

REGIONAL AND LOCAL PLANNING GUIDE

UPDATED NOVEMBER 2023

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INTRODUCTION AND INSTRUCTIONS

BACKGROUND

This document provides a working outline of the regional and local planning requirements that are included in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and final regulations to guide discussions with regional and local partners. Within this document, pages 1-2 outline the State of Illinois' vision for workforce and WIOA implementation, including local and regional planning. Please read the state vision, as it is intended to inform the local and regional planning process.

The planning requirements that are included in the WIOA and final regulations are outlined in the State of Illinois Regional and Local Planning Guide on pages 3-4. Each local workforce innovation area in Illinois will submit a plan that includes the *regional planning components* (developed by the regional planning team) and *local planning components* (developed by the LWIA) as required by the U.S. Departments of Labor and Education. For purposes of regional and local plan compliance, **it is expected that regional and local plans follow the format of this Planning Guide, beginning with the chapter headings and addressing each item of required content in that chapter.**

Note: This guide and the information requirements are based on the latest regulatory information available at the time of publication. Additional information may be required based on any new federal or state regulations that are issued after the release of this guide.

STATE OF ILLINOIS WORKFORCE VISION

WIOA requires the state, regional and local workforce plans to be developed in concert with the core and required partners and stakeholders. Illinois' planning process begins with the state's vision.

Vision

Illinois' workforce system will meet employers, jobseekers, and community members where they are, centering the customer experience in an interoperable, equitable, and accessible manner to ensure all customers achieve their goals. We will support employers by building diverse, quality career pathways and provide effective training, education, and economic opportunities for jobseekers and communities to thrive.

STRATEGIES

The vision and principles laid the groundwork for the 11 strategies of the WIOA State Plan. The vision, principles and key strategies developed at the state level are the foundation of the planning process. The strategies are as follows:

1. The Workforce Development System uses a customer-centered approach to service delivery.
2. The Workforce Development System advances diversity, equity, inclusion and access.

3. WIOA partners and other workforce and education systems in Illinois enhance coordination and collaboration.
4. Jobseekers and employers have a broader awareness of the Workforce Development System.
5. The Workforce Development System improves local service delivery through enhanced support of frontline workers.
6. The Workforce Development System supports, informs and enhances employers' talent strategies.
7. The Workforce Development System sets a good-job standard for training programs and employers that work with the Workforce Development System.
8. The Workforce Development System will build out tools and practices that can help employers adopt a culture that promotes equity and accessibility.
9. The Workforce Development System educates and supports jobseekers regarding how to navigate the labor market.
10. The Workforce Development System interacts with jobseekers in the places where they live and visit.
11. The Workforce Development System will use a data-informed approach to reduce barriers to services for jobseekers who have historically been underserved.

PROGRAM COORDINATION AND SERVICE INTEGRATION

The State of Illinois is committed to the integration of the core and required partner programs throughout the workforce system. The planning process must be informed by the service integration activities outlined in the updated IWIB Service Integration Policy ([WIOA Policy WIOA-1.13](#)). The policy defines service integration as a combination of strategies to align and simplify access to one-stop center services and supports for employers, job seekers and system customers with the goal of providing the best experience possible. Service integration may occur across entities delivering specific services or programs, across time as customer needs change, or both.

This planning guide emphasizes that regions and local areas must demonstrate their commitment to service integration by providing specific plans and actions for working toward alignment, as well as any challenges to aligning the plans and activities within each region and local area. As the planning process evolves, regions and local areas must demonstrate the alignment with the strategic plans of other required partners and be sure to integrate other relevant parts when applicable. Local Planning must also align with the community colleges' Perkins CTE 4-Year Plan. Local Workforce Innovation Boards and Adult Education providers are required to be consulted through the completion of the Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment and the Perkins Local Application.

REGIONAL AND LOCAL PLAN COORDINATION

According to the WIOA final rule, a regional plan is required to meet the purpose of developing, aligning, and integrating service delivery strategies; supporting the state's vision and strategic and operational goals; and to coordinate resources among multiple LWIAs in a region. This approach is intended to align resources between multiple local workforce boards. WIOA requires the local workforce board, in partnership with the chief elected official(s), to submit a local plan to the Governor.

REGIONAL PLANNING REGULATIONS

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and final regulations require local workforce boards and chief elected officials (CEO) within an identified planning region to participate in a regional planning process that results in the preparation of a regional plan that includes:

- The establishment of regional service strategies, including use of cooperative service delivery agreements (§ 679.510(a)(1)(ii));
- The development and implementation of sector initiatives for in-demand industry sectors or occupations for the planning region (§ 679.510(a)(1)(iii));
- The collection and analysis of regional labor market data (in conjunction with the state), which must include the local planning requirements at § 679.560(a)(1)(i), (ii) and (iv);
- The coordination of administrative cost arrangements, including the pooling of funds for administrative costs, as appropriate (§ 679.510(a)(1)(v));
- The coordination of transportation and other supportive services as appropriate (§ 679.510(a)(1)(vi));
- The coordination of services with regional economic development services and providers (§ 679.510(a)(1)(vii)); and
- The establishment of an agreement concerning how the planning region will collectively negotiate and reach agreement with the Governor on local levels of performance for, and report on, the performance accountability measures described in WIOA Sec. 116(c) for local areas or the planning region (§ 679.510(a)(1)(viii)).

LOCAL PLANNING REGULATIONS

The local plan serves as a four-year action plan to develop, align and integrate the region and local area's job-driven workforce development systems and provides the platform to achieve the local area's visions and strategic and operational goals. At the end of the first 2-year period of the 4-year local plan, each local board shall review¹ the local plan and the local board, in partnership with the chief elected official, shall prepare and submit modifications to the local plan to reflect changes in labor market and economic conditions or in other factors affecting the implementation of the local plan. Additional criteria have been included in this Planning Guide to assist regional and local workforce areas in developing responses to the implementation of recommendations from the Governor's Commission on Workforce Equity and Access, the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) Equity Task Force and the IWIB Service Integration Work Group. The local plan sets forth the strategy to:

- Direct investments in economic, education and workforce training programs to focus on providing relevant education and training to ensure that individuals, including youth and individuals with barriers to employment, have the skills to compete in the job market and that employers have a ready supply of skilled workers (§ 679.500(a)(1));
- Apply job-driven strategies in the one-stop system (§ 679.500(a)(2));
- Enable economic, education and workforce partners to build a skilled workforce through innovation in, and alignment of, employment, training and education programs (§ 679.500(a)(3)); and
- Incorporate the local plan into the regional plan per § 679.540. At the end of the first 2-year period of the 4-year local plan, each local board shall review the local plan and the local board, in partnership with the chief elected official, shall prepare and submit modifications to the

¹ Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, U.S.C. 29 § 3123(a)

regional and local plans to reflect changes in labor market and economic conditions or in other factors affecting the implementation of the local plan (§ 679.560(a)).

ILLINOIS PLANNING REGIONS

WIOA Section 106 requires the Governor to identify “planning regions” to align workforce development activities and resources with larger regional economic development areas. After an analysis of the labor market information and other data factors, the State has determined that the WIOA planning regions align with the existing ten Economic Development Regions (see Appendix I). The Economic Development Regions were determined based on the following factors:

- Workforce: Demographics, Labor Force, Commuting Patterns
- Geography: Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs)
- Business & Industry: Employers & Major Industries

In accordance with WIOA Section 106(a)(2), a single local area may not be split across two planning regions. Local areas must be contiguous to be a planning region and effectively align economic and workforce development activities and resources (20 CFR 679.210). There are three LWIAs in Illinois that are split across state planning regions. **A renewed waiver from this requirement is being sought from the U.S. Department of Labor as a part of the 2024-2028 Unified State Plan². Local areas split across multiple planning regions may elect to participate in regional planning in the region of their choice or in both.**

The State of Illinois recognizes that the realignment of a local workforce area requires a significant amount of planning and effort at the state and local levels. Technical assistance is available to local workforce areas that voluntarily choose to realign programs, consolidate activities and/or merge local workforce areas.

PLAN ORGANIZATION

All local workforce innovation areas in Illinois must submit a plan that includes both the regional and local planning components outlined in this planning guide.

REGIONAL COMPONENTS	
Chapter 1	Economic and Workforce Analysis
Chapter 2	Strategies for Service Integration
Chapter 3	Vision, Goals and Implementation Strategies
LOCAL COMPONENTS	
Chapter 4	Operating Systems and Policies
Chapter 5	Performance Goals and Evaluation
Chapter 6	Technical Requirements and Assurances

² <https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/Resources/Pages/StateUnifiedPlan.aspx>

TIMELINE

ACTIVITY	TARGET DATE
Draft Regional and Local Planning Guide issued	October 11, 2023
Final Regional and Local Planning Guide issued	December 4, 2025
Regional data packets issued	October 31, 2025
Regional and local plan posted for public comment period not to last more than 30 days	February 16, 2026
Regional and local teams update plans based on public comments	March 14, 2026
Regional and local plan finalized (approved by local workforce board and submitted to the Governor)	March 31, 2026
State review period completed	June 30, 2026
Regional and local plan effective date or technical assistance provided (as needed)	July 1, 2026

PLAN REVIEW AND PUBLIC COMMENT

The plan (including the regional and local components) must be made available for viewing and public comment for no more than 30 days before submission to the Governor per § 679.550(b)(3). Any comments expressing disagreement with the plan must be included when the plan is submitted.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMITTAL

The regional and local component of the plan must follow the chapter format as laid out in this Planning Guide. The required items of content in the guide will be reviewed for quality and completeness to meet compliance requirements. Plans must be submitted by the close of business on March 31, 202 to the State of Illinois at: wioaplans-mous@illinoisworknet.com.

REGIONAL COMPONENTS

CHAPTER 1: ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

This chapter must discuss how the region has collected and analyzed updated regional labor market information including the local planning requirements. Regional teams are encouraged to use the labor market information posted on <https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/RegPlanning> to provide consistency in the data used for regional analysis throughout the state³.

A. Provide an analysis of the factors listed below:

1. Economic conditions, including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations (§ 679.560(a)(1)(i));
 - a. What are the targeted industries, high-impact industry clusters, and in-demand occupations in the region?
 - b. What industries have favorable location quotients?
 - c. What industries and occupations have favorable demand projections based on growth?
 - d. What industries and occupations have favorable demand projections based on replacements?
 - e. What industries are considered mature but still important to the economy?
 - f. What industries are considered emerging in the regional economy?
 - g. What is the projected regional key in-demand occupations?
 - h. What sources of supply and demand data were used to determine the targeted industries occupations and skills?
2. Employment needs of employers in existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations (§ 679.560(a)(1)(ii));
3. Knowledge and skills needed to meet the employment needs of the employers in the region, including employment needs in in-demand industry sectors and occupations (§ 679.560(a)(2));
 - a. What are the targeted career pathway clusters in the region?
 - b. What skills are in demand in the region?
 - c. How well do the existing skills of job seekers match the demands of local businesses?
4. Regional workforce considering current labor force employment and unemployment data, information on labor market trends, and educational and skill levels of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment⁴ (§ 679.510(a)(1)(iv) and § 679.560(a)(3)).
 - a. How is the region changing in terms of demographics, labor supply and occupational demand?

³ For clarity on what resources to use, regions can discuss the most appropriate data to select with their local IDES labor market economist.

⁴ The term “individual with barrier to employment” means one or more of the following populations: displaced homemakers, low-income individuals, Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians, individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities, older individuals, ex-offenders, homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths, youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system, individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers, eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers, individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act, single parents, including pregnant single women, long-term unemployed individuals, and such other groups as the Governor determines to have barriers to employment (WIOA Sec. 3(24)).

- b. What special populations exist in the region, what is their magnitude, and what are the policy and service implications to meet the needs of these individuals?
- B. Describe how the Local Workforce Innovation Board and WIOA partners support the development and implementation of sector initiatives for in-demand industry sectors or occupations for the planning region (§ 679.510(a)(1)(iii)). Plans must answer the following questions:
 1. How will the workforce partners convene or support the convening of regional employers, foundations, institutions and other stakeholders to create or maintain sector partnerships?
 2. Identify the established and active sector partnerships in the region (as defined in Illinois' Next Generation Sector Strategies Guide⁵). If any exist, are they business-led and what is their role in WIOA planning?
 3. What public-private partnerships exist in the region that could support sector strategies, and what is their role in planning?
 4. What neutral conveners with the capacity to help establish sector partnerships exist in the region, and what is their role in planning?
- C. If any employer collaboratives are engaged in the U.S. Chamber's Talent Pipeline Management initiative, describe the following:
 - a. What is the focus of the collaborative(s)?
 - b. How is the workforce system supporting the needs of these employers?
- D. Describe any broad economic development opportunities in the region within the context of the workforce, education and economic development plans.
- E. Describe any broad economic challenges in the region's workforce, education and economic development plans.
- F. Describe how a *workforce equity lens*⁶ is incorporated into the local planning requirements for collecting and analyzing labor market information.

⁵ Regional team are encouraged to review Illinois' Next Generation Sector Strategies Guide that is posted on <https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/network/Pages/SectorStrategies.aspx>.

⁶ An Equity Lens, as defined by the IWIB Equity Task Force, is an ongoing process for analyzing or diagnosing the impact of the design and implementation of policies on under-served and marginalized individuals and groups, and to identify and potentially eliminate barriers.

CHAPTER 2: STRATEGIES FOR SERVICE INTEGRATION

This regional component of the plan must describe the regional service strategies, including use of cooperative service delivery strategies and the connection of job seekers with employers. Regions are required to provide information and analysis of the steps that will be taken to address the challenges and opportunities associated with the regional service integration strategies.

- A. Provide an analysis of workforce development activities, including education and training, in the region. This analysis must include the strengths and weaknesses of workforce development activities and capacity to provide the workforce development activities to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment, and the employment needs of employers (§ 679.560(a)(4)). The plan must address the following areas:
 - 1. Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of workforce development activities in the region.
 - 2. Analyze the capacity of the regional partners to provide workforce development activities to address the education and skill needs of the workforce including individuals with barriers to employment.
 - 3. Analyze the capacity of the regional partners to provide activities to address the needs of employers.
 - 4. How well do existing training programs in the region and local areas prepare job seekers to enter and retain employment with regional businesses?
 - 5. Summarize the commitments of each program partner to implement the selected strategies described in the “Action Plan for Improving Service Integration in the Region.”
- B. Describe how transportation and other supportive services are coordinated within the region (§ 679.510(a)(1)(vi)). The plan must address the following sections:
 - 1. What regional organizations currently provide or could provide supportive services?
 - 2. What policies and procedures will be established to promote coordination of supportive services delivery?
- C. Describe the coordination of services with regional economic development services and WIOA service providers (§ 679.510(a)(1)(vii)). The plan must address the following sections:
 - 1. What economic development organizations, WIOA service providers or businesses are actively engaged in regional planning?
 - 2. What economic development organizations, WIOA service providers or businesses were invited to participate but declined?
- D. Describe the coordination of administrative cost arrangements, including the pooling of funds for administrative costs, as appropriate (§ 679.510(a)(1)(v)).
- E. Describe how a *workforce equity lens*⁶ is or will be incorporated in the regional service integration strategies, including to job seekers and employers.

CHAPTER 3: VISION, GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

This section will outline how the Local Workforce Board(s) will coordinate the regional workforce, education and economic development activities with regional activities that are carried out in the local areas. The responses must illustrate that business, education and workforce development stakeholders have provided input and are involved with the development of the strategies and to ensure alignment with other plans.

- A. Describe the local strategic vision to support state and regional economic growth (§ 679.560(a)(5)). Describe how this aligns with the State of Illinois' vision and principles (page 1). Include a description of how the region and local areas will accomplish the local strategic vision and support state and regional economic growth.
- B. Describe the local goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce (including youth and individuals with barriers to employment) and goals relating to the performance accountability measures based on performance indicators (§ 677.155(a)(1)). Include a description of how the region and local areas will accomplish local goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce and goals relating to performance.
- C. Provide a description of the regional and local strategies that will achieve the vision and principles. This section must include a description of the strategies and services that will be used in the local areas:
 - 1. To facilitate engagement of employers in workforce development programs, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations (§679.560(b)(3)(i));
 - 2. To support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area (§ 679.560(b)(3)(ii));
 - 3. To better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development (§ 679.560(b)(3)(iii));
 - 4. To strengthen linkages between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs (§ 679.560(b)(3)(iv));
 - 5. To promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services (§ 679.560(b)(4)); and
 - 6. To implement initiatives such as incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies, career pathways initiatives, utilization of effective business intermediaries, and other business services and strategies designed to meet the needs of regional employers (§ 679.560(b)(3)(v)).
- D. Describe regional strategies that will increase apprenticeship and other work-based learning opportunities.
- E. Describe initiatives to shorten the time from credential to employment and address how the area will work with the education system to begin putting training opportunities in place to meet this strategy.
- F. Describe the steps that will be taken to support the state's efforts to align and integrate education, workforce and economic development, including:
 - 1. Fostering the improvement and expansion of employer-driven regional sector partnerships to increase the focus on critical in-demand occupations in key sectors that are the engine of economic growth for the state and its regions.

2. Expanding career pathway⁷ opportunities through more accelerated and work-based training, and align and integrate programs of study leading to industry-recognized credentials and improved employment and earnings.
3. Expanding career services and opportunities for populations facing multiple barriers to close the gap in educational attainment and economic advancement through career pathways and improved career services.

G. Describe how goals established in this plan will be monitored and evaluated.

H. Describe how a *workforce equity lens*⁶ is or will be incorporated in the implementation of regional workforce, education, and economic development strategies.

⁷ The [State of Illinois Career Pathways Dictionary](https://isac.org/pace/cp_dictionary_11-13-18_final.pdf) is available at isac.org/pace/cp_dictionary_11-13-18_final.pdf.

LOCAL COMPONENTS

CHAPTER 4: OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES

This chapter provides an overview of all the operating systems and policies within the Local Workforce Innovation Areas (LWIAs). LWIAs must incorporate key documents into the plan that describe the one-stop delivery system and the services that are provided by the workforce partners. LWIAs are required to provide information and analysis regarding the challenges and opportunities that are associated with the local operating system and policies.

- A. Coordination of Planning Requirements: The plan will incorporate the Memorandum of Understanding and Service Integration Action Plan. As part of this plan, the LWIA will complete a Service Integration Self-Assessment of its progress on service integration. A copy of the documentation associated with the self-assessment process will be submitted as an appendix to this plan. Additionally, this plan must include the following statements in this chapter:
- *The Local Workforce Innovation Area 4 **Memorandum of Understanding** provides a description of the one-stop delivery system, and other information that is essential to the establishment and operation of effective local workforce development systems as required by the WIOA Rule (20 CFR Part 678.705). The Memorandum of Understanding and any subsequent modifications is incorporated by reference into this plan.*
 - *The Local Workforce Innovation Area 4 **Service Integration Self-Assessment Tool** provides a description of how local workforce partners will align and coordinate services as required by the State of Illinois Service Integration Policy (WIOA Policy Chapter 1, Section 13). The Service Integration Self-Assessment Tool, and any subsequent modifications, are incorporated by reference into this plan.*
- B. Provide a copy of the following local policies and agreements:
- Chief Elected Official (CEO) Functions and Agreement Between Multiple Chief Elected Officials (WIOA Policy Chapter 1, Section 2)
 - Chief Elected Official Delegation of Authority and Acknowledgment of Financial Liability (WIOA Policy Chapter 1, Section 3)
 - Local Workforce Innovation Board (LWIB) Certification and Recertification Requirements (WIOA Policy Chapter 1, Section 5)
 - One-Stop Operator Procurement (WIOA Policy Chapter 1, Section 7)
 - Career Planning (WIOA Policy Chapter 4, Section 2)
 - General Follow-Up Services (WIOA Policy Chapter 4, Section 3)
 - Selective Service Registration Requirements (WIOA Policy Chapter 5, Section 1.1)
 - Youth Eligibility (WIOA Policy Chapter 5, Section 4)
 - Service Priorities (WIOA Policy Chapter 5, Section 6)
 - Veterans' Priority of Service Requirements (WIOA Policy Chapter 5, Section 7)
 - Individual Training Accounts (WIOA Policy Chapter 7, Section 2.1)
 - On-the-Job Training (WIOA Policy Chapter 7, Section 2.2.1) (Modified September 2025 – see attached)
 - Incumbent Worker Training (WIOA Policy Chapter 7, Section 2.2.3) (Modified September 2025 – see attached)
 - Work Experience (WEX) and Transitional Jobs (WIOA Policy Chapter 7, Section 2.5) (Modified May 2025 – see attached)
 - Training Provider and Training Program Eligibility – Eligible Training Provider List (WIOA

Policy Chapter 7, Section 3)

- Supportive Services (WIOA Policy Chapter 7, Section 4)
- Privacy and Security (Personally Identifiable Information) (WIOA Policy Chapter 8, Section 2.2)
- Property Control for Property Purchased with WIOA Funds (WIOA Policy Chapter 8, Section 3.6)
- Compliant and Grievance Procedures (Nondiscrimination) (WIOA Policy Chapter 8, Section 5) (Modified March 2026 – see attached)

C. Describe how the use of technology and other alternative means of service delivery in the one-stop delivery system, including a description of:

1. How the workforce centers are implementing and transitioning to an integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information system for programs carried out under WIOA (§ 679.560(b)(20)).

As the team of leaders met to complete the self-assessment we recognized the ideal case management system would be one electronic system, but in reality we do not believe that at a local level we can complete this task. What we have indicated in our self-assessment is that we will coordinate with the Program Service Team (front line staff from each partnering agency who work with job seeking customers), Business Service Team (front line staff from partnering agencies who work with businesses), One-Stop Operator and the newly created One Stop Partner Committee of the Workforce Board to integrate information that will keep the partners up to date on common occurrences throughout the LWIA.

2. How the local area is using multiple methods to provide orientations for customers, including but not limited to, virtual and asynchronous orientations.

In our large rural workforce area, orientations include list of services and programs offered by the partners in the system. Although group settings are possible for these orientations, most are one on one as an individual's enters the system. Zoom is a subscription paid for in the MOU for the use of the Workforce Board and all the partner meetings but could be used for an electronic orientation if deemed necessary. Case management and regularly scheduled appointment and workshops have also utilize these technology options.

Printed material from each partner is a resource to be used to ensure that all individuals who have a workforce need gets the information and contact information to address that need.

During the Program Service Team meetings resources are shared on special programs and services along with status of current programs to ensure that all partners are up to date on the offers. These meeting notes are also included in the Workforce Board meeting packets. The same will be done with the Business Services Team meeting notes. Notes will also be shared between the two teams so that each team is aware of the programs and services offered along with data being collected.

3. How the Local Board will facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system through the use of technology and other means, such as online meeting software and mobile workforce centers. (§ 679.560(b)(5)(ii)).

As stated in the previous question, Zoom is used by the local board to bring together stakeholders and customers who may not have in-person availability for services. Google meets is also used along with Skype to ensure a variety of platforms.

LWIA 4 has always practiced mobile case management when necessary to meet people where they are who may have a barrier to visit an access site or the comprehensive center.

The creation and maintaining of the One Stop website will continue to provide information through technology. An increased effort will be emphasized to keep the updates in real time. Another resource that has continued after the pandemic is the use of DocuSign for signatures.

We have continued to see the importance of not always having to travel distances for signatures.

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

1. Expanding access to employment, training, education and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment (§ 679.560(b)(2)(i));

LWIA 4 has several access sites that house partner services that align with the needs of the area will allow for a more expanded access. With the design of the Program Service Team and the Business Service Team it supports the core programs information will be readily available. Cross-training with staff helps to inform all partners to make appropriate referrals to the correct agency for services. This along with co-enrollment is a well-rounded practice to meet the needs of customers, both business and individuals to expand access to services.

Revamping the Rapid Response workshops to include other partners has enhanced service delivery with programs that are available. Because of the diversity found in today's more modern workforces, this would also better guarantee that those who are impacted by the lay-off or closing and who have a specific barrier to employment would get the programs and services they need in a more expeditious manner.

The creation of the One Stop Partner committee of the Workforce Board it will bring the need for services to the forefront with representation from all partners, the one stop operator and also the program service team. This collaboration of information will produce real time need for services along with a strategy to address those needs.

Partnering in job fairs as well as in person job fairs expands access to both the business customer and the job seeker without duplication of services. This along with participating in multiple resource groups along with sitting on community boards help to increase awareness of the one stop system and in turn expands access.

The inclusion of non-WIOA partners in Program Service Team meetings in order to familiarize partner staff with additional resources for addressing customer barriers.

2. Scaling up the use of Integrated Education and Training models to help adults get their State of

Illinois High School Diploma and work on other basic skills and English language acquisition while earning credentials and industry-recognized credentials that lead to in-demand occupations;

NCI Works, the local workforce board, and the Business Employment Skills Team, Inc., the Title 1B partner, are essential partners and supporters of the Integrated Education and Training (IET) Model or Integrated Career and Academic Preparation System (ICAPS) Healthcare Model at Illinois Valley Community College (IVCC) and Sauk Valley Community College (SVCC). The goal is to help Adult Education students obtain a High School Equivalency while seeking an industry recognized credential for occupations that are in high demand. IVCC's and SVCC's Adult Education programs have created several career pathways for stackable credentials in healthcare. A universal referral process between Title I and Title II is already in place to help identify common customers that would benefit from this partnership. Following common career pathways throughout the partners make this transition a smooth link between education and self-sufficient employment.

A career navigator will focus on individual's needs through assessments. Students can proceed in a number of directions from transitional jobs to work experience or on-the-job training as well as help with job search for unsubsidized employment. Through cooperative agreements and employer engagement, students will benefit from internships, work experience, workforce preparation activities, and soft skills training. In addition, the Local Workforce Board has approved waiving the HSE requirement for ICAPS students who are seeking funding through Title I to reduce the financial burden for credential attainment.

3. How the core programs in the local area will leverage their business services to provide more holistic support to employers;

Our local business services team has been in existence since 2002. The number of partners in this effort has grown over the years, especially with the consolidation of LWIA 4 and LWIA 12. Current partner in the local effort include: the community colleges (IVCC and SVCC), IDES, economic development, DHS/Office of Rehabilitative Services, and BEST, Inc. Together the team has been completed a Rapid Talent Pipeline (RTP) training and established a very successful Certified Nursing Assistant program at Castro Health Institute in Sterling. Additional sector strategies include 3 Health Care Summits and 2 Manufacturing Forums. Through these efforts occupational hiring and training needs were identified giving our local post-secondary training providers the information needed to develop and implement needed training including that for a Certified Medical Assistant program to fill area need.

Additionally, representatives are in regular contact with each other and area businesses to assess those challenges they face and connect them to the resources necessary including partner services. LWIA 4 Business Services Team operate under a single point of contact philosophy and are equipped with the necessary knowledge of partner services to act a liaison to the entire system's business focused services. This approach, and the our experience in RTP and sector strategies, allows us to respond to area business needs in a timely manner whether that response be a customized hiring event or working with training providers for apprenticeship or other customized training.

Members have also now been involved in LWIA 4, specifically BEST, Inc.'s, 3 apprenticeship

grants. Most recently that involvement expanded to include input from a local energy company (Jo-Carroll Energy) and a broadband construction company (Wolf Line Construction) for the purpose of expanding broadband availability in Carroll and Jo Daviess Counties. A sector strategy in which Jo-Carroll Energy led the initial identification and conversation on area needs. This initiative also involved Morrison Institute of Technology and 2 area career and technical education centers in an effort to expand career exploration and training opportunities in broadband technology for the area. Working as a team, the partners in LWIA 4 provide support to area businesses that is driven by business identifying their own needs and working with the system to create solutions.

4. Increasing the awareness of the services the workforce development system offers to both individuals and employers in the local area;

By providing service information during job fairs and informational sessions, individuals and businesses gain both knowledge and understanding of services provided in the workforce area.

Partnering at Rapid Response events offers information of how the system works together without duplicating services.

Becoming more deliberate on maintaining a real time website that promotes and enhances partner services.

By continuing to have a Program Service Team and a Business Service Team promoting and providing awareness to the communities.

By becoming more involved in community service. BEST, Inc. provides for staff the ability to do 4 hours of community service a month to help promote awareness in the local communities.

Being involved on community boards to share resources along with successes of partner programs and services.

Conducting presentations at County Board meetings, city resource meetings and social service agency to bring awareness about services.

Attending and being very active in local chambers, economic development and business networks to provide a clear understand of the workforce system.

A Facebook presence on various community events bring awareness of the workforce system.

Through the ongoing promotion of the NCI Works podcast series “*Getting to Work*” which offers job seekers and business best practices on those challenges being face by both customer bases.

5. Determining the most effective marketing methods and messages for informing college and university students about Prior Learning Assessments;

Both IVCC and SVCC will continue to expand current and future students' awareness related to the opportunities for credit for prior learning. Print marketing materials, the college website, and social media will all be used in this regard. As noted below, both colleges will look to expand connections to adults who are currently out of work or underemployed, in order to inform them of the possibility of their work experiences translating into college credit. Both colleges intend to expand their PLA opportunities through streamlining processes and procedures.

6. How targeted marketing will be used to reach various segments of the labor force, such as mature workers and the underemployed, who may not require extensive education or training to qualify for jobs in high demand occupations, as well as younger jobseekers that do not yet have a plan for a post-high school career;

Being present with Partners in Outreach is a way to reach in-school youth and introduce them to careers and how the Workforce System can help them in pursuing those careers.

Working with schools as guest presenters in their classes related to resume writing, and interviewing.

Conducting community outreach with social service resources in the area. Since the inception of the Program Services Team which includes all front line staff level Partners allows for a targeted outreach for various populations and targeted groups.

Being present in all of the counties to conduct outreach and host events.

Outreach is conducted through a variety of community engagement activities, including job clubs at local libraries, rural job fairs hosted in partnership with community organizations, and regular promotion of events and services through social media. Additional outreach efforts include radio interviews, speaking engagements, and press releases that highlight available programs and services. Annual training is provided to frontline staff to ensure they have a thorough understanding of each program and can make informed, effective referrals.

7. Facilitating the development of career pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs (§ 679.560(b)(2)(ii)); and

Title I Business Service Team members just completed a certification on TPM and will tailor what they learned and incorporate what they can in the rural setting. Along with the BST collecting and tracking data and activities.

Title I Business Service Team will continue to utilize Rapid Talent Pipeline and sector strategies to tailor assistance to the companies they serve in our rural setting. Along with the BST collecting and tracking data and activities. Such information collected will be shared with all stakeholders in an effort to provide a coordinated response to area businesses.

The Program Service Team will fully align an integrated career-pathways system for our job seeking customer who indicate the need for multiple partner services.

8. Improving access to activities leading to a recognized post-secondary credential (including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable, and stackable) (§ 679.560(b)(2)(iii)).

Adult Education programs will be accessible to all potential students by providing services at the One-Stop center as well as in the community. Program locations are accessible to students and the adult education program staff is able to provide classroom accommodation or accessibility services to students who qualify for this assistance. Adult education staff members are trained on addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities.

In order to reach a variety of students, program information will also be shared within the community through print, social media, and Skype. Adult Education shares program information and services with the local workforce development board and area employers. Greater programmatic accessibility will bring more potential students to the adult education program allowing for more students to successfully complete the high school equivalency and career pathway education.

Participation in adult education also allows students the opportunity for participation in ICAPS programming which is by design a fast-track to earning both the high school equivalency and an industry-recognized credential. Upon completion of the ICAPS program, students are then able to enter the workforce or continue in post-secondary education to earn a higher-level certificate or degree.

- E. Describe how local strategies will be coordinated with state (including the Illinois' WIOA State Plan), regional and local partners to enhance services and avoid duplication of activities, including a description of the following:

The Local Workforce Board Executive Committee created a Committee of the Workforce Board that is made up of One Stop Partners in the system. Not only representation from the Board Partners but all system partners will be invited to attend. Information from the PST and the BST will be provided at these meetings as will a report from the One Stop Operators.

Reports to the Local Workforce Board committee of the One Stop Partners ensure that goals of the system align and are being carried out by the partners.

Goals from the Service Integration in LWIA #4 align with the goals of the workforce system as a whole and will be reviewed as forward progress continues to be made. Local Workforce Area #4 Partners have made significant progress on the goals established in this Plan.

However, because these goals remain ongoing, Partners will continue to take action during this Plan cycle to further advance and strengthen them.

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

BEST, Inc., the provider of the Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth employment and training activities under WIOA, will be one of the members of both the Program Service Team as well as the Business Service Team. Scheduled meetings, along with coordinated events will help avoid

duplication of services.

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

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

NCI Works will carry out its coordination duties under WIOA Title II in much the same way as under other WIOA Titles. As previously stated, the Executive Committee is assigned the responsibility of reviewing the local plan to assure the alignment of Core Partner programs and services, and the Oversight Committee is responsible for establishing continuous improvement goals for local workforce system

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

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

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

Reports to the Local Workforce Board committee of the One Stop Partners ensure that goals of the system align and are being carried out by the partners.

The interagency Regional Business Services Team has continued its tradition of collaboration when trying to meet the needs of the area's employers. This allowed the local employers to learn even more about services that are available to them from yet another one of our partners.

There have been cross trainings via conference call, and based on the self-assessment, cross training will continue both in person and electronic with the ability to record and save for future new hires.

Wagner-Peyser staff are currently coordinating with the Unemployment Insurance Program on the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment grant through the Department of Labor. The Unemployment Insurance Program profiles the clients monthly and provides the list to the Wagner-Peyser staff.

Wagner-Peyser in turn, sets up a meeting with these clients and provides them information and services to assist in their attempts to find gainful employment. Any barriers that arise during these assessments are discussed with the clients being referred to appropriate partner services and/or

workshops.

Wagner-Peyser staff also review job seeker resumes in Illinois Job Link and make appropriate job referrals and schedule interviews for job seekers with local employers who are attending our monthly hiring events. Wagner-Peyser staff also review the recent Illinois JobLink registrations and call the claimants to inform them of available partner services and assist them in further updates of their resume to enhance the possibility of success in them finding employment before their Unemployment benefits are exhausted.

4. Vocational rehabilitation service activities under WIOA Title IV (§ 679.560(b)(13)).

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

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

- Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Program

As the primary CSBG program for the comprehensive one stop center, Tri-County Opportunities Council will have an Outreach Specialist working out of the one-stop one day per week. An intake application will be taken on those individuals interested in their supportive services at the one-stop on the day that the Outreach Worker is on site. At that time, appropriated services and /or referrals will be provided. Clients interested in supportive services at other times may contact 800/323-5434. The staff will provide direct linkage to services and/or referrals based on the information obtained in that call.

5. Relevant secondary and post-secondary education programs and activities with education and workforce investment activities (§ 679.560(b)(9)).

The Youth committee of NCI Works review goals and strategies tied to workforce needs in the area youth. They recommend for approval youth contracted programs that tie HSE or credit recovery with the 14 elements in Title I youth funding to identify a well-rounded youth experience. They also participate with Title I staff in going into schools to provide job search, work habits and career exploration to area youth. Title I along with Perkins (both secondary and post-secondary) annually a career exploration days are hosted and well attended by area high schools, HSE classes, and enrolled Title I youth. A wide range of

careers in clusters include health care, manufacturing, STEM, business, criminal justice to name a few. These events are hosted at the post-secondary community colleges in LWIA #4. Educators are part of the presentation panel and help plan the day.

6. How the Local Board will support the state strategies identified under § 676.105 and work with the entities carrying out core programs and other workforce development programs, including programs of study and career pathway programs under the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.) to support service alignment and needs identified in regional or local level assessments including the Perkins Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (§ 679.560(b)(1)(ii)).

Priorities identified by LWIA #4 in its Self-Assessment Implementation Plan address coordination, sharing customer information, aligning services, increasing knowledge of partner programs and services among all staff, creating manuals, utilizing the PST/BST and the Rapid Talent Pipeline Initiative. Each of these initiatives is designed to enhance services, facilitate data collection, align services and avoid duplication. Furthermore, these goals also support the following strategies laid out in the State Unified Plan:

Cross training and common case management will be a focus with partner staff as we move into a more integrated case management role as defined in the self-assessment. Working to streamline common career pathways with the secondary and post-secondary CTE and Perkins is part of the planning process. Both entities were present during the planning sessions and will continue to work closely in activities. Another Post-Secondary activity that has currently been incorporated is that they will make up part of the Rapid Response team to go out and speak during Employee/Employer Rapid Response.

7. Provide a copy of the local supportive service policies and describe how the Local Board will coordinate the provision of transportation and other appropriate supportive services in the local area (§ 679.560(b)(10)) and include information on the supportive services by each local program as appropriate.
 - Tri-County Opportunities Council (CSBG) provides the following supportive services as a partner in the one- stop comprehensive system:
 - Outreach
 - Comprehensive needs assessment
 - Intake
 - Case management
 - Career planning
 - Workforce preparation
 - Financial Literacy

A comprehensive needs assessment is completed with each client to determine the type and level of supportive services desired from the CSBG program. Based on the needs assessment, specific individualized goal plans are developed and coordinated supportive services are provided. When needed, partner services are requested and services are bundled to meet client need and ensure non-duplication of services.

Since the BEST, Inc. supportive services will be included as part of this plan which is being developed as a collaborative effort, all workforce partners will have the opportunity to review them and identify any duplication or conflicts. The Program Services Team (PST) will also be encouraged to share supportive services policies and procedures during their joint meetings in order to maximize the resources of each partner program.

IDES programs aid those who are job ready or require limited supportive assistance. This limited assistance includes computer and internet access, soft skills training, resume writing skills, and interviewing skills. Any deficiencies that are identified outside of IDES' scope will be referred to the appropriate partner agency for assistance.

National Able/Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP) provides the following supportive services as a partner in the one- stop comprehensive system:

- Outreach and recruitment
- Comprehensive needs assessment
- Intake
- Case management
- Paid Job Training
- Workforce preparation

A needs assessment is completed with each participant to identify any unmet needs or barriers they may require assistance with. Using the outcome of the needs assessment, Individual plans are developed and coordinated supportive services are provided either by National Able or referrals to other partner agencies are requested to best meet the participants need and ensure non-duplication of services.

Any policies related to the provision of transportation and other supportive services in the local area that require NCI Works input and/or approval will be reviewed to make sure they adequately meet the needs of customers, and do not conflict with similar policies of other partners.

F. Describe how the local area will provide adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities including:

1. A description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area (§ 679.560(b)(6)).

BEST, Inc. covers 8 counties with 7 program offices that offer the ability to do mobile case management in communities that need service but does not have an office location. In all the access sites along with the comprehensive center all title I services will be offered along with some partner services and direct linkage availability but at the very least referral options. Northwest Central Illinois Works fully intends not to limit the options available to either employers or workers in order to meet their employment needs. Again, emerging and transitional workers need training in essential skills, career exploration, basic academic skills, and life skills. Incumbent workers and to some extent transitional workers would benefit from skills-upgrade training and

retention services. Depending upon individual need, workers in any of the three categories could benefit from supportive service assistance, personal and employment counseling, learning how to balance work and life issues, and retention services. Assessment testing and interviewing is conducted by Career Planners. Illinois workNet, O*NET and individual interest tests are administered, in addition to an Individual Employment Plan and Individual Career Plan interview. Career exploration is conducted with phone calls and/or internet based searches.

A large menu of services are looked at on an individualized basis to ensure that each plan fits the needs of the customer.

2. A description of how the Local Board will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out in the local area with statewide rapid response activities (§ 679.560(b)(7)).

Whenever there is a Mass Layoff or Closure, staff immediately begin the process of coordinating with the state's Rapid Response representative and local partners to organize an initial meeting with the company. If we learn of an event prior to receiving a WARN notice from the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, steps are taken to reach out to the company to assess the situation and if a WARN notice is in fact required for the pending event. All efforts are made to work with the company as early as possible so that employees can receive the necessary information to make their transition easier.

For state level events, the DCEO Rapid Response Representative for LWIA 4 takes the lead on initial communications with the company to establish dates, times, and location of an initial meeting, to include scheduling it through virtual means. During the initial meeting, workshop dates and times, and in some cases the location of those workshops, are discussed and set for a mutually agreed upon time. Partners included in that meeting usually include DCEO, IDES, and the Business Service Manager for BEST, Inc.

Workshops will be schedule at the company's convenience, either onsite or at another local location, and will provide an overview of Title 1 services, Unemployment Insurance, and other service information as needed to include training provider and English Language Learner/Adult Education service, completing the rapid response survey, and other services identified during the initial meeting.

A PowerPoint presentation of these same services will be added to the company page in workNet/IEBS. Follow up to the survey will be conducted by Title 1, BEST, Inc., staff. For local level events, the Business Service Manager or other local staff from BEST, Inc. will reach out to the company, assess the ability to provide a local rapid response effort, and coordinate that response with local partners to include, but not limited to: Illinois Department of Employment Security, English Language Learner/Adult Education, and training providers. Information on the local event will be entered into workNet/IEBS.

G. Describe how the local area will provide youth activities including:

1. A description and assessment of the type and availability of youth workforce investment activities in the local area, including activities for youth who are individuals with disabilities, which must include an identification of successful models of such activities (§ 679.560(b)(8)).

Working with individuals with disabilities is an area that Title I and Title IV work closely together on. One of the strengths is how the two programs work with in-school youth in work based learning. A common scheduled appointment allows for a team approach to meet the needs of the youth. Another strength is working with Title II and Disability Services with the college to link individuals with actual resources. Taking a contracted youth program approach with youth services under WIOA helps on to align an individualized career plan that meets the needs of the youth.

2. A description of how local areas will meet the minimum expenditure rate for out-of-school youth.
 - Local Area # 4 gives priority to contracted youth programs who apply for youth funds based on Out-of-School Definitions. Program design is focused on Out of School Youth and Local Boards oversight committee reviews fiscal reports every two months.
3. The design framework for youth programs in the local area, including how the 14 program elements will be made available within that framework (§ 681.460).

Local workforce investment activities for youth are as follows:

Providing the elements required to be offered to WIOA-eligible youth either through BEST, Inc. staff or the providers who contract for youth services. In some cases, these elements will be delivered directly by the provider or BEST, Inc. or as a referral to an appropriate agency. Depending upon the nature of the activity, some of them may be work-based activities. RFP for service providers are let out each year for either a new proposal or a one-year renewal if the provider is meeting performance and other criteria established for renewal option.

Using technology to stay connected, e.g., Facebook, messenger, cellular phone for texting. Also the ability to use Google meets, zoom and DocuSign to ensure services.

Currently we have a youth coordinator whose main focus is on developing youth activities such as our Work in the Real World, Career/Life Preparation Project, and also being a representative on the youth committee

Partnering with Adult Education to possibly co-enroll for work-based learning and ICAPS along with working with Division of Rehabilitation Services for transition services for older youth

Youth Incentives are outlined local policies and procedures to help the youth stay active and interested. Follow up is conducted both by contractors and youth career advisors.

NOTE: It is a matter of record that attempts to procure youth services through a competitive process have fallen short of expectations in the past, in spite of the NCI Works Youth Committee's due diligence and good faith efforts to meet the intent of the law. Therefore, should the Youth Committee ever determine that there are an inadequate or insufficient number of responses to the RFPs/RFQs, NCI Works retains the right to make sure any and/or all of the 14 elements are

provided in whichever way(s) it deems appropriate in order to carry out its responsibility under the Act. This may include offering any of the allowable activities through the Business Employment Skills Team, Inc., the local grant sub-recipient; mainstreaming youth in community college programs; or continuing attempts to award grants/contracts on a competitive basis through either traditional or non-traditional methods. It is the feeling of the NCI Works Youth Committee that Pursuing this course of action is in the best interest of the local youth and that it is preferable to running the risk that their needs go unmet. Regardless of the method utilized for procuring the programs/services under these circumstances, approval by NCI Works would be required through the annual plan process. At a minimum, RFPs will be let out and approved on an annual basis according to the following procedures: RFP's will be let out in late winter, early spring; rated and presented to a Youth Committee meeting for conditional approval (contingent on allocation and negotiation). Projects approved by the Committee will then be presented NCI Works for conditional approval (contingent on allocation and negotiation). Should the Youth Committee and/or NCI Works deem it necessary to let out additional RFPs, a similar time frame will be implemented.

H. Provide a description of how the local area will provide services to individuals with barriers to employment and training⁸ as outlined in Illinois' WIOA State Plan:

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

IDES Wagner -Peyser staff will assist with resume creation, interview skills, and other related activities. Additionally, they will educate the individuals and area employers on the possible tax credits or special bonding programs based on the barrier. Finally, they will refer these individuals out to other partners for specialized assistance through the electronic referral process and menu of available partner services.

Any customers with barriers to employment will be referred from BEST, Inc. to partner agencies to assess and address these issues prior to job placement. The One-Stop staff utilize the common Electronic Partner Referral Form, prior to direct linkage to the appropriate service provider or providers. Furthermore, WIOA requires the Title 1B partner to give priority of service to low-income individuals and individuals who are basic-skills deficient. BEST, Inc. staff are aware of this requirement and consider it as part of the enrollment process.

Tri-County Opportunities Council, as a Community Action Agency, is charged by the federal government to work specifically with low-income citizens to provide them with the tools and potential for becoming self-sufficient. Federal funding is used locally to offer specialized programming in communities. An initial intake, which includes income verification, is completed to determine household eligibility. Eligible households are afforded the opportunity to work in partnership with CSBG staff to address any identified skill deficits.

National Able/Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP) is a federally funded program administered through the U.S. Department of Labor based on the Older Americans Act. The SCSEP program promotes useful part-time (at minimum wage) training opportunities in community service activities for unemployed low-income persons who are 55 years old or

older who are actively looking for employment. A SCSEP participant must meet the age and income criteria, which is 125% of the current poverty rate, to qualify for the program.

The SCSEP program provides on-site job training to transition the participant into an unsubsidized position of employment in conjunction with the participant's job goals and gain self-sufficiency. Participants receive local minimum wage for community service assignments on a part time basis. This is not only a job training program it also serves as a viable community service resource based on the requirements of the Older Americans Act. Thus, SCSEP is both a training and community service program.

In addition to a priority of services, the local area Partners are conducting outreach to SNAP participants to ensure new work requirements is being looked at system wide. Each Partner has a Menu of Services that they offer and is discussed during normal Program Service Team meetings.

2. Provide information on local programs, policies and procedures to address and mitigate barriers to employment and training.

Title I receives a contract with the LaSalle County Court System to provide classroom instruction to individual who are on probation and completing the coursework to avoid incarceration.

Through the Program Service team as well as the One Stop Partner committee on the Workforce Board cross training topics will continue to be developed as barriers and strategies are created to mitigate existing barriers as well as newly identified barriers.

3. How the local workforce areas will ensure equitable access to workforce and educational services through the following actions:

- a. Disaggregating data by race, gender, and target population to reveal where disparities and inequities exist in policies and programs.

To align with Perkins V requirements related to data tracking, SVCC and IVCC are both incorporating the practice of disaggregating of data based on ethnicity, race, and gender, on multiple levels. For example, both colleges are including the assessment of data based on race, ethnicity, and gender in the Program Review process. This data will be examined by internal stakeholders and advisory councils to develop strategies to improve either enrollment or persistence numbers of non-traditional students. Findings will also combine with the Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment, completed every two years, to inform the spending of Perkins funds through

- b. Exposing more high school students, particularly young women and minorities, to careers in science, technology, engineering and math fields.

Both colleges have a history of, and will continue to, work with our local vocational centers and local high schools to expose young men, young women, and minority groups to non-traditional fields related to careers in science, technology, engineering, and math.

SVCC also has a career fair every spring where it highlights companies that are attempting to increase the diversity of their workforce.

IVCC has instituted a new student organization, Women in Technology, whose members are comprised of young women interested in careers in science, technology, engineering and math. Purposes of the student organization include: meeting the needs of women on both a personal and professional level; and providing support for each other from entry into college to entry into the workforce. Students not only support each other but function as role models to younger students as they travel to local area high schools and middle schools to discuss non-traditional careers for women in the STEM fields.

IVCC also has a career fair each spring that highlights careers with a focus on equity and diversity.

- c. Exploring how effective mentor programs can be expanded to adults, particularly those who are displaced and moving to a new career.

Both community colleges are planning on working with their local BEST representative and other workforce board partners to determine if they can link new students to students who have recently moved to a new career through a funded education program.

- d. Ensuring workforce services are strategically located in relation to the populations in most need.

Improving access is a strategic goal for both community colleges, and we work in partnership with local agencies to determine where people are under-informed about academic programs. While the geographical region is quite large, both campuses, along with workforce agencies, should be able to serve all of their respective populaces, especially through an improved referral system and the increase in online programming.

Tri-County Opportunities Council is a Community Action Agency. The mission of our organization is to investigate the impact of poverty throughout our nine county service area. We work in partnership with individuals, families and communities to provide opportunities that support movement towards stability and self-sufficiency for those impacted by poverty. As part of this mission, the CSBG program has office sites located in seven of the eight counties served by the Local Workforce Area 4. Those counties are: Bureau, Carroll, LaSalle, Lee, Ogle, Putnam and Whiteside. We do not cover Jo Daviess. Outreach Workers in the CSBG program also travel to non-office locations, such as libraries, restaurants, partner offices, etc. to meet with potential clients who are not able to meet in a traditional office site.

The populations served by BEST, Inc. primarily include low-income youth and adults, as well as individuals who were laid off from work due to plant closings and/or major lay-offs, all of whom face financial hardships. NCI Works and the local CEOs recognize that these individuals greatly benefit from the broad access to programs and services made available through the local workforce development agency, and therefore fully support the 9 offices strategically located throughout the 8 counties in LWIA #4. Furthermore, BEST, Inc. offices all have access to Skype for linkage with other programs if needed as part of their career path journey mapping.

IDES has staff located in the comprehensive one stop in Ottawa and an access site in Sterling. Additionally, staff are sent out from these offices to remote areas to do workshops and aid as needed. Similarly, IDES has a toll free number (800-244-5631) for anyone to call during normal business hours to get assistance with their needs.

Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP) operates in the 8 counties in the LWIA 4. Our service area is very large and at this time we do not have permanent, dedicated office space located within the LWIA 4 area. We provide services within this region through referrals from our partners and provide access to services through direct linkage. We also schedule appointments to meet participants face to face at partner agencies within the communities they reside in throughout LWIA 4.

Additional efforts in our Local Area that support immigrants and migrants through appropriate and allowable workforce services are being conducted by all Partners in all 8-counties. All Partners have and will continue to offer allowable services to any individual that may be appropriate for services, suitable for services and eligible to receive services under the Federal Regulations.

I. Describe how the local area will utilize a customer-centered approach to its service delivery model, including the following:

1. How a customer-centered or human-centered approach will be used over the course of this plan to improve local service delivery methods⁹.

Human centered design for the system, the center and also the program design was a major influencer of the service integration self-assessment. Meeting the needs of the customer in a way that is non-threatening to them.

A tool will be developed to get input from individuals and businesses as one of the goals in the self-assessment to assure that this initiative is being accomplished.

2. Any efforts to provide services to customers in the spaces where they commonly visit (i.e., using a bus or other mobile solution to provide services outside of the one-stop center or having a local workforce are representative available at a public library at set times).

BEST, Inc. received a supplemental grant from the State of Illinois and one thing purchased was computers and job search equipment to be housed at local homeless shelters and community based non-profits that assist individuals in the evening or overnight. By allowing such access to job search equipment will open up opportunities for individuals to search when they are at the sights.

In addition, local partners meet individuals in public locations when onsite appointments are not possible or if it is more convenient for the customer. In addition, the use of technology and the advances electronic platforms are centered around customer centered design.

3. Any efforts to review and update the referral process, including creating a universal referral process, utilizing an electronic referral management system, expansion of referral pathways, etc.

If there are obstacles to updating the local area's referral process, describe them here.

A centralized computer data base system where staff could create case notes, comments, and report on relevant outcomes would be a wonderful system to have as a system wide software system. This type of system could not be created locally with all partners having the ability to use it to the full extent. This system would have to be created by higher level state agencies. This is our largest obstacle.

J. Describe training activities in the local area, including the following:

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

Work-based learning (WBL) activities offer a wonderful opportunity, both pre-classroom training and post classroom training, to learn about an occupation of interest prior to investing time and money only to find out that particular career will not meet a customer's professional and/or personal goals. It also allows them put into practice those skills obtained through classroom training.

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

Transitional Jobs should be offered to Adults with either little or no work history, or prolonged unemployment. In LWA #4, this WBL is designed to serve as the first step in transitioning into the workforce. For the Adult customer, and in particular those customers with whom we would do joint case management with our TANF, Transitional Jobs could be the first step in a career path that would be followed by a longer work experience position, or it could serve as an avenue of career exploration.

OJT can be an attractive offering in the business services menu of employer incentives, especially in today's business climate when employers are experiencing difficulty in finding qualified workers. Employers may be more likely to hire a candidate who has some of the required skills and then utilize an OJT to train for the additional skills needed if supported by a financial incentive. Aggressive marketing, including the use of testimonials from employers who have hired workers through an OJT contract, will be utilized. This marketing campaign will include educating our partners on assessing potential OJT opportunities for our common customers, as well as educating our customers on how to sell the program as an opportunity for a win-win situation for them and for the business.

Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) is, and will continue to be, promoted and encouraged to all area businesses by BEST, Inc. Business Relations Representatives and those cooperating partners of the Regional business services team. The demand for IWT has skyrocketed in the past few years to the point where BEST, Inc. budgets for the maximum allowable for funding. Focus on

continued training of the areas incumbent workers not only benefits the employee by giving them employable/marketable skills, but it also benefits the business by making their current workforce more effective and efficient during changes in technology and business practices.

As with current national trends, LWIA #4 plans to expand Apprenticeship Programs either through additional special grants or through resources already in existence with the BST.

With the addition of the Workforce Pell Grant, Program staff, Business Service and Partners will gain knowledge on short-term, high skilled training and how this new funding source will compliment any current programs and services being offered.

2. How local areas will provide training and professional development opportunities to staff regarding equity, access, trauma-informed care, and other topics concerning a customer-centered approach to service delivery.

As outlined in our Service Integration Self-Assessment, one of the main goals is cross training annually if not more often with an in person/hybrid event of all front line staff in the system. This will allow staff to interact with each other and plan for functions to partner with in the upcoming year. This will also help in the streamlining of effective and efficient referrals being made between partners in the system.

The Program Service Team along with the Business Service Team will also act as a train the trainer for the host agency to share professional development from speakers in their quarterly meetings.

Additional grant funds will be researched and applied for to help fund professional development sessions similar to the State Supplemental grant that BEST, Inc. received in 2024 and held a Rural Mental Health Awareness Conference. Some type of professional development has been part and will continue to be part of any application for a State Supplemental Grant.

The MOU budget has a line item in place for shared costs in professional development for staff.

⁸ The term “individual with barrier to employment” means one or more of the following populations: displaced homemakers, low-income individuals, Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians, individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities, older individuals, ex-offenders, homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths, youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system, individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers, eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers, individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act, single parents, including pregnant single women, long-term unemployed individuals, and such other groups as the Governor determines to have barriers to employment (WIOA Sec. 3(24)).

⁹ There are multiple online resources describing how to incorporate human-centered/customer-centered design into your work. One recommended article for reading is available here: <https://online.hbs.edu/blog/post/what-is-human-centered-design>

3. How training services outlined in WIOA Sec. 134 will be provided through the use of individual training accounts, including, if contracts for training services will be used, how the use of such contracts will be coordinated with the use of individual training accounts under that chapter, and how the Local Board will ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training programs regardless of how the training services are to be provided (§ 679.560(b)(18));

Customers who are eligible for Training Services as defined in the plan, i.e., must be WIOA-eligible, must have the necessary skills and qualifications in order to find self-sufficiency employment, must select a training program that is directly linked to employment opportunities in the local area and is on the State Approved List (ETPL). The State Eligible Training Provider list of training services will be made available to customers through the IWDS and Illinois workNet. Customers can access the Illinois workNet by using the computers in the resource rooms or a personal computer. The individual must be able to apply for financial aid (i.e., must have a high school diploma, HSE or Associates Degree as defined in FAFSA), and if not eligible for financial aid due to a default, must have written proof that a repayment plan is in place and is being fulfilled.

Any participant enrolled in a training program has a per participant cap of \$13,500. This includes required costs of tuition, books, and fees. The cost of required training materials must be reasonable. See the limits on training material costs. A waiver of the maximum ITA dollar amount may be granted based on the following:

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

Customer Choice will be ensured based on the following procedures:

1. Staff will gather the necessary documentation to verify that customer has completed initial services.
2. Staff will work closely with the client to complete all mandatory Training Services. Staff will advise and explain to the customer the Eligible Training Provider List and document it in case notes and/or the IEP.
3. Staff will verify that the training selected for that client is reasonable (based on cost and suitability of client to successfully complete), and appears on the Approved Training Provider list.
4. Staff will determine amount of assistance each semester by dividing \$13,500 by the number of terms needed in order to complete training program.
5. Place copies of documentation in customer file.
6. Staff will enter the appropriate services on to IWDS system.

A waiver to the requirement that an individual must have a high school diploma or GED/HSE to be eligible for an ITA was approved for students enrolled in the ICAPS program who are also enrolled in high school or an HSE program as part of a collaborative effort between BEST, Inc., Adult Education and Perkins/CTE.

At this time, LWIA only uses contracts for training services under the Incumbent Worker Training program. Adequate training for demand occupations have been supplied on the

Eligible Training Provider list. If contract training would be an area of need, the workforce board would develop proper procedures to assure effectiveness. This would be followed by a medication to the Local Plan and a 30 day comment period.

4. How the Local Board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services through the system and that the providers will meet the employment needs of local employers, workers and jobseekers; and

The LWIA #4 local training provider approval policy and procedures are attached. Each time a provider comes up for certification or re-certification, the request is reviewed by a committee of 3 BEST, Inc. staff who are familiar with the performance of the provider as well as the demand for the training. This committee was recommended by the Oversight Committee and approved by NCI Works to fulfill this function. The committee then makes its recommendation for approval to final approval to NCI Works at its next regular meeting. This process was put in place in order to avoid delay in providing access to training programs to Title IB customers.

5. How the local area tracks non-enrolling basic services provided to reportable individuals

As a system, we report to the Workforce Board quarterly on the number of individuals we serve in the workforce system.

Currently, BEST, Inc. uses the IWDS system to track universal customers that they have contact with.

As IWDS is set to sunset, our local area will look at other ways to ensure an accurate count on non-reportable individuals that come into the system.

- K. Describe if the local workforce board will authorize the transfer of WIOA Title IB workforce funds, including the maximum dollar amount and/or percentage that is authorized to be transferred on an annual basis:

1. To transfer funds between the adult and dislocated worker funding streams.

Any transfers of funds between adult and dislocated worker funding streams must be approved by both NCI Works and the CEOs of LWIA #4 based on a request from the BEST, Inc. Financial Director. This request must also include a justification for the transfer request. Need for the transfer and funding availability will be considered in the request for the transfer as well as for in the approval of the transfer.

2. To use funds for incumbent worker training as outlined in WIOA Sec. 134(d)(4)(A)(i).

Use of IWT funds is included in the original budget based on obligations of contracts carried into the new PY, as well as anticipated need going forward. As stated previously, LWIA #4 reached the maximum amount allowed by law, and anticipates the same for PY '24-PY '28

3. To use funds for transitional jobs as outlined in WIOA Sec. 134(d)(5).

LWIA 4 utilizes work experience as the policy fits the needs of our current customers. If a time

comes that transitional jobs would be more appropriate we have a policy in place.

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

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

- L. Describe how a *workforce equity lens*⁶ is or will be incorporated in the operating systems and policies as part of the Local Workforce Innovation Areas (LWIAs).

Local Workforce Area #4 is committed to help everyone find their place in the community both as an employer and a program. Our differences together make a stronger one with fair and equitable treatment access opportunity and engagement for all. Our One Stop Partner Committee that focuses on targeted population for the Workforce Board works closely to ensure services for all populations are equal and aligned.

To ensure responsiveness, inclusivity and accessibility access to workforce, educational, and community services, students may enter the program via the one-stop center or program office, contact via telephone, or request a virtual web-conference. We provide individualized services based on student needs, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, nationality, socioeconomic status, language, (dis)ability, age, religious commitment, or political perspective.

In the classroom we create an environment that welcomes all. We help students learn in the way that will meet their individual needs. We create an accepting and supportive classroom environment that builds purpose and motivation. Our instructors and our staff always show interest and appreciation for cultural backgrounds and we establish class norms that show sensitivity and inclusiveness. We provide a curriculum that is respectful of differences. We also provide learning accommodations, lend necessary technology, and provide students the opportunity to attend class remotely when needed in order to remove barriers to participation.

We believe that all people should have equitable access to jobs that are safe, pay a living wage, offer benefits, provide career pathways and opportunities for mobility. We also understand that there is an overlap of workforce development and “social determinants”. We know that gaps in educational attainment and barriers related to housing, transportation and supportive services systematically disadvantage people of color in the labor market. Social factors such as family income and wealth, access to healthcare services, transportation, housing quality and affordability and access to reliable childcare restricts job opportunities for workers. While these “social determinants” fall outside the direct scope of traditional workforce development and educational efforts that are focused on worker training, placement and career advancement, they are critical components of an equitable workforce system. By aligning Tri-Counties resources and efforts to address the causes of these social determinants, as well as providing supportive services, through programs, addressing housing affordability, access to health services, transportation, educational advancement, childcare and other supportive services, Tri-County will be able to ensure that barriers to workforce inclusivity can be addressed and reduced for customers.

Tri-County Opportunities Council will continue to work within the One Stop System to ensure linkages to partners to coordinate services for job seeking customers.

DRS' local plan includes several outreach goals for increasing referrals, especially of individuals from various racial/ethnic minority groups and other marginalized populations. We will continue to identify and respond to the specific needs of our business community in our service area. We will do this while staying true to the most critical component of vocational rehabilitation services, which is the assurance that vocational goals will be developed in partnership with the customer. They will be based on customer skills, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.

DRS will continue to work in partnership with all of our LWIA 4 partners to plan and strategize together to identify and try to meet the needs of our business community and key stakeholders. DRS is also committed to sharing resources, and to working collaboratively with our LWIA partners to provide timely & quality services to our shared customers/clients/participants/job seekers.

During certain times technology including available instruction in their homes that link them to education and employment may be required.

Workforce needs more Customer, Caseworker and private sector input to affectively find solutions to the needs of the community. Thjs can be addressed by collaboration from those from childcare and transportation to create pathways for Customers to engage outside their homes. At certain times we can better serve more by identifying resources to put computers and Internet in the homes of constituents. Along with these resources, there must be training on how to use the technology when learning and ongoing glitches that arise.

The funding needs to go away from the idea of these services in a building and move to more career planner outreach that occurs from home to home.

Those without computer hardware, knowledge of software, and Internet access are unable to establish a pathway to education, training and employment. Connecting with those who need guidance has yet to be addressed. When Workforce reaches beyond the traditional model to develop new modes of communication and tackles the more difficult obstacles of childcare and transportation, we will then see more people working.

If budgets will address a new model of funding remote Career planners whose expertise includes training and mentoring Customers rather than paying for security guards and building expenses, we will be more in line with serving all sectors of the population.

SVCC holds program reviews every five years for each program which have a large equity-based component. Data driven analysis shows where certain groups may be underrepresented in our programs relative to our district at large. This information is then shared with our advisory councils in order to discuss reducing these equity gaps. SVCC will happily share this information with Workforce partners as well in order to strategize about best serving every member of our district who would benefit from training.

CHAPTER 5: PERFORMANCE GOALS AND EVALUATION

The plan must include information on the actions the Local Board will take toward becoming or remaining a high performing board, consistent with the factors developed by the State Board (WIOA Sec. 101(d)(6)) and (§ 679.560(b)(17)). LWIAs are required to provide information and analysis regarding the challenges and opportunities that are associated with performance goals and evaluation.

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

As a general note, LWIA #4 partners are waiting on final direction from the State regarding the status of the common measure and/or any additional State Performance Measures. With that said:

IDES will monitor its programs (Migrant & Seasonal Farm Workers, Wagner-Peyser, Unemployment Insurance, Trade Readjustment Assistance, and Veterans) to make sure they are meeting WIOA, State, and Federal mandates, implementing corrective action plans where needed.

BEST, Inc. will monitor its programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth and Trade) to make sure they are meeting WIOA, State, and Federal mandates, implementing corrective action plans where needed.

All partners will provide their performance measures/goals to NCI Works for monitoring purposes. Performance status against the measures will be provided in a format and on a frequency as requested by the Board. Reports will be submitted to the NCI Works Oversight Committee for their review and recommended action if any. The Committee will then present the reports along with its recommended action for review and approval by the full Board.

All Partner information has been and will continue to be included in the NCI Works Annual Report.

- B. Describe how the current and planned evaluation activities and how this information will be provided to the Local Board and program administrators as appropriate.
 - 1. What existing service delivery strategies will be expanded based on promising return on investment?

Based on the information in A., the full board can expand delivery of services and/or programs after a review of the information provided. One example may be to expand programs that may have been funded under a special grant or having the insight to research and apply for other grant opportunities. Monitoring and Certification of the One Stop ensures that the working area in the Comprehensive Center is compliant with ADA and accessible to individuals with disabilities.

2. What existing service delivery strategies will be curtailed or eliminated based on minimal return on investment?

In the Service Integration self-assessment, one of the goals was direct feedback from customers. This will be examined to see if service strategies need to be adjusted or removed.

3. What new service strategies will be used to address regional educational and training needs based on promising return on investment?

- a. What return on investment and qualitative outcome data for various education and training programs will be collected to identify barriers to enrollment?
- b. What are the most cost-effective approaches to taking down those barriers or helping residents overcome them?

Based on the disaggregated data collected through annual program reviews, both colleges will assess enrollment, retention, and successful completion, and make adjustments where necessary. Qualitative data will also be collected from industry partners to gauge their employment needs. Additionally, through the Rapid Response team, admissions, financial aid, advisors, career services, and disability services will all play a role in ensuring that a potential student realizes the tools that exist to prevent barriers to attending college and finding a new position. Lastly, the One-Stop Center will be instrumental in making sure that member agencies and institutions are both sharing information, and also not duplicating services (in order to be more cost effective).

- C. Describe how a *workforce* responsiveness and inclusivity and accessibility is or will be incorporated in the analysis of performance goals and implementation of evaluation activities.

Workforce Accessibility is not a new element in program services and design. We will continue to evaluate performance goals and report to the to the Workforce Board on activities in Local Workforce Area #4.

The Local Workforce Board reviews customer feedback data with participation from all workforce partners to ensure a comprehensive evaluation of services. The Board also reviews quarterly enrollment data, including participant outcomes and referrals between partner agencies, to monitor collaboration and service effectiveness. Title I performance is reviewed quarterly, and each partner agency has the opportunity to provide updates on its programs, services, and activities during Board meetings.

With the implementation of IWDS 2.0, the Board anticipates a more streamlined and consistent process for tracking and documenting referrals across partner agencies. In addition, the Board reviews activities and services supported through external grant funding to gain a better understanding of emerging workforce needs and opportunities throughout the eight-county region.

CHAPTER 6: TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS AND ASSURANCES

This chapter includes the technical requirements and assurances that are required by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA Sec. 121 (c)(2)(iv)). LWIAs are required to provide information and analysis regarding the challenges and opportunities that are associated with meeting the administrative requirement of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act programs.

A. Fiscal Management

1. Identify the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds described in WIOA Sec. 107(d)(12)(B)(i)(III) as determined by the chief elected official or the Governor under WIOA Sec. 107(d)(12)(B)(i) (§ 679.560(b)(14)).

The Chief-Elected Officials of LWIA #4 have designated Business Employment Skills Team, Inc. (BEST, Inc.) as the Grant Sub-recipient/Fiscal Agent to disburse the Title 1B Funds according to all WIOA federal, state and local laws, regulations and policies, and per available grant funding. With the use of electronic platforms all administrative responsibilities have been carried out in accordance with all policies and procedures

2. Provide a copy of the local procurement policies and procedures and describe the competitive procurement process that will be used to award the subgrants and contracts for WIOA Title I activities (§ 679.560(b)(15)).

Attached are the local procurement policies and procedures for LWIA #4. Subgrants and contracts for WIOA Title 1B activities will be procured based on the appropriate policies and procedures, and per available grant funding. Although the policies remained the same, carrying out the negotiations, contracts, agreements and purchases were all done electronically through Zoom or other appropriate platforms

B. Physical and Programmatic Accessibility

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

BEST, Inc. (Title I) and IDES will be housed full-time at the Comprehensive One-Stop on a regular basis, and therefore all career and training services will be available at all times for individuals seeking services. Tri-County Opportunities Council (TCOC) will provide services on-site one day per week and through direct linkage the other 4 days of the week. Adult Staff administer the TABE Test on site at the One-Stop Center twice a month unless there is a need to do so in between scheduled visits. All other workforce partners will provide their services through direct linkage as described elsewhere in this narrative. Furthermore, a1H staff members will be trained to provide services to all, regardless of the range of abilities, mobility, age, language, learning style and education level. Additionally, assistive devices, such as screen-reading software programs and assistive listening devices will be available

Partners will draw upon the expertise within the partnership to address specific issues; e.g.,

Illinois Department of Human Services - Division of Rehabilitation Services to address accommodations in providing services for individuals with disabilities.

Specifically:

IDES will provide access on site at the Ottawa one-stop for the following programs; Title III: Wagner-Peyser, Unemployment Insurance, Trade Readjustment Assistance, Migrant & Seasonal Farm Workers, and Veteran's Services. These services will be provided by trained full time staff in a facility that meets EO/ ADA standards for access to those with disabilities. To ensure inclusiveness of services IDES has staff members on site who speak Spanish and access to a phone interpretive service for any other language.

BEST, Inc. (Title IB) will provide access to Title IB Adult, Youth, Dislocated Worker and Trade Adjustment Act programs. BEST, Inc. staff are fully trained in EO/AA policies and procedures and have direct linkage contact with an EO/AA Officer who is housed full-time in the BEST, Inc. administrative office in Oglesby. The BEST, Inc. Program Manager and Business Relations Manager, who have a combined 50+ years of experience in workforce programs, are both housed at the Center, along with one Trade Career Advisor, one Career Advisor with extensive working knowledge of all three Title IB programs, and one Business Relations Representative with extensive knowledge of all business services offered throughout the system.

For customers wishing to access DHS/TANF services, interviews are conducted in person or via telephone. Those who walk into the center and wish to apply for TANF can be directed to the DHS office that is located in the area where the person resides.

Tri-County Opportunities Council (CSBG) will be housed one day per week at the Comprehensive One Stop. While at the Comprehensive One Stop, the Outreach Worker will complete an intake application on those individuals interested in CSBG supportive services. At that time, appropriated services and/or referrals will be provided. Alternative methods of direct linkage, while at the Comprehensive One Stop, will be by Skype, with video capability, as this is the preferred and agreed upon option by all partners. This option provides face-to-face virtual meeting.

Clients interested in supportive services at other times may contact 800-323-5434. The staff will provide direct linkage to services and/or referrals based on the information obtained in that call.

The Outreach Worker will participate in training to provide services to all, regardless of the range of abilities, mobility, age language, learning style and education level. The Outreach Worker will facilitate the use of assistive devices, such as screen reading software programs and assistive listening devices by clients in need of this type of assistance. Use of other partner's expertise to address specific barriers will be facilitated by the Outreach Worker; i.e.: Illinois Department of Human Services - Division of Rehabilitation Services to address accommodations in providing services for individuals with disabilities.

The Outreach Worker will also utilize Tri-County Opportunities Council Equal Opportunity/ Affirmative Action Plan which serves as a guide to the agency's equal opportunity

objectives and includes the manner in which the agency plans to provide accommodations for client services. Contained in this plan is a Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and Hearing Impaired Plan, which provides guidelines for the Outreach Worker, as well as resources and supportive services which can be obtained for those who do not speak or speak limited English or those who are hearing impaired. This helps to ensure any barriers to obtaining services are removed.

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

As defined in the Self-Assessment which is part of this document, a detailed guide on our strategies for aligning service to not duplicate services and to be informed enough to make proper referral will be part of the cross training. In addition, a menu of services for all programs will be given by each partner at an initial intake appointment.

C. Plan Development and Public Comment

1. Describe the process used by the Local Board to provide a public comment period prior to submission of the plan, including an opportunity to have input into the development of the local plan, particularly for representatives of businesses, education and labor organizations (§ 679.560(b)(19)).

At the January 6, 2026 Executive Committee Meeting, the committee gave authority to post the Local Plan for public comment on February 14, 2026.

At their March 3, 2026 meeting, NCI Works voted to approve the PY 24 Local Plan modification as presented. At the time of the meeting, no public comment making major changes to the narrative was received. A Legal Notice was placed in local newspapers and posted to the NCI Works website open for public comment. There were no public comments received.

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

No Public comment received

3. Provide information regarding the regional and local plan modification procedures.

Regional plan modifications will be done in coordination with the appropriate LWIA, in a manner following the procedures of the original plan development and submission, and in compliance with DCEO policy.

Local plan modification will be done in a manner following the procedures of the original plan development and submission, and in compliance with DCEO policy. Any local partner wishing to

modify the plan should notify the NCI Works co-chairs of their request in writing, and should include their specific purpose of the modification.

- D. Describe how a workforce responsiveness and inclusion is or will be incorporated in with meeting the administrative requirement of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act programs.

Under Title I, EO Compliance Monitoring is conducted on an annual basis. During the program process, the EO Officer completes a Dynamic Formula for Equal Opportunity Statistical Calculations that determines if there are any discrepancies within the Adult, Dislocated Worker or Youth Programs.

As part of the Workforce Board, the One Stop Partner Committee made up of partners, workforce boards, and service providers for the said targeted population, addresses the hiring needs of individuals with disabilities, veterans, ex-offenders and other populations facing special challenges to obtaining employment. Some of the goals include those of working with individuals in the targeted populations:

1. Identify issues that present barriers to employment for each targeted population.
2. Coordinate and collaborate with appropriate other stakeholders to develop and implement strategies to address the challenges. (Including the core and required partners)
3. Set eligibility, service and budget priorities
4. Solicit input and cooperation from the business community to develop work-based learning and/or employment opportunities.
5. Develop and implement best practices and promising strategies that will create successful career pathways.
6. Provide information and assist with operational and other issues relating to the provision of services to individuals with disabilities, including issues relating to compliance with WIOA Section 188, if applicable, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

APPENDIX ITEM I
REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REGIONS AND
LOCAL WORKFORCE INNOVATION AREAS
UPDATED JULY 1, 2019

