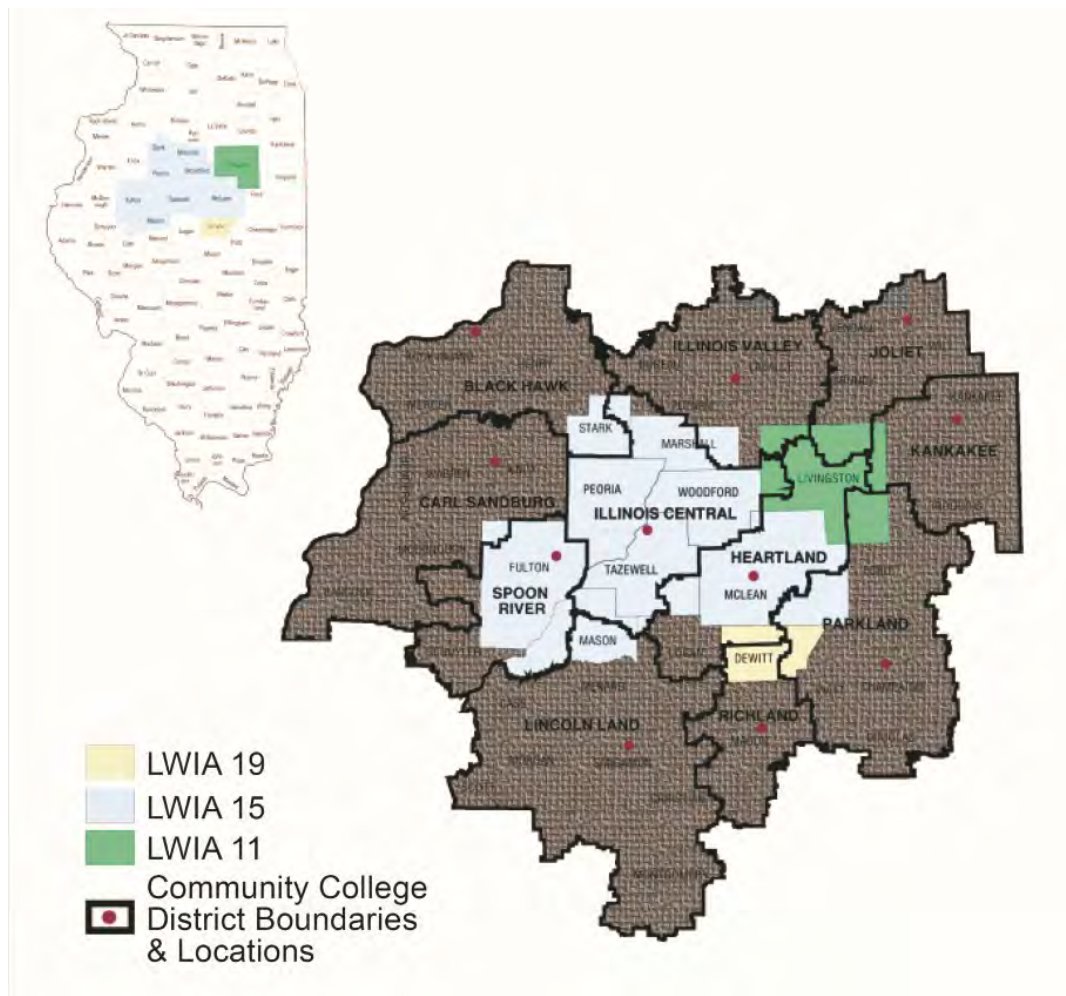


North Central Economic Development Region 3
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act – 2020 Regional Plan
Local Workforce Investment Area 15 Local Plan



North Central Economic Development Region 3
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act- 2020 Regional Plan
Local Workforce Investment Area 15 - 2020 Local Plan

Table of Contents

	Executive Summary.....	3
Chapter 1:	Economic and Workforce Analysis – Regional Component.....	7
Chapter 2:	Integration of Strategies and Services – Regional Component.....	34
Chapter 3:	Vision, Goals and Strategies – Regional Component.....	48
Chapter 4:	Operating Systems and Policies – Local Component.....	69
Chapter 5:	Performance Goals and Evaluation – Local Component.....	92
Chapter 6:	Technical Requirements and Assurances – Local Component.....	96
	Attachment 1 – Local Performance Goals.....	99
	Attachment 2 – Supportive Service Policy.....	100
	Attachment 3 – Individual Training Account/Priority of Service.....	107
	Attachment 4 – Initial and Subsequent Training Provider Certification.....	112
	Attachment 5 – Local Procurement Policy.....	114

Executive Summary

This plan was developed in accordance with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Guidelines and State of Illinois Requirements issued in November of 2021. WIOA requires that Local Workforce Development Areas complete a Regional Planning Process. In Illinois the Governor has designated the following counties; DeWitt, Fulton, Livingston, Marshall, Mason, McLean, Peoria, Stark, Tazewell and Woodford as the North Central Economic Development Region 3 (NCEDR). The Region plans to build on proven practices such as sector strategies, career pathways, regional economic approaches and work-based learning models to effectively serve both employers and job seekers in our area.

The Plan supports the vision to ensure collaboration among education, workforce, economic development and required partners as they provide program participants the ability to move along their chosen career pathway, leading to high paying jobs in growing sectors of the economy that offer long-term opportunities for stable employment and ultimately assist businesses in Illinois to be competitive in a global economy.

Vision Statement: The NCEDR is adopting the State of Illinois’ vision which is to: “Foster a Statewide workforce development system that supports the needs of individuals and businesses to ensure Illinois has a skilled workforce to effectively compete in the global economy.”

The following State’s Principles will guide our work during the planning process:

- Demand-Driven Orientation
- Strong Partnerships with Business at All Levels
- Pathways to Careers of Today and Tomorrow
- Cross-agency Collaboration and Connections
- Integrated Service Delivery
- Equitable Access and Opportunity for all Populations
- Clear Metrics for Progress and Success
- Focus on Continuous Improvement and Innovation

Action Agenda: The Region will facilitate the enactment of the state Action Agenda for Workforce Development and Job Creation by working toward the following goals:

1. Unite workforce development partners around regional clusters strategies by:
 - a. Identifying high-impact regional clusters and associated in-demand occupations, and
 - b. Implementing a coordinated workforce development strategy around regional clusters.
2. Prepare Illinois workers for a career, not just their next job by:
 - a. Increasing apprenticeship opportunities
 - b. Addressing barriers to successful training and employment, and
 - c. Establishing and supporting equity goals and aligning with Perkins equity goals.

3. Connect job seekers with employers by:
 - a. Shortening time from credential to employment, and
 - b. Integrating workforce services across program providers for one-stop customers.

In practical terms, the Workforce Innovation Boards of Areas 11, 15, and 19 and the regional workforce system partners will work together to enhance the productivity and competitiveness of our communities by linking employers and individuals to the employment and training services that they need.

Background: The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act envisions a workforce system that better aligns workforce, education and economic development partners. The regional workforce efforts of Bloomington, East Peoria, Normal, Pekin, Peoria, and Pontiac as well as the rural counties and towns in DeWitt, Fulton, Marshall, Mason, Stark and Woodford counties will benefit greatly from a unified workforce team that can act quickly to address workforce needs of both employers and job seekers.

In furtherance of the plan development for the EDR 3, the partners will build a system that:

- Is employer-centric and built upon common efforts of our economic development partners with strong industry partnerships in place.
- Is holistically focused on the industry sectors that are being targeted.
- Uses regional labor market data to have an up-to-date understanding of both the supply and demand sides of our regional economy, including the talent needs and qualifications of employers and our education and training systems effectiveness in meeting them.
- Builds upon educational efforts throughout the region to identify and create job relevant career pathways for all on-ramps within a given industry sector and their associated occupations.
- Advances opportunities for all job seekers including low skilled adults, youth, individuals with disabilities, veterans and other individuals with multiple barriers to employment.
- Creates a system of workforce, education and economic development partners that provide excellence in meeting the needs of businesses and individuals thus growing a vibrant and robust regional economy.

Plan Development: The North Central Economic Development Regional Plan has been developed in accordance with WIOA and State of Illinois Regional Planning guidelines. The NCEDR will undertake the processes and strategies outlined in this plan over the next four years.

The Regional Planning Process will include:

- The establishment of regional service strategies,
- The development and implementation of sector initiatives for in-demand industry sectors or occupations for the planning region,
- 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) and (ii),

- The coordination of administrative cost arrangements, including the pooling of funds for administrative costs, as appropriate,
- The coordination of transportation and other supportive services as appropriate,
- The coordination of services with regional economic development services and providers, 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.

The Local Planning Strategies will include:

- 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,
- Applying job-driven strategies in the one-stop system,
- Enable economic, education and workforce partners to build a skilled workforce through innovation in, and alignment of, employment, training and education programs, and
- Incorporate the local plan into the regional plan per 20 CFR 679.540.

Impact of the COVID-19 National Health Emergency (Pandemic):

The State of Illinois Regional and Local Planning Guide, that was updated in November of 2021, asks the Regions and Local Boards to identify implications of the pandemic, to the extent known. There is content throughout the regional and local plan that provides examples of the impact that the pandemic has had on the delivery of workforce, economic development and educational services. Where possible, solutions that have been implemented or could be have been identified.

Closing of the One-Stop Centers, due to the pandemic had the greatest impact on Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Service. Many Centers remained closed for the past two years. For a system that was founded on co-location and joint delivery of services this was devastating. Customers could no longer access training services such as academic, vocational or on-the-job training. Colleges were forced to cancel in-person learning and pivot to virtual classes. Employers were forced to cease operations and lay off their workers.

There was a sea change in how not only workforce development but how the world operated. Initially, most people including employers, job seekers and staff were in survival mode. Trying to figure out how to function in their daily lives without contracting a sometimes, deadly virus. Many factors impacted the ability to help our traditional job seeking customers including:

- Children returning to the home to participate in virtual classrooms
- Government supports that eased the need for a paycheck
- Digital Literacy and lack of access to technology

- Inability of adults to attend in-person classes due to lack of childcare and in some cases, lack of the class itself (i.e., clinicals)

Services to employer customers have been limited for the following reasons:

- Inability to deliver in-person rapid response services as businesses closed.
- As the economy has recovered there has been a lack of workers.
- Lag time in development of the ability to deliver technology-based services.

Moving forward as a system will require state-level decisions on whether or not long-term commitments to One-Stops will continue. The Title 1 program was limited in its ability to resume services because the closing of the center was beyond their control. If it is determined that service delivery will refocus on virtual delivery then resources will need to be made available at the local level for virtual products and technology and training to work remotely.

Chapter 1 – Economic and Workforce Analysis – Regional Component

This chapter must discuss how the region has collected and analyzed updated regional labor market information including the local planning requirements. Additionally, the chapter must demonstrate alignment with education and economic development. Regional teams are encouraged to use the labor market information posted on <https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/RegPlanning> that will provide consistency in the data used for regional analysis throughout the state.

- A. Provide an analysis of the:** As part of the 2022 modification, provide an updated analysis of the factors listed below noting any significant impacts of the COVID-19 National Health Emergency:
- 1. Economic conditions including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations (§ 679.560(a)(1)(i));**

Chapter 1 Section A Question 1a: What are the targeted industries, high-impact industry clusters, and in-demand occupations in the region?

The regional partners met to review data from the planning packets provided by the State of Illinois. Based on an analysis of this data we determined which sectors, industries and occupations were most important to our regional employers. Data on maturing, leading and emerging industries was reviewed to answer the questions associated with development of Chapter 1 of the regional plan. Some customized data was also developed and utilized to answer some questions such as occupational growth due to replacement.

NAICS Title	2018 Employment	Projected 2028 Employment	Net Employment Change 2018 - 2028	Percent Employment Change	Concentration (Location Quotient)
TOTAL, ALL INDUSTRIES	314,849	309,638	(5,211)	-1.7%	
Self Employed Workers	12,981	13,273	292	2.2%	0.69
Agricultural Production	8,811	9,038	227	2.6%	2.91
Natural Resources & Mining	112	90	(22)	-19.6%	0.08
Construction	11,333	11,439	106	0.9%	0.8
Manufacturing	29,805	29,591	(214)	-0.7%	1.2
Wholesale Trade	10,777	10,783	6	0.1%	0.94
Retail Trade	30,248	29,197	(1,051)	-3.5%	0.98
Utilities	2,050	2,064	14	0.7%	1.89
Transportation & Warehousing	10,815	11,071	256	2.4%	0.92
Information	3,278	2,802	(476)	-14.5%	0.59
Financial Activities	28,432	28,929	497	1.7%	1.7
Professional & Business Services	33,498	33,967	469	1.4%	0.82
Educational Services	29,328	26,250	(3,078)	-10.5%	1.06
Health Care & Social Assistance	42,799	42,714	(85)	-0.2%	1.04
Leisure & Hospitality	31,503	29,933	(1,570)	-5.0%	0.99
Other Services	12,866	12,734	(132)	-1.0%	0.99
Government	16,213	15,763	(450)	-2.8%	0.76

Leading
Maturing
Emerging

The table below lists the First Tier Targeted Industries and their associated high-impact industry clusters as well as their associated in-demand occupations in the region. The industries, clusters and occupations were derived based on customized data from the Illinois Department of Employment Security. The data in the tables list those industries and occupations with the highest number of annual job openings in the region. There are other industry clusters and occupations that may be filled through the Region’s focus on the targeted industry.

Targeted	
Industries	Occupations
1. Healthcare and Social Assistance a. Ambulatory Health Care Services b. Hospitals c. Social Assistance d. Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	1. Registered Nurse 2. Nursing Assistant 3. Personal Care Aides 4. Home Health Aides 5. Medical Assistant 6. Respiratory Therapists
2. Manufacturing a. Food Manufacturing b. Machine Manufacturing c. Transportation Equipment Manufacturing	1. Machinists 2. Welders 3. Mechanical Engineers
3. Transportation and Warehousing a. Truck Transportation b. Transit and Ground Passenger Transportation c. Warehousing and Storage	1. Truck Drivers, Heavy and Tractor-Trailer 2. Laborers/Freight/Stock and Material Movers 3. Bus/Truck/Diesel Engine Mechanics

We also recognize as a region that the Construction, Professional and Business Services, and Self-Employment are emerging industry sectors in the region. Although Information Technology is not a stand-alone sector of the regional economy, occupations requiring it are embedded in companies from all sectors. Because of their high growth projections, we are identifying these as Tier 2 targets of opportunity for the region.

The partners had an extensive discussion about remote workers that has emerged as part of the impact of the pandemic. The region is interested in working with businesses to identify jobs that could be done remotely and as a system train for them. The table below from Glassdoor shows the popular sectors for remote jobs as of June 2021.

The Healthcare Industry was also greatly impacted by the pandemic. The need for nurses at all levels, respiratory technicians and therapists has skyrocketed. The workforce system has been limited in their ability to respond to the need because of school closures, individuals unable to complete training and a general disruption in traditional learning models. These career pathways along with teaching were identified as some of the most critical to be addressed by the system.

Most Popular Sectors for Remote Job Applications in June 2021

Rank	Sectors	% of All Remote Job Applications
1	Information Technology	24.8%
2	Business Services	11.3%
3	Health Care	4.5%
4	Finance	3.2%
5	Education	2.5%
6	Insurance	2.2%
7	Manufacturing	1.6%
8	Media	1.5%
9	Biotech & Pharmaceuticals	1.4%
10	Retail	1.4%

Source: Glassdoor

Chapter 1 Section A Question 1b: What industries and occupations have favorable location quotients?

Per the data packet supplied by the Illinois Department of Employment Security for the 2022 Regional planning cycle, a value greater than 1.0 means that sector's employment is more heavily concentrated here than in the nation, while values less than 1.0 indicate employment is less concentrated than in the nation. The farther away from 1.0, the greater the difference between what is happening in that county compared to the nation. For Region 3 the Industries with the highest Location Quotient are listed below.

Industries with Favorable Location Quotients:

North Central Region					
Employment by Major Industry Category					
NAICS Title	2018 Employment	Projected 2028 Employment	Net Employment Change 2018-2028	Percent Employment Change	Concentration (Location Quotient)
Agricultural Production	8,811	9,038	227	2.6%	2.91
Utilities	2,050	2,064	14	.7%	1.89
Financial Activities	28,432	28,929	497	1.7%	1.70
Manufacturing	29,805	29,591	(214)	-0.7%	1.20
Educational Services	29,328	26,250	(3,078)	-10.6%	1.06
Health Care and Social Assistance	42,799	42,714	(85)	-0.2%	1.04

Chapter 1 Section A Question 1c: What industries and occupations have favorable demand projections based on growth?

Industries with Favorable Demand based on Growth:

North Central Region					
Employment by Major Industry Category					
NAICS Title	2018 Employment	Projected 2028 Employment	Net Employment Change 2018-2028	Percent Employment Change	Concentration (Location Quotient)
Agricultural Production	8,811	9,038	227	2.6%	2.91
Transportation and Warehousing	10,815	11,071	256	2.4%	.92
Self-Employed Workers	12,981	13,273	292	2.2%	.69
Financial Activities	28,432	28,929	497	1.7%	1.7
Professional and Business Services	33,498	33,967	469	1.4%	.82

Occupations with Favorable Demand based on Growth:

SOC Code	Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) Title	Average Annual Openings due to Growth
00-0000	Total, All Occupations	2,276
29-1000	Health Diagnosing & Treating Practitioners	64
11-0000	Management Occupations	57
53-0000	Transportation & Material Moving Occupations	54
53-7000	Material Moving Workers	50
39-0000	Personal Care & Service Occupations	41
41-3000	Sales Representatives, Services	36
39-9000	Other Personal Care & Service Workers	35
29-0000	Healthcare Practitioners & Technical Occs	33
11-3000	Operations Specialties Managers	26
17-0000	Architecture & Engineering Occupations	24
49-0000	Installation, Maintenance & Repair Occs	23
11-9000	Other Management Occupations	20
17-2000	Engineers	20
47-0000	Construction & Extraction Occupations	18
47-2000	Construction Trades Workers	16
15-0000	Computer & Mathematical Occupations	12

Chapter 1 Section A Question 1d: What industries and occupations have favorable demand projections based on replacements?

Industries associated with favorable demand projections based on replacement include:

- Transportation and Warehousing
- Healthcare and Social Assistance
- Business and Professional Services
- Construction

Occupational Openings due to Replacement:

Standard Occupational Classification (SOC)		Average Annual Job Openings due to Separations		
Code	Title	Exits	Transfer	Replacement
43-0000	Office & Administrative Support Occupations	2,020	2,862	4,882
41-0000	Sales & Related Occupations	1,742	2,707	4,449
35-0000	Food Preparation & Serving Occupations	1,801	2,629	4,430
11-0000	Management Occupations	1,034	1,770	2,804
35-3000	Food & Beverage Serving Workers	1,104	1,582	2,686
41-2000	Retail Sales Workers	1,154	1,507	2,661
53-0000	Transportation & Material Moving Occupations	879	1,546	2,425
51-0000	Production Occupations	763	1,503	2,266
25-0000	Education, Training & Library Occupations	759	900	1,659
13-0000	Business & Financial Operations Occupations	457	1,135	1,592
11-9000	Other Management Occupations	715	860	1,575
39-0000	Personal Care & Service Occupations	646	779	1,425
43-4000	Information & Record Clerks	524	844	1,368
53-7000	Material Moving Workers	459	909	1,368
37-0000	Building & Grounds Cleaning & Maint. Occs	570	743	1,313
29-0000	Healthcare Practitioners & Technical Occs	526	612	1,138
47-0000	Construction & Extraction Occupations	332	799	1,131
43-9000	Other Office & Adm. Support Workers	502	617	1,119
49-0000	Installation, Maintenance & Repair Occs	357	744	1,101
13-1000	Business Operations Specialists	311	786	1,097
41-3000	Sales Representatives, Services	330	655	985
43-5000	Material Recording/Schedule/Dispatchers	370	604	974
35-2000	Cooks & Food Preparation Workers	378	594	972
47-2000	Construction Trades Workers	280	687	967
31-0000	Healthcare Support Occupations	424	532	956
39-9000	Other Personal Care & Service Workers	422	515	937
37-2000	Building Cleaning & Pest Control Workers	448	485	933

It should be noted that openings due to replacement is not the current nomenclature being used by labor market analysts. The following terminology and definitions are in use.

Total openings = Growth Openings + Separations

Definitions:

Growth Openings – difference between the base and projection year employment

Separations – the need to replace those who have exited the labor market, or have changed occupational fields/categories = Exits + Transfers

Exits - leaving the labor force entirely

Transfers – change in occupational field/category. permanently leaving an occupation to go to a different field, or to a different occupational category (defined as a different

Major SOC group)

Chapter 1 Section A Question 1e: What industries and occupations are considered mature but still important to the economy?

Occupations considered mature but still important to the economy include Manufacturing, Educational Services and Healthcare and Social Assistance.

Chapter 1 Section A Question 1f: What industries and occupations are considered emerging in the regional economy?

Industries Considered Emerging in the Regional Economy:

North Central Region					
Employment by Major Industry Category					
NAICS Title	2018 Employment	Projected 2028 Employment	Net Employment Change 2018-2028	Percent Employment Change	Concentration (Location Quotient)
Self Employed Workers	12,891	13,273	292	2.2%	.69
Professional and Other Business Services	33,498	33,967	469	1.4%	.82
Construction	11,333	11,439	106	.9%	.8
Wholesale Trade	10,777	10,783	6	.1%	.94

Occupations associated with Emerging Industries	
Industry	Occupations
Wholesale Trade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products • Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand • Light Truck Drivers • Office Clerks, General • General and Operations Managers
Professional and Other Business Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer Systems Analysts • Software Developers and Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers • Accountants and Auditors • Office Clerks, General • Paralegals and Legal Assistants • Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks
Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction Laborers • Carpenters • Electricians • Plumbers, Pipefitters, Steamfitters • Office Clerks, General
Transportation & Warehousing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Truck Drivers, Heavy & Tractor Trailer • Laborers/Freight/Stock & Material Movers • Industrial Truck & Tractor Operators • Light Truck Drivers • Passenger Vehicle Drivers, Except Bus Drivers, Transit and Intercity

Chapter 1 Section A Question 1g: What sources of supply and demand data were used to determine the targeted industries occupations and skills?

Data from the Illinois Department of Employment Security and EMSI Burning Glass 2022 was used to analyze the supply and demand in the determination of targeted industries, occupations and skills.

**A. Provide an Analysis of the:
2: Employment needs of employers in existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations (§ 679.560(a)(1)(ii));**

Analysis of employment needs of employers for existing and emerging industries indicates the following occupations are in demand:

Occupations associated with Existing Industries	
Industry	Occupations
Agricultural Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmworkers and Laborers, Crop, Nursery, and Greenhouse • Farmers, Ranchers, and other Agricultural Managers • Farmworkers, Farm, Ranch, and Aquacultural Animals • Agricultural Equipment Operators
Manufacturing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Miscellaneous Assemblers and Fabricators • Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers • Industrial Engineers • Mechanical Engineers • Machinists
Educational Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary Teachers, Ex. Spec/Voc. Ed • Elementary Teachers, Ex. Special Ed. • Educational/Vocational School Counselors
Financial Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Service Representatives • Insurance Underwriters • Computer Systems Analysts • Software Developers and Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers • Insurance Sales Agents
Health Care and Social Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registered Nurses • Nursing Assistant • Licensed Practical Nurse • Emergency Medical Technician • Medical Records and Health Information Technicians • Radiological Technologists • Medical Health Service Managers

Occupations associated with Emerging Industries	
Industry	Occupations
Wholesale Trade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products • Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand • Light Truck Drivers • Office Clerks, General • General and Operations Managers
Professional and Other Business Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer Systems Analysts • Software Developers and Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers • Accountants and Auditors • Office Clerks, General • Paralegals and Legal Assistants • Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks
Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction Laborers • Carpenters • Electricians • Plumbers, Pipefitters, Steamfitters • Office Clerks, General
Transportation & Warehousing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Truck Drivers, Heavy & Tractor Trailer • Laborers/Freight/Stock & Material Movers • Industrial Truck & Tractor Operators • Light Truck Drivers • Passenger Vehicle Drivers, Except Bus Drivers, Transit and Intercity

A. Provide an Analysis of the:
3. The 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));

Chapter 1 Section A Question 3a: What are the targeted career pathway clusters in the region?

The Targeted Career Pathway Clusters are:

Health Care

Therapeutic Services

Occupations focused primarily on changing the health status of patients over time through direct care, treatment, counseling, or health education information

Diagnostic Services

Occupations related to the tests and evaluations that aid in the detection, diagnosis and treatment of diseases, injuries or other physical conditions.

Health Informatics

Workers involved in all aspects of managing health care agencies, patient data and information, financial information, and computer applications related to health care processes and procedures. Workers usually have limited interaction with patients.

Manufacturing

Production

Occupations related to the making or assembling of electronic parts, constructing or assembling modular housing, performing welding jobs, or printing various materials.

Logistics and Inventory Control

Occupations related to the maintenance and transportation of raw materials and finished parts inventories. Includes moving raw materials to the production line, unloading trucks with raw materials, wrapping pallets of finished products for shipment, and communicating with traffic managers.

Engineering

Occupations related to manufacturing engineering. Includes industrial maintenance technology, machining, CNC operators, CNC programmers, and tool and die makers.

Chapter 1 Section A Question 3b: What are the skills that are in demand in the region?

Skills in Demand in the Region	
Industry	Skills
Health Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical Thinking • Observational Skills • Communication • Science and Math • Education: Certificate, Associate and Bachelor Degrees
Manufacturing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical Thinking • Ability to Work with Diverse Teams • Interest and Aptitude in Technology • Ability to Cross Train • Education: On-the-Job Training, Certificates, Associate and bachelor's degrees
Transportation and Warehousing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Physical Strength • Teamwork • Education: On-the-Job Training, Certificates and Associate Degrees

Chapter 1 Section A Question 3c: How well do the existing skills of job seekers match the demands of local business?

The following data tables were supplied by IDES for the 2022 planning cycle. They indicate that the region is on par with the rest of the state in educational attainment levels. The tables provided illustrate the skills gaps in the area for occupations requiring certificates, associate degrees and bachelor's degrees or higher.

The data indicates that there are significant supply gaps for occupations requiring certificates, associate's and bachelor's degrees. These shortages are in areas such as healthcare, information technology and education.

The data supplied did not cover occupations requiring on-job training. These type of training programs continue to be a priority in the region. Assistance for this type of training is available through partner programs including Title 1, Community Colleges and Bureau of Apprenticeships.

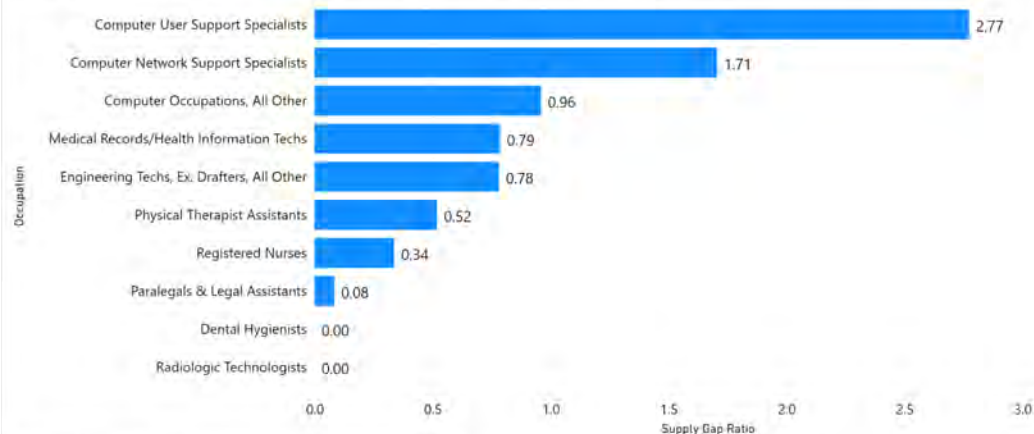


Supply Gap Analysis for Occupations Requiring an Associate's Degree

Region

North Central

The supply gap ratio is a proxy measure that provides insight on how closely supply aligns with demand for selected occupations. The calculation of the ratio is supply / demand. In this case, the supply is the number of program completions in the region associated with the occupation and the demand is the estimated number of regional job openings. A gap ratio of one indicates one completer per projected job opening. Gaps lower than one indicate more job openings than completers, and gaps greater than 1 indicate more completers than openings.



Completers do not include most apprenticeships and true OJT provided solely by employers.

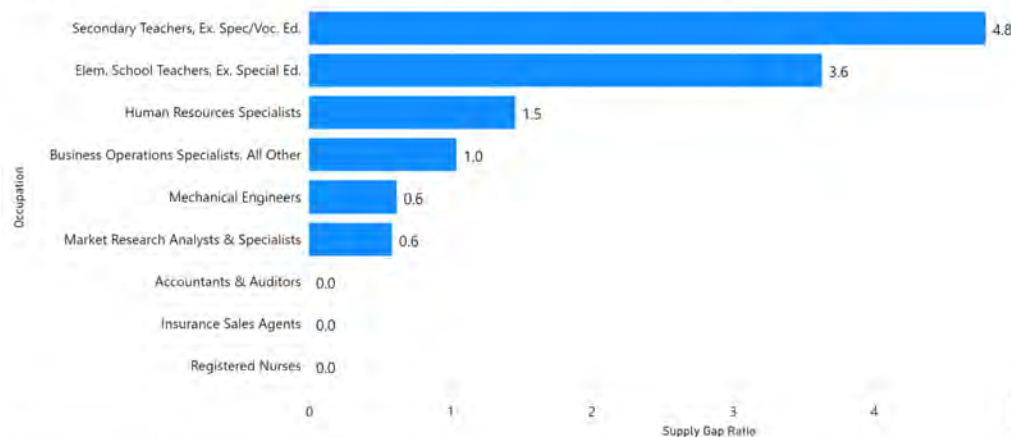
Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security, Illinois Board of Higher Education, & Emsi-Burning Glass, 2021

Supply Gap Analysis for Occupations Requiring a Bachelor's Degree

Region

North Central

The supply gap ratio is a proxy measure that provides insight on how closely supply aligns with demand for selected occupations. The calculation of the ratio is supply / demand. In this case, the supply is the number of program completions in the region associated with the occupation and the demand is the estimated number of regional job openings. A gap ratio of one indicates one completer per projected job opening. Gaps lower than one indicate more job openings than completers, and gaps greater than 1 indicate more completers than openings.

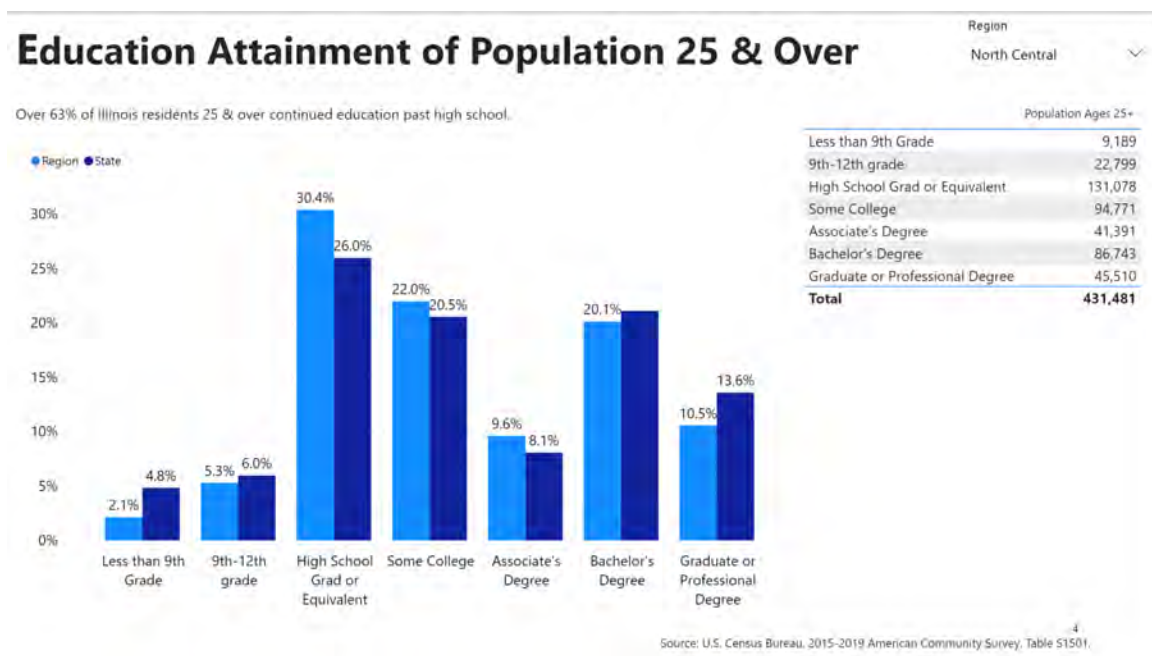


Completers do not include most apprenticeships and true OJT provided solely by employers.

Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security, Illinois Board of Higher Education, & Emsi-Burning Glass, 2021



Fortunately, the region is well positioned to work with employers to help fill these gaps. As demonstrated by the chart below, 90% of the population in the region have attained their high school diploma or higher. Of these, 20% of the population has attained a Bachelor's degree.



The region is rich in educational institutions that offer training for occupations in the industry sectors that we are targeting. Universities and Colleges in the region offering four-year degrees include:

- Illinois State University – Public Institution
- Bradley University – Private Non-Profit Institution
- Eureka College – Private Non-Profit Institution
- Wesleyan University – Private Non-Profit Institution

The region also has three Community Colleges that offer both certificate and associate degree programs in the sectors of focus. These institutions include:

- Heartland Community College
- Illinois Central College
- Spoon River College

In addition, the region has six colleges focused on Nursing and Health Sciences. These include:

- Graham Hospital School of Nursing
- Methodist College
- OSF St. Francis Medical Center
- St. Francis Medical Center College of Nursing
- Illinois Wesleyan School of Nursing
- Mennonite School of Nursing – Illinois State University

The region also has numerous private business schools with programs with focuses on industry sectors such as welding, emergency management services and cosmetology.

When taken together these institutions have the potential to meet the needs of business for skilled workers in the region. The NCEDR plans to more fully understand the programs of study offered through these schools and work with business to improve upon their effectiveness in meeting the skills that are in demand in our regional economy.

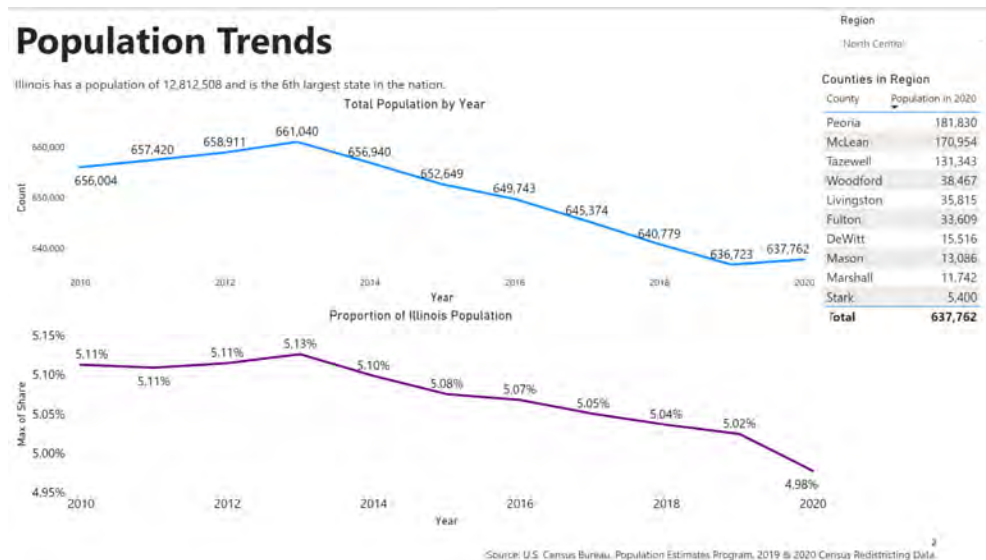
Question A 1a of this chapter identifies the specific high-demand occupations within each of the targeted industry sectors. Question A 3b identifies What are the skills that are in demand in for those occupation in the region? Many of these occupations require a certificate, Associate's Degree or Bachelor's Degree for successful candidates, or extensive on-the-job training. Many healthcare occupations also require passage of a state or national licensing exam. The regional partners will continue to work with the post-secondary education community to expand opportunities for our residents to gain the necessary credentials for those in-demand occupations that require them. We also will continue to work to expand apprenticeship opportunities for those occupations where on-the-job learning is required.

A. Provide an Analysis of the:

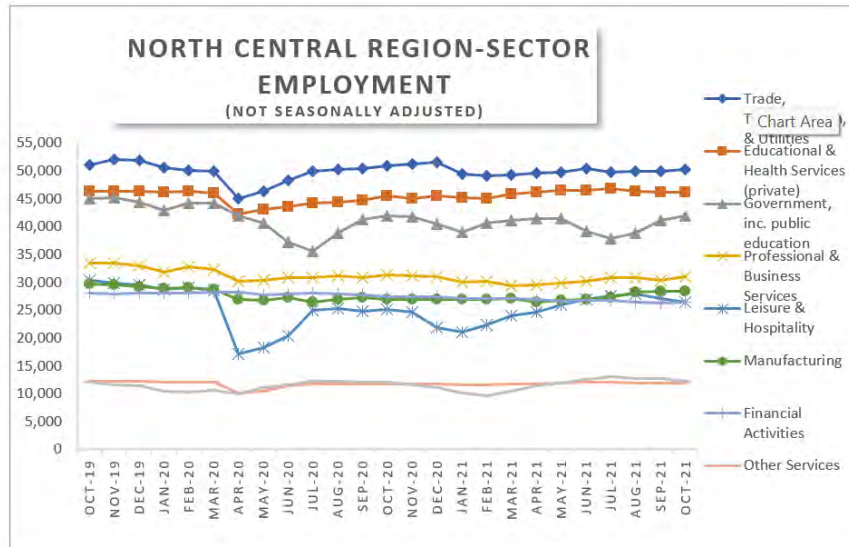
4. Regional workforce considering current labor force employment and unemployment data, information on labor market trends, and educational and skill levels of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment (§ 679.510(a)(1)(iv) and § 679.560(a)(3)).

Chapter 1 Section A Question 4a: How is the region changing in terms of demographics, labor supply and occupational demand?

The region has experienced changes in overall population, labor force and age of population all of which impact the labor supply. The table shows that there has been a general decline in the population of the region with a loss of 3,378 individuals since 2019. The population 55 and over makes up 30% of those living in the region. Individuals that have an associate degree or higher is relatively unchanged from the last planning cycle.



Occupational demand in the region does not show significant change. It is expected that there will be a greater need of elementary and secondary teachers in the region as well as healthcare workers. Both of these industries and their associated occupations were greatly impacted by the pandemic.



Chapter 1 Section A Question 4b: 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?

The Table below contains information provided by the State identifying special populations that exist in the region. The table quantifies the magnitude of the estimated need for these targeted populations. Policy and Service implications for these targeted individuals include:

- A special focus on equity lens initiatives that will provide assistance to those most in need of increased access to programs and career pathways in demand occupations.
- Increased coordination of services between partners
- To the extent possible integrated case management
- Promoting existing partner services to these population as well as creating new programs to meet their unique needs

ADDITIONAL TARGET POPULATION STATISTICS

EDR 3 North Central

(DeWitt, Fulton, Livingston, McLean, Marshall, Mason, Peoria, Stark, Tazewell, & Woodford)

Low-Income Indicators

SNAP Households, Monthly Average 2020	57,222
SNAP Cases, Monthly Average 2020	110,016
TANF Cases, Monthly Average 2020	2,118
TANF Persons, Monthly Average 2020	6,009

Foster Care Indicators

Total Foster Youth, October 31, 2021	2,253
Foster Youth- Foster Care	877
Foster Youth- Relative	1,305
Foster Youth- Institution or Group Home	28
Other Foster Youth	43

DOC Indicators

Adult Prison Population by Sentencing Region, June 30th, 2021	2,133
Adult Parolee Population by Region of Residence, June 30, 2021	1,122
Average Daily Juvenile Detention Population, June 2021	28.3

Other Indicators

Single Parents	
Male Householder with own children, no partner present	2,852
Female Householder with own children, no partner present	12,980
Adult Population at Risk	
Foreign Born Population	25,856
Age 18+ without high school diploma	39,499

B. Describe 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:

Chapter 1 Section B Question 1: How will the workforce partners convene employers, foundations and regional institutions to help lead sector partnerships and make coordinated investments?

Employers are critical partners in the effort to develop sector partnerships in the region. Likewise, foundations and regional institutions interested in workforce development are key players in the coordination of services that bridge the gap between workers and employer needs. To benefit from the expertise of these groups there must be formal opportunities for their voices to be heard. In EDR 3 there are many opportunities and initiatives in place to convene employers, foundations and regional institutions to help lead sector partnerships. Examples of these include:

The Greater Peoria Economic Development Council convenes employers in many ways to support the development and attraction of a ready workforce:

- Participation in the Workforce Alliance. This is a regional public-private consortium led by Illinois Central College (District 514), the Greater Peoria EDC, and a partnership called the CEO Council (a group of over 70 business leaders). The group is comprised and led by a diverse group of 20+ unique employers, k-12 and postsecondary education leaders, and community-based organizations including the HOI United Way and Community Foundation of Central Illinois. It oversees three, population-based strategies pertaining to the development and coordination of workforce readiness initiatives:
 - Population 1 - Emerging Workforce: focused on supporting implementation of shared, regional K-12 College and Career strategies to students are work ready and schools are aligned to new state expectations.
 - Population 2 - Adult Up-Skilling: focused on identifying and recruiting working adults into training programs connected to in-demand, living-wage careers as a way to improve lives and close workforce gaps.
 - Population 3 - Adults with Multiple Barriers: focused on coordinating direct workforce services between community-based organizations to address systemic barriers allowing working-age adults to pursue training for an in-demand, living-wage career in our region.
- Greater Peoria CareerSpark Strategy Teams. As a strategy of the Emerging Workforce committed listed above, GP CareerSpark, a shared, region-wide 8th grade career expo led by the GPEDC and Junior Achievement of Central Illinois convenes over 120 unique

employers annually to provide hands-on career exploration to over 4,500 8th graders. Career Spark has been meeting virtually during the pandemic.

- Greater Peoria Essential Abilities and Knowledge (GPEAK) Assessment – GPEAK measures an individual's demonstration of essential skills and knowledge needed for meaningful employment, while encouraging participants to reflect on their growth and development of essential skills.
- HelloGP Talent Attraction Strategy Team. This strategy team is comprised of a smaller cohort of employers, approximately 15, representing our most critical industries, coordinates and implements shared attraction strategies aimed at bringing new workforce into our region and retaining existing workforce.

The Heartland Community College convenes the following groups to discuss workforce needs:

- Industry Visioning Meetings, each semester, bringing regional industry leaders from a specific industry, to discuss workforce needs and trends and how those do/do not align with educational and training programs.
- Advisories for each CTE program for input on program effectiveness.
- Ad Hoc business reps as we create and deploy educational and training programs for a given business or employer.
- Foundation Board of approximately 40 regional leaders to provide governance for the HCC Foundation and input on priorities and activities.

The following are highlights of recent Heartland Community College expansion/revision efforts related to workforce development:

- Rivian – In response to Rivian, and in collaboration with ICC and Career Link, identification of existing programs/trainings, revisions to those, or creation of new programs and trainings.
 - Heartland developed an Electric Vehicle Technology Associate's Degree program. Career Link added the program to the state's Eligible Training Provider List. Graduates of the program are qualified to perform maintenance, assembly and repair to electric vehicles.
- Essential Workplace Skills (EWS) series - Creation and deployment of "Essential Workplace Skills" series providing incumbent worker training for critical soft skills, in response to collective employer needs and the McLean County Chamber of Commerce and aligned with ICSPS framework for student employability skills.
- "Complete and Connect" – program for HCC GED students to gain employability skills and workplace experience, with support from Career Link.
- Work Ready program expansion – revising short term Work Ready programs to align with and stack into credit programs; initial example is revision of Certified Medical Assistant program as a credit program with ability to stack Phlebotomy (noncredit)
- Creation and Deployment of Incumbent Worker Trainings – enhanced ability to design trainings, activities, and assessments based on regional employer needs for current workers.

- Consultative Business Services – emerging efforts to expand services such as strategic planning, process mapping, asset mapping, facilitation, onboarding, and assessment.

Chapter 1 Section B Question 2: Identify the established and active industry sector partnerships in the region (as defined in Illinois' Next Generation Sector Strategies Guide)? If any exist, are they business-led and what is their role in WIOA planning?

The regional partners met in December 2019. During that meeting it was determined that there are no current established or active industry sector partnerships in the region that meet the definition of Next Generation Sector Strategies.

The Pandemic started in February of 2020 and this type of work has been delayed. It is anticipated that as the economy reopens and restrictions are lifted this type of work will restart.

The representative from the Greater Peoria EDC did indicate that there may be a couple of initiatives that could meet this requirement but that would need to be determined through further communication with the state.

These include:

- Greater Peoria EDC's Manufacturing Network, along with our support of the Illinois Defense Industry Network diversification strategy may qualify as a sector initiative focusing on diversifying manufacturing businesses away from mining machinery manufacturing.
- Regional Workforce Development Alliance. The working goal of the Alliance is to create the regional workforce required to stabilize and grow our economy by systemically connecting employers, educations, community based organizations with high school graduates, the under-credentialed and multi barriered adults to ensure 70% of our population has the required certifications to obtain gainful employment.

Chapter 1 Section B Question 3: Identify any regional sector partnerships that are inactive or have disbanded since the prior planning cycle. What other public-private partnerships exist in the region that could support sector strategies and what is their role in planning?

Business-led sector-based partnerships that exist in the region include:

- Strategic Manufacturing Group: To develop our region's future workforce, GPEDC's Strategic Manufacturing Group connects area manufacturers with educators to plan events and activities that inspire and prepare students for manufacturing careers. During our annual Discover Manufacturing Career Expo, approximately 800 students from over 20 area schools are introduced to manufacturing career pathways each year.
- Discover Manufacturing: This is designed to bring awareness to youth about the quality of today's manufacturing jobs and to promote opportunities within the

industry. Technology is changing like never before. Tomorrow's manufacturing will look different from today's. Modern manufacturing requires people who value creativity, problem-solving, and innovation.

At the Discover Manufacturing Career Expo, the student is immersed in a hands-on experience featuring a variety of manufacturing careers. They learn what employers are really looking for; honesty, optimism, hard work ethic, communication, teamwork, judgement and adaptability.

- **Peoria Pathways to Prosperity:** Peoria Pathways to Prosperity is an innovative State of Illinois-led STEM education initiative designed to support college and career readiness for all students. Supported by a partnership between the State of Illinois and a group of local organizations Peoria Pathways to Prosperity supports local programs that empower students to explore their academic and career interests while also supporting new statewide, public-private partnerships known as Learning Exchanges that better coordinate investments, resources and planning for those programs.
- **B N STEM Initiative:** The BN STEM initiative is community driven by the local business community to support and invest in the workforce of tomorrow. BN STEM supports local programs, curriculum development and internship opportunities for student interested in the STEM fields.

Individuals that serve on these groups are also involved in the Regional planning process. Their work within these sector partnerships helps inform the work that is being done on the regional plan. There are several ways in which these groups will be incorporated into the WIOA regional planning efforts. We will:

1. Leverage their existing employer outreach efforts to better understand the skill needs of employer within their respective sectors.
2. Coordinate WIOA Regional strategies with economic development plans.
3. Leverage their expertise in development of program models such as Career Pathways, Talent Pipelines and Earn and Learn Models.

The other public-private partnerships that exist in the region that could support sector strategies include:

- **CEO Regional Workforce Alliance – Working Goal:** Create the regional workforce required to stabilize and grow our economy by systemically connecting employers, educators, community-based organizations with high school graduates, the under-credentialed and multi-barriered adults to ensure 70% of our population has the required certifications to obtain gainful employment.
- **Manufacturing Greater Peoria –** Greater Peoria has an extensive history in heavy metal manufacturing. This five-county region represents a population of 408,266. Over 15% of our workforce is employed in the manufacturing industry which is 50% higher than the national average.
- **Peoria Innovation Hub –** a public-private partnership between the University of Illinois, Greater Peoria EDC, and OSF Healthcare. Through the State of Illinois Innovation Network our region has begun building partnerships to support a

physical innovation lab in downtown Peoria that will include workforce training programs in STEM and innovation centers.

- BN Advantage Partnership – created to sustain the local economy and grow it going forward. This strategic economic development plan brings together business, community and education leaders to address local workforce needs as well as targeted industries.
- Essential Employability Skills Alignment Project - brings together key stakeholders to develop a common approach to determine performance indicators and associated levels for each of the State's Essential Employability Competencies outlined in the Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Act. These performance indicators will provide a common approach to validate the competencies and skills individuals acquire through work-based learning experiences, as well as consistent methods for measuring and communicating what they learned. This is a collaborative project between the Regional Workforce Alliance and Illinois Central College and Northern Illinois University Education Systems Center and Jobs for the Future to align and address essential employability skills and to provide robust work-based learning opportunities that prepare individuals for fulfilling careers and meaningful employment,
- The McLean County Chamber of Commerce as part of the BN Advantage partnership will lead the region on workforce development planning that will put forth regional strategies for workforce development initiatives that will benefit businesses, workers and potential workers in the region. Initiatives will be based on current and potential employer needs, inventory of existing programs, comprehensive and strategic use of area agencies and organizations.
- The McLean County Chamber of Commerce's Manufacturing Council provides a monthly forum for leaders in the manufacturing industry to discuss relevant topics such as manufacturing workforce needs while learning about employment trends and employee benefits.
- Workforce Equity Initiative - Illinois Central College is the lead college of an \$18.7 million Workforce Equity Initiative partnering with 14 additional Illinois community colleges. The initiative addresses local workforce gaps and employment barriers in an effort to prepare underserved individuals with a decent and equitable employment opportunity. The initiative focuses on developing our area's workforce by providing participants with a credential and a living wage. It addresses high demand-careers and targets low-income individuals, those living in high crime and high poverty areas, unemployed individuals and minorities. The Workforce Equity Initiative will train participants in the high-demand occupations of Computer Numerical Control (CNC) Operator, Welder, CDL Truck Driver, CompTIA A+, CompTIA Network+, Local Area Network (LAN) Technician, Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN), Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) and Paramedic. The end goal is for participating students to secure employment with a full-time job paying at least 30 percent above the regional living wage.

Individuals that serve on these groups are also involved in the regional planning process. Their work within these sector partnerships helps inform the work that is being done on the

regional plan. There are several ways in which these groups will be incorporated into the WIOA regional planning efforts. We will:

1. Leverage their existing employer outreach efforts to better understand the skill needs of employer within their respective sectors.
2. Coordinate WIOA Regional strategies with economic development plans.
3. Leverage their expertise in development of program models such as Career Pathways, Talent Pipelines and Earn and Learn Models.

Chapter 1 Section B Question 4: What neutral conveners with the capacity to help establish sector partnerships exist in the region and what is their role in planning?

The region has numerous organizations and entities that could potentially function as neutral conveners to help establish sector partnerships in the region:

- The Workforce Investment Board of Local Area 15 is a core partner under WIOA. They are leading the regional planning efforts and function as the One-Stop Operator for the local area. They have decades of experience convening employers and working with them to develop programs that meet the needs of employers for a skilled workforce.
- McLean County Community COMPACT- The McLean County Community Compact creatively enlists the support of community stakeholders from business, government, labor, education and the community to further its purpose. Among the benefits of Compact membership is the ability to learn first about county-wide initiatives and to network with colleagues in each of these sectors.
- The Illinois Manufacturing Excellence Center (IMEC) – works with manufacturing firms throughout the State to link long-term plans with on-site implementation services by identifying performance gaps, solving these gaps, and building a culture to support sustained improvements towards a competitive future. IMEC helps these organizations optimize operating capacity, implement advanced product and process innovations, increase sales, enter new markets and improve profitability.
- Greater Livingston County Economic Development Council - dedicates its purpose to supporting the retention and expansion of existing enterprises and to attracting new businesses. Additionally, the GLCEDC recognizes the importance of a highly trained and competent workforce and works diligently with Heartland Community College, the Livingston Area Career Center, and the Grundy, Kankakee, Livingston County Workforce Investment Board to respond to the needs of current and prospective employers. Furthermore, as a respected advocate of the business community, the GLCEDC works with elected officials at the federal, state, and local levels to advocate for more business friendly policies pertaining to workers' compensation insurance, tax reform(s), and other pro-business initiatives as directed by our Board of Directors. The GLCEDC also serves as a liaison between a business and government agencies to facilitate and expedite the development of new projects
- Greater Peoria Data Hub - Greater Peoria is investing in its future by creating the strategies and framework to connect our region's employers with a skilled workforce. These efforts are driven by a driven partnership of economic

development organizations, regional K-12 public education districts, Illinois Central College, industry partners, and community-based organizations.

- Peoria NEXT Innovation Center - is the home to researchers, investors, and entrepreneurs that are transforming new technologies and innovations into commercial enterprises. The 48,000 square foot center opened its doors in 2007 and can house up to 27 companies. Companies in the fields of medical devices, mechanical engineering, molecular studies, biofuels and information technology are currently tenants. River City Labs is a local Makerspace with a membership of 40 paying local innovators and 100+ non-paying members. The lab is located in the Peoria Warehouse District and is currently seeking to expand to support its growing membership.
- Heartland Community College Workforce Development Center - Collaborates with area employers to help build the skills of 21st century workers. Heartland offers training, degrees and certificates in many fields that are in high demand, including: Computer networking & technology, Nursing, Construction, Maintenance, and Manufacturing.
- Spoon River Community Outreach - The Office of Community Outreach is truly committed to creating partnerships with business and industry and other public agencies. By working cooperatively with business and industry we can jointly address many of the workforce and training needs of the region and community. Ask us about training opportunities. We have state-of-the art facilities available or we can provide training on-site “at your place.”
- DeWitt County Development Council – **Values** the partnerships that we have with private industry. As stakeholders and investors in our community, these private industry partners, have a vested interest in the economic growth of our County. Their knowledge, experience, and leadership is invaluable.
- IWU Center for Action Research -ARC works with not-for-profit organizations, faith-based groups, businesses, civic groups, local government, neighborhood groups, and many others. ARC facilitates collaborative relationships that leverage the strengths of all parties to produce a successful project outcome. ARC has a close working relationship with large employers, has internship programs and has the capacity to provide data proven contributions to workforce issues.
- BN Grows - Business Retention and Expansion Program. This EDC sponsored program is a proactive approach designed to retain and/or expand the businesses in our community. This program focuses on your company, your industry and your relationship to the community. As part of the program, the Bloomington-Normal Retention Committee, comprised of EDC members/partners, will visit with local businesses, both large and small. The purpose of these visits is to gather comprehensive information regarding opportunities and challenges that exist for local business owners. The EDC will help to identify and address local business concerns that pertain to the local economy and correct those that negatively impact the business climate by putting you in contact with the right resources. A major focus of the survey is what types of skills are the employers looking for, are they having problems recruiting these skills, and other questions about workforce issues. This approach allows us to collect trend data on workforce issues by industry at the local level, but also identify specific needs of companies and address them immediately.
- Greater Peoria Economic Development Council – Convenes employers in many ways to support the development and attraction of a ready workforce. The Workforce Alliance is a

regional public-private consortium led by Illinois Central College (District 514), the Greater Peoria EDC, and a partnership called the CEO Council (a group of 70 business leaders). The group of 20+ unique employers, k-12 and post-secondary education leaders, and community-based organizations including the HOI United Way and Community Foundation of Central Illinois.

Chapter 1 Section C: As part of the 2022 modification, if needed, describe the impact of the pandemic on the ability to collect and analyze regional labor market information not mentioned in the previous sections. Include what steps, to the extent known, that will be taken over the next two years to adapt to the impact of the pandemic.

The regional partners discussed the impact of the pandemic on their ability to collect labor market information. Labor Market Specialist from the Illinois Department of Employment Security explained where the information in the data packets came from. Other partners at the meeting also discussed information that is available through their statewide information systems. It was determined that the workforce system's ability to collect this information was not impacted by the pandemic.

The Title 1 Partner had created a technology based referral system in response to office closures due to the pandemic. This allowed partners to continue to provide some level of tracking on common customers.

Chapter 1 Section D: As part of the 2022 modification, describe how a workforce equity lens is incorporated into the local planning requirements for collecting and analyzing labor market information.

It is anticipated that during the next year State level partners will develop reporting capabilities for use at the local level that support workforce equity lens analysis of labor market information. All partners agree that the information exists within their automated systems and could be made available to the local level. Data such as race, disability status, gender, age and poverty level could be used to assess those being served and associated outcomes.

Below is a table depicting the type of information available from partners in the region. The data shown is for Title 1 and is a total population report from IDES of the Peoria MSA and new and cumulative registrants served by Career Link between July 1, 2021 and January 21, 2022. The table compares the percentages of the gender and ethnicities of the Peoria MSA population and our customer base.

As you can see there is a large discrepancy of the male/female ratio in our customer base compared to the population at large. In the past, this ratio has been much closer to the population's break down. In the past, we have noticed that more of our male customers are dislocated workers, particularly from layoff events in the manufacturing industry. In the past two years of the pandemic, we have seen fewer and fewer dislocated worker applications. At the same time, we've served a higher number of Adult customers, which tend to be female.

As you can see from the data, the percentage of Black customers is well above the percentage of Black individuals in the population. Also, the percentage of Hispanic or Latino customers is slightly above the percentage of Hispanic or Latino individuals in the population.

Demographics of Career Link Customers

Category	IDES Report Total Pop.	IDES %	Registrants	Reg. %	New Registrants	New %
Total	406,883	100%	425	100%	153	100%
Male	199,373	49%	122	29%	54	35%
Female	207,510	51%	300	71%	98	64%
Age 14-18			120	28%	53	35%
Age 19-21			63	15%	17	11%
Age 22+			236	56%	81	53%
White	347,472	84%	282	66%	92	60%
Black	35,791	9%	117	28%	48	31%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander			1	0%	0	0%
Am. Indian/Alaskan Native	884		1	0%	1	1%
Asian		0%	5	1%	3	2%
Hispanic	14,118	4%	20	5%	7	5%
Declined			24	6%	10	7%

Chapter 2 – Strategies for Service Integration – Regional Component

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. As part of the 2022 modification, regions are required to provide updated information and analysis noting any significant impacts of the COVID-19 National Health Emergency and what steps will be taken to address the challenges and opportunities that are 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)). Plans must respond to the following: The 2022 modification must update the following sections of your plan where applicable to address the impact of the COVID-19 National Health Emergency and any plans for mitigating the pandemic implications over the next two:

Chapter 2 Section A Question 1: Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of workforce development activities in the region.

Workforce Development Analysis

The EDR -3 Partners identified strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) pertaining to workforce development in the region. The results of this analysis are shown in the Table below.

SWOT Analysis for North Central Region – Workforce Development		
Internal Origin	Strengths: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large Number of Job Openings • Strong Collaboration Among Partners • Focus on Training in Demand Occupations • Creation of Electronic Referral on Partner Website • Improved Economic Conditions • Community Colleges working Regionally 	Weaknesses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People not Looking for Work • Closing of Offices • Limited Access to Broadband • No Common Customer Information System • Limits to Training Capacity (Faculty and Space) • Reporting Systems Between Partners
External Origin	Opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large Number of Job Openings • Connecting Employers to Non-Traditional Employees • Plans to Report Performance to Board • Increased Earn and Learn Models • Employers more Engaged in Out-of-the-Box Solutions 	Threats: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global Pandemic • Disincentives to Work • Loss of large employers • Economic downturn • Funding – lack of from both state and other sources

Strengths: Regional partners identified the large number of job openings in the area as an overarching feature of the new Pandemic Centric Economy. It has wound up being all things, a strength, weakness, opportunity and threat.

Partners agree that as restrictions ease, they will renew their collaborative efforts to serve both job seekers and employers. Early on in response to office closures they created a web-based referral system for partners to use when serving customers. Those things that made the system strong in the past will continue to be the foundation (i.e., sector focused and demand driven).

Weakness: Closing of Offices limited workforce development partners ability to respond to job seeker and employer need at the height of the pandemic. Going forward, it will take support at the state level to construct a system that can function when there are spikes in COVID-19 cases. Although the ability to deliver services remotely is imperative, the most vulnerable customers benefit the most from in-person services.

Lack of digital literacy and access to technology are also major weaknesses. Many partners identified instances where those with significant barriers could not access services. Many rural areas don't have broadband. Many customers don't have computers or lack the basic knowledge of how to utilized mobile applications. The partners will look for resources to address these issues.

Opportunities: Once again the large number of job openings means there is ample opportunity for employment. Partners will hold discussions with employers about remote workers and what

training might facilitate this. They will also promote the hiring of non-traditional employees such as the disabled, returning citizens, low income, etc.

Threat: The continuation of the COVID-19 restrictions is the greatest threat to the system. Office closures, business closures, technological disparity and disincentives to work limit the workforce development systems' ability to deliver services. New ways to operate in a Pandemic Centric world must be found. Investments in treatment options for those that contract covid would mean a return to normality. Until that time the system will need investments in technology and marketing for staff, job seekers and employers.

Chapter 2 Section A Question 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.

Capacity: The Region is well-positioned to provide workforce development activities to address the education and skill needs of the workforce.

By taking a holistic approach to collaboration with core partners, the Region will be able to better serve at risk populations. These WIOA partners include Titles I, II, III and IV, ICCB – Perkins CTE, IDES, Aging, Corrections, and Community Action Agencies.

In March of 2020, the Illinois Department of Employment Security's (IDES) Jobs for Veteran's State Grant (JVSG) program began enlisting the use of digital tools that facilitate remote work and day-to-day administrative operations. The use of this technology allowed for customer service provision to take place that, due to COVID-19's impact, had been restricted. As telework and virtual event planning and implementation emerged as a common practice, lessons were learned and improvements to our delivery model took place. These changes have left their mark on our day-to-day operations in the post-COVID-19 landscape.

In furtherance of WIOA requirements, Priority of Service in the Region includes:

1. Veterans and eligible spouses in the following order or priority:
 - First, to veterans and eligible spouses (who also are included in the groups given statutory priority for WIOA adult formula funds). This means that veterans and eligible spouses who also are recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals*, or individuals who are basic skills deficient would receive first priority for services provided with WIOA adult formula funds.
 - Second, to non-covered persons (individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses) who are included in the groups given priority for WIOA adult formula funds.
 - Third, to veterans and eligible spouses who are not included in WIOA's priority groups.
 - Fourth, to any other populations identified by the Governor or Local Workforce Development Board for priority.
 - Last, to non-covered persons outside the groups given priority under WIOA.

2. Recipients of Public Assistance such as those participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Security Income (SSI). And/or any other State or local income-based public assistance.
3. Other Low-Income Individuals, including those who:
 - Are in a family with total family income that does not exceed the higher of—(I) the poverty line; or (II) 70 percent of the lower living standard income level;
 - is a homeless individual (as defined in section 41403(6) of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994), or a homeless child or youth (as defined under section 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act);
 - receives or is eligible to receive a free or reduced-price lunch under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act;
 - is a foster child on behalf of whom State or local government payments are made; or
 - is an individual with a disability whose own income meets the income requirement, but who is a member of a family whose income does not meet this requirement.
4. Individuals who are basic skills deficient such as those who
 - are a youth with English reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the 8th grade level on a generally accepted standardized test; or
 - are a youth or adult, that is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or in society.

To mitigate the impact of the pandemic on the partner's capacity to provide workforce services our technology contractors set up remote access for all employees in each county. We were able to perform eligibility and assessment remotely using electronic signatures, but participation was low due to no walk-in traffic in the center.

The fact the people are staying at home and not working combined with businesses and schools closing impacted the ability to serve job seekers and employers. There is a need for marketing resources from the State on a scale aligned with the state and community colleges.

The reinstatement of the TABE testing requirement has limited Title 1 enrollments. The ability to conduct TABE testing remotely is being explored as many individuals have to quarantine episodically.

New outreach activities are being explored as we move through the pandemic including working with regional partners of various issues.

Chapter 2 Section A Question 3: Analyze the capacity of the regional partners to provide activities to address the needs of employers.

The Region's capacity to serve employers is robust. Each LWIA in the region has a Business Services Team made up of education, workforce development and economic development partners in the area. These teams meet regularly to understand the needs of employers and work collaboratively to address them. Each partner program has resources that they bring to the table that can address specific needs. For instance, Adult Education programs will continue to offer Bridge and IET programs for low skilled and low literate youth and adults. Areas of concentration will continue to be Manufacturing, Healthcare, and IT as it relates to those fields. Workplace Literacy activities will be developed to offer credentials for specific skills (i.e., MOS Word, Excel, Advanced Forklift training, etc.) Essential Employability Skills through career foundations curriculum will continue to be contextualized into adult ed programming.

The COVID-19 Pandemic has had a dramatic effect on the ability of the partners to continue meeting on a regular basis. All partners had to reassess their ability to provide services while working remotely, and the case of IDES, navigating an unprecedented workload. As the country ground to a halt thousands of individuals statewide lost their jobs and filed for unemployment. As the restrictions of the pandemic are lifted and the workload levels out, we will again start regular Business Service Team meetings in order to best serve the employers in the region.

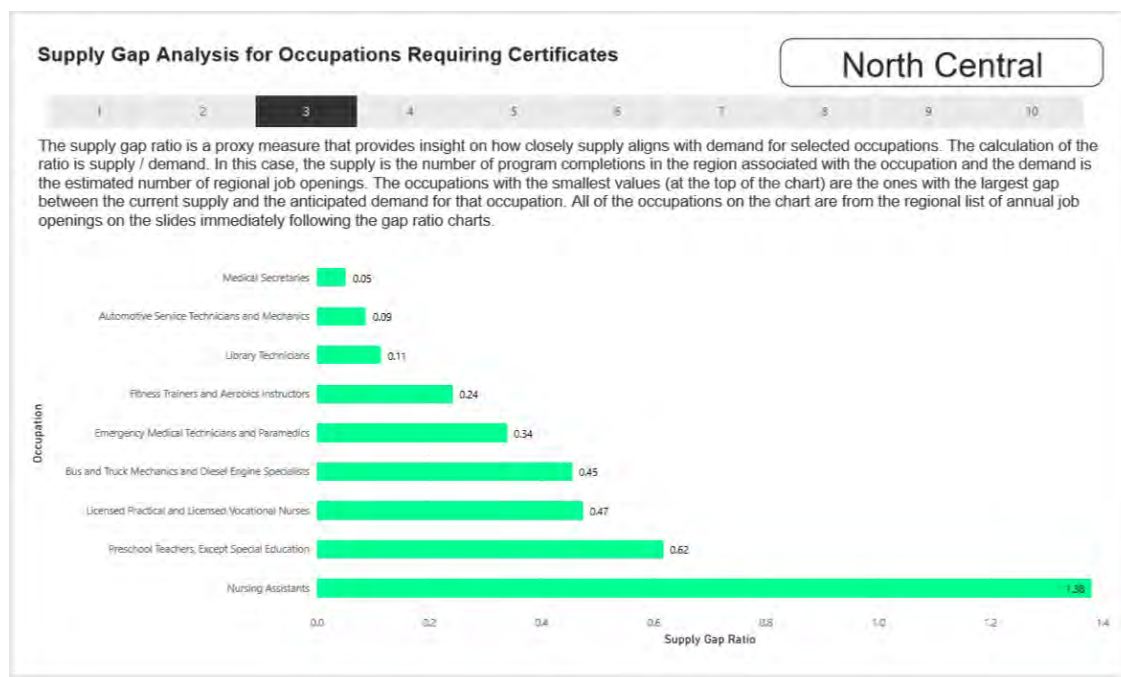
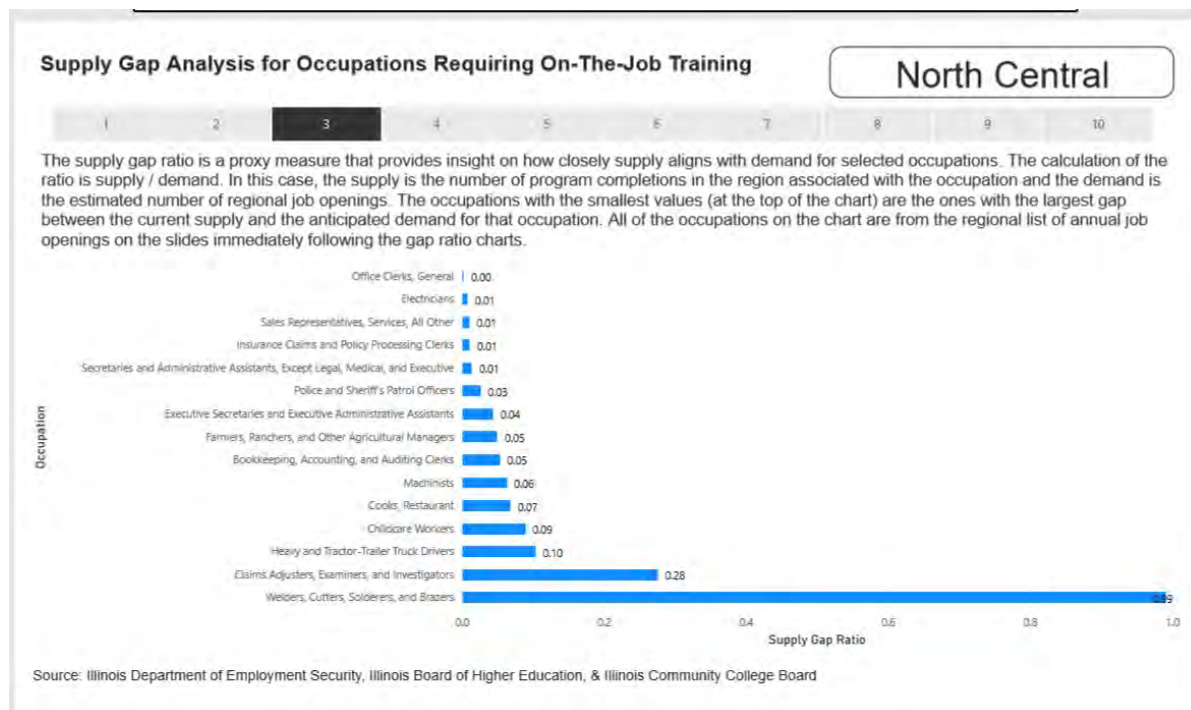
We will take or have taken the following steps to continue to serve employers:

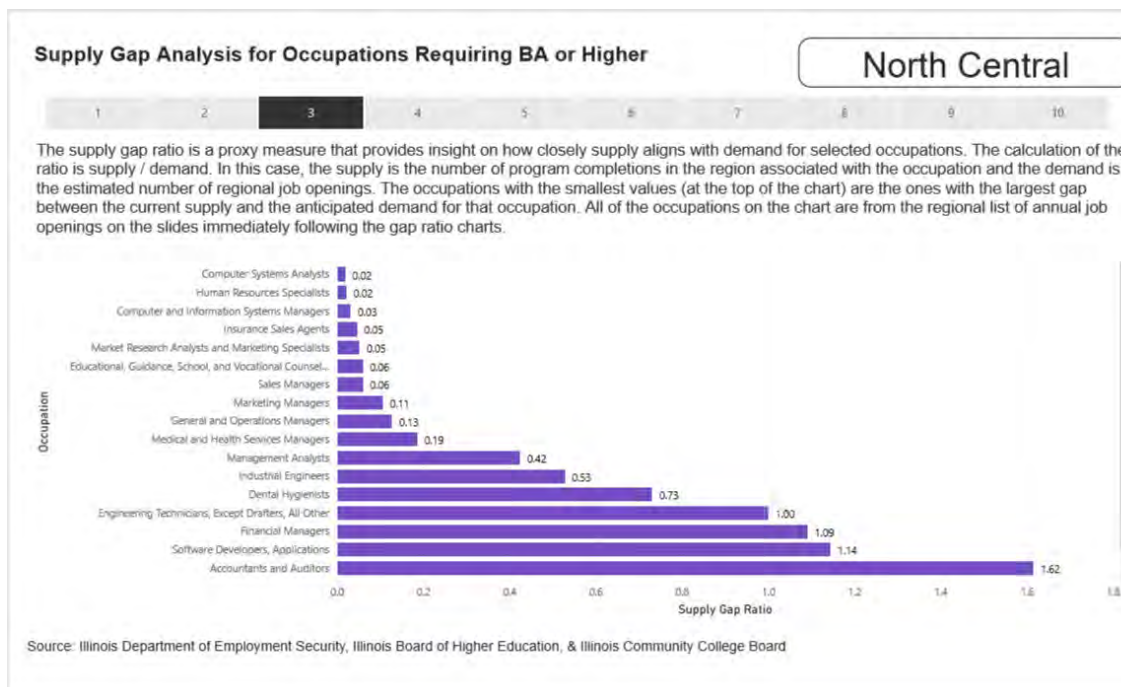
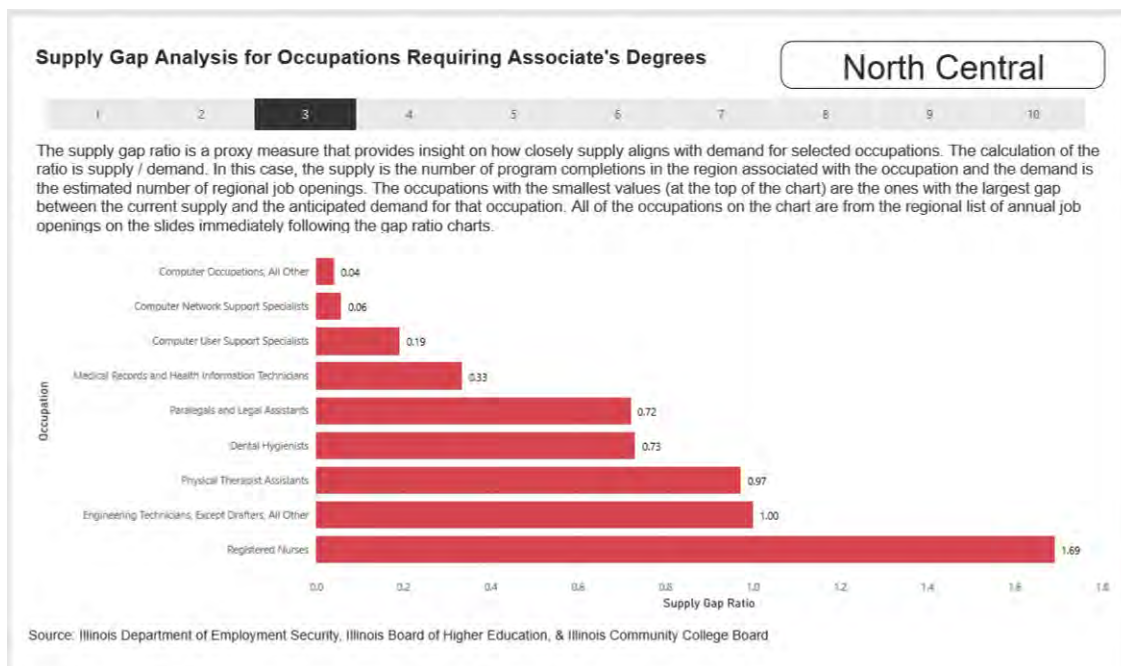
- Monthly Business Service Team meetings held virtually.
- Virtual Orientations are being planned.
- Partnering with IDES for virtual Job Fairs on Illinois workNet. Development of a partner website with an internal referral system for all partners, centralillinoisishelps.com.
- Increased outreach to jobseekers and businesses utilizing social media, cable, newspapers to promote training services.
- Coordination with IDES to send weekly email blasts to UI claimants for recruitment to the dislocated worker program.
- Marketing of Incumbent Worker, OJT and Apprenticeship training by Career Link Business Services Representatives, area colleges and EDCs.
- Business team members have attended Talent Pipeline Training to better serve business needs throughout the region.

Chapter 2 Section A Question 4: How well do existing training programs in the region and local areas prepare job seekers to enter and retain employment with regional businesses?

Data considered in answering this question included Supply Gap Analysis supplied by IDES. These charts demonstrate that the greatest number of occupations with a gap are those requiring On-the-Job Training and Certificates. One of the core outcomes measures for WIOA partners is

completion of GED and enter post-secondary or employment. Median wage information and employment after 2nd quarter data is collected. These measures show that the system is meeting their goals which reflects on their ability to meet employer's needs.





Chapter 2 Section A Question 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.”

Through the MOU development process, each program partner in their respective LWIA has committed to the integration of workforce development services. The LWIA partners reached

agreement on and submitted Action Plans for Improving Service Integration within their LWIAs to the State of Illinois in the fall of 2019.

In accordance with the Regional Planning guidelines, the partners to EDR 3's plan commit to the implementation of their respective Service Integration Plans. The Partners recognize that the Service Integration Plans will change over time and this document formalizes the commitment at the LWIA level to continue the work of integration as it evolves. Please note that during the pandemic regional partners used technology to the extent possible to connect remotely.

Below is the summarization for each LWIAs commitments to current integration plans.

LWIA 11:

- Customer Centered Design
 - Compilation of Frequently Asked Questions
 - Create One-Stop Customer Pledge
- Staff
 - Cross Training of Partner Staff
- Intake and Assessment
 - Develop Sign-in Process that Captures Service Needs
- Services
 - Updated Schedule and Referral Form
- Career Pathways
 - More Staff Training
 - More Information on Web Page
 - Increase Board Engagement
- Information
 - Evaluate and Increase Use of Social Media
- Evaluation
 - Use of Infographics to Collect Data to Share with Board

LWIA 15:

- Cross Training of Staff
 - Review Frequency and Depth of Cross Training
 - Explore the Use of Webinars, Job Shadowing and Lunch and Learn
 - A portion of our website has been dedicated to provide cross training information or materials for all partners
- Communication Across One-Stop
 - Establish Joint Meeting Times
 - Review Email and Telephone Communications and Update
- Access to Services is Timely and Coordinated
 - A dedicated website for all of the partners in the region has been developed – centralillinoisishelps.com. An internal referral system has been implemented on the website to be used by all the partners.
 - Align MOU and Plans with Website

LWIA 19:

- Customer Input
 - New Tools - Customer Surveys
 - Update Customer Profile Form
 - Develop Customer Flow Charts
 - Use Customer Feedback to Shape Service System
- Staff Capacity
 - Establish a Vision for Customer Service
 - Establish Core Set of Competencies for Staff
 - Community Resource Academy
 - Develop Sharing Culture Among Partners
- Systems Communication
 - Finalize Referral Tracking System
 - Create Universal Consent Form
 - Create Schedule for Regular Meetings of Front Line Staff
 - Notify Staff of Changes in Service Design
- On-Going Systems Improvement
 - Complete Planning Process and Incorporate into Other Documents
 - Keep LWIB Informed on Implementation Progress.

B. Describe how transportation and other supportive services are coordinated within the region (§ 679.510(a)(1)(vi)). Plans must respond to the following questions: . The 2022 modification must update the following sections of your plan where applicable to address the impact of the COVID-19 National Health Emergency and any plans for mitigating the pandemic implications over the next two:

Chapter 2 Section B Question 1: What regional organizations currently provide or could provide supportive services?

Supportive Service Coordination

The NCEDR has numerous resources that can provide assistance to individuals that help support their success in pursuing education, training and employment. These include:

Transportation	Childcare	Books, Uniforms, Career Wear
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career Link • Salvation Army • Department of Human Services • Show bus • Connect Transit • City Link 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childcare Connection • Childcare Resource and Referral Network • Childcare Assistance Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career Link • Perkins Programs • Department of Human Services • Dress for Success • Mission Mart • Goodwill

Chapter 2 Section B Question 2: What policies and procedures will be established to promote coordination of supportive services delivery?

The region will identify gaps in coordinated services. Through integration planning we will cross train staff to assure that staff who provide services across programs are knowledgeable of the supportive services that are available. The region will facilitate a learning exchange where WIOA partners and other key support service providers can share.

Most of the NCEDR is served by two 2-1-1 hotline systems. Both 2-1-1 hotlines identify supportive service providers and maintain information on how to access these resources. Heart of Illinois 2-1-1 serves Peoria, Tazewell, Woodford, Marshal and Stark counties. Illinois 2-1-1 serves McLean County. The hotline will continue to serve as the information system for training supportive services in the NCEDR. In addition, A Directory of all social service agencies in McLean, DeWitt and Livingston Counties is maintained by PATH – Providing Access to Help. This includes references to mental health, housing, transportation, medical, vocational and educational services.

Examples of pandemic driven policy change to meet the needs of participants are listed below:

Computer policy – If a computer is **REQUIRED** for your online program due to COVID, computers will be considered as follows:

1. If your college provides the opportunity to borrow a computer, you must utilize this option.
2. If borrowing is not possible and your college provides the opportunity to rent a computer, you must utilize this option.
3. If your college does not provide the opportunity to rent or borrow a computer, Career Link will purchase a Chrome Book for you. If you choose to purchase your own computer, Career Link may be able to reimburse you up to the maximum of \$200. You will need to provide your original signed receipt.
4. If additional software is a requirement of your program, please provide your Career Planner with a list of program requirements and costs from the college for consideration. Maximum costs will apply according to our Supportive Services Policy.

Hourly wage of work participants to reflect experience the wage being paid by the employer.

Reopening Plan was introduced that requires approval of IDES and LWIB.

C. Describe the coordination of services with regional economic development services and WIOA service providers (§ 679.510(a)(1)(vii)). Plans must answer the following questions: The 2022 modification must address the impact of the COVID-19 National Health Emergency and any plans for mitigation over the next two years when respond to the following required sections:

Chapter 2 Section C Question 1: What economic development organizations, WIOA service providers or businesses are actively engaged in regional planning?

The following economic development organizations were involved in the regional planning process: Bloomington-Normal Economic Development Council; City of Pekin Economic Development Council; Greater Peoria Economic Development Council and Spoon River Partnership for Economic Development.

These organizations provide strong leadership within their respective geographic areas of service to meet the needs of business and grow their local economies. Each of the representatives on the committee is involved in economic development activities that helped inform the plan development process so that we can respond as a region to business needs. A brief overview of these organizations is provided below:

- **BN Advantage:** To sustain the local economy going forward, Bloomington-Normal-McLean County region is dedicated to continuing to invest in creating a broader range of jobs for residents to diversify beyond our major employers. We are committed to focus on creating the environments that business and talent expect and demand in today's world which attracts the best and most advanced employment and earnings opportunities in the short and long term. Six organizations have joined together to drive this initiative: McLean County Planning Commission; McLean County Chamber of Commerce; Bloomington-Normal Economic Development Council; Bloomington-Normal Area Convention and Visitors Bureau; Connect Transit and the Central Illinois Regional Airport. With a clear mandate to sustain, strengthen and grow the region's economy, these six partner organizations are providing strong and focused leadership in this critical endeavor. This strategic economic plan is intended to strengthen and grow the following targeted industry sectors within the region to achieve its mission: of advancing the Bloomington-Normal Metro Region's community and economic growth and vitality by sustaining the region's superior quality of life and diversifying its economy.
 - Advanced Business Services
 - Finance and Insurance
 - Shared Services and Back Office Centers
 - Information and Communication Technologies
 - Entrepreneurship
 - Agribusiness/Food Processing
 - Transportation and Logistics
- **Bloomington-Normal EDC:** The Bloomington-Normal Economic Development Council helps businesses succeed in Central Illinois – from start-ups and small businesses to large corporations. Our area boasts one of the youngest, most educated and talented workforces in the Midwest. Centrally located and rich in resources, Bloomington-Normal has been voted “one of the best” for families, singles and businesses. The EDC

of Bloomington-Normal has many programs and services to help businesses thrive. Our services include; site location assistance, resources for entrepreneurs, financial assistance and research assistance.

- Greater Peoria EDC: The five counties of Logan, Mason, Peoria, Tazewell, and Woodford are collectively a designated Economic Development District (EDD) by the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA). The Greater Peoria EDC is the organization that manages that designation. Every five years, the Greater Peoria EDC develops and submits a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) to the EDA. One of the core strategies within the CEDS has been, and will continue to be, the improvement of the region's workforce development system. We provide annual updates showcasing the progress of our region on the implementation of that strategy. Strategies and projects included in our CEDS are more likely to successfully receive EDA grants. The current CEDS expires in 2020. The CEDS strategy team, comprised of a variety of stakeholders including Career Link, is working to craft a new CEDS to guide work from 2020-2024.
- Greater Livingston County Economic Development Council: GLCEDC dedicates its purpose to supporting the retention and expansion of existing enterprises and to attracting new businesses. Additionally, the GLCEDC recognizes the importance of a highly trained and competent workforce and works diligently with Heartland Community College, the Livingston Area Career Center, and the Grundy, Kankakee, Livingston County Workforce Investment Board to respond to the needs of current and prospective employers. Furthermore, as a respected advocate of the business community, the GLCEDC works with elected officials at the federal, state, and local levels to advocate for more business friendly policies pertaining to workers' compensation insurance, tax reform(s), and other pro-business initiatives as directed by our Board of Directors. The GLCEDC also serves as a liaison between a business and government agencies to facilitate and expedite the development of new projects
- Spoon River Partnership for Economic Development: Spoon River Partnership for Economic Development is the lead agency in the Canton area to focus on business and economic development and actively works with the City of Canton, Chamber of Commerce, Canton Main Street, Spoon River College, Fulton County and other local and regional stakeholders to promote economic development within the Canton area. These activities focus on business attraction, entrepreneur and small business development, retention and expansion of existing businesses, and other community and economic development activities.
- DeWitt County Development Council: Our Mission is to actively engage current and potential businesses to market DeWitt County to attract commerce and encourage job growth. DCDC promotes ideas for local business expansion and workforce development, and provides direction for new and existing businesses or commerce seeking resources to enhance business operations
- City of Pekin Economic Development: Ideally located about halfway between Chicago and St. Louis; easy access to highways, river ways and air travel; an abundant and skilled work force; a vibrant local economy; an exceptional quality of life - these are just a few of the reasons why so many businesses thrive in Pekin. The City of Pekin offers many different economic incentives and tools to new and expanding businesses.

These include a Pekin Area Enterprise Zone, one Tax Increment Financing district (TIF), Build Illinois Loan Program, EDFAP Loans, and Riverway Business Park.

Chapter 2 Section C Question 2: What economic development organizations, WIOA service providers or businesses were invited to participate but declined?

None of the invited economic development organizations or business declined to participate.

D. Describe the coordination of administrative cost arrangements, including the pooling of funds for administrative costs, as appropriate (§ 679.510(a)(1)(v)).

The North Central Region partners have entered into negotiations regarding the administrative and other costs for the One-Stop Center infrastructure and shared system costs, following the Governor's Guidelines to State and Local Program Partners Negotiating costs and Services Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014, and the Supplemental Guidance for Program Year 2020 (State FY 2021). A draft budget has been prepared and presented to partners, along with a proposed cost allocation using the cost allocation process recommended by the state. Discussions among the partners are ongoing with a view toward reaching agreement on an equitable arrangement for allocation of shared costs. Under the revised guidelines, this draft budget is due to DCEO on April 15, and the outcome report on the MOU negotiation is also due on April 15, with the fully executed MOU in place by June 30. The North Central Region partners expect to meet these deadlines. The partners will work together during the coming year to implement the cost coordination agreements and will monitor the costs of the One-Stop Center infrastructure and other shared system costs.

E. As part of the 2022 modification, if needed, describe the impact of the pandemic on the regional service strategies, including use of cooperative service delivery strategies and the connection of job seekers with employers, not covered in the above sections. Include what steps, to the extent known, that will be taken over the next two years to adapt to the impact of the pandemic regarding the regional service strategies, including use of cooperative service delivery strategies and the connection of job seekers with employers.

The greatest impact of the COVID-19 Health Emergency for workforce development was the crushing blow to access. The entire system was based on co-location and customers being able to visit, in-person, the center to receive services. The systemic response to the pandemic was to find technology-based solutions to assist customers. Funders must start to rethink service delivery as not being building-based but being customer focused via remotely accessible technologies. This will entail two main changes to our regional service delivery strategy. The first will be to identify resources to help address the needs of customers who do not now have the tools and training to access these remotely accessible services. This will include access to computer hardware, software, Internet access and training. The second change in strategy will be to identify and coordinate career planning staff drawn from multiple partners. These staff would

work together to reach out to our customers, provide training and mentoring as needed, and facilitate their access to the full range of career development services available through the one-stop system.

F. As part of the 2022 modification, describe how a workforce equity lens is or will be incorporated in the regional service integration strategies, including the coordination of service delivery strategies to job seekers and employers.

Workforce Equity will be achieved by creating Pathways that provide access to childcare and transportation so customers can engage outside the home. Those most in need may also lack access to technology within their homes. Identification of resources to provide internet and computers within the home will help these individuals work remotely. Some may also need training on how to use technology for remote access to work and education. The partners will meet periodically to review their progress in implementing the regional service integration strategies, including equity outcomes.

Chapter 3 – Vision, Goals and Implementation Strategies – Regional Component

This section will outline how the Local 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. Regions are required to provide updated information and analysis noting any significant impacts of the COVID-19 National Health Emergency and what steps will be taken to address the challenges and opportunities that are associated with the implementation of regional strategies.

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). As part of the 2022 modification, include a description of how the region and local areas will adapt to the impact of COVID-19 National Health Emergency over the next two years to accomplish the local strategic vision and support state and regional economic growth.

The Local Workforce Innovation Board (LWIB) 15 of the North Central Economic Development Region – 3 will achieve alignment through the adoption of the State's strategic vision and principles to support regional economic growth which are stated below:

Vision

“Foster a Statewide workforce development system that supports the needs of individuals and businesses to ensure Illinois has a skilled workforce to effectively compete in the global economy.”

Guiding Principles

- Demand-Driven Orientation
- Strong Partnerships with Business at All Levels
- Pathways to Careers of Today and Tomorrow
- Cross-agency Collaboration and Connections
- Integrated Service Delivery
- Equitable Access and Opportunity for all Populations
- Clear Metrics for Progress and Success
- Focus on Continuous Improvement and Innovation

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)). As part of the 2022 modification, include a description of how the region and local areas will adapt to the impact of COVID-19 National Health Emergency over the next two years in

accomplishing local goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce and goals relating to performance.

The NCEDR will prepare an educated and skilled workforce by aligning and integrating partner programs and services. This alignment will include programs that focus on employer needs for a skilled workforce. When possible, we will leverage funds across programs to better serve employers. The region will work to improve access to sector-based education and training services to those facing multiple barriers to employment.

The region will use a diverse array of training models to achieve our goals including:

- Development of Career Pathways – that will focus on our primary targeted industry sectors of healthcare, TDL and manufacturing. We will also explore pathway creation for our secondary targeted industry sectors of information technology, finance and business management. These pathways will contain multiple entry and exit points. This will allow individuals of varying abilities to have access to realistic pathways.
- Earn and Learn Opportunities - will be created by leveraging the linkages that economic development partners have to employers in our targeted industry sectors. Integrated business services will be developed so that employers will have an understanding of training resources from all partners.
- Talent Pipeline Solutions – reengineer the concept of education and training design. This model places the employer at the center of skill acquisition and training. The region will develop programs based on the concepts outlined in a talent pipeline approach. This includes the concept that each partner adds incremental value to the supply chain of a trained workforce.

Some examples of preparing educated and skilled youth and individuals with barriers are:

Two Community Colleges in the region have received Workforce Equity Grants from the Illinois Community College Board.

The Illinois Central College (ICC) Workforce Equity Initiative seeks to prepare African American and other adults residing in “Disproportionately Impacted Areas”, within College District #515, with a work credential and a living wage job. The WEI project will train participants in the high demand occupations of CNC (Computer Numerical Control), Welding, CDL Truck Driving, A+ (IT Basics), CompTIA Network+, LAN Technician, EMT (Emergency Medical Tech.), Paramedic, and LPN (Licensed Practical Nurse). All participants will enter employment or be placed on a career pathway leading to a job paying at least 30% above the regional living wage. The WEI grants in Year 1 and Year 2 will serve a total of 348 individuals in 9 different training programs.

Heartland Community College's Workforce Equity programs are focusing on short-term stackable credentials, designed to get students into the workforce quickly, but can also be built upon to earn an Associate degree. The grant is to engage African American, Latinx, and low-income learners to get career training that can move them quickly into the workforce. The grant will focus on high impact programs to develop and foster the skills of individuals that are looking to retool their job skills or directly entering into the workforce. Heartland certification programs such as EV Maintenance, Medical Assistant, Office Assistant, Truck Driver Training, and more are designed to create a quick pathway to occupations earning 30% above the area living wage.

Illinois central College: In order to ensure that individuals with barriers to employment have Earn and Learn Opportunities, Illinois Central College continues to address underserved populations by accessing grant opportunities in addition to partnering with community-based organizations, employers and others. In addition to the Equity Grant, current initiatives that addresses local workforce gaps and employment barriers in an effort to prepare underserved individuals with a decent and equitable employment opportunity include the Solar Training Program and Highway Construction Training Program. These initiatives focus on developing the region's workforce by providing participants with opportunities for earning credentials and a living wage. These Earn and Learn Programs address high demand-careers and target low-income individuals, those living in high crime and high poverty areas, unemployed individuals and minorities

In Greater Peoria, a number of workforce development initiatives are in motion through the Regional Workforce Alliance, a collaboration of over 40 educational and industry leaders working along the talent pipeline from middle-school, to high-school, and with adults.

Career Pathways - Beginning in middle school with [CareerSpark](#), a free, hands-on career expo open to all 8th graders, we have exposed over 12,000 local students to the manufacturing companies and careers in Greater Peoria. This work continues through partnerships with regional high schools that has focused on creating high-impact internship and job shadow opportunities for students to engage with in the industries most critical to our region's economic sustainability. Our region is also supporting schools in aligning this work to the new Postsecondary and Career Readiness Expectations outlined in the [Postsecondary and Workforce Act](#). Our region has also been key in guiding the development of new state-standardized [College and Career Pathways](#) endorsements that will offer a transcriptable credential to students graduating high school with early college credit and work experience in an industry concentration. These new standardized pathways will provide our regional schools with a framework to align their coursework and career development experiences to ensure more equitable and efficient access to regional in-demand careers.

Talent Pipeline - Through this Regional Workforce Alliance framework, work is underway to reengineer the concept of education and training design. By bringing together industry leaders, educational partners, and community-based organizations, we will establish more intentional population-based strategies that support the unique needs of our K-12 students, our underemployed citizens, and those individuals with multiple barriers, placing skill

acquisition and living wage careers at the center of our training. The region will develop programs based on the concepts outlined in a talent pipeline approach.

Other examples are the pre-apprenticeship programs Career link has partnered with throughout the region:

Illinois Youth Career Pathways Program Grant Summary

Peoria Public Schools Dist. 150: The Pathways grant is focusing on Construction internship opportunities. The plan is to have seventeen (17) students certified this year through Career Link. Students have or will soon gain their forklift certification through Goodwill Industries. Students will also learn about employability skills through Goodwill as well as participate in the American Hospitality Association. Over the next two years, it is expected that 25-30 students will be engaged in the opportunities. Students will gain their certification by working at Ruyle, City of Peoria, and Morton Industries.

This grant will provide opportunities to work with the Carpenters' Union Hall. We use their curriculum in our program therefore, students will earn a union credential. Students will also receive credentials through ABC. The benefit to this is that the Carpenters' Union will give priority to interview students in this pre-apprenticeship grant to enter the apprenticeship program.

Methodist Hospital: Apprenticeship Plus Nursing Assistant to Medical Assistant Bridge Program Apprenticeship Scholarship. Provided a bridge from basic labor occupations to Certified Nursing Assistant to Medical Assistant .

YouthBuild - Career Link

Healthcare

YouthBuild McLean County (YBMC) will operate an on-site Healthcare training lab. Participants will learn practical skills, in-line with the certified, clinical medical assistant curriculum proposed in the NOFO. While working in the lab, participants will transition to work based learning activities. We are also working with other local, non-profit healthcare organizations such as McLean County Nursing Home to develop additional work based learning activities.

Construction

YouthBuild McLean County (YBMC) will operate an on-site Construction training lab. Participants will learn practical skills, in-line with the residential construction, carpentry curriculum proposed in the NOFO. While working in the lab, participants will transition to work based learning activities. YouthBuild McLean County has rehabilitated and constructed homes in McLean County for over 20 years.

Information Technology

YouthBuild McLean County (YBMC) will operate an on-site Information Technology (IT) training lab. Participants will learn practical skills, in-line with the COMPTIA curriculum proposed in the NOFO. While working in the lab, participants will transition to work based

learning activities. This is a relatively new program at YouthBuild McLean county, but has been wildly popular with program participants.

CareerLink – GED Recovery Programs: Spoon River, Blackhawk, Heartland Community, Peoria Park Dist. ICC North- Assist High School dropouts in obtaining their GED, provides career counseling, resume and job search skills, and post second training opportunities including OJT and Apprenticeship opportunities.

Each partner program under WIOA will look at its own program design to see how they align with the goal of preparing an educated and skilled workforce. For programs under Title 1 and Title IV this may mean a review of the current curriculum that they fund within our targeted industry sectors. Programs under adult education may want to expand contextualization of curriculum around workforce and academic readiness. As a region partner programs will review current assessment processes and tools and develop, to the extent possible, common assessment practices that address the needs of our industry sectors of focus.

Core partners will work towards consistent program design that enables them to meet the WIOA performance measures of:

1. Percent Employed 2nd Quarter after exit (Adult Programs)
 - a. Placement in Employment/Education 2nd Quarter after Exit (Youth Programs)
2. Percent Employed 4th Quarter after exit (Adult Programs)
 - a. Placement in Employment/Education 4th Quarter after Exit (Youth Programs)
3. Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after Exit (Adult and Dislocated Worker)
4. Credential Attainment (up to 1 year after exit-Youth)
5. Measurable Skill Gains (All Programs except Wagner-Peyser)
6. Effectiveness in Serving Employers (All Programs)

The regional plan must include establishing an agreement of how the region will collectively negotiate and reach agreement with the Governor on local levels of performance for the performance accountability measures (as described in WIOA Sec. 116(c)) to comply with § 679.510 (a)(1)(viii). Each year the Local Board, and the Chief Elected Officials shall negotiate and reach agreement on local levels of performance based on the state adjusted levels of performance established under Section 116 (b)(3)(a). The local levels of performance were successfully negotiated for PY 20-21 – (See Attachment 1)

C. Provide a description of the regional and local strategies that will achieve the vision and principles. To the extent possible, the 2022 modification must describe how regional partners are adapting or will adapt their approaches to meeting each of the strategies described in the 2020 plan as a result of COVID-10 National Health Emergency. This must include a description of the strategies and services that will be used in the local areas:

Chapter 3 Section C Question 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));

The NCEDR plans to undertake the following efforts to engage employers in workforce development programs: *(Note that the in response to the pandemic some of these activities have been suspended or have been delivered remotely. Post-Pandemic, the activities will return to normal.)*

1. Work with the region's economic development organizations to identify employers throughout the region from the identified sectors of:
 - a. Healthcare
 - b. Manufacturing
 - c. Transportation and Warehousing
 - d. Construction
 - e. Professional Business Services
 - f. Information Technology
 - g. Self-employment
2. Implement the State's Framework for Next Generation Sector Partnerships that offers a vision for building sustainable employer-driven, community-supported sector partnerships in Illinois, with a particular emphasis on the role that economic development organizations play in leading this work, and clarification on how workforce development and education organizations support it. We will work with economic development to create partnerships that are:
 - a. Industry-led, driven by a committed group of employer champions
 - b. Community-supported by a diverse range of public program partners
 - c. Convened or facilitated by a credible third-party (or intermediary)
 - d. An organizing vehicle for multiple program partners to respond to industry priorities together
 - e. Local or regional (not top-down or statewide)
 - f. Action-oriented, focused on improving industry sector competitiveness, and not limited to just workforce issues.
3. Through a collaborative effort, partner agencies will investigate the viability of developing employer-led initiatives to create apprenticeship programs in the manufacturing, healthcare and transportation sectors.
4. **Strategies and services to facilitate engagement of employers including small employers:**

Career Link used the LEAP (Local Employment Assistance Partnership) program to have monthly meeting with partner agencies and small businesses within our 8 counties. These meetings are used to showcase local businesses and get a glimpse of what assistance they can use. The partners at the meeting offer comprehensive services available including OJT, grants, and workforce. The featured businesses are then connected to the resources. Both Peoria and Bloomington LEAP meetings are held monthly. We also discuss how the local businesses are

doing, and try to identify any local businesses that would be interested in assistance. Career Link Business Services also is part of the State's Rapid Response Team. We offer retraining options to dislocated workers affected by business closures. This can include career services, education assistance, or simply a connection to a local opportunity at another business. Career Link also assists small and medium sized businesses by being a contact for virtual career fairs. Prior to COVID, we held these events live at the Illinois workNet center. During COVID-19, we have partnered with Illinois Worknet.com to direct businesses to set up virtual career fairs. We also share local openings on our social media Facebook page and website. Career Link continues to partner with Illinois Central College, DHS/DRS, and IDES to connect individuals to local jobs.

Chapter 3 Section C Question 2: To support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area (§ 679.560(b)(3)(ii));

To support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area the region's partners will take the following steps.

1. Coordinate business services among the partners to improve on our existing models and expand on existing EDC retention models.
 - a. Meet with businesses to address barriers to growth.
 - b. Leverage regional resources to help businesses launch or accelerate international trade programs.
 - c. Identify technology transfer opportunities within the public and private sectors that can be leveraged for growth.
 - d. Share information on regional, state and federal financial tools for business development on the EDC website.
2. Work with regional partners and economic development councils to foster a shared understanding of the needs of business and in particular the skill needs of businesses in our targeted sectors.
3. Improve outreach and recruitment of potential employee candidates by leveraging existing federal, state and regional career guidance tools and expanding their use throughout the region. Examples of these tools include:
 - a. O*NET
 - b. IDES Career Information System (CIS)
 - c. Make Yourself Greater Peoria
 - d. Illinois Job Link
4. Improve skills assessment of job-seeker customers by expanding use of the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) and related tools.
5. WIOA Navigator – HCC is proposing a WIOA Navigator position to align resources and support accessibility to the student population. Navigators will be knowledgeable about all WIOA services (both individualized and business services) and support the facilitation of WIOA resources for those who are eligible. This may include supporting outreach and recruitment, WIOA eligibility determination, career advising, case management, job preparedness, and job placement assistance.

The Navigator will be trained on both College and WIOA programs and resources. Therefore, it is anticipated that the Navigator will be successful in aligning other College resources to support the identification and referral of eligible students and businesses.

The integrated business services team of EDR 3/LWA 15 will continue to develop and improve mechanisms to connect business to the full range of partner services regardless of sources. Communication and coordination among partners allows for the most effective provision of services. The efforts of the Business Services Team are focused on delivering timely solutions to expressed business needs.

The Business Service Team has a standardized process for contacting businesses in each targeted industry sector and the capability of providing direct access to appropriate services or referral to other who can provide those services. Business Services Team members are knowledgeable of all available services. Appropriate team members are identified to serve as resources for the delivery of services. The Business Services Team will participate in community-based, business-focused events on a regular basis. The Business Services Team will partner with businesses to identify their needs and provide timely solutions. The Business Services Team will develop customized service proposals for business customers that detail a range of potential solutions to meet those customers' needs and challenges.

The Business Services Team offers services based on the five types of workforce issues that typically concern a business:

- Recruitment and Hiring Solutions
- Training and Education Solutions
- Transition Solutions
- Information Solutions
- Support Service Solutions

Closely tied to the solutions sought by businesses is the expanded use of work-based learning (Registered Apprenticeships, Youth Apprenticeships, Pre-Apprenticeships, Customized Training, On-the-Job Training, Incumbent Worker Training and others). This emphasis recognizes work-based learning as often the most effective mechanism for delivering Training and Education solutions, in an environment that is directly shaped to and for the needs of the employer – their own business.

Due to the pandemic, partners have or will take the following approaches to meet the needs of businesses.

- Monthly business service team meetings held virtually.
- Virtual orientations are being planned.
- Partnering with IDHS for virtual job fairs on Illinois workNet. Development of a partner website with an internal referral system for all partners – centralillinoisishelps.com.
- Increased outreach to jobseekers and businesses utilizing social media, cable, newspapers to promote training services.

- Coordinated with IDES, send weekly email blasts to UI claimants for recruitment to the dislocated worker program.

Chapter 3 Section C Question 3: To better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development (§ 679.560(b)(3)(iii));

To better coordinate workforce program and economic development, the region will work to coordinate policy and program design. The states vision is to provide communities with the opportunity to prosper. Policy and program coordination between economic development, whose goal is economic growth and workforce development, the goal of which is training a skilled workforce, should help the state achieve that goal.

Workforce and Economic Development recognize the toll that COVID-19 has taken on workers, particularly low-skill and low-wage workers who were disproportionately impacted by COVID-related shutdowns and business weakness. Through the Regional Workforce Alliance, the Greater Peoria Economic Development Council has focused attention on upskilling workers to prepare them for steadier and more lucrative jobs. Coordinated systems for the unemployed to overcome the multiple barriers that prevent them from employment (transportation, health, childcare, etc.) are being created.

Chapter 3 Section C Question 4: To strengthen linkages between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs (§ 679.560(b)(3)(iv));

Those receiving unemployment insurance are primary customers of the one-stop system. Through co-location and direct linkages, those receiving unemployment insurance will be able to connect to all partner services in the region. Unemployment insurance clients are required to register on the state's job bank, IllinoisJobLink.com (IJL), for assistance with their job search. Partner programs can also reach out to clients through their IJL account to provide services, as well as track all services provided to the client.

Linkages between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs will be strengthened through the enhanced career services offered through the one-stop. Enhanced career services include reemployment workshops, referrals to training and education providers and direct referral to employment.

IDES is also receiving funds for the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) through USDOL. This program targets UI recipients that are most likely to exhaust benefits and requires them to receive assistance with their reemployment efforts. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, RESEA services have transitioned from in-person workshops and one-on-one meetings to provision over the telephone. All RESEA participants are contacted by phone and all services are provided one-on-one. IDES is researching other virtual platforms that could be used in providing these services in the future.

IDES is also attempting to connect more clients to the one-stop system by utilizing the Benefit Payment System to run reports showing claimant that are fully registered both for unemployment insurance as well as on IJL. Local offices are contacting these claimants to inform them of all services available to them at the one-stop and to encourage their attendance at workshops and hiring events hosted by the one-stop.

Chapter 3 Section C Question 5: To promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services (§ 679.560(b)(4)); and

Regional strategies to promote entrepreneurial skills training will include:

1. A more coordinated effort between economic development agencies to cross promote each other's efforts in the region through regional links on their websites.
2. Explore regional incentives to attract and retain entrepreneurs.
3. Partners have identified the following initiatives that will help the region expand entrepreneurial and microenterprise services:
 - a. The Canton Area Chamber of Commerce has a leadership academy for high school sophomores through its Young Professionals group.
 - b. 1 Million Cups* is a free weekly national program designed to educate, engage, and connect entrepreneurs. Developed by the Kauffman Foundation, IMC is based on the notion that entrepreneurs discover solutions and network over a million cups of coffee. Presenters are allowed six minutes to tell their story, present their business model, share some obstacles they've had to overcome, or even some they haven't yet.
 - c. The George R. and Martha Means Center for Entrepreneurial Studies at Illinois State University serves as a research and consulting resource for local businesses. It is devoted to creating and implementing entrepreneur support programs for Illinois State University students, local high school students and members of the Bloomington/Normal community.
 - d. Advantage Illinois - Enhancing access to capital for Illinois businesses is a top priority. The Brookings Institution has noted that more than 95% of new jobs are derived from business expansion or start up activity. Small businesses are the backbone of the Illinois economy, and the Advantage Illinois program is there to assist. By working with the state's banking community and venture capitalists, we'll help entrepreneurs and small businesses start up, expand and create new jobs at a faster rate.
 - e. KeyStart is an idea submission and pitch competition which will award a \$5,000 investment to one new business idea per bimonthly program cycle. The purpose of this program is to provide entrepreneurs with fast access to capital in order to turn ideas into real companies.
 - f. The Turner Center for Entrepreneurship is a not-for-profit program located at Bradley University. It provides business counseling, technical assistance, training, and educational activities for individuals interested in owning their own businesses.

- g. Illinois Wesleyan Design, Technology and Entrepreneurship Program. This is a new program being offered for the first time in the fall of 2016. This unique interdisciplinary program incorporates creative and technical skills, material science, and finance and management. Students will make product prototypes, create business plans, and develop electronic portfolios of their finished products. Faculty and resources for the program will come from physics and other disciplines within the natural sciences, the College of Fine Arts, business administration, marketing and accounting.
- h. The Illinois Small Business Development Center at Illinois State University (SBDC) was established in March 2005 to help entrepreneurs start a new business or expand or improve an existing business. The Center offers one-on-one confidential counseling for all phases of business activities.
- i. Spoon River College and the Spoon River Partnership for Economic Development jointly sponsor the Small Business and Entrepreneurship Resource Expo. The Expo informs local small business owners about potential resources that can help their business prosper
- j. Slingshot CoWork is a co-working space dedicated to the startup community in Bloomington Normal. Created to be a call to the community that the entrepreneurial spirit is alive and well. This space is dedicated to creating jobs for people right here in Bloomington Normal.
- k. The Nest is a co-working space that provides a shared work environment that combines the flexibility independent professionals have with the connectedness they need. Co-working is a sustainable alternative to isolation and distraction from home offices and cafes.
- l. The Illinois Small Business Development Center at Bradley University provides free business counseling and low-cost training programs for existing and startup businesses in Central Illinois.
- m. Startup Peoria is a program of the Greater Peoria Economic Development Council. It exists to develop an ecosystem, for entrepreneurs and innovators, to launch successful ventures that contribute to the growth and sustainability of Greater Peoria.
- n. Peoria NEXT Innovation Center is the home of researchers, inventors and entrepreneurs that are transforming new technologies and innovations into commercial enterprises.
- o. Central Illinois Angels is an investment organization focused on providing equity to opportunities that show a promise of significant return to its members.
- p. Innovative Entrepreneurs – is a high school program from Unit 5 school district in McLean County. This program connects students with local business owners so they can see day-to-day operations and hear their startup stories.

The region will use the above listed initiatives to help focus investments on the key sectors that have been identified for the region.

Entrepreneurship has skyrocketed during the past two years as people voluntarily or

involuntarily adapt to a changing employment situation and economy. There will always be an emphasis on supporting scalable and high growth startups, regional partners will also focus on more traditional small business start-ups, “gig-workers” and “side hustles” to ensure they are viable businesses that support workers.

Chapter 3 Section C Question 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)).

To implement initiatives designed to meet the needs of regional employers, the region will undertake the following strategies:

1. Work Based Learning – Earn and Learn Models - To increase the utilization of work-based learning in the region we will work through existing initiatives such as the Strategic Manufacturing Group, Healthcare Exchange and Bloomington Advantage addressing our target industry sectors to promote these programs to regional employers. We will also work with our business service teams LEAP (Local Employer Assistance Partnership), to standardize the promotion of these programs when meeting with employers.
2. Sector Strategies - The region plans to use both Career Pathway and Talent Pipeline approaches to support our sector strategies. We will inventory the current information on Career Pathways in the region and evaluate how complete they are. It is our plan to create pathways with multiple entry and exit points, so that participants with varied levels of educational attainment can enter a career pathway at an appropriate entry point to obtain the skills and credentials that they need. These career pathways will also enable participants to exit into employment that is relevant for the skills and credentials they have obtained or continue in further education and training to prepare for better-paying jobs that require more advanced skills. Registered and non-registered apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships that obtain industry recognized credential programs will be used to establish Talent Pipelines that puts the employer as the primary consumer of the program. Incumbent worker programs will be utilized to upgrade the skills of the existing workforce. The region will explore these models and work to develop training programs using this approach.
3. Coordinated Business Services - Partners in the region will provide cross training on the programs and services that they offer to employers. The Economic Development Partners in the region will take the lead in developing common messaging and marketing of business services. The partners will develop strategies that go beyond program silos to promote their employer services.

D. Describe regional strategies that will increase apprenticeship and other work-based learning opportunities.

The Region will use the following strategies to increase apprenticeships and other work-based learning opportunities:

- Target industries such as manufacturing, transportation/warehousing and construction that lend themselves to apprenticeship training as part of a Next Generation Sector Partnership.
- Identify occupations within the targeted Tier 1 and Tier 2 Industry Sectors that have the greatest skills gap and can be addressed by on-the-job learning.
- Include Registered Apprenticeship programs on the Eligible Training Provider List, thus qualifying associated training for Title 1 funding.
- Business Service Teams will promote work-based learning to meet employer needs for skilled workers.

Examples of current initiatives include:

1. Industrial Maintenance Apprenticeship for Bridgestone. It contains an incumbent worker training project for Multi-skill Maintenance and Reliability in which 10 electrical and mechanical maintenance employees will be cross trained.
The training is through RedVector.com dba Vector Solutions Un. of TN College of Engineering. The training will be a combination of online and classroom instruction. All the training will be done at the Normal Bridgestone plant. The cost for this training is about \$31,000.00 based on all employees successfully completing the training.
There will also be an opportunity for new hires to be trained and the possibility of pathway programs for high school students into the apprenticeship.
2. CAP-IT Grant - ICC has received a Customized Apprenticeship Program-Information Technology (CAP-IT) grant that will provide apprenticeship programs to provide paid work-based learning and postsecondary education. The CAP-IT grant will benefit the regions efforts to expand apprenticeships in Information Technology.
3. Apprenticeships - Employer partners, education and workforce development continue to work together to design new apprenticeship programs. ICC, working with regional stakeholders have established secure software and industrial maintenance apprenticeships and are working with partners on additional regional apprenticeship programs.
4. Department of Labor Registered Apprenticeships Programs - HCC is developing a number of DOL registered apprenticeship in the manufacturing sector.
5. Internships – Several of HCC’s applied programs require an internship to ensure work-based learning is part of the program of study.
6. Job Shadowing – Several of HCC’s applied short-term work-ready programs incorporate job shadowing to orient the students to the real-world environment.
7. Compete and Connect – HCC GED students gain employability skills and workplace experience, with support from Career Link. Goal is to continue the program in McLean

County and advance the model as a regional strategy by expanding in Logan and Livingston Counties.

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.

A goal for the region is to assist adults in obtaining credentials. Only 40% of the adults in the region currently have a post-secondary credential when 60% is required for economic vitality. Various initiatives throughout the region are designed to assist in assuring that 60% of the adults in the region obtain a post-secondary credential by 2025.

These initiatives include:

1. Workforce Equity Initiative - Illinois Central College is the lead college of an \$18.7 million Workforce Equity Initiative partnering with 14 additional Illinois community colleges. The initiative addresses local workforce gaps and employment barriers in an effort to prepare underserved individuals with a decent and equitable employment opportunity. The initiative focuses on developing our area's workforce by providing participants with a credential and a living wage. It addresses high demand-careers and targets low-income individuals, those living in high crime and high poverty areas, unemployed individuals and minorities. The Workforce Equity Initiative will train participants in the high-demand occupations of Computer Numerical Control (CNC) Operator, Welder, CDL Truck Driver, CompTIA A+, CompTIA Network+, Local Area Network (LAN) Technician, Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN), Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) and Paramedic. The end goal is for participating students to secure employment with a full-time job paying at least 30 percent above the regional living wage.
2. Regional Workforce Alliance - The Regional Workforce Alliance is a monthly gathering of business professionals and educators, creating connections to align public and private sector resources across the region for the benefit of developing a qualified workforce for Greater Peoria. The Regional Workforce Alliance has three committees that address:
 - The emerging workforce- Addresses K – 6, Middle School/Career Exploration, High School Career Experiences/College Credits, Career Decisions, Post- secondary credentials (Community College/Trade School, Apprenticeships, Regional 4 year Colleges/Universities, Military, Industry Specific) focused on retaining aligned workforce gaps and credential young adults
 - Upskilling working adults- Targets underemployed and under credentialed adults with work experience to obtain credentials that address workforce gaps. Earn and Learn – short term to under 3 years

- Individuals facing multiple barriers - Focuses on adults who swirl through Community Based Organizations and support systems with little to no credentials or work experiences to qualify them for entry level job stabilization
Each committee is aligning its efforts to increase the number of credentialed adults, grow the workforce, meet business needs and expand economic vitality.
3. Highway Construction Careers Training Program - The Highway Construction Careers Training Program is a partnership between the Illinois Department of Transportation and Illinois Central College. This program is an intensive 12-week program to learn the skills necessary for acceptance in the trades and the opportunity for a career with high wage-earning potential. The goal of the program is to increase the number of minorities, women, and disadvantaged individuals working in the construction trades. The training includes, but is not limited to, First Aid/CPR certification, job readiness, math for trades, OSHA 10-hour certification and technical skills training.
 4. Solar Pipeline Training Program - The Solar Pipeline Training Program is part of the Future Energy Jobs Act. ICC in partnership with Commonwealth Edison have developed the program that provides students the opportunity to compete for solar entry-level positions. Students gain the fundamental knowledge and hands-on experience necessary to analyze, design, sell and install photovoltaic systems. Students earn OSHA certification and upon successful completion of the program have the ability to take the North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners (NABCEP) Photovoltaic Associate Certification.
 5. Complete and Connect - program for HCC Adult Ed (GED prep) students to gain employability skills and workplace experience, with support from Career Link. Goal is to continue the program in McLean County and advance the model as a regional strategy by expanding in Logan and Livingston Counties.
 6. Career Now – this program is a part of HCC’s Early College opportunities and offers high school seniors dual credit toward their high school diploma and a work ready program. The goal is to help those students in danger of not graduating on time or those without specific post-secondary plans. High schools participating will provide work-based experiences in addition to credit. HCC will provide college credit and work readiness for an entry level job with a career path if a student chooses to return to post-secondary at a later date.
 7. Apprenticeships, internships, and work-based learning - HCC is seeking US Dept. of Labor approval to offer registered apprenticeship in several areas of manufacturing. The College also has numerous programs that incorporate either an internship or other form of work-based learning.

8. Development of Academic Pathways - HCC is mapping out academic pathways leading to specific careers. These maps provide clear guidance to students as to what course of study they should pursue from high school through career.
9. Work Ready short-term certificates - HCC is developing a number of short-term (<1 year) programs that lead directly to employment and are stacked into larger certificate or degree programs that provide for career advancement.

F. Describe the steps that will be taken to support the state’s efforts to align and integrate education, workforce and economic development including:

Chapter 3 Section F Question 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.

As discussed throughout the plan, the region will take the following steps to foster the improvement and expansion of employer-driven regional sector partnerships, including the development of Next Generation Sector Partnerships.

1. Identify existing economic development efforts throughout the region by industry sector.
2. Identify existing employers within the region by industry sector, both those that are currently “system engaged” and those that are not.
3. Inventory the current sector-partnerships and career pathways by industry sectors.
4. Prioritize occupations within the targeted industry sectors.
5. Inventory existing Career Pathways and evaluate how complete they are. Conceptualize new Career Pathways where none exist.
6. Develop Talent Pipeline Solutions, Apprenticeships, Incumbent Worker and On-the-Job Training opportunities for targeted industry sectors.

Chapter 3 Section F Question 2: Expanding career pathway 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.

The region will take the following steps to expand career pathways:

1. Create employer driven models to recruit and place individuals in earn and learn opportunities on the pathway that are based on the skills requirements of the job.
2. In response to employer input, identify and/or design assessment tools that best identify the skills gap of individuals referred to employers for earn and learn training.
3. Develop Registered Apprenticeships with employers in our targeted industry sectors.
4. Develop dual credit transfer courses and dual credit work-based learning for high school students.

5. Develop strategies and structured industry-informed pathways that are regionally aligned so that high school students can more seamlessly transition to community college career technical education (CTE) certificates and/or transfer degrees.
6. Develop Adult Education programs that allow the student to earn a High School Equivalency Certificate while earning and industry-recognized credential in a short-term certificate program as a first step on a pathway to other careers.

Chapter 3 Section F Question 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 and expansion of bridge programs.

The region has numerous initiatives designed to expand career services and opportunities for populations facing multiple barriers to help them close the gap in educational attainment. These include:

1. **Disabled:** The State VR program honors customer informed choice. This methodology includes an interactive process between DHS-DRS and the customer that provides sufficient, objective information and options that are designed to empower the customer in selecting services, providers and outcomes. The VR Counselor provides Career Counseling and Vocational Guidance which includes utilization of information from The Career Index, Career Information Systems, or O*Net, as well as counselor knowledge of the local labor market and current employment activity. The planned employment goal should be consistent with the customer's unique strengths, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, career interests and informed choice. The employment outcome chosen by the customer should be supported by the counselor unless the assessment clearly contraindicates the customer's choice.

The concept of customer informed choice does not necessarily mean that the customer will use information to choose an employment goal in a growth sector. The VR counselor will discuss the issues in finding employment that will occur as a result of choosing a vocational goal in a low growth sector, but unless there are limitations or concerns that specifically contradict the vocational choice by the customer the customer's informed choice should be honored.

2. **Offenders:** The Re-entry Employment Service Program (RESP) consists of IDES Employment Service Reps working with ex-offenders who may be on parole and/or living in an Adult Transition Center (ATC), which may be known as a half-way house. The workshops are offered on a weekly basis to the ex-offenders and help them in the areas of creating targeted resumes, dressing for success and being prepared for interviews, informing them of programs that are available to employers (Fidelity Bonding, Work Opportunity Tax Credit, and Illinois State Tax Credit for hiring ex-offenders are several examples) that should be mentioned when the ex-offender is interviewing for a job.

Due to mandated COVID-19 mitigations, the ATC program has been suspended since the beginning of the pandemic. As restrictions are released and IDES workloads level out, IDES will review the program and assess the best way to restart the services. We will look at options for both in-person and virtual service delivery for the program.

Three regional partners, Career Link, Job Partnership, Goodwill Elite, and area employers are collaborating to develop a re-entry program. Staff is provided to operate an Adult Re-Entry program designed to help returning citizens successfully “re-enter” society following their incarceration, thereby reducing recidivism, improving public safety and saving money. Re-entry efforts seek to reduce the barriers to employment so that people with past criminal involvement can compete for work opportunities.

3. **Veterans:** IDES provide assistance to military veterans in several ways. For veterans who have barriers (e.g. physical, psychological, educational, resume filled with military jargon, etc.), a Veterans’ Rep will help them work to overcome those barriers. Another level of Veterans’ Rep works with employers in the area encouraging them to hire veterans for their job openings. When a veteran is declared to be job ready, he/she is referred to employers who have openings in the fields for which the veteran has experience/training. These services have continually been provided by telephone since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.
4. **Youth:** IDES’ Hire the Future program is geared to young adults aged 16-24 and is designed to facilitate the transition into the workplace.

Both In and Out of School youth are exposed to Sector-based Career Pathways through Sub- Contractor led programs in addition to Work Experience related opportunities.

In-school youth participate in Drop-Out Prevention programs while enrolled in Secondary high schools where Career Exploration is a very large part of the curricula. Focus is often placed on learning Vocational/ Technical skills firsthand through hands-on classroom activities/projects or Job Shadowing Experiences.

Out of school youth participate in Dropout Recovery Programs. Youth obtain their GED (high school equivalency) while also taking part in career exploration activities and ICAPS opportunities. Out of school youth are highly encouraged throughout the program to take advantage of post-secondary opportunities that are available to them during and after the GED obtainment period.

Students also receive further career guidance through Transitional Grant participation. Two local Youth Providers offer continued Career opportunities/exploration once the youth has completed his/her GED and are entering either the Post-secondary or Employment track. Students receive continued support throughout their Follow-up period.

5. **National Farm Workers:** The National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) is a nationally directed program of services for chronically underemployed and unemployed migrant and seasonal farmworkers (MSFWs) which is administered by the Illinois Migrant Council. NFJP goals are to strengthen the ability of MSFWs and their dependents to obtain or retain unsubsidized employment or stabilize their unsubsidized employment in agriculture; deliver career services, training, and related assistance to eligible MSFW including youth; provide access to career services for MSFW through the One-Stop services delivery system; and coordinate with the State Workforce Agency and Monitor Advocate System Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Program.
6. **Long Term Unemployed:** Career Link's current initiatives involve the incorporation of Sector based Career Pathways for potential Long-Term Unemployed population, including but not limited to the Mitsubishi and Caterpillar layoffs. Tailor made workshops relating to career exploration in high growth occupational fields along with job readiness training and activities are customized for the aforementioned populations. They have also contracted with two community colleges to provide Work Readiness Training for affected laid off workers.
7. **Low Skilled Adults and Youth:** Another initiative involves creating additional Bridge Program and Integrated Education and Training (IET) opportunities for participants enrolled in High School Equivalency and English as a Second Language programs.

Heartland Community College offers and IET in Microsoft Office Specialist. Bridge programming includes Bridge to Workplace Technology and Education. HCC will offer an accelerated pathway to 6 different sectors in the coming year that will allow students to take credit classes while still working in Adult Education.

ICC has added a Manufacturing Bridge and a Production Welding Certificate IET program. In addition to the CAN program, Adult Ed will add a Healthcare IET program with Medical Office Assistant—Basic certificate and a MOS certificate in the fall of 2020. Ideally, our intent is to seek advice from Career and Technical Education Advisors regarding logistics, etc. involved in developing avenues to additional career sector pathways. Mid Central Community Action of McLean county offers integrated or “bundled” services that lead to concrete gains in net income and job retention. CSBG's Income Supports Program offers annually three undesigned \$1,000.00 dollar scholarships to eligible individuals who are trying to advance their education in order to access employment at a higher or living wage.

8. **General:** An expansion of workshops, including more focused content related to preparing individuals for entry into these sector based career opportunities will include: Basic Skills Remediation for the Out of School Youth and the Long Term Unemployed populations in order to prepare them for initial entry and competency requirements necessary for successful completion of selected career pathways. A College Preparatory

component will also be infused into the existing workshop curricula. Based on current feedback from participants, the newer “electronic based form” of teaching is a tremendous barrier to those re-entering the educational field. Hopefully, the advanced overview of today’s classroom/expectations will deflate customer anxiety and the potential of “dropping out” of a program. Additionally, incorporation of the Veteran’s population into these workshops serves as a high priority for our LWIA. The learning curve for this population seems to resemble that of a long-term unemployed individual entering post-secondary education.

In addition to these initiatives, regional partners will work to address how to fully mainstream targeted populations into sector-based career pathways. We will develop data on these populations to determine the extent to which they are already involved in existing career pathways. We will also utilize technical assistance provided by the State to help us achieve this goal.

The pandemic has highlighted the need for new ways to connect those most in need of supportive services such as childcare and transportation to those services. The connection so well established at the One-Stop where customers were able to walk a short distance to see a Career Planner are no longer in place due to most staff working from home. Many people with multiple barriers to employment were no longer required to participate in services and have become isolated from the idea of going to work or school. Until access to childcare and transportation is reestablished the likelihood of successful employment outcomes is very limited.

Chapter 3 Section F Question 4: Expanding information for employers and jobseekers to access services by improving the Illinois public-private data infrastructure to support the alignment and integration of economic development, workforce development and education initiatives for supporting sector partnerships and career pathways.

The NCEDR supports the State’s goal of expanding information for employers and jobseekers to access services by improving the Illinois public-private data infrastructure to support the alignment and integration of economic development, workforce development and education initiatives for supporting sector partnerships and career pathways. Although we lack the ability at the regional level to impact the development of such systems, if they are created, we will encourage our local employers and job seekers to use them. The regional partners welcome any opportunity to provide input into the design of the systems that make up the data infrastructure that is under development.

Chapter 3 Section G: As part of the 2022 modification, describe the impact of the pandemic on 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 not covered in the above sections. Include what steps, to the extent known, that will be taken over the next two years to adapt to the impact of the pandemic regarding how the Local Workforce Board(s) efforts for regional coordination.

Local Boards in the Region will adapt to the impact of the pandemic on coordination of workforce, education and economic development by an increased reliance on technology. Partners has adopted the use of virtual meetings such as ZOOM and Google to facilitate coordination. Staff from all partners have learned how to use technology to assist job seeker and employer customers. The LWIA has created a web-based referral system to assist customers across program titles.

Chapter 3 Section H: As part of the 2022 modification, describe how a workforce equity lens is or will be incorporated in the implementation of regional workforce, education, and economic development strategies.

Equity will be incorporated into our strategies by using data to understand current efforts and to measure future success. Partner programs collect the type of demographic information used to measure equity in access and service. We anticipate that the State will be providing information on our current efforts and developing goals that will be measured. Workforce Development programs already target those with barriers to employment. By design, most are focused on assisting those most in need. In some instances, the mere fact that we are measuring it may shine a light that provides insight into how these programs assist low-income individuals, people of color, those with disabilities, veterans, women as well as many others in achieving workforce equity. As a system we will also look at increasing access for customers through digital literacy efforts including access to computers.

Chapter 4 – Operating Systems and Policies – Local Component

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 updated information and analysis noting any significant impacts of the COVID-19 National Health Emergency and what steps will be taken to address 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 and include the following statements in this chapter:

Chapter 4 Section A Statement 1: The Local Workforce Innovation Area 15's 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

Chapter 4 Section A Statement 2: The Local Workforce Innovation Area 15's Service Integration Action Plan 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 Action Plan and any subsequent modifications is incorporated by reference into this plan.

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

Chapter 4 Section B Question 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)).

The implementation of an integrated technology-enabled intake and case management information system for programs carried out under WIOA is to be determined. Currently there are a number of systems in place: Illinois Workforce Development System, Illinois Job Link, and Illinois WorkNet.

The pandemic caused the closing of the One-Stop Career Centers. Linkage through the use of technology has been limited to the development of a web-based referral system for the partners. Intakes have been completed virtually through the use of technology including digital signatures of customers.

Chapter 4 Section B Question 2: How the Local Board will facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system, including in remote areas, through the use of technology and other means (§ 679.560(b)(5)(ii)).

Services provided by the one-stop delivery system to remote areas will have been in place for the past 5 years. Physical office locations have been established in all of the counties represented by LWIA 15. Rural counties including; Marshall, Stark, Woodford, Mason, and Fulton each have an Access office. Partner service access will be provided to individuals through an electronically or technologically linked access point, including but not limited to the Careerlink16.com website, emails, telephone and Facebook.

Chapter 4 Section B Question 3: As part of the 2022 modification, describe how Lessons learned about remote delivery of services during the COVID-19 National Health Emergency will be adapted into operations over the next two years.

Our technology contractors set up remote access for all employees in each county. We were able to perform eligibility and assessment remotely using electronic signatures, but participation is low due to no walk-in traffic. People staying home not working, job sites closing, schools closing and reopening remotely. There is a need for marketing resources to be provided from the state on a scale aligned with the state and community colleges. TABE testing has been reinstated as a requirement. We are currently looking into the possibility of TABE testing remotely if needed since so many are being quarantined off and on.

Over the next two years we will continue to develop the ability to deliver services remotely. We must be flexible while in-person delivery remains the preference. The ability for customers to access technology solutions is must also be addressed as we move forward.

C. Describe how the Local Board will support the strategies identified in the Unified State Plan and work with entities carrying out core programs, including a description of the following, noting significant implications of the COVID-19 National Health Emergency where applicable (§ 679.560(b)(1)(ii)):

Chapter 4 Section C Question 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));

The region has numerous initiatives designed to expand career services and opportunities for populations facing multiple barriers to help them close the gap in educational attainment. These include:

1. **Disabled:** The State VR program honors customer informed choice. This methodology includes an interactive process between DHS-DRS and the customer that provides sufficient, objective information and options that are designed to empower the customer in selecting services, providers and outcomes. The VR Counselor provides Career Counseling and Vocational Guidance which includes utilization of information from The Career Index, Career Information Systems, or O*Net, as well as counselor knowledge of

the local labor market and current employment activity. The planned employment goal should be consistent with the customer's unique strengths, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, career interests and informed choice. The employment outcome chosen by the customer should be supported by the counselor unless the assessment clearly contraindicates the customer's choice.

The concept of customer informed choice does not necessarily mean that the customer will use information to choose an employment goal in a growth sector. The VR counselor will discuss the issues in finding employment that will occur as a result of choosing a vocational goal in a low growth sector, but unless there are limitations or concerns that specifically contradict the vocational choice by the customer the customer's informed choice should be honored.

2. **Offenders:** The Re-entry Employment Service Program (RESP) consists of IDES Employment Service Reps working with ex-offenders who may be on parole and/or living in an Adult Transition Center (ATC), which may be known as a half-way house. The workshops are offered on a weekly basis to the ex-offenders and help them in the areas of creating targeted resumes, dressing for success and being prepared for interviews, informing them of programs that are available to employers (Fidelity Bonding, Work Opportunity Tax Credit, and Illinois State Tax Credit for hiring ex-offenders are several examples) that should be mentioned when the ex-offender is interviewing for a job.

Career Link has established two adult reentry program in Region 15 that assists ex-offenders in successfully completing life skills training and transitioning to employment through On-the-Job Training. Programs are run by Goodwill and Jobs Partnerships.

These programs are designed to decrease the recidivism rate of ex-offenders in central Illinois. To this end, there are three basic objectives for individuals enrolled in this program. The participants should:

1. Successfully complete program training courses;
2. Enter employment or post-secondary training; and
3. Maintain employment for at least 12 months after exit.

To achieve their objectives the programs offer:

1. Life Skills Training for the participants, including Interpersonal Communication Skills, Essential Employability Skills, Adaptability, and Multicultural Sensitivity/Awareness.
2. Information on Job Readiness Skills and Job Search Techniques in order to enhance the participants' ability to obtain employment.
3. A financial education component. This component includes instruction on basic budgeting methods, financial wellness, building credit, and home ownership.
4. An employment component. Program providers establish partnerships with local employers to provide on-the-job training opportunities for participants. The job

positions should be full-time, permanent positions that pay a household-sustaining wage.

5. A Case Management component that supports the participant throughout the entire program. Case Managers develop a customized Individual Employment Plan for each participant based on a thorough assessment of the individuals' knowledge, skills, and abilities.
6. An optional Mentoring Component: The program may include a mentoring component. The expectation is that the mentors provide professional support and guidance to the student.

In addition, Career Link also assisted the ELITE program in Peoria in receiving a JTED grant for their re-Entry program.

3. **Veterans:** IDES provides assistance to military veterans in several ways. For veterans who have barriers (e.g. physical, psychological, educational, resume filled with military jargon, etc.), a Veterans' Rep will help them work to overcome those barriers. Another level of Veterans' Rep works with employers in the area encouraging them to hire veterans for their job openings. When a veteran is declared to be job ready, he/she is referred to employers who have openings in the fields for which the veteran has experience/training.
4. **IDES' Hire the Future:** program is geared to young adults aged 16-24 and is designed to facilitate the transition into the workplace.
Both In and Out of School youth are exposed to Sector-based Career Pathways through Sub- Contractor led programs in addition to Work Experience related opportunities. In-school youth participate in Drop-Out Prevention programs while enrolled in Secondary high schools where Career Exploration is a very large part of the curricula. Focus is often placed on learning Vocational/ Technical skills firsthand through hands-on classroom activities/projects or Job Shadowing Experiences.
Out of school youth participate in Dropout Recovery Programs. Youth obtain their GED (high school equivalency) while also taking part in career exploration activities and ICAPS opportunities. Out of school youth are highly encouraged throughout the program to take advantage of post-secondary opportunities that are available to them during and after the GED obtainment period.
5. **The National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP):** is a nationally-directed program of services for chronically underemployed and unemployed migrant and seasonal farmworkers (MSFWs) which is administered by the Illinois Migrant Council. NFJP goals are to strengthen the ability of MSFWs and their dependents to obtain or retain unsubsidized employment or stabilize their unsubsidized employment in agriculture; deliver career services, training, and related assistance to eligible MSFW including youth; provide access to career services for MSFW through the One-Stop services delivery system; and coordinate with the State Workforce Agency and Monitor Advocate System Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Program.

6. **Long Term Unemployed:** Career Link’s current initiatives involve the incorporation of Sector based Career Pathways for potential Long Term Unemployed population, including but not limited to the Mitsubishi and Caterpillar layoffs. Tailor made workshops relating to career exploration in high growth occupational fields along with job readiness training and activities are customized for the aforementioned populations. They have also contracted with two community colleges to provide Work Readiness Training for affected laid off workers.
7. **Low Skilled Adults and Youth:** Another initiative involves creating additional Bridge Program opportunities for participants enrolled in GED Recovery Programs. Currently, one of our colleges offers a CNA dual enrollment opportunity. Ideally, our intent is to seek advice from Career and Technical Education Advisors regarding logistics, etc. involved in developing avenues to additional career sector pathways.
8. **General:** An expansion of workshops, including more focused content related to preparing individuals for entry into these sector based career opportunities will include: Basic Skills Remediation for the Out of School Youth and the Long Term Unemployed populations in order to prepare them for initial entry and competency requirements necessary for successful completion of selected career pathways. A College Preparatory component will also be infused into the existing workshop curricula. Based on current feedback from participants, the newer “electronic based form” of teaching is a tremendous barrier to those re-entering the educational field. Hopefully, the advanced overview of today’s classroom/expectations will deflate customer anxiety and the potential of “dropping out” of a program. Additionally, incorporation of the Veteran’s population into these workshops serves as a high priority for our LWIA. The learning curve for this population seems to resemble that of a long-term unemployed individual entering post-secondary education.

In addition to these initiatives, regional partners will work to address how to fully mainstream targeted populations into sector-based career pathways. We will develop data on these populations to determine the extent to which they are already involved in existing career pathways. We will also utilize technical assistance provided by the State to help us achieve this goal.

Many of these services have been delivered through the use of technology due to the impact of the pandemic. It is anticipated that in-person service delivery will resume post-pandemic.

Chapter 4 Section C Question 2: Scaling up the use of Integrated Education and Training models to help adults get their GED and work on other basic skills and English language acquisition while earning credentials and industry-recognized credentials that lead to in-demand occupations;

The adult education programs will continue to develop, expand and enhance programming based on the employer need for Region 3. Region 3, currently offers

ICAPS Model One, Production Welding, CNA, Business Technology certificates and micro credentials in CPR, Forklift Safety, MOS PowerPoint and Food Sanitation. In FY21, the programs will expand to offer additional CNA credential programs along with Medical Office Basic, Health Information Management and micro-credential of MOS Word. Programs will integrate Essential Employability Skills curriculum into all educational offerings. Bridge programs will contextualize content to pass the HSE and help students to improve their English Language skills. Efforts are being made to reduce enrollment into developmental education classes by offering a dual credit model that supports HSE and ESL students in general education coursework. The Local Board will provide data and labor market information from IDES and sector partnerships to allow Adult Ed programs to make informed decisions. In addition, the Local Board will expand support services for adult learners. Adult Ed programs will collaborate with Area Planning Councils to not duplicate services. Braided funding efforts with other core and required partners will include Perkins V, IDES Career Link and other agencies to provide scholarships and training opportunities. The local plan will be aligned to state strategic plans to include pre-apprenticeship, along with earn, and learn opportunities.

Chapter 4 Section C Question 3: Using the insights and lessons learned from successful dual credit programs to scale up similar efforts in other sectors and regions;

The scaling up of dual credit programs will supported by recognizing that all students can benefit from enrollment in these programs. We will work to create programs that support the enrollment of students that are traditionally underrepresented.

This support would include:

- provide advisement, tutoring, study skills workshops, and/or student success courses
- Coordinate high school and college schedules to facilitate participation
- Provide supportive services

We will build on existing programs such as those recognized in the State plan as examples of success:

Heartland Community College and the District 5 high school in Normal, Illinois, partnered to create an information technology career pathway that enables students to graduate from high school with a diploma and an associate degree in information technology.

Chapter 4 Section C Question 4: Determining the most effective marketing methods and messages for informing college and university students about Prior Learning Assessments;

The local Community Colleges will review current practices of marketing Prior Learning Assessments to students. They will determine if current methods are effective and if not, identify news ways of reaching students about the benefits of the program. Current

marketing efforts were implemented by assessing strategies that have proved effective in the past. Career Link and the local community colleges have employed a number of approaches in the past including radio, newspapers, television, billboards, websites and social media. If current methods prove to be ineffective, then each entity will need to explore how to improve outreach. This analysis would include looking at the medium used, the message and frequency.

Chapter 4 Section C Question 5: Investigating how targeted marketing can identify 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;

Reaching a segment of the population has been proven to be difficult in the past. One approach would be to solicit the advice of a marketing firm. One segment that can be reached is the dislocated worker population through the IDES email blast system. Another possible source for mature workers would be National Able. The underemployed often need support services and are clients of various community-based organizations. They could be engaged in identifying potential clients as well as offer some suggestions on how to independently reach this population.

The local area plans to use both Career Pathway, Talent Pipeline, apprenticeships and other business strategies to support our sector strategies. We will inventory the current information on Career Pathways in the region and evaluate how complete they are. It is our plan to create pathways with multiple entry and exit points, so that participants with varied levels of educational attainment can enter a career pathway at an appropriate entry point to obtain the skills and credentials that they need. These career pathways will also enable participants to exit into employment that is relevant for the skills and credentials they have obtained or continue in further education and training to prepare for better-paying jobs that require more advanced skills. Talent Pipeline and apprenticeship models place the employer as the primary consumer of the program. The region will explore these models and work to develop training programs using this approach.

Chapter 4 Section C Question 6: Facilitating the development of career pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs (§ 679.560(b)(2)(ii)); and

The local area plans to use both Career Pathway, Talent Pipeline, apprenticeships and other business strategies to support our sector strategies. We will inventory the current information on Career Pathways in the region and evaluate how complete they are. It is our plan to create pathways with multiple entry and exit points, so that participants with varied levels of educational attainment can enter a career pathway at an appropriate entry point to obtain the skills and credentials that they need. These career pathways will also enable participants to exit into employment that is relevant for the skills and credentials they have obtained or continue in further education and training to prepare for better-paying jobs that require more advanced skills. Talent Pipeline and apprenticeship models place the employer as the primary consumer of the

program. The region will explore these models and work to develop training programs using this approach.

Chapter 4 Section C Question 7: 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)).

The LWIB works to improve access to post-secondary credentials in a variety of ways including:

- Promoting the development of credentials that are industry-recognized, portable and stackable.
- Work with employers to identify needed certifications.
- Work with local and regional training providers to ensure the development of new credential programs that are in line with both industry and customer needs.
- Coordination with partners to provide numerous services related to career, training and supportive services.
- Provide training to partner staff on post-secondary credentials that are industry recognized, portable and stackable.
- Include information on industry-recognized credentials in orientations for one-stop customers.

Chapter 4 Section C Questions 8: In the 2022 modification, use insights and lessons learned from the COVID-19 National Health Emergency regarding the identification and service delivery to targeted populations significantly affected by the pandemic.

The greatest insights concerning services to targeted populations was the impact that the technology would have on the delivery of services. Many individuals did not have experience in using virtual platforms to receive services or to go-to-school on-line. Many did not have access to computers or the internet. As past experience had shown us, many of those with barriers to employment utilized the resource rooms in the One-Stop centers to access computers for job search, resume preparation, etc. In our rural communities many did not have broadband access.

D. Provide information regarding the local coordination strategies with state (including the Unified State Plan), regional and local partners to enhance services and avoid duplication of activities, including a description of the following, noting any significant implications of the COVID-19 National Health Emergency, where applicable:

Chapter 4 Section D Question 1: Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth employment and training activities under WIOA Title I (§ 679.560(b)(6)).

Career Link, the Title 1 agency, provides career planning and case management services to Adults, Dislocated Workers and Youth in the local area. Adult, Dislocated Workers, and Youth Career Planners are located on-site to assist customers searching for training and job seeking

assistance. A fully staffed Resource Room is available to assist customers looking for and applying for jobs. Career Link offices and staff provide career research, Demand Occupational Outlook to determine the best choice for a career that allows an individual to be self-sustainable. In addition, front –line staff can refer customers to any of the seven other affiliate offices if they are seeking service within another county.

In addition, individuals eligible for WIOA can receive assistance with tuition for vocational classroom training. Individuals in training may also receive supportive services such as childcare reimbursement, books and fees and transportation allowance. Earn and learn programs such as on-the-job training, apprenticeships, incumbent worker training, work experience and internships are available. The local area also provides Rapid Response service to employers and laid off workers when a business downsizes or closes.

These services have been delivered remotely through the use of technology since the start of the pandemic. As restrictions ease, when possible, we meet in person with customers. The pandemic had the greatest impact on services to dislocated workers. The extended unemployment benefits meant laid-off workers did not have a financial incentive to return to work. It was difficult to recruit dislocated workers because rapid response workshops were not held. We used information packets and provided information virtually but the in-person connection was lost.

Chapter 4 Section D Question 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)).

The Board supports the coordinated development of career pathway programs with our educational partners. We will work to provide opportunities to individuals to acquire the skills that meet business needs. We support innovative programs such as contextualized learning delivered through educational program.

The Board will review Title II Adult Education applications in accordance with guidance issued by the State.

Chapter 4 Section D Question 3: Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.) services (§ 679.560(b)(11)).

Wagner-Peyser staff provides the following services to business and individuals:

- IllinoisJobLink.com (IJL) job-seeker assistance
- Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits on-line application assistance
- Facilitate employment workshops on a variety of topics including: IJL, resume writing, interviewing, completing employment applications
- Organize recruiting (hiring) events with employers on-site (and off-site)

- Provide military veterans employment assistance using an intake process (Initial Assessment) that will result in a referral to a Veteran's Rep if a barrier to employment is identified
- Client follow-up to obtain hiring-outcome information
- Targeted groups assistance: Veterans, ex-offenders, youth (Hire The Future)
- Participating in partner employment service-related events/activities including Department of Corrections Re-Entry Summits and Summits of Hope
- Promoting partner re-training programs and events, as appropriate, using IDES outreach notices
- Attend Rapid Response and WARN meetings in the community/service-delivery area
- Employer outreach explaining benefits of hiring military veterans including the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)

Those needing a referral to a partner service are provided contact information for the agency to which they are being referred. The referral is entered on to IJL as a service. Follow-up with referred customers is done when the customer is a Veteran who is enrolled in Case Management and receiving and intensive service.

Chapter 4 Section D Question 4: Vocational rehabilitation service activities under WIOA Title IV (§ 679.560(b)(13)).

The Division of Rehabilitation Services Vocational Rehabilitation program is a mandatory member of the Local Workforce Innovation Board. The area served by EDR3 serves a geographical area that includes part of the catchment areas of the local DRS offices in Bloomington, Pekin and Peoria (plus one county served by the Galesburg local DRS office). The Vocational Rehabilitation representatives to the board will be supervisor from one of the local offices that is appointed to a two-year position. The Vocational Rehabilitation representative to the WIOA board will serve as a conduit sharing information regarding changes to the VR program with the board and conversely provide information regarding WIOA Title 1 workforce investment activities with all Division of Rehabilitation Services offices serving the EDR3 geographic area.

Chapter 4 Section D Question 5: Relevant secondary and post-secondary education programs and activities with education and workforce investment activities (§ 679.560(b)(9)).

Secondary and post-secondary education programs and activities in the local area include:

Activities - secondary and post-secondary:

1. Curricular alignment, secondary to post-secondary, through Programs of Study (POS) and Pathways to Results (PTR);
2. Dual credit (secondary and post-secondary) classes
3. Work-based learning;
4. Career expos and fairs.

Services for students:

1. Career exploration and development (also for community members);
2. Job search assistance;
3. Workshops – resume writing, interviewing skills, mock interviews;
4. Academic advisement;
5. Personal counseling;
6. Placement testing;
7. Transfer and Career & Technical Education degree and certificate credit programs;
8. Financial assistance – grants, loan applications, scholarships;
9. Accommodations for students with disabilities;
10. Learning labs for academic assistance;
11. Perkins CTE grant - academic and financial assistance for students enrolled in CTE programs, equipment for CTE programs, professional development for CTE faculty, career services.

Activities/services with employers and Title I:

1. Customized training for incumbent workers and dislocated workers;
2. Rapid response for dislocation events.

Referral process with one-stop partners:

1. Individuals referred by one-stop partners through direct linkage to community college – college provides placement testing, orientation, assistance with enrollment and application for financial assistance, and services listed above;
2. Students enrolled in programs referred through direct linkage and from information provided by partners to other one-stop partners for services not provided by/available at college.

Chapter 4 Section D Question 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)).

Representatives from the three area community colleges all participated in the Regional Planning process.

Career pathways have been developed and include the following career clusters: Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources; Architecture and Construction; Arts Audio/Video Technology & Communications; Business Management and Administration; Education & Training; Health

Sciences; Hospitality & Tourism; Human Services; Information Technology; Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security; Manufacturing; Transportation, Distribution & Logistics.

Workforce development partners are encouraged to refer eligible clients to ICC and the Perkins Grant Coordinator. Students meeting the criteria of the Perkins grant may receive academic (tutoring) and/or financial (assistance with textbooks, uniforms, tools & instruments, certification exam fees, transportation) services. Some of the ways Perkins Programs from the 3 area colleges will work with the local board are:

1. Working together to measure student performance.
2. Collaborating to ensure that we are being culturally responsive
3. Workforce partners serving as a stakeholder to be a voice with regards to our career programs.
4. Working together to continue to identify and support growing and emerging occupations in our workforce region
5. Ensuring labor market alignment with our programs.
6. Workforce having input on our program size, scope, and quality.
7. Identify any programs we have that might be misaligned with the workforce needs.
8. Identify, develop, and promote appropriate programs of study to workforce partners.
9. Collaborating on career exploration programs.

Chapter 4 Section D Question 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.

(See Attachment 2 - Supportive Service Policy)

The Local Board will assure that partner staff provide reliable access to transportation and other services by cross training of staff. This training will assure that all staff that provide services across programs are knowledgeable of the supportive services that are available and thus can coordinate access to said services.

Services that are available include:

Supportive Service	Provider
Childcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catholic Charities • Department of Human Services • Salvation Army • WIOA Title 1
Clothing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catholic Charities • Community Action Agencies • Good Will Industries • Salvation Army
Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catholic Charities • Department of Human Services • Salvation Army • United Way
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Human Services • Veteran's Affairs
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catholic Charities • Community Action Agencies • Department of Human Services • Good Will Industries • Salvation Army • United Way • Veteran's Affairs • WIOA Title 1
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Human Services • Good Will Industries • WIOA Title 1
Utilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catholic Charities • Community Action Agencies

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

Chapter 4 Section E Question 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)).

All the programs that are available to Adults and Dislocated Workers in EDR 3 are eligible in compliance with the Demand Occupation List issued by the state. Program availability is also assessed using current labor market information, as well as current hiring practices of employers in our region and throughout the state. The LWIB as always adjusted to the changing climate of

demand occupations within the area as well as addressing the needs of employers. Certification programs, Associate degree programs, and the final two years of a bachelor's degree are offered. Area educational institutions with eligible programs are: Illinois Central College, Spoon River College, Heartland Community College, Illinois State University, Bradley University, Illinois Wesleyan, Midwest Technical Institute, 160 Driving Academy, St. Francis Nursing School, Methodist Nursing School, Graham Hospital School of Nursing and Blackhawk College.

In addition to classroom training, on the job training is also offered for eligible individuals. The EDR Business team will seek to expand relationships to address the needs of employers as well as individuals seeking assistance with our programs.

Customized training, internships, and other work-based learning opportunities will continually be explored with our EDC and educational partners in the region. A business service team will work in partnership to engage area employers to participate in the region's initiatives. The goal will be to open up more short-term opportunities designed to expedite the placement of an individual in a job leading to self-sufficiency.

Currently Career Link, Illinois State University and the Energy Learning Exchange have partnered on a proposal for a Rapid Response Illinois Talent Pipeline Grant. This grant will provide opportunities and training in home performance, weatherization, and other initiatives.

Chapter 4 Section E Question 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)). As part of the 2022 modification, describe how adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities will address the impact and recovery from the COVID-19 National Health Emergency.

The content below will continue once we are past the pandemic. In the meantime, Rapid Response activities are coordinated online instead of in person as many businesses are taking covid precautions and in-person workshops have not occurred. Due to lack of Dislocated Workers seeking training services, funds have been shifted from Dislocated Workers to Low-Income Adult funding. There is a greater need and interest from Low-Income Adults.

The Local Board will continue to ensure the Local Workforce Innovation Area (LWIA) coordinates a Rapid Response Team of representatives from WIOA partners and community organizations. The LWIA is the lead agency for coordinating Rapid Response activity in the region and includes LWIA staff, IDES staff, community college staff and other partners. The regional Rapid Response Team partners with Department of Commerce Rapid Response staff as appropriate. The Team coordinates efforts to make impacted workers and businesses aware of available services, eligibility requirements and how to apply.

LWIA 15's regional Rapid Response Teams includes Career Link, IDES, Heartland Community College, Illinois Central College or Spoon River College, Navicore Solutions, Chestnut Credit Counseling and Illinois OCHI (Office of Consumer Health Insurance). The regional Rapid

Response Team recently coordinated services for dislocated workers from Vistra Energy Corp. plant closings and other layoff events.

Rapid Response is a business-focused and flexible strategy designed for two major purposes. First, to help growing companies access an available pool of skilled workers from other companies that are downsizing or who have been trained in the skills your company needs to be competitive. Also, Rapid Response responds to layoffs and plant closings by quickly coordinating services and providing immediate aid to companies and their affected workers.

The Rapid Response Team works with employers and any employee representative(s) to quickly maximize public and private resources to minimize the disruptions on companies, affected workers, and communities that are associated with job loss. Rapid Response provides customized services on-site at an affected company, accommodate any work schedules, and assist companies and workers through the painful transitions associated with job loss.

Providing Rapid Response services to affected workers during layoffs or plant closings will result in multiple benefits to employers. The more quickly the Rapid Response strategy is implemented, the better off employers and dislocated workers will be.

- Higher productivity and worker morale and lower absenteeism during layoff event due to reduced stress.
- Lower unemployment insurance costs as workers are re-employed more quickly when services are begun prior to layoff.
- Decreased likelihood of sabotage or work disruptions.
- Media and rumor management. Rapid Response Teams understand the often-confidential nature of layoffs, and will work with the company to ensure confidentiality at all times
- Better public relations for an employer. Rapid Response Teams can also work with the media to highlight services an employer is providing to its workers during a layoff period, which will improve a company's public image.

Benefits to Workers

Rapid Response Teams can provide dislocated workers with information and services, including:

- Career counseling and job search assistance
- Resume preparation and interviewing skills workshops
- Information on the local labor market
- Unemployment insurance
- Information about education and training opportunities
- Information on health benefits and pensions

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

Chapter 4 Section F Question 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)).

Career Link currently has 6 in-school programs serving juniors and seniors identified as at-risk students. These programs combine career research in high demand occupations, soft skills training, job search assistance, and tutoring. Many go on to attend post-secondary education.

There are 5 out of school youth drop-out recovery programs. These programs provide GED assistance, work experience, career research, and opportunities to continue on to post-secondary education.

Career Link has partnered with Peoria Public Schools to implement the Youth Career Pathways Program. The program will provide Construction Internship opportunities to 25-30 students. In addition to union and OSHA certifications students will gain their forklift certification through Goodwill. Work experiences will be provided by Ruyle, City of Peoria, and Morton Industries.

Career Link is also partnering with the Laborer's Local 362 – LIUNA, and School District 87 of McLean County to establish the Construction Craft Preparation Program. The CCPP is an educational program offered to juniors and seniors to assist high school students in learning the necessary skills they will need to begin a career as a construction craft laborer. The program will serve 30 students a year. They will earn dual credit: high school and apprenticeship. It is anticipated that the majority of students who complete this course will enter into a union apprenticeship.

It is our focus to develop programs using the Career Pathways model, the Talent Pipeline model and the Apprenticeship model. It is our focus to meet with our partners in the EDCs and community colleges to begin development and exploration on how we may achieve our goals assisting youth from junior high to out of school youth. We will seek the use of braided funding opportunities to maximize our potential to reach the goals we would like to achieve. Work-based learning opportunities such as Apprenticeship models, On-the-Job training and other initiatives are key to creating sustainable career pathways. Through our area groups such as the Workforce Alliance, Pathways to Prosperity, Strategic Manufacturing Groups we have a good nucleus that can provide open discussion and action on meeting our initiatives.

The local region will work to address the disparity through better service alignment between Career Link and the Division of Rehabilitation Services. We will work to build the capacity of the one stop center to address disability initiatives throughout the region through better collaboration with our partners.

Chapter 4 Section F Question 2: A description of how local areas will meet the minimum expenditure rate for out-of-school youth

Specific strategies are in place to identify and recruit out-of-school youth. Partnerships and resources have been identified to carry out these strategies, including dropout recovery efforts, connecting with Adult Basic Education, serving TANF recipients, and coordinating with Health and Human Services partners like Homeless and Runaway program.

- We have formed the necessary partnerships to advance the youth services vision.
- Key partners and stakeholders within our workforce system have developed an on-going, collaborative approach for recruiting, referring and serving youth.

LWIA 15 contracts with the following organizations to operate Drop Out Recovery programs in EDR 3:

- Black Hawk College
- Heartland Community College
- Illinois Central College
- Peoria Park District
- Spoon River College

These organizations provide instruction for GED preparation, for literacy and numeracy gains, for employment related skills, and incentives to motivate students to achieve. The organizations also partner with other groups and businesses to provide workforce experiences.

Goodwill Industries of Central Illinois and YouthBuild McLean provide transition services to the youth served by EDR 3 Drop Out Recovery programs. These intensive education and employment skills services assist the youth with transitioning from GED to post-secondary education, employment or military service.

Chapter 4 Section F Question 3: As part of the 2022 modification, describe how youth activities will address the impact and recovery from the COVID-19 National Health Emergency.

Pandemic related program design changes for youth activities included:

- As a result of covid, the Local Board authorized an increase in wages to work experience participants from \$11/hr to match the increasing wages that employers are now paying for entry level positions.
- Sub Contracted Youth GED programs adapted to provide services online.
- Goodwill held Zoom follow-up conversations with participants.
- LWIA 15 is initiating standalone work experience opportunities without an ITA to meet the 20% spending requirements under WIOA.

F. Provide a description of how the local area will provide services to individuals with barriers to employment as outlined in the Unified State Plan:

Chapter 4 Section G Question 1: Provide information on how priority will be given to recipients of public assistance, other low income individuals and individuals who are basic skills deficient consistent with WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(E) (§ 679.560(b)(21)).

(See Attachment 3 – Priority of Service Policy)

Chapter 4 Section G Question 2: Describe how the local workforce areas will ensure equitable access to workforce and educational services through the following actions:

Chapter 4 Section G Question 2a: Disaggregating data by race, gender and target population to reveal where disparities and inequities exist in policies and programs.

Disaggregation of special population data, including subpopulation data like race and gender, is a new requirement in the Perkins V Act. In order to ensure alignment across plans, the concept is also included in the WIOA plans. Postsecondary Perkins partners are simultaneously undergoing local and regional planning or their four-year local application. We suggest reaching out to your community college partners to collaborate on this data collection. These partners are also conducting a Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment, in which they are identifying where equity gaps exist in their policies and programs; community colleges are required to engage representatives from local workforce development boards in this process.

The LWIB, partnering with the one-stop operator and partner program administrators is tasked with understanding the demographic makeup of participants in the local area. All partners are required to ask about these demographic identifiers when an individual seeks to enroll. All partners, to the extent possible, must analyze enrollment and completion data by race, gender and other targeted population characteristics, such as veteran or disability status for example, to determine the extent of service delivery and share the results of this analysis with the LWIB and/or its designee.

The WIOA Unified State Plan contains disaggregated data for selected target populations in Table 11 on pp. 62-63. Note this is not a complete disaggregation, more work is required; but data is available from IDHS on Public Aid, SNAP and TANF recipients and vocational rehabilitation enrollment and from IDHS on veterans in the population by various age brackets.

The Regional Data Packets have a significant amount of demographic data broken out by various characteristics. Local plans should include demographic breakouts of enrollment to the extent possible and a description of the local area's planned activities to work toward a better understanding of how service delivery across programs meets the needs of these populations living in the area. In short, describe how the LWIB and program administrators will ensure services get to the people most in need and how you will verify by matching enrollment and service data to known demographics.

As part of the Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment process, Spoon River College is dedicated to examining all of our CTE programs to determine if and how equity is embedded in all aspects of our CTE programs. We will identify which subpopulations are being well represented and which ones need to be considered more. Spoon River College will continue work to identify any areas and conditions which may be hindering the success and experiences of subpopulations.

Title I will work with our Perkins partners to utilize their concept for examining subpopulations. Use existing target population reports to measure their progress.

Chapter 4 Section G Question 2b: Exposing more high school students, particularly young women and minorities, to careers in science technology, engineering and math fields.

In accordance with the State's Unified Plan, the regional partners will explore using such platforms as The Illinois Science and Technology Institute which connects professionals in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields with high school classrooms through its Mentor Matching Engine, a web platform that offers high quality mentoring experiences that overcome geographic barriers. We will focus on directing the use of resources such as this to young women and minorities to increase their participation in education related to careers in STEM.

We will also work with the three community colleges in the region to build on their Pathways to Results (PTR) programs which focus on improving transitions to and through high school to postsecondary education and into employment by addressing inequities in student outcomes.

Chapter 4 Section G Question 2c: Exploring how effective mentor programs can be expanded to adults, particularly those who are displaced and moving to a new career.

Building on the experience of Career Link providing mentoring for it's in and out of school youth programs, the region will examine methods to expand this availability to other populations. Career Link is expanding its efforts to create apprenticeships, which by their very nature have a mentoring aspect. Another option to be explored is engaging those individuals who are part of the aging workforce to mentor customers who are either eligible adults or dislocated workers.

Chapter 4 Section G Question 2d: Ensuring workforce services are strategically located in relation to the populations in most need.

Career Link operates a One Stop, the Peoria Illinois workNet Center, and seven access sites across the eight counties of Local Workforce Innovation Area 15. The One Stop is located on a bus line, just a few blocks from the CityLink Transit Center.

G. Provide a description of training policies and activities in the local area,

including the following and any significant implications of the COVID-19 National Health Emergency, as applicable:

Chapter 4 Section H Question 1: How local areas will meet the annual Training Expenditure Requirement (WIOA Policy Chapter 8, Section 49);

The grant application process begins by developing an overhead budget and estimating what portion of this budget will be chargeable to Adults and to Dislocated Workers. This amount must fall below the 50 % threshold in each funding stream. Career Link will plan for an amount that is at least 3% below the threshold or, 47%. As the year progresses, the Fiscal Department monitors expenditures for 50% compliance. Approximately every two months the Fiscal Department will publish a report on meeting the 50% requirement and the 80% requirement to the Management staff. If it appears that any funding stream is close to the threshold, a discussion will take place as to the severity of the problem and possible remedies. Follow-up monitoring will occur to determine if the corrective action plan is working and if it is not, a further discussion among Management staff will take place to discuss further steps.

Chapter 4 Section H Question 2: How local areas will encourage the use of work-based learning strategies, including the local area goals for specific work-based learning activities and proposed outcomes related to these activities;

Career Link will undertake the following strategies:

1. Work Based Learning – Earn and Learn Models: To increase the utilization of work-based learning in the region we will work through existing initiatives such as the Strategic Manufacturing Group and Bloomington/Normal Workforce Development/Stem strategies addressing our target industry sectors to promote these programs to regional employers. We will also work with our business service teams to standardize the promotion of these programs when meeting with employers.
2. Sector Strategies: The region plans to use both Career Pathway and Talent Pipeline approaches to support our sector strategies. We will inventory the current information on Career Pathways in the region and evaluate how complete they are. It is our plan to create pathways with multiple entry and exit points, so that participants with varied levels of educational attainment can enter a career pathway at an appropriate entry point to obtain the skills and credentials that they need. These career pathways will also enable participants to exit into employment that is relevant for the skills and credentials they have obtained or continue in further education and training to prepare for better-paying jobs that require more advanced skills. Talent Pipeline is a concept that puts the employer as the primary consumer of the program. The region will explore these models and work to develop training programs using this approach.
3. Coordinated Business Services: Partners in the region will provide cross training on the programs and services that they offer to employers. The WIOA core partners in the

region will take the lead in developing common messaging and marketing of business services. The partners will develop strategies that go beyond program silos to promote their employer services.

Incumbent worker, Apprenticeships, internships, work experience, and on the job training opportunities will be offered to employers and participants as components in the Talent Pipeline process. The proposed outcomes needed will be directed towards employment in high demand occupations earning a living wage that allows for self-sufficiency, earning industry recognized and/or stackable credentials, and job retention.

Chapter 4 Section H Question 3: Provide a copy of the local Individual Training Account Policy and describe how training services outlined in WIOA Sec. 134 will be provided through the use of individual training accounts, including, if contracts for training services will be used, how the use of such contracts will be coordinated with the use of individual training accounts under that chapter, and how the Local Board will ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training programs regardless of how the training services are to be provided (§ 679.560(b)(18)); and

(See Attachment 3 - Individual Training Account Policy)

Training services will be provided that maximizes consumer choice. An individual who is eligible, in consultation with a Career Planner may choose from an eligible list of providers that have been approved by the Local Workforce Innovation Board. Training Providers located outside of the LWIA 15 region will be assessed according to the same standards outlined in the Training Provider Eligibility Policy. Training services may be provided by contract for such services as on the job training, customized training, incumbent worker and possibly registered apprenticeships. Contract services may also be utilized if there is a training services program that is effective in the local area administered by a community-based organization or private organization to serve individuals with barriers to employment. Contracted learning activities may sometimes be coordinated with an ITA when Provider offered classes are coordinated with work-based learning activities.

Chapter 4 Section H Question 4: Provide a copy of the local training provider approval policy and procedures. Describe how the Local Board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services through the system and that the providers will meet the employment needs of local employers, workers and jobseekers.

(See Attachment 4 - Training Provider Policy)

Policies and guidelines will reflect the State's Training Providers Procedures. The LWIB will ensure continuous improvement by granting approval of new programs that meet eligibility and Demand Occupation requirements with the assistance of a Provider/Program Committee consisting of LWIA 15 Management staff and seasoned Career Planners. This process ensures

that Board’s ability to react in an expedient manner thus ensuring continuous improvement of eligible provider services through the system. Business Services Teams will establish relationships with local employers assessing their needs for new programs to be added.

I. 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:

Chapter 4 Section I Question 1: To transfer funds between the adult and dislocated worker funding streams.

In regard to transferring funds between Adult and Dislocated Worker funding streams, the primary strategy utilized by Career Link, the Title IB administrator of workforce funds, is to allocate resources to the funding stream that has demand for funds and services that can’t be met by the original allocation. The amount of the transfer is determined by the volume of demand and the average cost per participant. The maximum dollar amount that could be transferred under WIOA is 100%. Under normal circumstances it would probably never exceed 50%. However during the pandemic we have seen very few dislocated worker applicants and it has been required to transfer approximately 80% from dislocated workers to Adult in order to serve the needs of our customers. Re-Entry contracts have been awarded and OJTs have increased under these contracts which require Adult funding.

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

Funds set aside for incumbent worker training will be determined by past demand, any anticipated new company participation and a reserve to meet unanticipated demand.

Chapter 4 Section I Question 3: To use funds for transitional jobs as outlined in WIOA Sec. 134(d)(5).

The strategy used to determine the funding for transitional jobs, up to the 10% maximum, will be to analyze past need and examine expectations for future participation.

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

Career Link does not intend to use performance contracts.

Chapter 4 Section J: As part of the 2022 modification, describe the impact of the Pandemic on the operating systems and policies within the Local Workforce Innovation Areas (LWIAs) otherwise not already described above. Include what steps, to the extent known, that will be taken over the next two years to adapt to the impact of the pandemic regarding the operating systems and policies within the Local Workforce Innovation Areas (LWIAs).

The LWIA will continue to look for technology solutions to increase access to services. During the pandemic many services were delivered virtually. Orientation, intakes, assessment and on-going case management were delivered through on-line videos or virtual meetings. If we enter a post-pandemic delivery period then we will assess what features of virtual delivery to carry into the future.

Chapter 4 Section K: Describe how a workforce equity lens is or will be incorporated in the operating systems and policies as part of the Local Workforce Innovation Areas (LWIAs).

Using the definition established by the Equity Taskforce, the LWIA will engage in an on-going process of analyzing the impact of design and implementation of policies on under-served and marginalized individuals and groups to identify and potentially eliminate barriers. When barriers are identified they will be addressed. Through review of policies and procedures we will amend or develop procedures and policies that provide for an inclusive and equitable access to the delivery of services.

Chapter 5 – Performance Goals and Evaluation – Local Component

The plan must include information on the actions the Local Board will take toward becoming or remaining a high performing board, consistent with the factors developed by the State Board (WIOA Sec. 101(d)(6)) and (§ 679.560(b)(17)). LWIAs are required to provide updated information and analysis noting any significant impacts off the COVID-19 National Health Emergency and what steps will be taken to address 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)).

Chapter 5 Section A Question 1: WIOA Performance Measures

The performance goals regarding the 15 local levels of performance LWIA 15 were negotiated on October 16, 2020 with the Governor and chief elected officials consistent with WIOA Sec. 116(c) to be used when measuring the performance of the local fiscal agent, eligible providers under Title 1B and the one stop delivery system to comply with 679.560(b)(16) (See Attachment 1 page 88).

Chapter 5 Section A Question 2: Additional State Performance Measures

There are no additional State Measures.

B. Provide a description of the current and planned evaluation activities and how this information will be provided to the local board and program administrators as appropriate.

Chapter 5 Section B Question 1: What existing service delivery strategies will be expanded based on promising return on investment?

In addition to the Demand Occupation Programs that are traditionally funded at the approved training institutions in Local Workforce Area 15, workbase learning strategies will continue to be explored that serve youth, adults, and dislocated workers. Pre-apprenticeship models that offer avenues for disadvantaged participants, for example, our GED programs collaborating with recruitment towards apprenticeship opportunities. On-the-Job training opportunities will be explored and marketed by our business service teams throughout the area. The ROI on Pre-Apprenticeship opportunities has been low. The stakeholders we have assisted who have received grants for Pre-Apprenticeship programs have not had good returns, primarily for the lack of employer investment yet they are still

awarded grants. It is our hope and intent to expand training programs that assist businesses with their recruitment of qualified employees while keeping the cost per participant at a more reasonable level.

Chapter 5 Section B Question 2: What existing service delivery strategies will be curtailed or eliminated based on minimal return on investment?

Currently, we have no programs that will be eliminated based on minimal ROI. We have in the past used data on poor entered employment, wage and retention rates to eliminate some programs of study such as medical office tech, HVAC and medical office assistant. We undertake a detailed review of each program based on outcomes and will be prepared in the future to eliminate poor performing programs as necessary.

Chapter 5 Section B Question 3: What new service strategies will be used to address regional educational and training needs based on promising return on investment?

In addition to the Demand Occupation Programs that are traditionally funded at the approved training institutions in Local Workforce Area 15, work-based learning strategies will continue to be explored that serve youth, adults, and dislocated workers. Pre-apprenticeship models that offer avenues for disadvantaged participants, for example, our GED programs collaborating with recruitment towards apprenticeship opportunities. On-the-Job training opportunities will be explored and marketed by our business service teams throughout the area.

Chapter 5 Section B Question 3a: What return on investment and qualitative outcome data for various education and training programs will be collected to identify barriers to enrollment?

As required by WIOA legislation, we follow all funded clients for one full year after exit. This facilitates an annually review of the results of our clients in regards to specific training providers and programs. We track how many funded clients attend, graduate, earn an industry recognized credential, obtain employment and track their quarterly wages in follow-up. If the results suggest a specific program is not producing satisfactory outcomes, we notify the staff which programs will no longer be funded. This has happened to several programs in the last year. We provide our local Workforce Invest Board (WIB) with quarterly updates on performance and in the future we will be sharing those results by training provider/program.

To identify barriers to enrollment, part of this annual review will examine client data organized by training provider/program. Client data such as residence by zip code, education level, income level and other barriers identified in Individualized Employment Plans. Our performance measures from each of our providers and the programs that are funded are evaluated on a continual basis for those that have exited the programs successful or unsuccessful. Cost per participant, wages, credentials, job attainment and retention are taken into consideration as to whether or not programs are successful. Furthermore, preprogram wages are collected at

enrollment. These are compared to post-program earnings to help us identify return on investment.

Chapter 5 Section B Question 3b: What are the most cost-effective approaches to taking down those barriers or helping residents overcome them?

To address the formerly incarcerated population and residents with felonies we are looking to step-up efforts to partnering with programs such as the Life-Skills Reentry program in Kewanee. Currently we have been accepting referrals for from the program. Other approaches need to be explored. Employers that are willing to hire felons need to be recruited for any reentry program to be successful. Partnering with agencies such as Marcfirst and the Dept of Rehabilitation Services may help address the employability of people with disabilities. Different strategies are being explored. to address the remedial needs of residents who are welfare and food stamp recipients through partnerships with area colleges to enhance engagement in pre -employment programs, apprenticeships and OJTs. The most cost-effective approaches to take down these barriers and others will continually be explored.

Chapter 5 Section C: Provide a description of the current and planned evaluation activities and how this information will be provided to the local board and program administrators as appropriate.

Program Evaluation activities: Monitoring is conducted with all Sub-contractors utilizing an established evaluation form and process. Participant files are reviewed before certification by the Assistant Director or Performance Manager. Participant file reviews are conducted by the Program Manager on a quarterly basis to ensure that training related documents are maintained correctly. Career Planners monitor Work Experience sites to ensure that the participants are following the guidelines established in the Job Description and contract. On the Job Training contracts are also monitored by Business Service Reps and/or Career Planners. Training related policies are reviewed on a yearly basis whereas any changes/recommendations are presented to the WIB Board for approval.

Chapter 5 Section D: As part of the 2022 modification, describe the impact of the Pandemic on the regional service strategies, including use of cooperative service Delivery strategies and the connection of job seekers with employers, not covered in the above sections. Include what steps, to the extent known, that will be taken over the next two years to adapt to the impact of the pandemic in regard to the regional service strategies, including the use of cooperative service delivery strategies and the connection of job seekers with employers.

The greatest impact of the pandemic on regional service strategies stemmed from the shutdown of the American economy. The closing of the physical One-Stops, suspension of in-person training, and closures of many businesses led to a significant disruption in the delivery of workforce development services. Service integration plans will need to be re-evaluated now that the economy is beginning to open backup. Workforce Partners will convene to determine new

methods of providing cooperative services. Chief among these will most likely be through the use of technology. During the pandemic the local area created on-line processes and tools for serving customers. These included on-line referral system, intake and assessment processes and virtual job coaching. We will also work with employers to understand how remote workers may be employed in the future.

Chapter 5 Section E: As part of the 2022 modification, describe how a workforce equity lens is or will be incorporated in the analysis of performance goals and implementation of evaluation activities.

Utilizing State Guidance, which is forthcoming, workforce system partners will use available data analytics to assess the performance of specific programs with regards to equity in access and in outcomes. Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Partner Programs will inventory current equity related data components that are gathered and identify any gaps. Partners will review current populations served and identify successes and areas to target for improvement.

Chapter 6 – Technical Requirements and Assurances – Local Component

This chapter includes the technical requirements and assurances that are required by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA Sec. 121 (c)(2)(iv)). LWIAs are required to provide updated information and analysis noting any significant impacts off the COVID-19 National Health Emergency and what steps will be taken to address the challenges and opportunities that are associated with meeting the administrative requirement of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act programs.

A. Fiscal Management

Chapter 6 Section A Question 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)).

United Workforce Development Board (UWDB) is the grantee for WIOA funds. Steven Martin, Executive Director, is the authorized designee.

Chapter 6 Section A Question 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)).

(See Attachment 5 – Local Procurement Policy)

B. Physical and Programmatic Accessibility

Chapter 6 Section B Question 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)).

As the lead agency in Illinois for provision of services for individuals with disabilities, the Illinois Department of Human Services- Division of Rehabilitation Services (IDHS-DRS) will work the One Stop partners to ensure that access to program services will be available for persons with disabilities. The One Stop must be determined to be physically accessible during leasing arrangement completed by Central Management Services. Program accessibility is a little more difficult to monitor and maintain as sensory and cognitive impairments may make computers, software, written materials, and telecommunication devices inaccessible. Vocational rehabilitation staff will be available to review

accessibility issues for customers at the One Stop, affiliates, and partner programs, as well as provide accessibility information and recommendations on projected job sites.

DRS will assist in identifying adaptive equipment at the One Stop to ensure program accessibility. Equipment purchase will be subject to demonstrated need, administrative approval, and appropriation approval. Technical assistance may also be available from the local Centers for Independent Living (LIFE CIL-Bloomington, Advocates for Access-Peoria Heights), and from the Illinois Technology Assistance Program and the IDHS-DRS Rehab Tech Unit.

Entities within the One-Stop delivery system will work with our Vocational Rehabilitation partner to assure compliance with WIOA Sec. 188 and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act. We plan to review and develop an enhanced referral process between all partners. Vocational Rehabilitation staff will be available through direct linkage with the One-Stop Center. All staff will receive cross training on effective methods for providing services to individuals with disabilities. Business Service Staff will work with Rehabilitation Services staff to learn how to effectively work with employers to provide employment opportunities to those with disabilities.

Chapter 6 Section B Question 2: Provide copies of executed cooperative agreements (as applicable) which define how all local service providers, including additional providers, will carry out the requirements for integration of and access to the entire set of services available in the local one-stop system, with respect to efforts that will enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities (§679.560(b)(13)). 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.

If needed, cooperative agreements will be developed between partners to facilitate how local programs will be integrated and made accessible to those with disabilities.

C. Plan Development and Public Comment

Chapter 6 Section C Question 1: Describe the process used by the Local Board, consistent with WIOA Sec. 108(d), to provide a 30-day public comment period prior to submission of the plan, including an opportunity to have input into the development of the local plan, particularly for representatives of businesses, education and labor organizations (§ 679.560(b)(19)).

A legal notice will be placed in the two largest newspapers in Region 15/EDR 3. This legal notice will provide a brief description of the action that is contemplated. The notice will also contain the phone number and email contact so that an interested party may ask questions, request a copy of the action and where to file a written comment. Comments may also be presented to the Workforce Innovation Board and such comments will be considered by the Board and the Board will determine what steps, if any, will be taken as a result of the written and oral comments. A summary of comments will be included with any submission of a Grant or

other similar action, to the Department of Commerce. Such comments will be taken during the 30-day comment period. As part of the preparation of the local plan, the conveners assured that representatives from business, education and labor organizations had an opportunity to provide input into the plan. Some examples of representatives of the board that were part of the process are Ronn Morehead AFL/CIO, Steve Timmerman First Farmers Bank, Chris Setti Greater Peoria Economic Development Council, Sam Lewis Pridestaff, Kelli Hill Heartland Community College, Paula Nachtrieb Illinois Central College.

Should comments be received the summary will be prepared and the response of the CEO and the Workforce Innovation Board will be noted.

Chapter 6 Section C Question 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.

Comments will be added if provided

Chapter 6 Section C Question 3: Provide information regarding the regional and local plan modification procedures.

The local plan modification process follows the same steps as that of an original grant submission. The need for a modification may be dependent on actions by the Dept. of Commerce or by local circumstances.

Chapter 6 Section D: Describe how a workforce equity lens will be incorporated in with meeting the administrative requirement of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act programs.

The LWIA will seek guidance from the State on the development of workforce equity tools or initiatives to incorporate into meeting administrative requirements. When appropriate Workforce Equity will be included in the procurement process.

Attachment 1 – Negotiated Performance

Workforce Development Activities (Title I of WIOA)

Negotiated Levels of Performance for PY 2020 and 2021

LWIA 15 - United Workforce Development Board Inc. - Career Link

<u>Adult</u>	PY 2020	PY 2021
Employment Rate 2 nd Quarter after Exit	82.0%	82.0%
Employment Rate 4 th Quarter after Exit	80.5%	80.5%
Median Earnings 2 nd Quarter after Exit	\$8,200	\$8,200
Credential Attainment within 4 Quarters after Exit	78.0%	78.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	50.0%	50.0%
<u>Dislocated Worker</u>		
Employment Rate 2 nd Quarter after Exit	85.0%	85.0%
Employment Rate 4 th Quarter after Exit	81.0%	81.0%
Median Earnings 2 nd Quarter after Exit	\$9,200	\$9,200
Credential Attainment within 4 Quarters after Exit	79.0%	79.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	50.0%	50.0%
<u>Youth</u>		
Employment or Education Rate 2 nd Quarter after Exit	74.0%	74.0%
Employment or Education Rate 4 th Quarter after Exit	72.5%	72.5%
Median Earnings 2 nd Quarter after Exit	\$3,275	\$3,275
Credential Attainment within 4 Quarters after Exit	72.0%	72.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	50.0%	50.0%

Attachment 2 – Supportive Service Policy

CAREER LINK

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES POLICY AND PROCEDURES

(9.27.2014 Transportation increase #1 –refer to attachment on back of this form)

Transportation increase #2 eff. 1/5/15 to 1/3/2016

Transportation reduction #3 eff. 1/4/2016 to 12/30/2016

Transportation reduction #4 eff. 12/31/16 pay period to 1/12/2018

Transportation increase # 5 eff. 1/13/2018 to present

**SUPPORTIVE SERVICES POLICY AND PROCEDURES UPDATED EFFECTIVE 3/5/18-
PRESENT**

**Transportation increase #6 effective first payroll period 1/7/19 -PRESENT
POLICY**

Supportive Services may be provided to Adults and Dislocated Workers who are registered in Career Services and/or Training related activities/programs. Youth registrants participating in Youth Programs and/or training related activities/programs may be eligible for Supportive Services also. These Supportive Services will only be provided when they are necessary to enable individuals to participate in Title I activities. Career Planning staff must determine the availability of such services through other sources first and attempt to secure funding from those sources before authorizing expenditure of WIOA funds. When other sources of funding are identified, Career Planning staff will refer the individual to the source of that funding to obtain the needed services. Documentation of the referral as well as the response will be placed in the individual's file. When a needed service is not available or the individual does not meet the eligibility for that service, Career Link will provide funding in accordance with the following guidelines **(All attempts of obtaining funding from other sources will be noted on the IWDS System):**

TRANSPORTATION

In-School Youth (Secondary Programs) – Transportation assistance will be provided only for off-campus Title I funded activities and at the rate listed below.

In-school Youth (Post-secondary level), Out-of-School Youth, Adults and Dislocated Workers – Transportation assistance will be available for participants attending post-secondary training, Internships and GED/Career Preparation programs. Exceptions must be approved by the Assistant Director or Executive Director. The amount of assistance for gasoline is based on the documented round trip mileage between the student's home and the classroom training site and/or the Internship site (including the distance to the child care provider when appropriate) for days in attendance only. Round trip mileage will be documented by the Career Planner through use of a map finder website on the Internet (such as Rand McNalley or MapQuest). Payment will be made directly to the student on a bi-weekly schedule upon

receipt of an attendance record signed by the instructor(s)/supervisor and the student at the following “per day” rates:

<u>Round Trip Miles</u>	<u>Rate Per Day</u>
11 – 20	\$6.96
21 – 30	\$10.44
31 – 40	\$13.92
41 – 50	\$17.40
51 – 60	\$20.88
61 – over	\$20.88

Mileage reimbursement rates are based on 60% of the current IRS federal rate calculated at the top end of the mileage range. When a change in the rate occurs it will be applied beginning with the next full payroll period.

In those areas of LWIA #15 where public transportation is available to the participant and can be used as their source of transportation to their training site and child care provider, a bus pass can be purchased for their use. Bus passes are purchased for a monthly time period. The check will be made out to the Bus Transit organization. The client will be responsible for taking the check to the Bus Transit to purchase the pass. Clients will continue to turn in attendance Records in accordance with the CRT classroom training schedule.

AUTOMOBILE REPAIRS

Career Link will only provide assistance for car repairs when the participant is the legal owner of the vehicle and when the car is necessary for transportation to training and it would not be operable or safe without the repairs. Documentation of ownership must be sent to the Fiscal Dept. with the Payment Authorization and a copy placed in the participant’s file. The vehicle must also be properly insured and the participant must have a valid driver’s license. Documentation of these requirements must also be provided to the Fiscal Dept. and placed in the participant’s file. Documentation of need, 3 bids to document reasonable cost and exhaustion of other sources of assistance must be provided to the Fiscal Dept. and placed in the client file. Case notes must be recorded on IWDS concerning all of the above requirements. See Attached Payment Authorization/CSA Classification.

Out-of-School Youth, In-School Youth (who are enrolled in a post-secondary level program) and (1A) Adults will be eligible to receive up to a total of \$300 in **approved** car repairs (there is no longer a one-time limit). This total is effective during the time that the client is enrolled in their training program. This \$300 is to be used for **emergencies only** and must be approved by the Career Planner. It cannot be used and will not be approved for preventive maintenance such as oil changes, tire rotations, etc.

Only those **Dislocated Workers** who also meet eligibility guidelines for Adult (1A) will be eligible to receive car repairs. If a Dislocated client requests car repairs, the Career Planner will be expected to document how the client meets 1A eligibility guidelines (proof of Link Card, etc.). This documentation must be placed in the client’s file and a copy of it should be sent with the request to Fiscal. The remaining requirements for documentation and record keeping are the same as above.

CHILD CARE

In-School Youth (Secondary Program) – Available only for activities that are outside the normal school day and which are required for participation in a WIA funded activity.

In-school Youth (Post Secondary Programs), Out-of-School Youth, Adults and Dislocated Workers – Individuals enrolled in vocational classroom training and/or work experience and who are in need of care for their children while participating in training and who do not have a family member in their home who is able to provide child care, are eligible for support. An effort must be made to obtain other sources of child care assistance prior to approval of any Career Link support. Any participant eligible for assistance shall be offered such assistance unless funds have been exhausted.

PRIORITIES FOR CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE

1. Family members at no cost to Career Link. Career Link will not pay child care assistance to a family member living in the same residence as the participant.
2. Child Care Resource & Referral Network – all participants seeking child care assistance **are required** to apply for CCRRN assistance. If a participant is eligible and receives CCRRN assistance, he/she **will not be eligible** to utilize Career Link monies for co-payments etc.
3. Assistance from DORS for Special Needs Child
4. Child Care provider with sliding fee scale
5. Provider who will accept Career Link fee limits
6. Participant will pay the difference between provider's charges and Career Link's limits

GUIDELINES:

Each childcare provider is required to complete the W-9 Form (Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification). Childcare providers will be sent a 1099 for tax purposes. In addition, A Daycare Provider Acknowledgement Form must be completed. The Career Link Career Planner, Daycare Provider and Career Link Participant must sign this form.

Childcare checks will only be made out to the childcare provider.

Childcare will not be provided for Internet/On-line courses.

Childcare can't be provided for study time.

Once a participant's child reaches the age of 13, Career Link will no longer pay for childcare assistance. Participants with children who have documented disabilities may request continued childcare services. At this time, a review of the situation will be conducted by the Career Planner and Senior Career Planner. All acquired information will be presented to the Program Manager/Assistant Director. After review, a decision will be then be provided to the participant.

Reimbursement is based on the following maximum per child:

	<u>INFANT</u>	<u>TODDLER</u>
Full-Time	\$148.50/Week \$38.50/Day	\$99/Week \$33/Day
Part-Time	\$4.40/Hour	\$3.85/Hour

Three or more days per week @ 5 or more hours per day--authorize weekly rate (maximum or less)

Five or more hours per day for less than 3 days per week--authorize daily rate (maximum or less)

Less than 5 hours per day—authorize hourly rate (maximum or less)

Career Link will pay child care at the regular authorized rate for holidays and breaks no more than 10 days in length in order to hold the child's slot with the provider. We will not pay for extended breaks between semesters that are more than 10 days in length.

Since most breaks between semesters **do** exceed the 10 day limit, Career Link does not usually pay for these breaks. Participants can request consideration for an exception to the policy using the following procedure.

1. If the participant feels that payment of only 10 days or less during a break from school will greatly impact their childcare situation for the next semester, they must contact their Career Planner as soon as possible to discuss the problem.
2. The participant must get written verification from the childcare provider that the payment of 10+ days will hold their childcare slot(s).
3. The Career Planner will base their decision for approval on issues such as the availability of funds, the participant's past record of promptness and cooperation in following childcare procedures, the guarantee from the provider that the payment will hold the child's slot, etc.
4. Approval must be granted **prior** to incurring the childcare expenses.

ASSISTANCE with RENT, MORTGAGE and HOMEOWNER'S INSURANCE
--

In-School Youth – No assistance for rent, mortgage payments or homeowner's insurance will be provided unless the youth is enrolled in a post-secondary level education program. (The participant's name must be on the rental lease, mortgage contract or homeowner's insurance.)

Out of School Youth, Adults and Dislocated Workers - The rental lease, mortgage contract and homeowner's insurance must have the participant's name on the documentation.

UTILITIES ASSISTANCE

Out-of-School Youth, In-school youth (who are currently enrolled in a post-secondary level education program) and Adults – A participant who has established residency as an individual family may receive assistance with payments for electricity, gas, water, telephone or rent. To be eligible the participant must

have exhausted other sources of assistance first. ***See attached Payment Authorization/CSA Classification.***

Out-of-school Youth, In-School Youth (who are enrolled in a post-secondary level program) and (1A) Adults will be eligible for assistance with utilities. The utilities can total up to \$300 during the time period that the client is enrolled in their training program. A “Plan of Action” must be written and added to the client’s IWDS case notes describing how the client plans to pay for their utilities beginning the next month. It should be specific and not simply state that the client will be graduating in 6 months.

Dislocated workers are only eligible to receive these services if they also meet Adult (1A) eligibility. Documentation of the client’s eligibility is the responsibility of the Career Planner. The documentation must be placed in the client’s file and copies must be sent with the request for assistance to the Fiscal Dept. The remaining requirements for record keeping are the same as for other supportive services.

[REFERRALS TO MEDICAL SERVICES]

Referrals to medical services will be made as appropriate. Payment will be made for medical examinations, tests and shots when these are required for participation in a WIA sponsored activity. ***See attached Payment Authorization/CSA Classification.***

[LINKAGES TO COMMUNITY SERVICES]

Referrals will be made to other appropriate fee paid community services when no other funding is available. Career Link will reimburse the service providers 50% of the cost of services ***up to a limit of \$500.***

TRAINING EXPENSES

Career Link will pay for the following Training Expenses:

1. Books **required** for courses in which the participant is enrolled. Courses must be specifically required in the curriculum or can be counted as an “elective. **Used books must be purchased when available.**
2. \$28 worth of necessary school supplies per semester.
3. Uniforms, equipment and materials required for participation in a curriculum. See “Payment Authorization/CSA Classification and Maximum Expenditure Limits” for maximum expenditures for specific items and/or categories. Expenses must be a requirement of the class/curriculum.
4. Review courses, licensing exams, and other tests and exams that are part of a credentialing process included in certain curriculums.

**** Review Courses****

Participants may take one review course in an approved program that will be funded by Career Link. In order for the course to be funded by Career Link, the company’s written Policy on retakes/refunds must be obtained. In the event that a refund is possible, the following procedures must be used.

- a. If participant pays for the course and requests a reimbursement, that reimbursement will only be made when documentation is provided that the participant will not receive a refund from the review course. If the refund is dependent upon passing a test, proof that the test has been passed will be sufficient documentation.
- b. When Career Link pays the company directly for the review course, any refund must be payable to Career Link. The participant will provide documentation of attendance in the review course, as well as documentation of completing the tests and questions for the course. The test will be funded by Career Link only after that documentation is received.

5. Expenses must be a requirement of the class/curriculum.

Exception*National Career Readiness Certification testing fees and other related costs (licensing, etc.) are EXEMPT from the “Required Status” related to class/curriculum.*****

Effective 1/2011

ITA Scholarship Voucher/ ITA Client Service Authorization Purchase Order or ITA Payment Authorization Check Request and Maximum Expenditure Limits

*Limit is the standard fee

DESCRIPTION	CATEGORY	LIMIT
Audiology testing	Emergency Needs	\$275
Automobile insurance	Emergency Needs	\$413
Automobile repairs	Emergency Needs	\$300
Dental care	Emergency Needs	\$300
Housing assistance (rent, mortgage)	Emergency Needs	\$300
Interview clothing	Emergency Needs	\$150
Non-safety eye glasses/exam	Emergency Needs	\$300
Other (requires supervisor approval)	Emergency Needs	N/A
Utilities assistance	Emergency Needs	\$300
Background checks, MVR record and/or fingerprinting	Training Related	\$100
Books, textbooks, packets	Training Related	\$1000
Graduation fee, supplies, i.e., caps, gowns	Training Related	\$600
Immunizations	Training Related	\$500
Licensure or certification costs	Training Related	*
School supplies (per semester)	Training Related	\$ 28
Non-medical supplies required by school	Training Related	\$165
Other (requires supervisor approval)	Training Related	N/A
Other safety apparel or equipment	Training Related	\$110
Prescription safety glasses (must be required)	Training Related	\$440
Printer ink cartridge (one per semester)	Training Related	\$ 25
Psychological testing	Training Related	\$330
Required physicals/exams/drug screens	Training Related	*
Review courses for licensing exams	Training Related	\$550
Safety shoes	Training Related	\$ 80
School medical supplies except stethoscope	Training Related	\$350
Stethoscope	Training Related	\$110

Study carrels (per semester)	Training Related	\$330
Testing fees	Training Related	*
Tools/devices required for training	Training Related	\$1000
Uniforms	Training Related	\$330
Bus Tokens/Passes	Training Related	\$45 mth
National Honor Society Induction	Training Related	\$100

Nursing Uniforms (maximum purchase): 3 tops, 3 bottoms, 1 lab coat and 1 pair of shoes in a 12 month period. For Graduation Ceremony, one top and one bottom may be purchased. Undergarments will not be purchased unless it is a requirement for medical reasons.

Hotel accommodations for NCLEX: Must be approved by the Program Manager/Assistant Director

Basic calculators must be purchased using \$28 supplies money. Only scientific or graphic calculator, etc. can be purchased if it is listed in the course syllabus as a requirement (not required to use \$28 supplies money)

Expenditures in the “Other” category require the approval of the Program Manager/Assistant Director.

Waivers to maximum amounts may be authorized only by the Executive Director.

In many situations alternative funding sources are available and these should be investigated and exhausted first.

File: G Drive: Policies: Supportive Services Policy and Guidelines

LWIA 15 Board approved interim adoption of former LWIA 16 Supportive Services Policy on June 26, 2014. Merge of LWIA 15 and LWIA 16 occurred October 1, 2014.

1st transportation increase was effective: 9/27/14. This particular transportation page has been archived on the “G” Drive under Policies...for Monitors Refer to Executive WIB approval

National Career Readiness Certification “Exception” approved by Executive WIB Board on 10/16/2015.

Executive Committee Approved Supportive Services Chart revisions 2.7.18.

Attachment 3 – Individual Training Account/Priority of Service

The Workforce Innovation Board of Region 15 INDIVIDUAL TRAINING ACCOUNT (ITA) POLICY

I. Background Information from the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and Federal Rules

- A. The “Individual Training Account” is an account established by the designated one-stop operator on behalf of an eligible participant: a dislocated worker, an adult, and out of school youth (age 16-24) enrolled in post-secondary programs.
- ** B. In order to be referred for training services through an individual training account, the adults and dislocated workers must be enrolled in Career Services under WIOA Title 1 from the one-stop operator designated by the Workforce Innovation Board to provide these services.
- ** C. Individuals must select a program of training services that is directly linked to the employment opportunities in the local area or in the area to which the individual is willing to relocate. It must be an occupation that has been determined to be in a sector of the economy in the applicant’s local area that has a high potential for sustained demand or growth.
- ** D. The individual who seeks training services and who is eligible may, in consultation with the designated Career Planner, select an eligible program and training provider from the approved list. The guidance provided by the Career Planner will be done in a manner that maximizes consumer choice in the selection of the training provider and program.
- ** E. Eligible training providers are those entities determined to be eligible through procedures described in WIOA and established by the Governor and the local Workforce Innovation Board.
- F. The Workforce Innovation Board may develop initial and subsequent eligibility standards beyond the state policy.

II. Policy: Initial and Subsequent Training Provider Eligibility

- A. The Workforce Innovation Board will adhere to the Governor’s Training Provider Eligibility Demand Occupation List for initial and subsequent eligibility.
- B. In addition to the State’s Demand Occupation List, all curriculums for which eligibility is being sought must meet the growth index established by the LWIB of Region 15. This growth index represents occupations, which have been determined to lead to long-term, high-wage employment.

- C. Training Providers located within the geographical boundaries of LWDA 15, will be certified through the Internet-based application and procedures developed by the state. Providers will be allowed to apply and to be certified on a continuous basis. Thus there will be no limitations on certification periods.
- D. In accordance with current State Policy, Training Providers located outside of LWDA 15's geographical boundaries will need to apply for eligibility to the LWDA in which they are geographically located. To receive ITA funds from LWDA 15, these providers will need to complete the following process:
 - 1. Completion of an Individual Referral Agreement with LWDA 15.
 - 2. Submittal of a copy of the course catalog description associated with the curriculum for which funding is being sought.
 - 3. Submittal of Cost of Attendance Information for distribution of PELL Grants.
- E. The Workforce Innovation Board and the one-stop operators designated to implement ITA policies and procedures, will widely disseminate information concerning the procedures for the Internet-based application for training providers.
- F. The employees of the United Workforce Development Board will be authorized to verify the Training Provider Eligibility process on behalf of the Workforce Innovation Board and with the Training Provider.
- G. Providers will be approved only following reference checks and verification of authenticity of the program of courses and the institution.
- H. The Workforce Innovation Board reserves the right to deny eligibility of a training Provider and/or course of study based on the board's criteria or lack of suitable references or evidence of fraudulent business practices.
- I. The LWIB will use the approved Training Provider list for all ITAs through WIOA Title I-B, and any other federal or state funded training resources. The WIB will attempt to assist these providers in applying to join the list of certified Training Providers.
- J. Other one-stop partners will be encouraged to use the LWIB's Eligibility Training Provider list when approving courses of education and training for individuals through their funding sources.

III. Policy: Individual Training Accounts

- A. Training must be in occupations identified by the local LWIB as growth occupations and with providers approved through the State's Training Provider Certification process.
- B. The training course or program must be likely to result in employment in the geographic area in which the prospective trainee intends to reside upon training

completion.

- C. The training course or program, even though on the state list, must also meet the Workforce Innovation Board's performance standards and additional criteria.
- D. The prospective trainee must have the skills and qualifications to succeed in the training program based on the development of an in-depth objective assessment and an individual service plan by the Career Link Career Planner.
- E. Trainees should generally attend "full-time" (as defined by the training provider) and programs should not exceed 104 weeks (two years). Exceptions to this policy may be approved on a case-by-case basis. Written requests should include an explanation of the necessity for the exception and evidence that financial support is available during the extended training period.
- F. Individuals seeking an ITA must have a specific occupational goal. The course of study must be occupation-specific and result in the attainment of a credential. No ITA funds shall be provided for general academic programs.
- G. Individuals will be required to apply for other forms of financial aid. Career Link funds will not be withheld while the individual is awaiting determination of eligibility for other financial aid. The Career Link staff will use the training provider's "cost of attendance" to identify the total amount of resources needed. The total funds from financial aid will not exceed this cost of attendance. The individual may be allowed to use Pell grant funds to assist with living expenses while using other sources of financial aid and the ITA for tuition and fees. The Career Link Staff will be authorized to change this policy in the event of ITA fund shortages.
- H. Individuals who are delinquent in repaying a student loan will not be automatically disqualified from being considered for an ITA but must develop and implement a repayment plan with the Career Link career planner.
- I. The ITA funds of Workforce Region 15 will prioritize Adult services as follows:
 - 1. Residents of Region 15 who are economically disadvantaged, or basic skills deficient, and Veterans.
 - 2. Residents of Region 15 who are economically disadvantaged or basic skills deficient and Non-Veterans.
 - 3. Residents of Region 15 who are not economically disadvantaged or not basic skills deficient but are Veterans.
 - 4. Residents of Region 15 who are not economically disadvantaged or basic skills deficient and are Non-Veterans
 - 5. Non-Residents of Region 15 who are economically disadvantaged or basic skills deficient and Veterans
 - 6. Non-Residents of Region 15 who are economically disadvantaged or basic skills deficient and Non-Veterans

7. Non-Residents of Region 15 who are non-economically disadvantaged not basic skills deficient and are Veterans
8. Non-Residents of Region 15 who are non-economically disadvantaged non-basic skills deficient and are Non-Veterans

The ITA funds of Workforce Region 15 will prioritize Out of School and In-school Youth services as defined by WIOA Law and as follows:

If other barrier(s) for out of school youth such as drop out, parent, etc. aren't met, the following criteria will be utilized:

1. Economically disadvantaged residents who are Veterans
2. Economically disadvantaged residents who are Non-Veterans
3. Economically disadvantaged Non-Residents who are Veterans
4. Economically disadvantaged Non-Residents who are Non-Veterans

The ITA funds of Workforce Region 15 will prioritize Dislocated Worker services as follows:

1. Residents who are Veterans
2. Residents who are Non-Veterans
3. Non-Residents who are Veterans
4. Non-Residents who are Non-Veterans

- J. ITAs will be awarded per semester, quarter, or for uninterrupted training coursework. Subsequent to the issuance of the first ITA, additional ITAs (if needed) will be awarded only for continuing in the curriculum at the educational or training institution identified in the customer's plan, unless there is mutual agreement by the customer and the Career Link Career Planner that a different plan is justifiable. The maximum total amount of all ITAs per individual will be limited to \$22,000. This dollar limitation will include tuition and published fees as outlined in the institution's course catalog and made available to the general public. It will, however, exclude required books, supplies and support services.
- K. The Career Link Staff will be authorized to adjust the ITA amount if funding is available or for special grant funds. Approval is required by the Program Manager or Assistant Program Manager.
- L. Career Link will only pay "in-district" tuition rates at Community Colleges. Individuals wishing to attend a Community College outside of their district will be responsible for applying to the Community College District of their residence for payment of the "out-of-district" portion of the tuition and fees. Exceptions to this policy may be approved on a case-by-case basis.
- M. Support services may be provided during the period of an ITA per separate policy. Resources other than WIOA, such as funds available through the Illinois Department of Human Services, will be accessed for these support services as appropriate.

- N. Adults who become employed but continue to earn wages that are determined not to meet the “self-sufficiency standard” may be eligible for an ITA if their Individual Employment Plan indicates a training need or such need is subsequently identified by the individual and/or the employer. (See the LWIB’s Self-sufficiency Standard) In the event of fund shortages, the Workforce Innovation Board may authorize the Staff to deny these ITAs.
- O. Dislocated Workers who become employed may be eligible to receive an ITA if they are employed in an occupation that pays less than 80% of their previous earning prior to their layoff and if their Individual Employment Plan indicates a training need or such need is subsequently identified by the individual and/or the employer. The look-back period for a Dislocated Worker is 4 years from the date of application. In the event of fund shortages, the Workforce Innovation Board may authorize the staff to deny ITAs for all Dislocated Workers who have been re-employed.
- P. An ITA or voucher may be denied if any of the above requirements are not met. Additional reasons for denial are as follows:
 - Training funds are limited or exhausted;
 - The individual’s ITA funding limit has been reached;
 - The individual cannot demonstrate that he/she has the financial resources to complete the training;
 - The Training Provider does not accept the trainee;
 - The trainee attempts to make changes to the voucher without the signature of their UWDB case manager; or,
The Training Provider and/or the trainee refuses to comply with reasonable Career Link or, as managing agency, LWIB requirements and conditions.

IV. Changes and Additions to These Policies

- A. This policy will remain in effect until it is revised or terminated.
- B. The Career Link staff will be authorized to revise this policy or implement additional policies necessary for the timely and effective management of ITAs. If it is found that the Staff is required to make significant changes or additions, the Workforce Innovation Board will review and approve the revised ITA policy. Policy reviews will be done annually or as needed.
- C. The Career Link Staff and the Workforce Innovation Board, as managing agency, will maintain suitable implementation procedures for effective ITA policy deployment.

Changes effective 6/1/2016: Training Certification, Basic Skills Deficiency, etc. added directly in criteria ranking.

Change effective May 23, 2018: Section III-Letter J ITA amount increase from \$15,000 to \$22,000. Approved by Executive WIB Board

Attachment 4

Initial and Subsequent Training Provider Certification

- A. The Workforce Investment Board will adhere to the Governor's Training Provider Certification Standards for initial and subsequent eligibility.
- B. In addition to the State's standards, all curriculum for which certification is being sought must meet the growth index established by the LWIB of Region 15. This growth index represents occupations which have been determined to lead to long-term, high-wage employment.
- C. Training Providers located within the geographical boundaries of LWIA15, will be certified through the Internet-based application and procedures developed by the state. Providers will be allowed to apply and to be certified on a continuous basis. Thus there will be no limitations on certification periods.
- D. In accordance with current State Policy, Training Providers located outside of LWIA 15's geographical boundaries will need to apply for certification to the LWIA in which they are geographically located. To receive ITA funds from LWIA 15, these providers will need to complete the following process:
 - 1. Completion of an Individual Referral Agreement with LWIA 15.
 - 2. Submittal of a copy of the course catalog description associated with the curriculum for which funding is being sought.
 - 3. Submittal of Cost of Attendance Information for distribution of PELL Grants.
- E. The Workforce Investment Board and the one-stop operators designated to implement ITA policies and procedures, will widely disseminate information concerning the procedures for the Internet-based application for training providers.
- F. The employees of the United Workforce Development Board will be authorized to verify the Training Provider Certification process on behalf of the Workforce Investment Board and with the Training Provider.
- G. Providers will be approved only following reference checks and verification of authenticity of the program of courses and the institution.
- H. The Workforce Investment Board reserves the right to deny certification of a training Provider and/or course of study based on the board's criteria or lack of suitable references or evidence of fraudulent business practices.
- I. The WIB will use the approved Training Provider list for all ITAs through WIA Title I-B, and any other federal or state funded training resources. The WIB will attempt to assist these providers in applying to join the list of certified Training Providers.
- J. Other one-stop partners will be encouraged to use the WIB's certified Training Provider list when approving courses of education and training for individuals through their funding

sources.

Revised and approved by the Workforce Investment Board of Region 16 on September 19, 2012.

Change from LWIA 16 to LWIA 15– effective October 1, 2014

Attachment 5 – Local Procurement Policy
UNITED WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD, INC.
CAREER LINK

LOCAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD 15

PROCUREMENT SYSTEM

Adopted June 25, 1991

Revised May, 1996

Revised January, 1997

Revised October 1, 2002

Revised July 1, 2011

Revised May 1, 2013

Revised July 1, 2015

Revised July 1, 2016

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
Code of Conduct	1
UWDB-CAREER LINK Procedures.....	2
General Procedures and Principles [which apply to all procurements]	2
Recipient (UWDB-CAREER LINK) Responsibilities	2
Competition.....	3
Procurement Procedures- Solicitations for Goods and Services.....	3
Cost and Price Analysis	4
Procurement Records	4
Requirements for Selection of Contractors	5
Types of Procurement	5
Micro Purchases.....	5
Small Purchases	5
Sealed Bids (Formal Advertising)	5
Competitive Proposals	6
Noncompetitive Proposals.....	6
Procurement for Program Contracts and Client Costs.....	7
Purchases By/For Participants	7
Providers/Contractors Lists	7
Contracts	7
Training Programs - OJT & Tuition Based Payments	8
Affirmative Action	8

INTRODUCTION

The **United Workforce Development Board, Inc., Career Link**, acting as a trustee of public funds, has an obligation to grant opportunities for all interested parties to provide goods and services. It also has a responsibility to secure goods and services with the most quality at the lowest price.

This policy applies to the purchase of any item or service despite purpose, amount, or for whom, and will follow the requirements of the Workforce Innovations and Opportunities Act, implementing regulations, and the Uniform Guidance outlined at 2 CFR 200 and the US Department of Labor exceptions outlined at 2 CFR 2900. All costs for goods or services purchased must meet the test of being reasonable, necessary, and allocable to WIOA.

CODE OF CONDUCT

All United Workforce Development Board, Inc. Members and UWDB staff shall abide the following code of conduct.

No Board member shall participate in the selection or in the award of a contract supported by grant funds if a conflict of interest, real or apparent, is involved. A board member has the responsibility to report when a potential conflict of interest exists. He or she may declare the conflict or ask the Chair to rule on the application of the Code of Conduct.

A conflict of interest exists when an organization submits a bid and a Board member or a family member, as defined below, is employed by that organization or has a financial interest in that organization. When such a conflict of interest exists, either real or apparent, the Board member shall be excused from the meeting and shall not take part in discussions, make a motion, second a motion, rate any proposal or vote on the selection of bidders. The chair shall rule on the application of the Code of Conduct.

Family members are defined as: father, mother, brother, sister, son, daughter, spouse, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, step parent, stepchild, mother-in-law, father-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, or sister-in-law.

No Board member shall accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from current or potential providers or vendors.

Board members who violate the Code of Conduct can be removed from the Board in accordance with the Bylaws regarding removal from office.

All provisions also apply to staff. Staff members who have a conflict of interest cannot participate in the selection process, including staff discussions of subcontractors, review and rating of proposals, or negotiation of contracts.

UWDB-CAREER LINK PROCEDURES

The Fiscal Department and Technical Specialist/Planner (herein after referred to as Planner) are responsible for administering and supervising the procurement system. Questions regarding procurement for training programs should be addressed to the Planner. Questions regarding all other purchases must be directed to the Fiscal Department.

All procurement covered by this policy will be authorized by a signed Contract, Agreement, Purchase Order, Payment Authorization, or Client Services Authorization. Only the Executive Director and the Assistant Director are signatories for contracts, agreements, and purchase orders. Staff positions listed in the “Purchases By/For Participants” section may approve Payment Authorizations and Client Service Authorizations.

The Planner will procure and prepare all training program contracts.

Contracts for training programs must be approved by the Workforce Innovations Board. The Planner will receive the original and send the original to the Fiscal Department.

The Executive Director or Assistant Director must approve all purchases except “Purchases By/For Participants” (see page 7). A Purchase Order will be completed by the appropriate staff and approved by the Executive Director or Assistant Director prior to placing the order. Orders place through the internet should have a confirming order sent or a copy printed off of the screen. The Purchase Order must be sent to the Fiscal Department.

A Purchase Order will be prepared for all purchases except those relating to a contract or participant costs.

Upon receipt of goods, a packing slip or other proof of receipt should be signed and dated by the person accepting the goods. All documentation must be sent to the Fiscal Department.

GENERAL PROCEDURES AND PRINCIPLES

These general procedures apply to all procurement regardless of type.

Recipient (UWDB-CAREER LINK) responsibilities

The standards contained in this section do not relieve the recipient of the contractual responsibilities arising under its contract(s). The recipient is the responsible authority without recourse to DOL regarding the settlement and satisfaction of all contractual and administrative issues arising out of procurements entered into in support of an award or other agreement. This includes disputes, claims, protests of award, source evaluation or other matters of a contractual nature. Matters concerning violation of statute are to be referred to such Federal, State or local authority as may have proper jurisdiction.

Grantees (State of Illinois) and subgrantees (UWDB) will have protest procedures to handle and resolve disputes relating to their procurements and shall in all instances disclose information regarding the protest to the awarding agency. A protestor must exhaust all administrative remedies with the grantee and

subgrantee before pursuing a protest with the Federal agency. Reviews of protests by the Federal agency will be limited to: (i) Violations of Federal law or regulations and the standards of this section (violations of State or local law will be under the jurisdiction of State or local authorities) and (ii) Violations of the grantee's or subgrantee's protest procedures for failure to review a complaint or protest. Protests received by the Federal agency other than those specified above will be referred to the grantee or subgrantee. Protests will be made in writing to the Executive Director or Assistant Director. If neither can resolve the dispute, then the protest will go before the Workforce Innovation Board. If protests cannot be resolved at that level, further provisions in the regulations apply.

Competition

All procurement transactions shall be conducted in a manner to provide, to the maximum extent, practical, open and free competition. The recipient shall be alert to organizational conflicts of interest as well as noncompetitive practices among contractors that may restrict or eliminate competition or otherwise restrain trade. In order to ensure objective contractor performance and eliminate unfair competitive advantage, contractors that develop or draft specification requirements, statements of work, invitations for bids and/or requests for proposals shall be excluded from competing for such procurements. Awards shall be made to the bidder or offeror whose bid or offer is responsive to the solicitation and is advantageous to the recipient, price, quality and other factors considered. Solicitations shall clearly set forth all requirements that the bidder or offeror shall fulfill in order for the bid or offer to be evaluated by the recipient. Any and all bids or offers may be rejected when it is in the recipient's (UWDB) interest to do so."

Competition may not be restricted or eliminated by:

- (i) placing unreasonable requirements on firms in order for them to qualify to do business,
- (ii) requiring unnecessary experience and excessive bonding,
- (iii) Noncompetitive pricing practices between firms or between affiliated companies,
- (iv) non-competitive awards to consultants who are on retainer contracts,
- (v) Organizational conflicts of interest,
- (vi) specifying only a "brand name" product instead of allowing "an equal" product to be offered and describing the performance of other relevant requirements of the procurement, and
- (vii) any arbitrary action in the procurement process.
- (viii) Grantees and subgrantees [UWDB] will conduct procurements in a manner that prohibits the use of statutorily or administratively imposed in-state or local geographical preferences in the evaluation of bids or proposals, except in those cases where applicable federal statutes expressly mandate or encourage geographic preference.

Procurement procedures - Solicitations for goods and services

- (1) Recipients shall avoid purchasing unnecessary items.
- (2) Where appropriate, an analysis shall be made of lease and purchase alternatives to determine which would be the most economical and practical procurement for the Federal Government.
- (3) Solicitations for goods and services shall provide for all of the following:
 - (i) A clear and accurate description of the technical requirements for the material, product or service to be procured. In competitive procurements, such a description shall not contain features which unduly restrict competition.

- (ii) Requirements which the bidder/offeror must fulfill and all other factors to be used in evaluating bids or proposals.
- (iii) A description, whenever practicable, of technical requirements in terms of functions to be performed or performance required, including the range of acceptable characteristics or minimum acceptable standards.
- (iv) The specific features of 'brand name or equal' descriptions that bidders are required to meet when such items are included in the solicitation.
- (v) The acceptance to the extent practicable and economically feasible of products and services dimensioned in the metric system of measurement.
- (vi) Preference, to the extent practicable and economically feasible for products and services that conserve natural resources and protect the environment and are energy efficient."

Nonexpendable personal property, acquired either through purchase or lease-purchase, with a unit purchase price of \$5,000 or more shall require prior approval from Department of Commerce.

- (5) To foster greater economy and efficiency, grantees and subgrantees are encouraged to enter into State and local intergovernmental agreements for procurement or use of common goods and services.
- (6) Grantees and subgrantees are encouraged to use Federal excess and surplus property in lieu of purchasing new equipment and property whenever such use is feasible and reduces project costs.

Cost and Price Analysis

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

A cost analysis will be necessary when adequate price competition is lacking, and for sole source procurements, including contract modifications or change orders, unless price reasonableness can be established on the basis of a catalog or market price of a commercial product sold in substantial quantities to the general public or based on prices set by law or regulation.

Procurement records

Grantees and Subgrantees will maintain records sufficient to detail the significant history of procurement. These records will include, but are not necessarily limited to the following: rationale for the method of procurement, selection of contract type, contractor selection or rejection, and the basis for the contractor price. Additionally, certifications of publication or tear sheets are needed for RFP's or Sealed Bid procurements.

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

- (a) basis for contractor selection,
- (b) Justification for lack of competition when competitive bids or offers are not obtained, and

(c) basis for award cost or price.

The above standards will apply to all procurements.

Requirements for Selection of Contractors

Contracts shall be made only with responsible contractors who possess the potential ability to perform successfully under the terms and conditions of the proposed procurement. Consideration shall be given to such matters as contractor integrity, record of past performance, financial and technical resources or accessibility to other necessary resources. In certain circumstances, contracts with certain parties are restricted by agencies' implementation of 'Debarment and Suspension' [barred from receiving federal funds]

TYPES OF PROCUREMENT

The following methods are available for the acquisition of goods, services, and training programs:

1. Micro Purchases
2. Small Purchases
3. Sealed Bids (Formal Advertising)
4. Competitive Proposals
5. Noncompetitive Proposals

1. Micro Purchases:

Micro Purchases are purchases with an aggregate dollar amount less than \$3,000. These purchases do not require price quotes. Vendor selection should be distributed equitably among qualified suppliers in an effort to promote competition.

2. Small Purchases:

Small purchase procedures are those relatively simple and informal procurement methods for securing services, supplies, or other property that do not cost more than the simplified acquisition threshold] ... price or rate quotations shall be obtained from an adequate number of qualified sources.”) Staff shall anticipate total purchases in the aggregate with a single vendor during the same fiscal year. If a future purchase exceeds the dollar limitation, an alternate method must be used.

3) Sealed Bids (Formal Advertising):

Bids are publicly solicited and a firm-fixed price contract (lump sum or unit price) is awarded to the responsible bidder whose bid, conforming with all the material terms and conditions of the invitation for bids, is the lowest in price. (i). In order for sealed bids to be feasible, the following conditions should be present: (A) a complete, adequate, and realistic specification or purchase description is available; (B) Two or more responsible bidders are willing and able to compete effectively for the business; and (C) The procurement lends itself to a firm fixed price contract and the selection of the successful bidder can be made principally on the basis of price.

(ii) If sealed bids are used, the following requirements apply: (A) The invitation for bids will be publicly advertised and bids shall be solicited from an adequate number of known suppliers, providing them

sufficient time prior to the date set for opening the bids; (B) The invitation for bids, which will include any specifications and pertinent attachments, shall define the items or services in order for the bidder to properly respond; (C) All bids will be publicly opened at the time or place prescribed in the invitation for bids; (D) A firm fixed-price contract award will be made in writing to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder. Where specified in bidding documents, factors such as discounts, transportation costs, and life cycle costs shall be considered in determining which bid is lowest. Payment discounts will only be used to determine the low bid when prior experience indicates that such discounts are usually taken advantage of; and (E) Any or all bids may be rejected if there is a sound documented reason.

4. Competitive Proposals:

The technique of competitive proposals is normally conducted with more than one source submitting an offer, and either a fixed-price or cost-reimbursement type contract is awarded. It is generally used when conditions are not appropriate for the use of sealed bids. If this method is used, the following requirements apply:

- (i) Requests for proposals will be publicized and identify all evaluation factors and their relative importance. Any response to publicized requests for proposals shall be honored to the maximum extent practical;
- (ii) Proposals will be solicited from an adequate number of qualified sources;
- (iii) Grantees and subgrantees will have a method for conducting technical evaluations of the proposals received and for selecting awardees;
- (iv) Awards will be made to the responsible firm whose proposal is most advantageous to the program, with price and other factors considered.

For all procurements excluding contracts, the successful bid will be presented to the Executive Director or Assistant Director. If the Executive Director or Assistant Director rejects the bid, either may conduct their own review/rating and cost/price analysis or may request the staff to re-rate the proposals. All proposals may be rejected. The award decision cannot be changed without re-rating the proposals using the published criteria.

The competitive proposal procedure is suited for procuring contracts. Upon the direction of the Workforce Innovation Board, a Request for Proposal (RFP) packet will be prepared and will be publicized through the media and the providers/contractors list. On receipt of bids, appropriate staff will rate the proposals and conduct a cost/price analysis. The successful bid will be presented to the Workforce Innovation Board stating the reasons for the award.

5. Noncompetitive Proposals:

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

- A) The item is available only from a single source.
- B) The public exigency or emergency for the requirement will not permit a delay resulting from competitive solicitation.
- C) The awarding agency [Department of Commerce] authorizes noncompetitive proposals [or performs the procurement]; or
- D) After solicitation of a number of sources, competition is determined inadequate.

Sole source procurements are rare; a failure to plan for needs is not an emergency purchase.

PROCUREMENT FOR PROGRAM CONTRACTS AND CLIENT COSTS

Purchases By/For Participants

Authorizing documents shall be a Payment Authorization or Client Services Authorization. Staff authorized to approve these purchases shall be the Executive Director or Assistant Director, the Program Manager, Senior Career Planner, and the Career Planners.

When participants purchase items not procured by staff, the receipt from the vendor and an approved Payment Authorization shall be submitted to the Fiscal Department before reimbursements will be made.

If payment is to be made to the vendor, a Client Services Authorization (C.S.A.) will be prepared. The yellow copy will be taken or sent to the vendor when the purchase is made. The white copy shall be sent to the Fiscal Department. Upon receipt of the invoice, the Fiscal Department will inform the Career Planner of the total purchase amount.

Providers/Contractors List

The Planner shall maintain a list of potential providers/contractors who have expressed an interest, in writing, in being considered for awards to operate training programs. These providers/contractors shall be sent Requests for Proposals in the areas of service for which they wish to be considered when awards are to be made.

Contracts

The type of procuring instruments used (e.g., fixed price contracts, cost reimbursable contracts, purchase orders, and incentive contracts) shall be determined by the recipient but shall be appropriate for the particular procurement and for promoting the best interest of the program or project involved. The “cost-plus-a-percentage-of-cost” or “percentage of construction cost” methods of contracting shall not be used.

The competitive proposal procedure is suited for procuring contracts. Other procedures may be used as appropriate.

Contracts may be extended for two subsequent years when such provision has been included in a Request for Proposal and a subsequent contract.

Grantees and subgrantees will maintain a contract administration system which ensures that contractors perform in accordance with the terms, conditions, and specifications of their contracts or purchase orders.

Contract Profit

All procurement contracts and other transactions between Local Boards and units of State or local governments must be conducted only on a cost reimbursement basis. No provision for profit is allowed.

Training Programs

Sole source awards for OJT will be conducted by the Senior Career Planners or the Business Service Representative when an employer/employee relationship exists between the participant and the employer.

Tuition-based payments are limited to providers who have been certified by the appropriate certifying agency of the State of Illinois and that are private, business, or vocational schools under the Vocational School Act or private or public education agencies. The price must be that which is published in the school catalog.

Class-sized or other special programs may be procured similarly to regular training programs. The price would be agreed upon by the training provider and UWDB by contract.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Positive efforts shall be made by recipients to utilize small businesses, minority-owned firms, and women's business enterprises whenever possible. Recipients of Federal awards shall take all of the following steps to further this goal:

- (1) Ensure that small businesses, minority-owned firms, and women's business enterprises are used to the fullest extent practicable.
- (2) Make information on forthcoming opportunities available and arrange time frames for purchases and contracts to encourage and facilitate participation by small businesses, minority-owned firms, and women's business enterprises.
- (3) Consider in the contract process whether firms competing for larger contracts intend to subcontract with small businesses, minority-owned firms, and women's business enterprises.
- (4) Encourage contracting with consortiums of small businesses, minority owned firms and women's business enterprises when a contract is too large for one of these firms to handle individually,
- (5) Use the services and assistance, as appropriate, of such organizations as the Small Business Administration, the Department of Commerce's Minority Business Development Agency, and DOL's Office of Small Business and Minority Affairs in the solicitation and utilization of small businesses, minority-owned firms and women's business enterprises.