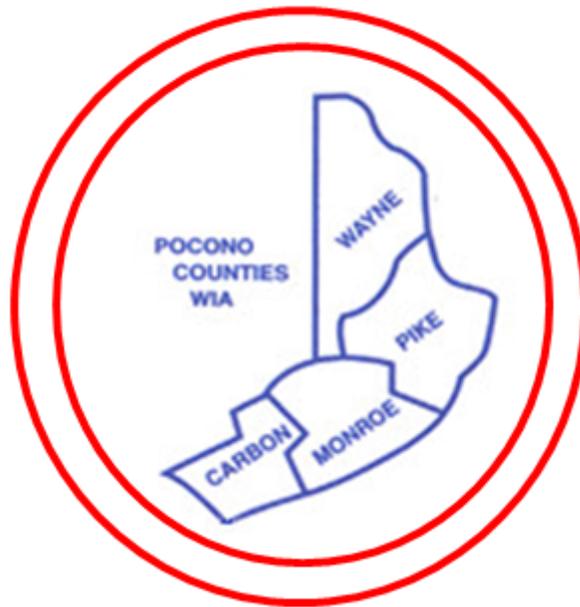


Pocono Counties Workforce Development Area
Local Area Plan
PY 2021-2024

PY 2021-2024 WIOA Multi-Year Local Area Plan



**POCONO COUNTIES WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

Effective Date: 7/1/2021 through 6/30/2025

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

The Poconos Workforce Development Area is comprised of Carbon, Monroe, Pike, and Wayne counties located in Northeastern Pennsylvania. The Pocono Counties Workforce Development Board (Poconos WDB) serves as the local connector between the PA Department of Labor and Industry and the region’s offices.

POPULATION

The population in the Poconos area in 2020 was 342,500, an increase of 1.5% over the past 5 years¹. Over the next five years, the population is projected to increase by an additional 1.4% (Figure 1).

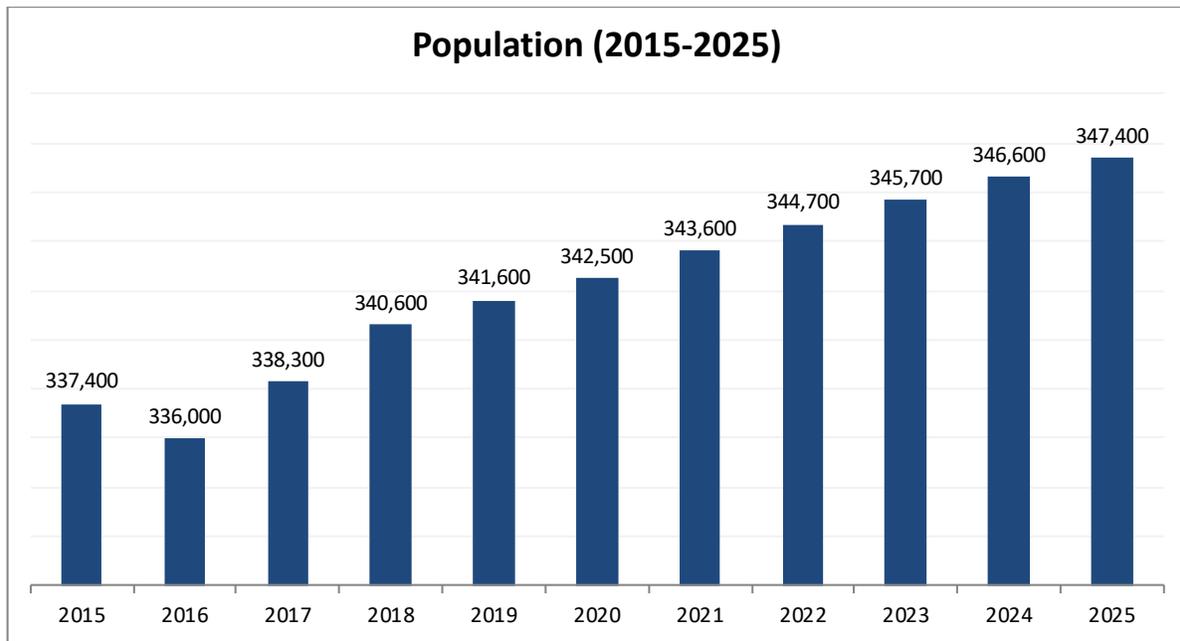


Figure 1: Population Increase over Time

All counties in the Poconos region experienced growth over the past 5 years with the exception of Wayne county (-1%). Monroe County grew the fastest (2.7%), a trend that will continue over the next 5 (2.1% projected growth). The county’s location on the New Jersey border along with easy access to Interstate 80 makes it a destination for those who work in New York and New Jersey but want to live in Pennsylvania. The trend towards remote work due to COVID may accelerate this trend even further in the coming years.

In 2020, the median age for the Poconos region was 45.2 years, ranging from a high of 48.2 in Pike and Wayne counties, to 42.9 in Monroe County. The median age is older than the NEPA planning region as a whole (43.7)².

One trend worth noting is growing portion of retirees. People aged 65-85 grew the fastest (17%) since 2015, and are expected to grow by another 16% by 2025³. The aging demographic highlights the workforce challenges as the baby

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

² Source: <https://data.census.gov/>

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

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boomers continue to retire, increasing the shortage of skilled labor across industries. It also increases the necessity for apprenticeship programs, where senior workers play an important mentorship role to new apprentices, and in doing so are able to transfer institutional knowledge to them before they retire.

While still predominantly white (85%), the Poconos region is gradually becoming more diverse. The White population declined by .5% (1,449) between 2015 and 2020, while at the same time the Black population increased 12% (4,032) and the Hispanic population grew 21% (7,377). These trends look to continue over the next 5 years, albeit at a slower rate.

EDUCATION

In 2020, 48.9% of the population in the Poconos region had a High School education or lower, while 22.3% had a Bachelor’s degree or higher. Generally, the former is increasing and the latter is decreasing slightly over time, but overall, the education levels are relatively stable (*Figure 2*). These percentages are roughly in line with the NEPA region as a whole, where 11.2% did not graduate high school and 22.1% have a Bachelor’s degree or higher.

Educational Attainment			
Level	2015	2020	2025
Less Than 9th Grade	2.9%	3.2%	3.3%
9th Grade to 12th Grade	7.0%	7.0%	7.2%
High School Diploma	38.8%	38.7%	38.6%
Some College	20.0%	20.0%	20.1%
Associate's Degree	8.7%	8.8%	8.8%
Bachelor's Degree	14.3%	13.9%	13.6%
Graduate Degree and Higher	8.4%	8.4%	8.4%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
High School or Lower	48.7%	48.9%	49.1%
Bachelor's or Higher	22.7%	22.3%	22.1%

Figure 2: Educational Attainment⁴

INCOME

In 2019, the median household income in the Poconos region is estimated to be \$61,646⁵, which is more than 10% above that of the NEPA region (\$55,699).

Median household income grew 13% between 2014 and 2019. The majority of income gains were among higher income households. While households making less than \$50,000 dropped by about 11%, households making more than \$100,000 increased by 31%. Households making between \$50,000 and \$100,000 stayed relatively steady (*Figure 3*).

⁴ Source: EMSI, 2020.4

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

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Households and Household Income				
Income	2014	2019	Change	Percent Change
Total Households	123,970	124,101	131	0.1%
Less than \$24,999	25,487	22,200	-3,287	-12.9%
\$25,000 to \$49,999	30,581	27,841	-2,740	-9.0%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	43,342	41,837	-1,505	-3.5%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	16,422	19,464	3,042	18.5%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	5,123	7,388	2,265	44.2%
\$200,000 or more	3,015	5,371	2,356	78.1%
Median Household Income	\$54,996	\$61,646	\$6,650	12.1%

Figure 3: Household Income⁶

EMPLOYMENT

In 2019, the Poconos region had a labor force participation rate of 59%, a small decrease from 2014 when the labor force participation rate was 60.7%.⁷ Closures and job losses in March led to a spike in the April unemployment across the Poconos region (*Figure 4*). Unemployment peaked at 19.7% in April of 2021 and has been steadily decreasing since then, though it still remains well above its pre-COVID lows.

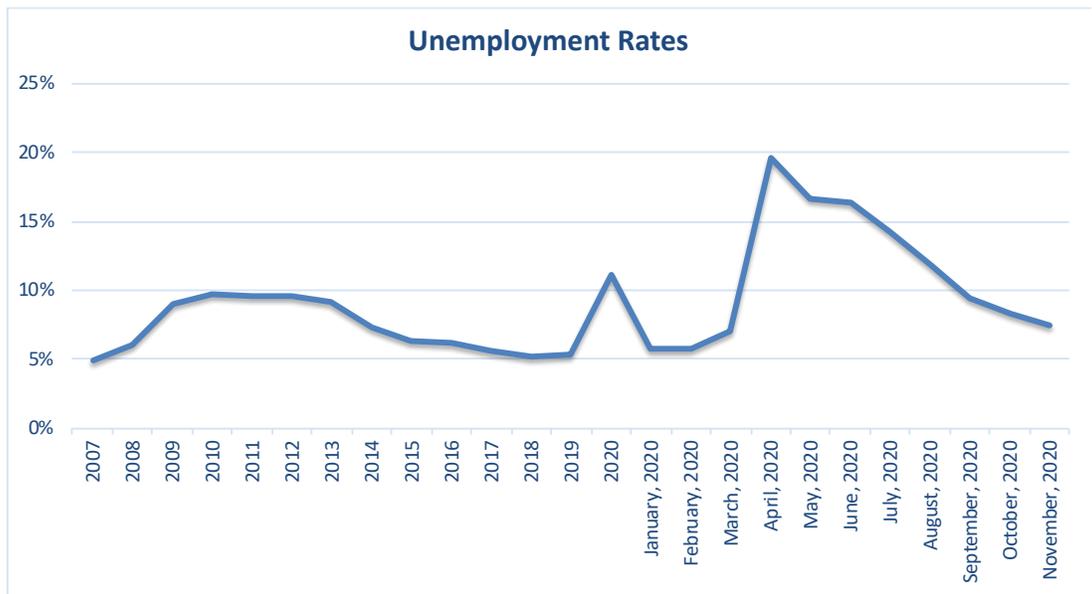


Figure 4: Unemployment Rate over Time⁸

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

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

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

⁸ Source: PA Department of Labor and Industry

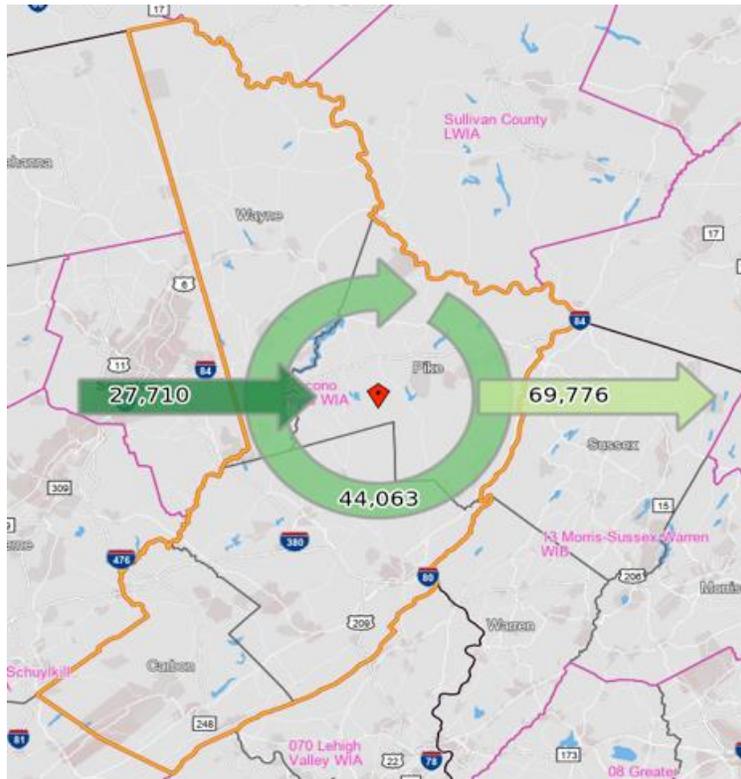
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Unemployment Rates by Educational Attainment Level		
Educational Attainment Level	2014	2019
<i>Total:</i>	9.7%	5.4%
Less than high school graduate:	17.0%	9.7%
High school graduate (includes equivalency):	11.9%	6.4%
Some college or associate's degree:	8.5%	5.3%
Bachelor's degree or higher:	6.4%	3.4%

Figure 5: Unemployment by Education Level⁹

COMMUTING PATTERNS

The Poconos region is in a Shared Labor Market (*Figure 6*). About 28K people work in the WDA but live elsewhere, while 70K people live in the WDA but travel outside the region to work. The difference in inflow and outflow of labor is significant, with 61% of people living in the region employed outside of it. The high level of commuter households highlights the need for the region’s LWDBs to work together to meet the workforce needs of employers and job seekers.



⁹ Source: 2010-2014 ("2014") and 2015-2019 ("2019") 5-Year American Community Surveys

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Figure 6: Regional Commuting Patterns¹⁰

POPULATION WITH BARRIERS

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

Poverty - Among the factors that often contribute to poverty are unemployment and under-employment. Many people live in poverty because they are unable to find a job that pays a living wage or to find a job at all. In the Poconos region, the poverty rate was 10.1% in 2019, a drop of .7% from 2014. Unemployment in this group dropped from 38% in 2014 to 23% in 2019.¹¹ Although current data is not yet available, these gains have likely been reversed due to COVID. Many of those most effected were in retail and the service industry which often pay lower than average wages, exacerbating poverty among those who were already most vulnerable.

Disabilities - Those with disabilities face a number of barriers to employment, including individual and systemic perceptions and prejudice that make employers hesitant to hire people with disabilities. In the Poconos region, individuals with disabilities accounted for 16.2% of the population in 2019, an increase of 15.3% over the previous 5 years. In 2019 average earnings for an individual with a disability in the region were \$22,486, a third lower than individuals with no disabilities. These individuals are much more likely to be in poverty than individuals who have no disability (17.5% vs 9.8%), and almost 3 times as likely to be unemployed (16.1% to 5.8%).¹²

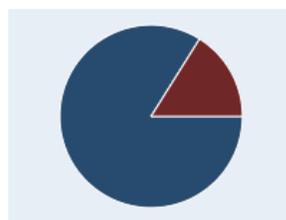
Reentry Populations - According to the Urban Institute, most individuals released from prison held some type of job prior to incarceration and want legal, stable employment upon release. Some criminal justice research suggests that finding and maintaining a legitimate job can reduce former prisoners’ 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 Poconos region, in 2019 there were 447 individuals released from a state prison, 70 completing sentences and 377 paroled (*Figures 7-10*).¹³

CARBON

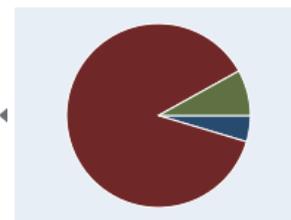
2019 Estimated County Population	64,182
Releases per 10,000 County Residents	13.6
Total Releases	87
Completed Sentence	12
Paroled	75
Average Age at Release	36

Gender



Blue = Male, Red = Female

Race



Red = White, Blue = Black, Green = Hispanic

Figure 7: Returning Citizens in Carbon County (2019)

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

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

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

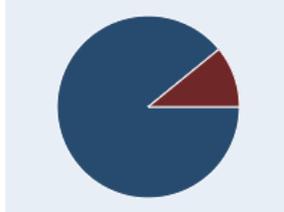
¹³ Source: PA Department of Corrections Calendar Year Releases

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MONROE

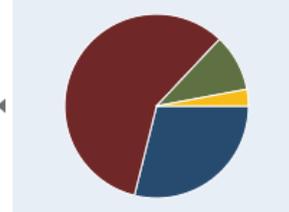
2019 Estimated County Population	170,271
Releases per 10,000 County Residents	14.0
Total Releases	239
Completed Sentence	43
Paroled	196
Average Age at Release	37

Gender



Blue = Male, Red = Female

Race



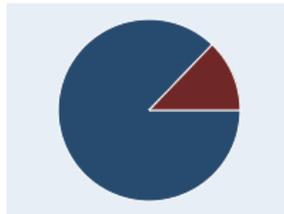
Red = White, Blue = Black, Green = Hispanic

Figure 8: Returning Citizens in Monroe County (2019)

PIKE

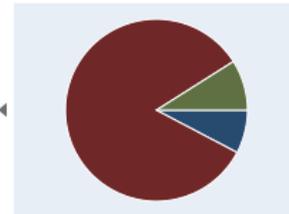
2019 Estimated County Population	55,809
Releases per 10,000 County Residents	14.0
Total Releases	78
Completed Sentence	10
Paroled	68
Average Age at Release	39

Gender



Blue = Male, Red = Female

Race



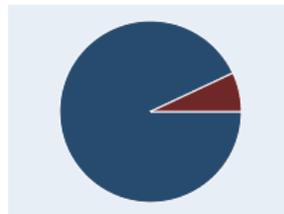
Red = White, Blue = Black, Green = Hispanic

Figure 9: Returning Citizens in Pike County (2019)

WAYNE

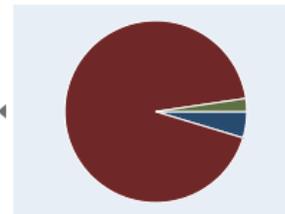
2019 Estimated County Population	51,361
Releases per 10,000 County Residents	8.4
Total Releases	43
Completed Sentence	5
Paroled	38
Average Age at Release	37

Gender



Blue = Male, Red = Female

Race



Red = White, Blue = Black, Green = Hispanic

Figure 10: Returning Citizens in Wayne County (2019)

Ability to Speak English - The inability to speak English while living in the U.S. can be a barrier to employment. During 2019, there were 9,657 individuals ages 5 and over “who speak English less than very well”, a decrease of 8% over the previous 5 years.

Single Parent Households - During 2019 there were 9,143 Single Parent Households with children under 18 years of age (10.7% of all family households), a slight decrease since 2014 when they made up 12% of all households.¹⁴

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

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

ANALYSIS OF REGIONAL JOB POSTINGS

Over the past year, the vast majority of job postings required no prior experience or had a set education requirement (*Figure 11*). These are primarily positions in the Food Preparation and Retail sector which generally pay below family sustaining wages.

Education Level	Unique Postings	% of Total
No Education Listed	36,372	71%
High school or GED	9,217	18%
Associate's degree	2,479	5%
Bachelor's degree	4,361	9%
Master's degree	1,240	2%
Ph.D. or professional degree	748	1%
Minimum Experience	Unique Postings	% of Total
No Experience Listed	34,954	69%
0 - 1 Years	9,082	18%
2 - 3 Years	5,087	10%
4 - 6 Years	1,468	3%
7 - 9 Years	242	0%
10+ Years	157	0%

Figure 11: Education Level Required in Job Postings¹⁵

When comparing the educational requirements of the jobs available in the Poconos region with the Educational Attainment levels highlighted in Section 1.1, there is a clear mismatch between those possessing a 4-year degree or higher (22%) and jobs requiring advanced credentials (12%). The result is that the labor pool is not effectively meeting the demands of the job market.

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

The top qualifications in-demand by employers are in the Transportation and Healthcare sectors (*Figure 12*). Workers with a Commercial Driver’s License are twice as in demand as the next 10 credentials combined. Once again, all of the most in-demand occupations require short-term training rather than a 4-year degree.

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

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Qualification	Postings with Qualification
Commercial Driver's License (CDL)	9,706
Certified Nursing Assistant	1,118
Licensed Practical Nurse	954
Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) Card	489
Hazmat Endorsement	468
Nurse Practitioner	422
Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN)	293
Medical License	251
Tanker Endorsement	230
CDL Class B License	220
Licensed Vocational Nurses	199

Figure 12: Certifications Required in Job Postings¹⁶

Among employers in the Poconos region, top in-demand hard skills include Flatbed Truck Operation, Merchandising, Warehousing, Nursing, and Caregiving. Top soft skills in demand by employers include Communications, Customer Service, Management, Sales and Leadership.

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL REQUIREMENTS FOR IN-DEMAND SECTORS AND OCCUPATIONS

The service industry accounted for the bulk of the area’s employment opportunities, accounting for 97,444 jobs in 2020 (86.8% share of all jobs), and this expected to remain steady over the next 5 years. Many of the occupations in this industry will rely heavily on Proof of Experience, Short-Term On-the-Job training and/or State Licensing, Post-Secondary Degrees, and Industry Credentials as job requirements.

For example, the **Healthcare** industry employed 15,283 (13.5% share) workers in the region in 2020. Many of the new positions will require job seekers to possess a post-secondary degree and/or state licensing. In the case of Nursing Care Facilities, many workers (aides) are required to complete an in-house training program and pass a test within a few months of employment. Non-service sectors also require short-term trainings. **Advanced Manufacturing** accounts for 7,659 job opportunities in the region (6.8%). To be competent in these positions, workers need to possess a combination of math, computer, engineering and diagnostics skills that can be trained in local community colleges or obtained through registered apprenticeship programs.

NEXT GENERATION INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS

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

- Establish and grow a sustainable partnership

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

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- Promote business-to business networking; and
- Develop and market career pathways.

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

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

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

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

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

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

FOCUS ON APPRENTICESHIP

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

This project also supports employer awareness of the Innovation in Management Registered Apprenticeship program. This program is portable and transferrable across multiple industries. The Greater Pittston Chamber of Commerce recently registered their Innovation in Management Apprenticeship training program in the Commonwealth with the support of the PA Apprenticeship and training Office. Individuals who complete this

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

WORKFORCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE POCONOS REGION

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

The Board emphasizes training and education programs that are aligned with its targeted industries, including Advanced Manufacturing, Healthcare, Energy, Food Processing, and Logistics and Transportation. The Poconos WDB and our PA CareerLink® One-Stops strategically utilize available WIOA funded training resources including Individual Training Accounts (ITAs), On-the-Job Training (OJTs), Incumbent Worker Training (IWT), Registered Apprenticeships (RA) and Transitional Jobs (TJ) funds to support the region’s workforce development needs.

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

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

As noted at the beginning of Section 1.2, there is a mismatch between the region’s talent pool and the skills employers need. The supply-demand mismatch manifests itself on several levels. The initial gap exists between available jobs and unemployed individuals. While many jobs are available (especially in the priority sectors in the workforce area), employers continually note critical shortages of talent.

Another challenging labor market trend is the supply demand mismatch between education levels in the workforce area and the type of education and training required for jobs in the Poconos region labor market. While 22% of individuals in the region possess a 4-year degree or higher, only 12% of job postings require one.

One of the contributing reasons for this continuing supply demand mismatch is the continued opinion of parents directing their children to attend college for a professional degree rather than the technical skill credentials. The Poconos WDB where possible will work to address these issues, through greater recognition of apprenticeship opportunities and collaborating with K-12 schools to better educate students and their parents. The WDB is committed to educating youth, parents, and educators on the benefits of all educational opportunities post high school, primarily opportunities presented through apprenticeships, community colleges, and education through career and technology centers. The Poconos WDB believes that there are benefits from all post-secondary education and training, not just primarily four-year colleges and universities.

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When reviewing our area’s High Priority Occupation list, it is evident that the Poconos region has many jobs not necessarily requiring an advanced degree. This shows that there are entry level opportunities as part of high priority career pathways and does not imply that post-secondary education is not valuable. Much evidence-based research demonstrates that those with higher degree attainment are more likely consistently employed with higher wages. Recent changes in the labor market, supported by the emphasis on licensing, credentials and certifications in the labor market also recognize additional and usually post high school competency attainment. However, in many instances the employer-based refrain of “good jobs that don’t require a college degree” or “not everyone needs to get a four-year degree” are demonstrated here.

One of the ways to help address the Supply Demand mismatch is to upgrade the skills of the current workforce. The Poconos WDB will continue to expand the incumbent worker training available to employers throughout the counties especially in the targeted industries of Advanced Manufacturing, Logistics and Transportation, Food Processing, and Healthcare. The Board places particular emphasis on enrolling eligible jobseekers into training programs that are aligned with the hiring needs of regional employers in these sectors.

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

The Poconos WDB offers significant workforce development services to the area's employers and jobseekers through the staff and resources available targeting six core programs: Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Adult Education and Literacy, Wagner-Peyser, and Vocational Rehabilitation. Jobseekers and employers can access these services at a PA CareerLink® center located in Carbon or Monroe Counties or an affiliate site located in Pike or Wayne Counties. Overall, the WDB offers a customer-focused and a career-driven process to assure that jobseekers’ and employers’ training and employment needs are met with quality outcomes.

With the inception of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the WDB has begun efforts to streamline the employment and training services available to businesses and jobseekers. It is applying a two-fold approach to help drive the strategy and decision-making processes:

1. **Data Driven.** The WDB constantly monitors labor market data to gain a thorough understanding of the skills and abilities of the available labor force as well as the workforce needs and requirements of the regions’ employers.
2. **Hands-On.** The WDB and its PA CareerLink® Business Service Teams (BSTs), along with affiliate site staff, regularly meet with employers to collect information to better understand their specific workforce development needs.

Overall, the WDB fosters meaningful relationships with key education providers including community colleges, universities, technical schools, local school districts, and other training institutions. These partners provide the Board with opportunities to bridge learning and skills gaps that exist between jobseekers and key industry partners.

PA CAREERLINK® ONE-STOPS

The Basic Career Services provided through the PA CareerLink® centers are available to all customers. However, they also make use of the specialized skills, experience, and services provided by the workforce system partners to meet the needs of customers with special needs or barriers. Customer registration and initial customer needs assessment process attempts to identify any particular barriers, needs, or services that may be of assistance in meeting the

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customer's goal(s). Staff also attempts to determine the eligibility of customers for services that have specific priority or eligibility requirements. The close working relationships and knowledge of the Career Service and Business Service Team partner staff allows them to leverage all available resources in a timely and efficient manner. The availability of specialized training services such as ITA's, OJT, Apprenticeships, Work Experience, Transitional Jobs, and Incumbent Worker services ensures that both job seeker and employer customers have a wide variety of tools and approaches to meet their needs. This makes the best use of available resources and assists our teams in meeting the wide-ranging needs of the diverse customers utilizing our centers, including members of underserved communities, and customers with significant barriers to employment. As part of our regional coordination the WDB promotes Non-Joint individual and Group Registered Apprenticeship programs for non-traditional occupations. Our PA CareerLink® Partners promote Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeship training models and services as an additional tool in serving the employment goals of the underserved customers in our workforce, as well as meeting the skilled worker training needs of area employers. Some of the special populations served through the system include:

- **Veterans.** The Veterans' Employment Program staff are the primary source of assistance for veterans using PA CareerLink® services. These partner staff members work closely with the County Veteran's Affairs and the State's Veteran's Affairs staff to ensure that all veterans are aware of the information and services available to them. Additionally, all center personnel are also trained on the priority service policy for veterans.
- **Basic Skills Deficient Individuals.** Some local area residents may lack basic reading, writing, and math skills. The PA CareerLink® centers and partners address these needs by providing basic education, remediation, and high school equivalency preparation services. Additionally, some services may also help customers in paying any fees associated with taking the high school equivalency examination. All jobseekers who lack a high school diploma or equivalency are encouraged to participate in these services. However, the Board does not deny services to those customers who decline to participate in literacy activities.
- **Low-Income Individuals.** Low-income individuals are a significant population of the Board's customers. They may be working in part-time or low wage jobs. They are a priority for both general job search assistance and for specialized services, such as WIOA training services. The special barriers experienced by many low-income customers are addressed through a variety of local services. Specifically, the Employment, Advancement, and Retention Network (EARN) Program offers job search assistance, career guidance, life skills, supportive services, training assistance, and job retention services designed to meet the needs of this customer group.
- **Older Individuals.** Older workers often have special employment barriers that must be addressed, such as inadequate technology skills. As a result, they may require more staff assistance in learning skills such as how to access the Internet or how to use a computer to look for work. To assist this special population, the Board partners with the area's Senior Community Service Employment Program providers. Additionally, Older Workers may also qualify for WIOA Adult or Dislocated Worker training services.
- **Returning Citizens.** The Board has working relationships with the county prisons and the Adult and Juvenile Probation offices in the area to help returning citizens secure training and/or employment. Additionally, it also works with various youth correctional services such as the Youth Forestry Camp #2, Youth Services Agency facilities, and others.
- **Individuals with Disabilities.** The Board partners with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) to assist individuals with disabilities who may need specialized services. OVR staff determine eligibility for WIOA title IV services, and as applicable, assist them in developing a career development plan and provide job development services tailored to their specific goals.

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Supporting these efforts, all PA CareerLink® staff are provided training and information on the services and strategies available individuals with disabilities. This training includes workshops on Disability Awareness Etiquette; instruction on the use of adaptive equipment in the Career Resource Area, and the use of the TTY phone system. It is important to note that individuals with disabilities may also qualify for training assistance under the Board's priority service policy for Title I services.

Specialized services designed to assist returning citizen youth include the WIOA title I Youth programs, the Pennsylvania Conservation Corp, and the Job Corp. Adult returning citizens receive assistance through WIOA title I Adult services, the literacy services of the Carbon Career and Technical Institute Adult Education Department, and other general services available at the PA CareerLink® centers.

- **LEP Customers.** The Pocono Counties area has a low number of residents with Limited English Proficiency (LEP). However, the Board has a formal LEP Service Plan. All staff are able to make English as a Second Language (ESL) referrals and resources are available at the reception station and within the Career Resource Area. Moreover, language line interpretation services and translated documents are available for customers, as needed.
- **Unemployment Compensation (UC) Claimants.** UC Claimants represent a significant percentage of the customers served through PA CareerLink® services. They can be divided into two primary categories. The first one is claimants who register with PA CareerLink® for temporary or seasonal layoffs to comply with UC registration requirements. Those individuals are advised of the services available to them in the event that they want to explore or pursue other employment or career goals. The second category is claimants who are permanently laid off due to downsizing, business closings, or other reasons. They are also directed to register on the PA CareerLink® website.

Those profiled as permanent layoffs are directed to register for a Re-employment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) Workshop in the PA CareerLink®. The RESEA workshop is designed to ensure that these Claimants are aware of all of the services and assistance available to help them with their re-employment efforts. They also receive specialized staff assistance in the development of their individual employment and training plans. The purpose of the RESEA program is to provide timely early services to UC Claimants and help them achieve their re-employment goals quickly, and before they exhaust their UC benefits.

- **Youth.** The primary goals of youth services are to give young adults a better understanding of the soft skills (e.g., work maturity skills and basic literacy skills) that are required by employers and to provide youth with a better understanding of the local business needs and the job skills projected to be in demand in the next five to 10 years. Based on eligibility and specific needs, youth may receive services offered under WIOA title I, including work experience opportunities through the Summer/ Year-Round Youth Employment program, or On-the-Job Training (OJT) and Individual Training Account (ITA) services. Additionally, OVR offers services such as career guidance, job development, training, and job coaching services to Out-of-School Youth with disabilities. Youth are also provided with information and referrals to organizations such as Job Corps.

EDUCATIONAL PROVIDERS

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

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needs in High Priority Occupations (HPOs).

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

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

The Pocono Counties WDB constantly monitors labor market data to gain a thorough understanding of the skills and abilities of the available labor force as well as the workforce needs and requirements of the regions’ employers. Our Business Service Teams, support for Business/Education efforts, engagement with Chambers of Commerce and Economic Development agencies in our WDA, and Industry Partnership initiatives are part of our ongoing effort to keep current with the changing needs of our Business Community. The WDB fosters meaningful relationships with key education providers including community colleges, universities, technical schools, local school districts, and other training institutions. These partners provide the Board with opportunities to bridge learning and skills gaps that exist between jobseekers and key industry partners. The data regarding the training needs of our In-Demand Industry sectors and occupations is used to focus our attention on both the skill needs and skill gaps of these key businesses. The majority of training resources utilized by our customers are devoted to occupations within these industries. Our close collaboration with our educational providers allows us to assist them in identifying any emerging skill gaps. Labor Market information on these keys industries and occupations is also used to inform our customers, including youth entering the workforce, incumbent workers, and dislocated workers regarding the skill needs and opportunities available in these occupations. These are the ways we utilize the information we gather on our area’s key industries and occupations.

IN-DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTORS

The top 6 industries in the Poconos region accounted for 73% of all jobs in the region (*Figure 13*). With the exception of the Healthcare and Manufacturing sectors, each had a location quotient (LQ) greater than or equal to ‘1’. Food Services had the highest LQ (2.03), with jobs expected to increase 6.2% over the next 5 years. Healthcare jobs are expected to grow the fastest (8.1%) over the same time period.

Industry Sector	2020 Jobs	2020 Percent	2020 State Location Quotient	Projected Change 2020-2025		Average Earnings per Job
Government (includes public education)	20,118	17.9%	1.60	-162	-0.8%	\$80,070
Accommodation and Food Services	16,880	15.0%	2.03	1,039	6.2%	\$25,531
Retail Trade	15,283	13.6%	1.41	-334	-2.2%	\$33,338
Healthcare and Social Assistance	15,096	13.5%	0.81	1,222	8.1%	\$55,879
Manufacturing	7,659	6.8%	0.77	56	0.7%	\$94,947
Construction	6,438	5.7%	1.12	-27	-0.4%	\$51,831

Figure 13: Employment Outlook by Top Industry Sectors¹⁷

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

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

Job postings by industry indicate a similar demand for workers,

with all the sectors above (with the exception of Government and Construction) among the top posters to online job boards in the region (*Figure 14*). The *Transportation and Warehousing* sector had the most postings (59K), about 50% more than the next highest sector (Retail, 39K postings).

Industry	Total Postings (Nov 2019 - Nov 2020)
Transportation and Warehousing	58,881
Retail Trade	39,142
Healthcare and Social Assistance	28,553
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	16,865
Accommodation and Food Services	6,852
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	8,902
Manufacturing	5,829
Finance and Insurance	5,988

Figure 14: Job Postings by Industry¹⁸

IN-DEMAND OCCUPATIONS

Top in-demand occupations align with the in-demand sectors highlighted above. When including hiring due to turnover, nearly all of the in-demand occupations will see hiring equivalent to about the size of current size of the workforce over the next 5 years.

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

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Occupational Grouping	Jobs		State Location Quotients	Total Job Openings (2015-2020)		Projected Job Openings (2020-2025)	
	2020	2025		Net	Percent	Net	Percent
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	11,856	12,453	1.33	14,324	131.0%	13,719	115.7%
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	14,039	13,835	0.92	12,746	93.0%	10,144	72.3%
Sales and Related Occupations	11,798	11,657	1.15	12,071	96.4%	10,471	88.8%
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	9,672	10,059	0.97	9,928	103.7%	7,999	82.7%
Educational Instruction and Library Occupations	7,754	7,783	1.24	7,163	94.3%	4,498	58.0%
Production Occupations	5,296	5,347	0.79	6,240	110.6%	4,066	76.8%
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	5,577	5,722	1.52	5,397	107.6%	4,704	84.3%
Construction and Extraction Occupations	5,795	5,857	1.17	5,351	97.6%	4,079	70.4%
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	6,264	6,393	1.40	5,181	88.9%	3,898	62.2%
Personal Care and Service Occupations	3,976	4,190	1.22	4,986	123.9%	4,188	105.3%
Healthcare Support Occupations	4,532	4,999	0.74	4,644	104.7%	4,460	98.4%

Figure 15: Demand for Top Occupational Groupings¹⁹

Overall, between 2020 and 2025 a total of 87,555 positions will be filled, representing 78% of the 112,238 jobs currently available across all industries. This total includes turnover within existing positions as well as the creation of new ones, and further indicates the strong need for additional short-term trainings to prepare the area’s workforce for local jobs.

The top 20 positions advertised locally are all in the Transportation & Warehousing or Healthcare sectors (*Figure 16*).

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

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Job Title	Total Postings (Nov 2019 - Nov 2020)
CDL-A Truck Drivers	11,288
Flatbed Truck Drivers	8,522
CDL-A Flatbed Truck Drivers	5,977
CDL Truck Drivers	4,134
Owner-Operator Truck Drivers	3,547
Team CDL-A Truck Drivers	3,234
Warehouse Workers	2,300
Delivery Drivers	2,106
Licensed Practical Nurses	2,056
Local CDL-A Truck Drivers	1,810
OTR CDL-A Truck Drivers	1,799
Registered Nurses	1,640
Warehouse Team Members	1,361
Warehouse Production Workers	1,282
Uber Drivers	1,257
Certified Nursing Assistants	1,174
Dedicated Truck Drivers	1,050
Company CDL-A Truck Drivers	1,048
Call Time Managers	1,029
Caregivers	1,023

Figure 16: In-Demand Occupations²⁰

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

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2. STRATEGIC PLANNING QUESTIONS: Vision and Goals

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

The WDB's strategic vision is to support regional economic growth and self-reliance through a comprehensive youth, adult and dislocated worker service delivery system. The economic future of the local area is dependent on a workforce that is globally competitive and aligned with the skills needed by the major industry clusters within our local and regional labor markets. The Board is committed to building a workforce system that is universally accessible to our labor force, accountable to its stakeholders, data-driven, and aligned with the economic development and education efforts of our partners. It is also committed to a regional strategy of interaction and cooperation with the Lackawanna County, Luzerne/Schuylkill, and Northern Tier Workforce Development Boards that are part of our planning region for Northeastern Pennsylvania.

Our plan is designed to allow the partner staff in our service delivery system to identify barriers to employment, address the skill gaps of the region's jobseekers, and identify transferrable skills or career pathways that allow them to succeed. The over-arching mission is to equip jobseekers with the necessary skills and credentials to attain or return to self-sufficient employment, including established career pathways to high priority occupations.

The following goals and initiatives have been established to achieve the vision:

The WDB developed a strategic alignment with its local school districts to educate youth about high demand career opportunities and postsecondary training options. The goal is to provide youth with the knowledge of the local and regional labor market necessary to pursue viable options that lead to attainment of industry recognized credentials, career pathways and high priority occupations that pay family-sustaining wages.

The WDB maintains meaningful relationships with a wide range of local training providers (i.e., Career and Technical Centers, Community Colleges, Universities, and others). These partnerships enable it to explore opportunities to bridge learning and skills gaps that exist between jobseekers and key industry partners. Ongoing conversations with employers and training providers, through such groups as Industry Partnerships, Perkins Stakeholder meetings, and other Economic Development entities help to identify the region's critical workforce training needs and any emerging skill gaps not yet available from labor market data. The goal is to share pertinent labor market information that aids our local training providers in the development or expansion of short-term training programs needed for job seekers to attain in-demand industry recognized credentials. The goal of these strategic planning efforts is to ensure that the training opportunities available to our jobseekers is aligned with the labor market needs of our regions' employers.

The WDB and PA CareerLink® staff facilitate meetings with manufacturing employers to promote and discuss the benefits of developing and registering apprenticeship programs as a key workforce development strategy. Employers are aligned with existing funding resources and organizations that support and assist the employers' efforts to develop and register an apprenticeship program that provides their workers with the knowledge and competencies needed in industry. Registered Apprenticeship programs offer jobseekers the opportunity to earn as they learn, while attaining industry recognized

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credentials and career pathway opportunities. We engage employers from all industry sectors to promote/discuss apprenticeship program.

The Board has collaborated with neighboring Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) to develop a Pre-Apprenticeship program for individuals age 18-24 who are interested in entering a building trade's registered apprenticeship program. The cohort of LWDBs received a state grant to support this project. This program will prepare participants to enroll and succeed in apprenticeship programs.

Additionally, because agriculture has traditionally been a major economic and cultural factor in Wayne County, the Board also focuses efforts on this important sector. It works with the Wayne Tomorrow/Agriculture Committee to identify occupational need and workforce preparedness, including a plan that demonstrates the impact that agriculture has on Wayne County. The goals are as follows:

- Support existing producers and agribusinesses
- Expand Wayne County's agriculture sector and farming capacity by increasing agricultural productivity
- Attract new agri-businesses to locate to Wayne County

- We are actively engaging in apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships to support ag in Wayne County
- Attract young farmers and support them to be successful

The WDB secured an Industry Partnership (IP) grant on behalf of the local advanced manufacturing sector employers to support incumbent worker training to increase the competitiveness and create new career pathways for employees and jobseekers. The Board also participates in the following IPs with their LWDB partners: Healthcare, Energy, Food Processing, and Logistics and Transportation.

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?

In Pocono Counties, partner staff in the two comprehensive PA CareerLink® centers and the two affiliate locations have multiple roles within their respective locations, including responsibilities related to WIOA, Wagner-Peyser, Veterans, Vocational Rehabilitation, EARN and other core programs administered through the service delivery system. Staff integration and cross training is part of the continuous improvement efforts of our PA CareerLink® and affiliate site service locations. Staff development efforts are designed to ensure that all partner staff are familiar with the services, program eligibility, and resources available to individuals seeking job search or training assistance. Staff meetings are designed to identify the service needs of customers, assist staff in identifying solutions to potential barriers, and to avoid duplication of services. The Board monitors the provision of core program services through reports submitted by the Pocono Counties Operator Consortium and through reports provided by the PA CareerLink® Site Administrators at the Workforce Development Board Meetings.

The Board's strategies to align local and regional resources in order to achieve its vision and

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goals include the following:

- Developing career pathways for skill credential and degree achievement and provide individuals in the region the opportunity to obtain a job that provides a living wage.
- Increasing public awareness of the region’s diverse skill sets of workers and the incumbent worker population through WEDnet, Industry Partnerships, and related funding streams available in the area.
- Continuing its commitment to Apprenticeship Programs and Regional Industry Partnerships.
- Increasing outreach to employers through the PA CareerLink® system and through Business/Education Partnerships.
- Engaging employers and identifying their respective needs within the region.
- Enhancing relationships with state agencies, education and economic development entities, and with the PA CareerLink® system.
- Increasing referrals to literacy services through enhanced coordination.
- Increasing work-related opportunities for youth through a coordinated youth talent pipeline.

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 Board has and will continue to develop and cultivate a demand- driven workforce to provide employers with the resources needed to compete and grow their respective businesses. In doing so, it utilizes accurate data-driven information to identify, profile and analyze cluster information and identify demand occupations. It engages in Regional Industry Partnerships to address the Incumbent Workforce. It continues to promote economic recovery within the Northeast and to preserve and create jobs through innovative training opportunities that will encourage individuals to retool their skills and meet the demands of a 21st century workforce. The Board also continues to interact with area career and technical institutes, community colleges, and educational and training providers to meet the training requirements of a skilled workforce.

The Board’s efforts align with the Governor's Vision of the Commonwealth Workforce Development System as follows:

- 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 Board is actively engaged in career pathway models addressing the need to assist individuals with barriers to employment by providing training opportunities for skill training that leads to employment in High Priority Occupations. It has also invested in the implementation of career

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pathway models in its Business/Education Partnerships as well as a pre-apprenticeship program. Board staff participate in planning groups including stakeholders for Perkins funding at the community college and with area Career & Technical Schools. These planning groups review program outreach to underserved targeted populations, program results and effectiveness measures, and assist in planning efforts to ensure training is aligned with the needs of our area employers.

- Expand the state's pipeline of workers for targeted industry sectors from entry level skills to middle skills through Industry Partnerships, WEDnetPA, and other innovative strategies.

The Board will use data and work with employers to identify the skills and competencies necessary to attain family-sustaining employment. Efforts will be directed to ensure individuals with barriers are utilizing programs obtaining postsecondary credentials and certifications. It has consistently committed well over 50% of funds to training activities and has targeted training to individuals with barriers to employment.

- Increase opportunities for all youth to participate in work-based learning through year-round employment, pre-apprenticeship, State and Local Internship opportunities, apprenticeship activities, and other similar experiences.

As noted, the WDB is sensitive to age demographics of the area workforce. It knows it must cultivate and support a comprehensive workforce strategy to meet employer needs to fill newly created positions and positions vacated by retiring workers. Addressing this need the Board has recognized the priority to serve older youth with effective practices for recruitment and retention. Youth work experience programs have been and will continue to be an important component to service this population. OVR is a vital partner supporting initiatives serving transition age youth with disabilities.

- Engage employers directly to close skills gaps and more quickly upskill or reskill the workforce to meet the current and future needs.

The WDB has always stressed the importance of education in its workforce system. The Board engages employers and educational resources within the area by prioritizing funding directed to business services activities, OJT, Apprenticeships, and incumbent worker training to employers that offer high-quality jobs. An important element of this task is the utilization of the Business/Education Partnerships within the four counties. These partnerships connect schools, employers, and students to provide career-related experiences and expose opportunities through soft skill development, internships, job shadowing, and career mentoring. Career Pathways are an important component of Business/Education Partnerships. The Board has also approved Apprenticeship, Transitional Employment, and Incumbent Worker Training policies. The Board is also engaged in regional efforts with the Lackawanna and Luzerne/Schuylkill Workforce Development Boards to support and expand on the use of Apprenticeships by employers to meet their needs for a skilled workforce. The Regional Boards have worked jointly to focus attention on the success of businesses in our area utilizing Apprenticeship as part of their recruitment and incumbent worker training practices, as well as promote the use of this practice to other employers. Plans are in place, pending conditions related to COVID 19 restrictions on in person meetings, to highlight regional

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Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeship programs in our region. As part of our regional approach to increase the use of Apprenticeships by employers, the local boards in the Northeastern PA's Planning Region coordinated with Marshall Machine, a regional employer, the Northeast Equipment Dealers Association, Johnson College, and the Wayne-Pike Workforce Alliance to expand the Farm Equipment Mechanic Group Sponsorship Registered Apprenticeship program approved by the PA Apprenticeship and Training Office. Recognizing the importance and value of apprenticeship programming, each local board in the Northeastern PA Planning Region is committed to expanding apprenticeship opportunities within their respective workforce areas as well. For example, the region's Local Workforce Development Boards connects the development of apprenticeship programming to their ongoing industry partnerships and sector strategies. A notable example is the Non-Joint Individual Mechatronics Registered Apprenticeship program, developed in partnership between the Greiner Corporation, Luzerne County Community College, and the L-S WDB. In the Pocono Counties WDA, ongoing discussions with community organizations, employers, and Penn State University center on the development of food processing and agriculture related group sponsorship Registered Apprenticeship programs. Regional LWDB support was paramount in the development of the Greater Pittston Chamber of Commerce's "Innovations in Management" (IM) Group Sponsorship Registered Apprenticeship program. The IM Registered Apprenticeship is a one-year program intentionally developed to meet the needs of all industries and to prepare individuals develop the skills they need to be successful in a supervisory role. Successful completers of this innovative Registered Apprenticeship receive sixteen transferrable college credits, a Small Business Diploma from the Community College and a Journey Worker Certificate. In addition, the regional LWDB partners were awarded a grant to expand apprenticeships in the region.

These new policies provide additional tools and resources to support work-based learning opportunities with employers in our local and regional planning areas.

Business Service teams and coordination with our regions Chambers of Commerce are a productive and efficient method of providing our employers with up-to-date information on the wide range of services and resources available to assist in their continuing success and expansion. Funding made available through our Advanced Manufacturing Industry Partnership has allowed us to develop marketing tools to encourage job seekers of all ages to explore and pursue high paying and rewarding occupations in our manufacturing sector, as well as allowing us to develop a new online resource guide that can be used by both employers and job seekers to easily identify resources and information from a wide range of workforce development partners throughout Northeastern PA.

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

The Board will utilize data provided by the Commonwealth and locally generated data to allow for continuous program improvements. Relative data will allow for informed customer choice in considering programs. Additional pertinent data from state agencies, especially the Pennsylvania Department of Education will be welcomed by the Board. Common performance measurements across all core programs will be an asset to better evaluate programs within the local area.

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2.4. What are the local levels of performance that have been negotiated with the governor and chief elected officials?

How will the local board's goals relate to the achievement of these measures?

As shown in the WIOA Title I Performance Accountability Table included as Attachment 1, the Board and the local elected officials have agreed to adopt the levels of WIOA performance that have been established by the governor for the Commonwealth.

WDB programs will apply the federal performance measures for WIOA as performance goals for programs and sub-recipients. Attainment of performance measures and outcomes will be reviewed at quarterly WDB meetings and as part of the monitoring of the PA CareerLink® Operator process. The WDB, staff, and Chief Local Elected Officials will monitor performance levels throughout the year. This practice allows the WDB to adjust policies as a continuous improvement strategy. These measures include employment, median earnings, credential attainment, and measurable skill gains.

Additionally, WDB staff and sub-recipients will target high priority occupations and industries for job development in WIOA programs to meet and exceed employment and earning performance levels. Continuation of services and retention strategies will be in place to ensure long-term employment opportunities for the participants and program activities.

Credential attainment will be met by utilizing national and state recognized credentialing programs. These programs have proven to be successful for sub-recipients. Participants have expressed satisfaction with these programs.

Skill gains and effectively meeting the workforce needs of employers are crucial to achieving success in providing essential services delivery. WDB plans to institute tools to measure success in these areas. Proposed strategies include, but are not limited to the following:

- Employer and participant surveys
- Increase vs decrease of employer job orders to gauge satisfaction; and
- Pre-and post-training inventories to measure occupation skill gains for employers

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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.

Organization Chart. An Organization Chart that depicts the structure of the Pocono Counties Local Workforce Development Area is included as **Attachment 2**.

Local Elected Officials. The Governing Board of the Local Elected Officials is comprised of the 12 Commissioners representing the four counties. They acknowledge program accountability; appoint WDB members; designate the Fiscal Agent; assist with the development of plans and all provisions listed under WIOA. They attend WDB meetings to discuss and interact with the Board on ongoing activities.

Fiscal Agent and Administrative Entity. The Carbon County Commissioners have been designated the Administrative Entity/Fiscal Agent. The Fiscal Agent is responsible for maintaining effective control over and accountability for all funds, property, and all other WIOA assets, while safeguarding all such assets in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. As the Administrative Entity, the Board of Commissioners serves as the employer of record and is responsible for hiring and managing the local workforce board staff.

The County of Carbon serves as the employer of record for the Fiscal Agent/Administrative Staff as well as the current Title I Career Services Provider for the Carbon County PA CareerLink®, Carbon County Workforce Training. The Fiscal/Administrative staff has a separate budget, location, and is supervised by the Carbon County Board of Commissioners. Carbon County Workforce Training operates independently from the Administrative unit, has its own budget and is supervised by the Carbon County Administrator. Carbon County Workforce Training must also comply with the WIOA Request for Proposal (RFP) requirements when the Pocono Counties WDB issues an RFP for Career Services.

Workforce Development Board. The WDB is comprised of 24 members and includes representatives from key private sector industries in the Pocono Counties, partners in the service delivery structure, and other key stakeholders required under the WIOA.

Together, the WDB and the Local Elected Officials provide guidance and oversight to manage the local workforce development system, interacting with business and industry, economic development, education, governmental entities, and community-based organizations to provide services and training to jobseekers and employers.

Board Committees. The Standing Committees of the WDB are as follows: Executive Committee, Financial Committee, Youth Committee, PA CareerLink® Committee, Training/Performance Committee, and Industry Partnership Incumbent Worker Committee.

- **Executive Committee** acts for the Board in between its regularly scheduled meetings on those issues of policy that require timely action to meet statutory compliance. It does not usurp those specific functions, powers, and duties that are reserved by the Board under its agreement with the Chief Elected

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Officials.

- **Financial Committee** acts as a mechanism for the Board to increase the level of local coordination and the responsible use of all grants associated with WIOA's required programs by developing local board budgets, identifying resources to leverage support, conducting fiscal and financial oversight of programmatic and administrative entities.
- **Youth Committee** provides a forum for stakeholders who provide youth leadership expertise; actively engages in aligning goals of youth activities and youth program strategies for youth; and efforts focus on the development of the emerging workforce and strategically align with state and federal priorities of the public workforce system.
- **PA CareerLink® Committee** aides in the design of service delivery within the PA CareerLink® centers, including partner referral methods, customer flow processes, and the execution of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Resource Sharing Agreement (RSA).
- **Training/Performance Committee** establishes and negotiates the local common measures for approval by the appropriate Commonwealth of Pennsylvania agency acting on behalf of the Governor; works with Board staff and PA CareerLink® representatives in the development of performance standards and evaluation training programs; and oversees monitoring and oversight activities.
- **Industry Partnership Incumbent Worker Committee** development partnerships with the Board and surrounding counties; and promotes regional coordination of workforce resources and the promotion of the public workforce system.

Equal Employment Opportunity and Civil Rights Protections. The Board has processes that comply with federal and state regulation and policies for handling complaints and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) issues and civil rights protections. It has established a WIOA Equal Opportunity Officer that are responsible for grievance and complaint resolution.

Mr. Garry Wentz, Acting EO Officer
Pocono Counties WDB
410 Center Avenue
Jim Thorpe, PA 18229
(570) 325-2462
FAX (570) 325-8547

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

The Board works collaboratively with the entities that are carrying out workforce programs to support service alignment in the local area. A Program Partner-Provider List that identifies the workforce programs, providers, and locations is included as Attachment 3.

The WDB has established two comprehensive PA CareerLink® centers in central locations in Carbon and

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Monroe Counties. Additionally, it also supports two affiliate sites, included in the Monroe County PA CareerLink® MOU/RSAB, in the county seats of Pike and Wayne Counties. The PA CareerLink® centers provide all mandated services and meet the Pennsylvania Department of Labor One-Stop Certification requirements. The affiliate sites provide Title I Career Services, along with general jobseeker and business services. Additionally, staff from the Monroe County PA CareerLink® center also assist in specialized services on a part-time basis, such as the RESEA and Veterans services in Wayne and Pike Counties.

Collectively, all four facilities are operated under the direction of the Pocono Counties Operator Consortium and collaborate with each other to ensure that employer and jobseeker customers within the Pocono Counties WDA have access to the full range of workforce development services and resources. This service delivery structure allows for efficient, coordinated services for a variety of agencies.

Service Alignment. The Board procured and selected its One-Stop Operator, the Pocono Counties WDA Operator Consortium in accordance with WIOA, the Uniform Guidance and its implementing regulations, and local procurement policy. The One-Stop Operator coordinates local PA CareerLink® activities at each location; functioning as the liaison between the Board and the system partners, and ensuring that all services and available resources are properly aligned to carry out the vision of the Board. Within the full-service centers, partner staff provide seamless service delivery to all clients—from the initial intake assessments and direct referrals to partner services and programs – recognizing that services must be guided by the policies of the designated funding streams.

Staff are available to assist individuals in enrolling job seekers in the PA CareerLink®, the internet-based system of record for the PA CareerLink® services. They also receive written information on services available on site or through referrals to other service providers not physically located in the center. They can also sign up for workshops or other scheduled events such as job fairs or similar recruiting events. A team approach is utilized to assist customers, which involves the cooperation and collaboration of staff from multiple departments (i.e., case managers, workshop facilitators, etc.). Staff from partner organizations, such as OVR, also participate directly in work that is specifically related to their target populations. The special populations and services provided include:

Veterans and other eligible persons are given priority of service. A triage form is used to help identify those veterans who may have special needs. The form is provided to the Veterans' Employment Program representative and the person is called in for specialized services. Based on individual need, the staff may refer the veteran to training options and/or job placement. Staff may also refer a veteran to the OVR or other social service agencies for help with disabilities or more comprehensive needs.

Individuals that are basic skills deficient have their education needs met through a variety of system partners including local Adult Education and Title II service providers. Services include basic adult education, remediation, and high school equivalency preparation services.

Individuals who receive public assistance are referred to the EARN program for employment and training assistance. EARN services and staff are fully-integrated and co-located with the center for job search, job development services, and training programs.

Older individuals who may be eligible under Title V are referred to AARP. In addition, the PA CareerLink® centers may serve as host agencies or may hire older workers as greeters. Moreover, older workers have

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additional resources available to them through the Social Security Administration Office and OVR.

Returning citizens receive guidance and counseling to prepare for employment. PA CareerLink® staff encourage them to participate in workshops to help reinstate their driver's license, health insurance, and social security benefits, as well as to have their record expunged, when applicable. Workshops geared to returning citizens focus on financial literacy, credit rebuilding, and fair housing.

Individuals with disabilities who are eligible under WIOA title IV access services provided by the OVR. It helps them secure and maintain employment and independence; helping them become qualified trained members of the workforce. Eligible OVR customers receive multiple, individualized services such as, diagnostic testing, vocational counseling and guidance, vocational evaluation, restoration, occupational training, and job placement. PA CareerLink® and affiliate sites have close working relationships with other organizations in their communities to assist in meeting the needs of these customers. They include the Office of Developmental Programs in Wayne County, the Carbon/Monroe/Pike MH/MR. Carbon, Monroe, Pike and Wayne Counties all have Employment Coalitions made up of organizations such as OVR, HRC, CVS, Living Unlimited, Goodwill, and School District personnel that work collaboratively to assist individuals with disabilities to prepare for employment or post-secondary training goals.

Underemployed individuals are referred to staff for individualized services including testing, provision of labor market information, assistance in defining marketable and transferrable skills and development of an individual employment plan. They are informed about State Civil Service job opportunities to pursue while still employed, and other existing training.

Unemployed individuals are also served through the system. Staff participate in Rapid Response activities and RESEA orientations. They provide assistance such as RESEA workshops, the Unemployment Compensation Work Test, and Trade Adjustment Act services to help impacted workers return to work as quickly as possible.

LEP persons are provided with access to ESL classes instruction, a translator, and/or information provided in other languages as may be required. ESL providers in the local area include the Lehigh Carbon Community College (LCCC), Northampton Community College, and the Wayne Pike Workforce Alliance. Individuals in need of ESL services may also utilize the Greater Hazleton Metro Ministries and Luzerne Community College programs in neighboring Luzerne County.

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

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

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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 staffs in our service locations facilitate the referral of individuals with barriers to enrollment in core PA CareerLink® programs through a variety of practices. Customers with specific barriers and goals may be referred by community partners to our service centers with specific goals in mind. These individuals are scheduled or meet with the appropriate program staff in line with their needs and goals as quickly as possible. Customers who are accessing our service locations for the first time, or who have not been involved with our services for an extended period of time complete an initial assessment form. This form provides information to staff assisting the customer with the enrollment process that is helpful in identifying their needs and barriers. It also provides customers with a list of programs and services that may be available to them. It allows staff to direct customers to program staff in line with the customers' goals or provide customers with informational materials relative to their initial goals. Often, customers have the ability to speak with appropriate program staff on their first visit. If program staff are not available immediately, follow-up appointments are made before the customer leaves our centers.

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

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

Eligibility Validation. Individuals must be determined “eligible” prior to enrollment into any type of WIOA-funded services. The Board understands the importance of correctly documenting this eligibility, and requires verification of all documentation in accordance with PA DOL Policy guidance. Staff receive training on acceptable eligibility documentation requirements, as described in the PA DOL WIOA Guidelines, and as outlined in the current Data Validation policy.

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

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

As eligibility information is provided by the customer, staff verifies it by examining it, or by speaking with official representatives of authorized agencies. They also document eligibility in case files by maintaining physical evidence such as copies of documents (where legally permitted) and completed and signed telephone records and/or document inspection forms. Staff are required to properly secure any documentation collected on job seekers and maintain confidentiality regarding PID in accordance with the

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confidentiality requirements they sign that allows them access to the PA CareerLink®.

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.

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

Co-Enrollment and On-Ramps. The Board actively promotes the co-enrollment of customers into multiple programs to maximize its funding resources as well as to improve its performance results. Partner staff work collectively for jobseekers who have multiple needs and are involved in collaborative efforts to maintain joint case records that document contacts and the services provided. The PA CareerLink® is used for enrollment, tracking, case management, and referrals. The PA CareerLink® is recognized as the official system of record for recording services and program outcomes for jobseeker and business customers.

The initial registration process for jobseekers is designed to inform them of the broad range of services available, both on-site and through referrals. Partners use this registration information to eliminate the duplication of data collection. It is also instrumental in ensuring that customers can easily access the services that are appropriate to their unique needs and goals.

The local area uses a cross-referral system and customers are co-enrolled into specialized programs as applicable to their specific circumstances. In the past, the PA CareerLink® and affiliate sites have utilized internal or informal referral methods to direct customers to appropriate program staff. The Pocono Counties WDB has directed service center staff to utilize the PA CareerLink® Customer Referral to better track referrals, especially for referrals to Partner services that participate in our system of record. For example, many Wagner-Peyser customers are referred to WIOA staff for enrollment into Adult, Out-of-School Youth, or Dislocated Worker ITA or OJT services when training or postsecondary credentials are needed to help the customer pursue their occupational goals. In the same manner, many WIOA In-School Work Experience participants who have graduated from high school are referred to Wagner- Peyser or other partner services for help with their job search efforts. Moreover, EARN customers served through the system may also make use of Wagner-Peyser services or WIOA services as needed to assist them with their employment or training goals.

Specific program eligibility determination for programmatic services is completed by the partner. However, since all services are tracked through the PA CareerLink®, a customer may have multiple cases open at the same time for program outcome and performance tracking purposes.

Postsecondary Credentials. The goal of advising and assisting customers regarding the benefits of postsecondary credentials is handled in a variety of ways. Staff are involved in the career exploration activities and presentations that are conducted in the local school districts to provide In-School Youth. They assist with information about local and statewide career opportunities, the need for postsecondary training or credentials to pursue these careers, and the services and resources available through the PA CareerLink® or other partner programs. Additionally, the orientation for the WIOA Youth Employment Program includes an overview of the services available through the PA CareerLink® system to help students with their post

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high school employment and training goals. Adult or Dislocated worker customers whose employment goals require postsecondary credentials are referred to WIOA or Trade staff for possible training services.

Career Pathways. For customers who have already developed an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) or who prefer to take responsibility for their own career planning and development needs, the PA CareerLink® is charged with providing them with labor market information, self-service tools and resources, and other information on activities that will help them with their career planning needs. Information on the Pocono Counties WDB High Priority Industry Clusters, high demand occupations, training providers, and other information is available on-line or in the Career Resource Area.

For individuals with transferrable skills, the PA CareerLink® staff helps them identify potential career ladders that may be available to them with their current skills and experience. They also assist in identifying any skill gaps that must be addressed. Through interviews and a review of the customer's background and goals, staff better identify those individuals who might fill the skill demands of the local area's business customers.

Many jobseekers who register with the PA CareerLink® system have very specific or narrow goals that do not require comprehensive career planning services. Examples are jobseekers who register only because they want to complete an application for a particular PA CareerLink® business customer, or jobseekers responding to mass recruiting events. In these instances, staff provide these customers with an understanding of the wide variety of services offered at the centers and encourage them to use them.

Career pathways development is also a part of self-assisted services. PA CareerLink® personnel determines potential eligibility for services, enabling jobseekers to directly access the staff or partner who is best suited for their unique needs. This process is especially important for customers who have special needs in developing a career plan. The goals, services, and outcomes for customer career plans are recorded and monitored by the staff who assist them in developing the plans, or by the staff who provide the services that help them achieve their goals.

Adult basic education partners under Title II develop pathways to careers for adults whom are basic skills deficient. Programming includes beginner level literacy instruction to support college and career readiness. Instruction is also provided for English language learners and workforce and workplace preparation activities. Intensive case management is provided to participants that help students address barriers to participate (such as transportation, childcare, housing, and healthcare). The Board works in tandem with Title II staff to support alignment of core programs and other workforce system partners.

In all cases, staff attempts to help customers identify the transferrable skills, experience, credentials, and abilities that will enable them to pursue a specific career goal, advance to the next level of the career ladder, or obtain the skills needed to secure employment.

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

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

The WDB has fostered engagement with employers through various initiatives over the past 20 years. First, by supporting a business service delivery structure in all four counties. BSTs are formally established in the two comprehensive sites, and the Title I WIOA and other partner agencies, including Rapid Response, OVR, and others conduct coordinated employer outreach and engagement efforts in the satellite locations.

The PA CareerLink® centers and affiliate sites conduct county-wide job fairs, specific employer recruitment efforts, workshops on topics of interest to the employer community, and provide other general information of importance to the employers in their respective areas of the local area. They are also engaged with the local and regional employer communities through their membership in the Chambers of Commerce and economic development organizations in the region.

Over the years, these outreach efforts have resulted in close working relationships with both the targeted industry employers, as well as a significant portion of the small businesses located in the area. Success is demonstrated by the fact that more than 40% of the employers have registered within CWDS.

In addition to the efforts of the PA CareerLink® and affiliate site staff, the WDB also works closely with the employer community through its private sector business members and other business service efforts supported by the Board, such as Industry Partnerships, lay-off aversion efforts, and Business/Education Partnership initiatives. The Board is currently exploring the expansion of these local efforts along with regional efforts through the Next Gen model.

Actively reaching out to employers within the Pocono Counties who are in the process of expanding their enterprise and directing an outreach campaign to companies locating in our region emphasizing our abilities to assist with their recruitment goals. Utilizing this approach, the Board has reached out to representatives of the St. Luke's Health Care Network to gain a better understanding of their human resource needs and to be in a position to assist with their current expansion plans in Carbon and Monroe Counties. Contacts have been ongoing with the Lehigh Valley Health Care Network who has recently announced plans to construct another health care facility in Carbon County.

The Board is exploring the use of technology for streaming live meetings and utilizing webinars to increase employer participation hindered by the geographical nature of our rural workforce development area. Due

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to the need to expand on line services to job seekers and employers because of the COVID-19 virus emergency, the 4 county PA CareerLink® and affiliate sites have hosted on line recruiting events, interviewing opportunities, and other workshops to engage both job seekers and employers. The Board and our service delivery network has provided updates and information to employers on resources available to assist them in adapting to the limitations and staffing needs required under this medical emergency situation.

Opportunities exist in Pocono Counties to enhance employer and business engagement through participation in Industry Partnerships, annual manufacturing events as well as the Teacher in the Workplace and Business Education Partnership Programs. Our Advanced Manufacturing Industry Partnership has developed online marketing tools to promote manufacturing careers in Northeastern Pennsylvania, as well as an online resource guide that allows any employer to easily identify and connect with the wide range of workforce development partners and services available in our region.

The BSTs, as well as staff in the affiliate sites, provide area employers with integrated services to address their employment and training requirements. Services include recruitment of skilled workers, applicant screening, PA CareerLink® assistance, training for incumbent workers, and other related business activities. The BSTs provide information to employers regarding OJT program services, Industry Partnership training resources, WED-Net Training information, Apprenticeship and other work-based learning best practices, as well as training resources available outside of the Service Delivery Network supported by the WDB. The Board's recent development of Apprenticeship and Incumbent Worker policies is aimed at encouraging the use of these tools by Employers we serve. The Apprenticeship Policy is primarily designed to encourage the use of this model for skilled training of new workers. It does allow for limited use by employers for incumbent workers. The policy provides financial support for the OJT costs of the worker, or the formal training costs of the Registered Apprenticeship, or a combination of both. The Board is also engaged in regional efforts with the Lackawanna and Luzerne/Schuylkill Workforce Development Boards to support and expand on the use of Apprenticeships by employers to meet their needs for a skilled workforce. The Regional Boards have worked jointly to focus attention on the success of businesses in our area utilizing Apprenticeship as part of their recruitment and incumbent worker training practices, as well as promote the use of this practice to other employers. Plans are in place, pending conditions related to COVID 19 restrictions on in person meetings, to highlight regional Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeship programs in our region. The region is also currently guiding Johnson College in their desire to develop and register a Pre-Apprenticeship program for the Farm Equipment Mechanics Registered Apprenticeship program. The region's employers struggle to find workers with the right skills. Registered Pre-Apprenticeship provides the instruction needed to help individuals acquire the skills to be successful in registered apprenticeship programs. The region's LWDBs are committed to supporting the development an ecosystem that connects training providers and other organizations with the capacity to administer Pre-apprenticeship programs to Registered Apprenticeship programs. For individuals, Pre-Apprenticeship programs can be a bridge to career opportunities. For employers, Pre-Apprenticeships can provide a dependable pipeline to skilled job seekers.

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The BSTs, along with affiliate site staff, have prioritized outreach efforts to target Regional Industry Partnership and Industry Clusters identified as significant parts of the Regional Labor Market to support the growth and development of key sectors of the economy in the Northeast. BST outreach efforts have assisted the Board in identifying skill gaps, training needs and other pertinent issues confronting business and industry in the region.

The services that the BSTs offer employers go beyond those services provided by the PA CareerLink® or affiliate site partner staff. There is a close working relationship with other employer service organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Agencies, the Small Business Development Centers, and other statewide, county, and local agencies that provide services to both existing and startup businesses. Through electronic communications such as e-mail, Constant Contact, and local websites, the BSTs provide, support, and disseminate a large volume of information regarding services available to the business community.

Information regarding possible WARN or similar large-scale layoffs are communicated to the Rapid Response Unit and the WDB. Contact with these employers takes place as quickly as possible in an attempt to determine if any services or resources available can assist the impacted employer in averting the layoffs. All BST members are familiar with OJT services and other training services that may be available to assist businesses, either with recruiting and expansion plans, or possibly with training or upgrading services for their existing workforce. The BSTs offer county-wide Job Fairs to assist with ongoing recruitment needs, as well as provide individualized business recruiting assistance through the PA CareerLink® sites or in other locations.

As part of its continuous improvement processes, the Board will be developing enhanced approaches to better engage employers in the public workforce development system and to better address employer concerns using strategies such as the Next Gen model.

Unemployment Insurance Linkages. The local area complies with the Commonwealth's Register for Work and Work Search law by helping unemployed individuals register on the PA CareerLink® system. It also provides telephones in the PA CareerLink® centers so that Unemployment Compensation (UC) Claimants can call the statewide toll-free UC number regarding any benefits questions they may have.

Additionally, individuals who are likely to exhaust their benefits are identified by the State through the RESEA program. These individuals are directed to come to one of the PA CareerLink® locations for job search assistance.

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

Any potential UC eligibility issues identified during RESEA or any other UC Claimant interaction are referred to the State's Unemployment Insurance department for resolution.

Of significance, employers are invited to attend RESEA sessions to speak directly with participants.

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Moreover, the UC Workforce Development Representative conducts several seminars throughout the year for employers to learn more about UC Programs. Typical seminars include: UC 101; Separation Issues; UC Appeals and Hearings; Suitable Work; Relief from Charges.

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

Regional Economic Development Activities.

The WDB recognizes that the growth of both the local area and the regional economy relies on strategic collaboration between the Workforce Development Areas, Community, and Economic and Industrial Development agencies. The following is a list of the Economic and Industrial Development Boards and organizations that the WDB has either representation on, or a close working relationship with.

- Carbon County Chamber & Economic Development
- Monroe County Industrial Development Authority
- The Greater Pocono Chamber of Commerce
- Pike County Economic Development Authority
- Pike County Chamber of Commerce
- Wayne County Economic Development Corporation, WEDCO

- The Chamber of the Northern Poconos
- Northeast Pennsylvania Alliance
- The Manufacturing Resource Center and Northeastern PA Industrial Resource Center
- The Small Business Development Centers at the University of Scranton and Wilkes University

The WDB's employment and training services are designed to support and complement economic development efforts in the region. Engagement and communications with these local and regional economic development partners is ongoing and continuous.

The WDB also works to support a collaborative approach to Workforce Development issues through the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Partnership for Regional Economic Performance (RESEA) areas and through the PA Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) which encompasses a seven-county region: Carbon; Lackawanna; Luzerne; Monroe; Pike; Schuylkill and Wayne. The lead organization for the Commonwealth's RESEA Program is the Local Development District: NEPA Alliance - which includes members who engage the promotion of economic development across the seven counties. NEPA RESEA partners provide a powerful network of regional experts who can help business

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owners address nearly every type of challenge facing their companies.

In addition to the services provided directly by specific RESEA partners, the network can also help businesses access critical state and federal resources, such as loans, grants, technical assistance, or other support. NEPA Alliance services also include Business Financing, Government Contracting Assistance, International Trade Assistance, Non-Profit Assistance, Transportation Planning, Research and Information, and Local Government Services.

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

- Taking initiative;
- Creatively seeking out and identifying business opportunities;
- Developing budgets and forecasting resource needs;
- Developing a customer-centered environment;
- Understanding various options for acquiring capital and the tradeoffs associated with each option; and
- Communicating effectively and marketing oneself and one's ideas.
- Entrepreneurship education that provides an introduction to the values and basics of starting and running a business. These programs often guide individuals through the development of a business plan and may also include simulations of business start-up and operation.
- Enterprise development which provides support and services that incubate and help individuals develop their own businesses. Enterprise development programs go beyond entrepreneurship education by helping individuals access small loans or grants that are needed to begin business operation and by providing more individualized attention to assist in the development of viable business ideas.
- Each year, the NEPA RESEA partners provide services to local customers, primarily local businesses but also individual residents who are looking to learn about business start-up and management.

The Board actively endorses the promotion of entrepreneurial skills training throughout the four-county area. The University of Scranton Small Business Development Center provides entrepreneurial assistance for start-up, pre-start-up and established business in Monroe, Pike and Wayne Counties. In Carbon, interested individuals are advised of entrepreneurial resources and assistance available through the region's Small Business Development Centers located on the campuses of Lehigh University and Wilkes University. Interested individuals pursuing entrepreneurial goals are advised to use the services available through our network of Chambers and Economic Development Corporations.

The Stourbridge Project in Wayne County is a Business Incubator Accelerator focusing on business start-up workshops, growth mind set instruction and a vast array of support services to promote small business development. Workshop customers are afforded the opportunity to tour and use the free services including one to one discussion sessions with staff. The Stourbridge Project is a member of the Ben Franklin

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Technology Partners Network and is a Keystone Innovation Zone (KIZ) through the education partners of East Stroudsburg University, Northampton Community College and Lackawanna College.

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4. OPERATIONAL PLANNING QUESTIONS: Local Area Workforce Delivery System

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

PA CareerLink® Operator. In compliance with the WIOA and related federal and state regulations, the Board recently initiated a competitive procurement process to secure its One-Stop Operator services. As a result, it approved the Pocono Counties WDA Operator Consortium proposal that was submitted by four current partner agencies in the Carbon and Monroe County PA CareerLink® centers to act in this role for each of the PA CareerLink® centers and the affiliate sites.

The Pocono Counties WDA Operator Consortium includes Monroe County Job Training, Carbon County Workforce Training, Northampton Community College, and the Carbon Career and Technical Institute Adult Education Department. An Operator Consortium Agreement has been signed between the WDB and the members of the Operating Consortium. The One-Stop Operator’s programmatic responsibilities will include:

- Ensure that the roles of all required partners in the PA CareerLink® system have been defined, identified, and integrated into the service delivery system.
- Implement and augment the integrated services structure within the PA CareerLink® centers, as designed by the Board and enabled via the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with all core and required partners operating at the site.
- Monitor operational procedures and protocols to promote effective and seamless partner referral, for the benefit of the customer, while ensuring that individual partner program performance and outcomes are not negatively impacted.
- Evaluate service delivery (e.g., timing, type, format, etc.) across providers and partners as well as across customer segments, and identify opportunities to optimize services.
- Develop, implement, and monitor customer service standards across the centers.
- Continuously assess customer needs via customer feedback mechanisms at the center and make recommendations to the Board for continuous improvement.
- Implement and monitor the negotiated One-Stop partner MOU.
- Develop an understanding of and use all required technologies to access and report on necessary data (i.e., PA CareerLink®, Constant Contact, etc.).
- Establish and monitor metrics for measuring success based on state and federal requirements associated with provider and partner funding streams
- Develop and implement a plan for continuous improvement that engages all partners operating at the centers.
- Convene a regular meeting of the administrative leadership of MOU partners to review progress and performance of the core programs.

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The administrative responsibilities of the One-Stop Operator will include:

- Convene regularly scheduled meetings and/or conference calls with Board staff.
- Assign a program director who brings a high emotional intelligence and maturity (sensitivity, conflict resolution, listening skills) to influence and drive change across providers, partners, and Board staff.
- Provide updates and activity reports as requested at the direction of the Board.

WIOA Title I Providers.

Carbon County Workforce Training, Monroe County Job Training, Pike County Job Development Agency, Wayne/Pike Workforce Alliance

WIOA Title II Providers:

Carbon Career & Technical Institute/Adult Education Department, Lehigh Carbon Community College, Northampton Community College

WIOA Title III Providers:

PA Department of Labor, Bureau of Workforce Partnership Operations

WIOA Title IV Providers:

PA Department of Labor, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

The contact information, including addresses, phone numbers, e-mail, and websites for the above listed entities providing WIOA Title I, Title II, Title III, and Title IV services are detailed in the One-Stop Location and Program Services Chart included as **Attachment 3**.

EO Officer & EO Liaisons

EO Officer: Pocono Counties Deputy Director
410 Center Avenue, Rm 204
Jim Thorpe, PA 18229

EO Liaisons: BWPO Supervisor, PA CareerLink® Carbon County
50 E. Locust Street, Nesquehoning, PA 18240
BWPO Supervisor, PA CareerLink® Monroe County, Rte. 611, Merchants Plaza,
Tannersville, PA

Key Stakeholders

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Pocono Counties EARN Local Management Committee (LMC), AARP Foundation/Senior Community Service Program, Carbon County Action Committee, Monroe Youth Employment Services, CDE Career Institute, Pathstone, Inc., Choosing Integrity, Pinebrook Family Answers.

Procurement Policy. The Board procures its One-Stop Operator and Title I Service Providers using a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) process that complies with WIOA regulations and requirements. Under this method, responding proposals are scored using an award criterion and point system. The Board makes its awards based on the proposer's demonstrated ability to perform successfully under the terms and conditions of the RFP.

The One-Stop Operator and Title I Service Provider Procurement Proposal Committee is comprised of one Board member from each of the four Pocono Counties along with a representative from each of the four Boards of LEOs. Board staff provided support and assistance with Committee work.

During the December 2, 2020, WDB meeting, the Board approved the release of the RFP effective January 7, 2021, with proposals due by February 16, 2021.

The proposals received will be evaluated by the Pocono Counties Workforce Development Board Executive Committee, Local Elected Officials, and Board staff. The recommendations of the reviewers will be made to the Pocono Counties WDB at the next meeting, scheduled for March 3, 2021. As a result of the RFP for the One-Stop Operator and the Title I Service Provider(s) the following entities were approved by the Board.

Operator: Pocono Counties WDA Operator Consortium (current Operator)

Title I Service Providers: Carbon County Workforce Training
Monroe County Job Training
Pike County Workforce Development Agency
Wayne/Pike Workforce Alliance

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

A complete listing of the PA CareerLink® partners that are authorized to provide services in the Pocono Counties WDA is found in the Program Partner-Provider List included as **Attachment 3**.

The Operator Consortium members have recently updated the new MOU and the Operating Budgets for both PA CareerLink® centers and the affiliate sites. It defines the expectations, service levels, and resource contributions of each organization.

The new MOUs and Operating Budgets are effective from 7/1/20 through 6/30/24. The Operating Budgets are reviewed and updated annually to reflect any changes due to annual costs or changes in partner

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composition. It complies with all federal and Commonwealth directives regarding the WIOA.

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

The Board will continue to facilitate access to services provided through the PA CareerLink® System as follows:

Strategically Located Centers. The WDB provides access to services throughout the local area via the two comprehensive PA CareerLink® locations as well as its two affiliate sites. As a result, customers in the most remote parts of the region are no more than 15 to 20 miles from the closest location. Addresses are as follows:

PA CareerLink®: Monroe County, 2937 PA-611, Stroudsburg, PA 18360

PA CareerLink®: Carbon County, 50 E. Locust Street, Nesquehoning, PA 18240

Affiliate Site: Pike County Workforce Development Agency, 837 Route 6, Shohola, PA 18458

Affiliate Site: Workforce Alliance, 650 ½ West Park Street, Honesdale, PA 18431

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

Providing Access in Remote Areas. In addition to the four service locations, the Board will also provide and expand services in the remote locations of local area through the following strategies:

- Promoting use of the PA CareerLink® services available at <http://www.pacareerlink.pa.gov>
- Forming partnerships with the library system to provide service in remote areas of the counties. For example, Community Career & Training Sites, provided by Wayne Pike Workforce Alliance (The Community Education Council) are located within nine Wayne and Pike County libraries. The sites include computers for self-registration and job search, Microsoft office software, resume software, and paper.
- Encouraging and allowing the use of technology, including text messaging, social media, on-line video conferencing, Internet searches, and other state-of-the-art methods to locate, communicate, and contact jobseekers and industry personnel.
- All 4 service locations have established their own websites to provide customers with up-to-date information on services, resources, and events at the individual service location and the region. All PA CareerLink® and affiliate site staff utilize technology, including text messaging, social media, on-line

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video conferencing, Internet searches, and other state-of-the-art methods to locate, communicate, and contact jobseekers and industry personnel. The following are the links for the websites utilized by the 4 county service locations within the Pocono Counties WDA.

www.carboncareerlink.org

www.monroecountycareerlink.org

www.pikepa.org

www.wpworkforce.org

- Expanding its existing network community partnerships to include additional community-based entities, faith-based organizations, employer-sponsored groups, and government organizations to increase access throughout the local area.
- All service locations have referral practices in place for non-co-located partners in our region. AARP provides access to Older American Program services, the closest Job Corp Center provides workshops and recruiting sessions in our service centers, and staff provide information and referrals to the Council of Three Rivers American Indian Center for Native American Program services. There are no HUD employment programs in our region, but the Pocono Counties WDB utilizes Pathstone, Choose Integrity, and Pinebrook Family Answers to provide Youth Offender Re-entry services in all 4 counties.

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

Coordinating with Adult Education. To ensure that individuals participating in basic education and English learning programs have direct connections to career pathways leading to high-quality jobs, the WDB works closely with our Title II service providers within our WDA and in the surrounding region. All service centers track referrals to our Title II Service Providers, since most of the referrals are customers already enrolled in other PA CareerLink® programs or services. The Title II service providers in our region include the Lehigh Carbon Community College and Northampton Community College. We also refer to service providers outside our WDA if appropriate and in line with the needs of the customer, such as the Lackawanna College Lake Region Center. Customers referred to these service providers are tracked and reported as services in the PA CareerLink®. We also utilize other ABE/GED service providers besides Title II. They include the Monroe Career & Technical Institute, Carbon Career & Technical Institute, and Wayne Pike Literacy services. Participant outcomes are recorded on customer's IEP/ISS, through case notes, and as service outcomes as part of ongoing case management services.

Improving Access to Services for English Language Learners and Deaf and Hard of Hearing Individuals. As part of its service strategy, the Board requires that the PA CareerLink® centers provide translation and/or interpretation services. It encourages partners to staff each location with highly-qualified personnel who

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mirror the Center's demographics; utilizing bi-lingual and multi-lingual personnel as needed. Telephone-based translation services may be used for languages other than English. Individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing are afforded equal communication and programmatic access, including the scheduling and use of a PA certified American Sign Language interpreter.

Providing access to Unemployment Compensation Services. UC Courtesy phones and UC PCs are also available at the PA CareerLink® centers for those customers who need access to such services.

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 comprehensive PA CareerLink® sites and satellite locations are accessible to any individuals who may be interested in receiving employment and training services. Locations are certified for compliance by the Office of Equal Opportunity, PA Department of Labor and Industry (L&I).

The Board promotes full accessibility by requiring that its Operator and Partners:

- Conduct and participate in training of staff members and partner personnel regarding services to individuals with disabilities.
- Provide outreach and referral to agencies within the local area, including OVR that offer 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® centers and throughout the local area and coaching them on how to apply for needed resources.
- Include language and information on all brochures, orientation materials, service location websites, Facebook and other social media posts that actively promotes our services to individuals with disabilities. All forms of communication include notices that services are provided in accordance with EO and ADA Policy requirements, and that Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.
- Utilize a Limited English Proficiency policy, including the use of bi- and multi-lingual personnel in the Center as well as providing access to language interpretation services.
- Provide assistive technology items for persons with disabilities, such as adaptive keyboards and/or adjustable work stations. All PA CareerLink® and affiliate sites have Computer Resource Centers with adaptive keyboards, adjustable work stations, and TTY stations. They also have adaptive computer

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hardware and software such as roller ball mouse,

- Conduct a physical inspection of all assistive technology/equipment to ensure functionality on an annual basis.
- Coordinate staff training on assistive technology and equipment to ensure that personnel are fully-trained in usage and application.
- Help individuals with disabilities who may require additional assistance with the registration process.
- Maintain required federal and state notices and postings.

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

The Board understands the critical importance of ensuring that WIOA-funded training programs provide jobseekers with the skills and qualifications that are required and valued by local area employers. It notifies local educational agencies and training providers of initial eligibility provisions and the availability of applications for the Eligible Provider List.

In partnership with the state, it identifies those training providers at the local level whose performance (based on minimum criteria established by the Governor) qualifies them to receive WIOA funds. It then manages the resulting list of training programs that are eligible for ITAs.

The Board considers the following types of criteria as it reviews the applications for initial and ongoing eligibility:

- Performance results:
 - entered unsubsidized employment
 - employment retention
 - average quarterly wage
 - program graduation/certification rates
- Licensure by the Pennsylvania Department of Education
- Current labor market employment projections for proposed occupational training outcomes, including those that the WDB has identified as high priority occupations
- Input received from local area employers regarding skill needs
- Results of customer satisfaction surveys
- Training models that allow for remote learning opportunities

The statewide eligible provider list is updated annually. A local area provider that has been denied inclusion on the list, or has been removed from the list may choose to appeal the decision to the Board.

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The Performance/Training Committee is responsible for researching and reviewing such appeals. Based on the Committee's findings, it may re-instate the provider to the list, or it may continue to exclude it. In each instance the Committee will notify the provider of the decision and the rationale behind it.

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

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

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

Adult and Dislocated Worker workforce activities are provided under the broad categories of Basic Career Services, Individualized Career Services, and Training Services. Basic Career Services are available to any customer, while Individualized Career Services and Training Services are reserved for individuals who meet WIOA eligibility and Priority of Service requirements. Workshops are available both inhouse and remotely and are accessible thru all PA CareerLink® and affiliate sites.

Priority of Services. The WDB recently revised its Priority of Service Policy is to support its efforts to facilitate and prioritize training services to eligible individuals with barriers to employment, as defined in the State Plan. This Priority of Service Policy requires that a minimum of 50% of the Adults served by all WIOA title I service providers meet the definition of individuals with barriers to employment as described in the State Plan.

The Policy includes a WDB designated Pocono Counties Adult Priority Category as follows:

In addition to the 4 statutory priority groups defined in the Act, individualized career and training services can be provided to Adults who meet the Adult General Eligibility criteria, and are underemployed. Underemployed for this group is defined as an Adult whose Family Size/Family Income during the previous 6 months falls below 235% of the Poverty guidelines.

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Interaction of the Adult Priority and Veterans' Priority of Service

The priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses applies across all qualified employment and training programs. The priority of service for public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient is a statutory priority that applies only to the receipt of individualized career services and training services in the WIOA title I Adult program. With regard to the priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses, priority of service for the WIOA title I Adult program must be applied in the following order:

- A. Veterans and eligible spouses who meet the *statutory* priority (public assistance recipient, other low-income individuals including the underemployed, or basic skills deficient) and Adult program eligibility must receive the highest level of priority for services;
- B. Other individuals (not veterans or eligible spouses) who meet the *statutory* priority (public assistance recipient, other low-income individuals including underemployed, or basic skills deficient) and Adult program eligibility then receive the second level of priority for services;
- C. All other veterans and eligible spouses who meet Adult program eligibility, then receive the third level of priority for services;
- D. Other individuals (not veterans or eligible spouses) who do not meet the statutory priority (public assistance recipient, other low-income individuals including underemployed, or basic skills deficient), but do meet a local discretionary priority and Adult program eligibility, then receive the fourth level of priority for services.
- E. Other individuals (not veterans or eligible spouses) who do not meet the statutory priority (public assistance recipient, other low-income individuals including underemployed, or basic skills deficient) and do not meet the local discretionary priority, but do meet Adult program eligibility, then receive the fifth level of priority for services.

The Pocono Counties Priority of Service Policy ensures that a minimum of 51% of Adult Program participants will be individuals in the four (4) statutory priority targeted groups (public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals, basic skills deficient, and both underemployed and low-income).

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.

Training Services Overview. Historically, the Board has primarily used ITAs to fund occupational skills training activities for its customers. Based on a customer's specific needs and circumstances, he or she may choose to enroll in training activities using an ITA or a work-based learning program. Moreover, an ITA-funded training may also be completed in conjunction with work-based learning activities, such as OJT, customized training, work experience, transitional employment, apprenticeships, and internships. Such coordination will be clearly identified in the customer's IEP.

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Each customer will be given the option of selecting the training provider that best meets his or her particular needs from any of the entities that are included on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) as well as any organizations that have been deemed suitable for work-based learning activities.

Workforce Alliance is a PA Department of Education (PDE) approved distance learning provider.

An overview of the Board's ITA and work-based learning polices is provided below:

ITAs. The Board may enroll individuals who are determined eligible and suitable for training services into occupational skills training programs utilizing an ITA. It has adopted the following policies for the provision of ITAs.

Funding is limited to \$8,000 per eligible jobseeker to be used within a five-year time frame. This amount typically covers the costs of the most common ITA-related training programs available in the local area, especially short-term vocational training that does not qualify for traditional financial aid such as PELL or PHEAA grants, as well as standard Department of Education Student loans.

Short-term training programs in high-demand occupations represent approximately 80% of the ITA requests received from the local area's WIOA customers. Most WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker customers have a limited timeframe to pursue their training goals; therefore, the funding cap is designed to cover these requests when alternative financial aid is unavailable. It also enables the Board to fund a larger number of customers.

Work-Based Learning. The Board is currently exploring expanding the use of work-based learning programs, such as work experience, internships, co-op programs, apprenticeships, and transitional jobs, and incumbent worker services to meet any unique/specific skill needs of employers in the area. Policies it will consider as it moves forward include:

- Targeting high-growth industries for potential work-based learning opportunities.
- Educating employers, including chambers and industry associations, about how work-based training can enhance their businesses by decreasing turnover and improving productivity.
- Assisting businesses by streamlining work-based learning paperwork requirements.
- Assessing job candidates to determine their eligibility and suitability for work-based learning opportunities.
- Identifying career pathways in the targeted sectors that align with work-based learning activities.
- Including work-based learning as part of its agendas and topics of discussion during business forums and summits
- Requiring the BST to actively promote work-based learning as key service for local businesses.

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- Establishing time periods and caps for work-based learning activities.

The Pocono Counties WDB has policies to support the following work-based learning opportunities.

- On-the-Job (OJT) Policy
- Apprenticeship Policy
- Transitional Jobs Policy
- Youth Work Experience Policy
- Incumbent Worker Policy

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

Youth Committee. The Youth Committee includes Board members as well as at-large members. They represent the business sector, chambers of commerce, intermediate units, career and technical education, higher education, title I and title II providers, labor unions, county assistance office, vocational rehabilitation, juvenile probation, youth service organizations, associations that provide programming and services for youth, and the nonprofit sector.

The WDB Youth Committee is responsible for identifying high-quality employment and training activities for youth and their families. Through on-site and off-site services, youth may access each of the 14 WIOA Youth program elements as applicable to their needs. Additionally, the Youth Committee prioritizes Out-of-School Youth by emphasizing youth outreach efforts to recruit potentially eligible individuals aged 16-24, and by requiring that at least of 75% of WIOA expenditures be made for services to this key population.

It requires the following components as part of its youth program strategies:

- Youth Educational Achievement Services
- Youth Employment Services
- Additional Support for Youth Services
- Youth Leadership Development Opportunities
- Youth Work Experience
- Youth Training Services
- Assessment Testing Services
- Youth Supportive Services
- Youth Follow-Up Services

Annually, about 50% of the enrolled youth are individuals with disabilities identified either through an IEP or physician's statement. Depending on the extent or severity of the disability, collaborating partners may

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be engaged in the workforce activity. Eligible Youth (ages 14-21) participate in the Paid Work Experience Program. They are mentored by the worksite supervisors as they learn the basic employability skills of attendance, punctuality, proper dress and conduct, accountability, dependability, working with others, and following instructions. Through the intake and interview process with an employment and training specialist, appropriate services are determined and a worksite is selected that best meets the youth's abilities and career plan.

In alignment with the Commonwealth's workforce development goal to establish career pathways, area school districts are working to incorporate the model into their curricula and youth are required to build a career portfolio starting in the ninth grade. Information from the career portfolio assists the employment and training specialist with pertinent data for career counseling and work experience placement.

The summer and year-round work experience activity is customized to the individual's career path and utilizes private, for-profit, and non-profit worksites in accordance with the Commonwealth's workforce development goal to increase opportunities for all youth. In addition, outreach to both the IBEW and the KML Regional Council of Carpenters provides new workforce activities in pre- apprenticeship and apprenticeship experiences.

Some youth with disabilities (e.g. Asperger syndrome, autism, social anxiety, Downs syndrome, and intellectual disabilities) require additional services with a job coach. In these cases, the employment and training specialist collaborates with agencies such as Community Vocational Services (CVS), the Human Resource Center, Fitzmaurice Community Services, Inc., and the OVR to provide a job coach on a daily basis to assist the youth with job training.

Out-of-School Youth (ages 16-24) have expanded workforce activities available to them that include: financial literacy education, entrepreneurial skills training, services about local in- demand industry sectors or occupations, activities to help transition to postsecondary education, and education offered concurrently with workforce preparation activities for a specific occupation. This progression of workforce activities allows the youth to participate in paid work experience followed by either occupational skill training or OJT as the youth transitions into full- time employment in an identified career pathway.

OVR is an active partner in the two PA CareerLink® centers and affiliate sites. They provide direct services to their customers and encourage them to utilize other general and PA CareerLink® partner services in their efforts to pursue both postsecondary educational goals as well as employment opportunities in the local area. OVR has sponsored Career Fairs in local school districts for their customers transitioning from secondary schools to introduce these youth to the employment and training resources available to them after graduation from their respective schools. PA CareerLink® staff and partner programs participate in outreach efforts to youth with disabilities.

In addition, WIOA Youth programs, including the year-round Youth Employment Programs in all four counties provide valuable work-based learning opportunities for many youths with disabilities. A significant percentage of the youth who participate and benefit from the work experience opportunities in these programs are youth with disabilities.

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The PA CareerLink® Monroe County administers the following workforce activities for youth with disabilities within the Pocono Counties Workforce Development Area:

Choose Your Future - Goodwill Industries of NEPA. Goodwill Industries of NEPA is a partner agency co-located with the PA CareerLink® Monroe County. They have contracted with the Pocono Counties Workforce Development Area to provide two separate programs for area youth with disabilities.

1. Choose Your Future – Out-of-School Program

The "Choose Your Future" is designed to assist eligible participants with their transition into the world of work. This will be accomplished by providing each consumer with Career Pathways components that include a basic assessment to determine aptitudes and abilities as well as likes and dislikes.

This will be followed by interviewing techniques and job search skills. Each participant will then receive instruction in resume preparation that will result in each student having their own resume that will greatly assist in their quest for employment.

Staff will then assist each student in an individualized job search. We will assist in scheduling and if necessary, providing transportation to interviews. When a student is hired, staff will provide basic job coaching services to ensure the consumer is accomplishing all job-related tasks as required. Upon completion of 30 calendar days of employment, the participant will be considered "placed". However, staff will maintain contact with each consumer and if necessary, address any issues relating to job retention.

2. Choose Your Future - In-School Program

The "Choose Your Future" is designed to assist eligible participants with their transition into the world of work. This will be accomplished by providing each consumer with Career Pathways components that include a basic assessment to determine aptitudes and abilities as well as likes and dislikes.

This will be followed by interviewing techniques and job search skills. Each participant will then receive instruction in resume preparation that will result in each student having their own resume that will greatly assist in their quest for employment.

Staff will then assist each student in an individualized job search. Assistance is provided in scheduling, and if necessary, providing transportation to interviews. When a student is hired, staff will provide basic job coaching services to ensure the consumer is accomplishing all job-related tasks as required. Upon completion of 30 calendar days of employment, the participant will be considered "placed". At this point, contractual obligations are over. However, staff will maintain contact with each consumer and if necessary, address any issues relating to job retention.

Youth Employment Services (YES). Youth Employment Services (YES) is a partner agency within the PA CareerLink® Monroe County. They have contracted with the Pocono Counties Workforce Development Area to provide three separate programs for area youth which includes youth with disabilities.

1. Summer Youth & Employability Skills Program (In-School)

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Partnering with PA CareerLink®, Youth Employment Service will: recruit youth participants, establish their eligibility for program services, administer tests/assessments, hold orientations for all participants before they begin the programs, develop Individual Service Strategies for each youth, coordinate a match between youth participants and worksites, monitor both participants and worksites for the duration of the five-week summer work program, collect timesheets weekly, deliver paychecks, complete evaluations the end of the summer work experience program to show improvements and carry youth over into the year-long career pathway and employability training program called Project Success.

Participation in the summer work experience program is contingent on youth's participation in Project Success at the end of the summer. Once the summer work experience program ends in August, youth will be enrolled in Project Success, which starts in September and meets every other Saturday through June, following the academic school year.

Seminars are held every other Saturday, so as not to interfere with school hours, are located in a central location so they are easily accessible to youth throughout Monroe County, and feature workshops led by guest speakers who are prominent members of the community.

Topics include: Team building, Leadership and Entrepreneurial Skills, Diversity in Our Community, Education and Career Pathways Research, Financial Literacy - Learning How to Budget, Employability Skills and Resume Writing, Non-Profit/Service Organizations Day, Healthcare Careers Day, Local and State Government Careers Day, Media and Communication Skills/Public Speaking, Mock Interview and Job Fair Preparation, and Volunteer/Job Shadowing Day with a mentor matching the youth's career goal.

Through these workshops, Project Success provides career guidance and job training skills, encouraging youth to take an active role in their future careers and attaining leadership, problem-solving and self-sufficiency skills, ultimately providing the tools needed to successfully obtain employment. Many of youth not only learn these invaluable skills, but utilize them in real world situations and inspire their peers, furthering the growth of the community. By giving them insight into career pathways, educational institutions that are close to home and can offer the programs they want to pursue after high school, and introducing them to community leaders and like-minded peers, youth show stronger determinations to finish high school and have the knowledge and skillset to navigate the post- secondary education transition

2. Out-of-School Youth Employment Preparation

Youth Employment Service will recruit Out-of-School Youth, establish their eligibility for high school equivalency or classroom training services, administer tests and tutoring sessions for those who need remedial testing, establish employment and education goals on an Individual Service Strategy to develop a plan to best achieve those goals, and place youth into the high school equivalency or classroom training program, depending on their needs. YES will conduct year-round eligibility determination for youth who require PA CareerLink® services.

While the educational goals are being addressed with in high school equivalency or classroom training programs, Out-of-School Youth will also be expected to attend Project Success Beyond workshops. The

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curriculum follows the same structure as Project Success for in-school youth, but Project Success Beyond seminars are offered during the week in the evenings.

Seminars are held every other week in the evenings, are located in a central location so they are easily accessible to youth throughout Monroe County, and feature workshops led by guest speakers who are prominent members of the Community. Topics include: Teambuilding, Leadership and Entrepreneurial Skills, Diversity in Our Community, Education and Career Pathways Research, Financial Literacy - Learning How to Budget, Employability Skills and Resume Writing, Non-Profit/Service Organizations Day, Healthcare Careers Day, Local and State Government Careers Day, Media and Communication Skills/Public Speaking, Mock Interview and Job Fair Preparation, and Volunteer/Job Shadowing Day with a mentor matching the youth's career goal.

Through these workshops, Project Success provides career guidance and job training skills, encouraging youth to take an active role in their future careers and attaining leadership, problem-solving and self-sufficiency skills, ultimately providing the tools needed to successfully obtain employment. Many youths learn these invaluable skills and utilize them in real world situations and inspire their peers, furthering the growth of the community. By giving them insight into career pathways, educational institutions that are close to home and can offer the programs they want to pursue after high school, and introducing them to community leaders and like-minded peers, youth show stronger determinations to finish their high school equivalency or classroom training program and have the knowledge and skill set to enter the workforce and/or pursue more postsecondary education.

3. Project Discovery

YES is partnering with the PA CareerLink® Monroe County and Northampton Community College for Project Discovery. It offers a variety of career exploration and job readiness programs for youth ages 14 - 17, both in-school and out-of-school. Project Discovery program shows youth how to search and explore careers, choose careers, gain workplace skills, find a job, and tap into what Northeastern Pennsylvania employers are looking for in entry-level employees. Activities include:

- Identifying key career interest
- Discovering a few desirable careers Plan steps to chosen careers
- Developing critical skills
- Measuring progress
- Completing WIOA application forms
- Completing of customer profile
- Administering tests and assessing all participants
- Coordinating participant orientation
- Coordinating Project Curriculum with Northampton Community College
- Monitoring participants and their progress
- Conducting workshops for participants in a variety of topics

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- Developing a career path for participants
- Conducting various job shadowing opportunities
- Building resumes and conducting mock interviews
- Following up and involving participants in Youth Job Fairs
- Enrolling participants in yearlong Project Success (leadership program)

Targeted Out-of-School Youth (Youth Offender Programs)

The Pocono Counties WDB recently issued an RFP to solicit proposals to provide assistance to adjudicated youth or youth offenders with their employment or training goals. Title I Youth Service providers in Carbon, Monroe, Pike, and Wayne have been involved in efforts to assist county parole, probation, and offender re-entry task groups with services to facilitate offenders' efforts to secure employment and thereby reduce recidivism rates of local citizens.

The Pocono Counties WDB approved Youth Offender proposals from the following service providers to offer employment and related case management services to WIOA Eligible Youth Offenders.

- Pathstone, Inc.
- Pinebrook Family Answers
- Choosing Integrity
- PACCT Program offered through the Wayne Pike Workforce Alliance

The Service Providers listed above will work with local parole, probation, and correctional facility staff, in coordination with the Title I Youth Service staff in Carbon, Monroe, Pike, and Wayne counties to identify, recruit, and enroll Youth Offenders in programs designed to assist them in addressing barriers to employment and pursuing long term employment and training goals that will help them avoid reoffending and rejoining their local communities as productive citizens.

Referral and Co-Enrollment.

The Board promotes the concept of referral and co-enrollment of youth into partner programs, including TANF services. TANF eligible youth aged 12-24 are provided with a year-round program that includes life skills; job searching skills; and career awareness activities. Life skills focus on such things as financial literacy (i.e. budgeting, credit card usage, etc.), community service, substance abuse and wellness, diversity, sexual harassment, time management, conflict resolution, getting along with co-workers, respecting supervisors, and leadership. Job searching skills activities include how to apply for a job, put a resume together, interview for a job, and keep a job.

Title I Youth Service Providers are responsible for TANF YDP participant recruitment, eligibility determination, and program oversight. Service Provider staff work closely with CAO staff in an effort to identify TANF Youth for program participation. Youth Service providers use the same pre-application as part of their screening process in order to identify whether the youth qualify under WIOA, TANF, or SLIP guidelines. They also conduct outreach and advertising to identify employers that may be interested in participating in work experience, transitional employment, or internship activities for eligible youth.

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

Participants are also exposed to information about the local business community and labor market information. Youth are given an opportunity to participate in job shadowing activities as well as campus tours. Additionally, work experience opportunities are available to eligible participants, ages 12-24. Most work experiences occur during the summer months and worksites are chosen as close to the participants' homes as possible so that transportation is minimal.

There are no plans to utilize incentives for youth participants at this time. The Pocono Counties WDB and Title I Service Providers have discussed various proposals to utilize youth incentives as part of our WIOA Youth Program Service strategy a number of times. The WDB and the majority of Title I Service Providers have chosen not to utilize incentives for a variety of reasons. Those reasons are as follows:

- Consistent record of achieving or exceeding Youth performance goals without the use of incentives.
- Excessive amount of staff time needed to ensure consistent application, documentation, and necessary fiscal oversight and controls relative to possible program outcomes.
- Current services are sufficiently liberal and rewarding to youth goals/outcomes to negate the need for incentives.
- No evidence that the lack of incentives is impacting Youth recruitment or outcomes in any negative manner.

TANF YDP Reporting and Youth Provider Contact Information

The Fiscal Agent, Susan Rhoads-Procina, (570) 325-2462, sprocina@ptd.net is responsible for the tracking and reporting TANF YDF activities and expenditures for the Pocono Counties WDA.

The TANF YDP Youth Providers are as follows:

Carbon County Workforce Training
Heather Brown
(570) 325-2701 ext. 128
hnbrown@ptd.net

Monroe County Job Training
Kristi Hammond
(570) 620-2850 ext. 306
kahmcl@ptd.net

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Pike County Workforce Training
Cynthia DeFebo
(570) 296-2909
cdefebo@pikepa.org

Wayne Pike Workforce Alliance
Helene Mancuso
(570) 229-3420
hmancuso@wpworkforce.org

WIOA Youth Eligibility Requirements. The Board and Youth Committee review and approve all outlines and tools for WIOA Youth documentation requirements, including the policy for “requires additional assistance to complete an education program or to secure and hold employment” for eligibility and enrollment for WIOA Youth program services. To enroll in WIOA Youth programming, a youth must provide documentation to determine eligibility for the following requirements:

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

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

In-School Youth who meets all other WIOA Youth Program eligibility guidelines who

- a. lacks any prior work history, and
- b. would benefit from participation in WIOA Work Experience Program services, as determined by the WIOA Youth Program staff.

Out-of-School Youth who meets all other WIOA Youth Program eligibility guidelines who

- a. lacks any prior work history, or who
- b. lacks any postsecondary high priority occupation credential and

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- c. would benefit from either participation in WIOA work experience, OJT, or ITA services, as determined by the WIOA Youth Program staff.

The Board requires that the criteria for inclusion under this category to be verified by the Case Manager and clearly documented in the individual's case file to demonstrate that it is reasonable, quantifiable, and evidence-based. Examples of such documentation include copies of school records, assessment results, court records, and attestation regarding prior work history, as applicable.

Coordination with WIOA Title IV, Youthbuild, Job Corps, and AmeriCorps programs

Our PA CareerLink® and affiliate sites include OVR staff tasked with Pre-employment Transition services for in-school youth with disabilities. As partners in our efforts to assist all youth transitioning from secondary to post-secondary education and employment, they are well placed to make referrals to any services available to assist eligible youth with their individual employment and training plans. The service site staff also provide referrals and information to all youth customers interested in area Youthbuild, Job Corps, or AmeriCorps Service opportunities in our region through the PA CareerLink® referral system. Our service sites also promote these services and serve as recruiting or interview sites for these programs at no cost to the service providers. The PA CareerLink® Customer referrals system provides tracking of customer referrals to these program providers.

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

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

In addition to these proactive services, Rapid Response activities are triggered when the L&I learns of a planned closure or layoff through a notice as required by the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act, through the media, or by contacts in the local area. Rapid Response services may also be offered in the event of a mass job dislocation as a result of a disaster.

The Board, in collaboration with the Commonwealth's Rapid Response Coordinator, has established a Rapid Response Team that is comprised of key workforce partners including representatives from PA CareerLink® center staff, L&I, organized labor, and others. Fact Findings and Rapid Response Informational Meetings, which includes presentations and organized activities, are led by Bureau of Workforce Development & Operations Rapid Response staff throughout all phases of the layoff/closure business cycle.

The partners work together to ensure the system implements a strategic and comprehensive approach to address area dislocations. Working together allows for the coordination of services and information-sharing

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which focus the use of public resources aimed at supporting workers to generate greater outcomes/economies of scale and establish a system that is relevant and responsive. Specifically, the local, regional, and state representatives on the team share the responsibilities for providing the information and services to affected workers.

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 WDB works with its secondary and postsecondary educational partners to develop strategies to meet the skill needs of the region's employers and jobseekers. These educational partners are represented on the Board, where they provide insight and are made aware of the educational needs and skill gaps experienced by employers in finding qualified workers.

The Board supports Business/Education Partnership activities throughout the local area to foster understanding between educators and employers regarding the employment and career pathways available to students after graduation. The PA CareerLink® center and affiliate sites participate in Career Exploration Programs with local school districts to introduce students to the job search and career guidance services and resources available to them.

PA CareerLink® staff participate on Advisory Boards to local Career and Technical Schools and have close working relationships with the secondary and postsecondary schools in the region. This interaction with educational partners includes discussion of emerging occupational training needs, as well as feedback to educational partners regarding the barriers faced by adult jobseekers in pursuit of postsecondary educational goals. The Board is a strong supporter of the area Community Colleges in applying for funding to expand the training opportunities available to its jobseeker customers. Ongoing discussions have led to new approaches to training, such as the programs offered by area community colleges through the TAACT (Path) Grant. These programs offer more flexible scheduling, stackable skills, and other features which make them more accessible to adult and dislocated jobseeker customers trying to acquire or expand their occupational skills in high demand occupations.

The following is a list of the educational partners and the specialized resources available.

The Pocono Counties workforce system is primarily served by the following postsecondary education institutions: LCCC, Northampton Community College and East Stroudsburg University.

Although the main campuses of Lehigh and Northampton are located outside of the local area, they have a long history of promoting their services to residents of Carbon, Monroe, Pike, and Wayne Counties.

Additionally, Northampton Community College recently completed the construction of a much larger, state-of-the-art facility in Monroe County to further expand their services in the region.

Most of the Secondary School Districts in Carbon County are sponsors of the LCCC, reducing the costs of postsecondary education for residents of these school districts. In addition, the Carbon Career and Technical Institute has collaborated with LCCC to offer a wider variety of Adult and Continuing Education

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course offerings at their recently updated facility in Carbon County.

East Stroudsburg University partners with the WDB on numerous Economic Development projects. For example, it has a Research and Economic Development Department that incorporates the following initiatives to support the Economic Development efforts of the region: Business Accelerator Program, Entrepreneurial Leadership Center, Workforce Development Department, and the Pocono Mountain Keystone Innovation Zone.

The Wayne Pike Workforce Alliance in Hawley is the Community Education Council (CEC) that serves as an intermediary and broker of training programs based on identified need and demand for Wayne and Pike Counties. The CEC provides educational opportunities that build and support life-long learning in the area.

Carbon and Monroe Counties also have a wide variety of Adult and Continuing Education opportunities for area residents at the Carbon Career and Technical Institute and the Monroe Career and Technical Institute. Each is centrally located in its respective county. The school districts in Wayne and Pike Counties along with the Wayne Pike Workforce Alliance are currently working to expand Career and Technical Education programs despite not having a Career Technology Center.

Perkins Act Section 134 requires lead entities to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment to evaluate the progress of CTE Programs aligned with employment priorities.

Perkins Grant lead entities in the Pocono Counties Workforce Development Area include Lehigh Carbon Community College, Northampton Community College, East Stroudsburg University, Carbon Career & Technical Institute, and the Monroe Career and Technical Institute. All entities listed have had a long-standing professional relationship with the Pocono Counties Workforce Development Board. Administrative Staff and various Board Members serve on a number of Boards and Committees with our Perkins Partners.

The Board provides interaction and labor market statistics including current, short and long-term occupation projections and/or career pathways for in-demand industry sectors. Perkins partners utilize labor market data for training programs. Board collaboration with Perkins Act Grantees assist with the development of academic and technical standards for students in the preparation of high priority and in-demand occupations. The Board maintains the High Priority Occupation listings for the area identifying job categories that are in-demand by employers and likely to provide jobs with family sustaining wages.

The PA Department of Education (PDE) has designated the Wayne Pike Workforce Alliance, as a Community Education Council (CEC) serving Wayne and Pike Counties. The alliance partners with Perkins recipients to incorporate a comprehensive local needs assessment as required by PDE.

High school equivalency and literacy services are available in the local area through a number of training providers, including the LCCC, the Carbon Career and Technical Institute, Northampton Community College, the Monroe Career and Technical Institute, and the Wayne Pike Adult Literacy Program. The PA CareerLink® centers and affiliate sites refer customers in need of literacy or high school equivalency services to these providers, as well as assist eligible customers with the costs of participating in these programs.

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ESL providers in the local area include the LCCC, Northampton Community College, and the Wayne/Pike Alliance. Individuals in need of ESL services may also utilize the Greater Hazleton Metro Ministries and Luzerne County Community College programs located in Luzerne County.

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.

Coordination of Roles and Responsibilities. The WDB’s approach to workforce development efforts are centered on quality customer service to jobseekers and employers, the leveraging of various resources and funding streams to eliminate duplication of services, collaboration with other partner agencies, and support for a service delivery structure which maximizes access to all customers within the Pocono Counties while allowing for flexibility in each county to design service strategies around the needs and resources available in their respective labor markets. The WDB has developed close working relationships with the other Boards in the region, supporting regional approaches to the workforce needs of Northeastern Pennsylvania. Regional Rapid Response services, and collaboration in a wide variety of Industry Partnership programs are testament to this collaborative approach.

The WIOA staff and Wagner-Peyser staff work closely together to provide the basic career services needed by most customers and make the most efficient use of the staffing resources available in the local area. As a result, the WDB maintains a high level of funding devoted to training services in the local area. The effectiveness of this approach is also reflected in the long and consistent record of meeting the performance goals set by the U.S. and Pennsylvania Department of Labor.

The service delivery structure allows for flexibility in service strategies, access to a wide range of services, and the ability to share and effectively utilize the resources available in the local area. Even as career guidance information and employer recruiting strategies have moved into Internet based platforms, the WDB recognizes that a significant segment of both its jobseeker and employer customers may be better served by maintaining direct access to staff.

The Board’s ability to efficiently manage available funding resources is reflected by the fact that it has continued to maintain two Comprehensive PA CareerLink® centers and two satellite facilities while other areas have been forced to close sites and consolidate services in fewer locations.

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

Referral Mechanism. “Participant program referrals are made through the workforce development system of record publicly branded as the PA CareerLink® online system. Referrals for services are sent to internal and external agencies that have earned access approval. The online referral system connects agencies across county lines. Referrals to other agencies can be easily acknowledged, and approved agency staff can

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use the system for participant outcome follow-up.”

The assessment tools and orientation information provided to both new and returning customers serve 2 purposes. They provide customers with information regarding the services and programs offered by the partners in our PA CareerLink® Delivery System and are designed to assist in identifying the initial service needs of the customer, and referring them to the partner staff or program best aligned with their goals.

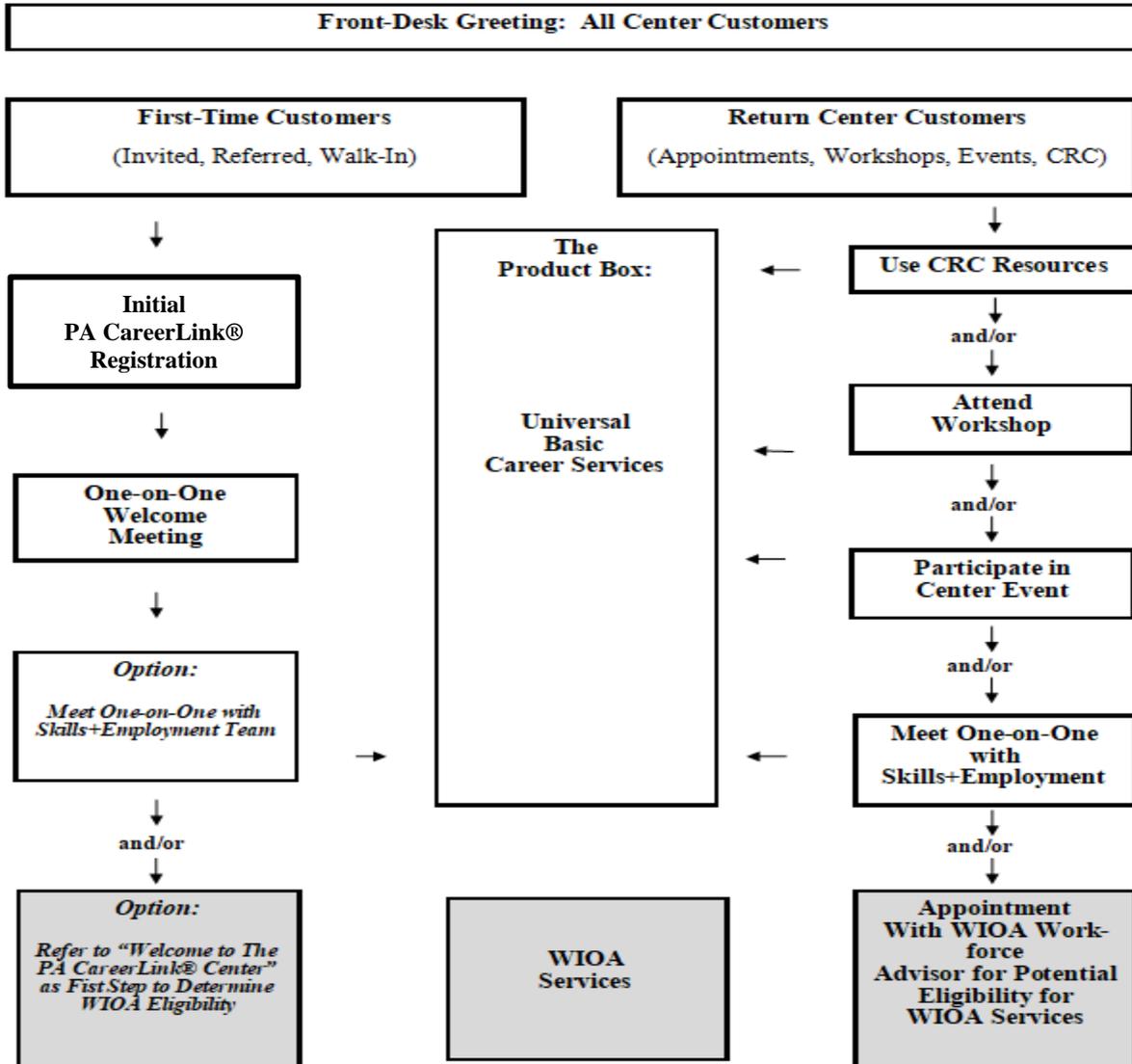
Customer interactions with PA CareerLink® partner staff provide more information and often lead to both internal or external referrals to other PA CareerLink® partner services. These referrals may be handled informally and immediately if the partner staff are available at that time, or through the use of the Customer referral tool. The PA CareerLink® referral feature and case notes documents the coordination between partner programs and services provided to the customer. Partner staff utilize customer information available in the PA CareerLink®, such as prior services, case notes, referral information, and service outcomes to avoid duplicating services provided by other partners and to ensure that other partner staff assisting the customer have access to a complete record of the customer’s participation in the PA CareerLink® system.

Orientation and Customer Flow. An individual orientation process is used. Therefore, customers do not have to wait to participate in a group orientation before using services. This same orientation information and related documents are also readily available on the websites for the individual PA CareerLink® and affiliate sites to further promote ease-of-access.

The registration form is a uniform document that captures all data needed for the PA CareerLink®. Staff members also use a customized IEP to assist the jobseeker in goal setting. Copies are shared with partner programs, with the individual’s permission.

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

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Staff Development. Partner staff have, and continue to receive information on current services, partner program information, and new initiatives through e-mail, and regular staff meetings.

These meetings provide all partner staff with an awareness of services available to customers and how to direct anyone in need of these services to the appropriate staff.

Partner staff have also received training on Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) requirements, program eligibility, emergency procedures, working with special populations, and community resources available for customers.

The One-Stop Operator Consortium will be tasked with establishing a formal professional development process for the system on an ongoing basis.

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

The WDB will review the RFP for Title II programming to ensure that educational opportunities will align with the targeted employment needs of the region. Specifically, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) will establish procedures, and accompanying rubrics and documentation, for title II applications to be provided to local boards to review for alignment with their local plan. After reviewing and evaluating the applications, the local boards will be responsible for submitting recommendations to PDE and will also be responsible to provide technical assistance later in the process.

The PA CareerLink® center and affiliate sites have close working relationships with the title II Adult Education and Literacy providers within the local area. Cross-referrals are made for customers in need of training or job search assistance. Eligible customers receive ITA services and supportive services to assist with high school equivalency testing fees, etc. WIOA funds may also be utilized to increase the capacity of the Adult Basic Education programs to provide services to more customers when needed.

WDB and PA CareerLink® staff participate in Title II Service Provider Advisory Board meetings and discussions. Title II Service Providers and administrative staff also are part of the Pocono Counties Operator Consortium and active partners in our local service centers. These linkages and discussions between the WDB, program staff, and our Title II Service Providers are designed to assist both entities in coordinating services, leveraging the available resources to meet our mission goals, and to assist in improving customer outcomes. Title II Service providers were provided copies of the Pocono Counties WDA Local Draft Plan as it was developed, and asked to provide input and/or corrections as we work to finalize this Plan.

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

Outreach and Intake. Outreach, intake, and eligibility, including the identification of an individual's potential barrier(s) to employment are discussed in section 4.11.

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

The menu of services available to jobseekers, including individuals with barriers to employment is as follows:

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Basic Career Services include:

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

Individualized Career Services include:

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

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Training Services include:

- ITA
- OJT

- Customized training
- Job readiness training

- Workplace training/co-op programs

- Skills upgrading and retraining

- Pre-apprenticeship / Apprenticeship
- Transitional jobs

- Incumbent worker training

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

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

Services to Individuals with Disabilities. OVR provides eligible WIOA title IV customers with individualized diagnostic, vocational counseling and guidance, vocational evaluation, restoration, training, and job placement services. Eligible and potentially eligible 14 to 21year old in-school youth with disabilities receive pre-employment transition services including work-based learning experiences, job shadowing and vocational counseling and guidance. Group training services for youth include workplace readiness, independent living skills, and self-advocacy skills.

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

The BST, along with affiliate site staff have the responsibility of supporting business engagement activities including the following functions:

- Support staff-assisted job orders
- Screen and refer qualified job candidates to job openings
- Outreach to new employers

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- Promote services such as OJT, Apprenticeship Services, incumbent worker training, and customized training
- Assist with Rapid Response when companies lay off workers
- Conduct layoff aversion activities

The BST, along with affiliate site staff conduct their employer engagement activities with personnel from other programs such as veterans, L&I Rapid Response, OVR, Older Worker program (Title V) to ensure non-duplication of efforts. Due to the small size of the staffing levels in our PA CareerLink® and affiliate sites all partner staff are involved with both job seeker and business customer services. All partners involved in Business Customer outreach efforts, including Title I, Title III, Veterans, and OVR are integrated members of the Business Service Teams, and coordination of outreach efforts to businesses takes place regularly due to the close working relationship and overlapping responsibilities of the partner staff in the PA CareerLink® and Affiliate sites. Information on Business customer outreach efforts and needs is shared and takes place continuously, independently from formal PA CareerLink® staff and BST meetings. General PA CareerLink® staff meetings include discussions of Business Service customer contacts and needs to ensure all partners are aware of developments and can assist in providing solutions to the needs Business customers

With respect to Title II services, the BST, along with affiliate site staff will take the lead on engaging employer inquiries regarding adult basic education and literacy, but will coordinate with literacy and education partners through the One-Stop Operator.

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

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

Employers are also invited to UC Seminars that are made available at the PA CareerLink®. UC representatives make presentations on a variety of topics, including: UC Updates; Separation Issues; UC Appeals/Hearings: Suitable Work; and, Relief from Charges.

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

Opportunities exist in Pocono Counties to enhance employer and business engagement with education through the Teacher in the Workplace and Business Education Programs. Both programs have provided an opportunity for educators to engage local employers in experiences that assist in discussions relating to student curriculum and the skills necessary for a particular occupation. Employer feedback with educators supports program development that is relevant to employers. The Summer Internship Program is an

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excellent tool for educators and the private sector to engage in a dialogue discussing the educational component with actual work experience.

Board Members have been promoting the value of serving on Occupational Advisory Councils at local school districts and career and technical schools. This interaction encourages broader business participation on Comprehensive Guidance Committees (i.e. 339) and participation in school sponsored career fairs. The Teacher in the Workplace Program has businesses opening their shops to local educators and strengthening engagement with the school districts to continue to provide opportunities to connect their respective industries to the classroom.

The Pocono Counties WDB has recently procured, through Industry Partnership Funding, a Manufacturing Resource Guide that can be utilized by employers to quickly and easily identify a wide range of services that may help them with their business and workforce development needs. The guide is regional in design, and marketing efforts are starting to promote its use and awareness within the Business and Economic Development Community.

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?

It is the WDB's experience that the provision of supportive services is not the most effective use of its funds. Therefore, it limits them to address either minimal barriers to employment or training goals. This approach allows the Board to serve more customers and cover more of their training costs.

The PA CareerLink® centers and affiliate sites are central repositories that provide information to individuals in need of supportive services. Staff are knowledgeable and have extensive experience and relationships with local, county and regional entities that provide support services to individuals in need of said services. Examples of community and regional partners include the following services, child care, child support, dependent care, housing, Medicaid, CHIP, SNAP, TANF, counselling services, and veterans' organizations available thru the PA CareerLink® and affiliate sites. Referrals are directed to Interagency Councils, Family Collaborative Board, Drug & Alcohol Services, Social Security, county assistance offices, literacy groups, homeless programs, community churches, libraries, food pantries, Domestic Relations, Children and Youth, Area Agency on Aging, Mental Health providers, abuse and rape crisis centers, legal services, credit counseling services and any and all agencies not listed.

The transportation barriers faced by customers in the area is more readily addressed by ensuring that all customers within the four counties have access to services through either a comprehensive PA CareerLink® center or an affiliate site.

The Pocono Counties WDA is rural in nature, as are many areas of the state, covering an area of 2,400 square miles. Due to its rural nature, and lack of significant population centers, only Monroe County has sufficient population to support a mass transportation system. And even within Monroe County, it primarily serves a relatively small but dense population and business corridor along Route 611 from the county seat in Stroudsburg to Mount Pocono, a distance of approximately 20 miles.

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For the most part, the public transportation services that are available in the local area are publicly subsidized buses and van services designed to assist elderly and disabled residents in getting to medical appointments or the retail shopping centers in their respective areas. Private taxi services are also available, but are very expensive.

The balance of Monroe County and the residents of Carbon, Pike, and Wayne Counties rely primarily on private car ownership, or carpooling to get to and from work. The Pocono Counties jobseekers have a long history of commuting to work, both within the boundaries of the four counties, as well as commuting to employment opportunities in the larger labor markets of the surrounding Luzerne, Lackawanna, Lehigh, and Northampton Counties. Over 40% of area residents commute to work outside of the local area. A significant number of residents also commute to labor markets in New York and New Jersey. The large numbers of residents commuting to New York City and other out of state areas has resulted in public bus routes, offered by Trans-Bridge Lines, designed around the needs of these commuters.

Despite the limited public transportation options available in the Pocono Counties, the WDB and its PA CareerLink® centers and affiliate sites are involved in ongoing regional and local initiatives to find solutions to transportation issues. The WDB is an active partner in the Northeastern Pennsylvania Alliance (NEPA), designated by the Commonwealth of PA as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for Carbon, Monroe, Pike, and Schuylkill Counties, which serve to assist and advise NEPA with assessing the transportation needs of these counties.

In addition, the PA CareerLink® centers and affiliate sites are working to promote the efforts of the Commuter Services of PA organization to address the transportation barriers faced by many of the region's jobseekers. This organization assists employers and jobseekers in establishing carpooling and other options to assist them with their transportation needs.

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5. COMPLIANCE

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

With respect to the provision of services to individuals with disabilities, the Board will utilize OVR expertise regarding assessment, career pathways development, education training and placement services. OVR has a very effective professional development program that will assist in assuring proper cross training of staff, technical assistance and sharing information. The Board will encourage the sharing of PA CareerLink® information that can assist in serving mutual clients. Because OVR serves as a full partner in the PA CareerLink® system and holds a seat on the Board, the local area is well-positioned to serve individuals with disabilities.

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 WDB uses the following process to ensure the collection of debts from its sub-recipients.

1. The WDB will comply with the Policies and Procedures Manual regarding the formulation of its Sub-recipient Audit Plan. In addition, any irregularities disclosed during the monitoring review of a Sub-recipient may result in an immediate audit of the Sub- recipient regardless of the dollar amount involved. This action will be initiated by the Board.
2. Upon issuance of the initial report, a copy will be submitted to the Sub-recipient, by certified mail, for review and corrective action. The Sub-recipient will have a period of thirty (30) days, from the date of mailing, to provide additional documentation supporting any questionable or unallowed costs. Following receipt of any additional documentation, the WDB Chairperson will issue an Initial Determination of all Findings. The Sub-recipient will then have the opportunity to request an informal audit resolution meeting to discuss any findings not yet resolved. Should a request be received, an informal meeting will be granted. If a request is not received within 30 days, a final determination will be issued. This final determination will list costs that remain disallowed and will explain the Sub-recipient's right to request a hearing before an independent hearing officer within 10 days. The independent hearing officer will be required to hold a hearing within thirty days. Both the WDB and/or Sub-recipient have the right to appeal this formal decision to the L&I. This appeal; however, will only be accepted if all local administrative remedies have been exhausted, i.e., informal meeting followed by a formal hearing. This determination will also list as a debt any amounts determined to be unallowable. Upon approval by the L&I of this determination, the audit will be considered resolved.
3. Upon receipt of the Hearing Officer's Decision, the Sub-recipient and/or WDB shall have a right to formally appeal to the L&I through both informal followed by formal hearings, and only after all local remedies have been exhausted. The Appeal must be submitted in writing with a copy to the WDB Chairperson within 10 days of the receipt of the Final Determination.

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4. Should the Sub-recipient choose not to appeal the Final Determination; payment of the established debt will be due within 30 days of receipt of the determination. Should the amount due not be returned within the required time, a second request will be sent with a 20-day response limitation. Should the second request not result in the payment of the debt, a third request will be sent allowing a 10-day response limitation. Interest will be charged, after consulting with the L&I, on the outstanding debt after the initial thirty (30) day period. Should no response be received following the third request, the matter will be referred to legal counsel for appropriate action.

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

The Board is currently functioning as a high-performing Board in that it consistently achieves the following:

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

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

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

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

The Pocono Counties WDA Local and Regional Plans was distributed to all WDB members, County Boards of Commissioners, PA CareerLink® and Affiliate site staff and interested community partners as soon as the updated demographic information and the draft Plans were completed and available prior to our regularly scheduled Board meeting of March 3, 2021. During discussions of the Draft Plans at our Board Meeting of

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3/3/21 we asked PCWDA Board Members, Local Elected Officials, PA CareerLink® and affiliate site staff and community partners to review the Draft Plans and submit their input, corrections, or comments to the Pocono Counties WDA Administrative office prior to the end of the 30-day comment period, ending 3/29/21. Administrative staff also invited any interested Board Members, Commissioners, staff, and community partners to participate in a Draft Local Planning Zoom meeting which was held on March 11, 2021.

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

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

To ensure an open opportunity for public comment, the Board published the Pocono Counties Local WIOA Plan as well as the Northeast Regional WIOA Plan on its website for the 30-day period beginning February 26, 2021 and ending March 29, 2021. Public Notices were also published in the primary newspapers for the region.

Additionally, notification of the availability of both the Local and Regional WIOA Plans for public comment was directly distributed via email to representatives of local businesses, labor organizations, educational institutions, and news media.

The Board received 2 (two) comments regarding the Draft Local Plan, which appear as Attachment 6. The Boards responses to those comments and any changes to the Draft Plan narrative are included in this attachment.

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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 July 1, 2021.

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 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 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 procurement policy – Must describe formal procurement procedures.
- Local area MOU(s).
- Program management policies and processes addressing, at a minimum, layoff assistance; equal opportunity for customers; complaints and grievances; supportive services; needs related payments; incentives; file management; eligibility determination and verification; self-sufficiency criteria; self-attestation/ and certification random sampling; priority of service; stipends; 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; work-based training policies including incumbent worker training, OJT, CT, and apprenticeship.
- Risk management policy and process including records retention and public access; public records requests; monitoring, grievance; incident; and disaster recovery plan.
- Human resources policy and process including employee classification; benefits; holidays and PTO; recruitment and selection; employee development; discipline; layoffs, terminations and severance; sexual harassment; and equal opportunity/non- discrimination.
- Professional services contract(s) for administrative services such as staffing and payroll, if applicable.

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REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – WIOA Title I Programs Performance Accountability Table

Attachment 2 - WIOA Local Workforce System Organizational Chart Model

Attachment 3 - Workforce Development Delivery System Program Partner/Provider List

Attachment 4- L M I S u p p o r t i n g D o c u m e n t a t i o n

Attachment 5- Links to NEPA Manufacturing IP Outcomes

Attachment 6- P u b l i c C o m m e n t s

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Attachment 1

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

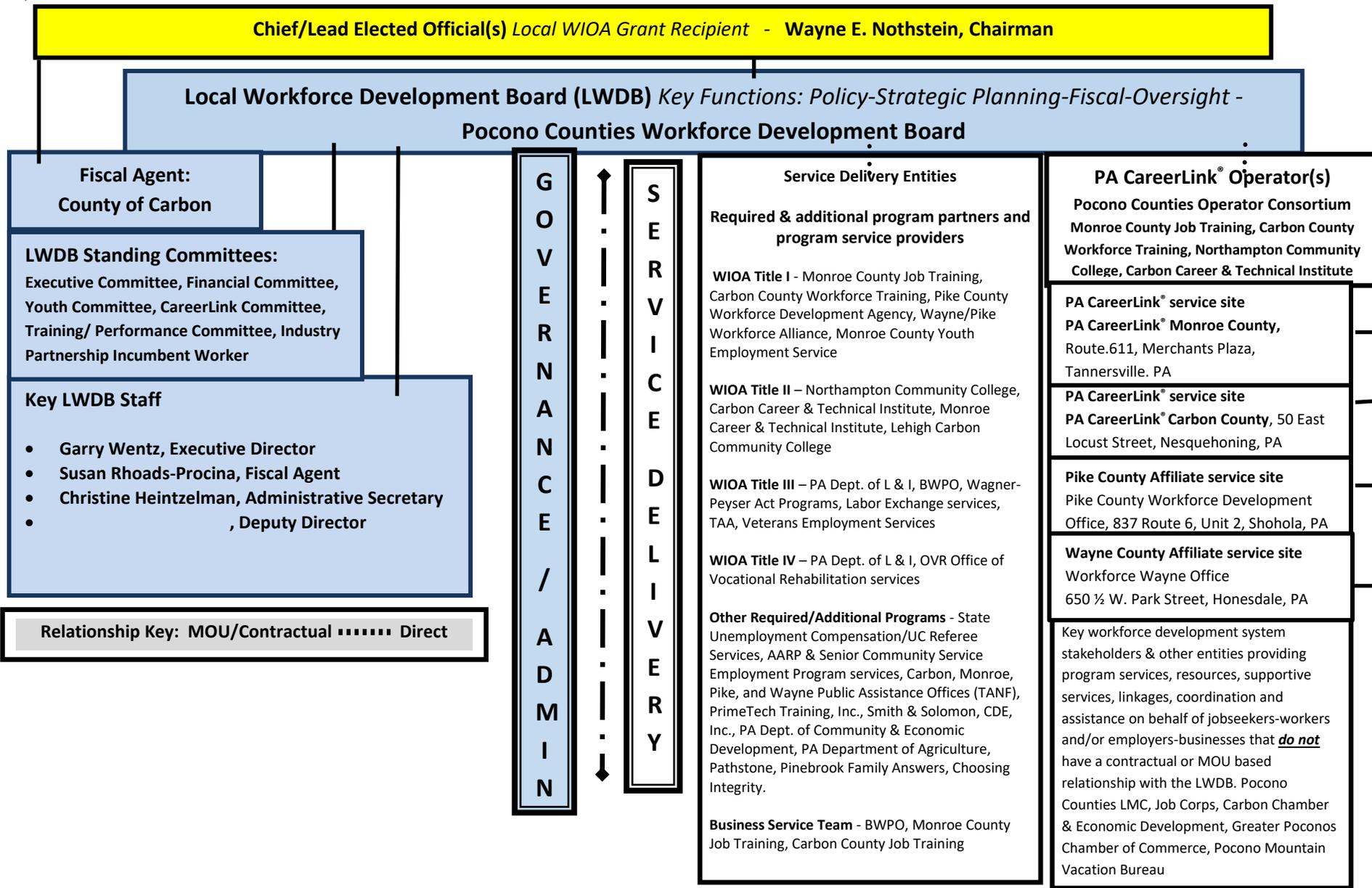
The *WIOA Title I Programs Performance Accountability Table* is for the benefit of the public and must be updated accordingly. Local boards must edit the table’s two columns with the appropriate program year(s) to correctly match the **most recent*** LWDA-negotiated performance goals and attained performance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

LWDA Name: Pocono Counties WDA		
WIOA Title I Programs (Adult-Dislocated Worker-Youth) Performance Measures	LWDA’s WIOA Title I Programs Negotiated Performance Goals - *Program Year(s): 2020 – 2021	LWDA’s WIOA Title I Programs Attained Performance Results - *Program Year: 2019
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	Negotiated Goals	Attained Performance
Adult	74%	78.8%
Dislocated Worker	78%	79.1%
Youth	65%	72.4%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	Negotiated Goals	Attained Performance
Adult	72%	73.6%
Dislocated Worker	76%	82.2%
Youth	62%	74%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)	Negotiated Goals	Attained Performance
Adult	\$6,200	\$6,361
Dislocated Worker	\$7,800	\$8,170
Youth	\$3,250	\$3,800
Credential Attainment Rate	Negotiated Goals	Attained Performance
Adult	80%	85.7%
Dislocated Worker	70%	79.5%
Youth	65%	58.3%
Measurable Skill Gains	Negotiated Goals	Attained Performance
Adult	40%	49.2%
Dislocated Worker	40%	45.2%
Youth	40%	27.4%

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Attachment 2 WIOA Local Workforce System Organizational Chart Model

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



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Attachment 3

Effective Date: **July 1, 2021**

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

Program Name	Program Authorization	Local Area Partner/Provider
POC address	POC telephone	POC website/email
Adult Employment and Training Activities	WIOA Title I, Adult, Youth, DW	Monroe County Job Training
2937 Route 611 Tannersville, PA 18372	(570) 620-2850	www.monroecountycareerlink.org dahmcl@ptd.net
Adult Employment and Training Activities	WIOA Title I, Adult, Youth, DW	Carbon County Workforce Training
50 E. Locust Street, Nesquehoning, PA 18240	(570) 325-2701	www.carboncareerlink.org shellen@ptd.net
Adult Employment and Training Activities	WIOA Title I, Adult, Youth, DW	Pike County Workforce Development
837 Route 6, Unit 2, Shohola, PA 18458	(570) 570.296.2909	www.pikepa.org/wfd cdefebo@pikepa.org
Adult Employment and Training Activities	WIOA Title I, Adult, Youth, DW	Wayne/Pike Workforce Alliance
650 1/2 W Park St. Honesdale, PA 18431	(570) 229-3420	www.wpworkforce.org hmancuso@wpworkforce.org
UC Referee	UCBR-UC Board of Review	Unemployment Compensation Referee Services
PA Department of Labor and Industry, Harrisburg, PA		rbrandes@pa.gov
Adult Education & Literacy Services	EDU Title II of WIOA – Adult & Literacy	Northampton Community College
2411 Route 715, Tannersville, PA 18372	(570) 620-9221	draneri@northampton.edu

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Older Worker Services	SCSEP – Senior Community Services Employment Program	Senior Community Service Program
354 Memorial Boulevard, Tobyhanna, PA 18466	(570) 972-0080	pvergenetti@aarp.org
Public Assistance Services	Part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act	Carbon, Monroe, Pike, Wayne County Assistance Offices
	(570) 275-7030	kmordan@pa.gov
Carl-Perkins, Adult Education and Literacy Services Provider	C & T – Career and Technical Education of Secondary and Post-Secondary of Carl D. Permits Career & Technical Education Act	Carbon Career & Technical Institute
150 W. 13 th St., Jim Thorpe, PA 18229	(570) 325-3682 ext. 123	fluck@carboncti.org

Adult Employment Services	WP – Title III of WIOA – Wagner Peyser TAA Trade JVSG-Veterans Job Counseling, Training and Placement Programs under Chapter 41 of Title 38 Rapid Response	Bureau of Workforce Partners Operations
651 Boas Street, Harrisburg, PA 17120	(484) 401-2881	maryfergus@pa.gov
Office of Vocational Rehabilitation	Title IV of WIOA and Title 1 of Rehabilitation Act – Vocational Rehabilitation	Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
45 North St., Allentown, PA 18102	(610) 821-6441	sustorm@pa.gov
CSBG Employment and Training	CSBG-Employment and Training under Community Services Block Grant	Carbon County Action Committee
267 South Second St., Lehighton, PA 18235	(610) 377-6400	ccachs@verizon.net
		PA Department of Agriculture
Harrisburg, PA	(717) 772-4365	kelodonnell@pa.gov
Adult Education Services		Smith & Solomon
98 Grove Street, Dupont, PA 18641	(570) 602-8780	rhamilton@smithsolomon.com

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Adult Education Services		CDE Career Institute (CDE)
2942 Route 611, Tannersville, PA 18372	(570) 409-9023	tkrasinski@cde.edu
Youth Employment Services	WIOA Title I Youth	Monroe County Youth Employment Service
2937 Route 611, Tannersville, PA 18372	(570) 620-2410	payes@ptd.net
Carl-Perkins, Adult Education and Literacy Services Provider	C & T – Career and Technical Education of Secondary and Post-Secondary of Carl D. Perkins Career & Technical Education Act	Monroe Career & Technical Institute
1094 Laurel Lake Road, Bartonsville, PA 18321	(570) 620-2850	dvirga@monroecti.org
Pocono AARP Foundation	Older Worker Employment Programs	AARP Foundation
354 Memorial Blvd. room #5, Tobyhanna, PA 18466	(570) 972-0080	pvergnetti@aarp.org
Title I Youth Re-Entry Services	WIOA Title I Youth	Pinebrook Family Answers
402 North Fullton Street Allentown, PA 18102	(610) 774-1435	lvandoren@pbfalv.org
Title I Youth Re-Entry Services	WIOA Title I Youth	Pathstone Corporation
421 McFarlan Road Kennett Square, PA 193348	(610) 925-5600	ndagostino@pathstone.org
Title I Youth Re-Entry Services	WIOA Title I Youth	Choosing Integrity
P.O. Box 603, Greentown, PA 18426	(570) 229-2007	luke@choosingintegrity.org

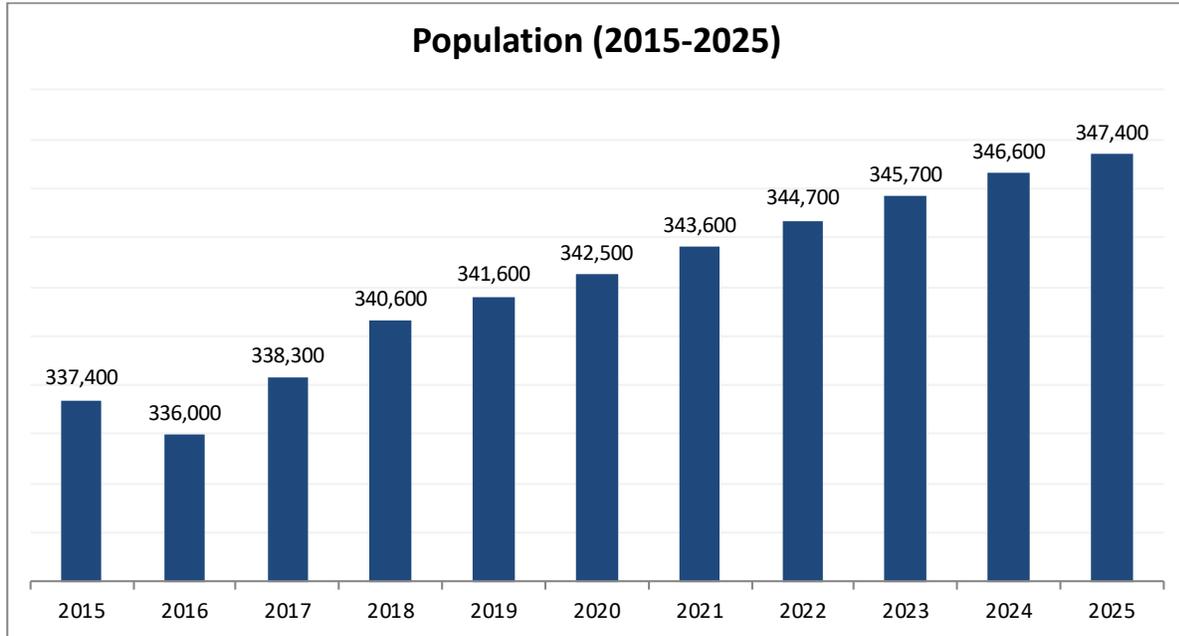
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Attachment 4

LWDB Name: Poconos Workforce Development Board

Figures – Section 1.1:

Figure 1: Population Increase over Time



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

Figure 2: Educational Attainment

Educational Attainment			
Level	2015	2020	2025
Less Than 9th Grade	2.9%	3.2%	3.3%
9th Grade to 12th Grade	7.0%	7.0%	7.2%
High School Diploma	38.8%	38.7%	38.6%
Some College	20.0%	20.0%	20.1%
Associate's Degree	8.7%	8.8%	8.8%
Bachelor's Degree	14.3%	13.9%	13.6%
Graduate Degree and Higher	8.4%	8.4%	8.4%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
High School or Lower	48.7%	48.9%	49.1%
Bachelor's or Higher	22.7%	22.3%	22.1%

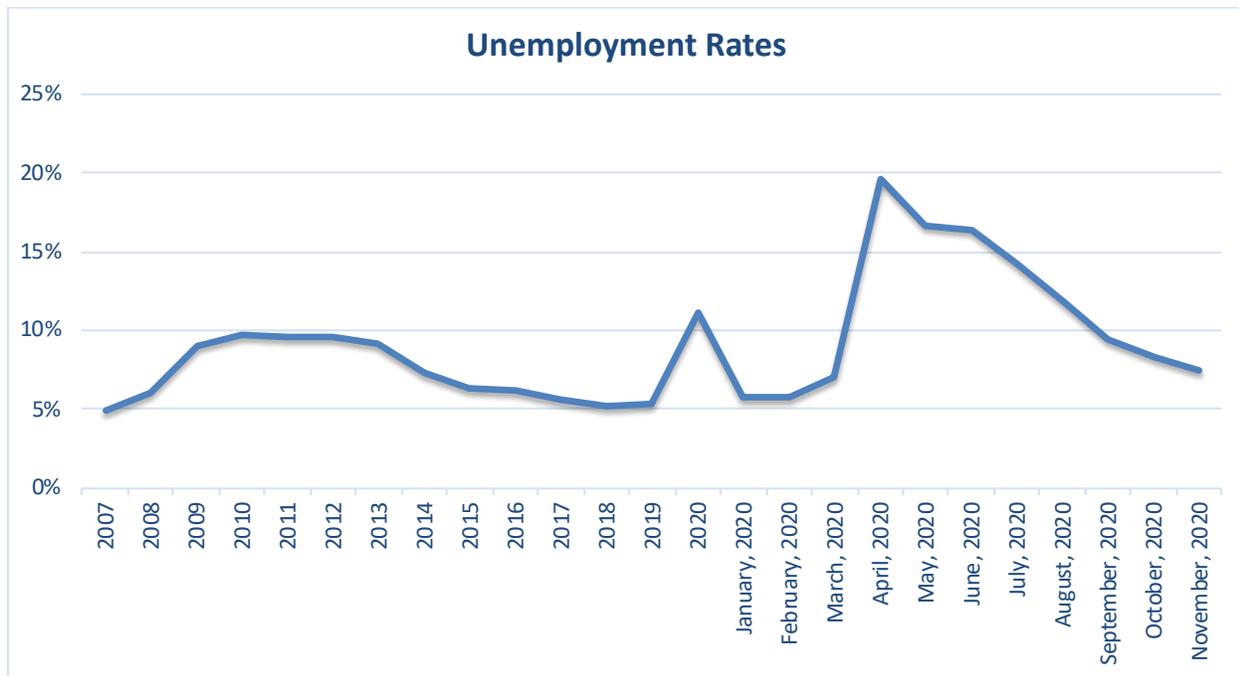
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Source: EMSI, 2020.4

Figure 3: Household Income

Households and Household Income				
Income	2014	2019	Change	Percent Change
Total Households	123,970	124,101	131	0.1%
Less than \$24,999	25,487	22,200	-3,287	-12.9%
\$25,000 to \$49,999	30,581	27,841	-2,740	-9.0%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	43,342	41,837	-1,505	-3.5%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	16,422	19,464	3,042	18.5%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	5,123	7,388	2,265	44.2%
\$200,000 or more	3,015	5,371	2,356	78.1%
Median Household Income	\$54,996	\$61,646	\$6,650	12.1%

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

Figure 4: Unemployment Rate over Time



Source: PA Department of Labor and Industry

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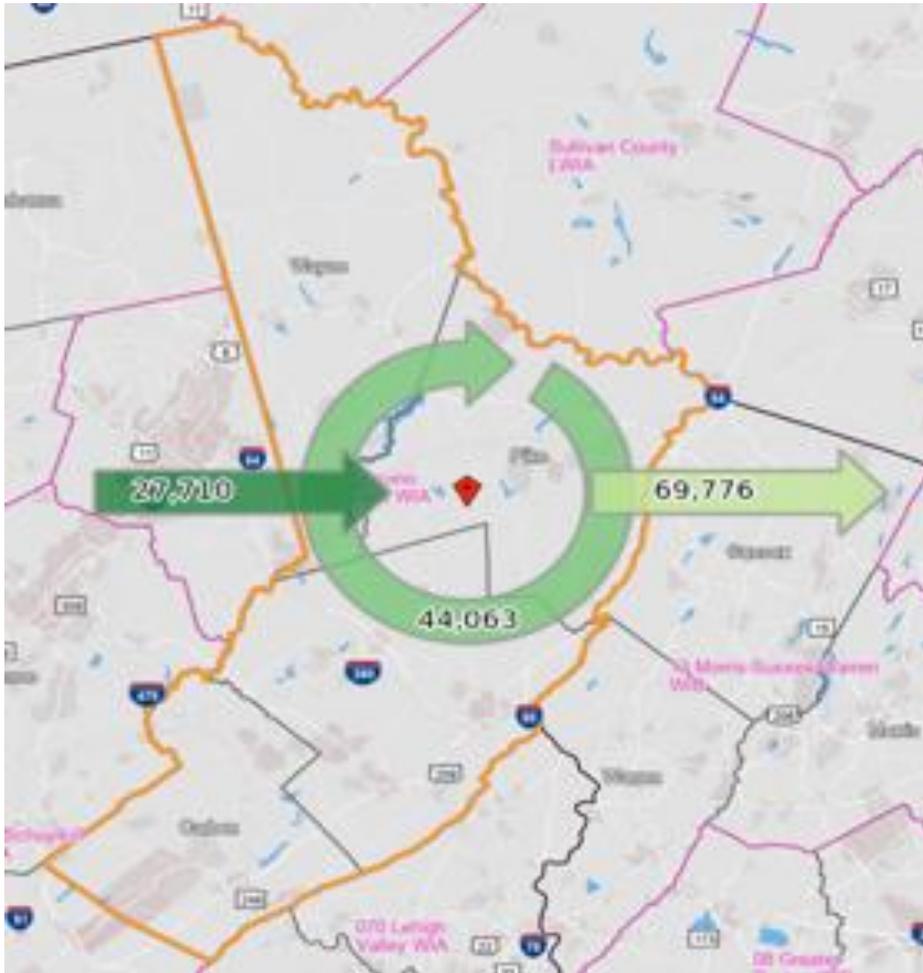
Figure 5: Unemployment by Education Level

Unemployment Rates by Educational Attainment Level		
Educational Attainment Level	2014	2019
<i>Total:</i>	9.7%	5.4%
Less than high school graduate:	17.0%	9.7%
High school graduate (includes equivalency):	11.9%	6.4%
Some college or associate's degree:	8.5%	5.3%
Bachelor's degree or higher:	6.4%	3.4%

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

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Figure 6: Regional Commuting Patterns



Source: Center for Workforce Information & Analysis (CWIA)

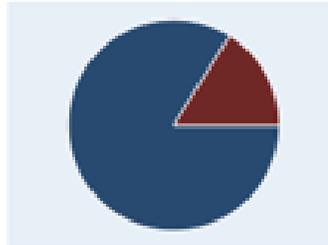
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Figure 7: Returning Citizens in Carbon County (2019)

CARBON

2019 Estimated County Population	64,182
Releases per 10,000 County Residents	13.6
Total Releases	87
Completed Sentence	12
Paroled	75
Average Age at Release	36

Gender



Blue = Male, Red = Female

Race



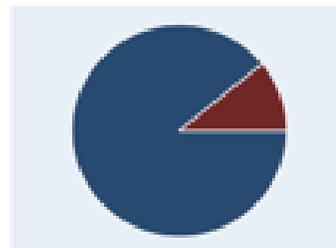
Red = White, Blue = Black, Green = Hispanic

Figure 8: Returning Citizens in Monroe County (2019)

MONROE

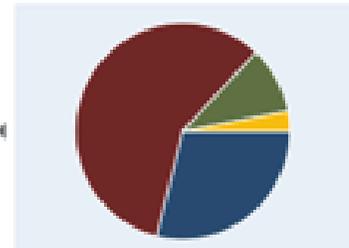
2019 Estimated County Population	170,271
Releases per 10,000 County Residents	14.0
Total Releases	239
Completed Sentence	43
Paroled	196
Average Age at Release	37

Gender



Blue = Male, Red = Female

Race



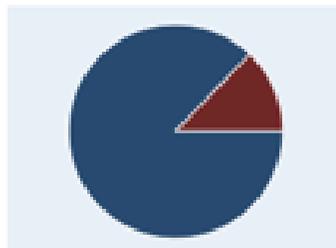
Red = White, Blue = Black, Green = Hispanic

Figure 9: Returning Citizens in Pike County (2019)

PIKE

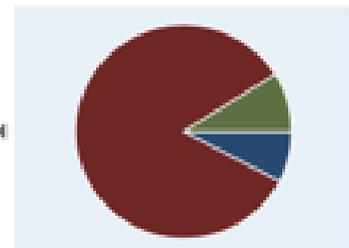
2019 Estimated County Population	55,809
Releases per 10,000 County Residents	14.0
Total Releases	78
Completed Sentence	10
Paroled	68
Average Age at Release	39

Gender



Blue = Male, Red = Female

Race



Red = White, Blue = Black, Green = Hispanic

Source for All: PA Department of Corrections Calendar Year Releases

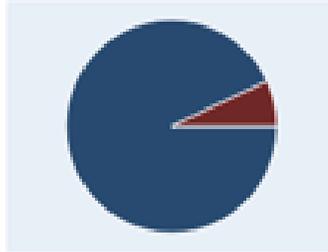
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Figure 10: Returning Citizens in Wayne County (2019)

WAYNE

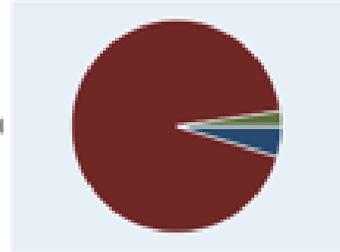
2019 Estimated County Population	51,361
Releases per 10,000 County Residents	8.4
Total Releases	43
Completed Sentence	5
Paroled	38
Average Age at Release	37

Gender



Blue = Male, Red = Female

Race



Red = White, Blue = Black, Green = Hispanic

Source: PA Department of Corrections Calendar Year Releases

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Figures – Section 1.2:

Figure 11: Education Level Required in Job Postings

Education Level	Unique Postings	% of Total
No Education Listed	36,372	71%
High school or GED	9,217	18%
Associate's degree	2,479	5%
Bachelor's degree	4,361	9%
Master's degree	1,240	2%
Ph.D. or professional degree	748	1%
Minimum Experience	Unique Postings	% of Total
No Experience Listed	34,954	69%
0 - 1 Years	9,082	18%
2 - 3 Years	5,087	10%
4 - 6 Years	1,468	3%
7 - 9 Years	242	0%
10+ Years	157	0%

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

Figure 12: Certifications Required in Job Postings

Qualification	Postings with Qualification
Commercial Driver's License (CDL)	9,706
Certified Nursing Assistant	1,118
Licensed Practical Nurse	954
Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) Card	489
Hazmat Endorsement	468
Nurse Practitioner	422
Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN)	293
Medical License	251
Tanker Endorsement	230
CDL Class B License	220
Licensed Vocational Nurses	199

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

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Figures – Section 1.5:

Figure 13: Employment Outlook by Top Industry Sectors

Industry Sector	2020 Jobs	2020 Percent	2020 State Location Quotient	Projected Change 2020-2025		Average Earnings per Job
Government (includes public education)	20,118	17.9%	1.60	-162	-0.8%	\$80,070
Accommodation and Food Services	16,880	15.0%	2.03	1,039	6.2%	\$25,531
Retail Trade	15,283	13.6%	1.41	-334	-2.2%	\$33,338
Healthcare and Social Assistance	15,096	13.5%	0.81	1,222	8.1%	\$55,879
Manufacturing	7,659	6.8%	0.77	56	0.7%	\$94,947
Construction	6,438	5.7%	1.12	-27	-0.4%	\$51,831

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

Figure 14: Job Postings by Industry

Industry	Total Postings (Nov 2019 - Nov 2020)
Transportation and Warehousing	58,881
Retail Trade	39,142
Healthcare and Social Assistance	28,553
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	16,865
Accommodation and Food Services	6,852
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	8,902
Manufacturing	5,829
Finance and Insurance	5,988

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

Figure 15: Demand for Top Occupational Groupings

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Occupational Grouping	Jobs		State Location Quotients	Total Job Openings (2015-2020)		Projected Job Openings (2020-2025)	
	2020	2025		Net	Percent	Net	Percent
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	11,856	12,453	1.33	14,324	131.0%	13,719	115.7%
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	14,039	13,835	0.92	12,746	93.0%	10,144	72.3%
Sales and Related Occupations	11,798	11,657	1.15	12,071	96.4%	10,471	88.8%
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	9,672	10,059	0.97	9,928	103.7%	7,999	82.7%
Educational Instruction and Library Occupations	7,754	7,783	1.24	7,163	94.3%	4,498	58.0%
Production Occupations	5,296	5,347	0.79	6,240	110.6%	4,066	76.8%
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	5,577	5,722	1.52	5,397	107.6%	4,704	84.3%
Construction and Extraction Occupations	5,795	5,857	1.17	5,351	97.6%	4,079	70.4%
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	6,264	6,393	1.40	5,181	88.9%	3,898	62.2%
Personal Care and Service Occupations	3,976	4,190	1.22	4,986	123.9%	4,188	105.3%
Healthcare Support Occupations	4,532	4,999	0.74	4,644	104.7%	4,460	98.4%

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

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Figure 16: In-Demand Occupations

Job Title	Total Postings (Nov 2019 - Nov 2020)
CDL-A Truck Drivers	11,288
Flatbed Truck Drivers	8,522
CDL-A Flatbed Truck Drivers	5,977
CDL Truck Drivers	4,134
Owner-Operator Truck Drivers	3,547
Team CDL-A Truck Drivers	3,234
Warehouse Workers	2,300
Delivery Drivers	2,106
Licensed Practical Nurses	2,056
Local CDL-A Truck Drivers	1,810
OTR CDL-A Truck Drivers	1,799
Registered Nurses	1,640
Warehouse Team Members	1,361
Warehouse Production Workers	1,282
Uber Drivers	1,257
Certified Nursing Assistants	1,174
Dedicated Truck Drivers	1,050
Company CDL-A Truck Drivers	1,048
Call Time Managers	1,029
Caregivers	1,023

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

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Attachment 5: Links to NEPA Manufacturing IP Outcomes

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

View the Videos:

<https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLvbEXKp-vwJDbHZ2qbV69Kuxu3zUu0mlw>

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

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

www.ideaworksmarketingassets.com/assets/NEPAManufacturingMerge/ManufacturingMerge.pdf

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Attachment 6: Public Comments

Comments regarding the

Pocono Counties WIOA Local Multi-year Plan 7/1/2021-6/30/2025

Helene Mancuso MPA CWDP, CPCC

hmancuso@wpworkforce.org

The Office of Developmental Programs and the County Administrative Entities for Developmental Programs, Wayne and Carbon, Monroe, Pike MHDS should also be mentioned within the draft plan. Often times individuals with disabilities may be not be eligible for OVR services or they are time limited and our offices and ODP funds pick up to continue employment support or job coaching services. Also, the Wayne County Employment Coalition and the Carbon, Monroe, Pike Employment Coalitions should be mentioned as partners. These coalitions are where the County Behavioral/Mental Health and Developmental Programs offices come together with OVR, school districts and job coaching providers like HRC, CVS, Living Unlimited, Goodwill, etc. to work together in support of competitive employment for individuals with disabilities. Here in Wayne County, we work to include all those with barriers to employment and Children and Youth is part of our coalition.

Response: Language and Narrative were added to the Plan, section 3.2, on page 30 to identify these partners and their contribution to our efforts to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities.

The Local plan identifies historical instances and uses Labor Market data that tends to lag. How will the plan address the need of the future workforce? COVID rapidly changed the way most of us did business. There is not enough emphasis on the skills need for the workforce of tomorrow.

Response: The Plan explains the ongoing efforts to utilize the most current data and engage with employers, training providers, and economic development entities in adapting to the changing needs of our labor force and employers needs. No change to plan.

The region is still without an incentive policy but approves incentive-based programs- Pocono Counties is the only WDA without one in the Commonwealth.

Response: The WDB and Service Providers have discussed this issue multiple times over the past 5 years and have decided not to utilize incentives for youth programs. The reasons for this decision are listed in this Plan. No changes to plan.

There is a mention of Apprenticeships, but there is not enough about how to encourage Apprenticeships in the local area. What steps have been taken and what is the path to increase Apprenticeships? Have others in the region adopted an Apprenticeship policy?

Response: Additional Narrative regarding Apprenticeships and the WDB's efforts to encourage and

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expand on the use of this tool, including both local and regional efforts have been added.

There is little mention of serving people in the post COVID world. How is the Local plan addressing the need of individuals who seek services but fearful of public settings?

Response: The Plan describes the efforts of our CareerLink® and Affiliate sites to expand the use of remote service and training opportunities for job seekers and employers due to the impact of COVID 19. Those tools will continue to be available and utilized in the future to provide services and information to customers concerned with this issue. However, the significant decline in customers participating in these remote service models indicate that most customers prefer the in-person service methods utilized prior to the health emergency situation. No change to the Plan.

There is little mention of transportation as a barrier in Wayne and ways to overcome it. We meet individuals in their local community rather than forcing them to come to a location. There is no mention of serving individuals in their home communities and tailoring federal dollars to the individual. We cannot be part of the Commuter program due to not in the MSA

Response: Transportation barriers, in all areas of the Poconos WDA and other rural areas of the State are longstanding issues. The efforts of the Pocono Counties WDB and our Service Providers to identify solutions to this issue are ongoing and described in the Plan. No changes made.

There is little mention of technology and the digital divide in the Pocono region. Covid magnified the real issues facing the local area and its impact on the Workforce. Most businesses and employees were force to work remotely. How is the Pocono region supporting these workers and businesses?

Response: As mentioned before, the CareerLink® and Affiliate sites have expanded their use of remote service and training capabilities, and will continue to utilize these methods in the future. The issue of the digital divide in the Poconos Region does not fall within the ability of the WDB to address, but is part of regional economic development discussions and efforts. The WDB will continue to support these efforts. No change to plan.

How is the Operator's consortium collaborating to maximize resources available in the local area?

Response: The Operator Consortium is made up of key stakeholders, with an extensive history of involvement in the Service Delivery System of the Poconos WDA. The Operator Consortium and the other Partners in our area's service delivery system work to maximize the resources available as part of their responsibilities. Information sharing and the WDB's efforts to pursue any resources that may expand our capacity are ongoing and described in the Plan. No change to Plan.

There is no mention of braiding funding to leverage WIOA dollars and maximize effectiveness of available funding for other workforce development programs to assist in the COVID recovery effort and to plan for the workforce of tomorrow.

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Response: Due to the health emergency, and the reduction in service levels due, the WDB believes there is sufficient WIOA and other Partner funding to assist in COVID recovery efforts. Other State or Federal funds that may be available are not yet known, but will be pursued if needed. No change to Plan.

Year-round YOUTH program only occurs in one of the counties (Wayne). What is the plan to bring the other counties into compliance with WIOA Youth guidelines (effective 2014) ?

Response: This statement is not correct. Year-round youth programs exist in all 4 counties and efforts to expand them are ongoing. No change to Plan.

What is the overall Equal Opportunity (EO) plan for the region? WIOA prescribes that all entities that touch WIOA dollars be trained in EO issues including board members, educational partners and employer partners using Paid Work or on the job training dollars. Only one county (Wayne) is in compliance. What is the plan for the local area going forward and what does that time-line look like?

Response: EO responsibilities, and the Pocono Counties updated EO Policy are described in the Plan. EO is not a new responsibility and all current service providers, Board Members, and stakeholders are aware of their responsibilities on this matter. Staff training in all 4 counties on EO responsibilities is ongoing and continuous. The Pocono Counties WDB and current service providers are in compliance with current EO policies. There has been no determination of deficiencies by the Pennsylvania Department of Equal Opportunity at this time. No change to Plan.

How was the 40% number attained when talking about businesses that are registered in CWDS? Does this number include entrepreneurs who have a less than 10 employees?

Response: The figure was based on current data regarding the number of employers, of any size, within the Pocono Counties WDA and the number of employers currently registered in the PA CareerLink®. No change to Plan.

There is no mention of utilizing social media to promote service available in the region to people and businesses.

Response: The narrative does describe the use of social media by the CareerLink® and Affiliate sites in our WDA. The use of Constant Contact, Facebook, Twitter, websites, and other social media is described in the Plan. No change to Plan.

Comments submitted by Jennifer Passenti, Lake Region Center Director, Lackawanna College

(570)226-4625 ext.2605

The following Certificate programs are available to residents of the Pocono Counties WDA:

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Massage Therapy, Real Estate, Medical Billing and Coding, Administrative Medical Assistant Career Prep,

Microsoft Office Suite 2016, QuickBooks Plus, Adobe Creative Bundle, Management Career Prep, Online Bookkeeping Administrative Expert, Java Programming, CIW Site Development Associate, Windows Operating Systems Fundamentals, ICT Programming and logic essentials, Stormwater Management Career Prep, Water Treatment Plant Operation Career Prep, Wastewater Treatment Plant Operation Career Prep, Wind energy Technician Career Prep, Certified Indoor Environmentalist, Wedding Planner Career Prep, **Enrichment training**, Become an Entrepreneur, Floral Career Prep, Event Planner, Photographer Career Prep, Aromatherapist Career Prep.

Response: This comment is informative but has no impact on the Plan Narrative. No change to Plan.

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Pennsylvania WIOA Plans Submission Checklist

Fiscal Year 2021-2024 WIOA Regional and Local Area Plans

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

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