

Local Plan

Workforce Development Board of Rock Island, Henry & Mercer Counties

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INTRODUCTION

Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act Planning Structure

The Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA), signed into law in July 2014, outlines how the core programs of federal investment in the areas of employment and training will be coordinated. To that end, WIOA requires each state to develop four-year strategies in the form of a Unified State Plan covering all core programs. The Unified State Plan informs the regional and local plans that, in the State of Illinois, take place at the Economic Development Region (EDR) and Local Workforce Area (LWA) levels.

Rock Island, Henry & Mercer Counties (LWA 13) is part of the Northeast Region of Illinois (EDR 6.) The Rock Island, Henry & Mercer Counties Workforce Innovation Board (“Local Board”), in conjunction with the WIOA required partners and other workforce system stakeholders throughout the local workforce area, developed a four-year local plan per the guidance of the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO.) The local plan is aligned with the Unified State Plan and the regional plan developed by all WIOA partners in EDR 6. (The regional plan for EDR 6 contains Chapters 1-3 of the Regional & Local Planning Guide provided by DCEO in October 2023; the local plan in the pages to follow contains Chapters 4-6.)

Economy and Industry Sectors:

The Local Workforce Area 13 consists of the following ten counties: Rock Island, Henry and Mercer counties.

The Economy and Workforce in LWIA 13 is embedded with a mixture of industry and occupation sectors separated by those with predominantly high locations quotients (LQ), those with favorable projected growth patterns, and those where the need to replace retiring or leaving workers indicates a need for focus.

Targeted Industries:

Manufacturing, Transportation/Distribution/Logistics, Agriculture, Health, Professional and Business Services, Construction, IT, Self-Employed, and Leisure/Hospitality.

High Impact Industries:

Manufacturing, Health, Professional and Business Services (including IT), and Construction.

CHAPTER 4: OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES

This chapter provides an overview of all the operating systems and policies within the Local Workforce Innovation Areas (LWIAs). LWIAs must incorporate key documents into the plan that describe the one-stop delivery system

and the services that are provided by the workforce partners. LWIAs are required to provide updated information and analysis regarding the challenges and opportunities that are associated with the local operating system and policies.

A. Coordination of Planning Requirements Coordination of Planning Requirements: The plan will incorporate the Memorandum of Understanding and Service Integration Action Plan:

The Local Workforce Innovation Area 6 Memorandum of Understanding (Attachment A) 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.

This umbrella Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) describes the commitment of the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) Required Partners (“Partners”) to provide integrated delivery of federally funded workforce services in Local Workforce Innovation Area (LWIA) 13 at the sole comprehensive One-Stop Center in that area- American Job Center Rock Island, IL. The MOU defines the workforce services each Partner will provide in LWIA 13, the methods each Partner will use to provide these services, and the roles and responsibilities of all Partners related to service delivery. All Partners are committed to offering their specific job seeker and/or business programs at the American Job Center, including a comprehensive range of job search, employment, business, and training-related services. These offerings are described in the Local Service Matrix (Appendix F to the MOU.) When combined, each Partner’s contributions to the programming available at center yield one cohesive, full-service system for job seekers and businesses that allows for the removal of barriers from successful job search, career development, business development, recruiting strategies, etc. LWIA 13 is consistently striving for enhanced cohesiveness of the one-stop system and improved service integration amongst all Partners.

The Local Workforce Innovation Area 13 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). Information from the initial Service Integration Action Plan is included below. Any subsequent modifications to the Service Integration Action Plan are incorporated by reference into this plan.

This plan, also described in the MOU, describes the goals and strategies jointly agreed upon by all Partners to enhance service coordination and integration. For the term of this Local Plan, goals include:

1. Cross-training of One Stop Staff
2. Improved communication across Partners
3. Staff collaboration on customer assessments through the referral process.
4. The Local Workforce Innovation Area 13 Memorandum of Understanding (attachment A) provides a description of the one-stop delivery system, and other information that is essential.

B. Provide a copy of the following local policies and agreements:

Attachment B includes the following:

Chief Elected Official (CEO) Functions and Agreement Between Multiple Chief Elected Officials

- Chief Elected Official Delegation of Authority and Acknowledgment of Financial Liability
- Local Workforce Innovation Board (LWIB) Certification and Recertification Requirements
- One-Stop Operator Procurement
- Career Planning
- General Follow-Up Services
- Selective Service Registration Requirements
- Youth Eligibility
- Services Priorities
- Veterans' Priority of Service Requirements
- Individual Training Accounts
- On-the Job Training
- Incumbent Worker Training
- Work Experience and Transitional Jobs
- Training Provider and Training Program Eligibility – Eligible Training Provider List
- Supportive Services
- Privacy and Security (Personally Identifiable Information)
- Property Control for Property Purchases with WIOA Funds
- Complaint and Grievance Procedures

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

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

LWIA 13 is in process reviewing both external referral software and an internal communication format through our website to create the sharing of referral information. While the external software is excellent it is expensive and may be out of our ability to obtain due to financial restriction. Alternatively, several local areas are utilizing an email referral system through their website that we are currently investigating for our own use. Currently we are using technology for case management beyond individualized agency software by creating a database through Microsoft Excel that houses client referral information to be accessible throughout WIOA program providers. It is our hope that this excel datasheet will be an intricate form of communication in which a client's individualized WIOA services and barriers are documented. Additionally, although a simplistic form of technology, partners have found contacting one another via the telephone makes for better case management, especially in terms of troubleshooting barriers. Prior to this practice, partners would refer clients to a specific agency by directing the client towards independent contact to such agencies. By collaboration during both Front-line staff meetings and Joint Service Committee meetings, partner leadership professionals agree to guide staff towards conducting client outreach by use of telephone so that agency professionals are aware of client barriers to successful completion of WIOA services. Although all agencies have case management systems, it will be the responsibility of the agency funding WIOA services to conduct thorough case management. Including insuring clients receive services. This idea of initiating referrals may provide clients with in-depth case management that is deemed necessary for program completion, resulting in an upturn of qualifying employees within the workforce. Referral and Case management processes will

continue to develop. Additionally, the local area has completed projects to simplify and expedite the referral process including: the development of a common Release of Information form and a common intake form.

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

Every Tuesday at 9 a.m. information sessions are held at the American Job Center. All partners in our local workforce area are invited to participate. We are currently working to develop a short video information session established on our website in a power point platform that will provide overall services of all partners which will include both web links to their respective websites and local contact information.

One-Stop Operator recently built a website that will give potential clients access to a pre-recorded information session. This information session will be a step in the online application request process.

Title I can provide virtual information sessions to potential clients on an as needed basis, by request.

Additionally, the One Stop Operator consortium recognizes the need to meet people where they are. Currently, iDES are coordinating to have an Employment Service Specialist available in the iDHS offices to provide information and offer services. Discussions with local libraries are taking place currently to develop a consistent schedule to put on a resource fair to help make the community aware of options and services the partners can provide.

Although a simplistic form of technology, partners have found contacting one another via the telephone makes for better case management, especially in terms of troubleshooting barriers. Prior to this practice, partners would refer clients to a specific agency by directing the client towards independent contact to such agencies. By collaboration during both Front-line staff meetings and Joint Service Committee meetings, partner leadership professionals agree to guide staff towards conducting client outreach by use of telephone so that agency professionals are aware of client barriers to successful completion of WIOA services. Although all agencies have case management systems, it will be the responsibility of the agency funding WIOA services to conduct thorough case management. Including insuring clients receive services. This idea of initiating referrals may provide clients with in-depth case management that is deemed necessary for program completion, resulting in an upturn of qualifying employees within the workforce. Referral and Case management processes will continue to develop.

The American Job Center worked in partnership with the Safer Foundation to host a resource fair in September 2023 in the parking lot at the American Job Center. There were eight agencies and/or schools participating in this event and a food truck. Channel 8 (ABC) news came to promote the event with segments in their broadcasts. The results were a showing of 112 people visiting the event and gathered for information. We intend to continue this activity in 2024.

3. How the Local Board will facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system, including in remote areas, using technology and other means (§ 679.560(b)(5)(ii)).

Access to partner services within the physical location of the American Job Center are provided in a number of ways including direct phone line links to partners with dedicated staff available during business hours, direct phone calls to partners to establish contact, and digital meeting availability through platforms, such as WebEx, teams, and zoom. Partners providing direct linkage access to services, as described in the MOU, should experience comparable customer service and experience to having a staff member on-site. Direct linkages at One Stop consist of direct phone lines manned by staff of the representative agency who are prepared to provide information and access to service immediately via phone.

LIWA 13's One Stop Operator Consortium continues to build upon and create a mobile-friendly website to the one-stop delivery system for staff assisted services, orientations, and self-assisted services including, but not limited to:

- ✦ Access to job listings
- ✦ Career exploration and career pathway tools
- ✦ Profiles of local employer partners who are hiring
- ✦ Tips and resources on resume writing, interviewing, negotiating, and job retention
- ✦ Specialized information for veterans and individuals with disabilities
- ✦ Comprehensive business services information for employers
- ✦ Needs assessment tool for employers
- ✦ Links to all Partner websites as well as Illinois WorkNet and Illinois JobLink.

D. 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 (§ 679.560(b)(1)(ii)):

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

LWIA 13 Workforce Development Board (WDB) recognizes that special populations may endure an increase volume of barriers when seeking advanced employment and/or training that leads to a sustainable income. Leadership team and Staff of American Job Center® agree that every individual will have unique barriers, that no situation will be matched and that our team is determined to assist clients to the best of our ability. Through collaboration and cross training, partners continue to learn what agency to turn to for client assistance. Although WIOA programs have a list of supportive services in which we can provide to clients enrolled in Title I career services or training activities, we recognize additional services outside of the scope of WIOA funding may be needed. In addition, all clients will have access to ADA compliant accessibility tools and equipment. All public funding will be awarded on a nondiscriminatory basis. Because of this collaboration and cross-training, client demographical location will not hinder their progress towards successful completion of WIOA programming.

More specifically, the Workforce Development Board of Rock Island, Henry and Mercer Counties makes expanding access to employment, training, and education by unique populations and all individuals with barriers a central priority. Furthermore, Workforce Development Board (WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD) recognizes that special populations may endure an increase volume of barriers when seeking advanced employment and/or training that leads to a sustainable

income. Leadership team and staff of **American Job Center**® agree that every individual will have unique barriers, that no situation will be matched and that our team is determined to assist clients to the best of our ability. Through collaboration and cross training, partners continue to learn what agency to utilize for client assistance. Although we do have a list of supportive services in which we can provide to clients enrolled in Title I career services or training activities, we recognize additional services outside of the scope of WIOA funding may be needed. In addition, all clients will have access to ADA compliant accessibility tools and equipment at **American Job Center**®. All public funding will be awarded on a nondiscriminatory basis. Because of this collaboration and cross-training, client demographical location will not hinder their progress towards successful completion of WIOA programming.

2. Scaling up the use of Integrated Education and Training models to help adults get their State of Illinois High School Diploma and work on other basic skills and English language acquisition while earning credentials and industry-recognized credentials that lead to in-demand occupations.

As demographics and economic changes shift toward a more diverse workforce, Black Hawk College Adult Education program strives to meet the increasing need for adult education, literacy and English language acquisition programs. The College has successfully implemented an Integrated Education and Training (IET) model through the Integrated Career and Academic Preparation System (ICAPS). ICAPS programs are offered for established integrated career pathways where students are able to complete their high school equivalency and be co-enrolled in credit CTE courses leading to a certificate. The ICAPS model provides comprehensive student services that include a team-teaching approach with CTE content instructors and supplemental basic skills instructors. Employment and work-based learning opportunities are also integrated and serve to enable smoother transitions to additional postsecondary degree and certificate programs.

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

LWIA 13 has formally created a multi-agency business services team to meet needs identified by the business specific to our local workforce area. This team consists of members of required and core partners along with individuals with economic development expertise. At its inception, strategic planning identified the need for networking and listening opportunities. Demographic and employment data are key components in facilitating conversations and opportunities to meet the employment needs of the region.

Title 1 in recent years has devoted capacity to building better business relationships with targeted industries utilizing such WIOA resources as incumbent worker training, On-the job training and pre-apprenticeship opportunities. We will continue to We have done that by getting a pre-apprenticeship grant to gain knowledge in this area in an effort to create a robust apprenticeship program in our local workforce area.

BEST, Inc., on behalf of both local workforce areas within EDR 6, recently completed an apprenticeship expansion grant. The BEST Navigator worked closely with LWIA 13 staff as well as area chambers, economic development, community colleges, and region 6 career centers to

engage businesses on a regional basis to recruit current apprenticeship program companies and new ones to the project of expanding registered apprenticeship participants.

The execution of the Apprenticeship Navigator built workforce capacity by developing and strengthening the knowledge, skills, abilities, processes, and resources that businesses, educational institutions, local workforce areas and community partners need to create new or expand existing employment opportunities, including creating new or expand existing apprenticeship programs.

Since the completion of the Apprenticeship Expansion grant, LWIA 13 continues to expand workforce capacity. With the incorporation of an Apprenticeship Navigator, LWIA 13 will build a WIOA Business Service Team to focus on work-based learning, including apprenticeships. The apprenticeship navigator will build and expand on a strong network of Community Based Organizations, Educational Providers, Governmental Workforce and Economic Development partners, Governmental Assistance partners, Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development entities, Labor Organizations, State Apprenticeship Agencies, Foundations and businesses. This Workforce Ecosystem will organically lead to strong relationships within the regional business community, which will inform and educate businesses and stakeholders resulting in an increase in business participation in apprenticeships.

LWIA 13 has witnessed the shift in the workforce since the onset of the pandemic, and this shift continues today. The majority of our work-based learning activities, outside of serving Out of School Youth, have been referral based. Although there is a great increase in business contact, it will be with the concentration on BUSINESS SERVICE TEAM by use of an apprenticeship navigator that our workforce ecosystem will strengthen which will result in a strong local and regional economy by creating an atmosphere of informed businesses and workforce.

The Department of Labor developed an apprenticeship ecosystem for businesses that includes eight partners:

1. Workforce System
2. Economic Development
3. Labor Organizations
4. Local Education (K-12)
5. Community Base Organizations
6. Foundations
7. Community Colleges
8. State Apprenticeship Agencies

ROCK ISLAND TRI-COUNTY CONSORTIUM follows this model with the addition of Government Assistance partners.

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

LWIA 13 has made a concerted effort to increase our involvement in other groups to expand awareness and learn. Groups and their off shoot like the Quad City Chamber, County Boards, local regional economic development organizations, not for profit gatherings, and socially focus groups such as human services councils.

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

Partners within WIOA programming should promote Prior Learning Assessments to all clients based off the Referral Intake process, where staff are currently being trained to sit with clients during intake process and discuss work, educational and social history. In this discussion staff should recognize if a client displays the qualifications to obtain Prior Learning Assessment.

This is another area in which cross training or understanding partner programs and services is crucial to individualized case managements. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD and LWIA 13 partner leadership team will continue to lead agency frontline staff towards cross-training and intense case management so that programs like Prior Learning Assessments are connected as a WIOA service.

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

Attending Rapid Response and WARN meetings give LWIA 13 partners insight on which businesses to market WIOA programs that require less intensive training due to skills received from work experience. Middle Skills are highly marketable and likely to be obtained by workers who have been in the workforce for some time. Additionally, using data for statistical analysis can target segments of the labor force by review of projected industry declines. Using this data will allow the local area to determine what skills will become available as the industry decline progresses. This data will also paint a picture of the extent of training and/or education needed within the area. Economic Development agencies are great resources for targeted marketing. These agencies have great awareness of sector developments and declines, both of which will assist the local area with marketing specific segments of the labor force.

Development of targeted marketing is a multifaceted process that the local area will strive to improve on an ongoing basis.

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

Career pathways are a hallmark of WIOA legislation. Career pathways offer a clear sequence, or pathway, of education coursework and/or training credentials aligned with employer-validated work readiness standards and competencies. A number of career pathways are available to job seekers, with a recent focus on Manufacturing, Logistics and Healthcare occupations. Information on career pathways is readily available at the One Stop Center as well as on Illinois WorkNet. The Career Planners are trained to understand the local high demand occupations and the career pathways that exist in those occupations. This knowledge allows the Career Planners to educate job seekers on various pathways available and the educational opportunities available to get onto a career pathway.

Co-enrollment in core programs across the system is encouraged to assure a holistic approach to participant success.

This is the main focus of our mission and currently is the underlying factor in all partner interaction with the public, individuals and businesses. The Local Board is committed to exploring robust development of career pathways options for high school students in conjunction with the secondary education system, the Black Hawk College and other local community colleges, universities and for-profit educational institutions, private business, and area Chambers of Commerce or other business-oriented stakeholders. Over the term of this plan, it is expected that growth in the amount and awareness of available career pathway options in high schools will increase significantly.

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

All training services funded through Title I dollars lead to recognized post-secondary credentials such as certificates, industry-recognized certification, licensure (e.g. CDL), etc. Methods and activities around improving access are described throughout this plan.

In addition, Black Hawk College has collaborated and developed programs of study with district high schools to provide students a clear pathway that best prepares them for a postsecondary certificate, degree or industry credential. As federally defined, A Program of Study is a coordinated, nonduplicative sequence of academic and technical content at the secondary and postsecondary level that: Incorporates challenging State academic standards; Addresses both academic and technical knowledge and skills including employability skills; Is aligned with the needs of industries; Progresses in specificity beginning with all aspects of an industry or career cluster and leading to more occupational specific instruction; Has multiple entry and exit points that incorporate credentialing; and culminates in the attainment of a recognized postsecondary credential. The program of study incorporates career exploration, work-based learning opportunities and dual credit coursework where appropriate. The Perkins V 4-year plan includes strategies to develop new programs of study as well as to improve and enhance existing programs. Emphasis is placed on using the ICCB Program of Study Expectations Tool that provides a framework to guide CTE faculty and advisory teams in the assessment and development of programs of study. The program of study templates also reflects the integration of credentials that are stackable and support progress as the student moves along the career pathway.

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

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

The collaborative nature of the One-Stop Center WIOA Partners at the American Job Center, along with the presence of the core Partners on the Local Board and the oversight of all Partners by the One-Stop Operator Consortium, provides for coordination of services and reduced duplication/redundancy of efforts. The navigation process for both job seekers and business customers enhances access to coordinated service.

LWIA 13 has a strong workforce partnership that allows for successful implementation of Referral Intake. This process allows for front-line staff members to capture a client's education history, skills history, social service necessities and any (additional) barriers to employment. This model allows for proper referral of services, which results in accurate obtainment of WIOA services and decrease in duplication of services. Although all agencies have case management systems, it will be the obligation of the agency awarding WIOA funding to carry out thorough case management. This case management may include insuring clients receive useful services from other agency sources. Great Northwestern Region (GDR), EDR 6, continues to collaborate on current happenings, including sharing of new policies and initiatives for comparison and discernment of best practices.

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

Adult Ed and workforce agency staff will hold partner orientations to avoid duplicating services and will maintain communication on co-enrolled students. RITCC will carry out its coordination duties under WIOA Title II in much the same way as under other WIOA Titles. As previously WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD is reviewing the local Area Plan and the Title II application for funds submitted to the Illinois Community College Board to assure the alignment of Core Partner programs and services. Joint Services Committee is responsible for overseeing all Core Partners' performance reports as well as establishing continuous improvement goals for local workforce system and to provide guidance and oversight for the One-Stop system and partners.

Providers of workforce investment activities under Title I of WIOA, adult education and literacy activities under Title II of WIOA, and career and technical education (as defined in section 3 of Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2302)) are members of WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD (WDB) and will be asked to report to WDB, describing how their activities serve as a complement to one another and avoid duplication of services. If it appears that there are gaps and/or overlaps in services, providers will be asked to revise their current plans and report outcomes at the next meeting.

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

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

Wagner-Peyser staff are currently coordinating with Unemployment Insurance Program on Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) grant through Department of Labor. Unemployment Insurance Program profiles clients monthly and provides the list to Wagner-Peyser staff. Wagner-Peyser in turn, sets up a meeting with these clients and provides them information and services to assist in their attempts to find gainful employment. Any barriers that arise during these assessments are discussed with clients and they are then referred to appropriate partner/supportive services and/or workshops. Covid-19 has affected the delivery of RESEA services in that all claimants contact for the program is now done by telephone, as opposed to in person workshops.

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

An interagency Business Services Team (BST) has been formed and has regular meetings to determine steps needed for all partners to collaborate in working with employers in this area. BST will communicate on what businesses they are visiting weekly and then schedule joint visits monthly. When unable to do joint visits, each program's staff utilize their knowledge of partner programs to communicate what the Workforce System can provide the employer. The program's staff will then make a referral to the partner. Wagner-Peyser Business Service representative is in the early process of working with Employment Service staff to coordinate possible employer visits by the BST based on employment needs of RESEA participants and sector strategies. Due to the nature of Covid-19, this process has been delayed, however, as restrictions lift and workloads level out, the partners will revisit forming the Business Services Team in order to provide quality services to employers.

There has been cross training via conference call, organized by One-Stop Operator, to meet with one of the proposed activities on the previous local plan. These will continue regularly to ensure that staff from all programs are able to assist clients as quickly and efficiently as possible.

A monthly meeting has been established with representatives from each of WIOA Core and Required Partner Program front-line staff members. During these meetings a review of referrals is discussed, and a calendar has been established for cross training. Training is completed either at **American Job Center**® or at partner organization location.

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

Title IV – Vocational Rehabilitation Services: Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS) Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) is lead agency serving individuals with disabilities. DRS works in partnership with people with disabilities and their families to assist them in making informed choices to achieve full community participation. In this process we work with all regional employers, all levels of education and all educational institutions within the region, and independent living opportunities.

Transition services are available for all secondary students with disabilities. Services facilitate and support the movement of high school students' adult life activities, primarily and ultimately employment. DRS will link students with community services provided by other agencies.

Transition is a process involving a partnership with individuals, school services, post school services and local communities that results in maximum levels of employment, integration and community participation.

As part of its continuum of coordinated transition services for youth with disabilities, DRS offers a wide range of services to students at local high schools through Secondary Transition Experience Program (STEP). STEP is a training/placement program to help students with disabilities prepare for employment and community participation during and after high school. Students learn to become productive, self-sufficient adults through a variety of STEP experiences. These experiences include assisting students in development of desirable work habits and realistic career goals. Students participate in pre-vocational classroom learning. Some students begin with on campus work experiences. Most students participate in paid work experiences. Some students receive specialized job coach assistance. Throughout the year, some students participate in mock interviews with DRS staff and employers. Students are offered one-to-one interviews and receive individualized feedback on how they presented and responded to the interview situation. Students are also offered the opportunity to participate in guidance and career counseling and self-advocacy.

Additionally, The Fast Track contract is held by the Illinois Iowa CIL and offers Pre-employment Transition Services (PTS) to youth ages 14-21, enrolled in an education program and who are "potentially eligible" for the vocational rehabilitation program.

DRS offers on-the-job evaluation (OJE) and on-the-job training (OJT) in cooperation with employers throughout the Region. OJE is utilized to evaluate whether a customer can perform work duties within a specific job title in which they have an interest. Length of evaluation is dependent on type of position and abilities and strengths / weaknesses of the individual. OJT is utilized to train individuals who possess the ability to perform work duties associated with a job they have chosen. Individuals are offered the opportunity to become acclimated to the job and to become proficient at their tasks. Timeframes vary depending on individual job. DRS and employers work cooperatively to monitor training and evaluate performance.

Throughout the Region, DRS works with all academic institutions to offer training opportunities in certificate programs, two-year technical programs, and all levels of academic degrees. Technologies and a variety of supports are available to students with disabilities to attend and successfully complete programs.

Many persons with disabilities benefit from job placement assistance. DRS staff work with individuals to explore careers, especially those with promising growth opportunities in the Region. Pre-placement work with individuals includes resume development and interview skills. DRS engages with specialized community providers to purchase placement, job coaching and supported employment opportunities for some individuals. For all individuals, all necessary supports are

available to guide the individual along a successful path to choose, get and keep employment of their choice.

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

By use of data derived from educational partners, LWIA 13 can discuss educational options for local secondary and post-secondary schools. In addition, labor market information assists with development of career pathways, some starting with secondary school vocational programs. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD approves all training programs based off analytical information and unique local area demographics.

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)).

Black Hawk College (BHC) administrators have agreed to the following activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services and avoid duplication.

- More visible presence at **American Job Center**® and affiliate centers by Perkins CTE related programs.
- Investigate dedicated BHC computers with:
 - BHC webpage access at start-up, Access to Career Cruising/Inspire
 - Online Application, Cooperative agreements, Skype a Counselor
 - CTE Program information, Financial Aid Information

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

Role of WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD (WDB) to support coordination of secondary and post-secondary educations programs and services with education and workforce activities will include things such as:

- I. Acting as an information source for educators and employers in our local area and region to bring them together to strategize local need.
- II. Ensuring that educators sit on WDB and board committees which will enhance services to customers at the One-Stop System. Each partner has a specialty and by working together on projects and events all customers can receive the same level of expertise, and the chance of duplicated services will be lessened.
- III. Ensuring that local workforce staff sit on Advisory Committees for community college departments. This will serve as linkage to WDB and communicate the relevant activities of the community college back to WDB.
- IV. Participating in career exploration events that are held for secondary education students with partnership from workforce and post-secondary entities.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD will review agencies and institutions and how services and activities listed above are delivered as part of an overall coordinated strategy or set of strategies designed to prepare a work-ready, skilled workforce that meets needs of the local business community.

- 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 B for the Local Title 1 Supportive Service Policy.

Supportive services may be made available to any adult or dislocated worker participating in Title I career services or training activities that is unable to obtain supportive services through other programs providing such services. Additionally, the supportive services must be necessary to enable the individual to participate in career services or training activities.

This Supportive Service Policy is based on Title I programming; however, it is recognized that other partner agencies provide Supportive Service Policies and are part of a holistic approach to client needs and direct all partners to work together to achieve successful program completion.

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

- 1. 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)).**

LWIA 13's **American Job Center**® Comprehensive One-Stop Career Center serves the three-county area. This site houses WIOA program agencies including Title I, Wagner-Peyser and Senior Citizens Employment Program (SCEP) Title 2 Adult Education. Additionally, the following partners are available via direct linkage; United Migrant Opportunity Services (UMOS), Perkins, and the ARC of the Quad Cities. **American Job Center**® partners have teamed together to increased collaboration by holding regular front-line staff partner meetings, cross training, creating a common intake process, holding orientations and planned implementation of a common referral process. This progression in service integration has developed into a highly individualized experience for clients. Qualifying Adults for services under Adult and Dislocated Worker receive on-site collaboration starting with Title I and IDES-is a well-known state agency and receives much of the incoming traffic to the center. Due to this, IDES refer clients inquiring on UI benefits to Title I for employment and training services.

Basic Career Services include internet access to job search and labor market information provided by IL WorkNet and Illinois Job Link, Orientation to information and services that are available from partnering agencies, program coordination and referrals, labor exchange services, training provider performance and cost information, performance information for local area as a whole, information on availability of supportive services and referrals, information and assistance with UI claims, assistance establishing eligibility for financial aid, among others.

Individualized Career Services include skills and supportive service needs assessment, Eligibility of services, employment retention services, follow-up services, work experience/transitional jobs and internships.

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

Assessment testing and interviewing is conducted by Career Planners. Illinois WorkNet, O*Net career exploration assessment and individual interest tests are administered, in addition to an Individual Employment Plan and Individual Career Plan interview. Career exploration is conducted with phone calls and/or internet-based searches.

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)).

Title I staff and LWIB will coordinate with Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity (DCEO), Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) & Department of Labor (DOL) Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA) to assist area employers with their workforce reductions and assist the affected workers with their transition plans. This team approach deals with three very important needs dislocated workers have: information on unemployment insurance benefits, health insurance options, and becoming re-employed. The Rapid Response team coordinates with the employer to offer both pre-layoff and post-layoff services to connect the affected workers with employment & training services funded through either WIOA or TAA.

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

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

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD Youth Committee meets quarterly and is tasked with review of potential youth service providers in our Tri-County area. Currently we have three youth providers, one in each county. Included in programming is GED preparation, Life-Skill workshops, Stackable Credentials, and Mentorship as defined by WorkforceGPS: “Mentoring is a formal relationship between a youth participant and an adult mentor that includes structured activities where the mentor offers guidance, support, and encouragement to develop competence and character of the mentee”.

Quad City Tri-County Transition Planning Committee (TPC) is a partnership of community, school, and agency representatives who relate information and respond to needs of individuals with disabilities. Typically, each year TPC offers a Transition Fair for middle school and high school students to provide them with information on community services and assist with transition beyond high school. This year it is being incorporated into Black Hawk Area Special Education’s (BHASED) Day of Transition Conference.

Western Illinois University (WIU), Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS), Quad City Career & Technical Education Consortium (QCCTEC) and Black Hawk College (BHC) coordinate and implement Transitions Conference which is aimed at high school Juniors and Seniors with disabilities. The event, which alternates location between BHC and WIU, focuses on transitioning to postsecondary education.

Local workforce investment activities for youth are as follows:

- ✦ 14 elements required to be offered to WIOA-eligible youth per TEGL 23-14 will be provided either through Title I staff or providers who contract for youth services. In some cases, these elements will be delivered directly by the provider, Title I or as a referral to an appropriate agency. Depending upon the nature of the activity, some of them may be work-based activities.
- ✦ Request for Proposal (RFP) for service providers are completed on a bi-annual basis. At the beginning of the second year of the two-year contract, positive evaluation of the provider's performance will result in a one-year renewal. LWIA 13 has successfully awarded contacts to projects that provide either GED/HSE instruction and/or credit recovery.
- ✦ A model to use for individuals with disabilities would be DRS model of IEP appointments with in-school youth. All services provider that could possibly benefit a youth in the future would be part of the IEP process, from present to employment and follow up.
- ✦ Using technology to stay connected. Facebook, Twitter and now a cellular phone for texting.
- ✦ Currently have a youth career planner whose focus is on developing youth activities and monitoring those contracts. This individual is also a representative on Youth Committee
- ✦ Partnering with Adult Education to possibly co-enroll for work-based learning and working with Vocational Rehab for transition services for older youth
- ✦ Mainstreaming youth in community college and other occupational training programs.

2. A description of how local areas will meet the minimum expenditure rate for out-of-school youth.

LWIA 13 focuses on out-of-school youth. Working with out-of-school youth is complemented by a Career Planner through coaching youth grant sub-recipients. Historically, the percentage of youth out-of-school participants has been at or near 100%.

3. The design framework for your programs in the local area, including how the 14 program elements will be made available within that framework (§681.460).

14 elements required to be offered to WIOA -eligible youth per TEGL 23-14 will be provided either through Title 1 staff or providers who contract for youth services. In some cases, these elements will be delivered directly by the provider, Title 1 or as referral to an appropriate agency. Depending upon the nature of the activity, some of them may be work-based activities.

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

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

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

WIOA requires that the workforce program gives priority of service to individuals receiving public assistance or other low income (meeting 70 % of the lower living standard) individuals who and/or are basic skills deficient. As the provider of these activities, partners ensure compliance with this priority. However, if none of those priority group are remaining and funds are available, income eligibility will be based on 200% of the lower living standard. Partners will also comply with the State of Illinois’ Veterans priority.

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

The Great Northwestern Region recognizes that special populations may endure an increase volume of barriers when seeking advanced employment and/or training that leads to a sustainable income. Leadership team and Staff of regional One Stop Centers agree that every individual will have unique barriers, that no situation will be matched and that our team is determined to assist clients to the best of our ability. Through collaboration and cross training, partners continue to learn what agency to turn to for client assistance. Although we do have a list of supportive services which we can provide, we recognize additional services may be needed. All clients, whether defined as having barriers or not, will have access to supportive services as listed in TEGl 19-16. In addition, all clients will have access to ADA compliant accessibility tools and equipment. All public funding will be awarded on a nondiscriminatory basis.

Refer to Chapter 3 of the regional plan for additional details.

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

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

In preparation of Black Hawk College’s FY22 Postsecondary Perkins application, college data was disaggregated by special population. It was determined that

economically disadvantaged students had a lower completion rate than other subpopulations. To assist this population college and American Job Center (AJC) staff developed a plan to collaborate on case management of AJC clients. To ensure compliance with privacy laws, AJC career planners are requiring clients submit FERPA forms to BHC Enrollment Services from their myBlackHawk account during intake. Each semester a list of WIOA funded students is requested from the Bursar with receipt of FERPA waiver noted. This allows college advisors to communicate with the students' AJC career planner in the event an Early Alert is received.

Partnership with University of Illinois Extension gives LWIA 13 subject matter expertise in terms of data that allows for breakdown of information into smaller subpopulations. Chapter 1 of Regional Plan provides local area's source for disaggregated data.

Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA), completed as required by Perkins V for Black Hawk College's FY21-24 Postsecondary Perkins application, identifies equity gaps for special populations as defined in Perkins V. Special populations include the following:

- Individuals with disabilities
- Individuals from economically disadvantaged families, including low-income youth and adults
- Individuals preparing for non-traditional fields
- Single parents, including single pregnant women
- Out-of-workforce individuals
- English learners
- Youth who are in, or have aged out of, the foster care system
- Homeless individuals
- Youth whose parents are members of the armed forces or on active duty

Workforce development partners will utilize this information to develop and implement plans to address the identified equity gaps. Black Hawk College staff will provide training for other workforce development partners on processes used to disaggregate data, such as Pathways to Results. Workforce development partners will engage area K-12 stakeholders in order to provide meaningful career exploration activities without duplication of efforts.

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

With an early insight to career pathways, secondary school students will have a head start in mapping out their future career while obtaining entry level credit hours prior to graduation from secondary school. Black Hawk College is working

with two high schools offering apprenticeships. Rock Island High School is offering an apprenticeship program in Shielded Metal Arc Welding. Moline High School offers an apprenticeship program in CNC Manufacturing. Students in both programs can complete college certificates and apprenticeship training.

Black Hawk College, Moline campus, has conducted a summer College for Kids program for over fifty years. This exposes youth entering sixth-ninth grades to a college campus, and some classes are STEM related. Black Hawk College, East Campus, will hold a similar program during summer of 2020 with a specific focus on career programs.

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

Mentoring as a formal relationship between an adult participant and an adult mentor that includes structured activities where the mentor offers guidance, support, and encouragement to develop skill and character of the client can improve successful completion of WIOA programs. LWIA 13 views mentoring alongside individual case management where it is understood that every client will have unique case that will require unique services.

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

LWIA 13's **American Job Center**® in Rock Island Illinois. By use of partner driven data and census data, local area can determine populations most in need of services. If it is recognized that a specific population needs service, LWIA 13 will conduct outreach.

4. Describe any efforts in the local area to support immigrants and migrants through appropriate and allowable workforce services.

- a. This addition aligns local planning efforts with language and efforts included in the Illinois WIOA Unified Plan.
 - i. LWIA 13 supports immigrants and migrants through appropriate and allowable workforce services by ensuring access to American Job Center services regardless of national origin, providing language access through interpretation and translated materials when available, and coordinating referrals to partner agencies such as Illinois Department of Human Services, Adult Education providers, and community-based organizations. Eligible immigrants and migrants may receive career services, job matching, labor market information, supportive service referrals, and training services consistent with WIOA eligibility requirements. Outreach and coordination with agricultural,

manufacturing, and service-sector employers further supports migrant and immigrant populations common to the local labor market.

5. Describe efforts in the local area to support SNAP program Recipients.

- a. This addition is in response to the new work requirements for SNAP recipients and will align local with the modification to Illinois' 2024 WIOA Unified plan.
 - i. LWIA 13 coordinates services for SNAP recipients by working closely with Illinois Department of Human Services and Illinois Department of Employment Security to align employment and training activities with SNAP Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) requirements. SNAP recipients are prioritized for career services, job search assistance, work-based learning opportunities, and referrals to training that lead to unsubsidized employment. Coordination helps SNAP recipients meet federal work requirements while improving long-term employment outcomes through access to WIOA-funded services and partner resources.

6. Describe plans in the local area to coordinate services with recipients of Workforce Pell Grants beginning with the 2026-2027 academic year.

- a. This is in response to coordinate to the new Workforce Pell Grants and will align local plans with the modification to Illinois 2024 WIOA Unified Plan. While final rules regarding those grants will not be available when local workforce areas are drafting their modifications, local areas should describe how they are planning to coordinate with recipients of the Workforce Pell Grants.
 - i. LWIA 13 plans to coordinate services with recipients of Workforce Pell Grants beginning with the 2026–2027 academic year by strengthening partnerships with postsecondary institutions, including Black Hawk College and other regional training providers. Career planners will work with eligible participants to align Workforce Pell Grant-funded education with WIOA career pathways, supportive services, and employment placement activities. As final federal guidance becomes available, LWIA 13 will update local policies and staff training to ensure seamless co-enrollment, reduce duplication of services, and support participants in completing credentials aligned with in-demand occupations.

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

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

i. The 2024-2027 WIOA Strategic Plan recognizes the need for state policy and/or guidance to encourage the adoption of effective local business coordination practices with a focus on human-centered engagement (Draft 2024-2027 WIOA Strategic Plan, page 141). LWIA 13 will build business practices that are based on this guidance. Meanwhile, LWIA 13 will continue building customer-centered practices that are guided by the State Goals and Strategies listed on page 5 of the 2024-2027 WIOA State Strategic Plan. These strategies include:

1. From Goal 3: LWIA 13 will educate and support jobseekers regarding how to navigate the labor market, continue to build capacity to interact with jobseekers in the places they live and visit, and use data informed approach to reduce barriers to services for jobseekers who have historically faced barriers to accessing services.
2. These efforts will prove effective in our goal to build customer-centered service delivery that is intended to produce equitable outcomes and results in higher customer satisfaction by addressing challenges to employment and creating career pathway approach that leads to sustainable employment.

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

One-Stop Operator recently built a website that will give potential clients access to a pre-recorded information session. This information session will be a step in the online application request process.

Title I can provide virtual information sessions to potential clients on an as needed basis, by request.

Additionally, the One Stop Operator consortium recognizes the need to meet people where they are. Currently iDES are coordinating to have an Employment Service Specialist available in the iDHS offices to provide information and offer services. Discussions with local libraries are taking place currently to develop a consistent schedule to put on a resource fair to help make the community aware of options and services the partners are able to provide.

3. Any workforce efforts to review and update the referral process, including creating a universal referral process, utilizing electronic referral management system, expansion of referral pathways, etc. If these are obstacles to updating the local area's referral process, describe them here.

LWIA 13 One-Stop Operator has a goal to create a referral process system that will be universally used by all partners. This goal is active in the OSO management plan.

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

1. How the 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.

Business-led WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD drives Work-Based Learning (WBL) activities, emphasizing the need. WBL activities offer opportunity for individuals and innovation for businesses. Pre-classroom training and post-classroom training allows for learning about an occupation of interest prior to investing time and money only to find out that career will not meet a customer's professional and/or personal goals. It also allows them to put into practice those skills obtained through classroom training.

Title I and Other Partners offer the widest range of work-based learning programs and strategies, including:

- ✦ Incumbent Worker Training (IWT)—Local businesses can apply for a training grant that will reimburse up to 50% of the costs of training existing workers. Emphasis is placed on training projects that lead to pay increases, promotions, and industry-recognized credentials for workers and/or that are part of an apprenticeship model.
- ✦ Apprenticeships—Title 1 has been awarded an Apprenticeship Navigator grant to begin the development of a robust apprenticeship culture in LWIA 13 through the process of learning about and implementing apprenticeship programs. Partnerships with the Black Hawk College, and other organizations throughout the local area are expected to yield even greater apprenticeship-related outcomes for both job seekers and businesses. Black Hawk College is also participating in the Construction Works project through the Illinois Tollway to guide more individuals from underrepresented populations into skilled trade apprenticeships.
- ✦ Since the completion of the Apprenticeship Expansion grant, LWIA 13 continues to expand workforce capacity. With the incorporation of an Apprenticeship Navigator, LWIA 13 built a Business Service Team to focus on work-based learning, including apprenticeships. The apprenticeship navigator will build and expand on a strong network of Community Based Organizations, Educational Providers, Governmental Workforce and Economic Development partners, Governmental Assistance partners, Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development entities, Labor Organizations, State Apprenticeship Agencies, Foundations and businesses. This Workforce Ecosystem is organically leading to strong relationships within the regional business community, which will inform and educate businesses and stakeholders resulting in an increase in business participation in apprenticeships.
- ✦ On-The-Job Training (OJT)—Local employers can receive a wage reimbursement of up to 75% for the first six months of employment when hiring an eligible individual who needs to be trained on-the-job. Title I aims to primarily use this tool when supporting

apprenticeships or to facilitate job placement of reentering ex-offenders (including individuals in recovery from addiction), veterans, older workers, youth, homeless individuals, individuals with disabilities, refugees and/or asylum seekers, and others experiencing significant barriers to employment

- ✦ Internships/Work Experience—Title I primarily utilizes this tool in the form of paid internships to help youth gain work experience and/or to explore a career path or workplace. Transitional jobs for income-eligible adult clients can also be developed to help bridge significant gaps in work history or to overcome other substantial barriers to employment.

In addition to Title I work-based learning, the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) provider at American Job Center provide income-eligible older workers with part-time, paid community service positions and work-based training at local nonprofits.

Black Hawk College, through its Continuing Education, CTE degree and certificate programs offers students a variety of work-based learning opportunities for students. Rigorous internships play a key role in many CTE degree/certificate programs providing students authentic work-based learning experiences. Each internship has a Learning Agreement that outlines a specific Learning Plan and Evaluation Rubric for each identified Learning Goal. The agreement also outlines the specific role and expectations of the employer, faculty advisor and student.

Lastly, the Department of Human Services/Rehabilitation Services (DRS) offers their Supported Employment Program to job seekers with disabilities and employers. DRS provides job analysis, job development, and job coaching assistance to job seekers, while offering employers wage reimbursements through periods of On- The-Job Evaluations (OJE) and On-The-Job Training (OJT.)

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

LWIA 13 partners will share internal resources for DEIA training. Training will occur for managers, directors, and front-line staff. Current training providers include: IMEC, U of I Extension, WIOA Wednesday Webinars, and the Office of Equal Opportunity.

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

LWIA 13 has multiple approved training providers that cover our local area, including training providers located just outside of our local area. LWIA 13 does not procure training providers and

allows each client to choose their preferred training provider. Our local area is unique given our proximity to the Iowa members making up the Quad Cities. This allows our participants access to two community colleges, three universities, and several other proprietary schools and we have grown our relationship with on-line based training.

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

Development of new initiatives responsive to the needs of the workforce and businesses including the development of in-demand accelerated training opportunities will be completed by gathering data from the Regional Plan, IDES LMI data, and Bi-State Regional Community Economic Development. This data informed approach provides continuous improvement in the identification of the needs of local employers, workers, and job seekers. Additionally, the strong relationships developed locally and throughout the state assist the local area in developing and maintaining training provider relationships that result in customized training opportunities and the identification of eligible training providers. OSO Management Plan Client Training goal states “Development of new initiatives responsive to the needs of the workforce and businesses including the development of in-demand accelerated training opportunities.”

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

All services are recorded in iWDS. LWIA 13’s One Stop Operator Consortium has management plan goals to develop a reporting process in conjunction with the Partners for the ongoing tracking of performance and referrals, with quarterly reporting to the local board. Initiation of this goal is in process.

K. Describe if the local workforce board will authorize the transfer of WIOA Title 1B workforce funds, including the maximum dollar amount and/or percentage that is authorized to be transferred on an annual basis:

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

Based on designated funding allocations and the need of clients, there has been a transfer of funds between fund sources. Local situations differ from year to year depending upon many factors, e.g., employer and job seeker needs, amount of our allocation, locally and regionally designed initiatives, etc. Therefore, the decision to transfer money will be determined on an as needed, timely basis and done in accordance with all policies that govern this option at time of transfer. All transfers are approved by the board.

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

Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) is intended to meet the requirements of an employer or group of employers to retain a skilled workforce or avert the need to lay off employees by assisting the workers in obtaining the skills necessary to retain employment.

Up to twenty percent of the adult and dislocated worker funds are available to support the cost of Incumbent Worker training. Employers could be reimbursed up to 90% of the Incumbent Worker training costs based on the number of employees. Companies are required to provide matching contributions based on the following:

- 10 percent of the cost, for employers with not more than 50 employees.
- 25 percent of the cost, for employers with more than 50 employees but not more than 100 employees; and
- 50 percent of the cost, for employers with more than 100 employees.

Should local area have an influx of Incumbent Worker need, WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD will determine what amount of additional funds will become available to support the program. Local board members were pleased to see that WIOA allows for a more flexible use of funds for IWT opportunities that will be used to enhance the skills of current workers and as a result will enable businesses to be more competitive.

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

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

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

LWIA 13 does not intend to use funds for pay for performance contracts currently.

L. Describe how responsiveness, inclusivity, and accessibility are or will be incorporated in the in the operating system and policies as part of the Local Workforce Innovation Areas. (LWIAs).

LWIA 13 is committed to continue to learn how racial, social, and geographic barriers affect an individual's access to sustainable wages. Local Area 13 has a diverse group of partners that have committed to Memorandum of Understanding. Safer Foundation, while not a formal partner, but whose target audience is justice impacted individuals which are represented by underserved communities of color, tend to be lower income and face barriers due to a background, lack of education and housing instability. Many of the grants received by the organization are required to target underserved communities, including that hardest hit.

The Arc of the Quad Cities is a non-for-profit agency partner that provides Work Services programs designed for individuals with disabilities who may require more direct supervision than one might get in a community position. The Arc provides paid work opportunities in sheltered workshop settings where individuals concentrate on developing a strong work ethic, good work habits, and proficient skills. Workers are trained in performing service contracts, light assembly work, textile recycling, secure document destruction, and product packaging.

Local Area 13 has a history of serving Incarcerated Offenders/ Returning Citizens. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD (WDB) Innovation Project for Returning Citizens (IPRC) established an **American Job Center**® Specialized One-Stop Career Center inside Kewanee Life Skills Re-Entry Center. Partner

organizations include WDB / IPRC, Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC), Rock Island Tri-County Consortium, Lake Land College, Black Hawk College, University of Illinois Extension, Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES), Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS), The Illinois Migrant Council, and Project NOW, Inc. Supporting organizations include Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB), Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity (DCEO), Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), Southern Illinois University Carbondale Center for Workforce Development (SIUC CWD), First Institute Training & Management Corporation, and Midwest Trailer Manufacturing, LLC. The objective is to build valuable life skills and prepare offenders for Re-Entry into society while maintaining safety and security. There is a focus on offenders who are ready to make needed changes to successfully reintegrate into their communities, by offering educational, job readiness, and cognitive behavior therapy courses. Business-driven career, education, training, and supportive services are provided. Customers being served are (1) businesses / employers, (2) State of Illinois / IDOC, and (3) incarcerated offenders / returning citizens. Workforce professionals meet routinely with all three types of customers to ensure that focus and programs are customer driven. Outreach has been improved using digital newsletters and videos produced by incarcerated offenders. Additional services have been provided to returning citizens located at the East Moline Correction Center.

Additionally, LWIA 13 recognizes that a humanitarian approach to providing services is essential. It is agreed that each individual has unique barriers. The impact of COVID-19 was detrimental to our program in many ways. However, COVID-19 pandemic also led our partners to use technology in a way that encourages service delivery. Technology services will continue to be provided for the public on an individualized basis. This new service delivery provides an additional level of equity.

CHAPTER 5: PERFORMANCE GOALS AND EVALUATION

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

1. **WIOA Performance Measures**
2. **Additional State Performance Measures**

Performance Measures are reviewed by career planners, managers, Oversight Committee, Youth Committee and WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD on a quarterly basis.

Performance Measurement	Goal	
Adult	PY 24 /PY 25	
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit	78.0%	
Employment Rate 4th Quarter after Exit	78.0%	
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after Exit	\$8,000	
Credential Attainment within 4 Quarters after Exit	74.0%	
Measurable Skill Gains	75.0%	
Dislocated Worker	PY 24 /PY 25	
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit	78.0%	
Employment Rate 4th Quarter after Exit	78.0%	
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after Exit	\$9,000	
Credential Attainment within 4 Quarters after Exit	68.0%	
Measurable Skill Gains	75.0%	
Youth	PY 24 /PY 25	
Employment or Education Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit	72.0%	
Employment or Education Rate 4th Quarter after Exit	72.0%	
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after Exit	\$4,500	
Credential Attainment within 4 Quarters after Exit	68.0%	
Measurable Skill Gains	68.0%	

Performance goals are reviewed by career planners, managers, Oversight Committee, Youth Committee and WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD on a quarterly basis.

- **Employment Rate: 2nd and 4th quarter after exit:** The percentage of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program (for title I Youth, the indicator is the percentage of participants in education or training activities, or in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit).
- **Title I Youth Education and Employment: Rate 2nd and 4th Quarter After Exit:** The percentage of title I Youth program participants who are in education or training activities, or in unsubsidized employment, during the second quarter after exit from the program.
- **Median Earnings after 2nd quarter post-exit:** The median earnings of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program.

- **Credential Attainment:** The percentage of those participants enrolled in an education or training program (excluding those in on-the-job training (OJT) and customized training) who attain a recognized postsecondary credential or a secondary school diploma, or its recognized equivalent, during participation in or within one year after exit from the program. A participant who has attained a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent is included in the percentage of participants who have attained a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent only if the participant also is employed or is enrolled in an education or training program leading to a recognized postsecondary credential within one year after exit from the program.
- **Measurable Skill Gains:** The percentage of program participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains, defined as documented academic, technical, occupational, or other forms of progress, towards such a credential or employment. Depending on the type of education or training program, documented progress is defined as one of the following:
 1. Documented achievement of at least one educational functioning level of a participant who is receiving instruction below the postsecondary education level.
 2. Documented attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.
 3. Secondary or postsecondary transcript or report card for enough credit hours that shows a participant is meeting the State unit's academic standards.
 4. Satisfactory or better progress report, towards established milestones, such as completion of OJT or completion of one year of an apprenticeship program or similar milestones, from an employer or training provider who is providing training; or
 5. Successful passage of an exam that is required for an occupation or progress in attaining technical or occupational skills as evidenced by trade-related benchmarks such as knowledge-based exams.
- **Effectiveness in serving employers:** WIOA sec. 116(b)(2)(A)(i)(VI) requires the Department of Labor and the Department of Education to jointly establish a primary indicator of performance for effectiveness in serving employers. The Departments are currently piloting three approaches designed to gauge the critical workforce needs of the business community.
 1. Approach 1 - Retention with the same employer - addresses the programs' efforts to provide employers with skilled workers.
 2. Approach 2 - Repeat Business Customers - addresses the programs' efforts to provide quality engagement and services to employers and sectors and establish productive relationships with employers and sectors over extended periods of time; and
 3. Approach 3 - Employer Penetration Rate - addresses the programs' efforts to provide quality engagement and services to all employers and sectors within a State and local economy.

Since this indicator is a new approach for measuring performance under WIOA's six core programs, the pilot program requires states to select two of the three approaches to report data that the Departments will use to establish a permanent indicator. States may also voluntarily develop an additional State-specific approach. The Departments will evaluate state experiences with the various approaches to identify a standardized indicator.

- **Re-Entry Employment Opportunities – Adult Program:** Recidivism Rate: the percentage of participants who are rearrested for a new crime or re-incarcerated for revocation of a parole or probation violation within one year from release from prison.
- Black Hawk Community College uses NRS Performance Measure which is a Static Report that allows programs to compare their programs level completion rate with the state targets. Also, in the spirit of continuous improvement, this report allows programs to enter the level completion percentage they proposed when they submitted their proposals. This allows programs to see how they are progressing not only relative to state targets, but also to what they have done previously.
- Additional State Performance Measures

As any new additional measures are developed, the WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD will address them as needed.

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.

1. What existing service delivery strategies will be expanded based on promising return on investment?

The primary service delivery strategy for LWIA 13 continues to be the use of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) to assist WIOA clients in returning to work and/or boosting their earning potential and/or beginning or continuing an in-demand career pathway. The success and return on investment of this strategy can be seen in the performance outcomes. Providing coordinated and integrated service at a single One-Stop centrally located in DuPage County continues to be an effective delivery strategy. The American Job Center provided career counseling, job search support, funding assistance, and other services.

LWIA 13 service delivery strategies that will be expanded based on promising return on investment include various routes. There has been a fundamental shift in culture and vision as it relates to potential participants from eligibility to suitability with an equity lens. Enrollment and selection process of WIOA fund recipients has received additional qualifiers. Applicants now write essays, and a panel of career planners and leadership team members review applicant essays and documentation to determine if they are a viable candidate to continue and successfully complete programing. Career Planners will discuss contact made with candidates, reporting this contact with the panel. This process will continue to ensure that WIOA funding has had an excellent return on investment as proven by our success performance outcomes.

Additionally, Youth Committee meetings are held quarterly to review performance of youth providers; these reports are given to the Board for review. This process of monitoring will allow LWIA 13 to assist youth providers with performance measures along with ensuring that youth continue a career pathway that will enhance their future in the workforce.

Finally, follow-up is a spotlight for LWIA 13. We have dedicated staff that mentor clients throughout the follow up period. Supplying services and one on one mentoring to guide clients through the beginning process of successfully achieving career pathway goals.

Expansion on these service delivery strategies will continue to progress. Additional expansions are expected to develop in other areas that will provide a promising return on investment.

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

LWIA 13 has curtailed hosting job fairs at the Center. The return on investment for these events has been minimal, and the time and resources spent organizing them is difficult to justify when looking at the number of hires that are made as a result.

Additionally, it needs to be noted that significant reduction in funding has reduced the availability of capacity in human resources to offer more robust career and business services to focus on training in an effort to meet 50% direct training requirements set forth by IWIB.

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

As a region, Economic Development Region (EDR) 6 has focused on apprenticeship activities. Both local areas in the region have applied for and have been granted Apprenticeship Navigator funding to enhance our ability to develop more apprenticeships in our local and regional areas.

The apprenticeship navigator will build and expand on a strong network of Community Based Organizations, Educational Providers, Governmental Workforce and Economic Development partners, Governmental Assistance partners, Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development entities, Labor Organizations, State Apprenticeship Agencies, Foundations and businesses. This Workforce Ecosystem will organically lead to strong relationships within the regional business community, which will inform and educate businesses and stakeholders resulting in an increase in business participation in apprenticeships.

LWIA 13 has witnessed the shift in the workforce since the onset of the pandemic, and this shift continues today. The majority of our work-based learning activities, outside of serving Out of School Youth, have been referral based. Although there is a great increase in business contact, it will be with the concentration on BUSINESS SERVICE TEAM by use of an apprenticeship navigator that our workforce ecosystem will strengthen which will result in a strong local and regional economy by creating an atmosphere of informed businesses and workforce.

The Department of Labor developed an apprenticeship ecosystem for businesses that includes eight partners:

- Workforce System
- Economic Development
- Labor Organizations

- Local Education (K-12)
- Community Base Organizations
- Foundations
- Community Colleges
- State Apprenticeship Agencies

ROCK ISLAND TRI-COUNTY CONSORTIUM follows this model with the addition of Government Assistance partners.

ROCK ISLAND TRI-COUNTY CONSORTIUM believes keeping operations in line with the core value of WIOA is essential to our work. The addition of Government Assistance Agencies to the ecosystem allows us to access workforce participants and job seekers with barriers to sustainable income. With this ideology at the core of our work, we will continue to expand our work with partners that assist underrepresented individuals. Additional attention will be given to the Commission on Equity and Inclusion’s workgroup findings and recommendations.

In addition, Talent Pipeline Management training has been implemented under the Apprenticeship Expansion grant through the US Chamber of Commerce. TPM is an employer-led talent supply chain framework that generates actionable data on employer demand, provides a structured process for collective action and decision making, engages the full spectrum of talent sourcing provides, creates shared value, competitiveness, and accountability and is focused on employer ROI.

LWIA 13 has been actively invested in and continues to focus on our involvement with returning citizens. We have applied for several additional funding opportunities to reduce recidivism in the State of Illinois by providing training that will allow participants viable skills to obtain self-sufficient employment upon release.

- **What return on investment and qualitative outcome data for various education and training programs will be collected to identify barriers to employment.**

As the State works toward a more cohesive system for tracking performance and outcome data of providers on the WIOA Eligible Training Providers List, it will be easier to decipher which programs yield the greatest return on investment. Regarding barriers to enrollment in the form of equity gaps, the Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment being conducted for Perkins V will help identify gaps and uncover specific barriers to enrollment.

- **What are the more cost-effective approaches to taking down those barriers or helping residents overcome them?**

Cost-effective approaches will be explored and experimented with once a clearer picture of all barriers related to equity gaps is in place. For the time being, the Local Board is aware that the common barriers of transportation and child-care are significant impediments to employment attainment and retention for a segment of community residents. Partnerships with other community organizations will continue to be developed to help offset those barriers as much as possible.

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

In LWIA 13 we have a long-standing process by which we review potential candidates not on eligibility, but rather suitability, understanding that everyone has their own unique set of

circumstances and needs to be addressed. Performance we have found takes care of itself as we utilize a human-centered approach in our efforts to utilize our limited funding to best meet the needs of our clients.

CHAPTER 6: TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS AND ASSURANCES

A. Fiscal Management

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

Rock Island Tri-County Consortium is Fiscal Agent, identified as the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds described in WIOA sec. 107(d)(12)(B)(i)(III), as determined by the chief elected officials for local workforce investment area, serving Rock Island, Henry and Mercer Counties under WIOA sec. 107(d)(12)(B)(i).

- 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)).**

The competitive process used to award subgrants and contracts in LWIA 13 for WIOA Title I activities are pursuant to the Rock Island Tri-County Consortium procurement policy (Attachment B.)

- 3. Provide copies of executed cooperative agreements (as applicable) which define how all local service providers, including additional providers, 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.** [This may include cross training of staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers and other efforts at cooperation, collaboration and coordination.]

There are no cooperative agreements currently other than the MOU.

B. Physical and Programmatic Accessibility

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

LWIA 13 is committed to making all services, facilities and program information accessible by complying with WIOA Section 188, applicable provisions of Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12010 et seq.) and all other applicable statutory and regulatory requirements. This applies to all programs, activities and services provided by or made available to potential employees, volunteers, contractors/service providers, licensees, clients and potential clients within One-Stop Delivery System.

Compliance monitoring is conducted at local and state level to programs, services, technology and materials are accessible and available at **American Job Center**® and affiliates.

All local workforce system staff will be trained, either as an entire staff or through their respective agencies, in provisions of WIOA Section 188 and ADA of 1990 so that when a customer with a disability visits **American Job Center**®, all staff will have understanding and knowledge of how to accommodate individual needs. Requests for assistance from one or more partners may be solicited depending upon the type of accommodation being requested. **American Job Center**® is compliant with ADA accessibility regulations.

- 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.**

There are no cooperative agreements currently other than the MOU.

C. Plan Development and Public Comment

- 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)).**

Developing local plans has truly been a partnership effort. Through a series of meetings and conference calls, processes, procedures, service delivery and other critical components of the local plan were introduced, discussed and agreed to by all partners in the local workforce system in LWIA 13. As parts of plan were written, they were sent out to partners, Local Workforce Development Board and CEOs for comment and input. Representatives of businesses, education and labor organizations that are members of the Workforce Investment Board of Rock Island, Henry, and Mercer Counties Not-for-Profit were invited to participate in the development of the local plan. Educational partners participated in much of the development.

- 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.**

CEOs reviewed the local plan. The Workforce Development Board has reviewed the local plan. The plan is available for viewing and public comment, 8:30 a. m. – 5:00 p. m., Monday through Friday, the American Job Center, 500 42nd St Suite 6, Rock Island, Illinois, as well as on county website, www.TheAmericanJobCenter.org, under County News. Notice of plan has been published in local newspapers and on the American Job Center website. Telephone 309.854.1904. Email WDB@AmericanJob.Center. **There were no public comments received during the 30-day public notice, nor any after that 30 day-time frame.**

- 3. Provide Information regarding the regions and local plan modification procedures.**

Any modifications needed or requested over the term of this Plan will be brought to the Partner group and Local Board for consideration and approval.

- D. Describe how a lens of responsiveness, inclusivity and accessibility are or will be incorporated in the analysis of performance goals and implementation of performance goals of evaluation activities.**

LWIA 13 will continue to comply with all Federal and State physical inclusiveness and accessibility requirements, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, Section 188 of WIOA, the Illinois Accessibility Code, the most recent ADA standards for Accessible Design and the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards, and all other applicable statutory and regulatory requirements, as well as all Equal Opportunity policies and standards including those adhered to by each Partner agency when hiring.