

Region VII Workforce Development Board Strategic Plan Modification

July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2024

Eastern Panhandle Counties of

**Berkeley * Grant * Hampshire * Hardy * Jefferson
* Mineral * Morgan * Pendleton**

**Region VII Workforce Development Board
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**Mr. Scotty Miley
Chief Local Elected Official**

**Ms. Layne Diehl
Chairperson**

**Mr. Thomas J. Van Meter
Executive Director**

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ATTACHMENTS:

- A. Local Elected Officials Agreement and Memorandum of Understanding between Local Elected Officials and the Region VII Workforce Development Board**
- B. Region VII Workforce Development Board Bylaws**
- C. Contract for Fiscal/Administrative Services between Eastern West Virginia Community Action Agency, Inc. and the Region VII Workforce Development Board**
- D. Meeting Schedules**
- E. Region VII Organizational Chart**
- F. Region VII WDB Procurement Policy**
- G. Region VII WDB Priority of Service Policy**
- H. Region VII WDB Incumbent Worker Training Policy**
- I. Region VII WDB Supportive Service Policy**
- J. Region VII WDB Low Income for Eligibility Policy**
- K. Region VII WDB WIOA Youth Additional Assistance Policy**
- L. Region VII WDB Individual Training Account (ITA) Policy**
- M. Region VII WDB Monitoring Policy**
- N. Region VII WDB Grievance Policy and Procedures**
- O. EO Discrimination Complaint Policy and Procedures**
- P. Region VII WDB On-the-Job Training (OJT) Policy**
- Q. Region VII WDB Youth Services Policy**
- R. Region VII WDB Transitional Jobs Policy**
- S. Region VII Workforce Development Board Manual**
- T. WorkForce West Virginia One-Stop Career Center Business Plans and Partner Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs)**
- U. Memorandum of Understanding between the Region VII Workforce Development Board and the One-Stop Management Consortiums**

- V. Eastern West Virginia Community Action Agency, Inc. Accounting & Financial Policies and Procedures Manual
- W. Conflict of Interest Statement
- X. West Virginia Occupational Projections Statewide 2016-2026
- Y. Region VII Demand Occupation Listing 2016-2026
- Z. West Virginia Demand Occupation Listing 2016-2026
- AA. West Virginia Occupational Projections Workforce Development Area 7 2016-2026
- BB. Cost Allocation Plan
- CC. Contract and Memorandum of Understanding between Region VII Workforce Development Board and United Way of the Eastern Panhandle
- DD. Region VII Training Provider Memorandums of Understanding
- EE. Region VII Workforce Development Board and Local Elected Officials Roster
- FF. Interagency Collaborative Team Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)
- GG. Public Comments
- HH. Procurement and Selection of Request-for-Proposals Policy
- II. One-Stop Chartering Criteria
- JJ. Contract for One-Stop Operator Services between Eastern West Virginia Community Action Agency, Inc. and the Region VII Workforce Development Board
- KK. Regional Policies – www.wvregion7workforce.org

INTRODUCTION

These guidelines direct the local plan submitted by your area under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. WIOA requires each local workforce development board (LWDB or local board) to develop and submit, in partnership with the local chief elected official, a comprehensive four-year plan to the state. The WIOA four-year plan will be effective July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2024. The law emphasizes the importance of collaboration and transparency in the development and submission of the plan. Affected entities and the public must have an opportunity to provide input in the development of the plan. The local board must make the plan available through electronic means and in open meetings in order to ensure transparency to the public.

The LWDBs must provide leadership in assembling their plan. LWDBs also should seek broad stakeholder involvement in the development of their local plan. Local elected officials, local workforce development board members, core program partners and mandatory one-stop partners must be an integral part of the planning process. WIOA encourages an enhanced, integrated system by including new core programs in its planning and performance requirements. Each plan will address how the LWDB will coordinate service delivery with the new core programs of Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS), Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR), and Adult Education (AE).

Each LWDB's plan should be based on the current and projected needs of the workforce development system, placing an increased emphasis on coordination and collaboration at all levels to ensure a seamless system for job seekers, including those with disabilities, and employers. The plan must include an identification of the education and skill needs of the workforce and employment needs of the local area and include an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of services to address these identified needs. The assessment must include the best available information or evidence of effectiveness and performance information for specific service models as well as a plan to improve the effectiveness of such programs by adopting proven or promising practices as a part of the local vision. The LWDB should provide a complete view of the system-wide needs of the local workforce development area.

The plan must address how the LWDB will foster strategic alignment, improve service integration and ensure that the workforce system is industry-relevant; responding to the economic needs of the local workforce development area and matching employers with skilled workers. The local plan must lead to greater efficiencies by reducing duplication and maximizing financial and human resources. These plan guidelines require LWDBs to address current and future strategies and efficiencies to address the continuous improvement of West Virginia's workforce system and its focus on customer service excellence. This plan should align with the business- and market-driven principles of the WorkForce West Virginia network.

PROCESS FOR PLAN SUBMITTAL

Prior to submission of its Local Plan, the Local Board pursuant to Section 108 of WIOA must:

1. Make available copies of a proposed Local Plan to the public through electronic and other means for a period that is no more than 30 days;

2. Allow members of the public (specifically representatives of business, labor organizations, and education) to submit comments on the proposed Local Plan by the end of the no more than 30-day comment period; and
3. Include with the Local Plan any comments that represent disagreement with the Local Plan.
4. All plans must include a Table of Contents and follow the guidance outline.

When submitting the Local Plan, please submit plans electronically in both Word (.doc) and Adobe (.pdf) format to wioa@wv.gov. The submission should include the name, title, email address, mailing address, and phone number of the person who needs to contact if there are questions regarding the plan. The Local Plan must be accompanied by the LWDB Chair and CLEO(s) Formal Revision Approval Letter.

KEY DATES

February 24, 2022.....	Notification of Combined State Plan planning process-Director meeting
March 4-18, 2022.....	Proposed Combined State Plan available for public comment
March 24, 2022.....	WIOA Guidance Notice No. 9-16, Change 2 issued/Local Plan presentation – Director meeting
March 29, 2022.....	Proposed Combined State Plan due (extension from March 15, 2022)
May 1, 2022.....	Local Plans due to Workforce West Virginia for review
June 1, 2022.....	Local Plans returned to LWDBs for possible changes/additions
June 15, 2022	Local Plans due to Workforce West Virginia for final approval
June 30, 2022.....	Local Plans approved

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

(1) Chief Local Elected Official

A. Identify the chief local elected official by name, title, mailing address, phone number and email address.

Grant County Commissioner
 Scotty Miley – Chief LEO
 4 Tyson Court
 Petersburg, WV 26847

- B. If the local area includes more than one unit of general local government in accordance with WIOA sec. 107(c)(1)(B), attach the agreement that has been executed to define how the parties will carry out the roles and responsibilities of the chief local elected official.**

The Local Elected Officials Agreement between the Region VII Workforce Development Board and the nine county commissioners/councilmen/mayor(s) that comprise Region VII is **Attachment A**.

- C. Attach a copy of the agreement executed between the local elected official(s) and the Local Workforce Development Board.**

Please see **Attachment A**.

- D. Describe the by-laws established by the Chief LEO to address the criteria contained in §679.310(g) of the proposed WIOA regulations:**

- i. The nomination process used by the Chief LEO to elect the local board chair and members;**

Article II, Section 2 of the Region VII Workforce Development Board (WDB) By-laws outlines the minimum WIOA requirements for a board member. The Region VII Workforce Development Board By-laws stipulate under Article II, Section 3, the process and responsibility of each Local Elected Official to nominate eligible Board members. Article II, Sections 4, 5, and 6 outlines selection of Board Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Treasurer.

- ii. The term limitations and how the term appointments will be staggered to ensure only a portion of membership expire in a given year;**

The Region VII WDB By-Laws Article II, Section 3 stipulates Board membership will be held in staggered terms in accordance with WIOA requirements (**Attachment B**). The Region VII WDB was established in 2001 and at the initial process of implementing the organization, the terms were staggered. As the organization has been in existence for 19 years, the terms have remained staggered due to normal resignations and expirations or terms. The terms of the members are monitored by the Executive Director to insure vacancies are addressed.

- iii. The process to notify the Chief LEO of a board member vacancy to ensure a prompt nominee;**

The Chief LEO is immediately notified by the Executive Director of any and all board member vacancies resulting from resignation. In accordance with Region VII WDB By-laws, the LEO Board is responsible for nomination and ratification of all new members. As such, all WDB member dismissals due to lack of attendance/participation/or other remain the responsibility of the Chief LEO and LEO Board.

- iv. The proxy and alternative designee process that will be used when a board member is unable to attend a meeting and assigns a designee as per the requirements at §679.110(d)(4) of the WIOA regulations;**

Article III, Section 9 of the Region VII WDB By-laws states each member of the WDB shall be entitled to one vote, and any act of a majority of the members present and voting at a WDB meeting shall constitute the act of the Board of Directors. Use of the proxy will not be permitted, with the exception of the following: certain members of the Board serve as ex officio members have the right to name a designee to represent them on the Board (pursuant to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014), and any designee so named will have voting privileges equal to those that would have been enjoyed by the ex officio Board member designating replacement.

- v. The use of technology, such as phone and web-based meetings, that will be used to promote board member participation;**

Teleconferencing and webinars are allowable and are used for WDB meetings under Article III, Section 8. Meetings of the Board are announced electronically and all Board materials are posted to the Region VII WDB's website. In addition, a legal ad is placed in local newspapers to direct the public to the website and to notify the public of the date and time of the meeting.

- vi. The process to ensure board members actively participate in convening the workforce development system's stakeholders, brokering relationships with a diverse range of employers, and leveraging support for workforce development activities; and,**

Region VII WDB members are actively involved in brokering relations and support for workforce development activities in the region. The Chair, Ms. Layne Diehl, is an active community member who sits on a variety of advisory councils, other Boards, and promotes Region VII WDB and its services via these activities. The Region VII WDB By-laws stipulate attendance and members can be removed for unexcused absences from the meetings.

- vii. Any other conditions governing appointments or membership on the local board.**

As previously stated, the Executive Director of the Region VII WDB will notify the Chief LEO and LEO Board of any and all vacancies. Through the process outlined in the Region VII WDB by-laws, the Chief LEO and LEO Board will nominate and appoint all board membership. Any removal or dismissal of WDB members must occur via action of the Region VII LEO Board. Please see **Attachment B**.

E. Provide a description of how the CLEO was involved in the development, review and approval of the plan.

On April 4, 2022, the Local Elected Officials and their staff were notified of the plan process and were provided with Local Plan Guidelines. A *rough draft* of the plan will be posted to Region VII's website on April 29, 2022 and a notice will be sent to interested parties, partners, LEOs and Board members for review and input. The plan will be located at each One-Stop Career Center,

Eastern West Virginia Community Action Agency, and the Region VII WDB website. On May 1, 2022, plans are due to WorkForce West Virginia for review. On June 1, 2022, plans will be returned to locals for possible changes/additions. On June 15, 2022, plans are due to WorkForce West Virginia for final approval. By June 30, 2022, plans are to be approved.

(2) Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB)

- A. Identify the chairperson of the Local Workforce Development Board by name, title, mailing address, phone number and email address. Identify the business that the chair represents.**

Ms. Layne Diehl, Chair

142 North Queen Street
Martinsburg, WV 25401
304-268-8832
layne@diehl1law.net

- B. Provide a description of how the LWDB was involved in the development, review, and approval of the plan.**

Region VII WDB staff requests all interested LEO and Board members review the current Local Plan and provide any comments/feedback. The Local Plan update process is on-going until the Local Plan is sent out for public comment on April 29, 2022. The Region VII WDB LEOs and Board members will be notified on April 29th of the rough draft plan posting to our website. On May 1, 2022, plans are due to WorkForce West Virginia for review. On June 1, 2022, plans will be returned to locals for possible changes/additions. On June 15, 2022, plans are due to WorkForce West Virginia for final approval. By June 30, 2022, plans are to be approved.

(3) Local Grant Sub recipient (local fiscal agent or administrative entity)

- A. Identify the entity selected to receive and disburse grant funds (local fiscal agent) if other than the chief elected official. WIOA section 107(d)(12)(B)(1)(iii); 20 CFR 679.420**

Please see **Attachment C**, Statement of Work Between Eastern West Virginia Community Action Agency, Inc. and the Region VII Workforce Development Board. Region VII WDB is designated by the Governor of West Virginia the administrative and fiscal entity for Region VII WDB is bid through a competitive procurement process in accordance state and local policy. Currently, the LEO Board and WDB have selected Eastern West Virginia Community Action Agency, Inc. as the administrative and fiscal entity for the Region VII Workforce Development Board.

- B. Identify the entity selected to staff the LWDB (commonly referred to as the**

administrative entity) and assist it in carrying out its responsibilities as a board organized under WIOA. (May be the same as the fiscal agent). 20 CFR 679.430

Please see **Attachment C**, Statement of Work Between Eastern West Virginia Community Action Agency, Inc. and the Region VII Workforce Development Board.

- C. If a single entity has been selected to operate in more than one of the following roles: local fiscal agent, local board staff, one-stop operator or direct provider of career services or training services, attach the agreement that describes how the entity will carry out its multiple responsibilities including how it will develop appropriate firewalls to guard against any conflict of interest.**

Eastern West Virginia Community Action Agency, Inc. (EWVCAA) operates as the fiscal agent and administrative entity for the LWDB as approved in the Statement of Work between the Region VII WDB and EWVCAA, and has been designated to do so since July 2010. EWVCAA is required to submit its annual budget to the LEO Board as well as its fiscal audit as performed by an independent accounting firm. All monitoring reports are available upon request. The Region VII WDB's by-laws (**Attachment B**) stipulate prohibitions of contracting with LWDB members in accordance with State policy. All financial statements are reviewed by the Executive Committee and full Board of Directors and are available upon request to the public.

LOCAL PLAN REQUIREMENTS

Section 1: Strategic Planning

- A. An analysis of the regional economic conditions including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations; and the employment needs of businesses in those industry sectors and occupations. The analysis should identify local priority industries based on employer (and WIOA partner) input.**

Before examining the industries within the Region VII counties, it is important to note that the region is a large exporter of workers to neighboring counties and states. The West Virginia University Economic Profile indicated that 45 percent of all workers in the region commute outside their home county for work. 20% of the region's workers have work locations that are more than 50 miles from their homes (this includes both in-region and out-region commuting).

nearly 94% of all food manufacturing jobs in Region VII. Food manufacturing dominates Hardy County, where 28% of all jobs are in that industry, and it has a location quotient of 28.5, meaning that employment in food manufacturing is 28.5 times more concentrated within Hardy County than in the nation as a whole. The vast majority of this employment is with a single employer, Pilgrim's Pride. Food manufacturing employment is projected to decline slightly through 2022.

Wood Products cluster (consisting of NAICS 113 – logging & forestry, NAICS 321 – wood product manufacturing and NAICS 337 – furniture manufacturing) has been a historically important cluster in the region, particularly in the Potomac Highlands region, with a location quotient of 8.6 in 2019. However, while employment is relatively more concentrated here than in the nation, Wood Products jobs have been significantly impacted by the closure of Verso in Mineral County. The closure in 2019 left nearly 700 people without jobs and the ripple effect to ancillary jobs such as loggers and foresters is still being assessed. Additionally, over the last decade, there have been sharp declines, particularly in Grant county, where wood products manufacturing employment has declined by nearly 50%, and in Hardy County, where furniture manufacturing has declined by more than 50%. Further steep declines are projected for these two counties, fueling an over projected decline of 25% for the cluster in the region through 2022. Elsewhere in the region, mining is important. In Grant County, 8% of all employment is in Mining (NAICS 212) or Support Activities for Mining (NAICS 213), with a 7% decline projected through 2022. Key industries in Pendleton County include animal production and truck transportation, both with 5% of all jobs in the industry.

The Data Processing, Hosting and Related Services industry (NAICS 518) has a location quotient (LQ) of 3.6 for the region, but this is driven by just two counties, with Berkeley having a LQ of 3.5 and Mineral having an LQ of 17.8 thanks to an IBM data processing facility.

Another industry with a high regional location quotient is Accommodations (NAICS 721), at 3.3. This industry is particularly strong in Jefferson County, with a location quotient of 12.0, but it is important in other counties in the region as well, with links to the general tourism industry.

As identified herein, Region VII is made up of two distinct areas, one being industry heavy and skirting the Washington DC Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) while the five western counties of the region consist of mainly wood, agriculture and agriculture food processing (i.e. poultry farming and processing). However, both areas have potential growth in other business or industry segments, such as information technology. These options are being pursued by economic developers throughout the region.

Healthcare. Healthcare is expected to grow in the state. Of the top twenty-seven occupations projected to grow in the state of West Virginia, nine of these are in the healthcare industry. Of the top seventeen occupations projected to grow in Region VII, ten of these are in the healthcare industry. Region VII continues to explore training opportunities for healthcare

professionals. Working closely with training providers and healthcare employers allows Region VII to identify potential areas of need within this employment sector.

Tourism. Many areas of the region are known for their beauty, serenity, sporting abundance, hospitality, history, and simply their ability to draw visitors from all over the east coast of the United States. The region has four distinct seasons, with noticeable climate distinctions within the region. For instance, in the Allegheny Mountains, you may find several inches of snow and blustery weather and only twelve miles away in the flatlands of the Potomac Highlands you will have no snowfall and temperatures ranging from 5 degrees to 15 degrees warmer. In a day's time, one can enjoy trout fishing in the morning and skiing in the afternoon and evening. This is but a sample of the abundance of year round activities that can greatly enhance the region's tourism market, if properly marketed. There are numerous bed and breakfast "homes" throughout the region. More hotels and motels are being built in anticipation of the expansion of the West Virginia Corridor H Interstate System, which will connect the western part of the region with Interstate 81 in Virginia. Along this new corridor, distribution is expected to grow like that of the industry along the I-81 and I-68 corridor near Martinsburg, WV. Building of the Corridor has already prompted communities to start planning and building Industrial Parks to accommodate businesses willing to move into the western counties of the region, as well as along the approximate 100 miles of new interstate highway.

Impact of Plant Closures. The region has been highly impacted by plant closures and downsizing over the past fifteen years. Among these are American Woodmark, the abrupt closure of AB&C Group, Rayloc in Hancock, Maryland, and Verso in Mineral County. Several other layoffs have occurred in the region that impacted 30 workers or less. Many of the workers in the region leave their respective counties and state to find self-sustaining employment in neighboring states. Local economic developers, community and technical schools, chambers of commerce, and the WDB, to name a few, are all working together to attract new industry to the region and retain its current skilled workforce. Berkeley County was able to claim an enormous success in their continued efforts to attract jobs to the region. Macy's Department Stores built a vast 30+ acre warehouse and distribution center in Berkeley County. Proctor and Gamble invested approximately \$500 million dollars in construction and site development of a 460-acre campus. The Proctor and Gamble plant opened in the fall of 2017 and became fully operational in late 2020 with employment of over 1,400 full-time workers. Macy's and Proctor and Gamble account for nearly 3000 jobs in Berkeley County. This has given much needed relief and hope to people facing long-term unemployment and very few job opportunities just a few short years ago. The jobs created by the opening of the Macy's distribution center was a welcome sign that true economic growth and recovery were taking shape in our region. The opening of the Proctor and Gamble plant reinforces the sentiment that true economic recovery is taking place and quite possibly giving our region the opportunity to bounce back even stronger during a post-recession era. Additionally, the Clorox Company will be opening a cat litter manufacturing plant in

Berkeley County in 2022. The investment will bring \$192 million in economic development to the region and will create approximately 100 full-time jobs.

Areas of Potential Growth. In the past fifteen years, hundreds of windmills have been erected in the Potomac Highlands. Several hundred more are projected in the near future. Due to the increasing demand for electricity in the Metropolitan D.C. and Northern Virginia Area the electric production from the windmills will continue to be a growth area for Region VII. Windmills bring two distinct job clusters with them. Construction workers of all types are needed for installation and maintenance workers are needed to maintain their operation. Other “green jobs” such as weatherization, are projected to be growth industries in both the national and regional market places.

B. An analysis of the knowledge and skills needed to meet the employment needs of the businesses in the Local Area, including employment needs in in-demand industry sectors and occupations.

The knowledge and skills needed to meet the needs of this region’s in-demand sector occupations and target industries include strong soft skills, including: team skills, service and social skills, interpersonal communicative skills, critical thinking/problem solving and flexibility as well as the pertinent post-secondary and technical skills required for emerging and demand occupations, i.e. CDL, Health Services, IT related certifications, and Advanced Manufacturing certifications.

This plan will ensure that WIOA programs are compliant with federal regulations through our One-Stop centers so that program services are coordinated, and when appropriate, integrated to make accessible a menu of customizable services available to clients on the basis of client needs.

C. An analysis of the workforce in the Local Area, including current labor force employment (and unemployment) data, and information on labor market trends, and the educational and skill levels of the workforce in the Local Area, including individuals with barriers to employment.

The Region VII Workforce Development Board includes the counties of Berkeley, Grant, Hampshire, Hardy, Jefferson, Mineral, Morgan, and Pendleton with a population of 282,296 and a total labor force of 138,500 as of February 2022.
(<http://lmi.workforcewv.org/table2.html>).

The Region VII WDB unemployment rate is 3.0% as of February 2022. In reviewing the most recent census in our eight county area, 86.8% have attained a high school diploma for individuals 25 years and older.

Barriers to Employment

In 2021, the unemployment rate for those with disabilities in the United States was 10.1%, according to <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/disabl.nr0.htm>. In 2021, 811 individuals with disabilities were served in the region. In additions to WIOA services, Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) include: evaluation and diagnostic services, vocational counseling and guidance,

training services, rehabilitation technology services, physical and mental therapeutic services, specialized services, placement services, support services, and post-employment services.

The Region VII WDB is involved in a regional effort to address those with barriers to employment due to poverty.

Median Household Income by County according to WVU's Bureau of Business and Economic Research's 2020 West Virginia County Data Profiles

(<http://business.wvu.edu/centers/bureau-of-business-and-economic-research/wv-county-profiles>)

Berkeley: \$62,515.00

Grant: \$42,216.00

Hampshire: \$47,857.00

Hardy: \$47,438.00

Jefferson: \$80,430.00

Mineral: \$49,936.00

Morgan: \$51,745.00

Pendleton: \$42,312.00

Median Household Income State of West Virginia: \$48,850.00.

The mean household income for the Eastern Panhandle (Berkeley, Jefferson, and Morgan counties) is \$80,270.00. The mean household income for the Potomac Highlands (Grant, Hampshire, Hardy, Mineral, and Pendleton counties) is \$61,067.00.

Residents with a bachelor's degree or higher – Working Age (25-64)

Region: 17.5%

State: 21.1%

U.S.: 37.9%

D. An analysis of the workforce development activities (including education and training) in the Local Area, including an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of such services, and the capacity to provide such services, to address the identified education and skill needs of the workforce and the employment needs of employers in the Local Area.

The Region VII WDB maintains relationships with regional economic development and business organizations. These relationships, coupled with our partnerships with public and private training providers allows us to facilitate the region's best training opportunities to meet the needs of the workforce. The Region VII WDB continues to be an engaged participant in our local and regional economic development agency's boards and committees, and often educational providers are included in these efforts.

Our largest strength regarding education and training are our region's training providers and education partners working hard to become involved with business leaders and understand their workforce development and training needs. The simulated workplaces have been developed in the secondary schools are aligned closely with employer needs, economic development initiatives and include business advisory councils. They remain flexible to industry needs and strive to find the best possible training solutions at the pace of business. In addition, our educational partners which include Blue Ridge Community and Technical College, Eastern West Virginia Community and Technical College, James Rumsey Technical Institute, and Mineral County Technical Center as well as private-for-profit training providers have excellent training programs that are aligned with our demand occupations and industry sectors. The public and private training providers work well with the Region VII WDB and are open to suggestions for training improvements based upon local employer input and need.

One of the weaknesses we see is the lack of registered apprenticeship programs and internships and cohort programs; however, Blue Ridge CTC and Eastern WV CTC are diligently exploring all possibilities and are moving toward implementing these programs.

E. A description of the Local Board's strategic vision and goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce (including youth and individuals with barriers to employment) including goals relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance described in Section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA in order to support Local Area economic growth and economic self-sufficiency.

The Region VII WDB's strategic vision is that our region is recognized for its economic growth, driven by flourishing businesses and a skilled workforce.

Our primary goal is to help businesses succeed by linking them to the workforce resources they need; and to help prepare job seekers by providing them with the skills needed for employment. To accomplish these goals, the Region VII WDB will:

- A. Create and sustain strategic partnerships dedicated to community prosperity through education, training, and developing a climate for growing business and job creation.
- B. Provide exceptional service to each customer every day.
- C. Connect citizens to employment opportunities.

It is important that these goals also remain tied to the primary indicators of performance under WIOA in order to support economic growth and worker self-sufficiency.

Through the implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), West Virginia will have a business-led, market-responsive, results-oriented and integrated workforce development system. The enhanced system will foster customer service excellence, seek continuous improvement and demonstrate value by enhancing employment opportunities for all individuals, including those with disabilities. This focused and deliberate collaboration among education, workforce and economic development networks will maximize the competitiveness of West Virginia's businesses and the productivity of West Virginia's workforce, thus increasing

economic prosperity.

The Region VII WDB will fully support and provide services to customers in Region VII in alignment with the state vision for the workforce development system. That vision recognizes the vital importance of West Virginia's employers having a well-trained workforce-ready labor force, while additionally providing more individuals with the opportunity to be productive members of that labor force. This vision will be accomplished through the implementation of strategies and services by the Region VII WDB which mirrors the state level strategies and goals. The following goals will be supported by the Region VII WDB:

Goal #1: Maximize Efficiency of the Workforce Development System (WDS)

In order for WIOA to be successful the workforce development system must be a seamless, comprehensive, and accessible system. Partners in the workforce development system will work together in order to maximize benefits to our customers and improve West Virginia's labor force participation rate.

Goal #2: Strengthen Relationships with Employers

The Region VII Workforce Development Board will collaborate with employers utilizing a variety of methods to develop solutions to their workforce needs.

Goal # 3: Overcome Employment Barriers of Individuals

The Region VII Workforce Development Board will identify employment barriers of individuals and develop solutions. The removal of barriers is a key component to improving West Virginia's labor force participation rate.

Goal # 4: Promote Career Pathways

It is imperative that the workforce development system provide education and training for skills that lead to quality employment in high-demand jobs or entry-level occupations that lead to high demand jobs. Career pathways must be diverse with multiple entry and exit points allowing individuals of varying abilities, including low-skilled adults and youth with multiple barriers to employment, especially those with disabilities, to have realistic access to pathways. The State will support career pathways that help adults and youth enter the labor force and/or advance among multiple occupations, advance within an occupation or move to a new occupation that has similar skills to a previous occupation.

Goal #5: Identify and Maximize Postsecondary and Employment Opportunities for Youth

Unemployment rates for older youth and young adults remain substantially higher than those for the population as a whole. The likelihood of employment correlates with education level, rates of employment, and labor market participation for individuals with secondary credentials or less are substantially lower than for those with postsecondary credentials. For these reasons, the workforce development system must recognize the employment challenges faced by youth, particularly those without postsecondary credentials. Partners must work together to alleviate barriers and create opportunities for youth.

Goal #6: Closer Align West Virginia's Labor Force Participation Rate with the National Labor Force Participation Rate

West Virginia continues to have the lowest Labor Force Participation Rate in the United States. Increasing labor force participation rates and reducing unemployment rate disparities for people with disabilities, both younger and older workers, and people with lower educational attainment would lead to measurable increases in the size of the state's available labor force. Helping minorities and other groups with barriers to employment is critical to ensuring West Virginia's employers are able to find workers and our economy is able to expand.

Goal #7: Meet or exceed the performance accountability measures as negotiated by the state with the DOL.

Striving to meet the performance accountability measures will help the WDB to focus on the issues determined to be of significance by the DOL, which in turn will aid in improving the economic well-being of the region.

- F. Taking into account analyses described in subparagraphs (A) through (D), a strategy to work with the entities that carry out the core programs to align resources available to the Local Area, to achieve the strategic vision and goals described in subparagraph (E).**

Goal #1: Maximize Efficiency of the Workforce Development System (WDS)

In order for WIOA to be successful, a seamless, comprehensive, and accessible one-stop delivery system must be sustained and systematically applied. As resources become more and more limited, partners in the workforce development system must work together in order to provide maximum benefit to our customers.

Strategy 1.1: Core Partners will collaborate to align program initiative and processes

- Coordinate and develop memorandums of understanding with all partners. These will be developed with a clear purpose of cooperation and service to all customers of the workforce system (individuals and employers).
- Share goals at the local level.
- Promote program integration in order to overcome silos and achieve unified goals.
- Conduct quarterly Management Consortium meeting with the core partners.

Strategy 1.2: Ensure cross-training of all workforce development system partners

- Develop team-based case management for the customers at our one-stops. Training for one-stop partners and new tools will be needed to ensure consistency across West Virginia.
- A high priority will be placed on staff training in serving individuals with barriers to employment, especially those with disabilities.

- Technical training will be provided on the data-sharing IT system to all effected staff at the regional level.
- Develop a comprehensive case management manual as a resource guide for all One-Stop staff.
- Conduct weekly staff meetings that include the One-Stop Director where cross training and other staff needs are continuously discussed.

Strategy 1.3: Communicate with all partners within the workforce development system

- The Region VII WDB has quarterly management consortium meetings. The team consists of all the required partner agencies in the region.
- Workforce development news and notices are maintained and updated frequently on the Region VII WDB website: <http://wvregion7workforce.org>.
- The Region VII WDB holds quarterly Board meetings.
- The Region VII WDB participates in quarterly business services team (BST) and implementation team meetings as well as training provider meetings.

Strategy 1.4: Maintain integrated state management information system utilized by core partners

- The Region VII WDB continues to input all WIOA-related data into the MACC system.
- The Region VII WDB continues to contribute financially to the operation and maintenance of the MACC system.

Goal #2: Strengthen Relationships with Employers

West Virginia will create an approach based on the needs of the job seekers as well as the needs of the employer. The workforce development system must examine the needs of the employer, assess the skills and skills gaps of the workforce and then create solutions to ensure maximum benefit to both customer groups.

Strategy 2.1: Partner with employers to identify workforce needs

- The Region VII WDB will use data and work with employers to identify the skills and competencies necessary to attain family-sustaining employment and will offer high quality training to individuals to obtain those skills.
- The Region VII WDB will promote and develop sector strategies based on labor market information and employer need. This includes supporting the growth and expansion of the industry partnership through increase state investment.
- The Region VII WDB will continue to encourage employers to participate in business/education partnerships. These partnerships connect schools, employers, and youth serving community organizations with students and Out of School Youth (OSY) to provide career-related experiences.
- The Region VII WDB will continue to participate in quarterly Business Services and Implementation Team meetings as well the Eastern Panhandle Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) meetings.

Strategy 2.2: Provide access to training programs that meet the needs of employers

- The workforce system will provide comprehensive counseling to ascertain supportive service needs of individuals. Skills assessments will be provided in order to determine skills needs/upgrades pertinent to obtain desired employment.
- The Region VII WDB will encourage cross-program funding and programmatic integration of workforce preparation activities to develop employability skills, adult basic education, and occupational training, supplemented by supportive services, as part of the career pathway models to ensure that the critical needs of individuals (including those with basic skills deficiencies) are met.
- The Region VII WDB encourages local employers to access workforce development funds in order to facilitate their training needs. Customized Training as well as Incumbent Worker funds are two broad-based avenues in which the Region VII WDB partners with local employers to enhance the workforce skill set within our region. In addition, the Region VII WDB continues to partner with local training providers and their state-approved training programs when more traditional occupational or classroom-based training is warranted. Utilizing various training methodologies, shall enable the Region VII WDB to build capacity within their program service delivery.

Goal # 3: Overcome Employment Barriers of Individuals

It is imperative that the workforce development system identify employment barriers of individuals and develop solutions. The removal of these barriers is an essential component to improving West Virginia's labor force participation rate.

Strategy 3.1: Assess needs of individuals seeking employment and/or training

- The WIOA rules explain that the Individual Employment Plan (IEP) is an individualized career service, jointly developed by the participant and career coach. The IEP includes an ongoing strategy to identify employment goals, achievement objectives, and an appropriate combination of services for the participant to obtain these goals and objectives. IEPs are one of the most effective tools used to serve individuals with barriers to employment. The IEP becomes the nexus that coordinates the various service strategies, including training, individuals may need to overcome barriers to employment.

The IEP is the basis for the overall case management strategy. The career coach will utilize the IEP to update strategies and activities as they occur, and to document referral and contact information for services obtained from partner organizations. When reviewing the IEP, career coaches will document a participant's progress, activities completed, benchmarks reached, and any other accomplishments.

Additionally, the IEP should be:

- Developed in partnership with the participant;
- Used as a tool that can and will change over time, as necessary, to meet the needs of the individual;
- Used as a roadmap to achieve measurable and attainable short-term and long-term goals; and

- Designed to reflect the individual's interests and incorporate career planning.

The provision of services should be a result of, and consistent with, the customer's assessment and IEP. Having a well-developed IEP and related documentation is required and is a fundamental part of case management. Once an IEP is developed and approved, it should be used in the on-going process of monitoring and re-evaluating the participant's progress toward educational and occupational goals.

The IEP should be a "living document" and reviewed and updated as life changes occur, including the participant's interests and ambitions. As strategies are updated and services and activities from partner organizations are completed, goals are met and benchmarks are reached.

Strategy 3.2: Use the Employment First framework to ensure competitive, integrated employment as the priority option for individuals with significant disabilities

- WIOA funding enables the delivery of a comprehensive array of services that prepare individuals with disabilities for post-secondary educational and employment opportunities, attainment of educational and/or skills training credentials, and obtainment of employment with career opportunities. This is accomplished by assessing the participant's skills, interests, needs and personal goals; creating customized service plans in collaboration with the participant; and expanding the participant's connection to and understanding of the local economy, educational opportunities, and available community services.

Strategy 3.3: Provide access to training programs that meet the needs of individuals

- The Region VII WDB works with employer partnerships, community and technical colleges, secondary and post-secondary schools to establish credentials that demonstrate job readiness, employability skills, and measurable skill gains. These achievements will be closely aligned to career pathways for individuals with barriers to employment, especially those with disabilities. The Region VII WDB is committed to serving previously under-served or neglected populations, such as immigrants and minorities.

Goal # 4: Promote Career Pathways

It is imperative the workforce development system provide education and training for skills leading to quality employment in high-demand jobs or entry-level occupations leading to high demand jobs. Career pathways must be diverse with multiple entry and exit points allowing individuals of varying abilities, including low-skilled adults and youth with multiple barriers to employment, especially those with disabilities, to have realistic access to pathways. The Region VII WDB will support career pathways which help adults and youth enter the labor force. The Region VII WDB will advocate for career pathways allowing for advancement among multiple occupations, advancement within an occupation or move to a new occupation with similar skills from an outdated occupation.

Strategy 4.1: Adhere to WIOA career pathways development

- The Region VII WDB adopts the WIOA Section 3(7) definition of career pathways.
- The Region VII WDB supports the West Virginia Adult Education, Career and Technical Education, and the Community and Technical College System of West Virginia in developing strategies to integrate career pathways meeting the requirement of WIOA.
- Region VII WDB makes available individualized career pathways when an individual demonstrates a need for a career pathway in order to obtain or retain employment, or to obtain a self-sufficient income.

Strategy 4.2: Enhance current career pathways system.

- The Region VII WDB will leverage the existing career pathways system to promote a comprehensive career pathway system that combines education, training, counseling, and support services from the core partner agencies.
- The Region VII WDB will ensure that career pathways are aligned to occupations that are high-demand and are likely to pay family-sustaining wages in our region.
- The Region VII WDB will also support placement of individuals with barriers to employment, especially those with disabilities, into quality entry-level jobs that provide the work experience and non-technical skills necessary to lead to employment in high-demand jobs.
- The Region VII WDB will continue to link On-the-Job Training (OJT) to career pathways.
- Individualized career services must be made available if determined to be appropriate in order for an individual to obtain or retain employment. These services include:
 - 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 (IEP) to identify the employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives, and appropriate combination of services for the participant to achieve the employment goals, including a list of, and information about, the eligible training providers
 - 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 services to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training
 - Internships and paid or unpaid work experiences that are linked to careers; internships and work experiences may be arranged within the private for-profit sector, the non-profit sector, or the public sector
 - Workforce preparation activities, including programs or services designed to help an

individual acquire a combination of basic academic skills, critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills, and self-management skills, including competencies in utilizing resources, using information, working with others, understanding systems, and obtaining skills necessary for successful transition into and completion of post-secondary education, or training, or employment

- Financial literacy services, including services which
 - Support the ability of participants to create budgets, initiate checking and savings accounts at banks, and make informed financial decisions
 - Support participants in learning, credit, debt, including student loans, consumer credit, credit cards, and teach participants about the significance of credit reports and credit scores, what their rights are regarding their credit and financial information, how to determine the accuracy of a credit report and how to correct inaccuracies, and how to improve or maintain good credit
 - Support a participant's ability to understand, evaluate, and compare financial products, services, and opportunities to make informed financial decisions
 - Educate participants about identity theft, ways to protect themselves from identity theft, and how to resolve cases of identity theft, and in other ways understand their rights and protections related to personal identity and financial data
 - Support activities that address the particular financial literacy needs of non-English speakers, including providing the support through the development and distribution of multilingual financial literacy and education materials
 - Provide financial education that is age appropriate, timely, and provides opportunities to put lessons into practice, such as by access to safe and affordable financial products that enable money management and savings, and

Strategy 4.3: Educate individuals (job seekers and employers) to encourage career pathways in training and employment environments

- The Region VII WDB will promote and support the creation of pre-apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeship programs as part of relevant career pathway models.
- The Region VII WDB will help in the establishment of statewide and regional lists of industry-recognized credentials with a focus on identifying credentials along established career pathways.
- The Region VII WDB will enhance career guidance to individuals with barriers, especially those with disabilities, to employment and education and into programs and services that will provide them with an effective pathway to their career goals.
- The Region VII WDB will add information to its web-site regarding career pathways.

Goal #5: Identify and Maximize Postsecondary and Employment Opportunity for Youth

Unemployment rates for older youth and young adults remain substantially higher than those for the population as a whole. The likelihood of employment correlates with education level, rates of

employment, and labor market participation for individuals with secondary credentials or less are substantially lower than for those with postsecondary credentials. For these reasons, the workforce development system must recognize the employment challenges faced by youth, particularly those without postsecondary credentials. Partners must work together to alleviate barriers and create opportunities for youth.

Strategy 5.1: Execution of WIOA regulations regarding youth

- The Region VII WDB will identify models and effective practices to help successfully meet the needs of the youth clientele.
- The Region VII WDB will work with the State to ensure that statistical models and negotiated performance levels are established and calibrated.
- WIOA funding enables the delivery of a comprehensive array of youth services that prepare youth for post-secondary educational and employment opportunities, attainment of educational and/or skills training credentials, and obtainment of employment with career opportunities. This is accomplished by assessing the participant's skills, interests, needs and personal goals; creating customized service plans in collaboration with the participant; and expanding the participant's connection to and understanding of the local economy, educational opportunities, and available community services. This process is organized and coordinated around 14 WIOA Youth program elements, which **must be made available** to every participant.

Strategy 5.2: Coordination of youth services within the workforce development system

- The Region VII WDB will support the development of transitional jobs and other work experiences to help OSY with limited work histories to develop the skills needed for workplace success.
- The Region VII WDB will encourage the co-enrollment of high-risk OSY, ages 18-24, as both WIOA Adult and WIOA Youth participants to allow for the leveraging of funds and provision of necessary services.
- The Region VII WDB will expand opportunities for youth to acquire post-secondary skills and credentials needed for high wage jobs through increased access to career and technical education programs and work-based learning experiences.
- The Region VII WDB will collaborate with JobCorps.
- The Region VII WDB youth provider ensures all fourteen program elements under WIOA Section 129(c)(2) are available to all participating WIOA youth.

Strategy 5.3: Provide youth a clear pathway to success

- The Region VII WDB will work with the State to identify on-ramps, access points, and supports which enable participants to enter and successfully complete training and enter employment.
- The Region VII WDB will work with core partner agencies to blend resources to provide more effective and efficient services to youth.
- The Region VII WDB will use the Office of Apprenticeship to promote apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship opportunities for youth.
- The three components of an integrated education and training program include: adult

education and literacy activities, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training. Adult education and literacy activities are programs, activities, and services, such as English language services, to achieve competence in reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension. Workforce preparation activities help individuals acquire a combination of basic academic, critical thinking, and digital literacy skills. They improve employability by improving self-management abilities, increasing ability to work with others, and develop other skills necessary for successful transition into post-secondary education, training, and employment. Such activities could include: skill development and practice, such as time management, mock interviews, independent living, or legal responsibilities after the age of 18, and how to prepare for post-secondary education, such as applications, financial aid, scholarship application, etc.

Goal #6: Closer Align West Virginia's Labor Force Participation Rate with the National Labor Force Participation Rate

Increasing labor force participation rates and reducing unemployment rate disparities for people with disabilities, both younger and older workers, and people with lower educational attainment would lead to measurable increases in the size of the state's available labor force. Region VII WDB is committed to offering workforce development services to various other traditionally under-served populations as well. Helping minorities and other groups with barriers to employment is critical to ensuring West Virginia's employers are able to find workers and our economy is able to expand. Region VII will utilize a "no-wrong-door" approach to referral and service delivery. This level of capacity-building within the region will not only increase service delivery among Asset Limited, Income Constrained Employed (ALICE) populations, but will also positively impact WV's labor force participation rate. Region VII WDB remains committed to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) as outlined by Executive Order 14035, released on June 25, 2021 by President Biden.

Strategy 6.1: Match individuals to basic education

- When an individual demonstrates either a basic skills deficiency or the lack of a high school diploma or TASC, the Region VII WDB makes a referral to our partners at Adult Education. Adult Education is uniquely equipped and staffed to assist individuals in need of basic education.

Strategy 6.2: Match individuals to postsecondary training or education

- Training services are provided to equip individuals to enter the workforce and retain employment. Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), a program of training services includes a structured regimen that leads to specific outcomes. A program of training services is one or more courses or classes, or a structured regimen that leads to:
 - a. A recognized post-secondary credential, secondary school diploma, or its equivalent;
 - b. Employment; or
 - c. Measurable skill gains toward such a credential or employment.

Training services are available for individuals who after an interview, evaluation or assessment and case management are determined to be unlikely or unable to obtain or retain employment that leads to self-sufficiency or higher wages from previous employment through career services alone. The participant must be determined to be in need of training services and possess the skills and qualifications to successfully participate in the selected program.

The WIOA lists training services. The list is not all-inclusive and additional training services may be provided. Training services may include, for example, occupational skills training, On-the-Job Training (OJT), registered apprenticeship which incorporates both OJT and classroom training, incumbent worker training, pre-apprenticeship training, workplace training with related instruction, training programs offered by the private sector, skill upgrading and retraining, entrepreneurial training, and transitional jobs.

Some participants may need additional services to assist their vocational training, such as job readiness training, literacy activities including English language training, and customized training. The WIOA training services may be provided when other sources of grant assistance are unavailable to the individual.

Strategy 6.3: Utilize career pathways when working with the population age 16-24

- When utilizing and identifying career pathways for populations aged 16-24, the Region VII WDB utilizes our WIOA Youth Program's Individual Service Strategy (ISS). Setting goals was an essential part of developing an ISS in the WIOA Youth program. Learning how to set goals enabled youth to make effective use of the WIOA program and services and, ultimately, to set goals for themselves as they pursue adult responsibilities, such as completing their education, finding employment, and becoming good citizens. The WIOA youth can be enrolled in several different activities, as appropriate, following the determination of their needs as identified during intake and the development of the ISS. Each activity involves the collection of information unique to that activity.

Strategy 6.4: Improve the job matching rate

- In order to improve an individual's success in their chosen career, the Region VII WDB case management team utilizes a combination of career preparation and career exploration initiatives. Career Exploration introduces young adults, parents, and teachers to available career paths in their region by offering a behind-the-scenes look into in-demand businesses and industries. Career Exploration provides real-time information regarding employer, education, and training requirements necessary to secure employment. Impacts include relationship building, establishing a talent pipeline, talent retention, and the opportunity to see real life application of coursework.
- The Region VII WDB will identify additional partners, such as regional career liaisons, as appropriate. The Region VII WDB recognizes career exploration as a pivotal component to comprehensive case management services. It is the

expectation that career exploration activities will be offered to our clients whenever our career coaches deem appropriate.

Strategy 6.5: Referral and recruitment of ALICE population(s)

- Ensure a “no-wrong-door” approach for referrals and service delivery. This will be achieved by regular cross-training of staff as well as partner staff.
- Region VII WDB has developed an electronic referral system that will facilitate increased customer opportunity to engage with the workforce development system, as well as various community partners.
- Region VII WDB will target public libraries, schools, community centers, along with jails/prisons to ensure previously under-served and traditionally marginalized populations are being included into the service delivery structure of the existing workforce development system.

Goal #7: Meet or exceed the performance accountability measures as negotiated by the state with the DOL.

Striving to meet the performance accountability measures will help the WDB to focus on the issues determined to be of significance by the DOL, which in turn will aid in improving the economic well-being of the region.

Strategy 7.1: Monitor performance on a regional level.

- The Region VII WDB will monitor performance on a monthly basis to ensure performance measures are being met or exceeded.
- WIOA Career Coaches and Youth Case Managers will follow-up monthly to ensure that clients are still in training or are employed.

Section 2: Alignment of the Local Workforce Development System

- A. A description of the workforce development system in the Local Area that identifies the programs that are included in that system and how the Local Board will work with the entities carrying out workforce development programs identified in the State Plan. The description should also include how the Local Board and the programs identified plan to align and integrate to provide services to customers. The description should also include programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.);**

The Region VII WDB serves Berkeley, Grant, Hampshire, Hardy, Jefferson, Mineral, Morgan, and Pendleton counties. James Rumsey Technical Institute and Mineral County Technical Center offer Carl Perkins services and technical educational services. The WDB works very closely with those educational entities, and they provide the WDB with their annual Carl Perkins plan for our review and comment. These educational entities provide TASC prep courses as well as TASC testing at their institutions.

WIOA authorizes the One-Stop Career Center (also known as American Job Center) service delivery system and six core programs. The core programs physically housed within the Region VII One-Stop Career Centers are:

- WIOA Title I (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth formula programs) administered by Department of Labor (DOL)
- Adult Education and Literacy Act programs administered by the Department of Education (DoED)
- Wagner-Peyser Act employment services administered by DOL
- Rehabilitation Act Title I programs administered by DoED

In addition to the core programs, for individuals with multiple needs to access the services, the following partner programs are required to provide access through the One-Stops. The following partner programs have a physical presence within the One-Stop Career Centers: Adult Education and Literacy, SNAP E&T programs, Small Business Development Centers (SBDC), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and the National Farmworker Jobs Programs. The following partners' programs are accessible through the One-Stop Career Centers through electronic portals: Career and Technical education (Perkins), Community Services Block Grant, Indian and Native American Programs, Job Corps, HUD Employment and Training Programs, Local Veterans' Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program, Senior Community Service Employment Program, Trade Adjustment Assistance Programs, Unemployment Compensation Programs, and YouthBuild. TANF is now a required partner.

B. A description of how the local board, working with entities identified in A, will expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment, including how the Local Board will facilitate the development of career pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate, and improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential (including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable, and stackable);

The Region VII WDB has an extensive outreach network in place to create community awareness regarding available employment and training services and all employment events. The One-Stop Career Centers provide access to individuals with barriers to employment and provide specialized services to meet the needs of customers with barriers. Services such as WIOA, TANF, and SNAP are available at the One-Stop Career Centers. Disabled Veteran Opportunity Program (DVOP) Specialists provide intensive case management, and employment and training services to Veteran's with significant barriers. Bi-lingual staff (Spanish/English) is available to communicate with our Spanish speaking customers. The One-Stop Career Centers have WIOA Career Coaches to assist customers with disabilities in navigating services and provide referrals

to appropriate community agencies/services. After initial contact, One-Stop staff will send appropriate referrals to partner agencies such as DHHR, DRS, and Adult Education. All staff is cross-trained regarding programs and services to allow for seamless service delivery and co-enrollment when appropriate. The One-Stop Career Centers have Business Analysts whose primary function is to develop and coordinate On-The-Job Training contracts. While the primary function of the Business Analyst is to work with employers, they also work hand-in-hand with One-Stop staff to fill job openings and when necessary host job fair or other hiring events.

Career Pathways:

Sector strategy partnerships have been developed with key stakeholders including but not limited to education and industry. Career pathways align and integrate education (including AE and ESL), job training, counseling and support services to create accelerated pathways to postsecondary education credentials and employment in in-demand occupations.

Career pathways involve a range of stakeholders. In addition to state and local workforce boards and agencies, potential partners should include education and training providers, community colleges, community-based organizations, support service providers, and employers. Examples of cross-program collaboration with key workforce development stakeholders developing career pathways in Region VII include:

- Strategies – Region VII WDB in coordination with Blue Ridge Community and Technical College and Eastern West Virginia Community and Technical College conduct quarterly Sector Partnership Strategy Meetings with key stakeholders including but not limited to industry and workforce development partners. These meetings help assess the needs of industry and align educational programs and offerings.
- Roles and Responsibilities – Training and education providers are able to design curriculum based on industry demands. The Region VII WDB facilitates meetings and disseminates labor market information to support career pathway efforts. Region VII WDB serves as a primary link between education and business. Other key stakeholders provide useful input based on regional infrastructure and technology needs.
- One of the key strategies the Region VII WDB has been able to effectively implement through Sector Partnership meetings is the capability of portable and stackable industry-recognized certifications. I.e., in partnership with Blue Ridge Community and Technical College their Advanced Manufacturing A.A.S. program has been divided into multiple, 6-week cohorts with open entry points and certifications at the end of each 6-weeks. This is an example of allowing clients the opportunity to easily access and obtain the skills required by industry. The stackable components allow the individual to ultimately obtain a 2-year Associate's Degree. However, the certifications earned at the end of 6-weeks cohorts allow for immediate employment opportunities. Similar programmatic designs are currently in development with Eastern West Virginia Community and Technical

College.

- The State has identified four growing industry sectors in the state; advanced manufacturing, healthcare, information technology, and energy. The Region VII WDB is financially committed to supporting all training endeavors that lead to industry recognized credentials in occupations identified as “in-demand” by the U.S. Department of Labor. The Region VII WDB is able to provide up to \$6,000.00 in tuition assistance and an additional \$5,000.00 in supportive services for WIOA-eligible individuals.
- The success of these programs will be measured by myriad of data points collected from the key stakeholders. Data used will include but not be limited to MACC, labor market information, EDA reports, economic impact studies, WIOA performance metrics, et.al.

C. A description of the steps taken by the Local Board to engage entities identified in A in the formulation of its Local Plan.

The formulation of the Local Plan begins with One-Stop Management Consortiums. The Management Consortiums meet quarterly at the One-Stop Career Centers. The management consortium is comprised of mandated partners and key stake-holders within the One-Stop delivery system. Through these meetings, and other One-Stop committee meetings such as the Implementation Team and Business Services Team, partners are given an effective platform to help shape service delivery strategies, identify customer needs, and ultimately shape policy. The Region VII WDB also hosts quarterly training provider meetings. These meetings are strategy sessions between education providers and the WDB on how we can effectively collaborate and implement strategic workforce development efforts in our region. Utilizing the collective knowledge of our One-Stop partners and training providers enables the Region VII Workforce Development Board with the knowledge to create an effective and meaningful plan for delivery of services throughout our region. In addition to the aforementioned meetings, individual board members were asked to give input and feedback in regards to the local plan. Region VII Workforce Development Board membership is business-driven (51% business) and includes multiple partner agencies including all core partners prescribed under WIOA.

D. A description of the strategies and services that will be used in the Local Area -

- **To facilitate engagement of businesses, including small businesses and businesses in in-demand industry sectors and occupations, in workforce development programs**
- **To support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the Local Area**
- **To better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development**
- **To strengthen linkages between the American Job Center delivery system and Unemployment Insurance Programs.**

The Region VII One-Stop Career Centers have an active Business Services Team made up of key

One-Stop staff, community college representatives, and other representatives from the local area that serves business needs.

In order to facilitate engagement of local employers in in-demand industry sectors, the One-Stop Career Centers Business Services Team actively participate, and will continue to participate, in area business advisory councils and boards that bring together business and educational leaders in-demand occupational and industry sectors. While this is a fluid list, current in-demand occupations receiving the most attention from our Business Service Team members include:

- Construction Trades
- Culinary/Hospitality
- Energy
- Healthcare
- Information Technology
- Advanced Manufacturing
- Transportation and Logistics

Through these councils and advisory boards, workforce development and educational leaders communicate directly with area business leaders regarding the in-demand human resource needs, training needs, and skill-sets that are currently being sought after by area businesses.

In addition, Region VII Business Services Team members frequently and actively partner with Chambers of Commerce/Economic Development entities throughout the Local Workforce Development Area.

Region VII business service representatives provide extensive outreach to employers in the local area. This is accomplished through employer visits, community presentations, and hosting of and participation in job fairs, community fairs, and recruiting events. Employer information is also disseminated through communication outlets such as press releases, the company's website and social media outlets.

The Region VII Business Services Team operates within the One-Stop Career Centers and is integrated with the WIOA program, TANF/SNAP, and Wagner-Peyser/Re-employment programs. All job orders, job fairs, and recruiting events are accessible to and communicated to all One-Stop staff and Business Service Team members.

E. A description regarding the implementation of apprenticeship, incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies, integrated education and training, career pathways initiatives, utilization of effective business intermediaries, and other business services and strategies, designed to meet the needs of businesses in support of the strategy described in Section 1.

Region VII currently has thirty-five local registered apprenticeship programs within our eight county area. Also, IBM in Mineral County has a national recognized registered apprenticeship

program. The Ironworkers Local 568 located in Cumberland, Maryland is also a registered apprenticeship that serves our region.

In addition, the Region VII WDB and other key stakeholders work with Mr. Michael Ferrari, U.S. DOL/OA 115-15 Aiken Center, Martinsburg, WV 25402, Phone: (304) 260-9137, Email: ferrari.michael@dol.gov.

The Region VII WDB does use On-the-Job-Training (OJT) and customized training for local employers and/or businesses locating or expanding into our area. Incumbent Worker training is offered to assist in skill upgrading of current employees as part of layoff-aversion strategies. As previously mentioned, our Business Services Team(s) work closely with our economic development partners; industry clusters; advisory councils; and educational partners to understand trends and workforce needs. Services are recorded in the Mid-Atlantic Career Consortium (MACC). The Executive Director of the Region VII WDB is involved with advisory councils and the school districts regarding secondary career academies and how they translate into postsecondary degrees and/or certifications leading to career pathways.

F. A description of how the Local Board will coordinate workforce activities carried out in the Local Area with economic development activities carried out in the Local Area in which the Local Area (or planning region) is located, and promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services.

The Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) is an active partner with the One-Stop Career Centers in Region VII. One-Stop Career Centers facilitate SBDC with appropriate referrals and for our mutual customers to receive direct and immediate benefit in regards to business plans, taxes, and incorporation and other issues important to the development of a business. Microenterprise and entrepreneurial training takes place through regular workshops as well as individual meetings and appointments facilitated by SBDC staff. We will continue to support entrepreneurial development efforts throughout the region including the development and expansion of related training in support of entrepreneurial development.

G. A description of how the Local Board will leverage and coordinate supportive services in the delivery of workforce development activities carried out in the Local Area. Specifically, the Local Plan should address how the Local Board will work with Local Management Boards and other providers to deliver supportive services to jobseekers.

The Region VII WDB established within policy authorization of Supportive Service payments to WIOA eligible participants to offset the costs of attending training. Supportive Service payments are one of the direct tools Workforce Development Areas can use to remove barriers from individuals in need of re-employment or re-training. The Region VII WDB is committed to alleviating the barriers job-seekers face during their efforts to find re-employment. Often these barriers are the customers' lack of financial resources. In such instances, Supportive Service payments are able to assist the job-seeker with the ability to have transportation, clothes, tools, and other items related to looking for or accepting employment.

Referrals for Supportive Service payments are initiated by One-Stop Career Center staff. Priority is given to individuals not receiving unemployment; however, receiving unemployment does not necessarily preclude a customer from Supportive Service payments. Issuance of a Supportive Service is identified and documented as part of the Region VII WDB's case management process as well as documented electronically within the MACC.

Ultimately, the appropriate regional WDB staff must approve Supportive Service payment requests. In addition, every effort is made by regional staff to not duplicate services when records indicate a customer is co-enrolled in another partner program. For instance, the Region VII WDB would not provide Supportive Services for transportation during a job search if a WIOA customer was co-enrolled in the SNAP E&T program and receiving transportation assistance from DHHR.

H. A description of how the Local Board intends to provide a greater business voice in the delivery of workforce development activities carried out in the Local Area. The description should include how the Local Board will engage businesses on decisions regarding the type and content of training activities.

The Region VII WDB believes the voice of business and industry must be heard if we are to effectively train and adequately prepare our regional workforce for careers in our Local Area. This has been accomplished through joint partnerships of the local Community & Technical Colleges in Region VII. Blue Ridge CTC & Eastern WV CTC are active partners in Sector Strategy meetings held quarterly at each respective institution. These meetings have provided a framework for key industry, economic development, chamber of commerce, and other key community leaders to come together and organize workforce and economic development efforts. Business stakeholders are given a platform to express their training and workforce issues while the CTCs are able to address the existing areas of need while proposing solutions to close the identified skills gaps. Effective partnerships and collaboration empower our Sector Strategy efforts and successfully provide business a "voice" within our Local Area. Also, the Region VII Workforce Development Board is business driven with over 51% of the board comprised of business membership.

I. A description of how the Local Board will promote and cultivate industry-led partnerships in the delivery of workforce training opportunities.

The Region VII Business Services Team and One-Stop Management Consortium Team have strong industry partnerships within the local area. Representatives actively participate and will continue to participate in numerous advisory councils and boards that represent occupational and industry sectors in the region. Established industry partnerships exist in: construction trades, culinary/hospitality, energy, healthcare, information technology, advanced manufacturing, and transportation and logistics. Representatives actively participate on these councils and boards and will strive to develop relevant memberships that increase effectiveness and guidance to the Local

Workforce Development Board. Region VII also actively partners with the area's chambers of commerce and economic development entities to develop and enhance industry partnerships. Finally, Region VII partners with business to offer industry specific hiring events such as job and resource fairs.

J. A description of the role (if any) of local faith or community-based organizations in the local workforce development system.

Active faith-based partnerships have been somewhat limited in Region VII. However, there are instances when a client has exhausted all other available partner resources and various faith-based groups in the region have provided emergency-type assistance. Examples of these faith-based groups would be Catholic Charities, Jefferson County Ministerial Association, as well as numerous individual churches within the Local Area. Community-based organizations such as Telamon and Eastern WV Community Action Agency provide a myriad of client services, including but not limited to supportive services and emergency needs-based assistance. Other community groups provide food pantries and coat closets to residents in need throughout the local area. It is worth noting that faith-based groups often work hand-in-hand with the community organizations to provide the aforementioned services.

Section 3: American Job Center Delivery System

A. List the American Job Centers in your Local Area, including address and phone numbers. Indicate the One-Stop Operator for each site and whether it is a comprehensive or satellite center.

The regional One-Stop system consists of two comprehensive centers. The Martinsburg One-Stop Career Center is located in Martinsburg, West Virginia at 202 Viking Way, Martinsburg, West Virginia 25401 and the phone number is (304) 264-6133. The South Branch One-Stop Career Center is located in Moorefield, West Virginia at 151 Robert C. Byrd Industrial Park Road, Suite 2, Moorefield, West Virginia 26836, and the phone number is (304) 530-3917. Both centers are open Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Eastern West Virginia Community Action Agency, Inc. is the One-Stop Operator at this time. However, the One-Stop Career Centers have a Management Consortium which meets quarterly to discuss key issues and resolve joint issues common to the One-Stop System stakeholders. Under WIOA, the One-Stop Operator will be competitively procured as required by the Act.

B. Customer Flow System – Describe the customer flow process used in the Local Area. This description should include eligibility assessment, individualized training plans and case management.

Eligibility Assessment:

Eligibility for services related to local determinations about the individual's need for and ability to benefit from services. A WIOA participant is an individual determined to be eligible to participate and who receives one or more WIOA-funded services in a Region VII One-Stop Career Center.

The WIOA registration must reflect information as of the date the form is completed on the online MACC. The signature and date of the intake worker on the registration form means that the intake worker has reviewed the registration information, made a determination of eligibility, and indicated that the individual is eligible or ineligible.

The WIOA gives the state the authority to establish policies and procedures relating to verifying WIOA eligibility, as long as the policies and procedures are consistent with the WIOA, the WIOA regulations, and other federal statutes. The Region VII WDB must establish policies and procedures to verify and document participant eligibility for WIOA programs.

The Region VII WDB procedure for verifying and documenting eligibility shall identify acceptable eligibility documentation. All documentation must be retained in the participant's file. See **Attachment S**, Region VII Workforce Development Board Manual, Chapter 2, page 1.

IEP Development and Case Management Processes:

The WIOA rules explain that the IEP is an individualized career service, jointly developed by the participant and career coach. The IEP includes an ongoing strategy to identify employment goals, achievement objectives, and an appropriate combination of services for the participant to obtain these goals and objectives. IEPs are one of the most effective ways to serve individuals with barriers to employment, and to coordinate the various services, including training services, they may need to overcome these barriers.

The IEP is the basis for the overall case management strategy. The career coach should utilize the IEP to update strategies and activities as they occur, and to document referral and contact information for services obtained from partner organizations. When reviewing the IEP, career coaches should document a participant's progress, activities completed, benchmarks reached, and any other accomplishments.

Additionally, the IEP should be:

- Developed in partnership with the participant;
- Used as a tool that can and will change over time, as necessary, to meet the needs of the individual;
- Used as a roadmap to achieve measurable and attainable short-term and long-term goals; and
- Designed to reflect the individual's interests and incorporate career planning.

The provision of services should be a result of, and consistent with, the customer's assessment and IEP. Having a well-developed IEP and related documentation is required and is a fundamental part of case management. Once an IEP is developed and approved, it should be used in the on-going process of monitoring and re-evaluating the participant's progress toward educational and occupational goals.

The IEP should be a "living document" and reviewed and updated as life changes occur, including the participant's interests and ambitions, as strategies are updated, as services are obtained from partner organizations, as activities are completed, and as goals are met and benchmarks are reached. The participant must receive a copy of the plan signed and dated by both the participant and career coach. When the plan is significantly modified, such as the addition or modification of information that may be used as data validation source documentation, a new copy should be signed and dated by both parties and provided to the participant.

MACC Case Notes: Case notes refer to electronic statements by the career coach that identify, at a minimum, the following:

- A participant's status for a specific data element;
- The date on which the information was obtained; and
- The career coach who obtained the information.

The content of case notes should include information that accurately describes the services provided and the individual's experiences. Case notes should tell a story of the participant's journey through programs into self-sufficiency. They should document progress, identify barriers, describe the interaction between the participant and the career coach, provide a description of the assistance the career coach has provided, and show how barriers were overcome.

The Region VII WDB has developed a case note guidance/standard operating procedure, which ensures case noting are consistent and complete for participants in all programs. See **Attachment S**, Region VII Workforce Development Board Manual, Chapter 2, pages 40-41. For additional information regarding Region VII Workforce Development Board customer flow, please refer to **Attachment S** for greater detail.

The activities and services of the WorkForce West Virginia system are streamlined to provide immediate access to a wide variety of both job seeker and employer services. This streamlined approach provides responsive customer service whether it is one-on-one customer support at a WorkForce West Virginia Career Center, one-on-one interaction with a WIOA partner, services at an Affiliate Site or access point, or by field visitation by a WorkForce West Virginia staff member. Upon entry into the WorkForce West Virginia Career Center, customers are informed of all service options available and are encouraged to utilize those services most appropriate to meet their needs. Although initial utilization of these resources encourages self-assessment and independent use of resources, the WorkForce West Virginia Career Center recognizes that some customers may require more assistance in order to become and remain gainfully employed. As a result, Resource Room staff and the

One-Stop staff with diversified backgrounds from the various partners are available to work with customers as part of Career Services in order to achieve a positive self-sustaining employment outcome. This can include enhanced career counseling, referral to other programs, referral to support services, and intensified employability skills training (i.e., AE, SPOKES, etc.) in addition to the options listed above.

Training Services available through the WorkForce West Virginia delivery system encompass a wide array of services offered by partnering with public and community training agencies. Adult training is provided to assist customers in improving basic skills, employability skills and job skills. Basic skill instruction is provided in labs within the WorkForce West Virginia Career Centers and includes literacy instruction, basic skill remediation and test preparation. English proficiency instruction is available in adult education centers throughout the region. Employability skill training is provided for all adults and dislocated workers who lack work history and is available to others who desire this instruction. Partner programs such as Adult Education (AE) and Strategic Planning in Occupation Knowledge for Employment and Success (SPOKES) are provided through the Region VII WorkForce West Virginia Career Centers. ADA compliant computers are located at the One-Stops for handicapped job seekers.

Other programs for customers that are provided by partner agencies include Veteran Employment Programs, the Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker Program, Job Corps, Older Worker Programs, Rehabilitation Programs, Community Action Programs, and Youth Programs. Another service available for adults and dislocated workers is Rapid Response, which provides services to displaced homemakers and dislocated workers.

C. Describe how the Local Board will ensure meaningful access to all customers.

The service delivery system in Region VII will be an evolving system, one that continues to improve on the quality of service, service accessibility, and remain adaptable in meeting the needs of area employers and job seekers. The system's primary focus is to provide a framework in which the workforce of West Virginia can advance skills needed for the 21st century. The delivery system will be dependent on web-based portals that allow immediate transfer and processing of information between rural access points such as the WorkForce West Virginia Career Center partners and other state and federal agencies. In keeping with the One-Stop delivery philosophy, the Board faces many challenges to provide services throughout the region, to enable universal access by all employers and job seekers. Currently, the WDB has chartered the Workforce West Virginia Career Center located in Moorefield, WV and the Career Center located in Martinsburg, WV

The aforementioned comprehensive One-Stop Career Centers in Region VII will be physically and programmatically accessible to all customers, including individuals with disabilities and those individuals with limited English proficiency. In so doing, the One-Stop Career Centers use principles of universal design and human-centered design such as flexibility in space usage. The One-Stop Career Centers will use pictorial, written, verbal, and tactile modes to present information for customers with disabilities or limited English proficiency. The One-Stop Career Centers will also provide clear lines of sight to information for seated or standing users, necessary accommodations, and adequate space for the use of assistive devices or personal assistants.

D. A description on the process the Local Board intends to provide for the solicitation and selection of a One-Stop Operator as identified in Section 107 of WIOA.

The selection of a One-Stop Operator will be conducted in accordance with federal, state, and local procurement policies and regulations. See **Attachment F** for Region VII WDB Procurement Policy. The Region VII WDB has adopted a Procurement and Selection of Request-for-Proposals Policy, see **Attachment HH**. The Region VII policy is in accordance with WorkForce West Virginia Policy 04-17.

E. A description of how the Local Board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services through the system and ensure that such providers meet the employment needs of local businesses, and workers and jobseekers.

To ensure continuous improvement, Region VII WDB staff monitors local training providers twice a year to assure file maintenance and integrity. This process allows WDB staff to provide technical assistance and guidance to these institutions. Region VII WDB believes this is a critical component in fostering partnerships and assisting our regional training providers in their mission to better serve WIOA clients. Also, each One-Stop Career Center facilitates quarterly Training Provider and Business Services/Implementation Team meetings. The purpose of these meetings is to discuss upcoming courses at each institution as well as the needs of local businesses in the area. These meetings are critical in the continuous improvement efforts of key One-Stop system stakeholders. Collectively, these meetings and monitoring sessions provide the necessary tools to facilitate effective partnerships and streamline referral process and client services.

F. A description of how the Local Board will facilitate access to services provided through the American Job Center delivery system, including in remote areas, through the use of technology and through other means.

Throughout the eight counties of the region, the Board will continue to develop access points with

WIOA partners. These access points will have computers linked to the WorkForce West Virginia delivery system for job seekers and employers to access services. The Board plans to have multiple sites with computers in each county, allowing maximum accessibility. Job seekers will have at their disposal extensive listings of jobs available locally, across the region, state and nation. Employers will have access to an extensive database of available workers, online labor market information and the ability to post job listings on the network. Computers will be available during normal business hours and in some cases, dependent on the hosting location, on a 24-hour basis. Computers will have access to the Internet and be linked to the regional and state job information system. Computers can be accessed during regular business hours, Monday through Friday, at our partner agencies (DHHR, DRS, etc.), libraries, and local One-Stop Career Centers. If a client needs further assistance, they can call the WDB office at (304) 530-5258

G. A description of how entities within the American Job Center delivery system, including American Job Center operators and the American Job Center partners, will comply with Section 188 of WIOA, 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.

Business representatives, community leaders, county government officials as well as secondary and post-secondary schools have attended community roundtable meetings. Together, they work to identify and support the initiatives necessary to combat the identifiable problems associated with high poverty areas. Educational partners include Blue Ridge CTC and Eastern WV CTC as well as secondary school representatives and other post-secondary school representatives in the Local Area. The Region VII WDB will also maintain a Business Analyst. In addition, the Region VII WDB continues to serve customers who are low-skilled, low-wage, disconnected, disadvantaged and at-risk, with multiple employment challenges, many of whom have hidden disabilities. Finally, the Region VII WDB ensures access for all individuals with disabilities to the full range of services available to all customers and those individuals with disabilities and barriers to employment are provided services that lead to competitive, integrated employment.

H. An acknowledgement that the Local Board understands that, while Section 188 of WIOA ensure equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities, sub-recipients may also be subject to the requirements of:

- **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, which prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities by recipients of Federal financial assistance.**
- **Title I of the ADA, which prohibits discrimination in employment based on**

- disability.
- **Title II of the ADA, which prohibits State and Local governments from discriminating on the basis of disability.**
- **Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act.**
- **West Virginia Anti-Discrimination laws.**

The Region VII Workforce Development Board and our sub-recipients will adhere to the above mentioned federal regulations and their requirements. Sub-recipient contracts and/or statement of works outline the aforementioned requirements. Sub-recipient monitoring will be used to reinforce Section 188 of WIOA as well as all applicable requirement therein.

I. A description of the roles and resource contributions of the American Job Center partners.

The Region VII WDB provides a number of employment, job training, and career assistance programs for individuals who live within the eight county area of Region VII and are out of work or who have suffered job loss for a variety of reasons.

WIOA Youth: The United Way of the Eastern Panhandle is the provider of Youth Services in the region, and they provide education and employment services for youth 16-24 years of age.

WIOA Adult Program: This program serves individuals 18 years old or older who meet family income guidelines and are eligible to work in the United States. WIOA Adult enrollees can receive assistance with: career planning, job search, job training (including ITA funding), follow-up, and related services.

WIOA Dislocated Worker Program: This program offers services to help individuals who have lost a job through no fault of their own and need help returning to work find suitable employment. Services provided may include career planning and counseling, job search assistance, vocational assessments, and funding for counselor-approved training.

WorkForce West Virginia Job Service/Unemployment: This is a program through which several of WorkForce West Virginia's key services to job seekers and certain workforce-development services to businesses are delivered.

Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS): This program specializes in working with individuals with disabilities that create barriers for employment, post-secondary training, independent living and community integration. DRS provides pre-employment transition services, vocational

assessments, job tryouts, community-based evaluations, job search assistance, job coaching, case management, tuition assistance and supportive services. Staff from DRS is available as needed, to consult with partners who happen to be working with individuals with disabilities.

Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR): The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR) is comprised of five bureaus: Bureau for Behavioral Health and Health Facilities; Bureau for Child Support Enforcement; Bureau for Children and Families; Bureau for Medical Services; and Bureau for Public Health. DHHR has a statewide presence and employs nearly 6,000 individuals.

Senior Community Service Employment Program: This program helps workers who are 55 or older to build the experience and confidence they need to find permanent employment.

All partners contribute to the infrastructure of the One-Stop Career Center system and co-enroll clients with other one-stop partners to avoid duplication and ensure wrap-around services are provided.

J. A description of how the Local Board will use Individualized Training Accounts based on high-demand, difficult to fill positions identified within local priority industries identified in Section 1 (A).

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) provides for the Individual Training Account (ITA) to be used on behalf of WIOA participants to finance training services. Upon exhausting all other student financial aid sources the ITA shall be one of the primary methods used by the WDB to train WIOA eligible participants. Customers will be required to apply for Federal Pell Grants and the portion of the Pell Grant attributable to tuition and other training costs must be applied to the tuition cost before WIOA funds are applied. WIOA funds may be used to fund an ITA while Pell eligibility is being processed. However, when Pell funds are provided, the portion of Pell attributable to tuition must be repaid to the WDB. The portion of a Pell Grant that is attributable to “education related” expenses is not required to be applied to tuition or reimbursed to the Board. In cases where an individual has a choice between a Pell eligible training provider and a service provider that has not applied or received Pell eligibility, the customer must choose the Pell eligible provider, if performance data are comparable and the Pell-eligible service provider training costs are comparable. The selection of a training provider will be in a manner that maximizes informed consumer choice. However, consumer choice must be in a demand or growth occupation within the Region VII labor market. Applicable portions of the ITA will be completed by the WorkForce West Virginia Career Center Case Manager and the Training Provider, and then forwarded to the WDB for approval. The ITA can only be

utilized at training or educational facilities approved by both the local WDB and WorkForce West Virginia. A listing of approved training providers can be reviewed on the state website at <https://public.workforcewv.org/JobSeeker/TrainingCourseSearch.asp>. The listing should provide information on school location; program offerings and class dates; school point of contact; program cost; program certification or degree; school completion rates; wage at placement; and rate of retention in unsubsidized employment. The availability of the above information will assist the individual in choosing a quality-training program.

ITA Eligibility. The process for determining individual ITA eligibility includes:

- individual has received Career Services without obtaining employment (career services received must be documented on the Individual Employment Plan (IEP) and in MACC). Before moving to either a training program or employment, the individual must demonstrate he or she has the necessary basic education or work skills necessary to proceed to training or employment.
- individual chooses a training program or educational program from a demand occupation which is offered by a Region VII certified Training Provider;
- individual has demonstrated through evaluation, assessment, and case management the abilities, aptitudes, and/or skills to successfully complete the training;
- the training occupation has the potential to provide the customer a self-sufficient income;
- individual is accepted by the training provider; and
- the WDB approves the ITA.

Individual Training Account (ITA) Limitations

1. Training costs shall not exceed \$6,000 for a twelve (12) month period and are limited to that twelve (12) month period, to include tuition, fees, books, supplies, tools and other direct training related expenses, unless by approval of the Executive Director. No payments will be made for training costs incurred prior to the time the Individual Training Account is approved. The training provider and/or participant shall provide proof, in writing, of tuition coverage or income to support training programs that cost in excess of the approved WIOA amount.
2. Participants may transfer from a training institution of higher education to another Board approved training institution as long as the receiving institution provides credit for all successfully completed training.
3. Transfers will not be approved for participants attending providers of training from other than Board approved institutions.

4. Funds shall not be approved for home study courses or sectarian activities. However, courses of study whose main course work is conducted on-site with minimal home study or video teaching can be approved.

5. Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funding shall not be provided for individuals changing programs unless approved by the WDB.

6. Prior to approval by the WDB, a new ITA will be completed by WIOA Career Coaches and the Training Provider and submitted to the WDB. The new ITA must be approved by the WDB prior to any program change.

7. Costs for any repeated course(s), lost books, etc. will not be paid by WIOA funding unless prior approval is granted through a waiver by the Region VII WDB Executive Director.

8. The participant will be required to apply for student financial aid, to include a Pell Grant, if attending a training provider that participates in the Federal Financial Aid Program. A copy of the award or denial letter must accompany the ITA.

9. The individual must be making satisfactory progress in the program. Satisfactory progress is defined as 2.0 grade point average (GPA) for each term and the cumulative GPA must also be 2.0 or greater. The Board will recognize higher progress standards when required by a school for satisfactory completion of a program. Satisfactory progress, in the case of schools utilizing a pass/fail grading system, will be defined as the progress level the school has established as the benchmark the individual must meet or obtain to be declared "skill efficient" in the school's program of study.

10. The student must agree to attend classes no less than 12 credit hours/semester hours or 25 classroom hours per week or be enrolled as full-time equivalent student in a West Virginia State Board of Education approved program, or be enrolled in a program approved by an accrediting agency recognized by the West Virginia State Board of Education. Instances where school scheduling will not allow the student to carry the required credit hours/semester hours may be waived and will be handled on a case-by-case basis by the WDB. Summer school students must be enrolled no less than the credit hours/semester hours equivalent to 6-credit hours/semester hours or 37.5 classroom hours per week.

ITA Payment. The Local Workforce Development Board will make payment to the training provider in two (2) separate installments per semester/session:

- ½ at the time of enrollment with submission of an invoice from the training provider; and
- ½ at mid-point in the semester/session with submission of an invoice and a student progress report. The student must be making satisfactory performance.

If a participant drops out of the training program between disbursement periods, the balance due will be prorated, and a refund issued to the WDB.

The length of training shall be based on the time needed to learn adequately the occupational skills. Depending on the type of training, it could be as long as twelve (12) months or as short as a few weeks.

ITA Disclaimer. Failure to abide by the ITA policy relieves the Local Workforce Development Board of any obligation to pay for any training cost incurred. The individual may be responsible for payment to the Board of training expenses incurred by the Board in the event the individual does not abide by the ITA policy. Each ITA recipient will have this acknowledged in a signed Memorandum of Understanding.

K. A description of how the Local Board will provide priority of services that conforms with the State Plan. This should include a description of additional local requirements or discretionary priorities including data to support the need and how the local requirement and/or priority will be documented and implemented for the Adult program.

WorkForce West Virginia has issued a Priority of Services Policy for Adult Title I Funding 2-16, which determines priority for providing WIOA Career and Training services. A priority of service will be utilized in Region VII that will fund all WIOA eligible veteran and felons needs and provide adult funding to recipients of public assistance and / or low-income individuals. Region VII Workforce Development Board remains committed to a seamless delivery of services to all WIOA eligible customers. The Board will continually review our own policies to conform and comply with State policies implemented to deliver seamless integration of WIOA services. The Region VII WDB believes this will be an on-going effort of the Local Board, One-Stop Delivery System, applicable local partners, and appropriate mandated State partners. See **Attachment G** for the Region VII WDB Priority of Service Policy.

Priority for individualized career services and training services funded with Title I Adult funds must be given to recipients of public assistance and other low-income individuals who are basic skills deficient. States and local areas must establish criteria by which the one-stop operator will apply the priority under WIOA section 134(c)(3)(E).

Veterans, under WIOA section 3(63)(A) and 38 U.S.C. 101 receive priority of service in all Department of Labor funded training programs under 38 U.S.C. 4215 and described in 20 CFR 1010. A veteran must still meet each program's eligibility criteria to receive services under the respective employment and training program. For income-based eligibility determinations, amounts paid while on active duty or paid by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for vocation

rehabilitation, disability payments, or related VA-funded programs are not to be considered income in accordance with 38 U.S.C. 4213 and 20 CFR 683.230.

L. A description of how the Local Board will utilize funding to create incumbent worker training opportunities.

Incumbent worker training (IWT) is defined as training designed to keep businesses and workers competitive by keeping workers employed, thus averting layoffs. IWT may be used to upgrade workers' skills for the purpose of layoff aversion. The purpose of this program is to assist businesses who have the need to train and retrain existing members of their workforce in order to remain competitive in the local, regional, and global economy. IWT is "employer driven" and responds to changes in market conditions as well as the introduction of new technology in the workplace. Our policy identifies the need for our Business Services Team to work jointly in effort to identify employers in need of IWT. See **Attachment H** for the Region VII WDB WIOA Incumbent Worker Training Policy.

M. A description of how the Local Board will train and equip staff to provide excellent, WIOA-compliant customer service.

The Region VII WDB will continue to use established professional development activities in order to meet goals, develop staff skills, and ensure a competent WIOA case management staff. In addition, we will enhance training curricula that incorporates policies, processes, and input from Wagner Peyser, UI, and /or core partner agency staff. The Region VII WDB will continue to train employees on the pertinent skills needed in the American Job Center through seminars, conferences, and other professional development opportunities. Examples of such professional development programs include but are not limited to: Workforce GPS, NAJA, NAWB, NAWDP, and other various state and local trainings. The WDB also provides a case management manual to all new staff to use as a reference and further enhance their professional skill-set.

Section 4: Title I - Adult, Youth, and Dislocated Worker Functions

A. A description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated workers employment and training activities in the Local Area.

All Adult and Dislocated Workers can be provided WIOA Career and Training Services through the comprehensive WorkForce West Virginia Career Centers located in Martinsburg and Moorefield. Career Services can be obtained at any WorkForce West Virginia Career Center, or by use of the Internet. Training Services may be provided to WIOA eligible job

seekers that do not have skills necessary to secure immediate employment and will be coordinated by a WorkForce West Virginia Career Center WIOA Career Coach. Training Services will be constantly monitored by the WDB to ensure both quality and success by the approved provider. The Region VII WDB reserves the right to remove a Training Provider or a Training Providers program from our approved regional list if there is a problem related to performance or quality.

Services will be provided to current workers, emerging workers, incumbent workers or dislocated workers, the disabled, veterans, low-income, including former and/or older workers re-entering the workforce. Eligibility for services will be in accordance with the WDB Priority of Service Policy and the WDB's Self-Sufficiency Income Level Policy.

B. A description of how the Local Board will coordinate workforce development activities carried out in the Local Area with statewide rapid response activities, as described in Section 134 (a)(2)(A).

WorkForce West Virginia, by publication, of Policy Guidance Letters No. 02-03, 03-03, 24-03, and Informational Notice dated October 4, 2006, has established procedures for the operation of Rapid Response activities throughout the state. These policies establish WorkForce West Virginia as the lead state agency. Although WorkForce West Virginia is the lead, their goal is to operate the Rapid Response program as a collaborative effort between the State and the local WDB. Thus, a Rapid Response Team including the state and local representatives will be used in all Rapid Response situations. The team will consist of:

- Representative from WorkForce West Virginia
- Representative from the local WDB
- The appropriate local One-Stop Director or Business Service Team representative
- The appropriate local Unemployment Insurance representative
- The appropriate local Resource Center Peer Advocate
- The appropriate Wagner-Peyser staff
- The appropriate WV Development Office Existing Industry Representative
- The State Trade Adjustment Assistance Act Unit
- Local Economic Development personnel
- Local Community and Technical College personnel