

PY 2006 WEST CENTRAL WIA LOCAL PLAN

I PLAN DEVELOPMENT

The development of the local plan began November 14, 2005 with Youth Council recommendations put forward on the redesign of WIA Youth Services based on the Common Measures. On March 15, 2006, the PY 2006 WIA Local Plan Guidelines were distributed and discussed at the regularly scheduled WIB meeting. The West Central Governing Board, which is composed of the six County Commissioners of Lawrence and Mercer Counties, reviewed the guidelines at their quarterly meeting. On May 2, 2006, the WIB mailed a questionnaire to over 150-community stakeholder to obtain input for items to be included in the Plan. Along with the questionnaire, a notice was included advertising a Stakeholders' Breakfast Meeting on June 1, 2006 at the Radisson in West Middlesex. The WIB Executive Committee invited area Economic Development Agencies to meet and review a preliminary draft of the Plan on May 17th, 2006 where special attention was focused on Section IV Economic and Labor Market Analysis. Another notice was mailed to remind stakeholders of the June 1st, 2006 Breakfast Meeting. More than forty individuals participated in the planning session including three County Commissioners, educators, economic development officials, private sector employers, labor representatives and other interested parties. They provided comments and information to be used in the Plan. On June 28, 2006 at a special public meeting of the West Central WIB, the Plan was approved.

The Commissioners of Mercer and Lawrence counties approved the plan at their July 13, 2006 Governing Board Meeting. The Plan was advertised for review and comment in the four local newspapers and posted on the West Central web site, beginning on July 3, 2006. Advertisement of the public notices is included in Appendix A. All comments related to the Plan have been aggregated and included under Appendix B.

II VISION AND PRIORITIES

A. Vision

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

For instance, liaison with the Northwest PA Regional Planning and Development Commission will provide referrals to companies awarded Opportunity Grant Program (OGP) funding for company expansion activities as well as Small Business First (SBF) financing. As members of the county retention/attraction rapid response teams, WIB staff would make available WIA Title I funding through the appropriate PA Careerlink for businesses hiring new workers, i.e. on-the-job training, or if the

company falls within an established industry partnership group a connection could be facilitated to access Job Ready PA incumbent worker training. Additionally, these and other business referrals would be informed of the Guaranteed Free Training/WEDNet conduits and program requirements. The WIB/PA Careerlink network has formed a training consortium of WEDNet partners and training providers to routinely link eligible businesses with this resource.

The Governor's Action Team regional representatives communicate with the WIB not only to notify the award of Customized Job Training (CJT) grants, but also for follow-up with non-successful applicants to determine if WIB resources may be available. The West Central WIB also maintains a partnership relationship with the Northwest PA Industrial Resource Center as well as Catalyst Connection in order to leverage their resources and information in the manufacturing sector. Likewise, the Ben Franklin Technology Center is a regional resource that provides input to the WIB regarding local companies that may supplement resources beyond the Challenge Investment Program offered by the Ben Franklin.

Finally, the lead economic development agencies for Mercer and Lawrence Counties along with the PA Careerlink site administrators and WIB staff form county Business Rapid Response Teams for workforce development coordination. The economic development members present updates on Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) activity that might be relevant to the group in addition to Keystone Opportunity Zone (KOZ) happenings. These networks allow for the maxim leveraging of available resources in the area to assist with the retention and attraction of business.

The WIB vision continues to be focused on engaging a wide spectrum of the community to participate with the public workforce system to identify challenges and develop strategies as well as solutions to address them. Toward this end, an ongoing community inventory appraisal and needs evaluation strategy is employed whereby relevant stakeholders, including employers, educational institutions, human service agencies, labor unions, economic development organizations and public officials or entities, are frequently convened or addressed to integrate and leverage resources to specifically support regional business and industry. This approach maximizes employment opportunities for local job seekers and assists in maintaining the competitiveness of incumbent workers. LWIB members themselves act as ambassadors to the greater community groups and business organizations on which they serve presenting the WIB's comprehensive workforce system integrated strategy, promoting use of the PA Careerlink one stop career centers, encourage employer participation on PA Careerlink business committee focus groups and informing WIB staff of trends or incidents that might have a significant impact on the local economy and/or workforce. Welfare, dislocated worker, and vocational rehabilitation funds can be combined to assist new and expanding employers custom prepare large group hiring efforts.

Business, industry, higher education, economic development, labor unions and other community organizations are engaged in WIB sponsored Workforce Leadership forums to discuss relevant industry cluster and labor market issues such as correlation of education/training with economic development projects, skill and need gaps evidenced in the local workforce, aggregation of training resources and cooperative endeavors to better prepare emerging workers, discuss relocation strategies for furloughed workers and challenges posed by the aging workforce.

At a recent strategic planning session the following emerged as current challenges for the system:

1. readiness for work and need for team functioning skills
2. earlier intervention with youth for faster career awareness and employability skill sets
3. more communication between educators and employers to better target industry needs
4. replacement issues related to expertise loss as the aging workforce exits the workplace
5. the need for higher level skills; based on the realities of global competition

B. Priorities and Goals

The West Central WIB has aligned its vision with that of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Strategic State Workforce Investment Plan (July 1, 2005 through June 30, 2007) by prioritizing its goals with those set forth in the aforementioned document. Additionally, the major tenets of Job Ready PA are woven into the WIB's vision to ensure that the local workforce will have the skills needed to compete in the global marketplace. This will be accomplished by continuing to encourage industry partnerships, collaboration with community colleges and 720 schools and generally fostering a workforce climate conducive for the growth of entrepreneurs, innovators and skillful workers.

Accepting the nine targeted statewide industry cluster groupings identified by the Departments of Labor and Industry, Community and Economic Development and Education as the basis for industry driven workforce development efforts, the WIB has fine-tuned its goals utilizing more localized information provided by the Center for Workforce Information and Analysis (CWIA):

Statewide-Targeted Industry Clusters

Targeted Industry Cluster	2002 Average Monthly Employment	2002 Average Annual Wages
Life Sciences	867,868	\$39,366
<i>Bio-Medical</i>	<i>81,864</i>	<i>\$64,457</i>
<i>Health Care</i>	<i>786,304</i>	<i>\$36,763</i>
Business and Financial Services	776,404	\$42,845
Education	536,572	\$35,121
Advanced Materials and Diversified Manufacturing	495,482	\$43,061
<i>Chemicals, Rubber, and Plastics</i>	<i>79,936</i>	<i>\$46,643</i>
<i>Electronics</i>	<i>75,760</i>	<i>\$50,792</i>
<i>Metals and Metal Fabrication</i>	<i>141,001</i>	<i>\$41,060</i>
<i>Printing</i>	<i>42,397</i>	<i>\$37,196</i>
<i>Vehicle and Vehicle Equipment</i>	<i>45,029</i>	<i>\$48,267</i>
Building and Construction	347,795	\$40,927
Agriculture and Food Production	314,088	\$26,308
<i>Food Processing</i>	<i>86,865</i>	<i>\$36,106</i>
Information and Communication Services	209,442	\$56,742
Logistics and Transportation	136,946	\$36,588
Lumber Wood and Paper	105,525	\$34,317
Targeted Industry Cluster	3,790,122	\$39,741
Total Statewide	5,507,323	\$35,791
Percent of Total in Targeted Clusters	68.8%	111.0%

West Central Targeted Industry Clusters

<u>Targeted Cluster</u>	<u>2004 Number of Jobs</u>	<u>2004 Annual Wages</u>
Diversified Manufacturing (Metals, Plastics, Wood, Electronics)	5867	\$40,809
Healthcare/Social Assistance	10,793	\$31,621
Logistics and Transportation	816	\$35,668
Skilled Trades	2,599	\$33,808
Business Support Services	3,081	\$20,987

Currently five industry partnerships have been organized on both the local and regional levels for (1) Diversified Manufacturing, (2) Logistics and Transportation, (3)

Healthcare / Social Assistance, (4) Financial Services and (5) Electronics. These partnerships bring together multiple employers to identify labor force shortages and skills needs, commission and review occupational analysis studies, advance toward industry recognized credentials and upgrade the skills of the existing workforce. The West Central WIB will continue to promote the creation and expansion of industry partnerships by annually reviewing updated industry cluster information and working together with local economic development agencies and other business organizations to seek interested parties. Additionally, the WIB will continue to support the High Priority Occupations identified within the designated clusters by developing career ladder paths for emerging workers and when possible denote career lattices that allow for trans-cluster movement within the local PA Careerlink training network. Educational organizations will be a key partner in this endeavor in order that lessons learned as a result of the dialogue between business, economic and workforce development may impact upon the delivery system aimed at youth as well as existing workers and adult job seekers. Also, the expertise and resources of education will be an asset when addressing skill gap issues.

Thus, the West Central WIB's goals are prioritized as follows:

Strengthen Local Industries by Promoting Industry Led Training Strategies

- Support training within the nine targeted statewide industry cluster groups.
- Regionalize industry cluster analysis to increase knowledge-based decision making at the local level.
- Identify career ladders and lattices evident within and adjacent to clusters in order to better create pathways to High Priority Occupations.
- Maintain and expand industry partnerships in targeted sectors of the economy including emerging clusters.

Increase Career Opportunities for Lawrence and Mercer County Residents

- Advocate for relevant educational opportunities that will lead to jobs with family sustaining wages.
- Facilitate avenues of continuing education for the under-employed, job seekers and unemployed that are in high demand by local businesses.
- Seek and obtain incumbent worker funds to maintain the competitive advantage of local industry.
- Increase individual training accounts, on-the-job training opportunities and work experience slots through PA Careerlink linkages.

Expand Youth Awareness for Careers of Tomorrow

- Encourage interaction between the workforce system Project 720 schools.
- Provide and advise Career and Technical Schools regarding local / regional industry data to assist in obtaining relevant equipment and adjusting curriculum.
- Support local schools and organizations providing services to youth by making available information relevant to local business and careers.
- Link education and business to better organize the workforce pipeline for graduates seeking jobs.

Adhere to Rigorous Accountability Standards

- Strive to maintain a high performing local workforce investment board.
- Engage the local PA Careerlink Centers in order to insure a focus toward high performance customer service.
- Maximize the alignment of workforce development funding streams at the local level.
- Support strategies to achieve performance under the common measures.

These prioritized goals are expected to encourage the creation and assist in the sustainability of small, new and emerging industries by enhancing the human resource pipeline with workers prepared to enter companies at a greater level of initial productivity. Also, the Small Business Development Centers operated by Gannon and Duquesne Universities in the region are consulted regarding industry cluster research and analysis which is passed on to their clients. This will help them make better decisions regarding start-up or expansion plans. Additionally, industry partnerships formed around emerging cluster segments such as electronics will allow for group leveraging of incumbent worker training funds to increase the current workforce's technology skills thus increasing innovation again in keeping with the principles of Job Ready PA.

III GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

A. Organization

A Governing Board, consisting of the elected or appointed County Commissioners of Lawrence and Mercer Counties, has been established to govern and implement the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, as amended and hereinafter referred to as the Act, in the West Central Workforce Investment Area.

This organization was incorporated as a 501(c)3 Not-for-Profit Corporation and does business under the name West Central Job Partnership. The Governing Board will carry out all responsibilities assigned to the Local Elected Officials (LEOs) under Title I of the Act. The role of the LEOs in the governance and implementation of the Act in the local area includes, but is not limited necessarily to: designating the fiscal agent for all funds made available to Lawrence and Mercer Counties under the Act; establishing a Local Workforce Investment Board (LWIB) in the two county area in accordance with the Act and the Rules and Regulations promulgated for the implementation of the Act; entering into a written agreement with the LWIB which details clearly the partnership between the two entities for the governance and oversight of activities authorized under the Act; authorizing the establishment of a Youth Council as a subgroup of the LWIB and approving nominations of members for appointment by the LWIB to that subgroup; approving or disapproving, in partnership with the LWIB, the designation or certification of any PA Careerlink operators within the Local Workforce Investment Area (LWIA) and approving or disapproving the termination of the eligibility of such operators; providing input and oversight to the LWIB regarding the negotiating and reaching agreement with the Commonwealth's PA Workforce Investment Board (PAWIB) on local performance measures; reviewing and approving or disapproving, in partnership with the LWIB, any plan pertaining to workforce development or job training, any modifications to such plans, and any other documents required by the State or Federal government

prior to submission; determining the apportionment of funds and liabilities between the involved counties and approving all adjustments to allocations; approving or disapproving any contract with any entity for the performance of services required or needed pursuant to the implementation or operation of any program or project authorized under the Act unless otherwise stipulated and agreed; and, conducting oversight, in partnership with the LWIB, of the operations of any local Title I funded programs of youth, adult, and dislocated worker activities and the PA Careerlink delivery system.

A Chairperson of the Governing Board is elected, together with a Vice-Chairperson and a Secretary/Treasurer, by a majority vote of the six members of the Governing Board. The Officers serve for a two-year term, beginning January 1, and ending December 31, or until replaced. In the event that both the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson are absent from a meeting, those members present may elect a member to serve as temporary Chairperson.

Four (4) members of the Governing Board constitute a quorum, which shall be necessary for the transaction of business at meetings and may be met by telephone or similar means. All matters brought before the Governing Board may be resolved by a simple majority of the total votes present at each meeting. Each member shall have one vote with no proxy.

The Governing Board, consisting of the six elected or appointed County Commissioners of Lawrence and Mercer Counties, serves as the Board of Directors of West Central Job Partnership, Inc. West Central Job Partnership is a not-for Profit Corporation established by the Commissioners and chartered under the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to coordinate or implement such activities and services that are or may be authorized under Title I of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, as amended.

West Central Job Partnership, an entity created by the Commissioner of Lawrence and Mercer Counties, is composed of two distinct divisions, administration and operations. The Division Chiefs of these two groups report to the Chairperson of the corporation, who is selected by majority vote of the six county commissioners. The Operations Division of West Central Job Partnership (WCJP) was jointly agreed upon by the LWIB and the Local Elected Officials to deliver core and intensive service functions, i.e., WIA Title I Operations, at PA Careerlinks and/or other locations within the jurisdiction of NW #145. This agreement was developed in consultation with duly authorized representatives of the Governor's Administration and the Department of Labor and Industry in accordance with the June 30, 1999 Workforce Investment Act: Title I Policy Paper. The Governing Board and LWIB established an Ad Hoc Transition Committee to finalize the elements of the agreement which would be a basis for the initial operational plan for the LWIA. A public hearing was held on January 28, 2000 which was widely advertised. Comments were solicited by mail from relevant agencies and community groups. The members of the Ad Hoc Transition Committee were distributed information obtained through the draft agreement on March 5, 2000 specifying WCJP's operations division as the WIA Title I Operator. The West Central WIB approved the agreement on March 15, 2000 followed by approval of the Governing Board as attested by the signatures of the LEO-WIB Agreement for Lawrence and Mercer Counties.

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

Gregg K. Dogan
Chief Financial Officer
West Central Job Partnership, Inc.
44 South Beaver Street
New Castle, PA 16101
Phone: 724-658-2501
Fax: 724-658-4252
Email: gdogan@wcjp.org
Web: www.wcjp.org

The attached organizational chart is identified as APPENDIX C included with this plan component demonstrates the separation of functions. The organizational structure illustrated on the chart was reviewed and recommended by the LWIB at its regularly scheduled meeting on November 10, 1999. The Governing Board formally adopted the structure at a special meeting on November 15, 1999. Structural changes were reviewed and formally acted upon by both the LWIB and the Governing Board at their regularly scheduled meetings conducted during the months of January and March of 2000, and was fully implemented effective April 1, 2000.

B. Local Workforce Investment Board

The eight statutory functions outlined for LWIBs as detailed in the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 at Section 117(d), while comprehensive in scope, nonetheless, do not exhaust the additional roles necessary to carry out these duties. A major additional function accepted by the West Central WIB is convening party. Examples of this function relate to the assembling of focus groups to engage in the analysis of employment statistics, economic development data and growth/decline trends. Subsequent workgroups are convened which include private sector representation to review the information and participate in efforts to group businesses by common labor force needs, shared supply chains or other factors which suggest a natural linkage of individual companies into industry cluster segments. Once the community stakeholders have reached consensus on which groupings should be targeted for retention or what clusters exhibit an emerging force in the region, an industry partnership, i.e., a collaboration of several interested businesses and other parties, is proposed.

As community leaders, the members of the LWIB function as ambassadors both individually and collectively to develop, foster, and maintain strong ties to all the relevant constituencies within the local Workforce Investment Area and contiguous regional areas. Through this means, the West Central area will insure alignment of local interests with the wider regional efforts and gather intelligence on best practices from other organizations involved in workforce development. Due to the ambassador function, the West Central WIB has become involved in a number of projects such as the Technology Center at Linden Pointe, the Northwest PA

Manufacturers Education and Economic Network as well as being a participant with the Southwest PA Regional Workforce Collaborative and the resulting “Wired” proposal recommendations.

The LWIB engages in supplemental grant procurement functions to seek and obtain funding for services determined to be beneficial to the overall workforce strategy but not allowable under regulations related to Title I of the Act. Successful instances of this function are TANF Transportation Grants and Youth Funds to assist the working poor, Workforce Leadership Grants to expand Community College Services in Lawrence and Mercer Counties, Job Ready PA Grants to develop industry partnerships and promote incumbent worker training and PHEAA funds for community awareness and educational outreach.

The LWIB encourages a climate promoting joint planning and integration of related services amongst those delivering workforce development programs and coordinating activities in the local area. A quarterly newsletter wherein stories illustrating collaboration amongst the various agencies operating under the workforce investment system umbrella was instituted and widely circulated throughout the community. Through this vehicle, the teamwork principle received positive reinforcement encouraging their further adoption. Additionally, the newsletter provided the LWIB a forum to promulgate its strategic direction and other important information to training providers, PA Careerlink staff, employers and the community at large. The West Central WIB has also supported partner recognition activities acknowledging outstanding contributions in collaboration during the course of the program year. The LWIB has inventoried and identified programs with potential barriers to coordination operating within the public workforce system and facilitated remedies. An example of this relates to the coordination of Adult Literacy services. With four distinct organizations providing these services, PA Careerlink Site Administrators and the LWIB convened a planning meeting whereby roles and responsibilities for each literacy provider were discussed and assumed. The expertise of the organizations was utilized and a sense of ownership resulted from the joint planning effort. Customers are now assigned a provider based upon assessed levels of basic skills enabling instructors to fine-tune their lessons making them more valuable to students. This model has also been employed with the integration of WIA Dislocated Worker and Trade Adjustment Assistance programs as well as with Welfare Employment and Training Programs coordinated by the Local Management Committee which serves as a LWIB subcommittee locally.

The West Central Workforce Investment Board advertises all of its meetings in the Public Notices section of the four local newspapers of the two county areas. The Board meeting schedule is also posted at each County Courthouse with the date, time and location of each meeting clearly identified. This information is also posted under the Calendar of Events section of West Central Job Partnership’s Web page located at www.wcjp.org . Board meeting agenda are also mailed to community leaders as well as the six County Commissioners. The Board meetings which are scheduled every other month and alternate between counties take place at banquet facilities that are handicap accessible. The Youth Council utilizes the same banquet facilities for their meetings. Subcommittee meetings of the Board are usually held at either the Lawrence or Mercer County PA Careerlinks, which also meet ADA compliance.

The West Central Board uses a variety of methods to communicate and share information among its partners. West Central Job Partnership has a web page located at www.wcjp.org . Contact information for the entire Board and its staff is listed there. Various strategic, operational and welfare plans are available for public inspection and comment. Staff e-mail addresses are listed so questions concerning labor market and other information can be directed to the appropriate person.

The Board also uses the “Workforce Journal” newsletter to share workforce information. Approximately 140 newsletters are mailed each quarter to community leaders, local elected officials, state representatives, training providers, schools and other workforce investment boards, etc.

Board members and staff to the Board routinely meet with the leadership of the two local PA Careerlinks to share information including the Board’s vision and strategic objectives. In Mercer County, the PA Careerlink Site Administrator is on the WIB and the Lawrence County PA Careerlink Site Administrator attends every Board meeting. Both Site Administrators give PA Careerlink Updates at each meeting.

In addition, the Board is represented by membership in two nationally recognized workforce associations of Pennsylvania; The WIB Association and Pennsylvania Partners. Belonging to these associations give board members, staff and others in the local workforce excellent opportunities to disseminate information, share best practices, and meet with federal agencies and high ranking elected officials. The Board is also a member of NAWB which is the National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB) where workforce information is disseminated to local areas on a macro scale.

Recently the West Central Board has partnered with several surrounding WIBs on different collaborative projects. To the north, the West Central, North Central and Northwest WIBs participate in several industry partnership projects together, including the MEEN (Manufacturing Education and Economic Network), TEEN (Transportation Education and Economic Network) and are in the infancy stages of a Healthcare industry partnership with the Northwest WIB. In the south, the West Central WIB has been working with the Boards from Tri-County, Southwest Corner, Westmoreland/Fayette and the Three Rivers WIB on the Regional Workforce Collaborative. (Business and Financial Services Partnership)

The West Central Youth Council currently has fifteen members of which six are also WIB members with an interest in youth. All of the Act’s required members are represented by this membership, including juvenile justice and housing authority staff. The Youth Council Chairperson is a WIB member appointed by the Chairperson of the WIB and is considered a committee chair position. This provides a vital link between the two bodies because communication moves through this conduit. For instance, regarding strategic planning or design of Title I Youth Requests for Proposals, recommendations are made by the Youth Council Chairperson at official WIB meetings for action. No Title I Operator is a voting member of the Youth Council. The WIB staff provides meeting support to the Youth Council, i.e., prepares meeting agenda/materials, arranges facilities, maintains and distributes minutes.

Currently there are thirty-five (35) members on the West Central Workforce Investment Board. Private sector members are identified by the six Chambers of Commerce in the two county area and their names are submitted to the appropriate county Board of Commissioners for consideration. To maintain the private sector majority required under the Act, each county selects nine (9) private sector members. The County Commissioners, working with the Chambers and WIB staff make an effort to align the private sector representation with the Industry Clusters identified for the two county areas. Appointment and re-appointment letters are mailed to the selected individuals and a copy of that letter kept on file at West Central Job Partnership Corporate Office. When appointing other mandated members to the Board, the County Commissioners consult with the appropriate group in the local area for nominations. These groups recommend representatives from local central labor councils, community-based organizations, local economic development agencies, local educational entities and other mandatory members. When two representatives are required, each county selects a representative to the Board. The Chief Elected Official (CEO) appoints the WIA Title I representative. The Board terms are for a three year period and are staggered, with approximately 1/3 of the Board up for re-appointment each year.

No member of the LWIB or the Youth Council shall engage in any activity, including participation in the selection, award, or administration of a sub-grant or a contract supported by Workforce Investment Act funds, if a conflict of interest, real or apparent, would be involved. Such a conflict would arise when an individual, any member of an individual's family, an individual's partner or organization which employs, or is about to employ, any of the preceding, has a financial or other interest in the firm or organization selected for the award.

Members shall not cast a vote on, nor participate in any decision-making capacity on the provision of services by such member or any organization that the member represents directly. In addition, members shall not cast a vote on nor participate in any decision-making capacity in any matter that would provide any direct financial benefit to that member.

The officers, employees or agents of the LWIB and Youth Council shall neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from contractors, potential contractors, or parties to sub-agreements, except that this prohibition shall not apply to unsolicited gifts of no substantial or nominal intrinsic value.

IV ECONOMIC AND LABOR MARKET ANALYSIS

The material upon which this analysis is based was provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry Center for Workforce Information and Analysis (CWIA) as well as IBM Business Consulting Services, Global Competitiveness Report and Deloitte, Manufacturing Pennsylvania's Future: Regional Strategies that build from Current Strengths and Address Competitive Challenges

- A. Utilizing 2004 Annual averages issued by CWIA in March 2006, the following describes the current makeup of the West Central Workforce Investment Area economic base by industry represented in terms of two digit NAICS codes. Health Care and Social Assistance (62) is the leading area employer comprising 18% of local employment or 14,338 employees. Ambulatory health care services, nursing

and residential care facilities and offices of physicians constitute the bulk of sub-segment employment for this category.

Following next in terms of employment concentration is manufacturing (31-33) accounting for almost 17% of local area employment totaling 13,307. Clearly, the metal manufacturing subsets, i.e., primary metal, purchased steel product and fabricated metal product manufacturing, demonstrate a dominant influence within this general industry grouping based on a 69% share of employment within the durables category as a whole.

Retail Trade (44-45) is the third largest industry grouping in the local area constituting 14% of overall employment or a 10,951 average employment figure for 2004. Employment is spread widely throughout the industry subsets lead by general merchandise and food/beverage stores with a significant concentration noted for automobile and motor vehicle/parts dealers.

Rounding out the main non-farm industries, which are evident in the local area by employment concentration, are the following:

NAICS

61	- education services	- 10%
72	- accommodation and food services	- 8%
23	- construction	- 3.8%
52	- finance and insurance	- 3.5%
56	- administrative and waste services	- 3.4%
48-49	- transportation	- 3.1%

It should be noted that NAICS (81) other services, except public administration and (99) government were excluded from the above specific analysis.

In general, service-providing industries constitute 78% of the local area non-farm employment share while goods producing industries tabulate 22%.

- B. Overall local area good producing industries are projected to manifest declining employment of more than 13% over a ten year period while service providing industries are expected to increase slightly by 2.5% as we analyze the specifics of these increases and declines, it should become more clear as to what factors are operative in these changes.

First, we will review industries expected to increase employment. Health Care and social assistance (62) is projected by CWIA to increase employment by about 12% over a ten-year period. Notably, ambulatory health care services (621), as the sub-segment tallying the largest concentration of employment within this two digit NAICS grouping, is significant with a 24% increase of its employment base demonstrating an average annual change of 98 over the decade. Occupations expected to increase within their industry are registered nurses, respiratory therapists, nursing aides, orderlies and attendants for both short and long terms as a result of the aging

populace. Offices of physicians (6211), dentists (6212) and other health practitioners (6213) collectively project an annual average increase of 62 jobs. The ranges of increases are widely spread among secretaries, medical assistants and dental hygienists. Nursing and residential care facilities (623 - 6231) likewise are projected to grow employment at an annual change of 83 employees. It is probable that this will include most of the occupations cited previously. Home health care services (6216) is projected to manifest the highest percentage decadal increase for the overall industry, i.e., 40%, however, average annual change will be only about 10.

For manufacturing modest gains in employment are projected for wood products (321) of about 10.2% and other wood product manufacturing (3219) or 18.5% jointly projected as more than 10 employment unit increases per year. Plastics and rubber products manufacturing (326) also is expected to post a modest employment increase over the decade of 40 or 5.2%. Short-term increases beyond these projections are likely for the local area due to economic development efforts that have attracted several new firms in these categories to Mercer and Lawrence Counties.

The metal manufacturing industries (33) for the most part, are continuing a trend toward declining employment with two exceptions, i.e., forging and stamping (3321) and metalworking machinery manufacturing (3335) are projected to increase by 100 with the former accounting for about 70% of these increases in the long and short term. However, these slight increases are overshadowed by the negative change across the majority of the metal manufacturing sub-segments resulting in an almost 8.2% ten-year decline or cumulative loss of 2380 employee units.

However, according to the Deloitte January 2004 report, despite this ongoing reduction in employment, the manufacturing sector continues to be the number one industry in terms of total dollar output for both the northwestern and the southwestern Industrial Resource Center (IRC) regions. Employment is tied to technology advances, which indicate that more intense technology skills will be required by new entrants into the industry sector.

General freight trucking (4841) is expected to have a slight employment gain over a ten-year period according to CWIA although a 5.1 overall decline is forecast for the industry as a whole (48-49). It should be noted, however, that employers continue to indicate worker need in 4841 well above these projections.

Mining (21), Utilities (22) and construction (23) will continue to demonstrate flat or declining employment growth. Manufacturing - non-durables (31) are continuing to decline across all sub-segments. Wholesale trade (42) also projects decline or flat employment with tow notable exceptions: drugs and druggists' sundries merchant wholesalers (4242) and metal and mineral (except petroleum) merchant wholesalers (4235).

Two pockets of slight employment growth are probable within information (51), i.e., telecommunications (517) and cable and other program distribution (5175), while the rest remain flat or in decline. Real estate, rental and leasing (53) show some growth; however, the actual numbers are insignificant even in a ten-year period. Although professional and technical services (54) represent only 1.7% of the total

employment a gain of 130 may be considered significant. Services to buildings and dwellings (5617) may have slight ten-year growth of 4.5% while administrative and waste services (56) as a whole shows slight decline. Educational services (61) are flat for the local area with gains in one sub-segment canceled out by losses in another. Finally, other services, except public administration (81) shows some significant growth in sub-segments such as repair and maintenance (811), auto repair/maintenance (8111), personal care services (8121) and membership associations and organizations (813).

- C. The previous sections discussed local industries and occupation with regard to general growth and decline in employment. This section will outline specific demand for skilled workers today and over the and over the next decade. When identifying an occupation, the respective Standard Occupational Classification/O*NET code will be given for purposes of clarity as well at the job title. These projections are guided by CWIA Demand and High Priority Occupation data as well as local economic and workforce development outreach information.

As has been noted in the prior analysis, Health Care and Social Assistance (62) is the largest area industry regarding total employment. Occupations within this NAICS classification with short and long term skilled workers demands are: registered Nurses (29-1111), Licensed Practical and Vocational Nurses (29-2061), Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics (29-2041), Radiologic Technologists and Technicians (29-2034) and Nursing Aides (31-1012). It is projected that these five occupations will demand between 100 to 130 new employees yearly or over a 1000 in the ten-year period for the local economy.

Manufacturing, although losing jobs overall; may be redistributing some employment from lesser skill to occupations requiring moderately intense technology skills. This is one extrapolation that can be concluded from the 2004 Deloitte Report. Once again CWIA data and local economic and workforce development outreach information were used to perform this analysis.

Viewed for the perspective of Pennsylvania's Advanced Materials and Diversified, Manufacturing cluster parameters, metals (331-332), metalworking machinery (333) and plastics/rubber products (326), which constitutes the core of our local area manufacturing cluster, contains several skilled occupations demonstrating employment demands. Among these are welders (51-4121), computer controlled machine tool operators (51-4011), machinists (51-4041), maintenance and repair workers (49-9042) and Supervisors (51-1011). Many of these same occupations are relevant to wood product manufacturing as well.

The West Central WIB has aggregated a number of industry segments together to form a Business Supportive Services Cluster. It is peculiar to this cluster area that it reflects trans-industrial activity that runs across and through otherwise specifically different enterprises. Occupations that have skill requirements and ongoing demand are auditors/accountants (13-2011), bookkeeping, accounting and auditing clerks (43-3031), computer support specialists (15-1041), secretaries (43-6012) (43-6013) and clerks (43-4171) (43-9061).

Finally, there is current and projected demand for truck drivers, heavy and tractor-trailer (53-3032) and light truck drivers (53-3033) which is fueled by companies located outside of Pennsylvania seeking employees for national and regional routes.

D. In designating occupations that are most critical to the local economic base, we have considered Deloitte's report on the sixteen driver industries, local cluster analysis and CWIA's High Priority Occupations policy. Local economic development agencies stress the retention of manufacturing in the two counties not only because of the sheer volume of employment but, also, because they import dollars into the local economy. The Deloitte report stresses that specified driver manufacturers can improve on their compound annual growth rate (CAGR) by investing in industries that have some degree of technology intensity. Also, extending the work life of machinery, cutting edge production planning and supervision are critical to this sector. Therefore, the following occupations are considered critical for manufacturing:

- (51-4121) - Welders, Cutters, Solderers & Brazers
- (51-1011) - Supervisors-Production and Operating Workers
- (49-9041) - Industrial Machinery Mechanics
- (49-9042) - Maintenance and Repair Workers
- (51-9072) - Molding & Casting Machine, Operators & Tenders
- (51-4041) - Machinists
- (51-4011) - Computer Controlled Machine Tool Operators
- (53-3032) - Truck Drivers, Heavy and Tractor Trailer

This last was included since it services manufacturing and is a key component in supply as well as delivery.

While elsewhere we have cited metal, plastic and wood products manufacturing as key driver industries for the local area, it should be noted that electronics is an emerging local industry. Although the state location quotient of 0.87 when compared to the metal and metal fabrication SLQ of 3.42 indicates electronics is not competitive in terms of employment concentration, IBM identified Next Generation Electronics as competitive in the region as a whole. CWIA data indicates a greater than 34% positive change of location quotient in Mercer County and 48% for Lawrence. Thus, in addition to the other critical occupations cited, these SLQ factors may require more critical demand for electronic/mechanical drafters (17-3012). Also, within this discussion the recent influx of semiconductor design and systems software engineering firms may cause spin-off effects requiring more electronic technicians in the future.

Other occupations also designated as critical to the local economic base are Nursing Instructors and Teachers (25-1072) because of the growing need to generate more Registered Nurses (29-1111) which are themselves critical to the healthcare industry. Industry partners have noted a growing critical need for Respiratory Therapists (29-1126) in their roundtable discussions. The Business and Financial Services industry partners stress the need for Training and Development Specialists (13-1073) as critical due to non-traditional characteristics in the emerging workforce, thus requiring more intensive company preparation. Also, the proliferation of computers in the workplace has increased the critical need for Computer Support Specialists (15-1041) to service across all other industry sectors. Lastly, Secondary

School Teachers with a concentration in Science and Math (25-2031) are essential if the local economy wishes to keep pace with the innovation and technology in an expanding global market place.

- E. The following descriptions of skill needs for the available, critical and projected jobs in the local area are referenced and aggregated from O*NET Dictionary of Occupational Titles second edition, 2002, Jist Publishing, Inc. The O*NET system provides measures for 46 possible skills for each job. Each skill is rated on two different scales. One rates the skill on its importance to the job and the other on the performance required for the job. For purposes of this analysis, we considered only the level of performance measure believing it to be the more useful. There are 10 possible Basic Skills and 36 Cross Functional Skills. For each job listed, skills are included with the average higher than the average for all jobs. In its analysis, Jist also selected the five skills with the highest numerical ratings and listed them in the descriptions. When two or more skills were tied in their measure for fifth place, up to 10 skills are included in the descriptions. Table I outlines the projected available and critical jobs by O*NET Codes and skill reference number. Table II differentiates the O*NET skills definitions by number.

TABLE I
PROJECTED AVAILABLE AND CRITICAL JOBS

Occupation	O*Net Codes	Skills
Accountants/Auditors	13-2011	19, 24, 38, 32, 17, 23, 5, 40
Bookkeeping, Accounting, & Auditing Clerks	43-3031	7, 5, 20, 32, 2
Computer Controlled Machine Tool Operator	51-4011	33, 28, 29, 5, 12, 13
Computer Support Specialists	15-1041	43, 7, 20, 45, 34, 1
Emergency Medical Technicians	29-2041	11, 36, 32, 23, 37, 2
General Office:		
Legal Secretary	43-6012	7, 10, 20, 2, 3
Medical Secretary	43-6013	7, 2, 10, 9, 20
Receptionists & Information Clerks	43-4171	2, 7, 36, 9, 10
General Office Clerks	43-9061	7, 2, 20, 5, 10
Industrial Machine Mechanics	49-9041	12, 35, 45, 32, 43, 33
Licensed Practical nurses	29-2061	36, 7, 37, 32, 3
Machinist	51-4041	5, 21, 13, 43, 30, 33, 3
Maintenance and Repair Worker	49-9042	35, 21, 12, 32, 45
Medical Assistant	31-9092	7, 2, 36, 19, 9
Medical Records and Health Information Technicians	29-2071	20, 7, 10, 19, 2, 9
Nurse Aides, Orderlies & Attendants	31-1012	37, 2, 7, 36, 9
Production Supervisors	51-1011	26, 11, 32, 10, 7, 5, 25, 33
Radiologic Technologists & Technicians	29-2034	7, 2, 28, 37, 9
Registered Nurses	29-1111	7, 2, 9, 36, 22
Respiratory Therapists	29-1126	7, 32, 36, 6, 2
Truck Drivers	53-3032	12, 28, 29, 7, 35, 10
Welders	51-4121	28, 29, 33, 13, 5, 12

*Compare skills listed in TABLE II

TABLE II
O*NET SKILL DEFINITIONS BY NUMBER

Basic Skills: These capacities facilitate the acquisition of new knowledge and skills.

Skill Number	Skill	Definition
1	Active Learning	Working with new material or information to grasp its implications.
2	Active Listening	Listening to what other people are saying and asking questions as appropriate.
3	Critical Thinking	Using logic and analysis to identify the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches.
4	Learning Strategies	Using multiple approaches when learning or teaching new things.
5	Mathematics	Using mathematics to solve problems.
6	Monitoring	Assessing how well one is doing when learning or doing something.
7	Reading Comprehension	Understanding written sentences and paragraphs in work-related documents.
8	Science	Using scientific methods to solve problems.
9	Speaking	Talking to others to effectively convey information.
10	Writing	Communicating effectively with others in writing as indicated by the needs of the audience.

Cross-Functional Skills: These skills facilitate performance in a variety of job settings.

Skill Number	Skill	Definition
11	Coordination	Adjusting actions in relation to other's actions.
12	Equipment Maintenance	Performing routine maintenance and determining when and what kind of maintenance is needed.
13	Equipment Selection	Determining the kind of tools and equipment needed to do a job.
14	Idea Evaluation	Evaluation the likely success of an idea in relation to the demands of the situation.
15	Idea Generation	Generating a number of different approaches to problems.
16	Identification of Key Causes	Identifying the things that must be changed to achieve a goal.
17	Identifying Downstream Consequences	Determining the long-term outcomes of a change in operations.
18	Implementation Planning	Developing approaches for implementing an idea.
19	Information Gathering	Knowing how to find information and identifying essential information.
20	Information Organization	Finding ways to structure or classify multiple pieces of information.

21	Installation	Installing equipment, machines, wiring, or programs to meet specification.
22	Instructing	Teaching others how to do something.
23	Judgment and Decision Making	Weighing the relative costs and benefits of a potential action.
24	Management of Financial Resources	Determining how money will be spent to get the work done, and accounting for these expenditures.
25	Management of Material Resources	Obtaining and seeing to the appropriate use of equipment, facilities, and materials needed to do certain work.
26	Management of Personnel Resources	Motivating, developing, and directing people as they work, identifying the best people for the job.
27	Negotiation	Bringing others together and trying to reconcile differences.
28	Operation and Control	Controlling operations of equipment or systems.
29	Operation Monitoring	Watching gauges, dials, or other indicators to make sure a machine is working properly,
30	Operations Analysis	Analyzing needs and product requirements to create a design.
31	Persuasion	Persuading others to approach things differently.
32	Problem Identification	Identifying the nature of problems.
33	Product Inspection	Inspecting and evaluating the quality of products
34	Programming	Writing computer programs for various purposes.
35	Repairing	Repairing machines or systems using the needed tools.
36	Service Orientation	Actively looking for ways to help people.
37	Social Perceptiveness	Being aware of others' reactions and understanding why they react the way they do.
38	Solution Appraisal	Observing and evaluating the outcomes of a problem solution to identify lessons learned or redirect efforts.
39	Synthesis and Reorganization	Reorganizing information to get a better approach to problems or tasks
40	Systems Evaluation	Looking at many indicators of system performance, taking into account their accuracy.
41	Systems Perception	Determining when important changes have occurred in a system or are likely to occur.
42	Technology Design	Generating or adapting equipment and technology to serve user needs.
43	Testing	Conducting tests to determine whether equipment, software, or procedures are operating as expected.
44	Time Management	Managing one's time and the time of others.
45	Troubleshooting	Determining what is causing an operating error and deciding what to do about it.
46	Visioning	Developing an image of how a system should work under ideal conditions.

- F. The following is a brief analysis of the current and projected demographic outline of the West Central Workforce Investment Area (WIA) available labor pool which includes the incumbent workforce. These projections are extrapolated from the U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000: Profile of General Demographic Characteristics: 2000 and the Penn State Data Center's Estimates of Average Annual Rates of the Components of population Change for Counties of Pennsylvania. Also, the Penn State Data Center's Annual Estimate for Counties of Pennsylvania: April 1, 2000 to January 1, 2005 provided a helpful model in making these projections.

The total population of Lawrence and Mercer Counties as of the 2000 census was calculated at 214,936. The total population aged 16 and over is 171,009 of which 99,210 or 58% are tabulated as part of the civilian labor force for the local area. Of those employed, about 72% are identified as private for profit wage and salary workers, i.e., approximately 67,323 individuals. The employed civilian population as a whole is roughly composed of 47% females. Females likewise fill 44% of the private for profit wage and salary worker category. Generally, it can be estimated that about 79% of the total civilian labor force (CLF) is populated by workers between the ages of 16 through 65 years. The largest single segment of workers are projected for the (35-44) group or about 19% of the CLF followed by the (45-54) groups at 17% and (25-34) at 14%. It is expected that more of the local labor market pool may be drawn from the growing (65-74) age segment as the economy continues to shift from a basic production labor economy toward a service and technology intensity driven labor economy. Black/African Americans compose 4.5% of the local area total population with Asians at .34%, Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islanders at .02% and 2 or more races and some other race amounting to about 1%. The labor force demonstrates little diversity relative to race with much more visible mix of women and older workers.

If average overall population erosion continues in the pattern illustrated by the Penn State Data Center, a total ten-year loss of 5,260 should not radically alter the labor force demographic as described. It is projected that most of the significant loss will occur at the lower and higher extremes of the continuum with falling birth rates and the deaths due to aging. However, it should be noted that variances within the various age categories discussed are possible.

- G. Information obtained courtesy of the Penn State Data Center indicates that the impact of population migration upon the local labor pool should continue to be negligible. For Lawrence County, net international migration of 0.2 and net internal migration of -1.7 factored together totals a net migration rate of about -1.5. In Mercer County, the net international rate is 0.3 while the net internal migration is calculated to be -0.3. The total is essentially zero. These are estimates of average annual rates of the components of population change for the two Pennsylvania Counties. Regarding the aspect of daily migration into and out of the area by individuals based on commuting patterns, the following analysis has been made based on the 2000 Census, CWIA data and Demographics Now (2005). Assuming current total employment in the LWIA to be 94,100, 84% of individuals who work in the West Central Region also reside in the Region. Thus, there is a daily out-migration of about 16% of the local workforce with an approximate 11% in-migration of workers who do not reside in the two county areas. The following chart outlines the destination of these residents for employment and the origination location for the in-migration:

**Commuting Patterns
Based on 2000 Census Data**

ESTIMATED DAILY OUT- MIGRATION Where West Central Region Residents Work			ESTIMATED DAILY IN - MIGRATION Where West Central Region Workers Reside		
Destination County	Commuters		Origination County	Commuters	
Butler	3648	3.99%	Trumbull	2,708	3.12%
Trumbull	3458	3.78%	Butler	2,641	3.05%
Beaver	2831	3.10%	Beaver	2,283	2.63%
Mahoning	2703	2.96%	Crawford	1,455	1.68%
Allegheny	2659	2.91%	Mahoning	1,342	1.55%

H. Current local skills gaps gauged for critical and high priority occupations based upon employer surveys and the public workforce system’s inability to keep pace with job order demands are primarily in the production occupations. A review and analysis of the O*Net Skills listed for the (1) computer controlled machine tool operator, (2) industrial machine mechanics, (3) Machinist, (4) welder and (5) production supervisor suggest the following prioritization of skills gaps. All five jobs require the product inspection skill indicating that this is the largest gap. Four of the five jobs require mathematics. Equipment maintenance and selection each were required by three of the five positions placing them in a tie for the third skill gave currently evident.

A review of the critical and in demand jobs previously outlined for West Central LWIA suggest the following skill gaps projected for the next decade. The skill gap priority was based upon the number of jobs listed as in demand or critical and the occurrence of that skill:

Priority	O*Net Skill	# of 23 In Demand/Critical Jobs
1.	Reading Comprehension	14
2.	Active Listening	11
3. a.	Mathematics	7
3. b.	Writing	7
3. c.	Problem Identification	7
3. d.	Service Orientation	7
4.	Speaking	6
5. a.	Information Organizing	5
5. b.	Operation and Control	5
5. c.	Product Inspection	5

V PLANNING AND EVALUATION

A building, located at 102 Margaret Street, in the City of New Castle, was selected by the Local PA Careerlink Steering Committee, in conjunction with the County Commissioners, as the PA Careerlink comprehensive physical site to serve residents of Lawrence County. The Lawrence County site became fully operational in November of 1998.

A building, located at 217 West State Street in the City of Sharon, was selected by the Local PA Careerlink Steering Committee, in conjunction with the County Commissioners, as the PA Careerlink comprehensive physical site to serve residents of Mercer County. The Mercer County site became fully operational in October of 2000.

Both sites have recently passed the Department of Labor & Industry's on-site review for compliance to accessibility.

At the present time, the Local Workforce investment Area does not utilize Access Points as a delivery option.

The effectiveness of this configuration is relative to the characteristics of the LWIA itself. The West Central Workforce Investment Area is composed of two fifth class counties, Mercer, which according to the 2000 U.S. Census, has a population of 120,293 and Lawrence with 94,643 residents. The combined LWIA population is 214,936. Mercer County's land area is 672 square miles with an average distribution of population of 179.1 persons per square mile. For Lawrence County, the land area is 360 square miles with a 262.6 person per square mile average distribution. These factors, land area and population density, were chief factors contributing to the WIB's decision to establish a comprehensive one stop career center (PA Careerlink) in each county. Additionally, it was determined that the comprehensive centers be located in areas of high population density also evidencing significant unemployment rates in order to place them amidst job seekers needing to reattach to the workforce. Thus, the Mercer site was targeted for the City of Sharon with a population of 12,752 and the Lawrence site in the City of New Castle with 20,631 residents. Regular business hours have been established between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday to be accessible to those who are unemployed and requiring staff assisted services. The Centers are available in the evenings by appointment only. All required federally mandated programs have entered into the memoranda of understanding (MOU) for these PA Careerlinks. Core and intensive services for Adult, Dislocated Workers and Older Youth as well as access to training services through Individual Training Accounts (ITA) are provided here. Core and Intensive services under Wagner-Peyser, chapter 41 of Title 38 United States Code (Veterans Programs), Unemployment Compensation and Trade Act Programs are present. Core and Intensive services under the Community Services Block Grant, Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and TANF Employment and Training Programs as well as Title II Literacy Programs. Core services can be accessed for Title V of the Older Americans Act, Carl Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act as well as Housing and Urban Development (HUD) employment program access. Effectiveness of the above configuration can be evaluated by comparing local market penetration figure with statewide averages. For the period July 1, 2004 through June 30, 2005, the Bureau of Workforce Development Partnerships determined that the PA Careerlink Centers operating in the West Central LWIA had an Employer Market Penetration of 12.2%

compared to the statewide average of 6.9%. Similarly, the LWIA tabulated a Job Seeker Market Penetration of 29.2% compared to the statewide average of 17%.

The information provided by the Center for Workforce Information and Analysis (CWIA) has become invaluable for the LWIB decision-making process. Local and regional information made available from the Regional Data Analysis Tool (RDAT) has enabled the LWIB to make decisions utilizing timely data. The distribution of limited workforce development resources requires that a system of triage be utilized to focus funding where it can have the most significant effect. The Industry Cluster Analysis Initiative is a direct result of the CWIA RDAT. The study of employment concentrations, location quotients of industry aggregation and wage competitiveness provided the basis for the LWIB initial designation of primary metals and metals manufacturing, logistic and transportation and healthcare as cluster areas requiring attention. Through Regional Planning with other contiguous Workforce Investment Areas and wider ranging use of the RDAT, these initial cluster definitions were expanded and developed into several regional partnerships: a diversified manufacturing industry partnership including plastics, fabricated and powdered metals, healthcare and logistics and transportation. These efforts have resulted in funding awards under the Job Ready PA legislation. Additionally, the computations made by CWIA in the establishment of High Priority Occupations have entered into the LWIB deliberations on funding of OJTs and WIA Customized Training. This has spurred the WIB to support funding primarily to businesses within the statewide clusters and when not a High Priority Occupation to chart out a career pathway for the worker.

PA Careerlink Site Administrators are in attendance at each LWIB meeting to report, provide information and to be aware of the board's strategic direction. Additionally, many of the one-stop partner seats on the West Central WIB are occupied by individuals who also are members of the consortia of operators for the two centers. This provides an interlocking connection for the dissemination of information both up and down to enrich the decision making process. Also, the Executive Director of Workforce Development acting on behalf of the WIB provides documents outlining strategic direction and negotiated performance goal information for the PA Careerlink Operators. Additionally, WIB staff or WIB members make presentations to the rank and file PA Careerlink front line staff to inform them of WIB actions. The Site Administrators and staff utilize this information to plan tactics for delivery of service and program alignment for job seekers and employers. Finally, the PA Careerlink receives copies of the newsletter which details this information in another format.

The West Central WIB created the position of Workforce Development Manager to work as a part of the PA Careerlink Business Service Teams in Mercer and Lawrence Counties. This provides direct access to strategic directions promoted by the WIB as well as integrating WIA Title I and other PA Careerlink services with Job Ready PA Incumbent Worker programs competitively obtained by the board thereby allowing for a seamless tailoring of workplace training services for business customers. Additionally, the WIB sponsors WEDNet coordination outreach seminars for employers through the PA Careerlinks bringing together the WEDNet partners and training providers to simplify the application process and coordinate this funding with other workforce development incumbent worker training planned or already in place. Another innovative feature of the local business service strategy is the

linkage of the Business Service Teams and PA Careerlinks with the Business Retention Program. The Workforce Development Manager and Site Administrators are registered with the local BREP business outreach call program as recipients of relevant call action plans (CAPs) which are electronically mailed to them for follow-up response. This is a vital connection with economic development and forms the basis of a rapid response network to increase efficiency and anticipate local business need. In each county, the lead economic development agency official, Industrial Resource Center representative, PA Careerlink Site Administrator and Workforce Development Manager compose a review panel of requests for incumbent worker training from the manufacturing sector.

The West Central LWIB is engaged in regional workforce development partnerships in both the northwest and southwest. First, the Northwest, North Central and West Central WIBs along with the Northwest Industrial Resource Center (NWIRC), The Northwest PA Regional Planning and Development Commission, the North Central PA Regional Planning and Development Commission, the Ben Franklin Partnership and the Governor's Action Team joined together in 2004 to form the Manufacturers' Education and Economic Network (MEEN). The purpose of this partnership was to establish a 14 county network to better coordinate and aggregate workforce development services for the manufacturing sector in the northwest quadrant of Pennsylvania with the objective of increasing competitiveness. Acknowledging the importance of manufacturing as a key driver industry for the region, the MEEN began a process of focused regional planning by first surveying employer customer needs and need gaps. The two Planning Commissions provided information regarding the global issues affecting the manufacturing sector while the WIB's industry cluster analyses were utilized to target specific industry segments for initial activities. The WIBs and NWIRC determined that metals and plastics manufacturing should be initially triaged for MEEN focus. WIBs organized meetings within their respective areas which were developed into partnerships. A regional steering committee was formed and awarded an industry partnership grant. Monthly conference calls of the steering committee occur with one face to face meeting per quarter. Information is shared and projects generated from these meetings. Projects have received funding for incumbent worker training of \$800,000. The Ben Franklin Partnership provides resources on innovation expansion and product development. The NWIRC has assisted in business assessments and systematic training plans. Curricula and core training methodologies are shared as in the case of a regional welding project that is underway throughout the 14 county regions. The Governor's Action Team input insures that customized job training efforts are not duplicative but, rather, supportive of the CJsTs.

In the southwest, the West Central WIB has affiliated itself with a five LWIB group which is known as the Regional Workforce Collaborative (RWC). The RWC only came into existence in 2005. Other members of the collaborative are the Community Colleges of Allegheny County, Butler, Beaver and Westmoreland Counties as well as the Allegheny Conference. The purpose and objective of this group is to increase coordination between economic and workforce development in the area and implement a cohesive strategy for meeting the needs of business in the region as well as presenting a coordinated network for the promotion of the region both nationally and globally. The Allegheny Conference represents regional economic development interests, the community colleges career development and the WIBs the public workforce system. Funding from the Heinz Foundation was received by

the Three Rivers Workforce Investment Board to promote regional workforce activities. Support funding for a Battlebot competition, i.e., the development of machrotronic skills for high school students by designing and building remote controlled robots, was provided by the RWC. Bi-monthly meeting are held where information is shared and potential collaborative projects are discussed.

VI SERVICE DELIVERY

A. Delivery System

1. Customers will access services through Internet connections available through the public library system, local educational agencies, partner agency sites, and business or home computers.

In addition, customers will access Title I information services at the comprehensive PA Careerlink sites. Customers, who require little or no assistance or support, will have self-service access. Staff facilitated assistance, however, will be available on-site for customers who are reluctant or unable to access those services directly.

A customer may also access services through telephone or personal contact with the mandated PA Careerlink partner agencies. Partners will cross-refer customers, who fail to meet a partner's eligibility requirements or who request services that are unavailable through a partner's programs, to the comprehensive PA Careerlink for enrollment in or access to Title I services or services available through other partner agency programs.

2. At the PA Careerlinks, customers will have universal access to all services available through all programs mandated by USDOL and to services available through other participating partners. In addition to Title I WIA funded activities and services, veterans, older workers, students, persons with limited literacy levels, and other customers with special needs will be able to access: Employment/Labor Exchange; Veteran's Employment Service Programs; Unemployment Insurance Programs; Older Americans Act Title V Senior Community Service programs; Adult Literacy programs, including the Move Up program in Mercer County; School-To-Work programs; Office of Vocational Rehabilitation programs; the Employment and Retention Network (EARN) program; and Supported Work and Supported Engagement programs.
 - a. At the PA Careerlinks, customers will have universal access to all services available through all programs mandated by USDOL and to services available through other participating partners. In addition to Title I WIA funded activities and services, veterans, older workers, students, persons with limited literacy levels, and other customers with special needs will be able to access: Employment/Labor Exchange; Veteran's Employment Service Programs; Unemployment Insurance Programs; Older Americans Act Title V Senior Community Service programs; Adult Literacy programs, including the Move Up program in Mercer County; School-To-Work programs; Office of Vocational Rehabilitation programs; the Employment and Retention Network (EARN) program; and Supported Work and Supported Engagement programs.
 - b. Customer (employer and job seeker) primary products and services vary among

the core, intensive and training services as follows:

(1) Employer Services

- Recruitment assistance and interviewing space
- Internet resume access
- Direct job order placement via the internet
- Training information and assistance
- Labor market information
- Tax credit information
- Technical assistance (ADA requirements, labor law compliance, etc)
- Updated resource directories
- Orientation to PA Careerlink system and services
- Applicant screening/testing for jobs
- Referral of qualified applicants
- Hiring Incentives

(2) Job Seeker Services

- Orientation to PA Careerlink system and services
- Internet job search capabilities
- Creating a personal folder
- Job listings and referral services
- Skill assessment and aptitude testing
- Resume building, interviewing skills and job search assistance
- Career counseling
- Adult education and literacy
- Job readiness instruction
- Occupational skills training
- Evaluation for assistive technology
- Worksite accommodations

Supportive Services

Supportive services are available to all WIA clients based on a needs assessment that is documented in case notes as part of the Individual Employment Plan. Supportive services are provided on a first-come/first-serve basis as long as funds are available.

Supportive services and the assessment/eligibility include that all clients are enrolled in WIA funded training:

1. Needs-Related and Needs-Based Payments:

- a. Needs-Related Payments – Unemployed; and not receiving Unemployment Compensation (UC)
- b. WIA Dislocated Worker 65% Needs-Related Payments – Unemployed; ceased to received UC or trade readjustment allowances under TAA or NAFTA-TAA; **and** enrolled in a WIA funded training program by the end of the 13th week after the most recent layoff, or, if later, by the end of the 8th week after

the worker is informed that a short-term layoff will exceed six months.

- c. WIA Dislocated Worker 65% State Training Activity Support Payments – Unemployed, **and** ceased to received UC or trade readjustment allowances under TAA or NAFTA-TAA.
2. Car Repairs – maximum of two payments which combined may not exceed \$800 when no other types of transportation is available, are less practical or are more costly. Clients must not be employed under the Act (i.e. OJT, Work Experience, Customized Training, etc.).
3. Child Care – up to a maximum of \$5,000/client will be reimbursed to licensed day care centers for clients who are not eligible to receive such assistance elsewhere.
4. Eye Care – Up to \$200 per enrollment for eye exam and glasses.
5. Uniforms and Tools – as required by the approved training program.
6. Health Care – maximum of two payments, which combined, may not exceed \$500 per enrollment year for dental, hearing aids and other emergency care.
7. Youth Incentives are available to youth who meet certain benchmarks or programmatic goals such as receiving a certificate or degree.

c. Coordination of Partner Services

The PA Careerlinks are non-incorporated entities of co-located agencies managed by a Consortium of Operators charged with oversight of the day-to-day operations. A Site Administrator coordinates activities and programs assisted by partner agency supervisors who meet monthly.

The Career Resource Areas of the PA Careerlinks are open to the public and offer self-serve information and activities to job seekers and employers. Partner agencies assign facilitators (on a rotating basis) to assist Career Resource Area clients in enrolling in the PA Careerlink system and demonstrate how to conduct a job search on the system. These facilitators are not identified by name badges as being affiliated with a specific agency.

Facilitators are knowledgeable of programs and services offered in the PA Careerlinks as well as in the community. Therefore, facilitators act as the referral and information source for all partner agencies and make appropriate referrals to partner agency and/or community based programs.

B. Adults and Dislocated Workers

1. In order to maintain greatest flexibility in designing and implementing programs, the local Workforce Investment Area elects the maximum transferal rate as permitted by Federal and State regulations.
 - a. The PA Careerlink system will maximize informed customer choice by assuring that all customers have the knowledge needed to make an informed decision. All customers will, through the PA Careerlinks, have access to information services which, at a minimum, include information: concerning job vacancy listings in local, regional, and national labor markets; the job skills necessary to obtain the

listed jobs; local occupations in demand, including the earnings and skill requirements for such occupations; identifying providers qualified to receive WIA funds to train adults, youth and dislocated workers - describing their programs, program performance outcomes and program cost information; financial aid assistance for training and education available in the local Workforce Investment Area and not funded under the Workforce Investment Act; availability of supportive services that enable an individual to participate in training activities; dealing with the availability of and eligibility for supplemental income programs (i.e., public assistance, unemployment compensation, etc.). All of these services/activities are offered through the PA Careerlinks as Core Services.

2. Core Services

- a. Core Services consist of a series of fundamental activities designed to assist and support consumers in accessing and utilizing available resources and are expected to include:
 - (1) outreach activities which involve the collection and publication or dissemination of information, to both the general public and specific targeted populations, describing available services in an effort to identify and attract potential consumers;
 - (2) orientation activities which direct the consumer's interests and inclinations toward those services available which may satisfy their individual need(s);
 - (3) information services activities which include all methodologies employed to provide consumers with complete, accurate, and up-to-date information needed to maximize informed choice in selecting and accessing services appropriate to their needs;
 - (4) the registration process which collects and records information needed to determine a potential consumer's eligibility and suitability for available services;
 - (5) the eligibility determination process through which service providers make a definite and firm decision about whether or not an applicant qualifies to receive available services;
 - (6) initial assessment activities which determine a consumer's needs and which are used to identify which, if any, of the available services are suitable for meeting those need;
 - (7) supportive services which consist of various types of assistance designed to sustain a consumer while he or she is participating in training activities;
 - (8) job search and referral assistance which includes the methodologies employed to help and support the consumer in organizing and conducting a successful job search;
 - (9) and/or, follow-up services which collect information about a former participant's current employment situation and needs.
- b. Most partner agency staff are assigned blocks of time to facilitate the core activities available in the PA Careerlinks whether it be in the Career Resource Area or facilitating a "how to" workshop. The amount of time assigned is based on the Resource Sharing Agreement and the number of FTEs assigned to the partner agency. Essentially core services are self-service. Assigned staff only provides information.

3. Intensive Services

a. Intensive Services are made available to adults and dislocated workers through the PA Careerlink service delivery system. Each of the mandated partners in the PA Careerlink system will facilitate access to advanced activities carried out under the partner's authorizing laws. Title I Intensive Services may be provided by the PA Careerlink Operators directly or through contracts approved by the LWIB. Intensive Services consist of a series of advanced activities designed to serve consumers who require more highly concentrated assistance and support in meeting their employment needs and may include:

- (1) Case management services which is a consumer-centered approach in the delivery of services designed to prepare and coordinate a comprehensive employment plan, to ensure access to necessary workforce investment activities and supportive services;
- (2) Employment counseling services, both group and individual sessions to assist in the development of an individual employment plan which will identify employment goals and the combination of services needed to find employment. Employment counseling services are provided during program participation and after job placement.
- (3) Comprehensive and specialized assessment services which are the methodology by which employment barriers faced by the consumer are identified and appropriate strategies for dealing with those barriers are designed. Compute-A-Match is a comprehensive test of vocational aptitudes, connective and conceptual abilities, vocational interest inventories, temperament factors, work attitudes and general education development levels of reasoning, math and language.
- (4) Career guidance and planning are the processes by which consumers are assisted with the solution of a variety of problems (personal, financial, legal, or programmatic) occurring during participation and by which a consumer is assisted in establishing a clear employment goal;
- (5) Development of an individualized employment plan which is a written document that identifies the consumer's employment goal, appropriate achievement objectives, and the service or combination of services suitable for meeting the consumer's needs and achieving the employment goal;
- (6) Short-term pre-vocational services which prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training, including the development of learning skills, communications skills, job search and retention skills, and personal maintenance skills (adult literacy activities related to basic workforce readiness may also be included).

Once a client is referred to WCJP, in need of intensive services, a WIA application is completed to determine that the client is eligible to receive WIA services. The Data Manager reviews the documentation collected for

eligibility determination. Once, the Data Manager certifies a client eligible, the Intensive Services will be made available at the PA Careerlink

b. Self-sufficiency

The local Workforce Investment Board (WIB) reviewed the *Self-Sufficiency Standard for Pennsylvania* (Path Ways PA, 2004) report that defines self-sufficiency as the actual cost of meeting a family's basic needs without public or private assistance, based on family composition and county of residence.

The WIB also decided to review definitions used by local providers of services to individuals in the emerging workforce. The Department of Public Welfare's Transportation Grants utilize the 235% of the Lower Living Standard Income Level (LLSIL) as eligibility criteria for individuals to receive transportation assistance. The LLSIL are determined by the Secretary of Labor and adjusted for regional, Metropolitan, urban and rural differences and family size.

The WIB decided to adopt the levels as identified in the 235% of the LLSIL as the definition of self-sufficiency for Lawrence and Mercer Counties. The LLSIL is updated annually by the Secretary of Labor and issued accordingly to the Local Workforce Areas.

Compliance review and monitoring is an ongoing process. The WIA applications are taken at the PA CareerLink in each county. The WIA application is entered in the WIA module as "pending" and submitted along with supporting documentation to WCJP's Data Manager for review and approval. Once approved, the Data Manager will complete the WIA verification and notify Case Managers they may proceed to provide Intensive Services to eligible participants.

4. Training Services

- a. West Central Job Partnership coordinates with other PA Careerlink partner agencies to development a "team funding approach" for individuals seeking approval for training. Other partner agencies include Bureau of Workforce Development Partnership to access TAA funds; Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) for individuals with disabilities; and County Assistance Offices (CAOs) for assistance with tuition, fees, supportive services, etc. West Central Job Partnership also provides information regarding various grants (Pell, PHEAA, SEOG, etc) that may be available to individuals. PA Careerlink Operators will assure that eligible adults and dislocated workers needing training have access to lists of eligible providers of training services containing quality consumer information, including cost and performance information for each of the providers, and access to information concerning available financial aid.
- b. An Individual Training Account (ITA) will be established to finance training services. To maximize the use of ITAs, contracts for training services, instead of ITA's, will be used only when one of the following exceptions applies: the services provided are On-the-Job Training or Customized Training; the Local LWIB formally determines, at a regularly scheduled public meeting, that there are an insufficient number of eligible providers in the local area to accomplish the

purpose of a system of ITA's. (Such a determination will require public notice and a thirty-day public review and comment period prior to the execution of a contract for the training services sought.); or, the LWIB determines that there is a training services program, of demonstrated performance, offered in the area by a community-based organization (CBO) or another private organization to serve special participant populations that face multiple barriers to employment.

Training services, whether under an ITA or under contract, must be obtained from a provider whose performance qualifies them to receive WIA funds.

Training services, whether under an ITA or under contract, must be provided in a manner that maximizes informed consumer choice in selecting a training provider.

The dollar amount of an ITA amount may not exceed \$8,000 per enrollment. If WIA funds needed to complete training exceed the \$8,000 limitation, the Executive Director of Workforce Development may waive the limitation at his or her discretion on an individual or group basis.

An ITA may not be established for an applicant who has defaulted on prior government loans.

Applicants, who have already attained a Bachelor or Associate Degree, may not pursue another degree nor convert an Associate Degree to a Bachelor Degree.

Holders of Bachelor or Associate degrees are restricted to training programs of less than one year in duration.

Students, who apply while currently enrolled in a training program and who have less than two years remaining, may qualify for an ITA, only if their cumulative QPA is 2.5 (on a 4.0 scale) or more, and they submit a complete transcript.

An applicant may be denied training offered by listed on the Commonwealth's Eligible Providers List, if the provider's rate of placement in training related employment falls below fifty percent (50%).

The LWIB will, through the designated PA Careerlink Operator(s), make available to consumers the Commonwealth's list of providers whose performance qualifies them to receive WIA funds to train adults, dislocated workers and youth. This list will include a description of the programs through which the provider is eligible to offer training services and the performance and cost information relevant to those programs and will provide information identifying eligible providers of on-the-job training and customized training.

A consumer, who desires to participate in Training Services, must select, in consultation with his or her case manager, a training provider from the Commonwealth's list.

The consumer, with the assistance of his or her case manager, must prepare and submit, to WCJP, a written request for an ITA. The request must include the information necessary, and such supporting documentation as may be required,

to determine his or her individual suitability and eligibility for Training Services.

WCJP will review the request and, prior to issuance of any ITA, must document and certify, in writing, that the consumer: has met the eligibility requirements for intensive services, has received at least one intensive service, and has been determined to be unable to obtain or retain employment through such services; after counseling or assessment and case management has been determined by a PA Careerlink partner to be in need of training services and to have the skills and qualifications to successfully complete the selected training program; has selected a program of training services that is directly linked to the employment opportunities either in the local workforce investment area or in another area to which the individual is willing to relocate; and, is unable to obtain grant assistance from other sources to pay the costs of such training, including Federal Pell Grants established under Title IV of the higher Education Act of 1965 or require WIA assistance in addition to other sources of grant assistance, including Federal Pell Grants.

ITA requests certified by WCJP will be forwarded to the Program Director for review and approval or disapproval. Unless the program has exhausted funds for the program year, the administrative division will create an ITA, as soon as reasonably possible after receiving written approval from the Program Director.

Upon receiving notification that an ITA has been created, WCJP will refer the consumer to the selected training provider.

Payments from ITAs will be processed and approved in conformance with the approved fiscal system and controls used by the fiscal agent for administering Workforce Investment Act funds. Payments may be made via electronic transfer of funds through financial institutions, vouchers, or other appropriate methods. Payments may be made in one lump sum or incrementally through payment of a portion of the costs at different points in the training program.

Any consumer who is denied an ITA, at any level of the operations division, may appeal that decision to the next higher level. The decision of the Executive Director of Workforce Development will be final.

West Central Job Partnership (WCJP), the Title I provider, intends to apply the Commonwealth's waiver to allow older youth to utilize the regular ITA procedure. Younger youth programs will continue to be procured and sub-contracted utilizing the Request for Proposal method.

- c. The West Central Workforce Investment Area requires that educational and training activities, whether under an Individual Training Account (ITA) or under contract, be provided in a manner that maximizes informed consumer choice in selecting a training provider.

Training Provider List - The LWIB will, through the designated PA Careerlink Operators, make available to consumers the State approved list of providers whose performance and demand qualifies them to receive WIA funds to train adults and dislocated workers. This list will include a description of the programs through which the provider is eligible to offer training services and the

performance and cost information relevant to those programs and will provide information identifying eligible providers of on-the-job training and customized training.

Local Area consumer reports on eligible providers will also be made available to consumers which, at a minimum, will include: actual numbers and completion rates for individuals in the applicable program; actual number and rates of certification, attainment of academic degrees, or other measure of skills, if appropriate; actual numbers and percentage rates of individuals who completed the applicable program and were placed in unsubsidized employment; actual numbers and percentage of individuals participating in the applicable program, who obtained unsubsidized employment in an occupation related to training; actual numbers and retention rates of individuals, who completed the program and were placed in unsubsidized employment, and were employed through the third quarter following the completion of the program; average quarterly wages received by individuals who have completed the applicable program; and, actual numbers and percentage rates of individuals who completed the applicable program and attained certification, attainment of academic degrees, or other measure of skills.

On a yearly basis West Central Job Partnership's (WCJP) Point of Contact (POC) transmits e-mail to all training providers that appeared on the previous year's approved training providers list. This submission will include instructions from the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry on the steps to take to submit applications for approval of training program/course for the new fiscal year.

Training providers may submit applications electronically or may request the LWIB to furnish forms for making applications and a list of high priority occupations when internet access is not available to the training provider.

Prospective training providers must submit applications covering each individual program course of study to be offered and containing verifiable program specific performance information for all students, as well as WIA students. Prospective providers must also submit separate applications for each training location. Approved courses remain on the Training Providers List for a one year time period spanning from July 1 through June 30.

Training providers are required to re-submit each individual program course of study annually with updated verifiable program specific performance information and updated data on the program course of study. Training providers may update or edit individual program course of study at any time. The LWIB will determine whether or not to grant local approval within thirty days from the receipt of the change of application for the program/course of study.

Within thirty (30) days of receipt of an application, the LWIB will determine whether or not to grant local approval. If it is determined that an application does not meet the eligibility requirements set forth in the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and corresponding federal regulations, the LWIB will issue a written denial notice. A separate notice will be issued for each training program being denied. The notice will clearly identify the specific program being denied and state the

specific reasons for denial. The denial notice will advise the training provider of its right to appeal the LWIB's decision within thirty (30) days of the date of denial and will outline the appeal process.

Those applications approved by the LWIB will be submitted electronically by the LWIB to the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry. The training program will appear on the Commonwealth's list only after the Department verifies the eligibility. If the program is found to be ineligible by the Department, the LWIB will notify the provider and will not approve Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for that program.

Training providers will have twenty (20) working days from the mailing of the denial notice of a training program in which to file an appeal to the LWIB. The request for appeal must identify the program that was denied and the reasoning for the appeal. The LWIB will issue a decision within twenty (20) working days after the appeal is filed.

If the training provider is not satisfied with the LWIB decision, a request for review may be filed with the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry. The request must be filed within twenty (20) working days from the date of the LWIB decision. Within twenty (20) working days of receipt of the request, the Department will render a final decision and notify the training provider.

Training providers, who receive a denial of eligibility or a determination of suspension or termination of eligibility, will have twenty (20) days in which to submit an appeal to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Within sixty (60) days of the receipt of an appeal, the training provider will be notified of the date, time, and place of hearing conducted for the purpose of making a final determination.

All appeals are electronically filed through the Pennsylvania PA Careerlink website: www.paPA Careerlink.state.pa.us.

- d. On the Job Training (OJT) is suitable for consumers who have been assessed as being in need of job specific skills in order to obtain, retain, or advance in employment. Those specific skills must be readily acquired, within a reasonably short period of time, through actual hands-on performance of productive work.

Only those participants who have been assessed and for whom OJT has been documented as an appropriate activity in the IEP should be referred to an employer for participation. Enrollment of an individual in OJT, who is referred to the WIA program by an employer, may not occur until after an objective assessment and IEP are completed and it is indicated that OJT is an appropriate activity.

Preference shall be given to the enrollment of veterans; if sufficient funds are not available for all eligible applicants deemed suitable for OJT.

Employers must compensate OJT participants at the same rates, including periodic increases not related to individual performance, as similarly situated employees or trainees. In no event may the OJT participant receive compensation that is less than the minimum wage prescribed under the Fair

Labor Standards Act of 1938, as amended.

Employers may be reimbursed for up to fifty percent (50%) of the wage rate of an OJT participant. This reimbursement is deemed to be compensation for the extraordinary costs associated with the training and supervision of the participant and the costs associated with the lower productivity of the participants. Employers are not required to document these extraordinary costs.

At the present time, the local Workforce Investment Area has not set a maximum amount or reimbursement cap for OJT contracts.

OJT must be limited in duration. An OJT contract should be limited to the period of time required for a participant to become proficient in the occupation for which the training is provided. In determining the appropriate length of the contract, consideration should be given to the skill requirements of the occupation, the academic and occupational skill level of the participant, prior work experience, and the participant's IEP.

Full-time OJT positions (30 hours or more per week) may not exceed six (6) consecutive calendar months. Any time spent in related classroom training, during which wages are paid by the employer, is included. Part-time participants (less than 30 hours per week) and participants with special needs can exceed six (6) months as long as the total training hours reimbursed are less than 500 hours.

The standard procedure for determining the length of the OJT period is to ascertain the DOT (Dictionary of Occupational Titles) Code and its attendant Standard Vocational Preparation (SVP) Code. This, when related to the chart below establishes the maximum permissible time (hours) in training.

	SVP ENTRY	
LEVEL		HOURS
3		400
4		600
5		800
6 & above		1,000

Staff will make adjustments to permissible time limits based upon and assessment of the participant's reading, math, and language levels as compared to those levels in the DOT Code book assignment of GED levels. Participants with low levels of reading, math, and language may receive an upward adjustment, since they need more time to understand the job. Those with levels higher than the job requirements may receive a corresponding decrease in allowable time, since they should understand directions, procedures, and other basic skill requirements of the job.

When a female participant enters a job which is non-traditional (occupations represented with less than 25% female involvement), that individual may lack basic knowledge of tools, procedures, and occupational language. Staff, therefore, may add an additional 40 hours of training, if the employer is willing to

use this time to train the participant in these areas of deficiency.

While the maximums shown for the SVP levels may be adjusted upward, in no case may the length of participation in OJT exceed the time limitations imposed above.

Downward adjustments to these maximums may be calculated during an assessment meeting involving the participant, the employer, and staff. The participant's proficiency in each duty/task listed in the job description and training outline will be rated. A participant, who has already acquired the skill to accomplish a duty/task, receives a rating of "0". A participant, who has some knowledge but not sufficient skill to accomplish a duty/task, receives a "1". A participant, who has no knowledge or skill to be able to accomplish a duty/task, receives a "2". The rating, reduced to a percentage and multiplied by the maximum number of hours available, determines a reasonable length of training.

Staff must note adjustments in the participant's IEP. Documentation of any adjustment becomes part of the client's file and the contract file.

OJT contracts may not be entered into with any employer who has previously exhibited a pattern of failing to provide OJT participants with continued employment with wages, benefits, and working conditions equal to those provided to regular employees working a similar length of time and doing the same type of work. Staff will keep a log by employer of all OJT hires which shows a cumulative retention rate determined by follow-up information. At the time of a request for an OJT, the employer will be made aware of his retention rate. If more than two previous contracts have been entered into, the employer must have at least a 65% retention rate to receive any additional contracts.

Each year staff will review the employers listed. Future OJT funding to any employer will be denied, if the retention rate for that employer falls below 65%.

Employers, who are sanctioned for failing to meet required retention rates, may submit a written request to West Central Job Partnership, Inc. for reinstatement. Any employer reinstated must retain 75% or be denied OJT funding without further recourse.

The West Central Job Partnership, Inc. will not enter into contracts for brokered services in the OJT program.

- e. Apprenticeship Training - Discussions are currently underway with the United Steel Workers of America (USWA) and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) to explore ways for WIA programs to interface with local apprenticeship programs. At this point, the discussions have not progressed beyond pre-apprenticeship cooperation for newly inducted workers. However, the Local Workforce Investment Board intends to continue discussions with the unions to foster relationships and innovative programming ideas.

C. Service to Specific Populations

The PA Careerlink system will function as the keystone for workforce development and will serve as a link between workforce and economic development. The system will provide universal access to integrated, market-driven, programs and services that are considerate of the abilities and work-support needs of a diverse population, promote customer choice, and permit both employers and job seekers to make informed decisions.

The physical co-location of the partner agencies affords a unified team approach to service all customer populations accessing the PA Careerlinks. The majority of partner agencies have staff facilitate in the Career Resource Areas and all staff have been cross-trained regarding services offered by partner agencies. Therefore, all staff are able to refer customers to services offered in the PA Careerlinks and/or partner agencies, as well as other services available in the community.

All clients are cross referred to programs for which they may be eligible to receive services and thereby may be co-enrolled in more than one program. All clients determined to be “job ready” are referred to the Bureau of Workforce Development Partnership (BWDP) staff for job matching and job referrals.

Unique and overarching strategies to ensure availability of services and training for the following populations include:

- Dislocated Workers - Title I staff checks the PA Careerlink system to determine if a WARN notice has been filed for a dislocated worker’s former employer. If so, the BWDP staff and Title I staff will coordinate efforts to serve the dislocated worker. Title I staff will schedule and administer a full array of assessments for any individual who seeks funding (Title I and/or TAA) to attend training. Assessment results are reviewed to assure the client’s interests and aptitudes match the training for which they are seeking funding. If the client is suitable for training, an employment plan will be developed jointly by BWDP and Title I staff to maximize the funding package for dislocated workers and outline the steps needed to guide the client through training and lead them to employment. Referrals are made to all appropriate supportive service agencies that could potentially assist in eliminating barriers in the training to employment process.
- Displaced Homemakers - For the purpose of determining eligibility, a displaced homemaker is defined as an individual who has been providing unpaid services to family members in the home and who: has been dependent on the income of another family member but is no longer supported by that income and is unemployed or underemployed and is experiencing difficulty in obtaining or upgrading employment.
- Low Income individuals:
 - Migrant Farm Workers and Seasonal Farm Workers - The local area does not have a significant population of migrant and/or seasonal farm workers. Therefore, no specific strategies have been developed to address these populations.
 - Women - Women seeking training for non-traditional employment - As part of career research activities, women are encouraged to review careers that are held predominately by men. They are instructed to

- compare wages of the non-traditional occupations to those more traditionally pursued by women. Employers are encouraged to hire women in non-traditional jobs. Employers who hire women to fill non-traditional employment vacancies via On the Job Training contracts (TAA and Title I) may receive an additional 40 hours of wage reimbursement.
- Minorities are mainstreamed into PA Careerlink core services and all services and activities available in WIA Title I funded programs.
 - Veterans - all individuals who have served in the military are referred to BWDP's Veterans Services Representative for job matching and referrals in addition to receiving all other PA Careerlink services.
 - Public assistance recipients - all clients receiving public assistance are referred to the County Assistance Office (CAO) for assistance in removing barriers that may prevent them from attending training or obtaining and/or retaining employment. TANF clients may be eligible to apply for and receive One Time Issuances (OTIs) from the CAOs which may include assistance for child care, transportation, clothing purchases, eyeglasses, etc. TANF clients will also be referred to partner agencies and/or community agencies for assistance in other areas such as drug and alcohol counseling, housing issues, etc.
 - Individuals with multiple barriers to employment:
 - Older individuals - referrals are made to Mature Services for program information and assistance. Older individuals are mainstreamed through the regular PA Careerlink processes and activities. All Title I programs are open to older individuals without bias. Any older individuals determined to be "job ready" will be referred to BWDP staff for job matching and referrals.
 - Persons with limited English proficiency - WCJP entered a contract with Language Line to provide interpreter services for any individual with limited English proficiency. All partner agencies located at the PA Careerlink were assigned access codes and trained to use the Language Line system. Recently, the Commonwealth notified all PA Careerlinks that the Language Line service is available to all PA Careerlink staff and the cost will be absorbed by the State. Training is provided to all staff once per year at capacity training on how to access Language Line services.
 - Persons with disabilities - individuals with a self-identified disability or observable disability are referred to the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR). OVR and Title I staff will coordinate and jointly develop a plan to maximize funding for disabled individuals. Title I funding may be combined with OVR funding if skills training is deemed an appropriate activity for the individual. OVR may be able to provide hardware or tools to assist a disabled individual in the workplace. For example, Title I funding may be used to provide OJT training with an employer and OVR funding may be used to purchase a large print computer screen for a seeing impaired person to be placed at the employer's place of business.
 - Ex-offenders - are mainstreamed through the regular PA Careerlink processes and activities. All Title I programs are open to ex-offenders without bias. Any ex-offender determined to be "job ready" will be referred

to BWDP staff for job matching and referrals. PA Careerlink Mercer County has partnered with the Department of Corrections, State Regional Correctional Facility - Mercer (SRCFM), Department of Probation and Parole, and Community Corrections Center to provide inmates orientations to PA Careerlink services. Once a month PA Careerlink partner agency staff travels to SRCFM to provide soon to be released inmates a full overview of the services available at the PA Careerlink. Once the inmates are released to the Community Corrections Center the ex-offenders are mainstreamed through the regular PA Careerlink processes and activities. All Title I programs are open to older individuals without bias. A steering committee comprised of representatives from the County Assistance Office, Probation and Parole, Community Corrections Center, BWDP and the Title I provider meet once a month to review activities of the program. A computerized database was created to track the services provided and the progress of participants. Services are also entered into the PA Careerlink system.

Strategies to provide services to special populations:

- Re-employment Services - each PA Careerlink holds weekly orientations to explain Core Services or facilitated activities available to the general public such as: PA Careerlink registration; self-directed job search; workshops for resume preparation, interviewing techniques, etc.
- Unemployment Compensation Work Test - all Unemployment Compensation (UC) recipients will receive a letter from the UC office providing information about PA Careerlinks and services available to unemployed individuals. A second letter is sent to UC recipients notifying them they must report to the PA Careerlink to attend a mandatory PREP orientation which details the PA Careerlink and services available to all UC recipients. This orientation includes a group session as well as one on one meeting with the PREP Coordinator and WIA Title I staff who will explain programs and funding available through the WIA programs.
- Integration of Rapid Response - Once a WARN notice is filed on behalf of an employer, the PA Careerlink partner agencies plan a Rapid Response session for all employees effected by the lay off. The Rapid Response team reviews all services available at the PA Careerlink including retraining funds available through TAA and WIA Title I Dislocated Worker programs. In addition to TAA and WIA Title I Dislocated Worker staff, the Rapid Response team includes staff from agencies which include: credit counseling; mortgage services; CHIPS; Adult Basic; and Unemployment Compensation. The team explains PA Careerlink services and is available to answer questions to employees who will be affected by the lay off.
- Dislocated Workers - individuals who have been laid off or will be laid off due to plant closures or downsizing are eligible for all Core Services and are mainstreamed through the regular PA Careerlink processes and activities. All Title I programs are open to dislocated workers without bias. Any dislocated worker determined to be "job ready" will be referred to BWDP staff for job matching and referrals. Any dislocated worker who needs more intensive services will have a WIA Title I application taken and proceed through intensive services. Services will be coordinate by WIA Title I staff and BWDP staff if it is determined the individual may also be eligible to receive Trade services.

- Trade Act Program Services - BWDP 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 WIA Title I provider for interest and aptitude assessment to assure the occupational field of interest is one in which they will be successful. The WIA Title I staff completes a WIA application for services and schedules the individual for assessment. Once tested the WIA Title I staff sends a recommendation to BWDP staff to approve or deny training along with the assessment results. BWDP forwards the TAA application for funding to the Commonwealth. Once approved the individual is co-enrolled in the PA Careerlink system and WIA systems. WIA Title I staff will process an Individual Training Account (ITA) if the training is over and above the State's \$16,000 training cap. All WIA Dislocated Worker and/or Rapid Response supportive services are available as needed to all co-enrolled individuals.
- Services Available to Individuals with Disabilities - Both PA Careerlinks in the Local Workforce Investment Area are handicap accessible and have various equipment to assist individuals with disabilities such as: TTY telephones to accommodate people with hearing impairments; furniture (tables) to accommodate people in wheelchairs; and magnification devices to accommodate people with visual impairments. If individuals need additional services beyond core services a WIA Title I application will be taken. If determined to be eligible, all WIA Title I programs will be made available without bias. Title I staff will coordinate and jointly develop a plan with Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) to maximize funding for disabled individuals. Title I funding may be combined with OVR funding if skills training is deemed an appropriate activity for the individual. OVR may be able to provide hardware or tools to assist a disabled individual in the workplace. For example, Title I funding may be used to provide OJT training with an employer and OVR funding may be used to purchase a large print computer screen for a seeing impaired person to be placed at the employer's place of business.

Adults and dislocated workers, who receive services funded under Title I other than self-service or informational activities, must be registered and determined eligible to receive services. EEO data must be collected on those individuals during registration.

Staff, employed by a contractor or sub-recipient, may assist an individual in the completion of the registration process; however, the ultimate responsibility for assuring that registration is completed remains with the Title I funded staff.

To be eligible to participate in adult activities or receive adult services authorized under Title I of the Act, an individual must be eighteen (18) years of age or older.

To be eligible to participate in dislocated worker activities or receive dislocated worker services authorized under Title I of the Act, an individual must: have been terminated or laid off, or have received a notice of termination or lay off from employment and be eligible for or have exhausted entitlement to unemployment compensation or have been employed for a duration of time sufficient to demonstrate, to the appropriate entity, attachment to the work force, but not eligible

for unemployment compensation due to insufficient earnings or having performed services for an employer not covered under a State unemployment compensation law and be unlikely to return to a previous industry or occupation; have been terminated or laid off, or have received a notice of termination or layoff, from employment as a result of any permanent closure of or substantial layoff at a plant, facility or be employed at a facility at which the employer has made a general announcement that such facility will close within one hundred eighty (180) days or (for the purpose of determining eligibility to receive services other than training, intensive, or supportive services) be employed at a facility at which the employer has made a general announcement that such facility will close; have been self-employed (including employment as farmer, rancher, or a fisherman) but is unemployed as a result of general economic conditions in the community in which the individual resides or because of natural disaster; or, be a displaced homemaker.

Title I funded staff have the ultimate responsibility for determining the information and documentation needed to certify the individual's eligibility and for making a definite and final decision about whether or not the individual is eligible to participate in or receive activities or services funded under the Act. Contractor or sub-recipient staff may be required to gather information and documentation necessary to the determination of eligibility.

Title I funded follow-up services must be made available, for a minimum of twelve (12) months following the first day of employment, to registered participants who are placed in unsubsidized employment. Title I funded follow-up services and outcomes must be recorded.

One person may be identified as the primary person responsible for case management services for each consumer during enrollment in the Title I Program. The person so named must be qualified by both training and experience and may be an employee of the PA Careerlink Operators or may be an employee of a contractor or sub-recipient.

The consumer must know at all times who the primary case manager is, even though the primary case manager may change as the consumer progresses through various Title I authorized activities or services.

The primary case manager serves as the participant's single point of contact with the Title I Program and is responsible for the overall coordination of all of the Title I authorized activities and services provided. Most importantly, the primary case manager is responsible for monitoring the participant's progress in achieving the objectives set forth in the individual employment plan.

Case management services must include progress review and intervention. Each participant's progress must be reviewed continuously and the case manager must counsel, remedy, or otherwise intervene whenever problems are identified. At least once each quarter, the primary case manager and the participant must meet for the specific purpose of reviewing and updating the individual employment plan

The person assigned primary case management responsibilities must make direct, personal, contact with an assigned adult or dislocated worker at least once per week

during the first two weeks of the individual's participation in any program activity. After this period, contact must be made at least twice per month with each assigned individual until participation is terminated.

Additional contacts should be made with a client facing serious barriers or not making satisfactory progress toward his or her goals. The frequency of additional case management contacts should be determined by a client's individual needs.

Telephone calls, in-office meetings, and home or site visits are acceptable examples of direct, personal, contact.

All case management contacts and the results must be clearly recorded in the client's case file. All case records must be reviewed and updated quarterly.

Contractor or subrecipient staff may conduct assessment; however, any and all assessment methodologies and instruments used must be approved in advance by the LWIB. The consumer, with the assistance and support of his or her case manager, must prepare the Individual Employment Plan (IEP).

The IEP must be reviewed quarterly to evaluate the progress of each participant in achieving his or her objectives, including the attainment of skills and the adequacy of any supportive services provided. The Plan must be used as the basic instrument for recording the results of decisions made about the combination and sequence of services for the client. Justification for decisions may be referenced but need not be recorded in the Plan. The IEP is meant to serve as a case management tool and is not a contract nor is it a compliance tool.

An adult will be determined to be eligible for participation in Title I Intensive Services, if the individual has been determined to be eligible for activities and services authorized under Title I of the Workforce Investment Act and is: unemployed, has received at least one core service and is unable to obtain employment through core services, and has been determined, by the PA Careerlink operator, to be in need of more intensive services to obtain employment or employed, has received at least one core service, and has been determined by the PA Careerlink operator to be in need of intensive services to obtain or retain employment that leads to self-sufficiency.

A dislocated worker will be eligible for participation in Title I Intensive Services. If the individual has received at least one core service, was unable to obtain employment, which pays a wage equal to ninety percent (90%) of his or her wage at dislocation, and has been determined by the PA Careerlink operator to be in need of intensive services to obtain employment that leads to self-sufficiency.

There is no required minimum time period for participation in Intensive Services before receiving Training Services.

A Title I participant's case file must contain a determination of need for Intensive Services, as established by the initial assessment or the individual's inability to obtain employment through the Core Services provided.

D. Priority of Service

1. After eighty percent (80%) of the WIA Title I funds allocated to the local Workforce Investment Area for adult employment and training activities are obligated, the local Area will give priority for enrollment in intensive and training services to an individual who received or is a member of a family that received a total family income (exclusive of unemployment compensation, child support payments, cash public assistance, and old age and survivors insurance benefits), for the six-month period prior to application for the program, that does not exceed 100% of the Lower Living Standard Income Level (LLSIL), as determined by the Secretary of Labor and adjusted for regional, metropolitan, urban and rural differences and family size or an individual who receives or is a member of a family who receives cash payments under a Federal, State, or local income-based public assistance program, provided that the individual is not eligible for participation in or needs employment and training services not available through other local programs designed specifically to serve him or her (e.g., Employment And Retention Network - EARN, Supported Work, Supported Engagement, CCI, et al).

This priority requirement does not apply to enrollment in intensive services nor training services paid for with WIA Title I funds allocated to the local Workforce Investment Area for dislocated worker employment and training activities.

2. Jobs for Veterans Priority Compliance - The Local WIB's allocations over recent years have been adequate all applicants determined eligible to receive services. Therefore, it has not been necessary to have a priority policy for veterans. However, after eighty percent (80%) of the WIA Title I funds are allocated as outlined in D. 2. above, priority will be given to veterans when approving and negotiating contracts for ITAs or OJTs.
3. The Local WIB prioritized available WIA Title I employment and training funds as follows:

	WIA Adult % of available \$	WIA DW % of available \$
Individual Training Accounts (ITAs)	77%	70%
On the Job Training or Work Experience	20%	20%
Customized Training	01%	05%
Supportive Services (training related)	02%	05%
Totals	100%	100%

Thirty percent (30%) of WIA Title I youth funds are restricted by Commonwealth mandates to be expended on Out of School Youth.

The WIA Title I Fiscal Agent monitors all funding allocations and expenditures and would notify the WIA Title I Operator in writing that a category of funding (WIA Adult ITAs) is closed and an effective date. This notification halts recruitment of new clients and processing of services for the targeted category.

E. Rapid Response (RR)

The LWIB provides oversight and strategic vision to the WIA Title I Operator. The WIA Title I Operator maintains a close relationship with economic development agencies in both counties. Through that relationship, the number of WARN notices filed on the CL system and the number of employees being affected by employer lay-offs or closings, the WIA Title I Operator has in the past been successful in applying to the Commonwealth and receiving approval for additional funds to provide Rapid Response services in Lawrence and Mercer Counties.

Integration of Rapid Response - Once a WARN notice is filed on behalf of an employer, the PA Careerlink partner agencies plan a Rapid Response session for all employees effected by the lay off. The Rapid Response team reviews all services available at the PA Careerlink including retraining funds available through TAA and WIA Title I Dislocated Worker programs. In addition to TAA and WIA Title I Dislocated Worker staff, the Rapid Response team includes staff from agencies which include: credit counseling; mortgage services; CHIPS; Adult Basic; and Unemployment Compensation. The team explains PA Careerlink services and is available to answer questions to employees who will be affected by the lay off.

F. Youth

1. The design framework of the local youth program will provide an objective assessment of each youth participant that includes the academic and occupational skill levels as well as the service needs of each youth; develop an individual service strategy for each youth participant which considers the assessment results and includes a career goal; and, provide preparation for post-secondary educational opportunities, linkages between academic and occupational learning, preparation for employment, and effective connections to intermediary organizations that provide strong links to the job market and employers.

The following most in need youth will be served as follows:

- a) Out-of-school – will be served via CareerLink partner services including job readiness; career research; ABE/GED; and job development.
- b) Homeless - referrals will be made to appropriate social services agencies to deal with housing issues. Once enrolled in a school district, clients will be mainstreamed in regular WIA program activities.
- c) Youth In and Aging Out of Foster Care – Youth in foster care will be mainstreamed in regular WIA program activities. Youth aging out of foster care will be referred to WIA programs in the home county of residence. Local youth aging out of foster care will receive services appropriate to in-school or out-of-school status.
- d) Youth Offenders – No special services are provided, however, WCJP meets with Juvenile Probation Officers to make them aware of WIA programs. Youth offenders are then mainstreamed to full array of youth services.
- e) Children of Incarcerated Parents – WCJP works with the local County Assistance Offices and Adult Probation Offices to identify grandparents and other relatives who may have legal custody of children of incarcerated parents. Those children, once identified, are referred and mainstreamed into regular WIA program activities.
- f) Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker Youth – Lawrence and Mercer Counties

have not been identified as areas with a concentration of migrant and seasonal farm workers. However, should the situation arise, migrant and seasonal farm worker youth would be referred to English as a Second Language (ESL) classes provided by literacy partners. Upon receiving ESL services, the youth would be mainstreamed into regular WIA program activities.

- g) Other at-Risk Youth – All other at-risk youth will be assessed and appropriate referrals will be made to partner agencies to resolve barrier issues and then mainstreamed into regular WIA program activities.

Youth Council members as discussed below in Section F. 2. are active in the design and the implementation of the WIA Title I youth program. Having Youth Council members who represent agencies that also deal with at-risk youth ensures that eligible youth will hear about and be referred to receive WIA Title I employment and training services.

2. The LWIB will assure that the membership of the Youth Council includes representatives of: local elected officials, local school-to-work partnerships, local education agencies, local public housing authorities, local area justice and law enforcement agencies, local youth initiatives serving homeless, Job Corps representatives, representatives of other local area youth initiatives (including those entities that serve homeless or runaway youth or public assistance recipients), parents, youth participants, and organizations having experience relating to youth activities.
3. The past program year, the WIA Title I Operator has collaborated and developed relationships with several new youth initiatives. First, Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV received a special grant to support youth with disabilities in preparing them for competitive employment. The goal of ProjectWORK is to match students' strengths and interests with partners from the local business community. Selected students will be given the opportunity to be in a trial placement for four to six weeks. The ProjectWORK grant did not include funds to pay the students' wages while employed at the local businesses. The WIA Title I Operator agree to obligate WIA Title I funds to cover the paid work experience wages to eligible youth.

The second new collaboration is with Slippery Rock University and the HORIZONS at the House and includes the following four components.

- a. "It's Your Life" Career Fair - A minimum of 20 children will have the opportunity to identify and learn more about a job or career that interests them. Each child will spend approximately 5 hours researching a career and preparing a tri-fold display board that includes information listed in activities b - d.
- b. Educational Road Trips - Thirteen boys and girls will be selected to participate in Educational Road Trips which will take students on six Saturday visits to various types of post-secondary institutions.
- c. What's a Girl to Do? - Ten young women will meet adult women working in male-dominated careers and fields. The goal is to encourage participants to think broadly about their career interests through personal experiences with successful adult women.

d. You're HIRED! The Apprentice for Youth - In order to support informed choices about starting a business, ten students will be invited to participate in You're HIRED! a program that will provide entrepreneurial skills and then divided into two teams where they will be challenged, much like participants on the show The Apprentice, to use those skills to launch a short-term, profitable business.

The third project is Success by Six a collaboration between: a) The school districts of Farrell, Hermitage, Mercer, Reynolds, Sharon, Sharpsville, West Middlesex, Grove City, Greenville, and Lakeview, b) Mercer County Head Start, c) United Way of Mercer County, Northern Mercer County United Way, and Grove City United Way, d) Shenango Valley Foundation, and e) West Central Job Partnership. Approximately 300 children in Mercer County begin the kindergarten school year lacking some school readiness skills. The six-week summer program will operate five hours per day, Monday through Friday and the curriculum will be taught by a certified primary school teacher and a certified Head Start teacher. Students will be selected for this program based on need which may include any of the following:

- a. Previous attendance at Head Start
- b. Previous attendance at Head Start and still considered "at risk"
- c. No preschool experience
- d. Limited amount of preschool experience
- e. Students exhibiting "red flags" during kindergarten registration process which may include: inability to separate from family; poor social interaction; inability to follow simple directions, or reports by family members of problems in preschool skills
- f. Family history of reports of limited exposure to readiness activities or experiences

The WIA Title I Operator will review the outcomes and successes of the projects outlined above. It is expected that the relationships with the new providers and the programs they offer will continue into future program years.

4. In addition to mandatory partners in the structure of the PA Careerlink, voluntary investors, sponsors and affiliates tend to foster coordination of services to "at risk youth". The voluntary partner agencies at the PA Careerlink Lawrence County that relate to youth include: Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV who operates the Elect Program for pregnant and/or parenting youth and the Project WORK for youth with disabilities; Allied Coordinated Transportation Services - mass transit provider; DESI-Job Corp; Lawrence County School-to-Work who has working relationships with all the school districts in the county; Housing Authority of Lawrence County - public housing provider; Lawrence County Technical Education & Career Center - Perkins funded vocational training provider; and occupational skills training providers - Erie Business Center South, New Castle School of Trades and Transport Tech.

The PA Careerlink Mercer County voluntary partner agencies that relate to youth include: Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV who operates the Elect Program for

pregnant and/or parenting youth and the Project WORK for youth with disabilities; Mercer County Housing Authority - public housing provider; AW/ARE, Inc. - service provider to victims of domestic violence; Child Care Information Services - agency responsible to coordinate subsidized child care services; Community Counseling - provider of mental health counseling; DESI-Job Corp; Mercer County School-to-Work who has working relationships with all the school districts in the county; Shenango Valley Urban League - community based organization and service provider to low income individuals; and occupational skills training providers - Penn State University- Shenango Campus, Business Institute of PA, Mercer County Community Education Council, New Castle School of Trades and Transport Tech.

The PA Careerlink network will provide eligible youth with information regarding the full array of applicable or appropriate services available through the LWIB, local providers found eligible by the LWIB, or PA Careerlink partners. All eligible youth will be referred to appropriate training and educational programs that have the capacity to serve them, either on a sequential or concurrent basis. Eligible applicants, who do not meet the enrollment requirements of a particular program or who cannot be served by the program, will be referred for further assessment and, then, referred to applicable or appropriate services.

5. The local Area will ensure compliance with applicable safety and child labor laws by requiring that all participants in youth work activities funded under Title I receive training in work place safety and orientation to child labor laws; all written agreements with Title I funded work activity sites include provisions requiring the site to comply with work place safety and child labor law requirements; all contractor staff and all work site staff involved in the supervision of youth activities funded under Title I receive training in safety, first aid, and child labor laws; and, the oversight and monitoring responsibilities of both the LWIB and the Youth Council for Title I funded youth activities include enforcement of safety requirements and child labor laws.
6. All youth who express an interest in WIA Title I programs will meet with an Initial Intake & Assessment Specialist. An application will be completed and the appropriate data validation collected. Any youth under the age of 18 must have a parent or legal guardian sign the application. All youth that meet the eligibility criteria for participation in Title I funded youth activities will: receive information regarding the full array of applicable or appropriate services available through the LWIB, providers found eligible by the LWIB, or PA Careerlink partners and be referred to appropriate training and educational programs that have the capacity to serve them on a sequential or concurrent basis

The WIA Title I Operator will administer an objective assessment that includes the review of the academic and occupational skill levels as well as the service needs of each youth. An individual service strategy will be developed for each youth participant who considers the assessment results and includes a career goal. Each youth will be assigned an Employment & Training Specialist who will provide case management services through the entire enrollment in the WIA Title I funded program

7. The program framework will provide:
 - a. Preparation for post-secondary educational opportunities – youth

participate in activities that require researching various occupations and a list of schools that provide training programs linked to the occupations of choice.

- b. Connecting academic and occupational learning – the youth programs are designed to help youth identify how academics translate to occupational learning. For example, how many gallons of paint are required to paint a 22' x 38' house if a gallon of paint covers 120 square feet.
 - c. Preparing youth for unsubsidized employment opportunities – youth activities include job readiness preparation that teaches “soft skills” that employers expect such as: reporting to work on time; no to low absenteeism; conflict resolution; etc. Matching career interests and aptitudes to occupations of choice to assure a good match – that the youth is not only going to like their job but will be able to perform it well. Job development services are also available to youth to provide job leads and potentially negotiation of an On the Job Training contract or a Paid Work Experience Agreement with an employer.
 - d. Connecting youth to the business community through intermediary entities – youth are referred to partner agencies included Community Action Partnerships, Wagner Peyser providers, etc. for programs and services that may lead to employment.
8. The local youth program will include the following program elements: tutoring, study skills training, and instruction leading to secondary school completion, including dropout prevention strategies; alternative secondary school offerings; summer employment opportunities directly linked to academic and occupational learning; paid and unpaid work experiences, including internships and job shadowing; occupational skills training; leadership development opportunities, which may include such activities such as positive social behavior (e.g., positive attitudinal development, self esteem building, cultural diversity training, etc.) and soft skills (e.g., decision making, team work, etc.); supportive services (e.g., linkages to community services, assistance with transportation costs, assistance with child care and dependent care costs; assistance with housing costs, referrals to medical services, and assistance with uniforms or other appropriate work attire and work-related tool costs including such items as eye glasses and protective eye gear); adult mentoring for a duration of twelve (12) months, that may occur both during and after program participation; follow-up services for a minimum of twelve (12) months after program participation, which may include leadership development and supportive services described above, regular contact with a youth participant's employer and assistance in addressing work related problems that may arise, assistance in securing better paying jobs, career development, and further education, work-related peer support groups, adult mentoring, and tracking the progress of youth in employment after training; and, comprehensive guidance and counseling, including drug and alcohol abuse counseling as well as referrals to counseling as appropriate to the needs of the individual youth.

In-School Youth Opportunities Program - The local Workforce Investment Board will support and work with local School-To-Work Partnerships and Local Educational Agencies to establish a comprehensive program for economically disadvantaged, in-school youth who are at risk of dropping out of school. That program will be designed to provide: opportunities to participate in tutoring, study skills training, or instruction leading to secondary school completion, including dropout prevention

strategies; opportunities to participate in instructional activities needed to prepare the individual for post-secondary educational opportunities; opportunities for a youth to validate vocational choices through participation in paid or unpaid work experiences, including internships and/or job shadowing; opportunities to participate in contextual learning activities which integrate the development of general occupational competencies with the development of academic skills or which emphasize the linkages between academic and occupational learning; opportunities to acquire the job readiness and pre-employment skills and the occupational skills needed to prepare for unsubsidized employment; opportunities to receive adult mentoring from individuals having strong employer connections; opportunities to participate in leadership development activities; opportunities to receive comprehensive guidance and counseling services, including drug and alcohol abuse counseling; and, opportunities to receive information regarding the full array of supportive services available locally through public agencies and community based organizations and to receive referrals to appropriate providers, when necessary.

Summer Youth Opportunities Program - West Central Job Partnership, Inc., the grant recipient/fiscal agent will administer a supplemental, summer employment opportunities program (for in-school and out-of-school, economically disadvantaged, youth) which is directly linked to academic and occupational learning. The program will offer: opportunities to develop work maturity skills and a work history through participation in paid or unpaid work experience; opportunities to participate in activities which link academic and occupational learning and to apply academic knowledge and skills to work-projects and acquire SCANS Foundation Skills and Competencies (or reasonable facsimiles) within the context of performing work on the actual job; opportunities to prepare for post-secondary education by remedying deficiencies in basic reading comprehension and mathematical skills; opportunities to participate in leadership development activities; and, opportunities to receive information about the local job market and employers.

To assure that the individual's employment and training needs are addressed fully, a youth's participation in the Summer Youth Opportunities Program will be integrated with his or her participation in either the In-School or the Out-Of-School Youth Opportunities Programs.

Out Of School Youth Opportunities Program - The LWIB will, based upon the recommendation of the Youth Council, award a grant or contract, on a competitive basis, to an eligible youth services provider for the purpose of administering a comprehensive opportunities program for eligible, out-of-school youth. For the purposes of this program, an out-of-school youth will be defined as an individual who has dropped out of school or who has attained a high school diploma or a GED, but is deficient in basic education skills and unemployed or underemployed. At a minimum the contractor or subrecipient will be required to provide: opportunities to participate in tutoring, learning skills training, or instructional activities need to remedy deficiencies in basic reading comprehension and mathematical skills and/or earn a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent; opportunities to receive comprehensive guidance and counseling services, including drug and alcohol abuse counseling; opportunities to develop work maturity skills and a work history through participation in paid or unpaid work experience; opportunities to participate in leadership development activities; opportunities to receive information regarding the full array of supportive services available locally through public

agencies and community based organizations and to receive referrals to appropriate providers, when necessary and, opportunities for adult mentoring for a duration of at least twelve (12) months, both during and after program participation.

Participants in the Out-Of-School Opportunities Program, eighteen (18) years or older, who need to enroll in occupational skills training or who need to link to the job market and employers, will be referred to the comprehensive PA Careerlink sites for concurrent enrollment in Title I funded adult services.

Follow-Up Services - West Central Job Partnership, Inc., will administer follow-up services for all registered Title I youth participants. Follow-up services for youth may include: leadership development and supportive services; regular contact with a youth participant's employer, including assistance in addressing work-related problems that arise; assistance in securing better paying jobs, career development, and further education; work-related peer support groups; adult mentoring; and, tracking the progress of youth in employment after training.

Registered youth participants in Title I funded programs will receive some form of follow-up services for a minimum duration of twelve (12) months. The types of services provided and the duration of services will be based on the needs of the individual. The scope of follow-up services may be less intensive for youth who have only participated in summer youth employment opportunities.

The local Workforce Investment Area will also provide nonfinancial support to meet the Act's requirements regarding youth program design. The local Workforce Investment Area will offer nonfinancial assistance to Local Educational Agencies, and other interested parties in an effort to leverage community resources for the purpose of establishing, inside or outside of the public school system, alternative school programs having specialized, structured curricula which provide for work/study and GED preparation. The local Workforce Investment Area enter into nonfinancial agreements with the County Assistance Offices, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV, and community based organizations to provide applicable supportive services to low income youths, who need but cannot afford such services in order to participate in training.

9. To be eligible to receive Title I funded youth services, an individual must be 14 through 21 years of age, be a low-income individual (as defined by the Act), and have one or more of the following special needs or face one or more of the following barriers to employment. a) Deficient in basic literacy skills; school dropout; homeless, runaway, or foster child; b) Pregnant or parenting; c) Offender; or, d) possesses one or more disabilities (includes learning disabilities) and requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment.

The West Central WIB approved that up to 5% of youth participants served, may be individuals who do not meet the income eligibility criteria as long as they fall into one or more of the following categories:

- a) school dropout;
- b) basic skills deficient;
- c) one or more grade levels below the grade level appropriate to the individual's age;

- d) pregnant or parenting;
- e) possesses one or more disabilities (includes learning disabilities);
- f) homeless or runaway;
- g) offender;
- h) from an abusive or neglected home life.

G. Business Services

A Business Service Team has been established by each PA Careerlink within the Workforce Investment Area to focus on services to employer customers.

The site administrator has set up a system to obtain customer feedback from employer customers regarding the services provided through the PA Careerlink as well as services desired in order to obtain information regarding the satisfaction and needs of these businesses. This information is obtained via questionnaires and/or focus groups.

The Business Service Teams perform outreach to companies through the maintenance and review of a contact log to insure that interactions are organized and coordinated. The site administrator liaisons with the Team PA Business Call Program staff in their respective county and the WCJP Development Manager to coordinate BST referrals and incumbent worker efforts promoted by the WIB.

The BST's prioritize outreach to businesses that are classified as falling within designated LWIA Industry Cluster groupings (high employment and wage growth). Efforts are made to develop relations with all companies contained within the given cluster.

Business Services Teams coordinate with the WIB's Industry Partnership initiative by assisting in the recruitment and development of PA Careerlink employer customers to participate in focus groups and consortium activity.

The BST maps resources frequently requested by employers to enable team members to refer customers to appropriate organizations that can meet their business needs.

BST MISSION

The mission of the Business Service Team is to provide guidance, resources, and strategic workforce solutions to employer customers. Through collaborative efforts, the Business Service Team will maintain a customer-friendly process to identify and access resources in response to specific business needs. In partnership with employers, the Business Service Team will maintain existing relationships and development new relationships to strengthen our local workforce and economy. The BST will promote industry stability and growth while continually improving the quality of the workforce, business climate and economy. The BST will serve as a central location where businesses can obtain coordinated assistance in recruiting, training and development of new or existing workers. Through these efforts, the BST will develop a flexible delivery of business services to assess, analyze, project and respond rapidly to the changing needs of businesses. To ensure efficient and

effective delivery of services, the BST will identify and utilize customer feedback as a measure for continuous improvement.

Site Administrators and the Workforce Development Manager maintain active leadership roles as members of the Business Service Team. They serve as a link between the BST and the Workforce Investment Board to ensure that local strategic plans and goals are communicated. The Site Administrators and Workforce Development Manager report the findings of the BST to the WIB. WIB policy related to Business Service Teams is conveyed to the BST through these same leadership roles.

The Business Service Team provides a multitude of service solutions for business customers. The BST serves as a consultant for the one-stop system and as an ambassador to the employment community. BST members study targeted clusters to gain knowledge of those industries. By maintaining frequent, on-going contact with recruiters who have established relationships, the BST has gained understanding of current and future workforce needs and provided linkages to alternative resources. Customer satisfaction is determined by providing pre and post-employment follow-up with business customers. By customizing quality services in response to individual customer needs, the BST has helped customers to improve their competitive advantage and retention. The BST stays informed of developments in local, national and international career trends and offers continuous development, implementation and evaluation to business customers.

One of the key roles of the Business Service Team is to develop long-term, strategic industry partnerships. Through collaborative efforts within the West Central Workforce Investment Area, the BST has aided the WIB in identifying legitimate partners interested in working together to strengthen those industries as a whole. Individual members of the BST have worked in partnership with key players in Workforce Investment Areas outside of West Central. Through collaboration, partnerships have been established that focus on the identification of regional industry needs in addition to local, county-by-county workforce deficiencies. Resulting from a local cluster analysis, West Central has established partnerships in various high-demand industries including, Manufacturing, Healthcare, Logistics and Transportation, Business and Financial Services and Electronics. As a result of these partnerships, we have identified career ladders in the Logistics and Transportation and Manufacturing industries. This information has been developed in coordination with specific companies within each perspective industry. The career ladders define the skills requirements within each occupation of the ladder. In addition, career ladders have helped upper management better understand the functions that their workers perform on a daily basis. As a result, the partnership has become equipped at understanding the skills gaps and related training necessary to move from one rung to the next. The partnerships have requested and received incumbent worker training grants through the Department of Labor and Industry to address the identified skills gaps. To receive funding, the partnership has required industry recognized transferable credentials awarded to incumbent workers because of successful training.

The LWIA plans to utilize the waiver and implement a sliding scale employer match of 10 to 50 percent for Customized Training. Customized Training should be designed to meet the special requirements of an employer or group of employers.

Employers who select training that also meets strategic goals of the LWIA will be rewarded by a reduction in the match that the employer must contribute to offset the training costs.

The sliding scale is structured around an employer who selects training that meets or matches one or more of the following factors:

- ❑ High Priority Occupation for Local Area
- ❑ Increase in Skill Proficiencies (Promotion to higher job classification)
- ❑ Increase in Wages
- ❑ Industry Recognized (Transferable) Certificate
- ❑ Refill Vacant Entry-Level Positions via PA Careerlink Referrals

# Factors Matched	% Employer Match
1	50%
2	40%
3	30%
4	20%
5	10%

The LWIB does not have any plans at the present time to conduct Statewide Activities, such as Incumbent Worker Training for any specific employer. However, should the BST members identify an employer, or group of employers, that have an identifiable gap between the skill level needed for employment positions, as compared to the skill level of the company's workforce. The LWIB reserves the right to transfer up to 10% of the Local WIA formula funds to procure training to the employees, to bridge the skill gap.

H. Faith-Based and Community Organizations

The PA Careerlink Lawrence County hosts a luncheon twice a year and invites community leaders from various faith-based and community organizations. The purpose of the luncheon is to provide information regarding services and activities available through: PA Careerlink; WIA Title I; TAA; DPW-BETP; and other partner agency programs. The faith-based and community organizations in turn share the program information with their congregations and/or clients who may be in need of the services available through the PA Careerlink network.

The LWIB currently has five (5) members representing community-based organizations. As part of the LWIB, these members have input into the plans that are developed by WIA Title I Operator and submitted to the Commonwealth for approval as well as oversight of Title I programming.

VII ADMINISTRATION

A. Program Administration

All policies utilized to support Title I program operations are addressed elsewhere in the plan.

B. Fiscal Administration

West Central Job Partnership, Inc. serves as the Grant Recipient for WIA funds on behalf of the Local Workforce Investment Board. The agency also serves as the grant recipient for other grants received from the Department of Public Welfare and the Department of Community and Economic Development. West Central Job Partnership also serves as the fiscal agent for both the Mercer and Lawrence County PA Careerlinks. An annual budget is prepared and approved each year by the WIB and also by the Governing Board of Commissioners. Finance Reports are distributed in advance of the meetings and reviewed thoroughly at both the bi-monthly WIB meetings and quarter Governing Board meetings. These reports are based on the monthly Financial Status Reports (FSRs) which are prepared and submitted each month on the Financial Management System provided to Grants Recipients of the Commonwealth. Also, the Board receives reports in terms of expenditures and the number of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs), On-the-Job Training (OJTs), Work Experience Slots, Customized Training and Supportive Services. In addition to these reports, the Board is also given local monitoring reports and reports that are issued by BWDP for WIB and Fiscal compliance.

At the time when the West Central WIB was created, several "models" were presented to the County Commissioners and new WIB. Both agreed to structure the WIB, Fiscal agent and WIA Title I Operators in the most efficient and effective manner possible. As explained earlier, the WIB and Fiscal Agent are not separate entities, eliminating many unnecessary costs. Models where the Fiscal Agent, WIB and Title I Operators were separate entities appeared inefficient and duplicative for this two county area. With this structure, it appears that the WIB can communicate its vision and directives with more impact and in a quicker manner. Additionally, the pros and cons of segregating the TANF programs from the PA Careerlinks were discussed. If this model was selected, the costs would have been duplicative by needing two receptionist, phone systems, copiers, conference rooms, computer labs, fax machines, T-1 circuits, security systems, etc. The WIB, through its Welfare Coordinating Committee (LMC) was able to work with the County Commissioners to house the TANF programs within the each PA Careerlink. This agreement has probably saved the local area hundreds of thousands of dollars over the last five years.

Unless otherwise authorized in writing by the Commonwealth, all WIA assets will be used solely for WIA authorized purposes. The proper use of equipment will be monitored during physical inventories and by additional monitoring as deemed necessary by the fiscal agent or relevant government agencies.

All non-expendable property with an acquisition cost of \$100 or more shall be safeguarded through proper identification procedures. Non-expendable property, with a cost of \$5,000 or more will require completion of a purchase form approved by the Commonwealth prior to purchase. Once approved, the property will be tagged with WIA tags issued by the Commonwealth and assigned proper identification numbers that are then recorded in the computerized property inventory records and in accordance with WIA inventory policies. Purchase forms will be completed and returned to the Commonwealth in a prompt manner. Care will be taken to ensure that all WIA funded property at the local level is adequately protected from damage and/or theft.

Non-expendable property with an acquisition cost of more than \$100 but less than \$5,000 will be identified and tagged with a separate set of local WCJP identification numbers.

Each individual and/or organization in charge of the care and safeguarding of WIA property must sign a Property Agreement. Facilities housing WIA assets must have security systems that are monitored 24 hours per day. Liability insurance must be acquired which covers all WIA assets. Each fiscal year, a complete physical inventory will be taken for all non-expendable property in the possession of the fiscal agent, its agents, and its subrecipients and compared to the computerized inventory report. Any discrepancies will be reconciled and the complete records validated.

A year-end physical inventory report will be completed and submitted to the Governing Board, the LWIB, and the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry.

Prior to purchase, the WIA excess inventory list shall be reviewed to determine whether the property is available and all subrecipients will be contacted to locate any unutilized WIA property within the local area.

For excess WIA non-expendable personal property with a current fair market value of \$5,000 or less and all computer and computer related items, the fiscal agent will follow the disposition instructions established by the Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Excess local property will be disposed of in accordance with procedures recommended by the LWIB. If the property can be used within the local area, in an existing WIA program or by a training facility, the property may be transferred. If the property cannot be used within the local area, it may be disposed of through auction or any other manner deemed appropriate to the situation.

The Governing Board of the fiscal agent, in consultation with the LWIB, shall make final determination of any item which is potentially declared excess property of the local Workforce Investment Area.

PA Careerlink Partners bringing their own non-expendable property to a PA Careerlink will be responsible for that property. These partners will maintain their own inventory list and tagging identification system. The PA Careerlink Site Administrator will have a collection of these partner lists to maintain a collective property report. Non-expendable property obtained through shared costs procedures will be added to West Central Job Partnership's inventory because WCJP has been designated as the fiscal agent for the PA Careerlinks in the West Central Workforce Investment Area.

C. Procurement

1. The West Central Workforce Investment Area shall adhere to the following procedures in procuring types of administrative or customer services and training not covered through Individual Training Accounts (ITAs). These procedures shall be followed for adult, dislocated worker, and youth programs.

Small Purchase Procedures will be used for the majority of procurement actions. These procedures will be used to secure goods and services that do not cost more than \$25,000 in the aggregate. A purchase order must be completed for every purchase made over \$200.00 for a single item or group of similar/like items. The Chief Financial Officer must approve all small purchases (except petty cash purchases).

A service, item, or group of similar/like items on an individual purchase order of more than \$1,000 but less than \$5,000 requires three telephone quotes. Purchases over \$5,000 but less than \$25,000 requires three written bids. Bids may be obtained by telephone and confirmed in writing. Purchases made from vendors who have negotiated state contract pricing, like GSA (Government Services Administration) would relieve the necessity of securing three bids. West Central Job Partnership, Inc. reserves the right to reject any and all quotes, which fail to meet specifications.

Invitation for Bid (IFB) Procedures will be used to procure services when the scope of service can be satisfactorily described and price is the only factor to be considered in the award. The IFB will include a complete description of the services required and all contractual terms and conditions applicable to the procurement.

All IFBs, that involve the expenditure of funds in the amount of \$25,000 or more, will be published in local newspapers in the Public Notice section.

Bids will be opened publicly in the presence of one or more witnesses at the time and place designated in the IFB. The amount of each bid together with the contractor's name, address and any other relevant information will be recorded.

Bids will be evaluated based on the requirements and specifications stated in the IFB. The criteria affecting the bid price and considered in evaluation for award will be objectively measurable. The IFB will state the evaluation criteria to be used. IFBs reflecting the minimum participation level will be presumed responsible bids for the purpose of nondiscrimination.

West Central Job Partnership, Inc. may cancel the IFB by returning all unopened bids to the contractors and issue a notice of cancellation to all contractors to whom IFBs were issued.

The Chief Financial Officer will carefully review and consider requests by bidders for correction or withdrawal of bids before or after bid opening to maintain the integrity of the competitive bidding system to assure fairness and to avoid delays or poor contract performance. Circumstances that permit review and consideration for correction or withdrawal of bids include:

Before Bid Opening - A bid may be withdrawn upon receipt of written notification from or by personal request of the contractor or authorized representative prior to the bid opening.

After Bid Opening but Before Contract Award - Generally contractors will not be permitted to correct or withdraw a bid after a bid opening. Withdrawal of bids may be permitted by written determination of the Chief Financial Officer when; the Chief Financial Officer knows or has cause to believe that an obvious error has been

made, the contractor requests relief and presents credible evidence that the reason for the lower bid price was a clerical mistake and was actually due to an unintentional arithmetical error, an unintentional omission of a substantial quantity of work, labor, material or services made directly on the compilation of the bid.

The contract will be awarded with reasonable promptness by written notice to the responsible contractor submitting the lowest bid price and meeting the requirements and criteria of the IFB.

Request for Proposal (RFP) Procedures will be used when it is anticipated that numerous sources will be submitting an offer for either a fixed-price or cost-reimbursement contract. This type of procurement will be used for services with a more detailed work statement.

The Chief Financial Officer reviews all proposals, bids and negotiated letters of agreement. The Local Workforce Investment Board subcommittee reviews and rates the proposals and makes a recommendation to the full LWIB membership for selection. The Local Workforce Investment Board ultimately approves the contractors and/or service providers. The Local Workforce Investment Board has the right to refuse the recommendation made by the subcommittee. The Chief Financial Officer has the authority to sign, modify and terminate all contracts on behalf of West Central Job Partnership, Inc.

The RFP will consist of a title page; table of contents; time, date and place of the pre-proposal conference, if applicable; general information about the contractor; information required from contractors; criteria for selection; work statement; closing time and date; name and telephone number of the RFP contact person; and an appendix.

Members of the LWIB will receive written notice of all RFPs prior to public announcement. All RFPs will be advertised, in local newspapers of general circulation within the Area, at least twice within one week. Local business associations, labor organizations, public agencies, educational agencies, training providers, and community based organizations will receive written notice announcing the issuance of an RFP.

An RFP mailing list will be maintained and updated to insure maximum distribution of requests and to promote fair and open competition. Written notice announcing the issuance of a request will be mailed to all potential providers on the RFP mailing list with instructions on how to obtain proposal preparation instructions and forms.

When procurement may be complex or there is a possibility of uncertainty in interpreting the RFP, a pre-proposal conference will be held. The meeting will brief all potential contractors regarding the objectives of the solicitation and the format for responses.

RFPs shall be time and date stamped as they are received. They shall be kept secure until such time as they are opened for review by individuals appointed by the LWIB or Youth Council.

All proposals will be evaluated and rated according to the evaluation criteria listed on the RFP rating sheet. Reviewers appointed by the LWIB or Youth Council will recommend the proposal rated the highest; however, the LWIB reserves the right to refuse any proposal regardless of cumulative points received or price proposed. LWIB members will refute or discuss with the RFP subcommittee or Youth Council non-agreement with their recommendations.

A provider whose proposal was not selected may appeal that decision, the appeal must be in writing and must be received by the Chairperson of the LWIB within ten (10) calendar days immediately following the date of the contract award. Within ten (10) calendar days immediately following receipt of the appeal, the Chairperson will respond, in writing, stating the reasons for the LWIB's decision.

If the provider is not satisfied with the LWIB's reasons, an appeal may be filed with the Governing Board. The appeal must be submitted to the Chairperson of the Governing Board, in writing, within ten (10) calendar days of the date of the LWIB's response. The Governing Board renders a decision regarding the appeal at its next regularly scheduled, public meeting. The decision of the Governing Board is final.

West Central Job Partnership, Inc. will not contract with any service provider which has been debarred or suspended or is in any other way ineligible for participation in Federal assistance programs.

Priority may be given to providers whose public mandate is the service solicited and who have provided the service successfully and can demonstrate capability.

All training contracts written by the agency for services shall be cost reimbursement or tuition-based depending upon the type of service being provided.

Service providers will be subject to monitoring reviews and may be subject to sanction. In addition, any outstanding audit exception must be finalized before West Central Job Partnership, Inc. will award another project or continuation of a current project.

Noncompetitive Proposal Procedures (Sole Source) will be used when the other three methods are not an applicable procurement option. The decision to use sole source procurement will be in writing and rest entirely with the Chief Financial Officer and may not be delegated. Sole source procurement will be used when one or more of the following conditions exist: only a single contractor is capable of providing the service; a state or federal statute or regulation exempts the service from competitive procedures; it is clearly not feasible to award the contract on a competitive basis; the service is a WIA funded On-the-Job Training activity; or, the services are to be provided by expert witnesses.

The fiscal agent shall perform a cost or price analysis in connection with every procurement action, including contract modifications. The method and degree of analysis depends on the facts surrounding the particular procurement and pricing situation, but at a minimum, the awarding agency shall make independent estimates before receiving bids or proposals. A cost analysis will be performed when the offeror is required to submit the elements of the estimated cost and adequate price competition is lacking. A cost analysis will be performed for sole source

procurements, including contract modifications or change orders, unless price reasonableness can be established on the basis of a catalog or market price of a commercial product sold in substantial quantities to the general public or based on prices set by law or regulation. The offeror shall certify that to the best of its knowledge and belief, the cost data are accurate, complete, and current at the time of agreement on price. Contracts or modifications negotiated in reliance on such data shall provide West Central Job Partnership, Inc. the right to a price adjustment to exclude any significant sum by which the price was increased because the contractor had submitted data that were not accurate, complete, or current as certified. A price analysis shall be used in all other instances to determine that reasonableness of the proposed contract price.

West Central Job Partnership, Inc. will not permit excess program income (for nonprofit and governmental entities) or excess profit (for private for-profit entities). If profit or program income is included in the price, profit or program income will be negotiated as a separate element of the price for each contract in which there is no price competition and in all cases where cost analysis is performed. To establish a fair and reasonable profit or program income, consideration shall be given to: the complexity of the work to be performed; the risk borne by the contractor; the contractor's investment; the amount of subcontracting; the quality of the contractor's record of past performance; industry profit rates in the surrounding geographical area for similar work; and, market conditions in the surrounding geographical area.

2. The Training and Services Review Committee of the LWIB is responsible for the review and evaluation of youth and other requested proposals. Locally, a Technical Evaluation Rating Form has been developed to promote objectivity and to reward those service providers that have been most effective. The Technical Evaluation Tool rates the proposals in eight categories including Management Summary, Needs Assessment, Project Objectives, Project Activities, Personnel Assigned, Prior Experience, Physical Facilities, and Organizational Summary.

Each year, the staff of West Central Job Partnership organizing several meetings with the contracted youth service providers. At these meetings, which are usually held at the conclusion of the fiscal year, the program is reviewed. Monitoring reports that have been compiled over the course of the year are revisited. The number of youth that have been actually enrolled in the program is compared to the number defined in the contract. The number of youth who have completed the program objectives (work readiness, ABE or GED) are reviewed as well as the number of youth who have entered employment or entered post secondary training. These meetings are conducted not only with the WIA In and Out of School Service Providers but also the TANF Youth services providers as well. The staff and members of the West Central Youth Council are constantly searching for new and innovative youth programs in the surrounding area that would effectively meet the activity needs of the eligible youth. The providers of these programs are encouraged to complete the next Requests For Proposal (RFP) that are available.

D. Appeals Process

Training providers will have twenty (20) working days from the mailing of the denial

notice of a training program in which to file an appeal to the LWIB. The request for appeal must identify the program that was denied and the reasoning for the appeal. The LWIB will issue a decision within twenty (20) working days after the appeal is filed.

If the training provider is not satisfied with the LWIB decision, a request for review may be filed with the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry. The request must be filed within twenty (20) working days from the date of the LWIB decision. Within twenty (20) working days of receipt of the request, the Department will render a final decision and notify the training provider.

Training providers who receive a denial of eligibility or a determination of suspension or termination of eligibility, will have twenty (20) days in which to submit an appeal to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Within sixty (60) days of the receipt of an appeal, the training provider will be notified of the date, time, and place of hearing conducted for the purpose of making a final determination.

All appeals must be forwarded, in writing, to the following address:

Department of Labor and Industry
Bureau of Workforce Investment
Certification Coordination Services
12th Floor, Labor and Industry Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Attention: Mr. James Rabenold

E. Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action

West Central Workforce Investment Area desires to make awards only to organizations or individuals who have the ability to perform successfully. For this reason, demonstrated performance becomes the primary consideration and certification must be submitted attesting that they are not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment or declared ineligible from participation. Annually, the Equal Opportunity Officer will evaluate compliance with Section 188 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and will report any deficiencies discovered and offer recommendations for corrective action to the LWIB. The Equal Opportunity Officer will prepare and submit written, bimonthly reports to the Governing body, the LWIB and the Commonwealth describing any grievances received and the status of or outcome of each grievance.

The Equal Opportunities (EO) Officer for West Central Workforce Investment Area will have jurisdiction over all WIA Title I funded activities within the local Area. The EO is Ms. Debra Paladino. The EO officer can be contacted by mail at West Central Job Partnership, Inc., 44 South Beaver Street, New Castle, PA 16101 or by e-mail at dpaladino@wcjp.org. The EO Officer may be reached by telephone at 724-658-2501. The Mercer County PA Careerlink Equal Opportunity Liaison is Joseph Miceli who may be reached at 724-347-9257 or jmiceli@state.pa.us. Ken Jasper is the Lawrence County PA Careerlink Equal Opportunity Liaison and can be reached at 724-656-3165 or at kjasper@state.pa.us.

All participants receive a Handbook which describes the grievance procedures and identifies contact information for the Equal Opportunity Officer. Those procedures are reviewed at orientation. Grievance rights and procedures are posted in writing and in prominent locations at all the local WIA Fiscal Agent's facilities and subcontractors' sites and at the PA Careerlink Sites.

Staff who are co-located at the PA Careerlink receive this information from the PA Careerlink Equal Opportunity Liaison or directly from the Equal Opportunity Officer at time of hire. Annually the Equal Opportunity policy and contact information for the Equal Opportunity Officer are advertised in the local newspapers.

The PA Careerlink EO Liaison at each PA Careerlink site will provide information on who is able to file a complaint or grievance and how to file a complaint or grievance for services received with that PA Careerlink site or by PA Careerlink staff. The EO Liaison will also be responsible for receiving PA Careerlink complaints and grievances and forwarding them to the Local Area's EO Officer for processing and resolution.

VIII PERFORMANCE

A. Performance Management

1. The monitoring process utilized in the West Central LWIA, as prescribed by the WIB, is a multi-tiered quality control approach utilizing quantitative indicators to ascertain performance status during the course of the program year. The following oversight criteria and procedures employ both quantitative and qualitative information to assist the area in meeting its performance objectives. Each system tier shares responsibility for accountability in achieving established program goals. While final monitoring responsibility rests with the WIB, it is the board's obligation to define and assist program operators not merely by setting policy but by providing tools by which service delivery activities can be monitored while concurrently serving as self-instructional templates for program managers. The continuum of local accountability runs from WIB > Consortium of Operators/Site Administrator > Specific Program Management > Direct Service Staff. Thus, the WIB requires that PA Careerlink operation staff produce a monthly activity record that can be compared for internal monitoring purposes with reports issued from data gathered by the Commonwealth's system of record as well as surveying job seeker and business customer satisfaction with services. Program supervisors are empowered to use the monthly activity log as a means to benchmark their specific performance. The consortia of operators and WIB staff review the local data on at least a quarterly basis to assist in the evaluation of partner activities within the PA Careerlink, i.e., volume of attendance at agency workshops, orientations, and numbers engaged in self initiated job search activities and customers entering employment. Additionally, Title I program staff provide quarterly reports to the WIB detailing Individual Training Accounts (ITA) issued and On-The-Job-Training contracts generated with beginning and ending dates. Also, wages at exit for WIA program completers are progressively calculated locally in order to weigh actual wages against negotiated wage levels throughout the course of the Program Year and juxtaposed with quarterly PA Center for Workforce Information and Analysis (CWIA) reports.

2. The system of record for capturing and reporting performance data is the internet based PA Careerlink system designed and maintained by the PA Department of Labor and Industry. Partner staff log in job seeker customer activities for core, intensive and training services as well as listing employer job orders, recording labor exchange referrals and placements. Entry into the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) component is made via the PA Careerlink portal and requires a one-stop registration prior to commencing a WIA application. The Bureau of Workforce Development Partnership provides and periodically revises a desk reference for Title I program registration and services update (outcomes). Verification of program eligibility is recorded on a module screen. The West Central LWIA maintains hard copy documentation of records presented to establish eligibility. An applicant may be kept in a pending status while verification review is being completed. Once the individual is verified as eligible for training, they are available on the "View List of Eligible WIA Registrants" option and assigned a case manager. At this point, the registrant is generally assigned a mix of Intensive Services which are reported through the "Add Services: Service Detail" screen recording items such as comprehensive and specialized assessments of skill levels, development of an individual employment plan (IEP), group or individual counseling/career planning, case management, work experience or others deemed necessary to achieve employment. Likewise for Training Services, an "Add Services: Service Detail" screen is accessed and relevant information entered by staff such as occupational skills training, on-the-job-training, skill upgrading and retraining, job readiness training, private sector training programs, customized training and/or adult education/literacy activities (offered in combination with other training services). Supportive Services and Staff-Assisted Core Services are also recorded on this system. This system is inclusive for eligible Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth registrants.

Each PA Careerlink Comprehensive Center has put into place a SQL data base, to monitor job seeker activity within the respective site and provide a tool for early detection of patterns relevant to achieving performance objectives. This tool allows One Stop Operators, Site Administrators and WIB Staff a monthly summary report by which to gauge Center service delivery by activity and observe emerging trends which may require adjustment. Core and intensive services for all participating partner agencies are grouped together under common headings such as "job search", "workshop" "training" or "individual meetings". Initially, customers are logged into the local system by a program aide who enters preliminary identification information into the data base. For each subsequent visit to the Center, job seekers merely note which services they expect to access on that day. Any service omitted upon entering the Center will generally be recovered up by the program aide when reviewing attendance records for workshops, orientations or other group activities.

3. Required one stop partners, as detailed in the act, entered into a Combined Business Plan/Agreement which serves as the memorandum of understanding (MOU) regarding operations for the respective PA Careerlink Comprehensive Centers. All parties to the agreement identified and assigned services within their specific program structure to a continuum of core, intensive and training services outlined on a matrix chart. Services were broadly grouped in two divisions: (1) those offered at the PA Careerlink Center and (2) those offered elsewhere.

For the latter, a system of referral and follow-up was instituted to route the customer to a site where the appropriate service may be accessed. Primarily, these off site

referrals relate to training services, however, there are cases where certain core or intensive service referrals are likewise made. When the intensive or training service is not directly provided by a PA Careerlink partner, a contract or agreement with the provider may be put forth by the partner initiating the referral. Examples of this are work experience which is a WIA Title I intensive service, on-the-job-training, individual training accounts (ITF) or trade adjustment assistance (TAA) training. Integration of program services are demonstrated at this level where funding for TAA and ITA are blended to enhance training options for effected dislocated workers. In fact, the Commonwealth has initiated a policy of dual enrollment for TAA eligible clients into WIA Dislocated Worker services. Similar cooperative funding and co-enrollment is also evidenced with appropriate Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) and Single Point of Contact (SPOC) clients.

Core services by PA Careerlink partners are for the most part delivered at the comprehensive centers. The consortia of operators have charged Site Administrators with the task of integrating core services within the PA Careerlink partner network. A standing committee of supervisors meet regularly with the site administrator to devise methods to reduce duplication and promote integration of core services. Staff is informed by their direct supervisors the extent of integration agreed upon for their respective program in order to balance the required integrity set forth by enabling legislation with the need to reduce duplication. A prime example of the efficacy of this approach relates to the coordination of multiple Adult Literacy providers targeting efforts within the PA Careerlink to client constituencies with differing learning needs thereby allowing instructors to work with students grouped by math and reading scores. This ongoing analysis has resulted in multiple partners coordinating and engaging jointly in outreach and orientation activities for customers seeking employment and training services. Additionally, center scheduling of information workshops have aggregated cross program resources to provide regular and ongoing presentations to job seekers on topics such as labor market statistics, high priority and in demand occupations, availability of supportive services and local area employment opportunities. Duplication of core services for employers has been reduced by the establishment of Business Service Teams. Also, information on other services available to businesses has resulted in increased WEDNet awards locally. Joint outreach strategies and sharing of contact information has been a major benefit of PA Careerlink collaboration and the WIB's policy of aligning resources.

4. The LWIA identifies areas needing improvement by utilizing oversight criteria and procedures which factor in both quantitative and qualitative data. The Site Administrator and Consortia of Operators periodically review both local and state generated PA Careerlink site reports collected from the systems as described above in part 2 of this section. Customer satisfaction surveys are distributed and returns studied to obtain a rough measure of how well overall the center efforts are perceived by job seekers and employers. These surveys provide quantitative barometer as well as anecdotal feedback ranging from facility appropriateness to staff effectiveness. Customer focus groups are convened at least twice yearly to obtain user insight on program deliver in order to improve operations. The WIB annually conducts a general PA Careerlink site monitoring to review overall system functioning within the county Centers and issues a monitoring report to the Site Administrator noting deficiencies or areas of concern. The Site Administrator informs the Consortium of Operators and prepares a corrective action plan for

submission if required. The WIB Training and Service Review sub-committee reviews the corrective action plan and consider the effectiveness. They may make recommendations to the WIB requiring funding shifts to amplify the corrections outlined. In one case, the WIB provided additional funds to enact an employer outreach campaign to increase job orders. With respect to the more direct fiduciary responsibility the WIB is charged with under the Act with respect to Title I programmatic functions, sub-recipient contractors are selected for monitoring based upon risk management factors, i.e., changes in the provider's personnel, volume of participant services provided, history of disallowed cost, audit or monitoring findings in the prior two years and share of LWIA allocation. This includes all local providers of youth services competitively procured by the WIB. Selected providers records are compared to specifics of the contract and proposal material. If deficiencies or areas of concern are noted, they are outlined and the respective contactor notified. The deficiencies, if any, are responded to and sent back to the WIB staff. Any new Individual Training Account (ITA) or On-The-Job-Training (OJT) provider located within the jurisdiction of the LWIA or approved out of state organization added to the State Provider List by the West Central WIB will be monitored within their first year. Any local provider not monitored for the prior two years may be monitored at the discretion of the WIB. Where it may come to the attention of WIB staff that any ITA or OJT provider has demonstrated a serious or series of continuous programmatic or fiscal problems, a monitoring visit may be scheduled. Subjects of a monitoring review are notified in writing prior to the visit in order to adjust schedules unless extraordinary circumstances do not allow for this method. In such a case, telephone communication may be used to set up the appointment.

5. In order to ensure effective implementation of the Common Measures, policies of cross information and tiered responsibility have been exercised. The strategic deployment of these policies is as follows. In view of the situation of multiple agencies' staff providing and reporting core services in an integrated PA Careerlink environment, knowledge of the ramification of specific service items to individual programs, e.g., Labor Exchange, is crucial. Over the past year, after attending training sponsored by the Bureau of Workforce Development Partnerships, a study group was formed to chart the effect of PA Careerlink data input to the Common Measures. The considerations of this group were disseminated to Site Administrators and discussed with all staff at Capacity Building Workshops. The objective was to insure that unintended consequences eventuated as the result of data entry.

Other strategies used to assist in promoting the best performance possible under the Common Measures require PA Careerlink staff to regularly do a search of ES and WIA participants that will exit in 29 days or less. This generates a ticker list of customers requiring relevant services. Appropriate PA Careerlink Staff will Attempt to engage the individual thereby precluding a soft exit and increasing the possibility of a positive outcome. In an effort to insure high performance for WIA investments, the LWIA Data manager issues a monthly report to the Lead Employment and Training Specialist at each PA Careerlink listing participants who will reach their 90-day limit within that month. Emergency alerts are issued when a participant is within 3 days of a soft exit to insure that all means have been utilized to contact and recover. Finally, each WIA staff will maintain a cumulative wage log in the Excel format to guide them with respect to their exiter levels relative to the Average Wage Measure. Similarly logs on Numeracy attainment for Older Youth, who are basic

skills deficient, as well as credential attainment, entered employment, post secondary or military activity for all youth is tabulated and compared.

B. Negotiated Performance

1. The levels of negotiated performance help to ensure and support the LWIA vision by providing guidance to Title I program staff and feedback on accomplishment to the West Central WIB. The wage levels and entered employment rates will require that industry led training strategies targeting high priority occupations within the designated clusters are g addressed. This strategy supports the WIB goal prioritizing that the workforce investment system plan with employers and establish partnerships that identify career and human resources supply pathways. It is expected that this will increase career opportunities by having more family sustaining wage jobs attached to the PA Careerlink system by demonstrating high value added return for employers from training investments. Likewise, the addition of better career opportunities, i.e., goal number two, will attract more under-employed, as well as unemployed, job seekers new to the public workforce system. Also, the more detailed information provided to WIBs and promulgated throughout the region related to industry cluster and high priority occupations will motivate educational providers to adjust curricula to meet industry expectations as well as expanding youth awareness for careers of tomorrow (goal priority 3). This should allow for more response time to make job preparation decisions from earlier ages. Additionally, the requirement of increased numeracy skills for older youth and the attainment of a credential and/or high school diploma reinforces the need for adequate basic mathematics and reading skills as well as promoting the need for general learning throughout one's engagement in the workplace. Finally, the WIB vision of accountability (goal priority 4) is supported by the quantitative measurements with which the WIA program as a whole is evaluated. Setting a cumulative standard for the investments and activities that comprise the public workforce system as a whole drives practitioners to make decisions that produce desired results. Accountability is an essential policy for public and private fund investment in order to insure that limited resources are judiciously utilized.

IX APPENDICES

Appendix A – Published Notice

Appendix B – Plan Review Comments

Appendix C – Organizational Chart

Appendix D - WIB / PA PA Careerlink Partner MOU(s)

Appendix E - Performance Measures and Levels