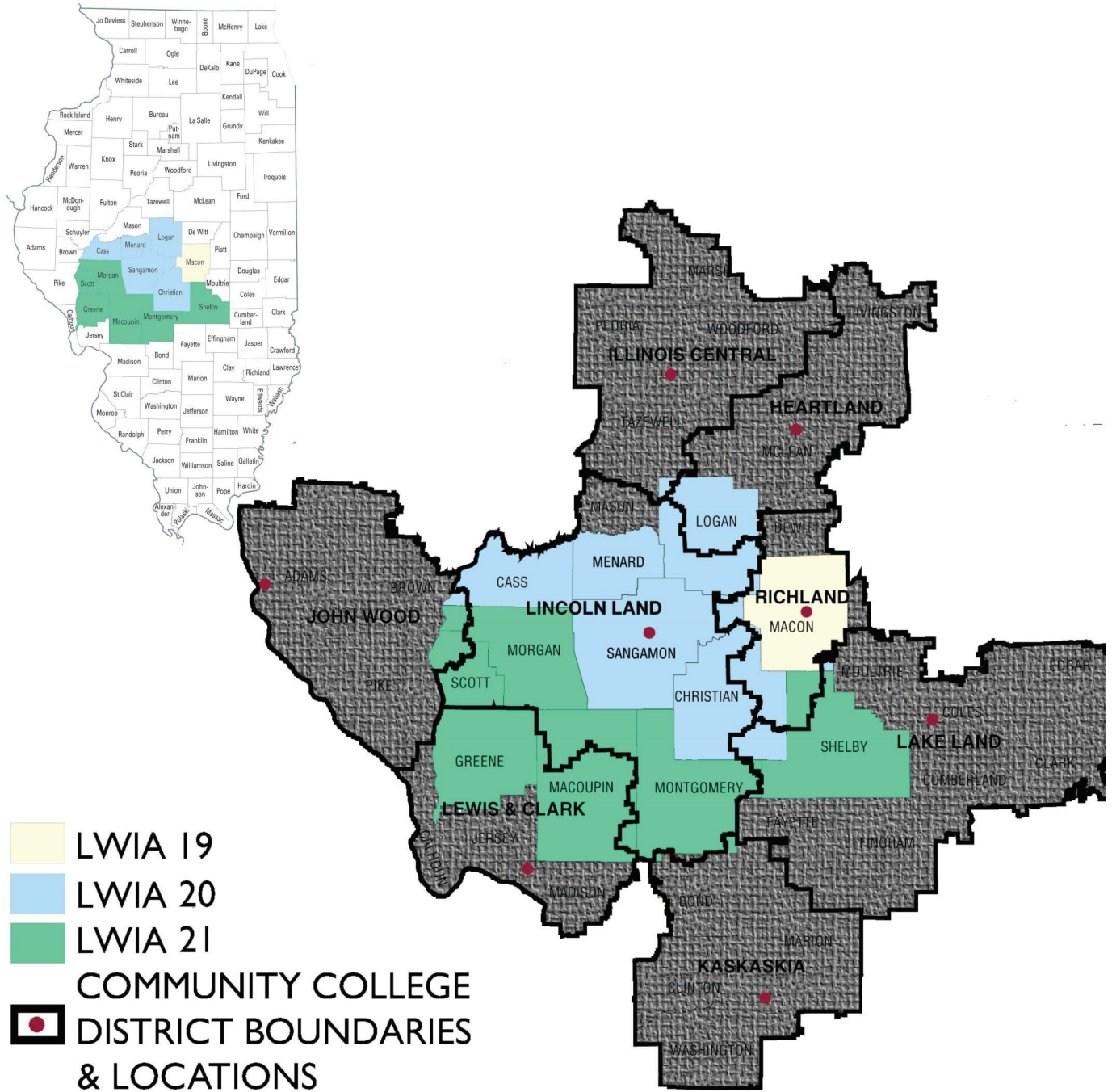


Central Economic Development Region 1

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act—2020 Regional and Local Plan



Central Economic Development Region 1

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act- 2020 Regional Plan

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Central Illinois Economic Development Region

2020 WIOA Plan

Executive Summary

The Workforce Boards of Local Areas 19, 20 and 21 in association with our partner agencies have produced this plan for the Central Economic Development Region (CEDR – 1). The Plan was developed in accordance with the state and local area plans, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) regulations, and the State of Illinois Regional and Local Planning Guide - updated November 2021. Our Boards are committed to creating workforce development strategies that promote the economic well-being of both employers and workers in the region. This plan formalizes the regional process for the Central Region to explore innovative means to better meet the needs of our customers and meet the educational, economic development and workforce development needs of the region.

Vision Statement:

This Plan incorporates the State of Illinois workforce development vision, which is to “Foster a Statewide workforce development system that supports the needs of individuals and businesses to ensure Illinois has a skilled workforce to effectively compete in the global economy.” This includes our commitment to:

- Maintaining a *Demand-Driven Orientation* to our planning work;
- Developing and maintaining *Strong Partnerships with Business*;
- Building *Pathways to Careers of Today and Tomorrow*;
- Engaging in *Cross-agency Collaboration and Connections* among each of the partners;
- Promoting *Integrated Service Delivery*;
- Ensuring *Equitable Access and Opportunity for all Populations*;
- Using *Clear Metrics for Progress and Success*; and
- Maintaining a *Focus on Continuous Improvement and Innovation*.

The Regional Plan also supports the Action Agenda for Workforce Development and Job Creation, as outlined in the Governor’s Executive Order 3. To advance this Action Agenda, CEDR will:

- Unite workforce development partners around regional clusters strategies by identifying high-impact regional clusters and associated in-demand occupations and implementing a coordinated workforce development strategy around regional clusters.
- Prepare Illinois workers for a career, not just their next job by increasing apprenticeship opportunities, addressing barriers to successful training and employment, and establishing and supporting equity goals and aligning with Perkins equity goals.
- Connect job seekers with employers by shortening time from credential to employment and integrating workforce services across program providers for one-stop customers.

Background:

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act envisions a workforce system that better aligns workforce, education and economic development partners. The regional workforce efforts of Springfield, Decatur, Lincoln and Jacksonville as well as the rural communities in Cass, Christian, Greene, Macoupin, Menard, Montgomery, Scott and Shelby will benefit greatly from a unified workforce team that can act quickly to address workforce needs of both employers and job seekers.

WIOA emphasizes training that leads to credentials in targeted growth sectors of the economy. It encourages service coordination among education and workforce partner agencies and the creation and utilization of career pathways in the targeted sectors. The legislation is designed to help workers, including those with barriers, to access services that lead to employment in demand occupations. The Region's plan is based on coordination of workforce, education and economic development efforts that will meet the needs of both employers and job seekers in our area.

Plan Development:

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

This Regional portion of the Plan includes the establishment of regional service strategies, including use of cooperative service delivery agreements; the development and implementation of sector initiatives for in-demand industry sectors; the collection and analysis of regional labor market data; the coordination of administrative cost arrangements; the coordination of transportation and other supportive services; the coordination of services with regional economic development services and providers; and the process for negotiation of local levels of performance for performance accountability measures.

This Plan also includes the Local Plan components for LWIAs 19, 20 and 21. The local planning strategies include direct investments in economic, education and workforce training programs so that individuals have the skills to compete in the job market and that employers have a ready supply of skilled workers; applying job-driven strategies in the one-stop system; enable economic, education and workforce partners to build a skilled workforce through innovation in, and alignment of, employment, training and education programs.

Regional System Partners:

In accordance with the Governor's vision for the State Workforce System, the CEDR's regional planning team included representatives from the following core and required partners:

- Capital Area Career Center
- City of Decatur
- City of Litchfield
- Community Action Programs of Central Illinois
- Decatur-Macon County Opportunities Corporation
- Department of Aging – Senior Community Service Employment Program
- Department of Corrections – Second Chance Act
- Department of Employment Security
- Department of Human Services – Division of Family and Community Service
- Department of Human Services – Division of Rehabilitation
- Economic Development Corporation of Decatur and Macon County
- Illinois Manufacturing Excellence Center
- Land of Lincoln Workforce Alliance
- Lincoln Land Community College
- Jacksonville Regional Economic Development Corp.
- Regional Office of Career & Technical Education
- Richland Community College
- Springfield Public Schools District 186
- Springfield Sangamon Growth Alliance
- West Central Development Council
- Workforce Investment Solutions of Macon and DeWitt

Implications of the COVID-19 National Health Emergency:

Content throughout this plan provides insight into the impact that the pandemic has had on workforce development services in our region. Where possible, specific steps have been identified that will be or have been taken to address continuity of service. The greatest impact on systems operations and service provision was the closing of the physical One-Stop Centers. The nature of the pandemic forced individuals to shelter in place for months at a time. Schools closed, many businesses closed and those that remained open were forced to rethink how to operate safely. In addition, as businesses began to reopen, they encountered an unprecedented drop in the numbers of available workers, making employee recruitment and retention a significant challenge. Many older workers retired. Other workers remained on the sidelines due to concern about the pandemic. Some workers were still caring for children who were not yet in school or were not able to reestablish disrupted childcare arrangements. Those workers without adequate access to computers and the Internet found themselves more isolated than ever from the services and information they would need to access services and identify employment opportunities. Enrollment in postsecondary instruction declined, especially in community colleges, as students were forced to delay their education. All of these challenges have required us to rethink how we can most effectively reach these workers, engage them in services and facilitate their transition to new and better jobs.

Chapter 1 – Economic and Workforce Analysis – Regional Component

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

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

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

The Central Region team met to discuss the data, targeted industries, clusters, and in-demand occupations. Staff from Illinois Department of Employment Security discussed the current data and how it could be interpreted. Marty Johnson from IDES confirmed that the updated charts in the packet reflect the effects of the pandemic on the economy. After reviewing the data, along with group discussion, team members agreed that sector information presented for Healthcare and Social Assistance, Manufacturing, and Professional and Business Services would continue to be the focus of workforce development in the region. These industries are recognized as the three first tier targeted industries in our Region.

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

Targeted	
Industries	Occupations
1. Healthcare and Social Assistance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ambulatory Health Care Services b. Hospitals c. Social Assistance d. Nursing and Residential Care Facilities 	1. Registered Nurse 2. Licensed Practical Nurse 3. Nursing Assistant 4. Personal Care Aides 5. Home Health Aides 6. Medical Assistant
2. Manufacturing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Food Manufacturing b. Machine Manufacturing c. Transportation Equipment Manufacturing 	1. Machinists 2. Welders 3. Mechanical Engineers
3. Professional and Business Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Professional, Scientific & Tech Services b. Management of Companies and Enterprises c. Administrative and Support Services 	1. Accountant and Auditors 2. Office Clerks 3. Operations Managers 4. Customer Service Representatives 5. Janitors and Housekeepers 6. Laborers/Freight/Stock & Material Movers

NAICS Title	2018 Employment	Projected 2028 Employment	Net Employment Change 2018 -	Percent Employment Change	Concentration (Location Quotient)
TOTAL, ALL INDUSTRIES	251,161	253,405	2,244	0.9%	
Self Employed Workers	10,967	11,379	412	3.8%	0.73
Agricultural Production	8,151	8,361	210	2.6%	3.38
Natural Resources & Mining	514	507	-7	-1.4%	0.48
Construction	9,105	9,309	204	2.2%	0.8
Manufacturing	24,329	24,798	469	1.9%	1.23
Wholesale Trade	9,063	8,850	-213	-2.4%	0.99
Retail Trade	25,315	25,245	-70	-0.3%	1.03
Utilities	1,726	1,774	48	2.8%	2
Transportation & Warehousing	8,156	7,975	-181	-2.2%	0.87
Information	3,195	3,073	-122	-3.8%	0.72
Financial Activities	11,733	11,917	184	1.6%	0.88
Professional & Business Services	18,413	19,256	843	4.6%	0.56
Educational Services	20,662	18,990	-1,672	-8.1%	0.93
Health Care & Social Assistance	39,231	39,799	568	1.4%	1.2
Leisure & Hospitality	22,094	22,599	505	2.3%	0.87
Other Services	12,162	11,254	-908	-7.5%	1.18
Government	26,345	28,319	1,974	7.5%	1.54

Leading
Maturing
Emerging

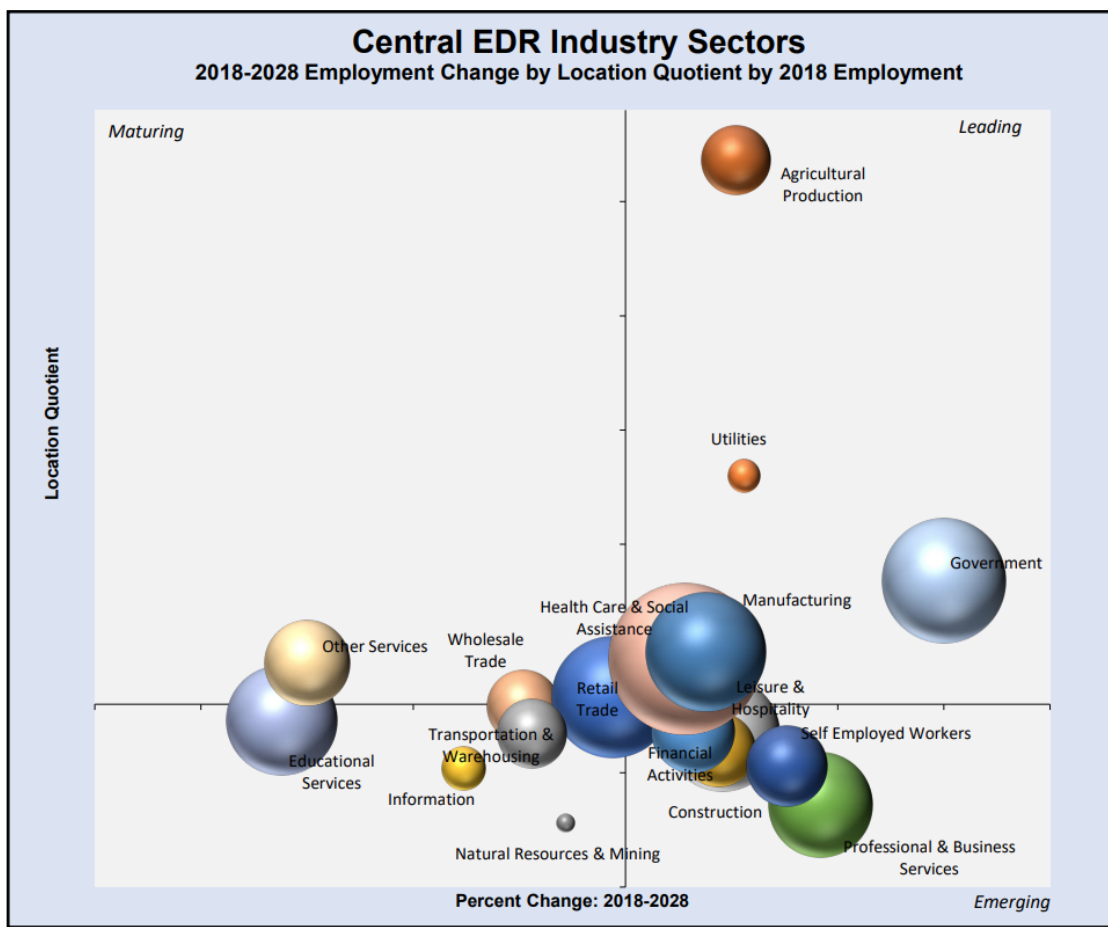
Data for the region indicates that Construction, Financial Activities and Leisure and Hospitality are emerging industry sectors. The partners also recognize that although the data does not list Transportation/Warehousing or Information Technology as either leading, maturing or emerging industry sectors in the EDR there are still numerous jobs in those sectors. For instance, the expected openings for Truck drivers are 312. Almost all industries have occupations requiring information technology workers.

Because of these industries high growth projections, we are identifying these as Tier 2 targets of opportunity for the Region. Some of the in-demand jobs in these top tier industries are entry-level, require a minimum of a high school diploma and are lower wage career areas; however, for youth entering the workforce, these jobs provide experience to begin building a work history, earning a standard living wage and are first steps in a career pathway.

Most industries in our area were impacted by the Pandemic. Nearly every industry had work stoppages due to efforts to stop the spread of the virus. Those most greatly impacted were Healthcare and Leisure and Hospitality. The healthcare industry had an enourmous need for all workers but none more so that nurses. At this point in the region the lack of healthcare workers is at a crisis level. The leisure and hospitality industry was impacted by the closing of the economy. Most restaurants and hotels had to either close during the first year of the pandemic or their customer base was greatly diminished. Many of our local restaurants did not survive.

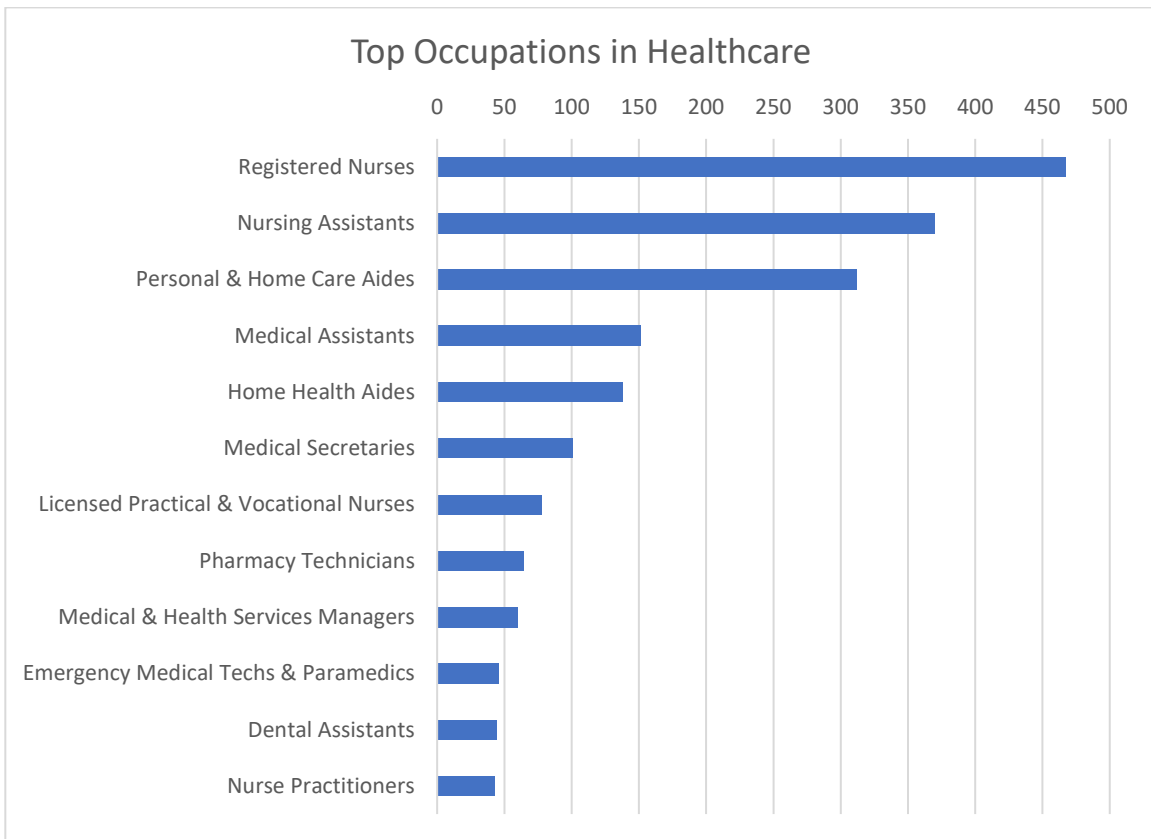
Chapter 1 Section A Question 1b: What industries and occupations have favorable location quotients?

The industries with favorable location quotients are Manufacturing, Agriculture Production, Utilities, and Healthcare and Social Assistance. Occupations within the region’s targeted industries that have a high location quotient are (Manufacturing) Machinists, Packaging/Filling Food Batch Makers, Production and Operating Workers; and (Healthcare) Registered Nurses, Personal Care Aides and Nursing Assistants.

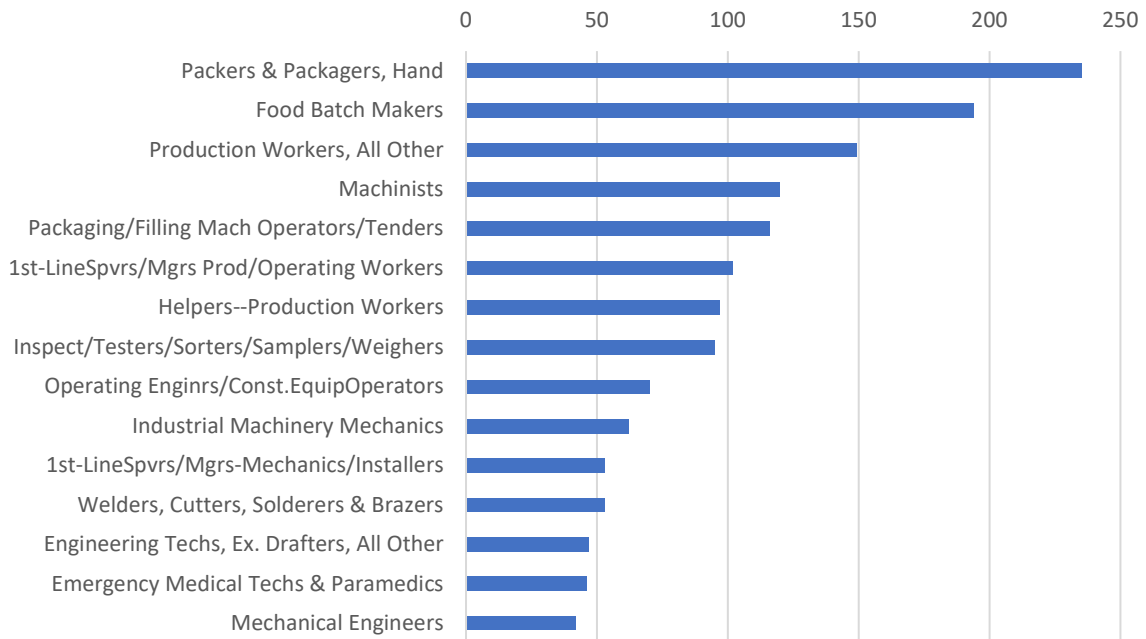


Chapter 1 Section A Question 1c: What industries and occupations have favorable demand projections based on growth?

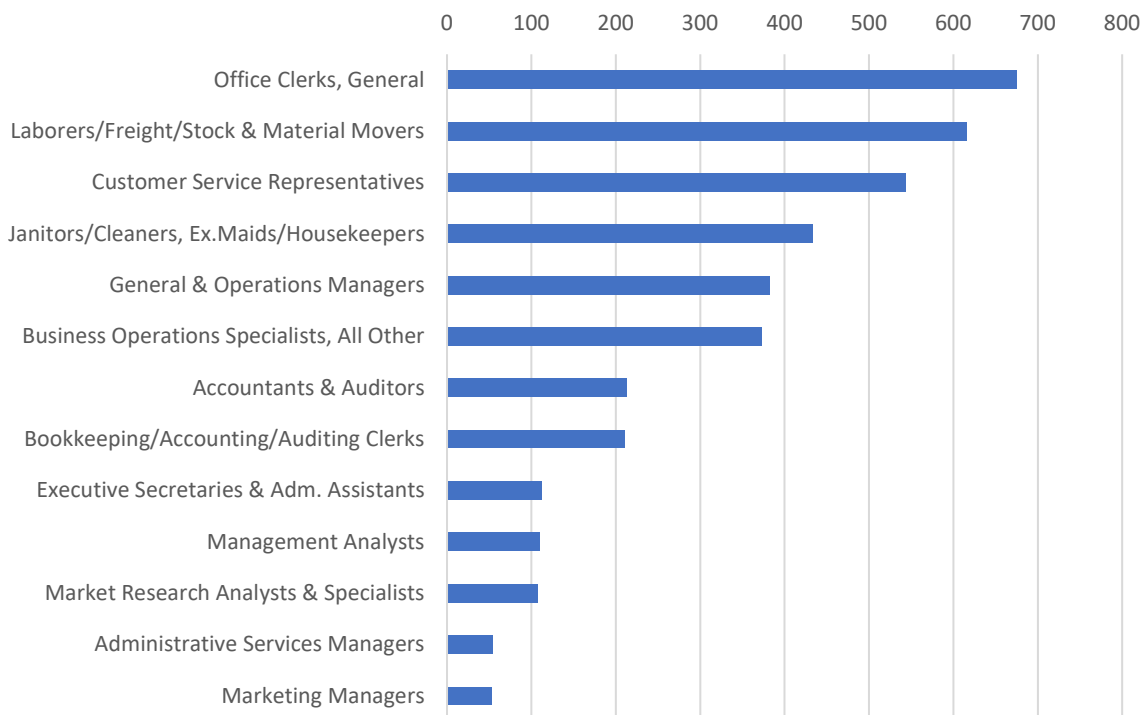
The industries with favorable demand projections are: Professional and Business Services, Healthcare and Social Assistance, Leisure and Hospitality, Manufacturing and Self-Employed Workers. Occupations related to the targeted industries are (Business and Professional Services) Janitors/Housekeepers, Customer Service Representatives, Office Clerks, Laborers/Freight Stock and Material movers; (Healthcare) Registered Nurses, Personal Care Aides and Nursing Assistants.



Top Occupations Manufacturing



Top Occupations Professional and Business Services



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

Growth by Replacement

Occupation	BY2018	BY2028	Exits	Transfer	Replacement
Cashiers	6663	6428	584	651	1235
Combined Food Prep. & Serving Workers	5674	6161	472	582	1054
Retail Salespersons	6780	6906	393	606	999
Office Clerks, General	6215	5781	335	383	718
Farmers, Ranchers & Other Ag Managers	6471	6645	408	244	652
Laborers/Freight/Stock & Material Movers	4338	4422	198	410	608
Waiters & Waitresses	3231	3171	222	392	614
Customer Service Representatives	4436	4143	206	366	572
Stock Clerks & Order Fillers	3758	3809	192	312	504
Registered Nurses	7011	7740	205	189	394
Janitors/Cleaners, Ex.Maids/Housekeepers	3177	3269	197	227	424
General & Operations Managers	4214	4321	90	281	371
Business Operations Specialists, All Other	3277	3667	94	239	333
Nursing Assistants	3453	3346	183	198	381
Truck Drivers, Heavy & Tractor-Trailer	2712	2767	113	199	312
Personal & Home Care Aides	1969	2187	154	136	290

The above chart shows the occupations that have favorable demand projections based on replacements. Top occupations with high demand in the targeted sectors include Office Clerks, Laborers/Freight/Stock and Material Movers for Professional Services and Business and Registered Nurses, Nursing Assistant and Personal and Home Care Aides for Healthcare and Social Assistance.

In speaking with the LMI Specialist at IDES, it should be noted that:

$$Total\ openings = Growth\ Openings + Separations$$

Definitions:

Growth Openings – difference between the base and projection year employment

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

Exits - leaving the labor force entirely

Transfers – change in occupational field/category, i.e., permanently leaving an occupation to go to a different field, or to a different occupational category (defined as a different Major SOC group)

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

According to the data provided by Illinois Department of Employment Security, EDR 1’s maturing industries include Retail Trade and Other Services.

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Self Employed Workers	10,967	11,379	412	3.8%	0.73
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Government	26,345	28,319	1,974	7.5%	1.54

Leading
Maturing
Emerging

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

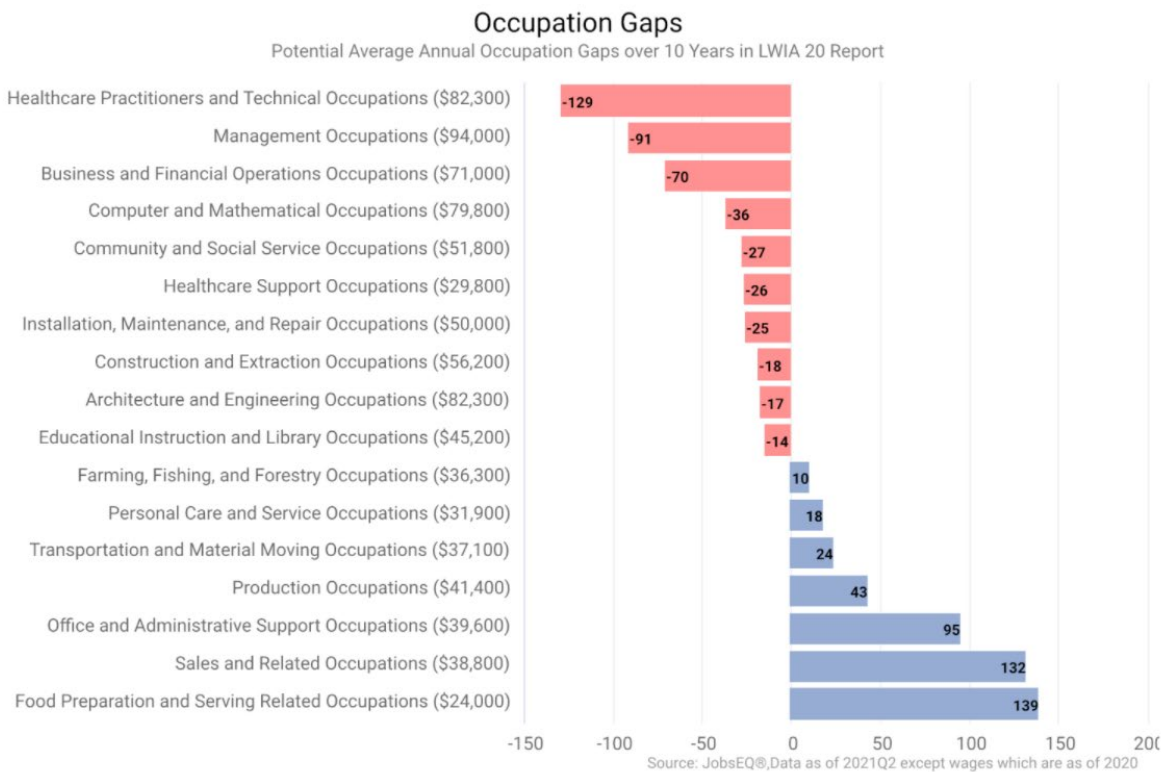
Occupations Associated with Emerging Industries	
Industry	Occupations
Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carpenters • Laborers • Construction Managers • First Line Supervisors
Financial Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountants/Auditors • Claims Adjustors • Insurance Carriers
Professional and Other Business Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Operations Specialists • Customer Service Representatives • Market Research Specialists • Office Clerks • Freight Stock and Material Movers
Leisure and Hospitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retail Sales Workers • Food Prep and Serving • Waiter/Waitresses • Cooks

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

Data was used Illinois Department of Employment Security. Data from Springfield Sangamon Growth Alliance software, Jobs EQ was also used. Below is a graph that shows 2-digit SOC code occupation gaps. The data shows that there will be shortages in Healthcare and Social Assistance, Professional and Business Services, Construction, and Information Technology. Many of the Tier 1 and 2 industries of focus for EDR 1 are mentioned as having an occupation gap over the next 10 years.

Occupation Gaps		
Potential Average Annual Occupation Gaps over 10 Years in LWIA 20 Report		
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations (\$82,300)	-129	
Management Occupations (\$94,000)	-91	
Business and Financial Operations Occupations (\$71,000)	-70	
Computer and Mathematical Occupations (\$79,800)	-36	
Community and Social Service Occupations (\$51,800)	-27	
Healthcare Support Occupations (\$29,800)	-26	
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations (\$50,000)	-25	
Construction and Extraction Occupations (\$56,200)	-18	
Architecture and Engineering Occupations (\$82,300)	-17	
Educational Instruction and Library Occupations (\$45,200)	-14	
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations (\$36,300)	10	
Personal Care and Service Occupations (\$31,900)	18	
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations (\$37,100)	24	
Production Occupations (\$41,400)	43	
Office and Administrative Support Occupations (\$39,600)	95	
Sales and Related Occupations (\$38,800)	132	
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations (\$24,000)	139	
Source: JobsEQ®		
Data as of 2021Q2 except wages which are as of 2020		
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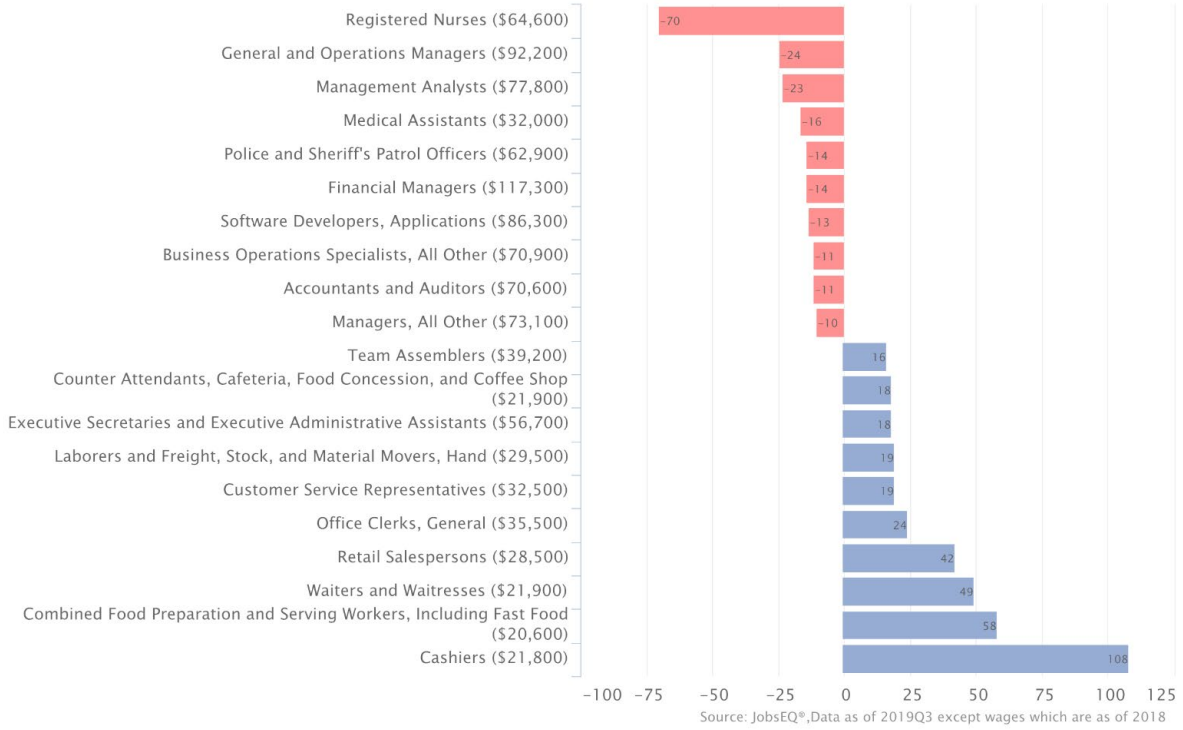
**A. Provide an Analysis of the:
2: Employment needs of employers in existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations (§ 679.560(a)(1)(ii));**



The above graph shows the emerging and existing occupational gaps over the next 10 years for the industries being targeted. Examining the data shows that all of the potential gaps fall into the sectors of focus for the economic development region. The focus in the region will be on developing career pathways to serve these industries and ensuring the employment needs of the regional employers are met.

Occupation Gaps

Potential Average Annual Occupation Gaps over 10 Years in Workforce EDR Region



The above graph shows the emerging and existing occupational gaps over the next 10 years for the industries being targeted. Again, the majority of the occupations that will have a shortage in the next 10 years are within the industries of focus for EDR 1.

A. Provide an Analysis of the:
3. The knowledge and skills needed to meet the employment needs of the employers in the region, including employment needs in in-demand industry sectors and occupations (§ 679.560(a)(2));

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

		Central Economic Development Region - Illinois Community College System Fiscal Year 2020 Summary of Graduates by Career Cluster																		
District ID	College Name	Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources	Architecture & Construction	Arts, Audio/Video Technology & Communications	Business Management & Administration	Education & Training	Finance	Government & Public Administration	Health Science	Hospitality & Tourism	Human Services	Information Technology	Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security	Manufacturing	Marketing	Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics	Transportation, Distribution & Logistics	Associate - Transfer	General Education Core Curriculum Credential (GECC)	Total
52601	Lincoln Land	7	30	6	7	0	4	0	419	19	5	14	21	127	0	0	270	625	0	1,554
53601	Lewis and Clark	37	23	71	52	0	59	0	273	0	60	39	65	112	18	2	29	337	542	1,719
53701	Richland	1	39	2	70	1	18	0	204	58	18	14	27	30	5	10	95	194	41	827
Central Total		45	92	79	129	1	81	0	896	77	83	67	113	269	23	12	394	1,156	583	4,100
State Total		1,497	2,650	613	2,915	333	760	0	12,607	1,065	1,899	1,896	1,580	3,556	229	126	3,191	21,971	8,819	65,707
% of State Total		3.01%	3.47%	12.89%	4.43%	0.30%	10.66%	0.00%	7.11%	7.23%	4.37%	3.53%	7.15%	7.56%	10.04%	9.52%	12.35%	5.26%	6.61%	6.24%

The Targeted Career Pathway Clusters are:

Health Care:

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

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

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

Manufacturing:

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

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

Professional and Business Services:

General Management: Occupations that plan, organize, direct, and evaluate all or part of a business organization through the allocation and use of financial, human, and material resources.

Administrative Support: Occupations that facilitate business operations through a variety of administrative and clerical duties including information and communication management, data processing and collection, and project tracking.

Operations Management: Workers who focus on planning, organizing, coordinating, and controlling the resources needed to produce or provide a business' goods and/or services. Includes quality control, scheduling, procurement, and warehousing.

(Note: Career Pathway Definitions are from careerwise.minnstate.edu/careers/clusterPathways)

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

Essential skills continue to be identified by employers as a key barrier to individuals entering employment. Not only do employers want individuals with specific occupational skills, but they also want individuals with the foundational workplace skills as well. Through conversations and business visits with employers, feedback showed that employers considered the following qualifications as essential to being hired:

- Reliability
- Communication (active listening and learning, speaking)
- Personal Responsibility
- Critical thinking and judgement/decision making
- Attendance/punctuality

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

In our Region, as in the rest of the State, the gap in skills between what a potential employee possesses and what an employer needs are a complex issue. We hear frequently that there are not enough of the right graduates for in-demand jobs. Many of the job seekers in our region have lost their jobs from occupations that are declining. To meet the needs of employers for skilled workers in healthcare, professional and business services, and manufacturing, these individuals need training. This is the case for low-income adults and youth as well.

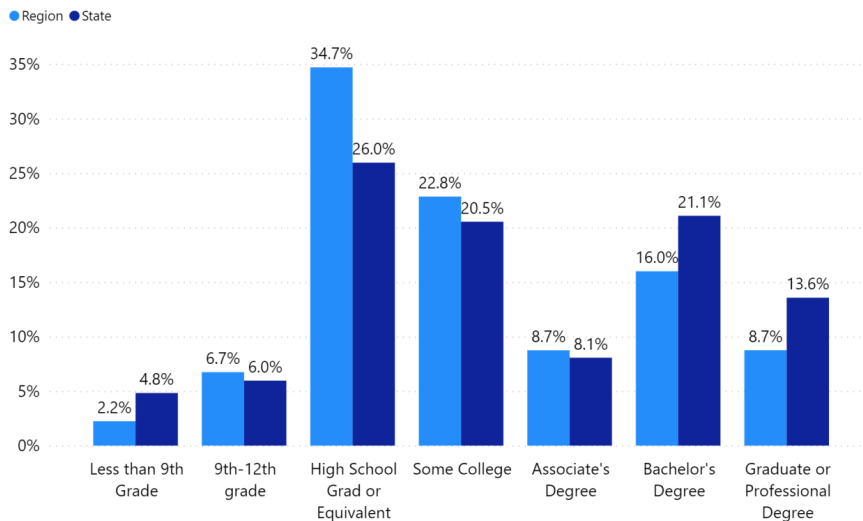
The table below shows the educational attainment of the population in the Central Region. However, none of these percentages have changed much since the last regional plan, which leads us to presume educational attainment in the region is stagnant. Due to this trend, the regions’ partners plan to increase the number of individuals who possess the skills required by employers through sector and career pathway initiatives specifically focusing on the targeted industries and through apprenticeships.

- 5% lower than state average for bachelor’s degree.
- EDR 1 has 35% of the population with a high school diploma or equivalent, which is higher than the state average.
- 23% of the population with some college, again higher than the state average.

Education Attainment of Population 25 & Over

Region
Central

Over 63% of Illinois residents 25 & over continued education past high school.



Population Ages 25+	
Less than 9th Grade	8,410
9th-12th grade	25,338
High School Grad or Equivalent	130,477
Some College	85,906
Associate's Degree	32,883
Bachelor's Degree	60,142
Graduate or Professional Degree	32,902
Total	376,058

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey, Table S1501.

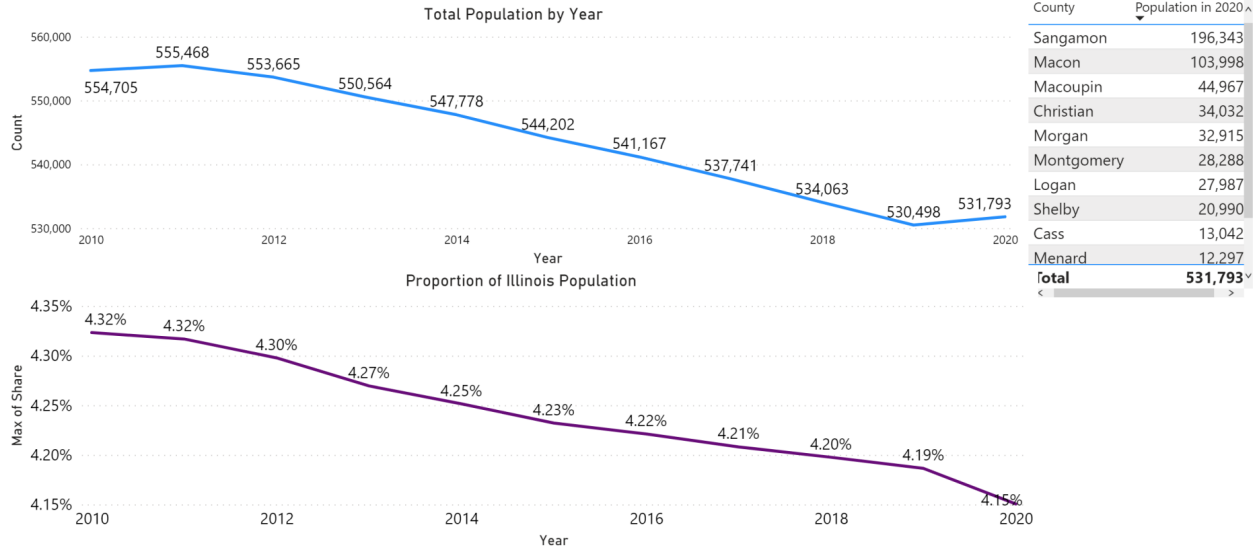
A. Provide an Analysis of the:

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

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

Population Trends

Illinois has a population of 12,812,508 and is the 6th largest state in the nation.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates Program, 2019 & 2020 Census Redistricting Data.

The population in EDR 1 is slowly decreasing. In 2015 there were 544,181 people living in the region. In 2020, the population had dropped by over 10,000 people to 531,793. Additionally, the median age in Illinois has been steadily increasing. The data shows this is the trend for EDR 1 as well. The largest population numbers are from individuals ages 55-59. There are 38,553 individuals between those ages in EDR 1, which shows 7.3% of the population will be retiring within the next 10 years.

This demographic shift will continue into the future and will create continued downward pressure on labor supply for the entire region. The unemployment rate is low for two of the LWIA's in the region, 20 and 21 but high in LWIA 19. The aging population is a key contributor to the expected strong demand for healthcare and manufacturing workers.

Chapter 1 Section A Question 4b: What special populations exist in the region, what is their magnitude, and what are the policy and service implications to meet the needs of these individuals?

Special populations that exist in the region include but are not limited to:

- Veterans
- Persons of Color
- Individuals with Disabilities
- Women
- Individuals Living in Poverty
- Returning Citizens
- Individuals Lacking a High School Diploma

The Tables listed below provide some information on the magnitude of the Special Populations to be served.

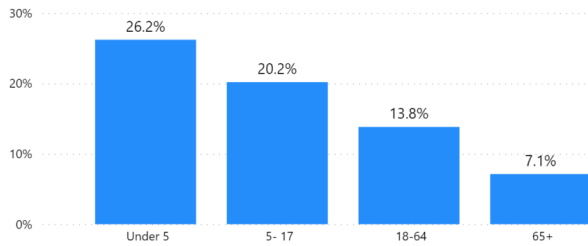
County	Poverty Rate 2019	Point Change from Previous Year
Cass County, Illinois	13	1.0
Christian County, Illinois	12.3	-0.2
Greene County, Illinois	13.7	-0.2
Logan County, Illinois	12.8	1.9
Macon County, Illinois	16.7	-0.7
Macoupin County, Illinois	13.5	0.6
Menard County, Illinois	8.2	-0.8
Montgomery County, Illinois	16	1.6
Morgan County, Illinois	13.8	-1.4
Sangamon County, Illinois	12.2	-0.9
Scott County, Illinois	11.2	0.9
Shelby County, Illinois	9.4	-0.8
Heartland Alliance – County Data Book		

Percent of Population Below Poverty

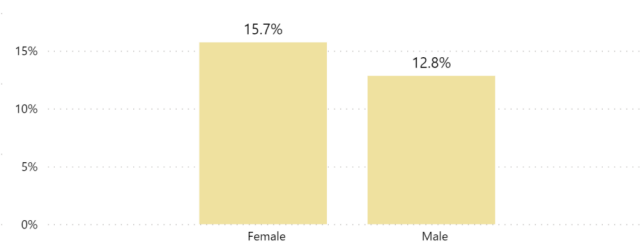
Region
Central

Roughly 1.6 million Illinois residents live below poverty. Children under the age of 5 (19%), females (14%), African Americans (26%), and individuals lacking a high school diploma or equivalent (23%) are more likely to live below poverty.

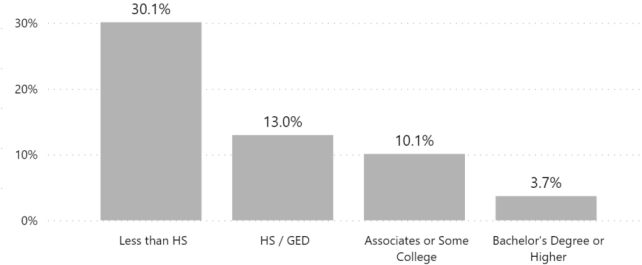
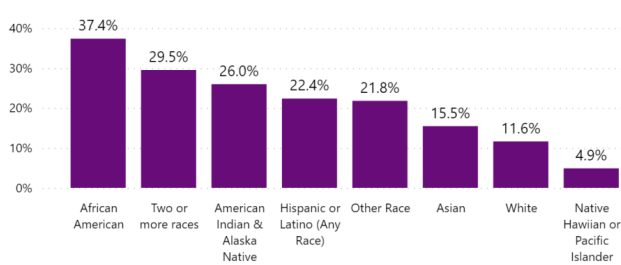
By Age



By Sex



By Race/Ethnicity



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey, Table S1701

Population with Disabilities by Age and Type

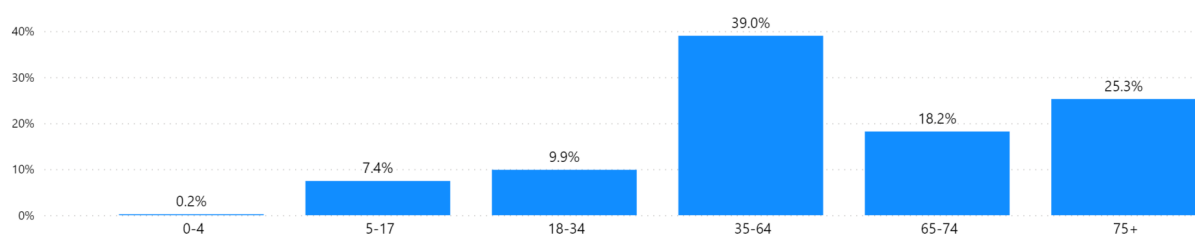
Region
Central

74,493

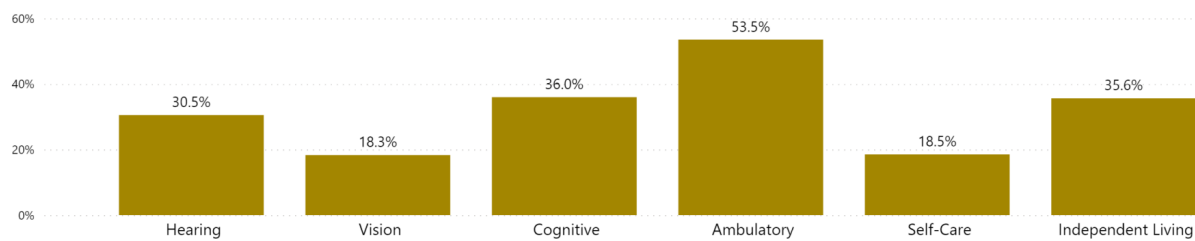
People with disabilities in region

Approximately 11% of the population (or 1.4 million people) in Illinois have some type of disability. The most prominent disabilities include ambulatory and the inability to live independently.

Share of Persons with Disabilities by Age



Share of Persons with Disabilities by Type*



*Sum of percentages can exceed 100 due to persons with multiple disabilities.

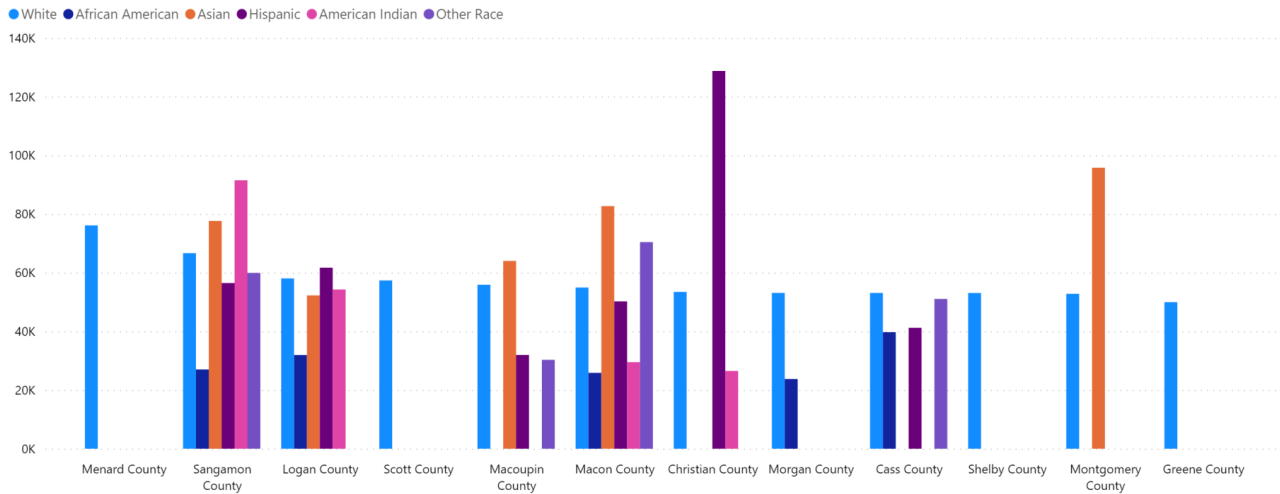
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey, Table S1810.

Median Income by County and Race

Region
 Central

Statewide, the median income for African American households is \$38,573, American Indian households is \$49,634, Asian households is \$90,278, Hispanic households is \$55,836, White households is \$71,922, and Other Race households is \$52,832.

Median Household Income by Race



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey, Table S1903.

The region is committed to expanding access for targeted populations, including those living in poverty, persons of color, persons with a disability, out-of-school youth, and veterans. Regionally, the partners will work to establish partnerships and collaborate with community organizations in order to serve job seeker customers to access the services that they need in order to be able to acquire the job skills that will lead to employment.

ADDITIONAL TARGET POPULATION STATISTICS

EDR 1 Central

(Cass, Christian, Greene, Logan, Macon, Macoupin, Menard,
Montgomery, Morgan, Sangamon, Scott, & Shelby)

Low-Income Indicators

SNAP Households, Monthly Average 2020	63,522
SNAP Cases, Monthly Average 2020	120,062
TANF Cases, Monthly Average 2020	2,258
TANF Persons, Monthly Average 2020	5,858

Foster Care Indicators

Total Foster Youth, October 31, 2021	1,925
Foster Youth- Foster Care	759
Foster Youth- Relative	1,111
Foster Youth- Institution or Group Home	30
Other Foster Youth	25

DOC Indicators

Adult Prison Population by Sentencing Region, June 30th, 2021	1,744
Adult Parolee Population by Region of Residence, June 30, 2021	1,310
Average Daily Juvenile Detention Population, June 2021	12

Other Indicators

Single Parents	
Male Householder with own children, no partner present	2,589
Female Householder with own children, no partner present	12,648
Adult Population at Risk	
Foreign Born Population	12,410
Age 18+ without high school diploma	40,645

B. Describe the development and implementation of sector initiatives for in-demand industry sectors or occupations for the planning region (§ 679.510(a)(1)(iii)); Plans must answer the following questions:

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

The Central Region will continue to share data regionally and will look for the commonalities between the three LWIA's. Once a year, the Central Region will convene a "sector-led" meeting, focusing on the three main industries, Healthcare/Social Services, Manufacturing and Professional/Business Services to discuss issues and opportunities within the region.

Included in the meetings will be businesses from the specific sector, Economic Development, Chambers of Commerce, and all core partners within WIOA. Economic development will facilitate the meetings.

A different sector will be selected each year. Discussions will include in-demand occupations within the specific cluster, barriers the employers and employees face, and what the future looks like for the workforce within the specific sector. WIB members from the three boards will be included in the meetings.

The purpose of the meetings will be to help build a stronger partnership within the sectors, and to help partners in the Central Region to identify areas of need, by aligning proper services to customers to help develop a talent pipeline.

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

It is the Region's intent to build upon the previous sector partnerships discussed in the last plan. These provide the region with a good foundation to expand upon. The goal for the region's Next Generation partnerships is to have one top tier industry meet annually to address all issues and concerns for the region. These events will encompass employers, Chambers of Commerce, and Economic Development organizations, and will discuss all issues that the companies are experiencing, including workforce concerns. At the end of the 2020 regional plan we will have met with all three top tier industries and will have outcomes that show how we addressed their workforce matters.

The Region's initial focus is to work collaboratively with businesses, chambers of commerce and other organizations to highlight the healthcare field. An event would be held at various locations within the region on a designated day in August or September and would emphasize the many career pathway opportunities within our region's booming healthcare industry. . Training could start with an Adult Education Health Care Bridge and then transition to C.N.A., LPN and RN positions. There are so many health care opportunities within the region. This is the way to enhance or highlight Health Care Pathways. If successful, we would look to replicate these efforts in manufacturing, CDL/Logistics, and other sectors as well. EDR 1 is also looking for additional grant opportunities that may help serve regional sector-based projects.

In addition, LWIA 20 was the Apprenticeship Navigator for EDR 1 and established numerous sector partnerships. Local township and community water districts and a regional medical group/hospital are participating in active apprenticeships. Additionally, a large manufacturer is being supported with an incumbent worker project that encompasses staff manufacturing training and management training for executives.

DECO's Red Team and EDR 1 organized and held a meeting with all of the local Chambers of Commerce to discuss workforce projects and programs that could help support their members. This event was held in June 2021.

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

Sector-based partnerships in the region include:

IMEC – Manufacturing: IMEC was established in 1996 to improve the productivity and competitiveness of Illinois' small and mid-sized manufacturing firms.

Midwest Inland Port – Manufacturing/Logistics and Transportation: *“Midwest Inland Port is a multi-modal hub located in Decatur, Illinois that delivers both domestic and international flexibility for companies through a well-positioned transportation corridor, connecting the Midwest to the East, West and Gulf Coasts of North America”*.

Midwest Trucking Association – Logistics and Transportation: Mid-West Truckers Association represents and services over 3,000 members in 15 states. Members are comprised of trucking companies and companies that operate trucks as part of their business.

BJC Collaborative – Healthcare: BJC HealthCare of St. Louis, CoxHealth of Springfield, Mo., Memorial Health System of Springfield, Ill., and Saint Luke's Health System of Kansas City, Mo., partnered together in October 2012 to create The BJC Collaborative to achieve even higher quality care for the patients served by the independent not-for-profit health care organizations. Blessing Health System in Quincy, Ill., joined the Collaborative in May 2013 and Southern Illinois Healthcare in Carbondale, Ill., in September 2013. Sarah Bush Lincoln Health System of Mattoon, Ill. joined in November 2015 and Decatur Memorial Hospital joined in February 2016.

International Warehouse Logistics Association – Logistics and Warehousing: IWLA members include companies that provide many services: warehousing; fulfillment; reverse logistics; transportation; freight-forwarding and brokerage services; inventory and supply chain management; and a broad range of manufacturing and value-added services.

In addition, the Central Region will continue to explore partnerships, utilizing each LWIA's Business Services Team, and reporting out regionally when a new partnership is formed.

Apprenticeship Navigator for EDR #1 - Apprenticeship Navigators are available to answer questions about registered apprenticeship and assist employers with the program development and registration process at no cost to their business. Apprenticeship Navigators can help employers:

Understand the registered apprenticeship training model, Identify existing models for occupations of interest, Connect employers with appropriate resources to assist with their programs, Draw up your Standards and Training & Education outline based upon employer input, Submit the employer's registration paperwork to the USDOL for full recognition in the National Registered Apprenticeship System, Assist with program updates as the employer's workforce needs evolve, Coordinate sector partnerships between interested employers.

BEST Mobile Training Center - is a master IPC provider offering both trainer and operator certifications. Koh Young America Inc. is a provider of certified training on Koh Young Zenith Alpha HS Machines.

The Decatur Building Trades Council – is a partnership that support sector strategies. This organization has supported the Trade pre-apprenticeship grants as well as the work experiences.

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

Neutral conveners in the Central Region that have the capacity to help establish sector partnerships include:

- Illinois Manufacturing Excellence Center – IMEC provides assistance to Illinois' small and mid-sized manufactures in identifying and solving performance gaps and building a culture that supports sustained improvements.
- Springfield Sangamon Growth Alliance - is a public-private sector partnership dedicated to advancing economic development efforts in Springfield and Sangamon County. Led by a volunteered, diverse and industry-driven board of directors, the mission is to pursue economic prosperity and growth for Sangamon County and the City of Springfield.
- The Economic Development Corporation of Decatur & Macon County – The EDC's primary role is to provide support and a point of contact for prospective area employers that are non-retail in nature as well as an advocate for the establishment of their presence in the community. Additionally, they administer Illinois Enterprise Zone benefits as they apply.
- The Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce- The chamber advocates on behalf of members for business-friendly legislation and offers programs, services, and networking opportunities to help make local business thrive and grow.
- Decatur Regional Chamber of Commerce - The chamber advocates on behalf of members for business-friendly legislation and offers programs, services, and networking opportunities to help make local business thrive and grow.
- Local Workforce Boards in our Region – these business led boards are ideally situated to convene employers for development of Sector Initiatives. Members come from the industries that are being targeted in the Region.
- Any business that is planning to expand could be considered a neutral convener. Their role could be determining skills levels for various occupations, assisting with developing training/curriculum that would train skilled workers, participating on advisory councils or workforce boards and providing equipment or skill training at their business location.

- Sector associations could be neutral conveners including – Illinois Manufacturing Association, Illinois Medical Association, Illinois Hospital Association, Midwest Truckers, etc.

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

The regional partners did not feel that the pandemic impacted their ability to collect and analyze regional labor market information. Most services were moved to on-line delivery because of the pandemic. As such, all partners were collecting demographic data on their customers electronically. The four Core Partners all have state-based systems to collect customer information and service delivery.

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

The demographic information supplied by the Illinois Department of Employment Security concerning the population of people with barriers to employment is included in the data packets for consideration in development of the Regional and Local Plan. Data such as Age, Gender, Race, Disability Status, and Poverty Level are available for use in program planning. This labor market information will help inform program development such as the Equity Grants to Community Colleges. Moving forward in the next two years the Regional Partners will look to LMI experts at the State for development of program level reports to provide equity analysis in program design.

Chapter 2 – Strategies for Service Integration – Regional Component

This regional component of the plan must describe the regional service strategies, including use of cooperative service delivery strategies and the connection of job seekers with employers. As part of the 2022 modification, regions are required to provide undated information and analysis noting any significant impacts of the COVID-19 National Health Emergency and what steps will be taken to address the challenges and opportunities that are associated with the regional service integration strategies.

A. Provide an analysis of workforce development activities, including education and training, in the region. This analysis must include the strengths and weaknesses of workforce development activities and capacity to provide the workforce development activities to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment, and the employment needs to employers (§ 679.560(a)(4)). Plans must respond to the following: The 2022 modification must update the following sections of you plan where applicable to address the impact of the COVID-19 National Health Emergency and any plans for mitigating the pandemic implications over the next two years:

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

As part of the December 2022 regional planning meetings, the Partners identified strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) pertaining to workforce development in the region. The results of this analysis are shown in the Table below.

SWOT Analysis for Central Region – Workforce Development		
Internal Origin	<p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational services • Training In Targeted Industries • Community Partners • Large number of small employers • Diverse economic make-up • Large Number of Job Openings • Development of technology to deliver services 	<p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of workers/unfilled positions • Closing of Offices • Skills shortage • Working in Silos • Communicating services • Lack of awareness of services to individuals • Capacity to train • Lack of customer technology skills
External Origin	<p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large number of job openings/unfilled positions • New/emerging education/career pathways • Regional collaboration • Service Integration Plans • Incorporation of Essential Skills into each program. • Increase in Career and Technical Education • Utilization of equity lens 	<p>Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global pandemic • Lack of workers • Loss of large employers • Economic downturn • Lack of CTE Teachers and facilities • Funding – lack of from both state and other sources • Illinoisans fleeing to other states • Labor force decline • Legalization of cannabis use

Strengths: One of the primary strengths of the region and effect of the pandemic is the large number of current job openings. There are unfilled openings across all industry sectors. However, there is an enormous need for healthcare workers, teachers and transportation and warehousing workers. For those seeking employment in these areas there is an abundance of opportunity. In addition to the overall strengths identified by the partners, there are a number of specific strengths of our workforce development system in the region. These can be categorized into two groups: a wide array of workforce development and educational services, and strong workforce development processes and business practices.

Workforce development and educational services:

- Development of Individual Employment Plan
- Job Search Assistance

- Job Placement Service
- Career Exploration
- Assessment
- Basic Skills instruction
- ESL
- HSE – Adult Secondary Education
- Bridge Programs
- Occupational Training
- Work Based Learning – Work Experience / On-The-Job Training/Apprenticeships
- Supportive Services – Childcare / Transportation / Tools / Supplies
- Labor Market Information
- On-Line Opportunities - Illinois workNet, Illinois Job Link, Career Information System
- Unemployment Benefits
- Cash Assistance / SNAP

Workforce development processes and business practices:

- Recruitment, Assessment, Selection Process
- Proven experience with NEG Accelerated Short Term MFG, TDL and CDL Training
- Strong ties to the community agencies
- Established relationships/partnerships with employers
- Established relationships with SHRM, EDC
- Aligning efforts to demand industries, occupations and skills
- Previous success with regional collaboration
- Consistently meet/exceed performance goals (entered employment, retention, credential attainment)

Weaknesses: The large volume of job openings in the region was also seen as a weakness. The lack of workers is one of the greatest impacts of the pandemic. During their meeting the partners identified several contributors to the lack of job seekers. These included:

- The “Great Resignation” which occurred in 2021. This included those leaving their jobs because of pandemic fatigue and those leaving because of vaccine mandates.
- Large numbers of retirements – The Federal Reserve noted that 2.5 million Americans chose to retire during the pandemic.
- Government assistance was also cited as a reason for a lack of workers.
- Turnover was an issue as well, with those currently working moving from job to job.

Additionally, the regional partners identified other weaknesses or opportunities for improvement, including the ongoing skill shortage, the continued tendency to work in our respective silos, the length of time it takes to train workers in our existing institutions, and challenges in recruiting dislocated workers into training programs. The lack of instructors for any sector is challenging

for the colleges. Lag-time between when customers can start a program of study can be drawn-out due to the instructor shortage.

Opportunities: The large number of job openings was also seen as an opportunity for the region. Partners will continue to develop collaborative methods to provide integrated services to both job seekers and employers. The pandemic has put a focus on the need to develop technology-based methods to deliver coordinated services while maintaining capacity to provide in-person services.

Threats: The greatest threat to program operations is the COVID-19 Global Health Emergency. Threats stemming from the pandemic include:

- Lack of workers
- Closure of offices
- Lack of ability to provide in-person training
- Lack of access to services based on individuals' barriers to employment

Chapter 2 Section A Question 2: Analyze the capacity of the regional partners to provide workforce development activities to address the education and skill needs of the workforce including individuals with barriers to employment.

Capacity: The Region is well-positioned to provide services to individuals with barriers to employment, including Underemployed / Unemployed, Ex-Offenders, Low Skill / Literacy Levels, Individuals with Disabilities, Substance Abuse, Older Americans, Out of School Youth, Adults who Lack a High School Diploma, Veterans, Homeless, ESL Individuals, Single Parents and Displaced Homemakers.

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

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

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

Current Initiatives in the Region include:

- LWIA 19 received funding for a Disaster Recovery Dislocated Worker grant to address the Opioid epidemic. This grant reaches out to individuals affected by the Opioid crisis. LWIA 19 has partnered with Crossing Healthcare who opened a recovery center specifically for people with addictions. Patients who complete the detox program have the opportunity to receive career services, education and employment training. The individuals who are eligible for WIOA services have access to work experiences, on-the-job training with a pathway to employment and/or more education. The services offered not only apply to those in a detox treatment facility, but anyone else who has been affected by the crisis either through a family member or friend.
- LWIA 19 applied for and received funding for the Youth Career Pathways grant to address the high unemployment rate for youth and to specifically target youth for the Trades Apprenticeship programs. LWIA 19 will offer the Multi-Craft Core Curriculum (MC3) which is a comprehensive pre-apprenticeship training curriculum. It was developed and approved by the Building Trades National Apprenticeship and Training Committee. This pre-apprenticeship program will introduce youth to a career in the construction trades.

The program will offer hands-on training, and career exploration of all Trade Apprenticeship programs. The Local Trades Building Council is heavily involved and will provide mentorships and guidance for the youth.

- LWIA 19 also applied for and received an Illinois Works grant which will offer the Multi-Craft Core Curriculum (MC3) pre-apprenticeship training to women, people of color and/or veterans of all ages. This grant specifically targets individuals with barriers specifically to employment and is to promote equity within the Building Trades apprenticeship programs in the area. This grant will encompass EDR 1, aligning services to all underrepresented populations.
- Richland Community College's workforce and programming goal are, in part, to bridge the minority employment gap as well as the needs of companies and organizations residing within the community. Training efforts are focused on addressing the job skills shortages that local employers are facing by creating accelerated career pathways for participants. Richland's Workforce Equity Initiative will focus on training in Essential Skills, Transportation/Construction, and Educational Services via Paraprofessionals. The WEI grants in Year 1 and Year 2 will serve a total of 271 individuals in 2 different training programs.
- Richland Community College recently went to a *coaching model* for advising. This is a more intrusive approach. This method allows the coaches to become more knowledgeable and personal with their students, and as a return will understand the barriers that the individuals possess.
- The Service Integration action plan(s) will help to expand customer service. Additional in-depth training of staff will allow all partners to better understand the customers walking through the door in order to improve alignment of services to address the barriers customers face as well as the barriers employers are facing in hiring employees.
- Richland Community College and Workforce Investment Solutions formed a consortium for Adult Education and received funding through ICCB's Adult Education and Family Literacy grant. The Consortium is located at the Decatur Public Library, which is downtown. This location provides for easy accessibility due to the Decatur Transit's main hub being next door to the library. The Consortium provides services for the at-risk individuals who need help in obtaining more education. Classes held at the library include high school equivalency, English Language Learner, Bridge programming and Basic Nursing Assistant. The Illinois workNet Center provides referrals to the Adult Education Consortium. Partners are updated on a monthly basis on program availability.
- LWIA 20 applied for and was selected to be the Apprenticeship Navigator for EDR #1. Apprenticeship Navigators are available to answer your questions about registered

apprenticeship and assist employers with the program development and registration process at no cost to your business. Apprenticeship Navigators can help employers: Understand the registered apprenticeship training model, Identify existing models for your occupations of interest, Connect you with appropriate resources to assist with your program, Draw up your Standards and Training & Education outline based upon your input, Submit your registration paperwork to the USDOL for full recognition in the National Registered Apprenticeship System, Assist you with program updates as your workforce needs evolve, Coordinate sector partnerships between interested employers

- LWIA 20 participated in the Life Skills Re-Entry Statewide Grant utilizing the Kewanee Life Skills Re-entry Center as a model to increase employment and training opportunities for offenders re-entering the workforce from Logan County Corrections Pilot Innovation Program.
- Lincoln Land Community College's Workforce Equity Initiative funding will be used to target Springfield's African American population with an expanded version of our Open-Door program, focusing on workforce education in healthcare and transportation. The WEI funding provides participants with career coaching, waived tuition and fees, stipends to remove financial barriers to education, and other supports to aid in completion of the short-term program. The WEI grants in Year 1 and Year 2 will serve a total of 252 individuals in 10 different training programs.
- In June 2019, the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) was notified that it received the U.S. Department of Labor's Scaling Apprenticeships Through Sector-Based Strategies Grant. The ICCB was awarded nearly \$4 million to implement the grant project over the next 4 years (fiscal years 2020-2023) to serve over 1700 participants. In our region Lincoln Land Community College and Richland College are the recipients of these grants.
- LWIA 21 plans to develop a remote work policy to increase their staff capacity to assist customers during times of quarantine or closures. This includes better access and understanding of technology when working remotely.

By aligning services, our Region will be able to expand employment opportunities for job seekers and Partners will collaborate to reduce duplication of services and better utilize resources.

The partners identified digital literacy and access to technology as significant roadblocks to individuals with barriers to employment utilizing services. Some Title II providers are providing classes for their customers on basic access activities such as downloading Apps to Smart Phones or how to type on a keyboard or connect to a ZOOM meeting. In addition, some have resources to provide laptops or computers. Further efforts in these areas need to be undertaken to expand access for those with barriers to employment.

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

The regional partners have continued to expand their capacity to address the needs of employers. Partners within each LWIA in the region collaborate to understand the skill needs of employers and implement appropriate responses. Some examples of how the partners work with employers to understand skill needs include:

- Each of the LWIAs use Business Services Teams (BSTs) to meet with employers on a regular basis to discuss emerging skill needs. In November of 2019, LWIA 19's Business Services Team held a "Lean Coffee" event for the Healthcare Employers in the area. The event was developed to dive deeply into issues that industry and policy leaders, education and employers were facing locally. The overall goal was to identify potential solutions that would lead to growth and vitality of the Macon/DeWitt communities. Issues were recognized and an action plan was developed to help alleviate the issues. One outcome was the development of a healthcare day for Juniors and Seniors in high school, as well as the eighth grade.

Due to the pandemic, the Career Fair was not held in 2020 or 2021, however, LWIA 19 is in the planning stages for April 2022 and will involve High School ages, as well as Junior High aged youth.

- Local Workforce Area 20 uses its Career and Technical Education (CTE) Program Advisory Committees (PACs), which bring together CTE program partners with members from related local industry and businesses for feedback and advice pertaining to the curriculum and future planning for each program. PACs help ensure that LLCC's CTE programs remain current and are able to meet the needs of local employers and best prepare students for future employment within that field.

Some examples of how the partners have worked to develop expanded services for employers include:

- LWIA 19 partners with agencies in the area in holding a Manufacturing Day for Juniors and Seniors in high school. This has been well attended and will continue.
- LWIA 19 holds virtual hiring events on a weekly basis. Various employers in all sectors are included in these events.

- Prior to the pandemic, each of the LWIAs provided job fairs. LWIA 19’s job fair is done annually. At least 45 employers in Macon and DeWitt Counties attended, and over 175 people attended the fair. It is the plan to eventually restart the in-person job fairs.
- LWIA 20 completed a grant application for the Regional Navigator Apprenticeship Expansion grant. This application was submitted with the support of and in conjunction with LWIAs 19 and 21, LLCC, and CACC Sangamon County ROE. The application was approved and LWIA 20 is the Apprenticeship Navigator for EDR 1.
- Local Workforce Area partners that make up the region provide workshops, post job openings, conduct employee screening and referral, workforce training, work-based training, tax credit information, business location advice, and various employer services. These workshops have been on hold due to the pandemic. They will restart once restrictions are lifted.

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

The Central Region has numerous postsecondary institutions that provide a wide array of educational services, including five community colleges, seven BA-granting institutions, one public university, a medical school, two nursing colleges, one private two-year college, and two occupational schools.

The below Table lists the existing postsecondary institutions in the region.

Central Region Postsecondary Institutions		
Institution	Location	Type
Blackburn College	700 College Avenue Carlinville, IL 62626	4-Year Private
Capital Area School of Practical Nursing	2201 Toronto Road Springfield, IL 62712-3803	Nursing
Heartland Community College	1500 W Raab Rd Normal, IL 61761	2-Year Public
Illinois College	1101 West College Jacksonville, IL 62650	4-Year Private
John Wood Community College	1301 South 48 th Street Quincy, IL 62305	2-Year Public
Lakeland Community College	5100 Lake Land Blvd Mattoon, IL 61938	2-Year Public
Lewis and Clark Community College	5800 Godfrey Road Godfrey, IL 62035	2-Year Public
Lincoln Christian University	100 Campus View Drive Lincoln, IL 62656	4-Year Private
Lincoln College	300 Keokuk Lincoln, IL 62656	4-Year Private
Lincoln Land Community College	5250 Shepherd Road Springfield, IL 62794-9256	2-Year Public
Midwest Technical Institute	2731 Farmers Market Rd Springfield, IL 62707	Private Occupational
Millikin University	1184 West Main Street Decatur, IL 62522	4-Year Private
Richland Community College	One College Park Decatur, IL 62521	2-Year Public
Saint John's College of Nursing	729 East Carpenter Street Springfield, IL 62702	Nursing
Southern Illinois University - School of Medicine	P.O. Box 19624 Springfield, IL 62794-9624	Professional
University of Illinois at Springfield	One University Plaza - UHB 1015, Springfield, IL 62703	4-Year Public
University of Spa and Cosmetology Arts	2913 West White Oaks Drive Springfield, IL 62704	Private Occupational
160 Driving Academy	2935 East Clearlake Drive, Ste.2B, Springfield, IL 62702	Private Occupational

Illinois Community College Graduates by Career Cluster Table– provides a count of graduates from each of the three community colleges that are physically located in the region. The columns show the graduates in each of the career clusters associated with the primary or secondary targeted sectors. The primary sectors are highlighted. **Illinois Community College Graduates by Career Cluster, FY 2018, Central Region**

College	Health Science	Manufacturing	Business Management and Administration	Transportation and Warehousing	Architecture and Construction	Hospitality and Tourism	Information Technology
Lewis & Clark	273	112	52	270	23	0	39
Lincoln Land	419	127	7	29	30	19	14
Richland	204	30	70	95	39	58	14
Central Total	896	269	129	394	92	77	67
State Total	12,607	3,556	2,915	3,191	2,650	1,065	1,896
% of State Total	7.11%	7.56%	4.43%	12.35%	3.47%	7.23%	4.37%

Chapter 2 Section A Question 5: Summarize the commitments of each program partner to implement the selected strategies described in the “Action Plan for Improving Service Integration in the Region.”

Through the MOU development process, each program partner in their respective LWIA has committed to the integration of workforce development services. The LWIA partners reached agreement on and submitted Action Plans for Improving Service Integration within their LWIAs to the State of Illinois in the fall of 2019.

In accordance with the Regional Planning guidelines, the partners to EDR 1's plan commit to the implementation of their respective Service Integration Plans. The Partners recognize that the Service Integration Plans will change over time and that this document formalizes the commitment at the LWIA level to continue the work of integration as it evolves. The Region also recognizes that communication among partners is a common issue. To address this issue, they will develop a contact list of regional partners and issue advanced notices about new grants and programs as they are awarded. The partners in the region continue to implement the strategies listed below during the pandemic using technology to connect remotely. Below is the summarization for each LWIA's commitments to current integration plans.

LWIA 19:

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

LWIA 20:

- Jobs Expectations Communicated to Staff
 - Assess Timing of One-Stop Operator and Partner Meetings
 - Share Information on Front-line Job Descriptions Across Partners
 - Mandatory Center Orientation for New Staff
- Cross Training Provided to Staff
 - Provide Bi-Monthly Training Opportunities for Front-line Staff
 - Training Locations vary Among Partner Agencies
- Communication Occurs Across all One-Stop Partners
 - Assess Timing of One-Stop Operator and Partner Meetings
 - Provide Bi-Monthly Training Opportunities for Front-line Staff

- Training Locations vary Among Partner Agencies
- Assure Email Lists include All Partners and Front-line Staff
- Share One-Stop Center Event Calendars with all Partners

LWIA 21:

- Job Expectations Communicated to Staff
 - Establish a Vision for Customer Service
 - Establish a Sub-Committee for Outreach to all Core Partners for more Involvement
 - More Cross Training for Front-Line Staff
- All Staff Valued and Respected
 - Increase Partner Engagement
 - Share Information from Meetings with Staff in a Timely Manner
 - Listen to Ideas Presented by Other Staff/Partners
- Services Delivered by Function
 - Create Sub-Committee to Oversee Solutions to Partner Participation and Confidentiality Issues Among Partners
 - Rotate Meeting Sites
- Service Delivered by Function – Business Services
 - Formulate Business Service Teams (BST)
 - Track Business Contacted by BST by Use of Spreadsheet
 - Email Exchange by BST
- Service Plans are Living Documents
 - Create Sub-Committee for Creation of a Comprehensive Referral Form and Follow-up Process.

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

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

The regional organizations that currently provide or could provide supportive services include:

Supportive Service	Provider
Childcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catholic Charities • Community Connection Point • Department of Human Services • Salvation Army • WIOA Title 1
Clothing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catholic Charities • Community Action Agencies • Good Will Industries • Salvation Army
Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catholic Charities • Department of Human Services • Salvation Army • United Way
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Human Services • Veteran’s Affairs • County Health Departments
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catholic Charities • Community Action Agencies • Department of Human Services • Good Will Industries • Salvation Army • United Way • Veteran’s Affairs • Housing Authorities • Youth Service Programs • Homeless Shelters

Supportive Service	Provider
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Human Services • Good Will Industries • WIOA Title 1 • Mass Transit Districts • SMART
Utilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catholic Charities • Community Action Agencies

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

Local workforce areas have supportive service policies in place that promote coordination among community providers. Customers entering training must apply to **Community Childcare Connection Point** and Child Care Resource Services (CCRS) for childcare funding prior to supportive services being awarded by WIOA.

Transportation is more difficult to coordinate as mass transit and rural transportation organizations require payment even if it is a minimal amount. LWIA 19 uses the Decatur Transit System, which has been free to all users since the start of the pandemic. LWIA 20 uses SMART Transport (Sangamon Menard Transportation) to provide transportation services. LWIA 21 uses West Central Transportation and CEFS Transportation.

The partners will work through the MOU process to identify better ways to promote coordination of supportive services. Each LWIA will develop a transportation and childcare provider list. Each LWIA plans to hold a supportive services fair in which providers in each area share information on the ways that they can assist individuals with their childcare, transportation and other needs. LWIA 19 partners with their local Salvation Army who provides a social services fair every year. It is hoped that this will start up again at the end of the pandemic.

In addition, LWIA 20 completed an On-Line Service Finder System for youth that is hosted on the Illinois workNet website.

The LWIAs created a regional intake form for accessing supportive services, and this is being used by each of the LWIAs.

Partners in the region will look at ways to mitigate the challenges of childcare brought on by the pandemic. Many childcare providers closed because of the high volume of individuals working from home for an extended period. While parents were working from home their children were also attending via technology.

LWIA 19 has utilized funding from the Community Foundation of Macon County to help individuals who are already working in childcare facilities to obtain their childcare certifications.

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

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

The following economic development organizations are engaged in regional planning:

- Springfield/Sangamon Growth Alliance is focused on transforming the economy of Sangamon County.
- City of Springfield - We are dedicated to being on the cutting edge with technological, social and cultural advances. That means an environment that provides flexibility and ample resources. Springfield offers those benefits along with a skilled, educated workforce and tremendous quality of life.
- City of Decatur - offers a Dynamic Business Climate, Productive Workforce, Wonderful Quality of Life and can be a city in which you want to locate or expand your business.
- Decatur Regional Chamber of Commerce - With more than 125 years serving as the "Voice of Business" for the Decatur community, the Decatur Regional Chamber of Commerce is proud to promote opportunity and prosperity in local commerce. The chamber advocates on behalf of members for business-friendly legislation and offers programs, services, and networking opportunities to help make local business thrive and grow.
- Economic Development Corporation for Decatur and Macon County - The EDC of Decatur & Macon County is a public/private nonprofit dedicated to the attraction, expansion and retention of businesses to our area. When companies need help, we are here to help with tools and resources such as employee training, GIS data mapping, location and demographic research, workforce studies, and more.
- City of Litchfield - The City of Litchfield is dedicated to providing high quality customer service to the community. A Commitment and a strong sense of pride enables the city to remain at the forefront of municipal advancement.

- Staffing and Employment Agencies
- Regional Planning Commissions - Planning Commissions are involved in many activities of interest to municipal officials in the planning region, state and federal agencies with which they interact, and the general public.
- University of Illinois/ Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation - We have several governing businesses who strive to improve the communities that they serve. Our strength lies in our private and public partnerships. Our goal is to promote our cities for development opportunities, but also to help businesses thrive and expand within Montgomery County.
- LLCC, CACC, District #186-Partners who are interested in economic development and business success in the region.
- IMEC –is a team of improvement specialists and technicians dedicated to providing organizations in Illinois with the tools and techniques to create sustainable competitive futures. The experienced hands-on team at IMEC works closely with its clients to plan critical business improvements in the areas of **Leadership, Strategy, Customer Engagement, Operations, and Workforce.**
- Ameren - LWIA 19 approached the Ameren office in Decatur and was able to host an information session about the Ameren hiring process. There were 80 people who signed up for the event, and 60 showed up. The next step will be to discuss how a regional alignment might take place. Ameren would like to be a part of the planning process.

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

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

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

Each of the Local Workforce Development Areas in the region has developed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and its One-Stop system infrastructure and system cost allocation. These MOUs and One-Stop system budgets are submitted separately to the State in the spring of each year. The MOUs for PY 2019 were approved, submitted, and are currently in place through June 30, 2020. The PY 2020 MOUs are in the beginning stages of development. They will be approved by the Local Boards and will be submitted when signatures are garnered prior to June 30. The PY

2020 MOU will begin July 1, 2020. The regional partners participate in local MOU negotiations and commit to a good-faith effort when developing appropriate cost sharing arrangements that are consistent with our broader strategies for service integration and coordination as outlined in this plan.

The LWIAs in the Central Region have arranged to coordinate administrative costs through various means including pooling funds for initiatives, free or nominal meeting space and staff time and efforts supported by respective partners.

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

The Regional Partners will take the following steps to adapt to the pandemic:

The first step to implementing the below activities is for the Regional Partners to restart regional meetings and gain a better understanding of how services are currently being delivered (i.e., in-person or virtually).

Explore the further use of technology to deliver services to individuals and employers. Part of the response to the pandemic has been through the use of technology to recruit, enroll, and train job seekers. We have implemented virtual intakes, waived testing requirements, accepted electronic signatures and implemented on-line learning.

The region will work with employers to identify training programs that are most in need. Business Services Teams are currently meeting with businesses remotely and in-person to discuss incumbent worker training that may include training on technology solutions for working remotely.

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

The Regional Partners will take the following steps to incorporate a workforce equity lens into integration and delivery of services:

- Identify barriers to accessing services including lack of technology, transportation or

childcare.

- Work with existing Workforce Equity Programs at the community colleges to increase coordination of resources and enrollments.
- Explore resources to address digital literacy barriers to participation in workforce development programs.
- Participate in workshops and training to address equity issues.

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

This section will outline how the Local Board(s) will coordinate the regional workforce, education and economic development activities with regional activities that are carried out in the local areas. The responses must illustrate that business, education and workforce development stakeholders have provided input and are involved with the development of the strategies and to ensure alignment with other plans. Regions are required to provide **updated** information and analysis noting any significant impacts of the COVID-19 National Health Emergency and what steps will be taken to address the challenges and opportunities that are associated with the implementation of regional strategies.

A. Describe the local strategic vision to support state and regional economic growth (§ 679.560(a)(5)). Describe how this aligns with the State of Illinois’ vision and principles (page 1). As part of the 2022 modification, include a description of how the region and local areas will adapt to the impact of the COVID-19 National Health Emergency over the next year to accomplish the local strategic vision and support state and regional economic growth.

The Central Economic Development Region 1 has adopted the State of Illinois strategic vision to support regional economic growth:

Vision: Foster a statewide workforce development system that supports the needs of individuals and businesses to ensure Illinois has a skilled workforce to effectively compete in a global economy. This includes our commitment to:

- Maintaining a *Demand-Driven Orientation* to our planning work;
- Developing and maintaining *Strong Partnerships with Business*;
- Building *Pathways to Careers of Today and Tomorrow*;
- Engaging in *Cross-agency Collaboration and Connections* among each of the partners;
- Promoting *Integrated Service Delivery*;
- Ensuring *Equitable Access and Opportunity for all Populations*;
- Using *Clear Metrics for Progress and Success*; and
- Maintaining a *Focus on Continuous Improvement and Innovation*.

The Regional Plan also supports the Action Agenda for Workforce Development and Job Creation, as outlined in the Governor’s Executive Order 3. To advance this Action Agenda, CEDR will:

- Unite workforce development partners around regional clusters strategies by identifying high-impact regional clusters and associated in-demand occupations and implementing a coordinated workforce development strategy around regional clusters.

- Prepare Illinois workers for a career, not just their next job by increasing apprenticeship opportunities, addressing barriers to successful training and employment, and establishing and supporting equity goals and aligning with Perkins’s equity goals.
- Connect job seekers with employers by shortening time from credential to employment and integrating workforce services across program providers for one-stop customers.

The partners in the region have maintained their commitment to the vision for workforce development outlined above while continuing operations during the pandemic. To achieve the vision many operations had to be adapted using technology. Office closures met customers did not have in-person access to services. Moving forward over the next two years we will look for improvements through the use of technology solutions to improve services to both job seekers and employers.

B. Describe the local goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce (including youth and individuals with barriers to employment) and goals relating to the performance accountability measures based on performance indicators (§ 677.155(a)(1)). As part of the 2022 modification, include a description of how the region and local areas will adapt to the impact of the COVID-19 National Health Emergency over the next two years in accomplishing local goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce and goals relating to performance.

The regional partners have considered the overall needs of their respective communities, the challenges of businesses and job seekers and the existing capacity of the workforce development system to respond to these needs. We have adopted the following goals to guide our work together during the next few years:

1. Develop and expand career pathways. The Region will continually review the existing pathways to determine what skilled jobs exist. Upon identification, the region will target our training and educational resources to expand access for individuals, including those with barriers, to such jobs.
2. Expand the use of the full range of work-based learning models for training, including work experience, internships, transitional employment, on-the-job training, apprenticeships and incumbent worker training.
3. Work with the local Chambers of Commerce and Economic Development representatives to research the development of talent pipelines within targeted industry sectors.
4. Continue to research and improve initiatives for assessing and improving the essential skills of our customers.

To attain these goals the region will adapt to the impact of the pandemic by strengthening efforts to use technology to deliver services. Business Services Teams will work with employers to identify their needs and how we can meet them while maintaining their safety and the safety of their workforce. Where applicable we will explore remote worker options. For those seeking employment and training services we will work to increase access through remote learning and virtual intakes, orientations and employment assistance.

With respect to the performance accountability measures required in WIOA and the implementing rule, the LWIAs in the Central Region individually negotiated and reached agreement with the State on local levels of performance for performance accountability measures. Negotiations occur every other year for a two-year period and measures are in place. In addition, partners will actively engage in whatever process is implemented by the respective state agencies for negotiating and setting targets for these measures. The goals for the Title I programs are set through the use of a statistical adjustment model. These procedures are in place and the partners consult with their respective state agency contacts and meet to discuss the implications of the performance measures and required targets for service delivery and integration. The Core Partners work cooperatively to report performance outcomes across all programs to advance the goals of improving access and success for all customers. However, currently there is no universal or shared system for Partners to communicate performance and anything related to customers.

Appendix 1 includes the negotiated Title I performance goals for each of the three LWIAs that comprise the region.

C. Provide a description of the regional and local strategies that will achieve the vision and principles. To the extent possible, the 2022 modification must describe how regional partners are adapting or will adapt their approaches to meeting each of the strategies described in the 2020 plan as a result of the COVID-19 National Health Emergency. This must include a description of the strategies and services that will be used in the local areas:

Chapter 3 Section C Question 1: To facilitate engagement of employers in workforce development programs, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations (§ 679.560(b)(3)(i));

We will use our Workforce Boards to create strategies for employer engagement and to lead engagement efforts for specific industries, particularly for the primary targeted sectors.

We will work with the existing community college advisory committees to leverage the work of these committees to inform our planning and policies for career pathway development, and to help

ensure that these advisory committees benefit from the perspectives of the workforce system. Program advisory committees exist for each AAS/AAA program offered by the community colleges. They have well-established procedures for garnering employer input into the skill needs of the occupations for which the programs prepare students.

As discussed in Chapter 1, the goal for the region's Next Generation partnerships is to have one top tier industry meet annually to address all issues and concerns for the region. These events will encompass employers, Chambers of Commerce, and Economic Development organizations and will discuss all issues that the companies are experiencing, including workforce concerns. At the end of the 2020 regional plan we will have met with all three top tier industries and will have outcomes that show how we addressed their workforce matters.

Where possible and if warranted we will work with our employer community to identify how they have been impacted by the pandemic and how our resources might assist them in mitigating any barriers to success.

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

We will work with Chambers of Commerce and Economic Development organizations to coordinate our outreach efforts to employers. The focus of this effort will be more oriented toward marketing the services of the workforce development system to regional employers as part of the overall economic development business retention effort.

We will also use our Business Services Teams to coordinate engagement of employers. The focus of this effort will be oriented toward responding to the specific workforce needs of individual employers who come to the attention of any of the business service personnel of the regional partners. Once again, we will be exploring the future of remote workers as part of each business's operations.

Examples of the work being done by our Business Services Teams in each LWIA are described below:

LWA 19: LWIA 19's Business Services Team (BST) meets monthly. The Team helps with planning and organizing sector-based career fairs. A Manufacturing Day is held in October and a Healthcare Day is held in April of every year. The target population for the fairs are middle school students and high school juniors and seniors.

Something new the LWIA 19's BST is working on is implementing an *Essential Skills* workshop to be held at the local One-Stop Center. This will be a "pilot" program. The goal is to take the class out to other sites in the area once the first one is completed. The "National Career

Readiness Certificate” is being looked at as a completion for the class. A curriculum is being developed by Richland Community College. Topics will include Appearance, communication, teamwork, problem solving and critical thinking, professionalism/manners, punctuality and confidence/attitude.

LWA 20: The LWIA 20 BST meets monthly. At the meetings the goal is to organize who attends job fairs, communicates/meets with businesses, etc. so we are one organized unit gathering and sharing data to address employer’s needs. One document was created to highlight all of the team members and their contact information. This is presented to employers at business visits so they can see which organization can address their specific concerns. The team also attends and participates in local job fairs:

- Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce (2 per year) – Partner
- Veterans Job Fair (Held at the American Legions’ State Conference) – partner
- Christian County – We organized them and include BST
- Cass County Job Fair- We have partner with IDES
- Various Job Fairs for major lay-off events (Honeywell Hobbs and Ardagh)

Additionally, an essential skills class was developed from BST meetings to address employer concerns regarding soft and foundational workplace skills. This workshop is held twice a month at the AJC.

LWA 21: The LWIA BST host annual Job Fairs to recruit employers and help administer the fairs. We have developed a good working relationship with LLCC and LCCC as well as other partners to have successful Job fairs. One is held at Litchfield and the other one is at LCCC at their main Campus in Godfrey, Illinois each spring. Once the Job Fairs are over we post on our websites all the employers that were present and what jobs they are recruiting for to continually help support their recruitment efforts.

Due to Covid-19, LWA 21 in Morgan County held two outdoor job fairs on the Jacksonville downtown plaza. These were held in June and September, coordinated through the Healthy Communities Collaborative Workgroup, and was in response to the needs of employers trying to hire during the pandemic.

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

The Economic Development community of EDR 1 primarily serves as link between local businesses and workforce development initiatives through their Business Development & Retention programs. These programs will provide feedback from employers concerning the state

of employment and recruitment. This information allows for a more holistic response from workforce partners as employers needs evolve.

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

The narrative listed below describes pre-pandemic service delivery models. It is planned that these processes will resume post-pandemic. As the beginning of the pandemic IDES offices were closed and all staff, including Wagner-Peyser, were required to process UI claims. This situation persisted for most of the past two years. Recently, the offices were re-opened by appointment only and Employment Services have slowly resumed. Many workshops have not restarted but some partner services are being used.

Process mapping will be used, when needed, to identify the services provided by the partners, therefore eliminating any overlapping services. The continual goal is to streamline the delivery of services for customers. A common Intake Assessment Tool has been developed, as discussed in the previous plan, with input from all partners in order to assess the customers' needs more effectively. All staff are now cross trained in all partner programs in order to better recognize the needs of the customer; another goal that was listed in the previous regional plan. Partner staff will continue to be immediately accessible to client's as they enter the One Stop and have their needs met with any onsite partner and through the direct linkage system.

Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) is the State employment office for Illinois businesses and workers, providing no-cost human resources solutions linking hiring businesses to qualified job seekers. The office has numerous designated staff members that focus on Wagner-Peyser/Employment Services (WP/ES) offered to job seekers. In addition, current resource room staff have been trained on WP/ES services and can assist any customer with questions.

Work search services will continue to be offered to this population and these services are designed to assist job seekers to return to the workforce as quickly as possible. WP/ES offers work search assistance via one-on-one services or workshops and events. One-Stop staff collaboratively develops and maintains connections with partner and community organizations. These connections are essential when a barrier to employment has been identified. WP/ES staff focuses on job seekers who are receiving unemployment insurance benefits to encourage economic growth and stability.

Employment services include the state labor exchange system (illinoisjoblink.com), resume preparation assistance, on-line job search & application techniques, interviewing techniques and job matching. WP/ES staff is prepared to provide job seekers with information on all programs and services provided by IDES. This includes but is not limited to: Veterans, Work Opportunity

Tax Credits, IllinoisJobLink.com (IJL), The Illinois Career Information System, Labor Market Information, Hire the Future, and Re-Entry Service Programs.

Through outreach conducted via phone and emails and social media, we notify job seeking customers of ongoing workshops, job fairs, on-site hiring events, and partner and employer orientations. IWDS and IJL are used to track and record referrals to job opportunities, partner services, community services and service delivery. The One Stop staff references employer information to identify employment opportunities for job seekers. WP/ES staff, along with the Business Services team review job orders to understand the job description, qualifications and requirements of available positions within an organization to help ensure that employers are receiving the most qualified candidates.

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

Concerning the Decatur IL, MSA, the following organizations are active in business development for this area:

- SCORE – A national network of business start-up mentoring and planning experts providing training, insight and general support.
- Midwest Inland Port (Business Development Resource Center) – A centralized point of contact for all available community and regional services providing referrals and directional advice to potential new businesses.
- Center for Entrepreneurship - A dedicated resource for entrepreneurs at every level. Through a variety of programs and development opportunities, The Center serves Millikin faculty and students, youth (ranging in age from elementary to high school level), community, and local businesses.
- SBDC - Illinois Small Business Development Centers are located throughout the state and provide information, confidential business guidance, training and other resources to start-up and existing small businesses.

In the Springfield, IL, MSA, the following are some of the organizations involved in business development:

- The Illinois Small Business Development Center at Lincoln Land Community College is the main provider of services that support the establishment and expansion of small business in our local area. Services include classes, one-on-one counseling, assistance with business plan development and loan applications, marketing plan development, etc.

- Local Chambers of Commerce, such as The Greater Springfield Chamber also provide support for existing businesses to help them flourish and expand, as well as attract new companies to relocate to this area.

Innovate Springfield (iSPI), a division of the University of Illinois system, is a downtown business incubator in Springfield that offers a synergistic environment, office space for rent and many other resources to help fledgling companies address various needs including financial, IT, marketing and networking.

Sangamon CEO is one of many like programs in the state that introduce entrepreneurship to high school students. It is a year-long program where students develop their own businesses while receiving entrepreneurship training at various local company facilities.

Chapter 3 Section C Question 6: To implement initiatives such as incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies, career pathways initiatives, utilization of effective business intermediaries, and other business services and strategies designed to meet the needs of regional employers (§ 679.560(b)(3)(v)).

The regional partners discuss at their regional meetings how their Business Services Teams can continue to support the regional sector strategies, a goal from the last plan. This continues to allow the regional team to leverage to limited resources and provides a more robust menu of work-based learning opportunities to area businesses, including incumbent worker training, OJT opportunities, apprenticeships, and customized training needs.

LWIA 19 received a Healthcare Innovation grant to begin in the Spring of PY19. This grant will address the shortage of healthcare instructors in their area. This 18-month grant will provide a healthcare sector service recruiter to focus on developing a group of potential healthcare instructors. A process will be developed and implemented so other areas can emulate and address shortages and/or needs in their local workforce area.

The partners continue to examine possible Regional Career Pathways. This helps identify opportunities for expansion and access to existing career pathways as well as acknowledge unmet skill needs of employers that may be addressed through the development of new career pathway programs or modification of existing pathways.

In recent months LWIA 21 has greatly increased its focus on work-based learning initiatives, especially within the manufacturing field. This has specifically led to incumbent worker training projects being implemented in partnership with two local manufacturers as part of their efforts to

expand their facilities and retain & upskill their current workforce while also creating additional job opportunities.

As previously mentioned, LWIA 20 was the designated Apprenticeship Navigator and they are still supporting two apprenticeships, one with various water districts located in EDR #1 and one with a regional medical group/hospital that supports Medical Assisting training and certification. Additionally, a large manufacturer is being supported with an incumbent worker project that encompasses staff manufacturing training and management training for executives.

In LWIA 19, the partnerships with manufacturers have increased along with the need for incumbent training. The pandemic made it challenging to recruit workers and so several employers invested in more training with staff that had been long-term employees. The need for more OJTs and paid work experiences have been driven by the lack of being able to hire skilled employees.

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

CEDR 1 responded to the recent Apprenticeship Expansion Grant opportunity to operate as the Regional Apprenticeship Navigator. We applied for this grant in conjunction with numerous partners: Lincoln Land Community College, Capitol Area Career Center and Sangamon County. Letters of support from the local workforce areas were gathered acknowledging this regional effort and the plans to collaborate on regional apprenticeship opportunities.

In June 2019, the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) was notified that it received the U.S. Department of Labor’s Scaling Apprenticeships Through Sector-Based Strategies Grant. The ICCB was awarded nearly \$4 million to implement the grant project over the next 4 years (fiscal years 2020-2023) to serve over 1700 participants. The grant requires that 35% of the grant funding would be matched by private dollars. The ICCB is the fiscal agent and lead on behalf of the community college system whereas ten participating colleges will receive funds under this grant. This grant will focus on expanding apprenticeship programming within Information Technology occupations.

Participating Colleges

1. College of Lake County
2. Oakton Community College
3. Kishwaukee College
4. City Colleges of Chicago
5. Prairie State College
6. Illinois Central College
7. Richland Community College
8. Lincoln Land Community College

Information Technology Pathways

- IT Generalist/ Network Systems
 - Information (cyber) Security
 - Programming and Software Development
- *list not exclusive*

- 9. Rend Lake College
- 10. Parkland Community College

Each of the ten community colleges will work with their local employers. In addition, statewide commitments have been made by Accenture and CompTIA. Support and wrap-around services are a critical and required component of the grant project. The project will leverage support from One Million Degrees, Young Invincibles, Autonomy Works, among other organizations to identify and/or provide these wraparound services.

The **goals** of this grant project are to:

1. Expand existing industry-led customized apprenticeships through IT sector partnerships by:
 - a) incorporating pre-apprenticeship models (Bridge Programs, Integrated Education and Training), Essential Employability Skills Framework, support services, and paid work-based learning resulting in industry recognized credential(s);
 - b) developing program models inclusive of incumbent worker outreach and upskilling strategies, such as in-house training and prior learning assessment.
2. Innovate new apprenticeship models for pilot and expansion that:
 - a) utilize new approaches for acceleration and flexibility, including competency-based education delivery and shorter-term and accelerated programs;
 - b) partner with CompTIA to scale industry credentials and address emerging industry skillsets related to cybersecurity;
 - c) result in family-sustaining employment.
3. In partnership with Jobs for the Future and Harper College, scale and expand apprenticeship model nationally by:
 - a) emphasizing partner recruitment, a strong external communication and dissemination plan, and professional development/coaching activities related to model expansion;
 - b) articulating a continuous improvement and national replication strategy.

LLCC received this grant from ICCB in the fall of 2019 to assist with expanding apprenticeship opportunities in the field of IT. LLCC will offer academic IT Pathway options at various levels of student progression. For a full discussion on implementation see page 45.

In addition to the above, RCC recently applied for the Apprenticeship Expansion Grant as an intermediary with a primary focus on the Healthcare Sector and the hiring of an Apprenticeship Coordinator. Hopefully RCC will hear in March. This position will also build on a youth apprenticeship that the college, Decatur Public Schools, Heartland Technical Academy, and HSHS Medical Group is working on in the CNA-Nursing area.

RCC has the IDOT funding Highway Construction Careers Training Program that is a pre-apprenticeship for the local labor unions in the skilled trades. The college has a current DOL registered apprenticeship with Fuyao Glass.

E. Describe initiatives to shorten the time from credential to employment and address how the area will work with the education system to begin putting training opportunities in place to meet this strategy.

The region has undertaken several initiatives that are intended to shorten the time from credential to employment, in collaboration with its community colleges.

Richland Community College (RCC):

Industrial Job Skills Training Program: RCC utilized a state Workforce Grant in the fall of 2018 to develop the Industrial Job Skills Training Program to meet the needs of local manufacturers. The Director of Workforce Development attended a manufacturing roundtable hosted by Decatur Area Chamber of Commerce in January of 2018, and at the roundtable a large discussion from local manufacturers were addressing the soft skills need and need for entry-level employees that had basic knowledge. As a result of this meeting, RCC Workforce Development created a 360 hour training program, called EnRich that provides Manufacturing Skills Standards Council (MSSC) credentials built into the training along with OSHA, Equipment training, hand tools, welding, CNC machining, math, and the essential skills.

Towards the end of the 360-hour training employers are invited to campus to interview those that are approaching graduation. In Decatur Macon County, the unemployment rate for African Americans has been around 22%, three times that of white residents. EnRich completers are 64% minority, with 57% classified as African American, 79% male and 43% African American Male. A total of 89% of EnRich participants who completed the program were hired by major local employers. Of those, 80% remain employed. More than 35% have a criminal record with 100% of participants being unemployed or underemployed. The following employers have hired participants from the program and the table identifies those who were a part of the original roundtable discussion for a program like this:

Firms Hiring program participants:	Participated in roundtable:
ADM BioProducts	
Agri-Fab	
All Service	
Archer Daniels Midland	X
Arcosa Wind Towers	
Caterpillar	X
Crossing Healthcare	
Dynagraphics	
Fuyao Glass Illinois, Inc.	
International Control Services	
Kelly Construction	
Macon Resources Inc.	
Mason Manufacturing	X
Mervis Industries	
Mueller Company	X
Ring Container Technologies	X
Stripmasters, Inc.	
Tate & Lyle	X
The Kelly Group	
Vector Construction	
Voestalpine Nortrak Inc	

Richland Community College (RCC):

Workforce Equity Initiative Grant: RCC is also utilizing the Workforce Equity Initiative Grant (WEIG) to provide short-term CDL training for predominately African Americans and ex-offenders. The training will not only prepare individuals to take and pass their CDL Class A test, but it will also deliver hands-on tandem truck spreader training to prepare individuals to start their own owner/operator tandem truck business. Other individuals will be trained to receive their passenger endorsement so that they can work for the local bus companies. Another aspect of the WEIG will be the training of 8 paraprofessional educators so that they can move into livable wages and work towards an education degree.

Lincoln Land Community College (LLCC):

Customized Apprenticeship Program-Information Technology (CAP-IT): LLCC received this grant from ICCB in the fall of 2019 to assist with expanding apprenticeship opportunities in the

field of IT. LLCC will offer academic IT Pathway options at various levels of student progression. For the entry level student, existing IT Bridge Programs within Adult Education will serve as a feeder to the Pre-Apprenticeship, which offers courses that lead to industry standard certifications. These certifications will support occupational pathways that include Computer Systems Analysts, Developers (Systems Software), Network Architects, Systems Engineers/Architects and Cyber Security Analysts. Postsecondary certificate offerings include a Computer Administration Certificate, a Cisco Network Administrator Certificate, and a Cyber Security Certificate. Mid-level IT degrees include an Associate in Arts degree in Computer Information Systems and two Associate in Applied Science (AAS) degrees in Computer Information Technology and Secured Software Programming. These curricula are currently being revised to align with the requirements of occupational pathways. Top level IT articulation agreements with university partners throughout the state of Illinois will also be updated and offered. These strategies will support occupational pathways including Computer Systems Analysts, Software Developers, Computer Network Architects, Computer Systems Engineers/Architects and Cyber Security Specialists.

Workforce Training Offerings: The Capital City Training Center (CCTC) is a partnership between Lincoln Land Community College (LLCC) and Central Management Services (CMS). This unique partnership was formed to serve the technology training needs of local organizations through scheduled courses and our customized training programs.

Pre-Apprenticeship Programming: LLCC offers the Highway Construction Careers Training Program that regularly leads students to apprenticeships within the trades. IDOT has funded this program to expand the number of people in historically underrepresented populations who enter a construction career.

CBE Cybersecurity: LLCC offers a certificate program in cybersecurity that provides technical skills necessary to prepare students for a job in the computer networking or security area in both traditional and competency-based education (CBE) format. CBE allows students to earn credit for existing knowledge in the subject which typically reduces time necessary to complete the credential.

Once again, LWIA 20 has completed a grant application for the Regional Navigator Apprenticeship Expansion grant. This application was submitted with the support of and in conjunction with LWIAs 19 and 21, LLCC, and CACC Sangamon County ROE. If receive it will help further the effort to shorten time from credential to employment.

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

Chapter 3 Section F Question 1: Fostering the improvement and expansion of employer-driven regional sector partnerships to increase the focus on critical in-demand occupations in key sectors that are the engine of economic growth for the state and its regions.

The region will foster the improvement and expansion of employer-driven regional sector partnerships to increase the focus on critical in-demand occupations in key sectors through the following efforts.

1. We will work with our economic development partners within our region to identify existing partnerships and initiatives with employers in our key sectors.
2. We will identify local employers willing to provide expertise to our sector initiatives.
3. We will work with community partners to organize and or expand work within existing partnerships or create new partnerships.

Chapter 3 Section F Question 2: Expanding career pathway opportunities through more accelerated and work-based training and align and integrate programs of study leading to industry-recognized credentials and improved employment and earnings.

Adult Education programs will continue to expand career pathways. However, there is still a strong need for adult education learners to complete the essential skills and Bridge programs to prepare for industry level and stackable certificates. These programs will continue to result in a higher success rate for completion and employment.

Lincoln Land Community College offers an IET in Healthcare Careers. Highlights of the program include:

- Students earn 12.5 college credits
- 18-week program includes a 2-week Academy, with instruction and activities related to team-building activities, communication skills, problem solving, reliability, integrity and organization
- 1st 8-week session includes courses such as First Year Experience, Health in Today’s Society, pre-C.N.A.
- 2nd 8-week session is NAS101 (Basic Nurse Assistant), which includes clinicals
- Support Class provided throughout program to assist with critical thinking, math and course pace issues

- GED class for those students who have not earned a High School diploma or the equivalent
- Students earn 3 industry recognized certificates at the end of 18 weeks
 - CPR for Healthcare
 - LLCC Certificate of Completion – Basic Nurse Assistant
 - State of Illinois Basic Nurse Assistant Certificate

LLCC has approved IETS for Automotive Technology, Early Childhood Education, and Manufacturing as well. Those programs are provided as funding allows.

A best practice that has emerged from the delivery of these programs is that strong bridge courses, tied to these employment sectors, will better prepare students for the rigor of the IET courses. Bridge course development is ongoing.

Chapter 3 Section F Question 3: Expanding career services and opportunities for populations facing multiple barriers to close the gap in educational attainment and economic advancement through career pathways and improved career services and expansion of bridge programs.

The partners will continue to work with local community groups to identify individuals who might benefit from WIOA services. LWA 20 has collaborated with local community colleges and their admissions departments to assess WIOA eligibility during the initial admissions process, therefore acknowledging customers in a more streamlined manner.

We recognize that in order for customers with significant barriers to employment to be successful, basic needs, essential skills, education barriers, perceptions of work, peer pressure and a range of issues have to be addressed. Career services now include and will continue to include support and counseling services from trained workforce development professionals.

LWA #19 received a Disaster Recovery National Dislocated Worker Grant to address the Opioid crisis. Macon County was/is identified as an area with a high need for emergency assistance. Workforce Investment Solutions (WIS) is a Federal Employment & Training Program under the United States Department of Labor. The Secretary of Health and Human Services has declared the Opioid epidemic as a national public health emergency. WIS and Crossing Healthcare have developed a relationship that will assist individuals who are enrolled in the Transitions part of the treatment process. WIS will be housed in the Transition Center to assist residents with education and employment training. WIS has a mission to provide business with qualified employees by enhancing their skills and abilities through training and education. In addition, by establishing relationships with job seekers to align education and employment training is a priority. These relationships will be key in developing an individual employment plan for residents who are enrolled in the Transitions program

Through a collaboration with Crossing Healthcare, a local federally qualified health center, located in Decatur, Illinois, we will create disaster-relief employment to alleviate the effects of the opioid crisis in our community, as well as provide employment and training activities, including supportive services, to address economic and workforce impacts related to widespread use, addiction, and overdose.

The partners will continue to expand career services and opportunities while working with employers who are willing to work with persons facing barriers. LWA 20 successfully participated in the State-wide Coordination and Innovation Project for Returning Citizens (IPRC) grant that addressed the needs of individuals who were reentering the workforce after incarceration. This grant is intended to increase employment and training opportunities for offenders re-entering the workforce by providing direct services inside of Logan County Correctional Center in collaboration with IDOC and IDES. We will continue to support these state-wide goals locally and as a region. It is important to expose individuals with barriers to positive work ethic and will continue to be a regional focus.

Community organizations will continue to work together and find the most effective ways to identify and serve nontraditional participants. The regional goal is to assist customers in being completely self-sufficient.

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

The Region will utilize systems developed by the State of Illinois that expand information for employers and job seekers to use for their workforce related needs. We will participate in any training provided by the state on these systems and provide input on their development, if asked.

The State developed an online service finder and LWA 20 hired an outside consultant to expand upon this system to highlight more youth services offered in the area. This system is now user friendly for youth and acknowledges all wrap around services for individuals who are at risk.

Chapter 3 Section G: As part of the 2022 modification, if needed, describe the impact of the pandemic on how the Local Workforce Board(s) will coordinate the regional workforce, education and economic development activities with regional activities that are carried out in the local areas not covered in the above sections. Include what steps, to the extent known, that will be taken over the next two years to adapt to the impact of the pandemic regarding how the Local Workforce Board(s) efforts for regional coordination.

The Regional Partners and their Associated Boards will take the following steps to adapt to the pandemic:

Explore the further use of technology to promote regional coordination. The pandemic forced the move to virtual meetings through the use of platforms such as Zoom and Go-To- Meeting. That will continue into the foreseeable future. WIOA Core Partners have used technology to deliver services for programs not located in the One-Stop Centers. When the Centers closed, due to the pandemic, all services had to be coordinated and delivered through this method. In-person services are the preferable method, but it is expected that there will be episodic periods where services will be delivered and coordinated virtually.

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

The Regional Partners will take the following steps to incorporate a workforce equity lens into implementation of regional workforce, education, and economic development strategies:

- Build upon existing Workforce Equity Programs at the community colleges and to expand across workforce and economic development efforts in the region.
- Identify barriers to accessing services including lack of technology, transportation or childcare.
- Explore resources to address digital literacy barriers to participation in workforce development programs.
- Participate in workshops and training to address equity issues.

Attachment 1

Workforce Development Activities (Title IB of WIOA)

Negotiated Levels of Performance for PY 2022 and 2023

LWIA #19 – Workforce Investment Board for Macon and DeWitt Counties

<u>Adult</u>	PY 2022	PY 2023
Employment Rate 2 nd Quarter after Exit	86.0%	86.0%
Employment Rate 4 th Quarter after Exit	85.0%	85.0%
Median Earnings 2 nd Quarter after Exit	\$8,500	\$8,500
Credential Attainment within 4 Quarters after Exit	83.0%	83.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	60.0%	60.0%
<u>Dislocated Worker</u>		
Employment Rate 2 nd Quarter after Exit	86.0%	86.0%
Employment Rate 4 th Quarter after Exit	83.0%	83.0%
Median Earnings 2 nd Quarter after Exit	\$10,700	\$10,700
Credential Attainment within 4 Quarters after Exit	83.0%	83.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	58.0%	58.0%
<u>Youth</u>		
Employment or Education Rate 2 nd Quarter after Exit	78.0%	78.0%
Employment or Education Rate 4 th Quarter after Exit	74.0%	74.0%
Median Earnings 2 nd Quarter after Exit	\$4,200	\$4,200
Credential Attainment within 4 Quarters after Exit	61.0%	61.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	54.0%	54.0%

Workforce Development Activities (Title IB of WIOA)

Negotiated Levels of Performance for PY 2022 and 2023

LWIA #20 – Land of Lincoln Alliance

<u>Adult</u>	PY 2022	PY 2023
Employment Rate 2 nd Quarter after Exit	84.0%	84.0%
Employment Rate 4 th Quarter after Exit	82.0%	82.0%
Median Earnings 2 nd Quarter after Exit	\$9,000	\$9,000
Credential Attainment within 4 Quarters after Exit	83.0%	83.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	65.0%	65.0%
 <u>Dislocated Worker</u>		
Employment Rate 2 nd Quarter after Exit	81.0%	81.0%
Employment Rate 4 th Quarter after Exit	81.0%	81.0%
Median Earnings 2 nd Quarter after Exit	\$9,100	\$9,100
Credential Attainment within 4 Quarters after Exit	85.0%	85.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	67.0%	67.0%
 <u>Youth</u>		
Employment or Education Rate 2 nd Quarter after Exit	79.0%	79.0%
Employment or Education Rate 4 th Quarter after Exit	76.0%	76.0%
Median Earnings 2 nd Quarter after Exit	\$4,600	\$4,600
Credential Attainment within 4 Quarters after Exit	77.0%	77.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	70.0%	70.0%

Workforce Development Activities (Title IB of WIOA)

Negotiated Levels of Performance for PY 2022 and 2023

LWIA #21 – Workforce Development Board

<u>Adult</u>	PY 2022	PY 2023
Employment Rate 2 nd Quarter after Exit	82.5%	82.5%
Employment Rate 4 th Quarter after Exit	82.0%	82.0%
Median Earnings 2 nd Quarter after Exit	\$8,000	\$8,000
Credential Attainment within 4 Quarters after Exit	81.0%	81.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	45.0%	45.0%
 <u>Dislocated Worker</u>		
Employment Rate 2 nd Quarter after Exit	85.0%	85.0%
Employment Rate 4 th Quarter after Exit	84.0%	84.0%
Median Earnings 2 nd Quarter after Exit	\$9,800	\$9,800
Credential Attainment within 4 Quarters after Exit	78.0%	78.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	52.0%	52.0%
 <u>Youth</u>		
Employment or Education Rate 2 nd Quarter after Exit	76.0%	76.0%
Employment or Education Rate 4 th Quarter after Exit	78.0%	78.0%
Median Earnings 2 nd Quarter after Exit	\$5,000	\$5,000
Credential Attainment within 4 Quarters after Exit	74.0%	74.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	47.0%	47.0%

LOCAL PLAN

LWIA #20

LAND OF LINCOLN WORKFORCE ALLIANCE LOCAL PLAN (LWIA #20)

Executive Summary

WIOA is designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with skilled workers needed to grow the economy. Therefore, this plan was developed in accordance with the state and local area plans, in accordance with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) regulations, and the State of Illinois Regional and Local Planning Guide, updated October 2022. Our Board is committed to creating workforce development strategies that promote the economic well-being of both employers and workers in the region. This plan formalizes the process for the LWIA 20 to explore innovative means to better meet the needs of our customers and meet the educational, economic development, and workforce development needs of the workforce area.

Governance

- Designation of Local Workforce Innovation Area - LWIA 20 serving the counties of Cass, Christian, Logan, Menard, and Sangamon.
- The CEOs for LWIA 20 continually appoint members of the Land of Lincoln Workforce Board (LLWB).
- The CEOs, LLWB, and the grant recipient are an Intergovernmental Agreement outlining responsibilities of each entity. Sangamon County and its department known as the Land of Lincoln Workforce Alliance will continue to serve as the administrative and fiscal agent.
- Local policies and procedures are in place and adhere to the U.S. Department of Labor and/or Illinois Department of Commerce guidelines.

The Land of Lincoln Workforce Board (LLWB) meets quarterly and will remain flexible with program delivery in order to meet the guidelines and intent of WIOA.

Regional and Local Planning

The LLWB participated in various regional planning activities to provide input on the development of the local and regional plan. The Central Region is comprised of twelve counties and includes the five counties forming the Land of Lincoln Workforce Alliance. The LLWB will sustain an effective workforce development system for our communities and continue to:

- Keep up-to-date with the local and regional economy;
- Identify and market the region's strengths and weaknesses;
- Identify economic and workforce issues to assure the region's continued growth and
- Create a credible foundation for convening public discussion around workforce issues.

Statistical information about the region was reviewed regionally and locally and reflects growth industries and occupations that will be targeted in the five county areas. The LLWB analyzed labor market data, established goals and objectives, and approved strategies for both the region and local areas. LWIA 20 will continue to target the Healthcare and Social Assistance industry and occupations that are in demand with shortages and job growth. Other targeted industries include: Professional and Business Services and Manufacturing. Secondary industries that the area will continue to observe are: Transportation, Distribution and Logistics (TDL), Construction, Leisure and Hospitality, and Information Technology.

Service Delivery

Partners in the workforce system will work cooperatively in the upcoming year to provide career services to customers that are in need of services. LLWA's guidelines for the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreement will be outlined in the upcoming months. Career services leading to employment will be provided through the one-stop Illinois workNet Center. The Land of Lincoln Workforce Board places a high emphasis on the training of participants and will use a variety of methods to assure that training goals are met. The LLWB will solicit training through requests for proposals, Individual Training Accounts, or other contracts for training services that assure a variety of training options for adults, dislocated workers, and youth. Staff are assigned to the One-Stop Illinois workNet Center in Springfield where comprehensive services are delivered. LLWA staff are also assigned to workNet centers on a scheduled basis to deliver career services in the rural communities.

Performance and Management

The CEOs and LLWB negotiate performance measures with the state, enter into memorandums of understanding with the One-Stop Operators and Partners, certify local training providers, and oversee the creation and operation of a truly functional and successful local workforce system. Local training providers for the five county area are certified, and combined with the other Workforce Investment Areas to create a statewide service provider network which allows customers to make informed choices on training that leads to the best and most appropriate job.

CHAPTER 4: OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES – LOCAL COMPONENT

A. Coordination of Planning Requirements: The plan will incorporate the Memorandum of Understanding and Service Integration Action Plan and include the following statements in this Chapter:

- **The Local Workforce Innovation Area 20 Memorandum of Understanding provides a description of the one-stop delivery system, and other information that is essential to the establishment and operation of effective local workforce development systems as required by the WIOA Rule (20 CFR Part 678.705). The Memorandum of Understanding and any subsequent modifications is incorporated by reference into this plan.**
- **The Local Workforce Innovation Area 20 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.**

The One-Stop Partners are committed to the principles and vision outlined at the federal and state level and by the Land of Lincoln Workforce Board. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is required of all partners and is an agreement outlining service delivery and other matters essential to the establishment of an effective one-stop workforce delivery system. For PY 2022, the One-Stop Partners will enter into a MOU and provide payments to the system based on WIOA guidelines. The cost allocation portion of the MOU is reviewed and approved annually.

The One-Stop location in Springfield is the mandated comprehensive One-Stop Center. The matrix attached in the MOU identifies the career services to be provided at this Center located at the Illinois workNet Center.

One-Stop Partners who will have staff at the Springfield One-Stop include the Department of Rehabilitations Services, the Department of Employment Security, and the Land of Lincoln Workforce Alliance. Other staffing options, including direct linkages, include Adult Education,

Lincoln Land Community College & Capital Area School of Practical Nursing (Perkins), Title V Senior Employment Programs, and the Illinois Department of Human Services.

In addition to the comprehensive center, outreach locations will continue in the rural communities of Beardstown, Lincoln, Petersburg, and Taylorville with staff available one or two days per week. All Centers meet accessibility standards. Outreach services at the rural locations are provided by the WIOA career planners and include job search/employability skills, eligibility for training programs, and employer outreach.

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

- **How the workforce centers are implementing and transitioning to an integrated technology enabled intake and case management information system for programs carried out under WIOA.**

The One-Stop Partners for LWIA 20 have cataloged the various technology tools used by the partners for intake, case management, and program management. The partners are in agreement that the integration of technology to enable a common intake and case management system is ideal and a goal that will continue to be explored. The partners are also aware that the State continues to explore a database system and may recommend a uniform database for the One-Stop system. Financially, a common database system could possibly be costly for Center partners; however, this will be researched and considered. While the State works on developing and/or designating a universal system, partners at the Center will continue to use IWDS for tracking and referral of customers and incorporate other technology based systems as they become available.

- **Describe how the Local Board will facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system, including in remote areas, through the use of technology and other means.**

The LLWB facilitates services in the rural communities through participation of Board members who represent all counties and support workforce initiatives. The Board approved Outreach Centers are available in the rural communities of LWIA 20 and provide access to services on-site and via technology. In addition to the Comprehensive Center in Springfield, three Centers are located at community colleges, one Center is at the County housing authority office. As mentioned previously, these Centers are located in Beardstown, Lincoln, Petersburg, and Taylorville. All locations have access to services through the use of technology and are accessible.

- **As part of the 2022 modification, describe how lessons learned about the remote delivery of services during the COVID-19 National Health Emergency will be adapted into operations over the next two years.**

It was necessary to provide technology assistance to customers, participants, and staff. When working with customers, sometimes it was necessary to utilize multiple (combination of more than one) modalities to complete one intake. There was an increased frequency of communications with

participants and this assisted them in adapting to changes. It became necessary to make exceptions for training restarts as some participants faced challenges to restricted and/or online only platforms which were and are not the best learning platform for all participants. LLWA had to provide additional support to staff in an effort to help them adapt to providing remote services. Throughout all of this, the LLWA staff was highly adaptable and clients did not see a break in service.

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

- **Expanding access to employment, training, education and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment**
- **Scaling up the use of Integrated Education and Training models to help adults get their GED and work on other basic skills and English language acquisition while earning credentials and industry-recognized credentials that lead to in-demand occupations;**
- **Using the insights and lessons learned from successful dual credit programs to scale up similar efforts in other sectors and regions;**
- **Determining the most effective marketing methods and messages for informing college and university students about Prior Learning Assessments;**
- **Investigating how targeted marketing can identify segments of the labor force, such as mature workers and the underemployed, who may not require extensive education or training to qualify for jobs in high demand occupations;**
- **Facilitating the development of career pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs; and**
- **Improving access to activities leading to a recognized post-secondary credential (including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable, and stackable)**
- **In the 2022 modification, use insights and lessons learned from COVID-19 National Health Emergency regarding the identification and service delivery to targeted populations significantly affected by the pandemic.**

In keeping with State and regional goals, the LLWB and core partners support the vision to ensure collaboration among programs - education, workforce, services to targeted populations, economic development, and all partner programs to create a system that meets the needs of businesses and individuals to grow a vibrant and robust regional economy. The Partners have adopted the State's vision which is to "Foster a Statewide workforce development system that supports the needs of individuals and businesses to ensure Illinois has a skilled workforce to effectively compete in the global economy."

During the pandemic, the Board regularly discussed how the pandemic was impacting local businesses. LLWA supported businesses by applying for and participating in 1E business grants. The LWIB recognized the need for and supported remote work and approved service expansion

policy changes (health/safety of employees). Professional development opportunities were offered to our staff and the LWIB was involved in the reopening plan.

Barriers to Employment-Target populations will include eligible customers with basic skill deficiencies, low income, barriers to employment, individuals with disabilities, veterans, and customers that lack essential skills such as computer literacy, work history, educational credentials, and employability skills. Individuals with significant barriers generally require more intensive services and training so they can succeed in the working world. The One-Stop Partners will expand career services that reduce barriers and guide customers to career pathways and industry credentials for gainful employment in the five county area.

Scaling up the use of Integrated Education and Training models to help adults get their GED and work on other basic skills and English language acquisition while earning credentials and industry-recognized credentials that lead to in-demand occupations-The Board is supporting this strategy with the inclusion of labor market sectors that will allow for the ICCB approval of bridge and IET programs. In addition, the Board supports programs offered by Lawrence Education Center (LEC) and Lincoln Land Community College (LLCC). A few highlights are:

- The Hospitality Bridge at LEC is now partnered with a new vocational course for the Illinois Food Managers' Certification. Instructional staff at LEC are now certified to proctor this test for this state certification which will allow students to train in management for the Hospitality industry at restaurants, bars and hotels to be able to move into a higher area of this in-demand industry and a sustainable wage.
- LLCC will collaborate with Career Technical Education and industry partners to reduce participant's progression barriers within occupational training programs. Work with WIOA partners to ensure integrated wrap-around services are provided throughout education and workforce preparation to enhance successful transitions into career opportunities through IET models.

Using the insights and lessons learned from successful dual credit programs to scale up similar efforts in other sectors and regions-Efforts are underway to apply knowledge gained from dual credit partnerships within the general education program to increase CTE dual credit programming and diversify courses that are offered. However, this is challenging because many area secondary schools do not have the necessary facilities or qualified instructors to provide instruction within such programs.

Determining the most effective marketing methods and messages for informing college and university students about Prior Learning Assessments-The LWIA will educate partners and front-line staff on the Prior Learning Assessment methods currently being utilized in the workforce area. This information will also be presented at the front-line staff training that is held every other month at various partner locations. Additionally, this information will be presented at Monday orientations and college/school orientations. Follow-up data will be collected from

clients to help gauge effectiveness of marketing methods to determine if additional marketing methods are needed. Social media platforms are used to promote and market PLAs and have been found to be the best vehicle to market to specific target markets. However, being that PLAs are relatively new, LLCC has recently begun efforts to integrate Prior Learning Assessments and competency-based education into its curriculum. While conversations are in preliminary stages across the various programs, the college recognizes that some students may pursue a credential in an area they have significant experience in which would negate the need to take the program in its entirety.

Investigating how targeted marketing can identify segments of the labor force, such as mature workers and the underemployed, who may not require extensive education or training to qualify for jobs in high demand occupations- As noted in the EDR 1 regional plan, the median age is increasing for our LWIA. Marketing to that population will be a priority, as well as marketing to the underemployed.

LWIA 20 hosts hiring events which are held at the One-Stop Center. In addition, we market our employability workshops throughout the community. We utilize the Chamber's e-newsletter to market services and programs so the business community is aware of all of the One-Stop offerings. Facebook and other social media platforms are used to promote events and educational opportunities. Lastly, calendars and flyers are produced on each specific event/training opportunity.

Facilitating the development of Career Pathways-The LWIA will continue to explore, develop, and expand career pathways with education partners that may include co-enrollment in core programs. The LWIA will work regionally to catalog existing pathways to determine what middle skilled jobs exist and target training resources for development or expansion. The LWIA has experience in developing career pathways as evident through special grant awards and regional initiatives.

Improving access to activities leading to a recognized post-secondary credential -LWIA 20 will continue our close involvement with One-Stop Partners, under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, to expand access to programs, increase skill level, reduce barriers to employment, and award credential attainment. The LWIB will continue to provide information to customers about Career Pathways, in-demand occupations, all training options and career ladders. Additionally, the LWIB will encourage the use of assessments, such as:

- **Illinois workNet Assessments,** Illinois workNet offers assessments that can be used as part of the career development process. The following assessments are available online with this site:
 - Skill and Interest Surveys (Self-accessed Assessments)
 - Employment 101 Pre / Post-Assessment and Certificate of Completion (Self-accessed Assessments)
 - NOCTI 21st Century Skills Assessment Certificate (Partner Initiated Assessment)
 - Observational Assessment (Partner Initiated Assessment).

We will also increase access to technology through RR and workshops, events, etc. We even purchased hardware for some during COVID. We offer support services (such as CC and transportation) to customers to eliminate barriers. Provide direct linkages to all other support services, priority of services and make sure the One-Stop center continue to be physically and programmatically accessible for individuals with disabilities.

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

- Service delivery to some individuals with disabilities became easier by eliminating transportation and other issues that in-person meetings present. Remote learning due to quarantines, closures, expanded learning options are now be more common, and will be more easy to restart, if needed. We found that minorities and those living in poverty were impacted the most. Educators still continue face some of the same challenges as they did at the beginning of the pandemic. When talking to clients we discovered that COVID exacerbated many of the already existing stressors and challenges for target populations. We also discovered that equitable access to technology is essential. This is something that EDR #1 and LWIA 20 will be focusing on. We will need to continue to partner and leverage increased policy flexibility to provide speedy access to services for target populations as needed.

LLWA has always focused on equity and will continue to strengthen and increase awareness, plan for and collaborate with those communities, distribute resources in a fair and equitable manner, and apply the equity lens in all future planning and initiatives.

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

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

Better integration and coordination of services through the One-Stop delivery system will continue to be pursued in an effort to enhance strategies with State, regional, and local partners. One-Stop Partners continue to work to better provide customer service with shorter wait times and less duplication of services, resulting in a satisfied customer. Discussions still surround partners co-locating and/or virtually connecting in order to provide better coordination with integration of activities and information. A goal is that the system is logical and accessible for job seekers and businesses, and that we have increased accountability through the streamlining of services. Additionally, all partners provide online links to other partners' webpages and their resources.

The narrative portion of the MOU specifies the roles of partners and the budget spreadsheets show the contributions for each partner. The One-Stop Operator will assure that partner responsibilities are being met and that the One-Stop Center is certified by June 30, 2020. Quarterly reports will continue to be provided to the Board and committees to show the progress towards the designated strategies and compliance with performance measures.

Some examples of local coordination strategies that will continue are:

Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth employment and training activities under WIOA

Title I-The Land of Lincoln Workforce Alliance will coordinate training and employment activities following a sectoral approach to workforce development as identified by the State and region. Employment and training activities will focus on the Healthcare, Manufacturing, and Professional and Business Services industries. As mentioned previously, the secondary industries of Transportation, Distribution and Logistics (TDL), Construction, Leisure and Hospitality, and Information Technology will also be explored to develop strategies for career pathway development. Coordination activities with One-Stop Partners will include a common intake, assessment, and follow-up. Additionally, continual cross-training with Partners will help to provide information about available training programs.

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-Adult Education and literacy coordinates with the One-Stop system to increase basic skills of adults and youth who need marketable skills for employment. This will include the continued expansion of Bridge programs as mentioned in the State, regional, and local plans.

To increase adult education and literacy training, the LWIB annually solicits applications for training on a competitive basis. Applications are reviewed by a team to see which training programs will best address the Title II needs of the LWIA. They are evaluated on program design, performance history, partnerships and linkages, financial ability of the organization, and if the associated costs are reasonable. The committee makes recommendations to the Board for approval. The full LWIB then votes to approve or deny these programs at the May Board meeting(s), and as needed during the program year.

Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.) services-Labor market data is coordinated through Wagner-Peyser by monitoring labor market trends to meet the needs of the changing workforce. Labor trends will continue to be tracked in order to be aware of occupations that may rise to the top of the demand scale. Local workforce data will be updated to determine emerging workforce and training needs to meet employment demands in the area. In addition, employment data, employability skills, and assessment will be coordinated for non-duplication and consistency of services provided at the Center. Wagner-Peyser/IDES staff also provides assistance in serving customers in the Resource Room, particularly with Illinois Job Link (IJL), the statewide database for job seekers. Veteran's representatives will continue to work with veterans for employment in

the community. Additionally, Land of Lincoln Workforce Alliance and IDES coordinate participation at numerous area job fairs.

Vocational rehabilitation service activities under WIOA Title I- The Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) will coordinate the provision of services to individuals with disabilities via the One-Stop in Springfield. Three business days per week, a vocational rehabilitation counselor will be available in person to meet with individuals with disabilities seeking services. On days when a counselor is not available in person at the One-Stop, an individual at the One-Stop wishing to access DRS services will be able to directly link to the local Springfield DRS Field Office using the direct linkage services. In either instance, a referral will be completed by DRS staff at the time of inquiry, an explanation of available services will be provided, and questions will be answered. Upon receipt of the completed referral, the assigned DRS counselor will work with said customer to determine eligibility for services and subsequently develop an Individual Plan for Employment outlining services the customer is eligible to receive. Services available may include, but are not limited to: job search and placement assistance; referral and coordination with other services; provision of workforce and labor market information and statistics; information related to performance and cost on providers of education, training, and workforce services; performance information for the local area as a whole; information on the availability of supportive services; assistance establishing eligibility for financial aid for non-WIUA training and education; comprehensive and specialized assessments; individual counseling; career planning; short-term pre-vocational services; internships and work experience; workforce preparation activities; and out-of-area job search assistance. Additionally, DRS will arrange cross training for all One-Stop staff to prepare them for working with customers who utilize assistive technology, which is also a State and regional initiative.

Relevant secondary and post-secondary education programs and activities with education and workforce investment activities-LWIA 20 will continue to improve upon and implement new training and career pathways with area community colleges, truck driver training facilities, vocational schools, unions, and other service providers who have developed customized programs for employers in the community. Additionally, regularly scheduled meetings with the One-Stop Operators and the Partners will assist to ensure there is no with duplication of services. Approved training programs are always discussed at the LWIB to confirm these programs are relevant and serving the needs of employers.

How the Local Board will support the state strategies identified in the State Plan under 20 CFR 676.105 and work with the entities carrying out core programs and other workforce development programs including programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.) to support service alignment and needs identified in regional or local level assessments, including the Perkins Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment- Labor market data will be reviewed and coordinated with Perkins programs to assure that workforce training at the secondary and post-secondary level

is consistent with local workforce demand and anticipated needs. Information from local Workforce Boards along with data gleaned from research tools will help to ensure that service alignment occurs and that programs of study offered are in sync with strong and growing labor demands in the region along with industries that are projecting growth. Perkins workforce training programs exist at Lincoln Land Community College and Capital Area Career Center. Both groups have advisory committees made up of employers and experts in the field who provide input on labor market changes and training or credentials needed by the industry. The Title 1 Executive and Assistant Director will participate in Perkins program advisory groups to review labor market data, training enrollment/expansion, and to help ensure that the advisory committees benefit from the perspectives of the workforce system.

- Job Corp outreach twice a month for youth ages 16-24.
- Back to Work 5 part series
- Employability Essentials and LinkedIn workshops
- Financial Literacy workshops with CSBG partner.
- Employer hiring events – recruitment and interviewing of applicants for open positions.
- Expungement workshops for ex-offenders.
- Employer Panels/Guest Speakers that provide tips on various hiring/interviewing issues.

Provide a copy of the local supportive service policy and describe how the Local Board will coordinate the provision of transportation and other appropriate supportive services in the local area; and

The LWIA 20 Supportive Services Policy is attached. The LWIA promotes coordination among community providers. Customers interested in training must apply to the Community Connection Point for child care funding prior to supportive services being awarded by WIOA.

Transportation assistance is more difficult to coordinate; however, a transportation and childcare provider list was developed locally and shared regionally. In addition, LWIA 20 will assist with planning and participate in a regional supportive services fair. As partners work through the MOU, better ways to coordinate supportive services will be addressed. Sangamon and Menard Counties did develop SMART transportation since the last plan and this addresses transportation issues within and between these two counties.

Cross training to assure individuals with barriers to employment, including individuals with disabilities, will occur between partners. The Department of Rehabilitation Services provides a case manager at the Center three days a week. Partners will work cooperatively to assure that services are accessible and the resource room is equipped with up-to-date assistive technology. Additionally, all Partners are routinely trained on assistive technology and a catalog of resources are accessible to all partner staff at the One-Stop Center.

The implications of the pandemic forced our workforce area to make abrupt changes so there was no break in local coordination. Regular partner outreach and communication were a critical part of continued coordination of services and service delivery. We adjusted our direct linkage methods

We continued partner front line staff trainings, which were a part of our service coordination plan, so all Partners were aware of changes being made within their organizations. We continually stayed abreast of the most current guidelines and additional pandemic response funding opportunities available in LWIA 20. We adjusted how we gathered Partner referrals, they were tracked online, through email and phone calls, yet we continued to utilize the standard form that was previously created. We also began to receive referrals from IDES for Employment Services that they did not perform due to being closed, the volume of UI workloads, and 30 minute appointment time limitations. LLWA staff met customers off sight, in the parking lots, through FaceTime, and Zoom. The staff walked clients through online applications step-by-step.

In addition to IDES referrals, we received increased numbers of referrals from DHS for Career Services. Partners and the One-Stop Operator continued to meet regularly through online platforms. All staff participated in numerous WIOA Wednesday webinar sessions on service integration and collaboration. LLWA had to rely on our Adult Education Partners for TABE testing once reinstated on 07/01/21. Lastly, we made numerous referrals to LLCC - Workforce Equity Initiative - Open Door Program.

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

- **A description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area.**
- **A description of how the Local Board will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out in the local area with statewide rapid response activities. As part of the 2022 modification, describe how adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities will address the impact and recovery from the COVID-19 National Health Emergency.**

The assessment of adults and dislocated workers interested in training includes determining their basic skill levels in Reading and Math. The Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) is administered to determine if educational levels are met for the approved training program. Career Planners provide occupational/labor market information and address suitability issues which may affect the individual's ability to successfully complete training and earn a credential.

Occupational training is provided through ITAs and cohort training. Work based learning includes work experience and on-the-job training (OJT), and is an option for individuals that can benefit from learning on the job rather than a classroom setting. A variety of post-secondary and vocational training programs exist in the LWIA 20 area. Approved training is focused on job openings in the area and customers are trained in the targeted sectors where jobs are in demand.

The Land of Lincoln Workforce Board assures that it will coordinate workforce activities carried out in the local area with statewide rapid response activities. The Land of Lincoln Workforce Alliance and the Illinois Department of Employment Security take the lead when providing services to companies and workers impacted by a plant/business closure or a lay-off. An initial meeting with an employer followed by Rapid Response workshops for workers begins the process of assisting affected employees with their training and employment needs. The workshop topics generally include: unemployment insurance, healthcare needs, available training and employment programs including OJT and other community services that provide a variety of assistance. Local area staff coordinate services with the State Rapid Response Team. Event tracking is entered on IWDS including worker surveys that identify service needs. Should additional funding be needed to serve this business closing, workforce dollars will be requested from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.

LWIA 20 will continue to respond to employer and job seeker needs to strengthen and develop adult and dislocated workers activities that will invest in quality career pathways and jobs. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the value of online skills-based learning for eligible Adults and Dislocated Workers. The range of programs available on the statewide Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) has allowed individuals who lost their jobs, due to the pandemic, to retrain for more secure and family-sustaining employment. The availability of short-term training programs in high demand occupations, resulting in quick employment, will be more important than ever (CDL, CNA- for example) to address shortages and get people working quickly. Continued business engagement will be a key component to ensure that the state, local areas, training providers, and partners continue to work together to address recovery and employer needs. LLWA continues to provide additional pathways to jobs and apprenticeships which may also require greater investments in support services. Additionally, we will continue to develop strategies to connect adults and dislocated workers to quality occupations with wraparound supports in place to help set them up for continued success.

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

- **A description and assessment of the type and availability of youth workforce investment activities in the local area including activities for youth who are individuals with disabilities, which must include an identification of successful models of such activities.**
- **A description of how local areas will meet the requirement that a minimum of 75% of the youth expenditures be for out-of-school youth.**
- **As part of the 2022 modification, describe how youth activities will address the impact and recovery from the COVID-19 National Health Emergency.**

Youth in the LWIA 20 area face a multitude of challenges including high unemployment rates. Skill levels have decreased and employability or essential skills are sorely needed. Of particular

importance is the need for youth to see the relevance of career pathways and the importance of credential attainment. The LWIA funds(ed) three youth providers, listed below.

Lawrence Education Center serves out of school youth and provides GED or high school credit recovery for youth that are drop outs. In addition, youth have options to obtain additional credentials through short term training while working on a high school diploma or GED. Examples include Microsoft certification, Food Service Sanitation and CNA training provided through a partnership with Fishes & Loaves.

The **Capitol Area Career Center** Skilled Trades Essentials Program (STEP) is an out-of-school youth program that focuses on industry safety and introduction to the trades, welding, building trades, HVAC, and electrical systems. Participants also participate in financial literacy and entrepreneurship training, and development of soft skills. Participants have the opportunity to earn the following credentials; OSHA 10, EPA 608, Employment Ready Certification for basic refrigeration and charging procedures, NCCER Core and Level 1 Carpentry, and American Welding Society certifications. In addition, participants will build a tiny house to be donated to a local program for Veterans. They receive cash incentives for attaining program goals, support services as needed, and placement into paid WBL opportunities based on performance, progression, and goal attainments, and follow up services.

The **Fishes and Loaves** Pathways to Success Program is an out-of-school youth program for entry level positions in the Health Sciences pathway. In addition to career planning, tutoring, leadership development, guidance/counseling, financial literacy, support, and follow up services, participants complete basic nurse assisting training and sit for the CNA state board exam. Those who successfully complete the program may also be placed into paid WBL opportunities.

We will continue to deliver or partner with programs that train youth in skills needed for high growth employment in our area. Youth with disabilities may participate in these programs. Youth providers are procured in January annually. The LWIA 20 procurement policy is included which defines the process for selecting youth providers. The success of our youth providers will be determined by their ability to help LWIA 20 surpass the negotiated performance measures by which the youth programs will be judged. Some adjustments may be needed for programs that work with youth with barriers to employment and the most difficult to serve.

Up to 5% of our WIOA youth in LWIA 20 may be individuals who do not meet the income criteria as long as they have at least one of the following barriers to employment:

- School dropout;
- Basic skills deficient;
- Educational attainment one or more grade levels below that appropriate for their age;
- Pregnant or parenting;
- Individuals with disabilities;
- Homeless or runaway;
- Offender;

- LWA 20 proposes as another barrier of employment: Youth considered by the Community as being at risk of dropping out of school. (State definition)

LWIA 20 has focused efforts on out-of-school youth for the past several years and meets the 75% expenditure level for out-of-school youth. This is a practice that will continue.

LWIA 20 has also developed a strong linkage between schools, both high school and post-secondary, vocational schools, and community programs. Additionally, we work closely with partners to address needs for youth in the area.

LWIA 20 recognizes the importance of linkages with foster care programs, educational institutions, public assistance (TANF) programs, and other youth providers for success of youth in our communities. Together, the partners recognize the importance of utilizing talents and sharing resources will increase the quality of services to youth in our communities.

In relation to meeting the minimum expenditure rate, monthly, at a scheduled staff meeting, we assess the budget and enrollments to address any shortfalls within each funding stream. Adjustments are made at that time to make sure the LWIA stays on target to reach the minimum expenditure rate.

LWIA 20 will continue to take cues from the ICCB, adult education partners, and business and community leaders to respond to, both employer and youth job seeker, needs to strengthen and develop youth activities that will invest in equitable and quality career pathways and jobs. Our staff and providers will continue to research evidence, attend professional development training opportunities, promote diversity, and continuously update strategies to continue to work towards successful programs.

LWIA 20 released a youth RFP in January 2022 soliciting for youth programs that place emphasis on achieving success in academic and occupational skills training leading to credential attainment, but that also includes work-based training components meeting the demands of local businesses all while incorporating an equity lens into program development and implementation.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the value of access to technology and online skills-based learning for eligible youth. The range of programs available on the statewide Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) has allowed out-of-school youth who lost their jobs during the pandemic to train for more secure and family-sustaining employment and career pathways.

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

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

- **Describe how the local workforce areas will ensure equitable access to workforce and educational services through the following actions:**
 - **Disaggregating data by race, gender and target populations to reveal where disparities and inequities exist in policies and programs.**
 - **Developing equity goals in conjunction with the education system and prepare action plans to achieve them.**
 - **Exposing more high school students, particularly young women and minorities, to careers in science, technology, engineering and math fields.**
 - **Exploring how effective mentor programs can be expanded to adults, particularly those who are displaced and moving to a new career.**
 - **Providing training to workforce program staff on data-driven approaches to address equity gaps.**
 - **Ensuring workforce services are strategically located in relation to the populations in most need.**

The demographic information supplied by the Illinois Department of Employment Security concerning race, gender, and targeted populations, as well as data gathered by LLWA during the application process is continually reviewed. LLWA is aware of the stress the COVID-19 pandemic created for particular populations, specifically for women and African-Americans. Career Planners are aware of the IDES report and are utilizing career planning and career counseling to encourage these populations to engage in education and training programs that will have increased earnings and long-term employment opportunities. Staff area aware of many community programs that can provide resources to individuals who are exhibiting the need for various wrap-around services too. This labor market information helps inform program development, such as the Equity Grants to Community Colleges. Moving forward in the next two years the local Partners will examine data at regional and local meetings to ensure inequities are addressed through policy and programming.

LWIA 20 will provide quality services to all customers including priority populations listed below that are outlined in the Unified plan. A Priority of Service Policy (attached) has been approved by the LLWB that addresses these populations. Data gathered during planning shows that the region has a larger than average population of Veterans (13.18%) compared to the State of Illinois average (5%). In addition, data also shows that the poverty rates in all five counties of LWIA 20 went up, thus increasing the low income population. One-Stop Partners will work cooperatively to serve these and all priority populations.

In addition, we recently changed our online pre-application to include statistics related to race, gender, and target populations so LWIA 20 is more aware of the customers we serve and how we can better address any inequities. We also run reports in IWDS to examine the data related to these special populations.

For training services such as academic classroom training, ITA approved occupational training, cohort/customized training and other skills special project training, a list is established with priority identified. Enrollment into one of the above training options is based on priority.

Supportive Services are determined during career planning and are calculated at the time of enrollment. Supportive services are based on policy and fund availability.

Priority Populations include:

- Low Income Individuals
- Basic Skills Deficient
- Veterans

Persons with Disabilities

- TANF Recipients
- Other Public Assistance Recipients
- Food Stamp Recipients
- Dislocated Workers
- Displaced Homemakers
- Migrant and Seasonal Workers
- Women
- Minorities
- Individuals training for Non-Traditional Employment
- Long Term unemployed
- Individuals with Multiple Barriers to Employment

Assistance is provided to all customers that are in need of job search assistance in the Resource Room or when they participate in our employability workshops.

The Workforce Equity Initiative is an expanded version of LLCC's Open Door program. The purpose of the Open Door - Workforce Equity Initiative is to train individuals in occupations leading to immediate employment. The Workforce Equity Initiative, funded through an Illinois Community College Board grant, will serve more than 100 low-income students; 75% of whom must be African American. The Workforce Equity Initiative will provide short-term, post-secondary education/training programs designed to help participants gain employment in high-wage and in-demand occupations. This program is supported by the Partners and continues to be promoted with customers in the One-Stop system.

LLWA continues to inform and advise staff and youth contractors about STEM deficits for minorities. The staff encourages inclusion of STEM exposure in youth programming and encourages minority students to pursue STEM, specifically in our Cass County location. LLWA has worked on translating materials and offers them to clients whenever possible. Our County staff and Business Services Representative encourage businesses to partner with high schools and colleges, specifically addressing careers in the STEM field. For example, we recently connected Springfield Clinic to the Health and Science Academy at SSHS during a Business Services visit. STEM careers and training programs are regularly discussed with our regional/local partners and board members. Additionally, the continuous cultivation of opportunities are researched and LLWA works to get additional programs added to ETPL. Lastly, we support many programs and various STEM grants through referrals and letters of support.

Sangamon CEO and Making the Grade are two programs in the area that have mentors as part of their programming. Supporting these programs more would be a way to increase mentorship opportunities for youth in the community. However, modeling these programs would be a great way to begin mentoring a number of the adults we serve. Utilizing the Board members as mentors or developing a program with the service providers would be another way to ensure success with our adult clients. These are areas to examine and look to expand upon.

This past year all of the County workforce offices were relocated to align more closely with the populations we serve. Now three locations are located at community colleges and the other location is located at the local Housing Authority office.

H. Provide a description of training policies and activities in the local area including the following and any significant implications of the COVID-19 National Health Emergency, as applicable:

- **How local areas will meet the annual Training Expenditure Requirement;**

The LLWB approves all local training policies annually at the March meeting. In addition to policies, the WIOA Participant Handbook is updated and provided to customers. This outlines policies and requirements in an easy to understand format.

The State of Illinois mandate to meet a 50% training expenditure rate was put into practice on July 1, 2018. LWIA 20 effectively plans and tracks expenditures and has consistently met the 50% minimum expenditure rate for direct training costs. With the implementation of WIOA, the 50% minimum has been revamped to include a combination of both Adult and Dislocated Workers direct training to equal 50%. Additionally, we meet the 20% WBL expenditure requirement for youth.

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

Work based learning (work experience, OJT) has consistently increased over the years and is emphasized by WIOA. Communication with area employers, both those on the LLWB and various partnerships established over the years, provide a reliable source for employer outreach strategies. Employer organizations, such as the Economic Development organizations and the Chambers of Commerce, have links to employers and provide valuable information to/about the LLWB. The One-Stop System Business Services initiative continues to operate with members from One-Stop Partners, business, economic development, and the Chamber. The Business Services team now utilizes common marketing materials and outreach processes. The Business Services team conducts business visits and reviews input from these visits. This will be used as a guide when implementing

business services in the area. The active participation of the business services team will be essential for the long term success of work based learning activities.

LWIA 20 Work Based Learning Goals:

	On-the-Job Training	Work Experience	Internships
Adults	10	5	0
Dislocated Workers	10	5	0
Out of School Youth	5	75	30

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

The LLWA will strive to help qualified adult workers acquire jobs, explore career opportunities and upgrade their existing skills to create a better quality of life. Training and service options will include:

- Emphasis on training through Individual Training Accounts (ITAs), class size training, on-the job training, and other contracts for service that are developed for the area;
- Career pathway information, skills upgrade opportunities and other career services provided at the local One-Stops, rural outreach Centers and WIOA partners;
- Provide staff and partner-assisted career services at the Illinois workNet;
- Provide available training services and related staff and sub-contractor assistance;
- Provide On-the-Job Training, Work Experience, Incumbent Worker Training, and Customized Training developed directly with area employers;

- Provide training services to qualifying applicants with staff, partner, and subcontractor assistance as necessary.

Outreach to Dislocated Workers - Through a combined system which makes ample use of the current Illinois workNet, the LLWA will market services to qualified dislocated workers, explore career opportunities for enrollment, and upgrade existing skills with credentials to become reemployed. More emphasis on training including Individual Training Accounts (ITAs), class size training, on-the job training, and work experience will be developed to assure that this population is not being overlooked.

Dislocated workers residing in our five county area or displaced from employment in our LWIA will be targeted for outreach for training and include:

- Access to information on careers, skills upgrade opportunities and services at the local One-Stop, rural Centers and WIOA partner locations;
- Cross train staff so they are familiar with partner-assisted services at the Springfield workNet Centers and at WIOA partner locations;
- Provide enrollment information about training and referral to partner programs;
- Provide available training services and related staff and sub-contractor as needed;
- Information provided about On-the-Job Training, Work Experience and Customized Training developed directly with area employers;
- Provide follow-up services to customers, and coordinate with partners and subcontractors as needed.

Additionally, Land of Lincoln Workforce Alliance and Illinois Department of Employment Security are co-located and address Unemployment Insurance claimant needs thoroughly.

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

The LWIA 20 Eligible Training Provider Approval Policy is attached. The LLWB approves training providers each year and monitors the success of providers from the previous year. The Policy identifies the expectations of providers and monitors continuous improvement. A list of **Eligible Providers of Training Services** is available to customers in the comprehensive One-Stop Center and at the outreach centers in the other four counties. The list is available in print form as well via the internet at www.worknet20.org and at www.illinoisworknet.com. A link is also provided to the State training provider list. The cost of training and past performance information will be provided for approved WIOA training. LWIA 20 staff will monitor the local list for accuracy and timeliness. Providers will provide proof that they meet state mandated requirements. The local Workforce Board reviews Provider information annually and certifies training providers. Additional requirements may include: specific enrollment conditions such as pre-hires, entry wage requirements, academic and assessment score levels, and follow-up and

performance data. Training provider certification is approved in the fall by the Workforce Board. The LLWB is committed to staying informed with local employers and their training needs, and will ensure the availability and approval of corresponding training providers and programming for job seekers.

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

- **To transfer funds between the adult and dislocated worker funding streams.**
- **To use funds for incumbent worker training as outlined in WIOA Sec. 134(d)(4)(A)(i).**
- **To use funds for transitional jobs as outlined in WIOA Sec. 134(d)(5).**
- **To use funds for pay for performance contracts as outlined in WIOA Sec. 133(b)(2-3).**

Transfer of funds between adult and dislocated worker funding streams- Poverty levels for all five counties in the LWIA 20 workforce area show increases in the economically disadvantaged population. For the past several years, LWIA 20 has transferred funding from dislocated worker to the Adult funding stream in order to meet the vast need of individuals requesting services. Our maximum allowed dollar amount is up to 50%. Waiting lists determine the need in the area and it is projected that a transfer of funds will be needed this year and for years to come. Economically disadvantaged adults requesting training and supportive services far exceed the numbers of dislocated workers requesting the same.

Use of funds for incumbent worker training- The LWIA, will provide incumbent worker training as a local strategy and per WIOA regulations, may transfer up to 20% for incumbent worker training from the adult and dislocated worker funding streams. The LLWA and Board will determine the percentage each year as part of the annual planning process. After WIOA Final Rules were issued, LWIA 20 updated the incumbent worker policy and created an on-line application process. We will continue to offer incumbent worker training as a local strategy and market to employers throughout the area. During the previous local plan we funded a number of IWT projects: Richardson Manufacturing, Kathy's Kitchen, Hanson, and HSHS.

Transitional jobs-No funds will be allocated for transitional jobs at this time; however, may be an option in the future.

Pay for Performance contracts-No funds will be allocated for pay for performance contracts.

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

Regular review of policies, procedures, as well as LMI data at the CEO, LWIB, Partner and One-Stop Operator meetings will occur. If there are required changes, due to the impact of the pandemic, those will be addressed.

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

During the pandemic, numerous policies and training documents were updated in order to address issues that occurred the pandemic.

CHAPTER 5: PERFORMANCE GOALS AND EVALUATION – LOCAL COMPONENT

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

The entire local workforce system is closely overseen by the LLWB and continues to make efforts towards a high performing board. If we take a look at the components of a high performing board - the basics of assuring compliance, review of financial reports, performance, core governance, strategy and planning - our Board is functioning well in each component. Some areas where improvement could be seen are related to Board training, which has been discussed at the State and local level. Additionally, a WIB Development Committee would be beneficial when needing a Board member replacement.

The LLWB will continue to make an effort to spotlight the achievements of our partners and customers in the success of their endeavors at meetings, gatherings of partners, and through workforce awards. We will strive to get the word out about successes to partners and the general public, as well. Annually an awards ceremony is sponsored by the LLWB. This event recognizes our customer's individual accomplishments in employment and education and business/employer leaders.

LLWA saw significant impacts due to COVID because our facility was not open to the public. The staff developed many ways to creative ways to communicate with clients, in order to achieve goals. Online platforms, meetings off-site and telephone calls were the three most common options when working with LLWA clients.

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)).

- **WIOA Performance Measures**
- **Additional State Performance Measures**

LWIA 20 negotiates planned performance goals and projected service levels with DCEO every other year, depending on changes to the State’s negotiated position with DOL. Performance is closely monitored and reported to the CEOs and the WIB on a quarterly basis. Outcomes are closely monitored and used for continuous program improvement and new program planning. At this time the Land of Lincoln Workforce Alliance continues to operate under the PY2020 goals until new goals are negotiated with the State. We will continue to strive to exceed these current measures as we have in the past years.

The local negotiated levels of performance and accountability measures are listed in the table below.

LWIA 20

Performance Measure	PY 2020/2021 Performance Goal
Adult	
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit	83%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter after Exit	81%
Median Earnings	\$8,200
Credential Attainment	83%
Measurable Skills Gains	53.0%
Dislocated Workers	
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit	81%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter after Exit	81%
Median Earnings	\$8,800
Credential Attainment	85%

Measurable Skills Gains	50.0%%
Youth	
Employment/Placement in Education Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit	75%
Employment/Placement in Education Rate 4th Quarter after Exit	75%
Median Earnings	\$4,100
Credential Attainment within 4 Quarters after Exit	76%
Measurable Skills Gains	58%

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.

- **What existing service delivery strategies will be expanded based on promising return on investment?**
- **What existing service delivery strategies will be curtailed or eliminated based on minimal return on investment?**
- **What new service strategies will be used to address regional educational and training needs based on promising return on investment?**
 - **What return on investment and qualitative outcome data for various education and training programs will be collected to identify barriers to enrollment?**
 - **What are the most cost-effective approaches to taking down those barriers or helping residents overcome them?**

Currently, reports on successful strategies occurring within the One-Stop Center are reported at each Board meeting.

Weekly information sessions are held for prospective customers to learn about and access core partner services. These information sessions are well attended and all One-Stop Partners take part in promoting their agency's services.

Service delivery strategies are reviewed on a monthly basis at the One-Stop Operator meetings. These strategies are discontinued or revamped if they are not working to address the needs of the customers entering the One-Stop Center. The One-Stop Operators are present and report issues, if any, to the Board at each LWIB meeting. The LWIB meets quarterly in March, May, September and November.

The Illinois Department of Employment Security Labor Market Economists provide educational data in regards to the community college system. ICCB also offers data on their website at <https://www.iccb.org/data/data-characteristics>. Tracking barriers to enrollment is more difficult as those are not tracked on a state-wide level but on a local level, and the current the referral tracking

system in the One-Stop Center consists of paper, emails, and IWDS case notes. LLWA tracks their referrals with an Excel database. A singular, state-wide referral system would help those who face barriers get the help they need to be successful in their work and educational goals.

An annual report is also presented and provided to the LWIB at each November meeting. This report includes details on the return on investment per each category; Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth.

LWIA #20 will continue to align new service strategies to address educational and training needs locally by addressing these common barriers: Transportation and child care issues; basic skills deficiencies by obtaining additional services; assist the customer in finding the proper agency to identify the barriers they are facing- food, shelter, healthcare and other basic needs.

One-Stop Partners collectively help customers with the above barriers, but additional training for front line staff, a new approach as identified in the One-Stop Service Integration plan, will help to develop more knowledge about these services.

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

Evaluation related to performance measures is presented to the CEOs and the Workforce Board at the September meeting, after negotiations with DCEO have occurred. Additionally, the WIB Chair is invited to participate in the performance negotiation process. Performance is closely monitored and reported to the CEOs and the WIB on a quarterly basis.

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

The region recognized a number of issues at the last regional planning meeting related to service delivery. Accessible technology and access to internet continues to be a barrier for many of our clients. Over the next two years, the region and its Partners will work to find a solution to the technology barriers. In addition, the region's cooperative service delivery strategies need to be strengthened, especially a clearer referral procedure between the workforce areas. This process will ensure that all Partners in the three workforce areas know how to seamlessly refer clients.

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

Creating an equitable workforce has been a large part of WIOA since its inception. The LLWA made numerous changes during the pandemic to address concerns related to performance. Policies changed and the WIOA handbook was changed and updated so participants had clear information on the expectations of the program. In addition, we are waiting on guidance from Department of Labor and DCEO on how the pandemic will affect and be applied to the statistical adjustment model.

CHAPTER 6: TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS AND ASSURANCES - LOCAL COMPONENT

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

A. Fiscal Management

- **Identify the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds described in WIOA Sec. 107(d)(12)(B)(i)(III), as determined by the chief elected official or the Governor under WIOA Sec. 107(d)(12)(B)(i).**
- **Provide a copy of the local procurement policies and procedures and describe the competitive procurement process that will be used to award the sub grants and contracts for WIOA Title I activities.**

The Chief Elected Officials have named Sangamon County and its department, known as the Land of Lincoln Workforce Alliance, as the administrative and fiscal agent through which the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) dollars will be administered. The procurement policy is attached. This policy identifies the procurement steps utilized when awarding sub-grants and contracts for WIOA Title I program. There were no significant impacts to fiscal management of grants as a result of the COVID-19 National Health Emergency.

B. Physical and Programmatic Accessibility

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

including providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities.

- **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. [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.]**

The physical characteristics of the comprehensive One-Stop facility located in Springfield, both indoor and outdoor, meet compliance with 29 CFR Part 37 and the most recent ADA standards for Accessible Design and the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards. Services are available in a convenient, high traffic and accessible location taking into account reasonable distance from public transportation and adequate parking (including parking clearly marked for individuals with disabilities). LLWA is located within an IDES facility and IDES is the lease holder. Physical accessibility of the One-Stop American Job Center comprehensive facility and affiliates came to an abrupt halt in March 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 National Health Emergency. Remote and electronic career and training service access platforms, mechanisms, and tools were immediately put into place. As of September 2021, LLWA began to also provide in-person services by appointment only. As of June 2022, services are still being provided by appointment only due to being housed in an IDES facility. Partner referrals continue to be provided if and as necessary.

Steps that were taken to address challenges and opportunities:

- Implemented State and CDC policy
- Created and implemented temporary remote work personnel policy
- Provided remote work platforms and tools
- Provided access to technology to participants
- Adapted support service policies
- Increased flexibility for submission of support service documentation
- Modified IEP/ISS as necessary for disrupted training plans and schedules
- Provided emergency assistance to businesses within LWA 20
- Participated in Workforce COVID-19 related webinar and trainings opportunities

Indoor space is designed in an equal and meaningful manner providing access for individuals with disabilities. Additional accommodations are listed below:

- Each location within our LWIA displays the “Equal Opportunity is the Law” notice with the Local EO Officer’s name, title and telephone number.
- The tag line *“equal opportunity employer/program” and Equal Opportunity Employer/ Program and Auxiliary aids and services available upon request to individuals with disabilities. No individual shall be excluded from participation in, denied the benefit of,*

subjected to discrimination under, or denied employment in the in administration of or in connection with any such program because of race, religion, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity, and sexual orientation) parental status, national origin, age, disability or political affiliation or belief or military service.

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- Each training provider certifies or affirms that their facility and programs are accessible to people with disabilities.
- A listing of sign language interpreters is available at all LWIA locations.
- All facilities within the LWIA provide communications with individuals with disabilities as effectively as with others.
- All facilities within the LWIA provide programs and activities physically accessible to individuals with disabilities.
- Written policies and procedures address reasonable accommodations, auxiliary aids and services, and proper protocol to interact with individuals with disabilities.
- Specific training on disability etiquette was conducted with staff.
- Assistive technology is located in an accessible area, is current, and resource room staff knows how to use the equipment. A manual was created, to assist staff in operating the equipment.
- Quarterly complaint logs are submitted to DCEO's Equal Opportunity department each quarter.

The comprehensive One-Stop Center will maintain a culture of inclusiveness in compliance with Section 188 of WIOA, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and all other applicable statutory and regulatory requirements. Each partner program affirms through the MOU that they will comply with all accessible requirements. Most programs have their own methods of administration which also govern program accessibility.

Additionally, a copy of the MOU with One-Stop Partners will be provided, when approved and signed by the CEOs, Land of Lincoln Workforce Board, and One-Stop Partners. This MOU will

show how the center meets requirements for integration and the services that are available in the local one-stop system with respect to individuals with disabilities.

C. Plan Development and Public Comment

- **Describe the process used by the Local Board, consistent with WIOA Sec. 108(d), to provide a 30-day public comment period prior to submission of the plan, including an opportunity to have input into the development of the local plan, particularly for representatives of businesses, education and labor organizations.**
- **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.**

Provide information regarding the regional and local plan modification

LWIA 20 will provide a copy of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with One-Stop Partners when it is approved and signed by partners, CEOs and the Land of Lincoln Workforce Board.

Measures were taken to allow formal comments. The 30 day public comment period for the Regional and Local Plan was advertised in the local newspaper. A copy of the plan was posted on www.worknet20.org and a copy could have been requested by contacting the Executive Director at the Land of Lincoln Workforce Alliance. Additionally, at the Land of Lincoln Workforce Board meeting, public comment was requested and it was discussed prior to approval of the plans. Comments and questions from all concerned individuals and groups were welcomed and considered. **There were no public comments or revisions to the plan.** There were no significant impacts to plan development and public comment as a result of the COVID-19 National Health Emergency.

The Chief Elected Officials of LWIA 20 and the Land of Lincoln Workforce Board review and approve the plan annually. The plan is also approved by two Sangamon County committees, Community Resources Committee and the Finance Committee.

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

The LLWA will review and clarify current policy for equal opportunity, non-discrimination, and physical accessibility, as well and respond to recommendations during EO monitoring. All policies will continue to support equality among the underserved individuals and communities. We will continue to provide education and training to staff related to accessibility and equity. During staff trainings we will communicate Equity Commission guidance in order to keep staff educated and compliant.

ATTACHMENTS

Individual Training Account (ITA) and Training through Contracts for Services

Background Information from the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and Federal Rules

1. The Land of Lincoln Workforce Alliance (LLWA) Training Policy offers training opportunities that will expand training choices for customers and better link workforce and economic development.
2. Training services through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act may be provided through contracts for service or Individual Training Accounts (ITA).
3. An Individual Training Account (ITA) is an account established for the benefit of an eligible customer: an adult (1A), dislocated worker (1D) or out of school youth (1Y).
4. Contract for Service options available to assist eligible customers are:
 - On-the-job training
 - Customized training
 - Incumbent Worker Training
 - Occupational Bridge Program
 - Non-ITA Occupational Classroom Training
 - Class Size Training
5. The LLWA will comply with the statutory requirement to utilize ITAs to the extent practicable and comply with State policies as directed by Policy Letter 04-02 by:
 - Expending the majority (i.e., 51 percent) of combined costs incurred through ITAs and training contracts under the adult and dislocated worker programs; or
 - Serving the majority (i.e., 51 percent) of adult and dislocated worker registrants receiving training

services through ITAs.

5. Priority for training services will be given to 1A/1Y eligible persons receiving public assistance, low income customers, basic skills deficient, and eligible veterans. Priority for training services will be given to 1D eligible person(s) who meet the definition of veteran.
- **Public Assistance** – Federal, State, or local government cash payments for which eligibility is determined by a needs or income test.
 - **Low-Income** – An individual who
 - (a) Personally receives or received in the past six (6) months or is a member of a family that receives or received in the past six (6) months assistance through the supplemental nutrition assistance program established under the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, the program of block grants to states for temporary assistance for needy families program under part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act or the supplemental security income program established under Title XVI of the Social Security Act, or State or local income-based public assistance;
 - (b) Is in a family with total family income that does not exceed the higher of
 - the poverty line, or
 - 70% of the lower living standard income level;
 - (c) Is a homeless individual;
 - (d) Receives or is eligible to receive a free or reduced price lunch under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act;
 - (e) Is a foster child on behalf of whom State or local government payments are made; or
 - (f) Is an individual with a disability whose own income meets the income requirement of clause (b), but who is a member of a family whose income does not meet this requirement.
 - (g) A youth customer living in a high-poverty area.

A minimum of 75% of Adult enrollments will meet priority criteria.

- **Basic Skills Deficient** – An individual (a) who is a youth, that has English, reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the eighth (8th) grade level on a generally accepted standardized test; or who is a youth or adult, that is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or society. Basic Skills Deficiency Assessment Requirements include:
 - (a) The Basic Skills Screening Tool (BSST) is required for all WIOA applicants prior to administering a WIOA Title I and II approved assessment, and is not to be used as an assessment to help determine a participant's educational needs. If the screening tool identifies an individual as basic skills deficient, that individual must be further assessed to determine their educational needs through the use of the assessment tools identified within this policy. Anyone unable to complete the screening tool without assistance must automatically be assessed as basic skills deficient. Adult Program participants who are assessed to be basic skills deficient must receive priority of service whether or not they are also low-income or public assistance recipients. Exceptions to the taking the BSST include:
 - An individual who has obtained an associate degree or higher;
 - Individuals who within the last year have taken the entrance or placement exam for the postsecondary institution that they intend to attend and passed with scores that do not need developmental or remedial courses in their chosen area of study;
 - Youth who within the last 6 months have taken the entrance or placement exam

- for the postsecondary institution that they intend to attend and passed with scores that do not need developmental or remedial courses in their chosen area of study;
- Adults or Dislocated Workers who are entering only WIOA On-the-Job Training, Paid Work Experience, or Customized Training;
 - Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) customers only receiving Reemployment Trade Adjustment Assistance (RTAA); or
 - TAA customers only receiving Job Search and/or Relocation Allowances.
- (b) During intake, there must be an assessment for determining a customer's interests, skills, and needs. Assessments are both formal and informal, and include one-o-one interaction between the participant and the Career Planner as well as observations made by the Career Planner. The formal component includes the BSST to determine priority of service and then completion of the assessment process described in the Career Planning section of this policy. For assessing skills and interests outside of basic skills, local programs must use assessment instruments that are valid and appropriate for the target population and must provide reasonable accommodation in the assessment process, if necessary, for individuals with disabilities. There are several assessment types that may be given to including interest, aptitudes, skills, and others in addition to the required reading and math assessments to attend training.
- (c) In addition to the BSST, all participants entering into training are required to complete approved reading and math assessments. Reading and math assessments for Adult and Dislocated Worker participants are not required if all of the following are met:
- The BSST does not identify the individual as basic skills deficient in which case the individual would be either referred to Adult Education or provided additional assessments per the BSST for Priority of Service;
 - The customer was not referred to adult basic education services;
 - Other assessment types listed in paragraph (b) including those found on Illinois workNet must have been utilized and recorded in the Illinois Workforce Development System (IWDS) as outlined in the Career Planning System Entry for Basic Skills Deficiency section of policy; and
 - The Individual Employment Plan (IEP) shows there was a decision made jointly between the participant and the Career Planner that Career Services will accomplish the desired employment goal(s).
- (d) Participants unable to meet their employment goals through Career Services or change their mind about receiving Training Services are required to take reading and math assessments to be enrolled in Training Services before the participant can be certified for training.
- (e) Customers enrolled only in the Youth Program may use other assessments that are approved by the Department of Education National Reporting System (NRS) for determining basic skills deficiency, and for determining Measurable Skill Gains (MSG).
- (f) Unless the customer was referred to adult basic education services or there is an established process in the Local Workforce Innovation Area (LWIA) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for a local Adult Education Provider to conduct the reading and math assessments required prior to a participant being certified for training, it is the responsibility of the Title I staff to provide the assessment for determining basic skills deficiency.
- (g) Only tests approved per the ICCB Adult Education Policy are allowable for those participants entering into training, including:
- Test for Adult Basic Education (TABE) 11 & 12 and Comprehensive Adult

Student Assessment Systems (CASAS) GOALS, the approved assessments as outlined in Adult Basic Education (ABE)/Adult Secondary Education (ASE) Required Testing.

- Title I staff administering the TABE 11 & 12 test must complete the test administration training offered through the ICCB's Illinois Learning, Educational and Academic Resource Network (iLearn) website and receive a certificate.
- At least one Title I staff person must complete the CASAS implementation training by certified personnel to use the CASAS GOALS assessment.
- For TABE 11 & 12, the Locator test must be used to determine the proper pre-test to administer. It may not be solely used as a pre-test or for a post-test.
- For CASAS GOALS, the Locator test if giving an e-Test, or Appraisal if giving a paper test must be used to determine the proper pre-test to administer. It may not be solely used as a pre-test or for a post-test.
- English speaking customers must, at a minimum, receive the TABE Reading or CASAS GOALS Reading assessment.
- If the training program of choice requires math, the customer must also receive the TABE Math or CASAS GOALS Math Assessment.

For English Language Learners, (English Language Acquisition):

- BEST Literacy, BEST Plus 2.0, or CASAS Life and Work Reading assessments are the approved assessments as outlined in the English Language Acquisition (ELA) Required Testing.
- Title I staff administering the BEST Plus 2.0 must attend the BEST Plus 2.0 Test Administrator Training Workshop.
- At least one Title I staff person must complete the CASAS training by certified personnel to use the CASAS Life and Work Reading Assessment.

(h) All tests must follow the Test Publisher's Guidelines.

- A Locator/Appraisal must be given prior to testing to determine the appropriate level of test to administer.
- If scores indicate the test is not valid because the score is outside of the accuracy range (as indicated by either an asterisk (TABE) or a diamond (CASAS GOALS), the individual must be retested following the assessment guidelines.
- Staff administering assessments must rotate test forms as appropriate during customer post-testing.

(i) Results of the Basic Skills Deficient Assessments must be addressed in the IEP or Individual Service Strategy (ISS) for Youth as outlined in the Career Planning System Entry for Basic Skills Deficiency Assessments. This is particularly important if participants are assessed as having basic skill deficiencies and require remediation.

- **Veteran** – An individual who served in the active military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged or released from such service under conditions other than dishonorable.

Veterans who meet the definition outlined in the LLWA Veterans Priority Policy will receive a priority of service over non-veterans if they meet program eligibility requirements. Priority means that veterans and eligible spouses will be given first opportunities for receipt of funding and services.

ITA Occupational Classroom Training General Requirements

1. Certified training programs will lead to placement in occupations identified as being in demand as defined in the DCEO Demand Occupation Training List (DOTL).
2. The LLWA may request additional occupations be added to their Regional Demand Occupation List under such conditions as a new plant opening, facility expansion, addition to the State's or Federal's key section initiatives or other reasons that might indicate multiple job openings will be available. Requests must be petitioned to and approved by DCEO.
3. LWIB's reserve the right to impose criteria that is unique to conditions within a particular LLWA so long as they meet, at a minimum, federal and state requirements. Immediate action may be taken to limit enrollment into a previously approved program based on information gathered from current unemployment insurance filings or sudden changes in local economic conditions which could possibly affect employment in the specific occupation for which training would have led.
4. LLWA has targeted the healthcare industry and focused efforts on occupational areas determined to be most in demand and for which a shortage is imminent.
5. The training course or program must be likely to result in employment leading to a self-sufficient wage for low-income customers. For dislocated customers, the program must lead to employment resulting in a wage which calculates to 80% of the dislocation wage.
6. The ITA amount will be restricted to payments not to exceed \$16,000.00 (tuition published to the general public) for the first anniversary year (12 months from the beginning of training) and no more than \$16,000.00 for the second anniversary year. It does, however, exclude required books, fees and training items, other mandatory course fees, and supportive services. If a training program surpasses two years, the LWIA Enrollment Review Committee will evaluate reasons for the extension and will have the authority to approve program continuance with a limit of \$4,000.00 excluding items listed above. Additional amounts beyond the limit will be approved by the Enrollment Review Committee and Executive Director. Customers will be encouraged to rent books if/when available.
7. Training fees and other mandatory supplies and books may be approved for payment by the career planner. The LLWA is a tax exempt organization and is unable to reimburse for any state or local taxes.
8. LLWA will be authorized to adjust the ITA amount if fund availability decreases or increases and for special grant funds or other State or Federal initiatives including the Trade Act.
9. When training funds have been exhausted for TAA eligible dislocated workers, the LLWA may utilize Formula funds to continue those individuals in training utilizing the current TAA training funding policy.

ITA Implementation

1. In order to be referred for training services through an individual training account, the customer must first receive career services (WIOA Title 1B) from the one-stop operator designated by the LWIB to provide these services. Career services are defined in the final rules and part of the MOU with One-Stop Partners.
2. Customers must select a program of training from the Statewide Eligible Training Provider list (ETPL) that is directly linked to the employment opportunities in the local area or in the area in which the customer is willing to relocate. The training must be in an occupation that has been determined to be in a sector of the economy that has a high potential for sustained demand or growth in the area and leads to a self-sufficient wage.
3. The customer who seeks training services and who is eligible may, in consultation with the designated career planner select a program and training provider from the WIOA certified state approved list. Eligible training providers are those entities determined eligible through procedures described by WIOA and established by the Governor and the LWIB. This list and guidance will be provided in a manner that maximizes customer choice in the selection of the training provider and program.
4. The customer must have the skills and qualifications to succeed in the training programs based on an in-depth assessment by the career planner. The customer and career planner will jointly develop an Individual Employment Plan (IEP/ISS).
5. Customers should generally attend “full-time” (as defined by the training **provider**) and programs should not exceed two years. Exceptions to extend beyond two years may be approved by the LLWA enrollment review committee.
6. Customers seeking an ITA must have a specific occupational goal. The course of study must be occupation-specific and result in the attainment of a credential or an industry recognized credential.
7. ITAs will be awarded per semester, quarter, or for uninterrupted training coursework. Subsequent to the issuance of the first ITA, additional ITAs (if needed) will be awarded only for continuing in the approved program at the educational or training institution identified in the customer’s IEP. Modifications to a customer’s IEP must be approved by the career planner.
8. Customers may be required to apply for other forms of financial aid. ITA funds will not be withheld while the customer is awaiting determination of other financial aid eligibility. LLWA staff may use the training provider’s “cost of attendance” to identify the total resources needed. The total funds from financial aid will not exceed this cost of attendance. The trainee may be allowed to use other financial aid resources such as Pell grants to assist with living expenses while using the ITA for tuition, fees and required training items. LLWA staff will be authorized to change this policy in the event of ITA fund shortages.
9. Customers who are delinquent in repaying a student loan will not be automatically disqualified from being considered for an ITA but must develop and implement an approved repayment plan with the institution and submit plans to the career planner prior to ITA approval.
10. LLWA will pay “in-district” tuition rates at community colleges. Customers wishing to attend a community college outside of their district will be responsible for applying to the community college district of their residence for a charge-back for payment of the “out-of-district” portion of the tuition and fees. Exceptions to this policy may be approved on a case-by-case basis by career planner.
11. An ITA or any subsequent ITA or voucher may be denied if any of the above requirements are not met. Additional reasons for denial are as follows:
 - a. Training funds are limited or exhausted.
 - b. The customer’s ITA funding limit has been reached and exceptions are not approved.

- c. The training provider does not accept or retain the customer.
- d. The customer attempts to make changes to the voucher without the signature of the career planner.
- e. The training provider and/or the customer refuses to comply with reasonable requirements or conditions made by LLWA staff and/or LWIB.
- f. The customer is participating in an activity deemed to be fraudulent or the customer has falsified documents resulting in payment or reimbursement for WIOA funded activities.
- g. The customer fails to remain in good academic standing as defined by the training provider.

12. Support services may be provided during the period of an ITA per Customer Support Policy. Resources other than WIOA, such as funds available through the Illinois Department of Human Services, will be accessed for these support services as appropriate.

13. Any previously exited customer requesting to receive an ITA or other training funds must be reviewed and approved by the Enrollment Review Committee prior to commitment of new funding. Past participation and performance will be taken into consideration.

Changes and Exceptions to these Policies

- 1. This policy will remain in effect until it is revised or terminated. A review of the ITA policy will be done, at a minimum, on an annual basis.
- 2. The Enrollment Review Committee and/or the LWIB will be authorized to revise this policy or implement additional policies necessary for the timely and effective management of ITAs.
- 3. Exceptions to this policy may be made on a case-by-case basis with the LLWA Enrollment Review Committee and the approval of the Executive Director. The Enrollment Review Committee shall be made up of: Program Compliance Specialist, Fiscal Services Director, and Assistant Director. An alternate staff member may substitute for a Review Committee member in his/her absence. A copy of the (extension/exception) approval/disapproval review form will be placed in the customer's file.

ENROLLMENT REVIEW COMMITTEE

Extension / Exception / Miscellaneous Requests

Customer Name: _____ **Title(s):** _____

Type of Request (Check all that apply):

- Extension of training dates beyond ITA policy:**
Original Planned End Date: _____ New Planned End Date: _____
- Exception to increase training/support funding beyond ITA policy**
Amount to exceed ITA policy: \$ _____
- Other: List:** _____

Customer Information and Reason for Exception Request (Career Planner)

Career Planner’s Recommendation: **Approve** **Not Approve**

Career Planner’s Signature:_____ **Date:**_____

Reasons for Approval/Denial (Committee Members)

Signature **Date** **Approved** **Not Approved**

Signature **Date** **Approved** **Not Approved**

Signature **Date** **Approved** **Not Approved**

Executive Director Signature **Date** **Approved** **Not Approved**

Contract for Service Policy

1. **On the Job Training (OJT)** (See OJT Policy)

2. **Customized Training**

Background: Customized training is designed to meet the special requirements of an employer or a group of employers. The employer(s) must pay not less than 50% of the cost of training (unless otherwise waived by the State). Employer costs may be in cash or in-kind, must be documented and are subject to audit. Customized training may be provided to eligible unemployed persons and, in some cases, to eligible employed workers.

Commitment to Hire: The employer(s) will commit to hire WIOA registrants who successfully complete the customized training program.

Customized Training for Employed Workers: A customized training contract may be written to train a WIOA customer who is already working for the employer (or group of employers) for which the customized training is being provided when the employee is not earning a self-sufficient wage. The employer (or group of employers) must commit to continue to employ such trainees who successfully complete the training.

Reimbursement: Employers will be reimbursed for customized training costs based on the cost for instruction and the length of training required. A negotiation process will take place between the Employer and WIOA to develop a training outline and reimbursement schedule. The reimbursement amount cannot exceed 50% of the cost of customized training.

Duration: In determining the length of the contract, consideration will be given to the skill requirements of the occupation, the academic and occupational skill level of the customer and prior work experience level of the customer. The length of the customized training agreement and amount of the reimbursement is dependent upon the complexity of the training, the skills of the trainees and the availability of funds.

Special Contracting Requirements

1. The customized training contract will be developed after the employer has conducted interviews and selected appropriate customers/trainees.
2. A customized training contract may be used to train an eligible WIOA customer who, prior to the start of the training, is already working for the employer. In order to be enrolled in the customized training activity, the employed WIOA customer must meet eligibility standards by not meeting the

self-sufficient wage standard. Customized training may be provided to a worker employed by another (non-training) firm if the worker is earning less than a self-sufficient wage. It is expected that, if the worker successfully completes the training, he/she will choose to leave his/her current employment to accept a job with the customized training employer. Customized training provided to a previously employed worker must relate to either:

- The introduction by the employer of new technologies;
- The introduction to new production or service procedures;
- Upgrading to new jobs that require additional skills/workplace literacy;
- Filling a critical skills shortage occupation identified by the LWIB.

Limited Training Service Providers

Background and Policy

1. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) provides that contracts for training may be used when there are an insufficient number of eligible providers in a local area. This exception applies to the rural areas of LLWA.
2. When the LWIB determines that there is need for a training service and an insufficient number of eligible providers in a local area are available to accomplish the purpose, the One Stop Partner Committee/One-Stop Partners will identify the appropriate provider of service. A legal notice in the local area will provide public comment for interested providers for 30 days.
3. The LWIB will apply this provision on an exception basis rather than as a blanket waiver. This exception will be applied on a program-by-program basis as is more consistent with the direction provided by the federal rule.
4. Members of the One Stop Partner Committee will document the formal action determining that there are an insufficient number of eligible providers and make appropriate modification to the Local Plan to support the exceptions.
5. The LWIB will continue to make efforts to maximize customer choices of training options under the contract for services procurement approach.
6. The One Stop Partner Committee will recommend Limited Training Service providers to the LWIB for approval after evaluation. Contracts for training entered into under this exception may only be to eligible training providers as determined under WIOA.

Programs of Demonstrated Effectiveness

Background and Policy

Contracts for training are also authorized under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act/WIOA for special populations that face multiple barriers to employment and that there is a training services program of demonstrated effectiveness offered by an eligible provider. The federal rule explains that the provider in this case is a community-based organization (CBO) or other private organization.

1. When considering a Program of Demonstrated Effectiveness, the One Stop Partner Committee will develop criteria that includes:
 - The financial stability of the organization;
 - Demonstrated performance in the delivery of services to hard-to-serve customer populations through such means as program completion rates, attainment of skills, certificates or degrees the program is designed to provide; placement after training in unsubsidized employment and retention in employment; and
 - How the specific program relates to the workforce investment needs identified in the local plan.
2. A provider's program of "demonstrated effectiveness" is in addition to meeting the requirements for qualifying as an eligible training provider.
3. Special customer populations that face multiple barriers to employment are populations of low-income individuals that are included in one or more of the following categories:
 - Individuals with substantial language or cultural barriers;
 - Offenders;
 - Homeless individuals;
 - And other hard-to-serve populations as defined by the Governor.
4. Low income individual means an individual who:
 - receives, or is a member of a family that receives, cash payment under a Federal, State or local income-based public assistance program;
 - received an income, or is a member of a family that received a total family income, for the 6 month period prior to application, exclusive of unemployment compensation, child support payments, and old-age and survivors insurance benefits received under section 202 of the Social Security Act that, in relation to family size, does not exceed 70% of the lower living standard income level, for an equivalent period;
 - is a member of a household that receives (or has been determined within the 6 month period prior to application for the program involved to be eligible to receive) food stamps pursuant to the Food Stamp Act;
 - qualifies as a homeless individual as defined in subsection (a) and (c) of section 103 of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act;
 - is a foster child on behalf of whom State or local government payments are made;
 - is an individual with a disability whose own income meets the requirements of program income eligibility but who is a member of a family whose income does not meet such requirements.
5. The One Stop Partner Committee of the Land of Lincoln Workforce Board will review Programs of Demonstrated Effectiveness and make recommendations for contracts for services for approval by the LWIB.

Incumbent Worker Training (see Incumbent Worker Policy)

Occupational Bridge Programs

Occupational Bridge Programs are training programs that blend workplace competencies, career exploration and basic literacy and math skills in an occupational context. It provides accelerated advancement through short, intensive classroom components, and offers academic and personal support services to help balance work, family and school responsibilities. A bridge program must target one or more of the following for consideration as an allowable training expenditure:

1. Low-skilled, low-income adults or dislocated workers unprepared to enter postsecondary occupational programs in high growth fields;
2. Adult education students who still do not score high enough to enter postsecondary occupational programs; or
3. Employability and career development content, if the major focus of the program is on academic remediation and occupational skills preparation.

The LLWA will review and approve Occupational Bridge Program contracts and/or include on the Eligible Training Provider list.

Academic Remediation/Prevocational Programs

Training institutions or training providers that provide classroom instruction in academic remediation or short-term pre-vocational services may be considered an allowable training expenditure when:

1. Services will be limited to no more than six months in duration, unless provided in conjunction with occupational training services.
2. Services are associated with basic literacy training, including but not limited to, adult basic education, GED, and English as a second language.

The LLWA will review and approve Academic Remediation/ Prevocational Training contracts.

Classroom Size Training Contracts

Contracts with institutions of higher education and other training providers will allow LLWA to work directly with institutions of higher education, such as community colleges, and other training providers to quickly design education and training to fit the needs of the job seekers and employers that they are serving. These contracts are intended to provide a means of quickly ramping up much needed training capacity. Classroom Size Training contracts and policies will adhere to DCEO guidelines.

Registered Apprenticeship Programs

Registered apprenticeships will combine education and work experience resulting in a nationally recognized portable credential and offers adults and dislocated workers a career pathway into specific fields. An ITA may support the classroom portions of the apprenticeship program. Educational tuition/fee payments will follow the same payments and restrictions as outlined on page 4 I. (F) Individual Training Accounts. Under WIOA, registered apprenticeships may be included on the Eligible Training Provider List.

Registered apprenticeship programs that want to be included on the Training Provider List will be referred to DCEO for inclusion on the state-wide list.

Contract for Service – Special Considerations

1. Training sites for the Contract for Service Programs are to be developed with public, private non-profit, or private sector businesses.
2. Eligible WIOA customers are pre-screened, assessed, and tested by LLWA staff and the customer's Individual Employment Plan (IEP) plan must reflect that Contract for Service training is an appropriate activity for them. A contract must be signed by an official authorized to bind the company. A signed contract must be in place prior to the employee starting the training.
3. These training programs are intended for occupations that are permanent full-time positions that have the potential to meet the local WIOA office Performance Standards.
4. The contracting employer shall provide the training described in the plan and necessary tools, supplies etc., normally supplied to employees in the performance of the same or similar job in which the trainee is employed.
5. The Contract for Service Training contract (OJT, Customized, etc.) will be developed after the employer has conducted interviews and selected an appropriate customer/trainee. These contracts will be unique to each customer based on their IEP.
6. The employer must not reduce the workforce with the intention of filling positions with the individual receiving training from the contract or displace a currently employed worker as a result of the training contract.
7. The trainee has not been laid off from the same position and employer for which he/she will receive training.
8. If there is a collective bargaining agreement, the training provided under the training contract must not violate the terms of this agreement. If the training being provided is inconsistent with the terms for a collective bargaining agreement, a written agreement must be obtained from the representing labor organization.
9. No WIOA funds can be provided to employers for training which would, directly indirectly, assist, promote or deter union organizing.
10. WIOA funds cannot be used (or proposed to be used) for the encouragement or inducement of a business, or part of a business, to relocate from any location in the United States, if the relocation will result in any employee losing his or her job at the original location.
11. LLWA will not contract with an employer who has previously exhibited a pattern of failing to provide customers with long-term employment with wages, benefits, and working conditions that are equal to those provided to regular employees who have worked a similar length of time and are doing the same work.

12. Contract for Service training positions will be funded with companies that have been operational for a period of at least one year and have stable employment and/or revenues.
13. Contract for Service training customers may not work for a company where the customer is related to an immediate family member who is an owner of or is in a supervisory or administrative position with the same company at the facility where training is to take place. Immediate family is defined as: wife, husband, son, daughter, mother, father, brother, sister, mother-in-law, father-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, stepparent or stepchild.
14. Contract for Service Employers agree to abide by Contract Assurances and Federal and State guidelines including, but not limited to, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Jobs for Veterans Act, Davis-Bacon Act, Immigration Reform Act of 1986, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and policies of debarment and suspension regulations as established. A complete list is contained in the boilerplate of the contract.
15. WIOA customers in contractual training or individuals employed in programs and activities under Title I of WIOA must be provided benefits and working conditions at the same level and to the same extent as other trainees or employees working a similar length of time and doing the same type of work. Additionally, WIOA customers shall be provided all benefits, rate of pay, hours of work, promotional opportunities, and overtime opportunities the same or similarly to classified employees.
16. The employer will have the necessary facility, equipment, and personnel to provide the “Contract for Service” training as described in the contract.

Training Provider and Training Program Eligibility

Background Information - Program and Provider Certification

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA) established a “customer choice” approach to services through a system of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) while assuring program quality through a provider certification system. All programs for which an ITA are issued must meet the requirements of initial eligibility as well as a condition of recertification as outlined in the State of Illinois’ WIOA Policy 15-WIOA-5.3 and the accompanying WIOA Training Provider Certification Policy Guide. In addition to these minimum requirements, The Land of Lincoln Workforce Alliance (LLWA) may develop initial and subsequent eligibility beyond the standards established by the State policy. No ITA will be issued for enrollment into a particular program until the program has official approval or renewal through this process.

The provider certification process will be administered locally by the Assistant Director and/or the Executive Director. A Provider Review Committee will be made up of not less than two LLWA staff as well as the Assistant Director and/or the Executive Director. The Provider Review Committee will be responsible for making recommendations to the Local Workforce Board (LWIB), including but not limited to initial certifications, annual re-certifications and conditional restrictions. All actions related to provider/program certifications must be approved by the LWIB and certified by the LWIB Chair. Records of such action will be maintained by the LLWA Office and will be recorded in the Illinois Workforce Development System (IWDS).

Provider Review Committee

All action relating to program and provider approval recommendation will be the responsibility of the Provider Review Committee. This committee will be made up of not less than 2 LLWA staff as well as the Assistant Director and/or the Executive Director. Participation will be voluntary with no limits on the duration of service.

The Provider Review Committee will meet annually to review all programs and to prepare recommendations for the LWIB for recertification. New applications will be reviewed throughout the year by the Provider Review Committee.

Timelines

LLWA and LWIB will follow all certification/recertification/revocation timelines as directed by DCEO WIOA Policy 15-WIOA-5.3.

Initial Training Provider Certification

All new applications for certification will be reviewed by the Provider Review Committee utilizing the guidelines for initial certification as outlined in WIOA Policy 15-WIOA-5. Details of the initial certification procedure are set forth in the WIOA Title I Training Provider Certification Policy Guide written and maintained by DCEO’s Office of Employment and Training. LLWA will adhere to the standards set forth in these documents and will utilize the resources in the Illinois Workforce Development System (IWDS) to maintain this information. Certified Training

Programs will lead to placement in occupations identified as being in demand and defined in the Demand Occupation Training List (Region 1) developed by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. Additionally, to be eligible to receive funds for the provision of training services, the provider shall be:

- a. an institution of higher education that provides a program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential. This may include programs receiving approval or accreditation by the U.S. Department of Education, Illinois Board of Higher Education, Illinois Community College Board, or Illinois State Board of Education;
- b. an entity that carries out programs registered under the Act of August 16, 1937 (commonly known as the “National Apprenticeship Act”; 50 Stat. 664, chapter 663; 29 U.S.C. 50 et seq.) as recognized in Illinois by the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL), Office of Apprenticeship; or
- c. another public or private provider of a program of training services, which may include joint labor-management organizations; eligible providers of adult education and literacy activities under Title II if such activities are provided in combination with occupational skills training; or programs that have been recognized by the industry as meeting the standards necessary for approval or accreditation, when such standards exist.

Within 30 days of the application to the LWIB, the Board provides authority to the LLWA to allow a committee of no less than two individuals to conditionally approve programs in lieu of waiting for LWIB certification. The program is deemed certified until such time as the LWIB can review and approve the certification at the next regularly scheduled meeting.

Annual Recertification

The Provider Review Committee will conduct timely annual reviews of all programs/providers.

Additional guidelines for annual recertification are set forth in WIOA Policy 15-WIOA-5.3, written and maintained by DCEO’s Office of Employment & Training. The LLWA will adhere to the standards set forth in these documents and will utilize the resources in the Illinois Workforce Development System (IWDS) to maintain this information.

The LWIB should grant recertification to a training program based on the following:

- a. State and local eligibility criteria;
- b. State and local performance criteria have been met;
- c. One or more O*Net codes associated with the training program remain on the most current Demand Occupation Training List (Region 1);
- d. The Training Provider has maintained timely updates in the IWDS system of information on the training program; and

- e. Other conditions for which the LWIB considers necessary for recertification.

Upon completion of the annual review, the Program Review Committee will make recommendations to the LWIB at its next regularly scheduled meeting. Upon action of the LWIB, updated program lists will be made available through the IWDS website.

Denials, Reconsiderations, and Reinstatements

Training programs may be denied approval for certification or recertification. The LLWA will follow State of Illinois Policy (WIOA Policy 15-WIOA-5.3) as it applies to revocation of certification, removal, notification and appeals procedures, reinstatement on the statewide list and re-application. LLWA will cease to enroll customers in a training program that has had its certification revoked. Programs failing to meet the criteria will be identified by the Program Review Committee and a Training Provider's eligibility will be rescinded by the LWIB as appropriate.

Monitoring and Oversight

All programs given full certification status will be subject to routine monitoring by the LWIB. At a minimum, the LWIB should:

- a. Ensure all eligible training providers have maintained all criteria for which they were determined eligible;
- b. Re-affirm that a training program is still accredited or the accreditation has been renewed;
- c. Ensure all certified training program basic information in IWDS has been updated to reflect current information;
- d. Conduct routine visits at each location for which certified training programs are conducted to ensure all assurances outlined in WIOA Policy 15-WIOA-5.3 continue to be met. Out of state and e-learning programs may be monitored collaboratively with state or local WIOA governing bodies in their states. In addition, regional WIOA bodies may collaboratively conduct monitoring for certification and recertification of training programs/providers;
- e. Ensure that all certified training programs have met the required performance measures.

Pre-hire Requirements and other Special Considerations (Conditional)

Pre-hire requirements may be placed on certain training programs when economic conditions exist that indicate limited employment in the career clusters associated with the particular training program. A pre-hire authorization will consist of a guarantee of employment upon completion of a particular training program. All pre-hire authorizations must be provided to the career planner in writing from a reputable employer and be contained in the customer file prior to enrollment.

While all programs will be reviewed on an annual basis, the LLWA reserves the right to rescind program approval or implement pre-hire requirements prior to the program renewal date if conditions warrant such action.

Notification

Throughout the anniversary year, providers will be kept abreast of any changes to their program approval status. No program approval will be rescinded without first notifying the provider in writing. All providers have the opportunity to meet with the Provider Review Committee upon request and to submit supporting documentation to the Provider Review Committee for reconsideration of the current approval action.

The Assistant Director will be responsible for processing changes from providers, including cost changes, address changes and changes in prerequisite requirements. It is the responsibility of the individual providers to keep this information current and to notify the Assistant Director when changes occur.

Access to Provider/Program Information

All provider and program information is recorded and available on IWDS. Staff may access this information directly through the IWDS system. Consumers and providers may access this information through a link on the www.illinoisworknet.com, www.worknet20.org website, or directly at <http://iwds.state.il.us/iwdshome.html>. Access to these sites will be administered by either the Assistant Director or the Program Compliance Specialist at the LLWA.

Record Keeping

All applications for certification will be recorded on IWDS in accordance with the WIOA Title I Training Provider Certification Policy Guide. All supporting documents submitted for use in the approval process will be maintained by the LLWA office.

In addition to the electronic information available on IWDS, all documentation used for renewal consideration will be maintained, by anniversary year, by the Administrative Office. This documentation shall include current Demand Occupation Training List (Region 1) information, annual performance outcomes and any other documentation used in the renewal process.

All program information will be presented to the LWIB for action and the LWIB Chair will certify an annual approval list. The annual approval list will be updated as new programs are approved. The majority of programs have an annual renewal date. All new programs added during the prior year will be updated to reflect the renewal month at the next renewal.

In addition to maintenance of the approved list, designated LLWA staff will provide authorization for the issuance of 500 C-5 forms for all approved programs. This approval will give authorization for designated LLWA staff to issue a 500 C-5 for customers attending a WIOA-approved program while receiving unemployment benefits.

Performance Measures

All eligible training providers are required to provide basic performance data, when available, on their training programs in order to be approved for initial eligibility or continued eligibility.

The specific training provider and training program performance information for ALL students of the program shall be provided, when available. The following ALL student performance data should include both WIOA and non-WIOA students.

NOTE: The State of Illinois understands the current concerns with the ability of training providers to provide the required performance data. All training providers are encouraged to begin development of a process to comply with this policy that would include a plan for identifying all students enrolled in a program of study and capable data system to track the performance of such enrollees. Further guidance is needed from the Departments of Labor and Education in order to develop a concise policy.

Reinstatement of Programs and Providers

If a provider and/or program was denied initial eligibility or recertification due to failure in performance, the provider may re-apply for eligibility after one year from its removal, if it has improved upon its overall performance and otherwise rectified any other conditions of their denial or revocation as an eligible training provider. The training provider must demonstrate it has corrected all performance and other deficiencies which resulted in their removal from the ETPL. If the program meets the minimum state or local performance standards (if established), along with any other eligibility criteria in place at the time of re-application, LLWA and the Workforce Board may determine the program eligible and submit it for reinstatement on the approved training provider/program list.

Eligible Training Provider Reciprocal Agreements

Effective August 7, 2020, a reciprocal agreement was put in place between the State of Missouri and the State of Illinois. Beginning April 21, 2021, the State of Illinois has entered into an agreement with the State of Washington. Both agreements broaden the choice of training providers and programs available to eligible youth, adults, and dislocated workers who qualify for WIOA Title 1B ITAs.

The reciprocal agreements allow qualifying WIOA participants in Illinois to use ITAs to enroll in a program of training identified on Missouri's or Washington's ETPL, and for WIOA participants in those states to use ITAs to enroll in training programs on Illinois' ETPL.

Final approval for participants placed in a school from either state, funded through an ITA, rests with Illinois' WIOA Title 1B Program Operator. In arranging out-of-state ITAs, the Illinois Career Planners must follow the requirements of WIOA Section 134(c)(3), Illinois' WIOA policies, as well as the established LWIB local policy on ITAs which includes duration, amounts, procedures, and exceptions. The program selected must lead to a placement in a demand occupation. Local policies may affect the terms of an individual training plan and individual financial feasibility plan and may be more restrictive concerning out-of-state ITAs.

Other out-of-state training institutions that are not operating within Illinois and with which Illinois does not have a reciprocal agreement must apply to be on Illinois' ETPL. They must meet the requirements for eligibility determination in Illinois outlined in the Out-of-State Eligible Training Programs subsection of the Training Provider and Training Program Eligibility section of the policy manual.

Career Planners can locate eligible training providers at the applicable state's Education and Training Program search pages.

Supportive Services Policy

Supportive Services may be provided to adults and dislocated workers who are registered and participating in WIOA Training Services and to youth registered and participating in training and youth programs. These Supportive Services will only be provided when they are necessary to enable individuals to participate in activities. Workforce staff, along with the individuals in need of supportive services, must determine the availability of such services through other programs and attempt to secure funding from those sources before authorizing expenditure of WIOA funds. When other sources of funding are identified, workforce staff will refer the individual to the source of that funding to obtain the needed services. Documentation of the referral will be kept in the individual’s file. When a needed service is not available or the individual does not meet the eligibility for that service, LLWA will provide funding in accordance with the following guidelines. All support services must document that no other sources are available for the support and activities must be recorded on the Illinois Workforce Development System (IWDS).

Support Services not identified below will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and will be reviewed by the LLWA Enrollment Review Committee based on funding availability and individual need.

Any support service changes will be defined by the grant and availability of funding at the direction of the Executive Director.

Year Round Programs

Transportation

Year Round Out-of-School Youth, Adults and Dislocated Workers: Transportation assistance may be available for customers attending classroom training or work experience related to a student’s training program and for which they are receiving college credit or a credential. Exceptions must be approved by the Enrollment Review Committee. The amount of assistance is based on the round trip mileage between the student’s home and the classroom training site and/or internship site (including the distance of the child care provider when appropriate) for day in attendance only. If student must drive multiple times to the training site in one day, total daily mileage will be calculated to determine rate of reimbursement. Customers who reside outside of the LLWA five county area while in training will need Review Committee approval for mileage support.

The mileage allowance is determined as follows (based on Google map documentation):

<u>Round Trip Miles</u>	<u>Rate Per Day</u>
5 – 29	\$10.00
30 – 50	\$15.00
51 and up	\$20.00

Bus tokens are available for those individuals who are able to utilize public transportation. When bus tokens are issued, a log must be maintained that includes the customer’s name, date of distribution, number of tokens issued, and purpose of distribution. If TAA funds are exhausted, LLWA will utilize 1D funds using current TAA Transportation policy.

CHILD CARE

Out-of-School Youth, Adults and Dislocated Workers: Individuals enrolled in classroom training or work experience, and who are in need of care for their children while participating in training and who do not have a family member (Parent, Step Parent or Legal Guardian) in their home capable of providing child care, are eligible for support. An effort must be made to obtain other sources of child care assistance prior to approval of any WIOA support. Any customer eligible for assistance shall be offered such assistance unless funds have been exhausted.

Priorities for Child Care Assistance

1. LLWA 20 will not pay for child care assistance to a Parent, Step Parent or Legal Guardian.
2. TANF - If eligible - through Community Connection Point.
3. DHS subsidy - through Community Child Care Connection.
4. Assistance from DRS with special needs children.
5. Child Care Provider with sliding fee scale.
6. Provider who will accept LLWA fee limits.
7. Customer pays difference between provider's charges and LLWA's limits.

A written policy from day care providers must be submitted before payment can be made. Each provider must submit a W-9 prior to payment. LLWA will pay child care at the regular authorized rate for holidays and breaks no more than 20 days in length in order to hold the child's slot with the provider according to day care provider policy. Child care allowances are available to full-time students. * All WIOA applicants must apply for child care assistance through the DHS/Community Child Care Connection (CCCC) and submit results to their Career Planner. CCCC denials for reasons other than (ineligible) will need immediate customer follow-up within a reasonable period of time.

Day Care for Full Time Training Customers

Child age 0 - up to 2.....	Not to exceed \$200.00 per week
Child age 2+.....	Not to exceed \$150.00 per week
School Aged Child	Not to exceed \$15.00 per day per child

* These rates are for full-time attendance in training. For purposes of this policy, full time attendance is defined as a minimum of 12 hours of weekly class contact time during Fall and Spring semesters and a minimum of 6 hours of weekly class contact time during Summer semester. Contact hours are hours spent in class/clinical setting not credit hours. Customers may need verification of online classroom contact hours.

Day Care for Part Time Training Customers

Not to exceed \$75.00 per child per week or \$15.00 per day for school aged children.

For purposes of this policy, part-time attendance is defined as less than 12 hours of weekly in-class contact time during Fall and Spring semesters and less than 6 hours of weekly class contact time during Summer semester.

Procurement Policy

Code of conduct governing the performance of the Alliance and Board engaged in the award and administration of contracts.

No employee, officer, member or agent of the Land of Lincoln Workforce Alliance (LLWA) or Board (LLWB) shall participate in the selection, the award of or the administration of a contract, if a conflict of interest, real or apparent, is involved. Such a conflict would arise when:

1. The employee, member, officer, agent or
2. Any member of his/her immediate family, or
3. His or her partner, or
4. An organization which employs, or is about to employ, any of the above, has a financial or other interest in the firm selected for award.

The LLWA or LLWB officers, members, employees or agents will neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors or anything of monetary value from contractors, potential contractors, or parties to sub-agreements.

Open and Free Competition

All procurement transactions in Local Workforce Area 20 (LWA 20) shall be conducted in a manner that provides maximum open and free competition consistent with this Procurement Policy. Procurement procedures shall not restrict or eliminate competition. Examples of what shall be considered to be restrictive competition include, but are not limited to:

1. Placing unreasonable or different requirements on firms in order for them to qualify for the same procurement;
2. Requiring unnecessary experience and excessive bonding;
3. Noncompetitive pricing practices between firms or affiliated companies;
4. Noncompetitive awards to consultants that are on retainer contracts;
5. Organizational conflicts of interest;

6. Specifying only a "brand name" product instead of allowing an "equal" product to be offered and describing the performance of other relevant requirements of the procurement;
7. Any arbitrary action in the procurement process.

Ability to Meet the Procurement Objectives

Awards will be made only to responsible contractors possessing the ability to perform successfully under the terms and conditions of the proposed procurement. Examples of how the ability to meet the procurement objectives can be demonstrated include, but are not limited to: financial resources, technical qualifications, experience, organization and facilities adequate to carry out the project; resources to meet the completion schedule contained in the contract; a satisfactory performance record for completion of contracts; and accounting and audit procedures adequate to control property, funds and assets.

Avoiding Unnecessary Purchases

The LLWA or LLWB will conduct a review of proposed procurements to avoid purchases that are not necessary or duplicative items. Consideration will be given to consolidating or breaking out procurements to obtain a more economical purchase. Where appropriate, an analysis will be made of lease versus purchase alternatives, and any other appropriate analysis to determine the most economical approach.

Affirmative Action

The LLWA or LLWB will take all necessary affirmative steps to assure that small and minority firms, women's business enterprises, and labor surplus area firms are used when possible. Affirmative steps will include:

1. Placing qualified small and minority businesses and women's business enterprises on solicitation lists;
2. Assuring that small and minority businesses and women's business enterprises are solicited whenever they are potential sources;
3. Dividing total requirements, when economically feasible, into small tasks or quantities to permit maximum participation by small and minority business and women's business enterprises;
4. Establishing delivery schedules, where the requirement permits, which encourage participation by small and minority business and women's business enterprises; and

5. Using the services and assistance of the Small Business Administration and the Minority Business Development Agency of the Department of Commerce.

Cost-Price Analysis

A cost or price analysis in connection with every procurement action, including contract modifications, will be conducted. The method and degree of analysis is dependent on the facts surrounding the particular procurement situation, but as a starting point an independent estimate must be made before receiving bids or proposals. A cost analysis will be performed when the offeror is required to submit the elements of his/her estimated cost, e.g., under professional, consulting, and service contracts. A cost analysis will be necessary when adequate price competition is lacking, and for sole source procurements, including contract modifications or change orders, unless price reasonableness can be established on the basis of a catalog or market price of a commercial product sold in substantial quantities to the general public or based on prices set by law or regulation. A price analysis will be used in all other instances to determine the reasonableness of the proposed contract price.

Specifications

Each procurement will clearly specify all requirements which the offerors must fulfill and all other factors to be used in evaluating bids or proposals. In competitive procurements, the description of the material, product or service to be procured will not contain features which unduly restrict competition. The description may include a statement of the qualitative nature of the material, product or service to be procured, and when necessary, shall set forth those minimum essential characteristics and standards to which it must conform if it is to satisfy its intended use. Detailed product specifications should be avoided if at all possible. In addition, the LLWA will ensure that all prequalified lists of persons, firms, or products which are used in acquiring goods and services are current and include enough qualified sources to ensure maximum open and free competition.

Illinois Joint Purchasing Program

The LLWA or LLWB may purchase items through the Illinois Joint Purchasing Program without soliciting bids or obtaining quotes. Under this program, the State of Illinois, Department of Central Management Services (CMS) negotiates statewide contracts for the purchase of good frequently used by State and local governments. The LLWA or LLWB may purchase items specified in these contracts at the prices negotiated.

Purchase Approval from DCEO

Requests for equipment and software with a unit cost of \$5,000 or more must be sent to the Department of Commerce and Economic, Office of Employment and Training for prior approval. Three price or rate

quotations must be reviewed by the LLWA and approved by the CEOs. The LLWA office will then submit the quotes to DCEO for approval.

Methods of Procurement

Procurement under grants shall be made by one of the following methods.

1. Procurement for Small Purchases under \$20,000

Small purchase procedures are those relatively simple and informal procurement methods for securing services, supplies or other property that do not cost more than \$20,000 in the aggregate with a single vendor during a fiscal year. If small purchase procurements are used, price or rate quotations will be obtained from three qualified sources including internet sources. The date, provider, what is being purchased, and the price or rate will be documented to the file. The decision to choose a particular vendor will be made based upon cost, service or other pertinent needs. Formal competitive bids are not required for contracts less than \$20,000.

The CEOs, WIB and county committee will approve contracts which do not obligate the LLWA or LLWB and Sangamon County for more than \$20,000. If the committee vote is not unanimous, the contract shall come before the full county board. (County Code: 2.04.470)

2. Procurement by Competitive Proposal for Purchases/Contracts over \$20,000

Procurement will be conducted when either a fixed-price or cost-reimbursement type contract for over \$20,000 (or aggregate to one service provider) is awarded. It is generally used when conditions are not appropriate for the use of sealed bids. Bids shall be obtained on all private contracts (except for professional services, or otherwise provided by law) which obligate the LLWA and Sangamon county for more than \$20,000. All bids received shall be kept on file in the originating department. The CEOs, WIB and county oversight committee will approve the contracts entered into by the LLWA or LLWB. All contracts which obligate the LLWA, LLWB and Sangamon County for more than \$20,000 must be approved by the Sangamon County Board. (County Code 2.04.460) .

3. Procurement by Sealed Bid

Bids are publicly solicited and a firm-fixed-price contract (lump sum or unit price) is awarded to the responsible bidder whose bid, conforming to all the material terms and conditions of the invitation for bids, is the lowest in price. A sealed bid is the preferred method for procuring construction, if the following conditions are present.

- a. In order for sealed bidding to be feasible, the following conditions should be present:
 - A complete, adequate, and realistic specification or purchase description is available;

- Two or more responsible bidders are willing and able to compete effectively for the business; and
- The procurement lends itself to a firm fixed price contract and the selection of the successful bidder can be made principally on the basis of price.

b. If sealed bids are used, the following requirements apply:

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

4. Procurement by Non-Competitive Proposal

Procurement by noncompetitive proposals is procurement through solicitation of a proposal from only one source, or after solicitation of a number of sources, competition is determined inadequate. The use of sole source procurements will be minimized to the extent practicable, but in every case the use of sole source procurements will be justified and documented.

Procurement by noncompetitive proposal may be used only when the award of a contract is infeasible under small purchase procedures, sealed bids or competitive proposals and one of the following circumstances applies: the item is available only from a single source; the public exigency or emergency for the requirement will not permit a delay resulting from competitive solicitation; the Department authorizes noncompetitive proposals; or after solicitation of a number of sources, competition is determined inadequate.

The splitting of any contract into smaller contracts with the purpose or effect of evading these rules is prohibited. (County Code: 2.04.480)

Procurement Records

The LLWA or Board Office will maintain records which detail the history of procurement. These records will include, but are not necessarily limited to the following: the method of procurement and the basis for the selection or rejection of a contractor, and the basis for the contract price.

Public Notice/Outreach

Requests for proposals/quotes will be advertised in the local newspaper. Any response to publicized requests for proposals shall be honored to the maximum extent practical. Proposals will be solicited from an adequate number of qualified sources. All potential providers/contractors, who have expressed an interest in being considered for awards shall be sent Requests for Proposals/Quotes for the area or areas of service for which they wish to be considered.

Guidelines for Competitive Bid Process

1. Existing service providers will be given consideration based on the score received on the Rating Sheet that will include at a minimum:
 - a. Evaluation of past performance.
 - b. Evaluation of the present year-to-date performance.
 - c. Costs are reasonable, necessary and allowable based on the cost/price analysis.
 - d. Employers in the area have a need for workers who are trained in these areas.
 - e. Local labor market data reflects need in the area/region.
 - f. General overall quality of proposal.
2. Proposals from new bidders will be given consideration based on the score received on the Rating Sheet which will include at a minimum:
 - a. References from other agencies for which bidder has provided services regarding their ability to operate satisfactory training programs.
 - b. References from other agencies regarding their ability to manage fiscal responsibilities.
 - c. Costs are reasonable, necessary and allowable based on the cost/price analysis.
 - d. Employers in the area have a need for workers trained in occupations offered, as identified by labor market data.

- e. General overall quality of proposal.
- 3. Should an existing service provider fail performance, the provider will be placed on probation for the 1st year and may award a contract if it determines the program meets the needs of WIOA participants and has the potential to improve during the second year. If the provider fails performance a second year, no funding will be awarded. The provider is not prohibited from submitting proposals in the future; however, and will be given the same consideration as a new bidder. Existing service providers whose score on the Rating Sheet are rated unacceptable will not be recommended for a contract award.
- 4. The LLWA or LLWB will use a variety of methods for proposal review including evaluations, past performance, interviews, recommendations, etc., when reviewing proposals to determine contract awards.
- 5. A Pre-Award Risk Assessment will be completed for existing providers and new bidders.
- 6. Awards will be made to the responsible firm whose proposal is most advantageous to the program, including price and other factors considered.

RFP Preparation

The Land of Lincoln Workforce Board procures the One-Stop Operator every four years. In the fall preceding the end of the four year contract term, the LLWB Chair will discuss at a scheduled Board meeting. The Board will review guidelines and determine if an outside contractor will be secured to complete the procurement of the One-Stop Operator as was done in 2017. If an outside contractor is not secured for procurement of the One-Stop Operator, the Board Chair will appoint a committee and follow steps in the procurement policy. The Board Chair will develop a timeline for RFP procurement to meet deadlines so that the Board may approve at their May meeting prior to the end of the One-Stop Operator contract.

For WIOA Programs, the LLWA Executive Director will appoint a committee to develop an RFP for each program where a contract will be issued: Adult, Youth, and Dislocated Worker. The committee will include staff familiar with WIOA training programs, policies and regulations, and staff familiar with RFP/contract provisions. The committees will first review the RFP from the preceding year and decide which guidelines will be retained. Proposal schedules, RFPs, rating sheets and recommendations will be updated annually and will be maintained at the LLWA office. A schedule listing the calendar dates, steps in the review and selection process will be identified. The RFP will address all requirements needed to deliver quality services and programs under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. (WIOA) An evaluation/rating sheet will be included in the RFP which identifies the guidelines that will be reviewed for contract award.

Review Process

1. Receipt of Proposals

All proposals received will be stamped with the time and date of receipt. If bidder request receipts, they will be accommodated. The same time and date affixed to the proposal will be put on the receipt.

2. Securing Proposals

Proposals received will be secured. If proposal are received via e-mail, they will be printed and secured in a locked office of management or Board staff.

3. Initial Review of Proposals

An initial review of proposal packages will determine completeness. The "Proposal Outline" will be checked to determine if items have been omitted. Missed items can be identified at this time. No one in the LLWA or LLWB will solicit changes to the bidder's technical proposal or cost or pricing data at this stage of the process. Such requests for changes in the substance of proposals are only allowable after formal review and during negotiations. However, bidders are allowed to submit unsolicited changes to any part of their proposals prior to the deadline date and time for receipt. All bidders will be allowed to make minor omissions complete.

4. Appointing Proposal Review Team

For WIOA Programs, the Executive Director will appoint a team of at least three persons for each program where contracts will be issued: Adult, Youth, and Dislocated Workers. For the Land of Lincoln Workforce Board, the Board Chair will appoint a team and follow the procurement steps. A Review Team Chairman will be decided by the Executive Director for WIOA programs and by the Board Chair for Board procurement including One-Stop Operator. The reviewers will be briefed before evaluation begins on each program. The briefing will set the tone for the review and provides an opportunity to orient new reviewers on how they should approach technical evaluation of proposals. The Review Team chair will conduct the briefing; remind all parties of critical dates and deadlines, review the evaluation factors or criteria from the RFP and their relative weights or importance against which proposals will be measured. Evaluation rating forms will be distributed and explained, a description of the process including the date that the team will meet to discuss ratings, and answer any questions about the evaluations. At this briefing, the chair will restate the rules relating to the ethics of procurement, emphasizing the need for confidentiality, objectivity, and fairness, and going over the ground rules covering actual, potential, or apparent conflicts of interest by reviewers. Each member of the review team will be asked to sign the "Code of Conduct".

5. Individual Review

Review Team members will read each proposal and thoroughly evaluate the criteria listed on the designated rating sheets identifying strengths, weaknesses or deficiencies. The proposal evaluation form will be completed by each review team member. A cost/price analysis will be conducted along with performance reports to evaluate existing providers.

6. Team Review

Upon completion of the individual review, the team will meet and discuss the pros and cons of each proposal. The team chair will log evaluation sheet scores from each reviewer. The chair will average the score for each proposal and compile a list of the questions/comments. A summary report will be prepared with the recommendations from the evaluation team, contract amount and number of participants. The total amount of funding recommended will equal the amount available for contracts contingent upon WIOA grant funding.

Contract Approval Process*

*(*the order of these recommendations/approvals is dependent on the dates the Council / Committees / Board meet)*

1. Land of Lincoln Workforce Board

A final summary report will be prepared with recommendations for contracts to be approval by the Land of Lincoln Workforce Board. This report will be based on evaluation criteria. The report will include the name of the proposer, amount of contract, number of participants, amount of past year's contract, performance, etc. The Land of Lincoln Workforce Board will approve contract recommendations. Should a Board member have a real or apparent conflict of interest in the contract award, the member will recuse him/herself and abstain from voting. The Board minutes will reflect this action.

2. Chief Elected Officials (CEOs)

Contract recommendations will be approved by the CEOs at the next scheduled meeting.

3. Sangamon County Committee

Contract awards will be approved by the Sangamon County Community Resources Committee. The bidder will be notified that their proposal is being recommended for approval.

4. Sangamon County Board

Resolutions for contract awards will be presented to the Sangamon County Board for approval.

After Sangamon County Board approval, the bidder will be advised that the contract has been awarded.

5. Meeting with Contractor

A meeting will commence with the successful contractor to review contract terms and begin planning for the upcoming program year. Outreach/recruitment, program start dates, staff training, financial reports and other issues will be discussed with the contractor.

Recordkeeping

The following items will be kept on file at the LLWA or Board Office:

- Original RFP submitted by all bidders.
- Final RFP submitted after consultation.
- All rating and evaluation sheets including costs/price analysis and past performance evaluations.
- Signed "Code of Conduct" forms.
- Copy of LLWB minutes approving contracts.
- Copy of CEO minutes approving contracts.
- Copy of Sangamon County Community Resources Committee minutes approving contracts.
- Copy of Sangamon County Board minutes approving contracts.

Contract Renewal/Modification and Extension

For Youth contractors, Youth RFPs will cover a two year time frame. Existing youth providers will not complete an entire RFP for awards during the second year. Near the end of year 1, a renewal request will be forwarded to the current providers. Providers will complete sections related to their planned and current performance goals, their planned and current expenditures, and indicate any program changes that will be made in year 2. A committee will review these renewals and may request additional information or a meeting to discuss any issues.

During the WIOA transition period and pending final rules and policy guidance, existing youth provider contracts may be extended to allow for youth services to continue. If an extension and eventual contract modification is approved, youth providers will submit any changes to their scope of work, budget changes and performance goals will be evaluated.

Under both arrangements, either contract renewal or extension, the committee will make a recommendation and the contract approval process listed above will be followed.