

West Central Job Partnership NW 145 WIA Local Plan PY 2012 – PY 2016

SECTION I: STRATEGIC PLAN

A. VISION

Describe the vision for the LWIA's economy and workforce

The West Central Local Workforce Investment Board (LWIB) will continue its strategic direction of aligning and utilizing available resources to support local workforce and economic development efforts to retain and grow existing businesses and industries in Lawrence and Mercer Counties, while simultaneously attracting new enterprises to the area by building on an expanded regional brand promoting effective quality collaboration. Toward this end, joint planning with regional and local organizations such as chambers of commerce, economic development and industry based coalitions will be further intensified to insure that the road to recovery will be paved with relevant workforce, education and training programs. Through this systematic engagement, curricula and program design will be infused with the necessary skilled knowledge to develop abilities to support current industry, grow the economy, advance incumbent worker skill sets as well as facilitate the pipeline for Pennsylvanian's seeking to locate or relocate themselves in jobs.

B. OVERARCHING STRATEGIES

1. Describe how the vision will guide investments in workforce preparation, skill development, education and training, and other initiatives.

Investments in workforce preparation, skill development, education and training will be guided based upon market based data as well as information derived from employer driven industry partnerships focused on high priority and in-demand occupations in order to create innovative workforce development services in concert with current and emerging economic trends. The West Central Local Workforce Investment Area (LWIA) is uniquely located at the central nexus of multiple regions when viewed from a macro level of analysis. For instance, the LWIA is divided by the Federal Government such that Sharon PA in Mercer County is grouped as part of a Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) along with Warren and Youngstown Ohio while the city of New Castle in Lawrence County is considered a Micropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) connected to Pittsburgh. Similarly, the Appalachian Regional Commission divides the LWIB into two Local Development Districts; 9A in the Northwest and 9D in the Southwest. Studies have shown that a significant proportion of the local workforce is highly mobile which is a relevant shared trait within a fifty mile radius using Sharon as the center point. Commuting patterns for the period 2007-2009 shows that on the average 35,900 workers who resided in NW#145 could be described as Out-Commuters, i.e., live in one of the LWIA counties but work in another. Thus, these facts have prompted the strategic decision to tailor local workforce development system infrastructure with a view toward developments in the three surrounding regions. This consists first in identifying driver

industry clusters in conjunction with local and regional economic development agencies that are projected to have a significant trans-regional presence with emphasis given to those requiring high priority occupations based upon labor market and productivity output data. Secondly, focus groups and subject matter experts convene to examine the aggregated data and make recommendations to the LWIA leadership, i.e., the West Central LWIB and Local Elected Officials (LEO), regarding priorities and objectives. Thirdly, existing networks of connectivity to the contiguous regions will be utilized to coordinate a delivery of service maximizing benefits to local businesses and the resident populous regarding skills acquisition development. This strategy will insure a congruence of effort both locally and regionally.

The West Central LWIB will guide investments to achieve the governor's vision for the commonwealth as expressed in the PA State Integrated Workforce Plan for the period July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2017. This will be accomplished by fully embracing the fundamental components of JOBSFirst PA as the roadmap by which to aim resources and talents to prioritize private sector business retention and job creation. These components include:

- * Design programs to bridge skills gaps amplified by the recent recession;
- * Develop and expand the career pathways concept;
- * Institute means to match up more effective job matching services; and
- * Target efforts on high priority occupations leading to family sustaining jobs.

Accepting the premise that government does not create jobs, the LWIB will seek to foster an environment in which companies can prosper and increase productivity and profitability thereby encouraging growth and job creation. NW#145 will continue to be an active participant and catalyst for trans-regional industry based collaborations such as the Three Rivers Energy Region, SHALEnet, The Transportation Economic and Education Network, Tech-Belt and the OH-PENN Interstate Region. Through these networks the LWIB has capitalized on its border location and heritage assets in manufacturing to link and promote Lawrence and Mercer County businesses and industry and the at large workforce in the emerging energy and advanced manufacturing sectors. These organizational relationships will provide intelligence and data necessary to bridge the aforementioned skills gaps. Synergies resulting from this aggressive contiguous regional outreach have yielded the recent six million dollar Workforce Innovation Fund grant award by the Department of Labor (DOL) Employment and Training Administration to the West Central LWIA, acting as fiscal agent for a consortium that includes two Ohio WIAs, to develop and expand a career pathways strategy for the advanced manufacturing sector based upon industry recognized credentials. A skills gap analysis is being procured that will identify specific functional skills within targeted critical high priority occupations and then tied to a nationally validated credential. This information and indexing will be disseminated to schools and training institutions to align curricula based upon evidence based industry need and open up further discussions aimed at the possible recognition of so-called stack-able credentials that lead to advanced education credit convertible to associate and bachelor degrees. Finally, the one-stop centers and labor exchange units in the interstate region will be made cognizant of these

findings so that job matching can be calibrated for the designated positions thus providing for more effective job matching and introducing a process by which other jobs can be likewise fine tuned for more effective job matching.

2. Describe how the LWIB will align strategies to achieve the governor's vision for Pennsylvania, as expressed in the state's Integrated Workforce Plan.

Goal A: Develop a Competitive Workforce

This will be accomplished by supporting employer driven training programs aimed at High Priority Occupations (HPO) and emergent economic development activities in the region. Scarce training dollars will be invested with consideration of other investments made locally such as *Keystone Works, Job Training Pilot Projects, On-the-Job-Training (OJT) Expansion Program and Welfare Employment and Training Initiatives*. These strategies shall be employed to continuously increase the coordination, maximization and leveraging of resources to develop a high demand, skilled workforce to support the needs of business and industry in the West Central WIA. This approach will focus on identifying and assessing underemployed as well as unemployed job seekers in addition to building on strategies to serve incumbent workers in critical industry segments.

Goal B: Better Connect Job Seekers with Employers

(a) Informed decisions should be a basic principle at every level of the workforce development system to the greatest degree possible. Regarding customers seeking employment or training services, the CareerLink[®] staff and their products will make available adequate information and guidance to navigate appropriate consumer choices. This includes multiple access points to job postings, aptitude and achievement assessments, an array of financial aid information beyond programs offered through the mandatory one-stop partners, available education and training providers and referrals for supportive services. Business customers likewise will receive information regarding products and services available through the PA CareerLink[®] Centers in Lawrence and Mercer Counties and their linkage to other economic development products and services via adjunct Business Service Team representatives from community development agencies, local development districts, chambers of commerce, industrial resource centers and other appropriate groups on an ad hoc basis. Beyond fundamental core services, intensive and training services will continue to be refined and utilized in conjunction with the HPOs identified by the Center for Information and Analysis (CWIA).

(b) An aggressive two way communication network focused on key sectors and constituencies in the LWIA will maintain knowledge of available and pending initiatives that may complement and provide leveraged resources for addressing the needs of business, industry and individual consumers of services. Industry partnerships, chambers of commerce, county boards of commissioners, economic development agencies, educational agencies, career and technical centers, labor unions and other community

based organizations and/or representatives thereof will be engaged at multiple levels to insure input, coordination, collaboration and cross information with the West Central LWIB and its operatives. This will include but not be limited to regular meetings, focus groups, sub-committees, employer advisories, presentation of reports and web site postings. Additionally, LWIB ambassadors will advocate and speak for the workforce development system in the context of their other board memberships to make the wider community and region aware of the aims and work of the LWIB in order to seek opportunities for partnered leveraging of funding and resources whenever possible such as Pennsylvania's STEM the Targeted Industry Program (PA-TIP) administered by PHEAA, PELL, ShaleNET, TAACCT and other initiatives.

(c) Enhancement of workforce development services will transform the PA CareerLink® and workforce system in general. Aligning education and training services with driver industry employer needs in the region will increase Pennsylvania's retention of secondary school graduates, who will be beneficiaries of these enhancements on the skills acquisition and pipeline development side, inasmuch as they prepare individuals for initial steps along a defined career pathway. The LWIA will collaborate with the commonwealth as cross agency systems are transformed to expand the Regional Reemployment Eligibility Assessment (REA) pilot, National Emergency Grants (NEG) roll outs when appropriate and generally participate in other pilot projects that will benefit businesses and the labor force. Such a strategy should tend to increase job placement for the workforce as a whole including veterans, older workers, persons with disabilities and ex-offenders by virtue of enhancements in program collaboration, coordination and communication.

Goal C: Build a Pipeline of Talent

The West Central LWIB will continue to link local efforts with regional and statewide initiatives aimed at insuring students are career and post-secondary education ready to participate in the economic recovery. As a prelude to this strategy, the West Central LWIB on behalf of the Mercer and Lawrence jurisdiction in PA (NW#145) and Ohio LWIA Areas #17 and #18 (Columbiana, Mahoning and Trumbull counties) prepared and submitted a proposal for the Federal DOL Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) grant. The partnership was awarded six million dollars for a three year period beginning July 1, 2012 to implement a comprehensive career pathways network for the advanced manufacturing industry sector within the five-county region. The proposal outlined strategies to increase awareness of career pathways to youth, parents and schools through job fairs, internships, work-experience, pre-apprenticeship programs, community outreach and awareness and coordination with Career and Technical Centers and other training facilities. These WIF activities will create a template that can be replicated for the other driver industries relevant to the LWIA. It is surmised that increasing awareness and facilitating access to career pathways services should bolster drop-out prevention and enhance re-engagement of high school age youth. This will continue to include liaison with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation to benefit their clients in general and special education in the K-12 educational system.

Goal D: Build a Strong Fiscal Foundation

The West Central LWIB will continue to strive toward the highest quality fiscally managed workforce system possible within the public workforce arena. Toward that end, program administration and design will maintain the practice of applying business principles and discipline to the exercise of managing and operating functions within the one-stop and workforce development system in order to maximize precious public funds and extend them to the widest degree possible in serving businesses, industry and individuals. This will entail seeking innovative solutions utilizing technology, collaborative partnerships, leveraging of resources, seeking additive funding streams from the federal government, private foundations and allowable fee for service opportunities to buttress the workforce system and introduce added value to the existing components. This will create greater efficiencies in amplified service and reduced cost for the individual funding streams by pooled support of individuals and projects that meet multi-eligibility criteria.

3. Describe the strategies to increase coordination, maximize and leverage resources to develop a high-demand, skilled workforce to support the needs of business and industry in the LWIA.

In summary, the strategies that are projected to increase coordination, maximize and leverage resources to develop a high-demand, skilled workforce to support the needs of business and industry in the West Central LWIA are as follows:

(a) Informed decisions will be a basic principle at all levels of the system. PA CareerLink[®] staff, business and job seeker customers, program participants, one-stop operators, managers and mandated partners, LWIA administrators and staff, LWIB board members, education and economic development agencies, local elected officials, contracted organizations as well as other community partners will be responsible for working toward the goal of responsible stewardship in their dealings related to the workforce development system.

(b) Aggressive communication engagement is the second strategic principle. Communication is not a unidirectional movement but requires that all parties engage respectfully in the interaction. The end product should be a result that is in the best interest of all parties involved although not necessarily the desired outcome of any one party of the interaction.

(c) Willingness to transform the current system by promoting a culture of continuous quality improvement is the third strategic principle. Expediency, traditional bias toward a specific habitual approach or mere unwillingness to change in the face of diminished returns should not hinder the transformational processes undertaken to elevate the workforce system to higher levels of achievement.

(d) The fourth strategic principle is that local efforts will be planned with a view toward

regional and statewide factors. In the past, county and state borders were considered the terminus for program planning. The business community does not halt its strategic vision at the edge of political jurisdictions. The West Central LWIB while committed to providing exemplary services to local residents and businesses of Mercer and Lawrence counties, nonetheless, accepts and embraces that the road to recovery cannot be traversed with ignorance of regional, national and global trends. The OH-PENN Interstate Region, Joint LWIB Competitiveness Council, the fifteen Pennsylvania County Transportation Education and Economic Network (TEEN), the three state ShaleNET Project and the recently announced National Additive Manufacturing Innovation Institute funded by the Departments of Defense and Commerce for Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia whose hub site will be housed at the Youngstown Business Incubator are concrete instances of how coordinating local and regional elements creates opportunities for synergistic transformation such that from the ashes of the rust belt there is emerging a reinvented identity known as the Tech-Belt. It is the overarching goal of the West Central LWIB to employ these strategies in embedding Lawrence and Mercer counties into the “Belt Buckle” of the region.

C. ECONOMIC & LABOR MARKET ANALYSIS

1. Economic conditions in the LWIA, identifying the critical businesses and industries, population and workforce trends, and the economic challenges facing the local area.

The West Central Workforce Investment Area has been in slow recovery since the economic recession officially ended in June 2009. Unemployment rates have declined, from 10.6% in June 2009 to 8.2% in June 2012, but still have not neared the pre-recession level of 5.7% recorded in December 2007. According to the Center for Workforce Information & Analysis’ Labor Market Services: Area Profile, in June 2012 in the West Central WIA there were 3.07 unemployed for every job opening; the fifth highest of all LWIAs in Pennsylvania.

The Center for Workforce Information & Analysis notes that the top 10 industries in the West Central WIA are: Health Care & Social Assistance, Manufacturing, Retail Trade, Educational Services, Accommodation & Food Services, Government, Other Services, Except Public Admin., Construction, Administrative & Waste Services, and Transportation employing an estimated total of 86,680 in 2008. In both counties, the companies who employed 500 – 1000+ workers were: Jameson Memorial Hospital, Sharon Regional Health System, Duferco Farrell Corp, George Junior Republic, UPMC Horizon Hospital System and General Electric. According to CWIA, as of the third quarter of 2011, Lawrence County’s top 10 major employers were: Jameson Memorial Hospital, Westminster College, New Castle Area School District, The Ellwood City Hospital, County Of Lawrence, The Tamarin Company (Giant Eagle), Wal-Mart Associates, Cennial Co Inc (McDonald’s), Liberty Mutual Insurance Company, and Ellwood City Forge. In Mercer County the top 10 employers are: Sharon Regional Health System, UPMC Horizon, General Electric, John Maneely Company (Wheatland

Tube), Walmart Associates, George Junior Republic, Duferco Farrell Corp, First National Bank of Pennsylvania, Grove City College, and Grove City Medical Center.

According to the US Census Bureau, the West Central WIA's population has declined from 214,936 to 207,746 between the 2000 and 2010 Census. Population in the WIA is projected to continue to decrease slightly with a population of 207,521 by 2020. Despite a decline in projected population, workforce is expected to grow in the WIA by an additional 2,580 from 86,680 estimated in 2008 to 89,260 in 2018. The top 10 industries with the highest projected employment for 2018 are: Health Care & Social Assistance, Manufacturing, Retail Trade, Educational Services, Accommodation & Food Services, Government, Other Services, Except Public Admin., Administrative & Waste Services, Construction, and Transportation. These industries will account for over 80% of total employment in the two counties with one third of employment in the Health Care and Manufacturing sectors.

Along with the challenges associated with declining population endemic to "Rust Belt" communities, the region is facing a new challenge of a Manufacturing Renaissance which is presenting new challenges and opportunities that will have a crucial impact on the region's workforce and economy in the next decade and beyond. The manufacturing that had been considered in a continually downward spiral since the closings of the area's steel mills in the 1970s, has now shown substantial growth – with the Youngstown-Warren-Sharon MSA adding 1,500 Manufacturing jobs (5.28%) between 2010 and 2011 – making its Manufacturing sector the eighth fastest-growing in the country. Along with the growth in Manufacturing, the impact of the Marcellus and Utica Shale Plays in Pennsylvania will not only affect the Oil & Gas Industry, but will also be substantially felt in Manufacturing, Building & Construction, and Logistics & Transportation industries. A significant economic and workforce challenge to this positive news is the ability of the region to supply enough skilled labor to meet the demand of the growing industries.

- 2. Analysis of the local economy, labor pool, and labor market. Include analysis of the following data:**
 - a. Current makeup of the local economic base by industry**

According to the latest data available from the Center for Workforce Information & Analysis, the top industries in the West Central WIA are Health Care & Social Assistance; Manufacturing, Retail Trade; Accommodation and Food Services; Finance and Insurance; Transportation and Warehousing; Other Services (except Public Admin.); Construction; Admin., Support, Waste Mgmt, Remediation; and Wholesale Trade. The 4,284 establishments in these top 10 industries account for 57,705 employees or over two-thirds of total employment.

Top Industries in the West Central WIA			
Rank	Industry Sector	Establishments	Employees
1	Health Care and Social Assistance	964	15,308
2	Manufacturing (31-33)	360	11,807
3	Retail Trade (44 & 45)	791	10,031
4	Accommodation and Food Services	445	5,953
5	Finance and Insurance	258	2,628
6	Transportation and Warehousing (48 & 49)	156	2,591
7	Other Services (except Public Admin.)	478	2,525
8	Construction	416	2,350
9	Admin., Support, Waste Mgmt, Remediation	183	2,289
10	Wholesale Trade	233	2,223

b. Industries and occupations expected to grow or decline in the short-term and over the next decade

As of June 2012, the West Central WIA had six industries with “growing companies”, defined as companies with at least 10 employees that increased their employment for four consecutive quarters and by no less than 10%. Of the 26 growing companies, 17 were in the Manufacturing industry followed by two each in Accommodation and Food Services, Health Care and Social Assistance, and Wholesale Trade clusters with one each in the Construction and Professional, Scientific and Technical Services industries.

Along with the industries showing short-term growth, the top 10 industries projected to have the most future job openings in the West Central WIA are: Educational Services; Ambulatory Health Care Services; Nursing and Residential Care Facilities; Hospitals; Food Services and Drinking Places; Social Assistance; Truck Transportation; Amusement, Gambling, and Recreation Industries; Health and Personal Care Stores; and Administrative and Support Services. Employment in these industries is expected to increase by 3,490 jobs to total of 37,040 between 2008 and 2018.

Industries with Highest Employment in the West Central WIA						
Rank	Industry	2008 Employment	2018 Projected Employment	Total Employment Change	Annual Percent Change	2008 - 2018 Total Percent Change
1	Educational	6,950	7,630	680	0.90%	9.80%

Industries with Highest Employment in the West Central WIA						
Rank	Industry	2008 Employment	2018 Projected Employment	Total Employment Change	Annual Percent Change	2008 - 2018 Total Percent Change
	Services					
2	Ambulatory Health Care Services	4,680	5,210	530	1.10%	11.30%
3	Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	4,020	4,550	530	1.30%	13.20%
4	Hospitals	4,510	4,950	440	0.90%	9.80%
5	Food Services and Drinking Places	5,900	6,340	440	0.70%	7.50%
6	Social Assistance	2,530	2,880	350	1.30%	13.80%
7	Truck Transportation	1,680	1,880	200	1.10%	11.90%
8	Amusement, Gambling, and Recreation Industries	750	880	130	1.60%	17.30%
9	Health and Personal Care Stores	720	830	110	1.40%	15.30%
10	Specialty Trade Contractors	1,810	1,890	80	0.40%	4.40%

The top 10 occupations with the highest projected growth for the West Central WIA are: Retail Salespersons; Cashiers; Waiters & Waitresses; Registered Nurses; Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers; Office Clerks, General; Janitors & Cleaners; Childcare Workers; Combined Food Preparation & Serving Workers; and Personal Care Aides. Employment in these occupations is projected to increase from an estimated 18,780 in 2008 to 20,120 by 2018.

Occupations with Highest Estimated Annual Openings in the West Central WIA					
Rank	Occupation	2008 Estimated Employment	2018 Projected Employment	2008-2018 Annual Percent Change	Estimated Annual Openings
1	Retail Salespersons	3,930	4,060	0.3%	134
2	Cashiers	2,360	2,310	-0.2%	112
3	Waiters & Waitresses	1,400	1,490	0.6%	85
4	Registered Nurses (Del. 2012)	2,020	2,350	1.5%	66
5	Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers (New Def 2010)	1,840	1,990	0.8%	48
6	Office Clerks, General	2,230	2,280	0.2%	46
7	Janitors & Cleaners	1,750	1,850	0.6%	44
8	Childcare Workers	1,120	1,230	0.9%	43
9	Combined Food Preparation & Serving Workers	1,250	1,420	1.3%	42
10	Personal Care Aides (New Def 2010)	880	1,140	2.6%	41

The industries that are projected to have the least employment over the next decade in the West Central WIA by 2018 are: Materials Engineers; Couriers & Messengers; Purchasing Managers; Radio & Television Announcers; Technical Writers; Title Examiners, Abstractors & Searchers; Coil Winders, Tapers & Finishers; Computer Operators; Information & Record Clerks, Other; Law Clerks; Meter Readers, Utilities; and Tool Grinders, Filers & Sharpeners with total employment in these 12 occupations projected to total 190 with a combined estimated annual average of 10 openings per year.

Top occupations predicted to have the least future job openings in West Central WIA				
Occupation Title	2008 Employment	2018 Projected Employment	2008 - 2018 Annual % Change	Estimated Annual Openings
Materials Engineers	20	10	-6.70%	0
Couriers & Messengers	20	10	-6.70%	1
Purchasing Managers	20	10	-6.70%	1
Radio & Television Announcers	20	10	-6.70%	1
Technical Writers	20	10	-6.70%	1
Title Examiners, Abstractors & Searchers	30	20	-4.00%	0
Coil Winders, Tapers & Finishers	30	20	-4.00%	1
Computer Operators	30	20	-4.00%	1
Information & Record Clerks, Other	30	20	-4.00%	1
Law Clerks (Del. 2010)	30	20	-4.00%	1
Meter Readers, Utilities	30	20	-4.00%	1
Tool Grinders, Filers & Sharpeners	30	20	-4.00%	1

c. Local industries and occupations that have a demand for skilled workers and have available jobs, today and projected over the next decade

The industries that have a demand for skilled workers and available and projected job openings (see chart “Industries with Highest Employment in the West Central WIA”) are reflected in the Occupations with Highest Estimated Annual Openings in the West Central WIA and the 2012 High-Priority Occupations for West Central Workforce Investment Area with Highest Projected Employment. It is important to direct workforce investments according to the growing occupations and industries in order to ensure that there will be the right supply of employees for both short and long term. It is also necessary to assist workers in the declining occupations that become dislocated in updating their skills and encouraging them towards growing industries.

d. Occupations that are most critical to the local economic base

By sheer number of employment, the top 10 occupations with the highest projected growth for the West Central WIA (see chart “Occupations with Highest Estimated Annual Openings in the West Central WIA”) are critical to the local economic base, employing 18,780 with projected growth to 20,120 by 2018 and a combined 661 estimated job openings per year.

Along with the occupations with the highest annual openings, the top 10 occupations with the highest 2011 Estimated Mean Annual Wages were: Dentists, General; Physicians & Surgeons, Other; Chief Executives; Marketing Managers; Sales Managers Occupation; Veterinarians; Pharmacists; Architectural & Engineering Manager; Purchasing Managers; and Lawyers. The salary range for these occupations is \$96,840 - \$237,560 with an average wage of \$137,134.

The 2012 High-Priority Occupations for West Central Workforce Investment Area that are projected to have the highest projected employment by 2020 are also critical to the economic base providing jobs with family-sustaining wages and opportunities for advancement to over 12,000 West Central residents.

2012 High-Priority Occupations for West Central Workforce Investment Area with Highest Projected Employment					
SOC Title	Educational Attainment	Annual Average (2011)	Estimated Employment 2010	Projected Employment 2020	Employment Percent Change 2010 - 2020
Registered Nurses	AD	\$53,540	2,020	2,350	16.34%
Office Clerks, General	ST OJT	\$24,890	2,230	2,280	2.24%
Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	WK EXP	\$37,480	1,840	1,990	8.15%
Customer Service Representatives	ST OJT	\$31,550	1,200	1,280	6.67%
Secretaries	ST OJT	\$27,200	1,340	1,250	-6.72%
Bookkeeping, Accounting & Auditing Clerks	MT OJT	\$31,570	1,160	1,190	2.59%
Supervisors - Retail Sales Workers	WK EXP	\$37,570	810	840	3.70%
Sales Representatives	MT OJT	\$55,720	840	830	-1.19%
Licensed Practical & Licensed Vocational Nurses	PS	\$35,920	670	700	4.48%
Automotive Service Technicians & Mechanics	LT OJT	\$38,980	670	700	4.48%

e. Skill needs for the available, critical, and projected jobs

According to the Center for Workforce Information & Analysis's Online Advertised Jobs Data, in 2011 of the 3,302 Jobs with listed education requirements, 57% required a High School Diploma or Equivalent; Nearly 18% required a Vocational School Certificate; almost 6% required an Associate's Degree; 17% required a Bachelor's Degree; 2% required a Master's Degree; and less than 1% required a Doctorate Degree.

Mean wage rates and total job openings by required education level on jobs advertised online for all Occupations in West Central WIA in 2011		
Education Level	Total Job Openings	Mean Wage
High School Diploma or Equivalent	1,913	\$25,545
Vocational School Certificate	527	\$39,609
Associates Degree	190	\$37,946
Bachelor's Degree	586	\$62,330
Master's Degree	70	\$54,580
Doctorate Degree	16	\$161,746

Along with education, there are specific skills and industry-specific certifications and credentials that employers require for more technical occupations and which employees must attain in order to progress in a career pathway. Additionally, many employers also require prior work experience. Of the total 14,194 online advertised job openings in the West Central WIA in 2011, 3,115 listed a required work experience. For those job openings requiring experience, nearly 57% required 1-2 years; 42% required 2-5 years; and less than 1% required more than 5 years experience.

f. Current and projected employment opportunities in the LWIA

Along with the Occupations with Highest Estimated Annual Openings in the West Central WIA (see table “Occupations with Highest Estimated Annual Openings in the West Central WIA”), the top 10 High Priority Occupations with the highest projected employment by 2020 (see table “2012 High-Priority Occupations for West Central Workforce Investment Area with Highest Projected Employment”) are Registered Nurses; Office Clerks, General; Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers; Customer Service Representatives; Secretaries; Bookkeeping, Accounting & Auditing Clerks; Supervisors - Retail Sales Workers; Sales Representatives; Licensed Practical & Licensed Vocational Nurses; and Automotive Service Technicians & Mechanics. The projected employment in these combined fields will near 27,000 by the end of the decade.

g. Job skills necessary to obtain employment opportunities (from C.2.f.)

As well as education and training knowledge requirements, there are requisite skills that job-seekers must have to obtain employment. Worker requirements represent developed or acquired attributes of an individual that may be related to work performance such as work-related knowledge and skill. Knowledge represents the acquisition of facts and principles about a domain of information, while experience lays the foundation for establishing procedures to work with given knowledge. These procedures are more commonly known as skills. O*NET defines Skills as the developed capacities that facilitate learning or the

more rapid acquisition of knowledge. They have enumerated 35 skills, 10 basic and 25 cross-functional (Complex Problem Solving, Resource Management, Social, Systems, and Technical) detailed in the chart below.

O*NET SKILL DEFINITIONS BY NUMBER		
Basic Skills: These capacities facilitate the acquisition of new knowledge and skills.		
#	Skill	Definition
1	Active Learning	Understanding the implications of new information for both current and future problem-solving and decision-making.
2	Active Listening	Giving full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times
3	Critical Thinking	Using logic and analysis to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions or approaches to problems.
4	Learning Strategies	Selecting and using training/instructional methods and procedures appropriate for the situation when learning or teaching new things.
5	Mathematics	Using Mathematics to solve problems.
6	Monitoring	Monitoring/Assessing performance of yourself, other individuals, or organizations to make improvements or take corrective action.
7	Reading Comprehension	Understanding written sentences and paragraphs in work-related documents.
8	Science	Using scientific tools and methods to solve problems.
9	Speaking	Talking to others to effectively convey information effectively.
10	Writing	Communicating effectively in writing as appropriate for the needs of the audience.
Cross Functional Skills: These skills facilitate performance in a variety of job settings.		
11	Complex Problem Solving	Identifying complex problems and reviewing related information to develop and evaluate options and implement solutions.
12	Coordination	Adjusting actions in relation to others' actions.
13	Equipment Maintenance	Performing routine maintenance on equipment and determining when and what kind of maintenance is needed.
14	Equipment Selection	Determining the kind of tools and equipment needed to do a job.
15	Installation	Installing equipment, machines, wiring, or programs to meet specifications.
16	Instructing	Teaching others how to do something.
17	Judgment and Decision Making	Considering the relative costs and benefits of potential actions to choose the most appropriate one.
18	Management of Financial Resources	Determining how money will be spent to get the work done, and accounting for these expenditures.

19	Management of Material Resources	Obtaining and seeing to the appropriate use of equipment, facilities, and materials needed to do certain work.
20	Management of Personnel Resources	Motivating, developing, and directing people as they work, identifying the best people for the job.
21	Negotiation	Bringing others together and trying to reconcile differences.
22	Operation and Control	Controlling operations of equipment or systems.
23	Operating Monitoring	Watching gauges, dials or other indicators to make sure a machine is working properly.
24	Operations Analysis	Analyzing needs and product requirements to create a design.
25	Persuasion	Persuading others to change their minds or behavior.
26	Programming	Writing computer programs for various purposes.
27	Quality Control Analysis	Conducting tests and inspections of products, services, or processes to evaluate quality or performance.
28	Repairing	Repairing machines or systems using the needed tools.
29	Service Orientation	Actively looking for ways to help people.
30	Social Perceptiveness	Being aware of others' reactions and understanding why they react as they do.
31	Systems Analysis	Determining how a system should work and how changes in conditions, operations, and environment will affect outcomes
32	Systems Evaluation	Identifying measures or indicators of system performance and the actions needed to improve or correct performance, relative to the goals of the system.
33	Technology Design	Generating or adapting equipment and technology to serve user needs.
34	Time Management	Managing one's own time and the time of others.
35	Troubleshooting	Determining causes of operating errors and deciding what to do about it.

The skills associated with the available, critical and projected occupations can be found in the charts below:

Skill Chart for Occupations with Highest Estimated Annual Openings and 2012 High Priority Occupations with Highest Projected Employment for West Central WIA	
Occupation	O*NET Skills needed
Automotive Service Technicians & Mechanics	2,3,11,13,14,17,22,23,27,28,35
Bookkeeping, Accounting & Auditing Clerks	2,3,5,6,7,9,10,30,34
Cashiers	2,5,9,29,30
Childcare Workers	2,3,6,7,9,12,17,29,30,34
Combined Food Preparation & Serving Workers	2,6,9,12,16,29,30
Customer Service Representatives	2,3,7,9,10,12,21,25,29,30
Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	2,3,6,7,17,22,23,28,34,35

Janitors & Cleaners	N/A
Licensed Practical & Licensed Vocational Nurses	2,3,6,7,9,12,17,29,30,34
Office Clerks, General	2,3,7,9,10,29,30,34
Personal Care Aides	2,3,6,9,11,12,17,29,30
Registered Nurses	2,3,6,7,8,9,12,17,29,30
Retail Salespersons	2,3,6,7,9,12,21,25,29,30
Sales Representatives	2,3,7,9,12,17,21,25,29,30
Secretaries	1,2,6,7,9,10,12,29,30,34
Supervisors - Retail Sales Workers	2,3,6,9,11,12,20,29,30,34
Waiters & Waitresses	2,6,9,12,17,29,30

The top three basic skills, capacities facilitate the acquisition of new knowledge and skills, required by these occupations are Active Listening, Speaking, and Critical Thinking. The top cross functional skills, skills that facilitate performance in a variety of job settings are Service Orientation and Social Perceptiveness (tied as #1), Coordination, and Time Management. These skills need to be developed in tandem with the education and technical training required by the occupations.

h. Current and projected demographics of the available labor pool, including the incumbent workforce

According to the Census’s 2008 American Community Survey, more than 26% of the employed labor force in the West Central WIA is 45-54 years old with an additional 20% aged 35-44 years and another 16% 55-64 years old. Additionally, those aged 16-34 account for less than one-third of the workforce with those 16-24 years old comprising a mere 14% of the employed workforce with the same group accounting for over a third of the unemployed labor force.

With nearly half of the employed workforce over 45 years old, the problems of an aging workforce exacerbate the skills shortage that is already present. Additionally the high youth and young adult unemployment rate mean that much of the population is not gaining work experience and on-the-job skills that will be necessary for them to replace the workers that will be retiring over the next decade.

i. Current LWIA skill gaps and skill gaps projected to occur over the next decade

In Lawrence and Mercer Counties, nearly 87% of those aged 25 and older have a High School Diploma or more with almost 19% having a Bachelor’s Degree or higher (See chart “West Central WIA Educational Attainment”).

West Central WIA Educational Attainment	
Category	2010 Estimate
Population 18 to 24 years	18,808
Less than high school graduate	13.70%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	34.15%
Some college or associate's degree	43.10%
Bachelor's degree or higher	9.10%
Population 25 years and over	
Less than 9th grade	4.05%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	9.15%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	45.00%
Some college, no degree	15.90%
Associate's degree	7.05%
Bachelor's degree	12.80%
Graduate or professional degree	6.00%
Percent high school graduate or higher	86.80%
Percent bachelor's degree or higher	18.80%

Looking at the Minimum Required Education Level on Job Openings Advertised Online in West Central WIA in 2011 (See chart “Mean wage rates and total job openings by required education level on jobs advertised online for all Occupations in West Central WIA in 2011”), of the 3,302 openings, 20% of those required a Bachelor’s degree or higher.

j. Workforce investment needs of businesses, jobseekers, and workers in the LWIA

In order to address the current and projected workforce and skills gaps for the industries and occupations that have a demand for skilled workers and have available jobs today and projected over the next decade, it is necessary to develop a workforce with the appropriate education, skills and experience to fill the projected needs over the short and long term. Workforce investments are needed

not only monetarily, supporting education and training for individuals, but in time spent with employers and education providers to determine workforce needs and career pathways that provide industry-recognized, stackable credentials.

k. “In-migration” and “out-migration” of workers that impact the local labor pool

The issue of “in” and “out” migration patterns of the labor force is relevant to the economic growth potential of the West Central LWIA inasmuch as job creation may be stimulated or hampered by the available pool of talent. First we will review data for each county and then aggregate that information for the area in general. Then we will state our assumptions, quantify our projections and draw conclusions.

In Lawrence County, of workers 16 years and over, 31.6% worked outside county of the county. The county subdivision with the highest out-migration was Little Beaver township with 70.8% of the workforce leaving the county to work and the subdivision with the least out-migration was New Castle city, with only 18.9% of its workforce leaving the county to work. (Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3, Matrices P26, P30, P31, P33, P43, P45, and P46). Of a total 12,733 out-commuters, 9,993 or 78% worked in another county in Pennsylvania, 2,572 or 20% worked in Ohio with the remainder (less than 1% each) working in the states of West Virginia, New Jersey, Georgia, New York, Virginia, Indiana, Texas, South Carolina, Kentucky, Florida, Illinois, Maryland, and Alabama. (Source: Decennial Commuting Patterns out of Lawrence County, PA for 2000)

In-commuters residing in another county, but working in Lawrence County totaled 8,192. Of the in-commuters, 6,902 or 84% came from another Pennsylvania County, 1,077 or 13% resided in Ohio and the remainder (each less than 1% of the total) came from 13 states: New Jersey, Delaware, West Virginia, Georgia, Maryland, Florida, New York, Michigan, Illinois, Virginia, California, Texas, and Rhode Island.

In Mercer County 21.1% of workers 16 years and over were employed outside of the county. The county subdivision with the highest percentage of the workforce leaving the county for employment was French Creek Township with 70.7% out-migration and the subdivision with the least out-migration was Hempfield Township with only 10.4% of the workforce leaving the county for employment. (Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3, Matrices P26, P30, P31, P33, P43, P45, and P46). Of a total 10,773 out-commuters, 6,112 or 56% worked in another county in Pennsylvania, 4,401 or 40% worked in Ohio with the remainder (less than 1% each) working in the states of New York, Florida, New Jersey, Virginia, Indiana, West Virginia, Georgia, Illinois, Wisconsin, Kentucky, Tennessee, Iowa, Kansas, Maryland, California, Nebraska, Texas, Connecticut, Michigan, Washington, and Mississippi. (Source: Decennial Commuting Patterns out of Lawrence County, PA for 2000)

A total of 10,660 workers who resided in another county in-commuted into Mercer County to work. Of these in-commuters 7,188 or 67% commuted from other counties in Pennsylvania, 3,265 or 30% came from Ohio and the remaining in-commuters (each less than 1% of the total) came from Illinois, New Jersey, West Virginia, Delaware, Virginia, Texas, Colorado, Maryland, New York, Iowa, Nevada, Michigan, Alabama, California and Georgia.

At this point we will aggregate the information for the West Central Workforce Investment Area as a whole based upon the analysis of the two counties employment migration patterns. 26% of the available labor pool aged 16 and above or 25,403 individuals are recorded as working outside their respective county of residence. According to the Workforce Analysis: Ohio and Pennsylvania's Five County Interstate Region (2008), only about 5% of this group commute within the LWIA area travelling from Mercer to Lawrence or visa-versa. This means that 21% or 20,700 workers are made unavailable to businesses physically situated in the LWIA boundaries. Conversely "in" migration of workers into the LWIA is tabulated at about 18,852 with 23% of these hailing from Ohio (4,342) and 75% from other Pennsylvania Counties (14,090). Only 2.2% (420) were recorded as from a plethora of other states. We estimate that the total "in" migration of workers historically at any given time composes up to 19% of the LWIA workforce. Once again using information from the interstate research document cited above, a 5% LWIA intra-migration is probable meaning that roughly only about 14,000 jobs in the LWIA as a whole are filled with individuals from without the area.

We make the following assumptions moving forward. First, the cost of transportation is a prime factor in decisions related to commuting to a job. Secondly, concentrated hubs of employment with higher wages will draw more labor assets from greater distances proportionate to the magnitude of the wage differential over and above those offered in the residential area. Third, individual in the labor market at the periphery of a defined geographical area are as likely to accept work outside their jurisdictional boundary within short commuting distance given wage parity, for example, if only minimum wage is available in a 15 mile radius near a border area and the individual has no specific skill or experience to command a higher wage beyond this parameter, then the chief factors for "out" migration would be an employer's desire to hire and the job seeker's willingness to perform the specific type of work. Fourth, since the 1970s the marked decline in population in the LWIA counties can be directly attributed to the downturn of the steel industry and manufacturing in general which had previously provided higher family sustaining wages. The concomitant loss of those jobs motivated many younger potentially higher skilled individuals to leave the area migrating to other regions of the country exhibiting job and wage growth thus fueling population decline. Additionally, the loss of these jobs and the various spin-off and ancillary jobs created a labor surplus for the remaining labor pool in the two counties thereby keeping wages low for the most part.

With the current upsurge in manufacturing occurring in the region, partially due to a more profitable economic climate in the U.S. as compared with other global competitor countries in the wake of the world-wide recession as well as technological innovations produced indigenously as well as the development of the Marcellus Shale energy here, accelerated job creation requiring skilled labor is beginning to have a marked impact upon the labor pool. It is expected that many of the “out” migration workers from within the LWIA will begin returning to the two counties as higher wage jobs are established since we estimate that more than half of these commuting workers travel to higher paying jobs in the larger metropolitan districts surrounding the OH-PENN region, i.e., Allegheny, Erie, Cuyahoga for example. If we factor out those intra-commuting between Lawrence and Mercer, then the creation of similar jobs of equal or near equal wages should attract these “out” commuters to fill the new jobs since the equal or nearly equal wages would become more attractive based upon the advantage of a significantly lower driving distance and lower expenditure on gasoline. It is not unreasonable to speculate that 20% of “out” commuters would be influenced by this transportation advantage thus drawing approximately 4,000 higher skilled individuals back to their area of residence. Similarly, “in” commuters should increase in direct proportion to the job and wage growth making Mercer and Lawrence Counties more attractive to talent in contiguous areas whose distance to work cost ratio is currently diminished by the higher wage garnered in travelling for better paying jobs. If there were only a 10% increase of “in” commuters based upon the new job creation needing skilled work, another 1,400 in commuters might be enticed to take advantage of the energy dividend related to commuting to equal or nearly equal to current skilled positions at a greater distance. However, the West Central LWIB will concentrate on training and retraining activities for the dislocated and emerging workforce as well incumbent workers in order to have these new jobs filled by local community residents.

D. KEY PRIORITIES AND GOALS

1. Based on the LWIB’s vision and its economic and labor market analysis, identify the key workforce development priorities for the local area.

Within the context of WIAs legislative mandate to provide universal services for employers and job seekers, the West Central LWIB has identified four key workforce priorities based upon the aforementioned strategic vision and labor market analysis. The following coincide in order with the goals set forth previously in Section I, B:

Priority 1: Institute a quantitative measure for job seekers to benchmark their skills against in demand and high priority occupations in the region.

Priority 2: Improve on job seeker/employer transactions by facilitating information based decisions using data and research on both ends of the interaction.

Priority 3: Align regional educational efforts with industry needs for critical high priority

occupations.

Priority 4: Utilize all available workforce development and education resources as well as leveraging additional funds in order to maximize training efforts and stretch diminishing allocations.

2. Strategies to address each key priority, and the goals to be achieved.

a. Strategies will align with the governor's priorities outlined in the State Plan.

These priorities and the strategies by which they will be accomplished are calibrated with the governor's priorities as outlined in the state plan. For instance, regarding the first priority, the West Central LWIB has determined that in order to develop a competitive workforce in line with the needs of existing and emerging businesses in the region, individuals and companies should be encouraged to make career and hiring decisions based upon informed decisions. For the job seeker, this entails an objective assessment of skills, achievement and interest. Toward that end, the LWIB has insisted that core and intensive services within its jurisdictions' CareerLinks[®] make available quantitative measures by which to benchmark these factors such as the World Wide Interactive Network (WIN), SAGE, Work Keys and Prove It. This will assist job seekers in making better employment and training decisions and decreasing inappropriate referrals for on-the-job training and other workplace based programs as well increasing the likelihood of completion of education and/or training programs.

To some extent this strategy supports the second priority also, inasmuch as assessment result become information on the job seeker side for making informed decisions. Additionally, career research and exploration utilizing various other tools such as O*NET, Occupational Outlook Guides, labor market information supplied by the Center for Workforce Information and Analysis (CWIA), job fairs, site tours/visits and work experience will provide other data conduits infusing the supply side of the transaction with increased information. On the demand, i.e., employer, side of the transaction, Business Service Teams and industry partnership liaison staff will work with businesses to fine tune and more specifically define the skills and, when relevant, credentials concomitant with the job titles appearing in listed job orders so that the two sides of the transaction will be better aligned.

The third priority builds on the preceding two by combining the information obtained from drilling down at each extremity of the employment transaction, i.e., job seeker and employer poles, to increase the flow of qualified applicants into the talent pipeline by informing the training and education sector of specifics necessary to modify or redesign curricula. In this way, those newly entering the labor market will be better fitted with skills and industry recognized credentials required by in demand and high priority occupations. This strategic approach to

align workforce education by infusing qualitative and quantitative elements derived from the private sector businesses that create jobs in the region and benchmarking skills gap deficiencies of the potential labor pool of the region should allow for a greater and more accurate dissemination of the cognitive and technical abilities required by the 21st century knowledge based economy.

Finally, these measured strategies, along with administrative and programmatic efficiencies promoting a systematic utilization of all relevant financial resources, will create an environment of fiscal responsibility and competitive growth for the LWIA and one-stop affiliates by allowing individual program dollars to reach further by widening the expanse of businesses and citizens benefitting from workforce services. Thus, the priority four goal of building a strong fiscal foundation will be achieved by targeted spending and fiscal management at all levels of the public workforce system.

b. Strategies will support the best interests of jobseekers and employers and the economic development plans for the local area, and the key partnerships necessary to successfully implement the LWIB's strategies. Roles of specific entities and programs and how the partnerships and priorities will meet the needs of employers and jobseekers.

The strategies outlined above are expected to support the best interests of both job seekers and employers by planning in tandem with local and regional economic development organizations and educational institutions with the goal of implementing a compatible network of programs aimed at growing the economy and creating jobs while concurrently investing in education and skills training supportive of family sustaining employment. Key partnerships have been constructed and will be maintained toward this end. Thus, industry partnerships based upon local driver clusters, local and regional economic development organizations, educational institutions and consortia, local and regional government bodies and community based organizations will continue to be pillars of the LWIB strategy. The West Central LWIA has identified and participated in the organization of four cluster based industry partnerships: (1) Advanced Manufacturing and Diversified Materials, (2) Building and Construction Trades, (3) Transportation Education and Economic Network and (4) Health Care. These groups' private sector members provide subject matter experts for strategic and tactical planning as well as hosting student tours, participation in job fairs, work experience and on-the-job training sites and serving as board members, advisors and ambassadors. In this manner, they provide information for design and program modification and most importantly employment opportunities in the key industry segments noted for NW#145.

On the regional economic development level, the Northwest Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission, i.e., the Local Development District (LDD) which includes Lawrence and Mercer Counties, has included LWIB representation on the consortia sub-committee for the Partnerships for

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

The West Central LWIB is interlocked with the areas key educational institutions at various levels. Both the Mercer and Lawrence County Career and Technical Center (CTC) directors are members of the LWIB and have significant roles on the Youth Council. Through this relationship the LWIB has access and meets periodically with all the superintendents of the county public schools. Additionally, the CTC directors along with the Executive Director of Workforce Development sit on Butler County Community College's Advisory Committee for the Lawrence Crossing and Linden Pointe campuses in the jurisdiction. This connectivity forms the basis for the education sector to interface with the workforce development system. Through this nexus, the goal of using cross information to mutually focus leveraged resources toward meeting current industry needs by providing relevant training is sought. Proprietary educational institutions are also linked to the system as well as business supporters of the local one stop centers.

The Lawrence and Mercer County Commissioners serve as the West Central Job Partnership Governing Board and provide oversight for the financial, administrative and programmatic operations of Workforce Investment Act and other funding related to NW#145's execution and maintenance of workforce development activities through the one stop system. This oversight insures the goal of maintaining a strong and viable fiscal foundation upon which to carry out the aforementioned goals and strategies for the LWIA. Commissioners from both counties also serve on the LDD and local economic development boards assuring that workforce and economic development activities are coordinated and targeted.

Many community based organizations are represented on the West Central LWIB such as the Mercer County Community Action Partnership, Adult Education

Lawrence County, Challenges Options on Aging, Mercer County Housing Authority and both county lead economic development agencies. Additionally, the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Mercer County Assistance Office and all mandatory programs of the Department of Labor and Industry are represented on the LWIB. These representatives also serve on the board's sub-committees insuring that goals and program design issues consider the wide constituencies of citizens, i.e., disabled individuals, veterans, dislocated workers, older workers, economically disadvantaged persons, etc., are given the opportunity to receive services and connect with employers through the talent pipeline. An even wider expanse of community based organizations are enlisted at the CareerLink® operations level to provide input, facilitate entry of their key populations into the employment and training programs at these centers and serve as conduits of information to the community at large. These include the Urban League of Shenango Valley, Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce, Shenango Valley Chamber of Commerce, Experience Works, Lawrence County Housing Authority, etc.

c. Strategies for meeting the workforce needs of the local area's employers, including strategies that support the creation and sustainability of small businesses and new and emerging industries.

The aforementioned partnership groups will provide the input necessary for the West Central LWIB to enact strategies informed by both the demand and supply side of the job seeker/employer transaction. That is, a by targeted engagement of employer groups, i.e., (1) driver industry groups requiring specific knowledge based skills and/or credentials of applicants and (2) high labor demand businesses that only require applicants to have general basic knowledge and/or soft skills, program planning will drill down to better determine both qualitatively and quantitatively what high priority and demand occupations seek from their applicants. These findings will be disseminated and made available to job seekers and those seeking training. Concomitantly, educational institution will be brought into the conversation to assist in aligning their training offerings with driver industry knowledge amplification needs. Economic development agencies will likewise be apprised of this information to enable them to enhance attraction and growth strategies based upon local cluster synergies. This strategic cycle of employer and educational agency engagement, informed decision making, two way communication and workforce system transformation by improved modification should result in a more competitive workforce, a better connection between job seekers and employers, an improved pipeline of talent built on a fiscally sound foundation utilizing scarce resources in a thoughtful and economic manner.

It is also projected that this methodological approach will sustain and support not only existing and driver industries in the LWIA but, also, will contribute to small businesses as well as new and emerging industries. The CareerLink® Business Service Teams led by the local site administrators focus on human resource issues

for small and moderate size businesses that include recruitment, training as well as a wide range of other services on an ad hoc basis as needed. Working with local chambers of commerce, site administrators coordinate regular outreach to the business community in order to assist in their growth and maintenance regarding talent issues. Similarly, the LWIB membership includes an even distribution of private sector members that represent small, moderate and larger companies in the two counties. This provides representation from a wide variety of employer segments at the policy level. The West Central LWIB keeps aware of trends on both the national, state and trans-regional levels to keep abreast of emerging industries and the occupations related to their operations. Examples of this can be seen with regard to the Marcellus Shale natural gas development in Pennsylvania. The LWIB was represented on early efforts to organize energy consortia in both the north central and southwestern regions and was a collaborator in the Three Rivers Energy Region project that ultimately became ShaleNet. On another level, the West Central LWIB supports and maintains direct communication with the three main business incubators operative in Mercer and Lawrence counties as well as the OH-PENN Interstate Region, i.e., the Youngstown Business Incubator. This allows the workforce system to be cognizant of emerging industries and assist in the development of talent necessary to grow these start-up companies to eventual independence.

3. Plans for increasing engagement with business, industry, education, economic development, and community organizations to achieve greater participation within the local workforce system, in order to identify workforce challenges and develop strategies and solutions to address those challenges.

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

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

4. Regional or sector strategies tailored to the LWIA's economy, and how these strategies intersect with the state's strategies.

The current structure of the LWIA's economy is impacted by three major factors: (a) proximity to the Ohio border and its metropolitan influence, which the federal government has recognized as an interstate Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), that sprawls into the West Central jurisdiction, (b) the development of the Marcellus and Utica Shale gas and oil deposits that run through the two counties and (c) legacy assets consisting in a high concentration of manufacturing infrastructure and skills base. These three factors have given rise to three major strategic initiatives tailored to capitalize and benefit from these circumstances. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and its sister State of Ohio in 2009 co-designated the two West Central counties and those bordering contiguously across the state line, i.e., Columbiana, Mahoning and Trumbull, consisting of LWIA Areas 17 and 18, as the nation's first officially designated interstate workforce region under the Workforce Investment Act. Regional and local leaders acknowledged the joint labor pool, supply chains and educational resources and petitioned their respective governors for the opportunity to collaborate, plan and coordinate in a cross border initiative. This initiative preceded and provided a template in the three state ShaleNet project that joined community colleges and LWIAs in Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia. Early recognition of the drain that the emerging gas drilling and transmission industry would place upon the local labor pool has mobilized manufacturing industry partnerships on both sides of the border to work together forming the OH-PENN Manufacturing Initiative which held its inaugural regional summit at Youngstown State University in April of 2012. Initial analysis indicated that both the emerging energy industry and the reinvigorated manufacturing sector would draw labor with similar skill sets thus placing a strain on recruitment and possibly inhibiting growth. This initiative seeks to codify, create and disseminate defined career pathways that will facilitate individuals in navigating through the educational and training terrain to obtain jobs and career maps by which workers can advance within the sector. These three strategies intersect with the state's strategies in the following manner: studies have consistently shown that Pennsylvania employers as well as their Ohio counterparts share the same labor pool. The coordination of the five interstate one stop career centers benefits employers and job seekers by allowing for the widest expanse of probable commuter labor to be matched with job openings. Thus, the interstate partnership allows for coordination in developing a competitive workforce by considering business needs irrespective of state boundaries, creates more familiarity with significant Ohio employers who hire Pennsylvania residents promoting better connections at both ends of the transaction, utilizes educational resources such as the Youngstown University STEM College to build a better pipeline of talent for local industries and creates possibilities for leveraging additional federal and foundation funding.

5. LWIB strategy to coordinate discretionary and formula-based investments across programs in support of the vision, including how the LWIB will use program funds to leverage other federal, state, local, and private resources to effectively and efficiently provide services.

This interstate partnership has provided opportunities for the West Central LWIB along with its partner LWIBs in Ohio to aggregate information compiled regarding discretionary and formula based investments made with state WIA allocation funds to illustrate the impact of regional planning in targeting resources to support high priority occupations and driver industries. For example, in a one year period January through December of 2011, the three LWIBs obligated or expended 51% of available WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker Training Funds to the two targeted regional clusters, Manufacturing and Health Care or \$6.2 million dollars. These funds when aggregated amounted to training 1195 individuals at a per person cost of \$5188. This aggregation of training activities was accomplished by compiling joint information and providing it to the OH-PENN Competitiveness Council which oversees the planning, collaboration and coordination of the three LWIBs. This combined effort leveraged \$550,000 between 2010 and 2011 from the Wal-Mart Foundation “America Works!” initiative and most recently an award from the U.S. Department of Labor “Workforce Innovation Fund” granting West Central as the fiscal agent for the interstate region \$6 million dollars for a three year period to expand and promulgate a career pathways strategy for the interstate manufacturing sector partnership. West Central also received \$20,000 Raymond John **Wean Foundation** Funds to assist the newly formed Mahoning Valley Manufacturers Coalition. Similarly, the West Central LWIB has benefitted local job seekers through its involvement and support of the ShaleNet initiative and has training entry level workers into the gas drilling industry utilizing these Community Based Job Training Funds administered by the Westmoreland Community College for the three state partnership.

6. Integrated cross-program strategies for specific populations and sub-populations.

At the local level, the LWIB provides oversight and guidance to one stop program staff to explore and integrate strategic options for cross program utilization whenever possible. The LWIB works to ensure that additional and specialized services are made available and provided to targeted populations to help increase their employability. Included are individuals with disabilities, older workers, veterans, ex-offenders, TANF customers and low-income individuals. In many cases, these individuals face multiple and unique barriers to employment.

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

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

- Businesses – CareerLink® staff are trained to assist employers input job orders into CWDS and screen applicants for vacancies listed.
- Partner Programs - The physical co-location of the partner agencies affords a unified team approach to service all customer populations accessing the PA CareerLinks®. The majority of partner agencies have staff facilitate in the Career Resource Areas and all staff have been cross-trained regarding services offered by partner agencies. Therefore, all staff are able to refer customers to services offered in the PA CareerLinks® and/or partner agencies, as well as other services available in the community.
- Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers - The local area does not have a significant population of migrant and/or seasonal farm workers. Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers (MSFW) will receive qualitatively equivalent and quantitatively proportionate services equal to those provided to all other customers. MSFWs will receive the full range of employment services, benefits and protections including counseling, testing, and job and training referral services. In providing such services, all PA CareerLink® offices will consider the preferences, needs, and skills of individual MSFWs.
- Persons with disabilities - individuals with a self-identified disability or observable disability are referred to the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR). OVR and Title I staff will coordinate and jointly develop a plan to maximize funding for disabled individuals. Title I funding may be combined with OVR funding if skills training is deemed an appropriate activity for the individual. OVR may be able to provide hardware or tools to assist a disabled individual in the workplace. For example, Title I funding may be used to provide OJT training with an employer and OVR funding may be used to purchase a large print computer screen for a seeing impaired person to be placed at the employer's place of business.
- Veterans - all individuals who have served in the military are referred to BWPO's Veterans Services Representative for job matching and referrals. In addition, veterans may receive all other scheduled PA CareerLink® services and scheduled for workshops and other core services offered by any partner agency and/or staff. Veterans may be referred for WIA application if intensive services are deemed appropriate.
- TANF Customers and low-income individuals - all low-income individuals are referred to the County Assistance Office (CAO) for assistance in removing barriers that may prevent them from attending training or obtaining and/or retaining employment. TANF recipients will also be referred to partner agencies and/or community agencies for assistance in other areas such as drug and alcohol counseling, housing issues, etc.
- Displaced Homemakers - For the purpose of determining eligibility, a displaced homemaker is defined as an individual who has been providing unpaid services to

family members in the home and who: has been dependent on the income of another family member but is no longer supported by that income and is unemployed or underemployed and is experiencing difficulty in obtaining or upgrading employment.

- Women and Minorities - As part of career research activities, women are encouraged to review careers that are held predominately by men (non-traditional employment). They are instructed to compare wages of the non-traditional occupations to those more traditionally pursued by women. Employers are encouraged to hire women in non-traditional jobs. Employers who hire women to fill non-traditional employment vacancies via On the Job Training contracts (TAA and Title I) may receive an additional 40 hours of wage reimbursement. Minorities are mainstreamed into PA CareerLink[®] core services and all services and activities available in WIA Title I funded programs.
- Individuals with Multiple Barriers to Employment
 - Older Individuals – referrals are made to Experience Works or Lawrence County Social Services for program information and assistance. Older individuals are mainstreamed through the regular PA CareerLink[®] processes and activities. All Title I programs are open to older individuals without bias. Any older individuals determined to be “job ready” will be referred to BWPO staff for job matching and referrals.
 - Persons with limited English proficiency - Language Line provides interpreter services for any individual with limited English proficiency. All partner agencies located at the PA CareerLink[®] were trained to use the Language Line system. Recently, the Commonwealth notified all PA CareerLinks[®] that the Language Line service is available to all PA CareerLink[®] staff and the cost will be absorbed by the State. Training is provided to all staff once per year at capacity training on how to access Language Line services.
 - Individuals with Disabilities - Both PA CareerLinks[®] in the Local Workforce Investment Area are handicap accessible and have a variety of equipment to assist individuals with disabilities such as: TTY telephones to accommodate people with hearing impairments; furniture (tables) to accommodate people in wheelchairs; and magnification devices to accommodate people with visual impairments. If individuals need additional services beyond core services a WIA Title I application will be taken. If determined to be eligible, all WIA Title I programs will be made available without bias. Title I staff will coordinate and jointly develop a plan with Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) to maximize funding for disabled individuals. Title I funding may be combined with OVR funding if skills training is deemed an appropriate activity for the individual. OVR may be able to provide hardware or tools to assist a disabled individual in the workplace. For example, Title I funding may be used to provide OJT training with an employer and OVR funding may be used to purchase a large print computer screen for a seeing impaired person to be placed at the employer’s place of business.

- Ex-offenders - are mainstreamed through the regular PA CareerLink[®] processes and activities. All Title I programs are open to ex-offenders without bias. Any ex-offender determined to be “job ready” will be referred to BWPO staff for job matching and referrals. PA CareerLink[®] Mercer County has partnered with the Department of Corrections, State Regional Correctional Facility - Mercer (SRCFM), Department of Probation and Parole, and Community Corrections Center to provide inmates orientations to PA CareerLink[®] services. Once a month PA CareerLink[®] partner agency staff travels to SRCFM to provide soon to be released inmates a full overview of the services available at the PA CareerLink[®]. Once the inmates are released to the Community Corrections Center the ex-offenders are mainstreamed through the regular PA CareerLink[®] processes and activities. All Title I programs are open to older individuals without bias. A steering committee comprised of representatives from the County Assistance Office, Probation and Parole, Community Corrections Center, BWPO and the Title I provider meet once a month to review activities of the program. A computerized database was created to track the services provided and the progress of participants. Services are also entered into the PA CareerLink[®] system.
- Dislocated Workers – Title I staff checks the PA CareerLink[®] system to determine if a WARN notice has been filed for a dislocated worker’s former employer. If so, the BWPO staff and Title I staff will coordinate efforts to serve the dislocated worker. Title I staff will schedule and administer a full array of assessments for any individual who seeks funding (Title I and/or TAA) to attend training. Assessment results are reviewed to assure the client’s interests and aptitudes match the training for which they are seeking funding. If the client is suitable for training, an employment plan will be developed jointly by BWPO and Title I staff to maximize the funding package for dislocated workers and outline the steps needed to guide the client through training and lead them to employment. Referrals are made to all appropriate supportive service agencies that could potentially assist in eliminating barriers in the training to employment process.
- Trade Act Eligible Individuals - BWPO staff first meet with the individual affected by a lay off or downsizing and the company has a WARN notice on file. If an individual is interested in re-training and applying for TAA funding, they are first referred to the WIA Title I provider for interest and aptitude assessment to assure the occupational field of interest is one in which they will be successful. The WIA Title I staff completes a WIA application for services and schedules the individual for assessment. Once tested the WIA Title I staff sends a recommendation to BWPO staff to approve or deny training along with the assessment results. BWPO forwards the TAA application for funding to the Commonwealth. Once approved the individual is co-enrolled in the PA CareerLink[®] system and WIA systems. WIA Title I staff will process an Individual Training Account (ITA) is the training is over and above the State’s training cap. All WIA Dislocated Worker and/or Rapid Response supportive services are available as needed to all co-enrolled individuals.

Strategies to provide services to special populations:

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

All CareerLink[®] customers may be referred to other community agency services such as, but not limited to: Community Action Partnerships for housing needs and transportation needs; CCIS for child care services; Human Service agencies for mental health counseling; Drug & Alcohol for counseling services; Job Corps for older youth referrals; etc.

7. LWIB strategies to connect youth to education and training opportunities that lead to employment, ensuring that students, parents, teachers, counselors, and school administrators have access to quality data regarding career pathways and options.

WCJP’s LWIB and Youth Council are very committed to designing and implementing a strategic plan in Lawrence and Mercer Counties that align all youth activities and services (regardless of the funding source) to promote skill development and work-based learning experiences and result in a talent supply for area industries and employers.

Career Pathways - West Central LWIB on behalf of the Mercer and Lawrence jurisdiction in PA (NW#145) and Ohio LWIA Areas #17 and #18 (Columbiana, Mahoning and Trumbull counties) prepared and submitted a proposal for the Federal DOL Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) grant. The partnership was awarded six million dollars for a three year period beginning July 1, 2012 to implement a comprehensive career pathways network for the advanced manufacturing industry sector within the five-county region. The proposal outlined strategies to increase awareness of career pathways to youth, parents and schools through job fairs, internships, work-experience, pre-apprenticeship programs, community outreach and awareness and coordination with Career and Technical Centers and other training facilities. These WIF activities will create a template that can be replicated for the other driver industries (energy-sector jobs) relevant to the LWIA. It is surmised that increasing awareness and facilitating access to career pathways services should bolster drop-out prevention and enhance re-engagement of high school age youth.

STEM Education - WCJP is represented on the steering committee of the NW PA's Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) network working to create regional STEM strategies for its stakeholders. Individuals in Armstrong, Butler, Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Indiana, Jefferson, Lawrence, Mercer, Venango, and Warren counties collaborate and share programs that expand options for students to acquire literacy to prepare them for high-demand, high-skill, high-wage careers. The NW PA STEM network held its fourth annual conference entitled STEM Skills Today, Economic Vitality for the Future on May 12, 2012 at Edinboro University. The STEM network will receive funds from the PA Higher Education PA State System of Higher Education for a field trip for a group of students from the counties listed above to travel to Penn State University, main campus, to tour the nanotechnology center.

Labor Market-Based Career Development – WCJP provides professional development activities to high school administrators, counselors, career education teachers, etc. relative to high priority occupations (HPOs) in the LWIA. Information includes education requirements needed for the occupations and the entry level wages an individual can expect to earn and apprenticeship programs that do not require a college degree. WCJP hopes to continue to offer the Guidance Counselor Boot Camp again this year to showcase Industry Partnership employers. Small groups of school guidance counselors toured local companies to learn about the variety of occupations and the education and training students need if they want to pursue those careers. Demonstrations are provided on how to: conduct a job search on the PA CareerLink® website; navigate the PA Workforce Development website to locate careers in demand and occupational wages; navigate websites that contain numerous Career Education and Work Standards activities; and utilize the PA Career Guide, etc. This same information is provided to youth during career exploration workshops, and to parents during evening parent involvement events.

Advanced Manufacturing, and Energy-Sector Jobs – In addition to information outlined above in the career pathways section, youth contractors utilize numerous websites and materials that promote advanced manufacturing and energy-sector occupations. Examples include: Industry Needs You website at www.industryneedsyou.com; Careers in Oil & Gas Extraction Industry dvd; PA Career Gates compact disk (cd) set sponsored

by the PA Department of Labor and Industry; ShaleNet website at www.shalenet.org. Industrial Career Fairs are held yearly where high school students are informed about modern manufacturing as a career path and job opportunities in the local area, skills and wages of the openings and a chance to meet with local manufacturing representatives and education and training providers.

8. LWIB strategies to ensure that eligible youth—including disconnected youth and youth with multiple barriers—have the opportunity to develop and achieve career goals through education and workforce training.

The LWIB and/or Youth Council membership includes representatives from community based organizations that serve youth, the juvenile justice system, various education agencies, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), County Assistance Office (CAO), public housing authorities, etc. These representatives act as ambassadors to market the WIA programs and the education/training assistance that is available to eligible youth including youth with disabilities. WCJP staff attends various community meetings (superintendent and guidance counselor meetings, Lawrence County School to Work, Prevention Coalition, Council of Community Services, etc) and provide information on WIA program activities to recruit youth who would benefit from the education/training assistance available through WIA funding and other CareerLink[®] partner agencies.

The **younger youth program** was procured as a drop-out prevention/career awareness program and all activities are designed to align with the PA Department of Education's Career Education and Work Standards (CEWS). Drop-out prevention activities include: tutoring sessions for assistance with academic deficiencies such as reading or math and homework assignments; meeting with high school guidance counselor to assure youth course credits and progress are sufficient to graduate or move to the next grade level etc.; parent involvement activities that include higher educational opportunities and sources of financial assistance; credit recovery programs for students who lack sufficient credits to graduate with their classmates; summer school to earn credits for failed courses; Career awareness activities include: review of high priority occupations in the local area; exploring careers on the O*Net website, career readiness workshops offering instruction on resumes and cover letters, educational levels and experience needed for career of choice, and entry level wages of various careers, overcoming barriers, dress for success, communication skills, attitude and enthusiasm, personality/character traits - self evaluation; career and job fairs; college fairs including financial assistance information; KeyTrain[®] e-mentoring from community and business leaders; KeyTrain[®] web-based career exploration; instruction on the use of the PA CareerLink[®] website to explore occupational possibilities and employment opportunities available in the local area; physical tours of the PA CareerLink[®] sites; introduction to DVDs and other materials produced by the Industry Partnerships operated in the Local Workforce Investment Area; identification of nontraditional jobs for both male and female participants, information about available nontraditional training programs, counseling regarding barriers that may prohibit entry into a nontraditional field, and the resources available to assist with training costs and elimination of barriers; field trips to local high priority occupation

employers in the area; etc. Youth also participate in various voluntary community service projects such as Global Youth Services Day and Make a Difference Day.

The **older youth program** was procured as a career exploration, literacy instruction leading the National Career Readiness Certificate®, tuition assistance for higher education, and job search/job placement assistance program. Career exploration activities include: review of high priority occupations in the local area; instruction on the use of the PA CareerLink® website to explore employment opportunities available in the local area; exploring careers on the O*Net website; career readiness workshops offering instruction on resumes and cover letters, educational levels and experience needed for career of choice, and entry level wages of various careers. Literacy instruction includes GED preparation for high school drop outs or raising levels of reading for information, locating information and applied mathematics for high school graduates who are identified basic skills deficient. Literacy providers are PA Department of Education programs operating in the CareerLinks®. Literacy instruction will be provided utilizing WIN® an internet-based interactive curriculum providing foundational skills instruction for all WorkKeys® and Pre-WorkKeys skill levels. Encompassing ten career-oriented skill and proficiency areas needed in today's workplace, the WIN® Courseware was developed directly toward the high standards established by the ACT, Inc. WorkKeys® assessments. Using the WIN® Career Center database, jobseekers can identify workplace career paths using a searchable database of job profiles and career information. The courseware also contains 19 Contextual Courseware modules that target critical career and life skills identified for remediation. The Contextual Courseware modules directly align WorkKeys® skills with career clusters identified by the U.S. Department of Labor. The Contextual Courseware offers instruction for the WorkKeys® skills specific to the field that the learners either have experience in or that is of interest to the learner. All older youth participants are encouraged to take the WorkKeys® assessment that will result in obtainment of the National Career Readiness Certificate®. Tuition assistance for higher education will be available to youth who meet the criteria outline in WCJP's Individual Training Account procedure. Job search/job placement services may include: paid work experience at private for profit companies or public non-profit agencies for the purpose of obtaining job experience and eliminating the barrier of no work history; referral to BWPO staff for labor exchange services and job matching to open job orders; and referral to WCJP's job developer for the purpose of identifying and negotiating OJT leads with local employers.

Both youth programs offer all ten required program elements either through direct services delivered by procured contractors or referral to other community agencies and resources. Individual Employment Plans (IEPs) are developed for all youth outlining the steps needed to meet their educational and career goals. Case management services are provided to all youth throughout their enrollment and include, but are not limited to: tracking of activities and goals; identifying and eliminating barriers that may prohibit successful attainment of youth goals; referral to supportive services provided via WIA funds or other community agencies and resources; meeting with teachers, guidance counselors, parent(s) or guardian(s) to identify and resolve any issues the youth may be experiencing.

E. DESIRED OUTCOMES

1. Benchmarks that have been (or will be) developed in support of key priorities.

Priority One Benchmark: In order to provide a quantitative measure for job seekers, the West Central LWIB has directed each of its two PA CareerLink® comprehensive sites to be equipped with Worldwide Interactive Network (WIN) licenses that allow for the measurement and benchmarking of individual skill knowledge levels over against occupational learning and specific standards for a given job title based upon ACT® research and profile aggregation for those actually performing such work. Since this has been established as a core service, each Center will use Program Year 2012 data to establish a base year and increase utilization by job seekers each year during the course of this plan by 5%.

Priority Two Benchmark: In order to improve job seeker/employer transactions by facilitating information based decisions using data and research on both ends of the transaction, the West Central LWIB has procured licenses for ACT® Work Keys® skill level achievement testing for each of its one stop comprehensive sites. Job seekers can pass the assessment testing at various levels, i.e., bronze, silver, gold or platinum, and obtain a National Career Readiness Certificate ® (NCRC). Our goal is to meet individually with the human resource officers for the top twenty employers in the LWIA regarding the skills measured and assessed by the NCRC and disseminate informational brochures through the chambers of commerce. Concomitantly job seekers at the local PA CareerLink® sites will be informed at orientations regarding the NCRC availability which, although a WIA intensive service, will be available to non-eligible persons as a fee for service activity provided at minimal cost. Program Year 2012 will be used to establish a base year for numbers of NCRC certifications issued and individuals hired and a 5% increase projected for each successive year.

Priority Three Benchmark: The West Central LWIB will facilitate bi-annual roundtables of representatives of educational institution involved with workforce development and human resource officers from the region's driver industries of critical high priority occupations to discuss skill gap issues, problems in hiring of recent graduated, emerging needs and other relevant topics to decrease misinformation and increase successful pipeline delivery of skilled knowledge workers for established and emerging businesses. Participants will be surveyed regarding impact.

Priority Four Benchmark: LWIB staff will seek competitive funding from state and federal governmental sources as well as private foundation funding to supplement allocated workforce dollars. The West Central LWIB is currently the recipient of a Workforce Innovation Fund grant as fiscal agent for the OH-PENN Interstate Region that will funnel \$6,000,000 over a three year period to develop career pathways for the reemerging manufacturing industry. The LWIB has as its goal to achieve federal or foundation funding of at least \$500,000 for years four and five of the plan to continue on the path of innovation. Additionally, LWIA and LWIB staff will screen all program

participants to ensure that all federal/state financial aid will be assessed. When an individual is eligible for other programmatic dollars, staff will liaise and collaborate to ensure co-enrollment and co-funding thus stretching training resources to cover additional residents.

2. Specific quantitative targets for the desired outcomes and results. Local levels of performance negotiated with the governor and CEO (pursuant to Section 136(c)) are to be used to measure the performance of the LWIA and used by the LWIB to measure the performance of the local Fiscal Agent, eligible providers, and the PA CareerLink® delivery system in the LWIA. See Table 1 for WIA programs (Appendix A).

In order to coincide with common measures across all programs the LWIB and CEOs have adopted the performance measurements specified by the Workforce Investment Act and negotiated with the Governor's agents (see Appendix A for LWIA negotiated performance levels). The LWIB negotiates the nine WIA performance measures with the Center for Workforce Information and Analysis (CWIA) each program year. The LWIB reviews and considers the actual performance measures for the last three program years when negotiating the performance standards. Local economic conditions that may have either a positive or negative impact to the standards are also considered during negotiations, including economic actions occurring in the three Ohio counties immediately to the west of our local area since many Lawrence and Mercer workers cross the Ohio line for employment every day. For example, recently, the Commonwealth decided to close the Youth Development Center in Lawrence County and approximately 223 workers were permanently released. Although these workers may not show up in the WIA performance standards this program year, the effect of the lay-off for other job seekers in the area is immediate. One-Stop job seekers with little or no job experience are now competing with displaced workers with solid work histories, skills and certifications.

Based upon Program Year (PY) 2011, which is the year illustrating the greatest spike in enrollment of the last three inasmuch as it occurred after the great recession had bottomed out and disengaged job seekers again began seeking employment and training services, the overall total participant change for the LWIA was +30% from 2100 in PY 2010 to 2729 in PY 2011. Considering that the LWIA has had a significantly higher unemployment rate since 2007 than the commonwealth as a whole and at 8.3% as reported in the Department of Labor and Industry's January 2013 edition of Fast Facts for the two county jurisdiction continues to remain higher than the statewide average of 7.9%, the increase in enrollment will concomitantly increase the difficulty in placing program participants into unsubsidized employment. Interestingly, Dislocated Worker enrollment decreased in 2011 by -15.4% while Adult enrollment increased by +72.8%. We interpret this to mean that job openings are being predominantly filled by the more experienced dislocated workers directly without WIA intensive or training services since they have both skills and experience as opposed to others who do not. This means that even the 1714 individuals enrolled into Adult activities whether skills training of some sort or other intensive services will be competing against more experienced job seekers

upon exit. Additionally, those individuals assessed as meeting eligibility as Dislocated Workers are likely the least skilled in this designation or possess other barriers to employment that have impeded their more immediate trajectory into employment. The state negotiators assessed the LWIA's previous year performance, which exceeded in all categories, and sought to significantly increase the PY 2012 rates. However, the West Central LWIB viewed the increase in job seeker service demand in relation to the continuing lower than state average LWIA unemployment rate as possibly signaling excess of supply over demand and put forward counter offers to insure that this trend as well as any currently unforeseen negative economic impact would be balanced out.

Based upon meeting all PY 2013 negotiated performance standards, State negotiators looked at the degree to which levels had been exceeded and made initial proposals in consideration of their data and in view of improving economic conditions in the LWIA. After several counter-proposals, the parties agree to significant increases for Adult/Dislocated entered employment rates (+3/+7) and more moderate +1 increases for retention rates while accepting a lowering of the six month average earnings for both. All Youth standards were raised significantly based upon PY 2013 and other historical performance achievement. However, it is felt that because of the lower statewide and county unemployment rates these targets are attainable.

3. Describe how the negotiated levels of performance support and ensure the LWIB's vision.

By measuring WIA program participant outcomes of entered employment, retention and job earnings which are indicators of a competitive workforce that meet the requirements of local businesses. Youth goals and outcomes are indicators of meeting baseline levels necessary for individuals to enter into the labor market and/or additional education.

4. Additional goals that the LWIB intends to achieve, for example, an increase in the percentage of workers employed in jobs with family-sustaining wages, or an increase in the number of employers with job opportunities.

The LWIB is part of an interstate regional strategy with Ohio's LWIAs #17 and #18. Over the next three years the region will be focusing on Federal resources increasing the number of industry recognized credentials for workers in the advance manufacturing sector with the assumption that these higher paid industrial jobs will create family sustaining wages.

5. System to track and measure the performance of regional activity.

For purposes of this federal project mentioned in number 4 above, the five counties will utilize the *OneFlow* database to track both WIA and non-WIA clients who are part of the project. Additionally, the federal grant requires a third party evaluator that will set benchmarks and measure work done in this regard including number of job orders with credential attainment as a preferred qualification. All WIA clients will continue to be entered into the Comprehensive Workforce Development System (CWDS).

F. PLAN DEVELOPMENT

1. Describe the involvement of the Local Elected Official (LEO), the LWIB and stakeholders in the development of the local plan.

The Local Elected Officials meet quarterly with the Division Heads of West Central Job Partnership providing oversight and input into the workforce development system. Their observations and insights form the basis of planning input. At the July 12, 2012 meeting, the Lawrence and Mercer Commissioners discussed their perspectives on the need for industry led initiatives, regional involvement and career pathways strategies that were incorporated into the text of the local vision and priorities that were aligned with the Governor's State Integrated Workforce Plan. On October 11, 2012, the Commissioners in their role as the West Central Governing Board will make final review and take action on the plan. The LWIB likewise reviewed the vision statements and strategic priorities at the September 12, 2012 public meeting and discussed policies and operational issues relevant to the plan. Membership includes stakeholders representing the Area Office on Aging, Career and Technical Centers, Adult Literacy, Labor, Economic Development, the private sector and community based organizations and are open to the public at large. Additionally, LWIB staff meets quarterly with each CareerLink[®] consortium of operators' group and reviews minutes for inclusion of perspectives from the Title One Operator, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, County Assistance Offices, Community Action and the Midwestern Intermediate Unit into the service delivery aspects of the document.

2. Describe the collaboration between the LWIB and representatives from economic development, education, the business community, and other interested parties, in the development of the local plan.

In addition to representatives on the LWIB representing economic development, education, the business community and the community at large, the West Central LWIB convenes a number of forums to gather a wider expanse of views. For instance, at the April 10, 2012 Youth Council meeting, district public school superintendents, juvenile probation, career and technical schools, youth service providers, public housing authority officials and others discussed with LWIB members and staff regarding issues facing youth merging from school into the workforce, cultural and soft skill barriers to employment and other topics contributing context to planning. The Regional PREP Business Service Action Team, which includes local and regional economic development agencies, CareerLink[®] Site Administrators, Industrial Resource Center and chamber of commerce staff meet quarterly with LWIB staff and provide insights from their perspective on the priorities and goals of their constituencies regarding the local workforce system. These views are considered when developing the local workforce plan. Also, each of the three defined cluster industry partnerships representing advanced manufacturing, transportation and logistics and building trades, give their perspective on goals and strategies for improving the workforce system. For example, at the August 22, 2012 Advanced Manufacturing Diversified Materials partnership the employers stressed the importance of utilizing industry recognized credentials and career pathways. Additionally, the transportation and logistics businesses on August 16, 2012 stressed the need for more assessment at the one stop centers. These perspectives and others put forward at the monthly meetings are considered when projecting planning for the LWIA.

3. Describe the process used to make the plan available to the public. Attach a copy of the public notice(s). (Appendix B)

The LWIA plan will be posted on WCJP's website at www.wcjp.org on September 24, 2012. An email will be sent to BWPO, LEOs, LWIB members, Youth Council members, current contractors, and WCJP staff as notice that the plan has been posted to the website and comments will be accepted until October 23, 2012. A notice will be published in local newspapers advising the public that the LWIA plan has been posted on WCJP's website and a public hearing will be held on October 16, 2012 at 9:30 am to accept comments on the plan. Comments will also be accepted electronically at ddonahue@wcjp.org.

The plan modification will be posted on WCJP's website at www.wcjp.org on April 1, 2015. A notice will be published in local newspapers advising the public the LWIA plan has been posted on the WCJP's website and will includes instructions on how to submit written comments by April 30, 2015

4. Provide a summary of the comments received during the review period (if any) and how the comments were addressed. (Appendix C)

See Appendix C for comments.

SECTION II: OPERATIONAL PLAN

A. OVERVIEW OF THE LOCAL WORKFORCE SYSTEM: STRUCTURE

1. Describe the local workforce development system, its entities and their respective roles and functional relationships. If any entities are incorporated, include corporate board functions.

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

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

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

- a. **Describe the role of the LEO in the governance and implementation of WIA in the LWIA. In LWIAs with more than one unit of government, indicate the decision-making process between/among LEOs. Attach LWIB/CEO Agreement (Appendix D).**

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

This organization was incorporated as a 501(c)3 Not-for-Profit Corporation and does business under the name West Central Job Partnership. The Governing Board will carry out all responsibilities assigned to the Local Elected Officials (LEOs) under Title I of the Act. The role of the LEOs in the governance and implementation of the Act in the local area includes, but is not limited necessarily to: designating the fiscal agent

for all funds made available to Lawrence and Mercer Counties under the Act; establishing a Local Workforce Investment Board (LWIB) in the two county area in accordance with the Act and the Rules and Regulations promulgated for the implementation of the Act; entering into a written agreement with the LWIB which details clearly the partnership between the two entities for the governance and oversight of activities authorized under the Act; authorizing the establishment of a Youth Council as a subgroup of the LWIB and approving nominations of members for appointment by the LWIB to that subgroup; approving or disapproving, in partnership with the LWIB, the designation or certification of any PA CareerLink[®] operators within the Local Workforce Investment Area (LWIA) and approving or disapproving the termination of the eligibility of such operators; providing input and oversight to the LWIB regarding the negotiating and reaching agreement with the Commonwealth=s PA Workforce Investment Board (PAWIB) on local performance measures; reviewing and approving or disapproving, in partnership with the LWIB, any plan pertaining to workforce development or job training, any modifications to such plans, and any other documents required by the State or Federal government prior to submission; determining the apportionment of funds and liabilities between the involved counties and approving all adjustments to allocations; approving or disapproving any contract with any entity for the performance of services required or needed pursuant to the implementation or operation of any program or project authorized under the Act unless otherwise stipulated and agreed; and, conducting oversight, in partnership with the LWIB, of the operations of any local Title I funded programs of youth, adult, and dislocated worker activities and the PA CareerLink[®] delivery system.

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

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

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

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

- b. **Describe the role of the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds, as determined by the CEO. Provide the identity and contact information of that entity.**

Fiscal Agent

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

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

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

2. Describe the LWIB's role in the local workforce development system.

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

a. Describe the board membership and the process used to identify and select members.

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

b. Describe the committee structure of the LWIB.

Executive Committee - comprising of the four officers, the past Chair and up to five additional LWIB members selected by the WIB chair. The Executive Committee will act as the liaison to the Local Elected Officials (Governing Board), are empowered to act on time-sensitive issues between LWIB meetings, and its members usually chair

various LWIB subcommittees. The Executive Committee will also oversee the Community Outreach strategies for the LWIB and CareerLinks®.

Training & Services Review Committee - will make recommendations on how core, intensive and training services are delivered through each CareerLink®, for adults, dislocated workers and older youth. This committee will make recommendations on how to allocate program funds between Individual Training Accounts (ITAs), On-the-Job Training (OJTs), Employer Based Customized Training and Supportive Services. The committee will be responsible for updates to the occupational demand list, review the list of eligible training providers, set criteria, review and make recommendations on various Request For Proposals (RFPs).

CareerLink® Oversight Committee - will review the overall operations and effectiveness of the One-Stop Centers, become the point of contact with the One Stop Operators, in addition to chartering and re-chartering the CareerLinks® and/or mini centers and analyze the performance indicators of all the participating partners.

Youth Council (REQUIRED) - will make recommendations to the LWIB concerning all youth activities including in-school youth programs, out-of-school youth programs, and special youth projects like the TANF Youth Grant. The Youth Council will review programs and providers of youth services. The council will explore innovative strategies to communicate and coordinate the WIA/TANF youth programs with the other programs currently in existence in the two county area.

Welfare Coordinating Committee– will make recommendations for alignment and provide oversight to various welfare employment programs within the LWIA jurisdiction such as the Employment Advancement Retention Network (EARN) and Work Ready. The committee is comprised of LWIB members providing services at PA CareerLink® Centers and other one stop partners and community service providers involved in transitioning individuals from welfare to work. County Assistance Office Executive Directors co-chair this committee, one who also serves on the West Central LWIB. Community Action Partnerships, Adult Literacy , WIA Title One provider and PA CareerLink® Site Administrators, some LWIB members and others not, likewise make up this group to insure that policy and practice between the various organizations are coordinated effectively. This committee evolved from the Bureau of Employment and Training Program (BETP) mandated Local Management Committee (LMC), which prior to the current Program Year was required by EARN and its predecessor Single Point of Contact (SPOC) program. The West Central LWIB was designed to include a seat for a Department of Human Services official who linked the LMC to the LWIB for workforce development coordination and align these programs locally.

- c. Identify and describe any functions the LWIB has assumed other than those required by statute.**

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

As community leaders, the members of the LWIB function as ambassadors both individually and collectively to develop, foster, and maintain strong ties to all the relevant constituencies within the local Workforce Investment Area and contiguous regional areas. Through this means, the West Central area will insure alignment of local interests with the wider regional efforts and gather intelligence on best practices from other organizations involved in workforce development. As a result of the ambassador function, the LWIB has been involved in the eCenter at Linden Pointe, ShaleNET, the Three Rivers Energy Region, the NW PA STEM initiative and the Oh-Penn Interstate Workforce Region.

The LWIB engages in supplemental grant procurement functions to seek and obtain funding for services determined to be beneficial to the overall workforce strategy but not allowable under regulations related to Title I of the Act. Successful instances of this function are TANF Youth Funds to assist the working poor and industry partnership grants that promote incumbent worker training. Other examples of procurement of funding outside of WIA include the Walmart Foundation “*America Works*” grant, the DOL Regional Innovation Grant and most recently the DOL Workforce Innovation Fund Grant.

The LWIB encourages a climate promoting joint planning and integration of related services amongst those delivering workforce development programs and coordinating activities in the local area.

d. Describe how the LWIB ensures timely, open, and effective sharing of information among local and state agencies, other boards, the local workforce investment system, and the PA CareerLink[®] offices.

The West Central Board uses a variety of methods to communicate and share information among its partners. West Central Job Partnership has a web page located at www.wcjp.org. Contact information for the entire Board and its staff is listed there. Various strategic, operational and welfare plans are available for public

inspection and comment. Staff names and telephone extensions are listed so questions concerning labor market and other information can be directed to the appropriate person.

Board members and staff to the Board routinely meet with the leadership of the two local PA CareerLinks[®] to share information including the Board's vision and strategic objectives. In Mercer County, the PA CareerLink[®] Site Administrator is on the LWIB and the Lawrence County PA CareerLink[®] Site Administrator attends every Board meeting. Both Site Administrators give PA CareerLink[®] Updates at each meeting.

In addition, the LWIB is represented by membership on the statewide Pennsylvania Workforce Development Agency which affords the opportunity to receive and provide information at multiple levels. Belonging to this association gives board members, staff and others in the local workforce system occasion to disseminate information, share best practices, meet and dialogue with representatives of state and federal agencies and other high ranking policy makers in the field. The West Central LWIB is also a member of the National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB) which is a resource for national information sharing and an avenue to provide the local board with a macro perspective. Additionally, congressional staff liaisons' meet with LWIB representatives both in Washington and Harrisburg to review current and pending policy as well as gather input from the local workforce areas.

The West Central LWIB has partnered with several surrounding LWIBs on collaborative projects. The West Central, North Central, Northwest and Tri-County LWIBs participate in a Transportation Education and Economic Network (TEEN) as part of Pennsylvania's Industry Partnership Initiative. Monthly telephone conferences of the entire partnership afford staff to coordinate together with private sector representative from the logistics and transportation industry cluster and the partnership intermediary, Strategy Solutions, Inc. To the West, the West Central LWIB has established an OH-PENN interstate region with two Ohio LWIBs, i.e., WIA Areas #17 and #18, which is recognized by the states of Pennsylvania and Ohio as well as the Federal Department of Labor (DOL) in accordance with the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 in this capacity. West Central Job Partnership, Inc., Administrative Division, acts as the fiscal agent for both the TEEN and OH-PENN consortia. In the former case, the TEEN partnership including private sector logistics and transportation, PA CareerLink[®] and LWIB representatives conference monthly and quarterly to jointly plan and review budgets generated by the fiscal agent. The OH-PENN consortia has established a Regional Competitiveness Council composed of five designated LWIB members from each of the three boards representing private sector, education, labor, economic and workforce development. This consortium has recently been awarded a six million three year DOL Workforce Innovation Grant (WIF) building upon past federal and foundation funds. The West Central LWIB staff conducts monitoring and provides fiscal services for both consortia. The TEEN LWIB collaborators are provided with reports on grant submission, awards, expenditures and monitoring results quarterly by the administrative staff. These

reports are provided to the OH-PENN Competitiveness Council at regular quarterly meetings where progress reports on the WIF project are presented. The focus of this five county project is to expand a career pathways strategy for the advanced manufacturing sector based upon increasing obtainment of industry recognized credentials by aligning private sector expectations with educational institution curriculum focus aiming trainees toward nationally validated recognized credentials for high priority occupations in advanced manufacturing.

e. Describe the Youth Council:

i. Describe how the Youth Council integrates a vision for youth through collaboration with youth-focused agencies and organizations within the LWIA.

WCJP's Youth Council is very committed to designing and implementing a strategic plan in Lawrence and Mercer Counties that align all youth activities and services (regardless of the funding source) to promote skill development and work-based learning experiences and will result in a talent supply for area industries and employers. The LWIB will assure that the membership of the Youth Council includes representatives of: local elected officials, local school-to-work partnerships, local education agencies, local public housing authorities, local area justice and law enforcement agencies, local youth initiatives serving homeless, Job Corps representatives, representatives of other local area youth initiatives (including those entities that serve homeless or runaway youth or public assistance recipients), parents, youth participants, and organizations having experience relating to youth activities. Youth Council members are active in the design and the implementation of the WIA Title I youth program. Having Youth Council members who represent agencies that also deal with at-risk youth ensures that eligible youth will hear about and be referred to receive WIA Title I employment and training services.

All WIA and TANF youth programs are geared to career exploration and High Priority Occupations in the region and state. This exploration includes STEM related occupations and activities.

ii. Describe the relationship between the Youth Council and the LWIB.

The West Central Youth Council currently has fifteen members of which six are also LWIB members with an interest in youth. All of the Act=s required members are represented by this membership, including juvenile justice and housing authority staff. The Youth Council Chairperson is a LWIB member appointed by the Chairperson of the LWIB and is considered a committee chair position. This provides a vital link between the two bodies because communication moves through this conduit.

Strategic planning or design of Title I Youth Requests for Proposals, recommendations are made by the Youth Council Chairperson at official LWIB meetings for action. The LWIB staff provides meeting support to the

Youth Council, i.e., prepares meeting agenda/materials, arranges facilities, maintains and distributes minutes.

3. Identify the PA CareerLink[®] Operator and describe the process for Operator selection and the relationship of the Operator to the LWIB. Describe any anticipated changes to the Operator/Consortium, and the roles and responsibilities of the Consortium.

The Boards of Commissioners for Lawrence and Mercer Counties under authority of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania appoint members to the West Central Workforce Investment Board (LWIB). The majority of members represent private sector businesses with other required membership including economic development, education, labor organizations and One Stop Partner Programs. The LWIB provides strategic direction for the Public Workforce System, in concurrence with the Local Elected Officials **designates the One-Stop Consortium of Operators** and establishes oversight for the One Stop Center.

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

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

4. Identify the WIA Title I Contractor(s) for Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth services. Describe the process for selection.

The Operations Division of West Central Job Partnership (WCJP) was jointly agreed upon by the LWIB and the Local Elected Officials to deliver core and intensive service functions, i.e., WIA Title I Operations for Adults and Dislocated Workers, at PA CareerLinks[®] and/or other locations within the jurisdiction of NW #145. This agreement was developed in consultation with duly authorized representatives of the Governor=s Administration and the Department of Labor and Industry in accordance with the June 30, 1999 Workforce Investment Act: Title I Policy Paper. The Governing Board and LWIB established an Ad Hoc Transition Committee to finalize the elements of the agreement which would be a basis for the initial operational plan for the LWIA. A public hearing was held on January 28, 2000 which was widely advertised. Comments were

solicited by mail from relevant agencies and community groups. The members of the Ad Hoc Transition Committee were distributed information obtained through the draft agreement on March 5, 2000 specifying WCJP=s operations division as the WIA Title I Operator. The West Central LWIB approved the agreement on March 15, 2000 followed by approval of the Governing Board as attested by the signatures of the LEO-LWIB Agreement for Lawrence and Mercer Counties. WCJP has a seat on the Consortium Operators in each CareerLink[®]. The Request For Proposal (RFP) method, as outlined in *Appendix I* of this document is used to procure Youth Program services

- 5. Provide an organizational chart (*Appendix E*) that delineates the relationship among the agencies involved in the workforce development system, including the LEO and required/optional PA CareerLink[®] partner programs and lines of authority. The chart should reflect the distinct separation between governance and service delivery structures. For incorporated entities, include the corporate board.**

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

- 6. Discuss the process used to determine how WIA funds are used for infrastructure, personnel, contracts, and other costs to provide the required WIA core, intensive, and training activities.**

LWIB staff on an annual basis review CareerLink[®] foot traffic reports to determine the volume of job seeker utilization at each site by service activity in order to benchmark demands on infrastructure needs for the center and skill sets required by personnel to deliver core and intensive services. This information is factored into setting percentage of funding by the LWIB for individual training accounts (ITAs) including carry-over costs and workplace training activities such as on-the-job and customized training. Additionally, the LWIB training and services review committee may make recommendations for contracted training determined to be necessary based upon emerging industry need and insufficiency of provided offerings on the state list. Available allocated funding, projected one stop center operational costs and staffing resources required to deliver WIA core, intensive and related services during training and follow-up are reviewed by the LWIB Executive Committee and Chief Financial Officer. Once these costs are determined, the full LWIB entertains recommendations from the Training and Services Review Committee to set training fund levels for adult, dislocated workers and youth programs regarding various components such as Individual Training Accounts, On-the-Job-Training, Younger/Older Youth Services, etc. etc. These levels and categories are periodically reviewed regarding expenditures and utilization and adjusted as necessary during the course of the fiscal year.

7. Describe any regional workforce development partnerships, including their purpose, roles, goals, objectives, and their activities that help improve LWIA performance.

On January 1, 2009 the Oh-Penn Interstate Region was designated by previous governors of Pennsylvania and Ohio under authority of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. The two counties in Pennsylvania (Lawrence and Mercer) and three counties in Ohio (Columbiana, Mahoning and Trumbull), which compose this consortium, were awarded a DOL/ETA Regional Innovation Grant the previous year (01/01/08) to implement a plan that aims at creating a continuum of learning and skills enhancement that will more rapidly transform the talent capacity of dislocated workers impacted by transitions in industries effecting workforce skill gaps and needs. The significance of the group obtaining designation by their respective states as a recognized region was to express the long-term ongoing nature of this association.

In late 2009, WCJP was invited to apply for and was awarded an America Works Initiative grant from the Walmart Foundation for the Oh-Penn Interstate Region. The goal of the initiative was to help low to moderate-income individuals who lost their jobs regain employment that provides long-term family-sustaining wages and benefits. The underlying premise was that the initiative would further expand and deepen existing collaborations among regional partners including, workforce boards, community colleges, adult basic education, community and faith-based organizations, chambers of commerce, and regional transportation authorities, in ways that directly promotes the economic growth strategy for the region.

Most recently, WCJP (on behalf of the Oh-Penn Interstate Region) was awarded a six million dollar Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) grant from the US Department of Labor. Through this WIF grant opportunity, the Oh-Penn Interstate Region seeks to implement a multi-faceted plan to address the critical skill needs of regional manufacturers which includes:

Sector Partnerships – Using the Oh-Penn Interstate platform, the LWIBs will serve as the intermediary to support the Mahoning Valley Manufacturers Coalition and the Industry Partners of Lawrence and Mercer Counties, creating a mechanism for ongoing feedback from industry regarding common needs and opportunities and organizing coordinated solutions from the public workforce system, economic development and education. The LWIBs will integrate the two sector partnerships and facilitate sharing of the unique strengths and experiences that each brings to the effort.

Career Pathways – Oh-Penn will facilitate a gap analysis between the skills and competencies needed by manufacturers and those covered in existing education and training programs. Where gaps are identified in the manufacturing career pathway, Oh-Penn will work with education and training providers to develop solutions. One such gap already identified is the lack of nationally recognized credentials in current programming. Another area of focus is articulation and transfer to accelerate completion and increase articulation of career-technical programs with programs provided at community colleges and universities. One of the most important tools for communicating clearly about career

pathways to a variety of audiences will be the creation of career pathways “road maps.” These road maps will visually depict the opportunities within the manufacturing industry, including the demand for occupations and the average wages for each. They also will show the necessary training or education to qualify for each occupation and the regional education/training providers and how stackable credentials lead to career progression as well as on- and off-ramps. A second set of road maps will be developed to assist career counselors and academic advisors. This version will include more detailed information about articulation agreements, credit transfer, credit for prior learning, options, etc. to equip counselors with the information they need to provide quality advisement.

Pipeline Development – Building from successful practices to stimulate interest in manufacturing careers, Oh-Penn will expand an outreach campaign, *Industry Needs You*, to educate youth, parents, career and guidance counselors, teachers and other individuals about the opportunities that exist within the industry. The Interstate Region will expand PA Industrial Career Fairs into high schools in Ohio and utilize the model of NEO HealthForce workshops, customizing with manufacturing content within the One-Stop Career Centers, to reach adults and dislocated workers. The Interstate Region will take lessons learned from the PMI 1st Step Program to create Manufacturing Career Academy Pre-apprenticeship Programs providing both classroom and hands-on education to out-of-school youth in the Summer Youth Employment Program.

Industry Exposure – Recognizing the need for more opportunities for exposure and hands-on learning, the Interstate Region will work with employers and schools to create more opportunities for exposure to industry. simplify coordination and create an online clearinghouse for job shadowing, tours and internships.

Professional Development – To adequately prepare today’s students for future employment in a competitive global economy, educators must have up-to-date and accurate information and a clear understanding of the academic and technical skills needed in the workplace. So, the outreach campaign will be supplemented by a Guidance Counselor Boot Camp, which will be expanded into Ohio and will include career counselors and academic advisors throughout the workforce system. These professional development opportunities will introduce counselors to modern manufacturing facilities and career pathways within the industry. Oh-Penn also will adopt the Educator in the Workplace model for teachers to actively participate in manufacturing environments and obtain first-hand information from the experts in the field and “on the job.” The Educator in the Workplace course is an unpaid internship course that affords educators the opportunity to spend 40 hours in a business or industry environment working side-by-side with a professional in a field of work that directly relates to the subject area taught by that teacher. The educator is expected to incorporate this experiential learning into their classroom curriculum by using the information, techniques, skills and “hands on” experiences gathered through their internship.

Assessments and Credentials – There is little-to-no current recognition of assessments and credentials by employers in the region. Instead, common practice is to require several years of experience in order to be considered for a job opening. This presents a dilemma for new grads and a Catch-22 situation which inhibits progress toward the goal of expanding the overall talent pool. That said, in planning discussions, employers are very open to learning more about how competency-based assessments and credentials can serve as the evidence they need to that applicants have the ability to do the job. The

community needs to be educated about the value of competency-based assessments and credentials, and The Manufacturing Institute leads the nation in this work. Partnering with The Manufacturing Institute and building from a USDOL-funded pilot project, the Interstate Region will promote the National Associate of Manufacturers-Endorsed Skills Certification System first to employers, stressing the benefits of adopting the assessments and certifications into their hiring and advancement requirements. To assist employers in recognizing assessments and credentials and to validate their value in preparing and placing individuals, the Interstate Region will support WorkKeys testing for all individuals interested in manufacturing careers and attainment of the National Career Readiness Credential. These strategies to increase demand for certifications can create a “pull” effect, increasing the number of candidates who will seek related training.

Participants will enter into pathways toward attaining a variety of stackable credentials through this project, which may include the ACT WorkKeys National Readiness Credential, Manufacturing Skill Standards Council’s (MSSC) Certified Production Technician certifications, National Institute of Metalworking Skills (NIMS) machining and metal forming certifications, American Welding Society’s (AWS) Certified Welder Certifications, DOL Journeyman Certificates and Associate’s and Bachelor’s Degrees in Engineering.

Retention/Incumbent Workers – While some employers are quick to point to employees “job hopping” due to wages, employee surveys suggest advancement opportunities are the most important factor in employee retention. Thus, it is important to also address internal career pathways for incumbent workers. Not only will this assist improving retention rates, but it also will provide opportunities for economically disadvantaged and underemployed workers to move into the entry-level positions. Oh-Penn is requesting a waiver from USDOL in order to serve a limited number of incumbent workers through this project in order to further demonstrate the value of assessments and training to manufacturers. Oh-Penn would replicate the public-private funding model created by the PA IP with 25-50% of the training cost shared by the employer and would leverage existing state funding first. While some entry-level workers may be eligible according to adult self-sufficiency guidelines, others may not. In order to effectively demonstrate the value of credentials to employers for their existing employees and avoid feeding into the perceptions by industry that the public workforce system is bureaucratic and cumbersome, it will be important to make access as simple as possible.

Work Experience – The sector partnerships have identified insufficient hands-on training as a challenge in shortfall in current training programs and have identified work-study programs as the solution. Oh-Penn will work collaboratively with employers to create work experience programs for students who are enrolled in a career-technical program to provide them with exposure to industrial environments, real-world experience and the opportunity to earn a paycheck and experience workplace consequences. Furthermore, because apprenticeship sponsors (employers) pay most of the training costs and this is sometimes prohibitive—particularly for smaller employers, partners will use on-the-job training (OJT) to offset the costs of apprenticeships and encourage employers to create more apprenticeship opportunities.

Workforce System Coordination – Through this project, the Oh-Penn Interstate Region will research identify additional opportunities to adopt common interest inventories and skills assessments to reduce duplication, maximize resources and increase progression in

the early steps of the career pathway. One example of a proven strategy exists in Mahoning and Columbiana Counties. All One-Stop Partners who offer tuition assistance (WIA, TA, NEG, etc.) have agreed to the One-Stop Common Assessment process. Customers interested in obtaining funding for postsecondary education are referred through the One-Stop Common Assessment. The Common Assessment consists of an online orientation to One-Stop services and a self-assessment in the online system, OneFlow, a Career Pathways Workshop covering career interests and labor market information and the Test of Adult Basic Education. Remediation is offered at the One-Stop Career Center. Required information for all programs is collected only one time and in one place in the OneFlow online common case management and tracking system. Partners reference this system to coordinate efforts and leverage funding for the customer's benefit. Through this project, partners will tailor an online Manufacturing Career Pathways Workshop to introduce individuals to careers in manufacturing. LWIAs will adopt the OneFlow system to facilitate interstate information sharing and to coordinate partner funding streams, and track individual progress in manufacturing career pathways. By doing so, Oh-Penn will leverage all available resources and coordinate braided funding to support manufacturing career pathways.

NW#145 will continue to be an active participant and catalyst for trans-regional industry based collaborations such as the Three Rivers Energy Region, SHALEnet, The Transportation Economic and Education Network, Tech-Belt and the OH-PENN Interstate Region. Through these networks the LWIB has capitalized on its border location and heritage assets in manufacturing to link and promote Lawrence and Mercer County businesses and industry and the at large workforce in the emerging energy and advanced manufacturing sectors. White House officials recently announced a \$30 million investment to form a manufacturing hub in Ohio aimed at boosting technology in a three-state region. President Barack Obama's administration announced details of a partnership between dozens of companies, universities and nonprofit organizations in Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia. Its main hub in Youngstown, Ohio, is scheduled to launch by September.

The consortium will develop additive manufacturing, also known as 3D printing, which will affect a range of industries including defense, aerospace and automotive. The partnering entities will add another \$40 million to the pilot program, which beat out proposals from other regions in the country.

WCJP is represented on the steering committee of the NW PA's Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) network working to create regional STEM strategies for its stakeholders. Individuals in Armstrong, Butler, Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Indiana, Jefferson, Lawrence, Mercer, Venango, and Warren counties collaborate and share programs that expand options for students to acquire literacy to prepare them for high-demand, high-skill, high-wage careers. The NW PA STEM network held its fourth annual conference entitled STEM Skills Today, Economic Vitality for the Future on May 12, 2012 at Edinboro University. The STEM network will receive funds from the PA Higher Education PA State System of Higher Education for a field trip for a group of

students from the counties listed above to travel to Penn State University, main campus, to tour the nanotechnology center.

8. Describe how the strategic direction and performance goals are communicated to partners and stakeholders for PA CareerLink® planning and alignment.

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

9. Describe how the LWIB will ensure effective implementation of the local plan.

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

levels throughout the course of the Program Year and juxtaposed with quarterly PA Center for Workforce Information and Analysis (CWIA) reports.

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

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

Other strategies used to assist in promoting the best performance possible under the Common Measures require PA CareerLink[®] staff to regularly do a search of ES and WIA participants that will exit in 29 days or less. This generates a ticker list of customers requiring relevant services. Appropriate PA CareerLink[®] Staff will Attempt to engage the individual thereby precluding a soft exit and increasing the possibility of a positive outcome. In an effort to insure high performance for WIA investments, the LWIA Data manager issues a monthly report to the Lead Employment and Training Specialist at each PA CareerLink[®] listing participants who will reach their 90-day limit within that month. Emergency alerts are issued when a participant is within 3 days of a soft exit to insure that all means have been utilized to contact and recover. The Data Manager reviews and compares state issued quarterly performance reports to cwds exiters for accuracy. Similarly, logs are kept of Older Youth who need to improve literacy and/or numeracy levels and reminder notices are sent to staff to schedule for testing in order to attain level of improvement.

B. OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES: SERVICE DELIVERY SYSTEM

1. Describe the LWIA's workforce development service delivery network.

The Program Division of West Central Job Partnership, Inc. is designated by the LWIB and the local elected officials (LEO) as the Title One Contractor for the One Stop Career Centers known as PA CareerLinks® in the two counties. The Administrative Division acts as the fiscal agent for Title One, the EARN program, the Consortia of Operators and federal projects in the OH-PENN Interstate Region. As noted elsewhere the Administrative Division Chief (WCJP's CFO) reports independently to the Vice Chair of the Chief Elected Officials and the Operations Division Chief (WCJP's Executive Director of Workforce Development) reports independently to the Chief Elected Official and Chair the corporate board which consists of the six county commissioners. The Program Division Chief is appointed to the LWIB representing Title One and serves as the consortium point of contact for each of the one stop centers. This structure creates an interlocking relationship between the board, the one stop consortia and partners providing workforce and related services at these PA CareerLink® sites. LWIB one stop policies are therein brought to operator meetings where strategies and tactics for implementation are jointly planned. PA CareerLink® Site Administrators attend all LWIB and operators meetings so that non-operator one stop partners are formally made aware by them of new initiatives or modification of current policies and practices.

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

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

The LWIB has authorized consortia of operator plans to establish gradated levels of partnership in the one stop centers in order to deliver both an internal and external network of local agencies both required partners under the Act and optional organizations that are relevant for either job seeker or business users of the centers. Operating Partners that have at least one full time equivalent seat at the one stop thereby appearing on the Resource Sharing Agreement Budget, contributing partners that occasionally may provide on-site services in addition to accepting referrals at their home base who pay a nominal \$500 yearly subscription fee that acts as monthly room rental and affiliate partners who pay \$250 and participate only as referral resources. This arrangement, as documented in the West Central Job Partnership LWIB/One Stop

Agreement (cf. Appendix F. 2), has brought together all mandated one stop partners into the network thus insuring that the two county LWIA provides a complete array of programs as ordained under WIA. Community memberships of optional, i.e., non-mandated partners, also are in place for businesses and congruent agencies such as chambers of commerce, economic development etc., in the form of \$350 and \$100 sponsorship fees prorated for monthly room rental usage . Optional members of the network as non-mandated partner occasional renters do not appear on either the LWIB/One Stop Agreement or the Resource Sharing Agreement Budget (RSAB). Only collocated mandated partners are listed on the RSAB.

2. Provide the number, type, and location(s) of PA CareerLink® offices in the LWIA. Indicate the name of the site and identify the management position(s) at the site. Include positions such as PA CareerLink® Administrator, Manager(s), and Supervisor(s).

A building, located at 102 Margaret Street, in the City of New Castle, was selected by the Local PA CareerLink® Steering Committee, in conjunction with the County Commissioners, as the PA CareerLink® comprehensive physical site to serve residents of Lawrence County. The Lawrence County site became fully operational in November of 1998. Hours of operation are Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 8:30 am to 4:30 pm and Thursday from 10:00 am to 4:30 pm. The morning hours on Thursday are reserved for capacity training for staff. The Site Administrator is Eileen Borrelli. Managers and supervisors include: BWPO – PA CareerLink® Program Supervisor; OVR – District Administrator; WCJP – PA CareerLink® Program Coordinator; Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV – Director of Continuing Education; CAO – Income Maintenance Worker Supervisor; Lawrence County Community Action Partnership – (See Attachment No. 1) Director of Workforce Programs; and Adult Literacy Lawrence County – Executive Director.

A building, located at 217 West State Street in the City of Sharon, was selected by the Local PA CareerLink® Steering Committee, in conjunction with the County Commissioners, as the PA CareerLink® comprehensive physical site to serve residents of Mercer County. The Mercer County site became fully operational in October of 2000. Hours of operation are Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 8:30 am to 4:30 pm and Wednesday from 10:00 am to 4:30 pm. The morning hours on Wednesday are reserved for capacity training for staff. The Site Administrator is Angela Palumbo. Managers and Supervisors include: BWPO – PA CareerLink® Program Supervisor; OVR – Supervisor; WCJP – PA CareerLink® Program Coordinator; Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV – Director of Continuing Education; CAO – Income Maintenance Work Supervisor; Community Action Partnership Mercer County – Family Development & Housing Counseling Manager

Both CareerLinks® offer after hours meetings by appointment as well as when specific need of a partner agency arises. Both sites passed previous Department of Labor & Industry on-site reviews for compliance to accessibility.

3. Describe how the LWIB will assess the effectiveness of its configuration of PA CareerLink® site(s), including, but not limited to, business hours and types of services offered.

The effectiveness of this configuration is relative to the characteristics of the LWIA itself. The West Central Workforce Investment Area is composed of two fifth class counties, Mercer, which according to the 2010 U.S. Census, has a population of 116,638 and Lawrence with 91,108 residents. The combined LWIA population is 207,746. Mercer County's land area is 672 square miles with an average distribution of population of 173.6 persons per square mile. For Lawrence County, the land area is 360 square miles with a 253.1 person per square mile average distribution. These factors, land area and population density, were chief factors contributing to the LWIB's decision to establish a comprehensive one stop career center (PA CareerLink®) in each county. Additionally, it was determined that the comprehensive centers be located in areas of high population density also evidencing significant unemployment rates in order to place them amidst job seekers needing to reattach to the workforce. Thus, the Mercer site was targeted for the City of Sharon with a population of 14,038 and the Lawrence site in the City of New Castle with 23,273 residents. Regular business hours have been established between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday to be accessible to those who are unemployed and requiring staff assisted services. The Centers are available in the evenings by appointment only or as needed and requested by a partner agency. All required federally mandated programs have entered into the One-Stop Partner Agreement for these PA CareerLinks®. Core and intensive services for Adult, Dislocated Workers and Older Youth as well as access to training services through Individual Training Accounts (ITA) are provided here. Core and Intensive services under Wagner-Peyser, chapter 41 of Title 38 United States Code (Veterans Programs), Unemployment Compensation and Trade Act Programs are present. Core and Intensive services under the Community Services Block Grant, Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and TANF Employment and Training Programs as well as Title II Literacy Programs. Core services can be accessed for Title V of the Older Americans Act, Carl Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act as well as Housing and Urban Development (HUD) employment program access.

4. Describe the type and availability of training and employment activities and supportive services that will be made available in the LWIA and the process to assess and determine service offerings.

The LWIB Training and Services Review Committee (TSRC) in conjunction with board staff meet periodically prior to each fiscal year to review material obtained through surveys of key industry components, economic development projects both imminent and underway in the local area and contiguous regions as well as assessing reports and interviewing PA CareerLink® Site Administrators, Title One Program Operator and other one stop partner staff in order to provide oversight and recommend program and service modification or alignment. Material under review includes but is not limited to economic and labor market analysis, population demographics and concentration, input

from the LWIAs three industry partnership groups, reports from chambers of commerce and other business intermediaries as well as studies and guidance by relevant state and federal agencies. Committee findings are brought back to the full LWIB which may result in directing the fiscal agent to allocate funds under its auspices to a particular service or project, establishment of a policy or guidance to the consortia of operators for implementation in the PA CareerLink® centers, issuance of a request for proposal (RFP) or invitation for bid (IFB) for a program or service. The Site Administrators act as staff to the consortia and receive LWIB meeting minutes to insure that the policy and oversight direction of the LWIB is translated into practical application at the point of service delivery.

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

Customer (employer and job seeker) primary products and services vary among the core, intensive and training services as follows:

Employer Services

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

Job Seeker Services

- \$Orientation to PA CareerLink® system and services
- \$Internet job search capabilities
- \$Creating a personal folder
- \$Job listings and referral services

- §Skill assessment and aptitude testing
- §Resume building, interviewing skills and job search assistance
- §Career counseling
- §Adult education and literacy
- §Job readiness instruction
- §Occupational skills training
- §Evaluation for assistive technology
- Worksite accommodations

Supportive Services

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

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

1. Needs-Related and Needs-Based Payments:
 - a. Needs-Related Payments – Unemployed; and not receiving Unemployment Compensation (UC)
 - b. WIA Dislocated Worker 65% Needs-Related Payments – Unemployed; ceased to received UC or trade readjustment allowances under TAA or NAFTA-TAA; **and** enrolled in a WIA funded training program by the end of the 13th week after the most recent layoff, or, if later, by the end of the 8th week after the worker is informed that a short-term layoff will exceed six months.
 - c. WIA Dislocated Worker 65% State Training Activity Support Payments – Unemployed, **and** ceased to received UC or trade readjustment allowances under TAA or NAFTA-TAA.
2. Car Repairs – maximum of two payments which combined may not exceed \$800 when no other types of transportation is available, are less practical or are more costly. Clients must not be employed under the Act (i.e. OJT, Work Experience, Customized Training, etc.).
3. Child Care – up to a maximum of \$5,000/client will be reimbursed to licensed day care centers for clients who are not eligible to receive such assistance elsewhere.
4. Eye Care – Up to \$200 per enrollment for eye exam and glasses.
5. Uniforms and Tools – as required by the approved training program.
6. Health Care – maximum of two payments, which combined, may not exceed \$500 per enrollment year for dental, hearing aids and other emergency care.
7. Youth Incentives are available to youth who meet certain benchmarks or programmatic goals such as receiving a certificate or degree.

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

5. Describe the LWIB's strategy for seamless service delivery, including the transitions among core, intensive, and training services and referral to partner services for both business and jobseeker customers.

The PA CareerLinks[®] are non-incorporated entities of co-located agencies managed by a Consortium of Operators charged with oversight of the day-to-day operations. A Site Administrator coordinates activities and programs assisted by partner agency supervisors who meet monthly. See Appendix D, LWIB/One Stop Partner Agreement for specific responsibilities.

PA CareerLink[®] services are provided on three levels:

1. Core Services - The Career Resource Areas of the PA CareerLinks[®] are open to the public and offer self-serve information and activities to job seekers and employers. Partner agencies assign facilitators (on a rotating basis) to assist Career Resource Area clients in enrolling in the PA CareerLink[®] system and demonstrate how to conduct a job search on the system. These facilitators are not identified by name badges as being affiliated with a specific agency and thereby provide a seamless delivery system including common functions across the partner agencies and programs.

Core services offered include, but may not be limited to: orientation of CareerLink[®] system, services, partner agency programs and eligibility criteria, if any; labor market information and trends; career exploration of jobs and entry level wages in the local area utilizing Choices and O*Net information; resume and cover letter development; interviewing techniques, budget counseling information, manufacturing information sessions, internet job search assistance; interviewing skills; job matching and referral to open job orders in the CareerLink[®] system; and Worldwide Interactive Network (WIN[®]) curriculum to prepare for WorkKeys[®] assessment.

Customers who are not able to secure employment utilizing core services may be referred to intensive services via WIA, TRA, OVR, DHS or other partner or community-based agency programs.

2. Intensive Services – include, but may not be limited to: WorkKeys® Assessment that leads to the National Career Readiness Certificate®: TABE to identify reading and math levels; SAGE/Compute-A-Match to identify interest and aptitude levels; ProveIt assesses levels of proficiency in numerous areas such as Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and other various occupational skill- sets; literacy instruction; job development assistance for leads to employment opportunities; evaluation for assistive technology

Customers who are not able to secure employment utilizing core services may be referred to training services via WIA, TRA, OVR, DHS or other partner or community-based agency programs.

3. Training Services – include, but may not be limited to: paid work experience, On-the-Job (OJT), Individual Training Account (ITA) opportunities

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

6. Describe measures developed to improve operational collaboration of workforce investment activities and programs, include measures to identify and eliminate existing barriers to coordination.

A standing committee of partner agency supervisors meet regularly with the site administrator to devise methods to reduce duplication and promote integration of core services. Staff is informed by their direct supervisors the extent of integration agreed upon for their respective program in order to balance the required integrity set forth by enabling legislation with the need to reduce duplication. Additionally, center scheduling of information workshops have aggregated cross program resources to provide regular and ongoing presentations to job seekers on topics such as labor market statistics, high priority and in demand occupations, availability of supportive services and local area employment opportunities. Duplication of core services for employers has been reduced by the establishment of Business Service Teams. Joint outreach strategies and sharing of contact information has been a major benefit of PA CareerLink® collaboration and the LWIB's policy of aligning resources.

A prime example of the efficacy of this team approach relates to a recent situation where WCJP noticed that numerous WIA participants exited to employment were reactivated in common measures because value-added services were entered in cwds by BWPO staff. Upon review of the situation a meeting was convened with BWPO and WCJP staff to review the exits and the extension in common measures. The meeting resulted in BWPO

staff understanding WIA exits to employment did not count toward common measures until no value-added services were entered in cwds for ninety days.

Please reference Section I – Strategic Plan of this LWIA Plan.

- 7. Attach the current, fully-executed LWIB/One-Stop Partner Agreement (OSPA) to identify current, specific levels and methods of participation of each required and optional partner program in the local service delivery system (*Appendix F*).**

See Appendix F for the fully-executed LWIB/One-Stop Partner Agreement (OSPA)

- 8. Describe how individual programs, using the funds allocated under each specific Title, will align with and implement the strategies and vision outlined in the Strategic Plan section.**

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

- 9. Describe the LWIB's role and functions in the provision of Rapid Response services, including coordination with statewide Rapid Response activities.**

The Administrative Division of the West Central Job Partnership, Inc. provides staffing services to the LWIB for the Mercer and Lawrence County LWIA jurisdiction and also acts as fiscal agent. This Division thus coordinates directly with the PA Department of Labor and Industry (PDLI) Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations (BWPO) in applying for, receiving and disbursing Rapid Response funds for local coordination with statewide Rapid Response activities. Additionally, the Administrative Division along with PA CareerLink® Site Administrators and the Title One Operator receives communication from the BWPO Regional Rapid Response Coordinator of WARN notices filed that are relevant for the LWIA so that all facets of the local workforce system can be mobilized to address the catastrophic impact mass lay-offs may have on affected communities and citizens. The LWIB provides oversight and strategic guidance to the one stop partners in addition to deploying funding to facilitate the transition activities of affected businesses and workers. When the Rapid Response proceeds to operational planning and delivery, the Division Chief of West Central Job Partnership, Inc. Program Division, who serves on the operators' consortium and represents WIA Title One on the LWIB, assumes programmatic responsibility for implementing the

resources provided by the board for the specific activities. There is no direct interaction between the LWIB or its designated staff as regards to any one stop program delivery function including WIA Title One but, as all one stop partners represented on the LWIB, there is individual interaction as a board member.

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

C. OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES: BUSINESS SERVICES

1. Describe the role of the Business Services Team (BST) in PA CareerLink[®] office(s).

Each PA CareerLink[®] office within the West Central two county jurisdiction has established a Business Service Team (BST) responsible for serving the needs of employer customers. Members of the internal BST consist of partner staff who offer direct employer service to the business community. Led by the Site Administrators, the PA CareerLink[®] BST serves as the retail engagement of employers to provide demand driven employment services to business customers. Specific employer requests are communicated to the BST via the Site Administrator. The Site Administrator convenes the team to devise a plan of action, and team members either collectively or individually set into motion specific activities to address the needs of business on a micro level. Examples of services offered include recruitment, assessment, labor exchange, labor market information, rapid response, workshops and tax incentives.

The Site Administrators who serve on the internal PA CareerLink[®] BST, also serve on the larger two-county BST for West Central PA. Other members of this team include representatives from local and regional economic development, chambers of commerce, industrial resource centers, small business development centers, Governor's action team, WCJP staff and local community colleges. The West Central BST works to foster relationship building with area businesses. This group of professionals meets regularly to proactively address the critical challenges and opportunities facing employers today and

into the future. Examples of services offered by this group includes long term strategic planning, market development, product development, curriculum development, customized consortia-based training, business expansion/diversification and continuous improvement.

2. Describe how the LWIB will ensure that the local strategic plan and goals for business services are communicated to and linked with the BST.

The West Central LWIB relies on the Business Service Teams to package and deliver relevant services to our region's most critical businesses. To appropriately carry out this function, the WCJP provides staff who serves on the PA CareerLink® Business Service Teams for Lawrence and Mercer Counties. Furthermore the LWIB requires the PA CareerLink® Site Administrators lead the Business Service Team in their respective county. WCJP staff who serve on the regional West Central BST, along with the CareerLink® Site Administrators, act as a link between the BST and the LWIB to ensure local strategic plans are communicated between the BST and LWIB. The BST model offers better targeting and linkages of service between the PA CareerLink® and the business customer. LWIB strategic plan and goals are made available to both regional and county BST members - several of who are themselves LWIB members and participated in the planning process.

3. Describe the BST outreach strategy and plans to promote partnerships and linkages with state and local businesses, professional service organizations, and trade associations and to support sector engagement goals.

The Site Administrators, along with LWIB staff meet regularly with economic development agencies both local and regional along with members of the Industrial Resource Centers, Small Business Development Centers, local Chambers of Commerce, Governor's Action Team and local Community College as part of the regional West Central Business Service Team. This group discusses and devises strategic responses to sector engagement on a more macro level. Chief among the goals of the wider West Central BST includes:

- Focus on and prioritize businesses in targeted sectors for focused outreach.
- Collect critical data through proven employer interview process performed by experienced and trained business calling agents.
- Input identified challenges, opportunities and data into online database known as the Executive Pulse Business Intelligence System.
- Develop a responsive, comprehensive and confidential employer proposal with all BST partners input.
- Create a work plan for and build a relationship between the business and network partners.

- Measure the value of aggregated service to business customers
- Continuously seek ways to assist the business over time while promoting the services offered by the regional BST.

During the employer interview process, team members notify the business customer of the network interconnectivity and enhanced single point of service, offering an aggregated proposal to address the business's most critical needs. Leaders of sector based initiatives such as Industry Partnerships (IP's) who are not already at the table are invited to participate in regular BST meetings to educate the network of opportunities for regional businesses. During BST meetings, partners are offered time to brief one another of specific programs and projects that could be extended to businesses throughout the broader region. These programs are then communicated to businesses during company interviews where applicable.

4. Describe the LWIA's service delivery solutions for business customers, including, but not limited to, developing career ladders, industry-recognized credentialing, customized service delivery, collaborations and/or partnerships.

One of the key roles of the Business Service Team is to develop long-term strategic industry partnerships. The partnerships rely on the promotion of Business Service Team to attract and recruit new leadership. Through collaborative efforts within the West Central Workforce Investment Area, the BST has aided in identifying new partners to assist in strengthening new and existing partnerships. The West Central LWIA has identified and participated in the organization of four cluster based industry partnerships, including: 1) Advanced Manufacturing and Diversified Materials, 2) Building and Construction Trades, 3) Transportation and Logistics, and 4) Health Care. These groups are responsible for the demand driven approach to delivery of service. Private sector members provide subject matter experts for strategic and tactical planning and development of the following:

- General Industry Promotion
- Career Ladders and Lattices
- Skills Gap Analysis
- Curriculum Development
- Industry-recognized Credentialing
- Student tours and projects
- Guidance Counselor Boot Camp
- Job Shadowing, Work Experience, Pre-Apprenticeship and Apprenticeship opportunities
- Consortia-based incumbent worker training
- Sector based Informational sessions and workshops (as expert panelists)
- Job Fair participation
- Ambassadors for the Workforce Investment System or LWIB sponsored events & activities

- On-the-Job Training (OJT) and Customized Job Training (CJT) opportunities

5. Describe how the LWIB will ensure that BSTs offer services and resources to businesses that include, but are not limited to, lay-off aversion strategies, On-the-Job Training (OJT) and customized training opportunities, recruitment, toolkits, data visualization and other materials.

The Business Service Team is locally managed and collaboratively governed. Every partner organization represented on the BST has a voice. Partner agencies which have one or more programs or services to assist businesses and their workers are welcomed to participate. BST partners commit to work collaboratively, transparently and diligently to plan and implement a comprehensive network to help retain and grow businesses in our region. Using a customer-centered approach, the BST consistently strives to share ideas and identify and leverage resources offered by BST partner organizations to meet the challenges and opportunities identified by area business through the interview process. Building on each organization's good work, experience, insights and contacts, the BST helps regional businesspersons avoid service silos to acquire the services they need quickly, efficiently and with the greatest collaborative impact. Through targeted outreach, the West Central BST offers full access to all available services and programs. BST members meet regularly to update one another on new and existing programs and services available to business customers. When the businessperson speaks with any partner of the BST, they may receive information about and access to all relevant partner services. By bringing the BST together to strategize on the best ways to serve each business, the team generates new ideas and ways to maximize impact and leverage service. As a result, the solutions offered are fully comprehensive and collaborative.

6. Describe the standardized metrics (e.g., repeat business, Return on Investment (ROI), labor market penetration, new hires) that will be used to measure the success and effectiveness of a BST.

The West Central BST will develop a reporting regime that tracks and measures critical processes such as prospect and client visits, follow-ups, proposals and actual business outcomes resulting from the services provided by the BST partners. Reporting will enable the BST to more effectively advocate for sector based support toward important business services by documenting the successes of those programs as well as identifying the expressed needs for assistance and support from business clients as captured through the Executive Pulse interview process. Customized reporting capabilities offered by the Executive Pulse Business Intelligence System will enable us to compare our results and the issues facing our region with other neighboring communities, giving us significant points of reference for our successes and challenges. The Scorecard feature of the Executive Pulse system will enable the BST to aggregate the collective financial investment made toward individual business customers.

Specific metrics for data collection may include the following:

- Total # companies interviewed

- Total # companies in receipt of formal proposal
- % of services received
- Financial investment (\$)
- Customer Satisfaction Rates (%)
- Follow-up (%)
- Market Penetration Rate (%)
- Repeat Business (%)
- CareerLink Membership Rate (+/-)
- Job Order Referral Service
- Industry Consortium Membership (+/-)
- Duplication of effort/service

D: OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES: PRIORITY OF SERVICE

1. Describe the LWIB’s strategies and processes for compliance with Jobs for Veterans Priority.

Definitions per the Jobs for Veterans Act (P.L.107-288) (38 USC 4215):

- The regulations apply to “covered persons,” which is defined as “covered veterans **and** eligible spouses.”
- Covered Veteran – defined as service in the military, naval, or air service and a discharge under conditions other than dishonorable.
- Eligible Spouse – the spouse of any of the following individuals:
 - A veteran who died of a service connected disability.
 - A member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty, who at the time of application for service under this section, is listed in one or more of the following categories, and has been so listed for a total of more than 90 days: missing in action, captured in the line of duty by a hostile force, or forcibly detained or interned in the line of duty by a foreign government or power.
 - A veteran who has a total disability resulting from a service connected disability.
 - A veteran who died while a disability so evaluated was in existence.

The LWIA definitions are as follows:

- Veteran is a person who:
 - Served on active duty in the military service of the U.S. for a period of more than 180 days and who was discharged or released with other than a dishonorable discharge; **OR**
 - Was discharged or released from active duty because of a service-connected disability; **OR**
 - Was discharged as a member of a reserve component under an order to active duty pursuant to Section 672(a), (d), or (g), 673b of Title 10, who served on active duty during a period of war or in a campaign badge is

authorized and was discharged from such duty with other than a dishonorable discharge (38 U.S.C. 2011(4)).

- **Not a Veteran** – does not meet the definition of Veteran or Campaign Badge.
- **Campaign Badge** – Veteran who served on active duty in the U.S. armed forces during a war or in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge or expeditionary medal has been authorized as identified and listed by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). The LWIA follows the Campaigns or Expeditions listed in the May 17, 2004 OPM publication. The list of Campaigns or Expeditions may be reviewed at the Campaign Badge Website found at: <http://opm.gov/veterans/html/vgmedal2.htm>.

All visitors to the CareerLinks® are required to log in at the greeter station upon entry into the building. The computerized log in system gives individuals the opportunity to self-identify as veterans and/or spouses of veterans. CareerLink® staff are aware when an individual has self-identified as a veteran or eligible spouse. At that point CareerLink® staff advises veterans and eligible spouses of: their entitlement to priority of service; the full array of employment, training and placement services available; and, applicable eligibility requirements for all programs and services offered. Veterans and eligible spouses receive the first level of priority in access to universal core services in the CareerLink®.

Programs with Eligibility Criteria – Eligibility criteria identify basic conditions that each and every participant in a specific program is required to meet. It is important to note that a veteran or eligible spouse must first meet any and all of the statutory eligibility criteria in order to be considered eligible for the program. Once determined eligible for the program, the veteran or eligible spouse will be given first priority for enrollment in the program and receipt of services over those determined eligible for the program and not a veteran or spouse of a veteran.

Programs with Statutory Priorities – Some programs are required by law to provide a priority or preference for a particular group of individuals or require the program to spend a certain portion of program funds on a particular group of persons. An example of this type of priority is the priority for low-income individuals and for recipients of public assistance for the WIA adult formula programs. For programs with this type of *mandatory* priority, the Title I operator will determine the status of each individual veteran or eligible spouse and apply priority of service as described below:

- Veterans and eligible spouses who meet the mandatory priorities or spending requirement or limitation must receive the highest level of priority for the program or service;
- Non-covered persons who meet the program's mandatory priority or spending requirement or limitation then receive the second level of priority for the program or service;
- Veterans and eligible spouses outside the program-specific mandatory priority or spending requirement or limitation then receive the third level of priority for the program or service; and

- Non-covered persons outside the program-specific mandatory priority or spending requirement or limitation then receive the fourth level of priority for the program or service.

2. Describe the criteria used to determine whether funds allocated for employment and training activities are limited and the process that the PA CareerLink® Operator uses to apply priority.

After eighty percent (80%) of the WIA Title I program funds (excluding administrative funds) allocated to the local Workforce Investment Area for adult employment and training activities are obligated on a fiscal year to fiscal year basis, the local Area will give priority for enrollment in intensive and training services to an individual who received or is a member of a family that received a total family income (exclusive of unemployment compensation, child support payments, cash public assistance, and old age and survivors insurance benefits), for the six-month period prior to application for the program, that does not exceed 100% of the poverty level OR 70 percent of the Lower Living Standard Income Level (LLSIL), as determined by the Secretary of Labor and adjusted for regional, metropolitan, urban and rural differences and family size or an individual who receives or is a member of a family who receives cash payments under a Federal, State, or local income-based public assistance program, provided that the individual is not eligible for participation in or needs employment and training services not available through other local programs designed specifically to serve him or her (e.g., Employment And Retention Network - EARN, Supported Work, Supported Engagement, CCI, et al).

The Fiscal Agent will review the yearly Adult allocation monthly and provide a status report to the LWIB. If Adult funds are limited, the LWIB may elect to transfer Dislocated Worker funds to the Adult category to maintain continuity of services to Adults. Transfer of DW funds to Adult will only occur when the LWIB determines that sufficient Dislocated Worker funds are available after the transfer of funds to Adult to continue uninterrupted services to Dislocated Workers. If the LWIB determines that Adult funding is limited and that funds from Dislocated Worker monies WILL NOT be transferred to the Adult funding category, the LWIB Executive Committee will notify the Title I Operator and CareerLink® Operators in writing that priority for WIA Adult intensive and training services (as identified in Section 134 (d)(4)(e)) shall be given only to recipients of public assistance and other low-income individuals.

3. Describe LWIB eligibility and priority selection policy for Adults and Dislocated Workers. Attach the LWIB's Priority of Service policy (*Appendix G*).

Adult, Dislocated Worker and Veterans Priority of Service Policy – The primary conditions of 20 CFR Part 1010, will be followed by the LWIA to ensure compliance that priority of service will be provided to veterans and certain spouses. See *Appendix G*.

E: SERVICES TO ADULTS AND DISLOCATED WORKERS

1. Describe how partner resources will be integrated to deliver core services to adults and dislocated workers.

In order to maintain greatest flexibility in designing and implementing programs, the local Workforce Investment Area elects the maximum transferal rate as permitted by Federal and State regulations.

The PA CareerLink[®] system will maximize informed customer choice by assuring that all customers have the knowledge needed to make an informed decision. All customers will, through the PA CareerLinks[®], have access to information services which, at a minimum, include information: concerning job vacancy listings in local, regional, and national labor markets; the job skills necessary to obtain the listed jobs; local occupations in demand, including the earnings and skill requirements for such occupations; identifying providers qualified to receive WIA funds to train adults, youth and dislocated workers - describing their programs, program performance outcomes and program cost information; financial aid assistance for training and education available in the local Workforce Investment Area and not funded under the Workforce Investment Act; availability of supportive services that enable an individual to participate in training activities; dealing with the availability of and eligibility for supplemental income programs (i.e., public assistance, unemployment compensation, etc.). All of these services/activities are offered through the PA CareerLinks[®] as Core Services.

Core Services

- a. Core Services consist of a series of fundamental activities designed to assist and support consumers in accessing and utilizing available resources and are expected to include:
- (1) outreach activities which involve the collection and publication or dissemination of information, to both the general public and specific targeted populations, describing available services in an effort to identify and attract potential consumers;
 - (2) orientation activities which direct the consumer's interests and inclinations toward those services available which may satisfy their individual need(s);
 - (3) information services activities which include all methodologies employed to provide consumers with complete, accurate, and up-to-date information needed to maximize informed choice in selecting and accessing services appropriate to their needs;
 - (4) the registration process which collects and records information needed to determine a potential consumer's eligibility and suitability for available services;
 - (5) the eligibility determination process through which service providers make a definite and firm decision about whether or not an applicant qualifies to receive available services;
 - (6) initial assessment activities which determine a consumer's needs and which are used to identify which, if any, of the available services are suitable for meeting those need;
 - (7) supportive services which consist of various types of assistance designed to

- sustain a consumer while he or she is participating in training activities;
- (8) job search and referral assistance which includes the methodologies employed to help and support the consumer in organizing and conducting a successful job search;
 - (9) and/or, follow-up services which collect information about a former participant's current employment situation and needs.

Most partner agency staff are assigned blocks of time to facilitate the core activities available in the PA CareerLinks[®] whether it be in the Career Resource Area or facilitating a "how to" workshop. The amount of time assigned is based on the Resource Sharing Agreement and the number of FTEs assigned to the partner agency. Essentially core services are self-service. Assigned staff only provides information.

2. Describe measures to ensure that intensive services are provided to adults and dislocated workers who meet the criteria in WIA Section 134(d)(3)(A).

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

- (1) Case management services which is a consumer-centered approach in the delivery of services designed to prepare and coordinate a comprehensive employment plan, to ensure access to necessary workforce investment activities and supportive services;
- (2) Employment counseling services, both group and individual sessions to assist in the development of an individual employment plan which will identify employment goals and the combination of services needed to find employment. Employment counseling services are provided during program participation and after job placement.
- (3) Comprehensive and specialized assessment services which are the methodology by which employment barriers faced by the consumer are identified and appropriate strategies for dealing with those barriers are designed. Compute-A-Match is a comprehensive test of vocational aptitudes, connective and conceptual abilities, vocational interest inventories, temperament factors, work attitudes and general education development levels of reasoning, math and language.
- (4) Career guidance and planning are the processes by which consumers are assisted with the solution of a variety of problems (personal, financial, legal, or

programmatic) occurring during participation and by which a consumer is assisted in establishing a clear employment goal;

- (5) Development of an individualized employment plan which is a written document that identifies the consumer's employment goal, appropriate achievement objectives, and the service or combination of services suitable for meeting the consumer's needs and achieving the employment goal;
- (6) Short-term pre-vocational services which prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training, including the development of learning skills, communications skills, job search and retention skills, and personal maintenance skills (adult literacy activities related to basic workforce readiness may also be included).

Once a client is referred to WCJP, in need of intensive services, a WIA application is completed to determine that the client is eligible to receive WIA services. The Data Manager reviews the documentation collected for eligibility determination. Once, the Data Manager certifies a client eligible, the Intensive Services will be made available at the PA CareerLink[®]

3. Describe measures to leverage resources to provide increased access to training opportunities.

At the local level, the LWIB provides oversight and guidance to one stop program staff to explore and integrate strategic options for cross program utilization whenever possible. For instance, individuals who are both WIA and OVR eligible receive coordinated services to enhance benefits and conserve resources. Thus, tuition may be paid by WIA Title 1 and books and supplies by OVR thus maximizing benefits to the client and minimizing cost to both programs. Likewise, individuals eligible for Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) and Trade Readjustment Act (TRA) programs are dual enrolled into WIA Dislocated Worker Programs to receive assessment, supportive services or training services as appropriate once again maximizing benefits while minimizing cost. Referrals are taken for WIA services for Veterans, individuals receiving Unemployment Compensation, Older Workers and other populations. In addition, all WIA participants are required to apply for other grants for which they may be eligible: Pell; PHEAA; work opportunity grants; cultural diversity grants that are offered at some universities; etc.

4. Describe how the Eligible Training Program/Provider system is used to provide improvement of education and training opportunities in response to the needs of business and industry.

The Course/Programs established on the Eligible Training Program/Provider (ETPP) System are derived from the High Priority Occupations within the State of Pennsylvania and each individual regional area within the state. High Priority Occupations are job categories, within selected industry clusters, that are in demand by employers, have higher skill needs, and are likely to provide family-sustaining wages. These High

Priority Occupations are developed by the Center for Workforce Information and Analysis (CWIA). Individual Training Accounts will only be funded by WCJP if the school and the program appear on the ETPP list.

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

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

Performance Measures are obtained within each Course/Programs application and must be met. In order to ensure that workforce development investments yield the best possible results, PA has developed this Performance Management Plan for evaluating the performance of workforce programs. The plan is not designed to simply measure program performance; rather it is about improving the outcomes from these investments. This plan sets forth the framework to monitor trends in key economic, workforce, and education indicators, and gathers quantitative data using common measures.

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

The LWIB through regular meetings with various partner agencies (Industry Partnership employers; LWIB employers; Workforce Innovation Fund Grant's Competiveness Council members; CareerLink® Operators; etc.) keep their pulse on the needs of local employers. Just recently, WCJP conducted a survey of the Advance Manufacturing Industry Partnership employers regarding their immediate needs for welders. The results of the survey led WCJP to issue a Request For Proposal (RFP) for short term welding training that will lead to manufacturing industry recognized credentials, such as American Welding Society's (AMS) Certified Welder credential.

The WIF grant is funding a skills gap analysis in the manufacturing sector to identify additional needs of local employers. Once the final skills gap analysis is complete, training providers in the local area will be convened to discuss the needs of the employers in hopes that curricula will be developed to address the gaps and provide individuals with skills the employers need in their day to day operations.

5. If implementing the waiver of the statutory exclusion and regulatory prohibition of using Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for out-of-school youth, describe training services for out-of-school youth.

Out-of-School Youth (OSY) work with contractor staff located in the CareerLink® locations to develop an Individual Employment Plan to determine the steps necessary to lead the OSY to self-sufficiency. Services available to OSY include: literacy/numeracy remediation and/or GED preparation; career research; WIN® curriculum facilitation; WorkKeys® assessments that result in a National Career Readiness Certificate®; resume preparation; job development assistance; subsidized employment opportunities – Paid Work Experience (PWE) or On the Job Training (OJT); or ITAs.

WCJP utilizes the PA waiver to allow Out-of-School Youth to follow the established Individual Training Account (ITA) policy. Career research includes researching a minimum of three careers in which OSY have an expressed interest. The research includes: the duties of the occupation; the conditions of work (standing all day, working outdoors, swing shifts, etc.); expected wages – are they family sustaining; etc. Once the participant has selected an occupation to pursue he/she must research three schools on the State Approved Training Provider List that offer training in the occupational field of choice. Once they have identified a high priority occupation, a school and training program the participant will apply for funding via the established ITA process.

Based upon individual needs and insufficient offerings on the ETTP list, WCJP may procure industry recognized credential-based training.

6. Describe the approach to OJT and customized training, including identifying opportunities, marketing, networking, and leveraging resources.

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

7. Describe current and/or planned use of WIA Title I funds for apprenticeship training.

The LWIB is currently considering issuing a RFP for pre-apprenticeship training that can be coordinated with existing programs or initiatives. This is in the very early planning stage and will require industry and/or labor union support.

F: SERVICES TO SPECIFIC POPULATIONS

The Operational Plan must address service strategies for: dislocated workers, displaced homemakers, low-income individuals (such as: migrant and/or seasonal farm workers, women, minorities, individuals training for non-traditional employment), veterans, public assistance recipients, individuals with multiple barriers to employment (including older individuals, persons with limited English proficiency, persons with disabilities, and ex-offenders), and youth.

Where the LWIA employs similar service strategies for all populations, the strategies need only be addressed once. Strategies that are unique to a specific population must be described separately.

- 1. Describe the strategies to provide services, such as those listed:**
 - a. Re-employment services**
 - b. Unemployment Compensation work test**
 - c. Rapid Response services**
 - d. Trade Act services**

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

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

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

- Businesses – CareerLink[®] staff are trained to assist employers input job orders into CWDS and screen applicants for vacancies listed.
- Partner Programs - The physical co-location of the partner agencies affords a unified team approach to service all customer populations accessing the PA CareerLinks[®]. The majority of partner agencies have staff facilitate in the Career Resource Areas and all staff have been cross-trained regarding services offered by partner agencies. Therefore, all staff are able to refer customers to services offered in the PA CareerLinks[®] and/or partner agencies, as well as other services available in the community.
- Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers – The local area does not have a significant population of migrant and/or seasonal farm workers. Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers (MSFW) will receive qualitatively equivalent and quantitatively proportionate services equal to those provided to all other customers. MSFWs will receive the full range of employment

services, benefits and protections including counseling, testing, and job and training referral services. In providing such services, all PA CareerLink® offices will consider the preferences, needs, and skills of individual MSFWs. “Language Line” would be utilized as a first step to assist non-English speaking MSFW applicants to identify barriers and services needed. Referrals will be made to appropriate CareerLink® partner agencies and PathStone identified agencies to address needed services such as: emergency housing; transportation services; child care; medical assistance; employment and training services; etc.

- Persons with disabilities - individuals with a self-identified disability or observable disability are referred to the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR). OVR and Title I staff will coordinate and jointly develop a plan to maximize funding for disabled individuals. Title I funding may be combined with OVR funding if skills training is deemed an appropriate activity for the individual. OVR may be able to provide hardware or tools to assist a disabled individual in the workplace. For example, Title I funding may be used to provide OJT training with an employer and OVR funding may be used to purchase a large print computer screen for a seeing impaired person to be placed at the employer’s place of business.
- Veterans - all individuals who have served in the military who are determined to be “job ready” are referred to BWPO’s Veterans Services Representative for job matching and referrals. Additional CareerLink® services are available to all veterans through the regular CareerLink® processes and activities. All Title I programs are open to veterans and given priority service over all other eligible individuals.
- TANF Customers and low-income individuals - all low-income individuals are referred to the County Assistance Office (CAO) for assistance in removing barriers that may prevent them from attending training or obtaining and/or retaining employment. TANF recipients will also be referred to partner agencies and/or community agencies for assistance in other areas such as drug and alcohol counseling, housing issues, etc.
- Displaced Homemakers - For the purpose of determining eligibility, a displaced homemaker is defined as an individual who has been providing unpaid services to family members in the home and who: has been dependent on the income of another family member but is no longer supported by that income and is unemployed or underemployed and is experiencing difficulty in obtaining or upgrading employment.
- Women and Minorities - As part of career research activities, women are encouraged to review careers that are held predominately by men (non-traditional employment). They are instructed to compare wages of the non-traditional occupations to those more traditionally pursued by women. Employers are encouraged to hire women in non-traditional jobs. Employers who hire women to fill non-traditional employment vacancies via On the Job Training contracts (TAA and Title I) may receive an additional 40 hours of wage reimbursement. Minorities are mainstreamed into PA CareerLink® core services and all services and activities available in WIA Title I funded programs.

- Individuals with Multiple Barriers to Employment
 - Older Individuals – referrals are made to Experience Works, Inc. in Mercer County and Lawrence County Social Services in Lawrence County for program information and assistance. Older individuals are mainstreamed through the regular PA CareerLink[®] processes and activities. All Title I programs are open to older individuals without bias. Any older individuals determined to be “job ready” will be referred to BWPO staff for job matching and referrals.
 - Persons with limited English proficiency - WCJP entered a contract with Language Line to provide interpreter services for any individual with limited English proficiency. All partner agencies located at the PA CareerLink[®] were assigned access codes and trained to use the Language Line system. Recently, the Commonwealth notified all PA CareerLinks[®] that the Language Line service is available to all PA CareerLink[®] staff and the cost will be absorbed by the State. Training is provided to all staff once per year at capacity training on how to access Language Line services.
 - Individuals with Disabilities - Both PA CareerLinks[®] in the Local Workforce Investment Area are handicap accessible and have a variety of equipment to assist individuals with disabilities such as: TTY telephones to accommodate people with hearing impairments; furniture (tables) to accommodate people in wheelchairs; and magnification devices to accommodate people with visual impairments. If individuals need additional services beyond core services a WIA Title I application will be taken. If determined to be eligible, all WIA Title I programs will be made available without bias. Title I staff will coordinate and jointly develop a plan with Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) to maximize funding for disabled individuals. Title I funding may be combined with OVR funding if skills training is deemed an appropriate activity for the individual. OVR may be able to provide hardware or tools to assist a disabled individual in the workplace. For example, Title I funding may be used to provide OJT training with an employer and OVR funding may be used to purchase a large print computer screen for a seeing impaired person to be placed at the employer’s place of business.
 - Ex-offenders - are mainstreamed through the regular PA CareerLink[®] processes and activities. All Title I programs are open to ex-offenders without bias. Any ex-offender determined to be “job ready” will be referred to BWPO staff for job matching and referrals. PA CareerLink[®] Mercer County has partnered with the Department of Corrections, State Regional Correctional Facility - Mercer (SRCFM), Department of Probation and Parole, and Community Corrections Center to provide inmates orientations to PA CareerLink[®] services. Once a month PA CareerLink[®] partner agency staff travels to SRCFM to provide soon to be released inmates a full overview of the services available at the PA CareerLink[®]. Once the inmates are released to the Community Corrections Center the ex-offenders are mainstreamed through the regular PA CareerLink[®] processes and activities. All Title I programs are open to older individuals without bias. A steering committee comprised of representatives from the County Assistance Office, Probation and Parole, Community Corrections Center, BWPO

and the Title I provider meet once a month to review activities of the program. A computerized database was created to track the services proved and the progress of participants. Services are also entered into the PA CareerLink[®] system.

- Dislocated Workers – Title I staff checks the PA CareerLink[®] system to determine if a WARN notice has been filed for a dislocated worker’s former employer. If so, the BWPO staff and Title I staff will coordinate efforts to serve the dislocated worker. Title I staff will schedule and administer a full array of assessments for any individual who seeks funding (Title I and/or TAA) to attend training. Assessment results are reviewed to assure the client’s interests and aptitudes match the training for which they are seeking funding. If the client is suitable for training, an employment plan will be developed jointly by BWPO and Title I staff to maximize the funding package for dislocated workers and outline the steps needed to guide the client through training and lead them to employment. Referrals are made to all appropriate supportive service agencies that could potentially assist in eliminating barriers in the training to employment process.
- Trade Act Eligible Individuals - BWPO staff first meet with the individual affected by a lay off or downsizing and the company has a WARN notice on file. If an individual is interested in re-training and applying for TAA funding, they are first referred to the WIA Title I provider for interest and aptitude assessment to assure the occupational field of interest is one in which they will be successful. The WIA Title I staff completes a WIA application for services and schedules the individual for assessment. Once tested the WIA Title I staff sends a recommendation to BWPO staff to approve or deny training along with the assessment results. BWPO forwards the TAA application for funding to the Commonwealth. Once approved the individual is co-enrolled in the PA CareerLink[®] system and WIA systems. WIA Title I staff will process an Individual Training Account (ITA) is the training is over and above the State’s training cap. All WIA Dislocated Worker and/or Rapid Response supportive services are available as needed to all co-enrolled individuals.

Strategies to provide services to special populations:

- Re-employment Services - each PA CareerLink[®] holds weekly orientations to explain Core Services or facilitated activities available to the general public such as: PA CareerLink[®] registration; self-directed job search; workshops for resume preparation, interviewing techniques, etc.
- Unemployment Compensation Work Test - all Unemployment Compensation (UC) recipients will receive a letter from the UC office providing information about PA CareerLinks[®] and services available to unemployed individuals. A second letter is sent to UC recipients notifying them they must report to the PA CareerLink[®] to attend a mandatory PREP orientation which details the PA CareerLink[®] and services available to all UC recipients. This orientation includes a group session as well as one on one meeting with the PREP Coordinator and WIA Title I staff who will explain programs and funding available through the WIA programs.
- Integration of Rapid Response - Once a WARN notice is filed on behalf of an employer, the PA CareerLink[®] partner agencies plan a Rapid Response session for all employees affected by the lay off. The Rapid Response team reviews all services

available at the PA CareerLink[®] including retraining funds available through TAA and WIA Title I Dislocated Worker programs. In addition to TAA and WIA Title I Dislocated Worker staff, the Rapid Response team includes staff from agencies which include: credit counseling; mortgage services; CHIPS; Adult Basic; and Unemployment Compensation. The team explains PA CareerLink[®] services and is available to answer questions to employees who will be affected by the lay off.

- Dislocated Workers - individuals who have been laid off or will be laid off due to plant closures or downsizing are eligible for all Core Services and are mainstreamed through the regular PA CareerLink[®] processes and activities. All Title I programs are open to dislocated workers without bias. Any dislocated worker determined to be “job ready” will be referred to BWPO staff for job matching and referrals. Any dislocated worker who needs more intensive services will have a WIA Title I application taken and proceed through intensive services. Services will be coordinate by WIA Title I staff and BWPO staff if it is determined the individual may also be eligible to receive Trade services.

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

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

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

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

Title I funded staff have the ultimate responsibility for determining the information and

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

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

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

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

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

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

The person assigned primary case management responsibilities must make direct, personal, contact with an assigned adult or dislocated worker at least once per week during the first two weeks of the individual's participation in any program activity. After this period, contact must be made at least once per month with each assigned individual until participation is terminated.

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

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

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

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

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

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

A dislocated worker will be eligible for participation in Title I Intensive Services. If the individual has received at least one core service, was unable to obtain employment, and has been determined by the PA CareerLink[®] operator to be in need of intensive services to obtain employment that leads to self-sufficiency.

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

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

G: SERVICES TO YOUTH

- 1. Describe how the LWIB will promote collaboration among the public workforce system, educational system, human services, juvenile justice, and others to better serve youth who are most in need and have significant barriers to employment. This includes the provision of: career pathways, STEM education, labor market-based career development, advanced manufacturing, and energy-sector jobs.**

The LWIB will assure that the membership of the Youth Council includes representatives of: local elected officials, local school-to-work partnerships, local education agencies, local public housing authorities, local area justice and law enforcement agencies, local youth initiatives serving homeless, Job Corps representatives, representatives of other

local area youth initiatives (including those entities that serve homeless or runaway youth or public assistance recipients), parents, youth participants, and organizations having experience relating to youth activities.

WCJP is represented on the steering committee of the NW PA's Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) network working to create regional STEM strategies for its stakeholders. Individuals in Armstrong, Butler, Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Indiana, Jefferson, Lawrence, Mercer, Venango, and Warren counties collaborate and share programs that expand options for students to acquire literacy to prepare them for high-demand, high-skill, high-wage careers. The NW PA STEM network held its fourth annual conference entitled STEM Skills Today, Economic Vitality for the Future on May 12, 2012 at Edinboro University. The STEM network will receive funds from the PA Higher Education PA State System of Higher Education for a field trip for a group of students from the counties listed above to travel to Penn State University, main campus, to tour the nanotechnology center.

2. Describe the criteria used for awarding grants for youth activities, including criteria used to identify effective or ineffective youth activities and providers of such activities.

West Central Job Partnership procures providers of youth program activities by issuing a Request for Proposal (RFP). Information regarding the RFP process may be found in Section H. 5 of this plan. Contracts for youth services are then negotiated for a one year period with the option to renew for two additional one year periods after documentation of satisfactory performance for the previous year. The contracts contain specific performance standards including: specific number of enrollments by benchmark dates; minimum number of hours youth must participate monthly; % of youth that must actively participate during the program year; and % of youth who pass to the next grade level or graduate high school. Performance of youth contractors is monitored on an on-going basis utilizing a variety of measures including: monthly contractor reports are reviewed for number of enrollments, participation rates, etc; review of monthly Direct Service Team (DST) minutes where contractor staff and WCJP discuss youth issues, barriers, problems, etc.; yearly mid-year meet and discuss session with the contractors to review program statistics regarding enrollments, attendance, retention, etc. A full programmatic and fiscal monitoring is conducted on each contractor on a risk assessment basis but no less than every two years.

3. Describe how policies ensure compliance with applicable safety and child labor laws.

The local Area will ensure compliance with applicable safety and child labor laws by requiring that all participants in activities funded under Title I receive training in work place safety and orientation to child labor laws; all written agreements with Title I funded work activity sites include provisions requiring the site to comply with work place safety and child labor law requirements; all contractor staff and all work site staff involved in the supervision of youth activities funded under Title I must pass Act 33/34 and FBI

clearances, receive training in safety, first aid, and child labor laws; and, the oversight and monitoring responsibilities of both the LWIB and the Youth Council for Title I funded youth activities include enforcement of safety requirements and child labor laws.

4. Describe the processes used to provide initial intake, objective assessment, case management, individual service strategies, and eligibility assessments for youth. Include policies for Eligibility Verification and Priority Selection for Title I-B Youth (Appendix H).

All youth who express an interest in WIA Title I programs will meet with an Initial Intake & Assessment Specialist. An application will be completed and the appropriate data validation collected – see Appendix H for a full description of the Eligibility Verification Process. Any youth under the age of 18 must have a parent or legal guardian sign the application. All youth that meet the eligibility criteria for participation in Title I funded youth activities will receive information regarding the full array of applicable or appropriate services available through the LWIB, providers found eligible by the LWIB, or PA CareerLink® partners and be referred to appropriate training and educational programs that have the capacity to serve them on a sequential or concurrent basis.

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

5. Describe the framework for youth programs that includes the following components:

a. Preparing youth for post-secondary education

Youth participate in activities that require researching various occupations, the educational requirements and the entry level wages. Once they select a high priority occupation they review the State approved training providers list of schools that provide training programs linked to the occupations of choice.

b. Connecting academic and occupational learning

The youth programs are designed to help youth identify how academics translate to occupational learning. Older youth utilize the WIN® curriculum for literacy/numeracy upgrades leading to the WorkKeys® assessment for the National Career Readiness Certificate® (NCRC®). The youth contractor will instruct youth to utilize the contextual learning modules of WIN® where the curriculum is geared toward the high priority occupation the youth is pursuing. Contractors for younger youth facilitate activities geared specifically toward occupations identified by participant interest, i.e. – a youth shows interest in becoming a nurse, math problems are assigned that a nurse would have to work out; or computer exercises for youth interested in Information Technology. One contractor utilizes KeyTrain®

curriculum, similar to WIN®, which provides specific occupational academic instruction.

c. Preparing youth for unsubsidized employment opportunities

Youth activities include job readiness preparation that teaches “soft skills” that employers expect such as: reporting to work on time; no or low absenteeism; conflict resolution; etc. Matching career interests and aptitudes to occupations of choice to assure a good match – the youth is not only going to like their job but will be able to perform it well. Job development services are also available to youth to provide job leads and potentially negotiation of an On the Job Training contract or a Paid Work Experience Agreement with an employer.

d. Connecting youth to the business community through intermediary entities

Youth are connected to the business community through use of PA CareerLink® resources such as job orders and referrals to employment along with active job development. Lawrence County School to Work, Inc. and Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV, youth contractors conduct tours of local employers to provide job shadowing opportunities for youth. These connections to the business community provide valuable career exploration information to youth participants on various occupations, job duties, educational requirements and wages of existing jobs in the local area. Youth contractors utilize the *Industry Needs You* website to introduce youth participants to numerous employers in the local area and the products they manufacture or the services they offer. The Lawrence County and Shenango Valley Chambers of Commerce assist in recruitment of private sector employers who are willing to participate in various youth career awareness programs. The youth contractors and PA CareerLinks® offer a variety of job and career fairs throughout the year that include many employers.

Older youth have the opportunity to progress through a list of activities that culminate in a Paid Work Experience (PWE) opportunity with a local employer. Activities include: 1) completion of cwds and WIA registration and TABE test; 2) Individual Employment Planning started; 3) documented participation on Worldwide Interactive Network to at least level 3 in the Reading for Information, Locating Information and Applied Mathematics; 4) be working on literacy and/or numeracy levels OR GED with contractor staff or Literacy Provider for at least 15 to 20 hours/month, if applicable; 5) completed Choices Interest profile; 6) completed a mock interview with CareerLink® staff; 7) have a recommendation for PWE from contractor and case manager; and 8) agree to continue working on WIN®, literacy and/or numeracy OR GED while in PWE to achieve WorkKeys® credential. Youth who complete PWE satisfactorily will be referred to the job developer for OJT opportunities and/or BWPO staff for job matching to job orders in cwds.

6. Describe how the LWIB incorporates the required youth program elements within the framework, including:

a. Tutoring, study skills training, instruction leading to secondary school completion, including drop-out prevention

WCJP’s youth contractors offer tutoring services and after school home work assistance to all youth enrolled in the program. Incentives are given to youth for

various benchmarks (increase in literacy and/or numeracy levels; receiving their high school diploma).

b. Alternative secondary school services

Cyber-school and home-schooling are options for youth who for various reasons cannot function in the mainstream school system. The youth contractors continue to provide workshops and other activities for cyber-school and home schooled youth. WCJP also will cover costs of credit-recovery programs which allow youth to work outside the mainstream school on assignments for which they can earn home school credit. Credit recovery programs have been offered to catch youth up to same level as students in their home school class or to youth who need additional credits to graduate in their senior year.

c. Summer employment opportunities linked to academic and occupational learning

Participants who want to work over the summer months meet with the youth contractors to identify employers who have job openings similar in nature to the occupations the youth want to pursue as careers. The contractors instruct and assist the youth to prepare resumes, answer interview questions, develop job readiness soft skills (the importance of showing up to work on time, accepting constructive criticism, team work, conflict resolution, etc.). Once the participants are placed in unsubsidized employment, the contractors will maintain contact over the summer months to address and issues and/or barriers that may develop. Subsidized work experience is offered to youth when the funding allocation permits. Youth are also encouraged to volunteer at agencies that would provide experience in the occupational fields of interest.

d. Paid and unpaid work experiences

Paid and unpaid work experience slots are developed as outlined in c. above. Younger youth enrolled in the Career and Technical Centers (CTCs) may be considered for paid or unpaid work experience situations related to their program of instruction (precision production metals, health careers, electronics technician, etc.). Contractors located at the PA CareerLink® sites work with older youth to develop an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) that outlines the necessary steps that will lead to post-secondary education and/or employment or entering the military. The IEP is customized to the individual's needs and may include any combination of the following: increase literacy/numeracy levels; obtain a GED; get a driver's license; improve typing skills; fill out a job application; prepare a resume and cover letter; conduct career research; research schools that offer training programs related to the occupation of choice; attend a job interview workshop; register to vote; obtain the WorkKeys® National Career Readiness Certificate® (NCRC®); accept a paid or unpaid work experience with a local employer; job development activities that lead to On the Job Training (OJT) opportunities.

e. Occupational skills training

Occupational skill training is offered to out-of-school youth via PA's waiver of prohibition of using Individual Training Accounts (ITAs). Youth are required to conduct career research of at least three occupations in which they have interest. The research includes: the duties of the occupation; the conditions of work (standing

all day, working outdoors, swing shifts, etc.); expected wages – are they family sustaining; etc. Once the participant has selected an occupation to pursue he/she must research three schools on the State Approved Training Provider List that offer training in the occupational field of choice. Once they have identified a high priority occupation, a school and training program the participant will apply for funding via the ITA process.

f. Leadership development opportunities

i. Exposure to postsecondary educational opportunities.

- Youth are informed of all career, job and college fairs where post-secondary and vocational training vendors have booths with information on their programs
- Younger youth are taken on field trips to various colleges, universities and vocational training facilities
- School catalogs are available and discussed in workshops regarding various colleges, universities and vocational training facilities\
- PA Career Guides are distributed to all youth participants
- Youth provide peer tutoring services to other youth participants
- Workshops offer lessons in: team building, decision making, work place behavior and budgeting

ii. Community service and learning projects

- All younger youth have the opportunity and are strongly encouraged to do a community service project, such as Global Youth Service Day, Hands on Ministries, Martin Luther King Day, and Make a Difference Day.
- Youth are encouraged to volunteer at agencies that have jobs in their career interest area which constitutes job shadowing
- Teamwork training and team leadership training - youth have an opportunity to be a youth leader in the workshops
- Youth have an opportunity to serve on the Community Service leader board and attend Community Service events such as Council of Community Service
- Workshops are provided on Teambuilding and a variety of activities are offered
- Workshops offer activities that assist in decision making

g. Comprehensive guidance and counseling

- Community agency and employer speakers present workshops or informational sessions
- Adult -Mentors have been used in the youth workshops
- Parent Involvement/Family Night activities are scheduled where we encourage family support
- Contractor staff build relationships and foster the development of positive life skills in youth participants

h. Adult mentoring

One youth contractor is working with Smart Futures of Pittsburgh, PA to utilize their PA e-Mentoring program. The PA e-Mentoring program allows schools to provide their students with an online career mentor within the classroom. E-Mentors

communicate with students through emails and an online curriculum that leads to a college and career plan for each mentee. PA e-Mentoring offers working and retired adults, parents, and mature college students a fun, easy, and flexible alternative to traditional face-to-face mentoring, and offers employers a way to establish meaningful connections with youths and schools within the community. *Key Outcomes for Students:* a printable College and Career Plan; stronger career focus with increased awareness of available career paths; increased interest in 2-year education opportunities; and higher self esteem.

i. Supportive services

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

j. Follow-up services

Follow-up services for a minimum of twelve (12) months after program participation, may include; leadership development and supportive services described above; regular contact with a youth participant’s employer and assistance in addressing work related problems that may arise; assistance in securing better paying jobs, career development, and further education; work-related peer support groups; adult mentoring; and tracking the progress of youth in employment after training; and, comprehensive guidance and counseling, including drug and alcohol abuse counseling as well as referrals to counseling as appropriate to the needs of the individual youth.

7. Describe the services provided to non-WIA eligible youth under the 5% exception.

When an individual is referred to the WIA youth program who has a barrier but does not meet the income guidelines to be eligible for WIA services, the following procedure is followed: the case manager will notify the CareerLink® Programs Coordinator of the need for a 5% WIA eligibility exception application; the CPC will submit an email request to the Program Director and cc the Data Manager of the request for the 5% WIA exception application; the Data Manager will run a 5% exception report from cwds and forward to the Program Director; the Program Director will review the 5% exception report to determine if a sufficient number of new youth enrollments to date will allow for a 5% exception application; the Program Director will notify the CPC, the case manager and the Data Manager whether the request is approved or denied. If the 5% exception is approved, the application is taken, the eligibility documentation is collected, the application is put in pending status, the application and all documentation is forwarded to the Data Manager; the Data Manager reviews all documentation and approves or denies the application. If approved, the Data Manager forwards a notice to the case manager and the CPC that the applicant is eligible to receive services. The services provided to

5% exception participants are the same as those provided to WIA eligible participants of the same age category.

8. Describe the process and criteria for determining “serious barriers to employment.”

To be eligible to receive Title I funded youth services, an individual must be 14 through 21 years of age, be low-income (as defined by the Act) and have one or more of the following barriers to employment (as defined by the Act): basic skills deficient; school dropout; homeless or runaway; pregnant or parenting; possess one or more disability (including learning disabilities); or offender. Additional serious barriers that require additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment have been defined by the LWIB as: lacks significant work history – has not worked for the same employer for longer than three (3) consecutive months in the two (2) years prior to application; and one or more grade levels below the grade level appropriate to the individual’s age.

9. Describe how the LWIB coordinates with Job Corps and other youth programs.

The youth contractors have open lines of communication with Job Corps. A Job Corps staff person comes to CareerLink® on a monthly basis to provide program information and talk with youth one on one. Flyers and brochures are available in the CareerLink® describing Job Corps services, and youth referrals are made to Job Corps as needed.

H. ADMINISTRATION AND PERFORMANCE

1. Describe how the LWIB ensures that all partner services are made available through the PA CareerLink® center and that core services are not duplicated.

The LWIB assures all partner services are available at the CareerLinks® by updating the LWIB/One-Stop Partner Agreements which outlines the services provided by each CareerLink® partner. The updated LWIB/OSPA includes signatures of all CareerLink® partners – see Appendix F.

2. Describe any LWIA policies or guidelines implemented to support WIA Title I program operations that are not addressed elsewhere in the local plan, including information about the purpose, development, implementation, and monitoring of such policies.

NA

3. Describe the system used to capture and report performance data.

Performance data is collected by the PA Department of Labor and Industry through entries made by both BWPO staff and business partners on the CWDS System and information gathered from wage records obtained from WRIS (Wage Record Interchange System) on the exited participants during the reporting period. Reports are created in

Excel by the PA Department of Labor and Industry and sent to the LWIA for review for any corrections.

WCJP has created an Excel spreadsheet for the exited participants and an excel spreadsheet for the older youth requiring the Literacy and Numeracy Gains within the reporting period, containing the information entered on CWDS by the staff. The Excel spreadsheets are maintained and updated weekly by the Data Manager.

Upon receipt of the reports from the PA Department of Labor and Industry, the figures are compared to WCJP's excel spreadsheet. If there are any inconsistencies or errors found in the PA Department of Labor and Industry's report, the Data Manager will report these findings to the Program Director and Executive Director of Workforce Development for further review. WCJP's Administration will notify the PA Department of Labor and Industry of any inconsistencies or errors for possible correction. If no errors are found, no action is taken.

The PA Department of Labor and Industry send the captured performance data reports to the US Department of Labor and Industry.

WCJP's Data Manager also maintains a spreadsheet that tracks older youth who need to upgrade literacy/numeracy levels within one year periods of their WIA participation. Reminder notices are sent to case managers when the one year time limit is approaching so the participants can be scheduled for post-testing and gains can be captured within the allotted timeframe.

4. Describe the monitoring process and oversight criteria and procedures used to move the local workforce investment system toward LWIA goals.

The monitoring process utilized in the West Central LWIA, as prescribed by the LWIB, is a multi-tiered quality control approach utilizing quantitative indicators to ascertain performance status during the course of the program year. The following oversight criteria and procedures employ both quantitative and qualitative information to assist the area in meeting its performance objectives. Each system tier shares responsibility for accountability in achieving established program goals. While final monitoring responsibility rests with the LWIB, it is the board's obligation to define and assist program operators not merely by setting policy but by providing tools by which service delivery activities can be monitored while concurrently serving as self-instructional templates for program managers. The continuum of local accountability runs from the LWIB > Consortium of Operators/Site Administrator > Specific Program Management > Direct Service Staff. Thus, the LWIB requires that PA CareerLink® operation staff produce a monthly activity record that can be compared for internal monitoring purposes with reports issued from data gathered by the Commonwealth's system of record as well as surveying job seeker and business customer satisfaction with services. Program supervisors are empowered to use the monthly activity log as a means to benchmark their specific performance. The consortia of operators and LWIB staff review the local data on at least a quarterly basis to assist in the evaluation of partner activities within the

PA CareerLink®, i.e., volume of attendance at agency workshops, orientations, and numbers engaged in self initiated job search activities and customers entering employment. Additionally, Title I program staff provide quarterly reports to the LWIB detailing Individual Training Accounts (ITA) issued and On-The-Job-Training contracts generated with beginning and ending dates. Also, wages at exit for WIA program completers are progressively calculated locally in order to weigh actual wages against negotiated wage levels throughout the course of the program year and juxtaposed with quarterly PA Center for Workforce Information and Analysis (CWIA) reports.

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

Each PA CareerLink® Comprehensive Center has put into place an SQL data base, to monitor job seeker activity within the respective site and provide a tool for early detection of patterns relevant to achieving performance objectives. This tool allows One Stop Operators, Site Administrators and LWIB Staff a monthly summary report by which to gauge Center service delivery by activity and observe emerging trends which may require adjustment. Core and intensive services for all participating partner agencies are grouped together under common headings such as “job search”, “workshop” “training” or “individual meetings”. Initially, customers are logged into the local system by a program aide who enters preliminary identification information into the data base. For each subsequent visit to the Center, job seekers merely note which

services they expect to access on that day. Any service omitted upon entering the Center will generally be recovered up by the program aide when reviewing attendance records for workshops, orientations or other group activities.

Required one stop partners, as detailed in the act, entered into a LWIB/One-Stop Partner Agreement which outlines duties regarding operations for the respective PA CareerLink® One-Stop Centers. All parties to the agreement identified and assigned services within their specific program structure to a continuum of core, intensive and training services. Services are broadly grouped in two divisions: (1) those offered at the PA CareerLink® Center and (2) those offered elsewhere.

For the latter, a system of referral and follow-up was instituted to route the customer to a site where the appropriate service may be accessed. Primarily, these off site referrals relate to training services, however, there are cases where certain core or intensive service referrals are likewise made. When the intensive or training service is not directly provided by a PA CareerLink® partner, a contract or agreement with the provider may be put forth by the partner initiating the referral. Examples of this are work experience which is a WIA Title I intensive service, on-the-job-training, individual training accounts (ITF) or trade adjustment assistance (TAA) training. Integration of program services are demonstrated at this level where funding for TAA and ITA are blended to enhance training options for effected dislocated workers. In fact, the Commonwealth has initiated a policy of dual enrollment for TAA eligible clients into WIA Dislocated Worker services. Similar cooperative funding and co-enrollment is also evidenced with appropriate Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) and Employment and Retention Network (EARN) clients.

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

information has been a major benefit of PA CareerLink® collaboration and the LWIB's policy of aligning resources.

The LWIA identifies areas needing improvement by utilizing oversight criteria and procedures which factor in both quantitative and qualitative data. The Site Administrator and Consortia of Operators periodically review both local and state generated PA CareerLink® site reports collected from the systems. Customer satisfaction surveys are distributed and returns studied to obtain a rough measure of how well overall the center efforts are perceived by job seekers and employers. These surveys provide quantitative barometer as well as anecdotal feedback ranging from facility appropriateness to staff effectiveness. Annually, the LWIB staff conducts a general PA CareerLink® site monitoring to review overall system functioning within the county Centers and issues a monitoring report to the Site Administrator noting deficiencies or areas of concern. The Site Administrator informs the Consortium of Operators and prepares a corrective action plan for submission if required. The LWIB CareerLink Oversight sub-committee reviews the corrective action plan and considers the effectiveness. They may make recommendations to the LWIB requiring funding shifts to amplify the corrections outlined. With respect to the more direct fiduciary responsibility the LWIB is charged with under the Act with respect to Title I programmatic functions, sub-recipient contractors are selected for monitoring based upon risk management factors, i.e., changes in the provider's personnel, volume of participant services provided, history of disallowed cost, audit or monitoring findings in the prior two years and share of LWIA allocation. This includes all local providers of youth services competitively procured by the LWIB. Selected providers records are compared to specifics of the contract and proposal material. If deficiencies or areas of concern are noted, they are outlined and the respective contractor notified. The deficiencies, if any, are responded to and sent back to the LWIB staff. Any new Individual Training Account (ITA) or On-The-Job-Training (OJT) provider located within the jurisdiction of the LWIA or approved out of state organization added to the State Provider List by the West Central LWIB will be monitored within their first year. Any local provider not monitored for the prior two years may be monitored at the discretion of the LWIB. Where it may come to the attention of LWIB staff that any ITA or OJT provider has demonstrated a serious or series of continuous programmatic or fiscal problems, a monitoring visit may be scheduled. Subjects of a monitoring review are notified in writing prior to the visit in order to adjust schedules unless extraordinary circumstances do not allow for this method. In such a case, telephone communication may be used to set up the appointment.

In order to ensure effective implementation of the Common Measures, policies of cross information and tiered responsibility have been exercised. The strategic deployment of these policies is as follows. In view of the situation of multiple agencies' staff providing and reporting core services in an integrated PA CareerLink® environment, knowledge of the ramification of specific service items to individual programs, e.g., Labor Exchange, is crucial. Various CareerLink® staff attended BWPO Common Measures training held at the Penn DOT building in Oil City, PA.

Other strategies used to assist in promoting the best performance possible under the Common Measures require PA CareerLink® staff to regularly do a search of ES and WIA participants that will exit in 29 days or less. This generates a tickler list of customers requiring relevant services. Appropriate PA CareerLink® Staff will attempt to engage the individual thereby precluding a soft exit and increasing the possibility of a positive outcome. In an effort to insure high performance for WIA investments, the LWIA Data manager issues a monthly report to the CareerLink® Program Coordinator and Lead Employment and Training Specialist at each PA CareerLink® listing participants who will reach their 90-day limit within that month. Emergency alerts are issued when a participant is within a week of a soft exit to insure that all means have been utilized to contact and recover. The Data Manager pulls the report RPT072-W-PRM-WIA Out-of-School Youth and RPT073-W-PRM-WIA Assessment Tests from CWDS to prepare a literacy/numeracy spreadsheet for all older youth participants who test basic skills deficient. The Data Manager will submit a monthly report to the CareerLink® Program Coordinator, Lead Employment and Training Specialist and youth staff as to which participants are approaching the last date to attain literacy and/or numeracy level upgrades. All WIA exits are reviewed by the CareerLink® Program Coordinator for final approval to exit. If exits don't meet a family sustaining wage, the request to exit is denied and the case manager is instructed to offer continued development services to find better employment.

5. **Describe the competitive process and non-competitive process to be used to award grants and contracts for activities carried out under WIA Subtitle I, including the process to be used to procure training services that are made as exceptions to the ITA process. Include how community-based organizations and faith-based organizations are notified of contract opportunities.**

The competitive and non-competitive processes are outlined in the LWIB Procurement Policy – see Appendix I. Exceptions to the ITA process would occur when the LWIB determines that insufficient training is available in the local area as identified on the State Approved Training Provider List. In that instance, the LWIB may seek and procure industry recognized credential based training to meet local employer needs by following WCJP's procurement policy. WCJP maintains a bidders list of agencies and companies who have expressed an interest in any RFPs issued by WCJP. At the time a RFP is released, all potential bidders on the list are notified that the RFP has been posted to WCJP's website. All procurement opportunities are advertised in local newspapers and are open to all community-based and faith-based organizations. Posting the RFP or the IFB on the website will start the 30 day public comment period.

6. **Attach the LWIB Procurement Policy (*Appendix I*).**
See Appendix I.
7. **Describe the procedures established for providers of youth or training services to appeal a denial of eligibility, a termination of eligibility, or other action by the LWIB or PA CareerLink® Operator. Attach the appeal policy (*Appendix J*).**
See Appendix J.

8. **Describe the procedure(s) for individual customers to appeal a denial of eligibility, reduction or termination of services, or other adverse action by the PA CareerLink[®] or service provider. Attach the policy (Appendix K).**

See Appendix K

9. **Describe the grievance procedure for PA CareerLink[®] staff. Attach the policy (Appendix L).**

See Appendix L

10. **Describe the administration of WIA funds used by the LWIB. Include risk management and oversight responsibilities for WIA funds, PA CareerLink[®] and other workforce development resources.**

West Central Job Partnership, Inc. serves as the Grant Recipient for WIA funds on behalf of the Local Workforce Investment Board. The agency also serves as the grant recipient for other grants received from the Department of Human Services, the Department of Community and Economic Development and directly from the United States Department of Labor. West Central Job Partnership also serves as the fiscal agent for both the Mercer and Lawrence County PA CareerLinks[®]. As fiscal agent for the two CareerLinks[®] operating in the local area, WCJP takes the lead in the development of the Resource Sharing Agreement (RSA) along with the invoicing and collection of funds from the operating partners for shared expenses identified in the RSA. CareerLink[®] finance reports are presented at the bi-monthly Operator's meetings in each county.

West Central Job Partnership prepares an annual budget which is approved each year by the LWIB and also by the Governing Board of Commissioners. Finance Reports are distributed in advance of the meetings and reviewed thoroughly at both the quarterly LWIB and Governing Board meetings. These reports are based on the Financial Status Reports (FSRs) which are prepared and submitted quarterly in the financial section of CWDS (Comprehensive Workforce Development System). Also, the Local LWIB and Governing Board receives reports in terms of expenditures and the number of participants enrolled in Individual Training Accounts (ITAs), On-the-Job Training (OJTs), Work Experience Slots, Customized Training and Supportive Services. In addition to these reports, the Board is also given local monitoring reports and reports that are issued by BWPO for LWIB and Fiscal compliance.

11. **Describe measures used by the LWIB to eliminate duplicative administrative costs.**

At the time when the West Central LWIB was created, several Amodels@ were presented to the County Commissioners and the new LWIB. Both agreed to structure the entity providing staff to the LWIB and the Fiscal Agent in the most efficient and effective manner possible. As explained earlier, the organization providing staff to the LWIB and Fiscal Agent are not separate entities, eliminating many unnecessary costs. Models where the entities providing staff to the LWIB and the Fiscal Agent were separate entities appeared inefficient and duplicative for this two county area. With this structure,

it appears that the LWIB can communicate its vision and directives with more impact and in a quicker manner. Additionally, the pros and cons of segregating the TANF programs from the PA CareerLinks® were discussed. If this model was selected, the costs would have been duplicative by needing two receptionists, phone systems, copiers, conference rooms, computer labs, fax machines, T-1 circuits, security systems, etc. The LWIB, through its Welfare Coordinating Committee (LMC) was able to work with the County Commissioners to house the TANF programs within each PA CareerLink®. This arrangement has probably saved the local area hundreds of thousands of dollars over the last ten years.

12. Describe the property management approach used by the LWIB.

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

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

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

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

A year-end physical inventory report of items with an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more will be completed and submitted to the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry, Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations.

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

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

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

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

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

APPENDIX A

WCJP Common Measures Negotiated Performance Goals

WIA Common Measures Performance	Previous Year's Performance (PY 2013)	Proposed Performance Goals (PY 2014)
<u>WIA Performance Levels</u>		
Adults Measures:		
Adult Entered Employment Rate (EER)	73	76
Adult Employment Retention Rate (ERR)	88	85
Average Six-Month Earnings	14,125	13,000
Dislocated Worker Measures:		
Dislocated Worker EER	79	83
Dislocated Worker ERR	91	91
Dislocated Worker Average Six-Month Earnings	15,984	16,800
Youth Measures:		
Literacy Numeracy Gain	79	72
Placement in Education or Employment	94	87
Attainment of Degree or Certificate	79	69

APPENDIX C

**West Central Job Partnership NW 145
WIA Local Plan PY 2012 – PY 2016
Public Comments Received/Addressed**

comments received at public hearing held April 30, 2015, by mail or electronically.

Please publish the following under Legal Notices for two days as soon as possible, send proof of publication and bill to Cynthia Myers cymvers@wcjp.org, or West Central Job Partnership, 44 South Beaver Street, New Castle, PA 16101

NOTICE

West Central Job Partnership Workforce Investment Area is soliciting comments from the general public until April 30, 2015 concerning a modification of its five-year Operational Plan. The plan modification may be reviewed in its entirety at WCJP's website www.wcjp.org: under the Workforce Investment Board tab, in the Plans section, click on the West Central WIA Local Plan PY 12 Modification.

Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Title I funded programs are equal opportunity employers/programs and auxiliary aids/services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

Appendix E

Workforce Development System Organizational Chart

