opportunities for job promotion.

Keystone Edge Regional Plan Goals and Strategies:

- Goal 1: Create and grow a competitive workforce by engaging knowledgeable, employer-focused leadership that promotes and advocates for business and industry to address the critical workforce challenges of the region.
- Strategy 1.1: Continue to build on employer-driven partnerships with industry in the region.

Goal 3: Increase opportunities for all youth to participate in work-based learning through summer employment, pre-apprenticeship, apprenticeship and other similar experiences.

Youth must be provided with an awareness of various available careers to develop their path to a successful future. Youth ages 15-21 are referred to the Summer JAM (Jobs And More) Program that provides valuable summer work experience. The Summer JAM Program is a program developed locally providing employment through the summer months to eligible youth in Erie County through funding provided by the County of Erie, as well as the NWWDB. This program helps students gain knowledge, tools and meaningful on-the-job experience. The program launched in Erie County last year and is being expanded into the rural counties of the local workforce development area.

The Workforce Innovation Fund Grant provides opportunities for the development of employer-focused training curriculum as well. The goal is to provide tiered, stackable training modules beginning with basic skills and increasing vocational and technical skill levels related to industry career ladders. Assessments are used to determine the best services to meet the customer's interests and abilities.

Individual training accounts are available, when appropriate, for eligible individuals. Youth can be referred to the other options such as the Upward Bound Programs, Educational Talent Search, adult education and literacy programs, as well as Job Corps. Some of the local school districts offer alternative diploma classes in Erie County. Paid and unpaid work experiences are provided for both in-school and out-of-school youth that lack work experience. Eligible youth can be placed in a 180-hour work experience with a local employer in either the private or public sectors. Work experiences are coupled with soft skills training and career exploration prior to beginning a work experience to maximize the placement opportunity. Internships and job shadowing are also available to eligible youth in the WIOA program. Youth in Erie County can utilize the Career Street website to look for potential internships within Erie County as well. On-the-job training opportunities are considered for

eligible out-of-school youth, as well as pre-apprenticeship programs through partnerships with community programs. Pre-apprenticeship opportunities are also being discussed by the Board's committees in an effort to increase their availability to area youth.

Leadership development activities are provided that build dependability, responsibility, positive work attitude, punctuality, interpersonal skills, being a team player, self-confidence, and self-motivation. Go College, a collaborative venture of the Erie School District, Gannon University, and the GE Foundation, is a national data-driven initiative that increases college access and success through academic enrichment, college exposure and service learning. Full-time professional and highly qualified college/career coaches and current Gannon University students serve as tutors within the schools all day, every day throughout the school year. They are also available before, during and after school to assist students academically.

ResCare, the WIOA Title I service provider, brings a set of programs that prepare out-of-school youth with the tools to find and retain employment. WIOA Title II Adult Basic Literacy Education classes that help prepare youth for post-secondary education are also offered and will be fully integrated. Career service counselors provide comprehensive counseling through regular communication with youth participants. Through active case management, career service counselors can maintain open communication with youth on barriers identified through needs assessment and receive feedback from staff concerning any needed interventions. Such interventions can include referrals to drug and alcohol counseling, counseling in the post-secondary or secondary school setting, mental health, family counseling or rehab counseling through the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), Community Shelter Services, SafeNet, Stairways Behavioral Health, Office of Children and Youth, and school guidance counselors.

Keystone Edge Regional Plan Goals and Strategies:

- Goal 4: Increase the alignment of education and training programs with employer demand.
- Strategy 4.1: Enhance workforce development services to meet employers' needs (specifically citing increasing work-based learning opportunities across the region).

Goal 4: Engage employers directly to ensure we are closing the skills gap and able to more quickly upskill or reskill the workforce to meet the current and future needs.

Employers are key partners to lead and define strategies for closing the training and skill gaps and promoting employer-recognized credentials and career pathways. To enhance local efforts in engaging employers, a business services structure that includes local economic development agency staff as members of the Business Services Team of the PA CareerLink® centers was implemented. This new structure increases the ability to tap into the expertise of the local economic development agencies to engage local employers, increase efficiency, and eliminate the need for multiple agency contacts with local industry leaders. It creates common synergies toward meeting workforce demand and supply in our LWDA. During the past year, a targeted job fair was conducted that matched experienced, skilled employees with regional manufacturers searching for employees with comparable skill sets. This approach to targeting job fairs had a positive impact on both employers and dislocated workers, based on the overwhelmingly positive feedback that we received following the event. Employer focus groups are also planned in 2016 with local industry leaders, the NWWDB, its staff and partners in an effort to better identify skills gap and training needed to meet current and emerging needs of employers to close the skills gap in the LWDA. In addition, the committees of the NWWDB will review the results of the Jobs1st Regional Partnership Grant skills gap analysis, and focus on

developing sector strategies and career pathways, in collaboration with the Title II adult education and literacy partners, to address the gaps that exist between available jobs and unemployed individuals, since jobs are available but employers describe critical shortages of talent. Also to be addressed is the disconnect between the education and skills that employers require and those that job seekers possess. Title II adult education providers integrate soft skills training across the curriculum and in the delivery of case management services.

Keystone Edge Regional Plan Goals and Strategies:

- Strategy 1.2: Develop a demand-driven implementation structure.
- Strategy 1.3: Collapse and re-energize employer advisory committees for education
- Strategy 3.6: Leverage the “Industry Needs You” campaign (to engage employers directly in the message to students)

Goal 5: Strengthen data sharing across state agencies and workforce development partners to understand education and employment outcomes and more effectively evaluate our efforts.

The NWWDB supports and encourages access to real-time data from state systems for reducing duplication, targeting outreach, easing the referral process between partners, creating efficiencies for participant services, and its positive impact on the board’s decision-making. At the local level, the NWWDB has expanded data collection efforts in concert with sub-grantees for reporting on all WIOA-funded customers. In addition to the state-required, negotiated program performance measures, the NWWDB tracks additional measures including but not limited to caseworker time spent per client, a list of potential customer barriers to employment, and referral sources. The NWWDB, through its committees, is developing a local evaluation tool dubbed “metrics that matter” that will evaluate customer satisfaction, responsible stewardship of taxpayer money, market penetration, and impact of local innovations. By implementing these activities, along with other significant initiatives such as digitization of services through such avenues as informational YouTube videos, increased outreach through Mobile Service Delivery by going to where the customers are, and reducing duplication via coordinating TABE assessments through our Title II adult education and literacy partners, the Board ensures that the local workforce system is as responsive and accessible as possible.

Keystone Edge Regional Plan Goals and Strategies:

- Goal 3: Maintain a commitment to continuous improvement of the workforce development network by increasing data sharing across various WIOA and partner programs.
- Strategy 3.2: Establish aggressive communication (among partners on a regional basis).
- Strategy 3.4: Empower a convener (for region-wide sharing of information, best practices, and action strategies).

Through increased communications with partner agencies in the local area and through the creation of local initiatives, partnerships have been developed and enhanced toward coordinated and unduplicated services to customers. Examples of such partnerships include a business services structure that includes ResCare’s tool kit for engaging other business-facing organizations; working with Title II adult education and literacy partners through the PA CareerLink® locations in the local workforce development area to coordinate TABE assessments for customers; working closely with our Employment And Retention Network (EARN) partners, local housing authorities, mental health agencies, re-entry agencies, veteran agencies, Multicultural Resource Center, and others on our Mobile Service Delivery initiative to reach individuals with barriers to employment and increase their

access to services and employment opportunities. Additionally, working closely with local OVR representatives, several youth with disabilities were placed in summer employment opportunities at Conneaut Lake Park, providing valuable work experience and for many an introduction to the world of work.

The success of the NWWDB's efforts in implementing these initiatives collectively with the Board's partners will further support the Governor's goals and significantly enhance the ability to influence meaningful change, advance partnership development, as well as increase sharing of program information, common measures and outcome data across these partner agencies. Additionally, these partnerships improve service and reduce duplication while leveraging resources that benefit the customer, as well as intensify performance accountability for meeting and exceeding performance levels, including entered employment, employment retention, wage gain, and other performance goals of the LWDB. Furthermore, these partnerships and initiatives support increased engagement of employers as well as boost overall customer satisfaction and reinforce the NWWDB's commitment to the communities that it serves.

In alignment with the Governor's priorities, the NWWDB conducted a strategic planning process and approved a new strategic plan in 2015. The plan was revisited in early 2016 by the Board's committees to increase committee focus on the goals and objectives. The local workforce development strategies set the board's agenda toward aligning priorities across multiple partners, providers, and employers through well-coordinated approaches. As a change agent in the region, the NWWDB will play a critical role of community convener, bringing stakeholders to the table to build partnerships, discuss issues, resolutions, and accountability. A well-coordinated approach through enhancement in technology and creative partnerships with community organizations and other service providers is key to future competitiveness and prosperity. The NWWDB committees will evaluate ways to strengthen data sharing across state agencies and workforce development partners. A concerted effort at the state level will also be necessary to achieve these goals. Furthermore, the governor's goals will be integrated into the LWDB's goals through:

- Partnering with community organizations to analyze and identify the skills and occupational needs of our targeted industry clusters and emerging industries as a focus toward developing a competitive workforce
- Creating data-driven, innovative workforce strategies that support regional economic competitiveness in tandem with local economic development efforts
- Developing and implementing innovative service design and enhanced technology to increase our outreach in meeting both employers' and job seeker's needs, including individuals with barriers to employment
- Developing sector strategies and career pathways for skill, credential and degree attainment to meet employers' needs and provide job seekers with an opportunity to a job that pays
- Achieving state-negotiated performance accountability measures and beyond through the establishment of local "metrics that matter"
- Developing and supporting employer-driven partnerships with industry in the region.

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 current performance standards are included as an attachment and will be updated following any new negotiations with the Department of Labor and Industry as the plan is implemented.

The NWWDB's goals support the achievement of federal performance accountability measures through increased focus on educating the NWWDB on the changes in legislation to support informed decisions and strengthen oversight of the local workforce development system. Improving customer service and strengthening collaboration among partner agencies, especially through our Mobile Service Delivery outreach partnerships, will enhance participant training and opportunities for placement into employment, especially for individuals with barriers. This improved process will allow increased one-on-one time for participants through partnership development, especially for those individuals with barriers to employment that require more intense focus. Furthermore, the committees of the NWWDB work toward expansion of the industry partnerships in the region, as well as the development of meaningful career pathways in coordination with local employers, will increase the opportunity for participants to gain and preserve self-sustaining employment. The NWWDB goals are committed to reducing the number of long-term unemployed in the area and reducing barriers to employment, including lack of adequate skills and credentials. Performance measures are included in the contract for the WIOA Title I program services contractor and technical assistance is provided if performance benchmarks are not met. Beyond the performance measures required by WIOA, the NWWDB is currently developing through its committees a local evaluation tool dubbed "metrics that matter" that will further evaluate customer satisfaction, responsible stewardship of taxpayer money, market penetration as well as the impact of local innovations.

The negotiated levels of performance for the local workforce development area include goals for Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth for employment, median earnings, credential attainment rate, measurable skill gains, as well as effectiveness in serving employers. The levels are indicative of the local success of providing quality workforce development services and placing participants into jobs. These levels of performance are negotiated with the Commonwealth, taking into consideration the challenges of serving certain demographics, in implementing new Priority of Service structures, as well as variations in the local economy. It is expected that the local workforce development area will continue to meet and/or exceed the local performance levels negotiated under WIOA.

3. OPERATIONAL PLANNING QUESTIONS: 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.*

An organizational chart is provided as an attachment to this plan.

In the Northwest Pennsylvania local workforce development area, each of the six counties (Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Venango and Warren) is represented by a Chief Local Elected Official (CLEO). The Chief Local Elected Officials are the grant recipient for WIOA Title I funds. The role of the Chief Local Elected Officials includes but is not limited to establishing a local workforce development board (LWDB); entering into a written agreement with the LWDB that details the partnership of the two entities for governance and oversight of the workforce development system; authorizing the establishment of a standing Youth Committee of the NWWDB; and the designation and/or certification of PA CareerLink® operators in collaboration with the NWWDB. The Chief Local Elected Officials work

in cooperation with the LWDB to develop and approve the Regional Plan, Local Plan, and the NWWDA budget. A chairperson of the Chief Local Elected Officials is elected by a majority vote of the six members of the Chief Local Elected Officials. Officers serve a one-year term. Four members constitute a quorum. Each member has one vote with no proxy. Matters before the Chief Local Elected Officials can be resolved by a simple majority of the total votes present at each meeting.

The Chief Local Elected Officials have designated the Venango County Commissioners as the fiscal agent for the local workforce development area. The Venango County Commissioners, as fiscal agent, covers the responsibilities of accounting, budgeting, financial and cash management functions, procurement and purchasing functions, property management functions, contracting and audit functions. The fiscal agent works with a committee of the NWWDB and the Chief Local Elected Officials to develop the budget, which is provided to the full Board for review and approval. There is a standing NWWDB agenda item on the regular Board meeting agenda for the fiscal agent to provide financial reports and various details outlining funding streams, PA CareerLink® expenses and revenues, as well as overall funding expenditures and balances.

Partners for Performance, an entity created and governed by the Chief Local Elected Officials as the administrative support agency to the NWWDB, provides staff support for the Board responsibilities of development and submission of a Regional and Local Plans, selection of one-stop operators, selection of youth providers, identification of eligible providers of training services, program monitoring, negotiation of local performance measures, assisting the Governor in developing the statewide employment statistics system, developing employer linkages, promoting the participation of private sector employers through connecting, brokering and coaching activities, and LWDB staff personnel management functions. The NWWDB contracts out the provision of all program services via a competitive bid process. No program services are provided by Partners for Performance or its staff.

The NWWDB guides policy, establishes a budget, and provides oversight to the local workforce development system. The role of the NWWDB is to act as intermediary to bring the various components of the system together for collaborative and innovative purposes. The LWDB plays an important role, working with private industry, public and non-profit sectors to create a positive economic environment that is conducive to economic growth that ensures a skilled workforce to meet the needs of business and industry. Currently the Board's structure allows for 24 member representatives on the Northwest Pennsylvania Workforce Development Board. Appropriate groups in the local area nominate representatives from local central labor councils, community-based organizations, local economic development agencies, local education entities, and others as appropriate per commonwealth guidance. Private sector business members are nominated by organizations such as the local Chambers of Commerce for consideration of appointment by the Chief Local Elected Officials. Board appointment terms are from two to four years and are staggered.

Two industry partnerships are currently active in the region: Advanced Diversified Manufacturing and Great Lakes Building and Construction Trades. Industry partnership employers are partnering with the Youth Committee, the Sector Strategies and Career Pathways Committee, and the LWDB in identifying workforce needs, educational requirements and career pathways.

The LWDB conducts its business through the committees listed below. Policy decisions are reviewed first by the appropriate committee and then are reviewed by the Executive Committee; policy recommendations of the committees are then presented to the full board for approval. All board

members are encouraged to serve on at least one committee. The current standing committee structure which includes some non-board members is listed below:

Executive

The Executive Committee acts on behalf of the full LWDB, when necessary, with ratification of approvals by the full LWDB at the next LWDB meeting. The Executive Committee also recommends priorities, goals, objectives, projects and strategies to address local workforce development needs. Other duties of the Executive Committee include LWDB committee oversight, liaison to the Chief Local Elected Officials, and board development.

Business Solutions

The Business Solutions Committee engages the private sector to identify and address skill gaps, education and credential needs, and workforce requirements to recommend strategies to meet private sector labor market demands; aligns with economic development, education and community stakeholders; industry partnership coordination; reviews eligible training provider list and analyzes training outcomes; enhancing customer experience and satisfaction.

Communications

The Communications Committee assists the LWDB in the development of an outreach and communications plan that includes promoting engagement with job seekers, employers and partners, the local website, branding, public relations, and overseeing community outreach.

Fiscal/Monitoring

The Fiscal/Monitoring Committee ensures system accountability and transparency through fiscal oversight, audit, and program system monitoring, including performance measures, metrics that matter, and certification of one-stop centers; develops and recommends the workforce budget, negotiates with the Commonwealth of local performance measures; conducts oversight of the program contractor(s); oversees industry partnership resources and other grants.

Governance

The Governance Committee ensures compliance to LWDB bylaws and other governing documents; makes recommendations to Executive Committee and the LWDB for policy changes as needed; and makes recommendations for appointments, removals, and nominations of LWDB members and partners to the CLEOs.

Workforce Solutions

The Workforce Solutions Committee continuously reviews and improves the one-stop system to eliminate barriers that inhibit job seekers from attaining the education and training needed to gain family sustaining wages; establishes program goals; and promotes career pathways for adults.

Youth Committee

The Youth Committee assists the LWDB with developing, implementing, and oversight of a comprehensive plan for at-risk youth, both in-school and out-of-school, that coordinates services, training, and work-based learning; provides policy input for youth services; promotes career pathways for youth; develops innovative ideas for pipeline development.

The LWDB Chair also has the authority to create ad hoc committees, as needed or required.

Equal Opportunity Officer (EEO) duties related to PA CareerLink® are as follow:

Joe Miceli
Bureau of Workforce Partnership & Operations
PA CareerLink® - Erie County
1647 Sassafra Street, Suite 300
Erie, PA 16502
(814) 455-9966

Jeanna Noel
Bureau of Workforce Partnership & Operations
PA CareerLink® - Oil Region
255 Elm Street
Oil City, PA 16301
(814) 678-5050

PA CareerLink® Warren County's status as a comprehensive site was changed by the NWWDB at its August 11, 2017 meeting from a comprehensive site to an affiliate site with the intention of moving to Mobile Service Delivery when the lease expires in June 2018.

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 Workforce Service Delivery System Program Partner/Provider list is included as an attachment to the plan.

The NWWDB ensures the provision of WIOA Title I, Title II, Title III, and Title IV programs and services that align with the Governor's vision and strategy for the commonwealth's workforce development system, as well as local and regional strategies. WIOA Title I programs are competitively bid and awarded to a program services contractor. Currently, ResCare is the program services contractor for WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Programs. The WIOA Title I, Title II, Title III, and Title IV program providers are collaborating partners within the local PA CareerLink® system, with coordination of services directed by the procured one-stop operator.

All required federally mandated programs have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to define roles within the local PA CareerLink® centers. Career services for Adult, Dislocated Workers, and Older Youth, as well as training services are provided through the local PA CareerLink® system. Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations staff provide employment and training services as a partner member of the local PA CareerLink® system authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, Trade Act of 1974, Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program, as well as programs authorized under state unemployment compensation laws. Staff of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation also provide employment and training services authorized under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as a partner member of the local PA CareerLink® system.

There are two comprehensive PA CareerLink® sites in the local workforce development area. These centers are located in Erie and Venango Counties. There is one affiliate site in Warren County that is proposed to close in June 2018 when the lease expires. Services will be provided to Warren County residents at one of the comprehensive sites or by Mobile Service Delivery. There will be up to four

special sites established for dislocated workers in Clarion and Crawford Counties. The affiliate and special sites are connected to the comprehensive site in Venango County. Special sites will be established by MOU between the site and the NWWDB. The location of the special sites will be determined in consultation with the one stop operator, but in or near a county where there is no comprehensive site available.

In concurrence with the CLEOs, the NWWDB competitively procured a PA CareerLink® one stop operator for the local area. An evaluation committee that included NWWDB members evaluated the proposals received and made a recommendation for award of contract for the successful bidder to the NWWDB. The selected one stop operator, ResCare Workforce Services, will coordinate the services and resources in the MOU and the Resource Sharing Agreement Budget among, at a minimum, the core programs identified in WIOA. The one stop operator is responsible to focus resources on individuals with barriers to employment and ensure that the minimum funding requirements and performance goals are on track in the local workforce system. The overall goal for the system is to provide excellent service consistently to customers of the system, both job seekers and businesses. This will be accomplished through better coordination, increased communication, leveraging of resources, and reducing duplication. Some examples will include, but not be limited to, monthly partner meetings, functional alignment of area teams with regularly held meetings, staff training, and standard processes/procedures and forms. The use of technology such as Zoom or Skype will enable these meetings to occur across the six counties, ensuring the same message and efficient use of staff time.

Since ResCare Workforce Services was selected as both the WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth program services contractor as well as the one stop operator, a memorandum of understanding between the NWWDB, the CLEOs, and ResCare Workforce Services was executed that clarifies how ResCare Workforce Services will carry out its responsibilities to perform the functions of both the one stop operator as well as the WIOA Title I program services contractor to ensure that the appropriate firewalls are in place and that no conflict of interest exists in the performance of the contracted services. The one stop operator will work to ensure alignment and integration of partner programs and services into the local workforce development system through the following:

1. ResCare shall develop, implement, and ensure compliance with proper internal controls and firewalls to maintain transparency and integrity to ensure that no conflict of interest exists in its performance of the duties as WIOA Title I Program Services Contractor and WIOA Title I One Stop Operator. This information will be submitted to and monitored by the WDB;
2. ResCare shall develop, implement, and ensure compliance with a separate reporting structure within the organization which meets the requirements for separation of functions under WIOA. This information will be submitted to and monitored by the WDB;
3. ResCare shall be responsible to render impartial decisions and perform the duties of the WIOA Title I Program Services Contractor and One Stop Operator in an objective way;
4. ResCare shall not convene system stakeholders to assist the WDB in the development, preparation, and submission of Local Plans, competitive processes for selecting one stop operators, terminating one stop operators, career services providers, or youth providers;
5. ResCare shall not be responsible for the oversight of itself or other operators;

6. ResCare shall not negotiate local and/or regional performance accountability measures;
7. ResCare shall not develop or submit budgets for activities of the WDB.

The WDB and the CLEOs agree on the following expectations (regarding the responsibilities of the One Stop Operator) to include, but not necessarily be limited to:

- Serve as an intermediary with all of the one stop partners;
- Know and understand the parameters under which the partners provide services;
- Know and understand each partner's performance measurement goals;
- Ensure that an effective partner referral mechanism is in place for the benefit of individuals and the partner's performance;
- Attend and participate in one stop partner meetings;
- Possess knowledge of community events and ensure that all appropriate partners are made aware of upcoming and/or relevant events in which they may wish to participate;
- Act as an ambassador for the one stop system within the community;
- Provide a bridge to business services and resources;
- Ensure compliance with the Commonwealth's and the WDB's one stop center certification criteria which is essential for receipt of infrastructure funding;
- Ensure that the Commonwealth's "Methods of Administration" are enacted and maintained;
- Ensure that all relevant equal opportunity and civil rights measures are complied with;
- Recommend, maintain and retire technological equipment and related IT services necessary for the operation of the one stop center; and
- Track and implement the negotiated one stop partner Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

The NWWDB will evaluate the One Stop Operator within the initial six (6) months after the contract start date, and then at least annually thereafter. The evaluation shall include (but is not limited to) contract provisions, participating partner surveys, performance measures developed by the NWWDB, and any applicable PA CareerLink® certification requirements.

Mobile delivery of workforce services does not require a site. It is a proactive delivery of services; meeting the needs of individuals with barriers to employment that otherwise would not visit a comprehensive site. Collaboration and cooperation with a myriad of social service providers,

education providers, and employers eliminates the need for job seekers to self-identify by visiting the PA CareerLink®. Community organizations will provide access to their clients, gratis use of their facilities to deliver individual and group-level workforce programming, wrap-around, holistic counseling to shared or dual enrolled clients. At its basest level, this approach is designed to reach those job seekers that have the most significant barriers to success, whether adult, youth, or dislocated workers where they are. Strategy and operational detail for the mobile delivery of services is provided as an attachment to this plan.

The local workforce development area, as previously described, includes the six core programs mandated under WIOA. Program service delivery covers Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Venango and Warren Counties and includes partnerships with many community agencies. Workforce development services provided to the public through the service delivery network are funded by a combination of WIOA funds and other grant funds that are applied for by the NWWDB and/or its partners. The purpose of each PA CareerLink® is to create a seamless system of service delivery that will enhance access to the individual program services while improving long-term success. The core program partners (Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Adult Education and Literacy, Wagner-Peyser, and Vocational Rehabilitation) work together to effectively serve job seekers and employers. Although each program has defined activities and responsibilities by law, they work to leverage services and reduce duplication for optimum outcomes.

The service delivery network is coordinated by the PA CareerLink® Operator and includes both mandated and voluntary partners. The PA CareerLink® centers also maintain working relationships with various community-based and other organizations including organizations such as Domestic Relations in Crawford County, St. Benedict Education Center at Oil Region, and the Steel Valley Authority in Erie. These relationships enhance services provided to job seekers and employers. The NWWDB will continue to evaluate and develop strategies for high-quality career services, training and education, as well as the supportive services needed to assist customers with placement into family-sustaining employment, as well as to help employers find skilled workers and access to training for their current workforce. The Board, as well as its committee membership composition, includes career and technical center directors and Title II adult education supervisors.

The PA CareerLink® centers also have partnerships and work collaboratively with their local Chambers of Commerce, economic development, the Senior Community Service Employment Program under Title V of the Older Americans Act (SCSEP), County Assistance Offices, County Office of Drug and Alcohol, OEO, Erie Together, local training providers, local career and technical centers, local high schools and colleges, as well as Community Education Councils to name a few. Local Community Service Block Grant agencies participate in the delivery of workforce development services in multiple ways including: participation in local and regional planning groups; engaging in business service delivery; distribution of materials in the PA CareerLink® centers; providing computer links to partner organizations; holding meetings at PA CareerLink® centers as needed; participating in sessions for employers with partner agencies; and working with partners to leverage grant funding opportunities.”

As mentioned previously, the WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Program services are currently contracted to ResCare for the six-county local workforce development area, as awarded through a competitive bid process conducted in 2017. Partnerships are developed and collaboration occurs with other intermediary entities which help to connect job seekers to the business community (i.e. the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Veterans counselors, Job Corps, county human service agencies, employer on-the-job training programs, Erie Together, Big Brothers and Big Sisters and Girl

Scouts/Boy Scouts, Community Education Councils). ResCare is also contracted to provide workforce development services to eligible participants through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program designed to help needy families achieve self-sufficiency. This includes referrals to partner agencies and/or community agencies for assistance such as drug and alcohol counseling, housing, and other assistance in removing barriers that may prevent them from attending training or obtaining and/or retaining employment. Customers entering the PA CareerLink® can receive a full array of career services from any or all partners. Career services must be tracked in the state system of record (Commonwealth Workforce Development System or CWDS).

Customers requiring individualized services are evaluated and recommendations are made based on the initial assessment of knowledge, skills and abilities. Based on this initial assessment, the customer begins job search activities or moves into a more individualized service process, as appropriate. If a customer cannot obtain employment through these services, they are evaluated for training services. Training services may include skill training or on-the-job training. Referrals between partnering agencies are provided to ensure that needed services are made available. The customer is exited upon securing suitable employment or choosing to no longer participate in PA CareerLink® services, at which time follow-up services are conducted for no less than twelve months. PA CareerLink® staff members are trained to assist employer customers with employment needs such as recruitment assistance, assessment and testing, and labor market information.

3.3. *How will the local board work with the entities carrying out core programs to:*

- *Expand access to employment, training, education and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly individuals with barriers to employment.*

The NWWDB ensures that the local workforce system is universally accessible, customer centered, with training that is job-driven. Customers entering the PA CareerLink® can receive a full array of career services. Career services are tracked in the state system of record (Commonwealth Workforce Development System or CWDS). Customers requiring individualized services are evaluated and recommendations are made based on the initial assessment of knowledge, skills and abilities. Based on the initial assessment, the customer begins job search activities, moves into the individualized career services process, and/or they are evaluated for training services. The WIOA Title I program services contractor staff is responsible to review and sign off on all registration paperwork for completeness and accuracy when determining participant eligibility and maintain a centrally controlled file for each program applicant and registrant which contains copies of all documents collected. The NWWDB requires a documented secondary staff review of eligibility determination for all WIOA participants. All data must be entered into the state system of record (CWDS) for tracking the participant registration and eligibility. The staff secondary eligibility review must be documented in the participant file. NWWDB local policy allows for self-certification as a source for documenting eligibility for WIOA Title I program participants, with the exception of out-of-school youth, but must be limited and only available as a last resort after all other sources of eligibility verification are exhausted. Family income level may not be self-certified in any case. WIOA Title I program service contractors are encouraged to use telephone verification prior to self-assessment for Adult, Dislocated Worker, and In-School Youth by verifying eligibility criteria through phone calls with recognized governmental or social service agencies. Information obtained through this method must be documented. The NWWDB will use a random sampling methodology to monitor self-certification and self-attestation usage.

Training opportunities for customers are supported through the Northwest PA Workforce Development Board's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). Training services may include skill training or work-based options such as on-the-job training, customized training or incumbent worker training. There is no sequence of services required for a job seeker to obtain training. Supportive services are offered to assist eligible participants toward successfully completing their training. The customer is exited upon securing self-sustaining employment or choosing to no longer participate in PA CareerLink® services, at which time follow-up services are conducted for no less than twelve months. PA CareerLink® staff members are trained to assist employer customers with employment needs such as recruitment assistance, assessment and testing, and labor market information.

Co-located partners operate under a unified set of core values, vision, and mission that creates the foundation for how services are provided by guiding behavior, organizing the work environment and creating an opportunity for presenting positively and professionally to customers and partners. WIOA Title I staff and Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations staff share the responsibilities of career services for all customers. This includes conducting initial assessment of customer needs, presenting workshops, assisting customers in the Career Resource Center, and conducting more in-depth assessments based on customer needs.

The NWWDB places importance on increased focus on individuals with barriers to employment as well as focus on individuals entitled to priority of service. The NWWDB will encourage the local one stop system partners to continue to identify opportunities to expand access to workforce development services and explore co-enrollment for eligible individuals. Strengthened partnerships with local Title II adult literacy and education partners will support this effort, as well as strengthened relationships with OVR staff. The Mobile Service Delivery initiative will increase outreach efforts and expand service access to individuals with barriers to employment through partnerships with social service agencies, digitization of service through laptops and mobile internet capability, as well as posting of informational YouTube videos, etc. This effort will reach individuals with barriers to employment that might be reluctant to come into the physical PA CareerLink® centers in the LWDA to access services.

Individuals eligible for both Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) funding are provided with services to assist in removing barriers that may prevent them from attending training and/or retaining employment. These recipients will also be referred to partner and/or other community agencies for assistance in other areas such as drug and alcohol counseling, housing, etc. Implementation of the Mobile Services Delivery provides greater access to workforce development services for TANF and SNAP recipients."

Eligibility to receive services under WIOA Title IV, a core partner may only be determined by a qualified OVR Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor. Additionally, training for OVR staff is at the discretion of the local OVR District Administrator.

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

Committees of the NWWDB will re-evaluate targeted industry sectors to develop and promote career pathways as a key workforce development strategy. Efforts will create career pathways that will align and integrate education (including Adult Basic Education and English as a Second Language), job training, counseling and support services to create accelerated pathways to postsecondary education

credentials and employment within in-demand occupations. Efforts to facilitate employer engagement will include an assessment of what employers want and not what staff thinks they want them to know to build positive working relationships. Focus groups were conducted in 2016 with local employers to increase understanding of what employers need and to increase employers' understanding of what the partners in the system can provide to them. The appointment of a NWWDB member representing apprenticeships will augment the focus on the opportunities of apprenticeships in the LWDA.

Driven by identified sector needs, the Business Services Team, which includes local economic development agencies staff, coordinates outreach efforts to job seekers and employers by all partners. Wagner-Peyser and other partners refer customers to the Title II adult education and literacy partners as customer need is identified. Individuals with low basic skills who would like to upgrade their skills to attend postsecondary training are referred to Title II programs to enhance their English, math, and literacy skills. This includes English Language Learners. The Chairperson of the local Adult Education and Literacy Coalition is a member of the NWWDB as well as several of its committees. This provides the NWWDB with opportunities for facilitating the development of career pathways and co-enrollment with the Title II partners across the local workforce development system, reducing duplication and improving access to activities that can lead to a recognized postsecondary credential. Title II partners seamlessly refer customers to the PA CareerLink® system through both comprehensive sites and Mobile Service Delivery. Title II partners administer assessment testing and remediation to job seekers at the PA CareerLink® centers in the local workforce development area. PA CareerLink® staff conduct outreach to the Adult Education and Literacy providers and high school equivalency (HSE) credential classes to promote PA CareerLink® services to interested job seekers.

Community Education Councils serve as an intermediary and broker of training programs in the local workforce development area based on identified need to ensure that rural communities have access to credential-bearing training opportunities. The Community Education Councils (CECs) network aligns training development efforts with the overarching strategies of the NWWDB to increase education and training delivery to rural areas working with the Mobile Service Delivery process.

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

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

The committees of Board evaluate targeted industry sectors to develop and promote career pathways as a key workforce development strategy. The committees identify career pathways that align and integrate education (including Adult Basic Education and English as a Second Language), job training, counseling and support services to create accelerated pathways to postsecondary education credentials and employment within in-demand occupations. Efforts to facilitate employer engagement include a discussion of what employers desire in services from the system. During 2016, focus groups were conducted with local employers to further evaluate what employers need. A NWWDB member has been appointed representing apprenticeships and it is anticipated that his perspective will assist in bringing additional focus to the availability and opportunities of apprenticeships in the local workforce development area.

Input gathered from private sector participation on NWWDB and its committees is incorporated into

the strategic direction of the local board. This is the basis of an employer-led board, comprised of local business leaders in small to large companies in in-demand sectors that comprise high-priority occupations in healthcare, manufacturing, building construction and other industry sectors in the local area. Where possible, Next Generation Industry Partnerships or similar models can be used to support the local workforce development system to gather input from private sector employers in identifying and meeting the needs of businesses in the local area.

Additionally, the NWWDB plans to reserve funds allocated to the local workforce development area to pay for the Federal share of the cost of providing training through a training program for incumbent workers to support targeted industry sectors. Employer payment of the non-Federal share for employers participating in the program will be established by taking into consideration such other factors as possibly the number of employees participating in the training, the wage and benefit levels of the employees at the beginning and anticipated upon completion of the training, the relationship of the training to the competitiveness of the employer and employees, and the availability of other employer-provided training and advancement opportunities. These activities will be further strengthened through the engagement of industry partnerships, both existing industry partnerships as well as those to be developed based on analysis and demand.

The committees of the Board are collaborating to bring together local employers, youth providers, career and technical centers, adult education and literacy providers, and other interested stakeholders to identify and develop career pathways that lead youth and adult job seekers from entry level positions to occupations with stackable credentials. The Workforce Innovation Grant funding will provide opportunities in this effort for individuals with barriers to employment.

For WIOA funding, smaller employers with limited resources can be reimbursed at a higher percentage than larger employers. The Business Services Team, which benefits from the participation of an OVR business service representative, discuss talent acquisition and development needs and then shift to the identification of services and programs that will be of benefit to the employer. Work-based training, workforce readiness, and targeted recruitment events are some of the many services that can be offered to assist the employer. The Business Services Team promotes the PA CareerLink® available services and programs not only to employers, but to other organizations that have business members and customers. In addition, PA CareerLink® staff participate on several local human resource groups across the six-county region to discuss current HR topics, services and training available through the PA CareerLink® and its partners.

Employers in manufacturing and building and construction trades are engaged through local industry partnership meetings conducted regularly within the local workforce development area. ResCare is currently in the process of building new business services procedures and partnerships, using tools and protocols that have proved successful in multiple sites nationally. Their experience in operating programs in over 400 locations across the nation offers a fresh approach to local workforce development services and their agency provides over 1,200 online training modules available to program participants, providing many additional resources that may not have been previously offered.

Business Services Team representatives promote the area's workforce development programs and services to local employers and provides employers to a pipeline of qualified talent, recruitment assistance, retention and up-skilling of their existing workforce through referrals and joint visits with local economic development agencies. Members of the Business Services Team attend and support the industry partnership meetings to assist the employers with acquiring and retaining skilled talent.

The NWWDB is working with our Partnership for Regional Economic Performance (PREP) partners to submit an Engage! application that will enable the tracking of engagement with employers, as well as participating on lead economic development teams in both Crawford and Erie Counties, and working closely with the Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) in both Clarion and Erie. Additionally, the NWWDB has embraced efforts to address business and employer needs through Next Generation Sector opportunities. With Next Generation Sector Partnerships, the opportunity exists to expand engagement of additional industry sectors even beyond manufacturing to include healthcare, building and construction, and hospitality. The Business Services Team aligns with the NWWDB's local and regional sector strategy by assisting in the recruitment and development of business customers to participate in sector focus groups and industry partnership activity for key industries in the local area. The mission of the Business Services Team is to provide guidance, resources, and strategic workforce solutions to employer customers. The PA CareerLink® Business Services Team and local economic development work together to increase awareness among employers about resources available through the public workforce development system including but not limited to on-the-job training, customized training, work-based learning, incumbent worker training, expansion, new business markets, opportunities for equipment purchases, etc.

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

An employer focus group was held in 2016 with local industry leaders, the NWWDB, its staff and partners in an effort to better identify skills gap and training needed to meet current and future needs of employers to close the skills gap in the LWDA. A refreshed approach has also been taken for offering job fairs on a sector basis, matching experienced workers with regional employers, starting with the manufacturing sector.

To further the important work of the NWWDB in increasing apprenticeship opportunities in the local workforce development area, the Board is collaborating on an American Apprenticeship Grant with the West Central Workforce Development Area. The US Department of Labor recently awarded a \$2.9 million American Apprenticeship Grant to West Central Job Partnership to build *The Greater Oh-Penn Manufacturing Apprenticeship Network*. The Network is comprised of five industry-led sector partnerships including 137 very actively engaged businesses (Mahoning Valley Manufacturers Coalition, Erie Regional Manufacturer Partnership, Advanced Materials Manufacturing Industry Partnership in NW PA, and Portage County Manufacturers Coalition); five Workforce Development Areas (WDB Areas 17, 18, & 19 in Ohio; NW PA WDB Area; and West Central PA WDB Area) as well as the Ohio Apprenticeship Council, the PA Department of Labor & Industry, multiple community colleges, universities, career and technical centers, Adult Basic Education providers, and other partners through the American Job Centers. The Network includes the 6 counties of the Northwest workforce development area, along with 8 other contiguous counties on the border of Pennsylvania and Ohio (Lawrence, Mercer, Erie, Crawford, Venango, Clarion, Warren and Forest in PA and Trumbull, Mahoning, Columbiana, Portage, Geauga, and Ashtabula in Ohio). The Network aims to markedly increase manufacturer's ability to meet their needs for high-skilled and credentialed employees and willingness to use customized registered apprenticeship models. The Network will focus on methods to ease the apprenticeship process for manufacturers by creating a multi-employer group sponsorship apprenticeship platform and streamlining apprenticeship and employee candidate recruitment, assessment, and pre-screening operations with different service providers and "on-ramps," facilitating the process of matching appropriate candidates with manufacturers' needs.

Another valuable local resource for supporting system initiatives and improvements include the regional skills gap analysis that was conducted for Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Venango, Warren, West Central and Lawrence Counties as part of a Jobs1st Regional Partnership Grant through the Northwest Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Committee. This regional skills gap analysis revealed that many manufacturing employers reported difficulties in finding qualified candidates to hire for openings in their companies. Since this analysis, many initiatives have been implemented including Mobile Service Delivery and the Workforce Innovation Fund Grant activities to provide opportunities for the creation of wrap-around programs to supplement our existing structure and broaden the services that we can provide to employers. Key benefits of the grant are the development of short-term training with “stackable credentials” by industry, incorporating employer input and specifications, job readiness training, as well as stronger cooperation and collaboration across programs and funding streams.

The NWWDB works in tandem with local economic development agencies and their

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

Partnerships with economic development officials have been enhanced and include regular communication and strategic interactions. The Board and its staff are active partners in the efforts of the Northwest Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission’s Partnership for Regional Economic Performance (PREP) which connects local and regional workforce development activities with other business service providers, such as the Northwest Industrial Resource Center (NWIRC). The Executive Director of the Northwest Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission is a member of our NWWDB. The PREP partners work collaboratively to identify and address key workforce issues through the PA CareerLink® Business Services Team and through implementation of action strategies in the Keystone Edge Regional WIOA Plan.

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

The Office of UC Service Centers Customer Services Section conducts seminars on UC topics that assist employers in understanding their rights and responsibilities with regard to UC. Mandatory work registration and work search requirements of the PA Unemployment Compensation Law assists employers in reducing their UC costs. PA CareerLink® staff are knowledgeable on the UC requirements for JobGateway® registration. Currently unemployment insurance programs provide a phone in the PA CareerLink® centers for use by claimants. The local PA CareerLink® system provides customers with the required information on the Profile Reemployment Program (PREP)/Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program. In addition to the required information for the PREP/RESEA Program, information is provided on workshops such as resume writing, computer basics, etc. Upcoming hiring events are discussed. Claimants are provided with a review of the claimant’s JobGateway® registration, resume and preferences. A job search may also be conducted if the claimant is unsure of the process. An assessment of the claimant’s goals and potential barriers to employment is conducted. The claimant will be instructed to attend a workshop or other services that will assist in their reemployment.

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?*

One of the key growth strategies for the local area and the region will be to expand entrepreneurship activity and business start-ups. The NWWDB, along with its newly-procured one-stop operator and WIOA Title I program service provider, will work with the local Ice House initiative and its corps of certified facilitators to incorporate entrepreneurial thinking into training programs for both youth and adults. The Ice House Entrepreneurial Program is a powerful learning program designed to educate and engage participants in the fundamental aspects of an entrepreneurial mindset and the unlimited opportunities it can provide. Participants of the Ice House Entrepreneurial Program learn to: develop critical thinking skills that will enable them to identify and evaluate opportunities, manage risks, and learn from the results; understand the process that enables entrepreneurs with limited resources to transform an idea into a sustainable success; understand and apply fundamental aspects of entrepreneurial thinking across disciplines and as a means of personal empowerment; establish goals, identify resources, and determine the steps required to accomplish their goals; identify and interact with local entrepreneurs within their own communities.

The NWWDB works closely with local economic development agencies, and benefits from having local economic development agency leaders as members of the local board. These members assist with two-way information flow to enhance the achievement of economic development and workforce development goals for the region. The NWWDB works in collaboration with economic development partners and programs to increase awareness among employers about resources available through the public workforce development system including but not limited to on-the-job training, customized training, work-based learning, incumbent worker training, as well as identifying and addressing key workforce challenges. As mentioned previously, the NWWDB is also currently working with our Partnership for Regional Economic Performance (PREP) partners to submit an Engage! application that will enable the tracking of engagement with employers, as well as continuing to participate on lead economic development teams in both Crawford and Erie Counties, and working closely with the Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) in both Clarion and Erie.

The PA CareerLink® Business Services Team and local economic development work together at the staff level to discuss expansion, new business markets, opportunities for equipment purchases supporting expansions and new markets, etc. Through these collaborations, as well as those with the Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) in Clarion and Erie Counties, individuals who are interested in self-employment are referred to community partners such as the Small Business Development Centers in Clarion and Erie Counties to receive specialized assistance including entrepreneurship education that provides an introduction to the values and basics of starting and running a business. Enterprise development provides support and services that incubate and help individuals develop their own businesses by helping individuals access small loans or grants that are needed to begin business operation.

4. OPERATIONAL PLANNING QUESTIONS: 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.

Competitive requests for proposals are announced to the public through advertisement in local newspaper and/or email notification to a large audience, announcements at public LWDB and committee meetings, and via the LWDB website that includes distribution to regional training providers, faith-based and community-based organizations. Proposals received are reviewed by LWDB staff only for completeness and adherence to requirements. Proposals are then thoroughly reviewed and evaluated by a review team made up of LWDB members, Chief Local Elected Officials, committee members, and community partners that are familiar with the program/service. The review team makes a recommendation to the full LWDB for approval. Additional procurement details are provided in the LWDB's Procurement and Property Management Policy that can be found at www.nwpawib.org.

In certain circumstances allowed by the Commonwealth and by local procurement processes, a sole source procurement may occur. Procurement by noncompetitive proposals (sole source) is procurement through solicitation of a proposal form only one source and would be used only when one or more of the following circumstances apply:

- ❖ The item is available only from a single source; or
- ❖ The public exigency or emergency for the requirement will not permit a delay resulting from competitive solicitation; or
- ❖ The Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity expressly authorizes noncompetitive proposals in response to a written request from the non-Federal entity; or
- ❖ After solicitation of a number of sources, competition is determined inadequate.

The NWWDB selected a one stop operator by following a competitive procurement process. On March 10, 2017, the NWWDB issued a request for proposals (RFP) for both the one-stop operator and the program services provider for WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Programs in the local workforce development area. Following receipt of proposals by April 14, 2017, an evaluation committee that included NWWDB members evaluated the proposals received and made a recommendation for award of contract for the successful bidder to the NWWDB. ResCare Workforce Services was awarded the one stop operator contract as well as the WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth program services contract and assumed these roles on July 1, 2017. A memorandum of understanding between the NWWDB, the CLEOs, and ResCare Workforce Services was executed that clarifies how ResCare Workforce Services will carry out its responsibilities to perform the functions of both the one stop operator as well as the WIOA Title I program services contractor to ensure that the appropriate firewalls are in place and that no conflict of interest exists in the performance of the contracted services. The one stop operator will work to ensure alignment and integration of partner programs and services into the local workforce development system through the following:

- ❖ ResCare shall develop, implement, and ensure compliance with proper internal controls and firewalls to maintain transparency and integrity to ensure that no conflict of interest exists in its performance of the duties as WIOA Title I Program Services Contractor and WIOA Title I One Stop Operator. This information will be submitted to and monitored by the WDB;

- ❖ ResCare shall develop, implement, and ensure compliance with a separate reporting structure within the organization which meets the requirements for separation of functions under WIOA. This information will be submitted to and monitored by the WDB;
- ❖ ResCare shall be responsible to render impartial decisions and perform the duties of the WIOA Title I Program Services Contractor and One Stop Operator in an objective way;
- ❖ ResCare shall not convene system stakeholders to assist the WDB in the development, preparation, and submission of Local Plans, competitive processes for selecting one stop operators, terminating one stop operators, career services providers, or youth providers;
- ❖ ResCare shall not be responsible for the oversight of itself or other operators;
- ❖ ResCare shall not negotiate local and/or regional performance accountability measures;
- ❖ ResCare shall not develop or submit budgets for activities of the WDB.

The WDB and the CLEOs agree on the following expectations (regarding the responsibilities of the One Stop Operator) to include, but not necessarily be limited to:

- ❖ Serve as an intermediary with all of the one stop partners;
- ❖ Know and understand the parameters under which the partners provide services;
- ❖ Know and understand each partner's performance measurement goals;
- ❖ Ensure that an effective partner referral mechanism is in place for the benefit of individuals and the partner's performance;
- ❖ Attend and participate in one stop partner meetings;
- ❖ Possess knowledge of community events and ensure that all appropriate partners are made aware of upcoming and/or relevant events in which they may wish to participate;
- ❖ Act as an ambassador for the one stop system within the community;
- ❖ Provide a bridge to business services and resources;
- ❖ Ensure compliance with the Commonwealth's and the WDB's one stop center certification criteria which is essential for receipt of infrastructure funding;
- ❖ Ensure that the Commonwealth's "Methods of Administration" are enacted and maintained;
- ❖ Ensure that all relevant equal opportunity and civil rights measures are complied with;
- ❖ Recommend, maintain and retire technological equipment and related IT services necessary for the operation of the one stop center; and

- ❖ Track and implement the negotiated one stop partner Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

The NWWDB will evaluate the One Stop Operator within the initial six (6) months after the contract start date, and then at least annually thereafter. The evaluation shall include (but is not limited to) contract provisions, participating partner surveys, performance measures developed by the NWWDB, and any applicable PA CareerLink® certification requirements.

ResCare Workforce Services has developed and implemented an internal control policy to ensure the firewall between the one stop operator and the WIOA Title I program services contractor is in place and to ensure that no conflict of interest exists in the performance of their duties. ResCare Workforce Services has developed, implemented and ensured compliance with a separate reporting structure within the organization which meets the requirements for separation of functions under WIOA. The agreement between the NWWDB, the CLEOs, and ResCare Workforce Services and ResCare's internal control policy will hold ResCare accountable for rendering impartial decisions and performing their respective duties as the one stop operator and the WIOA Title I program services contractor in an objective way. Please see section 4.2 below that describes the roles and relationships within the local workforce development system.

Program partners have been provided on the state-provided Program Partner Template, and services provided jointly by the partners are described in subsequent sections on operational duties.

There are currently three comprehensive PA CareerLink® centers in the local workforce development area:

PA CareerLink® - Erie County

1647 Sassafra Street, Suite 300

Erie, PA 16502

Phone: (814) 455-9966

Hours of Operation: Monday – Thursday 9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.; Friday 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Type of Site: Comprehensive, Full Service

PA CareerLink® - Oil Region

255 Elm Street, Oil City, PA 16301

Phone: (814) 678-5050

Hours of Operation: Monday – Thursday 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.; Friday 8:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Type of Site: Comprehensive, Full Service

PA CareerLink® - Warren County

1003 Pennsylvania Avenue West, Suite 102, Warren, PA 16365

Phone: (814) 723-2350

Hours of Operation: Monday – Thursday 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.; Friday 8:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Type of Site: Affiliate

PA CareerLink® Warren County's status as a comprehensive site was changed by the LWDB at their August 11, 2017 meeting from a comprehensive site to an affiliate site with the intention of moving to mobile service delivery when the lease expires in June 2018.

Currently there are three access points located at Smith Education Center, 221 North Center Street, Corry, PA 16407; Forest County Assistance Office, 171 Elm Street, Tionesta, PA 16353; and Forest County Building, 126 Cherry Street, Marienville, PA 16239 to provide program services outreach to the rural communities.

Each comprehensive, full-service PA CareerLink® location has in place a center manager provided by the PA CareerLink® Operator to manage the day-to-day operations. The NWWDB evaluates PA CareerLink® locations to determine need and evaluate reducing infrastructure costs and duplication where reasonable and appropriate. The number of full-service, comprehensive PA CareerLink® centers in the LWDA have been reduced as a result of this analysis. Projects are currently being piloted in the local workforce development area to enhance outreach, especially to individuals with barriers to employment, by way of a more “mobile” PA CareerLink® system that will proactively bring staff to the customer and not wait for customers to enter the physical PA CareerLink® locations.

Local one-stop system partners have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that defines mutual expectations and shared roles for service delivery. As stated in the MOU, “The one-stop delivery system (herein also referred to as the PA CareerLink® Service Delivery System) brings together workforce development, education, and other human resource services in a seamless customer-focused service delivery network that enhances access to the programs’ services and improves long-term employment outcomes for individuals receiving assistance. One-stop Partners administer separately funded programs as a set of integrated streamlined services to customers.”

Required one-stop program partners include:

Department of Labor

- ❖ WIOA title I programs: Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth formula programs;
- ❖ Job Corps;
- ❖ YouthBuild;
- ❖ Native American programs;
- ❖ Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers (MSFW) that includes the National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP);
- ❖ Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.), as amended by WIOA title III;
- ❖ Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) authorized under title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965;
- ❖ Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) activities authorized under chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974;
- ❖ Unemployment Compensation (UC) programs;
- ❖ Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSF) programs authorized under chapter 41 of title 38, U.S.C.;

- ❖ Reentry Employment Opportunities (REO) programs (formerly known as Reintegration of Ex-Offenders Program (RExO)) authorized under sec. 212 of the Second Chance Act of 2007 (42 U.S.C. 17532) and WIOA sec. 169;

Department of Education

- ❖ Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) program, authorized under WIOA title II;
- ❖ Career and technical education programs at the postsecondary level, authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (Perkins);
- ❖ The State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services program authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 720 et seq.), as amended by WIOA title IV;

Department of Housing and Urban Development

- ❖ Employment and training programs;

Department of Health and Human Services

- ❖ Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program authorized under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.), unless exempted by the Governor under 20 CFR 678.405(b).

Department of Community and Economic Development

- ❖ Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) programs (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.)

Additional partners may be included in the partnership as desired to expand access to services for both job seeker and employer customers. Sharing of costs will be defined via a Resource Sharing Agreement (RSA) and an Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA) to be completed by December 30, 2017. Sharing of costs may include cash, not-cash, and in-kind contributions.

A detailed description of the required one-stop partners and a description of their respective program(s) can be found in section 4.2. Program partners are also shown on the Workforce Service Delivery System Program Partner/Provider List as an attachment to this plan.

- 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).*

Program partners are shown on the Program Partners grid as an attachment to this plan.

Primary partner roles and their respective programs for the local one-stop system include:

Adult Basic Education and Literacy – WIOA Title II Adult Education and Literacy (AEFLA)

Partner(s):

Crawford County READ Program

*Greater Erie Community Action Committee
Multicultural Community Resource Center
Northwest Tri-County IU5
Community Action, Inc.
Dr. Gertrude A. Barber Center*

Adult basic education is a critical partner in establishing career pathways for adults who are deficient in basic skills. These programs provide a full range of adult basic education services, from beginning level literacy through high adult secondary, including individuals with intellectual disabilities, and transition activities to support college and career readiness. These services include English language acquisition, basic skills instruction in work readiness, workplace preparation, and career awareness. Programs provide case management services by helping students address barriers to participation in adult basic education programming, as well as prepare and plan for entry onto a career pathway through employment and/or postsecondary education/training. There are numerous adult education and literacy providers in the region. Adult literacy and education classes are designed for participants needing basic skills remediation, allowing participants to successfully work toward their goals of high school equivalency (HSE) credential preparation, post-secondary education and/or employment. A coalition group of adult education and literacy providers exists in the region and the coalition's point of contact is a member of the LWDB. In partnership with the PA CareerLink® centers, the Title II adult education and literacy partners conduct Department of Education approved assessments in an effort to reduce duplication within the PA CareerLink® system and provide focus on career pathways and skill development for job seekers.

Career and Technical Education – Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 1973

*Partner(s):
Mercyhurst University*

The career and technical centers in the LWDA work as partners with the local PA CareerLink® system. They provide students with the academic and technical skills, knowledge and training necessary to succeed in future careers and to become lifelong learners. Career and technical centers prepare learners for the world of work by introducing them to workplace competencies and make academic content accessible to students by providing it in a hands-on context. Many school districts in the LWDA have embraced the Worldwide Interactive Network® (WIN®) software. WIN® is an internet-based curriculum to prepare individuals to take the WorkKeys® assessment that leads to a credential known as the National Career Readiness Certificate®. Career and technical center leadership and personnel participate as members of the NWWDB and various committees of the Board as well.

WIOA Adult – WIOA Title I, Subtitle B

*Partner(s):
ResCare Workforce Services*

The WIOA Adult program is one of three Title I core programs to assist participants in finding self-sustaining employment. WIOA Adult programs provide basic and individualized career services, as well as various training services as appropriate. Priority of service is provided to Adult program participants based on criteria as required by WIOA and state requirements. WIOA Adult program services are provided through the local PA CareerLink® system by a competitively bid program services contractor.

The NWWDB Priority of Service Policy includes four groups of individuals that the commonwealth requires to be targeted for priority when providing individualized career services and training services in the WIOA Title I Adult program. These four targeted groups are public assistance recipients; other low-income individuals; individuals who are basic skills deficient; and individuals who are both underemployed and low-income. An additional local requirement has been added to the NWWDB Priority of Service Policy that an individual's residency must be considered in determining an individual's priority of service. Given the local area's close proximity to both Ohio and New York state borders, requests are sometimes received from out-of-state residents for individualized career services and training services in Northwest Pennsylvania because the neighboring workforce areas in their states of residence were out of funds. This significantly impacted the amount of funding available for the priority of service individuals residing in the local workforce development area. Given the significant number of layoffs and closures in Northwest Pennsylvania, the NWWDB determined that a residency priority be added to its policy. Individuals will be evaluated by PA CareerLink® staff for eligibility for priority of service and documentation will be included in the participant file of all individuals who are deemed eligible for priority of service.

WIOA Dislocated Worker – WIOA Title I, Subtitle B

Partner(s):

ResCare Workforce Services

The WIOA Dislocated Worker program assists individuals either prior to or after a layoff and provide career services and training services such as occupational skills training, on-the-job or customized training, as well as apprenticeship opportunities to assist these individuals in reemployment. WIOA Dislocated Worker services are provided through the local PA CareerLink® system by a competitively bid program services contractor. Referrals are provided to local Small Business Development Centers for entrepreneurial assistance. Funding support for more than 50 Ice House facilitators was provided in partnership with the NWWDB. Staff of the NWWDB are trained Ice House facilitators providing quick turnaround of training for clients or other community partners. Participation in the lead economic development team/groups in the area by both the Business Services Team members and NWWDB staff. NWWDB participates in the Erie County Executive's "Up for the Job" initiative to attract employers with interest in the skilled workforce available in the local area.

WIOA Youth – WIOA Title I, Subtitle B

Partner(s):

ResCare Workforce Services

WIOA Youth program services provide eligible youth with services such as case management support for educational attainment, career guidance and exploration, summer and/or year-round work experiences such as internships and pre-apprenticeships, supportive services and skill training as appropriate. Youth program participant services prepare youth for either entry into post-secondary education or family-sustaining employment in in-demand occupations. Youth program services are prioritized toward out-of-school youth, as well as those with barriers to employment. WIOA Youth program services are provided through the local PA CareerLink® system by a competitively bid program services contractor. The Summer Jobs and More (JAM) Program will provide valuable work experience opportunities for youth in the local workforce development area, with its initial start-up in Erie through funding support

by the County of Erie and the NWWDB, with expansion into the rural counties of the LWDA. As part of work experience services for youth, entrepreneurship training is available for participating youth.

Wagner-Peyser – WIOA Title III

Partner(s):

PA Department of Labor and Industry

Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations (BWPO) staff provide employment and training services as a partner member of the local PA CareerLink® system authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, Trade Act of 1974, Jobs for Veterans State Grants program, as well as programs authorized under state unemployment compensation laws. These services 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 and supporting local job fairs.

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation – WIOA Title IV

Partner(s):

PA Department of Labor and Industry

The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) provides services to individuals with disabilities to help them secure and maintain employment and independence. These services are designed to ensure individuals with disabilities become qualified trained members of the workforce increasing regional workforce diversity and the overall number of skilled workers available to business in the region. Additionally, OVR provides multiple services and technical assistance to the business community designed to assist them with hiring and retaining employees with disabilities.

Unemployment Compensation Programs

Partner(s):

PA Department of Labor and Industry

Unemployment Compensation Programs provide a dedicated computer and telephone for individuals to open claims or telephone the call centers for assistance.

The co-located partners in comprehensive sites operate under a unified set of core values, vision and mission that creates the foundation for how services are provided by guiding behavior, organizing the work environment and creating an opportunity for presenting positively and professionally to customers and partners. WIOA Title I staff and Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations staff share the responsibilities of career services for all customers. This includes conducting initial assessment of customer needs, presenting workshops, assisting customers in the Career Resource Center and conducting more in-depth assessments based on customer needs. The Business Service Team coordinates outreach efforts to job seekers and employers by all partners. Wagner-Peyser, as well as other partners, refer customers to the Title II Adult Education and Literacy partners as customer need is identified. The Title II partners administer assessment testing and remediation to job seekers at the PA CareerLink® centers in the local workforce development area. Space is provided to

the Title II partners at the PA CareerLink® centers to conduct these services. PA CareerLink® staff conduct outreach to the Adult Basic Education and high school equivalency (HSE) credential classes to promote PA CareerLink® services to interested job seekers.

Indian and Native American Program

Partner(s):
County of Three Rivers American Indian Center, Inc.

The Indian and Native American (INA) Employment and Training Program helps qualifying American Indians, Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiians obtain employment in occupations that provide a wage that leads to self-sufficiency. These programs include more fully developing academic, occupational, and literacy skills, and entrepreneurial skills training to make individuals more competitive in the workforce. Furthermore, the program promotes economic and social development in accordance with the goals and values of the community. The INA program also provides financial assistance for education, career and training services, and other supportive services that will help individuals obtain occupational skills, industry recognized credentials, and postsecondary education that provide knowledge and skills necessary for better paying jobs.

Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Program

Partner(s):
PathStone Corporation, Inc.

The National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) is a nationally-directed, locally-administered program of services for migrant and seasonal farmworkers (MSFW). The program partners with community organizations, state agencies, and State Monitor Advocates to provide appropriate career and training services, youth services, housing assistance services, and related services to eligible MSFWs and their dependents. NFJP grantees partner with the one-stop system for integrated services for farmworkers and their families.

Job Corps

Partner(s):
PA Outreach and Admissions

Job Corps is a national program that operates in partnership with states and communities, LWDBs, one-stop centers and partners, and other youth programs to provide academic, career and technical education, service-learning, and social opportunities primarily in a residential setting, for low-income young people. The objective of Job Corps is to support responsible citizenship and provide young people, ages 16-24 with the skills that lead to successful careers that will result in economic self-sufficiency and opportunities for advancement in in-demand occupations or the Armed Forces, or enrollment in postsecondary education, including an apprenticeship program.

Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)

Partner(s):
Greater Erie Community Action Committee

PathStone Corporation, Inc.
AARP

The 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 older Americans and supportive services that allow them to participate in the training. Participants also have access to employment assistance through American Job Centers (PA CareerLink®). Participants must be at least 55 years old, unemployed, and have a family income of no more than 125% of the federal poverty level. SCSEP participants gain work experience in a variety of community service activities at local non-profit and public facilities, including schools, hospitals, day-care centers, and senior centers. Nationally, the program provides over 40 million community service hours to public and non-profit agencies, allowing them to enhance and provide needed services. These sites are referred to as “host agencies.” Participants work an average of 20 hours per week and are paid the highest of federal, state, or local minimum wage, or the comparable wage for similar employment. This training serves as a bridge to unsubsidized employment opportunities for participants.

Trade Adjustment Assistance Activities

Partner(s):
PA Department of Labor and Industry

Trade Act programs are focused on getting participants reemployed and ensuring those individuals maintain employment. 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.

Jobs for Veterans

Partner(s):
PA Department of Labor and Industry

Jobs for Veterans is a PA Department of Industry administered program which assures the commonwealth will be able to provide 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 Jobs for Veterans allows for Local Veterans Employment Representatives to do employer outreach and promote veterans as job seekers who have highly marketable skills and experience.

Community Service Block Grants

Partner(s):

Community Action, Inc.

PathStone Corporation, Inc.

Venango-Crawford Office of Economic Opportunity

Warren-Forest Economic Opportunity Council

Community Action Association of PA

The mission of the Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) is to provide a full range of services and activities having a measurable impact on the cause of poverty in a community or those areas of a community where poverty is a particularly acute problem. Only federally designated Community Action Agencies (CAA) receive funding. Ameliorating the causes and conditions of poverty take on 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 and coordination; and increased engagement in community planning and improvement activities.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program is designed to help needy families achieve self-sufficiency. States receive grants to design and operate programs that accomplish one of the purposes of the TANF Program. The four purposes of the TANF Program are to: 1) Provide assistance to needy families so that children can be cared for in their own homes; 2) Reduce the dependency of needy parents by promoting job preparation, work and marriage; 3) Prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies; 4) Encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families. WorkReady and the Employment and Retention Network (EARN) are the TANF employment programs in Pennsylvania.

Partner(s):

Clarion County Department of Human Services

Crawford County Department of Human Services

Erie County Department of Human Services

Forest County Department of Human Services

Venango County Department of Human Services

Warren County Department of Human Services

St. Benedict Education Center

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

The NWWDB has a local Individual Training Account (ITA) Policy regarding requirements for providing ITAs to program participants. Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) are a primary strategy for providing Training Services to WIOA participants through the local workforce development system. The ITA must be for an in-demand occupation on the High Priority Occupation List in the local workforce development area. The Training Provider's program needs to be within a reasonable commuting

distance that the customer has agreed to, or in an area where the occupation is in demand and the customer is willing to relocate. Documentation of the customer's willingness and ability to relocate must be provided. Preference must be given to local occupations on the High Priority Occupation List and programs submitted by the Northwest regional training providers when making this determination. The NWWDB has currently capped ITAs at an amount up to \$5,500 per participant in training.

The NWWDB actively seeks partners in its efforts to increase outreach to targeted populations. This will be accomplished through a more mobile PA CareerLink® system that brings the workforce development services to the customer through partnership development with multiple community agencies. Such outreach will benefit individuals with barriers to employment by meeting them in an environment where they are comfortable and have a support system that will increase their success. Many of these individuals might not otherwise avail themselves of these services if they must access the services at a larger PA CareerLink® center, which can be intimidating to some populations.

There are two (2) comprehensive PA CareerLink® sites in the local area as well as one affiliate site in Warren where any client in the area may seek services. These three sites serve the public. The Mobile Service Delivery will occur in the early phases of implementation in partner locations serving only the clients of the partner; there will be no public access at partner locations. We have treated businesses as partner locations as specific needs occur and provided assessments at the employer's location to those individuals they have identified as potential employees through service delivery. We also meet with low-income/target group individuals at locations where they may be engaged such as housing authorities, re-entry organizations, multicultural resource centers, human service agencies, etc. Disabled individuals may be met at locations such as Community Resources for Independence (CRI) where accessibility will not be an issue. Public hours and locations for the comprehensive, affiliate, and any public access sites such as the Clarion Mall are advertised in CWDS and on the www.nwpacareerlink.org website. In addition, clients may call toll-free at 844-333-5248 for a one-on-one appointment or to check the calendar. Public access locations will be treated like any other comprehensive site for accessibility. It is anticipated that public access will become available in libraries during phase II of implementation. In addition, dislocated workers in counties where there is no comprehensive or affiliate site may be served by a special site for dislocated workers only, such as services provided for the large layoff at General Electric Transportation Systems in Erie.

The PA CareerLink® has developed partnerships in Erie County with both the Housing Authority and Housing and Neighborhood Development Service (HANDS). HANDS has agreed to work in partnership with the PA CareerLink® to provide on-site classes, trainings, and job search assistance for their residents. This partnership also includes space for on-site delivery of services. The partnership between the PA CareerLink® and the Housing Authority provides additional support and assistance in job search activities. The Mental Health Association (MHA) provides numerous programs for individuals with mental health barriers. The partnership with PA CareerLink® will provide participants with on-site weekly services addressing soft skills. The MHA staff provides mentoring of their participants to foster their success. St. Benedict Education Center, the Employment and Retention Network (EARN) local program contractor, provides job training to address soft skills for individuals who are referred through the County Assistance Offices. Through the Employment and Retention Network, clients have up to 12 months for training and job search. Collaboration with St. Benedict Education Center on the Next Generation Industry Partnership grant availability resulted in the EARN contractor requesting a Next Generation Industry Partnership grant application be submitted for the local workforce development area to support employer demand in the hospitality and tourism sector.

Such hospitality and tourism occupations provide entry level positions with a career pathway for individuals with barriers to employment. Mobile outreach services are conducting WIN assessments for EARN participants. EARN staff are collocated in both Oil City and Warren. EARN partnership with the PA CareerLink® is beneficial since many of their participants need additional support after the St. Benedict Education Center program ends. Such partnership building and the move toward a more mobile local PA CareerLink® system will result in improved outreach to these special populations, especially individuals with barriers to employment.

Partnerships with the Senior Community Service Employment Program agencies provide an opportunity to enhance skills under the Older Americans Act through programming for eligible individuals who are in need of additional training to re-engage the workforce.

Co-enrollment will occur, based on eligibility, with a federal Workforce Innovation Fund grant that was awarded to implement a program designed to assist individuals with significant barriers to employment by providing short-term, modular training with stackable credentials. These training opportunities are created and implemented using input from employers in targeted industry sectors, as well as expertise in developing curriculum from adult literacy and education providers, career and technical centers, Community Education Councils, etc. Further, partnering with Title II adult literacy and education partners and the services they provide will serve to increase and enhance the opportunities for success for individuals with barriers to employment.

Mobile Service Delivery initiatives have been developed to increase outreach to individuals with barriers to employment. Outreach to customers will be conducted through various partnerships with local agencies such as Erie Housing Authority, HANDS, the Mental Health Association and St. Benedict Education Center. Such outreach will benefit individuals with barriers to employment by meeting them in an environment where they are comfortable. Many of these individuals might not otherwise avail themselves of these services if they must access the services at a larger PA CareerLink® center, which is often intimidating to some populations. Technology is being acquired to allow case managers to more effectively provide services off-site, in rural areas with limited or no internet connectivity.

Programs and facilities within the local workforce development area are compliant with WIOA Section 188 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. This is ensured through regular program/ facilities monitoring conducted by the LWDB staff monitor and EO Officer, as well as through state ADA compliance reviews conducted annually. PA CareerLink® staff training sessions are conducted from time to time to ensure that staff members are prepared to provide the best service possible to individuals with disabilities. Resources include but are not limited to Test Telephone or Teletypewriter for the Deaf (TTY), ADA accessible desks, computers, etc. Coordination with Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) helps to maximize service and funding opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

The committees of the Board support and advise the Board in the establishment and delivery of services to individuals with barrier to employment, including individuals with disabilities.

- 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 in Erie, Venango, and Warren Counties and any affiliated sites are fully accessible to any individuals who may be interested in accessing employment and training services. Each site is certified for compliance with EO/ADA requirements by the Office of Equal Opportunity, PA Department of Labor and Industry. Compliance reviews are completed annually. All public access sites including special sites for dislocated workers will be treated like all comprehensive or affiliate sites and will be fully accessible with reasonable accommodations. The system will be encouraged to partner with agencies that serve individuals with ADA needs, reducing the need for special equipment and/or software, etc., and leveraging available resources. Overall, the Board promotes full accessibility by requiring that its One-Stop Operator, One-Stop Partners, and Center Managers:

- 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, such as the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation that offer 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® sites and throughout the local area and coaching them on how to apply for needed resources.
- Provide access to bi- and multi-lingual personnel to assist customers with language barriers.
- 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 a regular basis.
- Coordinate staff training on assistive technology and equipment to ensure that personnel are fully-trained in usage and application, with assistance from OVR staff.
- Help individuals with disabilities who may require additional assistance with the registration process, making referrals as appropriate to OVR while maintaining access to all services for the individuals.
- Maintain required federal and state notices and postings at all service sites.
- Provides access to American Sign Language Interpreters upon request.

ADA and sensitivity training for PA CareerLink® and partner staff will be provided by OVR staff. All PA CareerLink® staff and partners will be required to participate in these trainings and any Office of EOE trainings as well. Any required changes to the system will be implemented. Additionally, the Office of EOE conducts annual compliance reviews within the local workforce development area and submits a report to the NWWDB's EO Officer, who facilitates the completion of any needed EO changes or improvements. Technical assistance is provided by the Office of EOE as needed.

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

The NWWDB annually reviews the High Priority Occupation (HPO) list from the commonwealth. Training providers must meet requirement criteria to be approved for eligibility. They can petition the LWDB to add programs to the High Priority Occupation List if they can provide documentation of local job availability and wages for an occupation. Training programs must meet performance benchmarks regarding program completion, job placement rates, earnings, and credential attainment of students. Program applications must include a program description, program length, tuition and costs, prerequisites, and credentials that can be attained. The NWWDB provides an annual information session for any interested area training providers for navigating the eligible training provider state system. This provides an opportunity for input to identify any new courses of study to meet employer and job seeker demand, to discuss labor market changes, performance and employer needs. Email communication is conducted regularly with training providers, blast emails are distributed annually to ensure local eligible training providers are aware that they may apply to be on the ETPL list. Through communications with its providers, the NWWDB ensures that schools providing training in demand occupations apply to be included on the ETPL. Input from private sector employers on the NWWDB, economic development partners, as well as members of the Advanced Diversified Manufacturing Industry Partnership and Great Lakes Building and Construction Trades Industry Partnership helps the NWWDB to understand employers needs and identifies any new or emerging occupations to be placed on the HPO list as needed. The NWWDB will continue to engage employers to identify skill sets that job seekers need and work with the schools and training providers to ensure that the training provided meets the needs of the employer or industry cluster.

Members of the board that participate in the Fiscal/Monitoring Committee are involved in the monitoring of the one stop centers, one stop operator, fiscal agent, state monitoring of the local area, etc., to ensure compliance. Monitoring will be done frequently to determine early on any risk or weaknesses so that technical assistance can be provided to ensure the success and longevity of the contract. As part of this process, the committee and members of the board are involved in the evaluation of the providers and make recommendations to the board regarding quality of performance. A committee of board members, CLEOs, and partners are involved in the selection of providers. A separate committee determines pay-for-performance measures and evaluates the provider's performance. The Fiscal/Monitoring Committee will be involved in ensuring the firewall between the Operator and Title I provider to include surveys of the partners. The Fiscal/Monitoring Committee will review the surveys of customers done by the staff of the NWWDB that include job seekers and employers. These are done in addition to satisfaction surveys by the PA CareerLink®.

The Board, through its committees, is developing a local evaluation tool dubbed "metrics that matter" that will evaluate customer satisfaction, responsible stewardship of taxpayer money, market penetration, and impact of local innovations. This initiative will assist the Board in evaluating the local workforce development services. In addition, a training provider "report card" is planned to be developed to track the long-term employment success of customers who complete training programs funded in the local workforce development area. Employer surveys may be used as part of the "metrics that matter" initiative.

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.*

A primary focus of the PA CareerLink® is to provide comprehensive workforce development services, accessible to all employers, job seekers, including individuals with barriers to employment, as well as incumbent workers, that result in economic self-sufficiency and a workforce trained to employer specifications and prepared to compete in a global economy. Career services, both basic and individual, are available for eligible individuals. Training options include individual training accounts and on-the-job work-based training. Incumbent worker training options may be evaluated in the local workforce development area. Several committees of the Board evaluate supply and demand and service offerings to provide oversight and recommend system improvements. Best practice research will be conducted as well. Committee recommendations are brought to the full board for consideration. System improvements often are implemented based on the work and recommendation of the LWDB committees. PA CareerLink® center managers and system partners attend LWDB meetings to provide valuable input and ensure that the strategic direction of the LWDB is implemented within the service delivery system.

Through partnership development and collaboration among PA CareerLink® partners under the leadership of the PA CareerLink® Operator, quality career services are made available to the Adult and Dislocated worker population. Service offerings include:

Career Services

- Determination of individual eligibility for services
- Outreach, intake, and orientation to the system
- Referral to PA CareerLink® partners, as well as other agencies as appropriate
- Computer-assisted assessment of skill levels, aptitudes, abilities, interests and values mapped to the needs of local employers
- Information on supportive services and community resources
- Provision of employment statistics information, including the provision of accurate information relating to local, regional, and national labor market areas
- Information on certified education and training providers; local performance outcomes of service providers
- Information regarding filing claims for unemployment compensation
- Information on the eligibility requirements for all partner employment and training programs
- Information on how the local area is performing on the local performance measures
- Information regarding resource room usage
- Internet browsing for job, information, and training searches
- Up-front triage that informs and directs customers to the services
- Job search assistance workshops, placement assistance, and career counseling
- Staff-assisted job development
- Staff-assisted workshops and job clubs
- Job matching and referral (i.e. testing and background checks)
- Staff-assisted, customized assessment of knowledge, skills, abilities, and interests
- Development of an Individualized Employment Plan
- Group counseling
- Individual counseling and career planning

- Internships and work experience linked to careers
- Financial literacy services
- English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs
- Follow-up services, including counseling regarding the workplace, for participants in workforce activities authorized under this subtitle that are placed in unsubsidized employment, for not less than 12 months after the first day of the employment
- Case management
- Short-term Prevocational Services, including development of learning skills, basic computer literacy, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct, to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training

Training Services

Training services are defined as services designed to equip individuals to enter the workforce and retain employment. Training services may be provided, as appropriate, to WIOA eligible adults, dislocated workers, and youth who have met the eligibility requirements. The NWPA WDB sets the policies for Individual Training Accounts (ITAs). Training Services for eligible individuals may include:

- Occupational skills training, including training for nontraditional employment, provided through ITAs for adults and dislocated workers. This includes both individual and cohort-based training models
- Transitional jobs
- On-the-Job Training
- Apprenticeships
- Programs that combine workplace training with related instruction, which may include cooperative education programs
- Skill upgrading and retraining
- Entrepreneurial training
- Job readiness training
- Adult education and literacy activities, where they are integrated with other training services
- Customized training conducted with the commitment to employ the individuals upon successful completion of the training

Workshops have also been developed and implemented in partnership with other providers. Efforts will be focused going forward on strengthening partnerships with community agencies, as well as the evaluation and implementation of other effective services to enhance the probability of hire for eligible participants, with focus on those with barriers to employment.

Supportive services are available to eligible participants throughout the LWDA. Such services include assistance with transportation and child care, referral to medical services, assistance with work-related clothing and tools, stipends, housing assistance and linkages to community services. The LWDB has a local supportive services policy and has provided training to PA CareerLink® staff on interpreting and implementing this policy.

For people with limited English proficiency, interpretive services are provided through Propio Language Services and assistance is also available from Interpretive Services of the Multicultural

Community Resource Center. The limited English proficiency participants are also referred to adult education and literacy partners.

When there is a hearing-impaired person in need of on-site interpretive services, state certified Sign Language Interpreters are contacted to provide assistance. All PA CareerLink® staff are trained on the use of the TTY line. A Braille embosser, materials available in alternate format, Zoom text and JAWS are available. Handicap parking is available at all PA CareerLink® locations. Signage includes Braille for the visually impaired. Staff, through interaction with participants, are able to assess particular needs and make appropriate referrals or arrangements for special assistance to ensure that there is universal access to all services.

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

Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) are a primary strategy for providing occupational skills training to WIOA participants. The ITA must be for an in-demand occupation on the High Priority Occupation List in the local workforce development area. The Training Provider's program needs to be within a reasonable commuting distance that the customer has agreed to, or in an area where the occupation is in demand and the customer is willing to relocate. Documentation of the customer's willingness and ability to relocate must be provided. Preference must be given to local occupations on the High Priority Occupation List and programs submitted by the Northwest regional training providers when making this determination. The NWWDB has a local policy that caps ITAs at an amount up to \$5,500 per participant in training. The NWWDB reduced the maximum funding amount for ITAs several years ago to increase the number of participants that can receive ITAs, given reduced levels of WIOA funding coming into the local workforce development area.

The Commonwealth's High Priority Occupations depict areas within selected industry clusters that are considered in demand by employers, require high levels of skills, and are more likely to provide family-sustaining wages. The High Priority Occupations are identified by the Center for Workforce Information and Analysis (CWIA). Courses and programs funded by Individual Training Accounts must appear on the Northwest PA Workforce Development Area's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). To meet the needs of business and industry, the LWDB manages a local High Priority Occupation list, which drives the submission of quality programs for the ETPL. Based on labor market analysis as well as employer input from NWWDB members, industry partnership members, some occupations may be limited by the LWDB to funding via an Individual Training Account (ITA). Examples of reasons that occupations may be subject to this funding limitation are lack of a self-sustaining wage, low annual openings, and occupation saturation. In addition, programs/courses submitted by training providers must be of primary importance and the training required to gain employment in the occupation(s). The LWDB will continue to develop and strengthen connections with its industry partnerships and higher education institutions to ensure that training conducted in the LWDA is what employers are looking for, as well as to help educators to identify needed changes in curriculum, to identify gaps and the skills needed for current and emerging occupations.

When circumstances arise where the NWWDB determines that there is a need to facilitate the training of multiple individuals in in-demand occupations or sectors (incumbent workers), or instances where there are training services programs provided by community-based organizations or other private

organizations that benefit the needs of individuals with barriers to employment, contracts for services may be used instead of ITAs as identified in 20 CFR 680.320. The NWWDB will solicit training providers, including but not limited to, work-based and cohort training providers and registered apprenticeship program sponsors, within and outside of their respective local areas in those cases to ensure a competitive market designed to promote consumer choice and achieve successful implementation of data-driven career pathways and sector strategies on the Local Training Provider List (LTPL). Eligibility of a provider and/or program will be based solely on measurable factors and shall include the criteria in Commonwealth's Workforce System Policy. A local scorecard will be developed to measure and evaluate employment and earnings outcomes. Information must be entered into the formal system of record, the Commonwealth Workforce Development System (CWDS). The NWWDB will develop, maintain, and distribute the Local Training Provider List, working closely with the commonwealth and in compliance with the Commonwealth's Eligible Training Providers policy.

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

The NWWDB and its committees envision an effective workforce development system for youth with programs in partnership with educators and employers. The Youth Committee of the Board developed a mission to *"Assist youth as they define personal career pathways. Help them identify intermediate goals and access resources of support as they work to attain personal growth and economic success."* This effort requires partnerships with youth programs, educators, employers, and other stakeholders to provide effective opportunities for career exploration, work readiness, work-based learning and work experience opportunities. The committees of the Board are collaborating in an effort to identify and develop career pathways for youth. Our LWDB has developed strategic objectives in youth programs that produce desirable outcomes, established linkages with career and technical centers to align programs with career pathways and labor market demand, and to continue to grow summer youth employment efforts. Research of national best practices will be conducted to support the development of the most comprehensive and enriching array of program services for eligible youth.

The Youth Committee membership has included representation from community-based organizations that serve youth, juvenile justice, Title II education, career and technical education, public housing authorities and the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR). As a core partner, OVR has the ability to collaborate with the local workforce development board to provide in-school youth with disabilities opportunities to participate in pre-employment transition services (PETS) to better prepare these students for life after high school. These skill gains will help to meet one of the intentions of WIOA, to better prepare in-school youth with disabilities to graduate high school and work toward meaningful careers. PA CareerLink® centers in the LWDA are handicap accessible and include accommodations for individuals with disabilities.

Partnering agency tutoring programs are designed to develop math and reading skills which improve opportunities for secondary education, therefore assisting individuals to be better equipped for alternative secondary school programs. Such programs are offered through partnerships with community agencies, providing referral for high school equivalency (HSE) credential training. Post-secondary preparation and transition activities are provided through TABE assessments, WIN Remediation, O*Net, Choices, and referral to other local community agencies for remediation services. Title II adult education and literacy providers conduct one-on-one or small group tutoring and/or instruction in both math and reading on as as-needed basis.

Occupational skills training is available through Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) that are presented as an option for youth participants to pursue. Through partnerships with agencies that focus on leadership development, as well as PA CareerLink® workshops and TANF programs, youth counselors are able to provide training in specific areas for youth with disabilities and barriers to employment. Supportive services are provided, as well as financial literacy education. The PA CareerLink® offers workshops that provide labor market information. WIOA Title I program staff work with school guidance counselors to keep them updated on current labor market trends, as well as present labor market information to high school students in a group setting. Individualized counseling on career opportunities is also part of the youth participant's individualized career plan. Training opportunities for high school equivalency (HSE) credential preparation and testing can be provided, if needed. Math, science, language arts and social studies training is offered for individuals who need additional assistance in those areas

As a focus on individuals with disabilities, a Transition Job Fair for hiring youth with disabilities ages 17 – 25 was conducted locally by OVR on April 13, 2016 at the Clarion Hotel in Erie County. This targeted job fair offers information to employers on the unique services that OVR can provide, as well as tax credits that may be available to employers as a benefit for hiring youth with disabilities.

In addition, youth services benefit from the proximity of Edinboro University within our local workforce development area. Edinboro University has been deemed as one of the top five universities in the nation with an exemplary commitment to providing accessible dormitory facilities and services to its students with disabilities.

There are youth who need additional assistance to enter or complete an education program or to secure or hold employment. The NWWDB Eligibility Policy includes guidelines for the use of this "Requires Additional Assistance" criteria for youth eligibility. The "Requires Additional Assistance" requires that youth meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Has an Individualized Education Program (IEP);
- Has a letter from a guidance counselor asserting their need of additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment;
- Is currently credit deficient (i.e. one or more grade levels behind peer group);
- Has a poor work history (been fired from 1 or more jobs within the last six months, OR has a history of sporadic employment, such as "has held 3 or more jobs within the last 12 months, and is no longer employed");
- Has actively been seeking employment for at least 2 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; or
- Has incarcerated parent(s)

Any of the above criteria used for serving youth under "requires additional assistance" must be fully documented and justified in the participant file and will be reviewed during NWWDB monitoring of participant files.

No more than 5% of In-School Youth served in a program year may be deemed eligible based on the “requires additional assistance” criterion. The NWWDB’s WIOA Title I program services contractor(s) will include the number of In-School Youth participants determined and documented to be eligible under the “requires additional assistance” criterion on their regular reporting to the NWWDB to ensure that this 5% limitation is not exceeded. It will also be included as part of the NWWDB monitoring of its WIOA Title I program services contractor(s).

The Youth Committee of the NWWDB is discussing, developing, and implementing strategies to provide eligible youth with high-quality, effective youth program services, provide career pathways programs, and establish linkages with career and technical centers and post-secondary institutions in an effort to align program offerings with career pathways and labor market demand. Collaborative efforts on the development of career pathways for youth are being conducted with the Board’s committee’s and Title II Adult Education and Literacy partners in the LWDA. WIOA Title I Youth Programs are competitively procured every two to three years or as needed to operate youth programs serving both in-school and out-of-school youth, with special focus on out-of-school youth per WIOA. Under WIOA, 14 program elements for youth are required to be provided including:

1. *Tutoring, study skills training and instruction and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized postsecondary credential*

This program element is provided for youth that are either working one-on-one with a career counselor or through a partnering agency that provides dedicated tutoring, remediation, or high school equivalency (HSE) credential services. Youth program staff work in conjunction with multiple agencies to ensure youth receive services. Examples of referral agencies include Upward Bound Program, Educational Talent Search, Job Corps and the Tri-County Intermediate Unit, Crawford County READ Program, etc. Appropriate OVR customer referrals are requested and accepted for participation in this program.

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

Alternative secondary school services are provided when youth who are enrolled in WIOA attend school at a public, non-traditional educational facility or program. The WIOA Title I youth program staff provide case management, attend meetings, and work closely with teachers and guidance counselors to foster success of the participant. Examples of partners providing alternative diploma classes include Central Tech After Hours, Warren Forest Higher Education Council, and Keystone Smiles. Appropriate OVR customer referrals are requested and accepted for participation in this program.

3. *Paid and unpaid work experiences that have as a component academic and occupational education which may include: (i) summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year; (ii) pre-apprenticeship programs; (iii) internships and job shadowing; and (iv) on-the-job training opportunities*

Based on a youth participant’s Individual Service Strategy (ISS), WIOA Title I youth staff connect participants with employers that align with their individual service strategy, whether subsidized or unsubsidized. Placement of youth participants in paid and unpaid work experiences are

aligned, whenever possible, with high-priority occupations. Work experiences may be coupled with soft skills training and career exploration prior to the beginning of the work experience to maximize the placement opportunity. Internships and job shadowing are also available to the youth participants in the WIOA program. Youth in Erie County can also utilize the Career Street website to look for potential internships. Younger youth aged 15-21 years are also referred to the Summer Jobs and More (JAM) Program for a summer work experience. Partnerships have been developed with community pre-apprenticeship programs for referral of eligible youth participants. Examples of local agencies providing paid and unpaid work experiences include the Charter School of Excellence, Hermitage House, and Keystone Smiles. Appropriate OVR customer referrals are requested and accepted for participation in this program.

4. *Occupational skill training, which shall include priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that are aligned with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area involved, if the local board determines that the programs meet the quality criteria described in section 123*

Youth participants who enroll in a post-secondary school or training program that leads to a degree or certificate fulfill this program element. WIOA Title I youth staff provide information and assist, when needed, with the application process and provide the supports necessary for youth to participate in training programs that lead to a recognized post-secondary credential aligned with in-demand industry sectors or occupations. Individual training accounts can be written using WIOA funding for eligible youth participants. Appropriate OVR customer referrals are requested and accepted for participation in this program.

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

Youth participants will be provided with integrated education and training programs that provide adult education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually with both workforce preparation activities and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster. Such programming will be provided for the purpose of educational and career advancement. The LWDB contracts with WIOA Youth program services contractors that link academic and occupational education. Appropriate OVR customer referrals are requested and accepted for participation in this program.

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

Leadership development programs are often subcontracted to partner community agencies supported by the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funding stream. These programs teach dependability, responsibility, positive work attitude, punctuality, good interpersonal skills, being a team player, building self-confidence, and self-motivation. This program element is also counted when youth are active participants in leadership programs such as Big Brothers Big Sisters and Girl Scouts/Boy Scouts. Examples of partners providing leadership development programs include Youth Leadership Institute, ACES, Urban Erie community Development Corporation, JFK Center, Bethany Outreach Center and Junior Achievement. Appropriate OVR customer referrals are requested and accepted for participation in this program.

7. Supportive services

Supportive services are provided to assist with eliminating barriers to training and employment. WIOA programs provide supportive services in-house or refer participants to other partners for support service needs. Services are based on an assessment of need via the participant's Individual Service Strategy or through the case management process. WIOA Title I youth staff identify community resources and/or financial assistance for youth who are in need of work clothing, supplies, driver's license, high school equivalency (HSE) credential testing, services such as eye glasses, or other services such as transportation, etc. to assist eligible youth in obtaining and retaining employment. Appropriate OVR customer referrals are requested and accepted for participation in this program.

8. Adult mentoring for the period of participation and a subsequent period, for a total of not less than 12 months

WIOA Title I Youth staff provide primary focus for adult mentoring program services to youth over 18 years of age, for no less than 12 months to assist youth in succeeding in their education and employment. Youth under 18 can also receive adult mentoring program services, which are often provided by partnering agencies such as Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Girl Scouts/Boy Scouts, and other local mentoring programs. Appropriate OVR customer referrals are requested and accepted for participation in this program.

9. Followup services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation, as appropriate

Youth participants who are exited from program participation receive follow-up case management for a period of not less than 12 months. Personal contact is made on a regular basis to ensure successful completion of education and employment retention. All Youth program contractors are required to provide all participants with follow-up services. Appropriate OVR customer referrals are requested and accepted for participation in this program.

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

Comprehensive guidance and counseling, including drug and alcohol abuse counseling is provided through collaboration with community agency partnerships. Through active case management, WIOA Title I staff can maintain open communication with youth participants on any issues identified in their needs assessment and staff can determine if interventions are needed. Interventions could include referrals to drug and alcohol counseling, counseling in the post-secondary or secondary school setting, mental health, family counseling or rehab counseling. Examples of partner agencies assisting with such comprehensive guidance and counseling include Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Community Shelter Services, SafeNet, Stairways Behavioral Health, Office of Children and Youth, and school guidance counselors. Appropriate OVR customer referrals are requested and accepted for participation in this program.

11. Financial literacy education

Program service contractors partner with community agency partners to assist youth participants to discover the relationship between earning, spending and saving, as well as the value of money. This will provide youth participants with the ability to use knowledge and skills to make effective and informed money-management decisions. Examples of partners providing such services include ACES programs, the Young Entrepreneurial Society funded under TANF and the Charter School of Excellence. Appropriate OVR customer referrals are requested and accepted for participation in this program.

12. Entrepreneurial skills training

Through effective collaborations with community agencies and partnerships, youth participants are provided the knowledge, skills and attitudes in entrepreneurial skills including understanding the characteristics of an entrepreneur, the risks of becoming an entrepreneur, and developing a positive attitude towards self-employment. The Young Entrepreneurial Society is one community partner that provides this program element. Appropriate OVR customer referrals are requested and accepted for participation in this program.

13. Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services

The PA CareerLink® staff offers customers updated labor market and employment information on in-demand industry sectors or occupations. Title I staff also work with school guidance counselors to provide them with current labor market trends, as well as present this information to high school students in a group setting. Individualized counseling on career opportunities is also part of the youth participant's individualized career plan. Appropriate OVR customer referrals are requested and accepted for participation in this program.

14. Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training

Title I program services staff partner with adult literacy and basic education agencies for transition classes to help prepare youth participants for post-secondary education. Work Certified®, a work readiness program that prepares out-of-school youth with the tools to obtain and retain employment, is also available. Another partner, the Go-College Program at East High School and Strong Vincent High School in Erie County also provides academic instruction and career counseling to ninth grade students throughout their high school career. This program supports students in successfully planning for, enrolling in, and completing college. Appropriate OVR customer referrals are requested and accepted for participation in this program.

As a core partner, OVR collaborates with the local Workforce Development Board to provide in-school youth with disabilities opportunities to participate in pre-employment transition services and other services to gain skills and knowledge to enter the workforce. In partnership with the Workforce Development Board and other youth services providers, OVR may provide both OVR eligible and potentially eligible in-school youth with disabilities services to enter competitive integrated employment. These meaningful opportunities allow in-school youth with disabilities to assess their

own strengths and skills, while exploring vocational possibilities and removing barriers from employment.

Work based learning is an important component for in-school youth with disabilities to engage in so that they may be afforded opportunities to discover career paths. Other services that may be provided to OVR in-school youth with disabilities include:

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

All partners of youth-serving agencies will make services available and will share the costs of providing services to youth with disabilities. If a youth chooses not to access services and programs that are available from OVR, the youth will remain eligible for all other services in accord with individual plans for employment and training.

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?*

The Board’s staff coordinates directly with the PA Department of Labor and Industry, Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations (BWPO) in applying for, receiving and disbursing Rapid Response funds for local coordination with statewide Rapid Response activities. The Board’s staff, along with PA CareerLink® Operator and Center Managers, receives communication from the BWPO Regional Rapid Response staff regarding WARN notices that are filed affecting the local workforce delivery area. A Rapid Response session, BRI, is scheduled by the Rapid Response Regional Coordinator, in collaboration with a Rapid Response Team, and is offered to all employees prior to their dislocation. The session is customized to the workforce but provides workers with information on PA CareerLink® services, Unemployment Compensation, healthcare options, and supportive services available in the local area. WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker services as well as retraining funds available through Trade Act services are promoted with events scheduled to assist the workers with individualized career services and training opportunities. The NWWDB provides oversight and

strategic guidance to the one-stop partners, as well as arranging for funding of transition activities of impacted workers and employers. The WIOA Title I program contractor implements program services and resources provided by the Board for specific activities. A Rapid Response Coordinator is located at the PA CareerLink® Erie, who coordinates activities with training, educational, and community service providers.

Layoff aversion activities are also conducted in the local workforce development area in partnership with the Steel Valley Authority through their Strategic Early Warning Network (SEWN) working with and providing turnaround services to at-risk small to mid-size manufacturers throughout Northwest Pennsylvania. The Steel Valley Authority is a multi-municipality government authority addressing layoff aversion helping workers, their families, small manufacturers, and communities survive global economic change. SEWN obtains referrals to struggling companies through a variety of sources, including workforce development professionals, local workforce development boards, financial institutions, company customers, suppliers or vendors, industrial resource centers, unions, or affected workers themselves. Within 48 hours of receiving a referral, SEWN staff and/or RRCS will contact the company and attempt to establish a meeting and plant tour. SEWN staff has expertise in several areas of business turnaround and layoff aversion, including: financial restructuring; buyouts; succession planning and ownership transition; labor-management relations; high-performance workplace strategies; operations; and cost management.

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).*

The committees of the Board include representatives of local education and various community agencies collaborating to develop effective youth programs and address barriers to employment. These committee members represent K-12 agencies, adult education and literacy agencies, career and technical centers, and others. By engaging relevant stakeholders from secondary and postsecondary education programs as NWWDB and committee members, the NWWDB ensures strategies that are well informed, coordinated, and that enhance rather than duplicate services. The Board's committees are working collaboratively to align and integrate education, job training, counseling, and support services to create accelerated pathways to post-secondary education credentials and employment in in-demand occupations. The Workforce Solutions Committee supports the NWWDB in ensuring that the PA CareerLink® system is entrepreneurial and includes coordination with secondary and post-secondary education programs and activities that are aligned with industry partnerships and ensures that participants are dually enrolled whenever possible to avoid duplication of services. NWWDB staff maintain an active role by being involved as members of local advisory committees for secondary and postsecondary providers. A relationship developed with the Adult Education and Literacy providers for coordinating assessments for participants enhances services and reduces duplication of effort. Also, mini-grants made available through the Adult Education and Literacy providers were reviewed by the Workforce Solutions Committee and the NWWDB is working with local Adult Education and Literacy providers to review their funding applications for alignment with this NWWDB local plan.

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

The Board has competitively procured ResCare as the PA CareerLink® Operator for the local workforce development area. In that role, ResCare will employ two (2) Center Managers and one (1) Mobile Service Delivery Manager who will act as “functional leaders”. As such, they will have the authority to organize Partner staff, in order to optimize and streamline service delivery efforts. Formal leadership, supervision, and performance responsibilities will remain with each staff member’s employer of record. The one-stop operator, through its Center Managers, will, at a minimum:

- ❖ Manage daily operations, including but not limited to:
- ❖ Managing and coordinating Partner responsibilities,
- ❖ Managing hours of operation,
- ❖ Coordinating daily work schedules and work flow based upon operational needs, and
- ❖ Coordinating staff vacations/unscheduled absences with the formal leader to ensure service coverage by center staff.
- ❖ Assist the NWPA WDB in establishing and maintaining the PA CareerLink® system structure. This includes but is not limited to:
- ❖ Ensuring that state requirements for center certification are met and maintained,
- ❖ Ensuring that career services such the ones outlined in WIOA sec. 134(c)(2) are available and accessible,
- ❖ Ensuring that NWPA WDB policies are implemented and adhered to,
- ❖ Adhering to the provisions outlined in the contract with the NWPA WDB and the NWPA WDB Regional and Local Plan,
- ❖ Reinforcing strategic objectives of the NWPA WDB to Partners, and
- ❖ Ensuring staff are properly trained by their formal leadership organizations and provided technical assistance, as needed.
- ❖ Integrate systems and coordinate services for the center and its Partners, placing priority on customer service.
- ❖ Integrated Workforce Service Delivery, as defined by WIOA, means organizing and implementing services by function (rather than by program), when permitted by a program’s authorizing statute and as appropriate, and by coordinating policies, staff communication, capacity building, and training efforts.
- ❖ Functional alignment includes having one-stop center staff who perform similar tasks serve on relevant functional teams (e.g. Skills Development Team or Business Services Team).
- ❖ Service integration focuses on serving all customers seamlessly (including targeted populations) by providing a full range of services staffed by cross-functional teams, consistent with the purpose, scope, and requirements of each program.
- ❖ The services are seamless to the customer, meaning the services are free of cumbersome transitions or duplicative registrations from one program service to another and there is a smooth customer flow to access the array of services available in the workforce center.

- ❖ Oversee and coordinate partner, program, and PA CareerLink® system performance. This includes but is not limited to:
- ❖ Providing and/or contributing to reports of center activities, as requested by the NWPA WDB,
- ❖ Providing input to the partner program leadership on the work performance of staff under their purview,
- ❖ Notifying the formal leader immediately of any staff leave requests or unexcused absences, disciplinary needs, or changes in employee status,
- ❖ Identifying and facilitating the timely resolution of complaints, problems, and other issues,
- ❖ Collaborating with the NWPA WDB on efforts designed to ensure the meeting of program performance measures, including data sharing procedures to ensure effective data matching, timely data entry into the case management systems, and coordinated data batch downloads (while ensuring the confidentiality requirements of FERPA, 34 CFR 361.38, and 20 CFR part 603),
- ❖ Ensuring open communication with the partner program leadership in order to facilitate efficient and effective center operations,
- ❖ Evaluating customer satisfaction data and propose service strategy changes to the NWPA WDB based on findings.
- ❖ Manage fiscal responsibilities and records for the center. This includes assisting the NWPA WDB with cost allocations and the maintenance and reconciliation of one-stop center operation budgets.

Prior to the selection of the one-stop operator, core values sessions were held with all partner staff in the local area. Core values are the principles and standards upon which an organization builds its future and they are used to shape the behavior of every person involved with the organization. A core values statement was adopted by the PA CareerLink® staff following the session. The purpose of this strategy and subsequent core values is to maximize coordination of services and avoid duplication of effort across partner agencies within the local workforce development system. The PA CareerLink® Operator and its Center Managers are responsible to ensure that the core values are embedded into the day-to-day operations. Additionally, meetings are conducted with all co-located partner staff to discuss daily operations and to coordinate staff activities. Regular training is conducted to ensure staff members understand the roles and responsibilities of all partners, promoting coordination of services and process improvements. Dislocated Workers who are eligible for Trade Act benefits are also co-enrolled in Wagner-Peyser, Title I, and Trade Act Programs to maximize the services available and reduce duplication across funding streams.

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

Procedures recently announced by the PA Department of Education call for the local Adult Education proposers for services in the local area to submit applications directly to the Department of Education (DOE). DOE will perform an initial review to ensure compliance by the proposers with requirements established by the DOE. DOE will then share applications related to each workforce area with the appropriate workforce development board, along with the scoring framework that is being employed

by the DOE. Local boards will then send recommendations regarding local Adult Education provider proposals to the DOE for consideration during DOE's final review, scoring, and selection process. DOE will make final decisions and inform the local board so that representatives of Adult Education providers can be included in service coordination meetings led by the one-stop operator.

The current local process calls for a committee of the Board to work with the Adult Literacy and Education Regional Coalition to initiate and implement local procedures in accord with new state protocols for local program review, and then for inclusion of adult education providers in service coordination meetings led by the PA CareerLink® Operator and Center Managers.

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?*

The PA CareerLink® system in the Northwest PA region provides career services that include but are not limited to outreach, intake and orientation, skill assessment, career counseling and job search, referrals to and coordination of activities, placement assistance and funding for training services. The region's PA CareerLink® sites provide services delivered by partner staff from a variety of federal and state employment and training programs such as WIOA Title I, Wagner-Peyser, Trade Act, Veterans Employment, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Carl Perkins, Adult Education and Literacy, Unemployment Compensation, PA Department of Human Services, Community Service Block Grant and programs funded through the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Through a coordinated referral system, customers learn about and are connected to a variety of other agencies that may not be co-located in a PA CareerLink® but may be best positioned to meet a specific customer need. The special populations focus includes:

Services to Persons with Disabilities and Barriers to Employment

Efforts are made to ensure that individuals with disabilities receive access to all services provided within the PA CareerLink® centers. The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) will be focused on individuals with the most significant disabilities who are eligible under WIOA Title IV. WIOA Title I staff will assist individuals with disabilities who do not want or need OVR services or are not found eligible for OVR services. They will also play a role in recruitment and outreach to this population. Sensitivity training is provided for PA CareerLink® staff, as well as training on the various adaptive technologies used within the PA CareerLink® sites. As with other participant groups, referrals are also made, as appropriate, to other partnering community agencies to ensure full accessibility to needed services. The Board's committees support and advise the NWWDB in the establishment and delivery of services to this population. Also, by developing relationships and conducting outreach to local agencies such as Community Resources for Independence, we are able to build on local expertise to benefit our customers with disabilities and barriers to employment.

Business services staff can identify resources to assist any employer to diversify their workforce to include individuals with barriers to employment. Specifically for individuals with disabilities, 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 helping a business to retain current employees following an accident, injury or disability.

Services to Veterans and Related Eligible Persons

Upon entering the PA CareerLink®, each individual is greeted and asked if they are a veteran. Once identified as a veteran, customers are apprised of the services available, including the veteran's priority of service. Specialized veteran workshops have been developed to assist the veterans in meeting employer expectations, including a workshop designed to enable veterans to transfer their military occupational experience to civilian job descriptions. Job/Career Fairs have been held giving veterans preference via an early admission to events before the general public. A regional veteran's outreach plan has been created to enhance opportunities to connect veterans to products, services and employment. PA CareerLink® staff members are trained to ensure that veteran's priority of service is always in effect, regardless of whether or not funding is limited, as long as the veteran or related eligible person meets the eligibility criteria.

Services to TANF Customers and Low-Income Individuals

Public assistance recipients may have multiple barriers to employment and require a range of services. These would include such services as case management, multiple support services, basic education remediation, vocational education, and job search assistance. Partnering with Employment and Retention Network (EARN) coordinates resources and services, as well as expanding case management and supportive services to this population. The NWWDB is working to further enhance service integration between the EARN Program and the PA CareerLink® system locally. All parties are committed to improving service integration and the leveraging of resources for the benefit of all job seekers.

Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers

Migrant and/or seasonal farm workers receive services equal to those provided to all other participants. Since these low income workers often are lacking in both basic education and vocational skills that are necessary to obtain a family sustaining income, these customers seeking assistance may benefit from the many services that are available through partnership with local adult literacy and education agencies across the region. To address the communication barrier of limited English speaking customers, local interpreters and dial up interpreters through Propio Language Services can be provided. Written materials of available services are also available in Spanish.

Services to Displaced Homemakers

Services are in place to assist this group by means of referral to partnering entities beyond PA CareerLink®. Displaced homemaker participants, most often women, sometimes lack marketable skills needed to provide for their own support. PA CareerLink® staff work with these participants using aptitude and interest assessments to assist them in making informed career choices. On-the-Job Training can be particularly beneficial for this population and outreach is conducted to both jobseeker and employers in the region regarding the benefits of On-the-Job Training opportunities. Adult literacy and education services partnerships will also benefit these individuals.

Services to Women and Minorities

Services to women are routinely made through referrals to local women's shelters, the Salvation Army, food banks, county assistance offices, Community Action, Inc., Community Services. Minorities often experience higher rates of high school dropouts and unemployment. Referrals for high school equivalency (HSE) credential preparation services are made. Job search assistance and other PA CareerLink® services are also made available.

Older Individuals

An active referral process exists between the PA CareerLink® and partner agencies for program information and assistance for mature workers. Resources are shared and appropriate services are provided. For participants with little or no prior work experience, paid work experience opportunities can be provided.

Persons with Limited English Proficiency

Individuals with Limited English Proficiency are provided with interpreter services through Propio Language Services. Written materials outlining available services are also available in Spanish. Individuals wishing to improve their literacy can access services through local adult literacy and education partner agencies.

Ex-Offenders/Returning Citizens

Ex-offenders face special challenges in reentering the workforce. PA CareerLink® staff members are conducting ongoing conversations with the federal prison system, the county jails, local church groups and concerned citizens regarding assisting those who have completed their incarceration find employment. The LWDB is also a partner on a Fatherhood Initiative Grant in collaboration with the Chautauqua County, New York local workforce development area to provide re-entry services to ex-offenders. In Erie County, as part of the Unified Erie approach to violence reduction, a group of stakeholders including law enforcement, social service, religious, government and educational professionals and ex-offenders convened to explore the creation of a countywide “transitioning client” reentry strategy. The purpose of the strategy is to support the successful reentry of formerly convicted county, state, and federal offenders into the community so they can reach their highest potential. This group continues to meet regularly and is called the Erie County Reentry Services and Support Alliance (ECRSSA). The primary goals of the ECRSSA are to (1) increase access and connections to support services and assistance for transitioning and call-in clients; (2) to promote a responsible quality of life through positive family, spiritual and informal support connections; and (3) to achieve safer communities through reduced violence and recidivism. The local workforce development system supports this effort by making available employment services such as soft skills training, resume writing, interviewing skills, and other job seeker services available through the PA CareerLink®.

Refugee and Immigrant Population

The NWWDA has a diverse population that includes a refugee and immigrant population, located almost solely in Erie County that includes Bhutanese/Nepalese, Somalian, Sudanese, Eritreans, Bosnians, Ukrainians, Iraqis, and Asians. Many refugees and immigrants have suffered political or religious persecution and have spent decades in refugee camps, unable to return home. The PA CareerLink® has developed partnerships with the Multicultural Resource Center, the International Institute, the Urban Erie Community Development Corporation and Erie Homes for Children and Adults to provide this population with a wide range of collaborative language and cultural diversity supportive services to assist them in breaking down barriers to employment. These services include but are not limited to resettlement services, interpretation in over thirty languages, child care, housing, transportation, overcoming past trauma and grief, managing money, understanding credit, driving simulation classes, and long-term follow-up support with employers. Many of these individuals possess skills needed by employers but need help re-establishing professional credentials in the United States and need help in their job search. On-the-Job Training opportunities are often provided to this population to assist them in their goal for employment to gain the self-sufficiency they desire for themselves and their families.

Dislocated Workers

Individuals who have been laid off or will be laid off due to plant closures or downsizing are eligible for career services through the PA CareerLink®. Dislocated workers that are determined to be job-ready receive job matching and job referral services. Any dislocated worker who needs additional assistance will proceed through individualized or training services. Dislocated workers may receive training or, if eligible, Trade Act services. They will work with PA CareerLink® staff to receive the services for which they are eligible to obtain employment that leads to self-sufficiency.

Trade Act Eligible Individuals

Eligible individuals who have been laid off or will be laid off due to plant closures or downsizing from a trade-impacted company are provided a Benefit Rights Interview (BRI), the Trade Act eligible individual meets with the Trade Act staff, a WIOA Title I application for services is completed to accomplish dual enrollment and an assessment is conducted. Supportive services are available as needed to all eligible co-enrolled individuals.

Youth

WIOA program services are provided to eligible youth by the WIOA Title I program services contractor. WIOA requires a focus on out-of-school youth (OSY). Emphasis is placed on connecting youth to occupational learning and STEM through activities such as Industry Clubs, Career Camp, Career Day, and pre-apprenticeship program pilots, with the ultimate goal of gainful employment for youth involved and pipeline development for local industry sectors.

Discussions are currently underway to increase outreach to targeted populations through a more mobile PA CareerLink® strategy that brings the workforce development services to the customer through partnership development with community agencies. Such outreach will benefit individuals with barriers to employment by meeting them in an environment where they are comfortable. Many of these individuals might be reluctant to otherwise avail themselves of these services. The PA CareerLink® has developed a partnership with both the Housing Authority in Erie County and Housing and Neighborhood Development Service (HANDS). HANDS has agreed to work in partnership with the PA CareerLink® to provide on-site classes, trainings, and job search assistance for their residents. This partnership also includes space for on-site delivery of services. The John Horan Garden Apartments provide housing for low-income families. Partnership between the PA CareerLink® and the John Horan Garden Apartments provides additional support and assistance in job search activities. The Mental Health Association (MHA) provides numerous programs for individuals who deal with mental health issues. The partnership with PA CareerLink® will provide participants with on-site weekly services addressing soft skills. The MHA staff will provide mentoring of their participants to foster their success. St. Benedict Education Center provides job training to address soft skills for individuals who are referred through the County Assistance Office. One of the challenges of the program is that participants need to be trained and ready for work within 180 days. Partnership with the PA CareerLink® will be beneficial because many of their participants need additional support after the St. Benedict Education Center program ends. This partnership building and the move toward a more mobile local PA CareerLink® system will result in improved outreach to these special populations, particularly individuals with barriers to employment.

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

Under the management of ResCare Workforce Services as the PA CareerLink® Operator, a coordinated

set of business services in collaboration with local economic development will be provided to local employers that include but are not limited to:

- Employer visits including maintaining existing business relationships, as well as connecting new employers to the local workforce development system that provide an assessment of business needs
- JobGateway®/CWDS support for creating business folders, uploading job postings, searching for potential employees, reviewing candidates, etc.
- OJT Program that engages employers with the local workforce development system that provides on-the-job training for job seekers in exchange for wage reimbursement
- Job Fairs that are specifically targeted to business and industries to provide access to cohorts of skilled job seekers
- Industry Partnerships that assist targeted industries with similar training and employment needs
- Apprenticeships that engage employers in apprenticeship models such as those opportunities provided by OH-PENN
- Incumbent Worker Training in that the NWWDB may reserve the right to use up to 20% of funds allocated to pay for the cost of providing training through a training program for incumbent workers
- Occupational assessments, such as WorkKeys
- Unemployment Insurance information sessions and/or workshops

The one stop system partners will develop value-added employer services that separate the PA CareerLink® from a crowded field of providers (both publicly and privately funded) similarly serving employers in Northwest Pennsylvania region. It is the intent to increase the number of employers accessing and receiving business services, as well as to increase the quality and effectiveness of the services. With limitations on staff and funds, the resources are targeted toward existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and those industries that provide entry level jobs with a career pathway within an industry.

For WIOA Title IV eligible customers, OVR provides these additional multiple services to the business community designed to assist businesses with onboarding pre-screened qualified employees with disabilities. OVR business services include reasonable accommodation consultation, OJT, referral on tax credits or deductions. OVR also offers no-cost consultation on the Americans with Disability Act (ADA), accessibility standards and helping a business to retain current employees following an accident, injury or disability.

The NWWDB has embraced efforts to address business and employer needs through Next Generation Sector opportunities. With Next Generation Sector Partnerships, the opportunity exists

to expand engagement of additional industry sectors beyond manufacturing to include healthcare, building and construction, and hospitality and tourism. The mission of the Business Services Team is to provide guidance, resources, and strategic workforce solutions to employer customers. The NWWDB is a partner in the Engage! application submitted to the state by the Northwest PA Regional Planning and Development Commission on behalf of the PREP partners. Through this process, Business Services Team staff will be responsible to enter employer information into Executive Pulse and share information among all partners. Business Services Team staff will have access to the data stored in Executive Pulse so that they have informed meetings with business customers. Economic development is well represented on the NWWDB. The Governor's Action Team (GAT) works with the staff to gather LMI to provide to prospects. NWWDB and the Business Services Team staff will organize and staff job fairs and conduct assessments of potential employees for the economic development community and employers.

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?*

Detailed information on the coordination of transportation can be found in section 1.7 of the Keystone Edge Workforce Development Region Multi-Year WIOA Regional Plan. Supportive services must be available to support eligible participants during training and assist them to overcome barriers to training and employment. The area's PA CareerLink® centers work to establish strategic partnerships with local agencies to assist adults, dislocated workers and youth in the local workforce development area with supportive services needs. In this effort, the Board's supportive services policy was updated in 2015 to increase the provision of supportive service funding for participants to better enable them to participate in workforce-funded programs and activities to secure and retain employment. In addition, training sessions were provided to all PA CareerLink® staff in the LWDA in December 2015 in an effort to increase focus on the importance of supportive services for participants, as well as emphasize the importance of documentation of supportive services in participant files. Referrals are made to community agencies that may provide various support services to maximize the availability of supportive services in the LWDA. Discussions on supportive services are also conducted with the Local Management Committee, which includes representatives from the local County Assistance Offices within the local workforce development area. Please refer to section 4.13 above for more information on supportive services in the local area.

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.*

It is anticipated that collaboration between the PA Department of Labor and Industry and the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) will result in the development and release of guidance that includes an agreement template for use by all local workforce development boards. The NWWDB will work with the Commonwealth to ensure compliance and fulfill the responsibilities within the agreement. OVR is represented on the NWWDB and is a key PA CareerLink® partner. OVR is a party to the local Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and the Resource Sharing Agreements for the local PA CareerLink® system.

Local efforts to enhance services to individuals with disabilities included the scheduling of a joint staff cross-training session for PA CareerLink® staff for both the Partner4Work and the Northwest PA adjacent local workforce development areas, provided by OVR staff.

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

The LWDA will follow the procedures for debt collection of lower tier sub-recipients due to audits as outlined in the PA Department of Labor & Industry Financial Management Guide (April 2017). In complying with such, LWDA requires lump sum payment in full within 30 days of final determination of any amounts owed when circumstances warrant. The payment must be made from a non-federal source. In the event that the sub-recipient is unable to make the payment in lump sum, the LWDA may develop a short-term installment payment based on conditions. In all cases, repayment is mandatory regardless of category (i.e. fraud, illegal acts, apathy, or lack of careful and accurate recordkeeping).

In addition, should the sub-recipient dispute the amount to be repaid after final determination is issued, the LWDA may impose legal sanctions as deemed appropriate. Furthermore, the LWDA agrees to ensure proper notification to all appropriate federal funding agencies and oversight agencies including but not limited to the Excluded Parties List System.

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

Multiple national groups and the U.S. Department of Labor have identified characteristics of high-performing workforce development boards. These characteristics cluster around the following general standards and specific criteria:

Standard I: Strategic Planning & Implementation

Criteria:

- Creation of a goal-oriented strategic plan that goes beyond the scope of WIOA funds
- Strategic plan that is developed from a broadly inclusive process including economic development, employer, education, human services, and other community leaders
- Strategic plan is a living document that is part of the board's continuous improvement process
- Adoption of a sector strategy approach in engaging employers
- Adoptions of a career pathways approach in engaging education and training providers

Standard II: Developing and Managing Resources

Criteria:

- Board reviews and monitors budget that aligns with strategic goals
- Resources and assets are coordinated and leveraged among service partners
- Board works with partners to attract more public and private resources to support strategies
- Board meets the expectations of the local elected officials in spending public funds

Standard III: Managing the Work of the Board

Criteria:

- Board is diverse, includes major employer sectors, and includes key community planners in economic development, education, and community services
- Board oversees the one-stop partnerships and resources pledged in the MOUs as a primary line of business
- Board has its own business plan and manages its business in accord with the plan, including oversight of staff to implement the board's business strategies.

The Board will work closely with the Department of Labor and Industry to meet all expectations for a high performing board that are currently under development. In line with the standards that are areas of focus for the state, the Board is committed to:

- Support for attainment of the Governor's goals in the State WIOA plan as described in this local plan;
- Negotiating performance standards tied to local conditions and meeting or exceeding those standards;
- Maintaining financial practices that ensure that proper oversight is maintained by the Board and the local elected officials for fiscal integrity;
- Achieving the state's training expenditure targets;
- Employing quantitative and qualitative measurement tools to ensure high performance levels, with particular emphasis on measuring the outcomes for employers for services delivered by business services representatives;
- Maintaining program monitoring and oversight to achieve highest levels of performance; and
- Working with all partners to increase outreach, recruitment and integrated services for individuals with barriers to employment.

In addition to WIOA program excellence detailed above, the Board continues to work closely with the chief local elected officials and community partners to work strategically toward higher levels of collective impact beyond WIOA-funded programs. Current leadership practices include:

- Creative partnerships with community organizations to expand access points for services;
- Expansion of sector-based strategies with employers in collaboration with neighboring workforce development areas, as new plans are developed for Next Generation Industry Partnerships;
- Maintaining broader strategic goals of the Board and tracking attainment of goals in collaboration with PREP partners in economic development; and
- Selection of a nationally-recognized PA CareerLink® Operator and WIOA Title I service provider that will expand the Board's work in business services, partnership development, technology applications, and connections to best practices in other regions.

A major priority for the NWWDB is to expand and diversify the funding base for programs and services in the local workforce area, working in partnership with other local organizations and with broader geographic coalitions as called for in the Keystone Edge Regional WIOA Plan. Employment and Training Administration (ETA) funds such as Workforce Innovation Fund grants, Make It In America grants, Dislocated Worker Grant (DWG) funds and Trade Act funds are some examples of funding sources used to effectively augment WIOA Title I funds. LWDB strategies will recognize and adhere to the funding restrictions of each funding stream, but will continue to seek out opportunities to leverage other available resources in an effort to increase services to the LWDA's eligible population, especially to those populations with barriers to employment. The use of formula-based investments with other

funding such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Veterans (VETS) and similar funding allows comprehensive services to be offered to all eligible low-income populations under WIOA. TANF funding continues to support WIOA year-round services and summer employment activities.

In addition, the US Department of Labor awarded a \$2.9 million American Apprenticeship Grant to West Central Job Partnership to build *The Greater Oh-Penn Manufacturing Apprenticeship Network*. The Network is comprised of five industry-led sector partnerships including 137 very actively engaged businesses (Mahoning Valley Manufacturers Coalition, Erie Regional Manufacturer Partnership, Advanced Materials Manufacturing Industry Partnership in NW PA, and Portage County Manufacturers Coalition); five Workforce Development Areas (WDB Areas 17, 18, & 19 in Ohio; NW PA WDB Area; and West Central PA WDB Area) as well as the Ohio Apprenticeship Council, the PA Department of Labor & Industry, multiple community colleges, universities, career and technical centers, Adult Basic Education providers, and other partners through the American Job Centers. The Network includes the 6 counties of the Northwest local workforce development area, along with 8 other contiguous counties on the border of Pennsylvania and Ohio (Lawrence, Mercer, Erie, Crawford, Venango, Clarion, Warren and Forest in PA and Trumbull, Mahoning, Columbiana, Portage, Geauga, and Ashtabula in Ohio). The Network aims to markedly increase manufacturer's ability to meet their needs for high-skilled and credentialed employees and willingness to use customized registered apprenticeship models. The Network will focus on methods to ease the apprenticeship process for manufacturers by creating a multi-employer group sponsorship apprenticeship platform and streamlining apprenticeship and employee candidate recruitment, assessment, and pre-screening operations with different service providers and "on-ramps," facilitating the process of matching appropriate candidates with manufacturers' needs.

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?

Local stakeholders, partners, and other community members were sent drafts of plans during the development of the WIOA Transition Plan. This process of engagement has continued with drafting of the final WIOA Local and Regional Plans for 2017-19, with updates to the plan sent to the same group. As noted below, public comment will be accepted and acted on during the 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 submission of the plan?

The Local Plan was posted to the NWWDB's website at www.nwpawib.org on July 28, 2017. Chief Local Elected Officials, LWDB members, Board committee members, program services contractors, Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations, Bureau of Workforce Development Administration, PA CareerLink® system partners, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, educational institutions, economic development agencies, community agencies, and other partners and stakeholders were notified via email that the Local Plan had been posted to the website for 30-day public comment. Public comment was accepted in writing electronically at participate@nwpawib.org or by mail until Sunday, August 27, 2017 at 12:00 noon. All public comments were reviewed by the CLEOs as well as a committee made up of LWDB members who determined if any changes were needed to the Local Plan. The comments

received and response from the committee are presented as an attachment to this document, showing any changes that were made to the plan as a result of the comments.

ATTESTATIONS

By checking the box adjacent to each line item, the local board attests to ensuring the compliance components/documents listed are (or will be) in place and effective prior to December 31, 2017.

Each of the following components/documents should be current and available to the Department at any time during the planning process and/or monitoring or auditing processes. At this time, the Department is not requiring copies of such documents be attached to regional or local area plans.

- ✓ Agreement between all counties and other local governments, if applicable, establishing the consortium of local/chief elected officials.*
- ✓ Agreement between the chief elected official(s) and the fiscal agent, if a fiscal agent is designated.*
- ✓ Agreement between the local area elected official(s) and the local workforce development board.*
- ✓ Local workforce development board policy and process that provides for nomination, appointment and removal of board members; resolutions; bylaws; code of conduct; and conflict of interest.*
- ✓ Financial management policy and process including cost allocation plan; internal controls; cash management; receipts of goods; cost reimbursement; inventory and equipment; program income; travel reimbursement; audit requirements and resolution; annual report; property management; debt collection; and allowable costs.*
- ✓ Local area procurement policy – Must describe formal procurement procedures.*
- ✓ 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/certification random sampling; priority of service; stipends; 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; documentation for training expenditure targets; incumbent worker training.*
- ✓ Risk management policy and process including records retention and public access; public records requests; monitoring, grievance; incident; and disaster recovery plan.*
- ✓ Human resources policy and process including employee classification; benefits; holidays and PTO; recruitment and selection; employee development; discipline; layoffs, terminations and severance; sexual harassment; and equal opportunity/non-discrimination.*
- ✓ Professional services contract(s) for administrative services such as staffing and payroll, if applicable.*

Performance Accountability Template

Local Workforce Development Area name: Northwest PA Workforce Development Area

Effective Date: July 1, 2017

WIOA Title I Programs

WIOA Performance Measures	Local Area PY17 Negotiated Performance Goals	Local Area PY16 Attained Performance Measures
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	Negotiated Goals	Attained Performance
Adult	63%	Data not yet available
Dislocated Worker	72%	Data not yet available
Youth	62%	Data not yet available
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	Negotiated Goals	Attained Performance
Adult	63%	Data not yet available
Dislocated Worker	72%	Data not yet available
Youth	57%	Data not yet available
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)	Negotiated Goals	Attained Performance
Adult	\$5,000	Data not yet available
Dislocated Worker	\$6,500	Data not yet available
Youth	Baseline	Data not yet available
Credential Attainment Rate	Negotiated Goals	Attained Performance
Adult	55%	Data not yet available
Dislocated Worker	57%	Data not yet available
Youth	66%	Data not yet available
Measurable Skill Gains	Negotiated Goals	Attained Performance
Adult	Baseline	Data not yet available
Dislocated Worker	Baseline	Data not yet available
Youth	Baseline	Data not yet available
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Negotiated Goals	Attained Performance
Adult	Baseline	Data not yet available
Dislocated Worker	Baseline	Data not yet available
Youth	Baseline	Data not yet available

Workforce Service Delivery System Program Partner/Provider List

Local Workforce Development Area name: Northwest PA Workforce Development Area NW170

Effective Date: July 1, 2017

WIOA Title I Youth/Adult/Dislocated Worker	WIOA Title I	NW PA Workforce Development Board
920 Water St, Ste 32B Meadville, PA 16335	814-333-1286	janderson@nwpajobconnect.org
Wagner Peyser	Wagner- Peyser Act (29 U.S.C.49 et seq.)	PA Dept. of Labor & Industry
651 Boas St, Harrisburg, PA 17121	814-678-5070	rpachay@pa.gov
Trade Adjustment Assistance3100	Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C.2271 et seq.)	PA Dept. of Labor & Industry
651 Boas St, Harrisburg, PA 17121	814-678-5070	rpachay@pa.gov
Jobs for Veterans	Chapter 41 of Title 38, United States Code	PA Dept. of Labor & Industry
651 Boas St., Harrisburg, PA 17102	814-678-5070	rpachay@pa.gov
Rapid Response		PA Dept. of Labor & Industry
651 Boas St, Harrisburg, PA 17121	814-678-5070	rpachay@pa.gov
Foreign Labor Certification (FLC)		PA Dept. of Labor & Industry
651 Boas St, Harrisburg, PA 17121	814-678-5070	rpachay@pa.gov
Unemployment Insurance Office of UC Service Centers	Social Security Act 9 of 1935 and Federal Unemployment Tax Act of 1939	PA Dept. of Labor & Industry Barbara A. Mourer, Director
651 Boas St, Room 625., Harrisburg, PA 17121	717-787-4127	bmourer@pa.gov
Adult Education and Literacy Activities	WIOA, Title II	Crawford County READ Program
640 Walnut Street, Meadville, PA 16335	814-337-7323	annmknott@gmail.com
Adult Education and Literacy Activities	WIOA, Title II	Greater Erie Community Action Committee
18 West 9 th Street, Erie, PA 16501	814-451-5612	tswoyer@gecac.org
Adult Education and Literacy Activities	WIOA, Title II	Multicultural Community Resource Center
554 East 10 th Street, Erie, PA 16503	814-455-0212	cbrigham@mcrerie.org
Adult Education and Literacy Activities	WIOA, Title II	Northwest Tri-County IU5
252 Waterford St, Edinboro, PA 16412	814-440-2970	Caryl_unseld@iu5.org

Workforce Service Delivery System Program Partner/Provider List (continued)

Adult Education and Literacy Activities	WIOA, Title II	Community Action, Inc.
105 Grace Way, Punxsutawney, PA 15767	814-938-3302	rcardamone@jccap.org
Adult Education and Literacy Activities	WIOA, Title II	Dr. Gertrude A. Barber Center
100 Barber Place, Erie, PA 16507	814-874-5554	kpagano@barberinstitute.org
Office of Vocational Rehabilitation	Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 720 et seq.)	PA Department of Labor & Industry
3100 Lovell Place, Erie, PA 16503	814-651-9607	jhewitt@pa.gov
PA Department of Human Services (DHS): TANF	Part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.)	Erie County DHS
154 West 9 th Street, Erie, PA 16501	814-461-2262	jcintron@pa.gov
PA Department of Human Services (DHS): TANF	Part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.)	Venango & Warren Counties DHS
1 Dale Ave., Franklin, PA 16323	814-209-1654	plyle@pa.gov
PA Department of Human Services (DHS): TANF	Part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.)	Forest County DHS
613 Elm Street, Tionesta, PA 16353	814-362-5378	jkeltz@pa.gov
PA Department of Human Services (DHS): TANF	Part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.)	Crawford County DHS
1084 Water St, Meadville, PA 16335	814-333-3400	rfecko@pa.gov
PA Department of Human Services (DHS): TANF	Part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.)	Clarion County DHS
71 Lincoln Drive, Clarion, PA 16214	814-226-1700	smichelott@pa.gov
Community Service Block Grants	Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.)	Community Action, Inc.
105 Grace Way, Punxsutawney, PA 15767	814-938-3302	rcardamone@jccap.org
Community Service Block Grants	Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.)	Pathstone Corp.
421 McFarlan Rd, Ste E, Kennett Square, PA 19348	610-925-5600	ndagostino@pathstone.org
Community Service Block Grants	Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.)	Venango-Crawford Office of Economic Opportunity
1 Dale Ave., Franklin, PA 16323	717-432-9767	kwoods@co.venango.pa.us
Community Service Block Grants	Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.)	Warren-Forest Economic Opportunity Council
1209 Pennsylvania Ave W. Warren, PA 16365	814-726-2400	raible@wfcaa.org

Workforce Service Delivery System Program Partner/Provider List (continued)

Community Service Block Grants	Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.)	Community Action Association of PA
222 Pine St., Harrisburg, PA 17101	717-233-1075	susan@thecaap.org
Job Corps	WIOA, Title I, Subtitle C	PA Outreach & Admissions
355 5 th Ave, Suite 1335 Pittsburgh, PA 15222	412-471-2724	Self.tyrone@jobcorps.org
Native American Programs	Native American Programs	County of Three Rivers American Indian Center, Inc.
201 Rochelle St, Pittsburgh, PA 15210	800-985-8721	rjohn@catraic.org
Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Programs	WIOA, Title I, Section 167	Pathstone Corp.
121 South 2 nd St, Reading, PA 19602	610-925-5600	Ndagostino@pathstone.org
Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSCEP)	Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.)	Greater Erie Community Action Committee
18 W 9 th Street, Erie, PA 16501	814-459-4581	mtrott@gecac.org
Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSCEP)	Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965	Pathstone Corp.
121 South 2 nd St, Reading, PA 19602	610-925-5600	Ndagostino@pathstone.org
Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSCEP)	Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965	AARP
321 Main St., Suite 4 H Johnstown, PA 15901	814-254-4147	rweible@aarp.org
EARN		St. Benedict Education Center
330 E 10 th Street Erie, PA 16503	814-452-4072	nsabol@stben.org

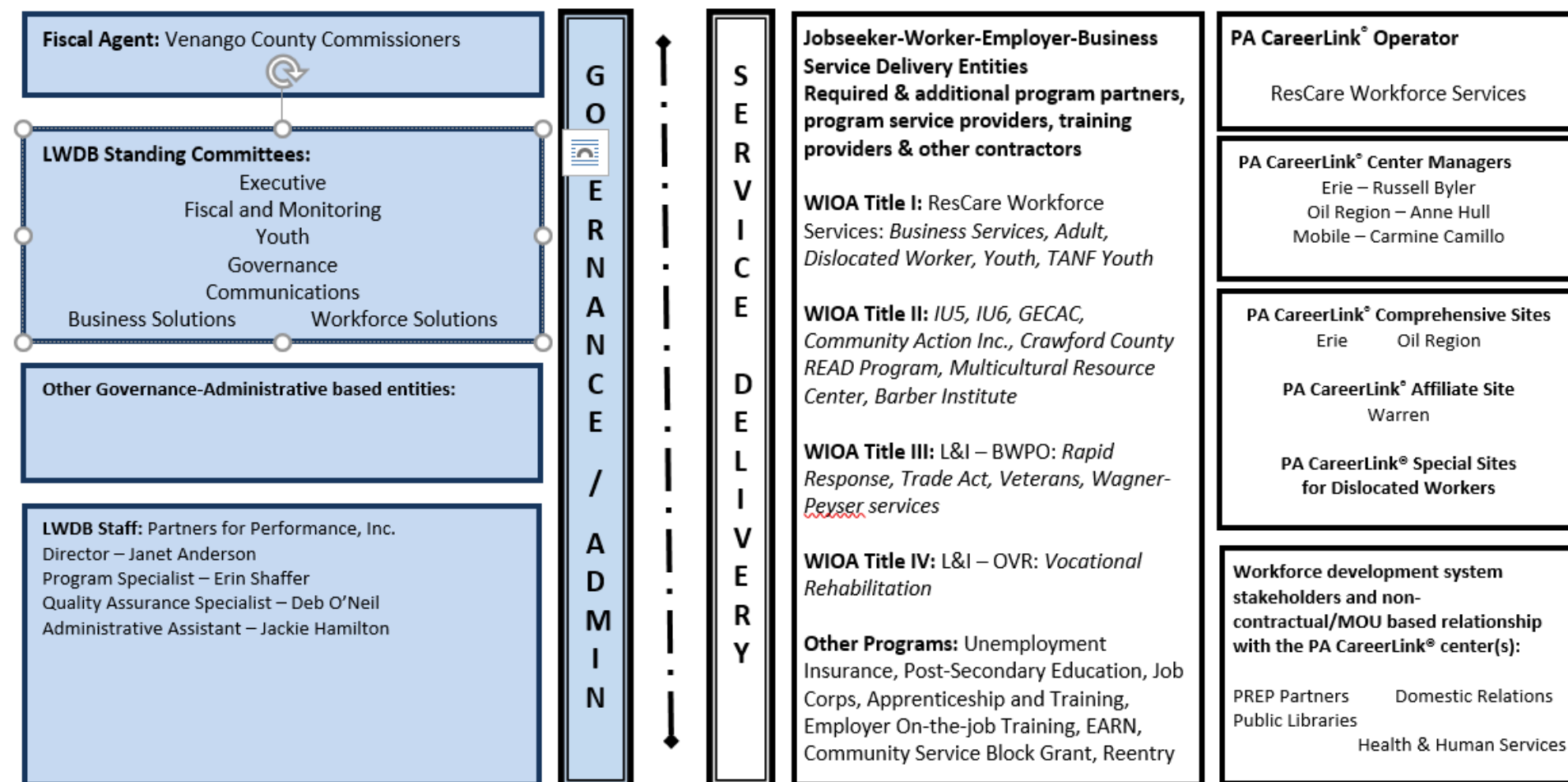
PY 2017-2019 WIOA Multi-Year Regional/Local Area Plan: Appendix E
Local Workforce Development Area Workforce System Organizational Chart

Local Workforce Development Area name: Northwest 170

Effective Date: August 11, 2017

Chief/Lead Elected Official(s): Commissioner Wayne Brosius (Clarion), Commissioner John Amato (Crawford), County Executive Kathy Dahlkemper (Erie), Commissioner Robert Snyder (Forest), Commissioner Chip Abramovic (Venango), Commissioner Ben Kafferlin (Warren)

Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB): Northwest 170



**NORTHWEST WDA
LOCAL PLAN PUBLIC COMMENT RECEIVED**

The following table represents all public comments received during the designated period and any response taken due to the comment.

#	Comment	Response
1	Agencies providing Title II adult education services under WIOA do so using competitive grant funding and are subject to change as a result of the grant funding process. Therefore, Title II adult education providers should not be listed by individual agency name. A preferably way of identifying these providers would be to consistently list as Title II Adult Education and Literacy partners. (Example: Page 23, Paragraph 2) from Northwest PA Adult Education (Title II) Coalition	Comment reviewed. Historically, the planning process has required this level of detail. No change to the plan.
2	It is unclear if Title I or Title II is providing the “Adult basic literacy education classes” for out-of-school youth. Title II should be listed as a specific partner (Page 26, paragraph 3, sentence 2) from Northwest PA Adult Education (Title II) Coalition	Comment reviewed. The sentence will be reworded to be more specific.
3	“Space is provided to the Title II partners at the PA CareerLink Centers to conduct this service (TABE testing)” The coalition suggests this sentence be deleted. The previous sentence accurately describes the partnership as a career service being provided by Title II as part of our negotiated MOU; Title II has not requested designated space. In addition, in Clarion and Crawford counties space will be provided for TABE assessment in Title II classrooms. This may also occur in other counties as the Mobile CareerLink system grows. (Page 34, paragraph 3, sentence 4 and Page 44, paragraph 5, sentence 6) from Northwest PA Adult Education (Title II) Coalition	Comment reviewed. The sentence will be deleted.
4	Page 34 and 44 specifies how CareerLinks will “refer customers to Title II Adult Education and Literacy partners.” It should also be included that Title II Adult Education and Literacy partners will seamlessly refer customers to the CareerLink system through the Mobile Career Link and through comprehensive CareerLink sites. (Pages 34 and 44) from Northwest PA Adult Education (Title II) Coalition	Comment reviewed. Language will be added to reflect that the referral process will work through Mobile Service Delivery and comprehensive sites.
5	The third sentence in this paragraph describes Title II Adult Education and Literacy services as tutoring. This is an incorrect term for our services and should be changed to “instruction. PDE’s definition of services is as follows, “Adult basic and family literacy education programs are funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Division of Adult Education, to provide a full range of instructional services that prepare Pennsylvanians looking to develop the basic skills necessary to participate fully in the education of their children, find and keep family-sustaining employment, or obtain a secondary school credential (www.education.pa.gov/Postsecondary-Adult/Adult%20and%20Family%20Literacy%20Education/Pages/default.aspx#tab-1) (Page 49, paragraph 2, sentence 3) from Northwest PA Adult Education (Title II) Coalition	Comment reviewed. The plan will be changed to reflect “tutoring and/or instruction” in this instance.

MOBILE SERVICE DELIVERY PLAN

Mobile Service Delivery Defined

Mobile delivery of workforce services does not require a site. It is a proactive delivery of services; meeting the needs of individuals with barriers to employment that otherwise would not visit a comprehensive site. Collaboration and cooperation with a myriad of social service providers, education providers, and employers eliminates the need for job seekers to self-identify by visiting the PA CareerLink®. Community organizations will provide access to their clients, gratis use of their facilities to deliver individual and group-level workforce programming, wrap-around, holistic counseling to shared or dual enrolled clients. At its basest level, this approach is designed to reach those job seekers that have the most significant barriers to success, whether adult, youth, or dislocated workers where they are. Strategy and operational detail for the mobile delivery of services is provided as an attachment to this plan.

Background

In 2015, staff deliberately undertook an effort to meet with all client types and partners/stakeholders of the NW PA CL to learn from their perspective *how the system was working and/or might be improved*. The comments were harsh from most and the process of identifying a better way to serve clients began. The following is a summary of the comments:

- Employers indicated that the system was not providing staffing that they needed.
- Clients were not finding jobs in positions with family sustaining wages, if they found them at all.
- Economic Developers shared their frustration with the system and lack of confidence in the workforce system's ability to assist either job seekers or employers.
- Partner groups (mandated and not) indicated that they had stopped making referrals to the PA CareerLink® system because clients became frustrated and were often turned away rather than receiving services. Staff members, both BWPO and Title I alike, focus more on "checking boxes" than delivering meaningful, personalized service to clients that results in gainful employment.
- Partners were duplicating workshops and services because of the need and lack of service for all at PA CareerLink®. Moreover, throughout the partnering process we have discovered that a wide array of social service agencies have opted to hire their own workforce services staff members rather than partner with the PA CareerLink® to assist their clients. In short, agencies that assist the very people we are statutorily compelled to serve have turned their backs on our sites.
- Staff believe that they are not to case manage clients, but to introduce the ideas and provide general guidance, but not to provide specific assistance. Again, the emphasis in the minds of staff is on "checking boxes"; throwing as many services (often non-value added) as possible at a client rather than focusing on the quality of services. Clients, including dislocated workers, are expected to fend for themselves in locating, applying for, and securing gainful employment. As a result, clients (including dislocated workers) seek assistance from other sources (including the local libraries) to finish the challenging process of securing a family-sustaining wage, something that our CL staff believes is beyond the purview of their work.
- Finally, employers, job seekers, and partners alike all lament the bureaucratic nature of the PA CareerLink®. With the heavy emphasis on linear service delivery, documentation, and formal enrollment in WIOA (despite the spirit of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and its elimination of sequence of services), clients have been forced into one-size-fits-all programming. As a result, individual job seekers and employers are increasingly turning to more nimble, responsive private entities (employment agencies) that better respond to their *unique* needs. In an increasingly competitive workforce service field, it is the belief of the WDB and its staff that we must evolve or wither away to irrelevance.

While clients and partners were frustrated by the results coming out of the PA CareerLink® they all seemed very positive about the prospect of staff coming to them in a place where the client is comfortable and the partner can provide support to their client. This evidences a willingness to give the PA CareerLink® *another* chance, but only if we change the way we deliver services in a meaningful, significant way. The mobilization of service delivery represents that meaningful change.

Customer Centric Approach

Government service delivery models are changing all around the globe to meet the demands of customers. Customer-centric models have been around for more than a decade. Aside from the inherently more responsive and individualized nature of services that accompanies a shift to customer-centric models, additional driving factors behind the shift include: vocalized demands for something better by customers of all varieties, austere budget cuts, and technological advancements. It is with this in mind that the mobile concept of delivery emerged. This is not a new or novel concept and could be modeled after many government service delivery models, including the current case management practices of OVR staff and mental health service providers, both publicly and privately funded.

Challenges

There are three challenges that the NW Workforce System must overcome in order to remain relevant. First, the local partners and stakeholders are critical about our ability to deliver adequate, let alone exceptional, service to either the job seeker or the employer. Agencies representing adults and youth with disabilities, Title II adult education providers, agencies working with non-native English language speakers, mental health service providers, and representatives from both the adult and juvenile criminal justice systems have all provided examples of how the current PA CareerLink® model does not meet the needs of their clients. Taken together, these partners represent the bridge to 70% of the clients we are mandated to serve, yet very few of them are even willing, let alone eager, to work with our staff. This has resulted in limited or no referrals to PA CareerLink®, the development of partner programming similar to our offerings that better meets the needs of clients, and a steady decline in the number of employers willing to post their positions on Job Gateway™ and/or consider PA CareerLink® job seekers as viable candidates. In fact, some staff within the system openly encourage clients to apply for positions directly with employers, or at least in a manner that downplays their affiliation with the PA CareerLink®, to improve their chances of being hired.

Second, the fiscal reality is that we cannot continue to do business as we always have if we are to put dollars for training and supportive services in the hands of our customers. At the start of the fiscal year, it was known that the Title 1 provider was not going to be able to maintain the level of staffing nor provide training dollars to meet our benchmark for performance. The decision to not fill staff positions that were vacated during the year provided the extra funding necessary to keep the remaining staff in place, adding additional strain to the system's ability to provide adequate coverage in all of the 5 comprehensive sites in our area. Further, the available dollars for training were spent by October 2016 in both Erie and the 5 rural counties. The limited available funds further discouraged already frustrated job seekers, training providers, staff, WDB and CLEOs.

Third, the number of trade-eligible dislocated workers in the area increased as the result of some high-profile, mass layoffs, placing additional strain on the system. The co-enrollment and dual case management requirements for Title I and BWPO, designed to facilitate collaboration, have instead largely result in increased stratification of responsibility, with staff quick to point out what is, and what is not, their responsibility. The Commonwealth's response to the need for additional assistance was indeed helpful, but the staff was relatively new to the evolving process, which subsequently created the need for a lot of support from Harrisburg, local BWPO management, and WDB staff.

Service Delivery for Mobile Service Delivery

Mobile Service Delivery is a proactive approach to service delivery; meeting the client where they are most comfortable and receptive to the delivery of meaningful career services. This can be at a partner/stakeholder location, a static public access point, within their community, or at a comprehensive site. The model promises the potential for delivery of “wrap around” services from a collaborative team of professionals (both workforce and social services) to clients with various barriers to employment. Moreover, these services can now be delivered in a setting/environment where these job seekers find comfort and familiarity, based on their individual preferences. The use of locations that are preferred by the clients will lead to the development of a system that emphasizes the comfort of job-seekers, not the convenience of PA CareerLink® staff. Although the model will remain flexible and continue to evolve in a client-facing manner, at this stage sites affiliated with service delivery include:

Hub: This is the physical location that serves as the base of operations for Mobile Service Delivery staff. The hub may or may not be located in a comprehensive site, and is **not** intended to be a public access location for clients to meet staff. It will house client files, a mobile services coordinator that will guide the logistics of all mobile activity, and serve as a location where staff will come together on a regular basis to collaborate on case management, receive training, and share challenges, successes, and effective service delivery strategies with each other.

Special Site: This is a special site as defined by WIOA. A physical location where workforce services are provided to dislocated workers during limited advertised hours, without the need of an appointment the office may house UC equipment and offer a CRC. The property owner/proprietor, in concert with representatives from the WDB and Operator, will establish the frequency of access, the nature of service delivery and programmatic offerings (e.g. public workshops designed to assist job seekers) provided at the location, and the sharing of in-kind resources in a formal MOU. The site will be staffed as required to serve the specific needs of the dislocated workers in the county where no comprehensive site exists.

Partner Location: This is a location where a formal relationship between the partner (may be an employer) and the local WDB has been established. Partner locations will limit the delivery of workforce services to clients/customers with whom they have an established relationship, initially. As the relationship evolves and expectations are met the partner *may* choose to open their doors to the general public which will require a formal MOU with the NW WDB. The PA CareerLink® service delivery strategy, including specific services delivered to whom and how often, will vary from partner to partner and will reflect the unique needs of the clients they serve at the partner location.

Comprehensive Site: This is a physical site where the services of all mandated workforce partners are available. This is a public access site fully staffed by at least two of the three mandated partners every day of the work week and houses UC equipment.

Affiliate Site: This is a physical location to support the comprehensive sites staffed with at least one partner and not Wagner-Peyser only. The partner(s) must be present at a minimum of 51% of the open hours. There is no requirement that the more than one staff be present to open the office doors. The site will have limited hours posted on various websites including Job Gateway and the PA CareerLink® website and advertised at the comprehensive sites, and advertised with partners and employers.

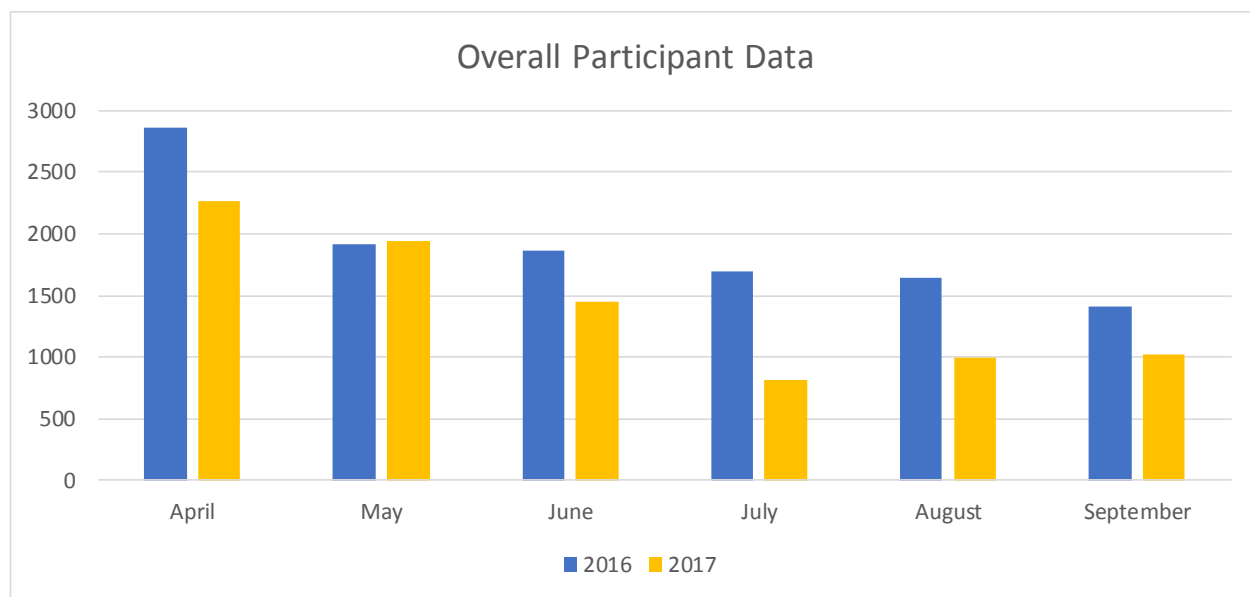
In summation, Mobile Service Delivery is designed to: 1) improve *individualized* customer service by shifting staff focus from “checking boxes” and “counting heads” to the delivery of value-added services, 2) reduce the infrastructure costs associated with the maintenance of 5 comprehensive sites in the NWPA region, and 3) provide better outcomes for employers and job-seekers alike by spending a larger percentage of Title I formula funds on training, work based learning, and supportive services. Staff

members who embrace this vision will become much more customer-centric in the routine performance of their job duties.

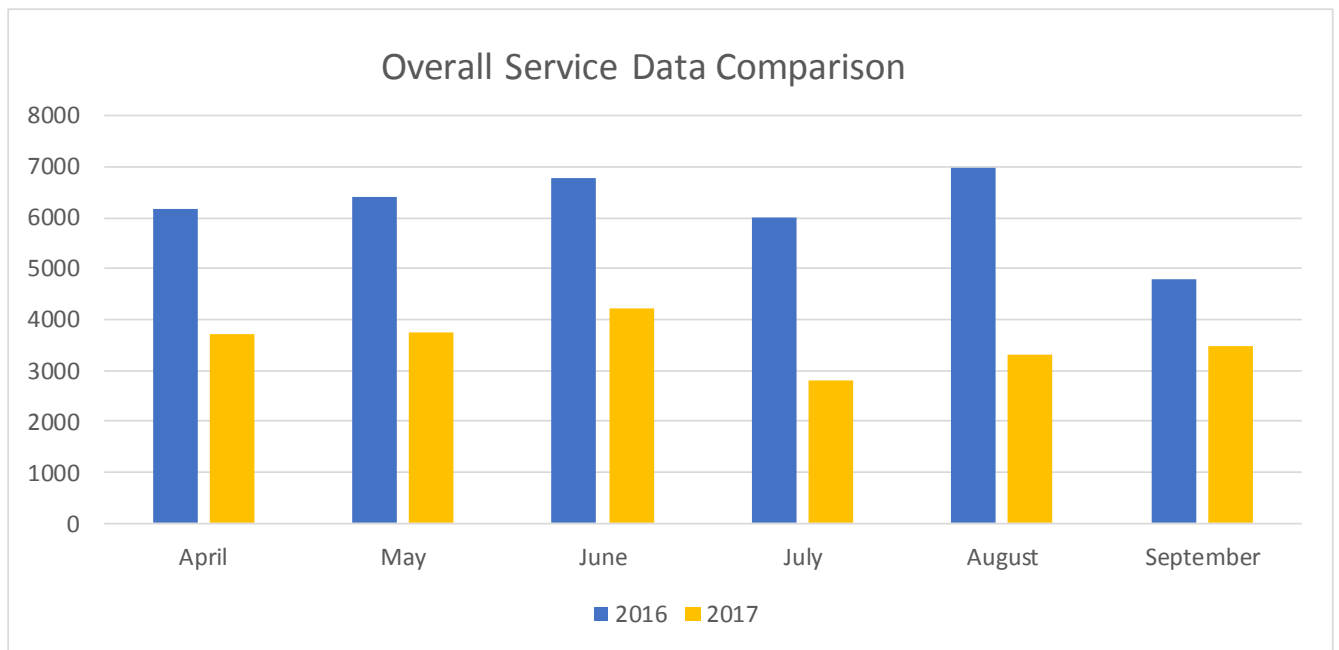
Mobile Assessment Plan

The mobile assessment plan is the review of data by the board for the entire NW Workforce System utilizing the agreed to data between CWIA/L&I and the NWWDB. The data for the 6-month period April – September comparing 2016 with 2017 is attached below and was shared at the December 8, NWPA Job Connect meeting with board members, CLEOs, partners, and stakeholders. The communication plan also attached to the letter provided to the department includes the Communication Plan with Goal 4 providing the assessment plan. Due to the slow start of the Operator, we are behind on the refinement of measures of success, but are ahead in sharing the data with the board as this was completed in December. At the February board meeting, the results for the 6-month period ending December 31, 2017 will be shared. Goals for frontline staff will be developed based on the results available in January 2018 with the new Operator.

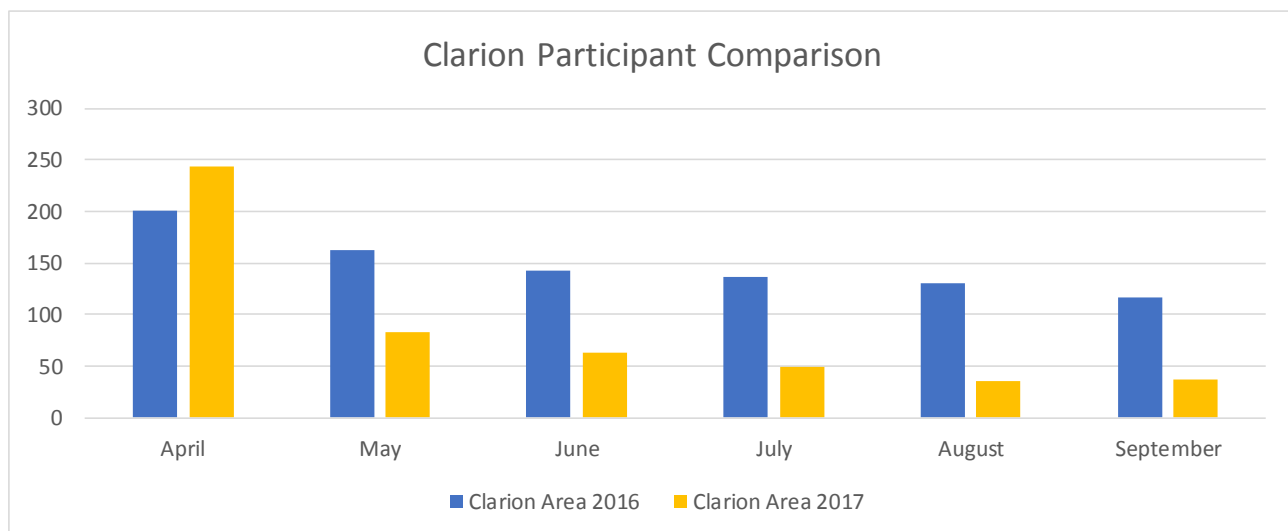
2016	Month	Number of Participants	2017	Month	Number of Participants
	April	2857		April	2271
	May	1913		May	1936
	June	1860		June	1445
	July	1693		July	809
	August	1646		August	994
	September	1413		September	1015



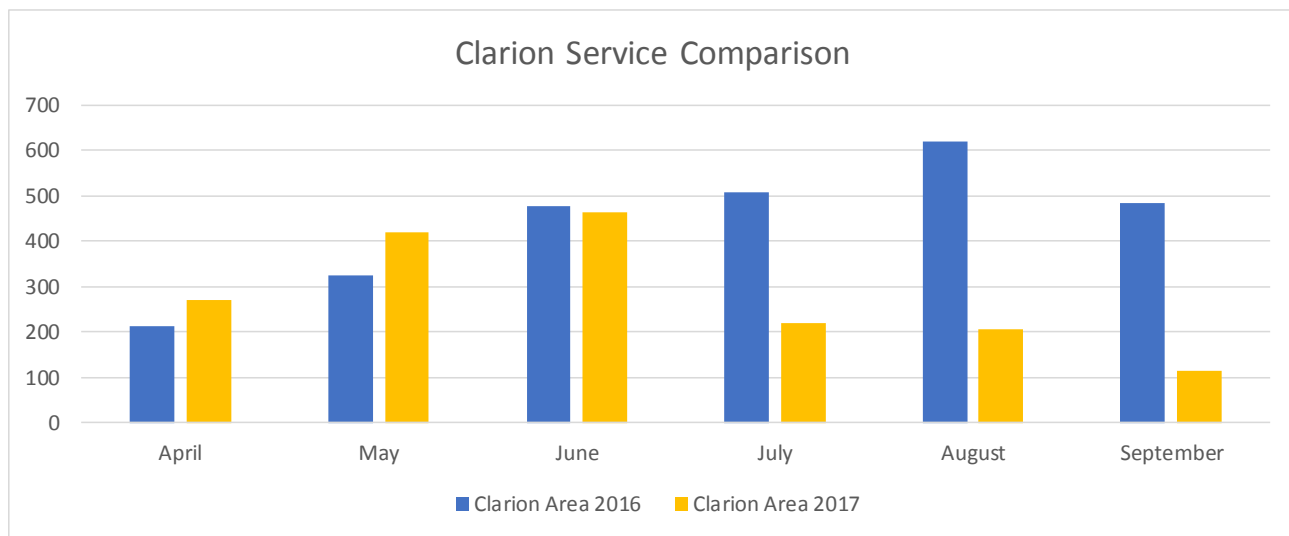
2016	Month	Number of Services	2017	Month	Number of Services
	April	6184		April	3711
	May	6391		May	3745
	June	6769		June	4228
	July	6001		July	2795
	August	6966		August	3327
	September	4803		September	3491



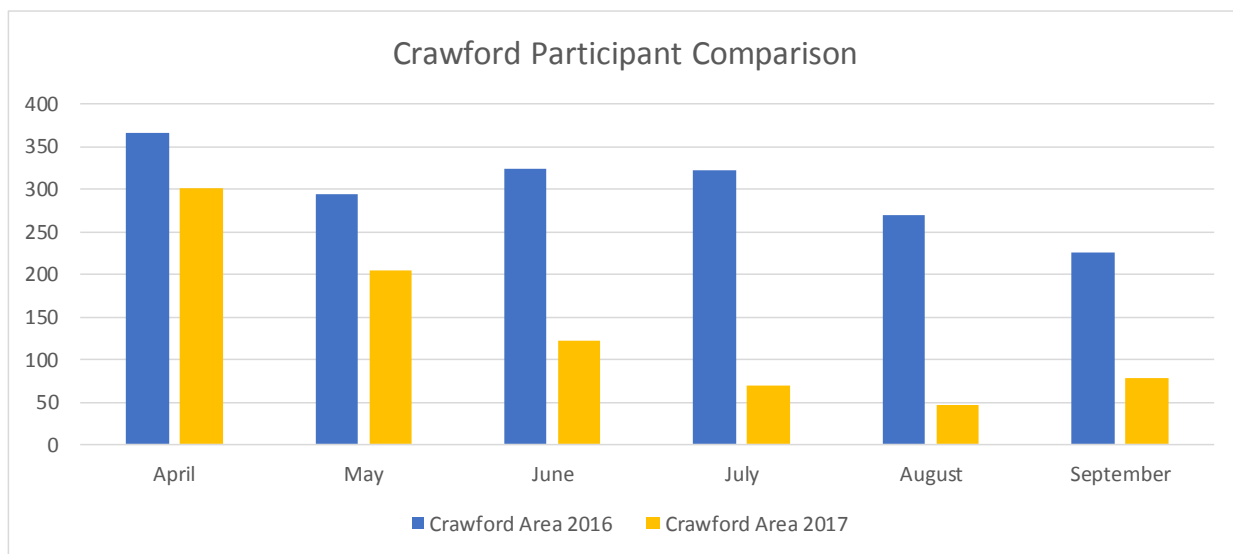
Clarion Area 2016	Month	Number of Participants	Clarion Area 2017	Month	Number of Participants
	April	201		April	243
	May	162		May	83
	June	143		June	63
	July	136		July	49
	August	130		August	35
	September	117		September	37



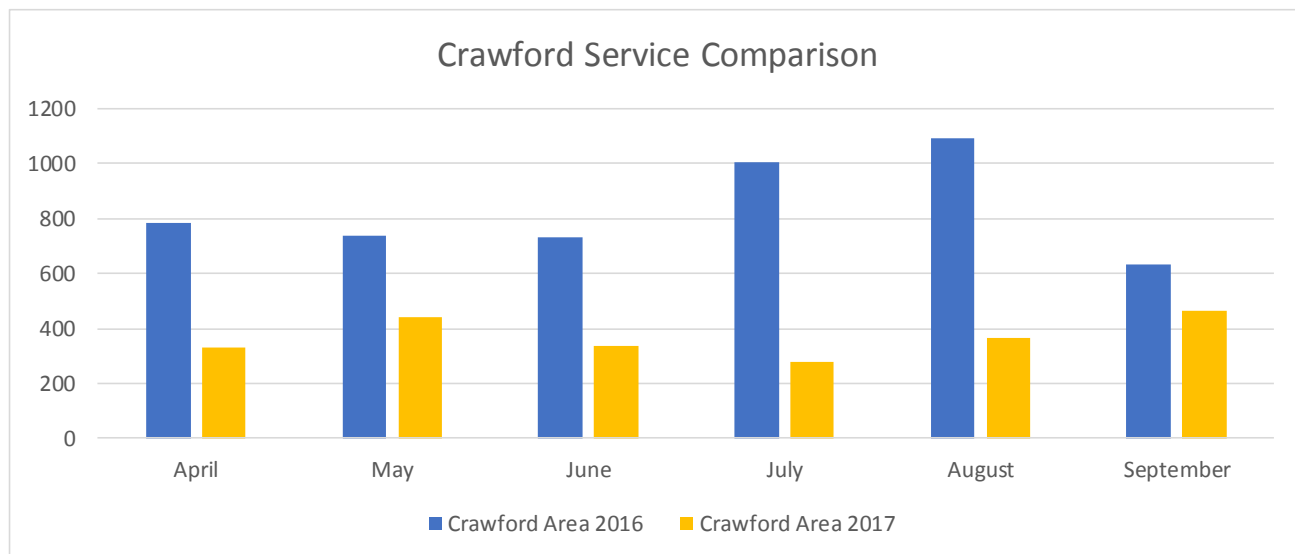
Clarion Area 2016	Month	Number of Services	Clarion Area 2017	Month	Number of Services
	April	212		April	272
	May	326		May	420
	June	476		June	464
	July	507		July	219
	August	621		August	206
	September	483		September	114



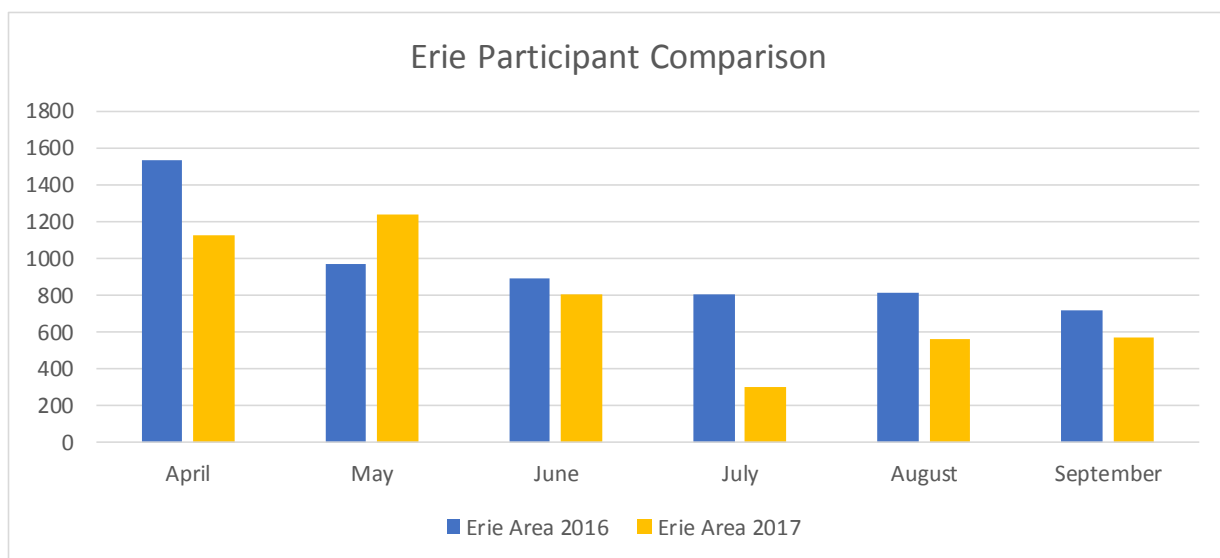
Crawford Area 2016	Month	Number of Participants	Crawford Area 2017	Month	Number of Participants
	April	366		April	301
	May	295		May	204
	June	324		June	122
	July	322		July	69
	August	269		August	46
	September	226		September	78



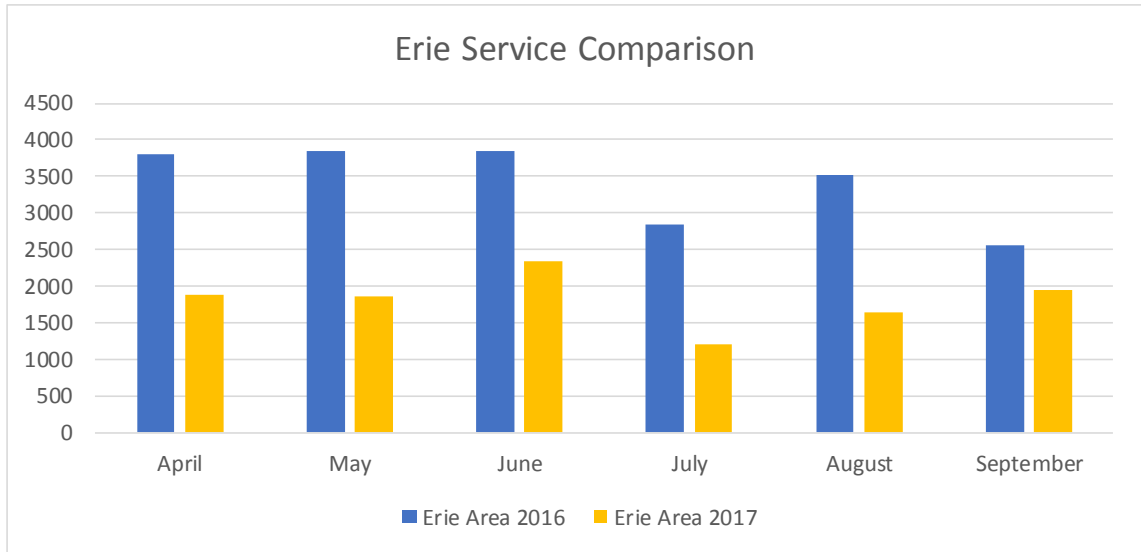
Crawford Area 2016	Month	Number of Services	Crawford Area 2017	Month	Number of Services
	April	783		April	330
	May	739		May	443
	June	730		June	337
	July	1003		July	280
	August	1090		August	368
	September	633		September	464



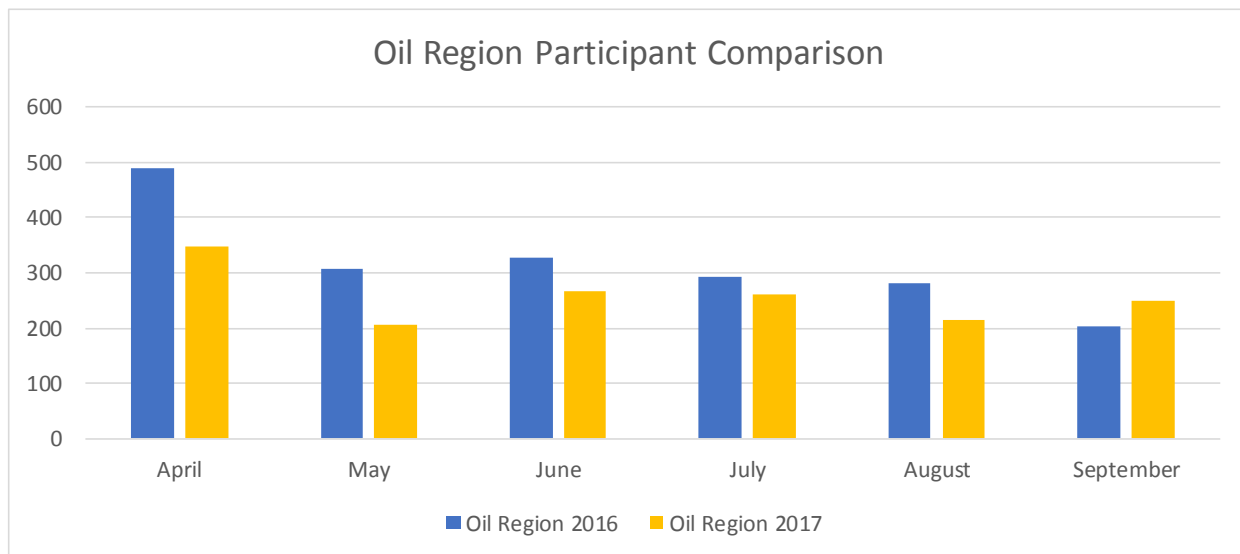
Erie Area 2016	Month	Number of Participants	Erie Area 2017	Month	Number of Participants
	April	1538		April	1126
	May	973		May	1238
	June	890		June	805
	July	808		July	301
	August	813		August	558
	September	722		September	568



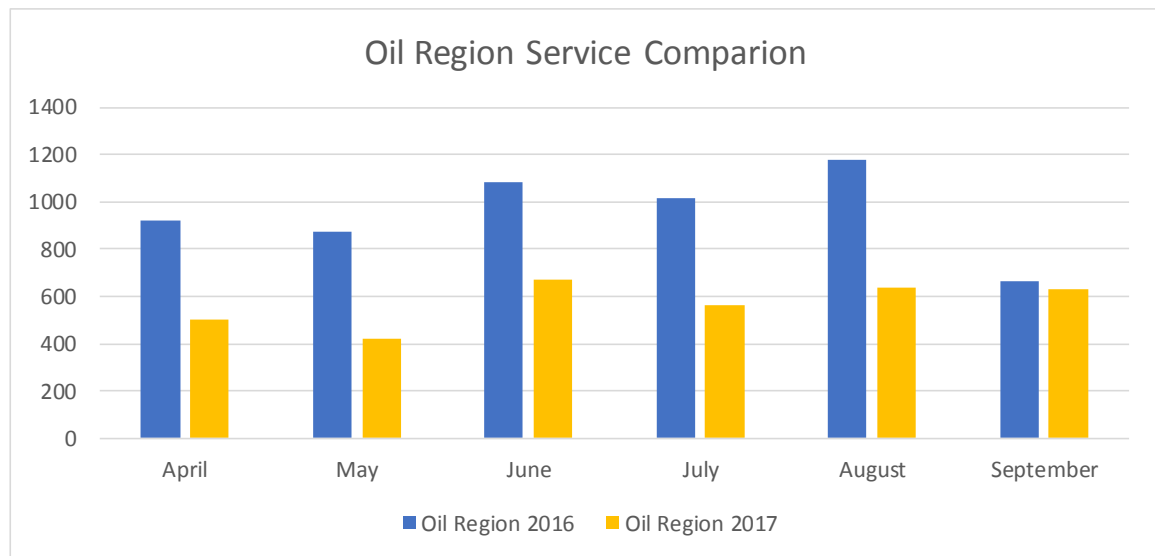
Erie Area 2016	Month	Number of Services	Erie Area 2017	Month	Number of Services
	April	3797		April	1889
	May	3854		May	1870
	June	3838		June	2341
	July	2847		July	1213
	August	3513		August	1631
	September	2563		September	1947



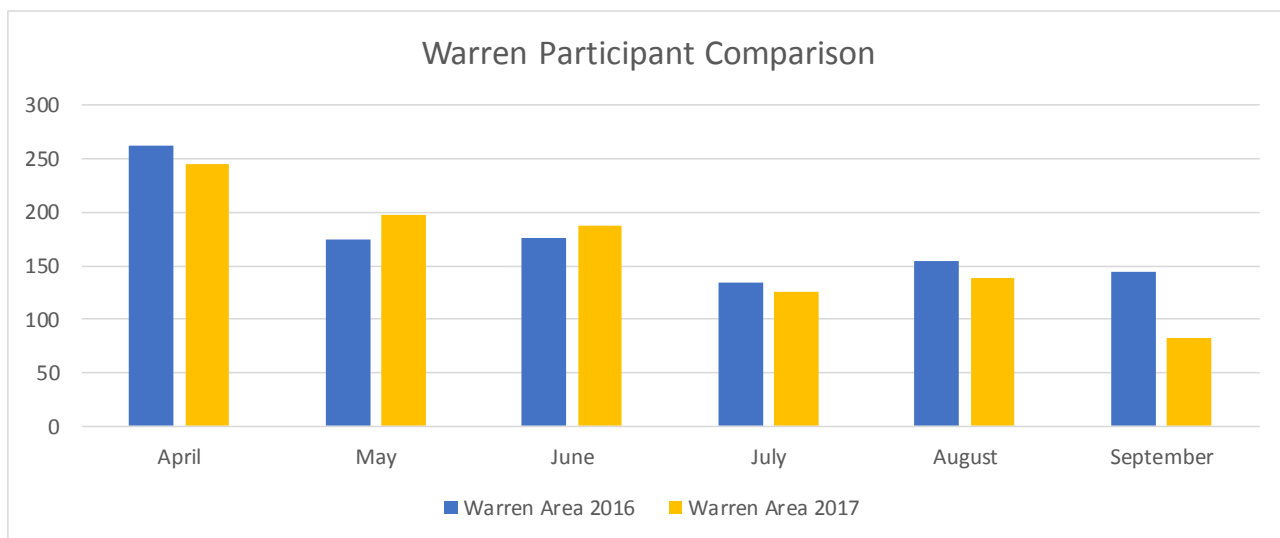
Oil Region 2016	Month	Number of Participants	Oil Region 2017	Month	Number of Participants
	April	489		April	347
	May	308		May	205
	June	327		June	267
	July	292		July	262
	August	280		August	215
	September	203		September	250



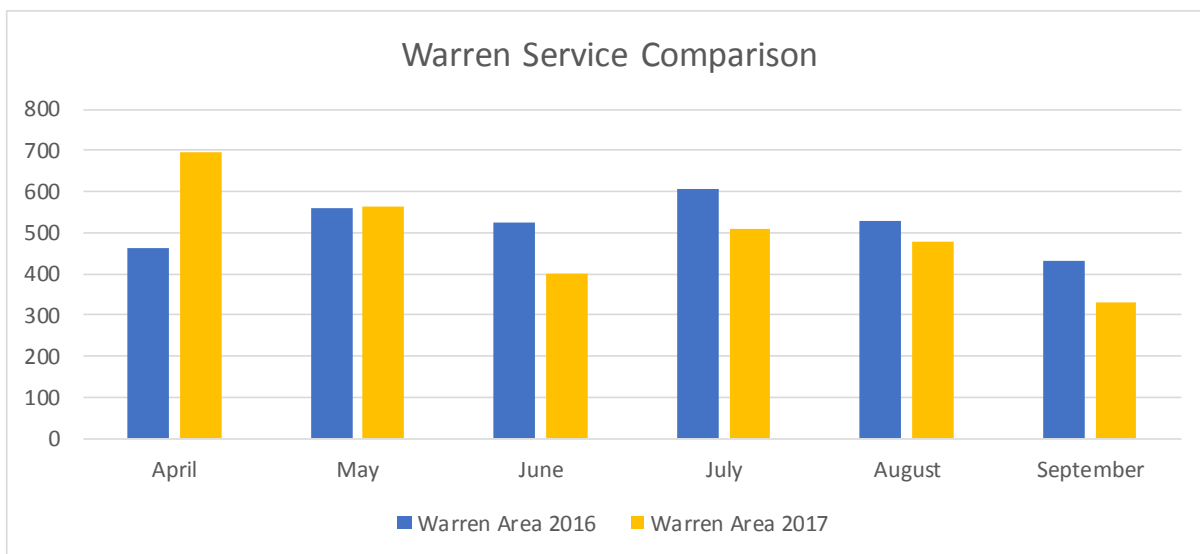
Oil Region 2016	Month	Number of Services	Oil Region 2017	Month	Number of Services
	April	922		April	503
	May	876		May	419
	June	1083		June	673
	July	1017		July	565
	August	1181		August	636
	September	664		September	629



Warren Area 2016	Month	Number of Participants	Warren Area 2017	Month	Number of Participants
	April	263		April	245
	May	175		May	198
	June	176		June	187
	July	135		July	126
	August	154		August	138
	September	145		September	82



Warren Area 2016	Month	Number of Services	Warren Area 2017	Month	Number of Services
	April	461		April	694
	May	561		May	565
	June	525		June	400
	July	607		July	511
	August	528		August	480
	September	430		September	332



West Central Workforce Development Area

Lawrence and Mercer Counties



PY 2017-2019 WIOA Local Plan

Workforce Area: *West Central Local WIOA Plan 2017-19*

Effective Date: *January 1, 2018*

1. STRATEGIC PLANNING QUESTIONS: *Local Area Workforce and Economic Analysis*

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

The local area's population and labor force have been analyzed in light of regional employer demand by sector for specific occupations identified in the Keystone Edge Regional Plan. The Healthcare and Manufacturing Sectors continue to be leading employment sectors now and projected into the near future, with Healthcare occupations projected to increase at double-digit rates and Manufacturing jobs remaining near current levels but rapidly changing in skill levels needed to fill them. There will also be substantial needs for replacement of Manufacturing workers due to an aging workforce in the region.

The challenge faced by employers in the workforce area is two-fold: a population that is declining in numbers at a rate that exceeds the region and the state; and a post-secondary education attainment level that is not keeping pace with increasing skill needs, making it difficult for employers to find the talent they need for higher skilled job openings. The ability to attract new employers with high-wage jobs is also impacted a most prospective employer's view available talent as a key factor in site selection. On the worker side, many higher wage jobs will be out of reach without the acquisition of additional skills.

With a declining population it becomes imperative for the labor force participation rate to be increased, as it is currently lower than the regional rate. This requires an extensive look at the barriers that are keeping persons in the region from seeking and finding employment; thus, the analysis that follows provides detailed information on many of the barriers. This leads to exploration of new partnerships with organizations that serve individuals with barriers to provide greater access to services and new strategies to promote training and employment services.

The region has a high demand for entry-level jobs in retail and hospitality, presenting an opportunity to use these jobs as a springboard to higher skills. While Industry Partnerships remain a key strategy for acquiring and advancing talent within sectors, the West Central Workforce Board will need to be a focal point for cross-sector solutions that serve to advance skills and earning levels.

An additional consideration for the local workforce area is the ability to attract talent to the area as it also attracts jobs through collaboration with economic development leaders. The lack of diversity in the local workforce area (92% white) can be a barrier to attracting diverse populations to the local area to meet employers' needs for talent.

The labor market information that follows provides insights that will be used by the West Central Workforce Development Board to create talent acquisition strategies for employers and skill advancement solutions for the local population.

OVERVIEW

The West Central Workforce Development Area is comprised of the counties of Lawrence and Mercer in Northwest Pennsylvania. Overall, it is home to 200,717 citizens¹. With a 2016 labor force of 94,700 the

¹ Population estimates per Claritas

largest sector in West Central is Health Care and Social Assistance, which employs 16,111, represents 11% of the Gross Regional Product (GRP), with average earnings of \$44,539. The next largest sectors include Manufacturing (employs 11,838 workers, represents 19% of the GRP, with average earnings of \$65,955) and Retail Trade (employs 10,658 workers, represents 7% of the GRP, with average earnings of \$29,096)².

High location quotients (LQs) indicate sectors in which a region has high concentrations of employment compared to the national average. The sectors with the largest LQs in the region include Advanced Manufacturing (LQ=1.95), Health Care (LQ=1.37), and Wood, Wood Products and Publishing (LQ=1.16).

POPULATION

The population in West Central is estimated to have decreased from 207,746 in 2010 to 200,717 in 2017, resulting in a decline of 3.4%. Over the next five years, the population is projected to decline by 1.6%. The population in the Keystone Edge is estimated to have decreased from 721,580 in 2010 to 702,718 in 2017, resulting in a decline of 2.6%. Over the next five years, the population is projected to decline by 1.1%.

In 2017, the median age for West Central is 44.4, while the average age is 43.0. Five years from now, the median age is projected to be 44.9. Comparatively, the median age for the Keystone Edge is 42.3 (which is lower than the WDA), while the average age is 41.8. Five years from now, the median age is projected to be 42.6.

Most of West Central's current year estimated population are White Alone (91.8%), 5.1% are Black or African American Alone, 0.2% are American Indian and Alaska Nat. Alone, 0.6% are Asian Alone, 0.0% are Nat. Hawaiian and Other Pacific Isl. Alone, 0.3% are Some Other Race, and 1.9% are Two or More Races. The population in the Keystone Edge is comparable: 91.0% are White Alone, 5.0% are Black or African American Alone, 0.2% are American Indian and Alaska Nat. Alone, 1.0% are Asian Alone, 0.0% are Nat. Hawaiian and Other Pacific Isl. Alone, 0.8% are Some Other Race, and 2.0% are Two or More Races. West Central's current estimated Hispanic or Latino population is 1.5%, which is lower than the Keystone Edge 2.5%.

HOUSEHOLDS

The number of households in West Central is estimated to have decreased from 83,568 in 2010 to 81,812 in 2017, resulting in a decrease of 2.1%. Over the next five years, the number of households is projected to decrease by 0.9%. Comparatively, the number of household in Keystone Edge is estimated to have declined from 288,036 in 2010 to 284,350 in 2017, resulting in a decrease of 1.3%. Over the next five years, the number of households is projected to decrease by 0.5%.

EDUCATION

One in four residents over the age of 25 in West Central (20.0%) and the region (21.8%) have earned an advanced degree. One in ten residents in West Central (10.8%) and the region (10.5%) did not graduate high school. Currently, it is estimated that 5.0% of the population age 25 and over in West Central had earned a Master's Degree, 1.0% had earned a Professional School Degree, 0.7% had earned a Doctorate

² EMSI, 2017

Degree and 13.3% had earned a Bachelor's Degree. In comparison, for the Keystone Edge, it is estimated that for the population over age 25, 5.7% had earned a Master's Degree, 1.1% had earned a Professional School Degree, 0.8% had earned a Doctorate Degree and 14.2% had earned a Bachelor's Degree.

INCOME

In 2017, the average household income in West Central is estimated to be \$60,403.24, which is less than the Keystone Edge \$61,853.12. The average household income in West Central is projected to change over the next five years, from \$60,403.24 to \$64,379.18. The average household income in the Keystone Edge is projected to change over the next five years, from \$61,853.118 to \$66,534.065.

HOUSING

Most of the dwellings in West Central (74.1%) are estimated to be Owner-Occupied for the current year, which is slightly higher when compared to Keystone Edge (71.2%). One in four housing units in West Central (26.8%) are estimated to have been built between 1939 or Earlier for the current year, which is comparable to Keystone Edge (27.3%).

EMPLOYMENT

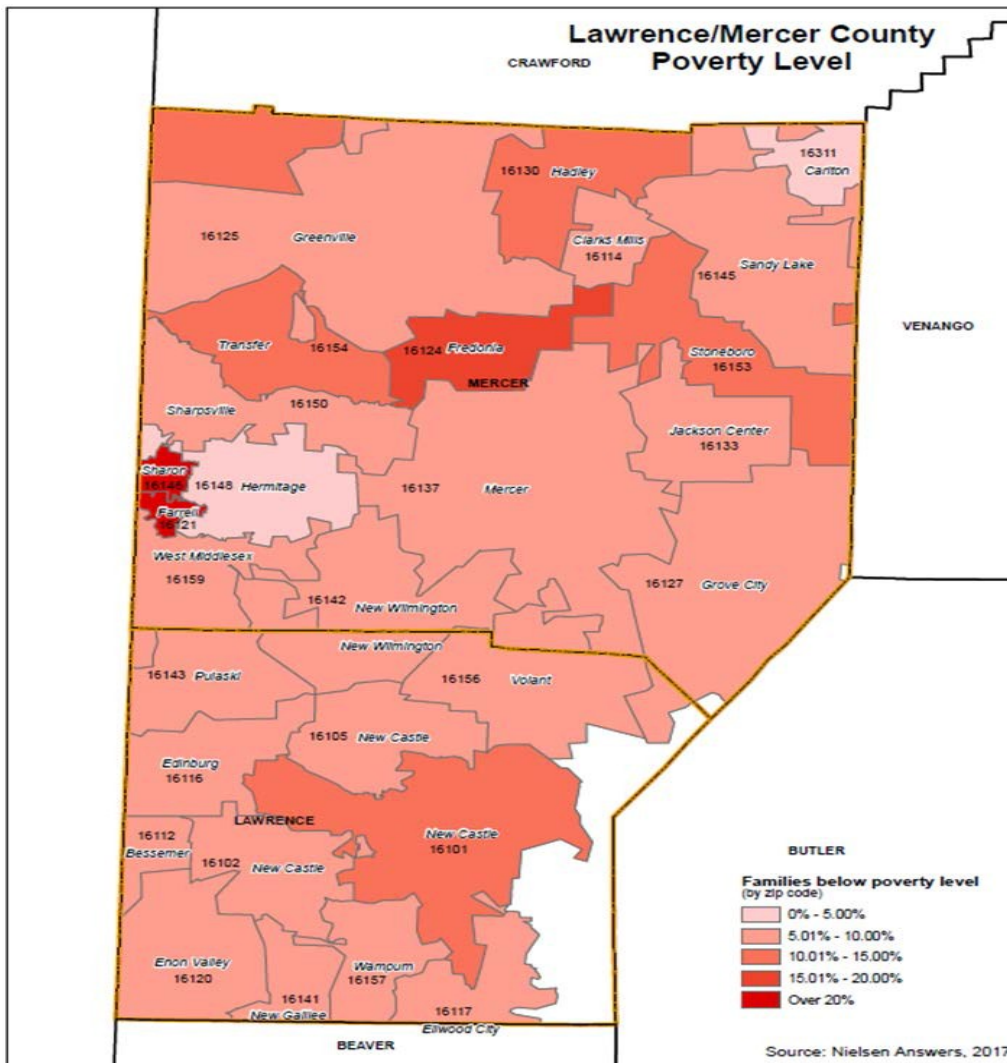
The percent of civilians who are unemployed in West Central (3.9%) is lower than the region (4.4%). For West Central, the employment status of the population age 16 and over is as follows: 53.3% are employed civilians, 3.9% are unemployed civilians, and 42.8% are not in the labor force. For Keystone Edge, the employment status of the population age 16 and over is as follows: 54.3% are employed civilians, 4.4% are unemployed civilians, and 41.3% are not in the labor force

A comparable amount of workers are employed each occupational classification in the WDA and region. The occupational classification for West Central are as follows: 25.9% hold blue collar occupations, 53.8% hold white collar occupations, and 20.3% are occupied as service & farm workers. The occupational classification for Keystone Edge are as follows: 25.3% hold blue collar occupations, 54.3% hold white collar occupations, and 20.4% are occupied as service & farm workers.

Most of the employed population in the West Central (83.5%) and Keystone Edge Region (80.2%) drives alone to work with an average travel time to work of 23 minutes.

POPULATION WITH BARRIERS

Among the factors that often contribute to poverty are unemployment and underemployment. Many people live in poverty because they are unable to find a job that pays a living wage or to find a job at all. When looking at West Central, 9.9% of families are living in poverty. There portions of Mercer County (Sharon and Farrell) where over 20% of the families live below poverty. Single parents are more likely to be living in poverty, with 12.6% of households in the county considered single parent households.

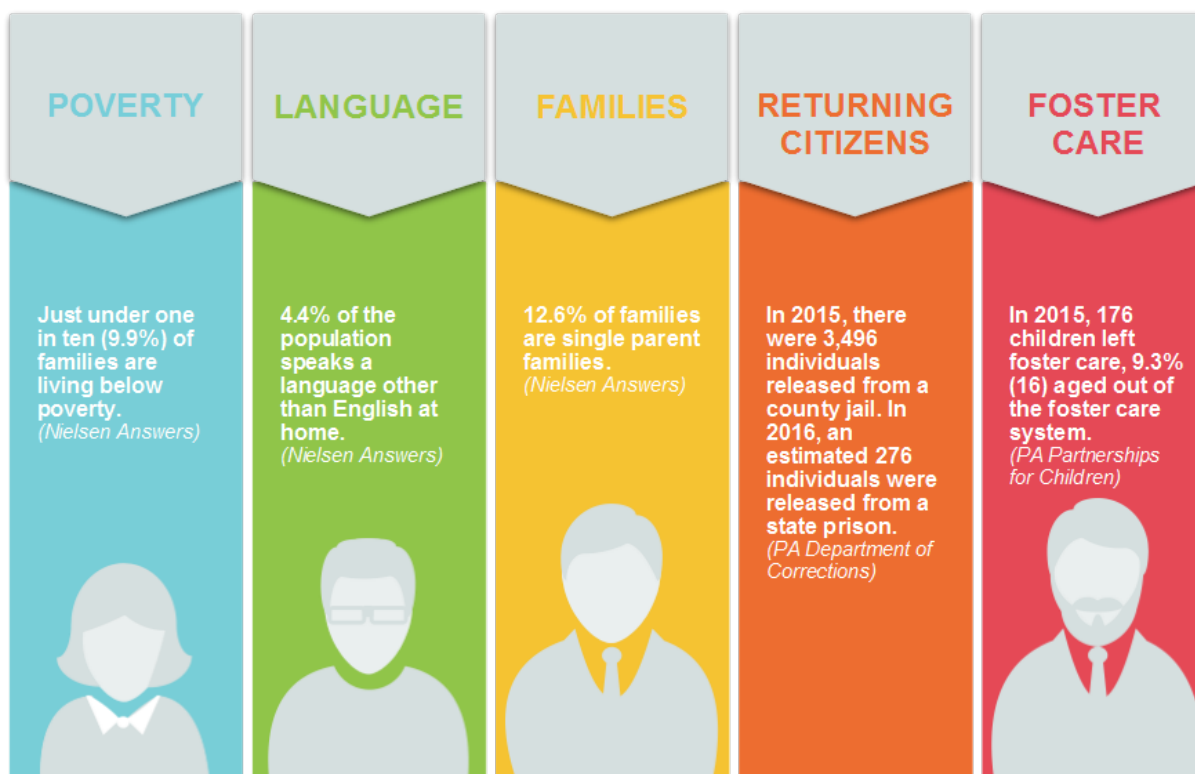


According to the Urban Institute, most individuals released from prison held some type of job prior to incarceration and want legal, stable employment upon release. Some criminal justice research suggests that finding and maintaining a legitimate job can reduce former prisoners' chances of reoffending, 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 West Central, in 2015 there were 3,496 individuals released from a county jail and in 2016 there were 276 individuals released from a state prison, if considering releases from county or federal prisons this number would only increase.

Research obtained from Children's Rights has shown that youth who age out of foster care are less likely than youth in the general population to graduate from high school and are less likely to attend or graduate college. By age 26, approximately 80% of young people who aged out of foster care earned at

least a high school degree or GED compared to 94% in the general population. By age 26, 4% of youth who aged out of foster care had earned a 4-year college degree, while 36% of youth in the general population had done so. In West Central, approximately 16 children age out of foster care each year.



According to the Division for Social Policy and Development Disability, in developing countries, 80% to 90% of persons with disabilities of working age are unemployed, whereas in industrialized countries the figure is between 50% and 70%.

When looking at West Central, 5.8% of those employed have a disability, while 19.3% of those unemployed have a disability. In West Central unemployment is 176% higher for those with a disability (16.6%) compared to those without a disability (6.0%). There are also 2,725 students receiving services through the local Intermediate Unit, with just over half (51.1%) students having a learning disability, 7.1% have an intellectual disability, 9.2% have emotional disturbances, 18.3% have health implications and 10.8% have autism.

According to Youth. Gov., the high social and economic costs of teen pregnancy and childbearing can have short- and long-term negative consequences for teen parents, their children, and their community. Through recent research, it has been recognized that pregnancy and childbirth have a significant impact on educational outcomes of teen parents.

- By age 22, only around 50 percent of teen mothers have received a high school diploma and only 30 percent have earned a General Education Development (GED) certificate, whereas 90 percent of women who did not give birth during adolescence receive a high school diploma.
- Only about 10 percent of teen mothers complete a two- or four-year college program.
- Teen fathers have a 25 to 30 percent lower probability of graduating from high school than

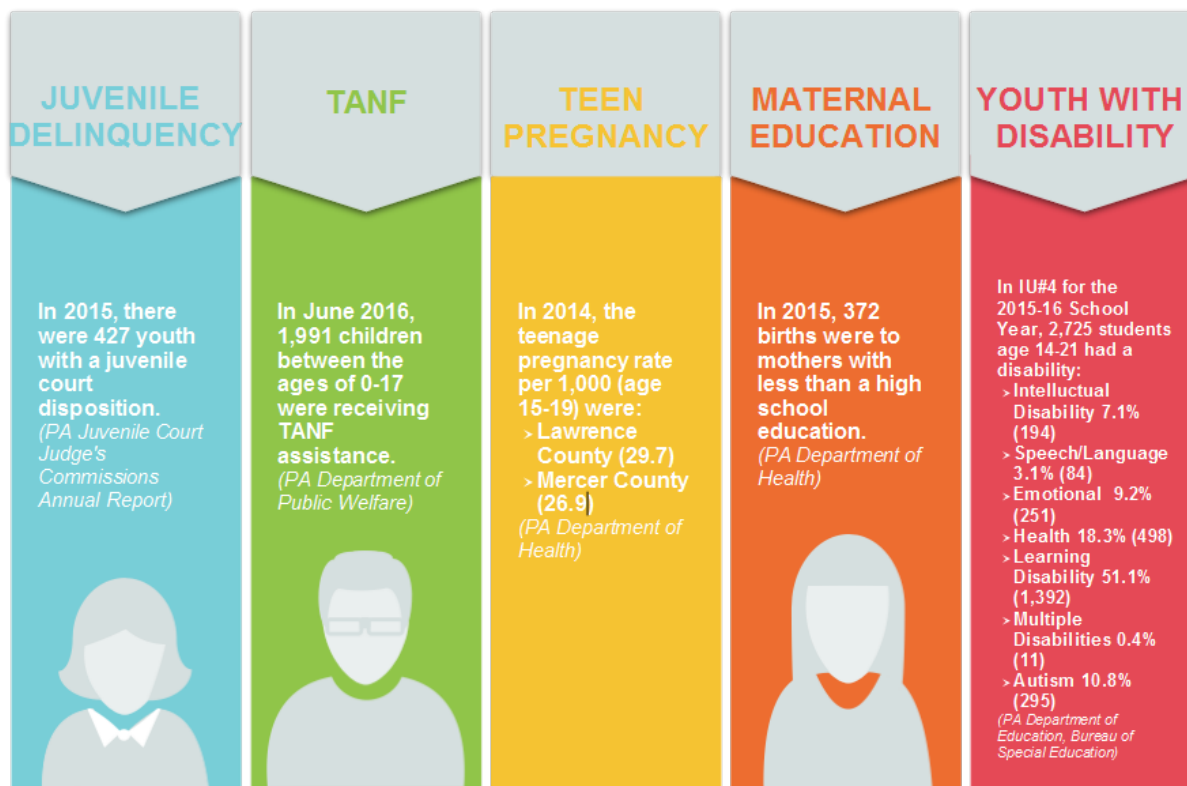
teenage boys who are not fathers.

Children who are born to teen mothers also experience a wide range of problems. For example, they are more likely to:

- have a higher risk for low birth weight and infant mortality;
- have lower levels of emotional support and cognitive stimulation;
- have fewer skills and be less prepared to learn when they enter kindergarten;
- have behavioral problems and chronic medical conditions;
- rely more heavily on publicly funded health care;
- have higher rates of foster care placement;
- be incarcerated at some time during adolescence;
- have lower school achievement and drop out of high school;
- give birth as a teen; and
- be unemployed or underemployed as a young adult.

These immediate and long-lasting effects continue for teen parents and their children even after adjusting for the factors that increased the teen's risk for pregnancy—e.g., growing up in poverty, having parents with low levels of education, growing up in a single-parent family, and having low attachment to and performance in school. Teen pregnancy costs U.S. taxpayers about \$11 billion per year due to increased health care and foster care, increased incarceration rates among children of teen parents, and lost tax revenue because of lower educational attainment and income among teen mothers. Some recent cost studies estimate that the cost may be as high as \$28 billion per year or an average of \$5,500 for each teen parent. The majority of this cost is associated with teens who give birth before age 18.

In West Central there were 1,991 children between the ages of 0 and 17 receiving TANF Assistance in 2016, 427 youth had a juvenile disposition in 2015, and there were 372 births to mothers with less than a high school education. According the PA Department of Health in 2014, the teenage pregnancy rate per 1,000 (age 15-19) in Lawrence County was 29.7 and Mercer County was 26.9 are comparable to the state rate of 27.2.



According to the National Coalition for the Homeless, meaningful and sustainable employment is the key to creating and maintaining housing stability. Unemployment, underemployment, and low wages relative to rent are frequent causes of homelessness and burden millions of families with the risk of becoming homeless. At the same time, individuals experiencing homelessness face obstacles to finding and maintaining employment.

The Point-in-Time (PIT) count is a count of sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons on a single night in January. HUD requires that Continuums of Care conduct an annual count of homeless persons who are sheltered in emergency shelter, transitional housing, and Safe Havens on a single night. Continuums of Care also must conduct a count of unsheltered homeless persons every other year (odd numbered years). In 2015, there were 120 individuals counted in West Central.

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act defines youth homelessness as:

- Children sharing housing due to economic hardship or loss of housing;
- Children living in "motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camp grounds due to lack of alternative accommodations"
- Children living in "emergency or transitional shelters"
- Children whose primary nighttime residence is not ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation (e.g. park benches, etc.)
- Children living in "cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations".

In 2016, there were 413 students in West Central who met the McKinney-Vento definition of homeless.



LABOR FORCE AND UNEMPLOYMENT

The overall unemployment rate for the West Central WDA in 2016 was 6.4% with a labor force of 94,700. When looking at the first few months of 2017 the unemployment rate has fluctuated from 5.7% to 6.0%.

Annual Average Labor Force Statistics, 2016

Annual Average	Labor Force			Unemployment Rate
		Employed	Unemployed	
2016	94,700	88,600	6,000	6.4

Seasonally Adjusted Labor Force Statistics, 2017

Month	Labor Force			Unemployment Rate
		Employed	Unemployed	
January	93,300	87,900	5,400	5.8

February	93,200	87,600	5,600	6.0
March	93,100	87,800	5,300	5.7
April	93,500	87,900	5,600	6.0

Source: Center for Workforce Information and Analysis

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/local area?

An analysis of skill gaps begins with a look at current and projected skills demanded by employers in the region. Labor Market trends can be examined by looking at Long Term Industry Projections as well as other Labor Market information. Regarding Long Term Industry Projections from 2014-2024, the total employment is projected to increase by 4.9% or 4,200. This is at a rate just above the region (4.4%) and both are below the state (7.7%). Construction is projected to increase at the largest percent while Education and Health Services are projected to increase the highest in terms of volume, which accounts for more than half of the overall volume. The West Central Workforce Development Board uses a number of resources to collect data including the U.S. Census, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), and the ongoing reports from the PA Center for Workforce Information and Analysis (CWIA). Private sector employers on the Board serve as champions of their industry sectors and as sources of real time insights related to critical needs and opportunities beyond official labor market information. Please refer to the Keystone Edge Workforce Development Region's Multi-Year WIOA Regional Plan, section 1.6, for additional information on partnerships and initiatives that support the connection between the region's employers and the workforce they need to attract.

Funded by the Northwest Commission, a regional economic development partner, the recent Skills Gap study is a good illustration of the strong collaboration that exists among workforce and economic development partners in the region. The analysis identified areas of economic opportunity and related industry and occupational demand as well as disconnects between skill needs and programming available. Much of this work is being applied to inform the WIOA local and regional plans.

Long-Term Industry Projections for West Central WDA (2014-24)

Industry	Employment (2014)	Projected Employment (2024)	Employment Change (2014-2024)	
			Volume	Percent
Total Jobs	86,320	90,520	4,200	4.9
Goods Producing Industries	17,650	17,920	270	1.5
Agriculture, Mining & Logging	2,260	2,220	-40	-1.8
Construction	3,090	3,540	450	14.6
Manufacturing	12,310	12,160	-150	-1.2
Services-Providing	63,400	67,210	3,810	6.0
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	15,920	16,540	620	3.9
Information	750	660	-90	-12.0
Financial Activities	3,180	3,210	30	0.9
Professional & Business Services	5,970	6,220	250	4.2
Education & Health Services	22,170	24,690	2,520	11.4
Leisure & Hospitality	7,490	8,030	540	7.2
Other Services, Except Public Admin.	3,910	3,970	60	1.5
Federal, State & Local Government	4,010	3,910	-100	-2.5

Source: Center for Workforce Information and Analysis

Looking at online postings can provide insight into real time hiring needs our employers are facing. Over the past year there has been an increase in postings for General Medical and Surgical Hospitals, Commercial Banking, Temporary Help Services, Home Centers, Elementary and Secondary Schools and All Other Miscellaneous Ambulatory Health Care Services.

Top 10 Help Wanted On-Line Job Postings by Industry, May 2016 & 2017

Industry Title	NAICS	May-2017	May-20
General Medical and Surgical Hospitals	622110	174	
Commercial Banking	522110	99	
Temporary Help Services	561320	71	
Home Health Care Services	621610	55	
Supermarkets and Other Grocery (except Convenience) Stores	445110	37	
Home Centers	444110	36	
Elementary and Secondary Schools	611110	34	
Nursing Care Facilities	623110	27	
Employment Placement Agencies	561311	21	
All Other Miscellaneous Ambulatory Health Care Services	621999	20	

Source: Center for Workforce Information and Analysis

The occupations with an increased number of job postings include Registered Nurses, Retail Salespersons, First Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers, Tellers, Maintenance and Repair Workers and Medical Assistants.

Top 10 Help Wanted Online Job Postings by Occupation, May 2016 & 2017

Occupation	SOC	May-2017	May-2016
Registered Nurses	29114100	122	116
Retail Salespersons	41203100	102	78
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	53303200	83	139
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	41101100	66	45
Nursing Assistants	31101400	42	43
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	29206100	40	45
Tellers	43307100	34	25
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	49907100	33	26
Customer Service Representatives	43405100	32	32
Medical Assistants	31909200	22	15

Source: Center for Workforce Information and Analysis

Looking at growing industries provides insight into the types of occupations and training programs that are needed. Outpatient Care Centers are projected to experience the greatest growth in both volume and percent.

Fastest Growing Industries in West Central WDA (2014-24)

By Volume Change:

Industry Title	Employment Change (Volume)
Outpatient Care Centers	550
Individual & Family Services	440
Restaurants & Other Eating Places	440
Offices Of Other Health Practitioners	410
Residential Mental Health Facilities	240
Offices Of Physicians	220
General Freight Trucking	200
Nursing Care Facilities	190
Home Health Care Services	190
Building Equipment Contractors	130

By Percent Change: (min. employment of 250)

Industry Title	Employment Change (Percent)
Outpatient Care Centers	52.4%
Offices Of Other Health Practitioners	43.6%
Home Health Care Services	33.9%
Individual & Family Services	25.1%
General Freight Trucking	17.9%
Residential Mental Health Facilities	17.6%
Nonresidential Building Construction	17.2%
Building Foundation/Exterior Contractors	16.7%
Residential Building Construction	15.6%
Building Equipment Contractors	14.9%

Colleges, Universities & Professional Schools	130	Specialized Freight Trucking	14.6%
Automobile Dealers	110	Insurance Agencies, Brokerages & Support	13.3%
Specialized Freight Trucking	70	Other Specialty Trade Contractors	12.2%
Architectural & Structural Metals Mfg	60	Architectural & Structural Metals Mfg	11.5%
Building Foundation/Exterior Contractors	60	Offices Of Physicians	11.5%
Management & Technical Consulting Services	60	Automobile Dealers	11.5%
Insurance Agencies, Brokerages & Support	60	Nursing Care Facilities	11.0%
Management Of Companies & Enterprises	50	Colleges, Universities & Professional Schools	10.2%
Residential Building Construction	50	Offices Of Dentists	9.3%
Nonresidential Building Construction	50	Warehousing & Storage	8.8%

Source: Center for Workforce Information and Analysis

Opportunity Occupations are employment opportunities that are generally considered accessible to someone without a bachelor's degree and that pays at least the national annual median wage, adjusted for differences in local consumption prices. There are several in the county that only require a high school diploma; although many require on the job training and experience.

SOC	Description	2016 Jobs	2021 Jobs	2016 - 2021 Change	2016 - 2021 % Change	Annual Openings	COL Adjusted Avg. Hourly Earnings	Typical Entry Level Education
13-1031	Claims Adjusters, Examiners, and Investigators	330	333	3	1%	9	\$26.17	High school diploma or equivalent
15-1152	Computer Network Support Specialists	150	150	0	0%	3	\$26.74	Associate's degree
29-2032	Diagnostic Medical Sonographers	81	84	3	4%	2	\$28.34	Associate's degree
33-1012	First-Line Supervisors of Police and Detectives	125	127	2	2%	5	\$32.40	High school diploma or equivalent
33-1021	First-Line Supervisors of Fire Fighting and Prevention Workers	43	44	1	2%	2	\$33.10	Postsecondary nondegree award
33-3021	Detectives and Criminal Investigators	89	92	3	3%	3	\$34.32	High school diploma or equivalent
33-3051	Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers	1,107	1,131	24	2%	43	\$30.63	High school diploma or equivalent
41-4012	Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	1,980	1,988	8	0%	45	\$26.94	High school diploma or equivalent
49-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers	677	687	10	1%	16	\$28.78	High school diploma or equivalent
53-1031	First-Line Supervisors of Transportation and Material-Moving Machine and Vehicle Operators	284	285	1	0%	10	\$26.12	High school diploma or equivalent

One way to measure the skill gap is to look at current educational attainment and compare that with the

expected employment growth by educational level. Occupations that require an advanced degree are among the fastest growing. Over half of the occupations require on-the-job training. It is projected that 15.6% of occupations will require a Bachelor's Degree, which 13.3% of the population currently hold.

2017 Est. Pop Age 25+ by Edu. Attainment	141,219	
Less than 9th grade	4,875	3.45%
Some High School, no diploma	10,410	7.37%
High School Graduate (or GED)	63,239	44.78%
Some College, no degree	22,355	15.83%
Associate Degree	11,966	8.47%
Bachelor's Degree	18,838	13.34%
Master's Degree	7,101	5.03%
Professional School Degree	1,377	0.98%
Doctorate Degree	1,058	0.75%

Employment Growth Rates by Educational Attainment Level for West Central WDA

Educational Grouping	Employment (2014)	Projected Employment (2024)	Percent Change (2014-24)
On-the-job training	45,490	47,230	3.8%
Long-term training	4,200	4,530	7.9%
PS education or experience	12,940	13,730	6.1%
Associate degree	1,310	1,420	8.4%
Bachelor's degree	12,140	12,870	6.0%
Advanced degree	2,630	2,980	13.3%

Source: Center for Workforce Information and Analysis

Looking at the knowledge and work activities that are needed provide insight into the skill sets training providers need to ensure they are including in their programs. The most needed knowledge area is of the English Language. In West Central, 4.4% of households speak a language other than English. Workers also need to have knowledge of customer and personal service and administration and management. The most needed work activities include getting information, communicating with supervisors, peers, or subordinates and performing for or working with the public directly.

Top 20 Knowledge Area and Projected Needs, 2014-2024

Knowledge Area	Number of Occupations	Total Annual Openings Needing this Skill	Growth Annual Openings Needing this Skill	Replacement Annual Openings Needing this Skill
English Language	321	2,284	470	1,814

Customer and Personal Service	300	2,165	457	1,708
Administration and Management	262	1,834	432	1,402
Mathematics	251	1,753	328	1,425
Public Safety and Security	206	1,424	359	1,065
Education and Training	233	1,414	358	1,056
Computers and Electronics	232	1,211	247	964
Clerical	215	1,207	240	967
Psychology	138	1,006	259	747
Sales and Marketing	102	913	126	787
Production and Processing	142	892	149	743
Law and Government	135	744	183	561
Personnel and Human Resources	120	718	161	557
Communications and Media	105	606	114	492
Mechanical	127	545	114	431
Therapy and Counseling	60	524	151	373
Sociology and Anthropology	68	486	128	358
Medicine and Dentistry	54	452	166	286
Transportation	67	413	113	300
Economics and Accounting	85	341	58	283

Source: *The Center for Workforce Information & Analysis*

Top 20 Work Activities and Projected Needs, 2014-2024

Work Activity	Number of Occupations	Total Annual Openings Needing this Skill	Growth Annual Openings Needing this Skill	Replacement Annual Openings Needing this Skill
Getting Information	250	1,455	345	1,110
Communicating with Supervisors, Peers, or Subordinates	186	1,136	255	881
Performing for or Working Directly with the Public	71	886	173	713
Making Decisions and Solving Problems	151	688	171	517
Interacting With Computers	142	619	117	502
Documenting/Recording Information	100	603	195	408
Identifying Objects, Actions, and Events	101	593	153	440
Organizing, Planning, and Prioritizing Work	102	566	149	417

Assisting and Caring for Others	58	564	200	364
Establishing and Maintaining Interpersonal Relationships	98	531	140	391
Updating and Using Relevant Knowledge	112	493	136	357
Evaluating Information to Determine Compliance with Standards	71	440	113	327
Monitor Processes, Materials, or Surroundings	52	319	69	250
Performing General Physical Activities	33	303	91	212
Inspecting Equipment, Structures, or Material	63	291	74	217
Processing Information	76	260	48	212
Communicating with Persons Outside Organization	70	247	44	203
Handling and Moving Objects	41	227	39	188
Resolving Conflicts and Negotiating with Others	34	222	62	160
Thinking Creatively	52	202	41	161

Source: The Center for Workforce Information & Analysis

When looking at more detailed work activities we see that our employers are looking for candidates who can order materials, supplies, or equipment as well as calculate the costs of goods or services. The ability to use computers and computer related software are among the most important tools and technologies the labor force needs to be able to use.

Top 10 Detailed Work Activities

Detailed Work Activity	2024 Employment	Percent of Annual Openings	Annual Openings
Order materials, supplies, or equipment	14,700	17.2%	449
Calculate costs of goods or services	11,670	14.9%	388
Sell products or services	11,320	14.4%	375
Clean work areas	10,900	13.7%	357
Greet customers, patrons, or visitors	10,360	12.1%	315
Monitor inventories of products or materials	10,470	11.7%	306
Record operational or production data	10,270	11.1%	290
Clean food preparation areas, facilities, or equipment	7,110	10.9%	284

Maintain records of sales or other business transactions	8,190	10.7%	278
Process customer bills or payments	6,610	10.5%	275

Source: The Center for Workforce Information & Analysis

Top 10 Tools & Technologies

Tools & Technologies	2024 Employment	Percent of Annual Openings	Annual Openings
Spreadsheet software	70,480	75.3%	1,963
Data base user interface and query software	64,100	70.0%	1,824
Personal computers	63,420	68.3%	1,781
Word processing software	61,550	63.4%	1,653
Desktop computers	56,430	60.3%	1,572
Office suite software	55,640	60.2%	1,570
Electronic mail software	48,470	49.8%	1,298
Notebook computers	46,620	47.0%	1,225
Internet browser software	43,580	44.4%	1,157
Presentation software	35,840	35.5%	925

Source: The Center for Workforce Information & Analysis

By analyzing job postings we can see the skills and certifications our employers are most frequently requesting. Employers are looking for candidates with skills related to pediatrics, flatbed scanners and freight. They are in need of people with Driver's License, Certified Registered Nurse, or Certified in CPR.

Top 10 Help Wanted On-Line™ Skills

Skills	On-Line™ Job Postings
Pediatrics	55
Flatbed scanners	54
Freight+	49
Forklifts	41
Quality Assurance	38
Quality control	33
Behavioral health	31

Preventive maintenance	30
Medical-Surgical Nursing	28
Patient documentation	27

Source: *The Center for Workforce Information & Analysis*

Top 10 Help Wanted On-Line™ Certifications

Certifications	On-Line™ Job Postings
Driver's License	216
Certified Registered Nurse	203
Certification in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation	179
Basic Life Support	101
FBI Clearance	96
Commercial Driver's License	92
Advanced Cardiac Life Support	66
Licensed Practical Nurse	54
Occupational Safety & Health Administration Certification	42
Board Certified	34

Source: *The Center for Workforce Information & Analysis*

The West Central Workforce Development Board, in analyzing the data for the local and regional plans, has identified several areas for work on policies and programs within the local area for collaboration with neighboring workforce areas in Pennsylvania and in Ohio:

- Information technology, while not growing as a sector in the region, is becoming a core competency needed by employers in all sectors and will need to be integrated with basic education and occupational training to meet employers' needs.
- Staffing and temporary help agencies are increasingly becoming the gateway to employment in multiple sectors. New efforts will need to be taken to connect these agencies to sector strategies and career pathways.
- The identification of pockets of poverty in the local area calls for new levels of engagement with organizations at the neighborhood level and with organizations serving specific target populations. In particular, the identification of large numbers of returning citizens from the correction facilities lead to new relationships with the criminal justice system for engaging both adults and out-of-school youth.
- Work-based learning strategies will need to be expanded as on-the-job training remains a primary means for gaining skills needed by local employers.

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 review of employer demand in the region, local population characteristics, and partner relationships both locally and in the region brings to light several challenges to be addressed by the West Central Workforce Development Board and its partners during plan implementation:

Lack of Population Growth

The population of the workforce development area has decreased by 3.4% between 2010 and 2017, and it

is projected to decline by 1.6% over the next five years. The challenge for employers will be to find the skills they need in the existing workforce and in a diminished local supply pipeline.

Educational Alignment to Demand

Projections point to many of the higher wage jobs increasingly requiring post-secondary credentials, sometimes combined with work experience, but not necessarily college degrees. The challenge will be to promote these opportunities and provide clear skills development pathways that are affordable and accessible. The challenge is for employers to validate micro-credentials and encourage attainment of credentials in their own workforces. Employers can also become more engaged in meeting skills demands by working with educators on work-based learning strategies.

Lack of Public Transportation

The primary public transportation is in small areas of cities in the region and in routes that allow Lawrence County residents to commute to jobs in the Pittsburgh metropolitan area. The challenge is to make services and training more accessible via new, dispersed partnerships and greater use of technology. In areas where there are large concentrations of jobs, it may be possible to create special transportation arrangements shared by employers in those areas.

Pockets of Poverty

The mapping of poverty rates in the two counties shows that there are areas that need to be prioritized for outreach. In many cases these are also areas where transportation to PA CareerLink® centers or to jobs is difficult without public transportation. The challenge is to create more community-based partnerships for access points and initial workforce development services combined with greater use of technology. An asset in moving individuals out of poverty is the high demand for many types of entry level jobs that can combine with training and work-based learning to lead to jobs that have family-sustaining wages.

Addressing Barriers to Employment

The data points to multiple high-risk population segments that will need connections to multiple partners to address barriers to further training and ultimately to employment. Recent partner meetings have led to new discussions of ways for OVR to assist other partners in identification of disabilities and for adult education providers to integrate literacy with occupational training. The challenge will be to increase training of all front-line staff to identify and address barriers, and to increase the number of connections among partners.

Multiple Regional Influences

The West Central Workforce Development Area has regional influences in all directions. Through the WIOA Regional Plan, new approaches are being developed with the Northwest Region. And through the ongoing Oh-Penn partnership, strategies continue to be created with partners in Mahoning, Columbiana and Trumbull Counties in Ohio. There are also several initiatives that have been launched with the Southwest Region. This presents both an opportunity and a challenge. The opportunity is to work with partners in all directions to create new programs and attract new funding. The challenge is in managing the multiple relationships.

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

In order to effectively address the needs of the employers and job-seekers, workforce development

activities are developed through engaging local and regional partners. With a two-county service area of over 1000 square miles of urban, suburban, and rural areas, the Workforce Development Board develops strategies to meet the unique needs of the counties. Some of the **strengths** of the Workforce Development Board are:

Relationships

The West Central Workforce Development Board has been proactive in developing and maintaining relationships in a greater region and is a leader in convening partners, as evidenced by the acquisition of competitive funding. Collaboration allows for information sharing and partner engagement that leads to more successful outcomes.

A key relationship exists with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation which 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.

Education and Training Providers

Two Campuses of Butler County Community College, Grove City College, Penn State Shenango, Thiel College, and Westminster College are all located within Lawrence and Mercer Counties provide undergraduate, graduate and continuing education to over 5,000 students. Additionally, Slippery Rock University and Youngstown State University, located less than 10 miles outside of the Workforce Development Area, enroll over 20,000 undergraduate and graduate students. Technical Education & Training Providers including Jameson School of Nursing, Laurel Technical Institute, Lawrence County Career & Technical Center, Mercer County Career Center, New Castle School of Trades, and Sharon Regional School of Nursing, provide occupation-specific training to prepare students for high-priority careers.

Local and Regional Employers

The West Central Job Partnership, Inc. and the West Central Workforce Development Board will continue to convene local and regional employers to identify skill sets required for various high priority jobs within their companies. As new skill sets are identified or when gaps are identified in local training providers program offerings, meetings will be held with the employers and the training providers to discuss the skill gaps and introduce new training opportunities or modify current training programs to bridge the skill gaps.

Basic Skills Education and English as a Second Language

The West Central Adult Education Coalition has been meeting during the WIOA “transition year” to develop ways in which the member agencies provide workplace preparation activities, career awareness and career planning for the clients they serve. The member agencies of the Coalition include: Adult Literacy Lawrence County (ALLC); Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV (MIU 4); and the Grove City Education

Center for Adults. Opportunities for offering integrated education and training activities (including participation in the Manufacturing Readiness Program), are being explored and the College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education are being implemented. This Coalition will play an integral part in the American Apprenticeship Grant discussed later in this document in 3.4 A. The two Community Education Councils (CECs) of Pennsylvania (Keystone Community Education Council and Lawrence County Learning Center) will be included in dialogue to align training development efforts to increase the education and training delivery services to residents in Lawrence and Mercer Counties. The CECs will be encouraged to participate in LWDBs efforts to align high school career and technical education programs and post-secondary institutions to assure residents of Lawrence and Mercer Counties have access to credential bearing training opportunities.

Two adult education providers have staff co-located at the PA CareerLink® centers (MIU 4 in Mercer County and ALLC in Lawrence County). Both agencies accept referrals to address basic skills upgrading and/or GED attainment. The Worldwide Interactive Network (WIN) is also utilized as a tool in the PA CareerLink® centers to upgrade literacy levels. Referrals could be made to other adult education providers if travel would be more convenient for an individual. The local workforce development area does not have a significant limited English proficiency population. However, the PA CareerLink® centers utilize Propio interpreter services for any individual with limited English proficiency. All partner agencies located at each PA CareerLink® were trained to use the Propio system. Training is provided to all staff once per year at capacity training on how to access Propio services.

Sector Partnership Activities

The West Central WDA has worked with employers in the key industries of Manufacturing, Healthcare, Building & Construction, and Transportation & Logistics since the beginning of Industry Partnerships in Pennsylvania and served as a best practice in bringing partners together to discuss opportunities and workforce needs. Where possible, Next Generation Industry Partnership or similar models will be employed to support the local workforce development system to gather input from private sector employers in identifying and meeting the needs of businesses in the local area. The West Central Workforce Development Board embraces the framework developed by the Commonwealth under Next Generation Partnerships and will use the key concepts to continue to advance work with employer on a sector basis.

Type and Availability of Education, Training and Employment Activities

The WCWDB pledged that the local workforce development system would be universally accessible, customer centered and offer job and training services that correlate to high priority occupation vacancies needed to be filled at local and regional employers. A full array of basic career services are available to all customers who access the PA CareerLink® workforce development system – either in person or by remote access. Those individuals may begin an active job search in the Job Gateway® system. Individuals who need more in-depth assistance may move on to individualized career services which may include career research, further assessments, career counseling, etc. Individuals with previous work histories and skill sets that are transferable to high priority occupations open at local or regional employers will be referred to a Job Developer. The Job Developer will work with the individuals to match them to employers who are looking to hire individuals with similar work experience. The employer may hire individuals outright or the Job Developer may negotiate with the employer to execute various work-based learning opportunities such as paid work experience, on the job training, or customized training. Individuals who lack significant skill sets and/or work histories may explore options of paid work experience or individual training

accounts to enroll in training programs on the approved Eligible Training Provider List. All career services provided are tracked in the Commonwealth Workforce Development System (CWDS).

History of Successful Grant Acquisitions and Administration

West Central Job Partnership, Inc. has a strong history of fiduciary integrity and acquisition of competitive funding. Over the past ten years, the organization has served as the fiscal agent for the following competitive grants: \$2 million in Statewide Industry Partnership funds: US DOL funded grants -\$250,000 Regional Innovation Grant, \$6 million first-round Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) grant, and a \$2.9 million American Apprenticeship Initiative grant; and \$550,000 private foundation monies– WalMart America Works grant.

Primary **opportunities for improvement** are shown below. These will be addressed in the local plan but also as opportunities to address these issues in partnership with the Northwest Workforce Development Board as part of the regional planning and implementation process.

Expansion of Employment Readiness Programs

Building upon the pre-apprenticeship model utilized for Manufacturing, there is an opportunity to increase the pipeline of workers into career pathways in in-demand industries by working to prepare job-seekers with career-readiness activities and placing them in occupational skills training leading to industry recognized credentials and employment.

Promotion of Industry-Recognized Credentials

Though some sectors like Healthcare have widely-adopted the use of industry-recognized credentials to gauge job-seekers and employees aptitude and abilities, other growing industries, like Manufacturing, that will need to expand their workforce have been using company-specific tests or required years of experience to assess employees. These criteria often limit the number of applicants for job openings who may be able to perform the job requirements, but have just entered the industry from a training program. Promoting nationally-recognized credentials to employers and encouraging that they request them from job-seekers will ultimately save the employers time and costs related to recruitment.

Coordination of Employer Outreach

Employers are called upon by a myriad of different agencies for their input and are increasingly pressed for time. By increasing alignment with partner needs and strategizing approach and utilization of employer involvement, all agencies involved can garner more buy-in and participation. Strengthening sector-partnership leadership to speak as a unified voice on behalf of the industry is crucial to these efforts.

Outreach to Job Seekers

With a large geographic area and decentralized population centers, it is important for the WDB to leverage relationships with community based organizations. Additionally, low-income job seekers do not always have the requisite access to transportation to accept jobs at employers who are hiring. Increased dialogue with area and regional transit authorities should be sought.

2. STRATEGIC PLANNING QUESTIONS: *Vision and Goals*

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

The West Central Workforce Development Board (WCWDB, or “the Board”) works in tandem with the Chief Elected Officials (CEO) of Lawrence and Mercer Counties. In addition to overseeing the use of funds, the WCWDB provides policy guidance and exercises oversight in the development of a broad workforce investment system in the coordination of education and workforce development activities in the community. The Board approves budgets, selects service providers, and is responsible for all program performance outcomes.

The WCWDB will build on past efforts to strategically align available educational and community resources to support workforce and economic development both locally and regionally. Cross communication and collaboration with Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development agencies, Human Service Organizations, and industry-based coalitions will be expanded to identify and establish suitable businesses for sector project implementation to provide first-step employment experiences for youth and individuals with barriers wherein systematic enrichment and support of necessary workplace skills are learned and reinforced. Pathway benchmarks will be determined with business and education whereby progressive productivity and necessary skills acquisition will be determined and promoted within a career track established for a given sector partnership project. Several projects where enrichment and employment are simultaneous will be targeted.

Key to performance accountability, economic growth and self-sufficiency is rapid attachment and integration of underserved, underemployed, and disconnected job-seekers into employment both stand/or re-employment. Industry-recognized certification validated by standard educational criteria will increase attainment for emerging, dislocated, and incumbent workers, increased wages and industry productivity.

The WCWDB, as part of its recent strategic planning work to prepare for full implementation of WIOA, adopted the following mission statement:

“To provide information and services relevant to the needs of employers and job seekers; comprised of employment opportunities, education and training options, and economic development linkages and resources throughout the local area.”

To assure that the mission is accomplished, the Board and its staff will align and utilize all available resources to support local workforce and economic development efforts to retain and attract business in the region. Joint planning with regional and local economic development organizations is crucial to maximizing and leveraging the resources necessary to develop a high-demand skilled workforce in support of business and industry's workforce needs. Toward this end the West Central WDB will build on and expand the relationships it has developed with key partners in order to construct proactive approaches.

The WCWDB will continue to work with employers to identify skill sets they need in their businesses/industries/companies to reach or retain global competitiveness in their field. The WDB will continue to meet with local secondary and post-secondary education institutions as well as vocational training facilities to convey the skill sets needed in the local economy. The intent is for the education and vocational facilities to introduce new training programs and/or revise current program curricula to meet the skill gaps identified by the employers. Identification of employer skill gaps, introduction of new or revised training programs in the local area should provide employers with a pipeline of skilled individuals that lead to jobs with family sustaining wages. The WDB will continue to work to provide integrated, work-

based opportunities for youth and individuals with barriers.

Training that will lead to post-secondary or industry related credentials, integrated work-based opportunities for individuals (including youth and individuals with barriers to employment) and family sustaining jobs should translate to the local workforce development area meeting or exceeding indicators of performance.

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?*

To fully implement the mission within the context of WIOA goals and the goals of the state and regional plans, actions were taken to engage both the Board and its staff in taking actions to address the updated mission. **First, the updated** Mission Statement was presented to staff at a Capacity Building Session and is framed and hangs in the lobby of each PA CareerLink® in the local workforce area. Second, the Board identified the need for its members to become more involved in the strategic planning and overall design of the local and regional workforce development system.

Therefore, the chair of the Board created several committees with specific missions and appointed several members to meet and address relevant workforce issues. The committees that were created and their missions set by the Board are as follows:

One Stop Committee - The purpose of the One Stop Committee is to recommend a strategic approach to connecting community organizations, educational institutions and businesses to the public one stop workforce system.

Employer Engagement Committee: The purpose of the Employer Engagement Committee is to recommend a strategic approach to heightening the greater employer/business community to workforce development and the benefits of participating in growing America's labor force.

Youth Committee: The purpose of the Youth Committee is to recommend a strategic approach to reaching out and reintegrating Out of School Youth (OSY) to the world of work and focusing In School Youth (ISY) on careers and opportunities for employment sustainability.

Through the clarified committee mission, the Board and its staff will work to identify important issues in the local area and will implement new strategies in the local area and beyond the local area boundaries via working with the Northwest Workforce area in regional plan development and with neighboring areas in Ohio as part of the ongoing Oh-Penn work.

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 commonwealth's workforce development system, as well any the goals and strategies articulated in the regional plan?*

The West Central Workforce Development Board will guide investments to achieve the governor's vision for the commonwealth's workforce development system as expressed in the PA Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Combined State Plan for the period July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2020. This will be accomplished by fully embracing the fundamental components of the Governor's plan for a comprehensive workforce development system that increases the numbers of "jobs that pay," expands the number of "schools that teach" the skills necessary to succeed in college and careers, and is a model of "government that works."

The Board initiated plans to convene various workforce development stakeholders in the local area to begin dialogue on how to build a network of services and to boost interagency cooperation on workforce issues to achieve a team effort to accomplish the Governor's visions and goals. Invitations to the first stakeholders' meeting held on April 12, 2016 included: community based organizations that serve individuals with disabilities (OVR) and minorities (Shenango Valley Urban League and Community Action Partnership agencies); adult basic education providers (Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV and Adult Literacy Lawrence County); Chambers of Commerce; and the United Ways. The intent of the meeting was to provide information to the stakeholders regarding the Combined State WIOA plan and obtain input for the Local Plan and to offer suggestions on a unified approach to meet the visions and obtain the goals of the Governor. The Board also convened small groups of older youth participants in July 2015 to solicit their input regarding how services could be improved to assist youth in obtaining credential(s) and family sustaining jobs.

The Governor's five strategic visions are outlined below as well as the efforts of the WCWDB to achieve his visions and goals:

Goal 1: Establish Career Pathways

The WCWDB will strive to establish career pathways as the primary model for skill, credential and degree attainment and provide individuals, with an emphasis on individuals with barriers to employment, an opportunity that leads to a family sustaining job. The Board will continue to convene meetings with the stakeholders above and expand the number of stakeholders to include employers and multi-employer partnerships, secondary and post-secondary education providers and other interested parties to develop a career pathways system. A great deal of information has been gathered for Advanced Manufacturing over the past. This employer engagement will be expanded to other driver industries in the area and region. The career pathways system must include the development of soft-skills, adult basic education, and occupational training that offers participants on-ramps and off-ramps that permit attainment of various industry recognized credentials at the various levels in the system. The career pathways system must encourage cross-program funding and programmatic integration to ensure supportive services are available to meet the critical needs of individuals such as accommodations to eliminate barriers to employment for individuals with disabilities. The stakeholders will be invited to work with the standing Youth Committee to continue discussions on the development of a career pathways system.

There was discussion at the April stakeholders' meeting of the need to identify several employers in the local area who have high turnover rates in high priority occupations and establish a human service network that combines literacy training (i.e. math specific to the occupation, etc.), occupational skills training, work-based learning as well as a support network (job coaching, supportive services, etc.) for participants once they have been placed with the employer. Another enigma that will be addressed in the future is how an individual finds employment that pays a decent wage when (s)he may never be able to successfully pass the GED exam. One stakeholder suggested the need to identify other credentials that are recognizable to employers so employers would be willing to offer jobs to individuals who do not have a high school diploma or GED.

The WCWDB will promote and support pre-apprenticeship and registered apprenticeship programs in traditional and non-traditional occupations. Career guidance will be offered to individuals seeking career services through the PA CareerLink® centers in the local areas and information will be provided on the training programs available on the State Eligible Training Provider List to enhance

informed customer choice in selecting programs and providers. This information will be widely disseminated amongst educational providers in the local area and region.

Goal 2: Invest in Talent and Skills for Targeted Industries in Strategic Partnership with Employers and Educational Institutions

The Workforce Development Area has been successful in applications for competitive grant funding through numerous opportunities dedicated towards enhancing the effectiveness of workforce strategies. Fiscal year 2015 - 2016 is the final funding year of a US Department of Labor \$6 million Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) grant. The Oh-Penn Pathways to Competitiveness Project funded through the WIF grant expanded upon the area's sector partnership focus in Advanced Manufacturing and leveraged this funding to educate youth, parents and educators on manufacturing career pathways through career maps, informational brochures, job fairs, internships, and paid work experience opportunities. Additionally, the project brought together the expertise of the regional Education & Training Providers, Economic and Workforce Development organizations, Chambers of Commerce, and the private sector employers to discuss strategic plans for the regional industry that will continue to be sustained throughout the grant's final year and integrated into a continuing strategy.

Building on the successful sector partnership work done through the WIF grant, West Central Job Partnership, Inc. was recently notified of its successful application for a US Department of Labor \$2.9 million American Apprenticeship Initiative grant. The grant will expand the number of Registered Apprenticeships in the two counties, as well as regionally through the Greater Oh-Penn Manufacturing Apprenticeship Network over a five-year period through October of 2020. Advanced Manufacturing is an in-demand and growing industry in the area and the funds will be leveraged to assist in enrolling individuals in pre-apprenticeship activities, assist employers in developing and formalizing apprenticeship programs and offset the cost of starting new apprentices. These activities are part of the workforce development area's sector partnership strategy and funding is leveraged with WIOA and state general funding to build upon and expand the resources available to job-seekers advance along career pathways tied to increasing skills and wages and employers to grow the ability of their workforce.

Butler County Community College (BC3) is an active member on the WCWDB and has been working on the committee to prepare the regional plan with the Northwest workforce area. Additional efforts will be focused on information identified in two recent skills gap analyses: one funded by a Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) grant awarded by United States Department of Labor, Employment & Training Administration; and a Northwest Commission Regional Skills Gap Analysis funded by PA Jobs 1st Regional Partnership Grant (awarded in March 2014). The LWDB will convene post-secondary education institutions to address the employer skill gap and work to align curricula to teach the skills needed and award credentials that will eliminate the employer gaps.

It is expected that sector partnerships will be expanded to include additional employment sectors such as health care and building trades. One stakeholder suggested a review of employment sectors where employers are struggling to find skilled workers such as early childhood development. Developing a sector partnership in this field (and potentially a pre-apprenticeship and registered apprenticeship program) would build a network that provides training and support to: individuals seeking credentials and employment; employers seeking qualified job candidates; and families seeking quality instruction for their pre-school children.²⁶

Goal 3: Increase Work-Based Learning Opportunities for Youth

The WCWDB will strive to increase opportunities for all youth to participate in work-based learning through summer employment, pre-apprenticeship, apprenticeship and other similar experiences. The development of a career pathways system discussed previously in Goal 1 will include work-based learning in a comprehensive system that will include instruction on soft-skills and employer expectations, adult basic education for remediation or GED obtainment, occupational training that offers participants leads to various industry recognized credentials at the various levels in the system AND a work-based learning component. The opportunity for youth to earn industry recognized credential(s) while working in a related occupation will enable the youth to have high quality and relevant career experience on a resume while also earning wages to provide family support. The career pathways system must encourage cross-program funding and programmatic integration to ensure supportive services are available to meet the critical needs of individuals such as accommodations to eliminate barriers to employment for individuals with disabilities. This system will require a “buy-in” from all parties to develop a community support system. Blending funding sources (Adult Literacy, OVR, WIOA, etc.) will allow the system to deal with the community need as a comprehensive whole rather than silo-funded programs. It will also be important to convene staff and supervisors from the various programs mentioned to discuss the comprehensive approach to assure that the philosophy radiates to the staff involved in the point of service to participants.

The work-based learning opportunities will include, but may not be limited to: paid work experience, unpaid community service, summer jobs, internships, pre-apprenticeship programs, registered apprenticeship programs, and on-the-job training. The standing Youth Committee will continue to meet and discuss the comprehensive career pathways system and work experience opportunities for youth. Employers will be encouraged to give youth a chance at high-quality work opportunities without being expected to deal with the “social” issues youth from the targeted populations (low-income, disabled, high school drop-out, basic skills deficient, pregnant or parenting, involved in the judicial system, homeless or aging out of the foster system) may possess. The community network system will be available to deal with the “social” issues via job coaching, supportive services, etc.

Goal 4: Engage Employers to Strengthen the Connection of Education and Training and the Economy, Increase Investment in Critical Skills and Increase Jobs that Pay

It is imperative that employers are convened on a regular basis to continue dialogue regarding skill gaps as identified in two recent skills gap analyses: one funded by a Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) grant awarded by United States Department of Labor, Employment & Training Administration; and a Northwest Commission Regional Skills Gap Analysis funded by PA Jobs 1st Regional Partnership Grant (awarded in March 2014). Additional employers in other sectors will be invited to become involved to identify skills gaps and training required in order to eliminate the gaps in their industry sector. Secondary schools, career and technical education as well as post-secondary schools need to participate in the conversations to hear and discuss the skills gaps realign or create new curricula and credentials to address and provide the skill sets employers are seeking.

The WCWDB will prioritize funds to be used for PA CareerLink® business services activities, on-the-job training and incumbent worker training to those employers who offer high quality jobs that pay family sustaining wages. The LWDB’s Employer Engagement Committee will recommend a strategic approach to recruit and convene employers and the business community to who offer the high-quality jobs in the local area. The WCWDB will continue to solicit grants from private foundations as well as other State and Federal resources to support and expand current industry partnerships and multi-employer endeavors, including pre-apprenticeship and registered apprenticeship programs.

The current Business Education Partnership relationships will be nurtured so employers continue to connect to career and technical education schools to provide career-related experiences and an introduction to the soft skills and employer expectations. It is expected that the Educator in the Workplace program currently being offered to high school teachers and counselors will continue. The program gives local educators the opportunity to gain hands-on experience in the manufacturing or healthcare industry and learn how it can be applied to classroom lessons. A collaborative project, the program involves the Lawrence County School to Work agency and Industry Partnership employers of Lawrence and Mercer Counties. Educators enrolled in the program complete 32 hours of on-site job shadowing at a local manufacturer or healthcare facility and create lesson plans to present in their classrooms. The presentations illustrate how classroom subject matter can be applied in the workplace, thereby demonstrating how important their school work will be to students later in their careers. Pennsylvania educators earn Act 48 credits and/or receive a financial stipend for participation in the event. The youth contractor will be encouraged to meet with the Intermediate Unit to determine if the lesson presentations can be videotaped and streamed to other classrooms in the districts to reach a larger number of students.

Goal 5: Strengthen Data Sharing and More Effectively Use Data

The LWDB currently utilizes the Commonwealth's CWDS as the system of record for WIOA participant enrollment in career and training services. WCJP also tracks many other program elements, target populations, etc. by utilizing the Ad Hoc reporting system within CWDS. CWDS and the Department of Health & Human Services CIS data base allows for data sharing between Title I and CAO staff on a limited basis. The WCWDB supports and encourages access to real-time data from state systems for reducing duplication, targeting outreach, easing the referral process between partner agencies, creating efficiencies for participant services, and its positive impact on the WCWDB decision-making process. The LWDB will continue to convene community stakeholders to: strengthen partnerships to analyze and identify skills and the occupational needs of targeted industry clusters and emerging industries; develop sector strategies and career pathways for skill, credential and degree attainment to meet the needs of local employers and provide job seekers (including job seekers with barriers to employment) with an opportunity to earn family sustaining wages; and develop a service infrastructure to utilize enhanced technology to increase outreach to employers and job seekers. It will be imperative for the community stakeholders to identify what data they need for their respective silo "reporting systems" so that the Commonwealth's CWDS incorporates that information into any changes made to the system of record. The WCWDB will support inter-agency staff training on any new modules the Commonwealth adds to the current CWDS.

The WCWDB has worked in partnership with the Northwest Workforce Development Board over the past year to develop the WIOA Regional Plan, and efforts will continue as the plan is being implemented. Four primary goals of the regional plan are shown below along with initiatives being taken by the WCWDB to support these goals.

Regional Goal #1: Create and grow a competitive workforce by engaging knowledgeable, employer-focused leadership that promotes and advocates for business and industry to address the critical workforce challenges of the region.

The Employer Engagement Committee of the Board will collaborate with the neighboring workforce areas to increase awareness of needs, opportunities, and the assistance that is available for joint-region and joint-agency customized solutions to meet needs. Through the Oh-Penn partnership with neighboring

Ohio workforce areas, the WCWDB has championed the Business Resource Network, a collaborative approach to employer outreach, laying the foundation for broader application with employers.

Regional Goal #2: Continually enhance the workforce development pipeline by promoting high-demand industry sectors, career pathways, and building a pipeline of talent through outreach.

The WCWDB works continuously to clarify skills gaps using multiple resources. Most recently this has included the Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) grant and the Northwest Commission Regional Skills Gap Analysis. The Board has established Career Pathways as the primary model for building talent pipelines in high-demand sectors and occupations. The Board will collaborate with its neighboring areas to build on these initiatives to increase public awareness of job opportunities and education and training programs that prepare individuals for these jobs. Efforts will include the newly-awarded American Apprenticeship Initiative grant.

Regional Goal #3: Maintain a commitment to continuous improvement of the workforce development network by increasing data sharing across various WIOA and partner programs. The WCWDB uses the Commonwealth's CWDS system as the baseline system of record, and will work with the Northwest Workforce Area to develop consistent approaches for using the ad hoc reporting features of CWDS. The Board will also use the regional implementation process to share data on best practices that can be implemented in the broader region. At the individual employer level, the Board has developed data sharing approaches with other education and economic development organizations to support joint solutions and efficiency in contacting employers; this approach will continue to be brought to larger scale in the region. This employer contact approach is also being utilized by both regional workforce boards to design an approach for service coal-impacted workers and employers in a three-state area.

Regional Goal #4: Increase the alignment of education and training programs with employer demand. As previously described, the Career Pathways approach will be foundation for alignment of classroom training and work-based learning in all program initiatives. The Business Education Partnership broadens the reach of the Board in developing talent pipelines by working with high school teachers and counselors in the Educator in the Workplace program and via labor market information for K-12 students and parents. The Board will work with its regional partners to further expand partnerships with schools, with career and job information developed and delivered on a regional basis with consistency of messages.

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 negotiated performance standards for the local area are attached as Appendix A.

As WIOA has placed an increased emphasis to service individuals with barriers, it is anticipated that this population will have received several touches from the social and employment network. Maximum coordination and communication must be utilized to avoid cross purpose direction which would prompt confusion and demotivation. Programs will increase support to these individuals while continuing to provide career services to other job seekers requiring less intense navigation and supportive services to advance through pathways to employment.

Strategic partnerships with employers, educational organizations and community based organizations and a more focused targeting of resources on business and job seeker needs should facilitate required performance outcomes. This course of action holds for Youth, Adults and Dislocated Worker populations.

Data sharing and coordination will provide all involved partner programs with information to report what is anticipated as increased employment, retention and earnings.

The goals of the WCWDB to convene community stakeholders to identify employer needs and align training curricula to meet those employer needs and lead to jobs with family sustaining jobs will be the biggest factor in meeting the federal performance accountability measures. This same stakeholder model includes the creation of career pathways that offer job seekers various on-ramps to training that leads to industry recognized credentials that will allow them to obtain higher skill-level jobs within the local economy thereby creating job openings for individuals who have not yet achieved that level on the career pathway.

The WCWDB is waiting for definitions from the US Department of Labor and/or the Commonwealth regarding some of the performance targets. However, the percentages listed on the attached Performance Targets Template have followed the Commonwealth's PY 2016/PY2017 proposed percentages. Historically WCJP's negotiated goals for Adults and Dislocated Workers' and Youth entered employment and retentions have been higher than the Commonwealth's goals. Also, historically WCJP's negotiated goals for 6 months average earnings for Adults and Dislocated Workers have been lower than the Commonwealth's goals, so the goals for wages on the attached Performance Targets Template are lower than what is proposed for the Commonwealth. WCJP has met or exceeded the Commonwealth's goals under WIA and it is expected that WCJP will continue to meet or exceed the negotiated local goals under WIOA.

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

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

The organizational structure for the West Central Workforce Development Area was modified prior to the successful procurement of the one-stop operator and clarification of roles pursuant to WIOA and state rules. To create the proper separation of duties under the law, separate lines of reporting were created in the West Central Job Partnership, Inc. structure. That change is reflected in the organizational chart attached as Appendix B.

The West Central Governing Board/Chief Local Elected Officials and the WCWDB in consultation are requesting from the PA Department of Labor and Industry a continuation of the structure exception model for the West Central Job Partnership, Inc., which has been granted since the inception of the Workforce Investment Act.

The Commissioners of Lawrence and Mercer Counties in 1999, when the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania oversaw the transition from the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) to the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998, in consultation with officials from the Department of Labor and Industry, restructured the local service delivery area to meet all federal and state guidance for instituting requirements for local workforce investment area designation. This process included the private sector, economic and workforce development leadership of the two counties. Considering the separation of functions outlined in the regulations and proceeding under the principle of seeking economic efficiencies and utilizing existing infrastructure, the Private Industry Council of Lawrence and Mercer Counties voluntarily vacated the 501(c)3 not-for-profit corporation established in 1986 by the Local Elected Officials (LEO) and the six county commissioners installed themselves as the corporate board of West Central Job Partnership, Inc. as re-registered with the PA Department of State.

The LEOs in 1999 wished to maintain a tighter control over financial and administrative functions related to the fiscal agent responsibilities under WIOA while maintaining a flexible operational presence that could rapidly adapt to progressively evolving workforce needs and rapidly changing priorities. A model was engineered that instituted two distinct divisions within the corporation each independently reporting to the corporate board through a Division Chief. Division A operates under a Chief Financial Officer (CFO) who reports directly to the Chair of the CEOs and whose major WIOA responsibilities cover WIOA Fiscal Agent and Administrative Duties in addition to providing staff services to the West Central Workforce Development Board, this latter is a non-incorporated advisory council proscribed by federal/state WIOA regulations to establish a budget and target allocated funding for workforce investment activities. The Program Division (Division B) Chief reports directly to the Vice Chair of the Chief Elected Officials and has primary responsibility for implementation of WIOA Title I operations. The Local Elected Officials took action at their February 22, 2017 meeting to add a third division to WCJP's structure. The Operations & Special Projects Division is responsible for implementing and developing policies and procedures that will coordinate the partners' activities and resources into a seamless workforce delivery system for high quality, customer services related to jobseekers and employers who use PA CareerLink® services. The Chief of the Operations & Special Projects Division reports directly to the Secretary/Treasurer of the Governing Board.

While meeting the specified separation of functions under WIOA, this structure also promotes flexibility and cost efficiencies such that one-stop fiscal agent responsibilities and LWDB staffing are performed by Division A employees thereby maintaining functional insulation from the competitively procured One Stop operational Operator duties. WCJP's Operations & Special Projects Division, the competitively procured One Stop Operator, was in place by July 1, 2017, and will supervise and direct a site administrator to manage one stop operations in the PA CareerLink® centers located in Mercer and Lawrence Counties. The 501(c) 3 under the auspices of the corporate board has sought federal and foundation funding to support the workforce development aims and strategic vision allowing the WCWDB to focus on its work of oversight and directing proper utilization of the Title 1 and other WIOA funds as well as stewardship over the maintenance and development of the one stop workforce system in the two-county area.

A Governing Board, consisting of the elected or appointed County Commissioners of Lawrence and Mercer Counties, has been established to govern and implement the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) in the West Central Workforce Development Area. This model is still applicable under WIOA with the maintenance of required firewalls. This organization was incorporated as a 501(c)(3) Not-for-Profit Corporation and does business under the name West Central Job Partnership, Inc. The Governing Board will carry out all responsibilities assigned to the Local Elected Officials (LEOs) under Title I of the Act. The role of the LEOs in the governance and implementation of the Act in the local area includes, but is not limited necessarily to: designating the fiscal agent for all funds made available to Lawrence and Mercer Counties under the Act; establishing a Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) in the two county area in accordance with the Act and the Rules and Regulations promulgated for the implementation of the Act; entering into a written agreement with the LWDB which details clearly the partnership between the two entities for the governance and oversight of activities authorized under the Act; authorizing the establishment of a standing youth committee as a subgroup of the LWDB and approving nominations of members for appointment by the WCWDB to that subgroup; approving or disapproving, in partnership with the WCWDB, the designation or certification of any PA CareerLink® operators within the Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) and approving or disapproving the termination of the eligibility of such operators; providing input and oversight to the LWDB regarding the negotiating and reaching agreement with the Commonwealth's PA Workforce Development Board (PAWDB) on local performance measures; reviewing and approving or disapproving, in partnership with the LWDB, any plan pertaining to

workforce development or job training, any modifications to such plans, and any other documents required by the State or Federal government prior to submission; determining the apportionment of funds and liabilities between the involved counties and approving all adjustments to allocations; approving or disapproving any contract with any entity for the performance of services required or needed pursuant to the implementation or operation of any program or project authorized under the Act unless otherwise stipulated and agreed; and, conducting oversight, in partnership with the LWDB, of the operations of any local Title I funded programs of youth, adult, and dislocated worker activities and the PA CareerLink® delivery system.

A Chairperson of the Governing Board is elected, together with a Vice-Chairperson and a Secretary/Treasurer, by a majority vote of the six members of the Governing Board. The Officers serve for a two-year term, beginning January 1, and ending December 31, or until replaced. In the event that both the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson are absent from a meeting, those members present may elect a member to serve as temporary Chairperson. Four (4) members of the Governing Board constitute a quorum, which shall be necessary for the transaction of business at meetings and may be met by telephone or similar means. All matters brought before the Governing Board may be resolved by a simple majority of the total votes present at each meeting. Each member shall have one vote with no proxy.

The Governing Board, consisting of the six elected or appointed County Commissioners of Lawrence and Mercer Counties, serves as the Board of Directors of West Central Job Partnership, Inc. West Central Job Partnership, Inc. is a not-for Profit Corporation established by the Commissioners and chartered under the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to coordinate or implement such activities and services that are or may be authorized under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

West Central Job Partnership, Inc., an entity created by the Commissioners of Lawrence and Mercer Counties, is composed of the three distinct divisions of administrative, programs, and operations/special projects. The Division Chief of Administration (WCJP's CFO) reports directly to the Chair of the WCJP's corporate board/LEOs while the Program Division Chief reports directly to the Vice Chair of WCJP's corporate board/LEOs, and the Operations/Special Projects Division Chief reports directly to the Secretary/Treasurer of WCJP's corporate board/local elected officials.

Fiscal Agent - The Administrative Division of West Central Job Partnership, Inc. was designated by the Local Elected Officials and attested to by their duly elected Chairperson who acts as the Chief Elected Official (CEO) for purposes of the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act in NW #145 in the aforementioned LEO-LWDB Agreement for Lawrence and Mercer Counties. The contact information for the fiscal agent is as follows:

Gregg K. Dogan Chief Financial Officer
West Central Job Partnership, Inc. 217 West State Street, Third Floor Sharon, PA 16146
Phone: 724-347-7855
Fax: 724-347-2109
Email: gdogan@wcjp.org Web: www.wcjp.org

The Administrative Division reports directly to the Chair of the Local Elected Officials (LEO) who is elected for a two-year term from among the six county commissioners that comprise the West Central Job Partnership, Inc. corporate board. The LWDB in conjunction with the corporate board have agreed that the Administrative Division will act as fiscal agent for the two counties regarding WIOA and other related workforce development funds for the jurisdiction as well as providing administrative staffing services for the LWDB. Additionally, the Administrative Division acts as fiscal agent for the PA CareerLink® centers

within the jurisdiction coordinating with one stop partners in the completion of center Resource Sharing Agreements. This division likewise manages and disburses Title 1 funds at the direction of the LWDB as well as Industry Partnership and other relevant funds such as private sector sustainability; EARN welfare, foundation and other federal grants.

Local Workforce Development Board - The chief role of the West Central Workforce Development Board, the Local Workforce Development Board for the workforce area, is to develop policy, establish a budget and provide oversight for the workforce system under its jurisdiction. This includes approving a system and budgeting for training activities under Title I of the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act, determining the number and operational structure for the PA CareerLink® comprehensive centers for Mercer and Lawrence Counties, acting in consultation with the Local Elected Officials (LEOs) to align workforce resources within the LWDA to be in line with both state and local economic development targets. Additionally, the WCWDB ensures that monitoring of funded activities under its purview occurs periodically and meets regulatory standards on both the programmatic and administrative levels such as, one stop operations and procurement of services both for vendors and sub-recipient contractors. As an appointed advisory board for the combined commissioners of Lawrence and Mercer Counties, they act in collaboration with the LEOs in a public-private partnership to maintain and adapt a flexible workforce system capable of investing assets to competitively position the businesses and populace of the jurisdiction to benefit in both regional and global markets.

Currently there are twenty-nine (29) members on the West Central Workforce Development Board. Private sector members are identified by the six Chambers of Commerce in the two-county area and their names are submitted to the appropriate county Board of Commissioners for consideration. To maintain the private sector majority required under the Act, the counties select a total of fifteen (15) private sector members. The County Commissioners, working with the Chambers and LWDB staff make an effort to align the private sector representation with the Industry Clusters identified for the two county areas. Appointment and re-appointment letters are mailed to the selected individuals and a copy of that letter kept on file at West Central Job Partnership, Inc. Corporate Office. When appointing other mandated members to the Board, the County Commissioners consult with the appropriate group in the local area for nominations. These groups recommend representatives from local central labor councils, community-based organizations, local economic development agencies, local educational entities and other mandatory members. When two representatives are required, each county selects a representative to the Board. The Chief Elected Official (CEO) appoints the WIOA Title I representative. Initially the Board appointments are for two, three or four-year terms.

After the initial appointments, the Board terms are for a three-year period and are staggered, with approximately 1/3 of the Board up for re-appointment each year.

Executive Committee is composed of the four WCWDB officers, the past Chair and up to four additional Board members selected by the WCWDB chair, the Executive Committee acting as the liaison to the Local Elected Officials (Governing Board), are empowered to act on time-sensitive issues between LWDB meetings, and its members usually chair various LWDB subcommittees. Any issue acted upon by the Executive Committee will be placed on the agenda for the next regularly scheduled Workforce Development Board meeting for a motion to ratify the action taken by the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee will also oversee the Community Outreach strategies for the WCWDB and PA CareerLink® centers.

Finance Committee is composed of the members of the Executive Committee discussed above and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Board. The Finance Committee members review the Title 1 WIOA

allocations, the PA CareerLink® budgets and expenditure reports and provide oversight on the funding resources to be allocated to ITAs, OJTs, incumbent worker training and other training initiatives.

Employer Engagement Committee recommends a strategic approach to heightening the greater employer/business community to workforce development and the benefits of participating in growing America's labor force.

Youth Committee recommends a strategic approach to reaching out and reintegrating older youth to the world of work and focusing younger youth on careers and opportunities for employment sustainability.

One-Stop/Operations Committee recommends a strategic approach to connecting community organizations, educational institutions and businesses to the public one-stop workforce system. The One-Stop/Operations Committee will meet regularly with the One-Stop operator for discussion and input regarding the daily operations and strategic goals of the PA CareerLink® system.

Individuals responsible for duties related to equal employment opportunities and civil rights protections are:

Cynthia Myers, EO Officer
West Central Workforce Development Area 217 West State Street, Third Floor
Sharon, PA 16146
724.347.7855 Ext. 308
cmyers@wjcp.org

John Bunnell, EO Liaison
PA CareerLink® Mercer County 217 West State Street
Sharon, PA 16146
724.347.9257 Ext. 202
jbunnell@pa.gov

Jane Rae, EO Liaison
PA CareerLink® Lawrence County 102 Margaret Street
New Castle, PA 16101 724.656.3165 Ext. 232
jrae@wcjp.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 following programs work collaboratively to provide an array of employment services and to connect customers to work-related training and education directly in the PA CareerLink® offices or by referral (the six core programs identified by WIOA are shown in **bold**):

- **WIOA Title I Adult - WCJP Administrative Division**
- **WIOA Dislocated Worker – WCJP Administrative Division**
- **WIOA Youth – WCJP Administrative Division and Intermediate Unit IV**
- **WIOA Title III Wagner Peyser – Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations (BWPO) merit staff**

- WIOA Title III Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) – BWPO merit staff
- Jobs for Veterans State Grant, Veterans and Disabled Veterans – BWPO merit staff
- **WIOA Title IV Rehabilitation Act – Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)**
- **WIOA Title II Adult Education and Literacy – Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV, Adult Literacy Lawrence County, and Butler County Community College (BC3)**
- Postsecondary Career and Technical Education (Carl D. Perkins) – Butler County Community College
- Community Services Block Grant – Lawrence County Community Action Partnership and Community Action Partnership Mercer County
- Senior Community Service Employment Program – PathStone Corporation
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) – referrals to County Assistance Offices (CAO) in Lawrence and Mercer Counties
- Unemployment Compensation Programs – dedicated computer and telephone for individuals to open claims or telephone the call centers for assistance

All required federally mandated programs have entered into the One-Stop Partner Memorandum of Understanding for these PA CareerLink® centers. Career services for WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Workers and Older Youth as well as access to training services through Individual Training Accounts (ITA) are provided here. Career services under Wagner-Peyser, chapter 41 of Title 38 United States Code (Veterans Programs), Unemployment Compensation and Trade Act Programs are present. Career services under the Community Services Block Grant, Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and TANF Employment and Training Programs as well as Title II Literacy Programs are also available. Career services can be accessed for Title V of the Older Americans Act, Carl Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act programs.

Core program providers (WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth; Wagner Peyser; Adult Basic Education; and Office of Vocational Rehabilitation) continue to meet on a regular basis to: coordinate and align program services to meet the needs of eligible individuals. Supervisors meet to discuss program services and how they are integrated into PA CareerLink® activities. Front-line staff meets every morning to review job orders and scheduled activities for the PA CareerLink® for the day. Weekly meetings are held for front line capacity training for partner agency staff to learn about specific programs and services.

Collaboration with Each Partner

The One-Stop Operator convenes meetings with the PA CareerLink® Site Administrators and the One-Stop Committee (comprised of the mandatory partners and several WCWDB members) on a quarterly basis to review the overall operations of the PA CareerLink® centers. The One-Stop Committee reviews performance and plans, and then makes recommendations of the delivery of career services. The One-Stop Operator and Site Administrators coordinate with any appropriate committees of the WCWDB. The One-Stop Operator and Site Administrators attend the WCWDB meetings and address any questions raised by Board members related to delivery of services. PA CareerLink® partners periodically attend the WCWDB meetings to discuss programs and services offered by their organizations.

Several mandated partners are not located in the local workforce development area (Job Corps, Youth Build) or not funded for programs in the local area (Second Chance Act, Career and Technical Education programs at the post-secondary level authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development). These partners, as well as other community based organizations, participate in local

workforce development activities in a variety of ways in partnership with the WCWDB, the One-Stop Operator, and the Site Administrators. Examples of participation include:

- Pittsburgh Job Corps has regular monthly recruitment sessions;
- PA District Probation and Parole holds monthly meetings/classes for individuals recently released from prison to introduce them to all PA CareerLink® services and activities;
- Butler County Community College schedules occasional classes (such as pre-manufacturing certificate course) at the PA CareerLink® centers;
- WCWDB facilitated a meeting between the Mercer County Housing Authority (HUD agency) and the New Castle School of Trades that resulted in six Housing Authority employees receiving training and certifications to handle refrigerants at little cost to the agency.

One-Stop Operator's Functional Relationships

West Central Job Partnership, Inc.'s corporate board consists of the six Local Elected Officials (LEOs). The One-Stop Operator reports directly to the Secretary/Treasurer of WCJP Inc.'s corporate board. The One-Stop Operator convenes regular meetings with the PA CareerLink® partner agencies to discuss customer flow and delivery of all workforce development services in the local area. The One-Stop Operator coordinates the service delivery of required partners and service providers. Within that role, the One-Stop operator is responsible for ensuring that the integrated service delivery system at the PA CareerLink® centers support the WCWDB policies related to oversight and implementation of the One-Stop delivery system. Additionally, the One-Stop Operator is responsible for ensuring that the service delivery system at the PA CareerLink® centers fully integrates the products, protocols, and quality standards that conform to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's State Plan.

Alignment with Regional and State Plans

The WCWDB is fully committed to implementation of the four goals presented in the Keystone Edge Regional Plan in partnership with the Northwest Pennsylvania Workforce Development Board. To ensure alignment with the regional plan and support of the state plan, current priorities for implementation include:

- Collaboration between the two local boards on Next Generation Industry Partnership proposals that engage employers on a regional basis;
- Establishment of sector-based employer advisory committees on a regional basis to provide consistent input on career pathways to all education and training providers;
- Coordinate a regional awareness campaign in the region;
- Establishment of a communications structure between the two workforce development boards at both the leadership level for strategy development and the operations levels for consistent quality of customer services; and
- Empowerment of conveners for region-wide development of policies, procedures and tools for coordinated and streamlined customer services for employers, job seekers, and students in the region.

3.3. *How will the local board work with the entities carrying out core programs to:*

➤ *Expand access to employment, training, education and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly individuals with barriers to employment.*

The local workforce development system described above identifies the six core programs mandated by WIOA. The LWDB will continue to work to align investments in workforce, education, and economic

development to regional in-demand jobs. The WCWDB strives to reinforce the partnerships and strategies necessary for one-stop centers to provide job seekers and workers with the high-quality career services, education and training, and supportive services they need to get good jobs and stay employed, and to help businesses find skilled workers and access other supports, including education and training for their current workforce. The WCWDB is interlocked with the area's key education and training institutions at multiple levels.

The WCWDB provides oversight and guidance to one stop program staff to explore and integrate strategic options for cross program utilization whenever possible. For instance, individuals who are both WIOA and OVR eligible receive coordinated services to enhance benefits and conserve resources. Thus, tuition may be paid by WIOA Title I and books and supplies by OVR thus maximizing benefits to the client and minimizing cost to both programs. Likewise, individuals eligible for Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) and Trade Readjustment Act (TRA) programs are dual enrolled into WIOA Dislocated Worker Programs to receive assessment, supportive services or training services as appropriate once again maximizing benefits while minimizing cost. Referrals are taken for WIOA services for Veterans, individuals receiving Unemployment Compensation, Older Workers and other populations. In addition, all WIOA participants are required to apply for other grants for which they may be eligible: Pell; PHEAA; work opportunity grants; cultural diversity grants that are offered at some universities, etc.

Validation of Eligibility

WIOA Title I staff meets with applicants interested in obtaining WIOA services to complete the application and collect supporting documents to verify WIOA eligibility. The WIOA on-line application is saved in CWDS in pending status and the supporting documents are forwarded to the Data Manager. The Data Manager reviews all documents and determines whether individuals are eligible to receive WIOA services. When telephone verification or self-attestations are utilized the Title I staff must include a case note of all attempts to review documents for data validation purposes and explain the reasons the documents were not available for inspection. The telephone verification or self-attestation form and Title I staff case notes will be reviewed and approved by the Program Division Chief. If eligible, the Data Manager sends an email to the appropriate Title I staff to confirm all programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker and/or Youth) for which the participant is eligible to receive WIOA services. The application and supporting documents are forwarded to the Administrative Division to be kept in the active WIOA files until the participant is terminated from WIOA services.

Eligibility to receive services under WIOA Title IV may only be determined by a qualified OVR Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor. Training for OVR 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.

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

Career services in the PA CareerLink® centers will include career research activities that illustrate career pathways to family sustaining jobs in the local area as well as the on- and off-ramps to the education/vocational training and the credentials that can be obtained along the pathway. A recent six-million-dollar Workforce Innovation Fund grant award by the Department of Labor (DOL) Employment and Training Administration to the West Central Workforce Development Area (WDA) for a consortium that included two Ohio WDAs, to develop and expand a career pathways strategy for the advanced manufacturing sector based upon industry recognized credentials. Specific functional skills were identified within targeted critical high priority occupations which tie to a nationally validated credential. This

information was disseminated to schools and training institutions to align curricula based upon industry need and open further discussion aimed at the recognition of the stackable credentials that lead to advanced education credit which converts to associate and bachelor degrees. Several local education facilities, including secondary career and technical education centers as well as post-secondary schools have introduced new training courses in manufacturing. The WIF grant also afforded opportunities to increase awareness of career pathways to youth, parents and schools through job fairs, internships, paid work experiences that will facilitate individuals in navigating through the educational and training terrain to obtain jobs and career maps by which workers can advance within the sector. The focus of this five county WIF project was to expand a career pathways strategy for the advanced manufacturing sector based upon increasing obtainment of industry recognized credentials by aligning private sector expectations with educational institution curriculum focus aiming trainees toward nationally validated recognized credentials for high priority occupations in advanced manufacturing. These professional development opportunities introduced counselors to modern manufacturing facilities and career pathways within the industry.

Coordination with WIOA Title II Providers

The WCWDB and PA CareerLink® centers work very closely with the West Central Adult Education Coalition (WCAEC) which includes Adult Literacy Lawrence County (ALLC), Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV and Grove City Education Center for Adults, as well as Keystone Community Education Council which is an education institution advocacy group. Two WIOA Title II providers are co-located in the PA CareerLink® centers and offer daily adult education classes and instruction: Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV in Mercer County; and Adult Literacy Lawrence County (ALLC) in Lawrence County. Staff from the co-located WIOA Title II providers attend the morning meetings as well as the weekly capacity building meetings. The supervisors of these agencies are included in the monthly PA CareerLink® center supervisor meetings. The Director of ALLC is also a WCWDB member and all three WCAEC agencies are members of the WDB's standing youth committee.

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

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

Plans have been put into motion to increase engagement with business, industry, economic development and community based organizations. The driver clusters of manufacturing, health care, building trades and transportation and logistics are regularly engaged and facilitated through organized industry partnership meetings. This can be described as the wholesale engagement approach which deals with the sector as a whole. A retail engagement of employers is undertaken by the PA CareerLink® which seeks to provide employment services on an individual basis. Thus, when a specific need such as recruitment or assessment is brought to someone's attention, the PA CareerLink® centers' Business Service Team members notify the site administrator and an action plan is organized with the employer. The site administrators, along with LWDB representatives meet quarterly with economic development agencies both local and regional along with members of the Industrial Resource Center, Gannon University Small Business Development Center and local chambers of commerce functioning in the two-fold capacity as West Central area sub-committee of the Partnership for Regional Economic Performance (PREP) and the local workforce area's WCWDB/PA CareerLink® Business Services Action Team that takes a more regional and less tactical approach to business services. This group discusses and devises strategic responses to business services on a more macro level. Through the combination of the wholesale and retail engagement strategy, the LWDB is provided macro and micro information regarding trends and

challenges relevant to workforce needs in the West Central two county jurisdiction. Community based organizations and education are likewise engaged at both the retail and wholesale levels within the PA CareerLink® and on the WCWDB to maintain the strategic goal of two-way communication ensuring that information flows into and out from the workforce development system.

As a core partner, OVR provides multiple services to the business community designed to assist businesses with onboarding pre-screened qualified employees with disabilities. The LWDB will continue to work with OVR representatives to enhance coordination of services.

The Employer Advisory Council (EAC) at the PA CareerLink® Lawrence County is a network of Human Resource Representatives, business representatives and employers who work with the PA CareerLink® in many ways – i.e.: posting job orders, participating in job fairs, inquiring about labor market information, utilizing local and/or regional resources for hiring or training needs. The EAC meets monthly and focuses on current HR topics and services and trainings available through PA CareerLink® partners and community resources. Attendees are regularly asked for feedback on current services and surveyed for business needs, future meeting HR topics and speakers. The PA CareerLink® Mercer County has replicated the EAC model for Mercer County and is holding monthly meetings with similar topics, training sessions and services listed above.

The PA CareerLink® Employment Service staff and Business Service Team (BST) members are briefed on customized and OJT program guidelines and make businesses aware of possible funding opportunities and eligibility requirements. Additionally, individuals participating in PA CareerLink® group orientations at the Centers are given information on OJT training to market themselves during their active job search. PA CareerLink® staff conducts outreach through employer visits and disseminate information on incumbent worker training, Customized Job Training, paid work experience opportunities, and OJT. BST works with economic development agencies to leverage Governor's outreach funds for business attraction coupled with OJT.

The WCWDB fully embraces and supports the employer-engaged, demand-driven processes specified in WIOA and further defined by the Commonwealth in the Next Generation Industry Partnership structure. This local plan and the WIOA Regional Plan include goals for engaging employers on a sector basis as full partners in training via development of training curricula and work-based learning to supplement classroom training. By utilizing career pathways as the language of the system, all partners collaborate to respond to the needs and opportunities identified by employers in a sector. The WCWDB has a proven record, as a partner in the OH-PENN bi-state coalition, in implementing the Business Resource Network model where multi-agency solutions are created to address needs of employers. The WCSDB currently has pending proposals for Next Generation Partnership funding that will assist in achieving its sector-aligned goals. A key component of the "employer toolbox" is coordination with the Rapid Response staff and resources, as employers are quickly connected to the Rapid Response services if needs include re-deployment of their workforce as a result of economic conditions and other factors.

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

The US Department of Labor recently awarded a \$2.9 million American Apprenticeship Grant to West Central Job Partnership, Inc. to build *The Greater Oh-Penn Manufacturing Apprenticeship Network*. The Network is comprised of five industry-led sector partnerships including 137 very actively engaged businesses (Mahoning Valley Manufacturers Coalition, Erie Regional Manufacturer Partnership, Advanced Materials Manufacturing Industry Partnership in NW PA, and Portage County Manufacturers Coalition); five Workforce Development Areas (WDB Areas 17, 18, & 19 in Ohio; NW PA WDB Area; and West Central

PA WDB Area) as well as the Ohio Apprenticeship Council, the PA Department of Labor & Industry, multiple community colleges, universities, career and technical centers, Adult Basic Education providers, and other partners through the American Job Centers. The Network includes 14 contiguous counties on the border of Pennsylvania and Ohio: Lawrence, Mercer, Erie, Crawford, Venango, Clarion, Warren and Forest in PA and Trumbull, Mahoning, Columbiana, Portage, Geauga, and Ashtabula in Ohio. The Network aims to markedly increase manufacturer's ability to meet their needs for high-skilled and credentialed employees and willingness to use customized registered apprenticeship models. The Network will focus on methods to ease the apprenticeship process for manufacturers by creating a multi-employer group sponsorship apprenticeship platform and streamlining apprenticeship and employee candidate recruitment, assessment, and pre-screening operations with different service providers and "on-ramps," facilitating the process of matching appropriate candidates with manufacturers' needs.

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

Two recent skills gap analyses were conducted, the Oh-Penn Pathways to Competitiveness Skill Gap Analysis Report, under the Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF grant), which encompassed Lawrence and Mercer Counties in Pennsylvania and Mahoning, Trumbull and Columbiana Counties in Ohio, and a more recent analysis, the Northwest Commission Regional Skills Gap Analysis, encompassed 14 contiguous counties on the border of Pennsylvania and Ohio: Lawrence, Mercer, Erie, Crawford, Venango, Clarion, Warren and Forest in PA and Trumbull, Mahoning, Columbiana, Portage, Geauga, and Ashtabula in Ohio. The WIF grant analysis identified a total of 32 employers in each of the five counties expressed a need for training *production workers*, however only two programs were identified, one each in Mercer and Trumbull Counties. The NW Commission's report stated that manufacturing employers "reported the most difficult positions to fill in the manufacturing industry are front-line positions including: (1) *Production Workers*, (2) Machinists, and (3) Laborers and Material Handlers.

The WIF grant provided funding for a workshop designed to help high school and adult career center instructors redesign their curriculum to align with industry recognized credentials like NIMS and Manufacturing Skill Standards Council's (MSSC) Certified Production Worker (CPT). Five (5) career and technical education centers attended the workshop where instructors received assistance to create new lesson plans and activities that could be introduced to classrooms immediately. WIF monies were also utilized to provide MSSC Instructor Training to 15 career and technical education instructors to become MSSC certified to teach the CPT curriculum in their high school or manufacturing readiness programs. Nine instructors are pursuing the optional Green Production instructor certification.

The NW Commission Regional Skills Gap Analysis findings include: "numerous employers in the (manufacturing) industry report difficulties in finding qualified candidates to hire for open positions. Approximately twenty-one out of twenty-five respondents (84%) rated finding qualified candidates as a 3 or 4 (an ongoing or significant challenge). Furthermore, the majority of employers (52%) reported replacing existing workers is a challenge, perhaps due to an ongoing issue of finding qualified candidates." The professional development opportunities for teachers and instructors outlined above as well as the addition of CPT programs (described in 3.1) is expected to help create a talent pipeline of skilled individuals who will be able to meet the hiring needs of manufacturing employers and fill the skill gap identified in the two reports

The economic development agencies in the LWDA are part of the Workforce Development Agency's wholesale level, two-tier approach in the PA CareerLink® centers as described in 3.4 A. above. As part of this approach and as members of the LWDB the economic development agencies stay well informed of

the PA CareerLink® partner agencies missions and services offered. To demonstrate this awareness and connectivity, Penn-Northwest Development Corporation (the economic development agency in Mercer County), was working with a Canadian company who was searching for an industrial setting to open a new US division of their company. The company is a provider of engineered turnkey industrial noise reduction solutions for oil and gas, mining, power and aerospace industries and was looking at sites in Ohio and PA to locate the new business. Penn-Northwest Development Corporation made the necessary connections with the PA Governor's Action Team and introduced the employer to the LWDB and PA CareerLink® services. West Central Job Partnership, Inc., the Title I WIOA provider (formerly WIA) met with the company officials and provided job training to new hires via On the Job Training contracts which reimbursed the employer 50% of the new hires' wages.

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

All Unemployment Compensation (UC) recipients receive a letter from the UC office providing information about PA CareerLink® centers and services available to unemployed individuals. A second letter is sent to UC recipients notifying them they must report to the PA CareerLink® to attend a mandatory Reemployment Services & Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) orientation which details the PA CareerLink® and services available to all UC recipients. This orientation includes a group session as well as one on one meeting with the RESEA Coordinator and WIOA Title I staff who will explain programs and funding available through the WIOA programs.

Each PA CareerLink® center facilitates monthly Employer Advisory Council (EAC) meetings on various topics that are important to employers. The EAC is a network of Human Resource Representatives, business representatives and employers who work with the PA CareerLink® centers in many ways – i.e.: posting job orders, participating in job fairs, inquiring about labor market information, utilizing local and/or regional resources for hiring or training needs. The EAC meets monthly and focuses on current HR topics and services and trainings available through PA CareerLink® partners and community resources. Attendees are regularly asked for feedback on current PA CareerLink® center services and surveyed for business needs, future meeting HR topics and speakers. The Office of UC Service Center Sections have been invited to speak at the EAC meetings and other ½ day seminars on UC topics and employer rights and responsibilities.

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?*

On the regional economic development level, the Northwest Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission, i.e., the Local Development District (LDD) which includes Lawrence and Mercer Counties, has included LWDB representation on the consortia sub-committee for the Partnerships for WCJP Regional Economic Performance (PREP) thereby linking the workforce development system operative in this jurisdiction with other core service providers of Business Services such as the Northwest Industrial Resource Center (NWIRC), The Gannon University and Duquesne University Small Business Development Centers (SBDC), The Ben Franklin Technology Partners of Central and Northern Pennsylvania

and Catalyst Connection SWIRC). The West Central LWDB also has representation on the Northwest Commission's Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategic (CEDS) Planning Committee to insure two way information flow and inclusion of workforce development expertise in the planning product. On the local level, the two county economic development agencies, i.e., Penn Northwest Development Corporation and Lawrence County Economic Development Corporation, as well as the LDD, are part of the PA CareerLink® Business Service Action Team (BST) for the West Central LWDA and have seats on the workforce development board. The BST meets on a quarterly basis and provides info and access to one stop center staff regarding available programs such as Keystone Opportunity Zones, Single Applications for Assistance, Liberty and Commonwealth Financing Authority, Federal Contracting and International Marketing.

It is projected that these strategies of integrated planning and program development will allow for a targeted effort to design a mix of services to employers and job seekers that will combine work-based learning with on-the-job training and incumbent worker/customized training to set pathways within participating companies of industries critical to local and regional economic development. The US DOL American Apprenticeship grant will assist in the seeding of registered apprenticeships in advanced manufacturing that will serve as a template for other industries such as health care and building trades. Chambers of Commerce, economic development agencies and labor union training councils will act as intermediaries across union and non-union companies to accomplish this goal. Community based organizations will assist with recruitment of underserved populations and priority groups of emerging workers.

Key to performance accountability, economic growth and self-sufficiency is rapid attachment and integration of underserved, underemployed, and disconnected job-seekers into employment both transitional and 1st step with maximal upfront support systems as well as rapid reengagement of dislocated workers into skills upgrade and/or reemployment. Industry-recognized certification validated by standard educational criteria will increase attainment for emerging, dislocated, and incumbent workers, increased wages and industry productivity.

4. OPERATIONAL PLANNING QUESTIONS: 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.*

WIOA required the One Stop Operator be competitively procured and in place by July 1, 2017. WCJP's Administrative Division issued a Request For Proposal (RFP) on February 16, 2017. The RFP was posted on WCJP's website. A bidders notice was emailed to all Workforce Development Board members, Local Elected Officials, 30 local organizations and published on two occasions in local newspapers. One proposal was received from WCJP's Operations & Special Projects Division by the deadline of March 31, 2017. WCJP's Administrative Division procured an independent third party consultant to review and rate the sole proposal. The proposal was deemed to have met the requirements of the RFP and all State and Federal requirements.

A cost analysis was determined the price quoted in the proposal met the "fair and reasonable" standards. The consultant also compared the proposal and RFP with three (3) other RFPs from LWDBs nationwide to assess the services required with the budget provided. The submitted proposal proved to be fiscally aligned and beneficial to the board. The LWDB awarded a contract/Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to WCJP's Operations & Special Projects Division to act as the One Stop Operator in Lawrence and Mercer Counties effective July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018 with the option for renewal for three

additional one year periods.

The Grant Recipient's procurement system has been developed to promote fair and open competition among providers. WCJP may utilize any one of the procurement methods including: micro-purchasing, small purchase procedures, competitive proposals and noncompetitive proposals. The GR will use the RFP procedure for the procurement of training programs over \$150,000.

The WCWDB staff attends various meetings hosted by key stakeholders and advocacy groups. An example would be WDB staff attendance at a Plastic Industry Summit held at Penn State University – Behrend campus. The Summit was hosted by the Keystone Community Education Council and the NW PA Oil and Gas HUB Taskforce. The purpose of the meeting was to launch an industry-led partnership utilizing the Next-Gen sector partnership format which was facilitated by Francie Genz. Francie Genz is a senior consultant for Collaborative Economics where she advises practitioners and policymakers on workforce and economic development strategies. Francie specializes in "next generation sector strategies" that strengthen regional economies and align workforce development and economic development efforts with the needs of key industry sectors.

Another meeting hosted by the Keystone Community Education Council attended by WDB staff was the Energy Infrastructure Seminar in June 2017. This seminar focused on the Shell Pipeline Company's cracker plant under construction in Monaca, PA, just south of the LWDA. The WDB strives to stay abreast of emerging or expanding industry clusters in the region to facilitate discussions regarding new jobs and the required skill sets with local businesses and/or local training providers.

Ongoing collaborations within the context of the Oh-Penn collaborative include:

Oh-Penn Competitiveness Council

The Oh-Penn Competitiveness Council is comprised of a representative from Business, Economic Development, Education, Labor, and Workforce Development from each of the three represented Workforce Development Areas in PA and Ohio. The role of the Competitiveness Council is to:

- Provide strategic guidance and leadership for the Oh-Penn Region's talent development by facilitating the alignment of workforce development, economic development, and education within the five counties
- Cultivate/ Facilitate new partnerships and collaborations within the region to achieve strategic goals
- Monitor/ Publicize key metrics for workforce and economic development on a regional basis
- Prioritize actions based on regional data analysis
- Build sector-based strategies within the Oh-Penn Region
- Advocate for new funds & changes in laws or regulations needed to streamline processes and procedures within OH One-Stops/ PA CareerLink® centers
- Oversee the maintenance of the regional asset map – identify linkages between assets that may not be fully engaged/ leveraged
- Track the success and account for multiple funding sources and programs.

American Apprenticeship Initiative

The Greater Oh-Penn Manufacturing Apprenticeship Network is a system of industry partnerships, the

public workforce system, and education and training providers focused on increasing the number of registered apprenticeships available in the region. Comprised of stakeholders from two states, five workforce areas, and 14 counties, the network is demonstrating how strong, regional partnerships can break through silos, aligning systems and resources to better meet business and job seeker needs. The goals of the Network are to:

- Markedly increase Greater Oh-Penn region manufacturers' ability to meet their needs for highly skilled and credentialed employees and willingness to use customized registered apprenticeship models.
- Streamline apprenticeship and employee candidate recruitment, assessment, and pre-screening operations with different service providers and "on-ramps," facilitating the process of matching appropriate candidates with manufacturers' needs; and
- Increase representation of target populations in registered apprenticeship programs in the region, particularly veterans and foster children transitioning into adulthood, ultimately improving their long-term prospects for stable employment and self-sufficiency.

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).

Partners and their roles are shown below:

Partner Program	Partner Organization	Roles & Services Offered
WIOA Title I Adult	WCJP Administrative Division	<p>In accordance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) West Central Job Partnership, Inc.'s Administrative Division is a mandatory partner of the PA CareerLink® system. WCJP's Administrative Division focuses on the delivery of Career Services in which there are 3 types; basic, individualized, and follow up. WCJP's Basic Career Services programming will include: Determination of whether the individual is eligible to receive assistance from the adult, dislocated worker, or youth programs, including co-enrollment among these programs. Outreach, intake and orientation to information and other services available through the one-stop delivery system including TANF assistance.</p> <p>Initial assessment of skill levels, including literacy, numeracy, English language proficiency, as well as, aptitudes, abilities (including skills gaps), and supportive service needs. Labor exchange services, including-Job Search and placement assistance, and when needed by an individual, career counseling including the provision of information on in-demand industry sectors and occupations; information on nontraditional employment; information from career profiles and interest inventories, and referrals to other programs and services as needed. Provide Labor Market Information, skills needed for high priority occupations, earnings for local occupations, and training providers available in the local area, as well as, the projected cost to attend training. Providing information and referrals on available supportive services including child care, child support, medical or CHIP program, SNAP/TANF cash referral, housing, clothing and transportation provided through other programs. Assistance is also given with information needed to apply for financial aid assistance for training and education programs. Referring participants to the UC system for guidance in filing a claim. Individualized Career Services programming will include: Comprehensive and Specialized Assessments which can include diagnostic testing, in depth interviewing and evaluation to identify employment barriers and employment goals, development of an Individual Employment Plan, group counseling, individual counseling, career planning, short term pre-vocational services such as learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, and personal maintenance. Work Based Learning opportunities that are linked to career pathways such as Paid Work Experience and On the Job Training contracts.</p>

		to Financial Literacy services, English Language acquisition programs, referrals to OVR for programs geared to those with disabilities. Assisting with Individual Training Accounts for high priority occupations being offered through the training providers list on the JobGateway system. Follow-up Career Services will be provided, as appropriate, for Adult, Youth, and Dislocated Worker program participants who are placed in unsubsidized employment for up to 12 months after the first day of employment. Youth who enter the military or post-secondary training will also be followed up on to provide support and supportive service referrals as needed to assist in long term retention.
WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker	WCJP Program Division	Same services as Title I Adult
WIOA Title I Youth	WCJP Program Division	Same services as Title I Adult. Youth are mainstreamed through the regular PA CareerLink® processes and activities and appropriate referrals to other programs and services are made.
WIOA Title I Youth	Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV (MIU4)	Initial assessment of skill levels, including literacy, numeracy, English language proficiency, as well as, aptitudes, abilities (including skills gaps); information from career profiles and interest inventories; provide Labor Market Information, skills needed for high priority occupations, earnings for local occupations, and training providers available in the local area; comprehensive and specialized assessments which can include diagnostic testing; career planning; short term pre-vocational services such as learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, and personal maintenance; referrals to Financial Literacy services
WIOA Title II Adult Education	MIU4, Adult Literacy Lawrence County, Butler County Community College (BC3)	Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) Program. Adult Basic Education & General Education Diploma (GED) instruction. The PA CareerLink® centers will seamlessly offer adult basic education training to individuals who need to obtain their GED or upgrade their basic skill levels. Referrals will be made to the adult education training providers co-located in the PA CareerLink® centers or to other adult education training provider locations closer to the individual's residence.
WIOA Title III Wagner Peyser	BWPO	Job seeker services: job search & placement assistance; career counseling; development of individual employment plans; case management. Employer services: assistance in developing & posting job orders; referral of qualified job seekers to openings; organizing job fairs. Labor market information is provided to job seekers & employers.
WIOA Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation	Office of Vocational Rehabilitation	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 and pre-employment

		<p>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 helping a business to retain current employees following an accident, injury or disability. Our statewide business services staff can identify resources to assist any organization on how to improve access compliance and steps to diversify their workforce to include citizens with a disability.</p>
Senior Community Service Employment Program	PathStone Corporation	<p>Authorized under Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 <i>et seq.</i>) Referrals are made to contractors for program information and assistance. Older individuals are mainstreamed through the regular PA CareerLink® processes and activities. All Title I programs are open to older individuals without bias. Any older individuals determined to be “job ready” will be referred to BWPO staff for job matching and referrals.</p>
Trade Adjustment Assistance	BWPO	<p>Individuals who meet qualifying criteria may receive; job training, income support in the form of Trade Readjustment Allowances (TRA), job search & relocation assistance 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 Reemployment Trade Adjustment Assistance (RTAA) and Alternative Trade Adjustment Assistance (ATAA); employment & case management services.</p>
Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG)	BWPO	<p>Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG), authorized under chapter 41 of title 38, U.S.C. Specialized counselors work directly with disabled veterans in the provision of labor exchange services, securing appropriate training services and obtaining employment at a family sustaining wage. JVSG allows Local Veterans Employment Reps to provide employer outreach and promote veterans as job seekers with highly marketable skills and experience.</p>

Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)	Lawrence County Community Action Partnership Community Action Partnership Mercer County	Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act (CSBG) (42 U.S.C. 9901 <i>et seq.</i>) CSBG agencies provide community engagements services to remove obstacles that block the achievement of self-sufficiency. Contribution to the workforce development system may include: participate on local and regional planning groups; engage in Business Service Teams activities; have print materials available in the PA CareerLink® centers; be linked 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.
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	County Assistance Offices Lawrence & Mercer Counties	Authorized under part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 <i>et seq.</i>) All low-income individuals are referred to the County Assistance Office (CAO) for assistance in removing barriers that may prevent them from attending training or obtaining and/or retaining employment. TANF recipients will also be referred to partner agencies and/or community agencies for assistance in other areas such as drug and alcohol counseling, housing issues, etc. TANF customers and low-income individuals may be referred for WIOA application if more intensive career services are deemed appropriate.
Unemployment Compensation	BWPO staff assisted	BWPO staff provides some direct assistance to UC claimants and employers at the PA CareerLink® centers. Computers and a dedicated telephone are available for individuals to open claims or telephone the call centers for assistance. The UC Board of Review utilizes space in the PA CareerLink® Lawrence County for UC appeal hearings.
Rapid Response	BWPO	Early intervention business services that assist workers and employers during the entire business layoff cycle. Rapid Response coordinates layoff aversion and outplacement services for employers and workers impacted by layoffs, plant closures, or natural disasters.
Foreign Labor Certification	BWPO	H2A (Temporary Agricultural Program) and H2B (Temporary Non-Agricultural Program) help U.S. employers fill jobs while protecting U.S. and foreign workers.

Several mandated partners are not located in the local workforce development area (Job Corps, Youth Build) or not funded for programs in the local area (Second Chance Act, Career and Technical Education programs at the post-secondary level authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development). These partners, as well as other community based

organizations, participate in local workforce development activities in a variety of ways in partnership with the WCWDB, the One-Stop Operator, and the Site Administrators. Examples of participation include:

- Pittsburgh Job Corps has regular monthly recruitment sessions;
- PA District Probation and Parole holds monthly meetings/classes for individuals recently released from prison to introduce them to all PA CareerLink® services and activities;
- Butler County Community College schedules occasional classes (such as pre-manufacturing certificate course) at the PA CareerLink® centers;
- WCWDB facilitated a meeting between the Mercer County Housing Authority (HUD agency) and the New Castle School of Trades that resulted in six Housing Authority employees receiving training and certifications to handle refrigerants at little cost to the agency.

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

It was determined that comprehensive one-stop centers would be located in areas of high population density that also evidence significant unemployment rates in order to place them amidst job seekers needing to reattach to the workforce. Thus, the Mercer site was targeted for the City of Sharon with a population of 14,038 and the Lawrence site in the City of New Castle with 23,273 residents.

PA CareerLink® Mercer County
217 West State Street
Sharon, PA 16146
724.347.9257

Site Administrator: Chris Burger, Extension 200

Hours of operation are 8:00 am to 4:30 pm Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday and 10:00 am to 4:30 pm on Wednesday. The morning hours on Wednesdays are reserved for capacity training for all partner agency staff.

PA CareerLink® Lawrence County
102 Margaret Street
New Castle, PA 16101
724.656.3165

Site Administrator: Eileen Borrelli, Extension 221

Hours of operation are 8:30 am to 4:30 pm Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday and 10 am to 4:30 am on Thursday. The morning hours on Thursdays are reserved for capacity training for all partner agency staff.

Both PA CareerLink® centers are available in the evenings by appointment only or as needed and requested by a partner agency.

The EARN program is co-located in both PA CareerLink® centers. EARN participants and other individuals with multiple barriers have full access to all services and activities offered in the PA CareerLink® centers. Therefore, those with multiple barriers are able to progress simultaneously through a combination of services (EARN for program specific activities; WIOA Title II instruction preparing for GED testing; WIOA

Title I for paid work experience; etc.)

Customers may access services through internet connections available through the public library system, local educational agencies, partner agency sites, and business or home computers. In addition, customers may access Title I information services at the comprehensive PA CareerLink® sites. Customers, who require little or no assistance or support, will have self-service access. Staff facilitated assistance, however, will be available on-site for customers who are reluctant or unable to access those services directly.

A customer may also access services through telephone or personal contact with the mandated PA CareerLink® partner agencies. Partners will cross-refer customers, who fail to meet a partner's eligibility requirements or who request services that are unavailable through a partner's programs, to the comprehensive PA CareerLink® for enrollment in or access to Title I services or services available through other partner agency programs.

Project SEARCH is a unique OVR sponsored, business led, one-year school-to-work program that takes place entirely at the workplace. Total workplace immersion facilitates a seamless combination of classroom instruction, career exploration, and hands-on training through worksite internship rotations. Project SEARCH is a non-paid internship experience for high school students who meet the following OVR criteria:

- Desire and plan to work competitively in the community at the conclusion of the Project SEARCH program
- 18-21 years of age
- Completed high school credits necessary for graduation but has deferred receipt of diploma
- Agree that the Project SEARCH year will be the last year of student services, and will accept diploma at the end of the school year
- Meet eligibility requirements for Vocational Rehabilitation
- Have independent personal hygiene and grooming skills
- Have independent daily living skills
- Maintain appropriate behavior and social skills in the workplace
- Take direction from supervisors and modify performance
- Communicate effectively
- Be able to use public transportation when available
- Ability to pass screening requirements of UPMC Jameson

The Project SEARCH Steering Committee members include representatives from: OVR, WIOA Title I,

Vocational Psychological Services, Cray Challenges, Human Services, and UPMC Human Resources staff.

The Board's designated EEO Officer monitors PA CareerLink® ADA and EEO compliance every year during regular monitoring of PA CareerLink® services. The Office of Equal Opportunity conducts on-site ADA and EEO compliance monitoring at the PA CareerLink® centers every three years through June 30, 2018. Starting July 1, 2018, the Office of Equal Opportunity will conduct ADA and EEO compliance monitoring at the PA CareerLink® centers yearly.

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 in Lawrence and Mercer Counties and any affiliated sites are fully accessible to any individuals who may be interested in accessing employment and training services. Currently each site is certified annually for compliance with EO/ADA requirements by the WCWDB and every three years by the Office of Equal Opportunity, PA Department of Labor and Industry. Starting July 1, 2018, the Office of Equal Opportunity will conduct ADA and EEO compliance monitoring at the PA CareerLink® centers yearly.

Overall, the Board promotes full accessibility by requiring that its One-Stop Operator, One- Stop Partners, and Site Administrators:

- 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, such as the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation that offer 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® sites and throughout the local area and coaching them on how to apply for needed resources.
- Provide access to Propio interpretive services to assist customers with language barriers.
- 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 a regular basis.
- Coordinate staff training on assistive technology and equipment to ensure that personnel are fully-trained in usage and application, with assistance from OVR staff.
- Help individuals with disabilities who may require additional assistance with the registration process, making referrals as appropriate to OVR while maintaining access to all services for the individuals.
- Maintain required federal and state notices and postings at all service sites.

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

The WCWDB will continue to work with local employers to identify skill sets that job applicants need but do not possess when interviewed for High Priority Occupation (HPO) job openings. Once skills are identified, the LWDB staff will survey the local schools and training providers in the local area to determine if similar HPO training is available and could be added to the Commonwealth's ETPL. If HPO training is not available on the State ETPL, the LWDB will meet with the schools or training providers to request they design and develop training that meets the HPO needs of the specific employer or industry cluster. The Board staff will follow the procedures outlined in Workforce System Policy 04-2015, *Eligible Training Providers* and develop a score card to measure and evaluate employment and earnings outcomes. All information will be entered into CWDS for tracking purposes.

The Board through regular meetings with various partner agencies (Industry Partnership employers; Board employers; Workforce Innovation Fund Grant's Competitiveness Council members; PA CareerLink® Operators; etc.) keep their pulse on the needs of local employers. In the past, WCJP conducted a survey of the Advanced Manufacturing Industry Partnership employers regarding their immediate needs for welders. The results of the survey led WCJP to issue a Request For Proposal (RFP) for short term welding training that led to manufacturing industry recognized credentials, such as American Welding Society's (AWS) Certified Welder credential.

Pre-Apprenticeship and work readiness career pathway projects will focus on skill gaps when identified by local employers or industry clusters such as healthcare and hospitality sectors.

One of the key goals of the Oh-Penn Pathways to Competitiveness Project (funded by a Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) grant awarded by the US Department of Labor) was to conduct a skills gap analysis in the manufacturing sector to identify specific needs of the current workforce involving both employers and training providers. The training needs of the workforce were matched to what training was being provided. Any ensuing gaps identified would allow for curricula to be aligned with employer needs and, if necessary, for new training to be developed. Regional training providers also participated in the analysis of their current program so that gaps related to employer critical skills needs would be recognized. The survey identified a total of 32 employers in each of the five counties who expressed a need for training production workers but only two training programs were identified: one adult program in Trumbull County in Ohio and one high school program in Mercer County, PA. As a result, several local career and technical education centers are in the process to add Manufacturing Skill Standards Council's (MSSC) Certified Production Technician (CPT) to their schools' course offerings.

- 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.*

The WCWDB in conjunction with board staff meet periodically prior to each fiscal year to review material obtained through surveys of key industry components, economic development projects both imminent and underway in the local area and contiguous regions as well as assessing reports and interviewing the One Stop Operator, PA CareerLink® Site Administrators, Title I Program

Operator and other one stop partner staff in order to provide oversight and recommend program and service modification or alignment. Material under review includes but is not limited to economic and labor market analysis, population demographics and concentration, input from the LWDA's industry partnership groups, reports from chambers of commerce and other business intermediaries as well as studies and guidance by relevant state and federal agencies. Committee findings are brought back to the full LWDB which may result in directing the fiscal agent to allocate funds under its auspices to a particular service or project, establishment of a policy or guidance to the One-Stop Operator for implementation in the PA CareerLink® centers, issuance of a request for proposal (RFP) or invitation for bid (IFB) for a program or service. The Site Administrators act as staff to the One Stop Operator and receive LWDB meeting minutes to insure that the policy and oversight direction of the Board is translated into practical application at the point of service delivery.

Customer (employer and job seeker) primary products and services vary among the basic, individual and training services as follows:

Employer Services

- Recruitment assistance and interviewing space
- Internet resume access
- Direct job order placement via the internet
- Training information and assistance
- Labor market information
- Tax credit information
- Technical assistance (ADA requirements, labor law compliance, etc.)
- Updated resource directories
- Orientation to PA CareerLink® system and services
- Applicant screening/testing for jobs
- Referral of qualified applicants
- Hiring Incentives
- Information regarding unemployment compensation law and employer requirements

Job Seeker Services

- Orientation to PA CareerLink® system and services
- Internet job search capabilities
- Creating a personal folder
- Assessment of: basic education levels (reading and math); interest and aptitude levels
- Development of an individual employment plan that includes an outline of steps to be achieved to reach the individual's goals toward education and/or employment
- Information regarding filing claims for unemployment compensation
- Job listings and referral services
- Skill assessment and aptitude testing
- Resume building, interviewing skills and job search assistance
- Career counseling
- Adult education and literacy instruction
- Job readiness instruction

- Work-based learning opportunities
- Occupational skills training
- On the Job Training (OJT)
- Incumbent worker training
- Apprenticeship opportunities
- Evaluation for assistive technology
- Worksite accommodations
- Follow-up services
- Case management services

Supportive Services

Supportive services may be available (depending on funding levels) to all WIOA clients based on a needs assessment that is documented in case notes as part of the Individual Employment Plan. Supportive services will be provided on a first-come/first-serve basis as long as funds are available.

Supportive services and the assessment/eligibility include that all clients are enrolled in WIOA funded training:

1. Needs-Related Payments (NRPs) – It is determined that attending training incurs a cost to the client for meals as well as transportation expenses. While some clients are employed or are receiving unemployment, others have no income source to maintain their enrollment. Therefore, West Central will provide a Needs-Related Payment to help defray the costs of attending training.

Eligibility to receive NRPs is different for Adult and Dislocated Workers. Payments will be provided based upon an assessment of the client and his/her income sources documented in the Individual Employment Plan and payable upon documented attendance and progress. All eligibility criteria must be presented and approved prior to administering payment. WCJP reserves the right to cease payments based upon funding restrictions and/or changes in the eligibility guidelines which will render an individual ineligible. For those individuals who must travel more than 2 miles round trip per day a \$10 payment will be provided to cover the extraordinary costs of meals and transportation. Transportation needs shall be determined during the initial assessment for payment eligibility.

2. Car Repairs – maximum of two payments which combined may not exceed \$800 when no other types of transportation is available, are less practical or are more costly. Clients must not be employed under the Act (i.e. OJT, Work Experience, Customized Training, etc.).
3. Child Care – up to a maximum of \$5,000/client will be reimbursed to licensed day care centers for clients who are not eligible to receive such assistance elsewhere.

4. Eye Care – Up to \$200 per enrollment for eye exam and glasses.
5. Uniforms and Tools – as required by the approved training program.
6. Health Care – maximum of two payments, which combined, may not exceed \$500 per enrollment year for dental, hearing aids and other emergency health care.
7. Youth Incentives are available to youth who meet certain benchmarks or programmatic goals such as receiving a certificate or degree.

All basic, individual and training services are available to all individuals with disabilities, Limited English Proficiency (LEP), and those with significant barriers. Disabilities and barriers are identified by various methods. Some disabilities or barriers such as LEP, missing limbs, etc. can be identified through observation. Referrals of observable barriers will be made to appropriate partner agencies such as literacy providers, OVR, etc. Disabilities and barriers not observed during regular contact with individuals will be identified at various points through the PA CareerLink® service delivery system by various assessments administered, such as TABE; Provelt; WorkKeys; etc. Again, depending on the barrier and/or disability, referrals will be made to appropriate partner agencies to provide assistance in the elimination of barriers to ensure there is universal access to all PA CareerLink® services and activities.

As described in paragraph 4.5 above, the WDB will continue to meet with employers to determine what skills sets may have changed for HPOs in specific industry sectors. The WDB will facilitate discussions with local training providers to determine if current programs can be revised to include instruction to cover the new skill sets needed by local employers. The WDB will also explore whether other programs in contiguous counties offer training programs that could possibly be delivered via electronic means.

The WDB's Youth Committee is currently exploring ideas to redesign the youth program activities to develop career pathways in several industry sectors, including: manufacturing; healthcare; building/construction trades; hospitality, leisure & tourism. The WDB will work with employers in the industry sectors identified to determine the skill sets needed for entry-level employees. The idea would be to have youth start in a core curriculum that would include: career exploration to identify an interest in one of the clusters; Worldwide Interactive Network® (WIN®) curriculum; WorkKeys® assessments; National Career Readiness Certificate® (NCRC®); and work-based learning opportunities (paid work or OJT). The core course of instruction will be competency based and individuals will proceed and attain the milestones at their own pace.

Once a participant meets all the benchmarks in the core activity, they will move to instruction and/or activities in a specific industry sector. The manufacturing sector has already been designed to develop entry-level skills that enable graduates to start a career as: Machine Operators; Machinist Apprentices; Quality Apprentices; CNC Apprentices; Assemblers; Maintenance; Press Operators, etc. The class instruction covers: basic shop safety; basic blueprint reading; hand and electronic measuring instruments; quality processes and procedures; manufacturing processes; basic shop equipment operation; introduction to CNC; and industrial fork truck classroom certification. Graduates will earn the following certificates or credentials: OSHA 10; two National Institute of Metalworking Skills (NIMS) credentials; and three National Tooling & Machining Association (NTMA) credentials.

At the conclusion of each industry sector training, participants will determine if they want to be

referred to: a full apprenticeship program in the industry sector; apply for a WIOA ITA to attain additional certificates, credentials or college degree; or a Job Developer to explore employment options in the local area (referral to employers with job openings; paid work experience or OJTs). Co-enrollment opportunities will be explored, such as OVR to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS) program funding for work-based learning opportunities for students with disabilities.

The other industry sectors mentioned (healthcare, building/construction trades and hospitality, leisure and tourism) are in the initial discussion and design phase. The manufacturing pre-apprenticeship program is currently open to any WIOA eligible participant (Older Youth, Adult or Dislocated Worker) as will the other industry sector programs once they are designed and implemented.

Once the remaining industry sector programs are designed (the curriculum identified as well as stackable credentials that could be earned) the WDB plans to solicit schools and training providers that are able to provide instruction that leads to the specific industry credentials identified. The WDB will then work to create a Local Training Provider List (LTPL) with input and approval from the Commonwealth. The LTPL process would include designing a system to track enrollments and outcomes of participants attending the local training programs. The WDB staff will design monitoring tools and conduct on-site compliance visits similar to those programs on the State approved ETPL.

It is WCJP's policy that **priority of service** will be given to four groups of targeted individuals when approving individualized career services or training services for WIOA eligible participants. The four groups are as follows: 1) **Veterans and eligible spouses**; 2) other individuals (not veterans or eligible spouses) who **receive public assistance**; 3) **other low income includes individuals**; and 4) individuals who are **basic skills deficient**. Currently the LWDB has not identified a local discretionary priority for another level of priority for services. However, the WDB will periodically review trends of the labor market to determine if new priority groups should be established.

WCWDB does utilize the flexibility to transfer program funds between Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. The WDB via the Administrative Division provides WIOA allocations to the Program Division by title of funding (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Older Youth) as well as a WDB's authorization by type of training (ITAs, OJTs and paid work experience). The Administrative Division Chief/Chief Financial Officer periodically reviews expenditure reports and requests the WDB to authorize transfer of funds from Adult to Dislocated Worker or vice versa.

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

The Course/Programs included on the State's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) are derived from the High Priority Occupations within the State of Pennsylvania and each regional area within the state. High Priority Occupations are job categories, within selected industry clusters, that are in demand by employers, require higher skill levels, and are likely to provide family-sustaining wages. These High Priority Occupations are developed by the Center for Workforce Information and Analysis (CWIA). Individual Training Accounts will only be funded by WCJP if the school and the program appear on the State's ETPL.

To compete in today's global economy, businesses need a skilled workforce, and individuals need increasingly higher levels of education and knowledge. Targeting only Course/Programs on the ETPL

and teaching occupational skills related to a High Priority Occupation, assists workforce education and training programs in Pennsylvania to align with the actual skills required of jobs in our economy.

Training Providers may use the High Priority Occupation list to create new training course/programs for the new and emerging High Priority Occupations within the State of Pennsylvania to add onto the ETPL. These new training Course/Programs will assist in meeting the needs of businesses and industries by providing skilled and knowledgeable workers ready for employment.

Training providers as well as each Course/Program must meet performance benchmarks established by the Commonwealth. In order to ensure that workforce development investments yield the best possible results, PA has developed this Performance Management Plan for evaluating the performance of workforce programs. The plan is not designed to simply measure program performance; rather it is about improving the outcomes from these investments. This plan sets forth the framework to monitor trends in key economic, workforce, and education indicators, and gathers quantitative data using common measures.

The High Priority Occupation list is reviewed by the WCWDB yearly when distributed by CWIA. Training Providers may petition the LWDB to add programs to the High Priority Occupation list by providing documentation that local employers are currently hiring individuals in the occupation and the wages are family sustaining wages.

The WDB will periodically review the ITA cap for the local area to determine if any changes are needed to the policy. Currently, the ITA cap is \$8,000 limited to tuition and fees. Cost of books, tools, uniforms, etc. required for training are over and above the cap. All grants (Pell, PHEAA, etc.) received by the participant are deducted before WIOA funds are applied. Participants may request ½ of their Pell grant be released to cover the extraordinary training related expenses. The participant must complete a budget showing the household income and expenses to document need. Each request is reviewed and approved on a case by case basis. The periodic review of the ITA cap entails comparing the ITA caps of other WDAs in the local region as well as other contiguous WDAs. A report is given to the WDB at the beginning of a Program Year for discussion whether the ITA cap should remain at \$8,000 cap over a two-year training period or if other issues, i.e. lack of training funds warrant a change in the cap.

The WDB will utilize contracts for services instead of ITAs when one or more of the five exceptions outlined in §680.320 of the WIOA final rule dated August 19, 2016 apply:

1. When services provided are OJT, customized training, incumbent worker training, or transitional jobs.
2. There are insufficient number of eligible training providers in the local area to accomplish the purpose of a system of ITAs.
3. There is a training program of demonstrated effectiveness offered in the area by a community-based organization or other private organizations to serve individuals with barriers to employment.
4. When it is possible to contract with an institution of higher education or other training provider in order to facilitate the training of multiple individuals in in-demand industry sectors or occupations, provided that the contract does not limit consumer choice.
5. When considering Pay-for-Performance contracts.

The WDB is considering the use of exception number 4 in the design and implementation of industry sector trainings outlined in 4.6 above. The WDB may determine at a later date to utilize other allowable exceptions earlier outlined.

All training, regardless of whether it is delivered as ITAs, OJTs, other work-based training opportunities, or by contract for a cohort of trainees will be explained to all WIOA eligible individuals and will not infringe upon participant choice of training.

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

The previous youth program operated under WIA and the first year of WIOA was primarily focused on providing drop-out prevention, career exploration and pre-employment soft skill services to In School youth. The youth contractors worked in most school districts in the two-county area, collaborating with school counselors, teachers, students (some with Individual Education Plans), parents and OVR when necessary. The main thrust was to help high school students and parents make informed decisions about the academic and career pathways and to offer assistance to eliminate barriers for those students who were at-risk of not graduating high school. Out-of-school Youth (OSY) were recruited to obtain GEDs if needed, upgrade basic skills levels when appropriate, obtain the ACT® sponsored National Skills Readiness Credential® (NCRC®), and either find employment or enroll in higher education or the military. OSY received wrap around services from OVR, the contractor (Intermediate Unit IV) and/or WIOA Title I staff as well as supportive services identified in their Individual Service Strategy (ISS).

A Request for Proposal (RFP) for programs for older youth literacy/numeracy and work readiness preparation was issued in PY 2016. Intermediate Unit IV was chosen to provide these services. Other youth program elements are currently delivered by the WCJP Program Division staff as allowed by WIOA Final Rule 681.400 and under the state's structure exception through December 31, 2017.

The focus under WIOA is to serve OSY and concentrate on providing work-based learning opportunities. The One-Stop basic and individualized career services and the RFP for additional services were structured to serve the OSY target population in accord with WIOA requirements and guidance. The vision is to develop a program that provides pre-apprenticeship activities that are relevant to any apprenticeship program as the core component and then "spiders" out to various apprenticeship programs or high demand occupations in the local area. The core program activities would be combined with various types of work-based learning opportunities. One Stop basic and individualized career services or procured youth services must either provide directly or make referrals to community resources so that all 14 elements are available to youth on an as needed basis.

The 14 elements are: 1) Tutoring, study skills, drop-out prevention & recovery strategies toward H.S. diploma or GED; 2) Alternative secondary school or drop out recovery services; 3) Paid & unpaid work experiences which include – a) Summer employment opportunities (year round), b) Pre-apprenticeship programs, c) Internships & job shadowing and, d) On the job training opportunities; 4) Occupational skill training; 5) Education offered concurrently with & in same context as workforce preparation activities & training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster; 6) Leadership development activities; 7) Supportive services; 8) Adult mentoring; 9) Follow-up services; 10)

Comprehensive guidance & counseling; 11) Financial literacy education; 12) Entrepreneurial skills training; 13) Labor market & employment information about in-demand occupations in the local area: career awareness; career counseling; and career exploration services; and 14) Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to post-secondary education and training.

All providers must reach performance benchmarks identified to date (employment, retention, median earnings) and those yet to be identified by USDOL and/or the Commonwealth (credential attainment, measureable skills gains and effectiveness in serving employers), and the WCWDB. Contractors will be required to connect with Community Based organizations (CBOs) as well as private employers to place individuals with disabilities in work-based learning opportunities conducive to the job functions they are able to perform. Again, the contractors will collaborate with OVR to coordinate any services that will assist to eliminate any barriers for the individuals to be able to perform the necessary job functions. Contractors will also connect with community transportation services to assist individuals with disabilities to travel to and from the work-based learning sites. Through partnerships with multiple providers, the costs associated with serving individuals with disabilities will be shared as appropriate. Some individuals with disabilities may choose not to access OVR services; these individuals will still have access to the array of services from other partners as guided by their individual employment and training plans.

The Board and its Youth Standing Committee are very committed to designing and implementing a strategic plan in Lawrence and Mercer Counties that aligns all youth activities and services (regardless of the funding source) to promote skill development and work-based learning experiences that result in a talent supply for area industries and employers. The WCWDB and/or Youth Standing Committee membership includes representatives from community based organizations that serve youth, the juvenile justice system, various education agencies, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), County Assistance Office (CAO), public housing authorities, etc. These representatives act as ambassadors to promote the WIOA programs and the education/training assistance that is available to eligible youth including youth with disabilities. WCJP staff attends various community meetings (superintendent and guidance counselor meetings, Lawrence County School to Work, Prevention Coalition, Council of Community Services, etc.) and provide information on WIOA program activities to recruit youth who would benefit from the education/training assistance available through WIOA funding and other PA CareerLink® partner agencies.

Youth with a self-identified disability or observable disability are referred to the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR). OVR and Title I staff coordinate and jointly develop an Individual Employment Plan to maximize funding for youth with a disability. Title I funding may be combined with OVR funding if skills training is deemed an appropriate activity for the individual. OVR may be able to provide hardware or tools to assist a disabled youth in the workplace. The WDB made the decision to limit WIOA youth funds to serve older, out of school youth. To be able to offer workforce services to additional youth, the WDB targeted TANF Youth Development Funds to serve TANF eligible in-school youth.

As a core partner, OVR collaborates with the West Central Workforce Development Board to provide in-school youth with disabilities opportunities to participate in pre-employment transition services and other services to gain skills and knowledge to enter the workforce. In partnership with the Workforce Development Board and other youth services providers, OVR may provide both OVR eligible and potentially eligible in-school youth with disabilities services to enter competitive

integrated employment. These meaningful opportunities allow in-school youth with disabilities to assess their own strengths and skills, while exploring vocational possibilities and removing barriers from employment.

Work based learning is an important component for in-school youth with disabilities to engage in so that they may be afforded opportunities to discover career paths. Other services that may be provided to OVR in-school youth with disabilities include:

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

Both PA CareerLink® centers in the Local Workforce Development Area are handicap accessible and have a variety of equipment to assist individuals with disabilities such as: TDD/TTY telephones to accommodate people with hearing impairments; furniture (tables) to accommodate people in wheelchairs; and magnification devices to accommodate people with visual impairments. If individuals need additional services beyond basic career services a WIOA Title I application will be taken. If determined to be eligible, all WIOA Title I programs will be made available without bias. Job Developers (WIOA Title I and OVR) will work jointly to develop work based learning opportunities for disabled youth.

The Program Division is responsible for completion of WIOA applications and collection of eligibility verification documents for all youth applying for WIOA program services, as well as Adult and Dislocated Worker program services. The eligibility criteria, definitions and documents collected by the Program Division are those listed in Workforce Investment Information Notice (WIIN) no. 3-99, Change 2, Youth Eligibility Definitions WSG No 03-2015, for eligibility criteria and acceptable forms of verification and Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) No 22-15 to verify that documentation of each eligibility criteria is acceptable. The applications are forwarded to the Program Division’s Data Manager for a second review and approval to proceed to offer WIOA individual services.

The WDB definition for individuals who “require additional assistance to complete an education program or to secure and hold employment” criteria and allowable documents to verify category follows:

- a. Lacks significant work history
 - i. Has no unsubsidized work history – CWDS resume, case notes and self-attestation; or
 - ii. Has not worked for the same employer for longer than three (3) consecutive months in the two (2) years prior to application – CWDS resume, case notes and self-attestation;
- b. One or more grade levels below the grade level appropriate to the individual’s age – TABE test reading and math levels
- c. High School graduate making minimum wage, even if they’ve held a job for a significant period of time – current pay stubs; or
- d. Recovering from addiction to opioids or other substances – documentation from the treatment facility of physician;

The WDB decided to serve only older, out of school youth with WIOA youth funds. There could be exceptions to this scenario, i.e. an out of school youth enrolled in college requests WIOA assistance via an ITA. In this case, the youth would be considered and in school youth. The Program Division’s Data Manager tracks 5% of the ISY participants using a CWDS report. This report (if there are any 5% applications) is distributed to the Program Division Chief and the Administrative Program Chief on a quarterly basis.

Job Corps, Youth Build and AmeriCorps programs are not located within the LWDA. However, representatives from Job Corps come in to both PA CareerLink® centers on a monthly basis to make program presentations and recruit youth. WIOA Title I staff have program brochures and refer age-eligible youth to the appropriate Job Corps representative in Pittsburgh.

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?*

The Administrative Division of West Central Job Partnership, Inc. provides staffing services to the LWDB for the Mercer and Lawrence County LWDA jurisdiction and also acts as fiscal agent. This Division thus coordinates directly with the PA Department of Labor and Industry (PDLI) Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations (BWPO) in applying for, receiving and disbursing Rapid Response funds for local coordination with statewide Rapid Response activities. Additionally, the Administrative Division along with the One Stop Operator, PA CareerLink® Site Administrators and the Title I contractor receives communication from the BWPO Regional Rapid Response Coordinator of WARN notices filed that are relevant for the local workforce development area so that all facets of the local workforce system can be mobilized to address the catastrophic impact mass lay-offs may have on affected communities and citizens. The WCWDB provides oversight and strategic guidance to the One Stop Operator, one stop partners in addition to deploying funding to facilitate the transition activities of affected businesses and workers. When the Rapid Response proceed to operational planning and delivery, the Program Division Chief of West Central Job Partnership, Inc. Program Division assumes programmatic responsibility for implementing the resources provided by the board for the specific activities. There is no direct interaction between the WCWDB or its designated staff as regards to any one stop program delivery function including WIOA Title I but, as

all one stop partners represented on the Board, there is individual interaction as a board member.

Once a WARN notice is filed on behalf of an employer, the PA CareerLink® partner agencies plan a Rapid Response session for all employees affected by the layoff. The Rapid Response team reviews all services available at the PA CareerLink® including retraining funds available through TAA and WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker programs. In addition to TAA and WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker staff, the Rapid Response team includes staff from agencies which include: credit counseling; mortgage services; CHIPS; and Unemployment Compensation. The team explains PA CareerLink® services and is available to answer questions to employees who will be affected by the layoff. The Steel Valley Authority is represented on the Regional Business Service Team which includes the One Stop Operator, PA CareerLink® Site Administrators and West Central Job Partnership, Inc. Program Division Chief. Other individual WCWDB members are also part of this team such as the economic development agencies. The Steel Valley Authority provides information and resources regarding TAA Lay-Off Aversion that are made available to eligible businesses in the LWDA jurisdiction. This provides a linkage for the local one stop centers and the Board to be in two-way communication with the regional organization charged with administering Lay-Off Aversion programs.

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).*

The Mercer County Career and Technical Center (CTC) director is a member of the WCWDB and has a significant role on the standing Youth Committee. Through this relationship the LWDB has access and meets periodically with all the superintendents of the county public schools. Additionally, the Program Division Chief and other staff participate in CTC's Carl Perkins meetings and various other advisory committees. The Executive Director of Adult Literacy Lawrence County is also a member of the LWDB and a member of the Lawrence Mercer Adult Education Coalition.

This connectivity forms the basis for the education sector to interface with the workforce development system. Through this nexus, the goal of using cross information to mutually focus leveraged resources toward meeting current industry needs by providing relevant training is sought. Proprietary educational institutions are also linked to the system as well as business supporters of the local one stop centers.

The West Central Adult Education Coalition has been meeting during the WIOA "transition year" to develop ways in which the member agencies provide workplace preparation activities, career awareness and career planning for the clients they serve. The member agencies of the Coalition include: Adult Literacy Lawrence County; Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV; and the Grove City Education Center for Adults. Opportunities for offering integrated education and training activities (including participation in the Manufacturing Readiness Program), are being explored and the College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education are being implemented. This Coalition will play an integral part in the new American Apprenticeship Grant. The two Community Education Councils (CECs) of Pennsylvania (Keystone Community Education Council and Lawrence County Learning Center) will be included in dialogue to align training development efforts to increase the education and training delivery services to residents in Lawrence and Mercer Counties. The CECs will be encouraged to participate in WCWDB's efforts to align high school career and technical education programs and post-secondary institutions to assure residents of Lawrence and Mercer Counties have access to credential bearing training opportunities.

The WIF grant concentrated on the Advance Manufacturing sector. The two Community Education Councils (CECs) in the local area (Keystone CEC and Lawrence County Learning Center) will be included in conversations to maintain and expand the Advanced Manufacturing career pathway. The CECs will be instrumental in future development of other career pathways such as health care and building trades since they have been historically able to leverage other state and local funding to implement sector based training through a variety of educational institutions in rural communities where campus locations are non-existent. CECs serve as an intermediary and broker of training programs based on identified need and demand.

The career and technical education center in Mercer County has adopted several tools utilized in the workforce development system/PA CareerLink® and integrated them into the regular high school curriculum at the CTC. WCJP was able to leverage funds from a Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) Grant awarded by the US Department of Labor to purchase a Worldwide Interactive Network® (WIN®) license for the Mercer County Career Center. WIN® is an internet-based curriculum the CTC students utilize to prepare to take the WorkKeys® assessment that leads to the National Career Readiness Certificate® (NCRC®) issued by ACT. ACT is known nationally for the ACT® college readiness assessment - the college admissions and placement test taken by more than 1.8 million high school graduates every year. MCCC has also been sanctioned and approved as an ACT testing center for proctoring the WorkKeys® testing. MCCC students are able to graduate with multiple stackable credentials (high school diploma; NCRC®; OSHA; National Institute of Metalworking Skills (NIMS) certificates and/or National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI) certificates in their career and technical programs of study. WIN®, WorkKeys® and the NCRC® are tools that PA CareerLink® participants utilize and the NCRC® is a credential they strive to obtain. Much work has been done under WCJP's WIF grant to educate locale employers on the value of utilizing the NCRC® when hiring individuals for open job vacancies within their companies.

MCCC instructors work with all high school seniors to facilitate enrollment in the Commonwealth's Job Gateway system. Students create or upload their resumes into the system and are shown how to conduct job searches and apply to job orders in the system. The MCCC staff work with all school districts within the county to facilitate enrollment of all seniors in Job Gateway.

The LWDB and the Youth Committee meet periodically to discuss a variety of topics that include:

- Secondary school career and education requirements (PA Department of Education's Career Education and Work Standards and Chapter 339 K – 12 requirements),
- Post-secondary school training programs
- Employer identified skill sets needed for various HPO job vacancies
- Ideas to coordinate and align workforce development services with programs offered in secondary and post-secondary education.

The WDB is committed to designing and implementing a strategic plan that aligns all workforce development with local education programs/activities to promote career pathways. The WDB and Youth Committee goals include professional development for educators regarding career pathways as well as providing work-based learning opportunities for youth and young adults that result in the development of talent pipeline for area industries and employers.

The various meetings and collaborations resulted in the WC Administrative Division applying for a Business Education Partnership (BEP) grant that includes professional development for high school counselors, career education teachers, etc. on HPOs and opportunities in the local area. The BEP also

allows for an expansion of the Career and Technical Education (CTE) centers' co-op program which places students at employers in the local area in jobs that are related to their vocational program of choice.

Another example of collaboration results, WC Program Division recently solicited mini-proposals from all the high schools in the two-county workforce development area to request TANF funds to begin or supplement career education activities outlined in their Chapter 339 career guidance plans.

Tri-County WDB (fiscal agent for a Strategic Innovation Fund grant which included WCWDA) issued a RFP soliciting providers to offer instruction for a manufacturing pre-apprenticeship program. Butler County Community College (BC3) responded to the RFP and has provided training to several cohorts of individuals – training is further explained in 4.6 above. Individuals enrolled in the cohort training are reviewed for and co-enrolled in WIOA if eligible and appropriate. The Title II providers were included in the initial discussions and offered basic adult education remediation if needed to bring participants' reading and math levels up to entrance pre-requisites to the pre-apprenticeship training program.

The manufacturing pre-apprenticeship program is the first "HPO introduction course" or basic skills program designed for the LWDA. As explained earlier, the Youth Committee and other WDA agencies are currently working to develop additional "HPO introduction courses" in: healthcare; building/construction trades; and leisure & tourism. These programs, once designed and implemented, will be open to all WIOA eligible individuals.

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

Career services provided by PA CareerLink® partners are for the most part delivered at the comprehensive one-stop centers. The One Stop Operator charged Site Administrators with the task of integrating career services within the PA CareerLink® partner network. A standing committee of supervisors (including the Department's merit staff) meets regularly with the site administrator to devise methods to reduce duplication and promote integration of career services. Staff is informed by their direct supervisors the extent of integration agreed upon for their respective program in order to balance the required integrity set forth by enabling legislation with the need to reduce duplication. A prime example of the efficacy of this approach relates to the coordination of multiple Adult Literacy providers targeting efforts within the PA CareerLink® to client constituencies with differing learning needs thereby allowing instructors to work with students grouped by math and reading scores. This ongoing analysis has resulted in multiple partners coordinating and engaging jointly in outreach and orientation activities for customers seeking employment and training services. Additionally, center scheduling of information workshops have aggregated cross program resources to provide regular and ongoing presentations to job seekers on topics such as labor market statistics, high priority and in demand occupations, availability of supportive services and local area employment opportunities. Duplication of career services for employers has been reduced by the establishment of Business Service Teams. Also, information on other services available to businesses has resulted in increased WEDNet awards locally. Joint outreach strategies and sharing of contact information has been a major benefit of PA CareerLink® collaboration and the LWDB's policy of aligning resources.

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

The PA CareerLink® Lawrence County and the PA CareerLink® Mercer County will seamlessly offer adult basic education training to individuals who are in need of obtaining their GED or upgrading their basic skill levels. Referrals will be made to the adult education training providers co-located in each PA CareerLink® in the local area or to other adult education training providers closer to the individual's residence.

Procedures recently announced by the PA Department of Education call for the local Adult Education proposers for services in the local area to submit applications directly to DOE. DOE will perform an initial review to ensure compliance by the proposers with requirements established by the DOE. DOE will then share applications related to each workforce area with the appropriate workforce development board, along with the scoring framework that is being employed by the DOE. Local boards will then send recommendations regarding local Adult Education provider proposals to the DOE for consideration during DOE's final review, scoring, and selection process. DOE will make final decisions and inform the local board so that representatives of Adult Education providers can be included in service coordination meetings led by the one-stop operator.

The current local review process calls for the Fiscal Agent to forward the Adult Education and Literacy applications to members of a committee (to be named by the Board chair) for review. After reasonable time for review, the Fiscal Agent will convene a committee meeting for members to provide comments regarding the applications. The chair of the committee will present a report to the full WCWDB which will take action to approve the committee's recommendations for submission to the PA Department of Education. Once the WCWDB approves the committee recommendations, a letter signed by the Fiscal Agent will be sent to the Adult Education and Literacy providers announcing the WCWDB's recommendations that have been sent to the PA Department of Education for their final review and approval. Once final decisions are made, the WCWDB work with its one-stop operator to take appropriate actions to involve adult education representatives in local coordination meetings of service delivery partners.

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?*

The West Central Workforce Development Board's objectives, goals and strategies for the targeted populations prioritized are as follows:

- (1) It is our objective to identify individuals locally within the groups identified below that:
 - have been seeking employment for at least 90 days, but have been unsuccessful in their search,
 - have had relevant problems identified that are likely sources for inhibiting hiring and
 - are seeking cooperative solutions to address the agreed upon issues.
- (2) The goals pursuant to these objectives will be:
 - placement in employment, or
 - a service to remediate a situation that requires a more intensive solution
- (3) Strategies to achieve these objectives and goals may include literacy/ESL referrals, case management, short or long term training by ways of work experience, on-the-job training, ITAs or referrals to outside organizations or agencies with specific expertise relevant to the particular issue.

Targeted populations include:

Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers - The local area does not have a significant population of migrant and/or seasonal farm workers. Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers (MSFW) will receive qualitatively equivalent and quantitatively proportionate services equal to those provided to all other customers. MSFWs will receive the full range of employment services, benefits and protections including counseling, testing, and job and/or training referral services. In providing such services, all PA CareerLink® offices will consider the preferences, needs, and skills of individual MSFWs.

Persons with disabilities - Both PA CareerLink® centers in the local workforce development area are ADA compliant and have a variety of equipment to assist individuals with disabilities such as: TDD/TTY telephones to accommodate people with hearing impairments; furniture (tables) to accommodate people in wheelchairs; and magnification devices to accommodate people with visual impairments. If individuals need additional services beyond basic career services a WIOA Title I application will be taken. If determined to be eligible, all WIOA Title I programs will be made available without bias. Title I staff will coordinate and jointly develop a plan with Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) to maximize funding for disabled individuals. Title I funding may be combined with OVR funding if skills training is deemed an appropriate activity for the individual.

OVR can provide no-cost worksite accommodation consultations to assist employers as well as their employees. For example, Title I funding may be used to provide OJT training with an employer and OVR funding may be used to purchase a large print computer screen for a person with a vision disability to be placed at the employer's place of business.

WIOA Title IV OVR Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors provide their customers with multiple, individualized services such as diagnostic, vocational counseling and guidance, vocational evaluation, restoration, training, and job placement. OVR also provides both OVR eligible and potentially eligible 14 to 21-year old in-school youth with disabilities pre-employment transition services designed to prepare them to enter competitive, integrated employment. Pre-employment transition services include paid work-based learning experiences, job shadowing as well as vocational counseling and guidance. Also offered is group training on workplace readiness, independent living skills, and self-advocacy skills.

Veterans - All individuals who have served in the military are referred to BWPO's Veterans Services Representative for job matching and referrals. In addition, veterans may receive all other scheduled PA CareerLink® services and scheduled for workshops and other core services offered by any partner agency and/or staff. Veterans may be referred for WIOA application if more intensive career services are deemed appropriate.

TANF Customers and Low-Income individuals - All low-income individuals are referred to the County Assistance Office (CAO) for assistance in removing barriers that may prevent them from attending training or obtaining and/or retaining employment. TANF recipients will also be referred to partner agencies and/or community agencies for assistance in other areas such as drug and alcohol counseling, housing issues, etc. TANF customers and low-income individuals may be referred for WIOA application if more intensive career services are deemed appropriate.

Displaced Homemakers - For the purpose of determining eligibility, a displaced homemaker is

defined as an individual who has been providing unpaid services to family members in the home and who: has been dependent on the income of another family member but is no longer supported by that income and is unemployed or underemployed and is experiencing difficulty in obtaining or upgrading employment.

Women and Minorities - As part of career research activities, women are encouraged to review careers that are held predominately by men (non-traditional employment). They are instructed to compare wages of the non-traditional occupations to those more traditionally pursued by women. Employers are encouraged to hire women in non-traditional jobs. Employers who hire women to fill non-traditional employment vacancies via On the Job Training contracts (TAA and Title I) may receive an additional 40 hours of wage reimbursement. Minorities are mainstreamed into PA CareerLink® career services and all services and activities available in WIOA Title I funded programs.

Older Individuals – Referrals are made to Lawrence County Social Services for program information and assistance. Older individuals are mainstreamed through the regular PA CareerLink® processes and activities. All Title I programs are open to older individuals without bias. Any older individuals determined to be “job ready” will be referred to BWPO staff for job matching and referrals.

Persons with Limited English Proficiency - Propio provides interpreter services for any individual with limited English proficiency. All partner agencies located at the PA CareerLink® were trained to use the Propio system. Recently, the Commonwealth notified all PA CareerLink® centers that the Propio service is available to all PA CareerLink® staff and the cost will be absorbed by the State. Training is provided to all staff once per year at capacity training on how to access Propio services.

Returning Citizens/Ex-Offenders – The PA Department of Probation and Parole hold weekly meetings at the PA CareerLink® centers for recently separated ex-offenders. These individuals are scheduled to attend PA CareerLink® orientations where all PA CareerLink® and partner services are explained. The recently separated ex-offenders are then mainstreamed through the regular PA CareerLink® processes and activities. All Title I programs are open to ex-offenders without bias. Any ex-offender determined to be “job ready” will be referred to BWPO staff for job matching and referrals. Services are also entered into the PA CareerLink® system.

Dislocated Workers – Title I staff checks the PA CareerLink® system to determine if a WARN notice has been filed for a dislocated worker’s former employer. If so, the BWPO staff and Title I staff will coordinate efforts to serve the dislocated worker. Title I staff will schedule and administer a full array of assessments for any individual who seeks funding (Title I and/or TAA) to attend training. Assessment results are reviewed to assure the client’s interests and aptitudes match the training for which they are seeking funding. If the client is suitable for training, an employment plan will be developed jointly by BWPO and Title I staff to maximize the funding package for dislocated workers and outline the steps needed to guide the client through training and lead them to employment. Referrals are made to all appropriate supportive service agencies that could potentially assist in eliminating barriers in the training to employment process.

Trade Act Eligible Individuals - BWPO staff first meet with the individual affected by a lay off or downsizing and the company has a WARN notice on file. If an individual is interested in re-training and applying for TAA funding, they are first referred to the WIOA Title I provider for interest and aptitude assessment to assure the occupational field of interest is one in which they will be

successful. The WIOA Title I staff completes a WIOA application for services and schedules the individual for assessment. Once tested the WIOA Title I staff sends a recommendation to BWPO staff to approve or deny training along with the assessment results. BWPO forwards the TAA application for funding to the Commonwealth. Once approved the individual is co-enrolled in the PA CareerLink® system and WIOA systems. WIOA Title I staff will process an Individual Training Account (ITA) if the training is over and above the State's training cap. All WIOA Dislocated Worker and/or Rapid Response supportive services are available as needed to all co-enrolled individuals.

Youth - Are mainstreamed through the regular PA CareerLink® processes and activities. All Title I programs are open to youth without bias. Any youth who is deemed to be "job ready" will be referred to BWPO staff for job matching and referrals. Youth in need of additional assistance will be assigned a case manager who will work with the individual to develop an Individual Employment Plan and identify assessments and/or activities such as career research of HPO in the area and next steps toward becoming job ready.

Individuals Needing Literacy and/or Basic Skills Training - Will be seamlessly referred to the adult education training providers co-located in the PA CareerLink® centers or to other adult education training providers closer to the individual's residence. Individuals may also work at their own pace on the computerized WIN curriculum to upgrade their basic skill levels. Other activities, such as work-based learning may occur simultaneously with their scheduled literacy upgrade assignments.

Business services staff can identify resources to assist any employer to diversify their workforce to include individuals with barriers to employment. Specifically for individuals with disabilities, 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 helping a business to retain current employees following an accident, injury or disability.

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

Business Services Teams align with the WCWDB's local and regional sector strategy by assisting in the recruitment and development of business customers to participate in sector focus groups and industry consortium activity for key driver industries. A result of local and regional cluster analyses, West Central Job Partnership, Inc. established partnerships in various high-demand industries including, Building and Construction, Business and Financial Services, Healthcare, Logistics and Transportation, and Manufacturing. The mission of the Business Service Team is to provide guidance, resources, and strategic workforce solutions to employer customers. Through collaborative efforts, the Business Service Team maintains a customer-friendly process to identify and access resources in response to specific business needs. The BST promotes industry stability and growth while serving as a central hub from which businesses can obtain coordinated assistance in recruiting, training and development of new or existing workers.

PA CareerLink® and WCWDB staff work together in their various roles and communications

with employers. The composition of the BST consists of PA CareerLink® partner agency staff who deal most frequently, and most directly with the business customer, including West Central Job Partnership, Inc. (WCJP), Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations (BWPO), Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) as well as Lawrence County Economic Development Corporation and Penn-Northwest Development Corporation. Site Administrators serve as leaders of the internal Business Service Team. They serve as a link between the BST and the Workforce Development Board to ensure that local strategic plans and goals are communicated. Business Service Team members perform strategic outreach to companies and meet regularly to ensure that interactions are organized and coordinated between staff. The BST's prioritize outreach to businesses that are classified as falling within designated industry sector groupings (high employment and wage growth). The BST maps resources frequently requested by employers to enable team members to refer customers to appropriate organizations that can meet their business needs.

The composition of our regional business retention and expansion network will continue to include the Northwest Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission, Northwest Industrial Resource Center (NWIRC), The Gannon University and Duquesne University Small Business Development Centers (SBDC), The Ben Franklin Technology Partners of Central and Northern Pennsylvania and Catalyst Connection SWIRC), the Shenango Valley and Lawrence County Chambers of Commerce, Penn Northwest Development Corporation and Lawrence County Economic Development Corporation. The regional business retention and expansion network meets on a quarterly or semi-annual basis and provides information sharing and access to one stop center staff regarding available programs and resources.

Career services provided by PA CareerLink® partners are primarily delivered at the comprehensive one stop centers under the supervision of Site Administrators. A standing committee of supervisors meets regularly with the Site Administrator to devise methods to reduce duplication and promote integration of services. Staff is informed by their direct supervisors the extent of integration agreed upon for their respective program to balance the required integrity set forth, thus reducing duplication. Multiple partners coordinate and engage jointly in outreach and orientation activities for customers seeking employment and training services. Additionally, center scheduling of information workshops have aggregated cross program resources to provide regular and ongoing presentations to jobseekers, site staff and employers on topics such as labor market statistics, high priority and in-demand occupations, availability of supportive services, and local area employment opportunities.

To ensure efficient and effective delivery and referral of services, the BST identifies and utilizes customer feedback as a measure for continuous improvement. The PA CareerLink® Site Administrators have developed a system to obtain customer feedback from employer customers regarding the services provided through the PA CareerLink® as well as services desired to obtain information regarding the satisfaction and needs of the business customer. Site Administrators and other BST members participate on advisory boards of local agencies and education providers to share and obtain information. Additional information is obtained via questionnaires, surveys, employer advisory councils, or targeted sector focus groups.

Customer satisfaction is determined by providing pre and post-employment follow-up with business customers. By customizing quality services in response to individual customer needs, the

BST has helped customers to improve their competitive advantage and retention. The BST stays informed of developments in local, national and international career trends and offers continuous development, implementation and evaluation to business customers.

Rapid Response communications are received by the PA CareerLink® Site Administrators so they can work with the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry and Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations. Site Administrators coordinate the center staff's response, which provides presentations and information to the employer and individuals to assist them in transitioning from their current employment to future employment. Additionally, as the demand for Unemployment Compensation services has increased with the cuts in personnel in the Commonwealth's call centers, there have been an increased number of individuals utilizing the PA CareerLink® site UC Courtesy Telephone to file their request for benefits or to get answers to inquiries about UC claims.

Individuals will also be directed to self-service elements in the centers. Those which require more intensive services will be referred to staff assisted services based on their need. Assessments will be available for individuals to determine literacy or educational/training needs.

The PA CareerLink® administrators are at times called upon by business customers to arrange for Rapid Response services when local companies are in distress. In these rare but challenging times, staff prepares customized information sessions in order to prepare future dislocated workers for training opportunities or seamless reattachment to the workforce.

For WIOA Title IV eligible customers OVR provides these additional multiple services to the business community designed to assist business with onboarding pre-screened qualified employees with disabilities. OVR business services include reasonable accommodation consultation, OJT, referral on tax credits or deductions. OVR also offers no-cost consultation on the Americans with Disability Act (ADA), accessibility standards and helping a business to retain current employees following an accident, injury or disability.

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 may be available (depending on availability of funding) to all WIOA clients based on a needs assessment that is documented in case notes as part of the Individual Employment Plan. Supportive services will be provided on a first-come/first-serve basis as long as funds are available.

Supportive services include: child care; eye care; health care – including dental, hearing aids and other emergency care; car repair; and clothing & uniform allowance (as required for training or employment). If no WIOA funds are available for supportive services, contractor staff will make referrals to community agencies that may provide services such as: the County Assistance Office for medical assistance, car repairs, clothing and/or uniform allowances; CCIS for child care; Community Action Partnerships for housing and transportation assistance; etc.

Please refer to Section 1.7 of the Keystone Edge Regional Plan for a description of the coordination of transportation and other supportive services in the region.

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.*

It is expected that PA Labor and Industry and the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) will jointly develop and issue a template to be used in all Local Workforce Development Areas that will include State and Federal criteria. WCJP will work with State and regional offices to provide the services outlined in the agreement template. Cross-training will be offered to PA CareerLink® staff so the services are understood and the service benchmarks may be reached. LWDB staff will include a compliance review of this agreement during the regular monitoring of the PA CareerLink® centers.

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

The settlement of all debts resulting from fraud, malfeasance, or other serious violations or illegal acts must be paid from non-federal resources. In the event a debt is established, the debtor will be notified in writing by certified letter, return receipt requested. The letter will provide information as follows:

- Date on which the debt was established as a final decision;
- Request for payment within 30 calendar days of the final establishment of a debt. Two additional letters requesting payment will be sent to the debtor at no less than 30-day intervals;
- Date that the debt will be delinquent (30 calendar days from the date the debt was established as final, unless other arrangements are negotiated and approved by WCJP;
- Appeal rights (notification of the right to appeal the decision). The debtor must request a hearing within ten (10) calendar days of receipt of notice of debt to avoid sanctions or penalties.
- Sanctions and/or selected remedies if the debt is still outstanding after 90 calendar days, including but not limited to debarment, litigation or referral to a collection agency.

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

A priority for the WCWDB in remaining and continuing to advance as a high-performing board is diversifying the funding base for community leadership and for programs and services tied to identified needs. The Board will work with its regional partner, the Northwest Workforce Development Board, to develop proposals for funding and to develop and maintain networks with potential private and public sources of funds in the region.

The Board and its partners have been successful in applications for competitive grant funding through numerous opportunities dedicated towards enhancing the effectiveness of workforce strategies. Fiscal year 2015 - 2016 is the final funding year of a US Department of Labor \$6 million Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) grant. The Oh-Penn Pathways to Competitiveness Project funded through the WIF grant expanded upon the area's sector partnership focus in Advanced Manufacturing and leveraged this funding to educate youth, parents and educators on manufacturing career pathways through career maps, informational brochures, job fairs, internships, and paid work experience opportunities. Additionally, the project brought together the expertise of

the regional Education & Training Providers, Economic and Workforce Development organizations, Chambers of Commerce, and the private sector employers to discuss strategic plans for the regional industry that will continue to be sustained throughout the grant's final year and integrated into a continuing strategy.

Building on the successful sector partnership work done through the WIF grant, West Central Job Partnership, Inc. was recently notified of its successful application for a US Department of Labor \$2.9 million American Apprenticeship Initiative grant. The grant will expand the number of Registered Apprenticeships in the two counties, as well as regionally through the Greater Oh-Penn Manufacturing Apprenticeship Network over a five-year period through October of 2020. Advanced Manufacturing is an in-demand and growing industry in the area and the funds will be leveraged to assist in enrolling individuals in pre-apprenticeship activities, assist employers in developing and formalizing apprenticeship programs and offset the cost of starting new apprentices. These activities are part of the WDA's sector partnership strategy and funding is leveraged with WIOA and state general funding to build upon and expand the resources available to job-seekers advance along career pathways tied to increasing skills and wages and employers to grow the ability of their workforce.

The WCWDB has worked with its partners to sustain a high level of collaboration in order to align, guide and direct the public workforce system within the local area. This is completed by providing linkages for career pathways for both job seekers and employers and maintaining outstanding performance accountability. Performance goals are shared with all partner agencies to ensure planning and alignment within the PA CareerLink® centers. Contracted service providers are used within the local area to provide ITA and OJT opportunities to job seekers that are looking to increase their marketability. The Board works closely with contracted service providers to evaluate performance and compliance through oversight monitoring. Interviews with providers and participants provide useful information in determining best practices that can be shared among other providers.

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?

Input processes for local plan development have been ongoing from the early stages of development of the WIOA Transition Plan. On February 17, 2016, the LWDB discussed the regional and local plans that were being developed, including contracted assistance to compile information mandated in the guidance for the regional plan which includes the six counties in the Northwest LWDB: Crawford, Erie, Forest, Clarion, Venango and Warren Counties. The staff to West Central's Board was preparing the local plan according to the Commonwealth guidance issued December 23, 2015. It was explained to the WCWDB that revised guidance would be coming from the Commonwealth and the completed plan would be due in Harrisburg on June 2, 2016.

The WCWDB then initiated plans to convene various workforce development stakeholders in the local area to begin dialogue on how to build a network of services and to boost interagency cooperation on workforce issues to achieve a team effort to accomplish the Governor's visions and goals. Invitations to the first stakeholders' meeting held on April 12, 2016 included: community based organizations that serve individuals with disabilities (OVR) and minorities (Shenango Valley Urban League and Community Action Partnership agencies); adult basic education providers (Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV and Adult Literacy Lawrence County); Chambers of Commerce; and the United

Ways. The intent of the meeting was to provide information to the stakeholders regarding the Combined State WIOA plan and obtain input for the Local Plan and to offer suggestions on a unified approach to meet the visions and obtain the goals of the Governor.

A follow-up, half-day session was held with Board members and community stakeholders on July 20, 2017, and a summary of data and key goals/strategies was presented and discussed. Input from that session was incorporated into both regional and local plans.

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

The 2017-19 Local WIOA Plan and the associated WIOA Regional Plan were posted on WCJP's website at www.wcjp.org on July 29, 2017. Notification was sent to BWPO, LEOs, WCWDB members, standing youth committee members, current contractors, PA CareerLink® partners and stakeholders, and WCJP staff as notice the plan had been posted to the website for review and comment. A notice was published in local newspapers advising the public that the plan had been posted on WCJP's website and comments are being accepted in writing at West Central Job Partnership, Inc., 217 West State Street, Third Floor, Sharon, PA 16146 or electronically to ddonahue@wcjp.org until 9:00 a.m. on August 28, 2017.

Comments received for suggested changes to the plan will be attached to the final plan, along with responses on how the suggestions impacted the plan.

Comments and Questions

No questions and/or comments were received during the thirty (30) day comment period.

ATTESTATIONS

By checking the box adjacent to each line item, the local board attests to ensuring the compliance components/documents listed are (or will be) in place and effective prior to December 31, 2017.

Each of the following components/documents should be current and available to the Department at any time during the planning process and/or monitoring or auditing processes. At this time, the Department is not requiring copies of such documents be attached to regional or local area plans.

☒ *Agreement between all counties and other local governments, if applicable, establishing the consortium of local/chief elected officials.*

☒ *Agreement between the chief elected official(s) and the fiscal agent, if a fiscal agent is designated.*

☒ *Agreement between the local area elected official(s) and the local workforce development board.*

☒ *Local workforce development board policy and process that provides for nomination, appointment and removal of board members; resolutions; bylaws; code of conduct; and conflict of interest.*

☒ *Financial management policy and process including cost allocation plan; internal controls; cash management; receipts of goods; cost reimbursement; inventory and equipment; program income; travel reimbursement; audit requirements and resolution; annual report; property management; debt collection; and allowable costs.*

☒ *Local area procurement policy – Must describe formal procurement procedures.*

☒ *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/certification random sampling; priority of service; stipends; 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; documentation for training expenditure targets; incumbent worker training.*

☒ *Risk management policy and process including records retention and public access; public records requests; monitoring, grievance; incident; and disaster recovery plan.*

☒ *Human resources policy and process including employee classification; benefits; holidays and PTO; recruitment and selection; employee development; discipline; layoffs, terminations and severance; sexual harassment; and equal opportunity/non-discrimination.*

☒ *Professional services contract(s) for administrative services such as staffing and payroll, if applicable.*

WEST CENTRAL Local Plan
Appendix C: Local Area WIOA Negotiated Performance Goals

Name of local workforce development area: West Central

WIOA Performance Measures	Local Area PY15 Performance Goals
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	Negotiated Goals
Adult	59%
Dislocated Worker	67%
Youth	58%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	Negotiated Goals
Adult	58%
Dislocated Worker	63%
Youth	57%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)	Negotiated Goals
Adult	4,000
Dislocated Worker	5,800
Youth	1,600
Credential Attainment Rate	Negotiated Goals
Adult	68%
Dislocated Worker	71%
Youth	60%
Measurable Skill Gains	Negotiated Goals
Adult	48%
Dislocated Worker	48%
Youth	48%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Negotiated Goals
Adult	25%
Dislocated Worker	25%
Youth	25%

West Central Workforce Development System

