

April 20, 2017

Michael Baker
Manager – Strategic Planning & Innovation
Office of Employment & Training
Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity
500 E. Monroe
Springfield, Illinois 62701

Dear Mr. Baker:

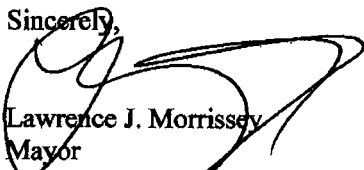
As required by WIOA Notice No. 15-NOT-07 and the *Regional and Local Planning Guide Updated December 2016*, enclosed please find the WIOA Regional Plan for the Northern Stateline Economic Development Region and Local Plan Components for LWIA 3 and 4.

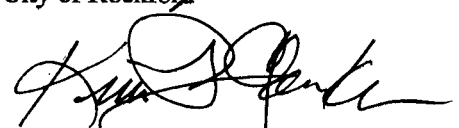
The Plans have been developed in collaboration with many regional partners and aligns with existing regional economic development priorities that include workforce development in Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) documents. The Plans were released for public comment for 30 days, from March 16, 2017 through April 15, 2017. Notification of availability was published in newspapers across the region (proof of publication attached), available on the local area websites, and notification sent to numerous stakeholders.

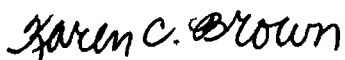
The Workforce Connection Board and Northwest Central Illinois Works, the local workforce boards serving workforce areas 3 and 4, and the Chief Elected Officials have reviewed and approved this plan. Public comments and responses are included in the documents.

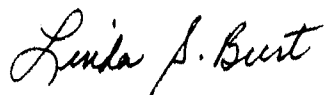
If you have any questions, or need additional information, please contact Darcy Bucholz at dbucholz@theworkforceconnection.org or 815-395-6609; or Pam Furlan at Pmfurlan@aol.com or 815-224-0369.


Sincerely,


Lawrence J. Morrissey
Mayor
City of Rockford


Kim Gouker, Vice-Chairman
Chief Elected Officials – Workforce Area #4
Ogle County Board Chairman


Karen C. Brown
Chair
The Workforce Connection Board


Linda Burt, Co-Chairperson
Northwest Central Illinois Works


Cary Robbins, Co-Chairperson
Northwest Central Illinois Works

cc. Pam Furlan & Darcy Bucholz

**ILLINOIS NORTHERN STATELINE
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REGION
WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY
ACT REGIONAL PLAN**



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**MODIFIED FINAL SUBMITTAL
APRIL 27, 2017**

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INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

What is WIOA?

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) is the U.S. law that authorizes and coordinates federal investment in employment and training services, adult education and literacy programs, and other skills development throughout the country. It was signed into law in 2014 and took effect July 1, 2015, and was the first legislative reform to the public workforce system in 15 years. WIOA funding supports workers and those looking for work in increasing their skills to match the evolving needs of employers in their region and connecting them with job opportunities. It also helps employers have a ready pipeline of talent for their current and future workforce needs. WIOA programming on a local level is overseen by business-led Workforce Development Boards that also include government, education, and other partners.

What is the Regional Plan?

One of the significant reforms of WIOA is that it fosters regional collaboration by encouraging alignment between workforce development programs and economic development strategies. This helps ensure that money spent on workforce training and adult education programs are meeting the current and future demand of employers in a specific region, and that employers have a role in the planning process. The result is that residents of a region can gain relevant skills development and increase their likelihood of advancing their careers, while businesses can succeed in their region with a workforce that meets their specific needs. As part of WIOA, states defined regions to develop plans that connect local Workforce Development Boards with employers and educational institutions and encourage them to think beyond local boundaries. In Illinois, regions were set by the state's existing Economic Development Regions that already align efforts to support business growth.

The Northern Stateline Region consists of Boone, Ogle, Winnebago, and Stephenson counties. They are already connected by virtue of being a Combined Statistical Area, a federal designation that recognizes economic and social linkages. The Region is served by two Workforce Development Boards that entered this process already experienced in working together. As outlined below, this plan is also built upon existing collaboration on regional economic development priorities that include workforce development.

Each Workforce Development Board has created a WIOA Local Plan that is published alongside this Regional Plan. While the Local Plans focus on specifics of service delivery, the Regional Plan is a bigger picture look at how those efforts connect with the Region's strategies of improving the economy and providing opportunity to all of its residents. In keeping with state and federal guidelines, the Regional Plan is broken into three sections:

1. Regional Economic and Workforce Analysis
2. Regional Integration of Strategies and Services
3. Regional Vision, Goals, and Strategies

CHAPTER 1: REGIONAL ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

A. Analysis of economic conditions including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations; Knowledge and skills needed to meet the employment needs of the employers in the region; and an analysis of the regional workforce.

Partners in the Northern Stateline Economic Development Region (EDR) followed the State of Illinois' data-driven focus in the WIOA regional planning process. There is a strong history of this kind of analysis in the Region with excellent existing partnerships between workforce investment boards, the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES), and economic development agencies. This Regional Plan also built upon the two Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) documents completed recently within the Region^{1&2}. The CEDS plans, which are developed with oversight from the U.S. Economic Development Administration, provided analysis of regional economic and workforce trends, as well as data-driven recommendations of Targeted Industry clusters. These plans included input from many partners involved in the WIOA regional planning process, including workforce development, economic development, and private sector representatives. The regional planning process also incorporated data provided by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO). A subgroup of the regional planning team provided further detailed analysis of economic and workforce data that was then confirmed by the full team. This analysis provides the backbone of this Regional Plan.

Overview of economic conditions

The Northern Illinois Region CEDS noted regional concerns regarding unemployment, sluggish job growth, an aging workforce, and the risk of population decline. These extend to the rest of the Northern Stateline Region. The Region was hit harder than any other part of Illinois by the Great Recession. Unemployment in the Northern Stateline Region spiked to 14.4 percent in 2009, by far the highest of any EDR in the state, and more than 32,000 were unemployed. The unemployment rate remained above 10 percent through 2013, and is still the highest in the state. All four counties in the Northern Stateline Region still qualify as economically distressed, as defined by the U.S. Economic Development Administration, because of continued high unemployment. Meanwhile, while the Region saw an employment rebound after the recession, recent growth has been slow and lags the state and nation.

	2015 annual average unemployment rate ³	2015 job growth ⁴	Percentage of pre-recession jobs peak ⁴
Northern Stateline	6.9%	0.8%	92.8%
Illinois	5.9%	1.4%	99.7%
U.S.	5.3%	2.7%	102.8%

¹ [Blackhawk Hills Regional Council 2014-2019 CEDS](#)

² [Northern Illinois Region 2016-20 CEDS](#)

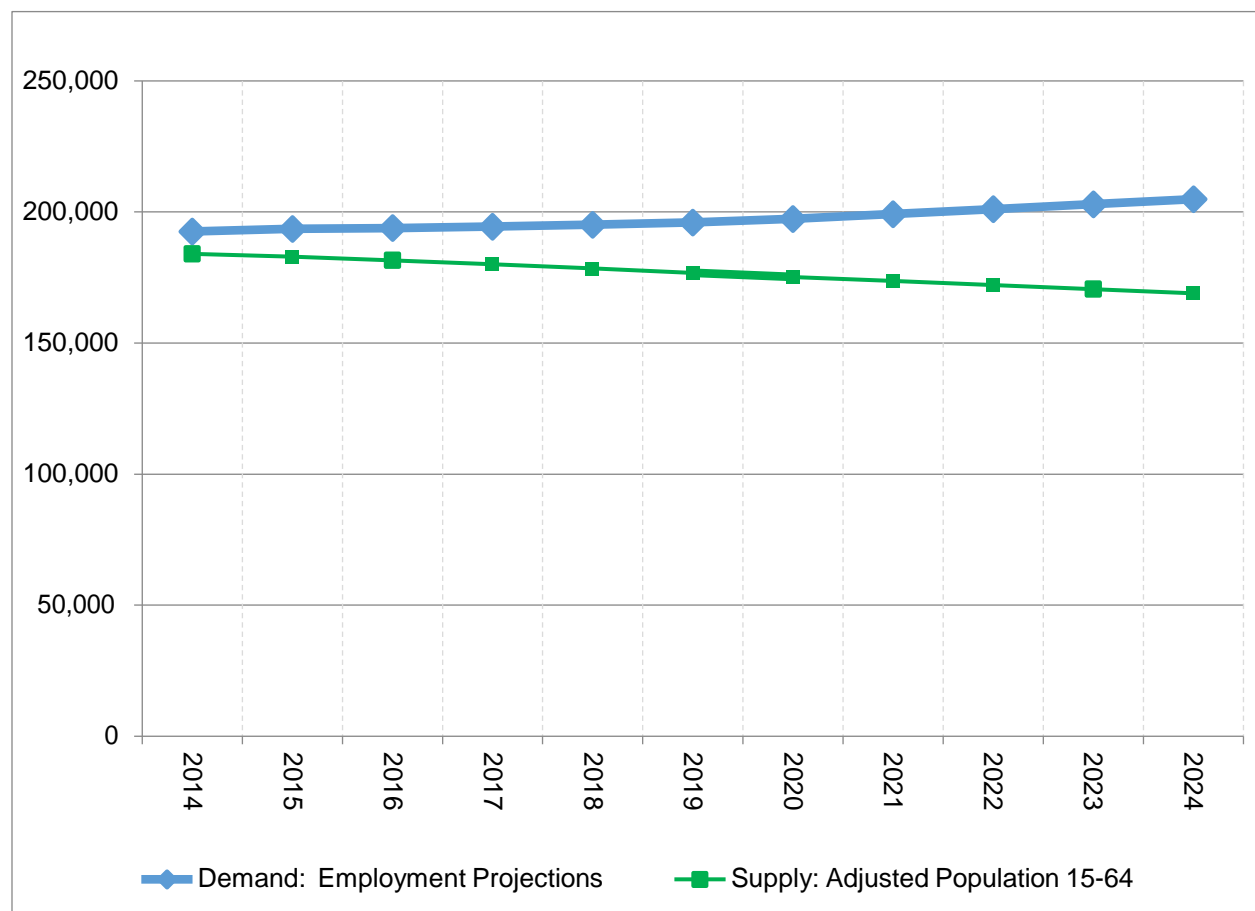
³ Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security Local Area Unemployment Statistics, not seasonally adjusted.

⁴ Source : Illinois Department of Employment Security Current Employment Statistics, not seasonally adjusted.

The Region has also faced a slight decrease in population and an aging rate that outpaces state and national levels. Reasons for population loss include residents moving elsewhere for better job prospects, taxation and business climate concerns, and quality of life issues. While the national population is aging, the fact that the Region is aging faster is a problem for ensuring the future workforce.

	2010-2014 estimated population change ⁵	2014 median age ⁶	2010-2014 change in median age ⁷
Northern Stateline	-2.2%	40.3	1 year
Illinois	0.4%	37.5	0.9 years
U.S.	3.3%	37.7	0.5 years

The trend of an aging workforce and decreasing population is most starkly depicted when labor supply and employment projections are shown next to each other.



Illinois Workforce Participation Rate of 64.9 Percent applied to Population 15-64 data.

Source: Emsi, BLS (Note: Emsi data used because IDES projections are not annual.)

⁵ Source: U.S. Census Bureau Estimates of the Resident Population: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2010

⁶ Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2014 American Community Survey

⁷ Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010 and 2014 American Community Survey

The policy and service implications of the above population and employment trends include several high-level strategies that permeate this Regional Plan:

- Increase efforts to attract and retain workers, particularly younger, educated workers who can fill the pipeline on in-demand occupations.
- Train those who are here to fit the needs of employers.
- Increase the workforce participation rate through better job opportunities and education/training of unemployed and underemployed.

Specific activities to address these implications are noted in Chapter 3 of this plan.

Education and skill levels of the workforce

While the Region is approximately on par with state and national rates of high school attainment among adults and leads in associate's degree attainment, it lags significantly in bachelor's degree attainment. This has been a long-standing concern in the Region, as positions that need advanced education are difficult to fill, causing employers to hesitate to bring professional and technical jobs here. Additionally, while the Region is competitive in high school attainment, a large number of adults lack diplomas or GEDs, making it a regional priority to connect them with education and training opportunities.

	% High school or higher	% Associate's degree	% Bachelor's or higher
Northern Stateline	88%	8.5%	21.4%
Illinois	88.2%	7.8%	32.8%
U.S.	86.9%	8.2%	30.1%

Source: U.S. Census 2014 American Community Survey 1-Year-Estimates

A 2016 study by Chmura Economics & Analytics⁸ of educational levels and employer demand found the Rockford metropolitan statistical area (which accounts for two of the Region's four counties and 77% of the population) had fewer high-skilled workers than employers needed, ranking 211th out of 381 in the nation and seventh in Illinois. Chmura defined "high-skilled" as workers with a bachelor's degree or higher, and used U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics information to define high-skilled jobs. The Rockford MSA had enough medium-skilled workers and more than enough low-skilled workers, Chmura reported.

Beyond the general educational needs of the workforce, there are industry-specific skill and education needs employers have communicated. This includes manufacturing skills in welding, fabrication, and machine operating (especially CNC machines); aircraft mechanic training; engineering degrees; food processing certifications in safety and process control; and healthcare training for nursing, medical technicians, and billing coding.

A 2015 survey of employers in Boone and Winnebago counties gave workers average scores on having appropriate technical skills, and average to above average scores on communication, problem-solving, leadership, and computers skills and reliability. However, in conversations with employers, there are concerns with the "skills gap" particularly within Manufacturing and a general concern about the "soft skills" of entry-level candidates. Many of the Region's long-term unemployed need assistance in those

⁸ <http://www.chmuraecon.com/interactive/underemployment-in-the-united-states/>

soft skills to get them in the door and begin the needed technical skill advancement. These concerns are addressed in more detail in Chapter 2 of this plan.

The Region has an increasing English Language Learner population, with 32,453 immigrants in the Rock Valley College District 511 alone. As Rockford is a Resettlement region, this is a very diverse population, with immigrants representative of a large variety of home countries. Many adults are Latino, but there are also large populations from Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and several African countries. The abilities of the adult immigrants are varied, with approximately 28.5% of students enrolling in beginning classes, 48.8% enrolling in intermediate classes, and 22.7% enrolling in advanced classes. Language barriers are especially an issue in growing Healthcare occupations, as they lead to employer concerns over communicating safety issues. The Region is addressing those concerns through partnering with La Voz Latina to provide intensive language classes and referring adults to ESP classes at both of the Title 2 core partners, Highland Community College and Rock Valley College.

Special populations

The Northern Stateline Region includes sizable numbers of most of Targeted Populations listed in the Unified State Plan, as evidenced by the chart below. Of special importance to the Region are:

- Long-term unemployed
- Low-income adults and those receiving public assistance
- Individuals with disabilities, including youth with disabilities
- Out-of-school youth
- Veterans
- Migrant and seasonal farmworkers
- Re-entry individuals (ex-offenders)
- English Language Learners
- Older individuals
- Low literacy adults, including those without a high school diploma
- Low-skilled adults

Northern Stateline Region Special Populations

Total civilian noninstitutionalized population: 2014 Estimate	440,931
Persons Below Poverty Level	70,315
Public Aid Recipients	121,051
Adult Public Aid Recipients	63,576
TANF Recipients: 2014 Monthly Average	4,608
SNAP Recipients: 2014 Monthly Average	91,370
Total Population with a Disability (Estimate)	47,694
Youth with Disabilities (<18 yrs.)(Estimate)	3,954
Adults with Disabilities (18+ yrs.)(Estimate)	43,740
DHS Division of Rehabilitation Services-Vocational Rehabilitation Program: FY2015 Data Summary	
Number Served Age 25+	493

Number Served Youth (<25)	321
Number in Plan Status Age 25+	241
Number in Plan Status Youth (<25)	367
Successful Closures Age 25+	86
Successful Closures Youth (<25)	77
Adult Parolee Population: June 30, 2014	1,300
Language other than English spoken at home, age 5+	48,579
Average Monthly Unemployed	17,573
Older Individuals (Age 65+)	70,702
Single Parents	32,405
Age 14-18 in Foster Care	159
Age 19-20 in Foster Care (Aged Out)	20

Source: Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity

There are multiple *policy and service implications to meet the needs of these individuals*. An overall implication is that due to the great need within the Region, service delivery partners have to be coordinated and efficient to maximize resources to provide the greatest good. Since many residents fall under multiple special population groups, partnerships are needed between agencies and programs servicing specific groups. This also highlights the need for an integrated case management system among workforce development partners and those providing supportive services.

Stakeholders noted the “benefits cliff” that those receiving public assistance face – benefits often drop faster than work income rises, creating a disincentive to work. Beyond regional policies that are discussed in Chapter 3 of this plan, there are policy changes state and federal agencies can make to reduce this problem. For instance, benefit providers can implement transitional programs, such as Social Security’s Ticket to Work program.

With transportation cited as a major barrier for low-income and unemployed residents, there is a need to improve connections to the Region’s fixed-route bus transit system and bolster demand-response service. Activities to address this regionally are listed in Chapter 3. However, there are federal and state policy implications as well, particularly maintaining and increasing transit funding. Stakeholders noted a disconnect between the state’s emphasis on providing employment opportunities for more residents and budget decisions that cut their means to get to work. Additionally, policy changes could make it easier for demand-response transit providers to share vehicles and maximize resources.

To meet the needs of the growing English Language Learner population, ESL funding must remain in place and, as possible, be increased. Workforce partners must also provide materials in multiple languages, and translators as needed.

Finally, policy changes can be made to help employers hire those with barriers to employment, including changes to unemployment insurance rules to minimize risk of turnover from hiring “riskier” employees and incentives to hiring ex-offenders or those who receive public assistance. As one stakeholder said, “Our challenge is to create a pathway to success that works for both employers and jobseekers.”

Targeted Industries

Targeted Industry clusters were identified in the two CEDS plans for the Region. The *targeted industries* were *determined* in consultation with workforce development, economic development, education, government, and private-sector partners and were based on existing and projected strengths. During the WIOA planning process, regional partners met and discussed the key industries in the Region, using the CEDS documents and other information collected to prioritize these areas:

I. Manufacturing

Specific clusters of focus include:

- Transportation Equipment (especially Automotive, Aerospace and Defense, and Rail Car)
- Machinery Manufacturing
- Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing
- Chemical Manufacturing
- Plastics and Rubber Product Manufacturing

II. Food Processing and Manufacturing (while a subset of **Manufacturing**, stakeholders wanted to call it out for its specific needs that differ from other Manufacturing clusters.)

III. Transportation, Logistics and Distribution

IV. Healthcare

These clusters employ almost 76,000 people more than 1/3 of the Northern Illinois Region's job base. They were chosen because of identified growth potential, regional supply chains, and the ability to draw wealth into the Region in order to spur job growth in other sectors. They all have location quotients above 1, representing a greater concentration than the national average, except for Healthcare, which is in the midst of significant growth. For Manufacturing clusters, the location quotients are typically much higher.

Industry	2012 Employment	2014 Location Quotient	2012-2022 Projected Employment Growth
Manufacturing	34,875	3.47	3.7%
<i>Manufacturing focus clusters</i>			
Machinery	8,640	5.80	-3%
Transportation Equipment	7,646	3.76	14.4%
Fabricated Metal Product	7,342	3.84	3.8%
Chemical	1,105	1.04	-2.9%
Plastics and Rubber Product	1,180	1.35	1.1%
Food Processing and Manufacturing	3,072	1.55	9.0%
Healthcare	24,428	0.99	14.2%
Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics	12,725	1.35	14.5%

Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security

Of the Manufacturing clusters, Transportation Equipment is the most promising for future growth. Automotive Manufacturing is a significant employer, with an estimated 6,800 workers in the Region as of 2015. This includes the Region's largest employer, Fiat Chrysler Automobiles in Belvidere, and its suppliers. It also includes companies that make components for other car and truck makers, and has grown past pre-recession levels. Aerospace and Defense Production is a significant growth industry whose numbers are undercounted in the above IDES levels because many suppliers are counted in other manufacturing sectors. It includes the second- and third-largest manufacturers in the Region, UTC Aerospace Systems and Woodward. Based on company reports, there are approximately 3,700 employed in companies classified as Aerospace and Defense production companies, and hundreds more employed by companies in other sectors that supply that industry. Rail Car Manufacturing is a growth industry focused in Ogle County with the recent arrival and expansion of a Nippon Sharyo production plant there.

Other Manufacturing clusters are more mature, but will present many job opportunities due to retirements. Additionally, the Region's Manufacturing clusters are interrelated, as they include many small- to mid-sized machine shops, metalworking companies, coatings makers, and other suppliers that serve multiple sectors. Companies in one of the more mature clusters can diversify into a growth cluster. For example, Plastics manufacturers may benefit from the growth of the Aerospace cluster. Finally, most Manufacturing clusters in the Region have similar occupational needs, so all will benefit from the workforce development strategies in this Regional Plan.

Healthcare is projected to see significant growth in the coming years, mirroring national trends and providing an opportunity for workers of all levels of skill. Traditionally seen as a "local" cluster that serves residents of the Region, this is growing into a "traded" cluster like the others in this study that brings money from outside the Region. With the expansion of the Region's health systems and growing specializations, they are serving as attractions for outside residents, thus growing our economy. Additionally, the Region's Healthcare systems are attracting educated workers that address some of the concerns identified in this analysis. Finally, Healthcare is seen as a quality of life asset that must be robust for the Region to see a return to population growth.

Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics is a growth cluster due to the Region's wealth of transportation assets, including Chicago Rockford International Airport, the Union Pacific Global III intermodal facility in Rochelle, multiple Class One rail lines, and a highway network including Interstates 39, 88, and 90 and U.S. 20. The cluster includes the second-largest UPS air hub in North America and distribution facilities for major retailers and food companies. It provides excellent entry-level opportunities as well as career pathways into technical and management positions.

Food Processing and Manufacturing is a growth area that stakeholders specifically called out due to the need for increased focus on training and education solutions for employers. These needs are detailed later in this plan. It is a cluster that is spread throughout the Region and includes dairy, snack foods, frozen foods, cereal, and a variety of other products.

In addition to the Targeted Industries listed above, stakeholders identified Information Technology (IT) as an in-demand sector of the regional economy. IT crosses across most of the Targeted Industries and other industries in the Region. It is particularly important to Manufacturing, with the national advance of digital manufacturing and the new Digital Manufacturing and Design Innovation Institute in Chicago (which has added a Rockford chapter to partner with Northern Stateline manufacturers). It is also important to Healthcare with changes in coding and patient records processes. As part of this Regional Plan,

stakeholders will continue to explore ways to advance IT, especially as it intersects with these other industries.

In general, the *employment needs of employers in existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors* match those of overall needs examined in this plan. All need a steady supply of younger talent to offset an upcoming wave of retirements. Manufacturers need workers with familiarity with the advanced technical processes in modern factories, while Food Processors need workers certified in key safety and process control measures. Healthcare employers need workers in key occupations like nursing and medical technicians to keep up with rising demand. Across the board, employers in those sectors need workers with foundational and soft skills, and these needs and planned solutions are itemized throughout this Regional Plan.

In-demand occupations

On the next page, the top 30 occupations, by projected annual openings, among the Region's Targeted Industries are listed. Also included is the typical level of education required for each and the on-the-job training amount. This list does not replace the individual Local Workforce Area approved occupation list for WIOA training, but serves as a complement and a guide for regional planning.

Description	Annual Openings	Typical Entry Level Education	Typical On-The-Job Training	Industries
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	236	Less than high school	Short-term	Manufacturing, TDL, Food
Team Assemblers	145	High school diploma or equivalent	Moderate-term	Manufacturing
Customer Service Representatives	121	High school diploma or equivalent	Short-term	Manufacturing, TDL
Registered Nurses	108	Associate's degree	None	Healthcare
Office Clerks, General	97	High school diploma or equivalent	Short-term	Manufacturing, Healthcare
Stock Clerks and Order Fillers	76	Less than high school	Short-term	TDL
General and Operations Managers	74	Associate's degree	None	Manufacturing
Nursing Assistants	72	Postsecondary non-degree award	None	Healthcare
Packers and Packagers, Hand	70	Less than high school	Short-term	Manufacturing, TDL, Food
Machinists	66	High school diploma or equivalent	Long-term	Manufacturing
Home Health Aides	64	Less than high school	Short-term	Healthcare
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	61	High school diploma or equivalent	Short-term	TDL
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	56	High school diploma or equivalent	Moderate-term	Manufacturing
Light Truck or Delivery Services Drivers	45	High school diploma or equivalent	Short-term	TDL
Receptionists and Information Clerks	44	High school diploma or equivalent	Short-term	Healthcare
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	44	High school diploma or equivalent	Long-term	Manufacturing
Shipping, Receiving, and Traffic Clerks	38	High school diploma or equivalent	Short-term	Manufacturing, TDL
Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	36	High school diploma or equivalent	Moderate-term	Manufacturing
Industrial Machinery Mechanics	36	High school diploma or equivalent	Long-term	Manufacturing
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	35	Postsecondary non-degree award	None	Healthcare
Personal Care Aides	33	Less than high school	Short-term	Healthcare
Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	32	High School Diploma or Equivalent	Long-Term	
Computer-Controlled Machine Tool Operators, Metal and Plastic	32	High school diploma or equivalent	Moderate-term	Manufacturing
Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	31	High school diploma or equivalent	Moderate-term	Manufacturing
Production Workers, All Other	30	High school diploma or equivalent	Moderate-term	Manufacturing
Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	29	Less than high school	Short-term	TDL
Medical Assistants	27	High school diploma or equivalent	Moderate-term	Healthcare
First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	26	Postsecondary non-degree award	None	Manufacturing, Food
Helpers – Production Workers	25	Less than high school	None	Manufacturing, Food
Mechanical Engineers	20	Bachelor's degree	None	Manufacturing

Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security 2012-2022 projections

Not on the list, but identified by stakeholders as an in-demand occupation is aircraft mechanics due to the new addition of an AAR Corp. facility at Chicago Rockford International Airport and an adjacent Rock Valley training facility. AAR is expected to employ 500 at open and eventually 1,000. There is a successful nearby aircraft maintenance business, and the potential for more to come to the Region.

Also, while not a Targeted Industry, leisure and hospitality jobs will continue to be in demand as the Region grows its tourism and sports event industries.

B. Describe the development and implementation of sector initiatives for in-demand industry sectors or occupations for the planning region.

The Targeted Industry clusters and in-demand occupations listed above are the *regional priorities*. While not explicitly ranked by priority by stakeholders, Manufacturing is the most important due to the size of the cluster and the above-average wages it provides. Healthcare was also prioritized for its growth potential and the increased need of technical training for its employees. Food Manufacturing, while not as significant regionally size-wise, was given special priority in developing training and certification processes since it was seen as under-served in that area. Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics requires fewer investments in training and education programs than the other clusters, but needs assistance in recruitment of workers and development of basic skills. Information Technology is not currently as high a priority as the other industries, but that could change quickly depending on the results of an IT sector strategy being explored. *This prioritization was determined* through both the CEDS plan processes described above and in regional stakeholder planning meetings in December, 2015; and January and February, 2016.

Sector partnerships and public-private partnerships

The Northern Stateline Region has strong sector and public-private partnership activity that can assist with the implementation of this plan, as well as identify more opportunities for partnership.

Below are sector partnerships in the Region that were identified by stakeholders:

Name & Brief Description	Key Partners	Geographic Area	Industries Targeted
Career Cruising/Unite! Career guidance software and partnership database that is available to 28,000 6-12 graders in the Region. Students keep individual career portfolios in this system. We also have 120 business partners and 100 career mentors that volunteer to work with teachers/students in various capacities – guest speaker, field trip, project advisor, job shadowing, internships, etc. These are all managed in the online database system.	CEANCI, consortium districts, local employers	Boone, Ogle, Winnebago counties	Various

<u>Advance Now</u> Dual credit program coordinated with RVC High School Connections. Offers courses in multiple career and technical areas.	CEANCI and RVC	Boone, Ogle, Winnebago counties	Various
<u>Manufacturing Day</u> Coordinate and financially support student involvement, grades 9-12 with targeted interests, in this region career awareness campaign for manufacturing.	CEANCI, RVC, IMEC, local manufacturers, RAEDC, Rockford Chamber CareerTEC and member schools	Boone, Ogle, Winnebago counties Stephenson County	Manufacturing
<u>Construction Trades Career Expo</u> Coordinate and financially support student involvement, grades 6-8 and targeted high school students, in this region career awareness campaign for trades.	CEANCI & NWIBT	Boone, Ogle, Winnebago counties	Construction Trades
<u>Careers on Wheels</u> Coordinate entire event and financially support student involvement, grade 6, in this region career awareness campaign for 16 career cluster occupations that are mobile.	CEANCI & consortium districts	Boone, Ogle, Winnebago counties	Various
<u>National Employment Team</u> Work in Illinois with national employers that have a regional presence.	CSVAR & regional employers (Mondelez, Lowe's)	All counties	Various
<u>Job Driven VR Technical Assistance grant</u> We will be targeting 25 businesses in the state this year to work with	Specifics TBD		
<u>Northwest Illinois Healthcare Collaborative</u> comprised of six independent healthcare organizations in Northwest Illinois working together to convey what Northwest Illinois community and health systems offer. http://nwilhealthcareers.com	CGH, FHN, KSB Hospital, OSF Healthcare, MercyHealth, and SwedishAmerican Health System.	All counties	Healthcare

Rockford Area Aerospace Network (RAAN) consortium of companies implementing a strategic plan to increase the competitiveness of the Rockford Region for aerospace expansion and attraction. Major subsectors include AS9100 and Nadcap certified suppliers of: Electric power generation systems, Power management, Actuation systems, Metal component fabrication, Aircraft interior manufacturing, and Maintenance repair and overhaul (MRO).	RAEDC; key aerospace companies in the Region including UTC Aerospace Systems, Woodward, and GE Aviation; education, training, and support providers	All counties	Aerospace
Workforce Development Coalition (WDC) The goal is to support local businesses and assist them in their quest for qualified employees. This is done through special programs, WorkKeys assessments and credit bearing programs. We also do program promotions and hosting career fairs and Manufacturing Day related activities.	Secondary and post-secondary representatives, Employers, Staffing Agencies, Public Library, Chamber and Retirees.	Stephenson County	Various

Though not listed above, the Logistics Council in Ogle County is a past *sector partnership* and the Region hopes to restart and expand to meet the needs of the TDL cluster.

The region's four economic development corporations – Growth Dimensions for Belvidere-Boone County, the Northern Illinois Development Alliance (NIDA), the Greater Rochelle Economic Development Corporation (GREDCO), and the Rockford Area Economic Development Council (RAEDC) – are *public-private partnerships* with strong business and government investment. Each has particular strengths in developing sector partnerships (Growth Dimensions – Automotive, NIDA – Food Processing, GREDCO – TDL and Rail Car Manufacturing, RAEDC – Aerospace) that can be leveraged as part of this plan. These partners all participated in the Regional Plan process. They also can all serve as *neutral conveners for establishing new sector partnerships*, as can the Region's workforce development agencies, Chambers of Commerce, and the new Regional Planning Council. Transform Rockford, a grassroots community initiative committed to tackling the Rockford area's biggest challenges, includes ample private-sector involvement and provides input and assistance on workforce initiatives.

As noted above, the *existing skills of job seekers* generally meet the demands of local businesses, but there are growth areas itemized through this plan. Each sector partnership described above or implemented as a result of regional collaboration is formed in part to address that sector's workforce needs. Employers will drive the sector strategies and partnerships, with WIOA Core Partners (Title IB, Adult Education, Wagner-Peyser, and Vocational Rehabilitation), Required Partners and other Stakeholders leveraging program resources to address workforce skill gaps. Partners are committed to collaborate on solutions, provide integrated services, and braid funding to effectively and efficiently meet regional business needs. One opportunity is to use the existing integration of Title IB Career Services and Business Services that connects job-seekers with training that meets employer-identified needs and connecting that process to the employer-led partnerships described here to meet sector-specific needs. Other opportunities include

leveraging the existing collaboration of Adult Education and Perkins training providers with employer collaboratives to develop and change program offerings (as evidenced by recent expansions in Manufacturing and Healthcare programs); and use of supportive service partners like IDHS and CSBG to connect long-term unemployed to soft skills training and other career readiness preparation.

Core partners are collaborating with secondary and post-secondary education and trainers to meet employer needs through these sector strategies. As noted in the examples above, secondary education is a key partner in developing the Region's future workforce, and actively part of this Regional Plan. Core partners will continue to serve as a connecting piece between educators and employers, including making sure key employers participate in events like Manufacturing Day and ensuring WIOA Youth programming directs participants into training opportunities consistent with future employer demand. Post-secondary education and training providers already collaborate with employers and core partners in these sector strategies, with the goal of helping employers clearly communicate their needs and aggregate demand for training so small- and mid-sized companies can participate. Through Career Services programming, Title 1B partners will communicate with educators and trainers on how program offering can meet the needs of job-seekers; while Business Services will play a direct role in connecting educators and trainers with business needs. Another example, detailed in Chapter 2, is the use of ICAPS Career Pathways programming in the Region.

An exciting new partnership being developed is the Northern Illinois Talent Pipeline Management in Manufacturing project, which uses a U.S. Chamber of Commerce model and brings together key regional employers, workforce and educational providers, and Northern Illinois University. This employer collaborative is supported by the local workforce boards, Rockford Chamber of Commerce, and local economic development entities. Education and training providers, including WIOA Core and Required Partners, will integrate solutions to address needs. At this early stage in the formation of the employer collaborative, foundational skills of job applicants is an area requiring attention. Soft/Essential Skill development is addressed under the Strategy, Goals and Activities section of this Plan.

The Northern Illinois Talent Pipeline Management in Manufacturing group is made up of 15 employers from all four counties of the Region. Core members include Imperial Punch, Greenlee Textron, Star Manufacturing, SPG Manufacturing, and Woodward. The group will continue to expand and is intended to create the "pull model" and future pipeline for manufacturing by continuing to inform the development and implementation of education and training programs and services.

In addition to this new employer collaborative addressing manufacturing, the Northwest Illinois Healthcare Collaborative, which has been in existence for over ten years, includes employer representatives from all the major health systems – OSF Healthcare; Freeport Health Network; MercyHealth; SwedishAmerican; KSB Hospital; and CGH. This collaborative partners with education entities to address skill and credential needs of the current and emerging workforce, and partners with secondary education to inform students, parents and educators on health careers; identifies appropriate pathways for the talent development pipelines; and provides resources and expertise curricula development and implementation. This employer collaborative will continue to inform and guide the workforce development for the Healthcare cluster.

The Rockford Area Aerospace Network is a collaborative led by the Rockford Area Economic Development Council that includes 27 business, educational, governmental, and other partners. Key employers such as UTC Aerospace Systems, Woodward, and GE Aviation, as well as their suppliers, drove this effort that has

promoted the need for an engineering school in the Region, the opportunity for an aircraft maintenance facility, and identification of recruitment and retention concerns for technical staff. RAAN can be a template for other manufacturing sector groups in the Region.

As evidenced by the number of sector related activities in the region, the Northern Stateline EDR has made significant progress in moving to an employer-led, demand-driven approach to designing and providing services. This approach will continue to be refined and become more robust as the WIOA Core and Required Partners leverage resources, braid funding and services, and address the goals, strategies and activities in this Plan.

CHAPTER 2: REGIONAL INTEGRATION OF STRATEGIES AND SERVICES

A. Provide an analysis of workforce development activities, including education and training, in the region.

The Northern Stateline Region's workforce development system has a strong track record of connecting well-trained workers to job opportunities, is respected by and responsive to employers, and is thoroughly collaborative. However, due to the complex challenges of a post-recession economy, coupled with an aging workforce and nationwide challenges faced by the Manufacturing sector, partners recognize significant work remains to be done. As part of the WIOA regional planning process, partners analyzed the *strengths and weaknesses of workforce development activities* using employer, customer, and stakeholder feedback, group planning sessions, and review of previous planning activities and analyses.

Strengths of the regional workforce system

Employers routinely cite the Region's workforce as both one of its biggest strengths and one of its biggest areas of need. Employers who gave input during the WIOA regional planning process, as well as during the 2016-20 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the Northern Illinois Region process and other surveys and interviews, noted sizable, well-trained, and effective workforce. In a 2011 Labor Shed Analysis of the Rockford MSA (which includes 2 of the 4 counties of this Region) by Foote Consulting Group, existing employers noted "the great work ethic and labor pool here."

There is strength in the growing regional collaboration that workforce development has been a part of. Workforce development, education, and economic development partners throughout the Region developed applications for the U.S. Department of Commerce's Make It in America and Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership programs from 2013 to 2015. Partners then collaborated on the updated CEDS plan. Each of these plans built on the work that came before to ensure new initiatives were aligned with ongoing efforts, and that partners were committed to carrying them through. In particular, the workforce component of the CEDS plan was developed with WIOA in mind, and partners added tactics to that plan that continue in this regional plan. One of the first comments made by partners at the initial WIOA regional planning session was that the new federal legislation and state planning process brought exciting opportunities for further collaboration.

The Region's workforce development system is known for employer-driven initiatives, particularly within Targeted Industry clusters. The Workforce Connection (TWC) Board, which represents three of the four counties of the Region, and Rock Valley College have long partnerships with major manufacturers like Fiat Chrysler Automobiles and Woodward in developing tailored training programs. Workforce development and educational institutions have collaborated with the Region's hospitals for more than a decade to improve training opportunities to help increase the number of nurses in the Region by more than 20% and face other staffing needs. The Region's community colleges have developed new programs in direct response to employer needs. Highland Community College's wind turbine maintenance program has assisted in an exciting new industry, but also provided skills transferable to the Region's manufacturing sector. Rock Valley College recently partnered with Northern Illinois University to offer bachelor's degrees

in Mechanical Engineering and Electrical Engineering in Rockford for the growing aerospace and other advanced manufacturing clusters.

The private sector has responded by providing strong leadership and engagement with the Region's workforce development boards, and by participating in this planning process. Business leaders have been at the forefront of identifying and addressing workforce needs and advocating for improvements to and support of the system. Additionally, government leaders are engaged in the workforce development system, actively participating on boards, providing feedback on plans and policies, and aligning their priorities with identified workforce needs. Both groups provided key feedback to assist with creation of this plan.

Another strength is the career focus of the Region's educational institutions. Partners have committed to implementing the Illinois State Board of Education's Career Cluster Framework at the K-12 level, and community colleges have strong existing Career Pathways programming in manufacturing, food manufacturing, healthcare, and transportation, distribution, and logistics. The Region's Education for Employment regional delivery systems - Career Education Associates of Northern Illinois (CEANCI) and CareerTEC - work with high schools and community colleges to provide courses of study leading to industry-recognized certifications in the Region's Targeted Industry clusters. Alignment Rockford, a public-private partnership to improve the performance and perception of Rockford Public Schools has led to College and Career Academies, small learning communities that provide real-world experiences with local businesses and professionals, linking schoolwork and the workplace. Belvidere School District 100 has developed the STEM-based Washington Academy, and 10 high schools in the Region participate in Project Lead the Way and commit to STEM-based education. Hundreds of students in the Region participated in Manufacturing Day this past year, visiting factories, food processors, and other facilities to learn about careers in manufacturing. Generally, schools are rated well; several of the Region's schools have been named to U.S. News and World Report's Best High Schools List.

Educational partners are collaborating on the Integrated Career and Academic Preparedness System (ICAPS), an Accelerating Opportunities Initiative, which seeks to address the needs of the adults in our community who are in need of a high school diploma. The ICAPS program includes dual enrollment in Adult Education and Career and Technical Education courses, leading to completion of the high school equivalency (GED), an institutional certificate, and at least one industry certification. Each program includes a pathway for students to continue their education, leading to a degree. Intense support services and a career navigator work with each student, assisting the student with any obstacles that arise.

The first ICAPS program is in CNC Career Pathways. This program leads to two institutional certificates: 1) Certified Manufacturing Associate, and 2) CNC. It also leads to three National Institute for Metalworking Skills (NIMS) credentials: 1) Measurement, Materials & Safety, 2) Lathe Operator I, and 3) Mill Operator I. Upon completion of this program, students will be ready for entry level positions in the manufacturing field, an industry that is growing in our area, such as CNC operator, CNC machinist, and setup. Students will have the opportunity to continue their studies in order to earn an Associate of Applied Science in Manufacturing Engineering Technology, after which, they will then be prepared to pursue a career of production manager, CAD/CAE/CAM designer or programmer, or tool designer.

Weaknesses of the regional workforce system

While the Region has been strong in collaboration among partners, coordination of service delivery has become a weakness. This was a symptom of the Great Recession and its after-effects. Unemployment in the Northern Stateline EDR spiked to 14.4 percent in 2009⁹, by far the highest in the state, with more than 32,000 unemployed. The unemployment rate remained above 10 percent through 2013. In response, the regional workforce system received an influx of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds, but with the absence of jobs it became a “train and pray” system. A concurrent spike in poverty in the Region led to increased stress on social service agencies, forcing them into reactionary programming and reducing their ability to proactively coordinate activities with workforce development.

Increased coordination is also needed between workforce development, economic development, and other partners with regard to employer outreach. Employers feel over-surveyed and invited to too many meetings, with confusion about which organization does what. Improvements are being made on this front, with early conversations about combining Business Services visits and economic development outreach and sharing of data, but more can be done.

While manufacturers appreciate the strengths of the workforce system in providing industry-recognized credentials and specialized training, there is a growing concern about difficulty in finding qualified workers, particularly with certain in-demand skills. This is exacerbated by the aging and impending retirement of many workers, coupled with a regional population decline since the recession. Meanwhile, workforce development and economic development professionals report that there is also a disconnect between the skills that employers say they are seeking and their hiring practices. Several manufacturing-related programs have been developed within the Region to meet perceived employer demand in machining, welding, and assembly skills, but even with these resources, program participants continued to have difficulty finding jobs.

Food manufacturers and processors in the Region feel they are underserved and there are no training programs for the certifications they require. This is particularly an issue because the cluster is scattered around the Region and not centered near any single training provider or educational institution. It was determined in the regional planning process that while the Region is heading in the right direction in addressing its Targeted Industry cluster needs, more work will be done for the food manufacturing industry.

There is also concern among all sectors about “soft skills” of many job applicants, and the Region must develop a more cohesive approach to providing training and other solutions to that problem. Many unconnected programs have been developed in the Region to address soft skills and other basic training needs, particularly in the Region’s cities like Rockford, but there is a growing fear of duplication and inefficient use of limited resources.

Customers of the workforce system report some barriers to training and employment that should be addressed. Transportation was often raised as a barrier, as customers near the fixed-route transit system in and around Rockford often report long commute times and inflexible work schedules. Others say it’s hard for them to even reach the fixed-route system. For residents in the three other counties of the Region, there are limited on-demand services, so they are reliant on their own vehicles. Customers also

⁹ Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security annual average data

noted that child care was a barrier, and suggested improved offerings of that and other supportive services. Customers and other stakeholders also indicated the need for a more coordinated intake system among different workforce partners to reduce duplicative paperwork and also assure that customers would be connected to all programs they qualified for.

Stakeholders noted two areas of weakness regarding marketing of the workforce system. Customers indicated that they primarily heard about programs through “word of mouth”. One customer of The Workforce Connection said in a focus group, “Not until you come do you know all that’s there.” This could lead to customers not participating in programs they qualify for, or not engaging the system at all. Increased marketing could also help the perception from some community groups and businesses that the workforce system is not addressing their key needs, which in turn causes creation of duplicative services.

The other marketing concern is a negative perception of manufacturing as a career among young workers or dislocated workers from other fields. Manufacturers report that many think of factories as dirty, loud, and dangerous, and not as the technologically advanced shops they are today. This limits the number of qualified candidates for a large, well-paying, economically foundational sector for the Region, and stakeholders say a coordinated marketing effort can assist.

Capacity to provide the workforce development activities to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment, and the employment needs of employers

There is ample *capacity to provide the needed workforce development activities* outlined in this plan, as well as the Local Plans for the two Local Workforce Areas in the Northern Stateline Region. The Region is served by two workforce investment boards – The Workforce Connection Board and NCI Works – and several WIOA-funded training providers –Rock Valley College, and Business Employment Skills Team Inc. All have track records of meeting federal, state, and local goals, have the support and participation of local businesses, and the backing of elected officials.

The Region is primarily served by two community colleges – Rock Valley College and Highland Community College – with Kishwaukee College and Sauk Valley Community College serving portions of Ogle County and McHenry County College serving a small area in Boone County. Rock Valley and Highland combined awarded nearly 1,400 associate’s degrees and more than 700 certificates in 2014¹⁰. The Region is also served by several four-year institutions, including Northern Illinois University, which has a Rockford center and a main campus in a neighboring county. The educational institutions are ready and willing partners in these workforce development activities with long track records of producing quality graduates and certificate-holders, and are trusted by businesses.

The Region’s four economic development corporations – the Greater Rochelle Economic Development Corporation, Growth Dimensions for Belvidere-Boone County, the Northwest Illinois Development Alliance, and Rockford Area Economic Development Council – are public/private partnerships actively engaged in workforce development activities. They provide an additional voice for businesses, and a partner in engaging those businesses.

¹⁰ Source: Emsi; Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System

There is ample capacity to meet the needs of individuals with barriers to employment, particularly if partners succeed in implementing the elements of this plan regarding coordination of services and reduction of duplication. Some examples of partners for key populations include:

- Long-term unemployed and individuals identified as likely to exhaust UI benefits are served by WIOA-funded workforce boards and service providers.
- Low-income adults and those receiving public assistance will be provided priority service by workforce boards and training providers.
- Individuals with disabilities, including youth with disabilities will be served by the Division of Rehabilitation Services staff, and given priority for WIOA Title 1B programs. The Vocational Rehabilitation Step-Up program is available in schools for transition-age students. Additionally, NCI Works has established a Targeted Population standing committee to address the needs of individuals with barriers to employment, specifically individuals with disabilities, returning citizens and veterans.
- Out-of-school youth will be served by programming that meets the requirement that 75% of youth funding goes to this population.
- Veterans receive highest priority for adult employment and training activities. Veterans' service representatives with IDES are on-site, fulltime to provide specialized assistance. Additionally, NCI Works has established a Targeted Population standing committee to address the needs of individuals with barriers to employment, specifically individuals with disabilities, returning citizens and veterans.
- Migrant and seasonal farmworkers receive specialized service from the Illinois Migrant Council (IMC), a community-based nonprofit organization that promotes employment, educational, and other opportunities for migrant and seasonal farmworkers and their families to achieve economic self-sufficiency and stability. IMC offers National Farmworkers Jobs Program training and support, partners with the Illinois Department of Employment Security on the Migrant Seasonal Farmworker Program, and provides ESL training, among other services.
- Re-entry individuals (ex-offenders) receive assistance through multiple programs including WIOA Title IB and the Illinois Department of Employment Security programs. As part of the Strong Cities, Strong Communities designation through the City of Rockford, TWC Board received U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration technical assistance to identify best practices and establish procedures to enhance and develop services for re-entry individuals. The Tri-County Re-Entry Coalition was formed and includes many of the One-Stop Partner programs / agencies, as well as Community-Based and Faith-Based organizations in the three counties. Additionally, NCI Works has established a Targeted Population standing committee to address the needs of individuals with barriers to employment, specifically individuals with disabilities, returning citizens and veterans.
- English Language Learners have multiple options for ESL classes, as well as training and materials provided in Spanish. Utilizing WIOA Title IB Adult funds, TWC Board has secured a contractor to provide work readiness training and work-based/place training for adult English Language Learners. NCI Works and its partners also provide English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs.
- Older individuals are provided specialized services through the Senior Community Services Empowerment Program (SCSEP), which trains qualified seniors 55 years and up with the skill sets needed to re-enter the workforce. Seniors who don't qualify for the program will be referred to other employment services or to a Senior Services center.

- Low literacy adults, including those without a high school diploma have multiple options for literacy programs. Tutoring and specialized services for low literacy adults are provided by The Literacy Council. Rock Valley College, Highland Community College and Rockford School District 205 – Roosevelt High School provide adult basic education classes and high school equivalency classes, along with transitional services, bridge programs and ICAPS. NCI Works will further coordinate with literacy program providers in its service territory.
- Low-skilled adults can receive specialized training to increase basic skills and occupational specific skills. Career Services are available through WIOA Title IB and specific training services are available through Rock Valley College, Highland Community College and other local eligible training providers. Business Employment Skills Training Inc. will also provide skills training.

Changes to service delivery strategies

Partners are focusing on getting individuals into higher-wage jobs and training for in-demand occupations and Targeted Industries. Also, work-based training to support classroom training will be expanded to include On-the-Job Training, Apprenticeships, Customized Training, Transitional Jobs, Internships, and Work Experience. ROI will be tracked in terms of wage growth for populations served, as well as for the Region as a whole, growth of Gross Regional Product in Targeted Industries, and required WIOA performance metrics when they are finalized. One new strategy under this plan is to develop a system for regional tracking of these ROI metrics in partnership with a Regional Planning Council that is coordinating a data commons. Partners will work collaboratively to ensure goals are being met and ROI can be demonstrated, and proactively communicate to businesses examples of ROI to support their continued investment in training programs.

At this time, the only strategy being curtailed is a de-emphasis on training programs for lower-demand occupations to focus on the above strategies.

Support of the state strategies and goals to align and integrate education, workforce and economic development

As detailed in Chapter 3 of this plan, the Northern Stateline Region's Goals were written to align with the four State Goals outlined in Chapter 4 of the Illinois WIOA Unified Plan while also incorporating the themes that came up repeatedly in the regional planning process. Goal 1 is particularly relevant to this: "Integration of workforce, education, and economic development efforts to move the Region's strategies forward through increased collaboration, communication, and shared resources." Partners are committed to work with their respective state agencies to support the state strategies and goals, while communicating regionally to ensure integration of those efforts. An example of this is ongoing meetings between regional workforce development agencies, economic development groups, and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity's regional staff.

In addition, the Business Services teams and economic development corporations in the Region will work together as outlined in Chapter 3 to align business engagement activities, such as the Business Services team work of the local workforce areas. This integration is already present in the joint planning work of the CEDS plan.

Formal and informal cooperative procedures to align services and coordinate delivery

Three of the four counties in the Northern Stateline Region make up Local Workforce Area 3 (LWA 3). The Local Memorandum of Understanding between all partners in LWA 3 will identify strategies and actions to align services and coordinate service delivery. Ogle County is in Local Workforce Area 4, which has its own Local Memorandum of Understanding. Both are attached to this plan with their respective Local Plans. Staff from both LWAs work closely to coordinate and collaborate, and will do so even more under this plan. Additionally, the community colleges that serve the Region collaborate with each other. Other regional groups referenced in this document, such as CEANCI, CareerTEC, and the Northwest Illinois Healthcare Collaborative, provide regional collaboration and coordination among their members.

B. Describe how transportation and other supportive services are coordinated within the region.

Transportation services

Rockford Mass Transit District (RMTD) provides fixed-route and demand-response service for the cities of Rockford, Loves Park, and Belvidere, and the Village of Machesney Park. RMTD's fixed-route service area is roughly 155 square miles with a potential service population of just over 260,000. Service runs seven days a week. In 2014, 1.8 million riders used the fixed-route system and almost 100,000 used the demand-response service.

RMTD is one of the policy committee members of the Rockford Metropolitan Agency for Planning (RMAP). RMAP conducts transportation and transit planning for most of Winnebago and Boone counties and a portion of Ogle County, which in total represent the majority of the Northern Stateline Region's population. RMAP oversees a Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan that assesses the transit needs and gaps for transit dependent populations. RMAP's Mobility Subcommittee includes representatives of RMTD, and other service and transportation providers. As such, RMAP is a prime convener of the coordination of transportation services in a large part of the Region. The RMAP Mobility Subcommittee gave important feedback during the drafting of this plan.

This coordination will be further improved as RMAP is joining the Economic Development District of Northern Illinois (EDDNI) in becoming a Regional Planning Council that assists with economic development and workforce planning in addition to transportation planning. EDDNI is a planning partner in the development of this regional plan, and oversees the CEDS plan for Northern Illinois that is referenced through this document.

Rural Boone County received demand-response service by the Boone County Council on Aging (BCCA). Service is available regardless of age. BCCA is also a member of the RMAP Mobility Subcommittee, providing further coordination. The Stateline Mass Transit District provides demand-response service to northern Winnebago County and connects with RMTD fixed-route service. Coordination is provided through regular communication and meeting attendance by each agency. The Lee-Ogle Transportation System provides demand-response service in Ogle County, and Pretzel City Area Transit serves Stephenson County. The workforce system One-Stop Centers, partner agencies, and educational

institutions provide information about the various transit services, and communicate regularly with the transit providers in their service territories.

Supportive services

TWC Board coordinates supportive services in LWA 3 through its Supportive Services policy, which ensures the appropriate use of supportive services and that eligible individuals receive the supportive services necessary to enable them to participate in activities authorized under WIOA. This includes “not-to-exceed” payments toward childcare, transportation (via transportation allowance or RMTD bus pass), and a variety of supplemental support items. Supportive services are provided in coordination with One-Stop Partner programs and other community-based and faith-based organizations. WIOA Title IB funds are available to provide supportive services if those supportive services are not readily available through other organizations. Additionally, as part of TWC Board’s recent mapping project, partners identified their roles in integrating services to connect target populations to supportive services.

For Ogle County, BEST, Inc. intends to contract with an agency to develop an on-line resource mapping directory. Partners can access this directory to locate supportive services that will help meet the personal/life needs of our customers. This directory will be a useful tool to further assist Title IV staff in locating support services in close proximity to their job- seeking customers.

C. Describe the coordination of services with regional economic development services and providers.

The Economic Development District of Northern Illinois (EDDNI) assisted with the development of this plan, and oversees the Northern Illinois CEDS plan referenced throughout this document. The CEDS is a U.S. Economic Development Administration-required documents that coordinates economic development planning for a Region. The CEDS for Northern Illinois included direct input by Growth Dimensions for Belvidere-Boone County and the Rockford Area Economic Development Council (RAEDC), as well as workforce representatives, government leaders, and private sector representatives from various key sectors. While the CEDS was developed in 2015, provisions of WIOA were kept in mind while creating its section on workforce, including a list of tactics that continue into this plan. The economic development groups also provided information from their individual organizational goals and strategies.

Additionally, Blackhawk Hills Regional Council’s CEDS plan covers Ogle and Stephenson Counties, and includes an objective to strengthen its collaboration with NCI Works “to find ways to economically train our existing and future advanced manufacturing workforce.”

The RAEDC and Growth Dimensions, along with Northwest Illinois Development Alliance and the Greater Rochelle Economic Development Corporation, participated further in the development of the Regional Plan, attending partner meetings (and several economic development representatives attended the statewide summit), and giving other input. Additionally, all four economic development agencies and representatives of the two workforce development boards (as well as economic development and workforce development from neighboring McHenry County) attended a regional summit with representatives of the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity to discuss coordination under WIOA. Additionally, several members of the business community representing various sectors attended partner meetings and the statewide summit. To ensure a larger mix of business input, previous business surveys conducted by workforce boards, economic development corporations, and

EDDNI were also included in this plan. Business input is shown throughout the plan, particularly in Goal 2, which outlines strategies to continue to be responsive to business needs.

Going forward, the Regional Planning Council (which includes EDDNI and RMAP), will assist in the coordination between economic development and workforce development. Representatives of workforce, economic development, education, and government will be among its members. Also, the Regional Planning Council will continue to work with Blackhawk Hills Regional Council in ensuring communication and collaboration. Both EDDNI and Blackhawk Hills will have private-sector representatives overseeing their CEDS plans as well. WIOA Core Partners will use these relationships and forums to make sure their program and training offerings align with the existing needs of employers as communicated by economic development retention and expansion activities, as well as the needs of potential growth and attraction industries. As outlined in the Regional Tactical Plan, a key action will be including Core Partners “into economic development business attraction and retention processes earlier, using scenario planning, boilerplate RFP sections, and shared understandings of targeted industries and locations for development. This activity recognizes that economic development processes often are time-sensitive and must be reactive to business needs, while allowing other partners to participate more fully.

Representatives of the various economic development corporations and workforce development agencies also sit on one another’s respective boards, ensuring continuous coordination and collaboration. During the most recent process, no economic development organizations or businesses that were invited to participate declined to do so.

D. Describe the coordination of administrative cost arrangements, including the pooling of funds for administrative costs, as appropriate.

All required partners participating in the development of this Regional Plan have agreed that the strategies and goals identified for Economic Development Region (EDR) 5 do not require coordination of administrative cost arrangements at this time. As specific projects and activities emerge, pooling of funds for administrative costs will be addressed among partners. If projects require additional administrative support, partners will identify in-kind resources, grants (i.e. Community Foundation support) and/or pool administrative costs, as needed and appropriate, to implement the project and/or activity.

CHAPTER 3: REGIONAL VISION, GOALS, AND STRATEGIES

A. Describe the strategic vision to support state and regional economic growth

Partners in the Northern Stateline Region are excited about the opportunities under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and the Illinois WIOA Unified Plan for increased collaboration. This regional plan builds upon the recent success within the Northern Stateline Region in developing business-driven talent solutions (as highlighted in the State's Vision Statement) that have supported not only a rebound from the Great Recession, but a path forward to economic growth. Workforce development has become a key piece of the ongoing conversation about bringing jobs to the Region and bringing residents to jobs. Workforce is also a major element of a regional collective impact model that is being developed through accountable partnerships like Rockford Community Partners, and stakeholders have noted that WIOA provides inherent connections with that model. That is why the strategic vision for the Northern Stateline Region is about more than just fulfilling traditional workforce development goals, and is broadly aligned with other regional strategies.

Vision Statement

A coordinated workforce pipeline that responds to employer needs, gives opportunities to all residents for traditional employment and support for self-employment and entrepreneurship, and provides talent for key industries to lead the way in regional economic growth.

B. Describe the goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce (including youth and individuals with barriers to employment), and goals relating to the performance accountability measures based on performance indicators.

Regional Goals

The Northern Stateline Region's Goals were written to align with the four State Goals outlined in Chapter 4 of the Illinois WIOA Unified Plan while also incorporating the six broad themes that came up repeatedly in the regional planning process. In keeping with the Regional Vision of giving "opportunities to all residents" these goals are intended to benefit the entire workforce, *including youth and individuals with barriers to employment*.

1. Integration of workforce, education, and economic development efforts to move the Region's strategies forward through increased collaboration, communication, and shared resources.
2. Engagement of employers as champions for workforce solutions that meet their current and future needs, using existing sector partnerships as foundations for further collaboration.
3. Increased skill level of the workforce through bolstered education and training opportunities providing industry-recognized credentials, sought-after degrees and certificates, and regionally relevant career pathways.
4. Better connection of residents of all skill levels and socioeconomic groups to career opportunities by addressing their barriers to traditional employment and education and providing support for individuals to participate in co-ops and social entrepreneurship ventures.

5. Improved intake, tracking, and data management systems that are user-friendly, easily sharable among partners, and able to provide relevant information to measure progress and needs for the Region's workforce systems.
6. A well-marketed workforce system that encourages residents and employers to engage its programs and services and understand available opportunities.

Additionally, it is the intent of this plan to assist core partners with meeting the six *performance accountability measures* under WIOA – participants who entered employment, participants who retained employment, median earnings, credential attainment rate, measureable skills gain, and effectiveness in serving employers. As metrics are set by Federal and State guidance, partners will work collaboratively under Goal 1 to meet regional metrics and identify assistance partners will need from one another. Additionally, the data strategies under Goal 5 will assist with tracking of metrics on a regional basis.

At this time local workforce boards negotiate local performance measures with the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity for Title IB, Adult Education and Literacy providers under Title II negotiate performance measures with their State funding entity, and Title III and Title IV are State agencies with State performance measures. The Core Partners and Required Partners are committed to working together to successfully meet all performance measures in the spirit of creating success for businesses, residents and the Region as a whole. Upon receipt of State guidance on collectively negotiating collective local performance for the performance accountability described in WIOA, the regional Core and Required Partners will establish a negotiation team, research and analyze demographics and performance scenarios, and negotiate in accordance with State guidance.

- C. Provide a description of the regional and local strategies that will achieve the vision and goals.**
- D. Describe the steps that will be taken to support the state goals to align and integrate education, workforce and economic development including.**

Regional Tactical Plan

To describe both the *regional and local strategies that will achieve the vision and goals* and *steps that will be taken to support the state goals*, the Region developed a tactical plan outlining strategies and action items for each of the above goals. This format was successfully used in developing the 2016-20 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the Northern Illinois Region, which includes a significant workforce component. Because the goals and strategies below are inherently connected, it will be noted below where activities affect multiple sections of this plan. Core and Required Partners will be assisting through the Business Services team and through their own involvement in the One-Stop Centers, with further opportunities to be developed as Activities are implemented.

Goal 1: Integration of workforce, education, and economic development efforts to move the Region's strategies forward through increased collaboration, communication, and shared resources.

Strategy 1.1: Develop a clear path for employers, residents, and partners to access the services and programs of the workforce development system where there is a common point of contact but allowing for multiple points of entry to the system. This strategy is in response to community concerns that the workforce development system is uncoordinated and diffuse, with overlapping and sometimes redundant programs confusing employers and residents alike. Partners are working to develop a system where the wide range of regional workforce, educational, social service, economic development, and civic agencies can each direct their clients and business partners into the same system but retain their autonomy and relationships.

Activity 1.1A: Develop an integrated customer intake and case management process, first piloting it among several Rockford-area social service and workforce agencies. The process would help funnel clients toward the public workforce development system while also ensuring they are aware of other programs they may qualify for. Train staff at workforce and partner agencies to be aware of the above intake system and services the other programs partners offer so they can make proper referrals. This includes giving all partner agencies consistent language and a process guide for directing clients into the workforce system to maintain the common point of contact of the goal. This system will also support Goals 3 and 5 below. **Partner Roles:** The Rockford Area Case Management Initiative (RACMI), including the Northern Illinois Center for Nonprofit Excellence, Rock Valley College (RVC), and Goodwill, is leading development of the process. Core and Required Partners will implement it through an MOU, though many are already part of the development process, including the City of Rockford (CSBG provider) and Title 1B providers.

Activity 1.1B: Create a multi-partner, unified regional Business Services team by connecting existing Business Services teams for the Region's two workforce development boards and formally partnering with other agencies. This would include providing an "Easy Button" on the front page of each workforce development agency website directly connecting businesses to the information they need, a single business services phone number for each workforce development area, coordinated branding of business services, and information sharing with partners so they know how to refer businesses. **Partner Roles:** The Workforce Connection (TWC) Board and NCI Works lead, with IDES, Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) and other Core and Required Partners will participate to ensure coordinated approach.

Activity 1.1C: Explore creation of a "smart card" for residents that would serve as a single source for connecting them to services and programs offered by partners much like how a library card or student ID works. It would also allow for integration among partners and co-branding, since participating residents would have easy access to a wide variety of offerings with one card. It would also assist with reducing redundant data collection by agencies. City of Rockford could be a starting point for this activity, but it could be expanded over time. **Partner Roles:** This is expected to follow the work of Activity 1.1A to complement that intake system. Partners will follow a similar MOU process, depending on which partners are able to join implementation; it would be expanded beyond Core and Required Partners to any willing community partner.

Strategy 1.2: Build on successful recent collaboration and communication efforts to better coordinate workforce and economic development. Workforce development partners were strong participants in the recent CEDS update and are active on the boards of the region's economic development agencies. Recently, the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) hosted a regional summit between economic development and workforce development agencies. Additionally, a new

Regional Planning Council that is being formed will assist with convening further meetings, since its membership will include workforce and economic development, and the RPC board will be able to make regional policy recommendations. These initiatives have highlighted several ways the groups can be more integrated.

Activity 1.2A: Hold regular meetings between economic development and workforce development agencies to align and coordinate strategies and improve regional communication on current and future workforce needs. This includes adding workforce development entities to the team on business attraction and retention efforts as confidentiality allows. For example, as part of this planning process, the economic development officials that head “Team Rochelle” in Ogle County agreed to include a representative from NCI Works, which administers WIOA programs in Local Workforce Area 4. This complements existing relationships between The Workforce Connection Board (which administers WIOA programs in LWA 3) and its economic development partners in Boone, Stephenson, and Winnebago counties, relationships which will also be strengthened as part of this plan. **Partner Roles:** TWC Board, NCI Works, economic development organizations - Rockford Area Economic Development Council (RAEDC), Growth Dimensions, Northwest Illinois Development Alliance (NIDA), Greater Rochelle Economic Development Corp. (GREDCO) – and DCEO.

Activity 1.2B: Bring education, workforce, and transportation partners into economic development business attraction and retention processes earlier, using scenario planning, boilerplate RFP sections, and shared understandings of targeted industries and locations for development. This activity recognizes that economic development processes often are time-sensitive and must be reactive to business needs, while allowing other partners to participate more fully. An example of this process was the successful attraction of AAR Corp. to the Chicago Rockford International Airport, which was the result of a longer period of joint planning around the targeted industry of aircraft maintenance, repair, and overhaul operations. **Partner Roles:** TWC Board, NCI Works, economic development organizations, Regional Planning Council (RPC), Rockford Mass Transit District, Boone County Council on Aging, Pretzel City Area Transit, Lee-Ogle Transportation System, and community colleges – RVC, Highland Community College (HCC), Kishwaukee College, Sauk Valley Community College.

Activity 1.2C: Where possible, combine workforce development Business Services outreach with economic development outreach, such as the successful Synchronist-based Voice of the Customer program. **Partner Roles:** TWC Board, NCI Works, economic development organizations, RPC (for back office technical assistance).

Goal 2: Engagement of employers as champions for workforce solutions that meet their current and future needs, using existing sector partnerships as foundations for further collaboration.

Strategy 2.1: Strengthen existing sector partnerships within the Region and develop - additional sector partnership, particularly around identified Targeted Industries.

Activity 2.1A: Continue the work of the Northwest Illinois Healthcare Collaborative and the Rockford Area Aerospace Network, expand the Information Technology Roundtable, and restart the Logistics Council in Ogle County and look for ways to expand it to a regional level. These partnerships have formed around industry-specific needs that often have included workforce development, and have created successful initiatives that had buy-in from companies. **Partner Roles:** TWC Board (oversees NIHC), RAEDC (oversees RAAN), NCI Works (potential facilitation of Logistics Council), with other partners and economic development organizations assisting as outlined in Chapter 2, Section B.

Activity 2.1B: Identify “sector champions” to lead the formation of other partnerships, using the above models. Possible sectors include food manufacturing, metalworking, and other manufacturing areas. While the groups would coalesce around their identified shared needs, it is expected workforce will be a key topic. These partnerships will be particularly helpful for small- and mid-sized companies that don’t have the time and resources to implement workforce development programs that larger companies can. **Partner Roles:** Economic development organizations, in partnership with TWC Board and NCI Works.

Activity 2.1C: Implement the Northern Illinois Talent Pipeline Management project. This is based on the U.S. Chamber of Commerce’s Talent Pipeline Management initiative and is a partnership of key regional employers, workforce and educational providers, and Northern Illinois University. The next step in 2016 is further research in developing how the project would work in this Region. The activity would align with the two others in this section, as sector partnerships will be key. One goal of this program is to align small- and mid-sized employers into groups that can work directly with training and education providers to develop specialized programs. **Partner Roles:** Northern Illinois University, TWC Board, and private employers lead; WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker providers, Career and Technical Education providers, and Eligible Training Providers will participate as needs are determined by employers.

Strategy 2.2: Provide the industry-recognized credentials needed to grow Targeted Industry clusters

Activity 2.2A: Develop programs to provide certifications and training needed by the growing Food Manufacturing industry in the Region, including programs in safety, sanitation, production, specialized equipment, and quality assurance. Partner with larger food companies and collectives of smaller ones to offer programs at schools and/or on site. Additionally, explore the possibility of crossover with training programs needed by biopharmaceutical and drug processing companies in the wider northern Illinois area. **Partner Roles:** HCC, NIDA, Growth Dimensions, TWC Board, and private sector partners.

Activity 2.2B: Identify training programs offered in the Region that could be attractive to employers outside the Region who are willing to send their workers off-site. This would develop the Northern Stateline Region as an expert in specific training niches. One possibility is to start with Food Manufacturing as noted in the above activity. This could allow the Region to offer larger programs than what regional companies could support. **Partner Roles:** Community colleges, Northern Illinois University, Eligible Training Providers, TWC Board, NCI Works.

Activity 2.2C: Partner with employers, placement and temporary agencies, and training providers to develop a “certified worker” program to address employers’ concerns about both basic and technical skills. This activity complements the Employability Certificate as part of Goal 4, as well as the various training programs of Goal 3. **Partner Roles:** This will start with the work of Activity 2.1A and 2.1C to determine these basic and technical skill needs. Core and Required Partners would then discuss how to put that into a usable program through the One-Stop and Adult and Dislocated Worker offerings, using existing best practices from DRS, IDES, and CSBG efforts to prepare job candidates.

Strategy 2.3: Improve outreach to and engagement with businesses, particularly small- to mid-sized businesses that need specialized attention but lack the resources of larger firms.

Activity 2.3A: As a component of Goal 1, improve coordination of business services, outreach, and engagement programs to minimize confusion and promote a unified system. Focus on delivery of employers’ desired solutions and demonstrate return on investment to them, while keeping the bureaucratic and process components in the background. **Partner Roles:** In conjunction with Activity 1.1B, TWC Board and NCI Works lead, with IDES, DRS, and other Core and Required Partners participating. Include economic development organizations, Chambers of Commerce and other groups that do business engagement.

Activity 2.3B: Use existing private sector representatives on workforce boards as champions for further business engagement in creating solutions to workforce problems. **Partner Roles:** Private sector representatives on boards.

Activity 2.3C: Engage with existing business associations, such as the Rockford Chamber of Commerce’s Manufacturers Council, Rock River Valley Tooling & Machining Association, and the Illinois Manufacturers’ Association. **Partner Roles:** TWC Board, NCI Works, community colleges, economic development organizations, and other partners that have relationships with business associations.

Goal 3: Increased skill level of the workforce through bolstered education and training opportunities providing industry-recognized credentials, sought-after degrees and certificates, and regionally relevant career pathways.

Strategy 3.1: Expand work-based learning programs that partner with businesses, such as internships, co-ops, apprenticeships, job shadowing, and scholarships.

Activity 3.1A: Build on the success of the Joint Institute for Engineering and Technology – Aerospace internship program by actively supporting the Northern Illinois University/Rock Valley College program, combining the new engineering school with internships in various advanced manufacturing fields. **Partner Roles:** NIU and RVC, Highland Community College (for other internship programming, RAEDC, private sector partners.

Activity 3.1B: Expand the use of apprenticeships, such as the aircraft maintenance apprenticeship program offered at Emery Air in Rockford and other company-specific programs. Assist manufacturers with setting up their own programs and connecting them with U.S. Department of Labor resources within the Region. **Partner Roles:** WIOA Core and Required Partners to promote apprenticeships through Adult and Youth programming, IDES existing encouragement of apprenticeships, and other partners where there is opportunity. TWC Board and NCI Works to coordinate wider efforts to expand apprenticeships through Business Services teams, in partnership with employers, community colleges, and the U.S. Department of Labor apprenticeships office in Rockford.

Activity 3.1C: Partner with businesses in developing training cohorts for in-demand occupations such as welding, CNC machining, forklift driving, etc. **Partner Roles:** Community colleges (in particular their Career and Technical Education components), Eligible Training Providers, business groups include Northern Illinois Talent Pipeline Management, TCW Board and NCI Works. Other partners will be involved in specific opportunities, such as CSBG programming to help low-income residents take RVC TechWorks training in CNC machining.

Strategy 3.2: Encourage and assist with the implementation of the Illinois State Board of Education's Career Cluster Framework (which includes career clusters, career pathways, and programs of study) in the K- 12 school districts and the local workforce areas in the Region.

Activity 3.2A: Develop new career pathways programs based on Illinois Pathways in partnership with the Region's community colleges and secondary schools. Programs in development relevant to Targeted Industries include manufacturing (such as welding), engineering, medical coding, aviation maintenance, and computer science. Strengthen existing pathways in food manufacturing and transportation, logistics, and distribution (including truck drivers and moving people into supply chain management). **Partner Roles:** Community colleges, K-12 school districts, and the Regional Office of Education to lead, with Business Services teams as a resource and Career Services and partners to explain options to job-seekers and residents seeking advancement.

Activity 3.2B: Explore modular, shorter-term training and stackable credentials in order to develop and deploy training more quickly and responsively. Look at credentials from a pathways perspective to articulate stackable credentials and connect all populations to pathways. **Partner Roles:** Community colleges and Eligible Training Providers, with input and engagement assistance from Business Services teams and economic development organizations.

Activity 3.2C: Develop an educational center and technical training facility in Belvidere at currently abandoned or underused commercial space. **Partner Roles:** City of Belvidere, in conjunction with educational and training providers to be determined. TWC Board to participate as plan is developed.

Activity 3.2D: Create a centralized location for enhanced Career and Technical Education in Rockford for high school and college students to consolidate disparate facilities. This facility can also be used by private industry in partnership with public school districts to facilitate job training. **Partner Roles:** City of Rockford, RVC, Rockford Public Schools 205.

Strategy 3.3: Address the Region’s need for engineering and technical talent to strengthen its Advanced Manufacturing clusters and offset the impending wave of retirements.

Activity 3.3A: Increase direct exposure to STEM for K-12 students to develop interest in future career goals. Use existing First Robotics and First Lego League programs and other hands-on demonstrations. **Partner Roles:** CareerTEC, Career Education Associates of North Central Illinois (CEANCI), K-12 school districts, community colleges, WIOA Youth programs, and companies that sponsor robotics teams.

Activity 3.3B: Encourage the development of educational and technical training academies, such as the Career Academy program at Rockford Public Schools, and Belvidere Public Schools’ science-based Washington Academy. **Partner Roles:** Alignment Rockford, Rockford Public Schools 205, Belvidere School District 100, and other K-12 school districts.

Activity 3.3C: Assist with the recruitment of students for the new NIU/RVC engineering program, and identify employers within the Region to provide internships, co-op placements, and other opportunities for students and graduates. **Partner Roles:** NIU, RVC, community colleges, K-12 school districts and academies, WIOA Career Services and Youth programs.

Goal 4: Better connection of residents of all skill levels and socioeconomic groups to career opportunities by addressing their barriers to traditional employment and education and providing support for individuals to participate in co-ops and social entrepreneurship ventures.

Strategy 4.1: Integrate supportive services and case management into the workforce delivery system.

This recognizes that individuals with barriers to employment need more assistance than training, education, and job referrals. It would establish a process to coordinate the needed assistance in conjunction with training, and reduce redundancy among providers. As this strategy integrates partners, it would tie to Goal 1.

Activity 4.1A: Use the joint case management system developed in Activity 1.1A for Core and Required Partners providing wraparound services integrating supportive services with career services. This program would connect individuals with case managers or “success coaches” to guide them through the process of getting the education and training needed to get and retain a job. **Partner Roles:** After partners identified in Activity 1.1A develop system, it will be implemented by Core and Required Partners through MOU, with other community partners participating as possible.

Activity 4.1B: As a follow up to Activity 4.1A, training of workforce development and partner staff to be success coaches, using existing resources and expertise but providing a common framework. For instance, workforce development staff would specialize in career planning, partnering with supportive services provider staff. NCI works will be using “journey mapping” to analyze how participants are now moving through the system, with an eye toward identifying improvements that can be made. This can be then extended to the rest of the Region. **Partner Roles:** TWC Board and NCI Works to coordinate, with One-Stop and partner staff participating in training.

Strategy 4.2: Address financial, logistical, and transportation barriers for unemployed and underemployed individuals.

Activity 4.2A: Address the “benefits cliff” faced by individuals receiving public support by promoting usage of existing transitional programs, such as Social Security’s Ticket to Work program that gradually phases out benefits but makes it easy to resume benefits if employment is not retained, and advocate for similar initiatives for other programs. Where possible, connect participants with stipends, bus passes, child care assistance, and other financial support directly tied to training and educational opportunities. **Partner Roles:** TWC Board and NCI Works to coordinate, with Core and Required Partners to provide information about barriers clients have and workforce board members to provide legislative advocacy. Operationally, partners will address this in line with each board’s supportive services policy and look for innovative ways to support individuals.

Activity 4.2B: Address transportation barriers for residents by engaging transit providers to provide them the right information to put service where it’s needed, and get the word out to residents about what’s available. Provide transit maps and schedules at workforce centers and

other partner agencies. Explore better coordination of on-demand and paratransit vehicles to pool resources where insurance and other limitations allow. Work with employers to develop other transportation options, including van service and commuter pools, particularly in rural areas and for second/third shifts. **Partner Roles:** Transit providers in partnership with workforce boards and the RPC through its RMAP Mobility Subcommittee.

Strategy 4.3: Develop and expand programs to help individuals overcome barriers to employment, including career counseling and soft skills training, and provide support for low-cost self-employment educational opportunities.

Activity 4.3A: In conjunction with Activity 2.2C, coordinate and consolidate soft skills training programs into a network of offerings throughout the Region that reduce duplication but also engage specific populations where they are. This would build on the strengths of existing service providers while bolstering programs where needed. Particular needs include basic job preparation skills – such as how to dress for an interview, how to interview, and how to be punctual – as well as basic technical skills such as typing and computer usage. Engage businesses in the development of this programming. Provide refresher workshops before hiring events. **Partner Roles:** Same as Activity 2.2C, plus other agencies and partners now offering soft skills training in the Region

Activity 4.3B: Educate career planners about addressing barriers to employment that job seekers may face, such as language and communication barriers for immigrant and refugee populations, limitations faced by individuals with disabilities, and challenges faced by ex-offenders returning home. **Partner Roles:** All Core and Required Partners will participate in discussions led by TWC Board and NCI Works to address this issue; training will be then provided to career planners and partner staff.

Activity 4.3C: Expand bridge programs, including pre-bridge programs, to bring unemployed and underemployed populations into career pathways that improve the size and skill of the workforce. **Partner Roles:** Adult Education providers/community colleges are leading.

Activity 4.3D: As a complement to Activity 2.2C, explore development of a regional Employability Certificate that uses nationally recognized programs like WorkKeys to give employers confidence in new hires. This would leverage existing certificate programs in the Region. **Partner Roles:** Partners as outlined in Activity 2.2C, along with community colleges or other training providers to offer the Certificate.

Activity 4.3E: Use the successful model of Etsy in Rockford and the development of regional makerspaces to engage unemployed and underemployed residents in entrepreneurial opportunities. **Partner Roles:** City of Rockford (including CSBG), Rockford Housing Authority, Freeport Housing Authority, NIDA, and Rock River Development Partnership through its Rockford City Market.

Strategy 4.4: Bridge the gap between employer expectations and the workforce pool, developing ways to build employer trust in unemployed and underemployed populations and mitigating their risk.

Activity 4.4A: Build employer trust over time by identifying the most ready, most skilled workers of key applicant pools and referring them to willing employers. By having good experiences hiring

those with barriers, employers may develop more willingness. **Partner Roles:** Business Services team in partnership with Core and Required Partners who serve special populations.

Activity 4.4B: Use existing incentive programs that encourage employers to hire those with disabilities, veterans, and others with barriers to employment. Make employers aware of programs tied to specific populations. **Partner Roles:** Business Services team in partnership with Core and Required Partners who serve special populations.

Activity 4.4C: Work with staffing/placement agencies, which have existing trust with employers, to develop or use existing screening, assessment, matching, and tracking programs to connect available workers with the right employer. Find ways to incorporate assessment and tracking into the public workforce system. **Partner Roles:** Business Services team and staffing agencies.

Goal 5: Improved intake, tracking, and data management systems that are user-friendly, easily sharable among partners, and able to provide relevant information to measure progress and needs for the Region's workforce systems.

Strategy 5.1: Support the collaboration efforts of this plan by developing shared systems or better coordinating existing systems for customer intake and tracking.

Activity 5.1A: Support the common intake system among key workforce partners outlined in Activity 1.1A by starting with user-friendly intake forms that reduce the need for multiple forms for multiple programs. **Partner Roles:** Roles as outlined in Activity 1.1A, with assistance from IDES, TWC Board, NCI Works, and One-Stop Operators.

Activity 5.1B: Use existing partners' tracking systems or develop a new one that can promote data sharing while protecting confidentiality. **Partner Roles:** Core and Required Partners as outlined in Activity 1.1A with assistance from IDES, TWC Board, NCI Works, and One-Stop Operators.

Activity 5.1C: Partner with the Regional Planning Council on data collection and maintenance infrastructure. **Partner Roles:** TWC Board, NCI Works, RPC, in partnership with Core and Required Partners and One-Stop Operators.

Activity 5.1D: Improve usage of Illinois JobLink and other labor exchange programs to provide easy access to qualified candidates for businesses. **Partner Roles:** IDES along with all partners that provide basic career services, Business Services team, and economic development organizations.

Strategy 5.2: Provide timely and relevant workforce data to businesses and economic development partners.

Activity 5.2A: Bolster existing state-provided employment projections and wage data with an annual regional survey of businesses on their wages, employment projections, and training needs, and publish annual report. This would be done in conjunction with the Regional Planning Council. **Partner Roles:** TWC Board, NCI Works, IDES, and RPC.

Activity 5.2B: As a complement to Activity 2.3A, integrate business surveys done by partner agencies into a shared surveying and data tracking system that reduces redundant asks of employers. Use data generated from Synchronist surveys and workforce agency business visits. Consult with Chicago-Cook Workforce Partnership on its workforce assessment tool in development. **Partner Roles:** TWC Board and NCI Works, Business Services team, economic development organizations, with technical support as needed from IDES, DCEO, RPC.

Goal 6: A well-marketed workforce system that encourages residents and employers to engage its programs and services and understand available opportunities.

Strategy 6.1: Brand the regional workforce system as an employer-driven solution to their workforce needs.

Activity 6.1A: Develop coordinated branding that promotes the workforce system as a one-stop solution to employer needs, and share materials with partners for dissemination. This includes updates to workforce system websites such as the “Easy Button” described in Goal 2. **Partner Roles:** TWC Board and NCI Works to lead, with partners to participate in branding development and dissemination of marketing materials.

Activity 6.1B: Meet with employers and employer groups to discuss perceptions of the workforce system and learn how to increase the positive perception of the system and address negative perceptions. **Partner Roles:** TWC Board, NCI Works, Business Services team, economic development organizations, and business groups.

Strategy 6.2: Promote the regional workforce system to residents, particularly those in most need of its services.

Activity 6.2A: Develop coordinated branding that promotes the workforce system as a one-stop solution to resident needs, and share materials with partners for dissemination. **Partner Roles:** TWC Board and NCI Works to lead, with partners to participate in branding development and dissemination of marketing materials.

Activity 6.2B: Visit community organizations, churches, and other places residents gather to provide details of training, education, and other workforce system offerings, rather than wait for residents to visit offices. **Partner Roles:** TWC Board and NCI Works, One-Stop Operators and Adult and Dislocated Worker

Activity 6.2C: Host more hiring events and WIOA informational and enrollment events in sites beyond workforce and educational facilities. **Partner Roles:** TWC Board and NCI Works, with partners hosting some of these events.

Strategy 6.3: Market job opportunities to retain residents who may commute or move out of the Region for work, and to attract new residents.

Activity 6.3A: Create and implement a coordinated awareness program of regional career opportunities, particularly in manufacturing, healthcare, and other key industries. Increase efforts to retain workers in high-demand occupations who are commuting out of the Region or moving to other regions, while attracting workers to move to the Region. **Partner Roles:** TWC Board and NCI Works, in partnership with economic development organizations and RPC.

PUBLIC COMMENT AND RESPONSES

The Northern Stateline Region draft Regional Plan was made available to the public on The Workforce Connection Board's website (www.theworkforceconnection.org) on Monday, 5/2/2016. Public notice was published in a local newspaper on the same day. Additionally, emails were sent to Local Board members and stakeholders advising them of the draft plan and soliciting comments. The 30-day public comment period ended Wednesday, 6/1/2016.

Two comments were received.

Name or organization	Comment	Response
Dan Dineen, Community Foundation of Northern Illinois	<p>Mr. Dineen was complimentary of the plan overall and expressed desire to continue working with workforce partners on its goals and strategies going forward. He made some minor corrections and editing suggestions that were fixed in the final version. He also made the following two suggestions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The document assumes the reader is familiar with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, so much so that it never actually spells out the acronym's meaning. I believe that some background about WIOA would be helpful for the reader to ground them in the relationship between federal funding/departments and regional efforts. 2. I'm excited to see all the different work being done in the region under the various goals in section 3. I know that many of the specific activities are in development, but, at the very least, I would love to see a backbone organization attached to each activity. This, I believe, would lead to more interested readers becoming invested participant and would strengthen 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An Introduction and Overview page was added to the beginning of the document in response to this comment. 2. This suggestion was discussed, but it was decided that at this time it was not appropriate to specifically link Activities to organizations beyond what is already in the plan. The Workforce Development Boards and other core partners are generally responsible for many of the items in the plan. Additionally, the Region will develop an implementation matrix after Regional Plan approval that will go into more depth about implementing agencies and partnerships that are needed.

	the document's claim to follow a collective impact model.	
Mayor Larry Morrissey, City of Rockford	<p>Thank you for the presentation today on our Workforce Alliance Regional Plan. Great work overall. I just wanted to confirm a couple of the points I made at the meeting and a couple others.</p> <p>First, I thought the Vision statement needs to add something along the lines of "and effective support for individuals to pursue self-employment and entrepreneurship opportunities." This has been a glaring hole in our national, State and local approaches to help folks out of poverty.</p> <p>Second, as it regards to goals, I would add something like "support for individuals, especially those who may have significant background barriers to traditional employment opportunities, to participate in co-ops and social entrepreneurship ventures."</p> <p>Third, as far as strategies, I would add:</p> <p>A) that we need to specifically mention our support for collective impact, accountable partnerships/collaborations like "Rockford Community Partners". I have copied Todd Cagnoni. I would like to add a RCP group specifically targeting "co-ops & social entrepreneurship"</p> <p>B) that we mention something around the need to support for low-cost entrepreneurial, self-employment education such as a</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Vision has been amended in response to this comment 2. Goal 4 has been amended in response to this comment. 3. A. The introduction to the Regional Vision, Goals, and Strategies referenced this, but more has been added in response to this comment. B. Strategy 4.3 has been amended in response to this comment. Additionally, it was noted that Activity 4.3E addresses this comment. C. Activity 1.1C has been added to the plan in response to this comment.

	<p>Rockford Maker Space. There is a venture I'm currently working on with the Rockford Public Library and Rock Valley College and a few entrepreneurs. Mark Williams from the City is helping on this. We got a grant from the RAEDC to purchase equipment. We're working up the plan for the space. I think this is something NIWA may be able to support by subsidizing an individual's membership to such a MakerSpace or supporting general overhead for such a facility if that's possible. I'd like to discuss this with you further.</p> <p>C) I may have discussed with you in the past the opportunity to create a "suped-up" version of a Library Card that can serve as a single source for connecting a resident to the host of services/databases that might support them. Such a "smart-card" could support a more seamless integration of our various partner organizations. I think this should also be integrated into our partner MOU and Technology parts of our work. This type of card would be similar to what a Student ID does for a student at a big university. It might be a transit card, debit card, library card, dining card, etc. We would use this as a way to improve and expand our network of partners and opportunities for the individuals we serve. This would also allow us to better market and brand our services with other partner organizations. I can see our logo on the back of the card.</p>	
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After the plan was modified in March 2017 in accordance with updated state and federal guidance, the draft plan was again made available to the public on The Workforce Connection Board's website (www.theworkforceconnection.org) on Monday, 3/13/2017. Public notice was published in a local newspaper on the same day. Additionally, emails were sent to Local Board members and stakeholders advising them of the draft plan and soliciting comments. The 30-day public comment period ended Thursday, 4/13/2017. There were no public comments received.



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**Illinois Local Workforce Area 3
Boone, Stephenson and Winnebago
Counties**

*WORKFORCE
INNOVATION AND
OPPORTUNITY ACT
LOCAL PLAN*

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BOONE, WINNEBAGO AND STEPHENSON COUNTIES LOCAL WORKFORCE INNOVATION AREA #3 LOCAL PLAN COMPONENTS

CHAPTER 4: OPERATING SYSTEMS & POLICIES LOCAL COMPONENT

- A. *Provide a description of the one-stop delivery system in the local area, including the roles and resource contributions of the one-stop partners;*
- *Identify the career services and other program services to be provided, including the location (address) at which services will be accessible including the:*
 - *Comprehensive One-Stop*
 - *Affiliated Workforce Centers*
 - *Specialized Workforce Centers*
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Local Workforce Area 3 (LWA 3), as defined by the state of Illinois, includes Boone, Stephenson, and Winnebago Counties and is located in the north central area of the state of Illinois along the border with Wisconsin. The three-county area has a population of 386,412 in 2015, down -2.7 percent from its 2010 level. Statewide, the population grew by +0.2 percent during that same period.

LWA 3 includes 8,546 private sector business establishments with employment in 1st Quarter 2016 equaling 140,662. Around 70 percent of the business establishments are small- to medium-sized businesses, with less than 250 employees. The region's labor force is almost 190,224 and its most recent annual unemployment rate was 7.0 percent in 2015. In the labor force, over 176,966 people are employed, with almost 13,258 unemployed. At 7.0 percent, the area was the second highest unemployment rate of all Illinois LWAs in 2015.

Analysis of the region shows significant economic changes from the 2007 national recession. Non-farm employment peaked in June 2007 at 184,700 and reached its lowest employment level in January 2010 at 156,800. A combination of seasonal layoffs and a temporary shutdown of one of the area's largest employers contributed to this low employment level. The effects of the recession also contributed to the Rockford metropolitan statistical area (MS) having one of the highest metropolitan unemployment rates in the nation. It continues to lead Illinois' MSAs with its high unemployment rate. From 2010 to 2015, there has been employment growth in the region's hardest hit industries, including Manufacturing (+5,200), Professional-Business Services (+1,600), Leisure-Hospitality (+1,100), Retail Trade (+500), and Transportation-Warehousing-Utilities (+300). However, Financial Activities (-900), Government (-700), and Construction (-300) have been affected by economic changes and challenges.

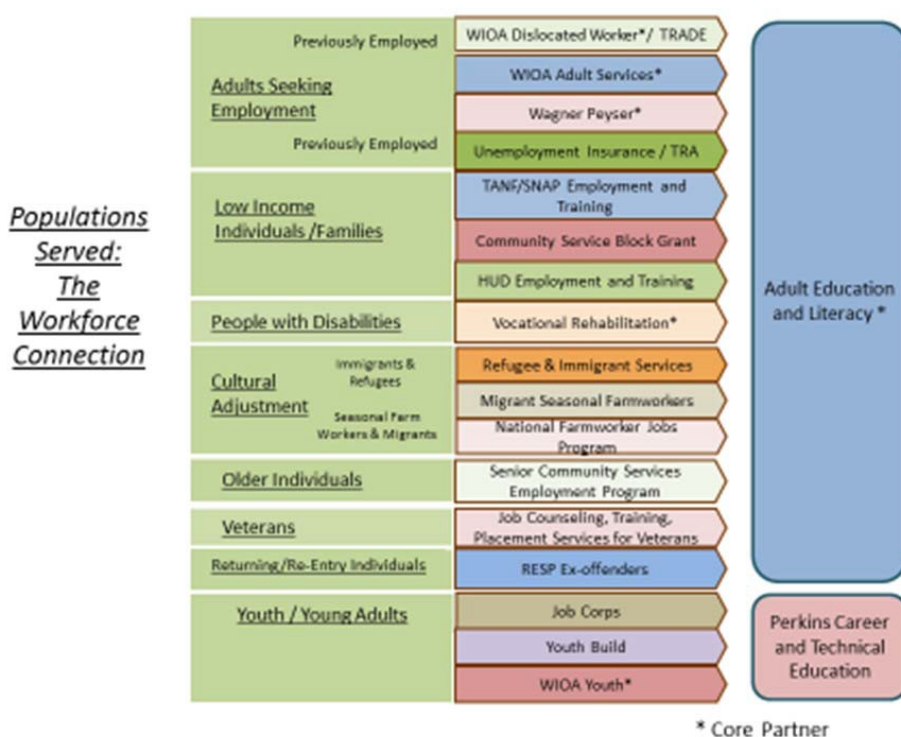
Overall, Manufacturing employment in the region has continued a decline for the past three decades even though it has experienced short-term growth. Around 9 percent of the area's business establishments are in the Manufacturing sector, and Manufacturing accounts for more than 21 percent of the area's non-farm employment. While the recession had led to layoffs in the Manufacturing sector, the skills of those laid off did not necessarily match the needs of new job openings in that sector. Recent efforts to expand the region's aerospace industry will put additional demand on training organizations to prepare workers for those new job opportunities if the business attraction efforts are successful.

The Educational and Health Services sector accounts for 15 % of the area's employment. Employment projections show that nursing continues to be the primary skills-shortage occupation, but demand had

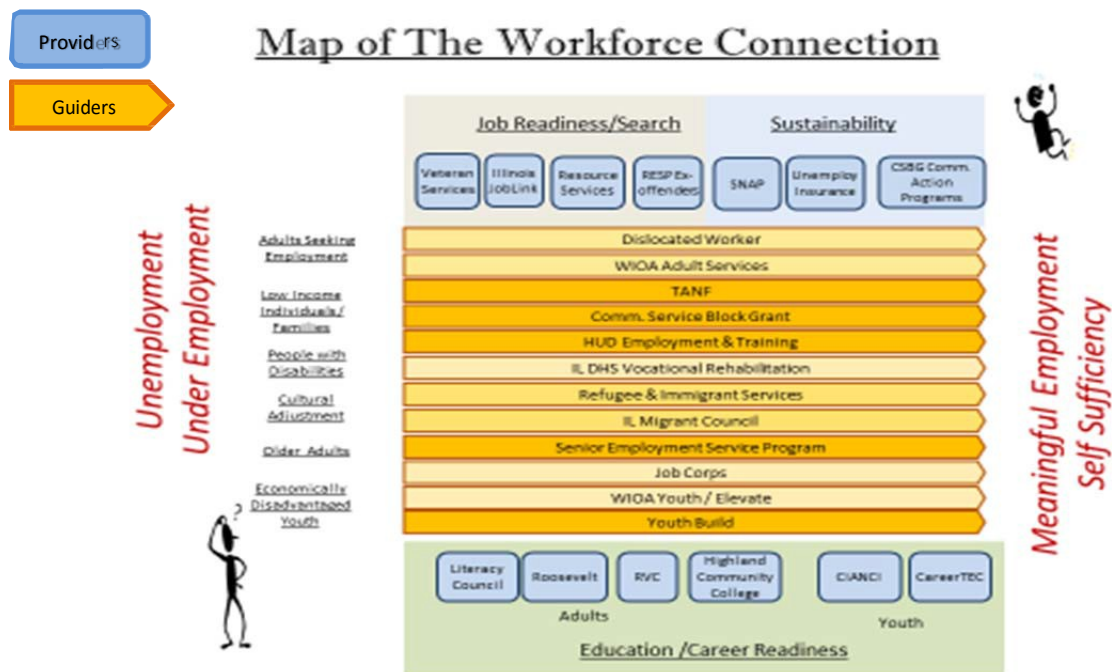
waned somewhat during the recessionary period. Overall employment in this industry expanded since December 2007, but demand for new employees ebbed to some extent as hospitals implemented cost savings. The Healthcare field will continue to have in-demand occupations as the areas' three hospitals and many clinics serve the needs of the local area and region.

The one-stop delivery system in Boone, Winnebago and Stephenson Counties (LWA 3) is branded as ***The Workforce Connection***. The Workforce Connection is the front door to the publically funded workforce development system. It is a partnership of twenty (20) programs serving individuals and businesses in the region. The Workforce Connection Board, the local workforce innovation board, and the Chief Elected Officials (CEOs) establish policy and provide oversight and guidance for The Workforce Connection.

Services are provided to connect individuals with assistance and training to meet the needs of local business. Business Services connect employers with potential employees and provide access to resources to be competitive in the global economy.



In the mapping project completed on The Workforce Connection partnership, programs were labeled as “guiders” and “providers” to identify roles in service provision related to employment and training activities. Partners are integrating services to address multiple target populations, connecting them to employment opportunities, training, and supportive services leading to increased educational attainment, credential attainment, and self-sufficiency.



The Workforce Connection locations in LWA 3 are as follows:

The Workforce Connection – Rockford
(Comprehensive One-Stop Center)
303 North Main Street
Rockford, Illinois 61101

The Workforce Connection – Belvidere
(Affiliated One-Stop Center)
998 Belvidere Road
Belvidere, Illinois 61008

And

The Workforce Connection – Freeport
(Affiliated One-Stop Center)
27 West Stephenson Street
Freeport, Illinois 61032

The Workforce Connection Board and the Partners of The Workforce Connection are transforming and revitalizing the local workforce system under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) in the Boone, Winnebago and Stephenson County area through commitment to the local vision - ***The Partners of The Workforce Connection will advance the economic vitality of the region by providing a qualified workforce through an integrated, accessible, employer-driven system, utilizing our collective resources to develop human capital for existing and emerging opportunities.***

This local workforce system will be characterized by three hallmarks of excellence as specified in *Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 19-14* issued by U.S.DOL, Employment and Training Administration on February 19, 2015:

- The needs of business and workers drive workforce solutions;
- One-Stop Centers provide excellent customer service to job seekers and employers and focus on continuous improvement; and
- The workforce system supports strong regional economies and plays an active role in community and workforce development.

Key operational principles include:

- Alignment of programs and integrated services;
- High-quality services;
- Accountability and transparency; and
- Data-driven decisions for informed customer choices.

The following *Basic Career Services*, as identified in WIOA are provided by partner agencies on-site and through technology at The Workforce Connection locations:

- Determinations of whether the individuals are eligible to receive assistance under WIOA Title IB;
- Outreach, intake (which may include worker profiling), and orientation to the information and other services available through the one-stop delivery system;
- Initial assessment of skill levels (including literacy, numeracy, and English language proficiency), aptitudes, abilities (including skills gaps), and supportive service needs;
- Labor exchange services, including:
 - job search and placement assistance and, in appropriate cases, career counseling including:
 - provision of information on in-demand industry sectors and occupations; and
 - provision of information on nontraditional employment; and
 - job placement and job development services for job seekers;
- Provision of referrals to and coordination of activities with other programs and services, including programs and services with the one-stop delivery system, and, in appropriate cases, other workforce development programs;
- Provision of workforce and labor market employment statistics information;
- Provision of performance information and program cost information on eligible providers of training services;
- Referrals to services and assistance; and
- Assistance in establishing eligibility for program of financial aid assistance for training and education programs that are not funded under WIOA.

It is the policy of The Workforce Connection Board that its staff, partners and funded agencies shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sexual orientation or gender identify, national origin, age, disability, political affiliation or belief. This policy requires The Workforce Connection Partner to take reasonable steps to ensure that individuals with limited English proficiency have meaning full access to services and training and ensures full access to the workforce system to individuals with disabilities.

Partner programs of The Workforce Connection are identified in the chart below and appropriate *Basic Career Services* will be provided as identified:

Partner Program	The Workforce Connection Centers		
	Rockford	Belvidere	Freeport
Community Service Block Grant Employment and Training	Technology		Technology
HUD Employment and Training	On-site and Technology		
IL Department of Human Services - TANF / SNAP	On-site and Technology		
IL Department of Human Services - Division of Rehab Services	On-site and Technology		On-site and Technology
Title II - Adult Education and Literacy	On-site		Technology
Wagner-Peyser - Title III	On-Site		
Career & Technical Education - Perkins	Technology		Technology
Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth - Title IB	On-site	On-site	On-site
Trade Adjustment Assistance	On-site and Technology	On-site and Technology	On-site and Technology
Veterans Job Counseling	On-site and Technology	On-site and Technology	
Unemployment Compensation (UI)	On-site and Technology	Technology	Technology
Senior Community Services Employment Program	On-site and Technology		
Trade Areadjustment Assistance (TRA)	On-site		
HUD Employment and Training	On-site and Technology		
Job Corps	On-Site	Technology	Technology
National Farmworkers Jobs Program	On-site and Technology		
YouthBuild - Title ID	Technology		

In response to information gathered through discussions with Partners, mapping of the workforce system, customer satisfaction surveys, and customer and potential customer focus group input, The Workforce Connection Board and the Partners will develop and implement strategies and tasks to address four topics:

1. Improve staff knowledge of all programs in the partnership;
2. Improve public knowledge of the public workforce system;
3. Develop and implement a uniform referral system; and
4. Expand collaboration and partnership to mitigate customer barriers.

Additionally, an analysis of target and priority populations in the region will be conducted to better understand barriers and issues. LWA 3 traditionally faces higher unemployment than most areas in Illinois. There are also many jobs going unfilled. The skill gap is part of the issue; however understanding the populations that have quit seeking employment or training, the “benefits cliff,” and other unknown factors is crucial to engaging target populations in services and addressing employer needs.

Many Partner program representatives have participated in the delivery of Business Services through The Workforce Connection for many years, and Business Services will continue with enhancements. The Workforce Connection will expand its Business Service Team to ensure participation of all Partner programs. The team will be led by Business Account Managers in a functional supervision/coordination role. The team and team members will:

- Coordinate outreach to employers;
- Communicate with employers to identify workforce issues;
- Coordinate timely and effective responses to workforce issues; and
- Collaborate with established networks of business and community organizations to connect available resources to address workforce needs.

Services to be provided include (not exclusive) the following:

- Recruitment and Labor Exchange Services
 - Individual recruitment (i.e. Illinois JobLink)
 - Job Fairs and other hiring events
 - Customized screening and referral of job candidates
- Connections to Additional Resources
 - Information and connections to various Tax Credits and other financial incentives
 - Connections to other organizations (Economic and Community Development) as appropriate to address specific needs
- Workforce Development and Training Opportunities
 - Customized Training
 - Incumbent Worker Training
- Workforce and Workforce-related Information Exchange
 - Customized Labor Market Information
 - Seminars addressing topics such as: Unemployment Insurance, Succession Planning, and Talent Pipeline Management

The Workforce Connection Business Team will utilize a seamless approach to deliver services. Business Team members and management are committed to be proactive and focus on building relationships with employers throughout the business cycle. Services will be aligned to meet the needs of business. Key team objectives are:

- Providing exceptional services;
- Utilizing technology as a conduit to disseminate information and resources, track business contacts, track service provision, and evaluate service provision; and
- Identify metrics to evaluate effectiveness.

Outcomes expected include:

- Increased communications with employers;
- Increased awareness of services and resources among local employers;
- Increased employer participation in the public workforce system;
- Validation of skill needs by employers; and
- Quality training identified for job seekers aligned with business needs.

Partners seek a coordinated approach to employer/business services through an expanded partnership to include not only one-stop Partners, but local Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development entities, and Industry Associations, to name a few. This coordinated approach is expected to align services and result in additional sector partnerships and development and implementation of more defined career pathways.

To address employer/business talent needs and provide information for the workforce development system to truly be demand-driven, employers must be engaged to participate in creating strategies for development of the talent pipeline. Initiatives in the local area have been implemented addressing various aspects of pipeline development. The Workforce Connection Board members and staff and Partners of The Workforce Connection are involved in many of these efforts, including Alignment Rockford supporting the Rockford Public School District in development of Academies focused on Industry Sectors in its four high schools and Transform Rockford addressing regional transformation from within the community.

Most recently, with funding from the Community Foundation of Northern Illinois, The Workforce Connection Board, in partnership with Northern Illinois University Center for Governmental Studies, began an initiative titled *Addressing the Skills Gap through Talent Pipeline Management in Northern Illinois*. This initiative or project is modeled after an innovative approach identified by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation in its recent publication, “Managing the Talent Pipeline: A New Approach to Closing the Skills Gap”. Their approach builds on the lessons learned in supply chain management and calls for employers to assume a new role as “end customers” of education and workforce partnerships. This positions them to organize and manage their supply chain partnership with performance-based measures and incentives. The initiative has yielded an employer collaborative in manufacturing. The collaborative is in the forming stages and continues to expand in membership. The collaborative will communicate skills needs with one voice to educational entities and employment and training providers to establish a robust regional partnership to address workforce development.

The outcomes intended as a result of this employer collaborative include:

- Students and workers will have a clear understanding of what credentials, skills, and experience are required for specific jobs in manufacturing and be able to more effectively plan and manage their own careers in a rapidly changing marketplace.
- Employers will secure and grow the talent they need to be competitive by linking their talent strategy and business strategy and working closely with suppliers of talent.
- Education and workforce providers will strengthen their relationships with employers by developing talent solutions that respond to employers’ competency and credentialing requirements for critical jobs and that meet their core performance requirements.
- Economic development and business organizations can advance their economic growth missions by supporting employers in planning, developing, and implementing talent pipeline strategies and building more diverse and flexible provider networks.

The Workforce Connection Board and Partners are committed to connecting community efforts, community-based and faith-based organizations, and existing workforce development and human service initiatives to align actions, maximize resources, and mitigate individuals’ barriers and issues preventing them from employment. The Workforce Connection partnership (the public workforce system) needs community- and faith-based organizations to provide valuable support services and make timely referrals for individuals disengaged from the system but in need of education, training and employment. Efforts are underway, working with the United Way of the Rock River Valley and the Stephenson County Human Services Network, to connect community-based and faith-based organizations into the public workforce system by increasing awareness of program services and establishing “access points” in neighborhoods across the three counties. These discussions and efforts are intended to result in a community-wide common data collection and tracking system; implementation of staff training opportunities providing consistency in working with customers, referrals and shared information on various programs; and a community-wide dashboard related to case management, supportive service provision, education, and employment.

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- ***Explain how the comprehensive one-stop center provides on demand access to the required career services in the most inclusive and appropriate setting and accommodations.***
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The Workforce Connection Partners are committed to providing on-demand access to basic career services as “access” is defined in the *Rules and Regulations* published August 19, 2016 §678.305(d)

- Program staff member physically present at the one-stop center;
- Having a staff member from a different partner program physically present at the one-stop center appropriately trained to provide information to customers about the programs, services, and activities available through partner programs; or
- Making available a direct linkage through technology to program staff who can provide meaningful information or services.

Additionally Partners providing services via technology will identify delivery methods that meet the “direct linkage” definition also specified in the *Rules and Regulations* published August 19, 2016 §678.305(d) (3) (i) A “direct linkage” means providing direct connection at the one-stop, within a reasonable time, by phone or through a real-time Web-based communication to a program staff member who can provide program information or services to the customer.

Staff are trained to provide services to all, regardless of range of abilities, mobility, age, language, learning style and intelligence or education level. Interpreter Services are provided through the “language Line” as needed for any customer with a language barrier. Accommodations are made for individuals as necessary to ensure services.

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- ***Provide information regarding the One-Stop Operator and describe the methods for coordinated services delivery between operator and partners.***
 - *Name of the procured one-stop operator*
 - *Describe the functions and scope of work of the one-stop operator*
 - *Describe how the One-Stop Operator was procured.*
-

Currently the One-Stop Operator is a consortium as designated under the Workforce Investment Act. The agencies of the consortium are Rock Valley College, Goodwill Industries of Northern Illinois, and the Illinois Department of Employment Security. The Workforce Connection Board, through an open, competitive process, will procure an entity (public, private, or nonprofit) or consortium of entities to be the One-Stop Operator by July 1, 2017.

The procurement process utilized a Request for Proposal (RFP) released in January 2017. Four proposals were received February 21, 2017 in response to the RFP. The evaluation process involved scoring of proposals by individuals (Board members and community members without conflict with any proposing entity); a joint meeting of reviewers to reach a consensus score for each proposal; interviews with proposing representatives; reference checks; and a recommendation by the evaluation committee to The Workforce Connection Board and CEOs.

The One-Stop Operator will provide and coordinate the following services and activities:

- Coordinate Resource Room and Basic Career Services provided by all Partner programs in The Workforce Connection Centers – Rockford, Belvidere, and Freeport.
- Coordinate reception and initial registration services for all customers.
- Implement and fulfill cooperative agreements and memoranda of understanding (MOU) with partners.

- Coordinate access to virtual resources at appropriate partner locations, libraries, and other points within the 3-County area.
- Develop processes to ensure that all customers receive appropriate, timely, and effective Basic Career Services.
- Implement a formal referral process for services within and outside of the Center(s); define minimum standards for referral, referral follow-up requirements, and documentation of referral outcomes.
- Provide reports as required to The Workforce Connection Board.
- Actively participate with the Core and other Partners to integrate services in the One-Stop System and Centers of Boone, Stephenson, and Winnebago Counties.
- Perform continuous improvement activities to achieve high level service quality and exceptional customer service.
- Ensure implementation of the State and Local branding standards.
- Ensure compliance with all State and Local policies and procedures relative to the One-Stop System and One-Stop Centers.
- Achieve and maintain One-Stop Center certification.

Services at and through The Workforce Connection will be facilitated under a *Service Integration Model* requiring an integration of the Customer Pool – people coming in the doors or accessing services are “our” shared customers. There will be an integrated customer flow, a standardized common service flow for customers. This model includes integrated customer service teams that support the customer flow, with staff from different programs working together to complete the work of the team. Services and staff resources will not be separated or in silos by funding stream or program. Functional teams of staff members from multiple organizations will work as a “unit” with functional supervision.

Under the Coordination Facilitated by the One-Stop Operator –

- a. Integration of the Customer Pool: Integration will occur with all One-Stop Partners. As a customer enters the One-Stop System (The Workforce Connection system network) the customer’s individual situation will drive the referrals and access to the program or programs that best meet the individual’s needs.
- b. Integrated Customer Service Teams: Staff from different programs work together to complete the work of the team.
- c. Integrated System Branding and Identification: All naming and identification is under The Workforce Connection, an Illinois workNet partner and a partner in the American Job Center network.
- d. The One-Stop Operator will coordinate labor exchange services with the Wagner-Peyser Program (IDES).

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- ***Provide the local operator’s role and responsibility for coordinating referrals among required partners.***
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The One-Stop Operator is responsible for coordinating with One-stop Partners to implement the common referral system being developed among the partners. The One-Stop Operator will develop processes for the referrals and follow-up on referrals amongst the Partners within the One-Stop Center(s) and external to the physical locations. The One-Stop Operator will implement the referral and follow-up processes, collect referral data, and provide reports to The Workforce Connection Board and One-Stop Partners.

B. Provide information regarding the use of technology in the one-stop delivery system, including a description of:

- *How the workforce centers are implementing and transitioning to an integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information system for programs carried out under WIOA.*
- *How the Local Board will facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system, including in remote areas, through the use of technology and other means.*

As noted previously, discussions are underway across the 3-county area on developing and implementing a technology-enabled system for collecting and reporting community outcomes. The Workforce Connection Board and many of the Partner representatives are involved in the discussion. Implementation and transition can be expected during program year 2017 and 2018. Currently, common data elements are collected on all visitors to The Workforce Connection. That data is used to count visitors, visits, and general services. At this time that data collection does not populate an integrated case management system for all Partners to utilize.

Currently, individuals can inquire about and begin the application process for job seeker and youth services online. Access points throughout the area utilize Illinois WorkNet and Illinois JobLink resources and can assist individuals with the online application. In addition, Career Cruising, a web-based system for career planning, is available to job seekers once they have visited a Center to establish an account.

C. Describe how the Local Board will support the strategy identified in the Unified Plan and work with entities carrying out core programs, including a description of:

- *Expanding access to employment, training, education and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment;*
- *Facilitating the development of career pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs; and*
- *Improving access to activities leading to a recognized post-secondary credential (including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable, and stackable).*

The Workforce Connection Board, Core Partners, Required Partners, and Community Partners will establish access points across the three counties. Access points will provide opportunities for individuals to seek many services through technology platforms in locations with which they are familiar, i.e. libraries, community centers, community-based organizations, to name a few. Working with our Educational entities, distance learning may also be provided through these access points.

As specified in the Northern Stateline Regional Plan, The Workforce Connection Board and Core / Required Partners will actively participate in developing a clear path for employers, residents, and partners to access the services and programs of the workforce development system where there is a single point of contact but allowing for multiple points of entry to the system. This strategy is in response to community concerns that the workforce development system is uncoordinated and diffuse, with overlapping and sometimes redundant programs confusing employers and residents alike. Partners are working to develop a system where the wide range of regional workforce, educational, social service, economic development, and civic agencies can each direct their clients and business partners into the same system but retain their autonomy and relationships.

The Workforce Connection Board, Core Partners and many required partners are participating in the development of an integrated client intake and case management system, first piloting it among several Rockford-area social service and workforce agencies. The system would help funnel clients toward WIOA-funded programming while also ensuring they are aware of other programs they may qualify for. Staff training will be provided for all staff at workforce and partner agencies to increase awareness of intake procedures and programs offered by One-Stop partners so appropriate referrals will be made. This includes giving all partners agencies clear language and a process guide for directing clients into the workforce system to maintain the single point of contact of the goal. This will facilitate the development of career pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate in core programs. Partners will also explore options such as a “smart card” to serve as a single source for connection individuals to the host of services offered through the partnership and other community organizations.

In addition, as identified in the Regional Plan, The Workforce Connection Board will continue to develop and enhance partnerships with P-20 Education to further career awareness and career pathway development. The Workforce Connection Board will convene stakeholders to develop new career pathways programs based on Illinois Pathways in partnership with the region’s community colleges and secondary schools. Programs in development relevant to Targeted Industries include manufacturing (such as welding), engineering, medical coding, aviation maintenance, and computer science. The Regional Partners will work to strengthen existing pathways in food manufacturing and transportation, logistics, and distribution (including truck drivers and moving people into supply chain management) by exploring modular, shorter-term training and stackable credentials in order to develop and deploy training more quickly and responsively. Credentials will be assessed from a pathways perspective to articulate stackable credentials and connect all populations to pathways.

D. Provide information regarding the local coordination strategies with state (including the Unified Plan), regional and local partners to enhance services and avoid duplication of activities, including a description of:

Coordination and participation with all partner entities starts at the governance level of The Workforce Connection Board. All core partner programs are represented on The Workforce Connection Board. In addition, The Workforce Connection Board has established a Youth Council and an Operations Management Council. Representatives from Partner programs and agencies are designated members of these Councils.

The Youth Council will focus on developing and overseeing strategies to connect education and career opportunities for youth and young adults. This Council will also provide oversight for WIOA and other funded programming, which includes the selection and evaluation of youth service providers and the coordination of youth services. This Council is comprised of The Workforce Connection Board members, school district representatives, career and technical education program representatives, and community stakeholders with expertise and experience related to youth services.

The Operations Management Council will focus on the local service delivery system. This Council will develop and implement strategies to create a coordinated and integrated workforce development system with all partner programs to serve the diverse populations that reflect our current and future workforce. The Council will develop system measures for the service centers; oversees the local training plan related to WIOA adult and dislocated worker services; oversees / approves eligible training provider selection and evaluation; and oversees the One-Stop Operator and Operations. The Council is comprised of The Workforce Connection Board members and representatives of all One-

Stop Partner Programs. A Sub-Committee of the Operations Management Council will provide information and assist with planning, operational, and other issues relating to the provision of services to individuals with disabilities.

The Youth Council and the One-Stop Operations Management Council will continually assess the service delivery and coordination strategies of all partner programs to enhance services. Regular meetings of the Councils allows for active discussion on services and avoids duplication of activities. Partner and community-based program presentations are regular topics of discussion to maximize coordination. Task groups charged with development and implementation of activities related to Regional Plan goals and strategies provide reports on progress to keep all Partners updated and involved, again to maximize coordination and avoid any duplication of efforts. A “dashboard” indicator of continuous improvement strategies and progress will be communicated to The Workforce Connection Board quarterly.

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- ***Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth employment and training activities under WIOA Title I.***
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Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth employment and training activities under WIOA Title I are provided by sub-recipients secured through a competitive procurement process. Services are provided on-site at The Workforce Connection Centers. Services are customer centered and aligned and integrated with Partner services. High quality basic career services are provided including, but not limited to, basic assessment, career counseling, and job search assistance. Coordination with One-Stop Partners leverages supportive services, basic education offerings, and training opportunities. Individualized career services provide further assessment, individual goal planning, and further connection to training opportunities and supportive services. Training may include tuition assistance through ITAs, On-the-Job Training, Apprenticeship, or other work-based learning options.

Coordination with Partner programs constantly occurs. Job seekers are often co-enrolled to fully address customer need and maximize resources. Specific examples include the EPIC program serving able bodied adults receiving SNAP benefits by co-enrolling to address training needs.

WIOA Title IB staff actively participate on The Workforce Connection Business Team and participate with local community-based organizations to address poverty through neighborhood programs, connect re-entry citizens to supportive services and employment / training opportunities, and create and implement customized programs for target populations.

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- ***Adult education and literacy activities under WIOA Title II. This description must include how the Local Board will carry out the review of local applications submitted under Title II consistent with WIOA Secs. 107(d)(11)(A) and (B)(i) and WIOA Sec. 232.***
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Four agencies provide Title II Adult Education and Literacy activities in LWA 3 – Highland Community College; Rock Valley College; Rockford Public School District 205 – Roosevelt High School; and The Literacy Council. As a core partner, Title II is represented on The Workforce Connection Board. Representatives from the four (4) agencies are members of the Operations Management Council. The Workforce Connection Board staff members participate on the Area Planning Councils for Adult Education and Literacy in the area.

The Workforce Connection Board will be reviewing the local applications submitted under Title II as required under WIOA. The Operations Management Council will conduct the initial review and, with a Council recommendation regarding alignment and consistency with the Regional and Local Plan of the area, will forward the applications to The Workforce Connection Board Executive Committee for review and endorsement.

- ***Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.) services.***

The Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) has been housed at The Workforce Connection - Rockford since the inception of the Workforce Investment Act. Wagner-Peyser staff actively participate on the Business Services Team and provide labor exchange assistance and services for job-seekers and local employers. IDES representatives have been active participants in Regional Planning, local service planning, and MOU negotiations. IDES (Wagner-Peyser) is represented on The Workforce Connection Board and the Operations Management Council. IDES staff provides staff and community training on Illinois JobLink, which is the primary labor exchange medium for The Workforce Connection Partners.

- ***Vocational rehabilitation service activities under WIOA Title IV.***

The Illinois Department of Human Services - Division of Rehabilitation Services, as a Core Partner, is represented on The Workforce Connection Board. Representatives from the Rockford office and Freeport office are also members of the Youth Council and the Operations Management Council. A sub-committee of the Operations Management Council will be formed to specifically address coordination of services for individuals with disabilities with Division of Rehabilitation services and other community-based organizations. Division of Rehabilitation will assist The Workforce Connection Board in identifying organizations in the three counties for participation on the sub-committee.

- ***Relevant secondary and post-secondary education programs and activities with education and workforce investment activities.***

Post-secondary education is represented on The Workforce Connection Board by the two Community College presidents in our area – Highland Community College and Rock Valley College. Private post-secondary education is represented on the Board by Rasmussen College. The Workforce Connection Board has a strong working relations with all education systems in the three-County area. Relevant secondary programs are coordinated with entities such as Alignment Rockford, the backbone agency for collective impact activities, focused on college and career readiness with the Rockford Public School District and their career academy focus in high school; and with CareerTec and Career Education Associates of North Central Illinois (CEANCI), addressing dual credit and career preparation programming in high school.

Relevant post-secondary educational programming and credential is addressed by The Workforce Connection Board with approval of the Eligible Training Provider list of programs and through employer-led collaboratives supported by The Workforce Connection Board staff. Two successful employer collaborations in the workforce area include the Northwest Health Care Collaborative, addressing workforce needs in health care since 2005. The Health Care Collaborative interfaces with educational entities on a regular basis to discuss programming and credentials for the region. The

newly formed Talent Pipeline Management Initiative in Manufacturing is addressing skill gaps for manufacturing occupations.

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- ***How the Local Board will support the strategy identified in the State Plan under 20 CFR 676.105 and work with the entities carrying out core programs and other workforce development programs, including programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.)***
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The Workforce Connection Board staff and Partners work closely with secondary Perkins programs in LWA 3 – CareerTec and Career Education Associates of North Central Illinois (CEANCI). Representatives from CareerTec and CEANCI are members of the Youth Council of The Workforce Connection Board. The Youth Council has and will continue to host events to facilitate information sharing and strategy development for coordination among organizations serving youth in the area. CEANCI and CareerTec host employer roundtable discussions to garner employer input on program development. One-Stop Partners attend and support these sessions.

The Workforce Connection Board staff and Partners also work closely with post-secondary Perkins program at Rock Valley College and Highland Community College, customizing programs to meet the needs of the region as appropriate and addressing college readiness.

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- ***Other services provided in the one-stop delivery system including by not limited to the programs outlined in WIOA Sec. 121.***
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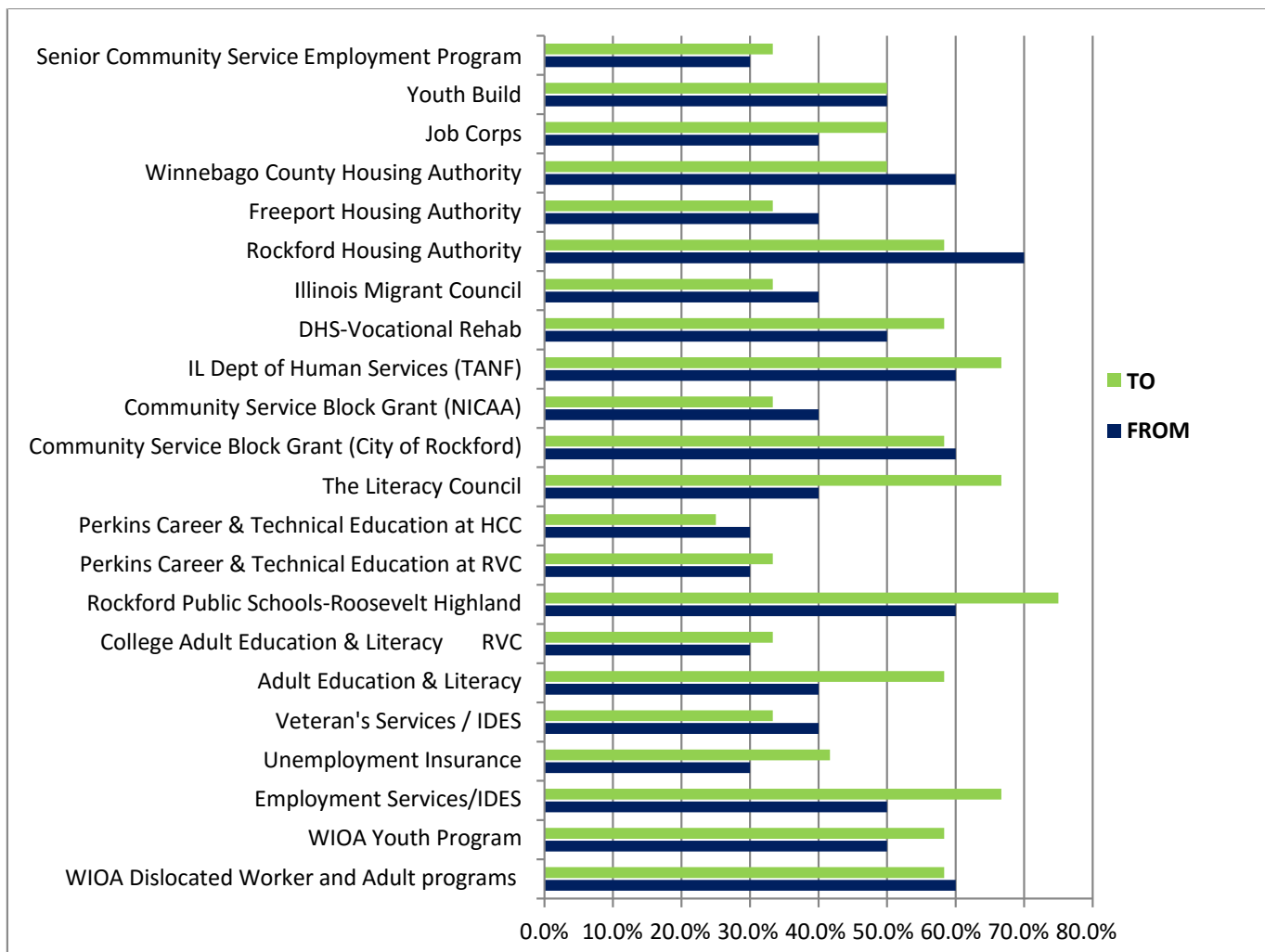
The Workforce Connection Board is focused on integration and alignment of services. The Workforce Connection Board will convene stakeholders and partners to identify and develop coordinated strategies to address issues to include educational attainment, skills gaps, and talent pipeline development. Ongoing strategies are being implement with community partners (Housing Authorities, United Way Agencies, Goodwill Industries, other Human Service agencies) to address increases in high school graduation rates and HSE attainment; keeping pace with technological trend to provide training that leads to industry recognized certifications for employment in demand occupations.

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- ***Provide a copy of the local supportive service policy and describe how the Local Board will coordinate WIOA title I workforce investment activities with the provision of transportation and other appropriate supportive services in the local area;***
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The Workforce Connection Board’s approved *Supportive Services Policy* for LWA 3 is contained in Appendix A. Job Seeking customers are given access to high-quality One-Stop and affiliate sites that connect them with a full range of services available in the community. Career Planners and Navigators work with job seeking customers to overcome barriers to training and / or employment. WIOA Title IB funds are available to provide supportive services if those supportive services are not readily available through other organizations. Supportive services are provided in coordination with One-Stop Partner programs, specifically CSBG, TANF, and SNAP; and other community-based and faith-based organizations.

- **Describe the local referral process (see MOU Part IX).**
 - *Identify the entities between who the referrals occur*
 - *Explain the method(s) that will be used to refer participants between programs*
 - *Define the roles related to referrals*
 - *Identify the methods of tracking referrals*
 - *Describe specific arrangements to assure that individuals with barriers to employment, including individuals with disabilities, can access available services.*

Many of the One-Stop Partners in LWIA 3 have a history of working together to address customer needs. As reported by Partners and indicated in the chart below, Partners make the most referrals **to** Rockford Public Schools – Roosevelt for Alternative and Adult Education. The most referrals to other Partners come **from** Rockford Housing Authority.



Referrals and referral mechanisms among One-Stop Partners are outlined in the *WIOA Memorandum of Understanding for Local Workforce Area 3 (Boone, Winnebago and Stephenson Counties)* in Part IX. The Partners will utilize a uniform paper referral process until an electronic referral system is

established. The electronic referral system will provide for reports for the One-Stop Operation Management Council and The Workforce Connection Board to fully understand the impact and connection of all services provided to customers.

The primary principle of the referral process is to provide integrated and seamless delivery of services to both job seekers and employers.

1. The partners agree to familiarize themselves with the requirements for participation in each of the required partners programs.
2. To the extent possible, the partners agree to develop materials summarizing their program requirements and to make this accessible to all partners in the comprehensive one-stop center.
3. To the extent possible, the partners agree to develop and utilize common intake forms.
4. The partners agree to become familiar with other partner services to make purposeful and appropriate referrals services.
5. The partners agree to evaluate ways to improve the referral process, including the use of customer satisfaction surveys.
6. The partners commit to robust and on-going communication required for an effective referral process.
7. The partners commit to actively follow up on the results of referrals and to assure that resources of the partners are being leveraged at an optimal level.

All Partners are committed to referrals of individuals and integrated services, most especially related to target or priority populations or individuals with disabilities. No one should get lost in the system; therefore Partners agree to providing “access” and “direct linkage” as defined in the *Rules and Regulations* published August 19, 2016 §678.305(d) and discussed in Chapter 4 A. of this plan to ensure “smooth hand-offs” and holistic services for customers.

E. Provide a description of how the local area will provide adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities including:

- ***A description and assessment of the type and available adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area.***

The provider of WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker employment and training activities is competitively procured in conjunction with the procurement for One-Stop Operator. The services will be provided by a partnership of agencies – Rock Valley College Employment Grants Division; Goodwill Industries of Northern Illinois; and Illinois Department of Employment Security. Rock Valley College and Goodwill Industries are the primary providers of Title I adult and dislocated worker services.

The Workforce Connection Board provides guidance and oversight to the service providers. Adult and Dislocated Worker employment and training activities are provided through The Workforce Connection Centers. Services provided include:

- Basic Career Services as identified previously
- Comprehensive and specialized assessments of the skill levels and service needs of adults and dislocated workers, which may include:
 - Diagnostic testing and use of other assessment tools; and
 - In-depth interviewing and evaluation to identify employment barriers and appropriate employment goals
- Development of an individual employment plan, to identify the employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives, and appropriate combination of services for the participant to achieve the employment goals, including providing information on eligible providers of training services, and career pathways to attain career objectives;

- Group counseling;
- Individual counseling;
- Career planning;
- Short-term prevocational services, including development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct, to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training;
- Internships and work experiences that are linked to careers;
- Workforce preparation activities;
- Financial literacy services;
- Out-of-area job search assistance and relocation assistance;
- English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs;
- Referrals to:
 - Adult Basic Education and High School Equivalency (HSE) preparation activities
 - Bridge Programs
 - Occupational Training (Eligible Training Providers and Programs);
- On-going Case Management and Coaching;
- Unsubsidized Job Development and Placement Assistance; and
- Access to the following Training Services:
 - On-the-Job Training
 - Customized Training
 - Occupational Skills Training

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- *A description of how the Local Board will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out in the local area with statewide rapid response activities.*
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The Workforce Connection Board oversees the Title IB service provider's role in participating with the State in provision of Rapid Response services. Service provider staff work closely with Department of Commerce staff and other Partners (IDES) to address lay-offs in the local area. These services include:

- Leveraging and coordination of community and public resources for layoffs, including linking to One-Stop partners and Trade Act programs and promoting seamless delivery of services to affected businesses and employees.
- Implementing strategies for promoting Rapid Response so that everyone involved in dislocation events is aware and takes full advantage of the full range of available re-employment services.
- Response to all rapid response requests within the times and process designated by IL DC Rapid Response procedures and policy.
- Provision of services in locations and times convenient for affected workers.
- Whenever possible, provides On-Site contact with the employer, representatives of the affected workers, and the local community, which may include assessment of their layoff plans and employer schedule.
- Assessment of the potential for averting the layoff(s) in consultation with state, regional and local economic development agencies, including private sector economic development entities.
- Developing a plan for background and probable assistance needs of the affected workers; reemployment prospects for workers in the local community and available resources to meet the short and long term assistance needs of the affected workers.
- Provision of information and access to unemployment compensation benefits, workforce services/system services, and employment and training activities, including information on Trade Adjustment Assistance program.
- Core Service providers assisting the local board and chief elected officials to develop a

coordinated response to the dislocation event and, as needed, obtaining access to additional funding to help with Rapid Response Services as needed.

- Scheduling a local response when a lay-off event is less than 500 workers.
- Preparing for an early start based on media, social media, and private sources or by employer request.
- As a last resort, when on-site access is not permitted, working through regular IDES services to provide information about Trade Adjustment Assistance services directly to affected workers seeking employment services.
- Partnering with area Community Colleges and other Eligible Training Providers to provide information about services to affected workers seeking out training options.

F. Provide a description of how the local area will provide youth activities including:

- ***A description and assessment of the type and availability of youth workforce investment activities in the local area including activities for youth who are individuals with disabilities, which must include an identification of successful models of such activities.***

The Workforce Connection Board procures providers of WIOA Title IB Youth services and activities for eligible youth, ages 14 to 24, in Boone, Stephenson, and Winnebago Counties. In-School and Out-of-School youth are served. Services include:

- Outreach, Recruitment, and Orientation
- Intake/ initial WIOA eligibility determination
- Comprehensive assessment of eligible youths' current educational/work-readiness skills and abilities
- Individual Service Strategy development
- On-going Case-Management—one case manager follows a youth throughout his/her WIOA Youth services enrollment. Case management includes the provision of strong guidance and counseling for the youth. (Case management activities are documented in frequent, detailed case notes).
- Services include:
 - High School Equivalency (HSE) preparation and/or Tutoring activities, as applicable
 - Career Exploration, Work Readiness Skills, Life Skills/Soft Skills, Financial Literacy education, Entrepreneurial Skills training, Leadership Development, Mentoring programming component
 - Bridge Programs
 - Vocational training, as appropriate
- Use of incentives for youth in specified activities
- Referrals to community services, as needed
- Work –Based Training (paid and unpaid), academic and occupational education is offered concurrently with work-based training through: Work Experiences, Job Shadowing, Internships, Pre-apprenticeship programs, On-the-Job Training opportunities
- Job Development and Placement Assistance, coordinated with The Workforce Connection's Business Services Team
- Supportive Services
- Follow-up of youth who have left the program
- Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling

The focus of youth programming is on implementing and delivering services that provide education, skill development, and support that youth need to successfully transition to further education, careers and productive adulthood through the implementation of the WIOA-required 14 program elements [WIOA Section 129(c)(2)], with a vision for serving youth in a manner that integrates resources, beginning with career exploration and guidance, continued support for educational attainment, opportunities for skills training in in-demand industries and occupations, and culminating with a good job along a career pathway, enrollment into post-secondary education, or a Registered Apprenticeship.

The local Youth Service model is designed to enhance the overall Youth Program *Outcomes*. A strong case management component, the central function of the service delivery system, ties all programming together using work-based learning, combining academic/occupational training and work experiences. Enrollment in program services is an on-going, open enrollment process. The *Youth Service* system offers work-based learning with a strong job placement/work exposure component that connects youth to internships, work experiences, on-the-job training, job shadowing, and unsubsidized employment to address their job-seeking and job-keeping skills. The WIOA Youth Service model's activities/services are also coordinated with other community services/activities serving youth.

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- ***A description of how local areas will meet the requirement that a minimum of 75% of the youth expenditure be for out-of-school youth.***
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The focus of WIOA Youth services is on out-of-school youth with 80% of the local WIOA formula funds budgeted to provide out-of-school services. Strategies for ensuring that a minimum of 75% or more of youth expenditure be for out-of-school youth include:

- Robust outreach and recruitment activities - Service providers collaborate with secondary educational entities and other youth service organizations to increase awareness of services and identify eligible youth for program participation.
- Strong case management to keep youth engaged in activities.
- Providing a full-compliment of services through the WIOA youth program and in collaboration with other community-based organizations to meet the individual needs of participants.
- Stackable credentials, as appropriate for each individual, beginning with high school equivalency, utilizing ITAs and contract training as appropriate for industry recognized certifications or credentials.
- Increased work-based learning opportunities to include work experience, internships, and apprenticeship.
- Co-enrollment as appropriate in programs such as Youth Build, Job Corps, or the WIOA adult program services.

G. Provide a description of how the local area will provide services to priority populations as outlined in the Unified Plan:

- ***Provide information on how priority will be given to recipients of public assistance, other low income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient consistent with WIOA 134(c)(3)(E).***

In accordance with WIOA 134(c)(3)(E) and Illinois WIOA Policy 15-WIOA-4.2, The Workforce Connection Board's contractual service providers will provide priority to recipients of public assistance,

other low income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient. The Workforce Connection Board policy, ***Eligibility – Adult / Dislocated Worker / Youth*** states:

Adult Eligibility

- A. An “adult” customer of WIOA must:
1. Meet general eligibility requirements; and
 2. Must be age 18 or older.
- B. After eligibility determination, priority for individualized career services and training service shall be given to:
1. Recipients of public assistance;
 2. Other low-income individuals; and
 3. Individuals who are basic skills deficient.
- C. Priority for services is established at any time or point in the service delivery process that individuals are waiting for appointments, training funds and/or supportive services. If waiting to access services occurs the priority populations identified in B. are served first, after Veterans.

-
- ***Describe how the local board will determine priority populations and how to best serve them, along with any other state requirements.***
-

Priority populations are determined based upon the concentration in the local workforce area. To determine the appropriate action needed by The Workforce Connection Board to address services to the priority populations, as assessment of existing services is completed. Of the priority populations listed in the State Unified Plan, these are ones with specific services through The Workforce Connection Centers:

- a. Long-term unemployed and individuals identified as likely to exhaust UI benefits will be provided career counseling, specific services for reemployment as appropriate, individualized career services, and, as appropriate, financial assistance for training/retraining.
- b. Low-income adults and those receiving public assistance will be provided priority service as outlined above, and, as appropriate, provided financial assistance for training and supportive services.
- c. Individuals with disabilities, including youth with disabilities will be served by the Division of Rehabilitation Services staff, and given priority for WIOA Title 1B programs. Pilot programs focusing on work-based training and job coaching are planned with community-based organizations serving individuals with disabilities.
- d. Out-of-school youth will be served by programming that meets the requirement that 75% of youth funding goes to this population.
- e. Veterans receive highest priority for adult employment and training activities. Veterans’ service representatives with IDES are on-site, full-time to provide specialized assistance.
- f. Migrant and seasonal farmworkers receive specialized service from the Illinois Migrant Council.
- g. Re-entry individuals (ex-offenders) receive assistance through multiple programs including WIOA Title 1B and the Illinois Department of Employment Security programs. As part of the Strong Cities, Strong Communities designation through the City of Rockford, The Workforce Connection Board received U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration technical assistance to identify best practices and establish procedures to enhance and develop services for re-entry individuals. The Tri-County Re-Entry Coalition was formed and includes many of the One-Stop Partner programs / agencies, as well as Community-Based and Faith-Based organizations in the three-counties.
- h. English Language Learners have multiple options for ESL classes, as well as training and materials provided in Spanish. Utilizing WIOA Title 1B Adult funds, The Workforce

Connection Board has secured a contractor to provide work readiness training and work-based/place training for adult English Language Learners.

- i. Older individuals are provided specialized services through the Senior Community Services Empowerment Program (SCSEP).
- j. Low literacy adults, including those without a high school diploma have multiple options for literacy programs. Tutoring and specialized services for low literacy adults are provided by The Literacy Council. Rock Valley College, Highland Community College and Rockford School District 205 – Roosevelt High School provide adult basic education classes and high school equivalency classes, along with transitional services, bridge programs and ICAPS.
- k. Low-skilled adults can receive specialized training to increase basic skills and occupational specific skills. Career Services are available through WIOA Title IB and specific training services are available through Rock Valley College, Highland Community College and other local eligible training providers.

H. Provide a description of training policies and activities in the local area including:

- ***How local areas will meet the requirement that a minimum of 40% of expenditure be for direct training costs;***

Adult and Dislocated Workforce program funding expenditures have historically met and exceeded the 40% expenditure requirement for direct training costs; and will continue to meet or exceed the requirement. Annual budgets of service providers are required to include direct training planned expenditures above the 40% minimum. Financial reports are reviewed by The Workforce Connection Board Finance Committee and the Executive Committee. The direct training expenditures percentage is specified in each report.

In-demand industry clusters and occupations in LWIA 3 require certifications and credentials for most entry level positions. Service providers focus on stackable credentials, requiring WIOA training investments for program participants. In addition, On-the-Job training, customized training, and other work-based learning activities provide exceptional opportunities for skill attainment specific to an employer's need and expenditures contribute to the 40% requirement.

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- ***How local areas will encourage the use of work-based learning strategies including the local area goals for specific work-based learning activities and proposed outcomes related to these activities;***

LWA 3 has substantial history with work-based training / learning activities, specifically On-the-Job Training (OJT), work experience for adults and youth, internships, and customized training.

For youth, work-based training in the form of work experiences is used in conjunction with academic and occupational training. The expected outcome of work experience is one or more of the following:

- Career / occupational exposure;
- Application of job readiness skills;
- Attainment of marketable skills; and/or
- Employability.

Adults / Dislocated Workers participate in OJT and customized training and work-based training activities. These activities are intended to increase occupational skills and result in employment. Adult and Dislocated Worker program participants also utilize work experience and transitional jobs as a work-

based training activity to attain marketable job skills and increase employability. Transitional jobs are designed for individuals with barriers to employment because of chronic unemployment or inconsistent work history. Transitional jobs will enable the individual to establish a work history, demonstrate work success, and develop the skills that lead to unsubsidized employment. Transitional jobs are combined with comprehensive career services and supportive services.

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- ***Provide a copy of the local Individual Training Account Policy and describe how training services outlined in WIOA sec. 134 will be provided through the use of individuals training accounts, including, if contracts for training services will be used, how the use of such contracts will be coordinated with the use of individual training accounts under that chapter, and how the Local Board will ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training program regardless of how the training services are to be provided; and***
-

A copy of The Workforce Connection Board-approved *Individual Training Account (ITA) Policy* is contained in Appendix A. ITAs will be used only for funding vocational (occupational skills) training programs. All participants must apply for Pell, FASFA and any other appropriate grant assistance, and provide proof of application for this aid. The Pell grant funding received by a participant must be applied toward the participant's tuition and other education-related expenses. If funding is required beyond available grant funds (i.e., PELL grants, WIOA funds, etc.), participants are required to arrange other means of financial aid or select a less expensive training program. For approved programs, WIOA will also pay the reasonable cost of participants' required books and special supplies, including uniforms and tools. Supportive Services for participants in ITA eligible training programs will be determined on an individual basis and based on participants' needs. The participant and his/her WIOA career planner must jointly develop a plan for a participant to complete the training (including prerequisite courses) within a reasonable timeframe. WIOA Title I-B funds are not available for participants to retake classes.

A per-participant Individual Training Account cap of \$13,000 applies to the total Training and Training-related costs for approved Eligible Training programs, prerequisite courses, and other courses (excluding Basic Skills Upgrading/HSE Preparation course, English as a Second Language upgrading courses, and transportation/child care costs). The Training and Training-related costs covered under the \$13,000 ITA cap include:

- Tuition
- Fees
- Books
- Supplies
- Tools
- Uniforms
- Anything necessary for the training that is on the class syllabus
- Credentialing exam fees and license fees

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- ***Provide a copy of the local training provider approval policy and procedures and describe how the local board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services through the system and that the providers will meet the employment needs of local employers, workers, and job seekers.***
-

A copy of the *Eligible Training Provider and Program Approval Policy* is provided in Appendix A. LWA 3 is fortunate to have high-quality, forward-thinking Eligible Training Providers (ETPs) in the area, including Rock Valley College, Highland Community College, Rockford University, Northern Illinois University, and Rasmussen College, to name a few. Focus of the ETPs and The Workforce Connection Board is on in-demand training. Identifying needs in the region and delivering education, training and credential to meet those employer needs. Training customers are offered options of training providers. Customers are encouraged to visit training providers, ask questions, and gather information prior to making decisions on enrollment into programs. Costs are compared and, with the WIOA requirement for performance reporting, customers will have the ability to review performance data also.

The Workforce Connection Board monitors performance of Eligible Training Providers, investigates complaints, and continues to convene educational representatives to discuss skill needs in the areas and strategies to address employer needs and increase educational attainment in the region. Continuous improvement will be assessed through data – credential attainment; placements; and customer satisfaction.

- I. Describe a planned or existing approach regarding which local strategies will be financed by the transfer of Title IB workforce funds, including the maximum dollar amount and / or percentage that is authorized to be transferred on an annual basis:***
- ***To transfer funds between the adult and dislocated worker funding streams.***
-

On an annual basis The Workforce Connection Board will consider the transfer of funds between Title IB adult and dislocated worker funding streams, with the potential of transferring the maximum 50% from either funding stream to the other. Factors that will be considered for transferring funds will include:

- Formula funds allocation reductions;
 - Outreach, recruitment and eligibility of customers seeking services (customer demand);
 - Integration of program services; and
 - Quality and efficiency of service delivery.
-

- ***To use funds for incumbent worker training as outlined in WIOA Section 134(d)(4)(A)(i).***
-

Incumbent Worker Training will be provided in accordance with WIOA requirements and State policy. As utilization of this training activity increases with local employers, The Workforce Connection Board will utilize up to 20% of the program funding from the Title IB Adult and Dislocated Worker funding streams. At no time will this transfer of funds impact that ability to provide services to unemployed or underemployed adults or dislocated workers. All incumbent worker training will be focused on targeted industry sectors as identified in the Regional Plan.

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- *To use funds for transitional jobs as outlined in WIOA Sections 134(d)(5).*
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As discussed previously, *Transitional Jobs* is a work-based training activity designed for individuals with little or no work experience, with the expected outcomes of career and occupational exposure; application of job readiness skills; attainment of marketable skills; and/or employability. Annually, The Workforce Connection Board and Title IB service providers will assess the customer need for this activity. As discussed in this Plan, service priority is given to individuals with barriers to employment – individuals with disabilities, low basic skills, low income, re-entry individuals, among others - and transitional jobs as a work-based learning activity is very appropriate for priority populations. The Workforce Connection Board reserves the ability to determine, on an annual basis, the amount of funding, up to the maximum 10% of Title IB adult and dislocated worker program funds, to be budgeted and utilized for *Transitional Jobs*.

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- *To use funds for pay for performance contracts as outlined in WIOA Section 133(b)(2-3).*
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At this time The Workforce Connection Board does not plan to utilize funds for pay for performance contracts as outlined in WIOA Section 133(b)(2-3).

J. Provide a plan explaining for which region the LWIA will associate with.

Boone, Winnebago and Stephenson Counties (LWIA #3) makes up the majority of Economic Development Region (EDR) 5, joining Ogle County. The four (4) Counties in EDR 5 have a long history of planning and working together on economic development projects and workforce development initiatives. Our Counties are connected by the I-39 transportation corridor and many residents commute for employment within the 4-County region. As is evidenced in the Regional Plan for EDR 5 cooperation and collaboration is strong, with solid goals, strategies and activities for the region.

CHAPTER 5: PERFORMANCE GOALS AND EVALUATION

LOCAL COMPONENT

A. Provide information regarding the projected local service levels.

Local service levels of WIOA Title I Subtitle B programs for PY 2016 are as follows:

Adult	500
Dislocated Worker	320
Youth	400

Service levels are established annually when funding allocations are issued and service budgets prepared.

B. Provide information regarding the local levels of performance negotiated with the Governor and chief elected official consistent with WIOA Sec. 116(c), to be used to measure the performance of the local area and to be used by the Local Board for measuring the performance of the local fiscal agent (where appropriate), eligible providers under WIOA Title I Subtitle B, and the one-stop delivery system in the local area.

- WIOA Common Measures
- Additional State Measures

WIOA common performance measure expected attainment negotiated for PY2016/2017 is as follows:

PERFORMANCE MEASURE	PY 2016/2017 Performance Goal
Adult	
<i>Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit</i>	65%
<i>Employment Rate 4th Quarter after Exit</i>	62%
<i>Median Earnings</i>	\$3,000
<i>Credential Attainment</i>	53%
Dislocated Workers	
<i>Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit</i>	67%
<i>Employment Rate 4th quarter after Exit</i>	67%
<i>Median Earnings</i>	\$5,000
<i>Credential Attainment</i>	42%
Youth	
<i>Employment / Placement in Education Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit</i>	53%
<i>Employment / Placement in Education Rate 4th Quarter after Exit</i>	50%
<i>Credential Attainment</i>	60%

LWA 3 has historically met or exceeded all negotiated performance measures, and will continue to meet or exceed measures negotiated.

Previous Negotiated Goals & Attainment

LWA: 03

Adult Program Performance

	Goal	Threshold	Actual Outcomes PY14	Actual Outcomes PY15
Entered Employment Rate	75%	60%	75.95%	73.18%
Employment Retention Rate	80%	64%	76.09%	78.61%
Average Earnings	\$11,000	\$8,800	\$10,737.36	\$10,323.52
Credential Attainment Rate	0	0	65.79%	55.97%

Dislocated Worker Performance

	Goal	Threshold	Actual Outcomes PY14	Actual Outcomes PY15
Entered Employment Rate	84%	67.2%	79.80%	81.94%
Employment Retention Rate	89%	71.2%	80.79%	78.89%
Average Earnings	\$16,000	\$12,800	\$13,676.40	\$14,456.74
Credential Attainment Rate	0	0	67.77%	74.51%

Youth Program Performance

	Goal	Threshold	Actual Outcomes PY14	Actual Outcomes PY15
Attained Degree/Diploma/Certification	66%	52.8%	56.46%	63.01%
Placed in Employment / Education	65%	52%	64.57%	75.74%
Literacy and Numeracy Gains	57%	45.6%	48.18%	51.85%

The Workforce Connection Inc. is the designated **fiscal agent** for LWA 3. In accordance with the *Fiscal Agent Agreement* the following performance accountability measures are in effect:

1. Timely processing of all accounting functions;
2. Accounting of grant funds by funding stream;
3. Monthly financial reports;
4. Acceptable annual audit; and
5. Cooperation with the Local Workforce Board and the Chief Elected Officials to meet the goals and objectives established for Illinois Local Workforce Investment Area 3.

In accordance with the *Fiscal Agent Agreement*, performance is reviewed annually.

Eligible service providers under WIOA Title I Subtitle B are required to meet or exceed WIOA Common Performance Measures as negotiated and the service levels as established in the sub-awards. Service providers are also evaluated on customer satisfaction.

Goals or specific benchmarks for the one-stop delivery system are established by the One-Stop Partners, The Workforce Connection Board and the CEOs. The immediate goals include:

- Attainment of One-Stop Center Certification
- Develop and implement a staff development plan to-
 - Increase awareness among Partner program staff
 - Increase referrals and utilization of Partner programs
 - Professional development

- Develop and implement an outreach and community communications plan to increase awareness of services with community-based organizations, stakeholders, the business community, and general public.
- Develop and implement a joint case-management process to address and mitigate barriers customers face in gaining employment and/or participating in services.
- Establish goals for Business Services.

CHAPTER 6: TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS AND ASSURANCES LOCAL COMPONENT

A. *Fiscal Management*

- *Identify the entity responsible for the disbursal of grant funds described in WIOA Sec. 107(d)(12)(B)(i)(III), as determined by the chief elected official or the Governor under WIOA Sec. 107(d)(12)(B)(i).*

The Workforce Connection Inc. is the designated fiscal agent for LWA 3, and as such, is responsible for disbursal of grant funds at the direction of The Workforce Connection Board as described in WIOA Sec. 107(d)(12)(B)(i)(III).

- *Provider a copy of the local procurement policies and procedures and describe the competitive procurement process that will be used to award the sub grants and contract for WIOA Title I activities.*

A copy of LWA 3's *Procurement Policy* is contained in Appendix A. Service provider sub-awards and contracts for service vendors are awarded through an open, competitive process, in response to a Request for Proposal (RFP) or a Request for Bids (RFB) as specified in the *Procurement Policy*. A Request for Proposal (RFP) is issued at an early stage in a procurement process, where an invitation is presented for suppliers, often through a bidding process, to submit a proposal on a specific commodity or service. This process will provide structure to the procurement decision and is intended to allow the risks and benefits to be identified clearly up front. The RFP may dictate to varying degrees the exact structure and format of the supplier's response. RFPs will reflect the strategy and short/long-term program objectives, providing enough detail for potential suppliers to offer a matching perspective.

All procurement transactions shall be conducted in a manner to provide, to the maximum extent possible, open and free competition. The Workforce Connection Board shall be alerted to organizational conflicts of interest as well as noncompetitive practices among Operators/Providers/contractors that may restrict or eliminate competition. Awards shall be made to the bidder or offeror whose bid or offer is responsive to the solicitation and is most advantageous to The Workforce Connection Board issuing the request for bid/proposal--price, quality and other factors considered. Solicitations shall clearly set forth all requirements that the bidder or offeror shall fulfill in order for the bid or offer to be evaluated by the solicitor. Any and all bids or offers may be rejected when it is in the solicitor's best interest to do so.

Requests for Proposals (RFP) are issued to procure program services. An RFP will describe the types of services being solicited and provide requirements on the submission of proposals. Notice of the availability of the RFP is distributed to all appropriate vendors on the current list of potential vendors and is published in a local newspaper. The RFP is posted in its entirety on The Workforce Connection Board's website. The RFP identifies at least the following: project duration; submission information; detailed description of all services solicited; targeted groups to be served; proposal evaluation criteria; and budget information requirements.

Request for Proposal (RFP) Distribution

A notice regarding the availability of a *Request for Proposals* and, if scheduled, the date of the Bidders' Meeting is placed in the *Legal Notices* section of the *Rockford Register Star* or *Freeport Journal*

Standard, as applicable. Notice of the availability of an RFP and the Bidders' Meeting (if scheduled) is also sent to a list of potential bidders for the particular programming sought and posted on The Workforce Connection Board's website, www.theworkforceconnection.org. Potential bidders may attend the Bidders' meeting, if scheduled, at which time hard copies of the RFPs are distributed. Otherwise, potential bidders will be sent a hard copy RFP, upon their request, or they may download the RFP from The Workforce Connection Board's website where all RFPs are posted about a week prior to the bidders' meeting.

Bidders' Meetings

Bidders' Meetings are often held to distribute and discuss the RFPs. (Whether or not a Bidders' Meeting is held usually depends on the complexity of the RFP, the programming changes being made, etc.) At the Bidders' meetings, staff 1) review selected area of the RFP, including, as applicable, the changes in the RFP from previous years; 2) discuss important topics relating to the programming sought (e.g., performance measures, budget development); and 3) answer initial questions. A second bidders' meeting may be held for the specific purpose of answering potential bidders' questions. The questions/responses are then posted on The Workforce Connection Board's website.

Proposal Review and Evaluation

The proposal review process for Title I-B programming follows the *Proposal Evaluation* process identified below:

1. *Proposal Evaluators*

Proposals will be evaluated by a team of The Workforce Connection Board members and community members who have no conflict of interest with any bidding organization. One team will review all proposals submitted in response to a specific Request for Proposals

2. *Proposal Evaluation Review Levels*

Level 1: Technical Review of Proposals

Staff will perform a technical review of each proposal prior to their being distributed to a review team. The technical review will determine if the proposal is complete and meets all the submission guidelines stated in the Request for Proposals (RFP). Proposals that are incomplete or fail to meet all the submission guidelines stated in the RFP will be rejected. Bidders will be notified regarding the status of their proposals after the technical review. Bidders may appeal the technical review results. (The Workforce Connection Board will accept only appeals relating to the technical review of a proposal.)

- a) The Workforce Connection Board staff will notify bidders via e-mail of the results of the technical review of their proposals. Bidders may then request a debriefing of their proposal's technical review. The Workforce Connection Board Executive Director must receive this request via e-mail within two working days of the day the Bidder was e-mailed notification of the technical review results of their proposal.
- b) The debriefing will be held within two working days of The Workforce Connection Board Executive Director's receipt of the bidder's request for a debriefing of their proposal's technical review.
- c) After the debriefing, the bidder will have three working days to present to The Workforce Connection Board Executive Director a written appeal of any aspect of their proposal's technical review.
- d) The Workforce Connection Board Chair or designee will review the written appeal and make the final decision regarding any The Workforce Connection Board action on the appeal.
- e) The Bidder will be notified in writing within three working days of The Workforce Connection Board Chair or designee's decision regarding the appeal.
- f) This will complete the Bidder's appeal process at the local Workforce Board level.

Level 2: Evaluation of Proposals by Review Team

- a) The proposal review team members will receive information regarding the programming sought through the Request for Proposals, the proposal review process, and the use of the Evaluation Tool. A team facilitator will be responsible for assisting the team to reach consensus regarding each proposal's Evaluation Tool scoring and priority for funding.
- b) All team members will review all proposals using the Evaluation Tool. During this initial review, review team members may suggest a score in response to each item on the Evaluation Tool.
- c) Team members will meet and discuss each proposal, arriving at a consensus score for each item on the Evaluation Tool. The proposal Evaluation Score will be the total of all the item scores on the Evaluation Tool.

Level 3: Evaluation of How Well Proposed Program Meets The Workforce Connection Board's Strategic Objectives and Priorities

- a) The review team will then discuss how well the proposed program meets one or more strategic objectives or strategic priorities of The Workforce Connection Board and CEOs. Included in this discussion will be a consideration of the bidder's ability to deliver the proposed programming, past success in attaining the WIOA Performance Standards, service provision in relation to the total Boone, Winnebago, and Stephenson County area, connection/collaboration with the One-Stop Center/System, and the proposed program's ability to further The Workforce Connection Board's strategic initiatives.
- b) Budgets, program size, and other aspects of a proposed program may be negotiated, as necessary. (RFPs will not contain budget limits or cost/per participant limits.) Review teams will consider the reasonableness of bidders' proposed budgets in relation to the proposed program and the funds available.
- c) The review team will then prepare its funding priority recommendations. Bidders will not necessarily be recommended for funding based on their Evaluation Score in relation to the Evaluation Scores of other bidders.

3. The Workforce Connection Board/CEO Action on the Recommendations of the Evaluation Teams:

- a) The funding priority recommendations of the Proposal Review Teams will be presented to the appropriate The Workforce Connection Board Committee, who will then prepare funding recommendations for The Workforce Connection Board and CEO action.
- b) The Workforce Connection Board and CEOs will take action on the program funding recommendations.
- c) Bidders will be notified of The Workforce Connection Board/CEO action.
- d) Bidders may contact The Workforce Connection Board Executive Director and request a debriefing of their proposal's evaluation.

4. Cost/Price Analysis:

If the Fiscal Agent has no conflict of interest with a bidder, the Fiscal Agent's accounting staff will review all the proposals' budgets, performing a **cost/price analysis** (using a specific cost/price analysis instrument) for each proposed budget. However, should the Fiscal Agent have a conflict of interest with any bidder, the fiscal review will be performed by The Workforce Connection Board staff, The Workforce Connection Board members, or an outside party. Any concerns resulting from the cost/price analysis will be discussed with the review team when they meet to prepare funding priority recommendations.

B. Physical Accessibility

- ***Describe how entities within the one-stop delivery system, including one-stop operators and the one-stop partners will comply with WIOA Sec. 188, if applicable, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, program and services, technology and materials for individuals with disabilities, including providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities.***

The Workforce Connection Board conducts an EO compliance assessment annually for all of The Workforce Connection Centers. The Workforce Connection - Rockford and affiliate sites in Belvidere and Freeport will maintain a culture of inclusiveness in compliance with Section 188 of WIOA, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and all other applicable statutory and regulatory requirements. Additionally, the physical characteristics of the facilities, both indoor and outdoor, meet compliance with 29 CFR Part 37, the 2010 or most recent ADA standards for Accessible Design and the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards. Services are offered in convenient, high traffic and accessible locations. The Workforce Connection - Rockford is a stop for public bus transportation; and the bus transit center is 3 blocks from the Center. Parking for individuals with disabilities is clearly marked in the lower level of the public parking deck connected to the Center and near the 3rd floor deck entrance to the center.

It is the policy of The Workforce Connection Board that its staff, Partners and funded agencies will not discriminate in their employment practices or services on the basis of gender, age, race, color, creed, religion, national origin, disability or veteran's status, or on the basis of any other classification protected under state or federal law. This policy requires The Workforce Connection and its Partners to take reasonable steps to ensure that individuals with limited English proficiency have meaningful access to services and training and ensures full access to the workforce system to individuals with disabilities. The Partners assure that they have in place policies and procedures to address these issues, and, that such policies and procedures have been disseminated to their employees and otherwise posted as required by law. The partners further assure that they are currently in compliance with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations regarding accessibility and they are unaware of any claims currently pending against them before any court or administrative body relative to alleged violations of such laws.

All partners will cooperate with compliance monitoring that is conducted at the local level to ensure that all comprehensive one-stop centers, programs, services, technology and materials are accessible and available to all. These services will be provided "on demand" and in "real time" in the physical comprehensive one-stop center in person or through technology consistent with the "direct linkage" requirement as defined in WIOA (WIOA Section 212(b)(1)(A) and Section 678.305(d) of the draft Notice of Proposed Rulemaking). Additionally, staff members will be trained to provide services to all, regardless of range of abilities, mobility, age, language, learning ability and intelligence or education level. An interpreter will be provided "in real time" to any customer with a language barrier. Additionally, assistive devices, such as screen-reading software programs and assistive listening devices are available.

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- ***Provide copies of executed cooperative agreements (as applicable) which define how all local service providers, including additional providers, will carry out the requirements for integration of and access to the entire set of services available in the local one-stop system with respect to efforts that will enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities.***
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The Memorandum of Understanding will identify goals and strategies for integrations of services to ensure accessibility for all populations, including individuals with disabilities. The Memorandum of Understanding, when completed for PY2017 will be provided in Appendix C.

C. Plan Development and Public Comment

- ***Describe the process used by the Local Board, consistent with WIOA Sec. 108(d), to provide a 30-day public comment period prior to submission of the plan, including an opportunity to have input into the development of the local plan, particularly for representatives of business, education and labor organizations.***
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The WIOA Regional Plan for the Northern Stateline Economic Development Region (EDR 5) and the Local Plan for Boone, Winnebago, and Stephenson Counties (LWA 3) will be available for public comment between March 15, 2017 and April 15, 2017. The following mechanisms will be used to notify the public of the availability of the *Plans*:

1. A legal notice of the availability of the Plans for public review and comment will be posted in the *Rockford Register Star* (Appendix B).
2. A notice of the availability of the Plans for public review and comment will be posted on The Workforce Connection website, www.theworkforceconnection.org.
3. A notice of the availability of the Plans for review and comment will be sent to all One-Stop Partners, Regional Planning Partners, The Workforce Connection Board members, and Chief Elected Officials.
4. Notice of the availability of the Plans for review and comment will be sent via e-mail to over 100 stakeholders.

-
- ***Provide a summary of the public comments received and how this information was addressed by the CEO, partners and the Local Board in the final plan.***
-

No Public Comments were received on this plan.

-
- ***Provide information regarding the local plan modification procedures.***
-

The Local Plan for LWA 3 will be modified as required by State Policy. The Plan will be reviewed annually to determine whether modifications outside of required modification are needed. If a modification is deemed necessary, The Workforce Connection Board will facilitate the modification process pursuant to State Policy.

Appendix A -- Policies

The Workforce Connection Board

Policy Title: Supportive Services

Reference Number 2016-400-04

Approved: 06/07/2016

Effective: 06/07/2016

Status: Active

Modifications: 1 11/01/2016

Purpose:

To ensure the appropriate use of supportive services and to ensure that eligible individuals receive the supportive services necessary to enable them to participate in activities authorized under WIOA.

References:

- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Sec. 3 Definitions;
- WIOA Proposed Rules: 680.900 – 680.970 and 681.570

Background:

Supportive Services enable registrants to overcome barriers that would otherwise prohibit their participation in activities authorized under the WIOA or reduce their opportunity to successfully achieve the goals established in their Individual Employment Plans (IEP) or Individual Service Strategies (ISS). The policy is also meant to promote effective management of services and to prevent misuse of WIOA funds.

Responsible Party:

One Stop center program directors and staff responsible for WIOA funded programs must verify and document eligibility for supportive services for Dislocated Worker, Adult and Youth program participants.

Policy/Procedures:

- **Participant Eligibility-** Supportive Services are available for WIOA program enrollees. Supportive Services needed by individuals will be identified and documented as necessary for individuals to participate in activities authorized under the WIOA, to include Basic Career Services, Individualized Career Services, and Training based on the Demand Occupation list for EDR5 or Statewide or an occupation (not on the demand list) that is part of an occupational career pathway identified through an approved individual employment plan (IEP) that will lead to a demand occupation. Other eligible activities include On the Job Training (OJT) and Apprenticeships. Individual programs will establish procedures to document the participant's need for supportive services and verify that such services are not available through other programs or sources. Documentation of the participant's need for supportive services will be maintained by the programs and staff will ensure case notes reflect the need and receipt of such support.
- **Training-** Participants attending training will be eligible for assistance under this policy if the program/classes they are attending lead to occupations identified on the Demand Occupation list for EDR5 or Statewide, or an occupation that is part of an occupational career pathway identified through an approved individual employment plan (IEP) , whether or not that training is actually being funded by WIOA. Other eligible training activities include One the Job Training (OJT), Apprenticeships and pre-vocational training classes.
- **On-Going Supportive Services-**The availability of On-going Child Care and Transportation assistance is based upon the availability of funds and the participant's demonstrated need. **All rates (Child Care rates for Licensed Day Care Center, License-Exempt Day Care Center, Licensed Day Care Home or Licensed Group Day Care Home, and License-Exempt Day Care Home or Care in Child's Home) are based on the State rate. If the State rate for these categories changes, the**

TWC-approved rates will be adjusted to remain consistent with the State rate. *Child Care reimbursement to a custodial or non-custodial parent will not be approved.*

CHILD-CARE for Boone and Winnebago Counties (not-to-exceed payments)*

	<i>Under Age 2</i>		<i>Age 2</i>		<i>Age 3 and Older</i>		
	Full-Day per child	Part-Day per Child (less than 5 hours)	Full-Day per Child	Part-Day per child (less than 5 hours)	Full-Day per Child	Part-Day per Child (less than 5 hours)	School-Age Day
Licensed Day Care Center	\$46.49	\$23.25	\$36.73	\$18.37	\$27.55	\$13.78	\$13.78
License-Exempt Day Care Center	\$40.50	\$20.25	\$32.00	\$16.00	\$24.00	\$12.00	\$12.00
Licensed Day Care Home or Licensed Group Day Care Home	\$31.57	\$15.79	\$29.34	\$14.67	\$26.93	\$13.47	Same as Part- Day
Non-Licensed Care	\$16.22	\$8.11	\$16.22	\$8.11	\$16.22	\$8.11	Same as Part- Day

CHILD-CARE for Stephenson County (not-to-exceed payments)*

	<i>Under Age 2</i>		<i>Age 2</i>		<i>Age 3 and Older</i>		
	Full-Day per child	Part-Day per Child (less than 5 hours)	Full-Day per Child	Part-Day per child (less than 5 hours)	Full-Day per Child	Part-Day per Child (less than 5 hours)	School-Age Day
Licensed Day Care Center	\$33.53	\$16.77	\$28.46	\$14.23	\$23.77	\$11.89	\$11.89
License-Exempt Day Care Center	\$29.20	\$14.60	\$24.80	\$12.40	\$20.70	\$10.35	\$10.74
Licensed Day Care Home or Licensed Group Day Care Home	\$29.39	\$14.70	\$27.25	\$13.63	\$24.96	\$12.48	Same as Part- Day
Non-Licensed Care	\$16.22	\$8.11	\$16.22	\$8.11	\$16.22	\$8.11	Same as Part- Day

* Child Care figures-- effective for WIOA and Trade participants: **7/1/15**. See <http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=75772> (updated figures as of 7/1/15).

TRANSPORTATION

Participants in Training who need WIOA-transportation assistance to attend training will receive a transportation allowance of \$55 or a RMTD monthly bus pass (cost: \$55) according to the schedule listed below.

- If a participant **begins** training on or before the 15th day of the month, he/she will receive a transportation allowance of \$55 for this month.
- If a participant **begins** training after the 15th day of the month, he/she will receive a transportation allowance of \$27.50 for this month.
- If a participant **ends** training on or before the 15th day of the month, he/she will receive a transportation allowance of \$27.50 for this month.
- If a participant **ends** training after the 15th day of the month, he/she will receive the full \$55 transportation allowance for this month. If a participant is receiving a monthly RMTD bus pass, he/she will receive the bus pass for the full month he/she **begins** training, regardless of when in the month this occurs.
- If a participant is receiving a monthly RMTD bus pass, he/she will receive the bus pass for the full month he/she **ends** training, regardless of when in the month this occurs.

Exception: Participants using Freeport area public transportation will receive transportation assistance equal to the amount of the fare needed to attend their scheduled training classes; assistance for one round trip per scheduled training day will be allowed. Proof that the participants attended training on the days for which they receive assistance must be submitted.

For WIOA and other grant program participants utilizing the RRTC bus, transportation, costs will be reimbursed to RRTC based upon the miles traveled reimbursed at the current federal mileage reimbursement rate plus a pick-up and drop-off fee of \$5.00 per participant. The total mileage for the trip will be divided by the number of participants to get a per participant cost of travel plus the pick-up and drop-off fee. This reimbursement arrangement will only apply to program enrollees who live or must travel to work-related training, job fairs, and worksites in Boone County, Stephenson County or points outside of LWA3. Winnebago County / Rockford area RRTC bus trips will be paid based upon the already established participant rate.

If a WIOA participant is co-enrolled in the TAA program, the amount of transportation assistance that the participant receives will be based on the federal TAA transportation assistance regulations. Transportation assistance for WIOA/TAA participants will be paid from WIA funds only in instances when TAA funds are exhausted.

Transportation assistance in the form of limited ride bus passes or gas stipends are available for individuals actively engaged in job search. The job search and interview records will be the documentation needed to secure additional transportation assistance.

SUPPLEMENTAL SUPPORT ITEMS

These items are Supportive Services purchased as a one-time option, based upon individual need. **NOTE:** *Case files must document that these supportive services cannot be secured from other programs or sources prior to purchase with WIOA funds. If items are provided by employers with work-place established re-payment procedures, WIOA funds will not be used for the purchase.*

<u>Item</u>	<u>Maximum Paid by WIOA</u>
Automobile related needs* (This item includes car repairs, licenses, car insurance.)	\$
Auto Repairs	500
Auto Insurance/License/Registration	700
Clothing	250
Eye exam & glasses	250
Job Related Tools / Uniforms	500
Protective Shoes	200
Utilities*	300
Occupational certification exam fees and occupational license fees ...	actual cost

* To be eligible for an assistance with Automobile related needs (repairs, insurance, license, or registration) or utility payments, the vehicle or residence must belong to or be leased to the individual enrolled in the program and must be documented. Utility payments will be made to the utility company, not an individual.

Car Repairs

During a participant's enrollment in WIOA, automobile related needs described above will be paid up to a total (cap) of \$500. Car repairs will be provided for a participant only with proof of insurance, copy of registration and a valid driver's license. The repairs to the vehicle must make it able to provide reliable transportation.

Auto Insurance/License/Registration

If a participant has access to a vehicle that is in working order, but does not have the vehicle registered or is not carrying insurance on the vehicle, the program can assist with costs for these items if other transportation options are not suitable for the individual (i.e. public transportation).

Job Related Tools / Uniforms

Normal procurement policies will be followed to purchase job related tools and/or uniforms. If the tools and/or uniforms are being purchased by the employer for a program participant the employer's procurement will be accepted.

Job Search Assistance

All Job Search activities must be documented and reflected in the participant file and appropriate case notes maintained. No Job Search assistance supportive services will be provided without proper documentation of need and case notes.

Participants enrolled in Staff-assisted Job Search and/or Job Development may request a \$ 30/month job search assistance stipend to cover activities such as dry cleaning interview clothes, getting a haircut, etc. Participants may also request bus tokens or bus passes to help them during their job search. If the individual has access to a properly registered and licensed vehicle and has a valid driver's license, they may receive a monthly transportation stipend. The stipend will be paid in the same manner as transportation stipends for individuals participating in training activities (identified in the Transportation Section above).

Background checks, drug screening, and physicals may be identified as needed supportive services for job search or job placement. These supportive services are allowable and can be paid as long as job search and job placement activities are properly documented.

Approval

All requests for On-Going Supportive Services/Supplemental Support Services will be approved in writing by the Case Manager's supervisor. Any item other than those listed above must have prior written approval from the fiscal agent to ensure grant fiscal compliance, in addition to that of the supervisor before authorization can be given to purchase the item. The written approval of the Program Director will be included in the documentation submitted to the Accounting Department.

Documentation

Proper justification for a participant's receipt of on-going supportive services/supplemental support services must be documented in the case notes of the participant and correspond with the participant's *Individual Employment Plan*. As required by law, the case notes should also support the Case Manager's attempts to find funding for the participant's needs through other sources.

Day Care Providers and participants must sign a *Day Care Attendance Sheet* for each child whose day care costs are entirely or partially paid by WIOA supportive services monies.

Action Required:

This information should be disseminated to The Workforce Connection WIOA One-Stop Operator and all WIOA program directors/staff and partner agencies. Ensure that procedures for approving and paying for supportive services are fully in compliance with this policy.

Inquiries:

Questions regarding this policy should be directed to The Workforce Connection Board Executive Director

Effective Date:

Immediately

The Workforce Connection Board**Policy Title: Individual Training Accounts (ITAs)****Approved: 10/03/2000****Effective: 06/07/2016****Status: Active****Reference Number: 2016-500-03****Modifications: 06/07/2016****Purpose:**

To provide information regarding Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) enrollment and funding requirements for Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) to be used to refer individuals to eligible providers of training services, and as the method of payment for such training services.

References:

Department of Commerce and Economic Development Policy Letter No. 13-PL-01

Department of Commerce and Economic Development Policy Letter No. 12-PL-01

Department of Commerce and Economic Development Policy Letter No. 09-PL-57

Background:

To be eligible for an ITA and other training services, an eligible adult or dislocated worker participant must:

- Have been determined in need of training services as specified in WIOA Sec. 134 (c) (3) to become employed or retain employment;
- Must have a high school diploma or HSE; unless the program of study does not require a high school diploma and results in an industry recognized credential (i.e. truck driving CDL) or the individual is concurrently enrolled and attending a HSE program;
- Have the skills and qualifications to successfully participate in the selected training program (as determined by program staff after participant interview, assessment or evaluation, and case management);
- Select a program directly linked to employment opportunities targeted sectors with in-demand occupations in the local area or another area to which the individual is willing to relocate;
- Be unable to obtain grant assistance (Pell or other forms of financial aid); or requires assistance beyond the assistance made available under grant assistance programs (including Pell) and other applicable forms of financial aid at the federal, state, or local level.

Responsible Party:

One Stop center staff responsible for WIOA funded programs must deliver individualized career services and access to training services based on WIOA eligibility requirements for training funds.

Definitions:

- High-Growth or In-Demand Occupation – identified through verified data that an occupation has reasonable growth, full-time employment opportunities, and pays a living wage.
- Targeted Sectors or Targeted Industries – identified through verified data, clusters of industries such as Healthcare, Manufacturing, Information Technology, Transportation/Distribution/Logistics, with substantial job openings, long-term growth.
- TAA – The Trade Adjustment Act (TAA) Program benefits US workers who have lost their jobs as a result of foreign trade by providing opportunities to obtain skills, resources and support they need to become reemployed.

Policy/Procedures:

A. Individual Training Accounts:

1. ITAs will be used only for funding vocational (occupational skills) training programs.
2. All participants must apply for Pell, FASFA and any other appropriate grant assistance, and provide proof of application for this aid. The Pell grant funding received by a participant must be applied toward the participant's tuition and other education-related expenses. If funding is required beyond available grant funds (i.e., PELL grants, WIOA funds, etc.), participants are required to arrange other means of financial aid; or they have the option of choosing a less expensive training program.
3. For approved programs, WIOA will also pay the reasonable cost of participants' required books and special supplies, including uniforms and tools.
4. Supportive Services for participants in ITA eligible training programs will be determined on an individual basis and based on participants' needs.
5. Supportive Services (e.g., transportation, child care, emergency housing) will not be available to participants choosing to attend ITA eligible training programs beyond 100 miles from their homes. (This policy does not apply to TAA participants.)
6. The participant and his/her WIOA career planner must jointly develop a plan for a participant to complete the training (including pre-requisite courses) within a reasonable timeframe, preferably within two years.
7. To continue to receive ITA funding, participants must:
 - a. Maintain an overall C or equivalent average*;
 - b. Bring/send their grade or progress records to their WIOA Career planner prior to the start of a new semester/quarter to prove they maintained a C or equivalent average; and
 - c. Report their progress in training to their WIOA Career planner at least once each month.

**A participant may request a review of special circumstances(s) affecting the first semester/quarter grades by:*

- *Submitting a written request for review of the special circumstances affecting grades and class standing to the program's supervisor. The written request will summarize the "special circumstances" why the appeal is sought.*
- *Submitting the request within one week of receipt of grades and prior to the start of the next semester.*
- *Submitting proof of attendance in all classes.*

The supervisor and participant's career planner will review the appeal and schedule a meeting with the participant.

If, after the meeting with the participant, the supervisor determines the appeal is valid, he/she may waive the policy for the participant. The waiver must be signed by the Supervisor and the participant.

9. WIOA Title I-B funds may not be used for participants to retake classes.
10. A per participant Individual Training Account cap of \$13,000 applies to the total Training and Training-related costs for approved Eligible Training programs, pre-requisite courses, and other courses (excluding Basic Skills Upgrading/HSE Preparation course, English as a Second Language upgrading courses, Employment Transitions course, and transportation/child care costs). The Training and Training-related costs covered under the \$13,000 ITA cap include:
 - Tuition
 - Fees
 - Books
 - Supplies

- Tools
- Uniforms
- Anything necessary for the training that is on the class syllabus
- Credentialing exam fees and license fees

No exceptions to the \$13,000 ITA cap policy will be granted.

TAA Customer Exception to \$13,000 Cap Policy

If an individual is TAA eligible and must begin or continue training under WIOA funding because TAA funds have been exhausted or are not available, the amount of ITA training assistance that the participant receives may exceed the \$13,000 cap. ITA training for WIOA/TAA participants will be paid from WIOA funds only in instances when TAA funds are exhausted or unavailable.

Initial Enrollment in ITA Training

An in-depth assessment of an individual participant's training needs must be made to determine what is best for the participant and best for the overall program. The filters that will be applied during the individual's assessment and program selection process include the following:

1. The individual has a high school diploma or HSE; unless the program of study does not require a high school diploma and results in an industry recognized credential (i.e. truck driving CDL) or the individual is concurrently enrolled and attending a HSE program;
2. The individual is in need of training;
3. The individual has the skills and qualifications to complete successfully the selected training program;
4. The individual is unable to obtain grant assistance from other sources to pay the costs of selected training;
5. The selected training program is directly linked to employment opportunities in the area (or another area to which the individual is willing to relocate);
6. Training will lead to the individual's self-sufficiency.

Re-enrollment in ITA Training

If a program participant has received funding under an ITA previously, re-enrollment will be considered only if:

- The completion of the previous training program occurred at least 24 months prior to the re-enrollment date; and
- The credential received from the previous training program is no longer in demand based upon industry and labor market data for the northern Illinois region. All decisions to re-enroll participants into additional ITA funded training, even after the 24 month wait period, must have program's director approval and such approval must be documented in the participant's case file.

Participants' Appeal Process

Participants may appeal the training decisions of counseling staff directly to the administrator of the Adult Program or Dislocated Worker Program.

Participants may appeal the decisions of the Adult Program or Dislocated Worker Program's administrator to The Workforce Connection Board's Operations Management Council. The Committee will then uphold the administrator's decision or render a new decision. The decision of the Committee is final.

B. Skill Upgrading and Retraining – Individual Courses or Short-Term Certification Programs

Participants who are determined to be in need of short-term training services (skill upgrading or retraining) in order to obtain or retain employment that leads to self-sufficiency may be enrolled in individual credit or non-credit courses that do not lead to certification or short-term certification programs. [Note: An R&R must have been distributed specifically listing the course as *Skill Upgrading or Retraining* course before an ITA voucher is completed.]

1. Courses must be directed toward growth and in-demand occupational employment;
2. Courses must be specifically approved by The Workforce Connection Board (initially approved by the One-Stop Operations Management Council) as *Skill Upgrading or Retraining* or be included in an ITA eligible program certified by The Workforce Connection Board (initially approved by the One-Stop Operations Management Council);
3. Individuals must be unable to obtain other funding sources to cover the cost to the *Skill Upgrading or Retraining* courses;
4. In all cases, a participant's Individual Employment Plan (IEP) must include a detailed career plan that shows how the *Skill Upgrading and Retraining* course(s) the participant will take will enhance his/her ability to be employed/reemployed. The career plan must be based on an assessment of the participant's skills and abilities.

C. Internal Procedures Related to ITAs

Participants may receive ITAs only for programs that are on the Illinois state-approved list (or other state approved list).

1. The Fiscal Agent must have a *Master ITA-Vendor Agreement* completed with the program provider before a participant may begin attending an approved program.
2. A *Referral & Recruitment* form listing the programs that The Workforce Connection Board has approved as Eligible Training Provider Programs and *Skill Upgrading or Retraining* must be issued (posted on IWC's website) before ITA vouchers may be issued for a participants' enrollment in a program.
3. Voucher issued by the fiscal agent will be used for tuition, fees, and books.

Action Required:

This information should be disseminated to all The Workforce Connection WIOA Title IB program directors/staff to assure compliance with requirements for training programs supported with WIOA funds.

Inquiries:

Questions regarding this policy should be directed to The Workforce Connection Board Executive Director

Effective Date:

Immediately

The Workforce Connection Board**Policy Title: Eligible Training Provider Approval****Approved: 10/03/2000****Effective: 06/07/2016****Status: Active****Reference Number: 2016-500-04****Modifications: 06/07/2016****Purpose:**

To provide information regarding Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requirements for the Eligible Training Provider (ETP) to provide WIOA funded training aligned with high growth/in-demand occupations in targeted industries.

References:

- Department of Commerce WIOA Policy 15-WIOA-5.3 WIOA Training Provider and Training Program Eligibility
- Demand Occupation List (to be issued by Department of Commerce)

Background:

Training providers may apply to The Workforce Connection, the local workforce board for Boone, Winnebago and Stephenson Counties, for approval as Eligible Training Providers, offering approved training programs meeting the requirements of WIOA and State policy. All training programs approved must be identified as high-growth or in-demand occupations.

Definitions:

- High-Growth or In-Demand Occupation – identified through verified data that an occupation has reasonable growth, full-time employment opportunities, and pays a living wage.
- Targeted Sectors or Targeted Industries – identified through verified data, clusters of industries such as Healthcare, Manufacturing, Information Technology, Transportation/Distribution/Logistics, with substantial job openings, long-term growth.
- ETPL – Eligible Training Provider List located in the Illinois Workforce Development System (IWDS).

Policy/Procedures:

A. Eligibility of Training Providers: To be eligible to receive funds for provision of training services, the provider shall be:

1. An institution of higher education that provides a program that leads to a recognized post-secondary credential. This may include programs receiving approval or accreditation by the U.S. Department of Education, Illinois Board of Higher Education, Illinois Community College Board, or Illinois State Board of Education.
2. An entity that carries out programs registered under the Act of August 16, 1937 (Commonly known as the “National Apprenticeship Act”; 50 Stat. 664, chapter 663; 29 U.S.C. 50 et seq.) as recognized in Illinois by the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL), Office of Apprenticeship, or;
3. Another public or private provider of a program of training services, which may include joint labor-management organizations; eligible providers of adult education and literacy activities under Title II if such activities are provided in combination with occupational skills training or programs that have been recognized by the industry as meeting the standards necessary for approval or accreditation, when such standards exist.
4. The Training Provider/Program must lead to placement in the Demand Occupation Training List (DOTL) for Economic Development Region 5. Exceptions to this requirement include:
 - a) The training program, as identified on the Demand Occupation List, is intended to be a beginning step in a Career Pathway or Bridge Program that would lead to placement in a Demand Occupation.

- b) The training provider's program provides only basic skills and/or remedial training.
5. TWC reserves the right to impose additional criteria through local policy that is unique to conditions within LWA3 and meets, at a minimum federal and state requirements based on economic, geographic, demographic conditions in the area, and/or characteristics of the population served by the provider.
6. TWC has the authority to deny approval of initial or continuing eligibility or revoke the status of eligibility, and remove it from the eligible training provider list for a training provider or a training program.

B. Registered Apprenticeship (RA) programs registered with the USDOL, Office of Apprenticeship

- Registered Apprenticeship programs will be added to the ETPL list on a statewide basis

1. An RA must indicate interest in being included on the ETPL.
2. RAs may contact TWC or State of Illinois, Office of Employment and Training to indicate interest in being included on the ETPL
3. TWC will inform all RAs in the area regarding these requirements, then notify Department of Commerce in writing of all RA programs that have shown interest in being included on the ETPL.

C. Initial Eligibility

1. New training providers located geographically within LWA 3, or has its headquarters or primary location within LWA 3 must apply for Initial Eligibility through TWC.
2. A training provider is prohibited from applying for training program eligibility through TWC when the program site is not geographically located in LWA 3, unless the LWA in which the program is located denies eligibility or fails to act on the application within 30 days of the date of application.
3. A new training provider must gather and provide all mandatory information found in Attachment A. – Requirements for Training Program Eligibility to LWA 3, as well as all other information required by TWC. The TWC staff will set up a Training Provider record in IWDS.
4. The Training Provider will be instructed on how to log in and enter training programs in IWDS to be determined eligible.

D. Agreement Requirements

1. A Training Provider must provide assurances that it will comply fully with all non-discrimination and equal opportunity provisions of the laws.
2. When TWC has assured that the training provider has provided all required information, TWC will initiate an agreement to be signed by all parties involved including the Training Provider and TWC.
3. The agreement will include provisions for routine on-site monitoring of the training provider/program. When the training program is outside of LWA3, monitoring will be coordinated with the other LWA or conducted by the state in which the training is determined eligible or provided.

E. Eligibility Timeline

1. The Program Review Sub-Committee, formed in accordance with the requirements of WIOA Policy 15-WIOA-5.3, will review each program submitted by current Eligible Training Providers or ETP applicants within 30 days of the application. The Sub-Committee's approval is deemed as conditional approval and participant enrollments may continue or begin with this approval. The Program Review Sub-committee approval will be presented to the One-Stop Operations Management Council at its next scheduled meeting for review and ratification. Should the One-Stop Operations Management Council not agree with the Sub-Committee's approval, the ETP application will then go to TWC to determine program approval.

2. If TWC fails to make a determination (or denies eligibility) of the program within 30 days of the application, and the training program meets state criteria, the program will be placed in a “capture list” in IWDS and will be available to another LWA to determine eligibility through their LWB. Once the 120 days period passes, the training program will be removed from the capture list.
3. If the Training Program does not meet all of the mandatory criteria for initial eligibility or is not accepted by TWC within 30 days for some other reason, the training provider can appeal its acceptance status in accordance with DCEO WIOA Policy 15-WIOA-5.3 - WIOA Training Provider and Training Program Eligibility (Section G.).

F. Next Eligibility Date/Review

1. Initial Eligible Training Providers next eligibility date will be within one year from the date of initial eligibility. This date may be selected to coordinate with the regularly schedule TWC meeting. Providers will be encouraged to have all or some of their training program determinations of continued eligibility in a group to streamline the process.
2. TWC may consider entering into reciprocity with another state under which providers of training services may enroll customers into programs provided in states other than Illinois.

G. Continued Eligibility Process

1. Continuing Eligible Training providers previously approved for eligibility must have its eligibility approval determined on at least a biennial (at least every two years) basis to maintain their status as an eligible training program.
2. TWC will provide a 90 day notice to each training provider of any upcoming continued eligibility date.
3. TWC must receive the training provider’s intent to apply for continued eligibility of a training program or programs in sufficient time to meet eligibility timeline requirements.
4. TWC will determine a schedule to issue “Training Providers Nearing Continued Eligibility Date” reports routinely throughout the year to provide Continuing Eligible Training providers with adequate time to prepare for “Pending Continuing Eligibility” requirements/processes.
5. Continued Eligibility to a training provider will be granted based on the following:
 - a) A current copy of the Training Program Basic Information record from IWDS;
 - b) Identification of items that have changed since the initial eligibility or most recent continued eligibility determination;
 - c) Performance data of the training program;
 - d) Any additional information the training provider has submitted for review or TWC determines pertinent to the TWC review.
6. TWC shall grant continued eligibility to a training program within 30 days based on the following:
 - a) State and local performance criteria are still being met;
 - b) One or more O*Net codes associated with the training program remain on current Demand Occupation Training list;
 - c) The training provider has maintained timely updates in IWDS on training program information;
 - d) Other conditions as deemed necessary by TWC.
7. Training programs not deemed eligible by TWC within 30 days of receipt of the application from TWC will be removed from the approved program list and may reapply after one year.
8. Training providers may appeal the TWC decision following DCEO WIOA Policy 15-WIOA-5.3 - WIOA Training Provider and Training Program Eligibility (Section G).

H. Training Provider or Training Program Change in Information

1. Training programs shall be subject to renewal for eligibility by the Program Review Sub-Committee, formed in accordance with the requirements of WIOA Policy 15-WIOA-5.3,

whenever significant information for the training provider and/or program(s) has changed.

Significant information includes:

- a. All of the “mandatory” fields on the Training Program Basic Information record in IWDS. Change(s) in any significant information must be entered in IWDS within ten (10) business days.
 - b. Submission of a change in significant information indicates a training provider’s intent to renew eligibility and prompts the same requirements as under the current eligibility determination. The Program Review Sub-committee decision for approval will be presented to the One-Stop Operations Management Council at its next scheduled meeting for review and ratification.
2. Training programs will be subject to renewal of eligibility status by the TWC Program Review Sub-committee whenever non-significant information on the training program changes prior to the continued eligibility date. Non-significant information is any information that is a “mandatory” field (but not considered “significant”) on the Training Program Basic Information application in IWDS, including O*Net codes associated with the training program. (These items are identified by a * on Attachment A – Requirements for Training Program Initial Eligibility and Continued Eligibility process in the DCEO WIOA Policy 15-WIOA-5.3 - WIOA Training Provider and Training Program Eligibility. The Program Review Sub-Committee shall review the training program and all the changes to determine if the changes have affected the conditions of the program eligibility determinations. If the changes have significantly altered the training program, the committee will send the training program to the One-Stop Operations Management Council for the renewal of the current eligibility approval. If the changes have not significantly altered the training program, the Program Review Sub-Committee shall approve the program for continued eligibility until the next scheduled continued eligibility date.

I. Performance Measures

1. All eligible training providers are required to provide basic performance data, when available, on their training programs in order to be approved for initial or continued eligibility.
2. Specific training provider/training program performance information for ALL students of the program shall be provided, when available as outlined in the DCEO WIOA Policy 15-WIOA-5.3 - WIOA Training Provider and Training Program Eligibility.
3. Performance data required should be entered in IWDS for the most current program year, as well as the previous three program years.

J. Denial or Revocation of Eligibility

TWC has the authority to deny approval of initial or continued eligibility or revoke the status of eligibility, and remove it from the Eligible Training Provider List for a training provider or for a training program in accordance with WIOA and DCEO WIOA Policy 15-WIOA-5.3 - WIOA Training Provider and Training Program Eligibility (Section G) under the following circumstances.

1. Its annual performance fails to meet the minimum standards set by the State of Illinois or TWC for the WIOA performance measures;
2. If it is determined at any time that the training provider intentionally supplied inaccurate information in its application for eligibility or continued eligibility;
3. The training provider substantially violated any requirement under WIOA or WIA; or
4. The training provider voluntarily chooses to cease being an eligible training provider or goes out of business.

K. Notification and Appeal Process

1. Should TWC determine the need to deny or revoke any initial or continued eligibility of a training provider and/or any of its programs for which it has sought approval, the affected provider must be notified in writing of TWC’s decision. The notice will include:

- a. The training program(s) that are being denied or revoked eligibility;
 - b. The reason(s) for the denial or revocation; and
 - c. Information about the opportunities the provider has to appeal the decision
2. The Notice shall be sent within seven (7) days of the decision to the training provider via registered mail with a copy sent to Department of Commerce, Office of Employment and Training (OET)
3. The training provider has twenty-one (21) days, from the date of receipt of the notice of denial or revocation of eligibility in which to file an appeal to TWC. The appeal must include the following information:
 - a. A statement that the training provider is appealing the denial or revocation of its eligibility;
 - b. The reason(s) the eligibility should be granted;
 - c. Contact information for additional information; and
 - d. The signature of the chief executive of the training provider
4. The appeal must be submitted formally, in writing, and must be sent by registered mail no later than twenty-one (21) days from the date of receipt of the notice of denial or revocation.
5. TWC, or a designated committee, will review the request for appeal within twenty-one (21) days of its receipt. If TWC determines an administrative error was made or if additional information submitted by the provider changes the basis upon which the original decision to deny or revoke eligibility was issued, the decision may be reversed and the training program(s) granted the appropriate initial or continued eligibility for inclusion on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL).
6. If TWC reverses its decision, it will notify the training entity of its action in writing within seven (7) days. TWC will also forward a request to OET for inclusion on the ETPL.
7. If TWC does not reverse its decision to deny or revoke eligibility and inclusion on the ETPL, it shall notify the provider within twenty-one (21) days from the receipt of the request that the program(s) was not determined eligible. Notice will be sent in writing by registered mail. The notice will include information about the opportunities for the provider to appeal its denial of eligibility with OET. A copy of the letter will be forwarded to OET.
8. A provider shall have twenty-one (21) days from the receipt of the final decision by TWC to appeal the denial or revocation to OET.
 - a. OET will have thirty (30) days to complete its investigation into the matter, gather additional information from the affected TWC file and from the provider, and issue a final determination of eligibility.
 - b. During this time period, OET will convene a meeting with the affected parties, if requested.
 - c. The final determination will be forwarded to the training provider and TWC in writing.
 - d. If OET overturns the decision of TWC, the program(s) will be included on the statewide list within seven (7) days. OET will not make a final decision to overturn the decision made by TWC without convening a meeting with all affected parties.
9. OET has the ability to ask TWC to deny or revoke a training provider or its program(s) eligibility and have it removed from the list "for cause". If this decision is made, OET must send a formal written notice of its concerns to the affected LWB(s). The notice will require local action on the matter. TWC will have the option to provide additional information that would clarify and substantiate the provider's eligibility status or of initiating removal of the provider or its program(s) from the ETPL. Both the notice from OET and affected LWB(s) and the board's response to the notice must be sent by registered mail. TWC has twenty-one (21) days to respond in writing to the OET notice.

L. Reinstatement on the Statewide List

1. Should a training provider improve upon overall performance and otherwise rectify any other conditions of their denial or revocation, a provider may re-apply for eligibility after one year from its removal. The training provider must comply with the requirements for initial eligibility, demonstrate it has corrected all performance and other deficiencies which resulted in their removal from the ETPL and TWC must determine eligibility of the program and submit it for reinstatement on the ETPL.
2. A training provider that was denied continued eligibility may re-apply for initial eligibility for the training program when it can demonstrate its program quality with at least one year of performance information. The provider can re-apply no sooner than one year from the date of denial; the provider must re-apply for program eligibility subject to the policies and procedures for continuing eligibility found in Section C.3 of DCEO WIOA Policy 15-WIOA-5.3 - WIOA Training Provider and Training Program Eligibility; and if the program meets minimum state or local performance standards along with any other eligibility criteria in place at the time of re-application. TWC must determine the program is eligible and submit it for reinstatement on the statewide ETPL.
3. TWC must reaffirm that a program previously accredited by the North Central Association, the Illinois Community College Board, or the Illinois State Board of Education is still accredited or the accreditation has been renewed.

Action Required:

This information should be disseminated to all The Workforce Connection WIOA Title IB program directors/staff to assure compliance with requirements for Eligible Training Providers/Programs supported with WIOA training funds.

Inquiries:

Questions regarding this policy should be directed to The Workforce Connection Board Executive Director

Effective Date:

Immediately

PROCESS FOR INITIAL ELIGIBILITY/CONTINUING ELIGIBILITY FOR ITA PROVIDERS/PROGRAMS

The Program Review Subcommittee will meet monthly to review and conditionally recommend initial eligibility/continuing eligibility of providers/programs. The Subcommittee's recommendations will be presented for approval at the Operations Management Council's next meeting after the Subcommittee's meeting. The Workforce Connection Board will act on the Operations Management Council's provider/program approval action as part of the Board's *Consent Agenda* at the next TWC Board meeting following the One-Stop Operations Management Council meeting.

1. Programs will (usually) be reviewed for continuing eligibility within 30 days of when their current eligibility expires.
2. New programs will be reviewed within 30 days of being presented for WIOA initial eligibility.
3. **Process for initial eligibility/continuing eligibility for programs will consist of a review of all providers/programs for the information bullet-pointed in A. below.**
Programs for initial eligibility/continuing eligibility will be listed by Industry Sector.

Targeted Industry Sectors: Business; Finance; Green; Health; Information Technology; Manufacturing; Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics

Also, there is an Other sector for programs that do not fall within a targeted sector. See section B. below.

A. TARGET INDUSTRY SECTOR PROGRAMS:

If the program is in a **targeted sector** and trains for an occupation on both or one of the DCEO lists of occupations for LWA 3, the program will be considered for initial eligibility/continued eligibility if:

- **Credential--Program Completers are expected to attain an Industry-recognized credential.** For WIOA purposes, participants will not "complete" the program unless they have received the industry-recognized credential for which the program trains.
 - The exception to credential attainment at program completion will be recognized for those programs that require licensure and/or work experience before an individual may take credentialing examination. In these cases, participants may "complete" the program (for WIOA records) but will not receive a credential at program completion. However, if a participant then receives a credential within the WIOA-designated performance timelines, the credential may be added to WIOA records for the participant when it is obtained.
Note: Some programs may be removed from approved list because credentialing test requires extensive study/practice after program completion or the credential cannot be earned until a person has extended time on-the-job.
- **AAJO--Average Annual Job Openings in Boone /Stephenson/Winnebago (IDES projections 2010-2020 (or later period when available) are sufficient to warrant training additional people.** (However, even though an occupation is listed on one or both of the State's *Demand Occupations* lists for LWA 3, there may not be related jobs available in the area now.)
 - If IDES AAJO for LWA 3 shows less than fifteen(15) AAJO for the sum of the AAJOs for O*Net occupations associated with the training program, the trainer must be able to prove to WIOA that the program trains for job openings. The trainer must demonstrate that occupational employment projections may not reflect the current labor market for occupations for which their program trains. The subcommittee will also discuss local knowledge of the field, e.g., for CNC machinists, we know that the

need is much greater than the IDES projections indicate. (And the Trainer will need to prove this, also.)

- **Program Cost** (per IWDS information)--The program cost seems “reasonable,” given the type of institution providing the training (public or private), the length of the program, and the expected entry level wages in the occupation(s) for which the program trains. Also considered: Is a credential required for an individual to enter the occupation? To advance in the occupation(s)?
- **Wage Data** (IDES)-- **The anticipated wage is sufficient.** “Sufficient wage” will vary by an individual participant’s circumstances and will consider the participant’s projected/anticipated wage upon program completion.
 - The cost of the training and length of time to complete the training will be weighed against the anticipated wage at program completion. *Approx. cost of training*—per IWDS--will be included on the chart of information the Committee receives. (Counselors must work with each individual participant to determine what a reasonable wage is for the participant’s circumstances.)
- **Successful Program Completion is considered.** -- The number of WIOA participants enrolled in program in last three years and their successful completion information as recorded in IWDS will be considered, as well as the number of ALL students enrolled in the program and their successful completion information as provide by training provider.
 - Staff will add to the chart referenced in 3 above (first 3 lines) columns for number of enrollees (WIOA participants) who have left the program, and, of those who left the program, the number who have “successfully” completed the program as recorded in IWDS, as well as the number of ALL students who have “successful completed the program as recorded by the training provider.
 - Successful completion of a training program depends on selecting the right people to enter the training program. WIOA staff may refer participants to a training program but it is the training provider that decides whether or not to accept the individual for training. Program providers should demonstrate how they screen ALL student/WIOA participants to ensure their successful completion of their training programs; they will describe their expectations/requirements regarding the education, skills, experience and other factors the program applicant needs in order to enter a program. (This is something that the Program Review Committee will review during consideration of provider/programs for initial eligibility or continuing eligibility.) WIOA requires eligible training providers to track and report Completion Rates of training programs for ALL students. WIOA participant completion rates for training programs will be available through IWDS data.
- **Training-Related Placements.** DWP and Adult placement data for “exited” participants indicates that WIOA/Trade participants are getting training-related employment after completing the training.
 - This entails a review of exited WIOA participant program results for providers/programs seeking continuing eligibility – to compare with eligible training provider’s data “Entered Employment Rates for WIOA participants and ALL

students. Placement information for second and fourth quarters after exit for participants is compiled for dislocated workers and for adults programs.

- **Review of providers' overall placement information by program—is required—for initial or continued eligibility of the program.** Providers will be requested to attend the meeting to address overall placement-from-program information and answer questions.
 - Providers will need to prepare a handout for the subcommittee's review. The Committee will request concrete data regarding each program's overall placement numbers/placement rates in training-related jobs for enrollees who complete a program. (If provider does not collect placement data or collects such data or refuses to release the data to the Committee, the Committee will not consider the provider/program for initial eligibility or continuing eligibility)
 - Providers may also be requested to attend the One-Stop Operations Management Council meeting.

B. **OTHER SECTOR PROGRAMS** (The provider/program does not train for positions in a targeted industry.)

The same information listed under A. above will be considered for providers/programs that fall in the OTHER category. The need for the provider/program must be strong. Even if the training provider shows that people completing the program are getting training-related employment, the Committee may refuse to recommend approval for an initial eligibility/continuing eligibility for a program because the program does not train for a position in a targeted industry. The training provider must provide information and verifiable data that directly connects to employment opportunities in Boone, Stephenson, and Winnebago or nearby Counties. These programs must be approved at the local Workforce Board level and reviewed by DCEO using the state level "Demand Occupation Request Form".

The Workforce Connection Board

Policy Title: Procurement

Reference Number 2016-100-08

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I. Introduction

The Workforce Connection Board (TWC Board), the Workforce Board for Boone, Winnebago and Stephenson Counties, has assembled this overall Procurement Policy to ensure accountability and keep the procurement process in line with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) reasonable and necessary requirements, Department of Labor (DOL) and Illinois Department of Economic Opportunity (DCEO) policy, Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Uniform Guidance, Illinois' Government Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA) prequalification requirements (including recipient checklist for determining if the entity receiving funds has a contractor or subrecipient relationship), and other applicable rules and regulations.

The procurement procedures described in this Procurement Policy are established as standards of conduct governing the performance of organizations and individuals engaged in the purchases of all goods and services with funds under the purview of TWC Board. No employee, officer, or agent of any such organization shall participate in the selection, or in the purchase of goods and services supported by Federal funds if a conflict of interest, real or apparent, would be involved.

In general, TWC Board requires that all procurement transactions be conducted in a manner providing full and open competition. All procurement of goods and services under the purview of TWC Board will comply with all TWC Board requirements and other processes and procedures in place; all procurements must comply with OMB Uniform Guidance

II. Procurement Principle

All services procured shall be assured to be the best available to meet the employment and training needs of the individuals served with funds under the purview of TWC Board.

Awards for contractors are made to vendors who can provide services that are the most advantageous regarding service, price, and other specific factors.

Contract or subrecipient relationships will be determined by utilizing the "Recipient Checklist for Determining if Entity Receiving Funds has a Contractor or Subrecipient Relationship" attached to this policy.

III. Definitions

Procurement: For the purposes of this policy, the term *procurement* includes any acquisitions action which obligates funds under the purview of TWC Board for the purchase of equipment, materials, supplies, and/or program or administrative services beginning with the process for determining the need and ending with contract completion and closeout, as applicable.

Request for Proposal (RFP)/Request for Bids (RFB): For purposes of this policy and subsequent actions, a **request for proposal (RFP)** is issued at an early stage in a procurement process, where an invitation is presented for suppliers, often through a bidding process, to submit a proposal on a specific commodity or service. This process will provide structure to the procurement decision and is intended to allow the risks and benefits to be identified clearly up front. The RFP may dictate to varying degrees the exact structure and format of the supplier's response. RFPs will reflect the strategy and short/long-term program objectives, providing enough detail for potential suppliers to offer a matching perspective.

No Bid or Sole Source Procurement: Procurement by noncompetitive proposals is procurement through solicitation of a proposal from only one source, or, if after solicitation of a number of sources, competition is determined inadequate. This method of procurement may be used only when the award of a contract is documented to be infeasible under small purchase procedures, sealed bids, or competitive proposals, and one of the following circumstances applies:

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

Procurement by small purchases procedures: Small purchase procedures are used to secure services, equipment, or supplies. Any purchase of \$1000 or less requires no quotes from vendors. Purchases for equipment and services over \$1000 will require three written quotes. Equipment purchases over \$5000 must have prior approval from DCEO or Federal funding sources. For services over \$5000, a request for quotation or bids will be mailed to potential bidders explaining the scope of the project along with due dates, etc.

Request for Qualifications (RFQ): Is a process to identify potential bidders. Appropriate procurement methods will follow a RFQ.

IV. Competitive Procurement Procedures

All procurement transactions shall be conducted in a manner to provide, to the maximum extent possible, open and free competition. The TWC Board shall be alerted to organizational conflicts of interest as well as noncompetitive practices among Operators/Providers/contractors that may restrict or eliminate competition. Awards shall be made to the bidder or offeror whose bid or offer is responsive to the solicitation and is most advantageous to the TWC Board issuing the request for bid/proposal--price, quality and other factors considered. Solicitations shall clearly set forth all requirements that the bidder or offeror shall fulfill in order for the bid or offer to be evaluated by the solicitor. Any and all bids or offers may be rejected when it is in the solicitor's best interest to do so.

V. Request for Proposals (or Bids) for Programming

Requests for Proposals (RFP) are issued to procure program services. An RFP will describe the types of services being solicited and provide requirements on the submission of proposals. Notice of the availability of the RFP is distributed to all appropriate vendors on the current list of potential vendors and is published in a local newspaper. The RFP is posted in its entirety on the TWC Board's website. The RFP identifies at least the following: project duration; submission information; detailed description of all services solicited; targeted groups to be served; proposal evaluation criteria; and budget information requirements.

Request for Proposal (RFP) Distribution:

A notice regarding the availability of a *Request for Proposals* and, if scheduled, the date of the Bidders' Meeting is placed in the *Legal Notices* section of the *Rockford Register Star* or *Freeport Journal Standard*, as applicable. Notice of the availability of an RFP and the Bidders' Meeting (if scheduled) is also sent to a list of potential bidders for the particular programming sought and posted on the TWC BOARD's website, www.theworkforceconnection.org. Potential bidders may attend the Bidders' meeting, if scheduled, at which time hard copies of the RFPs are distributed. Otherwise, potential bidders will be sent a hard copy RFP, upon their request, or they may download the RFP from the TWC BOARD's website where all RFPs are posted about a week prior to the bidders' meeting.

Bidders' Meetings:

Bidders' Meetings are often held to distribute and discuss the RFPs. (Whether or not a Bidders' Meeting is held usually depends on the complexity of the RFP, the programming changes being made, etc.) At the Bidders' meetings, staff 1) review selected area of the RFP, including, as applicable, the changes in the RFP from previous years; 2) discuss important topics relating to the programming sought (e.g., performance measures, budget development); and 3) answer initial questions. A second bidders' meeting may be held for the specific purpose of answering potential bidders' questions. The questions/responses are then posted on the TWC BOARD's website.

Proposal Review and Evaluation:

The proposal review process for Title I-B programming follows the *Proposal Evaluation* process identified below:

A. Proposal Evaluators

Proposals will be evaluated by a team of Board members and community members who have no conflict of interest with any bidding organization. One team will review all proposals submitted in response to a specific Request for Proposals

B. Proposal Evaluation Review Levels**Level 1: Technical Review of Proposals**

Staff will perform a technical review of each proposal prior to their being distributed to a review team. The technical review will determine if the proposal is complete and meets all the submission guidelines stated in the Request for Proposals (RFP). Proposals that are incomplete or fail to meet all the submission guidelines stated in the RFP will be rejected. Bidders will be notified regarding the status of their proposals after the technical review. Bidders may appeal the technical review results. (The Board will accept only appeals relating to the technical review of a proposal.)

- a) TWC Board staff will notify bidders via e-mail of the results of the technical review of their proposals. Bidders may then request a debriefing of their proposal's technical review. The TWC Board Executive Director must receive this request via e-mail within two working days of the day the Bidder was e-mailed notification of the technical review results of their proposal.
- b) The debriefing will be held within two working days of the TWC Board Executive Director's receipt of the bidder's request for a debriefing of their proposal's technical review.
- c) After the debriefing, the bidder will have three working days to present to the TWC Board Executive Director a written appeal of any aspect of their proposal's technical review.
- d) The TWC Board Chair or designee will review the written appeal and make the final decision regarding any Board action on the appeal.
- e) The Bidder will be notified in writing within three working days of the Board Chair or designee's decision regarding the appeal.
- f) This will complete the Bidder's appeal process at the local Workforce Board level.

Level 2: Evaluation of Proposals by Review Team

- a) The proposal review team members will receive information regarding the programming sought through the Request for Proposals, the proposal review process, and the use of the Evaluation Tool. A team facilitator will be responsible for assisting the team to reach consensus regarding each proposal's Evaluation Tool scoring and priority for funding.

- b) All team members will review all proposals using the Evaluation Tool. During this initial review, review team members may suggest a score in response to each item on the Evaluation Tool.
- c) Team members will meet and discuss each proposal, arriving at a consensus score for each item on the Evaluation Tool. The proposal Evaluation Score will be the total of all the item scores on the Evaluation Tool.

Level 3: Evaluation of How Well Proposed Program Meets TWC BOARD's Strategic Objectives and Priorities

- a) The review team will then discuss how well the proposed program meets one or more strategic objectives or strategic priorities of the Board and CEOs. Included in this discussion will be a consideration of the bidder's ability to deliver the proposed programming, past success in attaining the WIOA Performance Standards, service provision in relation to the total Boone, Winnebago, and Stephenson County area, connection/collaboration with the One-Stop Center/System, and the proposed program's ability to further TWC Board's strategic initiatives.
- b) Budgets, program size, and other aspects of a proposed program may be negotiated, as necessary. (RFPs will not contain budget limits or cost/per participant limits.) Review teams will consider the reasonableness of bidders' proposed budgets in relation to the proposed program and the funds available.
- c) The review team will then prepare its funding priority recommendations. Bidders will not necessarily be recommended for funding based on their Evaluation Score in relation to the Evaluation Scores of other bidders.

C. TWC BOARD/CEO Action on the Recommendations of the Evaluation Teams:

- 1. The funding priority recommendations of the Proposal Review Teams will be presented to the appropriate TWC Board Committee, who will then prepare funding recommendations for TWC Board and CEO action.
- 2. The TWC Board and CEOs will take action on the program funding recommendations.
- 3. Bidders will be notified of the TWC Board/CEO action.
- 4. Bidders may contact the TWC Board Executive Director and request a debriefing of their proposal's evaluation.

D. Cost/Price Analysis:

If the Fiscal Agent has no conflict of interest with a bidder, the Fiscal Agent's accounting staff will review all the proposals' budgets, performing a **cost/price analysis** (using a specific cost/price analysis instrument) for each proposed budget. However, should the Fiscal Agent have a conflict of interest with any bidder, the fiscal review will be performed by TWC Board staff, TWC Board members, or an outside party. Any concerns resulting from the cost/price analysis will be discussed with the review team when they meet to prepare funding priority recommendations.

VI. Purchasing Policies, Standards, and Procedures

Small purchase procedures are used to secure services, equipment, or supplies. Any purchase of \$1000 or less requires no quotes from vendors. Purchases for equipment and services over \$1000 will require

three written quotes. Equipment purchases over \$5000 must have prior approval from DCEO or Federal funding sources. For services over \$5000, a request for quotation or bids will be mailed to potential bidders explaining the scope of the project along with due dates, etc.

Sole source procurement or by noncompetitive proposals is used only when the award of a contract is documented to be infeasible under small purchase procedures, sealed bids, or competitive proposals, and one of the following circumstances applies:

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

All procurement activities shall allow for open and free competition among potential vendors for services. Awards for contracts are made to vendors who can provide services that are the most advantageous to the workforce system regarding service, price, specific factors, and meeting the needs of the individuals served with funding that is under the purview of the TWC Board. A current list of potential and approved vendors is maintained and used when soliciting for services. The list of potential programming providers is maintained by type of programming they can potentially provide. These lists are updated annually to include the names, addresses, and, to the extent possible, e-mail addresses.

TWC Board and/or CEO approval is not needed to purchase goods, services and equipment if the purchase is \$5,000 or less. The TWC Board Executive Director can authorize such purchases.

Any officer, employee, or agent of TWC Board or any of its contractors who is either (a) engaged in negotiations with a potential provider, (b) has arrangements concerning prospective employment with a potential contractor, or (c) has financial interest in a potential contractor may not participate in the review, award, or administration of a contract for a potential contractor. Such relationships constitute a conflict of interest.

VII. Procurement Procedures

A. The following procurement guidelines will be adhered to:

- Avoid purchasing unnecessary items.
- Where appropriate, make an analysis of lease and purchase alternatives to determine which would be most economical and practical procurement using Federal funds.
- Ensure that solicitations for goods and services provide for all of the following:
- A clear and accurate description of the technical requirements for the material, product, or service to be procured--in competitive procurements, such a description shall not contain features which unduly restrict completion;
- Requirements which the bidder/offeror must fulfill and all other factors to be used in evaluating bids or proposals;
- A description, whenever feasible, of technical requirements in terms of functions to be performed or performance required, including the range of acceptable characteristics or minimum acceptable standards;
- The specific features of "brand name or equal" descriptions that bidders are required to meet when such items are included in the solicitation;
- Preference, to the extent practicable and economically feasible, for products and services that conserve natural resources and protect the environment and are energy efficient.

- B.** Make positive efforts to use small businesses, minority-owned firms, and women's business enterprises, whenever possible.
- C.** Use procuring instruments (e.g., fixed price contracts/agreements, cost reimbursable contracts/agreements, purchase orders, and performance-based contracts/agreements) that are appropriate for the particular procurement and for promoting the best interest of the program or project involved.
- D.** Initiate contracts/agreements with responsible contractors who possess the potential ability to perform successfully under the terms and conditions of the proposed procurement. (Consideration shall be given to such matters as contractor integrity, record of past performance, financial and technical resources or accessibility to other necessary resources.)
- E.** On request, make available for the local, state or federal awarding agencies, pre-award review and procurement documents.

VIII. Cost/Price Analysis

Some form of cost or price analysis shall be made and documented in the procurement files in connection with every procurement action. Price analysis may be accomplished in various ways, including the comparison of price quotations submitted, market prices and similar indicators, together with discounts. Cost analysis is the review and evaluation of each element of cost to determine if it is reasonable, allowable and able to be allocated.

IX. Procurement Records

Procurement records and files for purchase in excess of the small purchase threshold shall include the following at a minimum:

1. Basis for contractor selection,
2. Justification for lack of competition when competitive bids or offers are not obtained, and
3. Basis for award cost or price.

Action Required: This information will be disseminated to organizations and individuals engaged in the purchases of goods and services using funds under the purview of The Workforce Connection Board (TWC Board).

Inquiries: Questions regarding any aspect of this Procurement Policy should be directed to the TWC Board Executive Director.

Date Effective: Immediately

**Appendix B Plan
Publication
for
Public Comment**

REGISTER STAR MEDIA

Audience based solutions.

Classified Advertising Ad Proof

Date Generated: 3/15/2017

Account No: RRP3956676ROC

ROCK RIVER TRAINING CORP
303 N. MAIN ST - STE 200
ROCKFORD, IL 61101

Email: _____
Phone: 815 3956676

SalesAssociate: HaasLindy | Phone: 815-962-2400 | Email: classified@rrstar.com

Order Urn: RRS000182732

PO Number:

PAYMENT INFORMATION

Total Order Price: \$128.76

AD COPY PROOF:

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**PUBLIC NOTICE
THE WORKFORCE
CONNECTION,
INC. (WORKFORCE
BOARD) REGIONAL
AND LOCAL WORK-
FORCE PLAN FOR
THE WORKFORCE
INNOVATION AND OP-
PORTUNITY ACT
ATTENTION: BUSI-
NESSES, LOCAL
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Public review and comment on the draft is available for review and comment at The Workforce Connection 303 No. Main Street, Suite 100, Chicago, Illinois 60601. Monday, Friday: 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Please contact Darcy J. Ucholz, NIWA Executive Director, at The Workforce Connection/IS/395-6609 or d_ucholz@tewor -rceconnec-

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TITLES:

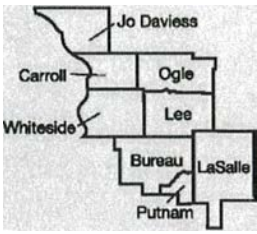
Title: Rockford Register Star | Class: 2006 Legal
Notices
Start Date: 3/16/2017 | Stop Date: 3/16/2017
Insertions: 1 |

Title: nstar.com online | Class: 2006 Legal Notices
Start Date: 3/16/2017 | Stop Date: 3/16/2017
Insertions: 1 |

Appendix C

Memorandum of

Understanding



BEST, Inc.

Business Employment Skills Team
Serving Northwest Central Illinois
www.best-inc.org



A proud partner of the AmericanJobCenternetwork

LWIA #4

WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT LOCAL PLAN

CHAPTER 4: OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES-LOCAL COMPONENT

This chapter must provide an overview of all the operating systems and policies within the LWIA. (WJOA Sec. 121 (c)(2)(i), Governors Guidelines Section 1, and MOU Sections 5-8)

Background: Local Workforce Area 4 is comprised of 8 counties: Bureau, Carroll, Jo Daviess, LaSalle, Lee, Ogle, Putnam and Whiteside. The total population for the area is 340,099 according to the 2010 census, with the largest individual city having a population of 18,768. The local area is geographically large, covering 5,378 square miles, and is rural in nature. LWA #4 rests in two Economic Development Regions (EDRs): EDR #5 the Northern Stateline region which adds Ogle County to the Rockford-area local workforce area, and EDR #6 the Northwest region which includes the remaining 7 counties of LWA #4 and the 3 counties in the Quad City local workforce area. In both EDR #5 and EDR #6 regional plans, Healthcare, Manufacturing and Transportation/Logistics have been identified as the critical industries based on the most recent labor market and/or anecdotal information. In addition, Information Technology will be considered a subsector through all 3 industry sectors in LWA #4 local plan. However, 2 other industry sectors play into the local economy, but to a lesser extent: Agriculture and Tourism.

Though the rural nature of our 8-counties certainly brings Agriculture to the forefront, it is the legalization of medical marijuana that brought the return of ag courses and programs to one of our community colleges, Illinois Valley Community College. Furthermore, Highland Community College continues to offer its long-standing agriculture programs as part of their course offerings, and Sterling High School in the Sauk Valley Community College district just hired an ag instructor for the first time in several years. With the re-emergence of ag in the classroom, it indicates that there is or will be a re-emergence of ag in the workforce. Therefore, our area would like to be prepared for sector strategies in the agriculture field, especially in Crop and Animal Production and Farm Management. In a more direct link with the Logistics Field, on-ground workforce intelligence indicates shortages in farm implement diesel mechanics.

Tourism, including Hospitality and Entertainment, is a very visible industry in our area. Although it is not supported by high-paying jobs, it provides an excellent 1st rung on a career ladder for youth or even as transitional jobs. It is seasonal so it fits well as a summer job for many young workers, while providing them with the essential skills everyone needs in the world of work, e.g., customer service, good work habits, etc. Like agriculture, we would like to be able to develop sector strategies as time goes on, so we are including this in our local plan.

- A. *Provide a description of the one-stop delivery system in the local area, including the roles and resource contributions of the one-stop partners. (MOU Sections 5 and 6)*
- *Identify the career services and other program services to be provided, include the location (address) at which services will be accessible including the:*
 - *Comprehensive One-Stop*
 - *Affiliated Workforce Centers*
 - *Specialized Workforce Centers*
 - *Explain how the comprehensive one-stop center provides on demand access to the required career services in the most inclusive and appropriate setting and*

accommodations. (Governor's Guidelines, Appendix Item 4)

- *Provide information regarding the one-stop operator and describe the methods for coordinated service delivery between operator and partners. (MOU, Section 7)*
 - *Name of the procured one-stop operator*
 - *Describe the functions and scope of work of the one-stop operator*
 - *Describe how the one-stop operator was procured*
- *Describe the local operator's role and responsibility for coordinating referrals among required partners. (MOU, Section 8)*

The workforce system envisioned by WIOA is quality-focused, employer-driven, customer-centered, and tailored to meet the needs of regional economies. The local one-stop delivery system in Local Workforce Area #4 serves to make this publicly-funded workforce system meet the needs of all the customers. All One-Stop Partners will provide some or all of the following Career Services, as outlined in the MOU and described below:

- a. Basic Career Services -
 - i. Basic information on eligibility,
 - ii. Outreach,
 - iii. Partner orientation workshops,
 - iv. Initial assessment,
 - v. Labor exchange services,
 - vi. Referrals,
 - vii. Labor market information,
 - viii. Information on eligible training providers,
 - ix. One-Stop performance,
 - x. Supportive services,
 - xi. Financial aid assistance, and
 - xii. UI claims
- b. Individualized Career Services-
 - i. Comprehensive assessment,
 - ii. Individual Employment Plan,
 - iii. Counseling,
 - iv. Career planning,
 - v. Short-term pre-vocational services including development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct for unsubsidized jobs.
 - vi. Internships and Work Experience
 - vii. Workforce preparation activities - essential skills
 - viii. Financial literacy services
 - ix. Out-of-area job search assistance and relocation assistance
 - x. English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs.

The above information is also addressed in the MOU Local Service Matrix for Comprehensive One-Stop Centers and the Local Service Matrix for Comprehensive One-Stop Centers Service

Delivery Method Templates, which identifies which partner(s) will deliver each of the services, as well as how the services will be delivered in the NCI Works! One Stop Comprehensive Center (located at 1550 First Street, Ottawa, 61350) and at the Affiliate One-stop Center (located at 2323 E. Lincolnway, Sterling, 61081). Working to organize and integrate services by function rather than program will create a high quality one stop system that will truly be seamless. Comprehensive case management and journey mapping will take publicly funded workforce programs to a new level, and will help facilitate co-enrollments, as appropriate, in core programs.

Specifically, each partner offers the following as its respective way for providing on-demand access to the required career services in the most inclusive and appropriate setting and makes necessary accommodations for individuals with disabilities, which are necessary to achieve effectiveness and physical and programmatic accessibility:

Adult Ed - IVCC

Adult Education will provide cross-training on Adult Education services for One-Stop staff. To meet the "on-demand access to required career services" at the One-Stop, Adult Education will administer a needs assessment with ADA accommodations, if necessary, through:

- The Adult Education web site (Spanish/English)
- Phone calls (Spanish/English)
- Email (Spanish/English)

Needs assessment follow-up will include:

- Intake and orientation for adult education classes
- Employment and education transition services
- ADA services
- Individual career and academic counseling
- College placement testing

Adult Education will also provide supportive services such as constitution testing, online learning, academic referrals, and assistance with HSE testing accommodations as well as coordination with other social service agencies to avoid duplication of services.

Adult Ed -SVCC

Sauk Valley Community College Adult Education partners with the Sterling affiliate one-stop center in several ways. First, the location of the Sterling center houses both BEST, In., the Title 1B provider and the IDES office which also serves as a location for an SVCC Adult Education class site. This means that we can accommodate any client seeking a GED who comes in to the center instantly. BEST staff simply walks the client to our classroom where the instructor will provide information about classes and GED requirements. The instructor can also register and provide services for the student on the premises. Secondly, once the client engages in class and passes the GED test, SVCC provides transitional support into college/certificate programs that Sauk has to offer. We work with BEST to provide the necessary information and services to make the client become a successful student.

Carl Perkins/CTE

The Carl Perkins/CTE partner will develop a paper referral form to be available at the workNet One-Stop Center that staff can use to refer clients to CTE programs & Perkins supported services

at IVCC. In addition, a contact phone number, e-mail, and Skype a Counselor will be available.

Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Program

As the primary CSBG Program for the comprehensive one-stop center, Tri-County Opportunities Council will have an Outreach Specialist working out of the one-stop one day per week. An intake application will be taken on those individuals interested in their supportive services at the one-stop on the day that the Outreach Specialist is on-site. At that time, appropriated services and/or referrals will be provided. Clients interested in supportive services at other times may contact their main office at 800/323-5434 and ask for the CSBG department. The staff in that department will determine where the client resides and provide client information to our Outreach Specialist in the respective area. The Outreach Specialist will contact the client directly and make arrangements for an intake meeting.

Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS)

As a One Stop partner, DRS is committed to providing world class customer service to individuals accessing the One Stop Center. The agency will provide an on-site counselor at least one day per week for approximately 5 hours to work with customers with disabilities access appropriate services. In addition to meeting with his current customers for regular appointments at the center to give them exposure to all services., he will be available to meet with walk ins to discuss DRS and serve as a referral source for other community agencies appropriate for individuals with disabilities. We will be able to take referrals for the vocational rehabilitation program, complete an initial interview or forward the referral to the appropriate office. Additionally, DRS will be involved in cross training with partner agencies in hopes of better overall knowledge of various programs.

Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES)

The American Job Center's One-stop Office in Ottawa is handicap (wheelchair) accessible. When Unemployment Insurance (UI) services are needed by someone who is visibly impaired or blind, program representatives are able to help fill out claim forms. In the case of someone who is deaf, written notes are used for communication. If a sign language interpreter is needed, arrangements can be made through the Department Rehab Services and a time scheduled for the interpreter to assist the client in the office. IDES has a full-time Spanish-speaking Program Representative on-site and claim forms written in Spanish are available. There is also a language interpretation line available which allows connectivity to interrupters in 24 languages while the client is at the One-stop. Clients may also connect via telephone to our Customer Service Center (CSC) for assistance, and the CSC also has language interpretation capabilities. A Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Presentative is available on site to assist veterans with significant barriers to employment. Presently, ITY services are unavailable for clients who are hearing impaired and need to make outgoing calls to other agencies. Trade Readjustment Allowances (TRA) and Migrant Season Farmworkers (MSFW) assistance are also available within the Ottawa One-stop. Direct linkage to other IDES programs is unnecessary since all are available on-site. Direct linkage to those Partners who are not physically located within the One-stop is being established using systems that are compatible with what is available at the Partners' locations.

Title III (Wagner-Peyser/ES): IDES' Employment Services and Outreach is a labor exchange program designed to sustain economic growth by expanding employment opportunities to qualified job seekers that meet the demands of the employers. The program's objectives aim to reduce the loss of productivity by filling job openings as quickly as possible and to shorten the duration of individuals' unemployment. For job seekers who are not job ready, Employment Services, in cooperation with other workforce partners, assist clients to access training, employability development services, and other supportive services needed to realize their employment goals. Services available onsite.

IDES/Unemployment Insurance (UI): The Unemployment Insurance program, administered by IDES, is designated to contribute to the state's overall economic stability by partially protecting eligible workers against loss of income during periods of unemployment. Eligible workers who become unemployed and meet all requirements set forth in the UI Act may receive benefits for the maximum number of weeks payable under the law or until the worker finds employment or becomes otherwise ineligible. Services available onsite.

IDES/Neterans: IDES provides veterans with priority of service over all other job applicants, actively promotes and develops employment opportunities, and provides placement and vocational guidance services. Services available onsite.

IDES/Migrant Season Farmworkers (MSFW): IDES provides staff assisted services including job development, career guidance, and referral to training and supportive services for migrant and seasonal farmworkers. Services available onsite.

IDES/Trade Readjustment Allowances (TRA): IDES administers Trade Readjustment Allowances, a benefit under the TAA program, providing income support to persons who have exhausted unemployment compensation and whose jobs were affected by foreign imports. Services available onsite.

Illinois Department of Human Services, LaSalle County Family Community Resource Center
Illinois Department of Human Services, LaSalle County Family Community Resource Center is located within the same building as the One-Stop. TANF staff is available all day, every day, to assist those wishing to apply for TANF benefits. In addition, customers can apply for benefits online using computers in the resource room at the One-Stop.

Illinois Migrant Council (IMC)

Unfortunately, IMC has regretfully indicated that due to budgetary constraints, it will no longer be able to provide services in LWA #4. However, all partners agree that IMC will always be welcome to at the one-stop to meet with other partner staff or an individual who may benefit from their services.

Second Chance

We have recently learned that Second Chance is not a required partner in Illinois. Therefore, no information is required.

Title IB/TAA

As the Title IB and Trade Act provider in LWA #4., Business Employment Skills Team, Inc. (BEST, Inc.) has a presence in the comprehensive center with full time employees who will offer the career services (listed above) to customers. In addition, multiple offices are housed throughout the workforce area to better assist customers with either transportation issues or the convenience of a more local office setting. All have access to TTY services.

Title V/SCSEP

The SCSEP is a federally-funded employment training program under the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (USDOL-ETA). The SCSEP is the largest federally-funded program for older adults who seek employment and training assistance, as well as civic engagement. Through this community service and transitional employment program, National Able Network partners with Community Service Assignments (community-based non-profit and government organizations known as Host Agencies) to provide participants with training opportunities to update their skills.

The SCSEP is designed to be used in conjunction with other programs and services. These programs are provided by public, private and not-for-profit agencies to create holistic services that maximize goals and skills of SCSEP Participants to achieve their goals of obtaining self-sufficiency. At this time National Able is still in the process of determining the days for their presence at the one-stop center.

At the time this local plan was made available for 30-day comment period, the one-stop operator had not been selected. Therefore, responses to questions related to the one-stop operator will be included at a later date. However, at their March 21, 2017 meeting, the NCI Works Executive Committee recommended that the consortium of Core Partners Adult Education, Illinois Department of Employment Security, Illinois Department of Human Services -Division of Rehabilitation Services, and Title IB/Business Employment Skills Team, Inc. (BEST, Inc.) be approved as the One-Stop Operator for LWA #4. At the time of submission of the local plan, the roles and responsibilities of the One-Stop Operator had not been finalized.

B. Provide information regarding the use of technology in the one-stop delivery system, including a description of:

- *How the workforce centers are implementing and transitioning to an integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information system for programs carried out under WIOA (§ 679.560(b)(20)).*
- *How the Local Board will facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system, including in remote areas, through the use of technology and other means (§ 679.560(b)(5)(ii)).*

To demonstrate their commitment to coordinate and collaborate programs and services throughout the local workforce area, all partner agencies, whether directly connected to the comprehensive one-stop center or not, actively participated in designing the local service delivery system. Furthermore, some of these agencies attended a half-day interactive discussion and training session hosted by BEST, Inc. early in the process that offered a presentation on

Demand Driven Services, Sector Initiatives and Work-Based Learning in light of new expectations of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

Many of the partners have a long history of collaboration and cooperation in providing services to both individual and business customers. Currently partners share general program information with customers and make referrals to other agencies as determined appropriate. Business Service Teams have successfully existed in our area for years. However, all parties to this MOU agree that significant efforts need to be made to go beyond these basic initial services, specifically: to enhance both the referral and tracking of all customers between partner agencies; to gain an in-depth working knowledge of each other's programs and services; to build a fully-aligned career pathways system for our business and job-seeking customers that is supported through the delivery of coordinated and integrated services; and, to keep the lines of communication open in order to address rising needs and challenges that may require a fully collaborative response.

At the MOU March 17, 2016 Meeting, partners agreed that the first task to be undertaken would be to enhance the referral and tracking system between agencies, not only at the comprehensive center but throughout the entire workforce system for the 8-county area. They decided that during PY '16, they would work on an on-line directory that would include contact information and preferred method of referral (e.g., on-line, phone, etc.) that would allow us to make and track referrals, including a mechanism for following up. Until that is developed, however, a very simple spreadsheet directory could be utilized.

Other options are currently being explored for implementing an integrated local workforce system: the use of a 211-like hotline with a unique phone number for each partner and an answering machine to make sure no calls are missed and appropriate referrals, tracking, and other basic career services could be done; Skype with video capability which would provide a face-to-face virtual meeting and can be offered by all partners at this time except for DHS (though they are looking into the possibility); and, the development of a one-stop center website, or minimally webpage, with links to each partner's individual website, that will list all programs and services available at the comprehensive one-stop center and the affiliate one-stop center. The website/webpage is being designed as a class-project at IVCC, and will begin with the core partners.

Future projects that will simplify and expedite the referral process include, to the extent possible, the development of a common Release of Information form and in our "dream one-stop", a common intake form. Partners present at this meeting acknowledge that both forms will probably require the support and involvement of state-level directors. Because the completion of this goal is really beyond the partners' control, no expected date of completion has been set.

Acknowledging that a functionally-aligned system depends upon all partners having an in-depth working knowledge of the programs and services that make up the business and career services system, partners intend to have appropriate staff cross-trained in the more essential elements of other partner programs. These elements include: program eligibility, services offered to both job seekers and businesses as well as how those services will contribute to career pathways and sector strategy initiatives, a designated point of contact for each agency, and any prohibitions and/or restrictions that apply to a specific program.

Finally, the key to carrying out our vision on an on-going basis will be continuous communication. Agency managers and designated staff in both the comprehensive and affiliate one-stop centers will meet on a monthly basis for the purpose of sharing general information; discussing issues or challenges that might arise, especially during the first year of this Local Plan; jointly developing policies and procedures related to journey mapping for individuals or businesses; serving as the vehicle for cross-training staff, with each agency "spotlighted" at one meeting; and providing the opportunity to our business service team members to share information on the local business environment. Not only will this be an effective way for everyone to stay on track with our MOU goals, but it will also be a great opportunity for our staff members to get together, get to know one another on a more personal basis, and foster personal and professional relationships. Timing of the first meeting will be determined at an appropriate time, but as soon as possible. Partner agencies that are not directly connected to the one-stops, but are an integral part of the local workforce system across the 8 counties will be encouraged to attend these meetings.

C. Describe how the Local Board will support the strategy identified in the Unified Plan and work with entities carrying out core programs, including a description of (§ 679.560(b)(1)(ii)):

- *Expanding access to employment, training, education and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment (§ 679.560(b)(2)(i));*
- *Facilitating the development of career pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs (§ 679.560(b)(2)(ii)); and*
- *Improving access to activities leading to a recognized post-secondary credential (including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable, and stackable) (§ 679.560(b)(2)(iii)).*

Developing career pathways in a demand-driven system will require strong partnerships with local businesses who will define the specific essential and occupational skills needed to meet their workforce needs. Through alignment and integration of partner services and resources, new and existing career pathway opportunities will be made available to our students, job seekers and workers, including those facing multiple barriers to employment. A "journey-mapping" strategy will serve as the linkage connecting career pathways with in-demand industries and occupations, and providing access to activities leading to a recognized post-secondary credential (including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable, and stackable). Community college post-secondary training programs that will offer opportunities for career pathways to job seekers in the manufacturing sector include IVCC's Certified Production Technician Program and their recently approved AAS in Engineering Technology Program; SVCC's Multi-Craft Program; and, Highland's Maintenance Tech program. All of these programs provide a gateway to licensed or degreed programs in the manufacturing sector. Likewise, healthcare bridge programs serve as the first step for job seekers pursuing careers in the healthcare field.

The monthly meetings with local workforce system staff will serve as the vehicle for expanding access to employment, training, education and supportive services for all customers of the

system, including those with barriers to employment. Again, staff will gather to share information on programs and services, and discuss best care scenarios for all customers, and in particular those who may be co-enrolled. To show the importance all partners place on an integrated service system, BEST, Inc. on behalf of NCI Works, applied for and received a grant to conduct a Process Mapping study, designed to produce a more effective and efficient seamless local system. This project will be completed by June 30, 2017, and implemented during PY '17.

D. Provide information regarding the local coordination strategies with state (including the Unified Plan), regional and local partners to enhance services and avoid duplication of activities:

In general, all partners will coordinate strategies to enhance services and avoid duplication of services through the monthly meetings described earlier in this plan, and through the reporting mechanism set up by NCI Works through its Committee structure. These Committees have been charged with oversight and reporting responsibilities specifically designed to enhance coordination and avoid duplication. Specifically:

- *Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth employment and training activities under WIOA Title I (§679.560(b)(6))*

BEST, Inc., the provider of the Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth employment and training activities under WIOA, will be housed at both the Comprehensive One-Stop Center and the Affiliate One-Stop Center, so the 13 Career Services will be offered onsite for individuals who are eligible for their services. (More detailed information is addressed in the MOU Local Service Matrix for Comprehensive One-Stop Centers and the Local Service Matrix for Comprehensive One-Stop Centers Service Delivery Method Templates, which identifies which partner(s) will deliver each of the services, as well as how the services will be delivered.) As the local workforce board, NCI Works will be responsible for monitoring all of these activities through its committees. The Executive Committee is assigned the responsibility of reviewing the local plan to assure the alignment of Core Partner programs and services. The Oversight Committee is responsible for overseeing all Core Partners' performance reports as well as establishing continuous improvement goals for local workforce system. Finally, the general description of the One-Stop Partner Committee is to provide guidance and oversight for the one-stop system and partners.

- *Adult education and literacy activities under WIOA Title II. This description must include how the Local Board will carry out the review of local applications submitted under Title II consistent with WIOA Secs. 107(d)(11)(A) and (B)(i) and WIOA Sec. 232. (§ 679.560(b)(12))*

Adult Ed and workforce agency staff will hold partner orientations to avoid duplicating services, and will maintain communication on co-enrolled students.

NCI Works will carry out its coordination duties under WIOA Title II in much the same way as under other WIOA Titles. As previously stated, the Executive Committee is assigned the responsibility of reviewing the local plan to assure the alignment of Core

Partner programs and services, and the Oversight Committee is responsible for establishing continuous improvement goals for local workforce system

Providers of workforce investment activities under title I of WIOA, adult education and literacy activities under title II of WIOA, and career and technical education (as defined in section 3 of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2302)) will be asked to submit a joint report to the Executive Committee briefly describing how their activities serve as a complement to one another and avoid duplication of services. If the Committee determines there are gaps and/or overlaps in services, the providers will be asked to revise their current plans and re-submit to the full NCI Works board at its next meeting.

Furthermore, the Executive Committee will review applications to provide adult education and literacy activities under title II for the local area to determine whether such applications are aligned and consistent with the local plan, and that all programs and services are available and accessible to all individuals, including those with disabilities.

- *Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.) services. (§ 679.560(b)(11))*

LWA 4, now and previously as LWA #12 prior to consolidation, has had a long history of coordinating business services across agencies. Early on under WIA we developed an interagency Business Services Team (comprised of local economic development agencies, BEST, Inc., Division of Rehabilitative Services, Illinois Department of Employment Securities, Illinois Valley Community College, Sauk Valley Community College, and Highland Community College) and have continued this initiative under WIOA. The team meets quarterly to discuss developments across the 8 counties served. The focus of this effort is to provide a single point of contact for area employers to eliminate multiple parties knocking on their door. Title 1 staff members have been trained in the use of Illinois Job Link and utilize it to enter job orders. Information about On-the-Job Training and Incumbent Worker Training has been shared with Wagner Peyser representatives so that they can share the information with area businesses they speak to and refer interested businesses to these programs. Collaboration on job fairs/hiring events has also been a team effort under WIA and now under WIOA. The team has now sponsored 5 job fairs/hiring events across 6 of the 8 counties served (LaSalle, Putnam, Bureau, Ogle, Lee and Whiteside Counties) and was the first area in the State to utilize Illinois workNet for a virtual job fair, targeting employers in Carroll and Jo Daviess Counties. This event met with moderate success, but served as the pilot for IDES webinars to for employers and job seekers.

Also, the Business Services Team has not completed on hiring event targeting laid-off workers from Nippon in Rochelle and Austin Westran in Byron, and is currently finalizing a second hiring event targeting laid off workers from Dura Automotive in Stockton. The first event was highly successful, with 23 employers and 140 job seekers attending.

Recently, members from BEST, the community colleges, adult education, DRS and IDES hosted two employer forums, one for the Illinois Valley Community College district and one for the Sauk Valley Community College district, to inform employers of the employer engagement services available to them under WIOA. Local educators were also invited to attend these forums in an effort to bridge communication between our manufacturing community and the education community regarding the emerging workforce coming out of secondary education. The purpose of these joint forums is to begin a dialog between the two groups to address the challenges each is facing, and come up with appropriate responses to ensure the local manufacturing sector's workforce is adequately prepared. The intent is to then replicate the events in the rest of our area and with our other targeted sectors going forward.

Upcoming Illinois Workforce Partnership training in the area of business services and engagement will be offered to all core partners in an effort to continue to grow the collaborative efforts already in place. This training will build on what LWIA 4 has already established and bring all one-stop system partners attending to a common understand of how to move forward with a coordinated business engagement effort under WIOA.

While the initiatives listed above are real examples of how coordination has already occurred in LWA #4, partners recognize that additional steps can be taken to further ensure coordination, improving service delivery and avoiding duplication. Therefore, the following activities will be developed and implemented going forward:

- Maximizing knowledge and cross training front line staff to be able to assist individuals with basic career services.
- ii Working with Core Partners to create a One-Stop System orientation for customers
- iii Coordinating with Wagner-Peyser staff job search workshops to not duplicate services.
- iv Industry-focused Work-Readiness Workshops, designed to replicate the culture and work environment by sector

As established in its by-laws, NCI Works will be responsible for monitoring all of these activities through its committees. The Executive Committee is assigned the responsibility of reviewing the local plan to assure the alignment of Core Partner programs and services. The Employer Engagement Committee will provide input into the development of various initiatives and projects to assure they meet employer needs. The Oversight Committee is responsible for overseeing all Core Partners' performance reports as well as establishing continuous improvement goals for local workforce system. Finally, the general description of the One-Stop Partner Committee is to provide guidance and oversight for the one-stop system and partners.

- *Vocational rehabilitation service activities under WIDA Title IV. (§679.560(b)(13))*

Similar to an in-school youth IBP appointment, all providers will be at the table to make

sure we are not duplicating services but rather addressing the specific needs of individuals being served through WIOA Title I and Title *N*. Many of the customers served by Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) are interested in jobs that will supplement their government benefits (SSI/SSDI, SNAP, Medicaid, subsidized housing, etc.) so it is important for all staff to be aware of the entire menu of training opportunities that is available to ensure customers are receiving training in fields which will likely result in competitive employment. This sharing of knowledge can be accomplished through cross-training and allowing front line staff to share best practices in working with individuals with disabilities and working with employers who hire individuals with disabilities.

BEST, Inc. intends to contract with an agency to develop an on-line resource mapping directory. Partners can access this directory to locate supportive services that will help meet the personal/life needs of our customers. This directory will be a useful tool to further assist Title *N* staff in locating support services in close proximity to their job-seeking customers.

Finally, providers of workforce investment activities and local agencies administering plans under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 will be asked to submit a joint report to the Executive Committee briefly describing how their activities serve as a complement to one another and avoid duplication of services. If the Committee determines there are gaps and/or overlaps in services, the providers will be asked to revise their current plans and re-submit to the full NCI Works board at its next meeting.

- *Relevant secondary and post-secondary education programs and activities with education and workforce investment activities. (§ 679.560(b)(9))*
- *How the Local Board will support the strategy identified in the State Plan under § 676.105 and work with the entities carrying out core programs and other workforce development programs, including programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.) to support service alignment (§ 679.560(b)(1)(ii))*

The local community colleges have agreed to the following activities in order to coordinate strategies, enhance services and avoid duplication:

- o More visible presence at the NCI Works! One Stop Comprehensive Center by Perkins/CTE related programs.
- o Investigate dedicated IVCC and SVCC computers with:
 - o IVCC and SVCC webpage access at start-up
 - o Access to Career Cruising/Inspire
 - o Online Application
 - o Cooperative agreements
 - o CTE Program information
 - o Financial Aid Information
 - o Skype a Counselor

Coordination will occur through means such as quarterly meetings and e-mail listserv, and possibly through some skype (conference calls) vs face to face meetings

The role of NCI Works to support the coordination of secondary and post-secondary educations programs and services with education and workforce activities will include things such as:

- Acting as a convener of forums to include educators and employers in our local area and region. This will bring all the needed parties to the table to strategize local need.
- ii Ensuring that educators sit on the local board and board committees which will enhance the services to the customers at the One-Stop System. Each partner has a specialty and by working together on projects and events all customers can receive the same level of expertise and the chance of duplicated services will be lessened.
- iii Ensuring that local workforce staff sit on Advisory Committees for different community college departments. This will serve as the linkage back to NCI Works and communicate the relevant activities of the community colleges back to the workforce board.
- iv Sponsoring and/or participating in career exploration events that are held for secondary education students with partnership from workforce and post-secondary entities.

The NCI Works' Oversight Committee is charged with the responsibility of spearheading an integrated reporting system for all education and workforce development institutions. Included in the reporting by these agencies and institutions will be an accounting of how the services and activities listed above are delivered as part of an overall coordinated strategy, or set of strategies designed to prepare a work-ready, skilled workforce that meets the needs of the local business community.

- *Other services provided in the one-stop delivery system including but not limited to the programs outlined in WIOA Sec. 121.*

All of the core and required partners have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding which defines each partner's contribution, specifically identifying the services and method of delivery that will contribute to supporting our vision. It will also document how each partner will contribute its proportionate share of infrastructure costs for the comprehensive one-stop center.

- *Provide a copy of the local supportive service policy and describe how the Local Board will coordinate the provision of transportation and other appropriate supportive services in the local area (§ 679.560(b)(10));*

Since these policies will be part of the local plan, the Board will have the opportunity to review them when the plan is presented to them at a regular meeting. In many instances, the board is actually charged with approving supportive services policies, so they will be aware of the policies that are being developed and will be able to make sure they are

consistent, complementary and will help enable customers to achieve their education, training, and/or career goals. Furthermore, the Resource Mapping process will make all of this information publicly available for anyone and everyone to access.

By virtue of the fact that sometimes supportive service needs are rather immediate, or can even exceed normal amounts or policy, the Board will give authority to the One-Stop Operator to approve waivers. This has been previous policy and though it was only needed sparingly, it was advantageous to the customer who was in need.

- *Describe the local referral process (MOU, Section 8).*
 - *Identify the entities between who the referrals occur.*
 - *Explain the method(s) that will be used to refer participants between programs.*
 - *Define the roles related to referrals.*
 - *Identify the method of tracking referrals.*
 - *Describe specific arrangements to assure that individuals with barriers to employment, including individuals with disabilities, can access available services.*

At the MOU Meeting on March 17, 2016 partners discussed the need to create a referral process that is both two way and would allow for easy follow up. With that in mind, they agreed that the first task to be undertaken would be to enhance the current referral and tracking system between agencies, not only at the comprehensive center but throughout the entire workforce system for the 8-county area. They decided that during PY '17, they would work on an on-line directory that would include contact information and preferred method of referral (e.g., on-line, phone, etc.) that would allow us to make and track referrals, including a mechanism for following up. Until that is developed, however, a very simple spreadsheet directory will be utilized.

Future projects that will simplify and expedite the referral process include, to the extent possible, the development of a common Release of Information form and in our "dream one-stop", a common intake form. Partners present at this meeting acknowledge that both forms will probably require the support and involvement of state-level directors. Because the completion of this goal is really beyond the partners' control, no expected date of completion has been set. Also, as described above, the 211-model, use of Skype with video option and the one-stop website/webpage will further facilitate referral between partners. Finally, the Process Mapping project may reveal more effective and/or efficient roles for referrals between partners as well as tracking and reporting referrals.

In terms of the roles related to referrals, it should be recognized that every agency has its own area of expertise and wishes to eliminate areas of duplication of services. Therefore, partners see a well-defined referral process as the means to accomplish this. The same thought process applies to certain eligibility items. Cross training staff on general information with the ability to refer will result in an effective transition of customers between partners. Agency managers and designated staff in both the comprehensive and affiliate one-stop centers will meet on a monthly basis for the purpose of sharing general information; discussing issues or challenges that might arise, especially during

the first year of WIOA coordination; jointly developing policies and procedures related to journey mapping for individuals or businesses; serving as the vehicle for cross-training staff, with each agency "spotlighted" at one meeting; and providing the opportunity to our business service team members to share information on the local business environment. Partner agencies that are not directly connected to the one-stops, but are an integral part of the local workforce system across the 8 counties will be encouraged to attend these meetings.

As they have done faithfully in the past, partners will follow federal guidelines in terms of assuring that individuals with barriers to employment, including individuals with disabilities, have access to all available services. Again, options such as 211-like hotline, Skype with video option and one-stop website/webpage will help assure that individuals with barriers, including disabilities, have access to services.

E. Provide a description of how the local area will provide adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities including:

- *A description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area. (§ 679.560(b)(6))*
- *A description of how the Local Board will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out in the local area with statewide rapid response activities. (§ 679.560(b)(7))*

Local Area # 4 covers eight counties with 11 offices providing adult and dislocated worker services. In addition, with the ability to work in a public location that has access to technology, staff can meet potential customers off site. In order to provide employers and workers with optimum opportunity for selection of services, all employment and training activities allowable under WIOA as well as those provided by all partner agencies will be made available in the local area. Northwest Central Illinois Works fully intends not to limit the options available to either employers or workers in order to meet their employment needs. Again, emerging and transitional workers need training in essential skills, career exploration, basic academic skills, and life skills. Incumbent workers and to some extent transitional workers would benefit from skills-upgrade training and retention services. Depending upon individual need, workers in any of the three categories could benefit from supportive service assistance, personal and employment counseling, learning how to balance work and life issues, and retention services.

Basic Career Services include internet access to job search and labor market information provided by IL workNet and Illinois Job Link, Orientation to information and services that are available from all Partnering Agencies, Program coordination and referrals, Labor exchange services, Training provider performance and cost information, Performance information for the local area as a whole, Information on the availability of supportive services and referrals, information and assistance with UI claims, Assistance establishing eligibility for financial aid, among others.

Individualized Career Services include skills and supportive service needs assessment, Eligibility for Title IB, Employment Retention services, follow-up services for Title IB customers, work experience/transitional jobs and internships.

Training services may include occupational skills training, including training for non-traditional employment; on-the-job-training; programs that combine workplace training with related instruction; skill upgrading and retraining; entrepreneurial training; customized training; occupational bridge programs; incumbent worker training, academic remediation/prevocational services.

Assessment testing and interviewing is conducted by Career Planners. Illinois workNet, ONet and individual interest tests are administered, in addition to an Individual Employment Plan and Individual Career Plan interview. Career exploration is conducted with phone calls and/or internet based searches.

The definition of "self-sufficiency" is determined by the local WIB. In LWA 4 "self-sufficiency" has been defined as 200% of the Lower Living Standard Income Level for family household income for the purpose of eligibility for program services.

Current plan to carry out Statewide Rapid Response activities works well and doesn't overwhelm the businesses with too many people from our agencies and too much information all at once. Currently, the initial on-site visits usually consists of BEST, Inc. Executive Director of Board and Programs, BEST, Inc. Business Relations Manager (BRM), occasionally a BEST, Inc. career advisor if available; the area-appropriate IDES rep; and, the Department of Commerce representative for our LWA. Workshops usually consist of BEST, Inc. Business Relations Manager (BRM), a BEST, Inc. Business Relations Representative (BRR) and Career Advisor; the area-appropriate IDES local office manager; and, the Department of Commerce representative for our LWA. If the Department of Commerce rep is unavailable, the BEST, Inc. BRM will cover his portion of the rapid response workshop; and if the BEST, Inc. BRM is unavailable, the BRR and CA cover her portion of the workshop. Information on the various types of programs and services that will assist the dislocated employees is distributed at workshops. An interest survey is completed by the laid off workers and used by staff to determine needs and appropriate course of action for the individuals.

F. Provide a description of how the local area will provide youth activities including:

- A description and assessment of the type and availability of youth workforce investment activities in the local area, including activities for youth who are individuals with disabilities, which must include an identification of successful models of such activities. (§ 679.560(b)(8))*
- A description of how local areas will meet the requirement that a minimum of 75 percent of the youth expenditures be for out-of-school youth.*

Local workforce investment activities for youth are as follows:

- The 14 elements required to be offered to WIOA-eligible youth per TEGL 23-14 will be provided either through BEST, Inc. staff or the providers

who contract for youth services. In some cases, these elements will be delivered directly by the provider or BEST, Inc. or as a referral to an appropriate agency. Depending upon the nature of the activity, some of them may be work-based activities.

- RFP for service providers are let out each year for either a new proposal or a one-year renewal if the provider is meeting performance and other criteria established for renewal option. LWA #4, and LWA #12 before the merger, has successfully awarded contracts to projects that provide either GED/HSE instruction and/or credit recovery. Some of these projects may also include WBL activities.
- Past participation in summer programs, Department of Natural Resource summer program, joint Trade Union Project with BEST, Inc., Community Gardens Summer Project through Special DCEO grant, job shadowing, industry tours that are also models of past work based learning
- A model to use for individuals with disabilities would be DRS model of the IBP appointments with in-school youth. All services provider that could possibly benefit a youth in the future would be part of the IBP process, in other words, journey mapping the youth's life from start to employment and follow up.
- Using technology to stay connected. Facebook, Twitter and now a cellular phone for texting.
- Currently have a youth coordinator whose main focus is on developing youth activities such as our Work in the Real World, Career/Life Preparation Project, and also being a representative on the youth committee
- Partnering with Adult Education to possibly co-enroll for work based learning and working with Division of Rehabilitation Services for transition services for older youth

NOTE: It is a matter of record that attempts to procure youth services through a competitive process as required by the Act have fallen short of expectations in the past. In spite of this, the NCI Works Youth Committee believes it has met the intent of the law through due diligence and good faith efforts. However, should the Youth Committee ever determine that there are an inadequate or insufficient number of responses to the RFPs/RFQs let out, NCI Works retains the right to make sure any and/or all of the 14 elements are provided in whatever way it deems appropriate in order to carry out its responsibility under the Act. This may include offering any of the allowable activities through the Business Employment Skills Team, Inc., the local grant sub-recipient; mainstreaming youth in community college programs; or continuing attempts to award grants/contracts on a competitive basis through either traditional or non-traditional methods. It is the feeling of the NCI Works Youth Committee that pursuing this course of action is in the best interest of the local youth and that it is preferable to running the risk that their needs go unmet. Regardless of the method utilized for procuring the

programs/services under these circumstances, approval by NCI Works would be required through the annual plan process. At a minimum, RFPs will be let out and approved on an annual basis according to the following schedule: RFP mailing in February, returned back to BEST, Inc. in March, rated and presented at the April Youth Committee meeting for conditional approval (contingent on allocation and negotiation). Approvals will be presented at the May NCI Works meeting for conditional approval (contingent on allocation and negotiation). Should the Youth Committee and/or NCI Works deem it necessary to let out additional RFPs, a similar time frame will be implemented.

For the past several years, our local area has been moving to an increased level of services to out-of-school youth by awarding contracts to youth providers. With focus on work based learning, we are attracting the older out-of-school youth for work-based learning activities such as, work experience, internships and On-The-Job Training. Therefore, based on past experience, we are confident we will meet or exceed the 75% out-of-school expenditure rate.

G. Provide a description of how the local area will provide services to priority populations as outlined in the Unified Plan:

- Provide information on how priority will be given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals and individuals who are basic skills deficient consistent with WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(E). (§ 679.560(b)(21))*

WIOA requires that the Title IB Workforce program gives priority to individuals receiving public assistance or other low income (meeting 70 % of the lower living standard) individuals who are basic skills deficient. As the provider of these activities, BEST, Inc. ensures compliance with this priority. However, in the event that none of those priority group are remaining and funds are available, income eligibility will be based on 200% of the lower living standard. BEST, Inc. will also comply with the State of Illinois' Veterans priority.

- Describe how the Local Board will determine priority populations and how to best serve them, along with any other state requirements.

NCI Works has established a Targeted Population standing committee to address the needs of individuals with multiple barriers to employment, specifically individuals with disabilities, returning citizens and veterans. Both NCI Works members and non-board members have been recruited to serve on this committee. Needs of these targeted groups will be identified and appropriate initiatives/responses will be developed as part of the first year plan. It should be noted that even though these three population groups have been identified for targeted services, a coordinated response will be developed for other groups that often face multiple barriers to employment such as drop-outs and migrant and seasonal farm workers to assure their personal and professional goals are met as well. Currently, the Targeted Population Committee is identifying the challenges and barriers each of the five priority populations faces during their job search activities, and

will determine the common issues that emerge. The next steps will be to develop strategies, initiatives, etc. to at least minimize the challenges, and at best eliminate them.

One very specific example of NCI Works' commitment to serving the priority populations is a recent OJT policy it passed. Under WIA, employers who entered into an OJT agreement with the Title 1B provider, in our case BEST, Inc., could have been reimbursed up to 50% of the wages of the trainee for a certain period of time. Under WIOA, the reimbursement amount was increased to up to 75% if certain criteria were met. NCI Works passed a policy to increase the reimbursement amount up to the 75% maximum level, with the stipulation that the additional 25% would be allowed incrementally based on four criteria, one of which was that the entire 25% could be allowed if the employer hired an individual from one of the priority population groups. This action is intended to provide further incentive to an employer to hire from among the priority populations groups

H. Provide a description of training policies and activities in the local area, including:

- How local areas will meet the requirement that a minimum of 40 percent of expenditures be for direct training costs;
- How local areas will encourage the use of work-based learning strategies, including the local area goals for specific work-based learning activities and proposed outcomes related to these activities;

LWA 4, and LWA 12 before the consolidation of the two areas, had always met or exceeded the 40% direct training expenditure requirement, so no significant policy or strategic changes are needed. However, with an even more emphasis on Work-Based Learning activities under WIOA, BEST, Inc. intends to transition toward increasing numbers of OJTs, Adult and Dislocated Worker Work Experience/Internships, Customized Training and Incumbent Worker Training over the course of the next four years. As we continue to market these activities and solicit testimonials from businesses that have utilized them, we anticipate seeing a steady rise in the numbers during this period of time with the initial local plan. This of course also assumes no major economic downturns in our area.

Prior to the merger with LWA #4, BEST, Inc., Illinois Valley Community College, Manpower, Inc. and some members of the local manufacturing community joined efforts in a customized training progr, 'Tech Reach', to address the lack of qualified candidates for openings in the participating manufacturing companies. Each partner had a specific role in this training program and though the results were mixed, the groundwork has been laid to replicate this effort in any of the targeted industries. With the expanded partnerships under WIOA, we believe that this type of customized training program would fit well into the demand-driven strategy for launching job seekers on their chosen career paths for all customers.

Work-based learning (WBL) activities offer a wonderful opportunity, both pre-classroom training and post classroom training, to learn about an occupation of interest prior to investing time and money only to find out that particular career will not meet a

customer's professional and/or personal goals. It also allows them put into practice those skills obtained through classroom training.

Work Experience prior to classroom training offers a customer the opportunity to gain valuable information about the skills needed as well as about the workplace culture of the specific occupation. The outcome would be either validation of a course of classroom training selected or an adjustment to one's career/occupational goals. As a post-classroom training internship, a customer gains valuable work experience in a new career/occupation that should shorten the time needed in gaining unsubsidized employment.

Transitional Jobs should be offered to Adults and Dislocated Workers with either little or no work history, or prolonged unemployment. In LWA #4, this WBL is designed to serve as the first step in transitioning into or back into the workforce. For Adult customers, and in particular those customers with whom we would do joint case management with our TANF, Transitional Jobs could be the first step in a career path that would be followed by a longer work experience position, or it could serve as an avenue of career exploration. For the dislocated worker who has exhausted his/her unemployment, it would be an avenue of career exploration into perhaps a whole new career path, but it would also serve the dual purpose of re-acclimating him/her back into the world of work after a prolonged absence. Similar to the adult customer, the dislocated worker could also transition into a full work experience. For either the adult or dislocated worker populations, a series of short term transitional jobs would be a good opportunity to "try-out" various occupations before committing to a course of study.

OJT, as stated earlier, should see a steady rise over the 4 year period of the initial local plan. In fact, we hope that by the end of year 4, with stable or improving economic conditions and the business climate as we know it today, we will see significant gains in our OJT activity, representing perhaps as much as half of our 40% direct training activities. Aggressive marketing, including the use of testimonials from employers who have hired workers through an OJT contract, will be needed. This marketing campaign will include educating our partners on assessing potential OJT opportunities for our common customers, as well as educating our customers on how to sell the program as an opportunity for a win-win situation for them and for the business.

Incumbent Worker Training is, and will continue to be, promoted and encouraged to all area businesses by BEST, Inc. Business Relations Representatives and those cooperating partners of the interagency business services team. Focus on continued training of the areas incumbent workers not only benefits the employee by giving them employable/marketable skills, but it also benefits the business by making their current workforce more effective and efficient during changes in technology and business practices.

- Provide a copy of the local Individual Training Account Policy and describe how training services outlined in WIOA Sec. 134 will be provided through the use of individual training accounts, including, if contracts for training services will be

used, how the use of such contracts will be coordinated with the use of individual training accounts under that chapter, and how the Local Board will ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training programs regardless of how the training services are to be provided (§ 679.560(b)(18)); and

- Provide a copy of the local training provider approval policy and procedures. Describe how the Local Board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services through the system and that the providers will meet the employment needs of local employers, workers and jobseekers.

The Individual Training Account Policies for LWA #4 is as follows:

Under WIOA, training is not entitlement. An Individual Training Account is the mechanism by which payment for training service is made. Local policy defines an ITA to include the cost of tuition, books and fees. Tools, uniforms, supplies, and supportive services are not included in the ITA. A dollar amount for an ITA is outlined in the local plan (currently \$13,000 per enrollment). A waiver of the maximum ITA dollar amount may be granted based on the following:

1. Prior customer experience with the particular provider and program.
2. Inter-agency or one-stop operator staff review committee approval.
3. Possible cost share arrangements with customer.

Duration of ITA activity is dictated by the cost limits rather than enrollment time

Customers must meet several criteria in order to be eligible for an ITA:

- They must meet provisions of WIOA eligibility regulations
- They must have been interviewed, evaluated, and assumed by a career advisor and be determined to be in need of training services. They must also have the skills and qualifications needed to successfully complete the selected training program.
- They must select a program of training that is directly linked to employment opportunities in the local area as demonstrated by labor market information. If the training area is not high growth, a letter must be obtained from an employer stating that the customer will be hired upon successful completion of training or the customer must agree to re-locate to a high growth area for the type of training which is being funded in order to obtain employment after training is completed.
- The training provider must be included on the state-approved list. If another LWIA certified a provider, local staff have the right to research performance information and other relevant information and deny an ITA if: the provider has been in business less than two years, previous customers' outcomes cannot be determined or do not indicate a high probability of success
- They must be unable to obtain grant assistance from other sources or need assistance beyond what is available to pay for the cost of training. A customer must apply for federal financial aid before being granted an ITA since WIOA funds are to be utilized as "last source". Short-term training areas like truck driving and certified nurses aid are exempted from this application process due to ineligibility for federal funds

because of a brief training period. If denial of funds is due to grades, this should be documented and the individual should resubmit the application when grades are sufficient. If a student is denied aid due to a previous default on a student loan or debt to a training institution, proof must be shown that a repayment plan is in place and is being fulfilled. If a Pell grant is awarded, a determination is made by the career advisor based on living expenses related to educational support to determine if the Pell monies or portion of it should be contributed toward books, tuition or fees.

- I. Describe a planned or existing approach regarding which local strategies will be financed by the transfer of Title IB workforce funds, including the maximum dollar amount and/or percentage that is authorized to be transferred on an annual basis:
- To transfer funds between the adult and dislocated worker funding streams.

Local strategies will differ from year to year depending upon a number of factors, e.g., employer and job seeker needs, amount of our allocation, locally and regionally-designed initiatives, etc. Therefore, the strategy will be determined on a timely basis and will be done in accordance with any and all policies that govern this option at the time of the transfer.

Consideration will include:

- o A determination that BEST, Inc. has a pool of eligible job seekers in one funding stream who either meet or have the potential to meet the identified needs of local employers, but does not have adequate funding in that specific account to cover the training activities.
 - o An assurance that the "transfer from" account will still have adequate financial resources to meet the individual customer/job seeker needs post-transfer.
 - o An assurance that the "transfer from" account will still have adequate financial resource to fund special projects and/or initiatives as identified in local/regional plans.
 - o An assurance that the "transfer from" account will still have adequate financial resource to fund its current and future obligations and/or commitments.
 - o An assurance that the transfer to/from complies with all state, federal and/or local policies and procedures.
- To use funds for incumbent worker training as outlined in WIOA Sec. 134(d)(4)(A)(i).

BEST, Inc. has used IWT strategies in the past and will certainly continue to utilize them in the future wherever and whenever deemed appropriate. We were pleased to see that WIOA allows for a more flexible use of funds for IWT opportunities that will be used to enhance the skills of current workers and as a result will enable businesses to be more competitive.

Consideration will include:

- o A determination by BEST, Inc., with agreement by NCI Works and the local elected officials, that there are local employers who are interested in and eligible to participate in an incumbent worker training event to the benefit of their workers.
 - o An assurance that the affected funding stream(s) will still have adequate financial resources to meet other individual customer/job seeker needs after IWT funding has been allocated.
 - o An assurance that the affected funding stream(s) will still have adequate financial resources to fund special projects and/or initiatives as identified in local/regional plans.
 - o An assurance that the affected funding stream(s) will still have adequate financial resource to fund its current and future obligations and/or commitments.
 - o An assurance that the allocation of funds to this activity complies with all state, federal and/or local policies and procedures
- To use funds for transitional jobs as outlined in WIOA Sec. 134(d)(5).

Again the strategy to determine the use of funds for transitional jobs will depend upon customer demand/need. Furthermore, depending upon total allocation, it may be necessary to weigh the need for this activity vs other work-based learning activities.

Consideration will include:

- o A determination that BEST, Inc. has a pool of eligible job seekers who would benefit from participation in this activity, as well as employers who would be willing to serve as worksites for these workers.
- o An assurance that the decision to allocate funds to this activity, including the amount to be allocated, was made only after weighing all options and potential outcomes, and concluding that this action would:
 - o Increase the chances of BEST, Inc.'s most in-need customers of successfully achieving their professional and personal goals by using this activity as a first step in their career paths; and,
 - o Increase BEST, Inc.'s chances of meeting their performance by generating more positive outcomes.
- o An assurance that allocation to this activity will still leave adequate financial resource in the affected accounts to fund special projects and/or initiatives as identified in local/regional plans.
- o An assurance that allocation to this activity will still leave adequate financial resource to fund its current and future obligations and/or commitments.
- o An assurance that allocation to this activity complies with all state, federal and/or local policies and procedures.

- To use funds for pay for performance contracts as outlined in WIOA Sec. 133(b)(2-3).

LWA #4 does not intend to use funds for pay for performance contracts at this time.

J. Provide a plan explaining for which region the LWIA will associate with.

At the time of this plan, the Department of Commerce has not released a policy relating to the selection of an Economic Development Region. Therefore, LWA #4 will remain in both EDRs #5 and #6.

CHAPTER 5: PERFORMANCE GOALS AND EVALUATION - LOCAL COMPONENT

The plan must include information on the actions the Local Board will take toward becoming or remaining a high performing board, consistent with the factors developed by the State Board. (WIOA Sec. 101(d)(6)) and (§ 679.560(b)(17))

A. Provide information regarding the projected local service levels.

N/A at this time.

B. Provide information regarding the local levels of performance negotiated with the Governor and chief elected official consistent with WIOA Sec. 116(c), to be used to measure the performance of the local area and to be used by the Local Board for measuring the performance of the local fiscal agent (where appropriate), eligible providers under WIOA Title I Subtitle B and the one-stop delivery system in the local area. (§ 679.560(b)(16))

- WIOA Common Measures
- Additional State Measures

Although PY ' 17 measures are not yet available, NCI works, the local board for LWIA #4, understands that in order to meet performance expectations of the one-stop delivery system, all partners must perform minimally at their respective level designated as "meeting performance goals". It will monitor the performance of eligible providers through its Oversight Committee as described in its by-laws. Specifically, each partner will be asked to provide a brief report of performance comparing planned and actual goal outcomes on a quarterly basis. If any of the approved levels of performance are not being met, a corrective plan of action will be submitted to the committee at its next regularly-scheduled meeting.

Furthermore, the board also recognizes that meeting/exceeding partner-specific performance measures depends upon the successful performance of the eligible providers and will therefore develop a reporting system that allows for provider accountability should the local area's performance not meet approved levels. Currently, the Oversight Committee reviews performance measures on a quarterly basis and reports their findings to the full board.

NCI Works does not intend to monitor the performance of the fiscal agent. Should additional State Measures be developed, the board will establish appropriate oversight activities accordingly.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS AND ASSURANCES -LOCAL COMPONENT

This chapter includes the technical requirements and assurances that are required by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. (WIOA Sec. 121 (c)(2)(iv) and MOU Section 9)

A. Fiscal Management

- Identify the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds described in WIOA Sec. 107(d)(12)(B)(i)(III), as determined by the chief elected official or the Governor under WIOA Sec. 107(d)(12)(B)(i). (§ 679.560(b)(14))
- Provide a copy of the local procurement policies and procedures and describe the competitive procurement process that will be used to award the subgrants and contracts for WIOA Title I activities. (§ 679.560(b)(15))
- Business Employment Skills Team, Inc. has been identified as the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds described in WIOA sec. 107(d)(12)(B)(i)(III), as determined by the chief elected officials for local workforce area #4 serving Bureau, Carroll, Jo Daviess, LaSalle, Lee, Ogle, Putnam, and Whiteside Counties under WIOA sec. 107(d)(12)(B)(i).
- A copy of the local procurement policies and procedures is attached. This includes the description of the competitive procurement process that is used to award the subgrant and contracts for WIOA title I activities.

B. Physical Accessibility

- Describe how entities within the one-stop delivery system, including one-stop operators and the one-stop partners, will comply with WIOA Sec. 188, if applicable, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology and materials for individuals with disabilities, including providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities. (§ 679.560(b)(5)(iii))

Local Workforce Area #4 is committed to making all services, facilities and program information accessible by complying with WIOA Section 188, applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) and all other applicable statutory and regulatory requirements. This applies to all programs, activities and services provided by or made available to potential employees, volunteers, contractors/service providers, licensees, customers and potential customers with the One Stop Delivery System.

Compliance monitoring is conducted at the local and state level to programs, services, technology and materials are accessible and available at the One Stop Center and affiliates

All local workforce system staff will be trained, either as an entire staff or through their respective agencies, in the provisions of WIOA Section 188 and the ADA of 1990 so that

when a customer with a disability visits the One Stop Center, all staff will have the understanding and knowledge of how to accommodate the individual(s) needs. Requests for assistance from one or more of the partners may be solicited depending upon the type of accommodation being requested.

- Provide copies of executed cooperative agreements (as applicable) which define how all local service providers, including additional providers, will carry out the requirements for integration of and access to the entire set of services available in the local one-stop system, with respect to efforts that will enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities. (§679.560(b)(13))
 - o This may include cross training of staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers and other efforts at cooperation, collaboration and coordination.

There are no cooperative agreements at this time.

C. Plan Development and Public Comment

- Describe the process used by the Local Board, consistent with WIOA Sec. 108(d), to provide a 30-day public comment period prior to submission of the plan, including an opportunity to have input into the development of the local plan, particularly for representatives of businesses, education and labor organizations. (§ 679.560(b)(19))
- Provide a summary of the public comments received and how this information was addressed by the CEO, partners and the Local Board in the final plan.

Developing the local plan has truly been a partnership effort. Through a series of meetings and conference calls, processes, procedures, service delivery and other critical components of the local plan were introduced, discussed and agreed to by all partners in the local workforce system in LWA #4. As parts of the plan were written, they were sent out to partners, NCI Works (the local workforce board for LWA #4) and CEOs for comment and input.

The NCI Works' Executive Committee met on behalf of NCI Works on January 24, 2017 to approve an amended version of the PY '16 plan so we could get it out for the 30-day public comment period and the full board approved the final PY '17 plan at their March 21, 2017 regular meeting with the caveat that if there were public comments that needed to be incorporated, they would take appropriate action at a special meeting in April. The CEOs approved an amended version of the PY '16 plan at their February 27, 2017 meeting so we could get it out for the 30-day public comment period and approved the final PY '17 plan at a special meeting on March 20, 2017 with the caveat that if there were public comments that needed to be incorporated, they would take appropriate action at their April 24, 2017 regular meeting. However, no public comments were received during the 30-day public comment period.

The legal notice for the local plan was published in local newspapers, and posted on the BEST, Inc. and NCI Works' websites March 15, 2017. In addition, hard copies of the plan

were available to the general public at the BEST, Inc. Administrative Office in Peru and in the BEST, Inc. Fiscal Office in Dixon.

Plan modifications will be done in accordance with state policy.

LWIA #4 Local Plan Attachments

CHAPTER 4: OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES -LOCAL COMPONENT

	Attachment Pages
B. • Local Supportive Service Policy attached	22 - 28
F. • Local Individual Training Account Policy attached	29
• Local Training Provider Approval Policy attached	30 - 33

CHAPTER 6: TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS AND ASSURANCES -LOCAL COMPONENT

A. • Local Procurement Policy attached	34 -36
Certificates of Publication attached	37 - 46

ADDENDUM

Compliance Policies
Core Service Policies
Intensive Service Policies
Training Services Policies
Supportive Service Policies
Exiting Policies
Fiscal Procedures Manual

Policy W..27
Supportive Service Policies

Supportive Service Policy

Policy Statement

1. If funds are available, WIA clients (except TAA) enrolled into training may be eligible to receive supportive services if the services are not available through another source.
2. A Supportive Service Needs Determination Form will be completed by a career advisor every semester.
3. Supportive Services will not exceed \$5,500.00 per fiscal year. A waiver may be granted if sufficient funds are available and approval is given by the One-Stop Operator Consortium.
4. Fiscal years run from July 1st to June 30th,
5. Participants may receive a statement of expenditures quarterly to let them know what has already been spent and how much money is still available.

Procedures

1. If eligible based on this form, staff will forward appropriate paperwork to Fiscal Unit.
2. *New Customer:* If the client is receiving supportive services for the first time you must send into the fiscal Supportive Service Needs Determination Form, "Google Maps" showing shortest route mileage, IWOS Printouts for Contact Information - Private Information; and Service Record Worksheet for the first 5 Fiscal Years.
3. *Returning Customers:* Supportive Service Needs Determination Form, and "Google Maps" showing shortest route mileage.

Kathy Day, Director

Date

09/16/14

BUSINESS EMPLOYMENT SKILLS TEAM, INC

Supportive Service Manual

TRANSPORTATION:

Clients who are enrolled in a WIA activity and are eligible may receive transportation assistance.

1. Attendance sheets and travel vouchers are submitted to a career advisor according to the Supportive Service Pay Schedule.
2. Client will be reimbursed \$.35 per mile for round trip mileage. If there is a break of 3 or more hours between classes and the client leaves the training facility, he/she may be reimbursed for 2 round trips. Reimbursement will be according to "Google Maps". In addition BEST, Inc. may reimburse documented parking fees. Transportation payments are made directly to clients on a biweekly schedule, upon receipt of an attendance record signed by the instructor(s) and the participant along with any other required documentation. Vouchers, which are more than one pay period late, will not be paid.
3. Mileage reimbursement is included in the \$5,500.00 supportive service cap.

CHILD CARE:

Clients who are enrolled in a WIA activity may be eligible to receive childcare assistance after a denial letter is received from 4 C's.

1. Attendance sheets and childcare vouchers are submitted to a career advisor according to the Supportive Service Pay Schedule.
2. Client will be reimbursed 100% of licensed daycare provider charges. Non-licensed providers will be reimbursed at:
 - a. \$3.00/hr, for one child
 - b. \$4.00/hr, for two or more children
3. Travel time will be paid using "Google Maps".
4. Costs incurred during semester breaks (Christmas and summer) are not funded by BEST, Inc. Clients should use exempt days or Pell money to cover these charges.
5. Childcare payments are made directly to clients on a biweekly schedule, upon receipt of an attendance record signed by the instructor(s) and the participant along with other required documentation.
6. It is the client's responsibility to pay the childcare provider in a timely manner. Non-payment of the childcare provider is considered fraudulent as federal funds were paid for that purpose.
7. Childcare reimbursement is included in the \$5,500.00 supportive service cap.

MEDICAL SUPPORTIVE SERVICES:

Clients who are enrolled in a WIA activity are eligible to receive assistance with medical related expenses.

1. BEST, Inc. may respond to a request for assistance with shots, physical exams, eye exams, eye glasses, etc.
2. Participants are to contact their career advisor before receiving services.

3. These costs are included in the \$5,500.00 supportive service cap.

OTHER SUPPORTIVE SERVICES;

Clients who are enrolled in a WIA activity may be eligible to receive other assistance.

1. BEST, Inc. may also respond to a request for assistance with other expenses necessary for continued program participation.
2. Participants are to contact their career advisor for approval prior to receiving services.
3. Other supportive services are not to exceed \$500.00 per fiscal year and are included in the \$5,500.00 supportive service cap.

If car repair you must submit proof that car is registered to the participant and blue book price exceeds cost of repair.

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Supportive Service Needs Determination

Mileage/Child Care

If another agency is providing the supportive services, do not complete this form!

Participant's Name: _____ SSN: -XX- Title: _____

Program: _____ start Date: _____ End Date: _____

Part A: Mileage - enter the number of round trip miles for each day the participant will attend training.

Monday _____ Tuesday _____ Wednesday _____ Thursday _____ Friday _____ Saturday _____

From: _____ To: _____

(Full Address)

(Training Facility Name/Address)

Total Amount of mileage per week period: _____ x .35 x #Weeks _____ = \$ _____ Total

If mileage will change during the semester please list start date along with new mileage. start Date: _____

Mileage: Monday _____ Tuesday _____ Wednesday _____ Thursday _____ Friday _____ Saturday _____

From: _____ To: _____

(Full Address)

(Training Facility Name/Address)

Total Amount of mileage per week period: _____ x .35 x #Weeks _____ = \$ _____ Total

Part B: Child care (we do not pay copay) Copy of 4 C's Oenl mwt be included with this form.

Number Of Dependents requiring child care: _____ Hourly Rate: _____ Licensed: ☐ yes ☐ No

After determining necessary mileage expense does the participant have any disposable source of income for mileage and/or child care?
☐ yes ☐ No

supportive service Fraud and Abuse

Any evidence of fraud, abuse or the supplying of false information may result in immediate termination of all services. Additional consequences, including prosecution may occur. You may also be required to pay back all funds provided by BEST. For example, questionable Initials or signatures on attendance sheets will be investigated. If it is found that initials or signatures were forged, you may be terminated immediately. You may be required to pay back any moneys paid to you or on your behalf (i.e. tuition, books) related to the period in question.

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

career Actvtsor Signature: _____ Date: _____

Comments:

Business Employment Skills Team, Inc.

Mileage Reimbursement

Client's Name: -- -- -- -- -- Title: -- -- -- -- --

Pay Period: From: _____ To: _____

DAY	DATE	DESTINATION	TOTAL MILES
SU			
M			
T			
W			
TH			
F			
SA			
SU			
M			
T			
W			
TH			
F			
SA			
Total Mileage for the Pay Period			

Client's Signature: _____ Date: _____

career Advisor's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Account Number: _____	Fiscal Use Only: _____
Ch/Id Care Amount: _____	Mileage Amount: _____
Check Number: _____	Approved: _____

Business Employment Skills Team, Inc.

Child Care Billing

Client's Name:

SS# XXX XII

Tit,,

Children's Names:	Age:	Circle Full or PartTime

Pay Period: From: To:

Child Care Provider:

# Children	Date: Monday	Date: Tuesday	Date: Wednesday	Date: Thursday	Date: Friday	Total Hours
Travel Time						
Total Hours						

# Children	Date: Monday	Date: Tuesday	Date: Wednesday	Date: Thursday	Date: Friday	Total Hours
Travel Time						
Total Hours						

Comments:

Child Care Provider Signature:

Date:

Client Signature:

Date:

Career Advisor's Signature:

Date:

Business Employment Skills Team

Attendance Sheet

Client Name: SS#xxx-xx Title: Pay Period: From To:

INSTRUCTORS: Only complete days when client is in attendance and sign below to certify that attendance is correct.

Class:		Class:		Class:		Class:	
Day:		Day:		Day:		Day:	
Time:		Time:		Time:		Time:	
Instructor:		Instructor:		Instructor:		Instructor:	
Day	Date	Day	Date	Day	Date	Day	Date
Instructors Signature:		Instructors Signature:		Instructors Signature:		Instructors Signature:	

Clients Signature: te: Career Advisor Signature: Date:

INDIVIDUAL TRAINING ACCOUNT POLICY

Policy Statement

Customers who are eligible for Training Services must have the necessary skills and qualifications in order to find self-sufficiency employment. Any participant enrolled is has a per participant cap of \$13,000. This includes required costs of tuition, books, fees and required materials. The cost of required training materials must be reasonable. See the limits on training material costs as per Policy W 21. A waiver of the maximum ITA dollar amount may be granted based on the following:

1. . Prior client experience with the particular provider and program.
2. Interagency review committee approval.
3. Possible cost share arrangements with client.

Procedures

1. Staff will gather the necessary documentation to verify that customer has completed Intensive Services.
- i. --Staff will work closely with the client to complete all mandatory Training Services.
3. Staff will verify that the training selected for that client is reasonable (based on cost and suitability of client to successfully complete), and appears on the Approved Training Provider list.
4. Staff will determine amount of assistance each semester by dividing \$13,000 by the number of terms needed in order to complete training program.
5. Staff will follow Policy W-32 and W-33 when enrolling into classroom training and W-20 when issuing ITA's
6. Place copies of documentation in customer file.
7. Staff will enter the appropriate services on to IWDS system.

Approved:

Pam Furlan, Executive Director
LWIB! Programs

Date

05/18/2015

Provider Certification and Customer Choice

POLICY

While the eligibility determination procedures themselves (as well as the extent of required performance and cost information) are determined by the Governor and the State Board, several aspects of the provider certification system are to be developed locally.

Northwest Central Illinois Works will publicize the new WIA certification process to the training provider community as widely as possible. Local newspapers, the internet and direct mailings targeted to training providers will be among the methods used for reaching this audience. Service providers who express a desire to be considered will be sent a letter detailing the information required. Northwest Central Illinois Works will follow the State of Illinois Training Provider Certification Policy for initial eligibility except where noted. Northwest Central Illinois Works will accept hard copy training provider applications if the potential provider is unable to complete the application on line.

PROCEDURES

Provider Certification

1. Northwest Central Illinois Works will require applicants to document at least one of the following state criteria in their applications for initial provider certification:
 - The provider is currently approved or has received accreditation under an existing process such as that offered by the Northwest Central Association, the Illinois Community College Board, or the Illinois State Board of Education.
 - The program for which certification is being sought has been approved by the accrediting body (Illinois Community College Board or Illinois State Board of Education) or has been recognized by the industry as meeting the standards necessary for approval or accreditation.
 - The provider is receiving or has received funds for a program for which certification is being sought under a grant, contract or voucher from an agency within the Illinois workforce development system within 3 years of the date of application.
2. If a provider cannot meet any of the above criteria, the following criteria will be:

- The training provider must demonstrate to the local workforce investment board that the program for which it is seeking certification responds to employer demand through a feasibility study of the area, labor market information, letters of support from employers.
 - The training provider seeking certification has to be in business for at least 2 years, or can demonstrate significant, documented experience of key staff which may substitute for this requirement.
 - Training area should be in a high growth field.
 - The training provider that is seeking certification may be required to appear before the Accountability Committee.
 - The Accountability Committee and/or support staff may interview past participants for input on training received.
 - The Accountability Committee and/or support staff may conduct on-site visits to the provider wishing to become certified.
 - Other criteria may be applied as deemed appropriate by the Evaluation and Analysis Committee.
3. Furthermore, each applicant will need to provide:
- The number of years it has been in operation
 - The date that each program for which certification is being sought was established
 - The cost of each program for which certification is being sought and briefly explain what is included in that cost figure
 - Measures of performance as required by procedures established by the Governor
4. As another condition for initial eligibility, providers must agree to submit appropriate information on all programs for which they are seeking certification to the Illinois Workforce Development System (IWDS).
5. During the subsequent eligibility phase, all programs will be subject to State eligibility criteria. At this time, no additional program-specific performance information is required by Northwest Central Illinois Works.
6. Application form and instructions included in Appendix A.
7. Each provider will be notified by Northwest Central Illinois Works whether it was approved or not approved to be included on the local list and subsequently the statewide list. Certified providers/programs and relevant information will then be forwarded to the Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity (IDCEO) who maintains the statewide list through the IWDS. Furthermore, all training programs approved by Northwest Central Illinois Works will be considered approved programs for the purpose of individuals' 500(c)5 waivers.

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8. If Northwest Central Illinois Works denies initial eligibility certification to a training provider and/or any of the programs for which it sought certification, it will notify the affected provider of its decision. The provider may then appeal the decision according to the local Request for Reconsideration Procedures available through the Business Employment Skills Team, Inc. Office.

Individual Training Accounts

The State list of eligible providers of training services will be made available to customers through the IWDS. Customers can access the system at <https://iwds.dceo.illinois.gov/iwds/iwdshome.html> by using the computers in the resource room at the IETC and satellite offices.

1. Locally providers can be approved and referred to the state list on an ongoing basis as opposed to once or twice a year. Participation will need to be encouraged due to a limited number of providers in the local area. Locally, training providers will be allowed to apply at any time.
2. In order to expedite the certification process, Northwest Central Illinois Works has authorized staff to approve training providers/programs on its behalf provided they meet the established criteria for certification. At each regularly scheduled meeting, staff must then notify the Board of all providers and programs that have been approved.

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The entity that provides services under each applicable Title I program will enter into agreements with approved training service providers. Part of the agreement will include a discussion of customer referral arrangements and a copy of the voucher for the period covered, and the authority to invoice for these services when delivered. The agreement will also address payment arrangements. Linkages have been developed with most of the training providers in the area which have resulted in establishing mutually agreeable payment arrangements. The specific documents and forms will be available with operating procedures at the office of the applicable Title I program.

The following policies regarding Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) have been approved by Northwest Central Illinois Works:

- Service providers geographically located within LWIA 4 must initially apply for certification to Northwest Central Illinois Works. However, if rejected by NCI Works, or if its request for certification is not acted upon within a 30-day period, the provider may then apply for certification to another local workforce investment board. Similarly, a service provider not geographically located within LWIA may apply for approval to North Central Illinois Works if its request for certification was either rejected or not acted upon within a 30 day period by its primary local workforce investment board. In any case, once a provider is certified and included on the statewide list, it is then eligible to receive local WIA ITA funds.

- ITAs will cover tuition, books and required fees.
- A dollar cap of \$13,000 per WIA enrollment will be placed on an ITA. These caps will be reviewed annually to take into account tuition and other increases.
- A waiver policy of the ITA cap will require each case to be reviewed by an inter-agency group with sign-off by the chairperson of the Oversight Committee or a Northwest Central Illinois Works officer for those applications for waiver that are approved by the staff committee. Consideration will be given to prior client experience with the particular provider and program and possible cost share arrangements with the client.
- No time limit for using the ITAs is being established, since WIA has a strong work emphasis and students may be encouraged to work part-time.
- In order to apply for an ITA, an individual who has defaulted on a student loan(s) or may still owe money to a training institution must show proof that a repayment plan has been agreed to and is being fulfilled.

Funding for training purposes shall be part of the budgeting and planning process of the agency operating the programs with the plan then approved by North Central Illinois Works. An adequate portion of adult and dislocated worker training funds will be budgeted and used for ITAs. Some portion of training funds will be set aside for OJT and other types of training program uses if deemed appropriate. LWA 4 will put forth its best effort to comply with the 40% training requirement as described in WIA Policy Letter NO. 07-PL-40 as it does with all DOL and DCEO policies, notices and memos.

A. PROCUREMENT POLICIES

GENERAL POLICY

All procurement transactions for BEST, Inc. shall be conducted in a manner that provides the maximum extent possible, for open and free competition. Policies and procedures governing procurement shall ensure that goods and services are obtained in an effective and efficient manner, consistent with the provision of applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules and regulations.

PROCUREMENT AUTHORITY/DELEGATION OF RESPONSIBILITY

The Executive Director Fiscal Operations of BEST, Inc. has the authority to approve single purchases up to \$5,000 following the agency's procurement and purchasing policies, with notification to the Corporate Board at the next regularly-scheduled meeting. Notification shall include the amount of the purchase, and the documented results of the procurement process. Any single purchase over \$5,000 must be approved by the Corporate Board in advance, and in accordance with the agency's procurement policies and procedures. The Executive Director of Fiscal Operations is authorized to sign all contract transactions, unless otherwise required by federal or state authority.

MAINTENANCE OF A BIDDER'S LIST

A "bidder's list", containing the names and addresses of potential service providers that have made a written request to be placed on such a list, shall be maintained.

\$qliQiWJQ!!_Afly_iQ_M4J,_t,XJti ts *MX* PrnpQsalpftQl@g**sb**.al_b sentto all potentiaLsice providers on the bidder's list, as appropriate, according to the type of goods and services being sought.

Service providers located in the Workforce Investment Area of Bureau, Carroll, Jo Daviess, LaSalle, Lee, Ogle, Putnam and Whiteside counties will be given priority as appropriate.

Additionally, efforts will be made to utilize small business and women and minority-owned sources of goods and services.

METHODS OF PROCUREMENT

Procurement shall be made by one of the following methods described below:

Competitive Negotiation - Invitations for the solicitation of proposal, with complete Request for Proposal (RFP) packages shall be sent to potential service providers contained on the established bidder's list, as appropriate according to the type of goods and services to be procured. Notice of solicitation of RFP's may also be published in local newspapers.

Requests for Proposal shall contain a clear and adequate description of the goods and services to be procured; technical requirements, outcomes, and specifications which bidders must fulfill; and factors to be used in evaluating bids or proposals.

The Northwest Central Illinois Workforce Investment Board shall review all proposals received in response to the solicitation.

Copies of the proposals and recommendations shall be given to the appropriate Committee for RFP, the Workforce Investment Board or Youth Council for review and concurrence. Each appropriate committee and the Executive Director of Fiscal Operations will make a resolution to the full board for action.

All selected bidders will be required to participate in negotiations with the Executive Director Fiscal Operations and appropriate Committee members. The award of any contract or agreement shall be contingent upon the satisfactory completion of negotiations and the continued availability of funding.

Unsuccessful bidders shall be notified in writing, within thirty days of the final decision.

Non-Competitive Negotiations (Sole/One Source) - Non-competitive negotiation may be used when the awarding of a contract through the RFP process is not feasible. Circumstances include:

Goods and services to be procured are available only from a single source;

Urgency for the goods and services will not permit an extended time frame necessary for the RFP process;

After solicitation of bids through the RFP process, competition is determined to be inadequate.

Small Purchases, Consultant or Professional Services - Relates to the procurement of services, supplies, or equipment (which are exempt from other procurement requirements) costing in the aggregate of \$25,000 or less.

- a. Purchases under \$500.00 do not require quotes from vendors.
- b. Purchases between \$500 and \$1000 require three oral quotes to be documented on a request for quote form. If three vendors are not available, this should be documented. A Purchase Order is required on equipment purchases of \$500.00 or more.
- c. Purchases for equipment and services over \$1000 will require three written quotes unless sole source justification is provided. Equipment over \$5000 must have prior DCEO approval. Items that are available as a result of federal, state or local government procurement procedures can be purchased without three quotes.

- d. For services over \$25,000, a Request for Proposal is required. Items that are available as a result of federal, state or local government bidding procedures can be purchased without three bids.

A Small Procurement Solicitation Form must be completed for small purchases/procurement. The form requires listing the material, goods or services; quantity; names of vendors; date contacted; person spoken to; price quote; explanation of service and notification method & date of acceptance or refusal; vendor selected and reason for selection. Final cost must be reasonable and necessary. Selection is not necessarily based on final cost alone. The quality of goods and services is also taken into consideration and also what a prudent person would purchase under similar circumstances. The Solicitation Form also requires the signature of procurer and Director along with the date.

Out-of-Pocket: With prior permission of the Executive Director Fiscal Operations, staff will be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses incurred for purchasing supplies of \$100.00 or less. In addition to these procedures, the procedures for sealed bids and all procurement shall be done in compliance with the Federal Regulation Provisions @29CFR95.40 through 95.48 or OMB Circular 110.

PURCHASE ORDER PROCEDURE

(All equipment, materials, and supplies ordered must be requested via a Purchase Request and must be approved by the Financial Director prior to ordering. The person requesting the equipment, materials and or supplies will complete the form in its entirety. If procurement (including state approval when required) has not been completed previously, it must be done. The procurement form is sent to fiscal to be attached to invoice before payment.

Equipment, materials, and/or supplies are then ordered per the Purchase Order form. Receipt of the order is verified by the staff person at the office where order is received. Packing slip is signed by employee receiving order and sent to fiscal to be attached to invoice before payment. Any discrepancy in the order is report to the Fiscal Dept. All discrepancies are resolved prior to payment.

Publisher's Certificate

LEGAL NOTICE

ATTENTION: Businesses, Local Education Agencies, Community-Based Organizations, Local Labor Organizations and Interested Persons:

The Chief Elected Officials for Local Workforce Area #4 and North-West Central IL Works (NCI Works) announces the availability of the Great Northwest Economic Development Regional Plan (Economic Development Region #6) and the Local Workforce Plan of the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) for public review and comments. The Local and Regional Plans have been developed to provide a variety of

workforce training services for adults and youth under WIOA for Program Year 2017 (July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018). Under the Local Plan, workforce training and services are provided to an 8-county area which includes: Bureau, Carroll, Jo Daviess, LaSalle, Lee, Ogle, Putnam & Whiteside Counties. Regional strategies have been developed and workforce training will be implemented for a 10-county area that includes Bureau, Carroll, Henry, Jo Daviess, LaSalle, Lee, Mercer, Putnam, Rock Island & Whiteside Counties under the Regional Plan.

Detailed copies of these Plans are available for public review Monday through Friday during regular business hours (8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.) beginning March 15, 2017 at the following Business Employment Skills Team, Inc. office locations: IL Valley Community College, 815 N. Orlando Smith Avenue, Room C328, Ogleby, IL and 1690 S. Galena Avenue, Dixon, IL. These Plans are also posted to the NCI Works (www.nciworks.org) and Business Employment Skills Team, Inc. (www.best-inc.org) websites. EOE

I, the undersigned, do hereby certify that I am an agent of the Ottawa Publishing Company, L.L.C., a true copy of which is hereto attached, relating to the matter of the undersigned, do hereby certify that I am an agent of the Ottawa Publishing Company, L.L.C., a true copy of which is hereto attached, relating to the matter of

I further certify that said newspaper is a newspaper as defined in an Act to revise the law in relation to notices as amended by Act approved July 17, 1959-III Compiled Statutes, Chap. 715, Sec. 5/1 and 515.

I do further certify that as such officer and authorized agent of the said Ottawa Publishing Company, L.L.C., that the matter or notice, a true copy of which is hereto attached, relating to the matter of

Legal Notice

The Chief Elected Officials

was published 1 time in each week for 1 successive weeks in said newspaper, the first insertion being on the 15th day of March 2017 and the last insertion being on the 15th day of March 2017.

OTTAWA PUBLISHING COMPANY, L.L.C.

Publisher of The Times
110 W. Jefferson St
Ottawa, Ill. 61350

By

Cynthia L. Lisk
Agent of said

(Seal)

OTTAWA PUBLISHING COMPANY, L.L.C.

Advertising Fee \$161.41

Received Payment \$0.00

CERTIFICATE OF PUBLICATION

STATE OF ILLINOIS }
County of Jo Daviess, ss.

We do hereby certify that we are the publishers of The Gazette
a secular weekly newspaper regularly published in the City of
Galena, County of Jo Daviess and State of Illinois for more
than six months prior to the first publication of this
and of general circulation in said county of Jo Daviess, State
of Illinois, that the affixed

has been published for successive week/s
said newspaper, the first insertion being on the day of
and the last on the day of

day , 2017 , for which we charge
\$ 11.00

Case#:

tk l !

Business Manager

CERTIFICATE OF PUBLICATION

STATE OF ILLINOIS
COUNTY OF LA SALLE

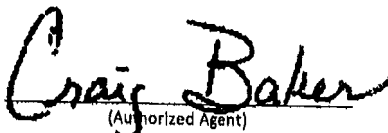
No. 24587

This Is to certify that a notice, a true copy of which Is hereto attached, was published In the News Tribune, a secular newspaper with one edition only on the date of each publication, of general circulation, In the Counties. of LaSalle, Bureau, Marshall, Lee, Putnam, and the adjacent areas, printed and published daily, except Sunday, In the City of LaSalle, County of LaSalle, and State of Illinois, by The Daily News Tribune, Inc., a corporation organized and existing under the laws of the State of Wyoming, and duly qualified to do business in the State of Illinois 1 times for successive Weeks; that the date of the first publication was the 15th day of March 2017, and the last publication In such newspaper was the 15th day of March 2017,

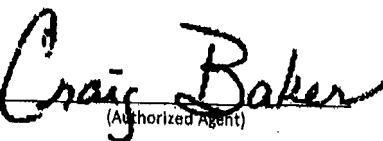
It is further certified that said newspaper, News Tribune, has been continuously published daily, except Sunday, for a period of more than one year prior to and immediately preceding said notice therein, and that the person who signs the name of said company to this certificate Is as It appears by the records of said company, Its duly authorized agent for such purpose.

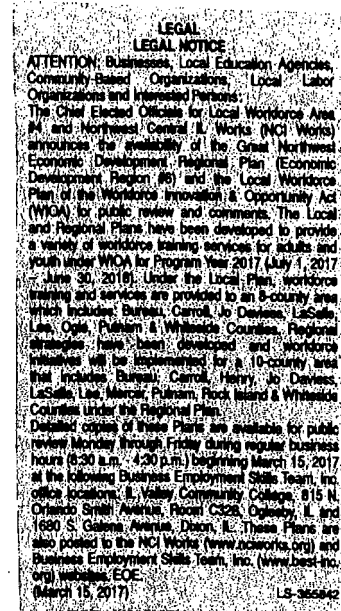
Dated In the City of LaSalle this 16th day of March 2017.

Business Employment Skills Team
Publication Fee: \$110.25

By 
(Authorized Agent)

Received Payment:

By 
(Authorized Agent)



No. Cioq=-

Certificate of Publication

State of Illinois,SS.

Lee County

This is to Certify that a notice, a true copy of which is hereto attached, was published in the Dixon Telegraph, a secular newspaper of general circulation published daily in the City of Dixon, In the County of Lee and State of Illinois, by B.F. Shaw Printing Company, a corporation existing under the laws of said State, once each week for 1 sucessive weeks; that the date of the first paper containing said notice was the 15th day of March, 2017, and that the date of the last paper containing said notice was the 15th day of March, 2017


And this is to further certify that said newspaper have been regularly publishe.d for one year prior to the first publication of said notice therein, and that the person who signs the name of said company to this certificate is as appears by the records of said company, it is duly authorized agent for such purpose

Dated at Dixon, in said county, This 15th day of March, 2017

Publication Fee \$100. 10

Received payment
Dixon Telegraph

Dixon Telegraph

by: 
Authorized Agent

by: _____

LEGAL NOTICE

ATTENTION: Businesses, Local Education Agencies, Community-Based Organizations, Local Labor Organizations and Interested Persons:

The Chief Elected Officials for Local Workforce Area #4 and Northwest Central IL Works (NCI Works) announces the availability of the Great Northwest Economic Development Regional Plan (Economic Development Region #6) and the Local Workforce Plan of the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) for public review and comments. The Local and Regional Plans have been developed to provide a variety of workforce training services for adults and youth under WIOA for Program Year 2017 (July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018). Under the Local Plan, workforce training and services are provided to an 8-county area which includes: Bureau, Carroll, Jo Daviess, LaSalle, Lee, Ogle, Putnam & Whiteside Counties. Regional strategies have been developed and workforce initiatives will be implemented for a 10-county area that includes Bureau, Carroll, Henry, Jo Daviess, LaSalle, Lee, Mercer, Putnam, Rock Island & Whiteside Counties under the Regional Plan.

Detailed copies of these Plans are available for public review Monday through Friday during regular business hours (8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.) beginning March 15, 2017 at the following Business Employment Skills Team, Inc. office locations: IL Valley Community College, 815 N. Orlando Smith Avenue, Room C328, Oglesby, IL and 1680 S. Galena Avenue, Dixon, IL. These Plans are also posted to the NCI Works (www.nciworks.org) and Business Employment Skills Team, Inc. (www.best-inc.org) websites. EQE.

LEGAL NOTICE

ATTENTION: Businesses, Local Education Agencies, Community-Based Organizations, Local Labor Organizations and Interested Persons: The Office of Public Officials of Local Workforce Area #1 and Northwest Central II Workforce Area announces the availability of the Great Northwest Economic Development Regional Plan (Economic Development Region 10) and the Local Workforce Plan of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) for public review and comments. The Local and Regional Plans have been developed to provide a variety of workforce training services for adults and youth under WIOA in Program Year 2017 (July 1, 2017 - June 30, 2018) under the Great Plan workforce training and services are provided to an 8-county area which includes Bureau, Carroll, Davidson, LaSalle, Lee, Pope, Putnam & Whiteside Counties. Regional strategies have been developed and workforce initiatives will be implemented for a 10-county area that includes Bureau, Carroll, Henry, Lee, Davidson, LaSalle, Lee, Pope, Putnam & Whiteside Counties. The initiative will provide training and services to the workforce in the Great Northwest Economic Development Region 10. Detailed copies of these plans are available for public review Monday through Friday during regular business hours (8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.) beginning March 16, 2017 at the following locations: Employment Skills Training Office, 1001 E. Valley Court, Suite 100, P.O. Box 100, Smith Avenue, Room C328, Green Hill and 1001 E. Valley Court, Suite 100, Smith Avenue, Room C328. Plans are also posted to the WIOA website (www.wioa.org) and Business Employment Skills Team, Inc. (www.best-inc.org) website. EDCI (www.edci.org) March 16, 2017

BUREAU COUNTY REPUBLICAN

800 ACE ROAD
PRINCETON, IL 61366

Publisher's Certificate of Publication

I, Sam Fisher, do hereby certify that I am the publisher of the Bureau County Republican a tri-weekly secular newspaper of general circulation published in the City of Princeton, in the county of Bureau and State of Illinois, and which, has been so published for more than 12 months prior to the first publication of hereunto annexed notice or advertisement, relating to the matter of

ZZL BUSINESS EMPLOYMENT SKILLS TEAM WORKFORCE

was published in said newspaper 1 time(s),
commencing 15th March 2017
and ending 15th March 2017

which were the dates of first and last insertions. I further certify that said newspaper is a newspaper as defined by the terms and conditions of Chapter 100, paragraph 1 et. seq. Illinois Revised Statutes 1981.

Given under my hand at Princeton, Illinois



Sam R Fisher, Publisher

Date 15 March 2017

LEGAL NOTICE

ATTENTION: Businesses, Local Education Agencies, Community-Based Organizations, Local Labor Organizations and Interested Persons:

The Chief Elected Officials for Local Workforce Area #4 and Northwest Central IL Works (NCI Works) announces the availability of the Great Northwest Economic Development Regional Plan (Economic Development Region #6) and the Local Workforce Plan of the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) for public review and comments. The Local and Regional Plans have been developed to provide a variety of workforce training services for adults and youth under WIOA for Program Year 2017 (July 1, 2017 - June 30, 2018). Under the Local Plan, workforce training and services are provided to an 8-county area which includes: Bureau, Carroll, Jo Daviess, LaSalle, Lee, Ogle, Putnam & Whiteside Counties. Regional strategies have been developed and workforce initiatives will be implemented for a 10-county area that includes Bureau, Carroll, Henry, Jo Daviess, LaSalle, Lee, Mercer, Putnam, Rock Island & Whiteside Counties under the Regional Plan.

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Published in the Bureau County Republican Mar. 15, 2017.

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which are the dates of the first and last papers
containing the same.

Given under my hand this 15th

day of March, 20 17

Edith W. Watson

Printer's File \$ (lf.J./

"*tj:

\$ _____ being the nmount in full of
our fees for publishing the annexed notice.

MI, Carroll, IL, _____, 20 _____

WIOA Plans Available for Public Comment & Underemployed Survey

—best-inc.org/new-and-upcoming/

Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) Program Year 2017 Plans are now available for Public Review through April 15, 2017.

- Local Workforce Area #4 Local Plan
- Great Northwest Economic Development Region Regional Plan
- IL Northern Stateline Economic Development Region WIOA Plan

Underemployed Survey

Northwest Central IL Works (NCIWorks) has contracted with Thomas P. Miller & Associates (TPMA) to conduct a survey designed to capture data on the underemployed workforce in our region. What we learn about these individuals could be attractive to companies that are looking at our counties (Bureau, Carroll, Jo Daviess, LaSalle, Lee, Ogle, Putnam & Whiteside) to either locate or expand their operations, and are concerned about the availability of an adequate pool of potential applicants. Your participation in this survey is important to us. Please click on the link below to complete the survey before April 10. If you have any questions, please contact our office at 815-224-0375.

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/5CNZZ8R_Individual_Underemployed_Survey

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WIOA Plan

nciworks.org/wioa-plan/

Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) Program Year 2017 Plans are now available for Public Review through April 13, 2017.

- Local Workforce Area #4 Local Plan
- Great Northwest Economic Development Region Regional Plan
- Northern Stateline Economic Development Region WIOA Plan



TRAINING • CONNECTING • DEVELOPING ILLINOIS' WORKFORCE

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Oglesby, IL 61348
Fax: (815) 223-1385
E-mail: nciworks@best-inc.org

(815) 224..0375

Contact Person

Pam Furlan,
Executive Director, LWIB
E-mail: E-mail Pam

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