



May 27, 2016

Ms. Brandy Burnham, Director
Bureau of Workforce Development Administration
PA Department of Labor & Industry
651 Boas Street, 12th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17121

Dear Ms. Burnham,

The Northwest Pennsylvania Workforce Development Board is pleased to submit its Program Year 2016 Transitional Local Plan as part of the Regional/Local Plan package for the Keystone Edge region that encompasses Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Lawrence, Mercer, Venango and Warren Counties in Northwest Pennsylvania. The Program Year 2016 Transitional Regional Plan and Local Plan were posted on our website at www.nwpawib.org for public comment from April 25, 2016 through May 24, 2016. Written public comment was received from three commenters during the 30-day public comment period. The public comment received has been included as an attachment to the Program Year 2016 Transitional Local Plan.

The Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) Executive Committee and Governance Committee reviewed and approved the Program Year 2016 Transitional Regional and Local Plan to be released for public comment at a public meeting on April 25, 2016. This decision was ratified by the full board at their public meeting held April 29, 2016. All public comment received was reviewed and given careful consideration by members of the LWDB staff, as well as a Review Committee formed specifically for this purpose that included LWDB members and Chief Local Elected Officials prior to submission.

If you should have any questions, please contact me at (814) 333-1286, extension 103 or via email at janderson@nwpawib.org.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Janet S. Anderson". The signature is written in a cursive style and is set against a light blue rectangular background.

Janet S. Anderson
Director

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NORTHWEST WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA



**PY 2016 ONE YEAR TRANSITIONAL
WIOA LOCAL PLAN**

Northwest PA Workforce Development Area (NW170) Program Year 2016 Transitional Local Plan

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Section 1: Workforce and Economic Analysis

Please provide a separate response for each of the elements listed below.

1.1 Provide an analysis of the economic conditions, including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations; and the employment needs of employers in those industry sectors and occupations.

[WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(A)] and [proposed 20 CFR 679.560(a)]

Note: Per WIOA Sec. 108(c), existing economic regional and/or local area analyses may be used if sourced data and/or derived analyses are economically relevant and current (i.e., within two years of the issuance of this guidance).

Review of data provided by the Center for Workforce Information and Analysis (CWIA) resulted in the following labor market analysis of the Northwest Pennsylvania LWDA:

Top Twelve Industry Sectors by 2014 – 2015 Employment

The top twelve industry sectors in the LWDA by 2014 – 2015 employment include Healthcare; Advanced Manufacturing; Hospitality, Leisure and Entertainment; Education; Business Services; Building and Construction; Real Estate, Finance and Insurance; Energy; Agriculture and Food Production; Logistics and Transportation; Wood, Wood Products and Publishing; and Bio Medical.

Top Twelve Industry Sectors by 2014 – 2015 Average Wage

The top twelve industry sectors in the LWDA by 2014 – 2015 average wage include Energy; Real Estate, Finance and Insurance; Advanced Manufacturing; Bio Medical; Education; Building and Construction; Business Services; Healthcare; Logistics and Transportation; Agriculture and Food Production; Wood, Wood Products and Publishing; and Hospitality, Leisure and Entertainment.

Top Ten Industries by Employment

The top 10 industries by employment in the Northwest LWDA are Restaurants and Other Eating Places; Elementary and Secondary School; Executive, Legislative, and General Government; Plastics Product Manufacturing; Nursing Care Facilities; Residential Mental Health Facilities; Colleges and Universities; Offices of Physicians; Employment Services; and Depository Credit Intermediation.

Fastest Growing Industries by Employment Volume Change

The fastest growing industries by employment volume change are noted by CWIA to include General Medical and Surgical Hospitals; Employment Services; Restaurants and Other Eating Places; Home Health Care Services; Offices of Physicians; Management of Companies and Enterprises; Residential Mental Health Facilities; Community Care Facilities for the Elderly; Colleges, Universities and Professional Schools; Self-Employed Workers; Local Government; Architectural and Structural Metals Manufacturing; State Government; Personal Care Services; Sawmills and Wood Preservation; Automotive Repair and Maintenance; Building Material and Supplies Dealers; Motor Vehicle/Part Merchant Wholesalers; Computer Systems Design and Related Services; and Other Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing.

Fastest Growing Occupations by Employment Volume Change

The fastest growing occupations by employment volume change include Home Health Aides; Personal Care Aides; Registered Nurses; Combined Food Prep/Serving Workers; Secretaries; Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers; Laborers and Material Movers; Licensed Practical Nurses; Medical Secretaries; Nursing Assistants; Janitors and Cleaners; Mental Health Counselors; Customer Service Representatives; General Maintenance Workers; Childcare Workers; Restaurant Cooks; Bookkeeping and Accounting Clerks; Bartenders; Hairdressers and Cosmetologists; and Medical Assistants.

Top 20 Knowledge Areas and Projected Needs

The top 20 knowledge areas and projected needs include English Language; Customer and Personal Service; Administration and Management; Mathematics; Public Safety and Security; Education and Training; Computers and Electronics; Clerical; Psychology; Sales and Marketing; Production and Processing; Law and Government; Personnel and Human Resources; Communications and Media; Mechanical; Sociology and Anthropology; Therapy and Counseling; Medicine and Dentistry; Transportation; and Economics and Accounting.

Top 20 Work Activities and Projected Needs

The top 20 work activities and projected needs include Getting Information; Communicating with Supervisors, Peers, or Subordinates; Performing for or Working Directly with the Public; Interacting with Computers; Making Decisions and Solving Problems; Documenting/Recording Information; Identifying Objects, Actions, and Events; Assisting and Caring for Others; Organizing, Planning, and Prioritizing Work; Establishing and Maintaining Interpersonal Relationships; Updating and Using Relevant Knowledge; Evaluating Information to Determine Compliance with Standards; Performing General Physical Activities; Monitor Processes, Materials, or Surroundings; Processing Information; Inspecting Equipment, Structures, or Material; Thinking Creatively; Communicating with Persons Outside Organization; Analyzing Data or Information; and Resolving Conflicts and Negotiating with Others.

1.2 Provide an analysis of the knowledge and skills required to meet the employment needs of the employers in the local area, including employment requirements for in-demand industry sectors and occupations.
[WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(B)] and [proposed 20 CFR 679.560(a)]

TOP 20 JOB SKILLS Needed for Help Wanted Online Job Postings	TOP 20 CERTIFICATIONS Needed for Help Wanted Online Job Postings
Pediatrics	Driver’s License
Quality Assurance/Quality Control	Commercial Driver’s License
Critical Care	Certified Registered Nurse
Bilingual	Certification in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation
Geriatrics	Licensed Practical Nurse
Preventative Maintenance	HAZMAT
Food Preparation	Basic Life Support
Preventative Maintenance Inspections	Certified in Nursing Administration
Technical Support	Certified Purchasing Manager
Pharmacy Benefit Management	Advanced Cardiac Life Support
Customer Relationship Management	Food Safety Programs
Business Sales	Occupational Safety & Health Admin Certification
Medical-Surgical Nursing	Continuing Education
Emergency Room	State Insurance License
Injection Molding	Certified Nursing Assistant
Search Engine Optimization	Better Business Bureau
User Experience Design	Automotive Service Excellence
Material Handling	FBI Clearance
Instrumentation	Board Certified
AutoCAD	DOT Medical Card

Source: Center for Workforce Information and Analysis

Science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) are critical for most in-demand occupations.

Recognized credentials and documented experience are prerequisites in demonstrating occupational technical skills. Technical skills are key in occupations that include the use and maintenance of equipment, as well as effective communication. These positions require a combination of math, computer, mechanical, engineering and troubleshooting skills. Career and technical centers and apprenticeship programs are targeted toward developing these job seeker skills that will allow for a pipeline for employment, especially in manufacturing and building and construction trades, which are two of our active industry partnerships in the LWDA. Transportation positions require short-term training and state licensure.

Management and Professional, IT and Engineering occupations require technical skills and post-secondary degrees. Many Healthcare occupations require post-secondary skills or industry-recognized credentials. Many sectors such as Healthcare, Financial, Education and Transportation require criminal and child clearances, drug testing and physicals.

1.3 Provide an analysis of the local workforce, including current labor force employment (and unemployment) data, and information on labor market trends, and the educational and skill levels of the workforce in the region, including individuals with barriers to employment.
[WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(C)] and [proposed 20 CFR 679.560(a)]

Annual Average Labor Force

According to CWIA, the annual average labor force for the LWDA in 2014 was 240,414 with 226,032 employed and 14,382 unemployed, with an unemployment rate of 6.0%. The most recent seasonally adjusted labor force statistics are for November 2015 with a labor force of 240,906 with 228,266 employed and 12,640 unemployed, with an unemployment rate of 5.2%.

Workforce Flow

With regard to workforce flow in the LWDA, CWIA reports that there are 30,516 workers that reside outside of the LWDA but work inside the LWDA. There are 41,399 workers that reside inside the LWDA but work outside of the LWDA. There are 157,374 workers that reside and work within the boundaries of the LWDA.

Projected Employment Distribution by Education Level

The projected employment distribution by education level for the LWDA between 2012 and 2022 is virtually unchanged, with employment distribution by Advanced Degree increasing from 4% to 5% and Moderate-Term On-The-Job Training increasing from 15% to 16% for the period 2012 to 2022. Other employment distribution by education levels is projected to remain the same: Bachelor's Degree at 13%; Associate Degree at 4%; Post-Secondary Education or Experience at 14%; Long-Term Training at 7%; and Short-Term On-The-Job Training at 42%.

Industry Projections

CWIA reports the long-term industry projections for the LWDA for the period 2012 – 2022 include total jobs increasing from 229,340 in 2012 to 245,260 projected employment in 2022. This equates to an increased volume of 15,920 jobs or 6.9%.

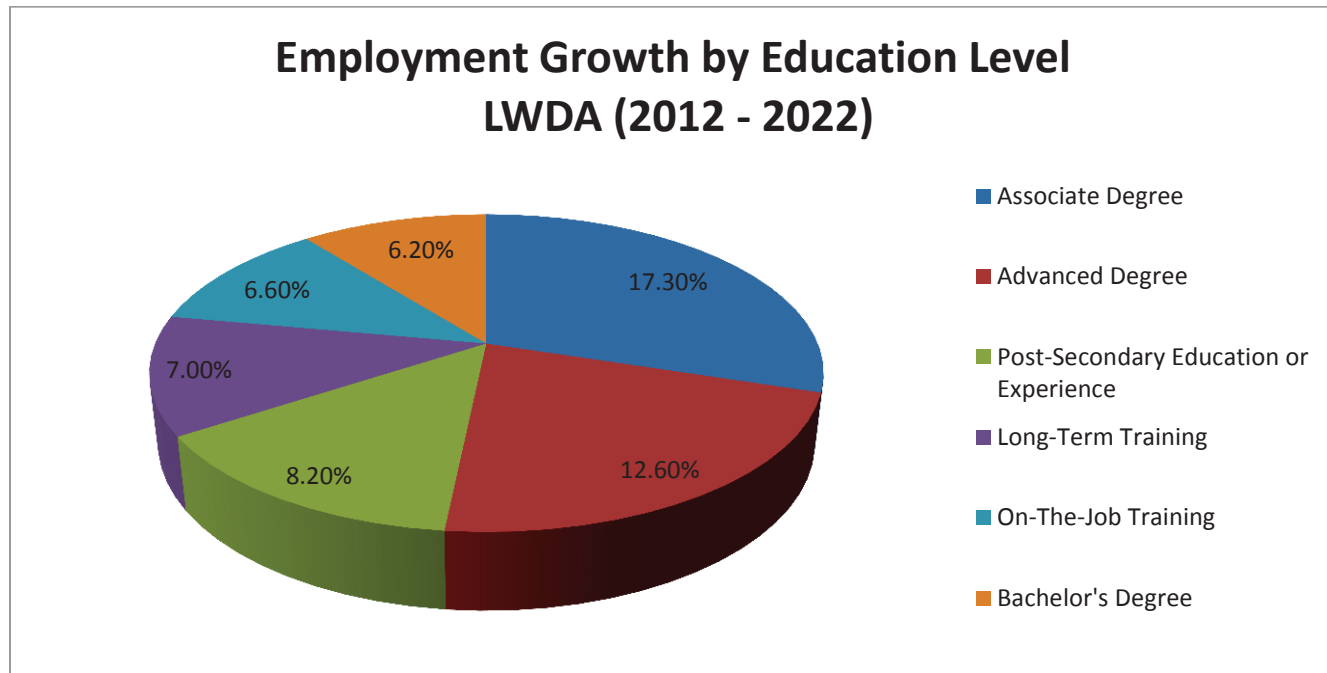
The projections for goods producing industries during 2012 – 2022 include increasing projected employment in Agriculture, Mining and Logging (2.0% or 140 jobs); Construction (9.0% or 530 jobs); and Manufacturing (0.6% or 240 jobs).

The projections for service providing industries increasing employment during 2012 – 2022 include Trade, Transportation and Utilities (3.3% or 1,210 jobs); Financial Activities (2.9% or 250 jobs); Professional and Business Services (17.6% or 2,470 jobs); Education and Health Services (14.6% or 8,210 jobs); Leisure and Hospitality (7.3% or 1,470 jobs); Other Services, Except Public Administration (6.4% or 730 jobs); and Federal,

State and Local Government (2.2% or 340 jobs).

The projections for service providing industries decreasing employment during 2012 – 2022 include Information (-0.5% or -10 jobs).

The projected employment growth by education level in the LWDA for the period 2012 – 2022 includes:



Source: Center for Workforce Information and Analysis

Population, Median Income and Poverty Rate by County

	POPULATION	MEDIAN INCOME	POVERTY RATE
Clarion County	39,615	\$45,059	17.3%
Crawford County	86,974	\$41,664	16.8%
Erie County	281,657	\$45,249	16.1%
Forest County	7,758	\$36,686	12.8%
Venango County	53,695	\$41,814	16.3%
Warren County	40,500	\$43,108	12.0%
Total	510,199		

Source: 2015 Jobs1st Regional Partnership Grant Skills Gap Analysis

Educational Attainment by Employment Status for the Population 25 – 64 Years by County

	CLARION	CRAWFORD	ERIE	FOREST	VENANGO	WARREN
TOTAL	19,095	44,832	144,053	4,632	28,714	21,825
Less Than High School Graduate	1,610	4,764	11,321	793	2,276	1,449
In Labor Force	946	2,355	5,480	76	1,124	712
High School Graduate	8,628	19,479	55,721	2,375	13,721	9,810
In Labor Force	6,264	13,733	40,525	697	9,911	7,125
Some College or Associate Degree	4,690	10,970	37,170	1,082	7,697	6,082

In Labor Force	3,734	8,271	29,706	366	6,076	4,747
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	4,167	9,619	39,841	382	5,020	4,484
In Labor Force	3,538	8,091	34,250	248	4,216	3,728

Source: 2015 Jobs1st Regional Partnership Grant Skills Gap Analysis

1.4 Provide an analysis and description of workforce development activities, including type and availability of education, training and employment activities. Include analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of such services, and the capacity to provide such services, in order to address the education and skill needs of the workforce and the employment needs of employers in the region.
 [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(D)] and [proposed 20 CFR 679.560(a)]

The LWDA’s service delivery network covers Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Venango and Warren Counties. Discussions are currently underway to increase outreach to customers through a more mobile PA CareerLink® system that brings the workforce development services to the customer through partnership development with community agencies, rather than waiting for the customer to enter the PA CareerLink® centers for services. This will reduce the number of “bricks and mortar” facilities and reduce infrastructure costs, allowing more funding for direct services to the customer. Workforce development services provided to the public through the service delivery network are funded by a combination of WIOA funds and other grant funds that are applied for by the LWDB. The service delivery network includes PA CareerLink® Operator Consortium and PA CareerLink® partners (both mandated and voluntary).

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

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

The LWDB ensures that the local workforce system is universally accessible, customer centered, with training that is job-driven. Customers entering the PA CareerLink® can receive a full array of career services. Career services are tracked in the state system of record (Commonwealth Workforce Development System or CWDS). Customers requiring individualized services are evaluated and recommendations are made based on the initial assessment of knowledge, skills and abilities. Based on the initial assessment, the customer begins job search activities, moves into the individualized career services process, and/or they are evaluated for training services. Training opportunities for customers are supported through the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). Training services may include skill training or work-based options such as on-the-job training, customized training or incumbent worker training. There is no sequence of services required for a job seeker to obtain training. Supportive services are offered to assist eligible participants toward successfully completing their training. The customer is exited upon securing self-sustaining employment or choosing to no longer participate in PA CareerLink® services, at which time follow-up services are conducted for no less than twelve months. PA CareerLink® staff are trained to assist employer customers with employment needs such as recruitment assistance, assessment and testing, and labor market information.

The LWDB currently contracts the WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth program services to the Greater Erie Community Action Committee (GECAC) for the six-county LWDA following award via a competitive bid process conducted in 2015. Partnerships have been developed and collaboration occurs with other community agencies which help to connect job seekers to the business community (i.e. the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, adult education and literacy agencies, housing authorities, Veterans counselors, Job Corps, community service agencies, employer on-the-job training programs, Erie Together, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, and Girl Scouts/Boy Scouts). Program service providers in the community are active partners in the workforce development system in the region. Data analysis is conducted to ensure continuous improvement and to assist the LWDB in strategic decision-making. Methods of referrals exist to ensure that access to needed services is available.

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

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

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

Opportunities for improvement include the development of a soft skills program for K-8 to assist with preparing youth for employment. The LWDB, through its committees, is working collaboratively to enhance the youth workforce system that builds a youth pipeline to support employer need. They understand the importance of boosting youth interest, education, and skills for the current occupational openings as well as the emerging occupations of the future. The Youth Committee will work to support the WIOA Title I program services contractor to expand outreach and recruitment of out-of-school youth. Strengthening partnerships and coordination with adult literacy and education providers will be a focus of the LWDB to provide eligible individuals with job readiness and life skills necessary to transition them into post-secondary education or employment. In addition, providing education and training to the LWDB on the requirements of changing legislation will also be an important focus in the coming year. We are working on additional initiatives to increase digitization of services such as YouTube videos, Ice House Entrepreneurial Program training¹, as well as an effort partnering with Title II adult education and literacy providers to coordinate TABE² assessments. TABE assessments will enable additional focus on career pathways and skill development for job seekers to increase the number of skilled employees to meet the needs of employers.

¹ *The Ice House Entrepreneurial Program is a powerful learning program designed to educate and engage participants in the fundamental aspects of an entrepreneurial mindset and the unlimited opportunities it can provide. Participants of the Ice House Entrepreneurial Program learn to: develop critical thinking skills that will enable them to identify and evaluate opportunities, manage risks, and learn from the results; understand the process that enables entrepreneurs with limited resources to transform an idea into a sustainable success; understand and apply fundamental aspects of entrepreneurial thinking across disciplines and as a means of personal empowerment; establish goals, identify resources, and determine the steps required to accomplish their goals; identify and interact with local entrepreneurs within their own communities.*

² *TABE is a Department of Education approved assessment tool.*

Section 2: Strategic Vision and Goals

Section 2 responses will require input from members of the local workforce development board and other local stakeholders. Please provide a separate response for each of the elements listed below.

2.1 Describe local board's strategic vision and goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce (including youth and individuals with barriers to employment). Include goals relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) in order to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(E)]

The local workforce development board (LWDB) vision: Northwest Pennsylvania will have a skilled workforce that is responsive to the current and future needs of the region. In accomplishing this effort, the following goals and objectives were identified by the LWDB as part of the strategic planning process:

Goal 1: Visionary Leadership

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

Goal 2: Establish Identity as the Workforce Experts

- Brand the workforce system. Advertise and celebrate successes
- Review service delivery to allow the one-stop shop to become the flagship product
- Participate in partner events that are workforce development related
- Comply with all new requirements for WIOA and the State and Local Plan

Goal 3: Partnership Development

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

Goal 4: PA CareerLink® Improvement

- Review and reassess what our market needs (e.g. employment services). Eliminate old, unnecessary ones
- Clean up, update, redact outdated policies / procedures
- Enhanced efficiency of services for jobseekers (improved customer service), especially individuals with barriers to employment
- Strengthen collaboration between WDBs (e.g. training list) - even across state borders

Goal 5: Sector Strategies

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

2.2 Describe how the local board's vision and goals align with and/or supports the governor's vision and goals for the commonwealth's workforce development system. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(E)]

(See Appendix C: *Transitional Planning References and Resources*)

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

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

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

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

- Implementation of a Workforce Innovation Fund grant focused on training individuals with barriers to employment for self-sustaining job opportunities
- Recently created partnerships with Erie Housing Authority and HANDS community agencies to enhance outreach and service delivery to individuals with barriers to employment who are often some of the hardest to serve
- The continued development and support of our employer-led industry partnerships for Advanced Diversified Manufacturing and the Great Lakes Building & Construction Trades
- The elimination of duplication of effort, services and costs within the PA CareerLink® system as well as reduction in "bricks and mortar" infrastructure costs while increasing services
- The development of affordable, effective and stackable training programs designed to produce skill sets in high priority occupations while developing and expanding career pathways that are responsive to the needs of local employers

- The refinement and strengthening of an improved employer outreach strategy which partners with local economic development agencies designed to listen and respond to current business needs, as well as plan for future investments

The LWDB's goals, initiatives and effort that align with and/or support the Governor's vision of the commonwealth's workforce development system include:

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

The LWDB is focused on providing the needed skills and training for employment in high-priority occupations for the area's job seekers and employers. We are aware that not all job seekers come to us prepared to enter such high-skill occupations. In support of this, the LWDB recently formed a Sector Strategies and Career Pathways Committee to develop and expand the career pathways concept. The committee composition includes private sector business leaders, adult literacy and education coordinators, post-secondary education leaders and other community agency members. This group will also work closely with the Youth Committee on this effort, with additional focus on the development of soft skills that are a necessary foundation of career pathways. Career pathways will be developed in collaboration with adult education and literacy partners to align and integrate education, job training, counseling and support services to create accelerated pathways to post-secondary education credentials and employment in in-demand occupations, especially for individuals with barriers to employment. Also involved will be the Individuals with Employment Barriers Committee of the LWDB that has been formed to support and advise the LWDB in the enhancement and delivery of services to individuals with employment barriers.

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

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

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

Youth must be provided with an awareness of various available careers to develop their path to a successful future. Youth ages 15-21 are referred to the Summer JAM (Jobs And More) Program that provides valuable summer work experience. The Summer JAM Program is a program developed locally providing employment

through the summer months to eligible youth in Erie County through funding provided by the County of Erie, as well as the LWDB. This program helps students gain knowledge, tools and meaningful on-the-job experience. The program launched in Erie County last year and is being expanded into the rural counties of the LWDA.

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

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

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

Work Certified®, a work readiness program that prepares out-of-school youth with the tools to find and retain employment, is also available. Adult basic literacy education classes that help prepare youth for post-secondary education are also offered. Career service counselors provide comprehensive counseling through regular communication with youth participants. Through active case management, career service counselors can maintain open communication with youth on barriers identified through needs assessment and receive feedback from staff concerning any needed interventions. Such interventions can include referrals to drug and alcohol counseling, counseling in the post-secondary or secondary school setting, mental health, family counseling or rehab counseling through the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), Community Shelter Services, SafeNet, Stairways Behavioral Health, Office of Children and Youth, and school guidance counselors.

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

Employers are key partners to lead and define strategies for closing the training and skill gaps and promoting employer-recognized credentials and career pathways. To enhance our efforts in engaging employers, a business services structure that includes local economic development agency staff as members of the Business Services Team of the PA CareerLink® centers was implemented. This new structure increases our ability to tap into the expertise of the local economic development agencies to engage local employers, increase efficiency, and eliminate the need for multiple agency contacts with local industry leaders. It creates common synergies toward meeting workforce demand and supply in our LWDA. During the past year, a targeted job fair was

conducted that matched experienced, skilled employees with regional manufacturers searching for employees with comparable skill sets. This approach to targeting job fairs had a positive impact on both employers and dislocated workers, based on the overwhelmingly positive feedback that we received following the event. Employer focus groups are also planned in 2016 with local industry leaders, the LWDB, its staff and partners in an effort to better identify skills gap and training needed to meet current and emerging needs of employers to close the skills gap in the LWDA. In addition, the Sector Strategies and Career Pathways Committee of the LWDB will review the results of the Jobs1st Regional Partnership Grant skills gap analysis, and focus on developing sector strategies and career pathways, in collaboration with the Title II adult education and literacy partners, to address the gaps that exist between available jobs and unemployed individuals, since jobs are available but employers describe critical shortages of talent. Also to be undertaken is the disconnect between the education and skills that employers require and those that job seekers possess. Title II adult education providers integrate soft skills training across the curriculum and in the delivery of case management services.

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

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

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

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

- Achieving state-negotiated performance accountability measures and beyond through the establishment of local “metrics that matter”
- Developing and supporting employer-driven partnerships with industry in the region

2.4 Describe how the local board’s goals relate to the achievement of federal performance accountability measures. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(E)]

The LWDB’s goals (as noted in 2.1) will support the achievement of federal performance accountability measures through increased focus on educating the LWDB on the changes in legislation to support informed decisions and strengthen oversight of the local workforce development system. Improving customer service and strengthening collaboration among partners agencies, especially through our mobile PA CareerLink® outreach partnerships, will enhance participant training and opportunities for placement into employment, especially for individuals with barriers. This improved process will allow increased one-on-one time for participants through partnership development, especially for those individuals with barriers to employment that require more intense focus. Furthermore, the implementation of the Sector Strategies and Career Pathways Committee of the LWDB and its work toward expansion of the industry partnerships in the region, as well as the development of meaningful career pathways in coordination with local employers, will increase the opportunity for participants to gain and preserve self-sustaining employment. The LWDB goals are committed to reducing the number of long-term unemployed in the area and reducing barriers to employment, including lack of adequate skills and credentials. Performance measures are included in the contract for the WIOA Title I program services contractor and technical assistance is provided if performance benchmarks are not met. Beyond the performance measures required by WIOA, the LWDB is currently developing through its committees a local evaluation tool dubbed “metrics that matter” that will further evaluate customer satisfaction, responsible stewardship of taxpayer money, market penetration as well as the impact of local innovations.

Section 3: Local Area Partnerships and Investment Strategies

Many of the responses in this section, such as targeted sector strategies, should be based on strategic discussions with the local board and partners. Please provide a separate response for each of the elements listed below.

3.1 Taking into account the analysis described in Appendix B - Section 1, describe 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 described in element 2.1. This analysis should include:

- A. A descriptive overview of the local workforce development system; include key stakeholders and entities associated with administrative and programmatic/service delivery functions. Examples include elected officials, advocacy groups, local workforce development board and committee structure, fiscal agent, operator(s), required program partners, and major contractors providing Adult/Dislocated Worker/Youth program elements. Describe respective roles and functional relationships to one another;
- B. A list of all local area PA CareerLink® centers; include address, phone numbers, and hours of operation; and
- C. An attached organization chart that depicts a clear separation of duties between the local board and programmatic/service delivery entities. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(F)]

A. In the Northwest Pennsylvania local workforce development area (LWDA), each of the six counties (Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Venango and Warren) is represented by a Chief Local Elected Official. The Chief Local Elected Officials are the grant recipient for WIOA Title I funds. The role of the Chief Local Elected Officials includes but is not limited to establishing a local workforce development board (LWDB); entering into a written agreement with the LWDB that details the partnership of the two entities for governance and oversight of the workforce development system; authorizing the establishment of a standing Youth Committee of the LWDB; and the designation and/or certification of PA CareerLink® operators in collaboration with the LWDB. The Chief Local Elected Officials work in cooperation with the LWDB to develop and approve the Regional Plan, Local Plan, and the LWDA budget. A chairperson of the Chief Local Elected Officials is elected by a majority vote of the six members of the Chief Local Elected Officials. Officers serve a one-year term. Four members constitute a quorum. Each member has one vote with no proxy. Matters before the Chief Local Elected Officials can be resolved by a simple majority of the total votes present at each meeting.

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

Partners for Performance, an entity created and governed by the Chief Local Elected Officials as the administrative support agency to the LWDB, provides staff support for the LWDB responsibilities of development and submission of a Regional and Local Plan, selection of one-stop operators, selection of youth providers, identification of eligible providers of training services, program monitoring, negotiation of local performance measures, assisting the Governor in developing the statewide employment statistics system, developing employer linkages, promoting the participation of private sector employers through connecting, brokering and coaching activities, and LWDB staff personnel management functions. The LWDB contracts out

the provision of all program services via a competitive bid process. No program services are provided by Partners for Performance or its staff.

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

The LWDB has nine standing committees that meet at least quarterly or as needed:

- Executive Committee is comprised of the Chairperson, First and Second Vice-Chairpersons, Secretary and Treasurer as voting members. Any county from the six-county area not represented will have a representative appointed by the Chairperson to sit on the Executive Committee as voting members. Two Chief Local Elected Officials sit on the Executive Committee in an ex officio capacity. The Executive Committee meets as often as necessary to carry out the business of the LWDB and has the authority to act on behalf of the LWDB when time does not permit the full board to meet.
- Fiscal Committee reviews and makes recommendations to the LWDB on budgets, special projects, and general financial matters
- Youth (standing)Committee supports/advises the LWDB in the development and delivery of youth services and promotes career pathways and tangible opportunities for youth, including youth with barriers to employment
- Communications Committee develops and implements regional outreach and communication activities to enhance community awareness and understanding of the system network and its benefits
- Monitoring and Evaluation Committee continuously monitors best practices and innovative approaches and workforce system improvements and ensures that quality standards and performance are met
- System Design and Implementation Committee supports the LWDB in ensuring that the PA CareerLink® system is flexible and entrepreneurial and includes a customer satisfaction process and an employer customer service process that is aligned with industry partnerships
- Governance Committee assists the LWDB in oversight and leadership that ensures compliance to federal, state and local requirements
- Sector Strategies and Career Pathways Committee develops sector strategies and career pathways models that align with PA CareerLink® services using regional input and data-driven research; conducts workforce research and labor market analysis to identify and close gaps in local and regional workforce resources

- Individuals with Barriers to Employment Committee supports and advises the LWDB in the establishment and delivery of services to individuals with barriers to employment
- Nominating Committee recommends a slate of nominees to the LWDB for officer and Executive Committee appointment

The Individuals with Employment Barriers Committee of the LWDB is a newly formed committee that provides focus on individuals with barriers to employment. It currently includes in its membership individuals representing advocacy groups such as the Autism Society of NWPA, Community Resources for Independence, and Voices for Independence, as well as members representing adult education and literacy, OVR, veterans and others that enhance our focus on the needs of individuals with barriers to employment.

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

The LWDB ensures the provision of WIOA Title I programs and services that align with the Governor's vision and strategy for the commonwealth's workforce development system, as well as local strategies. Programs are competitively bid and awarded to a program services contractor. Currently, Greater Erie Community Action Committee (GECAC) is the program services contractor for WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Programs. The program contractor is a collaborating partner within the local PA CareerLink® system.

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

Management of the PA CareerLink® system is currently provided by an operator consortium model, consisting of a minimum of three managing partners (currently Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and Greater Erie Community Action Committee). Two of the three members of the operator consortium also serve as members of the LWDB. The operator consortium elects a Chairperson to reside over the meetings and serve as the point of contact. The operator consortium is responsible for providing direction to the local workforce development delivery system and assisting the PA CareerLink® sites with the implementation of the LWDB's strategic objectives. There are currently five comprehensive PA CareerLink® centers in this local area. These centers are located in Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Venango and Warren Counties. The PA CareerLink® Operator Consortium for the six-county region meets as needed to manage the overall operations of the local workforce development center. Strategic direction for the local workforce development system is provided by the LWDB. In concurrence with the Chief Local Elected Officials, the LWDB designates the PA CareerLink® consortium of operators and establishes oversight of the local PA CareerLink® system. Upon receipt of appropriate technical assistance and guidance from the commonwealth, processes will be followed to procure the one-stop operators for the PA CareerLink® centers in our LWDA.

The Business Services Team, which includes local economic development agencies staff, coordinates outreach efforts to job seekers and employers by all partners. Wagner-Peyser and other partners refer customers to the Title II adult education and literacy partners as customer need is identified. Our Title II partners administer

assessment testing and remediation to job seekers at the PA CareerLink® centers in our LWDA. Space is provided to the Title II partners at the PA CareerLink® centers to conduct these services. PA CareerLink® staff conduct outreach to the Adult Education and Literacy providers and high school equivalency (HSE) credential classes to promote PA CareerLink® services to interested job seekers.

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

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

B. The LWDA currently includes five comprehensive PA CareerLink® centers:

PA CareerLink® - Clarion County
627 Wood Street, Clarion, PA 16214
Phone: (814) 223-1550
Hours of Operation: Monday – Thursday 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.; Friday 8:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Type of Site: Comprehensive, Full Service.

PA CareerLink® - Crawford County
260 Chestnut Street, Meadville, PA 16335
Phone: (814) 337-5574
Hours of Operation: Monday – Thursday 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.; Friday 8:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Type of Site: Comprehensive, Full Service

PA CareerLink® - Erie County
155 West 8th Street, Erie, PA 16501
Phone: (814) 455-9966
Hours of Operation: Monday – Thursday 9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.; Friday 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Type of Site: Comprehensive, Full Service

PA CareerLink® - Oil Region
255 Elm Street, Oil City, PA 16301
Phone: (814) 678-5050
Hours of Operation: Monday – Thursday 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.; Friday 8:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Type of Site: Comprehensive, Full Service

PA CareerLink® - Warren County
1003 Pennsylvania Avenue West, Suite 102, Warren, PA 16365
Phone: (814) 723-2350
Hours of Operation: Monday – Thursday 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.; Friday 8:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Type of Site: Comprehensive, Full Service

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

Each comprehensive, full-service PA CareerLink® location has in place a site administrator and a supervisor to manage the day-to-day operations. Analysis will be conducted during 2016 to evaluate the current PA CareerLink® locations to determine need and evaluate reducing infrastructure costs and duplication where reasonable and appropriate. It is likely that the number of full-service, comprehensive PA CareerLink® centers in the LWDA will be reduced as a result of this analysis. Projects are being piloted in the LWDA to enhance outreach, especially to individuals with barriers to employment, by way of a more “mobile” PA CareerLink® system that will proactively bring staff to the customer and not wait for them to enter the physical PA CareerLink® locations.

C. The Northwest PA workforce development system is illustrated in this linked [organizational chart](#).

3.2 Describe the workforce development system in the local area that identifies the programs that are included in that system and how the local board will work with the entities carrying out core and other workforce development programs to support alignment to provide services, including programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, that support the strategy identified in the State plan under section 102(b)(1)(E). [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(2)]

Note: The six (6) core programs identified by WIOA are: Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Adult Education and Literacy, Wagner-Peyser Programs, and Vocational Rehabilitation.

The LWDA as described above includes the six core programs mandated under WIOA. The LWDA’s program service delivery network covers Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Venango and Warren Counties and includes partnerships with many community agencies. Workforce development services provided to the public through the service delivery network are funded by a combination of WIOA funds and other grant funds that are applied for by the LWDB and/or its partners. The purpose of each PA CareerLink® is to create a seamless system of service delivery that will enhance access to the individual program services while improving long-term success. The core program partners (Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Adult Education and Literacy, Wagner-Peyser, and Vocational Rehabilitation) work together to effectively serve job seekers and employers. Although each program has defined activities and responsibilities by law, they work to leverage services and reduce duplication for optimum outcomes. The service delivery network includes PA CareerLink® Operator Consortium and PA CareerLink® partners (both mandated and voluntary). The PA CareerLink® centers also maintain working relationships with various community-based and other organizations including organizations such as Domestic Relations in Crawford County, St. Benedict Education Center at Oil Region, and the Steel Valley Authority in Erie. These relationships enhance services provided to job seekers and employers. The LWDB will continue to evaluate and develop strategies for high-quality career services, training and education, as well as the supportive services needed to assist customers with placement into family-sustaining employment, as well as to help employers find skilled workers and access to training for their current workforce. The LWDB, as well as the Youth Committee membership composition, includes career and technical center directors and Title II adult education supervisors.

The PA CareerLink® centers also have partnerships and work collaboratively with their local Chambers of Commerce, economic development, the Senior Community Service Employment Program under Title V of the Older Americans Act (SCSEP), County Assistance Offices, County Office of Drug and Alcohol, OEO, Erie Together, local training providers, local career and technical centers, local high schools and colleges, as well as Community Education Councils to name a few.

The WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Program services are currently contracted to the Greater Erie Community Action Committee (GECAC) for the six-county local workforce development area, as awarded through a competitive bid process conducted in 2015. Partnerships are developed and collaboration occurs with other intermediary entities which help to connect job seekers to the business community (i.e. the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Veterans counselors, Job Corps, county human service agencies, employer on-the-job training programs, Erie Together, Big Brothers and Big Sisters and Girl Scouts/Boy Scouts, Community Education Councils). Customers entering the PA CareerLink® can receive a full array of career services from any or all partners. Career services must be tracked in the state system of record (Commonwealth Workforce Development System or CWDS). Customers requiring individualized services are evaluated and recommendations are made based on the initial assessment of knowledge, skills and abilities. Based on this initial assessment, the customer begins job search activities or moves into a more individualized service process, as appropriate. If a customer cannot obtain employment through these services, they are evaluated for training services. Training services may include skill training or on-the-job training. Referrals between partnering agencies are provided to ensure that needed services are made available. The customer is exited upon securing suitable employment or choosing to no longer participate in PA CareerLink® services, at which time follow-up services are conducted for no less than twelve months. PA CareerLink® staff are trained to assist employer customers with employment needs such as recruitment assistance, assessment and testing, and labor market information.

Adult Basic Education and Literacy

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

Career and Technical Education

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

WIOA Adult

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

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

WIOA Dislocated Worker

The WIOA Dislocated Worker program assists individuals either prior to or after a layoff and provide career services and training services such as occupational skills training, on-the-job or customized training, as well as apprenticeship opportunities to assist these individuals in reemployment. WIOA Dislocated Worker services are provided through the local PA CareerLink® system by a competitively bid program services contractor.

WIOA Youth

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

Wagner-Peyser

Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations (BWPO) staff provide employment and training services as a partner member of the local PA CareerLink® system authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, Trade Act of 1974, Jobs for Veterans State Grants program, as well as programs authorized under state unemployment compensation laws. These services include but are not limited to job search and job placement assistance; career counseling; needs and interest assessments; proficiency testing; workshops; development of an individual employment plan; and case management. Services to employers include assistance in developing and posting job orders; referral of qualified job seekers to job openings; and organizing and supporting local job fairs.

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) staff provide employment and training services authorized under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as a partner member of the local PA CareerLink® system. They provide services

to eligible individuals with disabilities on an individualized basis. The OVR counselor assists customers in their choice of vocational goals, services, and service providers. Counseling and guidance, diagnostic services, assessments, information and referral, job development and placement, and personal services such as readers or sign language interpreters are provided at no cost to the individual. With increased focus of OVR staff on the most severely disabled as required by WIOA, the Individuals with Employment Barriers Committee will evaluate and discuss how Title I staff can most effectively serve the less severely disabled. In addition, OVR staff in Erie County are planning a training session to the WIOA Title I program contractor staff on serving individuals with disabilities and barriers to employment.

Unemployment Compensation Programs

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

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

3.3 Describe how the local board, working with the entities carrying out core programs, will expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(3)]

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

In addition, a Sector Strategies and Career Pathways Committee of LWDB was formed in December 2015 and will re-evaluate targeted industry sectors to develop and promote career pathways as a key workforce development strategy. Efforts will create career pathways that will align and integrate education (including Adult Basic Education and English as a Second Language), job training, counseling and support services to create accelerated pathways to postsecondary education credentials and employment within in-demand occupations. Efforts to facilitate employer engagement will include a consideration of what employers want and not what we think we want them to know to build positive working relationships. Focus groups will be conducted in 2016 with local employers to increase our understanding of what employers need and to increase employers'

understanding of what we can provide to them. The appointment of a LWDB member representing apprenticeships will augment the focus on the opportunities of apprenticeships in the LWDA.

We are actively seeking partners in our efforts to increase outreach to targeted populations. This will be accomplished through a more mobile PA CareerLink® system that brings the workforce development services to the customer through partnership development with various community agencies. Such outreach will benefit individuals with barriers to employment by meeting them in an environment where they are comfortable and have a support system that will increase their success. Many of these individuals might not otherwise avail themselves of these services if they must access the services at a larger PA CareerLink® center, which is often intimidating to some populations. The PA CareerLink® has developed partnerships in Erie County with both the Housing Authority and Housing and Neighborhood Development Service (HANDS). HANDS has agreed to work in partnership with the PA CareerLink® to provide on-site classes, trainings, and job search assistance for their residents. This partnership also includes space for on-site delivery of services. The partnership between the PA CareerLink® and the Housing Authority provides additional support and assistance in job search activities. The Mental Health Association (MHA) provides numerous programs for individuals with mental health barriers. The partnership with PA CareerLink® will provide participants with on-site weekly services addressing soft skills. The MHA staff provide mentoring of their participants to foster their success. St. Benedict Education Center provides job training to address soft skills for individuals who are referred through the County Assistance Offices. One of the challenges of their program is that participants need to be trained and ready for work within 180 days. Partnership with the PA CareerLink® will be beneficial since many of their participants need additional support after the St. Benedict Education Center program ends. Such partnership building and the move toward a more mobile local PA CareerLink® system will result in improved outreach to these special populations, especially individuals with barriers to employment.

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

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

3.4 Identify and describe (for each category below) the strategies that are and/or will be used to:

- A. Facilitate engagement of employers, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations, in workforce development programs in addition to targeted sector strategies;
- B. Support a local workforce development system described in element 3.2 that meets the needs of businesses;
- C. Better coordinate workforce development programs with economic development partners and programs; and

This must include the implementation of incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, work-based learning programs, apprenticeship models, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies, career pathways initiatives or utilization of effective business intermediaries and other business services and strategies that support the local board's strategy in element 3.1.

[WIOA Sec. 108(b)(4)(A) and (B)].

Employers in manufacturing and building and construction trades are engaged through local industry partnership meetings conducted regularly within the LWDA. An enhanced business services structure was created and implemented in 2015 that includes representatives of local economic development agencies as partner members of the Business Services Team of the PA CareerLink® to more strategically serve the needs of employers. The efforts of this enhanced Business Services Team will assist employers in maintaining a competitive advantage and ensuring that their workforce is as skilled as possible, to minimize any negative impact. This relationship accomplishes coordination of workforce development and economic development activities and increases our ability to engage local employers and eliminate the need for multiple agency contacts with local industry. The Business Services Team promotes the area's workforce development programs and services to local employers and provides employers to a pipeline of qualified talent, recruitment assistance, retention and up-skilling of their existing workforce. Members of the Business Services Team attend and support the industry partnership meetings to assist the employers with acquiring and retaining skilled talent.

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

A Sector Strategies and Career Pathways Committee of LWDB will re-evaluate targeted industry sectors to develop and promote career pathways as a key workforce development strategy. The committee will identify career pathways that will align and integrate education (including Adult Basic Education and English as a Second Language), job training, counseling and support services to create accelerated pathways to postsecondary education credentials and employment within in-demand occupations. Efforts to facilitate employer engagement will include a discussion of what employers want and not what we think we want them to know toward building positive working relationships. During 2016, focus groups will be conducted with local employers to further evaluate what employers need. A LWDB member has been appointed representing apprenticeships and it is anticipated that his perspective will assist in bringing additional focus to the availability and opportunities of apprenticeships in the LWDA.

Additionally, the LWDB will evaluate reserving up to 20% of the funds allocated to the LWDA to pay for the

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

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

During 2015, a targeted job fair was conducted that matched experienced, skilled employees with regional manufacturers searching for employees with comparable skill sets. This refreshed approach to targeting job fairs had a positive impact on both employers and dislocated workers, based on the overwhelmingly positive feedback that we received following the event. Employer focus groups are also planned in 2016 with local industry leaders, the LWDB, its staff and partners in an effort to better identify skills gap and training needed to meet current and future needs of employers to close the skills gap in the LWDA.

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

Another valuable local resource for supporting system initiatives and improvements include the regional skills gap analysis that was conducted for Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Venango, Warren, West Central and Lawrence Counties as part of a Jobs1st Regional Partnership Grant through the Northwest Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Committee. This regional skills gap analysis revealed that many manufacturing employers reported difficulties in finding qualified candidates to hire for openings in their companies. Since this analysis, many initiatives have been implemented including the mobile PA CareerLink® and the Workforce Innovation Fund Grant activities to provide opportunities for the creation of wrap-around programs to supplement our existing structure and broaden the services that we can provide to employers. Key benefits of

the grant are the development of short-term training with “stackable credentials” by industry, incorporating employer input and specifications, job readiness training, as well as stronger cooperation and collaboration across programs and funding streams.

Our partnerships with economic development have been enhanced and include regular communication and strategic interactions. We are engaged in the efforts of the Northwest Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission’s Partnership for Regional Economic Performance (PREP) which connects our workforce development activities with other business service providers such as the Northwest Industrial Resource Center (NWIRC). The Executive Director of the Northwest Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission is a member of our LWDB. We partner with the local economic development agencies in our LWDA to identify and address key workforce issues through our PA CareerLink® Business Services Team.

Strengthened linkages between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs are anticipated through data sharing, expanded re-employment services, and WIOA Title I eligibility reviews of unemployment insurance claimants. It is expected that effective management of assessments, job referrals, one-on-one services, and client follow-up will improve the participant’s likelihood of entering employment, decreasing receipt of unemployment insurance benefits, and increased quarterly earnings. Currently unemployment insurance programs provide a phone in the PA CareerLink® centers for use by claimants.

3.6 Describe the workforce activities, including activities for youth with disabilities. Identify successful models and best practices for youth workforce activities relevant to the local area. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(9)]

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

The Youth Committee membership includes representation from community-based organizations that serve youth, juvenile justice, Title II education, career and technical education, public housing authorities and the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR). OVR staff will work collaboratively with WIOA Title I staff to develop an employment plan to maximize funding for eligible youth with disabilities. PA CareerLink® centers in the LWDA are handicap accessible and include accommodations for individuals with disabilities.

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

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

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

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

3.7 Describe how the local board coordinates education and workforce investment activities with relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(10)]

The Youth Committee of the LWDB includes representatives of local education and various community agencies collaborating to develop effective youth programs and address barriers to employment. The Sector Strategies and Career Pathways Committee is working in tandem with the Youth Committee to align and integrate education, job training, counseling and support services to create accelerated pathways to post-secondary education credentials and employment in in-demand occupations. The System Design and Implementation Committee supports the LWDB in ensuring that the PA CareerLink® system is entrepreneurial and includes coordination with secondary and post-secondary education programs and activities that are aligned with industry partnerships and ensures that participants are dually enrolled whenever possible to avoid duplication of services.

3.8 Describe efforts to coordinate supportive services provided through workforce investment activities in the local area, including facilitating transportation for customers. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(11)]

Supportive services must be available to support eligible participants during training and assist them to overcome barriers to training and employment. The area's PA CareerLink® centers work to establish strategic partnerships with local agencies to assist adults, dislocated workers and youth in the LWDA with. In this effort, the LWDB supportive services policy was updated in 2015 to increase the provision of supportive service funding for participants to better enable them to participate in workforce-funded programs and activities to secure and retain employment. In addition, training sessions were provided to all PA CareerLink® staff in the LWDA in December 2015 in an effort to increase focus on the importance of supportive services for participants, as well as emphasize the importance of documentation of supportive services in participant files. Referrals are made to community agencies that may provide various support services to maximize the availability of supportive services in the LWDA. Discussions on supportive services are also conducted with the Local Management Committee, which includes representatives from the local County Assistance Offices within the LWDA.

3.9 Describe strategies to implement the operational goals of the local one-stop system, maximizing coordination of services provided by the Department’s merit staff, and the local board’s contracted service providers in order to improve services and avoid duplication. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(12)]

The PA CareerLink® Site Administrators are tasked with daily oversight of all partner activities. They work closely with partners to resolve any issues. The local PA CareerLink® system includes a Site Coordination Team comprised of WIOA Title I staff, BWPO staff, and Site Administrators. The purpose of this team is to develop and maintain consistency across the service delivery area, including all policies and procedures, as well as identifying opportunities for improvement. Additionally, a core values session was provided to all PA CareerLink® staff in December 2015 in an effort to provide a foundation for guiding behavior and making business decisions, organizing the work environment and creating an opportunity for presenting positively and professionally to customers and partners. Core values are the principles and standards upon which an organization builds its future and they are used to shape the behavior of every person involved with the organization. A core values statement was adopted by the PA CareerLink® staff following the session and is available [here](#). The purpose of this strategy and subsequent core values is to maximize coordination of services and avoid duplication of effort across partner agencies within the local workforce development system. The PA CareerLink® operator consortium and site administrators are responsible to ensure that the core values are embedded into the day-to-day operations. Additionally, meetings are conducted with all co-located partner staff to discuss daily operations and to coordinate staff activities. Regular training is conducted to ensure staff understand the roles and responsibilities of all partners, promoting coordination of services and process improvements. Dislocated Workers who are eligible for Trade Act benefits are also co-enrolled in Wagner-Peyser, Title I, and Trade Act Programs to maximize the services available and reduce duplication across funding streams.

3.10 Describe how the local board will carry out a review of local applications submitted under WIOA Title II Adult Education and Literacy, consistent with the local plan (as described in WIOA Sec. 107(d)(11) and WIOA Sec. 232). [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(13)]

The LWDB will develop a local process to review for consistency with the Local Plan the PA Department of Education Title II applications and make recommendations to the PA Department of Education promoting alignment. The process will be consistent with guidance yet to be provided by the Commonwealth. In the interim, the process will include timely submittal of applications for review and recommendation to the LWDB for action. A committee of the LWDB will work with the Adult Literacy and Education Regional Coalition to ensure that the interim process is fair and reasonable.

3.11 Based on the analysis described in Appendix B - Section 1, identify the targeted populations that the local board plans to focus additional effort and resources towards. In terms of the targeted populations, briefly describe the local board’s objectives, goals, and strategies.

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

Services to Persons with Disabilities and Barriers to Employment

Efforts are made to ensure that individuals with disabilities receive access to all services provided within the PA CareerLink® centers. Under WIOA, it is expected that the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) will be focused on the most severely disabled and therefore the WIOA Title I staff play a more significant role in recruitment and outreach to this special population. Sensitivity training is provided for PA CareerLink® staff, as well as training on the various adaptive technologies used within the PA CareerLink® sites. As with other participant groups, referrals are also made, as appropriate, to other partnering community agencies to ensure full accessibility to needed services. The Individuals with Employment Barriers Committee was formed to support and advise the LWDB in the establishment and delivery of services to this population.

Services to Veterans and Related Eligible Persons

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

Services to TANF Customers and Low-Income Individuals

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

Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers

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

Services to Displaced Homemakers

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

Services to Women and Minorities

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

Older Individuals

An active referral process exists between the PA CareerLink® and partner agencies for program information and assistance for mature workers. Resources are shared and appropriate services are provided. For participants with little or no prior work experience, paid work experience opportunities can be provided. The SCSEP providers in the LWDB counties include Experience Works, Inc., Greater Erie Community Action Committee, and PathStone Corporation.

Persons with Limited English Proficiency

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

Ex-Offenders

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

Refugee and Immigrant Population

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

in their job search. On-the-Job Training opportunities are often provided to this population to assist them in their goal for employment to gain the self-sufficiency they desire for themselves and their families.

Dislocated Workers

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

Trade Act Eligible Individuals

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

Youth

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

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

3.14 Briefly describe any additional funding outside of WIOA title I and state general funds, and how such funding will be leveraged in support of the local workforce system.

Employment and Training Administration (ETA) funds such as Workforce Innovation Fund grants, Make It In America grants, Dislocated Worker Grant (DWG) funds and Trade Act funds are some examples of funding sources used to effectively augment WIOA Title I funds. LWDB strategies will recognize and adhere to the

funding restrictions of each funding stream, but will continue to seek out opportunities to leverage other available resources in an effort to increase services to the LWDA's eligible population, especially to those populations with barriers to employment. The use of formula-based investments with other funding such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), Veterans (VETS) and similar funding allows comprehensive services to be offered to all eligible low-income populations under WIOA. TANF funding continues to support WIOA year-round services and summer employment activities.

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

Section 4: Program Design and Evaluation

Many of the responses below should be based on strategic discussions between the local board and one-stop partners. Please provide a separate response for each of the elements listed below.

4.1 Describe the one-stop delivery system in the local area including:

- A. The local board's efforts to ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services, including contracted service providers and providers on the eligible training provider list, and ensure that such providers meet the employment needs of local employers, workers and jobseekers. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(6)(A)]
- B. How the local board will facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system in remote areas, through the use of technology, and through other means. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(6)(B)]
- C. How entities within the one-stop delivery system, including one-stop operators and the one-stop partners, will comply with WIOA section 188, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities, including providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities.
[WIOA Sec. 108(b)(6)(C)]
(See Appendix C: *Transitional Planning References and Resources*)

- A. The LWDB annually reviews the High Priority Occupation (HPO) list from the commonwealth. Training providers must meet requirement criteria to be approved for eligibility. They can petition the LWDB to add programs to the High Priority Occupation List if they can provide documentation of local job availability and wages for an occupation. Training programs must meet performance benchmarks regarding program completion, job placement rates, earnings, and credential attainment of students. Program applications must include a program description, program length, tuition and costs, prerequisites, and credentials that can be attained.

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

- B. Mobile PA CL initiatives have been developed to increase outreach to individuals with barriers to employment. Outreach to customers will be conducted through various partnerships with local agencies such as Erie Housing Authority, HANDS, the Mental Health Association and St. Benedict Education Center. Such outreach will benefit individuals with barriers to employment by meeting them in an environment where they are comfortable. Many of these individuals might not otherwise avail themselves of these services if they must access the services at a larger PA CareerLink® center, which is often intimidating to some populations. Technology is being acquired to allow case managers to more effectively provide services off-site, in rural areas with limited or no internet connectivity.
- C. Programs and facilities within the LWDA are compliant with WIOA Section 188 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. This is ensured through regular program/ facilities monitoring conducted by the LWDB staff monitor and EO Officer, as well as through state ADA certification evaluations every three years. PA CareerLink® staff training sessions are conducted from time to time to ensure that staff are prepared to provide the best service possible to individuals with disabilities. Resources include but are

not limited to Test Telephone or Teletypewriter for the Deaf (TTY), ADA accessible desks, computers, etc. Coordination with Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) helps to maximize service and funding opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

Also, the Individuals with Employment Barriers Committee of the LWDB supports and advises the LWDB in the establishment and delivery of services to individuals with barrier to employment, including individuals with disabilities.

4.2 Describe the local board's assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(7)]

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

Through partnership development and cooperation within the LWDA, quality career services are made available to the Adult and Dislocated worker population. Additional service offerings include:

Work Certified® is an accredited certification program that is provided by the program services contractor and is available for eligible participants in the LWDA. Work Certified® is a 90-hour work readiness program that prepares job seekers with the tools to find and retain employment. Many competencies often cited by employers are often lacking in potential employees. The Work Certified® program teaches workplace behaviors by providing tools to increase and improve self-awareness, mental attitude, work ethic and self-confidence skills that increase a candidate's value to an employer. Offering regional Work Certified® classes helps to improve job seeker employability through a competency-based program. Classes can be customized for employers, either for incumbent workers or in training new hires to improve retention.

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

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

For people with limited English proficiency, interpretive services are provided through Propio Language Services and assistance is also available from Interpretive Services of the Multicultural Community Resource Center. The limited English proficiency participants are also referred to adult education and literacy partners.

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

4.3 Describe how the local board will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out in the local area with statewide rapid response activities. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(8)]

The LWDB staff coordinates directly with the PA Department of Labor and Industry, Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations (BWPO) in applying for, receiving and disbursing Rapid Response funds for local coordination with statewide Rapid Response activities. The LWDB staff, along with PA CareerLink® site administrators and WIOA Title I operator receives communication from the BWPO Regional Rapid Response staff regarding WARN notices that are filed affecting the LWDA. The LWDB provides oversight and strategic guidance to the one-stop partners, as well as arranging for funding of transition activities of impacted workers and employers. The WIOA Title I program contractor implements program services and resources provided by the LWDB for specific activities.

When a WARN notice is filed on behalf of an employer, the PA CareerLink® partner agencies organize a Rapid Response session for all employees impacted by the layoff. The Rapid Response team reviews all services available at the PA CareerLink® including retraining funds available through Trade Act and WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker programs. The Rapid Response team includes Trade Act and WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker staff, as well as staff from partner agencies. The team explains PA CareerLink® services and answers questions of employees who will be affected by the layoff.

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

4.4 Provide an analysis and description of youth workforce activities, including activities for youth with disabilities. Identify successful models and best practices, for youth workforce activities relevant to the local area. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(9)]

Note: This section must include a description of the program design elements as well as how the local area will implement the 14 program elements.

The Youth Committee of the LWDB is discussing, developing, and implementing strategies to provide eligible youth with high-quality, effective youth program services, provide career pathways programs, and establish linkages with career and technical centers and post-secondary institutions in an effort to align program offerings with career pathways and labor market demand. Collaborative efforts on the development of career pathways for youth are being conducted with the Youth Committee, the Sector Strategies and Career Pathways

Committee and Title II Adult Education and Literacy partners in the LWDA. WIOA Title I Youth Programs are competitively procured every two to three years or as needed to operate youth programs serving both in-school and out-of-school youth, with special focus on out-of-school youth per WIOA. Under WIOA, 14 program elements for youth are required to be provided including:

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

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

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

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

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

Based on a youth participant's Individual Service Strategy (ISS), WIOA Title I youth staff connect participants with employers that align with their individual service strategy, whether subsidized or unsubsidized. Placement of youth participants in paid and unpaid work experiences are aligned, whenever possible, with high-priority occupations. Work experiences may be coupled with soft skills training and career exploration prior to the beginning of the work experience to maximize the placement opportunity. Internships and job shadowing are also available to the youth participants in the WIOA program. Youth in Erie County can also utilize the Career Street website to look for potential internships. Younger youth aged 15-21 years are also referred to the Summer Jobs and More (JAM) Program for a summer work experience. Partnerships have been developed with community pre-apprenticeship programs for referral of eligible youth participants. Examples of local agencies providing paid and unpaid work experiences include the Charter School of Excellence, Hermitage House, and Keystone Smiles.

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

Youth participants who enroll in a post-secondary school or training program that leads to a degree or certificate fulfill this program element. WIOA Title I youth staff provide information and assist, when

needed, with the application process and provide the supports necessary for youth to participate in training programs that lead to a recognized post-secondary credential aligned with in-demand industry sectors or occupations. Individual training accounts can be written using WIOA funding for eligible youth participants.

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

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

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

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

7. *Supportive services*

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

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

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

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

Youth participants who are exited from program participation receive follow-up case management for a period of not less than 12 months. Personal contact is made on a regular basis to ensure successful completion of education and employment retention. All Youth program contractors are required to

provide all participants with follow-up services.

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

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

11. Financial literacy education

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

12. Entrepreneurial skills training

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

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

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

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

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

4.8 Describe the process utilized by the local board to ensure that training provided is linked to in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area, or in another area to which a participant is willing to relocate. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(22)] and [WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(G)(iii)]

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

4.9 Describe the process and criteria the local board will use to include a wide range of providers and opportunities through the Local Training Provider List (LTPL). [Workforce System Policy 04-2015, *Eligible Training Providers*]

Note: Such criteria must include the factors listed in the WSP 04-2014 in addition to any criteria established by the local board. Eligibility of a provider and/or program must be based solely on measurable factors.

The LWDB will solicit training providers, including but not limited to, work-based and cohort training providers and registered apprenticeship program sponsors, within and outside of their respective local areas to ensure a competitive market designed to promote consumer choice and achieve successful implementation of data-driven career pathways and sector strategies on the Local Training Provider List (LTPL). Eligibility of a provider and/or program will be based solely on measurable factors and shall include the criteria in [Workforce System Policy \(WSP\) 04-2015, Eligible Training Providers](#). A local scorecard will be developed to measure and evaluate employment and earnings outcomes. Information must be entered into the formal system of record, the Commonwealth Workforce Development System (CWDS). The LWDB will develop, maintain, and distribute the LTPL, working closely with the commonwealth and in compliance with WSP 04-2015, Eligible Training Providers.

Section 5: Compliance

Responses are focused on the local area's compliance with federal or state requirements. Please provide a separate response for each of the elements listed below.

5.1 Describe the replicated cooperative agreements, as defined by WIOA 107(d)(11), in place between the local board and the Department of Labor & Industry's Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) with respect to efforts that will enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities and to other individuals, such as cross training of staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers, and other efforts at cooperation, collaboration, and coordination. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(14)]

It is anticipated that collaboration between the PA Department of Labor and Industry and the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) will result in the development and release of guidance that includes an agreement template for use by all LWDA's. The LWDB will work with the commonwealth to ensure compliance and fulfill the responsibilities within the agreement. OVR is represented on the LWDB and is a key PA CareerLink® partner and member of the PA CareerLink® operator consortium. OVR is a party to the One Stop Operator Agreement, One Stop Partner Agreement and Resource Sharing Agreements of the local PA CareerLink® system.

Local efforts to enhance services to individuals with disabilities include the scheduling of a joint staff cross-training session for PA CareerLink® staff for both Three Rivers LWDA and the Northwest PA LWDA, to be provided by OVR staff in Erie County. The training session will be conducted at the OVR office in Erie, with Three Rivers LWDA participating via video conference. In addition, a Transition Job Fair for hiring youth with disabilities ages 17 – 25 was held on April 13, 2016 at the Clarion Hotel in Erie County. This targeted job fair provides information to employers on the unique services that OVR can provide, as well as tax credits that may be available to employers as a benefit for hiring youth with disabilities.

5.3 Describe the competitive and non-competitive processes, as well as the process for sole-sourcing, used for procuring goods and services within the local area. This includes, but is not limited to, the process used to award funds to a one-stop operator and other sub-recipients/contractors of WIOA title I adult, dislocated worker, and youth services. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(16)]

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

Procurement by noncompetitive proposals (sole source) is procurement through solicitation of a proposal from only one source and would be used only when one or more of the following circumstances apply:

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

- After solicitation of a number of sources, competition is determined inadequate.

5.4 Describe the local area's negotiated local levels of performance for the federal measures and their implications upon the local workforce system; attach the completed Performance Targets Template. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(17)]

Note: See Appendix C: Transitional Planning References and Resources "Performance Targets Template".

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

5.6 Describe the process used by the local board for the receipt and consideration of input into the development of the local plan in compliance with WIOA section 108(d). Describe the process to provide an opportunity for public comment prior to submission of the local plan. Be sure to address how members of the public, including representatives of business, labor organizations, and education were given an opportunity to provide comments on the local plan. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b)(20)]

Prior to the release of the Local Plan for the public comment period, partners and various community members, stakeholders, etc. were sent a copy of the commonwealth's Local Plan template to solicit input on the LWDA's responses to various sections of the Local Plan. This provides stakeholders, partners, community members and others an opportunity for significant and meaningful input into the development of the Local Plan. Through each step of the process, comments, suggestions and input received from LWDB members, committee members, Title I program services contractors, Title II adult education and literacy providers, operator consortium members, and other partners and stakeholders have been evaluated and careful consideration given to incorporating them into the Local Plan. The LWDB is comprised of representatives from economic development, education, business, labor and community-based organizations, as well as other partners, each of whom have input into the Local Plan. In addition, a Review Committee of LWDB members was formed to review all public comment received and determine if changes were needed to the Local Plan. The draft Local Plan was posted to the website at www.nwpawib.org for a 30-day public comment period on April 25, 2016. A printed copy of the draft Local Plan was available at the LWDB office for review. Notice of the public comment period was placed in local newspapers and/or posted via email notification to stakeholders and other interested parties. Public comment was also accepted via email or mail. Any public comment received was evaluated for potential changes to the final Local Plan. The comments received and response from the Review Committee are presented as an attachment to this document.

5.7 Prior to the date on which the local board submits a proposed local plan (i.e., no later than Thursday, June 2, 2016), the proposed local plan must be made available to members of the public through electronic and other means.

- A. Describe how the local board made the proposed local plan available for public comment. [WIOA Sec. 108(d)(1)];
- B. Describe how the local board collected and considered public comments for inclusion in the proposed local plan. [WIOA Sec. 108(d)(2)]; and

C. If any comments were received that represent disagreement with the proposed local plan, include such comments within the local plan's attachments. [WIOA Sec. 108(d)(3)]

The Local Plan was posted to the LWDB's website at www.nwpawib.org on April 25, 2016. Chief Local Elected Officials, LWDB members, LWDB committee members, program services contractors, Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations, Bureau of Workforce Development Administration, PA CareerLink® system partners, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, educational institutions, economic development agencies, community agencies, and other partners and stakeholders were notified via email that the Local Plan had been posted to the website for 30-day public comment. Public comment was accepted in writing electronically to participate@nwpawib.org or by mail until 4:00 pm on May 24, 2016. All public comments were reviewed by the CLEOs as well as a committee made up of LWDB members who determined if any changes were needed to the Local Plan. The comments received and response from the committee are presented as an attachment to this document.

5.8 List the name, organization, and contact information of the designated equal opportunity officer for each PA CareerLink® center within the local area.

Jeanna Noel
Bureau of Workforce Partnership & Operations
PA CareerLink® - Clarion County
627 Wood Street
Clarion, PA 16214
(814) 223-1550

Darlene McCann
Bureau of Workforce Partnership & Operations
PA CareerLink® - Crawford County
260 Chestnut Street
Meadville, PA 16335
(814) 337-5574

Joe Miceli
Bureau of Workforce Partnership & Operations
PA CareerLink® - Erie County
155 East 8th Street
Erie, PA 16501
(814) 455-9966

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

J. Scott Nidifer
Bureau of Workforce Partnership & Operations
PA CareerLink® - Warren County
1003 Pennsylvania Avenue West, Suite 102
Warren, PA 16365
(814) 723-2350

5.9 By checking the box adjacent to each line item, the local board attests to ensuring the compliance components/documents listed are in place and effective prior to July 1, 2016.

Copies of the listed compliance components/documents are not required at this time, but may be requested during monitoring and/or auditing.

- ✓ Agreement between all counties and other local governments, if applicable, establishing the consortium of local 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
- ✓ One-Stop Partner Agreement(s)
- ✓ Resource Sharing Agreement(s)
- ✓ Resource Sharing Agreement Budget(s)
- ✓ 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
- ✓ Program management policy and process including equal opportunity for customers; supportive services; needs related payments; file management; eligibility; self-sufficiency criteria; individual training accounts; layoff assistance; priority of services; grievance for eligible training providers list; transitional jobs; stipends; and training verification/refunds
- ✓ 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

Appendix C: Transitional Planning References and Resources

I. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Combined Workforce Development Strategic Plan (*State Plan*)

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

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

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

Our five broad goals for the commonwealth's workforce development system are:

- 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.
- 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.
- Increase opportunities for all youth to participate in work based learning through summer employment, pre-apprenticeship, apprenticeship and other similar experiences.
- Engage employers directly to ensure we are closing the skills gap and able to more quickly upskill or reskill the workforce to meet the current and future needs.
- Strengthen data sharing across state agencies and workforce development partners to understand education and employment outcomes and more effectively evaluate our efforts."

A. PY 2016 Combined State Plan to be found at [PA Workforce Development-Policy Documents](#)

B. [PA State Workforce Development Board](#) information

II. Department Policy and Guidance.

- A. Methods of Administration (MOA) will be accessible on a public site being established.
- B. Department Policy and Guidance (includes new and revised policies designed for initial implementation of WIOA) will be posted on the Labor & Industry website.

III. Center for Workforce Information and Analysis (CWIA).

The Department's Center for Workforce Information and Analysis (CWIA) will provide required labor market information and other economic data to assist in the development of regional and local plan economic analysis.

CWIA presents a wide range of data and information on their website: [CWIA Home Page](#)

CWIA staff will provide technical assistance regarding planning elements that necessitate an economic analysis.

IV. PY 2016 Performance Targets Template. (Attached)

V. Other Resources.

- [TEN 1-15; Promising Practices in Achieving Universal Access and Equal Opportunity: A Section 188 Disability Reference Guide; July 6, 2015](#)
- [TEGL 37-14; Update on Complying with Nondiscrimination Requirements: Discrimination Based on Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Stereotyping are Prohibited Forms of Sex Discrimination in the Workforce Development System; May 29, 2015](#)
- [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#)

Transitional PY16 Local Plan
Appendix C: Local Area WIOA Negotiated Performance Goals

Name of local workforce development area: Northwest PA Workforce Development Area

WIOA Performance Measures	Local Area PY15 Performance Goals
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	
	Negotiated Goals
Adult	59%
Dislocated Worker	67%
Youth	58%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	
	Negotiated Goals
Adult	58%
Dislocated Worker	63%
Youth	57%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)	
	Negotiated Goals
Adult	\$5,000
Dislocated Worker	\$6,300
Youth	\$2,100
Credential Attainment Rate	
	Negotiated Goals
Adult	68%
Dislocated Worker	71%
Youth	60%
Measurable Skill Gains	
	Negotiated Goals
Adult	48%
Dislocated Worker	48%
Youth	48%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	
	Negotiated Goals
Adult	25%
Dislocated Worker	25%
Youth	25%

NORTHWEST WDA
LOCAL PLAN PUBLIC COMMENT RECEIVED
APRIL 25, 2016 THROUGH MAY 24, 2016

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

#	Comment	Response
1	These two areas are confusing. You have projected employment and projected growth and state that between 2012 and 2022 is “virtually unchanged”. But as an example you state that the projected employment distribution for Advanced Degree increases from 4% to 5% but the projected employment growth is 17.3%. Could these two areas be stated clearer? (Section 1.3, <i>Employment Growth by Education Level Chart</i> , Page 4) from Keystone Community Education Council	Comment reviewed. Data provided by PA Department of Labor and Industry’s Center for Workforce Information and Analysis for local plan development. No change to the plan.
2	This chart is hard to figure out. I would read better and make more sense if under each educational attainment you are had, Employed, Unemployed and Not in labor force and had the figures to back it up. (Section 1.3, <i>Industry Projections; Educational Attainment by Employment Status for the Population 25 – 64 Years by County chart</i> , Page 6) from Keystone Community Education Council	Comment reviewed. Data provided through Jobs1st Regional Partnership Grant Northwest Commission Regional Skills Gap Analysis. No change to the plan.
3	Add Riverview Intermediate Unit. Remove “at Oil Region” from Keystone Community Education Council because they serve numerous counties. (Section 1.4, 2 nd paragraph, Page 6) from Keystone Community Education Council	Comment reviewed. Change will be made to “Community Education Councils in the six-county area”
4	In WIOA is there a requirement or sequence of service prior to Training? That needs to be checked because WIOA may not have any requirement. (Section 1.4, 4 th paragraph, Page 7) from Keystone Community Education Council	Comment reviewed. Sentence will be reworded for improved clarity.
5	Funding from other sources than WIOA (Section 1.4, end of first sentence in 9 th paragraph, Page 8) from Keystone Community Education Council	Do not understand the comment. No change to the plan.
6	If you are going to place the explanation of ICE House then there should be an explanation for TABE. Most individuals to not know nor understand what TABE is. (Section 1.4, Page 8) from Keystone Community Education Council	Comment reviewed. Will add a footnote to describe that TABE is a DOE accepted assessment tool; it’s use is determined by the PA CareerLink® Operator Consortium
7	Should it be stated who is responsible for Educating, Identifying and Ensuring? It is the WDB along with the CLEO’s that develop policy not the staff to the WDB. (Section 2.1, Goal 1, Page 9) from Keystone Community Education Council	Comment reviewed. The description of the responsible party is noted in 2.1. No change to the plan.
8	Who is responsible for accomplishing this? If this is part of a strategic plan than it should be stated in the strategic plan and placed in this Local Plan. (Section 2.1, Goal 2, Page 9) from Keystone Community Education Council	Comment reviewed. No change to the plan.
9	Who is responsible for accomplishing this? If this is part of a strategic plan than it should be stated in the strategic plan and placed in this Local Plan. (Section 2.1, Goal 3, Page 9) from Keystone Community Education Council	Comment reviewed. No change to the plan.

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10	In order to improve customer service it needs to be addressed how this is going to be accomplished with the decrease decreased number of staff and the potential closing of CLs and sending staff out of the office to work the mobile CL sites. (Section 2.1, Goal 4, 3 rd bullet, Page 9) from Keystone Community Education Council	Comment reviewed. This is a one-year transitional plan which allows for a year of innovation. No change to the plan.
11	Who is responsible for accomplishing this? If this is part of a strategic plan than it should be stated in the strategic plan and placed in this Local Plan. (Section 2.1, Goal 4, Page 9) from Keystone Community Education Council	Comment reviewed. The description of the responsible party is noted in 2.1. No change to the plan.
12	Should TABE be listed here? Is WorkKeys and WIN still being used? What is Proveit? (Section 2.1, Goal 5, 2 nd bullet, Page 10) from Keystone Community Education Council	Comment reviewed. These are merely examples of assessments and remediation tools that can be considered. Not an all-inclusive list of tools. No change to the plan.
13	Who is responsible for accomplishing this? If this is part of a strategic plan than it should be stated in the strategic plan and placed in this Local Plan. (Section 2.1, Goal 5, Page 10) from Keystone Community Education Council	Comment reviewed. The description of the responsible party is noted in 2.1. No change to the plan.
14	It needs to be noted that this is mostly for Erie County and the plans and time frame for when it would be accomplished in the Rural Counties be added. (Section 2.2, Goal 3, 1 st paragraph, Pages 11-12) from Keystone Community Education Council	Comment reviewed. This is a one-year transitional plan. Next year's plan will have more definitive information on future goals of the program. No change to the plan.
15	If all of these activities are supposed to be for the NW Region why are numerous activities being geared toward Erie only? Should there not be a statement that explains how they are going to be shared for the Rural counties? (Section 2.2, Goal 3, 5 th paragraph, Page 12) from Keystone Community Education Council	Comment reviewed. In the transition year, these activities are being tried in Erie County where there is a larger population; if successful, they will be expanded to other counties in the LWDA. No change to the plan.
16	With more tracking and reporting, more duties out of the office, more in-depth service <u>how</u> will better customer service be provided?? If you it is being said that it is going to be done should you not explain and justify how it will be accomplished? (Section 2.2, Goal 5, 1 st and 2 nd paragraphs, Page 13) from Keystone Community Education Council	Comment reviewed. No change to the plan.
17	At a regular LWDB meeting the full Board will review said action and ratify the decision. (Section 3.1, A., regarding <i>Executive Committee</i> , Page 16) from Keystone Community Education Council	Comment reviewed. No change to the plan.
18	Change "partners" to "Team members"(Section 3.1, A., regarding <i>Business Services Team</i> , Page 17) from Keystone Community Education Council	Comment reviewed. No change to the plan.
19	Capitalize "Community Education Councils" and add acronym "CECs" (Section 3.1, A., regarding <i>Community Education Councils</i> , Page 18) from Keystone Community Education Council	Comment reviewed. Community Education Councils will be capitalized in the plan.
20	Clarify: located at "Corry Higher Education Council at Smith Education Center" (Section 3.1, B., regarding <i>satellite centers</i> , Page 19) from Keystone Community Education Council	Comment reviewed. No change to the plan.

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21	Clarify: after "has in place a site administrator" add "(Oil City and Clarion, Meadville and Warren have a shared site administrator and Erie has their own)" (Section 3.1, B., last paragraph, Page 19) from Keystone Community Education Council	Comment reviewed. No change to the plan.
22	Are supervisor also shared (Section 3.1, B., last paragraph, Page 19) from Keystone Community Education Council	Comment reviewed. No change to the plan.
23	In the organization chart it indicates that PFP is directly responsible to the CLEOs yet in the narrative it states that PFP is "administrative support agency to the LWDB, provides staff support for the LWDB" Should the organizational chart reflect that PFP is under the NWPA WDB as administrative support? It would appear there is a conflict between the written information and the organizational chart. (Section 3.1, C., Page 19) from Keystone Community Education Council	Comment reviewed. No change to the plan.
24	Should there be a list of mandated partners? (Section 3.2, 1 st paragraph, Page 20) from Keystone Community Education Council	Comment reviewed. No change to the plan.
25	If the CareerLinks are not using the WorkKeys or Win then what schools are using it? Instead of saying many give a percent of schools in the NW region or list the schools. (Section 3.2, <i>Career and Technical Education</i> , Page 20) from Keystone Community Education Council	Comment reviewed. No change to the plan.
26	Insert: "The Community Education Councils (CECs) network, as designated by PDE, will align training development efforts with the overarching strategies of the commonwealth to increase the education and training delivery to residents of rural communities. Additionally, the CECs have historically leveraged other state and local funding to implement sector based training provided through a variety of educational institutions in rural communities where campus locations are non-existent. CECs serve as an intermediary and broker of training programs based on identified need and demand. The CECs extend program development activities with postsecondary institutions to ensure that residents of rural communities have access to credential bearing training opportunities." (Section 3.2, <i>Career and Technical Education</i> , Pages 20-21) from Keystone Community Education Council	Comment reviewed. Community Education Councils have been addressed earlier in the plan at section 3.1. No change to the plan.
27	What services? List them. (Section 3.2, <i>WIOA Adult</i> , Page 21) from Keystone Community Education Council	Comment reviewed. No change to the plan.
28	A LOT OF PEOPLE WITH BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT WOULD NOT BE COMFORTABLE OR HAVE THE KNOWLEDGE TO ACCESS ONLINE SERVICES (Section 3.3, 1 st paragraph, Page 22) from Keystone Community Education Council	Comment reviewed. No change to the plan.
29	Regarding higher education councils: Should be (Community Education Councils) which is	Comment reviewed. Higher education councils will be changed

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	the correct title at the state level (Section 3.3, 5 th paragraph, Page 23) from Keystone Community Education Council	to Community Education Councils in the plan.
30	Regarding eligibility reviews of unemployment insurance claimants: Sounds like it is being said that eligibility review will be done at the CareerLink. If that is true than this statement is correct. (Section 3.4, last paragraph, Page 26) from Keystone Community Education Council	Comment reviewed. Sentence will be revised to clarify that eligibility review is for WIOA Title I eligibility and not unemployment insurance eligibility.
31	If this is being done should it not be stated who is doing it? (Section 3.6, 1 st paragraph, Page 26) from Keystone Community Education Council	Comment reviewed. No change to the plan.
32	These are all great programs but when are they being used, who is trained to use them? If there are no staff members who know how to use O*Net or Choices for example then doesn't a plan need to be developed for when they will be trained and how they will be used. If the staff are not familiar with these tools should they be listed in the Local Plan? If there are plans to use them then should not there be a plan for which staff will be trained and when they will be trained. (Section 3.6, 3 rd paragraph, Page 26) from Keystone Community Education Council	Comment reviewed. No change to the plan.
33	Regarding youth counselors providing training in specific areas for youth with disabilities and barriers to employment: Is this just for out of school youth? If so should it not be stated? (Section 3.6, 4 th paragraph, Page 27) from Keystone Community Education Council	Comment reviewed. No change to the plan.
34	Regarding regular training to ensure staff understands the roles and responsibilities of all partners, promoting coordination of services and process improvements: When has the training occurred and how often has it been scheduled? Do to the turnover in staff at the CareerLinks should there be a schedule for the training on a regular basis? (Section 3.9, Page 28) from Keystone Community Education Council	Comment reviewed. No change to the plan.
35	Change this wording to the wording that is in WIOA Sec. 107 (I) Reviewing the applications to provide adult education and literacy activities under title II for the local area, submitted under such section to the eligible agency by eligible providers, to determine whether such applications are consistent with the local plan; and (II) Making recommendations to the eligible agency to promote alignment with such plan; and (Section 3.10, 1 st paragraph, Page 28) from Keystone Community Education Council	Comment reviewed. This portion of the plan will be revised to state "The LWDB will develop a local process to review for consistency with the Local Plan, PA Department of Education Title II applications and make recommendations to the PA Department of Education promoting alignment. The process will be consistent with guidance yet to be provided by the Commonwealth. In the interim, the process will include timely submittal of applications for review and recommendation to the LWDB for action. A committee of the LWDB will work with the Adult Literacy and Education Regional Coalition to ensure that

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		the interim process is fair and reasonable.
36	Regarding PA CareerLink® providing career services: State how you are doing this (Section 3.11, 1 st paragraph, Page 28) from Keystone Community Education Council	Comment reviewed. No change to the plan.
37	Are you seeking input from the County Vet Reps? If not it would be helpful to do so and state that in the plan. (Section 3.11, <i>Services to Veterans and Related Eligible Persons</i>), Page 29) from Keystone Community Education Council	Comment reviewed. Veteran representative is member of LWDB who provides input and vote. Also, Vet reps in PA CareerLink® centers. No change to the plan.
38	Name change needed wherever referring to CAO and DPW (Section 3.11, <i>Services to Women and Minorities</i> , Page 30) from Keystone Community Education Council	Comment reviewed. No change to the plan.
39	Everything seems to be occurring in Erie. What about the other five rural counties? When are there plans to do programs in the rural counties? (Section 3.11, <i>Ex-Offenders</i> , Page 30) from Keystone Community Education Council	Comment reviewed. In the transition year, these activities are being tried in Erie County where there is a larger population; if successful, they will be expanded to other counties in the LWDA. Ex-offender activities have been expanded into Venango County. No change to the plan.
40	The Trade Act Eligible Individuals were not covered. Why not use the language from WC? Trade Act Eligible Individuals – BWPO staff first meet with the individual affected by a lay off or downsizing and the company has a WARN notice on file. If an individual is interested in re-training and applying for TAA funding, they are first referred to the WIOA Title I provider for interest and aptitude assessment to assure the occupational field of interest is one in which they will be successful. The WIOA Title I staff completes a WIOA application for services and schedules the individual for assessment. Once tested the WIOA Title I staff sends a recommendation to BWPO staff to approve or deny training along with the assessment results. BWPO forwards the TAA application for funding to the Commonwealth. Once approved the individual is co-enrolled in the PA CareerLink® system and WIOA systems. WIOA Title I staff will process an Individual Training Account (ITA) if the training is over and above the State's training cap. All WIOA Dislocated Worker and/or Rapid Response supportive services are available as needed to all co-enrolled individuals (Section 3.11, Pages 28-31) from Keystone Community Education Council	Comment reviewed. A brief description of services to Trade Act eligible individuals will be added to the plan that states that "a Benefit Rights Interview (BRI) is conducted, the Trade Act eligible individual meets with the Trade Act staff, a WIOA Title I application for services is completed to accomplish dual enrollment and an assessment is conducted. Supportive services are available as needed to all co-enrolled individuals."
41	How will new occupations be handled when there is no availability of information on wages? (Example is with Pharmaceutical Manufacturing companies coming into the region) (Section 4.1, A., Page 33) from Keystone Community Education Council	Comment reviewed. No change to the plan.
42	Regarding PA CareerLink® staff training sessions: Should this not be set up on a scheduled basis because of the continues turnover of staff at the CareerLinks? (Section	Comment reviewed. No change to the plan.

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	4.1, C., Pages 33-34) from Keystone Community Education Council	
43	Regarding training on the local supportive services policy: Have a schedule for when and how often this policy is review with staff. (Section 4.2, 5 th paragraph, Page 34) from Keystone Community Education Council	Comment reviewed. No change to the plan.
44	State who is responsible for making sure that companies are aware of the Layoff aversion and how that information is disseminated (Section 4.3, last paragraph, Page 35) from Keystone Community Education Council	Comment reviewed. No change to the plan.
45	Should it not be indicated that the Charter School is for Erie County only? (Section 4.4, 11., Page 38) from Keystone Community Education Council	Comment reviewed. This is not an all-inclusive list. No change to the plan.
46	Should it be indicated that this is for Erie County only? (Section 4.4, 12., Page 38) from Keystone Community Education Council	Comment reviewed. This is not an all-inclusive list. No change to the plan.
47	Various Comments from Northwest PA Title II Adult Education Coalition (see attachment "Comment 47")	See attachment "Comment 47 - Response."
48	Comment Document from the Community Justice Project (see attachment "Comment 48")	All comments received were reviewed. The Local Plan is a one-year transitional plan and these comments will be taken under consideration for next year's more long-term plan.

Comments Submitted by the Northwest PA Title II Adult Education Coalition:

The Northwest PA Title II Adult Education Coalition partners include:

Carol Brigham – The Multicultural Community Resource Center
Dr. Armendia Dixon – Crawford County READ Program
Pamela Johnson – Jefferson Clarion Headstart Inc.
Tonya Mauk – Clarion County Literacy Program
Kathleen Pagano – The Barber National Institute
Teresa Swoger – Greater Erie Area Community Action Committee (GECAC) – GECAC Adult Education
Caryl Unseld, Northwest Tri-County Intermediate Unit 5 – Adult Education and Career Readiness Program

Comment 1 relates to section 3.10:

Please consider the draft regulations released by the federal government in April 2015 when determining the LWDB process for review of the adult education (Title II) provider proposals during competitive grant cycles. The “eligible agency” referred to is the PA Department of Education.

“An eligible agency must establish within its grant or contract competition, a process that requires an eligible provider applying for funds under AEFLA to submit its application to its Local Board prior to submission to the eligible agency. The process must require eligible providers to submit the application to the Local Board for its review for consistency with the local plan within the appropriate timeframe; and provide an opportunity for the local board to make recommendations to the eligible agency to promote alignment with the local plan. The eligible agency must consider the results of the review by the local board in determining the extent to which the application addresses the required considerations in §463.20.”

Based on the proposed federal regulations the following content should be incorporated into section 3.10 of the LWDB local plan. **The PA Department of Education (PDE) will establish within its grant cycle an overarching process that requires eligible providers applying for funds under WIOA Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Activities (AEFLA) to submit competitive grant applications to the Workforce Development Board for a review to determine alignment to the LWDB’s local plan. The grant proposals provided to the LWDB will be comprehensive and provide information on proposed scope of services and program delivery for the duration of the grant period. PDE will develop a standardized assessment tool to be used by the LWDB that will be used by LWDBs to determine individual proposal alignment to the local plan for its review and recommendations of submitted proposals. The process developed by PDE will include the timeline for submission and review of all applications. PDE will consider the results of the review by the LWDB in its consideration for grant awards. The LWDB will determine and describe in their local plans how the LWDB will internally handle the review of the applications.**

Comment 2

Title II providers, as part of a comprehensive program, provide basic education for individual seeking to earn a high school equivalency (HSE) credential. The GED® and HISET® tests are the approved HSE exams in Pennsylvania.

<http://www.gedtestingservice.com/uploads/files/e340ea4cd47cc1560dc1761d14f0a5eb.pdf>

<http://www.nwlincs.org/mtlincs/opi/HiSET/23632-HiSETbrandGuide.pdf>

Comment 3 - relates to page 20 of the draft local plan. The red text indicates suggested additions.

Adult basic education is a critical partner in establishing career pathways for adults who are deficient in basic skills. These programs provide a full range of adult basic education services, from beginning level literacy through high adult secondary, including individuals with **intellectual disabilities** and transition activities to support college and career readiness. These services include English language acquisition, basic skills instruction in work readiness, workplace preparation, and career awareness. Programs provide case management services by helping students address barriers to participation in adult basic education programming, as well as prepare and plan for entry onto a career pathway through employment and/or postsecondary education/training. There are numerous adult education and literacy providers in the region. Some examples include **Greater Erie Community Action Committee (GECAC), Crawford County READ Program, Northwest Tri-County Intermediate Unit 5, Riverview Intermediate Unit, Clarion County Literacy Program, Jefferson- Clarion Head Start Inc, Barber National Institute, Multicultural Community Resource Center**, and Warren Forest Economic Opportunity Council working in partnership with the PA CareerLink® centers in the LWDA. Adult literacy and education classes are designed for participants needing basic skills remediation, allowing participants to successfully work toward their goals of **GED preparation earning a high school equivalency credential through successful completion of the GED® or HISET® exam, entering** post-secondary education and/or **entering or retaining** employment. A coalition group of adult education and literacy providers exists in the region and the coalition's point of contact is a member of the LWDB. In partnership with the PA CareerLink® centers, the Title II adult education and literacy partners conduct **TABE/CASAS assessments** in an effort to reduce duplication within the PA CareerLink® system and provide focus on career pathways and **soft** skill development for job seekers.

Comment 4 – suggested changes to pages 7, 12, 13, 26, and 34

- Page 7: Remove KayLynn Hamilton's name and replace with **Workforce Development Liaison, PA Department of Education**
- Page 12: Third paragraph refers to Adult Learning Center and should possibly read **Adult Education and Literacy Programs**.
- Page 12: **Erie's Public Schools conducts an adult diploma program with the support of Title II Adult Education providers**.
- Page 13: Title II adult education providers **integrate** "soft skills" training across the curriculum and in the delivery of case management services.
- Page 26: **Title II providers conduct one-to-one or small group tutoring in both math and reading on an as needed basis**.
- Page 34: Last paragraph, Hispanic American Council is now called the Multicultural Community Resource Center

Comments submitted by the Northwest PA Title II Adult Education Coalition

Comment 1 regarding Local Plan section 3.10:

Section 3.10: Describe how the local board will carry out a review of local applications submitted under WIOA Title II Adult Education and Literacy, consistent with the local plan (as described in WIOA Sec. 107(d)(11) and WIOA Sec. 2322). [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(13)]

Response: Comment reviewed. The following language will be revised under section 3.10 in the Local Plan. “The LWDB will develop a local process to review for consistency with the Local Plan, PA Department of Education Title II applications and make recommendations to the PA Department of Education promoting alignment. The process will be consistent with guidance yet to be provided by the Commonwealth. In the interim, the process will include timely submittal of applications for review and recommendation to the LWDB for action. A committee of the LWDB will work with the Adult Literacy and Education Regional Coalition to ensure that the interim process is fair and reasonable.”

Comment 2 regarding GED found throughout the Local Plan:

Response: Comment reviewed. Minor changes will be made to the Local Plan to change “GED” or “HISET” to earning a high school equivalency (HSE) credential.

Comment 3 regarding edits to Section 3.2 of the Local Plan:

Section 3.2: Describe the workforce development system in the local area that identifies the programs that are included in that system and how the local board will work with the entities carrying out core and other workforce development programs to support alignment to provide services, including programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, that support the strategy identified in the State plan under section 102(b)(1)(E) [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(2)]

Response: Comment reviewed. Minor changes will be made to page 20 of the Local Plan to include individuals with “intellectual disabilities;” remove the names of example agencies providing adult education and literacy services in the region; remove “GED” and change to high school equivalency (HSE) credential; and remove the name of specific assessments and change to “Department of Education approved assessments.”

Comment 4 regarding minor clarification throughout the Local Plan:

Response:

Page 7 - Comment reviewed. KayLynn Hamilton’s name will be replaced with “Workforce Development Liaison, PA Department of Education on page 7.

Page 12 – Comment reviewed. Reference to Adult Learning Center will be replaced with “Adult Education and Literacy Programs”

Page 12 - Comment reviewed. Reference to Central Tech After Hours will be replaced with “school district.”

Page 13 - Comment reviewed. “Title II adult education providers integrate soft skills training across the curriculum and in the delivery of case management services” will be added at the end of the last paragraph in Goal 4.

Page 26 - Comment reviewed. “Title II Adult Education and Literacy providers conduct one-on-one or small group tutoring in both math and reading on an as-needed basis” will be added to the last paragraph on page 26 under section 3.6. The first sentence of this paragraph will also be changed to add “math” to the skills to be developed through tutoring programs.

Page 34 - Comment reviewed. Hispanic-American Council will be changed to “Multicultural Community Resource Center” in the sixth paragraph of section 4.2.



Community Justice Project Comments on the Northwest PA Workforce Development Board Local WIOA Transition Plan

(May 20, 2016)

The Community Justice Project (CJP)¹ submits these comments on behalf of Success Against All Odds and the many low-income clients CJP represents every year who seek to better their lives through better jobs. The Northwest PA Workforce Development Board WIOA Transition Plan (NWPAWDB Plan) was published for public comment on April 22, 2016, with comments due by May 29, 2016.

Because we work on behalf of low-income clients, our comments focus on: (i) priority of service for recipients of public assistance and other low-income, high needs persons; (ii) Career Pathways; and (iii) Transitional Jobs (subsidized employment).

I. Background

WIOA, like its antecedents -- the Workforce Investment Act and the Job Training Partnership Act -- places special importance on serving low-income, high needs groups. According to WIOA:

Priority for individualized career services and training services must be given to:

- (i) *recipients of public assistance;*
- (ii) *other low-income individuals ;and*
- (iii) *individuals who are basic skills deficient*

WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(E)

WIOA strengthens priority of service requirements under the Workforce Investment Act in a number of ways, including eliminating the provision under WIA that priority of services applies only when funds are limited. Under WIOA, priority of service must be provided, regardless of funding.

Strengthening the priority of service requirement was clearly needed, as a declining number of low-income persons were served under WIA, despite its priority of service requirement. National data show that only 48.7 percent of adult “exiters” who received training and/or intensive services through the WIA Adult funding stream were “low-income individuals” in Program Year 2013 – a marked decrease

¹ The Community Justice Project is a statewide project of the Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network focusing on impact advocacy. CJP has worked for many years with its client group Success Against All Odds to improve access to adult and postsecondary education for single parents participating in the TANF and SNAP programs.

from 71.3 percent in Program Year 2001. ***And only 3.8 percent of those served in Program year 2013 were TANF recipients.***²

Over the past decade and a half, WIA delivered training services to a declining share of low-income individuals, and WIA served a far lower percentage of low-income adults than the predecessor federal law in place before 1998, the Job Training Partnership Act, which required that 90 percent of the funds for adults were targeted for those who were low-income.³

In light of the underlying intent of WIOA, WIA, and the JTPA - and past failure by states to realize the goals of priority of service -- the Wolf Administration placed special emphasis on this key provision of WIOA in its March 17, 2016 WIOA State Plan. In order to ensure successful implementation of priority of service for recipients of public assistance and other low-income, high needs groups targeted by WIOA, the State Plan included:

- Service benchmarks for those entitled to priority of service;
- Specific guidance to Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) and CareerLinks on what “priority of service” means and how it works;
- A directive that LWDBs and Career Links provide detailed information on how they will address a range of issues critical to successful implementation of priority of service requirements.

(See, WIOA State Plan, pp. 10-11 and 67-70)

We focus in these comments on the last of these three priority of service provisions in the WIOA State Plan because an important purpose of the local and regional plans is for the LWDBs and CareerLinks to demonstrate that they have thought carefully about how they will ensure that training services are provided to low-income, high needs persons and have workable plans for so doing.

II. Comments

A. Priority of Service

In their local plans, LWDBs and PA CareerLink® centers are required to “state the additional methods by which they will apply the WIOA priority of service requirements and the commonwealth’s policy regarding priority of service,” by stating “in detail” how they will address specific issues critical to successful implementation of priority of service. (WIOA State Plan pp. 69-70)

² Comparison of nationwide data from PY2002 and PY2013 presented in Table II-1, Characteristics of Adult Exiters Who Received Intensive or Training Services, in Department of Labor Workforce Investment Standard Record Data (WIASRD) Data Books for PY2005 and PY2013, respectively. Online at:

http://www.doleta.gov/performance/results/pdf/PY_2005_WIASRD_DataBook_Rev%208-14-2007.pdf (page 15) and http://www.doleta.gov/performance/results/pdf/PY_2013_WIASRD_Data_Book.pdf (page 21).

³ Frank, Abbey and Elisa Minoff. 2005. “Declining Share of Adults Receiving Training Under WIA Are Low-Income or Disadvantaged.” Washington, DC: Center for Law and Social Policy. Online at <http://www.clasp.org/resources-and-publications/files/0254.pdf>. See also: Ridley, Neil. 2010. “Strengthening Priority of Service for Low-Income Adults through WIA Reauthorization.” Washington, DC: Center for Law and Social Policy. Online at <http://www.clasp.org/resources-and-publications/files/WIAServices.pdf>.

The Northwest PA Workforce Development Board Plan says very little about priority of service and fails to state a coherent and comprehensive plan to ensure that public assistance recipients and other low-income persons will receive priority for Title I WIOA training services. For example, in laying out priority of service policy, the plan devotes only a single, cursory sentence to how it will identify and track persons entitled to priority:

Priority of service is provided to Adult program participants based on criteria as required by WIOA and state requirements. WIOA Adult program services are provided through the local PA CareerLink® system by a competitively bid program services contractor. The LWDB Priority of Service Policy includes four groups of individuals that the commonwealth requires to be targeted for priority when providing individualized career services and training services in the WIOA Title I Adult program. These four targeted groups are public assistance recipients; other low-income individuals; individuals who are basic skills deficient; and individuals who are both underemployed and low-income. * * * * **Individuals will be evaluated by PA CareerLink® staff for eligibility for priority of service and documentation will be included in the participant file of all individuals who are deemed eligible for priority of service.**

(NWPADWB Plan, p. 21)(emphasis added)

Not surprisingly, the NWPADWB Plan by and large fails to detail how the agency will address the priority of service implementation issues set forth in the WIOA State Plan, despite the clear mandate to do so. This deficiency must be addressed.

Each of the issues related to successful implementation of priority of service implementation that LWDBs and PA CareerLinks are required to address is listed below. For each one, we explain why the issue in question is important to successful implementation of priority of service, and we offer suggestions as to how it might be effectively addressed.

(i) How [the LWDB and CareerLink] will obtain data reflecting each of the three categories of persons entitled to priority of service in their service area and the approximate numbers in each category.

This data is important in order to provide a sense of whether the LWDBs and CareerLinks (local agencies) are meeting the needs of the low-income communities they serve. While the Commonwealth intends to monitor LWDBs and PA CareerLinks to determine whether at least 70 percent of those served are persons entitled to priority,⁴ this in and of itself, does not tell us to what extent the needs of the low-income community overall are being met.

Comment: The NWPADWB Plan should:

⁴ The commonwealth will monitor data reported by LWDBs and PA CareerLink® centers to determine the percentage of those served who are individuals with priority of service. Should this percentage be less than 70 percent, the commonwealth shall provide the LWDB or PA CareerLink® center with technical assistance to ensure that effective affirmative outreach efforts to individuals with priority of service are made. (WIOA State Plan, p. 68)

- Include county by county data easily obtained from DHS showing the number of persons receiving public assistance (TANF and SNAP) -- a core group of those entitled to priority -- from the Department of Human Services (DHS).
 - State how it will obtain data reflecting the number of other low-income persons, we well as those who are basic skills deficient.
- (ii) The outreach [the LWDB and CareerLink] will do to inform the public of Pennsylvania’s priority of service policy and how they will target this outreach to best reach those potentially eligible for priority of service and any agencies that serve them.**

Because public assistance recipients and other low-income persons have been chronically and historically underserved, many in this community have little or no idea that training services are available to them through the LWDBs and CareerLinks, much less that they have priority for training. Local agencies will have to take specially tailored measures to reach this population. (Doing so will not only provide training opportunities for populations not previously served, but will help local agencies reach priority of service benchmarks established by the Commonwealth.) (WIOA State Plan, pp. 10-11 and 68).

While the NWPADB Plan mentions coordination of services to TANF participants with EARN programs, this falls well short of a comprehensive strategy for effective outreach to public assistance recipients and other low-income persons entitled to priority of service.

Services to TANF Customers and Low-Income Individuals

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

(NWPADB Plan, p. 29)

Perhaps the best strategy for outreach is for local agencies to connect with the Department of Human Services and work cooperatively with DHS state level policy makers and local County Assistance Offices to explore the needs of TANF and SNAP recipients within their service area for adult and postsecondary education, transitional jobs, and other services and to develop a collaborative system for those in need of such services to be screened, referred to, and served by the local agency.

Comment: The NWPADB Plan should include a commitment by the agency to work in partnership with DHS and its CAOs to develop a plan for outreach and provision of training services to persons receiving TANF and SNAP benefits that includes:

- A process for informing TANF and SNAP clients of the opportunities for training services available to them through WIOA, in addition to those available through DHS and its welfare to work contractors, or through both.⁵
- A process for assessing TANF and SNAP clients interested in WIOA training opportunities to determine their education level, aptitudes, barriers, career interests, and training needs/goals -- along with a breakdown of what agencies/contractors will be responsible for each aspect of this process.
- The provision of career counseling to inform TANF and SNAP clients about training and job opportunities in High Priority Occupations suited to their interests, aptitude, and experience.
- A system for referral of TANF and SNAP clients to the local WIOA agency for training services.⁶
- A process for sharing data regarding activities pursued by TANF and SNAP clients and the progress that have made.

(iii) How [the LWDB and CareerLink] will inform individuals seeking to access WIOA services of their priority of service, such as through posters and prominent placement of other information.

This is important in order to ensure that those who contact the local agency for training services and do not know they are entitled to priority of service will be able to identify themselves as such and receive the priority to which they are entitled.

The WIOA State Plan, itself, suggests a couple of methods to educate the public about priority of service, but there are many more. A local agency could develop and play a video in the office waiting room, run public service announcements, place advertisements at bus stops, etc.

Comment: The NWPADB Plan should describe a range of strategic methods it will use to educate the public about priority of service.

(iv) When otherwise deemed eligible for program participation, how [the LWDB and CareerLink] will affirmatively identify persons entitled to priority of service and inform those individuals of the full array of services available.

While issue (iii), above, relates to self-identification, issue (iv) is concerns the problem of how to identify persons entitled to priority of service who seek WIOA services and who either do not know they have priority or have not disclosed this. Use of a screening tool may be the most effective way for the local agency to determine whether a client may be entitled to priority.

Comment: The NWPADB Plan should describe:

- The screening or other tool it intends to use to identify persons entitled to priority of service; and

⁵Career Pathways programs are a good example of an important opportunity available through the WIOA system that is not available through DHS or its contractors. Transitional jobs may be another, depending on location.

⁶Under WIOA this can now be done by contract with DHS, an option that should be seriously considered.

- The counseling and written materials it will use to inform them of the range of services available to them and how priority of service works.

(v) The assessments [the LWDB and CareerLink] will use to identify barriers to employment among those entitled to priority of service and the services needed to address them.

Many of those entitled to priority of service have barriers to employment, such as those listed in the WIOA statute's definition of this term.⁷ The assessment process and tools employed by local agencies should include screening for barriers to employment, done in a manner that respects privacy, but nevertheless informs the client of the types of barriers for which assistance can be provided.

Comment: The NWPADB Plan should:

- Describe the process and tools that it uses or will use for assessment; and
- Explain how this process will inform clients of the range of barriers to employment for which services or accommodations may be available, while respecting the client's right not to disclose personal information should she prefer not to do so.

Once a barrier to employment has been disclosed, services to address or accommodate that barrier will normally be needed. So, for example, a victim of domestic violence might be referred to an agency that can provide appropriate counseling services or safety planning while she is pursuing training services through the local agency. An ex-offender with a criminal history might be counseled and/or referred to a legal services provider for help with expungement. Properly addressing barriers requires knowledge of services available in the community for the range of barriers the agency is likely to encounter and developing relationships with service providers to facilitate referral.

Comment: The NWPADB Plan should describe how it will identify and facilitate access to appropriate services in the community to address the range of barriers to employment listed in WIOA.

(vi) The process by which [the LWDB and CareerLink] will develop Individual Employment Plans for persons entitled to priority of service that will address, in addition to training needs, any barriers to employment they may have.

WIOA eliminated sequential service requirements for those seeking Title I training services. This was a significant change and should serve to improve access to training services, especially for those entitled to priority of service.

⁷ "Individuals with barriers to employment" include: displaced homemakers; Indians, Alaskan Natives and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities including youth with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals; youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English language learners, individuals with low levels of literacy and individuals facing cultural barriers; eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers; individuals within two years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under TANF; single parents to include single pregnant women; and long-term unemployed individuals.

Comment: The NWPADDB Plan should describe each step in its simplified procedure for processing requests for Title I training and other services under Title I of WIOA. In doing so, the Plan should:

- Explain the role of assessments and how they are used;
- Spell out the content and specific steps involved in developing Individual Employment Plans;
- Describe the factors involved in deciding upon and developing plans for training services;
- Explain how the local agency will incorporate plans for addressing barriers to employment.

(vii) How [the LWDB and CareerLink] will ensure that they are serving the spectrum of persons entitled to priority of service, including those, such as English language learners, who may require more resources to serve.

This issue is similar to element (v), dealing with barriers to employment, but is more focused on those needing special services or accommodations, such as persons with limited English proficiency (LEP) and disabilities. These needs are common in the high needs groups covered by priority of service requirements. Addressing the needs of such persons is required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Americans with Disabilities Act and, thus, the importance of ensuring services to these groups goes without saying.

Access to Career Pathways programs, with their emphasis on adult education including English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL), is especially valuable for those with limited English proficiency. But identifying LEPs and providing interpretation and translated documents will be critical in order to facilitate equitable access and provide meaningful training services. Special attention to language access by LWDBs and CareerLinks in their local plans is warranted given the importance of these services to persons with this particular barrier to employment and considering also Pennsylvania's poor performance in the past in serving LEPs:

While new provisions in WIOA do target workforce services to these basic skills deficient individuals, the record of career pathways models and other training programs in providing equitable access to individuals who are low-educated and/or LEP is very weak. This is an especially urgent concern in Pennsylvania, for example, where **only 2.5% of those exiting from Title I Adult intensive or training services in the 2014-15 program year were LEP.**⁸

The NWPADDB Plan says very little about how the agency will identify and serve LEP persons.

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

⁸ Margie McHugh and Madeleine Morawski, *Immigrants and WIOA Services, Comparison of Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Native and Foreign Born Adults in Pennsylvania* (National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy, March 2016), p. 4 (emphasis added).

(NWPADWD Plan, p. 30)

The Plan does somewhat better with regard to how it will serve persons with disabilities.

Comment: The NWPADWD Plan should describe:

- How it identifies and tracks, through the education, training, and employment process, the primary language of people with limited English proficiency so staff will be prepared to provide accessible services;
- How it provides notice of the right to language services (oral communication through bilingual staff and/or interpretation as well as translated documents);
- How it affirmatively identifies persons with limited English proficiency, so as not to rely entirely on self-identification through notice of the right to language services. (This could include, for example, training of staff to recognize signs that a person is not sufficiently fluent in English to navigate the local agency's WIOA process.)
- How it provides notice to persons with disabilities of their rights under the ADA, including the right to reasonable accommodation.
- How accommodations may be requested and how they are determined.

(viii) How [the LWDB and CareerLink] will address the special needs of individuals with barriers to employment in the delivery of services, such as by assuring that appropriate career planning services are provided. This should include a detailed description of how appropriate career planning services will be provided, or arranged for, through collaboration with other agencies in the event that the LWDB or PA CareerLink® center lacks the required expertise.

WIOA defines "career planning" as:

[T]he provision of a client-centered approach in the delivery of services, designed—
(A) to prepare and coordinate comprehensive employment plans, such as service strategies, for participants to ensure access to necessary workforce investment activities and supportive services, using, where feasible, computer-based technologies; and
(B) to provide job, education, and career counseling, as appropriate during program participation and after job placement.

(WIOA Sec. 3 (8))

We see this as involving two essential components -- career counseling and case management. Career counseling is key to making wise decisions about training services and training providers and should be a central component of the assessment and training program selection process for anyone seeking services from the local WIOA agency, including especially low-income persons, who may have lacked meaningful access to such assistance in their past.

Effective case management, as described in Section 3 (8) of WIOA, is critical to ensure that clients receive support, advice, and assistance, not only in the development of their training plan, but as they pursue their training program and must deal with the need for child care, transportation, and other supportive services, as well as barriers to employment that impact on their participation.

Comment: The NWPADWD Plan should:

- Explain whether case management services, as described in Section 3 (8)(A), will be provided directly by the local agency and, if not, by whom it will be provided and under what arrangements;
- Describe the case management services that will be provided, how they will be provided, and how clients will access these services;
- Explain whether career counseling will be provided directly by the local agency and, if not, by whom it will be provided and under what arrangements;
- Describe how and at what points in a client's participation in the WIOA program process career planning is provided.

(ix) How [the LWDB and CareerLink] will ensure access to services, i.e., interpreters and translated documents, for English language learners, as well as for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing.

This is similar to issue (vii), but is more focused on how bi-lingual staff, language line or other telephone interpretation services, in-person interpreters, and translation services are used and whether adequate resources are devoted to these services.

Comment: The NWPADWD Plan should:

- Identify the five most common languages spoken in the local agency's service area and the approximate number of persons who speak these languages;
- Identify how the local agency will document LEP persons' primary language in case records or files so staff will be prepared to provide accessible services;
- State the number of bi-lingual agency staff who speak any of the five most commonly spoken languages and their positions in the local agency;
- Explain whether and how it provides interpretation to LEP persons who seek training services;
- Explain how it trains staff to identify and meet the needs of LEP persons.

(x) How [the LWDB and CareerLink] will train staff to ensure that staff members have an understanding of who is entitled to priority of service and that the office is responsive to the needs of these groups.

Priority of services is only meaningful to the extent local agency staff understands and properly implement its requirements.

Comment: The NWPADWD Plan should:

- Describe the curriculum it will use to train staff on priority of service requirements; and
- Explain who will receive this training (e.g., reception staff, line workers, management) and how often the training will be provided.

B. Career Pathways

As advocates for low-income public assistance recipients, we are particularly interested in the availability and quality of Career Pathways training programs. Career Pathways programs provide adult

education (literacy/English-as-a Second Language/GED), career counseling, and transition to postsecondary education and job skills training. These programs have proven highly successful. States are strongly encouraged by WIOA to develop and operate such programs.

Over forty percent of adults receiving Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) lack a high school degree or GED. Yet, less than three percent of these parents are participating in GED programs. DHS does not operate Career Pathways or any other adult education programs for parents on TANF or SNAP. Providing access to Career Pathways programs to parents on public assistance through LWDBs and CareerLinks will provide a pathway from public assistance to employment at family sustaining wages -- a benefit not only to these families, but to the state as well.

The final WIOA State Plan requires that LWDBs and CareerLinks develop and operate Career Pathways programs, as defined in WIOA, and that such programs provide for entry at the literacy, ESL, GED, or postsecondary education level (See, Proposed WIOA State Plan, pp. 8-9)

The Northwest PA Workforce Development Board WIOA Transition Plan makes only a vague reference to development of career pathways programs:

Career pathways will be developed in collaboration with adult education and literacy partners to align and integrate education, job training, counseling and support services to create accelerated pathways to post-secondary education credentials and employment in in-demand occupations, especially for individuals with barriers to employment.

(NWPADB Plan, p. 11)

Primarily, however, the Plan speaks of career pathways in the sense of career ladders, as opposed to detailing how it will design, develop, and operate Career Pathways **programs**.

Comment: The NWPADB Plan should:

- Specify the elements of the Career Pathways programs it intends to operate, which should include at a minimum those required by WIOA;
- Identify the partners (such as Department of Education, Department of Human Services, Community Colleges, Career and Technical Schools) with whom the local agency intends to partner in operating Career Pathways programs;
- Explain the process that will be used to develop Career Pathways programs;
- State the number, location, and estimated time frame for operationalizing each Career Pathways program the local agency plans to establish.
- Explain how the local agency will provide priority of service to public assistance recipients and other low-income persons for Career Pathways slots.
- Explain how the local agency will ensure that the first step on its career pathways (Literacy, ESL or GED) is accessible to those entitled to priority of service.

C. Transitional Jobs

WIOA allows states to spend up to 10% of Title I funds on transitional jobs, i.e., subsidized employment, opportunities for participants. Access to transitional employment slots for low-income persons can

provide valuable work experience that can lead to permanent employment. This is particularly important for recipients of public assistance, many of whom want to work but lack work experience. It is also provides an important opportunity for those with criminal backgrounds.

The final WIOA state plan includes a requirement that LWDBs and CareerLinks use between 5% and 10% of their funds to provide transitional jobs and that they ensure that priority of service for transitional jobs is afforded to individuals who qualify for priority of service. (WIOA State Plan, p. 70)

The NWPADB Plan says nothing about a transitional jobs program for Title I adults.

Comment: The NWPADB Plan should:

- State the amount of Title I funds that it will dedicate to transitional jobs and the percentage this represents, as well as the total number of jobs that it anticipates will be funded;
- Describe its plans and goals for raising additional funds for transitional jobs;
- Describe in detail the design of its transitional jobs program (Local agencies that operated Way to Work programs with TANF Emergency Funds in 2010 may want to look back to those programs and explain what they would do the same or do differently from Way to Work.)
- Describe how it will recruit employers to participate in the transitional jobs program, and if there are particular employers that it anticipates will participate;
- State whether the local agency will be the employer of record for clients in the transitional jobs program and, if not, whom the employer(s) of record will be.
- State whether the transitional jobs program will be incorporate “wraparound” or complementary services (e.g., job skills training), and describe the services provided, if so.
- Explain how the local agency will provide priority of service to public assistance recipients and other low-income persons for transitional jobs slots.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

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