

West Central Workforce Development Area

Lawrence and Mercer Counties



One Year Transitional WIOA Local Plan

Final Version – June 1, 2016

Appendix B: PY 2016 Transitional Local Plan

Local planning requires an operational approach. The narratives framed in the local plan will include more detailed, actionable plans and objectives, consistent with the local plan’s respective regional plan strategic visions and goals.

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Section 1: Workforce and Economic Analysis

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

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

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

The West Central Workforce Development Area is strategically located between Pittsburgh, Erie, and Cleveland and contains the major thoroughfares of Interstates 79, 80 and 376 that provide direct routes to Chicago, New York City, Toronto, Canada and Charlotte, NC. Regional air fields in Greenville, Grove City, and New Castle as well as in Youngstown, OH provide additional access to national and international markets. These factors contribute to the region's strengths and attractiveness to businesses. Along with location, low cost of living is advantageous to the area's employers as well as residents. Access to five colleges and universities within the two counties, and an additional two large universities less than 10 miles outside of the area, draws talent from around the region, country, and internationally and provides the capacity to educate the workforce for in-demand and emerging opportunities.

In order to implement and refine effective workforce strategies and remain competitive, the West Central Workforce Development Area aggregates labor market information from data sources including the Pennsylvania Center for Workforce Information & Analysis (CWIA), U.S. Census Bureau, Pennsylvania State Data Center (PaSDC), Dun & Bradstreet along with real-time information from surveys, partner agencies, and current and future projection input from employers. Information gained helps the focus on sector-based strategies and develop plans to meet the varied needs of employers and job-seekers currently and into the future.

During the early 2010s the West Central Workforce Development Area was recovering from the economic recession of the late-2000s, when the counties' unemployment rate reached a high of 10.6% in June 2009, and since late 2014 has returned to pre-recession levels of less than 6%. According to the Pennsylvania Center for Workforce Information & Analysis (CWIA) Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) report from December 2015, the area's Average Labor Force for 2014 was 95,502 individuals, with an average unemployment rate of 6.1%.

Looking at the 12 identified strategic industry clusters identified in Pennsylvania's sector strategies, these clusters account for 64,322 jobs or more than 71% of employment in the area.

Cluster Name	2014 Average		
	Employment	Average Wage	National LQ
Healthcare (HC)	15,482	\$36,252	1.37
Advanced Manufacturing (AM)	11,514	\$54,329	1.97
Hospitality, Leisure & Entertainment (HLE)	8,044	\$13,483	0.87
Education (ED)	7,248	\$39,409	0.96
Business Services (BSV)	5,925	\$38,612	0.60
Building & Construction (BC)	5,127	\$45,965	1.05
Real Estate, Finance & Insurance (REFI)	3,229	\$60,027	0.76
Logistics & Transportation (LT)	2,499	\$46,301	0.95
Agriculture & Food Production (AFP)	2,285	\$37,561	0.82
Energy (ENGY)	1,477	\$74,134	0.85
Wood, Wood Products & Publishing (WWP)	1,338	\$30,862	1.11
Bio-Medical (BM)	154	\$47,302	0.17

Source: CWIA Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

Examining data from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages for the second quarter of 2015, the Workforce Development Area's top 10 industries by employment were: Restaurants and Other Eating Places, Elementary and Secondary Schools, Offices of Physicians, Individual and Family Services, Executive, Legislative, & Gen Government, Nursing Care Facilities, Services to Buildings and Dwellings, Residential Mental Health Facilities, Other General Merchandise Stores, and Grocery Stores. These industries accounted for 23,694 jobs at 1,197 establishments with a quarterly payroll of \$177,359,202.

NAICS Title	2015 Q2 Preliminary			
	Average Employment	Average Weekly Wage	Number of Establishments	Total Wage
Restaurants and Other Eating Places (new 2012)	5,673	\$240	307	\$17,712,949
Elementary and Secondary Schools	4,836	\$904	79	\$56,841,874
Offices of Physicians	2,041	\$1,184	191	\$31,424,681
Individual and Family Services	2,011	\$477	260	\$12,473,959
Executive, Legislative, & Gen Government	1,956	\$673	79	\$17,104,346
Nursing Care Facilities	1,759	\$548	17	\$12,531,203
Services to Buildings and Dwellings	1,427	\$385	117	\$7,141,749
Residential Mental Health Facilities	1,369	\$523	62	\$9,305,055
Other General Merchandise Stores	1,321	\$377	43	\$6,476,783
Grocery Stores	1,301	\$375	42	\$6,346,603

Source: CWIA Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages - Top 20 Industries by Employment, 4 Digit NAICS

Between Quarter 2 of 2014 and Quarter 2 of 2015, the top growing Industries by Employment volume change were: Restaurants and Other Eating Places, Electronic Markets and Agents/Brokers, Offices of Physicians, Individual and Family Services, Department Stores, Building Equipment Contractors, Warehousing and Storage, Support Activities for Mining, Special Food Services, and Forging and Stamping. These industries grew by an average of 25% adding 991 jobs, 14 establishments, and increasing their quarterly payroll by \$8,926,474.

Assessing Long-Term Occupational Growth, between 2012 and 2022 overall employment in the West Central Workforce Development Area is projected to increase by 6.5%, or 5,640 jobs. The top 10 fastest-growing occupations will be:

By Volume Change	By Percent Change*	By Annual Openings
Personal Care Aides	Home Health Aides	Retail Salespersons
Home Health Aides	Personal Care Aides	Cashiers
Registered Nurses	Licensed Practical Nurses	Combined Food Prep/Serving Workers
Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	Mental Health Counselors	Registered Nurses
Licensed Practical Nurses	Substance Abuse Counselors	Personal Care Aides
Combined Food Prep/Serving Workers	EMTs & Paramedics	Waiters & Waitresses
Childcare Workers	Medical Secretaries	Childcare Workers
Nursing Assistants	Social & Human Service Assistants	Customer Service Representatives
Janitors & Cleaners	Registered Nurses	Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers
Customer Service Representatives	Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	Home Health Aides

*Source: Long-Term Occupational Employment Projections (2012-22) *Minimum employment of 250*

The top 10 Growing Occupations by volume, are positioned to add 2,130 jobs to the local workforce adding 514 openings each year. These identified high-growth occupations reflect the projected growth in the industries and overall net gain in the area. The Long-Term Industry Employment Projections (2012-22) for the West Central Workforce Development Area also echo the larger trend seen statewide of the transformation of the economy from a goods-producer to a service-provider.

Occupational Title	Employment Change		
	Volume	Percent	Annual Openings
Personal Care Aides	480	39.0%	57
Home Health Aides	310	40.8%	45
Registered Nurses	270	15.4%	61
Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	210	13.6%	45
Licensed Practical Nurses	200	28.2%	37
Combined Food Prep/Serving Workers	170	7.7%	101
Childcare Workers	130	11.5%	46
Nursing Assistants	130	11.9%	34
Janitors & Cleaners	120	7.4%	42
Customer Service Representatives	110	8.4%	46

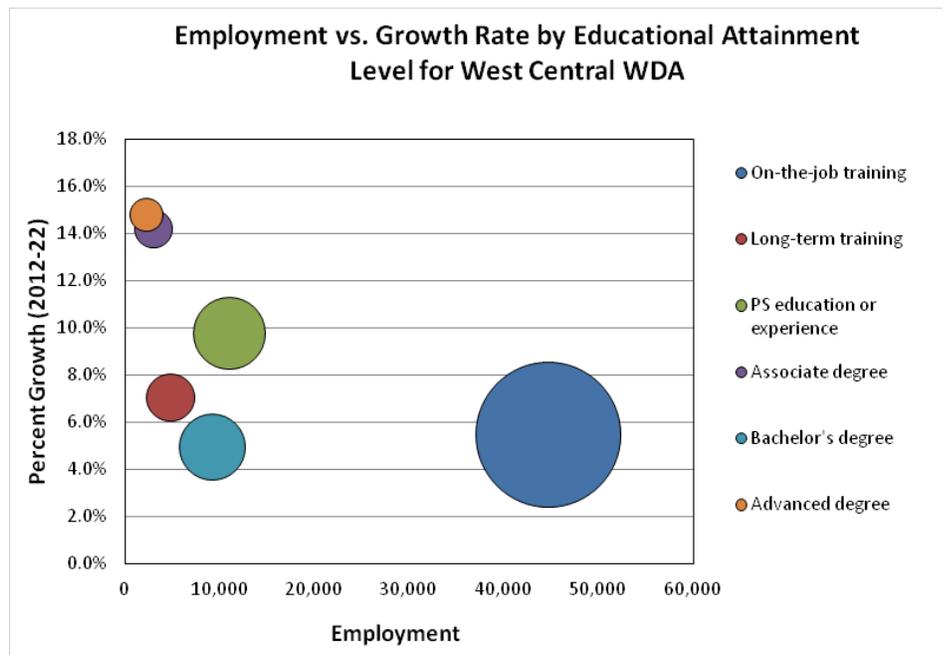
Source: Long-Term Occupational Employment Projections (2012-22)

The majority of employment in the West Central Workforce Development Area is in Services-Providing Industries, with 2012 employment at 63,090 compared to 17,410 in the Goods-Producing industries of

Agriculture, Mining & Logging, Construction, and Manufacturing. While employment in both is projected to increase 6.6% to 91,260 in 2022, the majority of this growth will be within Services-Providing sectors, notably Education & Health Services which is expected to add 3,380 jobs alone. The only industry where employment is expected to decline is Federal, State & Local Government which will lose 70 jobs.

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

Workforce Education is paramount to fulfilling the needs of employers and the Long-Term Occupational Employment Projections (2012 - 2022) indicate the demand for all the categories of educational attainment is projected to increase. The largest growth is predicted in Advanced Degrees (14.8%) and Associates Degrees (14.2%), though these educational groupings make up the two smallest areas of projected employment at 3.3% and 4.3% respectively. By volume, On-the-Job Training and Post-Secondary Education or Experience will see the largest increase, adding 2,450 and 1,080 jobs, respectively.



With the largest educational demand in On-the-Job and Post-Secondary Education, there will be a need by employers to validate competencies for Knowledge Area, Work Activities, and Job Skills through assessment or attainment of industry-recognized credentials. Looking at the Top 10 Job Skills and Certifications from Help Wanted Online Job Postings for November 2015, many

of the top-growing industries and occupations are represented in the Job Postings that include certifications. The growing healthcare industry has traditionally been at the vanguard of credential adoption, as seen in the number of related-certifications (Certified Registered Nurse, Certification in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation, Basic Life Support, Advanced Cardiac Life Support, Licensed Practical Nurse, and Certified in Nursing Administration) shown in the chart below.

Top 10 Job Skills and Certifications from Help Wanted Online Job Postings, 2015 November			
Skills	Job Postings for Skill	Certification	Job Postings for Certifications
Pediatrics	176	Certified Registered Nurse	617
Emergency room	80	Commercial Driver's License	539
Quality Assurance	76	Driver's License	453
Behavioral health	65	Certification in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation	438
Quality control	58	Basic Life Support	238
Critical care	55	Advanced Cardiac Life Support	133
Customer relationship management	42	HAZMAT	130
Bilingual	41	Licensed Practical Nurse	123
Search Engine Optimization	39	Certified in Nursing Administration	99
Medical-Surgical Nursing	39	Food safety programs	90
<i>Source: The Conference Board, Help Wanted OnLine, 01/04/2016</i>			

Along with Job-skills and Certifications, employers also require specific Knowledge Areas and Work Activities for occupations. The top projected in-demand knowledge area and work activity are English Language and Getting Information. These skills are quantifiable through assessments, particularly WorkKeys®, which also provides individuals with a nationally-recognized National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) in the areas of Reading for Information, Locating Information, and Mathematics. Educating employers and job-seekers on this credential can assist in meeting the demands of the workforce and building skills that are a foundation for more advanced skills and certifications along a career pathway.

Top 10 Work Activities and Projected Needs, 2012-2022			
Knowledge Area	Annual Openings Needing Skill	Work Activity	Annual Openings Needing Skill
English Language	2,311	Getting Information	1,501
Customer and Personal Service	2,183	Communicating with Supervisors, Peers, or Subordinates	1,211
Administration and Management	1,794	Performing for or Working Directly with the Public	861
Mathematics	1,754	Making Decisions and Solving Problems	701
Public Safety and Security	1,453	Interacting With Computers	676
Education and Training	1,378	Documenting/Recording Information	664
Clerical	1,279	Identifying Objects, Actions, and Events	590
Computers and Electronics	1,258	Assisting and Caring for Others	564
Psychology	1,031	Organizing, Planning, and Prioritizing Work	554

Sales and Marketing	918	Establishing and Maintaining Interpersonal Relationships	525
<i>Source: The Center for Workforce Information & Analysis</i>			

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

Between February 2015 and February 2016, the WDA’s Civilian Labor Force has increased from 95,100 to 96,000, while the unemployment rate has remained below 6% every month (with the exception of 6.1% in May 2015). Preliminary data for February 2016 shows the Labor Force as 96,000 with unemployment at 5.7% or 5,500 individuals.

According to the Pennsylvania State Data Center’s Pennsylvania County Population Projections, 2000-2030, the population of the two counties is expected to decline slightly, from 210,004 in 2010 to 207,521 in 2020. Despite the expected decline in population, CWIA’s Long-Term Industry Employment Projections (2012-22), projects employment in the West Central WDA to increase by 6.6% from 85,620 to 91,260.

In addition to the increase in employment, job openings due to retirements are also expected to significantly impact employers’ ability to fill open positions. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, LED OnTheMap for the West Central Workforce Development Area, in 2014 26.9% of the 77,058 total area’s jobs were held by those ages 55 and older. While retirements will allow younger workers to enter and advance in the workforce, employers are concerned about the skill and knowledge loss this creates.

With a network of interstate highways and a shared border with three counties in the state of Ohio, the area is uniquely affected by commuting patterns. According to the latest data available through the U.S. Census Bureau’s LED OnTheMap (2014 Annual Average), 49,363 individuals both live and work in the two counties, while 36,841 WDA residents work outside of the area and 27,695 individuals living outside of the area work in the WDA. Of those individuals living outside of the area, but commuting in for work there are: 7,950 from Allegheny County, 5,102 from Butler County, 3,785 from Beaver County, 3,007 from Mahoning County (OH), 2,094 Trumbull County (OH), and 10,808 from other locations. Of the 36,841 West Central WDA residents employed in other counties there are: 3,859 Trumbull County (OH), 3,497 Butler County, 3,286 Allegheny County, 2,692 Beaver County, 1,976 Crawford County, and 8,013 other.

Education Level and Labor Force Status	West Central WDA
Total:	104,511
Less than high school graduate:	8,540
Employed	3,580
Unemployed	482
Not in labor force	4,478
High school graduate (includes equivalency):	43,108
Employed	27,531
Unemployed	2,245
Not in labor force	13,332
Some college or associate's degree:	29,332
Employed	21,955
Unemployed	1,377
Not in labor force	6,000
Bachelor's degree or higher:	23,531
Employed	19,665
Unemployed	658
Not in labor force	3,208
<i>Source: 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates</i>	

Looking at the educational and skill levels of the workforce, in Lawrence and Mercer Counties there are 104,511 individuals ages 25 – 64. For that population, total employment is 72,683, total unemployment is 4,762, and 27,018 are not in the labor force. Participation in the labor force increases with each increasing level of educational attainment with 47.6% of those with Less than a high school diploma, 69.1% of those with a high school diploma or equivalency, 79.5% of those with Some college or Associates degree, and 86.4% of those with a Bachelor’s Degree or higher participating. Additionally, Unemployment declines for each increasing level or educational attainment: 11.9% less than a high school

diploma, 7.5% high school diploma or equivalency, 5.9% Some college or Associates degree, and 3.2% Bachelor's Degree or higher.

In addition to lack of requisite educational attainment, lack of citizenship, ability to speak English very well, poverty, disability, and being a single parent may present individuals with significant challenges for finding employment that provides family-sustaining wages. In the West Central WDA, while less than half of a percent of individuals are non-citizens and 1.61% of individuals identify as speaking English "less than very well", there are a significant percent of individuals who are below poverty-level, have a disability, and/or are single-parent households (Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2010-2014 5-Year Estimates)

A total of 19,421 (12%) of the total WDA's population 16+ had income in the past 12 months below Poverty Level. This ranks Lawrence and Mercer Counties in the top 50% of Pennsylvania Counties for percentage of individuals below poverty-level. Of that population, 27% are employed and an additional 5,301 are in the labor force. According to the U.S. Census QuickFacts median household income for the two counties (in 2014 dollars) was \$43,853.

Of the Population Age 16 and Over (Civilian Non-institutionalized) of 164,103, 29,358 (17.9%) individuals have a disability. Individuals with a disability are significantly less likely to participate in the labor force: with only one in five of those individuals with a disability aged 16 and older participating in the labor force, compared with three out of five of those without a disability. Additionally, looking at the educational attainment for those aged 25 and older, they are less likely to achieve secondary and post-secondary educational credentials, with 20% of those with disabilities less than a high school graduate compared with only 8% of the population without a disability. As a consequence, those with disabilities are more likely to be at or below poverty level (20%) compared to those without a disability (10%) (Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Table S1811, 2010-2014 5-Year Estimates),

Of the total 82,744 households in the WDA, 16.3% (13,509) of households are single-parent households. Of those, 8.8% of those householders are parents of children under 18 years of age. Of these single-parent households, 75% of the householders are female.

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

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

- Relationships
The West Central Workforce Development Board has been proactive in developing and maintaining relationships in a greater region and is a leader in convening partners, as evidenced by the acquisition of competitive funding. Collaboration allows for information sharing and partner engagement that leads to more successful outcomes.
 - The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation assists Pennsylvanians with disabilities to secure and maintain employment and independence under Title IV-Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Eligible OVR customers receive multiple services that may include but not be limited to; diagnostic, vocational counseling and guidance, vocational evaluation, restoration, training, job placement, individualized support services; and pre-employment training services for eligible and potentially eligible high school

students with disabilities. OVR also provides multiple services to the business community designed to assist businesses with onboarding pre-screened qualified employees with disabilities.

- Education and Training Providers

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

- Basic Skills Education and English as a Second Language

The West Central Adult Education Coalition has been meeting during the WIOA “transition year” to develop ways in which the member agencies provide workplace preparation activities, career awareness and career planning for the clients they serve. The member agencies of the Coalition include: Adult Literacy Lawrence County (ALLC); Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV (MIU 4); and the Grove City Education Center for Adults. Opportunities for offering integrated education and training activities (including participation in the Manufacturing Readiness Program), are being explored and the College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education are being implemented. This Coalition will play an integral part in the American Apprenticeship Grant discussed later in this document in 3.4 A. The two Community Education Councils (CECs) of Pennsylvania (Keystone Community Education Council and Lawrence County Learning Center) will be included in dialogue to align training development efforts to increase the education and training delivery services to residents in Lawrence and Mercer Counties. The CECs will be encouraged to participate in LWDBs efforts to align high school career and technical education programs and post-secondary institutions to assure residents of Lawrence and Mercer Counties have access to credential bearing training opportunities.

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

- Sector Partnership Activities

The West Central WDA has worked with employers in the key industries of Manufacturing, Healthcare, Building & Construction, and Transportation & Logistics since the beginning of Industry Partnerships in Pennsylvania and served as a best practice in bringing partners together to discuss opportunities and workforce needs.

- History of successful grant acquisition and administration

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

Opportunities for improvement include:

- Expansion of employment readiness programs

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

- Promotion of industry-recognized credentials
Though some sectors like Healthcare have widely-adopted the use of industry-recognized credentials to gauge job-seekers and employees aptitude and abilities, other growing industries, like Manufacturing, that will need to expand their workforce have been using company-specific tests or required years of experience to assess employees. These criteria often limit the number of applicants for job openings who may be able to perform the job requirements, but have just entered the industry from a training program. Promoting nationally-recognized credentials to employers and encouraging that they request them from job-seekers will ultimately save the employers time and costs related to recruitment.
- Coordination of Employer Outreach
Employers are called upon by a myriad of different agencies for their input and are increasingly pressed for time. By increasing alignment with partner needs and strategizing approach and utilization of employer involvement, all agencies involved can garner more buy-in and participation. Strengthening sector-partnership leadership to speak as a unified voice on behalf of the industry is crucial to these efforts.
- Outreach to job-seekers
With a large geographic area and decentralized population centers, it is important for the WDB to leverage relationships with community based organizations. Additionally, low-income job seekers do not always have the requisite access to transportation to accept jobs at employers who are hiring. Increased dialogue with area and regional transit authorities should be sought.

Section 2: Strategic Vision and Goals

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

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

Key to performance accountability, economic growth and self sufficiency is rapid attachment and integration of underserved, underemployed, and disconnected job-seekers into employment both transitional and 1st step with maximal upfront support systems as well as rapid reengagement of dislocated workers into skills upgrade and/or reemployment. Industry-recognized certification validated by standard educational criteria will increase attainment for emerging, dislocated, and incumbent workers, increased wages and industry productivity.

The LWDB adopted the following mission statement:

“To assure one stop access to a standard set of universal, core services and information which are market driven and considerate of the work force development needs of both employers and job seekers and that empower all customers to make informed choices.”

The Mission Statement was presented to staff at a Capacity Building Session and is framed and hangs in the lobby of each PA CareerLink® in the LWIA.

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

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

2.2 Describe how the local board’s vision and goals align with and/or supports the Governor’s vision of commonwealth’s workforce development system. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(E)]
(See Appendix C: *Transitional Planning References and Resources*)

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

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

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

Goal 1: Establish Career Pathways

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

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

The LWDB will promote and support pre-apprenticeship and registered apprenticeship programs in traditional and non-traditional occupations. These programs will be added to the local training providers list to increase the number of training programs offered in the local area. Career guidance will be offered to individuals seeking career services through the PA CareerLinks® in the local areas and information will be provided on the training programs available on the State Eligible Training Provider List as well as the local training provider list to enhance informed customer choice in selecting programs and providers. This information will be widely disseminated amongst educational providers in the local area and region.

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

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

Building on the successful sector partnership work done through the WIF grant, West Central Job Partnership was recently notified of its successful application for a US Department of Labor \$2.9 million American Apprenticeship Initiative grant. The grant will expand the number of Registered Apprenticeships in the two counties, as well as regionally through the Greater Oh-Penn Manufacturing Apprenticeship Network over a five-year period through October of 2020. Advanced Manufacturing is a in-demand and growing industry in the area and the funds will be leveraged to

assist in enrolling individuals in pre-apprenticeship activities, assist employers in developing and formalizing apprenticeship programs and offset the cost of starting new apprentices. These activities are part of the WDA's sector partnership strategy and funding is leveraged with WIOA and state general funding to build upon and expand the resources available to job-seekers advance along career pathways tied to increasing skills and wages and employers to grow the ability of their workforce.

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

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

Goal 3: Increase Work-Based Learning Opportunities for Youth

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

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

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

It is imperative that employers are convened on a regular basis to continue dialogue regarding skill gaps as identified in two recent skills gap analyses: one funded by a Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) grant awarded by United States Department of Labor, Employment & Training Administration; and a Northwest Commission Regional Skills Gap

Analysis funded by PA Jobs 1st Regional Partnership Grant (awarded in March 2014). Additional employers in other sectors will be invited to become involved to identify skills gaps and training required in order to eliminate the gaps in their industry sector. Secondary schools, career and technical education as well as post-secondary schools need to participate in the conversations to hear and discuss the skills gaps realign or create new curricula and credentials to address and provide the skill sets employers are seeking.

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

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

Goal 5: Strengthen Data Sharing and More Effectively Use Data

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

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

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

Strategic partnerships with employers, educational organizations and community based organizations and a more focused targeting of resources on business and job seeker needs should facilitate required performance outcomes. This course of action holds for Youth, Adults and Dislocated Worker populations. Data sharing and coordination will provide all involved partner programs with information to report what is anticipated as increased employment, retention and earnings.

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

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

Section 3: Local Area Partnerships and Investment Strategies

3.1 Taking into account the analysis described in Appendix B - Section 1, describe the local board's strategy to work with the entities that carry out the core programs to align resources available to the local area, to achieve the strategic vision and goals described in element 2.1. This analysis should include:

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

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

The LEOs in 1999 wished to maintain a tighter control over financial and administrative functions related to the fiscal agent responsibilities under WIA while maintaining a flexible operational presence that could rapidly adapt to progressively evolving workforce needs and rapidly changing priorities. A model was engineered that instituted two distinct divisions within the corporation each independently reporting to the corporate board through a Division Chief. Division A operates under a Chief Financial Officer (CFO) who reports directly to the Vice Chair of the CEOs and whose major WIOA responsibilities cover WIOA Fiscal Agent and Administrative Duties in addition to providing staff services to the West Central Workforce Development Board, this latter is a non-incorporated advisory council proscribed by federal/state WIOA regulations to establish a budget and target allocated funding for workforce investment activities. Division B's Chief is titled the Executive Director of Workforce Development who reports directly to the Chief Elected Official and whose major focus is overall implementation of WIOA Title 1 Operations, Serve as One Stop Consortium of Operators Point of Contact for each PA CareerLink® Center in the jurisdiction and represent Title 1 Operations on the LWDB as a sitting member.

While meeting the specified separation of functions under WIOA, this structure also promotes flexibility and cost efficiencies such that one-stop fiscal agent responsibilities and LWDB staffing are performed by Division A employees thereby maintaining functional insulation from one stop operational duties inasmuch as the CFO is not a voting member of the Operators' Consortia. The two operator consortia are non-incorporated internal groups of investing partners, i.e., three or more one stop partners that provide at least full-time-equivalent position at the respective center, who choose a site administrator to manage one stop operations in the PA CareerLinks® located in Mercer and Lawrence Counties. The 501(c) 3 under the auspices of the corporate board has sought federal and foundation funding to support the workforce development aims and strategic vision of the LWDA allowing the West Central WDB to focus on its work of oversight and directing proper utilization of the Title 1 and other WIOA

funds as well as stewardship over the maintenance and development of the one stop workforce system in the two county area.

A Governing Board, consisting of the elected or appointed County Commissioners of Lawrence and Mercer Counties, has been established to govern and implement the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act, and hereinafter referred to as the Act, in the West Central Workforce Development Area. This model is still applicable under WIOA with the maintenance of required firewalls.

This organization was incorporated as a 501(c)3 Not-for-Profit Corporation and does business under the name West Central Job Partnership. The Governing Board will carry out all responsibilities assigned to the **Local Elected Officials** (LEOs) under Title I of the Act. The role of the LEOs in the governance and implementation of the Act in the local area includes, but is not limited necessarily to: designating the fiscal agent for all funds made available to Lawrence and Mercer Counties under the Act; establishing a Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) in the two county area in accordance with the Act and the Rules and Regulations promulgated for the implementation of the Act; entering into a written agreement with the LWDB which details clearly the partnership between the two entities for the governance and oversight of activities authorized under the Act; authorizing the establishment of a standing youth committee as a subgroup of the LWDB and approving nominations of members for appointment by the LWDB to that subgroup; approving or disapproving, in partnership with the LWDB, the designation or certification of any PA CareerLink® operators within the Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) and approving or disapproving the termination of the eligibility of such operators; providing input and oversight to the LWDB regarding the negotiating and reaching agreement with the Commonwealth's PA Workforce Development Board (PAWDB) on local performance measures; reviewing and approving or disapproving, in partnership with the LWDB, any plan pertaining to workforce development or job training, any modifications to such plans, and any other documents required by the State or Federal government prior to submission; determining the apportionment of funds and liabilities between the involved counties and approving all adjustments to allocations; approving or disapproving any contract with any entity for the performance of services required or needed pursuant to the implementation or operation of any program or project authorized under the Act unless otherwise stipulated and agreed; and, conducting oversight, in partnership with the LWDB, of the operations of any local Title I funded programs of youth, adult, and dislocated worker activities and the PA CareerLink® delivery system.

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

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

West Central Job Partnership, an entity created by the Commissioners of Lawrence and Mercer Counties, is composed of two distinct divisions, administration and operations. The Division Chief of Administration (WCJP's CFO) reports directly to the Vice Chair of the WCJP's corporate board/LEOs while the Division Chief of Operations (WCJP's Executive Director of Workforce Development) reports directly to the Chair of WCJP's corporate board/LEOs.

Fiscal Agent - 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 Innovation Opportunity Act in NW #145 in the aforementioned LEO-LWDB Agreement for Lawrence and Mercer Counties. The contact information for the fiscal agent is as follows:

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

The Administrative Division reports directly to the Vice Chair of the Local Elected Officials (LEO) who is elected for a two year term from among the six county commissioners that comprise the West Central Job Partnership, Inc. corporate board. The LWDB in conjunction with the corporate board have agreed that the Administrative Division will act as fiscal agent for the two counties regarding WIOA and other related workforce development funds for the jurisdiction as well as providing administrative staffing services for the LWDB. Additionally, the Administrative Division acts as fiscal agent for the PA CareerLinks® within the jurisdiction coordinating with one stop partners in the completion of center Resource Sharing Agreements. This division likewise manages and disburses Title 1 funds at the direction of the LWDB as well as Industry Partnership and other relevant funds such as private sector sustainability; EARN welfare, foundation and other federal grants.

Local Workforce Development Board - The chief role of the West Central LWDB is to develop policy, establish a budget and provide oversight for the workforce system under its jurisdiction. This includes approving a system and budgeting for training activities under Title 1 of the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act, determining the number and operational structure for the PA CareerLink® comprehensive centers for Mercer and Lawrence Counties, acting in consultation with the Local Elected Officials (LEOs) to align workforce resources within the LWDA to be in line with both state and local economic development targets. Additionally, the LWDB insures that monitoring of funded activities under its purview occurs periodically and meets regulatory standards on both the programmatic and administrative levels such as, one stop operations and procurement of services both for vendors and sub-recipient contractors. As an appointed advisory board for the combined commissioners of Lawrence and Mercer Counties, they act in collaboration with the LEOs in a public-private partnership to maintain and adapt a flexible workforce system capable of investing assets to competitively position the businesses and populace of the jurisdiction to benefit in both regional and global markets.

Currently there are thirty-four (34) members on the West Central Workforce Development Board. Private sector members are identified by the six Chambers of Commerce in the two county area and their names are submitted to the appropriate county Board of Commissioners for consideration. To maintain the private sector majority required under the Act, each county selects nine (9) private sector members. The County Commissioners, working with the Chambers and LWDB staff make an effort to align the private sector representation with the Industry Clusters identified for the two county areas. Appointment and re-appointment letters are mailed to the selected individuals and a copy of that letter kept on file at West Central Job Partnership Corporate Office. When appointing other mandated members to the Board, the County Commissioners consult with the appropriate group in the local area for nominations. These groups recommend representatives from local central labor councils, community-based organizations, local economic development agencies, local educational entities and other mandatory members. When two representatives are required, each county selects a representative to the Board. The Chief Elected Official (CEO) appoints the WIOA Title I representative. Initially the Board appointments are for one, two or three year terms. The Board terms are for a three year period and are staggered, with approximately 1/3 of the Board up for re-appointment each year.

Executive Committee - comprising of the four LWDB officers, the past Chair and up to five additional LWDB members selected by the WDB chair, the Executive Committee acting as the liaison to the Local Elected Officials

(Governing Board), are empowered to act on time-sensitive issues between LWDB meetings, and its members usually chair various LWDB subcommittees. Any issue acted upon by the Executive Committee will be placed on the agenda for the next regularly scheduled Workforce Development Board meeting for a motion to ratify the action taken by the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee will also oversee the Community Outreach strategies for the LWDB and PA CareerLinks®.

Finance Committee – is comprised of the members of the Executive Committee discussed above, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Board. The Finance Committee members will review the Title 1 WIOA allocations, the CareerLink® budgets and expenditure reports and provide oversight on the funding resources to be allocated to ITAs, OJTs, incumbent worker training and other training initiatives.

Employer Engagement Committee – the purpose of the Employer Engagement Committee will be to recommend a strategic approach to heightening the greater employer/business community to workforce development and the benefits of participating in growing America’s labor force.

Youth (standing) Committee – the purpose of the Youth Committee will be to recommend a strategic approach to reaching out and reintegrating older youth to the world of work and focusing younger youth on careers and opportunities for employment sustainability.

One-Stop/Operations Committee – the purpose of the One-Stop Committee will be to recommend a strategic approach to connecting community organizations, educational institutions and businesses to the public one-stop workforce system.

PA CareerLink® Operators – Currently, the Local Elected Officials for Lawrence and Mercer Counties under authority of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania appoint members to the West Central Workforce Development Board (LWDB). The majority of members represent private sector businesses with other required membership including economic development, education, labor organizations and One Stop Partner Programs. The LWDB provides strategic direction for the Public Workforce System, in concurrence with the Local Elected Officials, **designates the One-Stop Consortium of Operators** and establishes oversight for the One Stop Center. WIOA mandates the procurement of the One-Stop Operator. Upon receipt of appropriate technical assistance and guidance from the Commonwealth, processes will be followed to procure One-Stop Operators for both PA CareerLink® locations.

Currently in Lawrence County, the Consortium of Operators includes Lawrence County Social Services, Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, and West Central Job Partnership. In Mercer County, the Consortium of Operators includes Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations, Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, and West Central Job Partnership.

Samuel J. Giannetti, Executive Director of Workforce Development for West Central Job Partnership is the point of contact for the Consortium. The Consortium of Operators acts as the One Stop Center's Administrative council, meets on a quarterly basis to review Center Operations, performance and to assess overall management status of the organization. The Consortium selects the Site Administrator and through the Point of Contact provides functional supervision to the Site Administrator.

Required Program Partners and Services – who directly provide an array of employment services and connect customers to work-related training and education directly in the PA CareerLinks® or by referral are as follows:

- *WIOA Title I Adult - WCJP
- *WIOA Dislocated Worker – WCJP
- *WIOA Youth – current procured contractors Lawrence County Community Action Partnership (LCCAP) & Intermediate Unit IV
- *Wagner Peyser, Trade, Veterans and Disabled Veterans - Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations merit staff
- *Rehabilitation Act Title I – Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

- *Adult Education¹ – Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV and Adult Literacy of Lawrence County
- Career & Technical Education (Perkins) – Mercer County Career Center and Lawrence County Career & Technical Education Center
- Community Services Block Grant – LCCAP and Community Action Partnership Mercer County
- HUD Employment & Training Programs – Mercer County and Lawrence County Housing Authorities
- Senior Community Service Employment Program – referrals to LCCAP
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) – referrals to County Assistance Offices (CAO) in Mercer and Lawrence Counties
- Unemployment Compensation Programs – dedicated computer and telephone for individuals to open claims or telephone the call centers for assistance
- Offenders – Probation and Parole through Project Reconnect offers workshops to offenders for job readiness, interviewing skills, life after incarceration. Once the offenders complete these court-appointed mandatory workshops, they are mainstreamed through CareerLink® services and meet with other partner agency staff for job development or occupation skills training.

All required federally mandated programs have entered into the One-Stop Partner Agreement for these PA CareerLinks®. Career services for Adult, Dislocated Workers and Older Youth as well as access to training services through Individual Training Accounts (ITA) are provided here. Career services under Wagner-Peyser, chapter 41 of Title 38 United States Code (Veterans Programs), Unemployment Compensation and Trade Act Programs are present. Career services under the Community Services Block Grant, Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and TANF Employment and Training Programs as well as Title II Literacy Programs are also available. Career services can be accessed for Title V of the Older Americans Act, Carl Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act as well as Housing and Urban Development (HUD) employment programs. The six (6) core programs identified by WIOA are marked with an asterisk above.

- B. It was determined that comprehensive one-stop centers would be located in areas of high population density that also evidence significant unemployment rates in order to place them amidst job seekers needing to reattach to the workforce. Thus, the Mercer site was targeted for the City of Sharon with a population of 14,038 and the Lawrence site in the City of New Castle with 23,273 residents.

PA CareerLink® Mercer County
 217 West State Street
 Sharon, PA 16146
 724.3647.9257
 Interim Site Administrator: Chris Burger, Extension 200

Hours of operation are 8:00 am to 4:30 pm Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday and 10:00 am to 4:30 pm on Wednesday. The morning hours on Wednesdays are reserved for capacity training for all partner agency staff.

PA CareerLink® Lawrence County
 102 Margaret Street
 New Castle, PA 16101
 724.656.3165
 Site Administrator: Eileen Borrelli, Extension 221

Hours of operation are 8:30 am to 4:30 pm Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday and 10 am to 4:30 am on Thursday. The morning hours on Thursdays are reserved for capacity training for all partner agency staff.

Both CareerLinks® are available in the evenings by appointment only or as needed and requested by a partner agency.

¹ Lawrence and Mercer Counties are serviced by two Community Education Councils of Pennsylvania: Keystone Community Education Council for Mercer County and Lawrence County Learning Center in Lawrence County

- C. The clear separation of duties between the local board and the programmatic/service delivery entities is depicted in the [West Central Workforce Development System Organizational Chart](#).

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

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

The local workforce development system is described above identifies the six core programs mandated by WIOA and are noted by asterisks in 3.1 A. The LWDB will continue to work to align investments in workforce, education, and economic development to regional in-demand jobs. The LWDB will strive to reinforce the partnerships and strategies necessary for One-Stops to provide job seekers and workers with the high-quality career services, education and training, and supportive services they need to get good jobs and stay employed, and to help businesses find skilled workers and access other supports, including education and training for their current workforce. The West Central LWDB is interlocked with the areas key educational institutions at various levels. Both the Mercer and Lawrence County Career and Technical Center (CTC) directors are members of the LWDB and have significant roles on the standing Youth Committee. Through this relationship the LWDB has access and meets periodically with all the superintendents of the county public schools. Additionally, the Executive Director of Workforce Development and other staff participate in CTC's Carl Perkins meetings and various other advisory committees. The Executive Director of Adult Literacy Lawrence County is also a member of the LWDB and a member of the Lawrence Mercer Adult Education Coalition.

This connectivity forms the basis for the education sector to interface with the workforce development system. Through this nexus, the goal of using cross information to mutually focus leveraged resources toward meeting current industry needs by providing relevant training is sought. Proprietary educational institutions are also linked to the system as well as business supporters of the local one stop centers.

The West Central Adult Education Coalition has been meeting during the WIOA "transition year" to develop ways in which the member agencies provide workplace preparation activities, career awareness and career planning for the clients they serve. The member agencies of the Coalition include: Adult Literacy Lawrence County; Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV; and the Grove City Education Center for Adults. Opportunities for offering integrated education and training activities (including participation in the Manufacturing Readiness Program), are being explored and the College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education are being implemented. This Coalition will play an integral part in the American Apprenticeship Grant discussed later in this document in 3.4 A. The two Community Education Councils (CECs) of Pennsylvania (Keystone Community Education Council and Lawrence County Learning Center) will be included in dialogue to align training development efforts to increase the education and training delivery services to residents in Lawrence and Mercer Counties. The CECs will be encourage to participate in LWDBs efforts to align high school career and technical education programs and post-secondary institutions to assure residents of Lawrence and Mercer Counties have access to credential bearing training opportunities

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

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

At the local level, the LWDB provides oversight and guidance to one stop program staff to explore and integrate strategic options for cross program utilization whenever possible. For instance, individuals who are both WIOA and OVR eligible receive coordinated services to enhance benefits and conserve resources. Thus, tuition may be paid by WIOA Title I and books and supplies by OVR thus maximizing benefits to the client and minimizing cost to both programs. Likewise, individuals eligible for Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) and Trade Readjustment Act (TRA) programs are dual enrolled into WIOA Dislocated Worker Programs to receive assessment, supportive services or training services as appropriate once again maximizing benefits while minimizing cost. Referrals are taken for WIOA services for Veterans, individuals receiving Unemployment Compensation, Older Workers and other populations. In addition, all WIOA participants are required to apply for other grants for which they may be eligible: Pell; PHEAA; work opportunity grants; cultural diversity grants that are offered at some universities; etc.

Career services in the PA CareerLinks® will include career research activities that illustrate career pathways to family sustaining jobs in the local area as well as the on- and off-ramps to the education/vocational training and the credentials that can be obtained along the pathway. A recent six million dollar Workforce Innovation Fund grant award by the Department of Labor (DOL) Employment and Training Administration to the West Central Workforce Development Area (WDA) for a consortium that included two Ohio WDAs, to develop and expand a career pathways strategy for the advanced manufacturing sector based upon industry recognized credentials. Specific functional skills were identified within targeted critical high priority occupations which tie to a nationally validated credential. This information was disseminated to schools and training institutions to align curricula based upon industry need an open further discussion aimed at the recognition of the stackable credentials that lead to advanced education credit which converts to associate and bachelor degrees. Several local education facilities, including secondary career and technical education centers as well as post-secondary schools have introduced new training courses in manufacturing. The WIF grant also afforded opportunities to increase awareness of career pathways to youth, parents and schools through job fairs, internships, paid work experiences that will facilitate individuals in navigating through the educational and training terrain to obtain jobs and career maps by which workers can advance within the sector. The focus of this five county WIF project was to expand a career pathways strategy for the advanced manufacturing sector based upon increasing obtainment of industry recognized credentials by aligning private sector expectations with educational institution curriculum focus aiming trainees toward nationally validated recognized credentials for high priority occupations in advanced manufacturing. These professional development opportunities introduced counselors to modern manufacturing facilities and career pathways within the industry.

The WIF grant concentrated on the Advance Manufacturing sector. The two Community Education Councils (CECs) in the local area (Keystone CEC and Lawrence County Learning Center) will be included in conversations to maintain and expand the Advanced Manufacturing career pathway. The CECs will be instrumental in future development of other career pathways such as health care and building trades since they have been historically able to leverage other state and local funding to implement sector based training through a variety of educational institutions in rural communities where campus locations are non-existent. CECs serve as an intermediary and broker of training programs based on identified need and demand.

The career and technical education center in Mercer County has adopted several tools utilized in the workforce development system/CareerLink® and integrated them into the regular high school curriculum at the CTC. WCJP was able to leverage funds from a Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) Grant awarded by the US Department of Labor to purchase a Worldwide Interactive Network® (WIN®) license for the Mercer County Career Center. WIN® is an internet-based curriculum the CTC students utilize to prepare to take the WorkKeys® assessment that leads to the National Career Readiness Certificate® (NCRC®) issued by ACT. ACT is known nationally for the ACT® college readiness assessment - the college admissions and placement test taken by more than 1.8 million high school graduates every year. MCCC has also been sanctioned and approved as an ACT testing center for proctoring the WorkKeys® testing. MCCC students are able to graduate with multiple stackable credentials (high school diploma; NCRC®; OSHA;

National Institute of Metalworking Skills (NIMS) certificates and/or National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI) certificates in their career and technical programs of study. WIN®, WorkKeys® and the NCRC® are tools that PA CareerLink® participants utilize and the NCRC® is a credential they strive to obtain. Much work has been done under WCJP's WIF grant to educate locale employers on the value of utilizing the NCRC® when hiring individuals for open job vacancies within their companies.

MCCC is also in the process of adding Certified Production Technology as a program of study for high school and adult students. CPT was identified as a program of study that could close an employer gap identified in a skills gap analysis conducted under the WIF grant. Once fully implemented high school students will be able to add another stackable credential to those already mentioned above. MCCC is also in the process of negotiating an articulation agreement with regional post secondary education institutions to recognize the CPT credential awarded by Manufacturing Skill Standards Council (MSSC) earned in high school and award a number of college credits to individuals who enroll in the post secondary education programs that align with the manufacturing career pathway.

MCCC instructors work with all high school seniors to facilitate enrollment in the Commonwealth's Job Gateway system. Students create or upload their resumes into the system and are shown how to conduct job searches and apply to job orders in the system. The MCCC staff work with all school districts within the county to facilitate enrolment of all seniors in Job Gateway.

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

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

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

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

A. Plans have been put into motion to increase engagement with business, industry, economic development and community based organizations. The driver clusters of manufacturing, health care, building trades and transportation and logistics are regularly engaged and facilitated through organized industry partnership meetings. This can be described as the wholesale engagement approach which deals with the sector as a whole. A retail engagement of employers is undertaken by the CareerLink® which seeks to provide employment services on an individual basis. Thus, when a specific need such as recruitment or assessment is brought to someone's attention, the CareerLink®'s Business Service Team members notify the site administrator and an action plan is organized with the employer. The site administrators, along with LWDB representatives meet quarterly with economic development agencies both local and regional along with members of the Industrial Resource Center, Gannon University Small Business Development Center and local chambers of commerce functioning in the two-fold capacity as West Central area sub-committee of the Partnership for Regional Economic Performance (PREP) and the LWDA LWDB/CareerLink® Business Services Action Team that takes a more regional and less tactical approach to business services. This group discusses and devises strategic responses to business services on a more macro level. Through the combination of the wholesale and retail engagement strategy, the LWDB is provided macro and micro information regarding trends and

challenges relevant to workforce needs in the West Central two county jurisdiction. Community based organizations and education are likewise engaged at both the retail and wholesale levels within the CareerLink® and on the LWDB to maintain the strategic goal of two way communication insuring that information flows into and out from the workforce development system.

As a core partner, OVR provides multiple services to the business community designed to assist businesses with onboarding pre-screened qualified employees with disabilities. The LWDB will continue to work with OVR representatives to enhance coordination of services.

The Employer Advisory Council (EAC) at the PA CareerLink® Lawrence County is a network of Human Resource Representatives, business representatives and employers who work with the CareerLink® in many ways – i.e.: posting job orders, participating in job fairs, inquiring about labor market information, utilizing local and/or regional resources for hiring or training needs. The EAC meets monthly and focuses on current HR topics and services and trainings available through CareerLink partners and community resources. Attendees are regularly asked for feedback on current CareerLink services and surveyed for business needs, future meeting HR topics and speakers. The PA CareerLink® Mercer County is exploring the option of replicating the EAC for Mercer County.

The CareerLink® Employment Service staff and Business Service Team (BST) members are briefed on customized and OJT program guidelines and make businesses aware of possible funding opportunities and eligibility requirements. Additionally, individuals participating in CareerLink® group orientations at the Centers are given information on OJT training to market themselves during their active job search. CareerLink® staff conducts outreach through employer visits and disseminate information on incumbent worker training, Customized Job Training, paid work experience opportunities, and OJT. BST works with economic development agencies to leverage Governor's outreach funds for business attraction coupled with OJT.

The US Department of Labor recently awarded a \$2.9 million American Apprenticeship Grant to West Central Job Partnership to build *The Greater Oh-Penn Manufacturing Apprenticeship Network*. The Network is comprised of five industry-led sector partnerships including 137 very actively engaged businesses (Mahoning Valley Manufacturers Coalition, Erie Regional Manufacturer Partnership, Advanced Materials Manufacturing Industry Partnership in NW PA, and Portage County Manufacturers Coalition); five Workforce Development Areas (WDB Areas 17, 18, & 19 in Ohio; NW PA WDB Area; and West Central PA WDB Area) as well as the Ohio Apprenticeship Council, the PA Department of Labor & Industry, multiple community colleges, universities, career and technical centers, Adult Basic Education providers, and other partners through the American Job Centers. The Network includes 14 contiguous counties on the border of Pennsylvania and Ohio: Lawrence, Mercer, Erie, Crawford, Venango, Clarion, Warren and Forest in PA and Trumbull, Mahoning, Columbiana, Portage, Geauga, and Ashtabula in Ohio. The Network aims to markedly increase manufacturer's ability to meet their needs for high-skilled and credentialed employees and willingness to use customized registered apprenticeship models. The Network will focus on methods to ease the apprenticeship process for manufacturers by creating a multi-employer group sponsorship apprenticeship platform and streamlining apprenticeship and employee candidate recruitment, assessment, and pre-screening operations with different service providers and "on-ramps," facilitating the process of matching appropriate candidates with manufacturers' needs.

- B. Two recent skills gap analyses were conducted, the [Oh-Penn Pathways to Competitiveness Skill Gap Analysis Report](#), under the Workforce Innovation Fund – WIF grant² which encompassed Lawrence and Mercer Counties in Pennsylvania and Mahoning, Trumbull and Columbiana Counties in Ohio and a more recent analysis³, the [Northwest Commission Regional Skills Gap Analysis](#), encompassed 14 contiguous counties on the border of Pennsylvania and Ohio: Lawrence, Mercer, Erie, Crawford, Venango, Clarion, Warren and Forest in PA and Trumbull, Mahoning, Columbiana, Portage, Geauga, and Ashtabula in Ohio. The WIF grant analysis identified a total of 32 employers in each of the five counties expressed a need for training *production workers*, however only two programs were

² Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) grant awarded by United States Department of Labor, Employment & Training Administration

³ Northwest Commission Regional Skills Gap Analysis funded by PA Jobs 1st Regional Partnership Grant in awarded in March 2014

identified, one each in Mercer and Trumbull Counties. The NW Commission's report⁴ stated that manufacturing employers "reported the most difficult positions to fill in the manufacturing industry are front-line positions including: (1) **Production Workers**, (2) Machinists, and (3) Laborers and Material Handlers.

The WIF grant provided funding for a workshop designed to help high school and adult career center instructors redesign their curriculum to align with industry recognized credentials like NIMS and Manufacturing Skill Standards Council's (MSSC) Certified Production Worker (CPT). Five (5) career and technical education centers attended the workshop where instructors received assistance to create new lesson plans and activities that could be introduced to classrooms immediately. WIF monies were also utilized to provide MSSC Instructor Training to 15 career and technical education instructors to become MSSC certified to teach the CPT curriculum in their high school or manufacturing readiness programs. Nine instructors are pursuing the optional Green Production instructor certification.

The NW Commission Regional Skills Gap Analysis findings include: "numerous employers in the (manufacturing) industry report difficulties in finding qualified candidates to hire for open positions. Approximately twenty-one out of twenty-five respondents (84%) rated finding qualified candidates as a 3 or 4 (an ongoing or significant challenge). Furthermore, the majority of employers (52%) reported replacing existing workers is a challenge, perhaps due to an ongoing issue of finding qualified candidates." The professional development opportunities for teachers and instructors outlined above as well as the addition of CPT programs (described in 3.1) is expected to help create a talent pipeline of skilled individuals who will be able to meet the hiring needs of manufacturing employers and fill the skill gap identified in the two reports discussed herein.

- C. The economic development agencies in the LWDA are part of the Workforce Development Agency's wholesale level, two-tier approach in the CareerLinks® as described in 3.4 A. above. As part of this approach and as members of the LWDB the economic development agencies stay well informed of the CareerLink® partner agencies missions and services offered. To demonstrate this awareness and connectivity, Penn-Northwest Development Corporation (the economic development agency in Mercer County), was working with a Canadian company who was searching for an industrial setting to open a new US division of their company. The company is a provider of engineered turnkey industrial noise reduction solutions for oil and gas, mining, power and aerospace industries and was looking at sites in Ohio and PA to locate the new business. Penn-Northwest Development Corporation made the necessary connections with the PA Governor's Action Team and introduced the employer to the LWDB and CareerLink® services. West Central Job Partnership, the Title I WIOA provider (formerly WIA) met with the company officials and provided job training to new hires via On the Job Training contracts which reimbursed the employer 50% of the new hires' wages.

On the regional economic development level, the Northwest Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission, i.e., the Local Development District (LDD) which includes Lawrence and Mercer Counties, has included LWDB representation on the consortia sub-committee for the Partnerships for WCJP Regional Economic Performance (PREP) thereby linking the workforce development system operative in this jurisdiction with other core service providers of Business Services such as the Northwest Industrial Resource Center (NWIRC), The Gannon University and Duquesne University Small Business Development Centers (SBDC), The Ben Franklin Technology Partners of Central and Northern Pennsylvania and Catalyst Connection SWIRC). The West Central LWDB also has representation on the Northwest Commission's Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategic (CEDS) Planning Committee to insure two way information flow and inclusion of workforce development expertise in the planning product. On the local level, the two county economic development agencies, i.e., Penn Northwest Development Corporation and Lawrence County Economic Development Corporation, as well as the LDD, are part of the CareerLink® Business Service Action Team (BST) for the West Central LWDA and have seats on the workforce development board. The BST meets on a quarterly basis and provides info and access to one stop center staff regarding available programs such as Keystone Opportunity Zones, Single Applications for Assistance, Liberty and Commonwealth Financing Authority, Federal Contracting and International Marketing.

⁴ NW Commission Regional Skills Gap Analysis page 154

It is projected that these strategies of integrated planning and program development will allow for a targeted effort to design a mix of services to employers and job seekers that will combine work based learning with on-the-job training and incumbent worker/customized training to set pathways within participating companies of industries critical to local and regional economic development. The US DOL American Apprenticeship grant will assist in the seeding of registered apprenticeships in advanced manufacturing that will serve as a template for other industries such as health care and building trades. Chambers of Commerce, economic development agencies and labor union training councils will act as intermediaries across union and non-union companies to accomplish this goal. Community based organizations will assist with recruitment of underserved populations and priority groups of emerging workers.

Key to performance accountability, economic growth and self sufficiency is rapid attachment and integration of underserved, underemployed, and disconnected job-seekers into employment both transitional and 1st step with maximal upfront support systems as well as rapid reengagement of dislocated workers into skills upgrade and/or reemployment. Industry-recognized certification validated by standard educational criteria will increase attainment for emerging, dislocated, and incumbent workers, increased wages and industry productivity.

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

WCJP's LWDB and Youth Standing Committee are very committed to designing and implementing a strategic plan in Lawrence and Mercer Counties that align all youth activities and services (regardless of the funding source) to promote skill development and work-based learning experiences that result in a talent supply for area industries and employers. The LWDB and/or Youth Standing Committee membership includes representatives from community based organizations that serve youth, the juvenile justice system, various education agencies, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), County Assistance Office (CAO), public housing authorities, etc. These representatives act as ambassadors to market the WIOA programs and the education/training assistance that is available to eligible youth including youth with disabilities. WCJP staff attends various community meetings (superintendent and guidance counselor meetings, Lawrence County School to Work, Prevention Coalition, Council of Community Services, etc) and provide information on WIOA program activities to recruit youth who would benefit from the education/training assistance available through WIOA funding and other CareerLink® partner agencies. Youth with a self-identified disability or observable disability are referred to the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR). OVR and Title I staff will coordinate and jointly develop an employment plan to maximize funding for disabled youth. Title I funding may be combined with OVR funding if skills training is deemed an appropriate activity for the individual. OVR may be able to provide hardware or tools to assist a disabled youth in the workplace. 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. Both PA CareerLinks® in the Local Workforce Development Area are handicap accessible and have a variety of equipment to assist individuals with disabilities such as: TDD/TTY telephones to accommodate people with hearing impairments; furniture (tables) to accommodate people in wheelchairs; and magnification devices to accommodate people with visual impairments. If individuals need additional services beyond core services a WIOA Title I application will be taken. If determined to be eligible, all WIOA Title I programs will be made available without bias. Job Developers (WIOA Title I and OVR) will work jointly to develop work based learning opportunities for disabled youth.

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

The West Central LWDB is interlocked with the areas key educational institutions at various levels. Both the Mercer and Lawrence County Career and Technical Center (CTC) directors are members of the LWDB and have significant roles on the Youth Council. Through this relationship the LWDB has access and meets periodically with all the superintendents of the county public schools. Additionally, the Executive Director of Workforce Development and other staff participate in CTC's Carl Perkins meetings and various other advisory committees. This connectivity forms the basis for the

education sector to interface with the workforce development system. Through this nexus, the goal of using cross information to mutually focus leveraged resources toward meeting current industry needs by providing relevant training is sought. Proprietary educational institutions are also linked to the system as well as business supporters of the local one stop centers.

Please refer to the connections to education described in sections 2.2 Goals 1 and 2 (pages 8 & 9 of this plan) A and 2-B for more evidence of the LWDB's efforts to coordinate with secondary and postsecondary education programs.

The PA CareerLinks® will seamlessly offer adult basic education training to individuals who are in need of obtaining their GED or upgrading their basic skill levels. Referrals will be made to the adult education training providers co-located in the PA CareerLinks® or to other adult education training providers closer to the individual's residence.

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

Supportive services may be available (depending on availability of funding) to all WIOA clients based on a needs assessment that is documented in case notes as part of the Individual Employment Plan. Supportive services will be provided on a first-come/first-serve basis as long as funds are available.

Supportive services include: child care; eye care; health care – including dental, hearing aids and other emergency care; car repair; and clothing & uniform allowance (as required for training or employment). If no WIOA funds are available for supportive services, contractor staff will make referrals to community agencies that may provide services such as: the County Assistance Office for medical assistance, car repairs, clothing and/or uniform allowances; CCIS for child care; Community Action Partnerships for housing and transportation assistance; etc.

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

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

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

A process will be established that will require the Adult Education and Literacy applications to be submitted to West Central's fiscal agent 45 days prior to the date the applications must be submitted to the Commonwealth. The fiscal agent will forward the Adult Education and Literacy applications to members of a committee (to be named by the LWDB chair) for review. After reasonable time for review, the fiscal agent will convene a committee meeting for members to provide comments regarding the applications. The chair of the committee will present a report to the full LWDB who will take action to approve the applications the committee's recommendations to PA Department of Education to approve or deny the Adult Education and Literacy application. Once the LWDB approves the applications committee recommendations, a letter signed by the fiscal agent will be sent to the Adult Education and Literacy providers announcing the LWDB meeting date and the approval of applications recommendations to approve the application that will be forwarded to the PA Department of Education. West Central's fiscal agent will revise this policy to conform to any future guidance issued by the Commonwealth on this subject.

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

The West Central WDB's objectives, goals and strategies for the targeted populations prioritized are as follows:

- (1) It is our objective to identify individuals locally within the groups identified below that:
 - (a) have been seeking employment for at least 90 days, but have been unsuccessful in their search,
 - (b) have had relevant problems identified that are likely sources for inhibiting hiring and
 - (c) are seeking cooperative solutions to address the agreed upon issues.
- (2) The goals pursuant to these objectives will be
 - (a) placement in employment, or
 - (b) a service to remediate a situation that requires a more intensive solution
- (3) Strategies to achieve these objectives and goals may include literacy/ESL referrals, case management, short or long term training by ways of work experience, on-the-job training, ITAs or referrals to outside organizations or agencies with specific expertise relevant to the particular issue.

Targeted populations include:

Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers - The local area does not have a significant population of migrant and/or seasonal farm workers. Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers (MSFW) will receive qualitatively equivalent and quantitatively proportionate services equal to those provided to all other customers. MSFWs will receive the full range of employment services, benefits and protections including counseling, testing, and job and/or training referral services. In providing such services, all PA CareerLink® offices will consider the preferences, needs, and skills of individual MSFWs.

Persons with disabilities - Both PA CareerLinks® in the Local Workforce Development Area are handicap accessible and have a variety of equipment to assist individuals with disabilities such as: TDD/TTY telephones to accommodate people with hearing impairments; furniture (tables) to accommodate people in wheelchairs; and magnification devices to accommodate people with visual impairments. If individuals need additional services beyond basic career services a WIOA Title I application will be taken. If determined to be eligible, all WIOA Title I programs will be made available without bias. 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.~~ OVR can provide no-cost worksite accommodation consultations to assist employers as well as their employees. For example, Title I funding may be used to provide OJT training with an employer and OVR funding may be used to purchase a large print computer screen for a seeing impaired person to be placed at the employer's place of business.

Veterans - all individuals who have served in the military are referred to BWPO's Veterans Services Representative for job matching and referrals. In addition, veterans may receive all other scheduled PA CareerLink® services and scheduled for workshops and other core services offered by any partner agency and/or staff. Veterans may be referred for WIOA application if more intensive career services are deemed appropriate.

TANF Customers and low-income individuals - all low-income individuals are referred to the County Assistance Office (CAO) for assistance in removing barriers that may prevent them from attending training or obtaining and/or retaining employment. TANF recipients will also be referred to partner agencies and/or community agencies for assistance in other

areas such as drug and alcohol counseling, housing issues, etc. TANF customers and low-income individuals may be referred for WIOA application if more intensive career services are deemed appropriate. **Displaced Homemakers** - For the purpose of determining eligibility, a displaced homemaker is defined as an individual who has been providing unpaid services to family members in the home and who: has been dependent on the income of another family member but is no longer supported by that income and is unemployed or underemployed and is experiencing difficulty in obtaining or upgrading employment. **Women and Minorities** - As part of career research activities, women are encouraged to review careers that are held predominately by men (non-traditional employment). They are instructed to compare wages of the non-traditional occupations to those more traditionally pursued by women. Employers are encouraged to hire women in non-traditional jobs. Employers who hire women to fill non-traditional employment vacancies via On the Job Training contracts (TAA and Title I) may receive an additional 40 hours of wage reimbursement. Minorities are mainstreamed into PA CareerLink® career services and all services and activities available in WIOA Title I funded programs. **Older Individuals** – referrals are made to Lawrence County Social Services for program information and assistance. Older individuals are mainstreamed through the regular PA CareerLink® processes and activities. All Title I programs are open to older individuals without bias. Any older individuals determined to be “job ready” will be referred to BWPO staff for job matching and referrals. **Persons with limited English proficiency** - Propio provides interpreter services for any individual with limited English proficiency. All partner agencies located at the PA CareerLink® were trained to use the Propio system. Recently, the Commonwealth notified all PA CareerLinks® that the Propio service is available to all PA CareerLink® staff and the cost will be absorbed by the State. Training is provided to all staff once per year at capacity training on how to access Propio services. **Offenders** - are mainstreamed through the regular PA CareerLink® processes and activities. All Title I programs are open to offenders without bias. Any ex-offender determined to be “job ready” will be referred to BWPO staff for job matching and referrals. Offenders are mainstreamed through the regular PA CareerLink® processes and activities. All Title I programs are open to ex-offenders individuals without bias. Services are also entered into the PA CareerLink® system. **Dislocated Workers** – Title I staff checks the PA CareerLink® system to determine if a WARN notice has been filed for a dislocated worker’s former employer. If so, the BWPO staff and Title I staff will coordinate efforts to serve the dislocated worker. Title I staff will schedule and administer a full array of assessments for any individual who seeks funding (Title I and/or TAA) to attend training. Assessment results are reviewed to assure the client’s interests and aptitudes match the training for which they are seeking funding. If the client is suitable for training, an employment plan will be developed jointly by BWPO and Title I staff to maximize the funding package for dislocated workers and outline the steps needed to guide the client through training and lead them to employment. Referrals are made to all appropriate supportive service agencies that could potentially assist in eliminating barriers in the training to employment process. **Trade Act Eligible Individuals** - BWPO staff first meet with the individual affected by a lay off or downsizing and the company has a WARN notice on file. If an individual is interested in re-training and applying for TAA funding, they are first referred to the WIOA Title I provider for interest and aptitude assessment to assure the occupational field of interest is one in which they will be successful. The WIOA Title I staff completes a WIOA application for services and schedules the individual for assessment. Once tested the WIOA Title I staff sends a recommendation to BWPO staff to approve or deny training along with the assessment results. BWPO forwards the TAA application for funding to the Commonwealth. Once approved the individual is co-enrolled in the PA CareerLink® system and WIOA systems. WIOA Title I staff will process an Individual Training Account (ITA) if the training is over and above the State’s training cap. All WIOA Dislocated Worker and/or Rapid Response supportive services are available as needed to all co-enrolled individuals. **Youth** are mainstreamed through the regular PA CareerLink® processes and activities. All Title I programs are open to youth without bias. Any youth who is deemed to be “job ready” will be referred to BWPO staff for job matching and referrals. Youth in need of additional assistance will be assigned a case manager who will work with the individual to develop an Individual Employment Plan and identify assessments and/or activities such as career research of HPO in the area and next steps toward becoming job ready. **Individuals needing literacy and/or basic skills training** will be seamlessly referred to the adult education training providers co-located in the PA CareerLinks® or to other adult education training providers closer to the individual’s residence. Individuals may also work at their own pace on the computerized WIN curriculum to upgrade their basic skill levels. Other activities, such as work-based learning may occur simultaneously with their scheduled literacy upgrade assignments.

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

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

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

Section 4: Program Design and Evaluation

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

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

A. The High Priority Occupation list is reviewed by the LWDB yearly when distributed by CWIA. Training Providers may petition the LWDB to add programs to the High Priority Occupation list by providing documentation that local employers are currently hiring individuals in the occupation and the wages are family sustaining wages.

The LWDB through regular meetings with various partner agencies (Industry Partnership employers; LWDB employers; Workforce Innovation Fund Grant's Competiveness Council members; CareerLink® Operators; etc.) keep their pulse on the needs of local employers. In the past, WCJP conducted a survey of the Advance Manufacturing Industry Partnership employers regarding their immediate needs for welders. The results of the

survey led WCJP to issue a Request For Proposal (RFP) for short term welding training that led to manufacturing industry recognized credentials, such as American Welding Society's (AWS) Certified Welder credential.

One of the key goals of the Oh-Penn Pathways to Competiveness Project (funded by a Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) grant awarded by the US Department of Labor) was to conduct a skills gap analysis in the manufacturing sector to identify specific needs of the current workforce involving both employers and training providers. The training needs of the workforce were matched to what training was being provided. Any ensuing gaps identified would allow for curricula to be aligned with employer needs and, if necessary, for new training to be developed. Regional training providers also participated in the analysis of their current program so that gaps related to employer critical skills needs would be recognized. The survey identified a total of 32 employers in each of the five counties who expressed a need for training production workers but only two training programs were identified: one adult program in Trumbull County in Ohio and one high school program in Mercer County, PA. As a result, several local career and technical education centers are in the process to add Manufacturing Skill Standards Council's (MSSC) Certified Production Technician (CPT) to their schools' course offerings.

- B. Customers may access services through internet connections available through the public library system, local educational agencies, partner agency sites, and business or home computers. In addition, customers may access Title I information services at the comprehensive PA CareerLink® sites. Customers, who require little or no assistance or support, will have self-service access. Staff facilitated assistance, however, will be available on-site for customers who are reluctant or unable to access those services directly.

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

A current youth contractor offers Educator in the Workplace to high school teachers and counselors. The program gives local educators the opportunity to gain hands-on experience in the manufacturing or healthcare industry and learn how it can be applied to classroom lessons. A collaborative project, the program involves the Lawrence County School to Work agency and Industry Partnership employers of Lawrence and Mercer Counties. Educators enrolled in the program complete 32 hours of on-site job shadowing at a local manufacturer or healthcare facility and create lessons plans to present in their classrooms. The presentations illustrate how classroom subject matter can be applied in the workplace, thereby demonstrating how important their school work will be to students later in their careers. Pennsylvania educators earn Act 48 credits and/or receive a financial stipend for participation in the event. The youth contractor will be encouraged to meet with the Intermediate Unit to determine if the lesson presentations can be videotaped and streamed to other classrooms in the districts to reach a larger number of students.

- C. All career and training services are available to all individuals with disabilities, limited English proficiency, and those with significant barriers. Disabilities and barriers are identified by various methods. Some disabilities or barriers such as LEP, missing limbs, etc. can be identified through observation. Referrals of observable barriers will be made to appropriate partner agencies such as literacy providers, OVR, etc. Disabilities and barriers not observed during regular contact with individuals or self-identified by individuals may be identified at various points through the CareerLink® service delivery system by various assessments administered, such as TABE, SAGE Compute-A-Match; ProveIt; WorkKeys; etc. Again, depending on the barrier and/or disability, referrals will be made to appropriate partner agencies to assist in the elimination of the barrier and/or disability (OVR for purchase of disability related tools or equipment, or the CareerLink® staff will assist the individual: connect to Propio for an interpreter; use various equipment in the CareerLink® such as the TDD/TTY telephone for hearing impaired or JAWS for visually impaired).

Both PA CareerLinks® in the Local Workforce Development Area are handicap accessible and have a variety of equipment to assist individuals with disabilities such as: TDD/TTY telephones to accommodate people with hearing impairments; furniture (tables) to accommodate people in wheelchairs; and magnification devices to accommodate people with visual impairments. If individuals need additional services beyond basic career services a WIOA Title I

application will be taken. If determined to be eligible, all WIOA Title I programs will be made available without bias. 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.

The LWDB EO officer monitors CareerLink® ADA and EO compliance every year during regular monitoring of CareerLink® services. The EO officer also facilitates staff training year on ADA and EO laws and regulations. The Office of Equal Opportunity conducts on-site ADA and EO compliance monitoring at the CareerLink® sites every three years.

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

The LWDB in conjunction with board staff meet periodically prior to each fiscal year to review material obtained through surveys of key industry components, economic development projects both imminent and underway in the local area and contiguous regions as well as assessing reports and interviewing PA CareerLink® Site Administrators, Title One Program Operator and other one stop partner staff in order to provide oversight and recommend program and service modification or alignment. Material under review includes but is not limited to economic and labor market analysis, population demographics and concentration, input from the LWDA's industry partnership groups, reports from chambers of commerce and other business intermediaries as well as studies and guidance by relevant state and federal agencies. Committee findings are brought back to the full LWDB which may result in directing the fiscal agent to allocate funds under its auspices to a particular service or project, establishment of a policy or guidance to the consortia of operators for implementation in the PA CareerLink® centers, issuance of a request for proposal (RFP) or invitation for bid (IFB) for a program or service. The Site Administrators act as staff to the consortia and receive LWDB meeting minutes to insure that the policy and oversight direction of the LWDB is translated into practical application at the point of service delivery.

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

The Administrative Division of the West Central Job Partnership, Inc. provides staffing services to the LWDB for the Mercer and Lawrence County LWDA jurisdiction and also acts as fiscal agent. This Division thus coordinates directly with the PA Department of Labor and Industry (PDLI) Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations (BWPO) in applying for, receiving and disbursing Rapid Response funds for local coordination with statewide Rapid Response activities. Additionally, the Administrative Division along with PA CareerLink® Site Administrators and the Title One Operator receives communication from the BWPO Regional Rapid Response Coordinator of WARN notices filed that are relevant for the LWDA so that all facets of the local workforce system can be mobilized to address the catastrophic impact mass lay-offs may have on affected communities and citizens. The LWDB provides oversight and strategic guidance to the one stop partners in addition to deploying funding to facilitate the transition activities of affected businesses and workers. When the Rapid Response proceed to operational planning and delivery, the Division Chief of West Central Job Partnership, Inc. Program Division, who serves on the operators' consortium and represents WIOA Title One on the LWDB, assumes programmatic responsibility for implementing the resources provided by the board for the specific activities. There is no direct interaction between the LWDB or its designated staff as regards to any one stop program delivery function including WIOA Title One but, as all one stop partners represented on the LWDB, there is individual interaction as a board member.

Once a WARN notice is filed on behalf of an employer, the PA CareerLink® partner agencies plan a Rapid Response session for all employees affected by the lay off. The Rapid Response team reviews all services available at the PA CareerLink® including retraining funds available through TAA and WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker programs. In

addition to TAA and WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker staff, the Rapid Response team includes staff from agencies which include: credit counseling; mortgage services; CHIPS; and Unemployment Compensation. The team explains PA CareerLink® services and is available to answer questions to employees who will be affected by the lay off. The Steel Valley Authority is represented on the Regional Business Service Team which includes the PA CareerLink® Site Administrators and consortia of operators' point of contact, i.e., West Central Job Partnership Program Division Chief. Other individual LWDB members are also part of this team such as the economic development agencies. The Steel Valley Authority provides information and resources regarding TAA Lay-Off Aversion that are made available to eligible businesses in the LWDA jurisdiction. This provides a linkage for the local one stop centers and the LWDB board to be in two-way communication with the regional organization charged with administering Lay-Off Aversion programs.

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

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

The previous youth program operated under WIA and the first year of WIOA was primarily focused on providing drop-out prevention, career exploration and pre-employment soft skill services to In School youth. The youth contractors worked in most school districts in the two-county area, collaborating with school counselors, teachers, students (some with Individual Education Plans), parents and OVR when necessary. The main thrust was to help high school students and parents make informed decisions about the academic and career pathways and to offer assistance to eliminate barriers for those students who were at-risk of not graduating high school. Out-of-school Youth (OSY) were recruited to obtain GEDs if needed, upgrade basic skills levels when appropriate, obtain the ACT® sponsored National Skills Readiness Credential® (NCR®), and either find employment or enroll in higher education or the military. OSY received wrap around services from OVR and the contractor (Intermediate Unit IV) as well as supportive services identified in their Individual Service Strategy (ISS). A Request for Proposal (RFP) will be issued in March 2016 to procure youth program providers. The focus under WIOA is to serve OSY and concentrate on providing work-based learning opportunities) and the RFP will be structured to serve the OSY target population. The vision is to develop a program that provides pre-apprenticeship activities that are relevant to any apprenticeship program as the core component and then “spiders” out to various apprenticeship programs or high demand occupations in the local area. The core program activities would be combined with various types of work-based learning opportunities. The RFP will require providers to provide or make referrals to community resources so all 14 elements are available to youth on an as needed basis. The 14 elements are: **1)** Tutoring, study skills, drop-out prevention & recovery strategies toward H.S. diploma or GED; **2)** Alternative secondary school or drop out recovery services; **3)** Paid & unpaid work experiences which include – a) Summer employment opportunities (year round), b) Pre-apprenticeship programs, c) Internships & job shadowing and, d) On the job training opportunities; **4)** Occupational skill training; **5)** Education offered concurrently with & in same context as workforce preparation activities & training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster; **6)** Leadership development activities; **7)** Supportive services; **8)** Adult mentoring; **9)** Follow-up services; **10)** Comprehensive guidance & counseling; **11)** Financial literacy education; **12)** Entrepreneurial skills training; **13)** Labor market & employment information about in-demand occupations in the local area: career awareness; career counseling; and career exploration services; and **14)** Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to post-secondary education and training. Proposals submitted in response to the RFP must include the description of all activities provided in each of the 14 elements, whether the provider will provide the service directly, or how the activity(ies) will be delivered by other providers (name and location of other provider; identify if service(s) are agency funded or fee for service; etc.). Providers must reach performance benchmarks identified to date (employment, retention, median earnings) and those yet to be identified by USDOL and/or the Commonwealth (credential attainment, measureable skills gains and effectiveness in serving employers), and the LWDB. Contractors will be required to connect with Community Based

Organizations (CBOs) as well as private employers to place individuals with disabilities in work-based learning opportunities conducive to the job functions they are able to perform. Again, the contractors will collaborate with OVR to coordinate any services that will assist to eliminate any barriers for the individuals to be able to perform the necessary job functions. Contractors will also with community transportation services to assist individuals with disabilities to travel to and from the work-based learning sites.

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

The Course/Programs included on the State’s Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) are derived from the High Priority Occupations within the State of Pennsylvania and each regional area within the state. High Priority Occupations are job categories, within selected industry clusters, that are in demand by employers, require higher skill levels, and are likely to provide family-sustaining wages. These High Priority Occupations are developed by the Center for Workforce Information and Analysis (CWIA). Individual Training Accounts will only be funded by WCJP if the school and the program appear on the State’s ETPL.

To compete in today’s global economy, businesses need a skilled workforce, and individuals need increasingly higher levels of education and knowledge. Targeting only Course/Programs on the ETPL and teaching occupational skills related to a High Priority Occupation, assists workforce education and training programs in Pennsylvania to align with the actual skills required of jobs in our economy.

Training Providers may use the High Priority Occupation list to create new training course/programs for the new and emerging High Priority Occupations within the State of Pennsylvania to add onto the ETPL. These new training Course/Programs will assist in meeting the needs of businesses and industries by providing skilled and knowledgeable workers ready for employment.

Training providers as well as each Course/Program must meet performance benchmarks established by the Commonwealth. In order to ensure that workforce development investments yield the best possible results, PA has developed this Performance Management Plan for evaluating the performance of workforce programs. The plan is not designed to simply measure program performance; rather it is about improving the outcomes from these investments. This plan sets forth the framework to monitor trends in key economic, workforce, and education indicators, and gathers quantitative data using common measures.

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

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

The LWDB will continue to work with local employers to identify skill sets that job applicants need but do not possess when interviewed for job openings. Once skills are identified, the LWDB staff will survey the local schools and training providers in the local area to determine if similar training is available and could be added to the Commonwealth’s ETPL. If training is not available, the LWDB will meet with the schools or training providers to request they design and develop training that meets the need of the specific employer or industry cluster. The LWDB staff will follow the procedures outlined in Workforce System Policy 04-2015, *Eligible Training Providers* and develop a score card to measure and evaluate employment and earnings outcomes. All information will be entered into CWDS for tracking purposes. The LWDB will be responsible for the development, maintenance and dissemination of the LTPL, in collaboration with the Department per the [Workforce System Policy \(WSP\) No. 04-2015](#).

Section 5: Compliance

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

It is expected that PA Labor and Industry and the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) will jointly develop and issue a template to be used in all Local Workforce Development Areas that will include State and Federal criteria. WCJP will work with State and regional offices to provide the services outlined in the agreement template. Cross-training will be offered to CareerLink® staff so the services are understood and the service benchmarks may be reached. LWDB staff will include a compliance review of this agreement during the regular monitoring of the PA CareerLinks®.

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

The Grant Recipient's procurement system has been developed to promote fair and open competition among providers. WCJP may utilize any one of the procurement methods including: micro-purchasing, small purchase procedures, competitive proposals and noncompetitive proposals. The GR will use the RFP procedure for the procurement of most youth training programs over \$150,000. However, the majority of classroom training, through ITAs is performed on an individual basis.

Micro-Purchase and Small Purchase Procedures

Micro-purchase is a purchase of supplies or services using simplified acquisition procedures which does not exceed the micro-purchase threshold of \$3,000 set by the Federal Acquisition Regulation. The micro-purchase threshold is periodically adjusted for inflation and WCJP will comply with that published amount.

Small purchase procedures will be used for the majority of procurement actions of the Grant Recipient. This procedure will be used to secure goods and services that cost between \$3,001 and \$150,000 in the aggregate. The GR will use the following procedures for procurement of this type.

1. All small purchases (except petty cash purchases) must be approved by the CFO of West Central Job Partnership or his designated representative.
2. A purchase order must be completed for every purchase made over \$200.00 for a single item or group of similar/like items.
3. A service, item, or group of similar/like items on an individual purchase order of more than \$1,000 but less than \$3,000 requires three telephone quotes. Purchases over \$3,000 but less than \$150,000 require three written bids. Bids may be obtained by telephone and confirmed in writing.
4. WCJP reserves the right to reject any and all quotes for not meeting specifications, quality, or service requested.

Invitation for Bid (IFB)

Invitation for Bid (IFB) will be used to procure services when the scope of the 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 which involve the expenditure of funds in the amount of \$150,000 or more will be published in local newspapers in the Legal Notice section.

Bids shall 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 shall be recorded.

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

Correction or Withdrawal of Bids - WCJP 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 which permit review and consideration for correction or withdrawal of bids include:

Before Bid Opening - Upon receipt of written notification or by personal request of the contractor or authorized representative prior to the bid opening.

After Bid Opening but Before Contract Evaluation - Contractors should not be permitted to correct or withdraw a bid after a bid opening. However, withdrawal of bids is permitted by written determination by the CFO when:

- a.) the GR knows or has reason to know that an obvious error has been made.
- b.) 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 or an unintentional omission of a substantial quantity of work, labor, material or services made directly on the compilation of the bid.

Award - The contract shall 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.

Cancellation of Invitations Before Opening - The GR may cancel IFB by returning all unopened bids to the contractors and issue a notice of cancellation to all contractors to whom IFBs were issued.

Competitive Proposal Procedure (RFP)

Competitive Proposal Procedures will be used when the GR anticipates numerous sources will be submitting an offer for either a fixed-price or cost-reimbursement contract. The GR would use this type of procurement for services with a more detailed work statement.

The CFO reviews all proposals, bids and negotiated letters of agreement. The Workforce Development Board or subcommittee there of (including Youth Standing Committee) may review and rate the proposals and makes a recommendation to the WDB for selection. The WDB ultimately approves the contractors and/or service providers. The WDB has the right to refuse the recommendation made by the subcommittee. The CFO has the authority to execute, modify and terminate all contracts.

The RFP issued by the GR 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.

Requests for proposals will be advertised in local newspapers at least twice within one week. When applicable, individual businesses, schools, community organizations, and professional groups will be sent a copy of the RFP notifying them of the request. Prior to advertisement, the RFP may be announced at the quarterly WDB meetings.

Request for proposal distribution lists are maintained and updated to insure maximum distribution of RFPs to promote fair and open competition. The notice of RFP shall be distributed to all offerors and the agency mailing list and to all who request the solicitation by mail or by phone. A computerized RFP data base will be maintained for future mailings.

Where RFP 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 offerors regarding the objectives of the solicitation and the format for responses.

RFPs shall be time and date stamped as they are received by the GR. The CFO or his designated representative will retain all RFPs until they are ready to be reviewed by the RFP subcommittee of WDB or Youth Standing Committee.

All proposals will be evaluated and rated according to the evaluation criteria listed on the RFP rating sheet. The proposal rated the highest will be recommended for WDB approval by the RFP subcommittee; however, WDB reserves the right to refuse any proposal regardless of cumulative points received or price proposed. WDB members may refute or discuss with the committee non-agreement with the selection.

Any appeals or protests of selection of a service provider must be filed with the CFO of the GR. The agency must appeal within 10 days of the contract award for the appeal to be valid. The CFO mandates final judgment on an appeal.

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

Service providers will be subject to monitoring reviews and will be subject to the GR sanction policy outlined in Oversight and Monitoring. In addition, any outstanding audit exception must be finalized before the GR will award another project or continuation of a current project.

The GR 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 in accordance with the Department of Labor regulations at [29 CFR part 98](#).

Individual Training Accounts, which utilizes off-the-shelf training packages at higher educational institutions will be considered contractor services and will not be subject to service provider selection.

WCJP contracts with accredited institutions that have documented success in educating/training individuals. All training contracts written by the agency for services shall be cost reimbursement or tuition-based depending upon the type of service being provided. Presently, WCJP does not enter performance-based contracts. If in the future the agency enters into performance-based contracts, all DOL, OMB and WIOA guidelines will be adhered to.

Noncompetitive Proposal Procedure (Sole Source)

Non-Competitive Proposal Procedures will be used by the GR 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 CFO of the GR and may not be delegated. Sole source procurement may be used by the GR when one or more of the following conditions exist:

1. Only a single contractor is capable of providing the service.
2. A state or federal statute or regulation exempts the service from competitive procedures.
3. Enrollment of individual participants in classroom training.
4. It is clearly not feasible to award the contract on a competitive basis.
5. The service is an OJT activity.
6. The services are to be provided by expert witnesses.

Sole source justification may include, but is not limited to, the following pertinent items:

1. If timing is a factor supporting sole source procurement explain:
 - a. who established the time frame and the logic used;
 - b. possible specific consequences of altering the time frame; and
 - c. how long WCJP has known that work must be performed and why the contract process was not started earlier

2. Describe specific efforts taken to locate other contractors. Statements such as “contacted several contractors and no one is interested” are not acceptable. If individuals are contacted, show names and telephone numbers of persons contacted.
3. If the sole source situation results from a lack of response to a former competitive effort, describe the follow-up efforts and the reasons for the lack of response. Also explain why further advertising is not possible.
4. Identify previous contracts between the agency and the contractor during the past three years. For each contract, show beginning and ending date, contract number, amount of the contract, and whether the contract was awarded competitively or on a sole source basis.
5. Identify and attach a copy of the specific section of the published document or statute that exempts the service from competitive bidding.
6. It is most unusual when a sole source award can be justified on the basis that only a single contractor is capable of providing the service. While agency personnel may only be aware of a single contractor, there are many sources of information that can be used to identify contractors. The following is a partial listing:
 - a. agency procurement and contracts personnel
 - b. contract compliance officers
 - c. other state agencies with similar needs
 - d. state licensing agencies
 - e. federal program coordinators
 - f. professional organizations
 - g. classified sections of telephone directories

Upon receipt of the sole source justification, the Program Director may proceed to negotiate and/or prepare the contract. The sole source justification will be attached to the fully executed contract.

The GR shall ensure that no individual in a decision making capacity including WDB members shall engage in any activity, including participation in the selection, award, or administration of subaward or contract supported by WIOA/HHS 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.

The officers, employees or agents of the agency making the award will neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from contractors, potential contractors, or parties to sub-agreements. Unsolicited gifts not of substantial or nominal intrinsic value will be permitted.

In addition, WDB 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 member directly represents), nor on any matter which would provide any direct financial benefit to that member. This written code of standards can be found in the West Central Job Partnership employee personnel policy and the WDB and Governing Board By-Laws.

The GR 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. The GR will perform a cost analysis when the offeror is required to submit the elements of the estimated cost, when adequate price competition is lacking, and 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 should provide the GR a 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 shall 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, WCJP shall negotiate profit or program income 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: 1) The complexity of the work to be performed; 2) The risk borne by the contractor; 3) The contractor's investment; 4) The amount of subcontracting; 5) The quality of the contractor's record of past performance; 6) Industry profit rates in the surrounding geographical area for similar work; and 7) Market conditions in the surrounding geographical area.

Upon receipt of the sole source justification, the Program Director may proceed to negotiate and/or prepare the contract. The sole source justification will be attached to the fully executed contract.

As fiscal agent, WCJP will follow the policies outlined above to procure youth program services and activities. WCJP will also follow policies and guidance issued by the Commonwealth to procure the one-stop operator.

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

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

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

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

At their regular meeting held at the New Englander Banquet Center on February 17, 2016, the LWDB discussed the regional and local plans currently being developed. It was explained that Thomas P. Miller Inc. was contracted to compile information mandated in the guidance for the regional plan which includes the six counties in the Northwest LWDB: Crawford, Erie, Forest, Clarion, Venango and Warren Counties and the staff to West Central's LWDB was preparing the local plan according to the Commonwealth guidance issued December 23, 2015. It was explained to the LWDB that revised guidance is expected from the Commonwealth and the completed plan is due in Harrisburg on June 2, 2016.

Also, the LWDB initiated plans to convene various workforce development stakeholders in the local area to begin dialogue on how to build a network of services and to boost interagency cooperation on workforce issues to achieve a team effort to accomplish the Governor's visions and goals. Invitations to the first stakeholders' meeting held on April 12, 2016 included: community based organizations that serve individuals with disabilities (OVR) and minorities (Shenango Valley Urban League and Community Action Partnership agencies); adult basic education providers

(Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV and Adult Literacy Lawrence County); Chambers of Commerce; and the United Ways. The intent of the meeting was to provide information to the stakeholders regarding the Combined State WIOA plan and obtain input for the Local Plan and to offer suggestions on a unified approach to meet the visions and obtain the goals of the Governor. The LWDB also convened small groups of older youth participants in July 2015 to solicit their input regarding how services could be improved to assist youth in obtaining credential(s) and family sustaining jobs. The WIOA youth participants were asked a variety of questions regarding the services and activities available to them in the PA CareerLinks® and offered by the youth contractors. The youth participants provided input on:

- Challenges they were experiencing in attending activities
- What services and/or activities would enhance their ability to stay engaged
- Recommendations for obtaining their GED and a job
- Services and activities they would like to see implemented in the future

The LWDB members, Chief Elected Officials, and community stakeholders were advised that an email will be sent as soon as the local plan document is posted to WCJP's website so they would have time to review the plan and submit comments during the 30 day public comment period.

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

- A. Describe how the local board made the proposed local plan available for public comment. [WIOA Sec. 108(d)(1)];
- B. Describe how the local board collected and considered public comments for inclusion in the proposed local plan. [WIOA Sec. 108(d)(2)]; and
- C. If any comments were received that represent disagreement with the proposed local plan, include such comments within the local plan's attachments. [WIOA Sec. 108(d)(3)]

- A. The LWIOA plan will be posted on WCJP's website at www.wcjp.org no later than April 29, 2016. An email will be sent to BWPO, LEOs, LWDB members, standing youth committee members, current contractors, and WCJP staff as notice the plan has been posted to the website for review and comment. A notice will be published in local newspapers advising the public that the LWIOA plan has been posted on WCJP's website and comments are being accepted in writing at West Central Job Partnership, 217 West State Street, Third Floor, Sharon, PA 16146 or electronically to ddonahue@wcjp.org until close of business May 31, 2016.
- B. Written and electronic comments will be accepted until close of business May 31, 2016. The comments will be reviewed to determine if any changes will be needed to the local plan. All comments will be recorded and posted on the website with appropriate responses to each.
- C. A separate page outlining the comments received and WCJP's responses will be added to the final plan at time of submission to the Commonwealth.

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

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

Jane Rae, EO Liaison
PA CareerLink® Lawrence County
102 Margaret Street
New Castle, PA 16101
724.656.3165 Ext. 232
jrae@wcjp.org

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

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

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

- Agreement between all counties and other local governments, if applicable, establishing the consortium of local elected officials
- Agreement between the chief elected official(s) and the fiscal agent, if a fiscal agent is designated
- Agreement between the local elected official(s) and the local workforce development board
- One-Stop Partner Agreement(s)
- Resource Sharing Agreement(s)
- Resource Sharing Agreement Budget(s)
- Local workforce development board policy and process that provides for nomination, appointment and removal of board members; resolutions; bylaws; code of conduct; and conflict of interest
- Financial management policy and process including cost allocation plan; internal controls; cash management; receipts of goods; cost reimbursement; inventory and equipment; program income; travel reimbursement; audit requirements and resolution; annual report; property management; debt collection; and allowable costs
- Local procurement policy
- Program management policy and process including equal opportunity for customers; supportive services; needs related payments; file management; eligibility; self-sufficiency criteria; individual training accounts; layoff assistance; priority of services; grievance for eligible training providers list; transitional jobs; stipends; and training verification/refunds
- Risk management policy and process including records retention and public access; public records requests; monitoring, grievance; incident; and disaster recovery plan
- Human resources policy and process including employee classification; benefits; holidays and PTO; recruitment and selection; employee development; discipline; layoffs, terminations and severance; sexual harassment; and equal opportunity/non-discrimination
- Professional services contract(s) for administrative services such as staffing and payroll, if applicable

Appendix C: Transitional Planning References and Resources

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

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

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

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

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

- Establish career pathways as the primary model for skill, credential and degree attainment and provide all Pennsylvanians, with an emphasis on Pennsylvanians with barriers to employment, an opportunity to a job that pays.
- Expand the state's pipeline of workers for targeted industry sectors from entry level skills to middle skills through Industry Partnerships, WEDnetPA, and other innovative strategies.
- Increase opportunities for all youth to participate in work based learning through summer employment, pre-apprenticeship, apprenticeship and other similar experiences.
- Engage employers directly to ensure we are closing the skills gap and able to more quickly upskill or reskill the workforce to meet the current and future needs.
- Strengthen data sharing across state agencies and workforce development partners to understand education and employment outcomes and more effectively evaluate our efforts."

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

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

II. Department Policy and Guidance.

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

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

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

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

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

IV. PY 2016 Performance Targets Template. *(Attached)*

V. Other Resources.

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

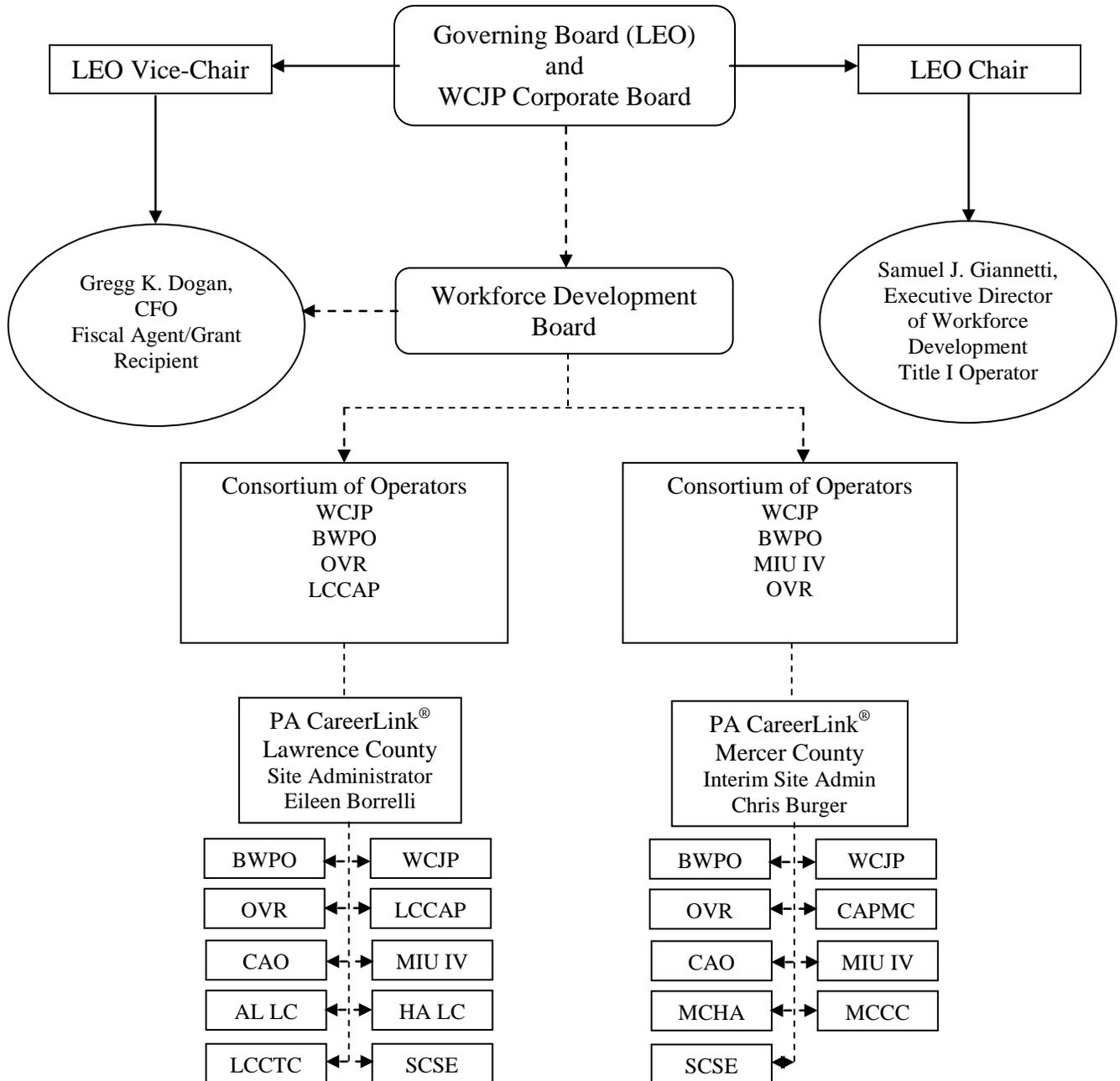
TransitionalPY16 Local Plan
Appendix C: Local Area WIOA Negotiated Performance Goals

Name of local workforce development area: West Central

WIOA Performance Measures	Local Area PY15 Performance Goals
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	Negotiated Goals
Adult	59%
Dislocated Worker	67%
Youth	58%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	Negotiated Goals
Adult	58%
Dislocated Worker	63%
Youth	57%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)	Negotiated Goals
Adult	4,000
Dislocated Worker	5,800
Youth	1,600
Credential Attainment Rate	Negotiated Goals
Adult	68%
Dislocated Worker	71%
Youth	60%
Measurable Skill Gains	Negotiated Goals
Adult	48%
Dislocated Worker	48%
Youth	48%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Negotiated Goals
Adult	25%
Dislocated Worker	25%
Youth	25%

Appendix D

Workforce Development System Organizational Chart



**WEST CENTRAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA
LOCAL PLAN
RESPONSE to PUBLIC COMMENTS
MAY 2016**

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

#	Page # Section - Comment	Response
1	Pg 2, ¶ 2, sentence 1 – Restaurants and other eating places, Electronic markets and Agents/Brokers, Office Physicians, Individual and Family Services, Department Stores, Building Equipment Contractors, Warehousing and Storage, Support Activities for.. Comment – “should Gas and Oil be added?”	No Change
2	Pg 6, 1.4, first bullet, Relationships – Comment – “The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation assists Pennsylvanians with disabilities to secure and maintain employment and independence under Title IV-Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 . Eligible OVR customers receive multiple services that may include but not be limited to; diagnostic, vocational counseling and guidance, vocational evaluation, restoration, training, job placement, individualized support services; and pre-employment training services for eligible and potentially eligible high school students with disabilities. OVR also provides multiple services to the business community designed to assist businesses with onboarding pre-screened qualified employees with disabilities.”	Exact wording has been added to the plan
3	Pg 8, 2.2, ¶2, sentence 1 and 2 – The LWDB initiated plans to convene various workforce development stakeholders in the local area to begin dialogue on how to build a network of services and to boost interagency cooperation on workforce issues to achieve a team effort to accomplish the Governor’s visions and goals. Comment - “Should the plan or plans referred to be listed?” Invitations to the first stakeholders’ meeting held on April 12, 2017 - Comment “Is this the wrong year?”	Comment 1 – No Change Comment 2 – Yes, the year was incorrectly stated, it should be 2016. Correction made to plan.
4	Pg 9, Goal 1: Establish Career Pathways.. Comment – “Educational Latticing – (it is a term often being used)”	No Change
5	Pg 9, ¶1, sentence 6 – The career pathways.. Comment - “Educational Latticing”	No Change
6	Pg 11, ¶3, sentence 2 – It is expected that the Educator in the Workplace program currently being offered to high school teachers and counselors will continue. Comment – “Is Educator in the Workplace still running?”	No Change – Educator in the Workplace is still in operation in Lawrence and Mercer Counties
7	Pgs 15 & 16, Executive Committee – comprising of the four LWDB officers, the past Chair and up to five additional LWDB members selected by the WDB chair, the Executive Committee acting as the liaison to the Local Elected Officials (Governing Board), are empowered to act	Yes, it is the Board policy to have time-sensitive Executive Committee decisions ratified at the next full Board meeting. Statement added to the plan.

**WEST CENTRAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA
LOCAL PLAN
RESPONSE to PUBLIC COMMENTS
MAY 2016**

	on time-sensitive issues between the LWDB meetings, .. Comment – “Is it the Board policy to have these time-sensitive issue decisions ratified at the following meeting of the full Board?”	
8	Pg 18, C. – The clear separation of duties between the local board and the programmatic/service delivery entities is depicted in the imbedded organizational chart. Comments – “Should the arrow go from the CFO to the Workforce Development Board? Should there be an arrow from the Workforce Development Board to the Executive Director of Workforce Development even though he sits on the Board it sounds like he oversees the Consortium of Operators and reports back to the WDB? Should there be an arrow from the Executive Director of Workforce Development to the Consortium of Operators because the way the plan reads he oversees the Consortium of Operators?”	No Change
9	Pg 18, 3.2 ¶3, sentence 2 – The member agencies of the Coalition include: Adult Literacy Lawrence County; Midwestern Intermediate IV; and the Grove City Education Center for Adults. Comment – “The two Community Education Councils should be included in the Coalition.”	No Change
10	Pg 21 B. sentence 3 – The NW Commission’s report stated that manufacturing employers reported the most difficult positions to fill in the manufacturing industry are front-line positions including: (1) production workers; (2) machinists, and (3) laborers and material handlers. Comment – “The two skills gap analyses are stated but should there be a link so that if someone wishes to review them they could?”	Plan changed – links added
11	Pg 24, 3.10, last sentence – West Central’s fiscal agent will revise this policy to conform to any future guidance issued by the Commonwealth on this subject. Comments – “Should the wording be changed to the wording that is in WIOA Sec. 107. (I) reviewing the applications to provide adult education and literacy activities under Title II for the local area, submitted under such section to the eligible providers, to determine whether such applications are consistent with the local plan; and (II) making recommendations to the eligible agency to promote alignment with such plan; and the LWDB will then respond accordingly to the Department of Education on their recommendation of the applications. The LWDB will revise this process to adhere to any future guidance issued by the Commonwealth.”	No Change
12	Pg 26, ¶1 – Persons with limited English proficiency – Comment – remove Language Line and replace with Propio currently being used in the PA CareerLinks®	Plan revised to include recommended changes
13	Pg 29 & 30, 4.4 “this section refers to the fact that there are 14 elements and that referrals	The 14 elements have been added to the plan. West

**WEST CENTRAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA
LOCAL PLAN
RESPONSE to PUBLIC COMMENTS
MAY 2016**

	will be made to partners to cover those elements on an as needed basis. It does not go into detail about how activities will be provided or describe what the elements are.”	Central is currently soliciting a youth provider (via a Request For Proposal) to offer the elements outlined. Design of the youth program and description of the activities will be determined upon completion of the RFP process and the award of a contract to the successful bidder
14	Pg 31, 4.9, last sentence - The LWDB will be responsible for the development, maintenance and dissemination of the LTPL, in collaboration with the Department. Comment - “Add the link to the Workforce System Policy 04-2015 http://www.dli.pa.gov/Business/WorkforceDevelopment/Documents/Directives/WSP%2004-2015.pdf	Link added
15	Pg 36, 5.6, ¶12, second sentence - Invitations to the first stakeholders’ meeting held on April 12, 2017 included... Comment – Is this the wrong year?	Yes, the year is incorrect and changed in the plan to read April 12, 2016.
16	Pg 36, 5.6, after the bullet points – Comments – “What were the results and conclusions made from the survey that was completed?”	No Change
17	Community Justice Project submitted numerous comments – see Attachment	See Attachment for complete response to comments. All comments received were reviewed. The Local Plan is a one-year transitional plan and these comments will be taken under consideration for next multi-year plan. No change



Community Justice Project Comments on the West Central Workforce Development Area WIOA Transition Plan

(May 19, 2016)

The Community Justice Project (CJP)¹ submits these comments on behalf of Success Against All Odds and the many low-income clients CJP represents every year who seek to better their lives through better jobs. The West Central Workforce Development Area WIOA Transition Plan (WCWDA Plan) was published for public comment on April 22, 2016, with comments due by May 31, 2016.

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

I. Background

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

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

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

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

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

Strengthening the priority of service requirement was clearly needed, as a declining number of low-income persons were served under WIA, despite its priority of service requirement. National data show that only 48.7 percent of adult “exiters” who received training and/or intensive services through the WIA Adult funding stream were “low-income individuals” in Program Year 2013 – a marked decrease from 71.3 percent in Program Year 2001. **And only 3.8 percent of those served in Program year 2013 were TANF recipients.**²

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

II. Comments

A. Priority of Service

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

The West Central Workforce Development Area WIOA Transition Plan fails to even acknowledge, let alone discuss plans for implementing, federal and state priority of service policy.

Not surprisingly the WCWDA Plan, by and large, fails to address **any** of the priority of service implementation details set forth in the WIOA State Plan, despite the clear mandate to do so. This deficiency must be addressed.

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

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

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

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

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

Comment: The WCWDA Plan should:

- Include county by county data easily obtained from DHS showing the number of persons receiving public assistance (TANF and SNAP) --a core group of those entitled to priority --from the Department of Human Services (DHS).
- State how it will obtain data reflecting the number of other low-income persons, as well as those who are basic skills deficient.

(ii) The outreach [the LWDB and CareerLink] will do to inform the public of Pennsylvania's priority of service policy and how they will target this outreach to best reach those potentially eligible for priority of service and any agencies that serve them.

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

The WCWDA Plan lacks any strategy for outreach to public assistance recipients and other low-income persons entitled to priority of service.

Perhaps the best strategy for outreach is for local agencies to connect with the Department of Human Services and work cooperatively with DHS state level policy makers and local County Assistance Offices to explore the needs of TANF and SNAP recipients within their service area for adult and postsecondary

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

education, transitional jobs, and other services and to develop a collaborative system for those in need of such services to be screened, referred to, and served by the local agency.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Comment: The WCWDA Plan should describe:

- The screening or other tool it intends to use to identify persons entitled to priority of service; and
- The counseling and written materials it will use to inform them of the range of services available to them and how priority of service works.

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

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

Comment: The WCWDA Plan should:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The WCWDA Plan does provide some information on how it plans to serve persons with limited English proficiency or disabilities:

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

Persons with limited English proficiency - Language Line® provides interpreter services for any individual with limited English proficiency. All partner agencies located at the PA CareerLink® were 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.

(WCWDA Plan, p. 28)

All career and training services are available to all individuals with disabilities, limited English proficiency, and those with significant barriers. Disabilities and barriers are identified by various methods. Some disabilities or barriers such as LEP, missing limbs, etc. can be identified through observation. Referrals of observable barriers will be made to appropriate partner agencies such as literacy providers, OVR, etc. Disabilities and barriers not observed during regular contact with individuals or self-identified by individuals may be identified at various points through the CareerLink® service delivery system by various assessments administered, such as TABE, SAGE Compute-AMatch; Provelt; WorkKeys; etc. Again, depending on the barrier and/or disability, referrals will be made to appropriate partner agencies to assist in the elimination of the barrier and/or disability (OVR for purchase of disability related tools or equipment, or the CareerLink® staff will assist the individual: connect to Propio for an interpreter; use various equipment in the CareerLink® such as the TDD/TTY telephone for hearing impaired or JAWS for visually impaired.

(WCWDA Plan, p. 30)

Comment: It would be helpful if the WCWDA Plan could also describe:

- How it identifies and tracks, through the education, training, and employment process, the primary language of people with limited English proficiency so staff will be prepared to provide accessible services;
- How it provides notice of the right to language services (oral communication through bilingual staff and/or interpretation as well as translated documents);
- How it provides notice to persons with disabilities of their rights under the ADA, including the right to reasonable accommodation.
- How accommodations may be requested and how they are determined.

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

WIOA defines “career planning” as:

[T]he provision of a client-centered approach in the delivery of services, designed—
(A) to prepare and coordinate comprehensive employment plans, such as service strategies, for participants to ensure access to necessary workforce investment activities and supportive services, using, where feasible, computer-based technologies; and

(B) to provide job, education, and career counseling, as appropriate during program participation and after job placement.

(WIOA Sec. 3 (8))

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

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

Comment: The WCWDA Plan should:

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

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

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

Comment: The WCWDA Plan should:

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

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

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

Comment: The WCWDA Plan should:

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

B. Career Pathways

As advocates for low-income public assistance recipients, we are particularly interested in the availability and quality of Career Pathways training programs. Career Pathways programs provide adult education (literacy/English-as-a Second Language/GED), career counseling, and transition to postsecondary education and job skills training. These programs have proven highly successful. States are strongly encouraged by WIOA to develop and operate such programs.

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

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

The West Central Workforce Development Area WIOA Transition Plan references career pathways only in the sense of career ladders and says nothing about how it will design, develop, and operate Career Pathways **programs**.

Comment: The WCWDA Plan should:

- Specify the elements of the Career Pathways programs it intends to operate, which should include at a minimum those required by WIOA;
- Identify the partners (such as Department of Education, Department of Human Services, Community Colleges, Career and Technical Schools) with whom the local agency intends to partner in operating Career Pathways programs;
- Explain the process that will be used to develop Career Pathways programs;
- State the number, location, and estimated time frame for operationalizing each Career Pathways program the local agency plans to establish.

- Explain how the local agency will provide priority of service to public assistance recipients and other low-income persons for Career Pathways slots.
- Explain how the local agency will ensure that the first step on its career pathways (Literacy, ESL or GED) is accessible to those entitled to priority of service.

C. Transitional Jobs

WIOA allows states to spend up to 10% of Title I funds on transitional jobs, i.e., subsidized employment, opportunities for participants. Access to transitional employment slots for low-income persons can provide valuable work experience that can lead to permanent employment. This is particularly important for recipients of public assistance, many of whom want to work but lack work experience. It also provides an important opportunity for those with criminal backgrounds.

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

The WCWDA Plan does not mention any kind of transitional jobs program.

Comment: The WCWDA Plan should:

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

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

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**WEST CENTRAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
LOCAL PLAN
RESPONSE TO COMMENTS FROM
COMMUNITY JUSTICE PROJECT**

The Commonwealth's Combined State plan is a four year document in effect (upon approval by the USDOL, ETA) from July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2020. The Commonwealth required each Local Workforce Development Board (WDB) to collaborate with their respective chief elected officials within their respective planning region to prepare and submit a "transitional" one-year Regional Plan for PY 2016 (July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017). A "transitional" Regional Plan template, which took into account the transition from WIA to WIOA was provided by the Commonwealth for the Local Workforce Development Areas (WDAs) to follow.

In addition to the "transitional" one-year Regional Plan, the WDAs were required to prepare a one-year PY 16 "transitional" plan effective July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017. The LWDA followed the template provided by the Commonwealth to prepare the one-year "transitional" local plan that is to be submitted with the Local Regional Plan.

The purpose for this plan is to provide for the overall strategy with regard to WIOA transitional implementation. West Central Workforce Development Area believes the "transitional" Local Plan fulfills the requirements established by the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry. The detail and congruity between the Regional and Local Plans due July 1, 2017 will be addressed more thoroughly in the multi-year plans that will be developed with additional guidance outlined in the USDOL final WIOA regulations and more detailed instructions issued by the Commonwealth.

No changes were made to West Central's Local Plan as requested by the Community Justice Project.