PY2017 - PY2020

NORTHWEST PENNSYLVANIA

WIOA MULTI-YEAR

LOCAL PLAN
Workforce Area: Northwest Pennsylvania Workforce Development Area

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

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

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

OVERVIEW

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

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

POPULATION

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

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

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

HOUSEHOLDS

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

EDUCATION

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

INCOME

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

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

EMPLOYMENT

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

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

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

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

POPULATION WITH BARRIERS

Among the factors that often contribute to poverty are unemployment and underemployment. Many people live in poverty because they are unable to find a job that pays a living wage or to find a job at all. When looking at the Northwest, 11.1% of families are living in poverty. There are select zip codes in the City of Erie where over 20% of the families live below poverty. Single parents are more likely to be living in poverty, with 14.6% of households in the county considered single parent households.
According to the Urban Institute, most individuals released from prison held some type of job prior to incarceration and want legal, stable employment upon release. Some criminal justice research suggests that finding and maintaining a legitimate job can reduce former prisoners’ chances of reoffending, and the higher the wage, the less likely it is that individuals will return to crime. However, most former prisoners experience difficulty finding a job after release. During the time spent in prison, many lose work skills and are given little opportunity to gain useful work experience. Moreover, the availability of job training programs in prison has declined in recent years. A large proportion of former prisoners have low levels of educational attainment and work experience, health problems, and other personal characteristics that make them hard to employ. Once in the community, not only are many employers reluctant to hire convicted felons, but many former prisoners are legally barred from certain occupations. In the Northwest, in 2015 there were 8,283 individuals released from a county jail (data was not available for Forest County). In 2016 there were 947 individuals released from a state prison.

Research obtained from Children’s Rights has shown that youth who age out of foster care are less likely than youth in the general population to graduate from high school and are less likely to attend or graduate college. By age 26, approximately 80% of young people who aged out of foster care earned at least a high school degree or GED compared to 94% in the general population. By age 26, 4% of youth who aged out of foster care had earned a 4-year college degree, while 36% of youth in the general
According to the Division for Social Policy and Development Disability, in developing countries, 80% to 90% of persons with disabilities of working age are unemployed, whereas in industrialized countries the figure is between 50% and 70%.

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

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

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

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

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

In the Northwest there were 4,621 children between the ages of 0 and 17 receiving TANF Assistance in 2016, 1,137 youth had a juvenile disposition in 2015, and there were 899 births to mothers with less than a high school education. In 2014, according to the PA Department of Health the teenage pregnancy rate in Clarion (18.4%), Crawford (17.5%) and Warren (16.7%) counties were significantly lower when compared to the state (27.2%). Teenage pregnancy data was not available for Forest County.
The Northwest receives services from the following Intermediate Units:
IU#5 includes: Crawford, Erie and Warren Counties
IU#6 includes: Clarion, Forest and Venango Counties

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

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

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

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

LABOR FORCE AND UNEMPLOYMENT

The overall unemployment rate in the Northwest WDA in 2018 was 4.7%, with a labor force of 228,897. When looking at the first half of 2019 the unemployment rate has fluctuated from 3.4% to 4.8%.
### Annual Average Labor Force Statistics, 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Labor Force</th>
<th>Employed</th>
<th>Unemployed</th>
<th>Unemployment Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>228,897</td>
<td>218,096</td>
<td>10,801</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Seasonally Adjusted Labor Force Statistics, 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Labor Force</th>
<th>Employed</th>
<th>Unemployed</th>
<th>Unemployment Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>227,630</td>
<td>216,764</td>
<td>10,886</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>229,833</td>
<td>219,163</td>
<td>10,670</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>228,486</td>
<td>218,587</td>
<td>9,899</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>227,258</td>
<td>219,548</td>
<td>7,710</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>229,905</td>
<td>221,037</td>
<td>8,868</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>232,347</td>
<td>222,472</td>
<td>9,875</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Center for Workforce Information and Analysis*

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

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

Funded by the Northwest Commission, a regional economic development partner, the skills gap analysis report is a good illustration of the strong collaboration that exists between workforce and economic development partners in the region. The analysis identified areas of economic opportunity and related industry and occupational demand as well as disconnects between skill needs and programming available. Much of this work is being applied to inform the WIOA local plan.
Another approach to defining the skill gaps in the local area has been hearing directly from employers through the local industry partnerships including the Advanced Diversified Manufacturing Industry Partnership, the Erie Regional Manufacturing Partnership, and the Great Lakes Building and Construction Trades Industry Partnership. Next Generation Industry Partnerships or other similar tools may be used as another way of engaging area employers to define skill gaps in the local area.

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

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

**Source:** Center for Workforce Information and Analysis

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry Title</th>
<th>NAICS</th>
<th>May-2017</th>
<th>May-2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employment Placement Agencies</td>
<td>561311</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Medical and Surgical Hospitals</td>
<td>622110</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>283</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Administrative Management and General Management Consulting Services 541611 225 153
Temporary Help Services 561320 207 175
Colleges, Universities, and Professional Schools 611310 90 96
Commercial Banking 522110 81 70
Home Health Care Services 621610 67 84
Elementary and Secondary Schools 611110 67 54
Supermarkets and Other Grocery (except Convenience) Stores 445110 61 104
General Freight Trucking, Long-Distance, Truckload 484121 45 109

Source: Center for Workforce Information and Analysis

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

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

Source: Center for Workforce Information and Analysis

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

Fastest Growing Industries in Northwest WDA (2014-24)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry Title</th>
<th>Employment Change (Volume)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Offices Of Physicians</td>
<td>570</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurants &amp; Other Eating Places</td>
<td>440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Health Care Services</td>
<td>390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleges, Universities &amp; Professional Schools</td>
<td>370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Care Facilities For The Elderly</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry Title</th>
<th>Employment Change (Percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home Health Care Services</td>
<td>28.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Foundation/Exterior Contractors</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Finishing Contractors</td>
<td>18.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Care Facilities For The Elderly</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offices Of Physicians</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupations</td>
<td>Employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Automobile Dealers</td>
<td>290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Mental Health Facilities</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Care Services</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traveler Accommodation</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Finishing Contractors</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Amusement &amp; Recreation Ind.</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Foundation/Exterior Contractors</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utility System Construction</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School &amp; Employee Bus Transportation</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities Rel. To Real Estate</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Material &amp; Supplies Dealers</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Automotive Repair &amp; Maintenance</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coating, Engraving &amp; Heat Treating Metal Mfg</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Professional &amp; Technical Services</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubber Product Mfg</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounting &amp; Bookkeeping Services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Center for Workforce Information and Analysis*

Opportunity Occupations are employment opportunities that are generally considered accessible to someone without a bachelor’s degree and that pays at least the national annual median wage, adjusted for differences in local consumption prices. There are several in the county that only require a high school diploma; although most are part of an apprenticeship program or require on the job training and experience.
One way to measure the skill gap is to compare current educational attainment levels with the expected employment growth by education level. Employment opportunities that require an Advanced degree are projected to increase the most. It is estimated that in 2024, 15.8% of the occupations will require a Bachelor’s Degree, while currently 14.2% of the population holds that degree. Over half of the employment opportunities require on the job training.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOC</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2016 Jobs</th>
<th>2021 Jobs</th>
<th>2016 - 2021 Change</th>
<th>2016 - 2021 % Change</th>
<th>Annual Openings</th>
<th>COL Avg Hourly Earnings</th>
<th>Typical Entry Level Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13-1031</td>
<td>Claims Adjusters, Examiners, and Investigators</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>$26.17</td>
<td>High school diploma or equivalent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-1152</td>
<td>Computer Network Support Specialists</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>$26.74</td>
<td>Associate’s degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29-2032</td>
<td>Diagnostic Medical Sonographers</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>$28.34</td>
<td>Associate’s degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33-1012</td>
<td>First-Line Supervisors of Police and Detectives</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>$32.40</td>
<td>High school diploma or equivalent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33-1021</td>
<td>First-Line Supervisors of Fire Fighting and Prevention Workers</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>$33.10</td>
<td>Postsecondary nondegree award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33-3021</td>
<td>Detectives and Criminal Investigators</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>$34.32</td>
<td>High school diploma or equivalent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33-3051</td>
<td>Police and Sheriff’s Patrol Officers</td>
<td>1,107</td>
<td>1,131</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>$30.63</td>
<td>High school diploma or equivalent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-4012</td>
<td>Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products</td>
<td>1,980</td>
<td>1,988</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>$26.94</td>
<td>High school diploma or equivalent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49-1011</td>
<td>First-Line Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers</td>
<td>877</td>
<td>887</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>$28.78</td>
<td>High school diploma or equivalent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53-1031</td>
<td>First-Line Supervisors of Transportation and Material-Moving Machine and Vehicle Operators</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>$26.12</td>
<td>High school diploma or equivalent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2017 Est. Pop Age 25+ by Edu. Attainment</th>
<th>488,372</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 9th grade</td>
<td>15,977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some High School, no diploma</td>
<td>35,067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Graduate (or GED)</td>
<td>214,640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College, no degree</td>
<td>76,842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Degree</td>
<td>38,985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>69,289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>28,030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional School Degree</td>
<td>5,415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate Degree</td>
<td>4,127</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Employment Growth Rates by Educational Attainment Level for Northwest WDA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On-the-job training</td>
<td>116,770</td>
<td>121,060</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term training</td>
<td>11,910</td>
<td>12,850</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PS education or experience</td>
<td>35,080</td>
<td>36,780</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate degree</td>
<td>3,790</td>
<td>3,990</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's degree</td>
<td>33,030</td>
<td>34,680</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced degree</td>
<td>8,630</td>
<td>9,550</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Center for Workforce Information and Analysis

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

Top 20 Knowledge Area and Projected Needs, 2014-2024

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge Area</th>
<th>Number of Occupations</th>
<th>Total Annual Openings Needing this Skill</th>
<th>Growth Annual Openings Needing this Skill</th>
<th>Replacement Annual Openings Needing this Skill</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English Language</td>
<td>445</td>
<td>5,991</td>
<td>1,162</td>
<td>4,829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer and Personal Service</td>
<td>414</td>
<td>5,622</td>
<td>1,106</td>
<td>4,516</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration and Management</td>
<td>364</td>
<td>4,599</td>
<td>1,036</td>
<td>3,563</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>4,499</td>
<td>778</td>
<td>3,721</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Safety and Security</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>3,758</td>
<td>852</td>
<td>2,906</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and Training</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>3,551</td>
<td>797</td>
<td>2,754</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computers and Electronics</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>3,235</td>
<td>634</td>
<td>2,601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>3,086</td>
<td>572</td>
<td>2,514</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>2,564</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>1,914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production and Processing</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>2,405</td>
<td>403</td>
<td>2,002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales and Marketing</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>2,376</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>2,058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law and Government</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>1,937</td>
<td>422</td>
<td>1,515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel and Human Resources</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>1,888</td>
<td>399</td>
<td>1,489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications and Media</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>1,537</td>
<td>321</td>
<td>1,216</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Top 20 Work Activities and Projected Needs, 2014-2024

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

Source: The Center for Workforce Information & Analysis
Workers will also need to be able to order materials, supplies or equipment, calculate costs of goods or services and sell products or services. They need to be able to use a computer and associated software.

**Top 10 Detailed Work Activities**

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

*Source: The Center for Workforce Information & Analysis*

**Top 10 Tools & Technologies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tools &amp; Technologies</th>
<th>2024 Employment</th>
<th>Percent of Annual Openings</th>
<th>Annual Openings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spreadsheet software</td>
<td>181,820</td>
<td>75.2%</td>
<td>5,029</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

*Source: The Center for Workforce Information & Analysis*

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

**Top 10 Help Wanted On-Line™ Skills**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>On-Line™ Job Postings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freight+</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flatbed scanners</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blueprints</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pediatrics</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality Assurance</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forklifts</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preventive maintenance</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality control</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tractor-trailers</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: The Center for Workforce Information & Analysis*
### Top 10 Help Wanted OnLine™ Certifications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Certifications</th>
<th>OnLine™ Job Postings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Driver’s License</td>
<td>613</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Driver’s License</td>
<td>416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certified Registered Nurse</td>
<td>374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certification in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation</td>
<td>307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Life Support</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensed Practical Nurse</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAZMAT</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Cardiac Life Support</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board Certified</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational Safety &amp; Health Administration Certification</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: The Center for Workforce Information & Analysis*

Review of the labor market data has led to several insights that will be used by NWPA Job Connect in developing policies, programs, and collaborations in the context of the regional and state WIOA plans:

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

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

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

**Declining Population**

The local workforce development area has seen a 2.3% decline in its population between 2000 and 2017, and is projected to have a further decline of 1.0% over the next five years. This is exacerbated by similar population declines in the broader Keystone Edge Region. Employers will be challenged to find
new solutions to filling skill gaps through both attraction of workers and advancing the skills of the workers they have.

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

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

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

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

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

The local workforce development board in the Northwest local workforce development area (LWDA) implemented a branding process during 2018 and since that time has been known as NWPA Job Connect. NWPA Job Connect currently contracts the WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth program services to ResCare Workforce Services for the six-county LWDA following award via a
competitive bid process conducted in 2017. ResCare Workforce Services is a two billion dollar company with over 400 locations across the United States. ResCare Workforce Services brings over 49 years of experience, expertise and best practices to deliver a pipeline of talented workforce professionals to local businesses through coordinated training and support services for Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth customers with a business-driven approach. Partnerships have been developed and collaboration occurs with other community agencies which help to connect job seekers to the business community (i.e. the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, adult education and literacy agencies, housing authorities, Veterans counselors, Job Corps, community service agencies, employer on-the-job training programs, Erie Together, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, and Girl Scouts/Boy Scouts). Program service providers in the community are active partners in the workforce development system in the region. Data analysis is conducted to ensure continuous improvement and to assist NWPA Job Connect in strategic decision-making. Methods of referrals exist to ensure that access to needed services is available. Where possible, Next Generation Industry Partnership or similar models can be used to support the local workforce development system to gather input from private sector employers in identifying and meeting the needs of businesses in the local area. The Board embraces the framework developed by the Commonwealth under Next Generation Partnerships and will use the key concepts to continue to advance work with employer on a sector basis.

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

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

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

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

2. **STRATEGIC PLANNING QUESTIONS: Vision and Goals**

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

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

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

To achieve the vision, the NWPA Job Connect maintains a strategic plan with multiple goals including:

**Goal 1: Visionary Leadership**
- Educate NWPA Job Connect members and stakeholders as to the changes in the legislation while implementing a structure for ongoing education
- Identify types of convening sessions (workforce discussions and forums) among stakeholders that should occur. Then be the convener/hold the convening sessions
• Ensure the administrative office has adequate resources, has knowledgeable staff, is visible, and is held to results-oriented performance measures for policy development

**Goal 2: Establish Identity as the Workforce Experts**
• Brand the workforce system
• Advertise and celebrate successes to promote the brand
• Review service delivery to allow the one-stop centers to become the flagship product
• Participate in partner events that are workforce development related
• Comply with all new requirements for WIOA, aligned with state, regional, and local plans

**Goal 3: Partnership Development**
• Needs analysis – gather from economic developers, state employment data, to evaluate current data to identify the location of stakeholders in the six county area to determine the “supply and demand” needs and bring the stakeholders to the table to develop action steps
• Board development – provide training in the foundation of the WDB to be more knowledgeable about the goals and purpose in order to make these members advocates of NWPA Job Connect and its future in order to make informed decisions
• Committee structure – to have board members serve on a minimum of one committee and a minimum of one “champion” or liaison to the board
• Encourage and seek non-board members to serve as information experts

**Goal 4: PA CareerLink® Improvement**
• Review and reassess labor market needs (e.g. employment services) - eliminate old, unnecessary ones
• Clean up, update, redact outdated policies / procedures
• Enhance efficiency of services for jobseekers (improved customer service), especially individuals with barriers to employment
• Strengthen collaboration between LWDBs in the region and state (e.g. training list) - even across state borders whenever possible

**Goal 5: Sector Strategies**
• Provide purposeful education and training to develop meaningful career paths in coordination with employers
• Provide baseline cognitive assessment for all jobseekers (i.e. WorkKeys, WIN, Proveit, etc.)
• Identify acceptable attainment levels for targeted industries in conjunction with employers in those industries
• Develop a soft skills program and implement in the K-8 grades
• Develop a sector advisory committee to meet regularly

2.2. **What is the local board’s strategy to work with the entities that carry out the core programs to align resources available to the local area, in order to achieve the strategic vision and goals for the local area?**

The primary strategy prior to full implementation of WIOA has been to offer high-quality, highly coordinated services of all program partners and funding sources via the PA CareerLink® centers covering the six counties of Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Venango and Warren. As a result of strategic planning and discussions with partners, the local board’s focus continues to be to increase
outreach to customers through a more mobile PA CareerLink® system that brings the workforce development services to the customer through partnership development with community agencies, rather than waiting for the customer to enter the PA CareerLink® centers for services. In addition to increasing outreach and service provision in the local workforce development area, this reduces the number of “bricks and mortar” facilities and reduces infrastructure costs, allowing more funding for direct services to the customer. Workforce development services provided to the public through the service delivery network are funded by a combination of WIOA funds, partner funds, and other grant funds that are applied for by NWPA Job Connect.

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

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

2.3. How will the local board’s vision and goals align with, support, and contribute to the governor’s vision and goals for the commonwealth’s workforce development system, as well any the goals and strategies articulated in the regional plan?

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

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

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

NWPA Job Connect’s efforts converge with the Governor’s vision through a desire to be a demand-driven workforce development system, focused on:
• Implementation of a Workforce Innovation Fund grant focused on training individuals with barriers to employment for self-sustaining job opportunities
• Partnerships with community agencies to enhance outreach and service delivery to individuals with barriers to employment who are often some of the hardest to serve
• The continued development and support of our employer-led Next Gen industry partnerships for Advanced Diversified Manufacturing and Building & Construction
• The elimination of duplication of effort, services and costs within the PA CareerLink® system as well as reduction in “bricks and mortar” infrastructure costs while increasing services
• The development of affordable, effective and stackable training programs designed to produce skill sets in high priority occupations while developing and expanding career pathways that are responsive to the needs of local employers
• The refinement and strengthening of an improved employer outreach strategy which partners with local economic development agencies designed to listen and respond to current business needs, as well as plan for future investments

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

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

The NWPA Job Connect Board is focused on providing the needed skills and training for employment in high-priority occupations for the area’s job seekers and employers. The Board is aware that not all job seekers come to the workforce development system prepared to enter such high-skill occupations. In support of this, the Board formed committees to develop and expand the career pathways concept. The committee composition includes private sector business leaders, adult literacy and education coordinators, post-secondary education leaders and other community agency members and partners.

The committees will work collaboratively on this effort, with additional focus on the development of soft skills that are a necessary foundation of career pathways. Career pathways will be developed in collaboration with adult education and literacy partners to align and integrate education, job training, counseling and support services to create accelerated pathways to post-secondary education credentials and employment in in-demand occupations, especially for individuals with barriers to employment. Also, committees have been charged with supporting and advising the Board in the enhancement and delivery of services to individuals with employment barriers.

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

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

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

**Keystone Edge Regional Plan Goals and Strategies:**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Keystone Edge Regional Plan Goals and Strategies:

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

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

Employers are key partners to lead and define strategies for closing the training and skill gaps and promoting employer-recognized credentials and career pathways. To enhance local efforts in engaging employers, a business services structure that includes local economic development agency staff as members of the Business Services Team of the PA CareerLink® centers was implemented. This structure increases the ability to tap into the expertise of the local economic development agencies to engage local employers, increase efficiency, and eliminate the need for multiple agency contacts with local industry leaders. It creates common synergies toward meeting workforce demand and supply in our LWDA. A targeted job fair was conducted that matched experienced, skilled employees with regional manufacturers searching for employees with comparable skill sets. This approach to targeting job fairs had a positive impact on both employers and dislocated workers, based on the overwhelmingly positive feedback that we received following the event. Employer focus groups are also planned with local industry leaders, NWPA Job Connect, its staff and partners in an effort to better identify skills gap and training needed to meet current and emerging needs of employers to close the skills gap in the LWDA. In addition, the committees of the NWPA Job Connect Board reviewed the
results of the Jobs1st Regional Partnership Grant skills gap analysis, and has been focusing on developing sector strategies and career pathways, in collaboration with the Title II adult education and literacy partners, to address the gaps that exist between available jobs and unemployed individuals, since jobs are available but employers describe critical shortages of talent. Also to be addressed is the disconnect between the education and skills that employers require and those that job seekers possess. Title II adult education providers integrate soft skills training across the curriculum and in the delivery of case management services.

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

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

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

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

Through increased communications with partner agencies in the local area and through the creation of local initiatives, partnerships have been developed and enhanced toward coordinated and unduplicated services to customers. Examples of such partnerships include a business services structure that includes ResCare’s tool kit for engaging other business-facing organizations; working with Title II adult education and literacy partners through the PA CareerLink® locations in the local workforce development area to coordinate assessments for customers; working closely with our Employment And Retention Network (EARN) partners, local housing authorities, mental health agencies, re-entry agencies, veteran agencies, and others on our Mobile Service Delivery initiative to
reach individuals with barriers to employment and increase their access to services and employment opportunities. Additionally, working closely with local OVR representatives, youth with disabilities can be placed in summer employment opportunities, providing valuable work experience and for many an introduction to the world of work.

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

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

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

2.4. What are the local levels of performance that have been negotiated with the governor and chief elected officials? How will the local board’s goals relate to the achievement of these measures?
The current performance standards are included as an attachment and will be updated following any new negotiations with the Department of Labor and Industry as the plan is implemented.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Two Next Gen industry partnerships are being convened in the region: Advanced Diversified Manufacturing and Building and Construction. Industry partnership employers are partnering with the NWPA Job Connect Board and it’s committees in identifying workforce needs, educational requirements and career pathways.
The NWPA Job Connect Board conducts its business through the committees listed below. Policy decisions are reviewed first by the appropriate committee and then are reviewed by the Executive Committee; policy recommendations of the committees are then presented to the full board for approval. All board members are encouraged to serve on at least one committee. The current standing committee structure which includes some non-board members is listed below:

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Youth Committee**
The Youth Committee assists the board with developing, implementing, and oversight of a comprehensive plan for at-risk youth, both in-school and out-of-school, that coordinates services, training, and work-based learning; provides policy input for youth services; promotes career pathways for youth; develops innovative ideas for pipeline development.
The NWPA Job Connect Board Chair also has the authority to create ad hoc committees, as needed or required.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

There are two comprehensive PA CareerLink® sites in the local workforce development area. These centers are located in Erie and Venango Counties.

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

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

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

2. ResCare shall develop, implement, and ensure compliance with a separate reporting structure within the organization which meets the requirements for separation of functions under WIOA. This information will be submitted to and monitored by NWPA Job Connect;

3. ResCare shall be responsible to render impartial decisions and perform the duties of the WIOA Title I Program Services Contractor and One Stop Operator in an objective way;

4. ResCare shall not convene system stakeholders to assist NWPA Job Connect in the development, preparation, and submission of Local Plans, competitive processes for selecting one stop operators, terminating one stop operators, career services providers, or youth providers;

5. ResCare shall not be responsible for the oversight of itself or other operators;

6. ResCare shall not negotiate local and/or regional performance accountability measures;

7. ResCare shall not develop or submit budgets for activities of NWPA Job Connect.
The NWPA Job Connect Board and the CLEOs agree on the following expectations (regarding the responsibilities of the One Stop Operator) to include, but not necessarily be limited to:

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

NWPA Job Connect evaluated the One Stop Operator within the initial six (6) months after the first contract start date with the implementation of WIOA, and at least annually thereafter. The evaluation shall include (but is not limited to) contract provisions, participating partner surveys, performance measures developed by NWPA Job Connect, and any applicable PA CareerLink® certification requirements.

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

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

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

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

As mentioned previously, the WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Program services are currently contracted to ResCare for the six-county local workforce development area, as awarded through a competitive bid process conducted in 2017. Partnerships are developed and collaboration occurs with other intermediary entities which help to connect job seekers to the business community (i.e. the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Veterans counselors, Job Corps, county human service agencies, employer on-the-job training programs, Erie Together, Big Brothers and Big Sisters and Girl Scouts/Boy Scouts, Community Education Councils). ResCare is also contracted to provide workforce development services to eligible participants through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program designed to help needy families achieve self-sufficiency. This includes referrals to partner agencies and/or community agencies for assistance such as drug and alcohol counseling,
housing, and other assistance in removing barriers that may prevent them from attending training or
obtaining and/or retaining employment. Customers entering the PA CareerLink® can receive a full
array of career services from any or all partners. Career services must be tracked in the state system
of record (Commonwealth Workforce Development System or CWDS).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Committees of the NWPA Job Connect will re-evaluate targeted industry sectors to develop and promote career pathways as a key workforce development strategy. Efforts will create career pathways that will align and integrate education (including Adult Basic Education and English as a Second Language), job training, counseling and support services to create accelerated pathways to postsecondary education credentials and employment within in-demand occupations. Efforts to facilitate employer engagement will include an assessment of what employers want and not what staff thinks they want them to know to build positive working relationships. Focus groups were conducted
in 2016 with local employers to increase understanding of what employers need and to increase employers’ understanding of what the partners in the system can provide to them. The appointment of a NWPA Job Connect member representing apprenticeships will augment the focus on the opportunities of apprenticeships in the LWDA.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

For WIOA funding, smaller employers with limited resources can be reimbursed at a higher percentage than larger employers. The Business Services Team, which benefits from the participation of an OVR business service representative, discuss talent acquisition and development needs and then shift to the identification of services and programs that will be of benefit to the employer. Work-based training, workforce readiness, and targeted recruitment events are some of the many services that can be offered to assist the employer. The Business Services Team promotes the PA CareerLink® available services and programs not only to employers, but to other organizations that have business members and customers.

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

Business Services Team representatives promote the area’s workforce development programs and services to local employers and provides employers a pipeline of qualified talent, recruitment assistance, retention and up-skilling of their existing workforce through referrals and joint visits with local economic development agencies. Members of the Business Services Team attend and support the industry partnership meetings to assist the employers with acquiring and retaining skilled talent. As a strategy to improve practices to increase business and employer engagement over current levels, ResCare increased staffing for the WIOA Title I Business Solutions services. In addition, ResCare identified specific Business Solutions staff as “recruiters” with focus on engaging new employers, and also assigned Business Solutions staff to specific geographic areas within our LWDA to avoid overlap,
reduce travel, and strengthen business relationships.

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

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

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

To further the important work of NWPA Job Connect in increasing apprenticeship opportunities in the local workforce development area, the Board is collaborating on an American Apprenticeship Grant with the West Central Workforce Development Area. The US Department of Labor 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 industry-led sector partnerships including 137 very actively engaged businesses (Mahoning Valley Manufacturers Coalition, Erie Regional Manufacturer Partnership, and Portage County Manufacturers Coalition); five Workforce Development Areas (WDB Areas 17, 18, & 19 in Ohio; NW PA WDB Area; and West Central PA WDB Area) as well as the Ohio Apprenticeship Council, the PA Department of Labor & Industry, multiple community colleges, universities, career and technical centers, Adult Basic Education providers, and other partners through the American Job Centers. The Network includes the 6 counties of the Northwest workforce development area, along with 8 other contiguous counties on the border of Pennsylvania and Ohio (Lawrence, Mercer, Erie, Crawford, Venango, Clarion, Warren and Forest in PA and Trumbull, Mahoning, Columbiana, Portage, Geauga, and Ashtabula in Ohio). The Network aims to markedly increase manufacturer’s ability to meet their needs for high-skilled and credentialed employees and willingness to use customized registered apprenticeship models. The Network will focus on methods to ease the apprenticeship process for manufacturers by creating a multi-employer group sponsorship apprenticeship platform and streamlining apprenticeship and employee candidate recruitment, assessment, and pre-screening operations with different service providers and “on-ramps,” facilitating the process of matching appropriate candidates with manufacturers’ needs.
Another valuable local resource for supporting system initiatives and improvements include the regional skills gap analysis that was conducted for Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Venango, Warren, West Central and Lawrence Counties as part of a Jobs1st Regional Partnership Grant through the Northwest Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Committee. This regional skills gap analysis revealed that many manufacturing employers reported difficulties in finding qualified candidates to hire for openings in their companies. Since this analysis, many initiatives have been implemented including Mobile Service Delivery and the Workforce Innovation Fund Grant activities to provide opportunities for the creation of wrap-around programs to supplement our existing structure and broaden the services that we can provide to employers. Key benefits of the grant have been the development of short-term training with “stackable credentials” by industry, incorporating employer input and specifications, job readiness training, as well as stronger cooperation and collaboration across programs and funding streams.

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

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

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

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

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

NWPA Job Connect works closely with local economic development agencies, and benefits from having local economic development agency leaders as members of the local board. These members assist with two-way information flow to enhance the achievement of economic development and workforce development goals for the region. NWPA Job Connect works in collaboration with economic development partners and programs to increase awareness among employers about resources available through the public workforce development system including but not limited to on-the-job training, customized training, work-based learning, incumbent worker training, as well as identifying and addressing key workforce challenges. As mentioned previously, NWPA Job Connect is also currently working with our Partnership for Regional Economic Performance (PREP) partners on an Engage! grant that enables the tracking of engagement with employers, as well as continuing to participate on lead economic development teams in both Crawford and Erie Counties, and working closely with the Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) in both Clarion and Erie. Our economic development partners bring to the table in-depth knowledge of local employers/industries and their needs, challenges, opportunities for growth, diversification, and economic restructuring. They can provide services such as financing packages, shovel-ready property, tax incentives, and understanding of the supply chain to work with workforce development staff to bring a full range of services to the employers. They also can provide loans for entrepreneurial start-ups and to continue as well as grow these industries.

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

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

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

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

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

The NWPA Job Connect Board selected a one stop operator by following a competitive procurement process. On March 10, 2017, NWPA Job Connect issued a request for proposals (RFP) for both the one-stop operator and the program services provider for WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Programs in the local workforce development area. Following receipt of proposals by April 14, 2017, an evaluation committee that included NWPA Job Connect Board members evaluated the proposals received and made a recommendation for award of contract for the successful bidder to the NWPA Job Connect Board. ResCare Workforce Services was awarded the one stop operator contract as well as the WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth program services contract and assumed these roles on July 1, 2017. A memorandum of understanding between the NWPA Job Connect Board, the CLEOs, and ResCare Workforce Services was executed that clarifies how ResCare Workforce Services will carry out its responsibilities to perform the functions of both the one stop operator as well as the WIOA Title I program services contractor to ensure that the appropriate firewalls are in place and that no conflict of interest exists in the performance of the contracted services. The one stop operator ensures alignment and integration of partner programs and services into the local workforce development system through the following:
ResCare shall develop, implement, and ensure compliance with proper internal controls and firewalls to maintain transparency and integrity to ensure that no conflict of interest exists in its performance of the duties as WIOA Title I Program Services Contractor and WIOA Title I One Stop Operator. This information will be submitted to and monitored by NWPA Job Connect;

ResCare shall develop, implement, and ensure compliance with a separate reporting structure within the organization which meets the requirements for separation of functions under WIOA. This information will be submitted to and monitored by NWPA Job Connect;

ResCare shall be responsible to render impartial decisions and perform the duties of the WIOA Title I Program Services Contractor and One Stop Operator in an objective way;

ResCare shall not convene system stakeholders to assist NWPA Job Connect in the development, preparation, and submission of Local Plans, competitive processes for selecting one stop operators, terminating one stop operators, career services providers, or youth providers;

ResCare shall not be responsible for the oversight of itself or other operators;

ResCare shall not negotiate local and/or regional performance accountability measures;

ResCare shall not develop or submit budgets for activities of NWPA Job Connect.

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

Serve as an intermediary with all of the one stop partners;

Know and understand the parameters under which the partners provide services;

Know and understand each partner’s performance measurement goals;

Ensure that an effective partner referral mechanism is in place for the benefit of individuals and the partner’s performance;

Attend and participate in one stop partner meetings;

Possess knowledge of community events and ensure that all appropriate partners are made aware of upcoming and/or relevant events in which they may wish to participate;

Act as an ambassador for the one stop system within the community;

Provide a bridge to business services and resources;

Ensure compliance with the Commonwealth’s and the NWPA Job Connect Board’s one stop center certification criteria which is essential for receipt of infrastructure funding;
Ensure that the Commonwealth’s “Methods of Administration” are enacted and maintained;

Ensure that all relevant equal opportunity and civil rights measures are complied with;

Recommend, maintain and retire technological equipment and related IT services necessary for the operation of the one stop center; and

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

NWPA Job Connect evaluated the One Stop Operator within the initial six (6) months after the first contract start date following implementation of WIOA and evaluates the One Stop Operator at least annually thereafter. The evaluation includes (but is not limited to) contract provisions, participating partner surveys, performance measures developed by NWPA Job Connect, and any applicable PA CareerLink® certification requirements.

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

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

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

PA CareerLink® - Erie County
1647 Sassafras Street, Suite 300
Erie, PA 16502
Phone: (814) 455-9966
Hours of Operation: Monday – Thursday 9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.; Friday 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Type of Site: Comprehensive, Full Service

PA CareerLink® - Oil Region
255 Elm Street, Oil City, PA 16301
Phone: (814) 678-5050
Hours of Operation: Monday – Thursday 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.; Friday 8:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Type of Site: Comprehensive, Full Service
Currently there are five remote sites located at Clarion SBDC, The Barnes Center, 330 North Point Drive, Suite 100, Clarion, PA 16214; Precision Manufacturing institute, 764 Bessemer Street, Suite 105, Meadville, PA 16335; Knox Public Library, 305 North Main Street, Knox PA 16232; Crawford Center, 511 Hill Road, Emlenton, PA 16373; and Clarion Mall, 22631 Route 68, Clarion, PA 16214 to provide program services outreach to the rural communities.

The One-Stop Operator hired, with partner approval, a Site Coordinator to manage the day-to-day operations of the two comprehensive sites. NWPA Job Connect evaluates PA CareerLink® locations to determine need and evaluate reducing infrastructure costs and duplication where reasonable and appropriate. The number of full-service, comprehensive PA CareerLink® centers in the LWDA have been reduced as a result of this analysis. Mobile service delivery has been implemented in the local workforce development area to enhance outreach, especially to individuals with barriers to employment, by way of a more “mobile” PA CareerLink® system that proactively brings staff to the customer rather than wait for customers to enter the physical PA CareerLink® locations.

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

Required one-stop program partners include:

**Department of Labor**
- WIOA title I programs: Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth formula programs;
- Job Corps;
- YouthBuild;
- Native American programs;
- Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers (MSFW) that includes the National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP);
- Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.), as amended by WIOA title III;
- Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) authorized under title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965;
- Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) activities authorized under chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974;
- Unemployment Compensation (UC) programs;
Reentry Employment Opportunities (REO) programs (formerly known as Reintegration of Ex-Offenders Program (RExO)) authorized under sec. 212 of the Second Chance Act of 2007 (42 U.S.C. 17532) and WIOA sec. 169;

**Department of Education**

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

**Department of Housing and Urban Development**

- Employment and training programs;

**Department of Health and Human Services**

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

**Department of Community and Economic Development**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*Partner(s):*

*Northwest Tri-County IU5*
Adult basic education is a critical partner in establishing career pathways for adults who are deficient in basic skills. These programs provide a full range of adult basic education services, from beginning level literacy through high adult secondary, including individuals with intellectual disabilities, and transition activities to support college and career readiness. These services include English language acquisition, basic skills instruction in work readiness, workplace preparation, and career awareness. Programs provide case management services by helping students address barriers to participation in adult basic education programming, as well as prepare and plan for entry onto a career pathway through employment and/or postsecondary education/training. Adult literacy and education classes are designed for participants needing basic skills remediation, allowing participants to successfully work toward their goals of high school equivalency (HSE) credential preparation, post-secondary education and/or employment. In partnership with the PA CareerLink® centers, the Title II adult education and literacy partners conduct Department of Education approved assessments in an effort to reduce duplication within the PA CareerLink® system and provide focus on career pathways and skill development for job seekers.

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

*Partner(s):*
*Mercyhurst University*

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

**WIOA Adult – WIOA Title I, Subtitle B**

*Partner(s):*
*ResCare Workforce Services*

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

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

WIOA Dislocated Worker – WIOA Title I, Subtitle B

Partner(s):
ResCare Workforce Services

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

WIOA Youth – WIOA Title I, Subtitle B

Partner(s):
ResCare Workforce Services

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

Wagner-Peyser – WIOA Title III
Partner(s):
PA Department of Labor and Industry

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

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation – WIOA Title IV

Partner(s):
PA Department of Labor and Industry

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

Unemployment Compensation Programs

Partner(s):
PA Department of Labor and Industry

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

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

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

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

Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Program

Partner(s):
PathStone Corporation, Inc.

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

Job Corps

Partner(s):
PA Outreach and Admissions

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

Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)

Partner(s):
Greater Erie Community Action Committee
PathStone Corporation, Inc.

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

Trade Adjustment Assistance Activities

Partner(s):
PA Department of Labor and Industry

Trade Act programs are focused on getting participants reemployed and ensuring those individuals maintain employment. The TAA Program was first established at the USDOL by the Trade Act of 1974, and has been amended several times. Individual workers who are members of the certified worker group apply for benefits and services at a PA CareerLink® office. Individual workers who meet the qualifying criteria may receive: job training; income support in the form of Trade Readjustment Allowances (TRA); job search and relocation allowances; Health Coverage Tax Credit (HCTC) as determined by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS); and for workers age 50 and older, a wage supplement in the form of Re-Employment Trade Adjustment Assistance (RTAA; ATAA)). Additionally, all workers covered by a certification are eligible for employment and case-management services, including basic and individualized career services either through the TAA Program or through and in coordination with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the Wagner-Peyser Act.

Jobs for Veterans

Partner(s):
PA Department of Labor and Industry

Jobs for Veterans is a PA Department of Industry administered program which assures the commonwealth will be able to provide special individualized services to disabled veterans. Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) staff work in conjunction with PA CareerLink® partners to identify veterans and establish an appropriate plan to meet the individuals’ employment and training needs. These specialized counselors work directly with disabled veterans in the provision of labor exchange services, securing appropriate training services and obtaining appropriate employment at a family sustaining wage. In addition, the Jobs for Veterans allows for Local Veterans Employment Representatives to do employer outreach and promote veterans as job seekers who have highly marketable skills and experience.

Community Service Block Grants

Partner(s):
Community Action, Inc.
PathStone Corporation, Inc.
Venango-Crawford Office of Economic Opportunity
Warren-Forest Economic Opportunity Council
Community Action Association of PA

The mission of the Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) is to provide a full range of services and activities having a measurable impact on the cause of poverty in a community or those areas of a community where poverty is a particularly acute problem. Only federally designated Community Action Agencies (CAA) receive funding. Ameliorating the causes and conditions of poverty take on a variety of community engagement activities and collaborative activism to remove obstacles that block the achievement of self-sufficiency; i.e. employment and training resources; community stakeholder collaboration; literacy activities; obtaining adequate housing; grassroots activities that provide intervention to the causes of poverty; addressing the needs of youth through programming and coordination; and increased engagement in community planning and improvement activities.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

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

Partner(s):
Clarion County Department of Human Services
Crawford County Department of Human Services
Erie County Department of Human Services
Forest County Department of Human Services
Venango County Department of Human Services
Warren County Department of Human Services
St. Benedict Education Center

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

NWPA Job Connect has a local Individual Training Account (ITA) Policy regarding requirements for providing ITAs to program participants. Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) are a primary strategy for providing Training Services to WIOA participants through the local workforce development system. The ITA must be for an in-demand occupation on the High Priority Occupation List in the local workforce development area. The Training Provider’s program needs to be within a reasonable commuting distance that the customer has agreed to, or in an area where the occupation is in demand and the customer is willing to relocate. Documentation of the customer’s willingness and ability to relocate must be provided. Preference must be given to local occupations on the High Priority Occupation List and programs submitted by the Northwest regional training providers when making this determination. NWPA Job Connect has currently capped ITAs at an amount up to $5,500 per participant in training. However, per a local board ITA policy revision in 2019, the amount of an ITA may be increased based on specific grant requirements, if needed.
NWPA Job Connect actively seeks partners in its efforts to increase outreach to targeted populations. This is accomplished through a more mobile PA CareerLink® system that brings the workforce development services to the customer through partnership development with multiple community agencies. Such outreach benefits individuals with barriers to employment by meeting them in an environment where they are comfortable and have a support system that increases their success. Many of these individuals might not otherwise avail themselves of these services if they must access the services at a larger PA CareerLink® center, which can be intimidating to some populations.

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

The PA CareerLink® has developed partnerships with many local community agencies over the past two years that work in partnership with PA CareerLink® to provide support and assistance to individuals with barriers to employment. St. Benedict Education Center, the Employment and Retention Network (EARN) local program contractor, provides job training to address soft skills for individuals who are referred through the County Assistance Offices. Through the Employment and Retention Network, clients have up to 12 months for training and job search. Collaboration with St. Benedict Education Center on the Next Generation Industry Partnership grant availability resulted in the EARN contractor requesting a Next Generation Industry Partnership grant application be submitted for the local workforce development area to support employer demand in the hospitality and tourism sector. Such hospitality and tourism occupations provide entry level positions with a career pathway for individuals with barriers to employment. Mobile outreach services are conducting WIN assessments for EARN participants. EARN staff are co-located in both Oil City and Warren. EARN partnership with the PA CareerLink® is beneficial since many of their participants need additional support after the St. Benedict Education Center program ends. Such partnership building and the move toward a more mobile local PA CareerLink® system has resulted in improved outreach to these special populations, especially individuals with barriers to employment.

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

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

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

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

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

4.4. How will entities within the one-stop service delivery system, including one-stop operators and the one-stop partners, comply with WIOA Sec. 188 (as applicable), and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101, et seq.) regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities?

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

- Conduct and participate in training of staff members and partner personnel regarding services to
individuals with disabilities.

- Provide outreach and referral to agencies within the local area, such as the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation that offer services to individuals with disabilities.

- Maintain an updated list of resources available within the local area for use by staff and customers in accessing needed services.

- Advocate for individuals with disabilities and barriers to employment by advising and informing them about resources available within the PA CareerLink® sites and throughout the local area and coaching them on how to apply for needed resources.

- Provide access to bi- and multi-lingual personnel to assist customers with language barriers.

- Provide assistive technology items for persons with disabilities, such as adaptive keyboards and/or adjustable work stations.

- Conduct a physical inspection of all assistive technology/equipment to ensure functionality on a regular basis.

- Coordinate staff training on assistive technology and equipment to ensure that personnel are fully-trained in usage and application, with assistance from OVR staff.

- Help individuals with disabilities who may require additional assistance with the registration process, making referrals as appropriate to OVR while maintaining access to all services for the individuals.

- Maintain required federal and state notices and postings at all service sites.

- Provides access to American Sign Language Interpreters upon request.

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

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

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

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

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

4.6. Provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area.

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

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

**Career Services**

- Determination of individual eligibility for services
- Outreach, intake, and orientation to the system
- Referral to PA CareerLink® partners, as well as other agencies as appropriate
- Computer-assisted assessment of skill levels, aptitudes, abilities, interests and values mapped to the needs of local employers
- Information on supportive services and community resources
- Provision of employment statistics information, including the provision of accurate information relating to local, regional, and national labor market areas
- Information on certified education and training providers; local performance outcomes of service providers
- Information regarding filing claims for unemployment compensation
- Information on the eligibility requirements for all partner employment and training programs
- Information on how the local area is performing on the local performance measures
- Information regarding resource room usage
- Internet browsing for job, information, and training searches
- Up-front triage that informs and directs customers to the services
- Job search assistance workshops, placement assistance, and career counseling
- Staff-assisted job development
- Staff-assisted workshops and job clubs
- Job matching and referral (i.e. testing and background checks)
- Staff-assisted, customized assessment of knowledge, skills, abilities, and interests
- Development of an Individualized Employment Plan
- Group counseling
- Individual counseling and career planning
- Internships and work experience linked to careers
- Financial literacy services
- English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs
- Follow-up services, including counseling regarding the workplace, for participants in workforce activities authorized under this subtitle that are placed in unsubsidized employment, for not less than 12 months after the first day of the employment
- Case management
- Short-term Prevocational Services, including development of learning skills, basic computer literacy, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct, to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training

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

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

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

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

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

When there is a hearing-impaired person in need of on-site interpretive services, state certified Sign Language Interpreters are contacted to provide assistance. All PA CareerLink® staff are trained on the use of the TTY line. Materials will be made available in alternate format, Zoom text and JAWS. Handicap parking is available at all PA CareerLink® locations. Signage includes Braille for the visually impaired. Staff, through interaction with participants, are able to assess particular needs and make appropriate referrals or arrangements for special assistance to ensure that there is universal access to all services.
4.7. How will training services be provided through the use of individual training accounts (ITA) that fund programs of study, or through the use of contracts for training services that fund work-based trainings.

Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) are a primary strategy for providing occupational skills training to WIOA participants. The ITA must be for an in-demand occupation on the High Priority Occupation List in the local workforce development area. The Training Provider’s program needs to be within a reasonable commuting distance that the customer has agreed to, or in an area where the occupation is in demand and the customer is willing to relocate. Documentation of the customer’s willingness and ability to relocate must be provided. Preference must be given to local occupations on the High Priority Occupation List and programs submitted by the Northwest regional training providers when making this determination. NWPA Job Connect has a local policy that caps ITAs at an amount up to $5,500 per participant in training. NWPA Job Connect reduced the maximum funding amount for ITAs several years ago to increase the number of participants that can receive ITAs, given reduced levels of WIOA funding coming into the local workforce development area. However, per a local board ITA policy revision in 2019, the amount of an ITA may be increased based on specific grant requirements, if needed.

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

When circumstances arise where the board determines that there is a need to facilitate the training of multiple individuals in in-demand occupations or sectors (incumbent workers), or instances where there are training services programs provided by community-based organizations or other private organizations that benefit the needs of individuals with barriers to employment, contracts for services may be used instead of ITAs as identified in 20 CFR 680.320. NWPA Job Connect will solicit training providers, including but not limited to, work-based and cohort training providers and registered apprenticeship program sponsors, within and outside of their respective local areas in those cases to ensure a competitive market designed to promote consumer choice and achieve successful implementation of data-driven career pathways and sector strategies on the Local Training Provider List (LTPL). Eligibility of a provider and/or program will be based solely on measurable factors and shall include the criteria in Commonwealth’s Workforce System Policy. A local scorecard will be developed to measure and evaluate employment and earnings outcomes. Information must be entered into the
formal system of record, the Commonwealth Workforce Development System (CWDS). NWPA Job Connect will develop, maintain, and distribute the Local Training Provider List, working closely with the commonwealth and in compliance with the Commonwealth’s Eligible Training Providers policy.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Has an Individualized Education Program (IEP);
- Has a letter from a guidance counselor asserting their need of additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment;
- Is currently credit deficient (i.e. one or more grade levels behind peer group);
- Has a poor work history (been fired from 1 or more jobs within the last six months, OR has a history of sporadic employment, such as “has held 3 or more jobs within the last 12 months, and is no longer employed”);
- Has actively been seeking employment for at least 2 months, but remains unemployed or underemployed. This includes a youth with no employment history, with limited work experience, and/or actively seeking full-time employment, but have only achieved part-time employment; or
- Has incarcerated parent(s)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

7. **Supportive services**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

11. **Financial literacy education**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Counseling and guidance from professional vocational rehabilitation staff to explore career and training options as well as understand VR services.
• Independent Living Skills training will allow students to gain knowledge to perform the daily tasks essential for maintaining or obtaining independence. Independent Living Skills can include the following: household budgeting and financial management; utilizing public transportation; navigating through the social services system.

• Self-Advocacy Training to assist students with disabilities to gain knowledge on disability awareness, advocating during an IEP process, understanding transition processes, and advocating for themselves in post-secondary education, employment, and coordinating social services.

• Workplace Readiness Training will provide students with knowledge needed to find and maintain competitive integrated employment. Curriculums can include soft skills training, interview skills, job readiness, job-seeking skills, HR practices, and other skills needed to become “workplace ready”.

• Job Shadowing will provide students with disabilities a one to five day job shadowing experience, for a maximum of 25 hours per school year, in an occupation of interest within a community integrated setting. Students will be provided an opportunity to shadow employees and obtain an overview of the knowledge, tasks, and abilities needed to work in a variety of occupational fields.

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

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

The Board’s staff coordinates directly with the PA Department of Labor and Industry, Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations (BWPO) in applying for, receiving and disbursing Rapid Response funds for local coordination with statewide Rapid Response activities. The Board’s staff, along with PA CareerLink® Operator receives communication from the BWPO Regional Rapid Response staff regarding WARN notices that are filed affecting the local workforce delivery area. A Rapid Response session, BRI, is scheduled by the Rapid Response Regional Coordinator, in collaboration with a Rapid Response Team, and is offered to all employees prior to their dislocation. The session is customized to the workforce but provides workers with information on PA CareerLink® services, Unemployment Compensation, healthcare options, and supportive services available in the local area. WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker services as well as retraining funds available through Trade Act services are promoted with events scheduled to assist the workers with individualized career services and training opportunities. NWPA Job Connect provides oversight and strategic guidance to the one-stop partners, as well as arranging for funding of transition activities of impacted workers and employers. The WIOA Title I program contractor implements program services and resources provided by the Board for specific activities. A Rapid Response Coordinator is located at the PA CareerLink® Erie, who coordinates activities with training, educational, and community service providers.

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

4.10. **How will the local board coordinate relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities with workforce investment activities to support strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of service(s).**

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

The NWPA Job Connect staff participate on career and technical center Occupational Advisory Committees and other annual meetings across the LWDA. Career and technical center Directors are members of the Youth Committee or participate in committee discussions to provide expertise on technical training programs. The career and technical centers have training programs on the state’s eligible training provider list as well. This ensures that the career and technical center programs are of sufficient size, scope, and quality to meet labor market needs in the LWDA.

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

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

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

Notifying the formal leader immediately of any staff leave requests or unexcused absences, disciplinary needs, or changes in employee status,

Identifying and facilitating the timely resolution of complaints, problems, and other issues,

Collaborating with NWPA Job Connect on efforts designed to ensure the meeting of program performance measures, including data sharing procedures to ensure effective data matching, timely data entry into the case management systems, and coordinated data batch downloads (while ensuring the confidentiality requirements of FERPA, 34 CFR 361.38, and 20 CFR part 603),

Ensuring open communication with the partner program leadership in order to facilitate efficient and effective center operations,

Evaluating customer satisfaction data and propose service strategy changes to NWPA Job Connect based on findings.

Manage fiscal responsibilities and records for the center. This includes assisting NWPA Job Connect with cost allocations and the maintenance and reconciliation of one-stop center operation budgets.

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

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

Procedures announced by the PA Department of Education call for the local Adult Education proposers for services in the local area to submit applications directly to the Department of Education (DOE). DOE performs an initial review to ensure compliance by the proposers with requirements established by the DOE. DOE will then share applications related to each workforce area with the appropriate workforce development board, along with the scoring framework that is being employed by the DOE. Local boards will then send recommendations regarding local Adult Education provider proposals to the DOE for consideration during DOE’s final review, scoring, and selection process. DOE will make final decisions and inform the local board so that representatives of Adult Education providers can be included in service coordination meetings led by the one-stop operator.
The current local process calls for a committee of the Board to work with the Adult Literacy and Education Regional Coalition to initiate and implement local procedures in accord with new state protocols for local program review, and then for inclusion of adult education providers in service coordination meetings led by the PA CareerLink® Operator.

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

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

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

Business services staff can identify resources to assist any employer to diversify their workforce to include individuals with barriers to employment. Specifically for individuals with disabilities, OVR provides multiple services to the business community designed to assist businesses with onboarding pre-screened qualified employees with disabilities. OVR on-boarding supports for a qualified new hire can include; reasonable accommodation consultation, initial probationary period wage reimbursement (On-the Job Training-OJT), referral on tax credits or deductions. OVR also offers no-cost consultation on the Americans with Disability Act (ADA), accessibility standards and helping a business to retain current employees following an accident, injury or disability.

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

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

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

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

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

Older Individuals
An active referral process exists between the PA CareerLink® and partner agencies for program information and assistance for mature workers. Resources are shared and appropriate services are
Persons with Limited English Proficiency
Individuals with Limited English Proficiency are provided with interpreter services through Propio Language Services. Written materials outlining available services are also available in Spanish. Individuals wishing to improve their literacy can access services through local adult literacy and education partner agencies.

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

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

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

**Trade Act Eligible Individuals**

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

**Youth**

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

Discussions to increase outreach to targeted populations resulted in the development of a more mobile PA CareerLink® strategy that brings the workforce development services to the customer through partnership development with community agencies. Such outreach will benefit individuals with barriers to employment by meeting them in an environment where they are comfortable. Many of these individuals might be reluctant to otherwise avail themselves of these services. St. Benedict Education Center provides job training to address soft skills for individuals who are referred through the County Assistance Office. One of the challenges of the program is that participants need to be trained and ready for work within 180 days. Partnership with the PA CareerLink® will be beneficial because many of their participants need additional support after the St. Benedict Education Center program ends. This partnership building and the move toward a more mobile local PA CareerLink® system will result in improved outreach to these special populations, particularly individuals with barriers to employment.

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

Under the management of ResCare Workforce Services as the PA CareerLink® Operator, a coordinated set of business services in collaboration with local economic development will be provided to local employers that include but are not limited to:

- Employer visits including maintaining existing business relationships, as well as connecting new employers to the local workforce development system that provide an assessment of business needs

- PA CareerLink®/CWDS support for creating business folders, uploading job postings, searching for potential employees, reviewing candidates, etc.

- OJT Program that engages employers with the local workforce development system that
provides on-the-job training for job seekers in exchange for wage reimbursement

- Job Fairs that are specifically targeted to business and industries to provide access to cohorts of skilled job seekers
- Industry Partnerships that assist targeted industries with similar training and employment needs
- Apprenticeships that engage employers in apprenticeship models such as those opportunities provided by OH-PENN
- Incumbent Worker Training in that the NWPA Job Connect Board may reserve the right to use up to 20% of funds allocated to pay for the cost of providing training through a training program for incumbent workers
- Occupational assessments, such as WorkKeys
- Unemployment Insurance information sessions and/or workshops

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

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

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

Opportunities exist in the LWDA to enhance employer and business engagement with education. This is accomplished through participation in industry partnerships, an annual Manufacturing Day event, as well as the Teacher in the Workplace and Business Education Partnership grant activities. The Teacher in the Workplace and Business Education Partnership grants have provided a setting for educators to engage local employers in experiences that help to inform student curriculum on local industries and their needs through a project-based learning process. In addition, participation on the NWPA Job Connect and its committees provides opportunities to engage businesses and employers with education. Employer feedback supports program development that meets the needs of the business customer.

4.15. How will the local board coordinate WIOA title I workforce investment activities with the provision of transportation and other appropriate supportive services in the local area?

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

5. COMPLIANCE

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

It is anticipated that collaboration between the PA Department of Labor and Industry and the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) will result in the development and release of guidance that includes an agreement template for use by all local workforce development boards. NWPA Job Connect will work with the Commonwealth to ensure compliance and fulfill the responsibilities within the agreement. OVR is represented on the NWPA Job Connect Board and is a key PA CareerLink® partner. OVR is a party to the local Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and the Resource Sharing Agreements for the local PA CareerLink® system.
Local efforts to enhance services to individuals with disabilities included the scheduling of a joint staff cross-training session for PA CareerLink® staff for both the Partner4Work and the Northwest PA adjacent local workforce development areas, provided by OVR staff.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A major priority for NWPA Job Connect is to expand and diversify the funding base for programs and services in the local workforce area, working in partnership with other local organizations and with broader geographic coalitions as called for in the Keystone Edge Regional WIOA Plan. Employment and Training Administration (ETA) funds such as Workforce Innovation Fund grants, Make It In America grants, Dislocated Worker Grant (DWG) funds and Trade Act funds are some examples of funding sources used to effectively augment WIOA Title I funds. NWPA Job Connect strategies will recognize and adhere to the funding restrictions of each funding stream, but will continue to seek out opportunities to leverage other available resources in an effort to increase services to the LWDA’s eligible population, especially to those populations with barriers to employment. The use of formula-based investments with other funding such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF),
Veterans (VETS) and similar funding allows comprehensive services to be offered to all eligible low-income populations under WIOA. TANF funding continues to support WIOA year-round services and summer employment activities.

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

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

Local stakeholders, partners, and other community members were sent drafts of plans during the development of the WIOA Transition Plan. This process of engagement has continued with drafting of the final WIOA Local and Regional Plans for 2017-19, with updates to the plan sent to the same group. As noted below, public comment will be accepted and acted on during the 30-day public comment period.

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

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

For this Local Plan modification, the Local Plan was posted to the NWPA Job Connect’s website at www.nwpajobconnect.org on August 13, 2019. Chief Local Elected Officials, NWPA Job Connect members, Board committee members, program services contractors, Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations, Bureau of Workforce Development Administration, PA CareerLink® system partners, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, educational institutions, economic development agencies, community agencies, and other partners and stakeholders were notified via email that the Local Plan had been posted to the website for 30-day public comment. Public comment was accepted in writing electronically at participate@nwpajobconnect.org and by mail until September 12, 2019 at 12:00 noon. No public comment was received.
## ATTESTATIONS

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

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

- ✔ Agreement between all counties and other local governments, if applicable, establishing the consortium of local/chief elected officials.
- ✔ Agreement between the chief elected official(s) and the fiscal agent, if a fiscal agent is designated.
- ✔ Agreement between the local area elected official(s) and the local workforce development board.
- ✔ Local workforce development board policy and process that provides for nomination, appointment and removal of board members; resolutions; bylaws; code of conduct; and conflict of interest.
- ✔ Financial management policy and process including cost allocation plan; internal controls; cash management; receipts of goods; cost reimbursement; inventory and equipment; program income; travel reimbursement; audit requirements and resolution; annual report; property management; debt collection; and allowable costs.
- ✔ Local area procurement policy – Must describe formal procurement procedures.
- ✔ Program management policies and processes addressing, at a minimum, layoff assistance; equal opportunity for customers; complaints and grievances; supportive services; needs related payments; incentives; file management; eligibility determination and verification; self-sufficiency criteria; self-attestation/certification random sampling; priority of service; stipends; training verification/refunds; individual training accounts; contracts for training services; statewide training providers list and eligibility verification; local area training provider list and eligibility criteria and process; “additional assistance” definition; transitional jobs thresholds; documentation for training expenditure targets; incumbent worker training.
- ✔ Risk management policy and process including records retention and public access; public records requests; monitoring, grievance; incident; and disaster recovery plan.
- ✔ Human resources policy and process including employee classification; benefits; holidays and PTO; recruitment and selection; employee development; discipline; layoffs, terminations and severance; sexual harassment; and equal opportunity/non-discrimination.
- ✔ Professional services contract(s) for administrative services such as staffing and payroll, if applicable.
Appendix E: WIOA Local Workforce Development System Organizational Chart model

The organizational chart is for the benefit of the public and must be used to describe the attributes of the local workforce development system. This chart should be reviewed annually for revisions. The local board may supplement this model with clarifying charts. If multiple pages are needed to represent the local system ensure that “Governance/Administrative” and “Service Delivery” information is displayed on separate pages respectfully. Use of model sub-titles is required. Publicly post the organizational chart with the local plan. A WIOA plan modification is not required when revision occurs with this document.
The Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry, or L&I, negotiates WIOA Title I programs performance goals with the U. S. Department of Labor on a two-year program cycle, which aligns with the WIOA planning requirement of reviewing WIOA Local Plans every two years. In an effort designed to meet or exceed the state WIOA performance goals, PA negotiates these same goals with PA’s local workforce development areas, or LWDA, to optimally set each local area’s WIOA Title I performance goal levels so that, collectively, the state negotiated performance goals are met or exceeded.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LWDA Name: NWPA Job Connect (Northwest PA Workforce Development Board)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>WIOA Title I Programs (Adult-Dislocated Worker-Youth)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Performance Measures</strong></td>
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<td>Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)</td>
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<td>Dislocated Worker</td>
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<td>Youth</td>
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<td>Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)</td>
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<td>Dislocated Worker</td>
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<td>Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)</td>
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L&I, BWDA, Revised 7/30/2019
Local Workforce Development Area name: NWPA Job Connect (NW170)

Effective Date: July 1, 2018

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Name</th>
<th>Program Authorization</th>
<th>Local Area Partner/Provider</th>
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<td>WIOA Title I Youth/Adult/Dislocated Worker</td>
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<tr>
<td>920 Water St, Ste 32B Meadville, PA 16335</td>
<td>814-333-1286</td>
<td>Nwpajobconnect.org / <a href="mailto:janderson@nwpajobconnect.org">janderson@nwpajobconnect.org</a></td>
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<td>651 Boas St, Harrisburg, PA 17121</td>
<td>814-678-5070</td>
<td>Pa.gov/rpachay@pa.gov</td>
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<tr>
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<td>814-678-5070</td>
<td>Pa.gov/rpachay@pa.gov</td>
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<tr>
<td>Office of UC Service Centers</td>
<td></td>
<td>Pa.gov/nshamatutu@pa.gov</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>651 Boas St, Room 625., Harrisburg, PA 17121</td>
<td>717-787-4127</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adult Education and Literacy Activities</td>
<td>WIOA, Title II</td>
<td>Northwest Tri-County IU5</td>
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<tr>
<td>252 Waterford St, Edinboro, PA 16412</td>
<td>814-440-2970</td>
<td>Iu5.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td><a href="mailto:Caryl_unseld@iu5.org">Caryl_unseld@iu5.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Office of Vocational Rehabilitation</td>
<td>Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 720 et seq.)</td>
<td>PA Department of Labor &amp; Industry</td>
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<tr>
<td>3100 Lovell Place, Erie, PA 16503</td>
<td>814-651-9607</td>
<td>Pa.gov/jhewitt@pa.gov</td>
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<tr>
<td>PA Department of Human Services (DHS): TANF</td>
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<tr>
<td>154 West 9th Street, Erie, PA 16501</td>
<td>814-461-2262</td>
<td>Pa.gov/jcintron@pa.gov</td>
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<td>PA Department of Human Services (DHS): TANF</td>
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<td>1 Dale Ave., Franklin, PA 16323</td>
<td>814-209-1654</td>
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<tr>
<td>613 Elm Street, Tionesta, PA 16353</td>
<td>814-362-5378</td>
<td>Pa.gov / <a href="mailto:jkeltz@pa.gov">jkeltz@pa.gov</a></td>
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<td>1084 Water St, Meadville, PA 16335</td>
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<td>Pa.gov / <a href="mailto:rfeczko@pa.gov">rfeczko@pa.gov</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>71 Lincoln Drive, Clarion, PA 16214</td>
<td>814-226-1700</td>
<td>Pa.gov / <a href="mailto:smithell@pa.gov">smithell@pa.gov</a></td>
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<td>Community Service Block Grants</td>
<td>Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.)</td>
<td>Community Action, Inc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>105 Grace Way, Punxsutawney, PA 15767</td>
<td>814-938-3302</td>
<td>Jccap.org</td>
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<td>Community Service Block Grants</td>
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<tr>
<td>421 McFarlan Rd, Ste E, Kennett Square, PA 19348</td>
<td>610-925-5600</td>
<td>Pathstone.org / <a href="mailto:ndagostino@pathstone.org">ndagostino@pathstone.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>1 Dale Ave., Franklin, PA 16323</td>
<td>717-432-9767</td>
<td>Co.venango.pa.us / <a href="mailto:kwoods@co.venango.pa.us">kwoods@co.venango.pa.us</a></td>
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<td>1209 Pennsylvania Ave W. Warren, PA 16365</td>
<td>814-726-2400</td>
<td>Wfcaa.org</td>
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<td>222 Pine St., Harrisburg, PA 17101</td>
<td>717-233-1075</td>
<td>Thecaap.org / <a href="mailto:susan@thecaap.org">susan@thecaap.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>501 E 38th Street, Erie, PA 16546</td>
<td>814-725-6253</td>
<td>Mercyhurst.edu / <a href="mailto:kdonnelly@mercyhurst.edu">kdonnelly@mercyhurst.edu</a></td>
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<td>Job Corps</td>
<td>WIOA, Title I, Subtitle C</td>
<td>PA Outreach &amp; Admissions</td>
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<td>7175 Highland Drive</td>
<td>412-214-5095</td>
<td>Jobcorps.org / <a href="mailto:Albright.James@jobcorps.org">Albright.James@jobcorps.org</a></td>
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<td>Native American Programs</td>
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<td>Council of Three Rivers American Indian Center, Inc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>120 Charles Street</td>
<td>800-985-8721</td>
<td>Cotraic.org / <a href="mailto:rjohn@cotraic.org">rjohn@cotraic.org</a></td>
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<td>--------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>121 South 2nd St, Reading, PA 19602</td>
<td>610-925-5600</td>
<td>Pathstone.org / <a href="mailto:Ndagostino@pathstone.org">Ndagostino@pathstone.org</a></td>
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<td>Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)</td>
<td>Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.)</td>
<td>Greater Erie Community Action Committee</td>
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<td>18 W 9th Street, Erie, PA 16501</td>
<td>814-459-4581</td>
<td>Gecac.org / <a href="mailto:mtrott@gecac.org">mtrott@gecac.org</a></td>
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<td>Pathstone Corp.</td>
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<td>EARN</td>
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<td>St. Benedict Education Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>330 E 10th Street, Erie, PA 16503</td>
<td>814-452-4072</td>
<td>Stben.org / <a href="mailto:nsabol@stben.org">nsabol@stben.org</a></td>
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The following table represents all public comments received during the designated period and any response taken due to the comment.

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<td>1</td>
<td>Agencies providing Title II adult education services under WIOA do so using competitive grant funding and are subject to change as a result of the grant funding process. Therefore, Title II adult education providers should not be listed by individual agency name. A preferably way of identifying these providers would be to consistently list as Title II Adult Education and Literacy partners. (Example: Page 23, Paragraph 2) from Northwest PA Adult Education (Title II) Coalition</td>
<td>Comment reviewed. Historically, the planning process has required this level of detail. No change to the plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>It is unclear if Title I or Title II is providing the “Adult basic literacy education classes” for out-of-school youth. Title II should be listed as a specific partner (Page 26, paragraph 3, sentence 2) from Northwest PA Adult Education (Title II) Coalition</td>
<td>Comment reviewed. The sentence will be reworded to be more specific.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>“Space is provided to the Title II partners at the PA CareerLink Centers to conduct this service (TABE testing)” The coalition suggests this sentence be deleted. The previous sentence accurately describes the partnership as a career service being provided by Title II as part of our negotiated MOU; Title II has not requested designated space. In addition, in Clarion and Crawford counties space will be provided for TABE assessment in Title II classrooms. This may also occur in other counties as the Mobile CareerLink system grows. (Page 34, paragraph 3, sentence 4 and Page 44, paragraph 5, sentence 6) from Northwest PA Adult Education (Title II) Coalition</td>
<td>Comment reviewed. The sentence will be deleted.</td>
</tr>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Page 34 and 44 specifies how CareerLinks will “refer customers to Title II Adult Education and Literacy partners.” It should also be included that Title II Adult Education and Literacy partners will seamlessly refer customers to the CareerLink system through the Mobile Career Link and through comprehensive CareerLink sites. (Pages 34 and 44) from Northwest PA Adult Education (Title II) Coalition</td>
<td>Comment reviewed. Language will be added to reflect that the referral process will work through Mobile Service Delivery and comprehensive sites.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The third sentence in this paragraph describes Title II Adult Education and Literacy services as tutoring. This is an incorrect term for our services and should be changed to “instruction. PDE’s definition of services is as follows, “Adult basic and family literacy education programs are funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Division of Adult Education, to provide a full range of instructional services that prepare Pennsylvanians looking to develop the basic skills necessary to participate fully in the education of their children, find and keep family-sustaining employment, or obtain a secondary school credential (<a href="http://www.education.pa.gov/Postsecondary-Adult/Adult%20and%20Family%20Literacy%20Education/Pages/default.aspx#tab-1">www.education.pa.gov/Postsecondary-Adult/Adult%20and%20Family%20Literacy%20Education/Pages/default.aspx#tab-1</a>) (Page 49, paragraph 2, sentence 3) from Northwest PA Adult Education (Title II) Coalition</td>
<td>Comment reviewed. The plan will be changed to reflect “tutoring and/or instruction” in this instance.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Mobile Service Delivery Defined
Mobile delivery of workforce services does not require a site. It is a proactive delivery of services; meeting the needs of individuals with barriers to employment that otherwise would not visit a comprehensive site. Collaboration and cooperation with a myriad of social service providers, education providers, and employers eliminates the need for job seekers to self-identify by visiting the PA CareerLink®. Community organizations will provide access to their clients, gratis use of their facilities to deliver individual and group-level workforce programming, wrap-around, holistic counseling to shared or dual enrolled clients. At its basest level, this approach is designed to reach those job seekers that have the most significant barriers to success, whether adult, youth, or dislocated workers where they are. Strategy and operational detail for the mobile delivery of services is provided as an attachment to this plan.

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Service Approach for the Mobile Service Delivery**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Mobile Assessment Plan**

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

![Overall Participant Data Graph]

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Overall Service Data Comparison
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![Clarion Participant Comparison](image)
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**Clarion Service Comparison**

![Bar chart comparing number of services in Clarion Area for 2016 and 2017 across months](chart.png)

- **Clarion Area 2016**
- **Clarion Area 2017**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crawford Area 2016 Month</th>
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<th>Crawford Area 2017 Month</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
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![Crawford Participant Comparison](chart.png)

- Crawford Area 2016
- Crawford Area 2017
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<th>Crawford Area 2017</th>
<th>Month</th>
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![Crawford Service Comparison](image_url)
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Erie Participant Comparison

![Erie Participant Comparison Graph](image-url)

Legend:
- Erie Area 2016
- Erie Area 2017
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<th>Month</th>
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**Erie Service Comparison**

![Erie Service Comparison Chart](chart.png)
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**Oil Region Participant Comparison**
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**Oil Region Service Comparison**

- Oil Region 2016
- Oil Region 2017
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![Warren Participant Comparison](chart.png)
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![Warren Service Comparison](chart.png)

Legend:
- **Warren Area 2016**
- **Warren Area 2017**