

Overview West Central Economic Development Region (EDR 10)

The West Central Illinois Economic Development Region (EDR 10) covers 5,583 square miles and encompasses the nine counties of Local Workforce Area 14. The nine counties include: Adams, Brown, Hancock, Henderson, Knox, McDonough, Pike, Schuyler, and Warren. The most western counties, Adams, Hancock, Henderson and Pike, border the states of Iowa and Missouri. Adams County is included in the Quincy-Hannibal, IL-MO Combined Statistical Area, Hancock County is included in the Fort Madison-Keokuk IA-IL-MO Micropolitan Statistical Area and Henderson County is included in the Burlington IA-IL Micropolitan Statistical Area. The West Central EDR is also part of a Tri-State Region with Northeast Missouri and Southeast Iowa and has been designated by USDA as a Great Region for its community's regional approach to creating economic opportunity and job creation in rural communities. The Tri-State Region also offers unique partnerships and consortium opportunities for the communities served.

The West Central Illinois EDR is located in the heart of the Midwest. The western counties border the Mississippi River. The EDR offers the northernmost port on the Mississippi River for 12-month barge traffic. In addition, the Illinois River borders Brown, Pike and Schuyler counties.

The EDR is a central hub to several major metro (SMSA) areas. Quincy, in Adams County, is at the center of four-lane highways in all directions. The Avenue of the Saints passes just 5 miles to the west and is 4-lane from Canada to the Gulf. Illinois Highway 172 is part of the newly designated CKC (Chicago – Kansas City Expressway) which offers a less-congested alternate route to these popular Midwest destinations. The Knox County Area is served by Interstate 74 running from Indianapolis and the Quad Cities and by Interstate 80 connecting Des Moines and Chicago, in addition, US-34 serves the area as well as US-150.

Seven class-1 rail lines enter Galesburg in Knox County and converge at the BNSF classification yard in Southeast Galesburg. Strategic grade separations within the city allow trains to get in and out of the city quickly and easily without disrupting local automobile traffic. Over 100 trains enter and leave the Knox County community each day. BNSF and Norfolk Southern offer multiple freight trains daily and Quincy also has two daily Amtrak trains to and from Chicago.

The region is within miles of four airports. Abraham Lincoln Capital Airport is approximately 70 miles from Pike County and offers travel to two major airport hubs: Dallas Fort Worth International Airport and Chicago O'Hare International Airport. Galesburg, in Knox County, is conveniently located approximately 45 minutes from both Peoria International Airport and Quad Cities International Airport. Residents and businesses can connect through these two airports with direct flights to more than a dozen cities including Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas, Denver, Minneapolis, and the Phoenix area. Quincy Regional Airport offers flights to St. Louis Lambert Airport and Chicago O'Hare International Airport.

This chapter must discuss how the region has collected and analyzed *updated* regional labor market information including the local planning requirements. Additionally, the chapter must demonstrate alignment with education and economic development. Regional teams are encouraged to use the labor market information posted on <https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/RegPlanning> that will provide consistency in the data used for regional analysis throughout the state⁴.

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));

a. What are the targeted industries, high-impact industry clusters, and in-demand occupations in the region?

In reviewing and analyzing the labor market data that is available the targeted industries that are also in-demand and will have the most impact on EDR 10, are Health Care, Transportation, Distribution and Logistics (TDL), and Manufacturing. Due to COVID-19 the Retail Trade industry lost employees and revenue. Some businesses closed and will not reopen.

b. What industries and occupations have favorable location quotients?

Since EDR 10 is such a rural area it is very difficult to find just one or two favorable location quotients. The favorable quotient in one area may not be the same for all areas. The blue highlights below, show which counties have a favorable quotient for the identified sectors. Trade, transportation and Utilities sector is favorable or neutral (Hancock County) in seven of the nine counties. This is no surprise due to river and train traffic that is available in this area. The second sector, Natural Resources & Mining, has a favorable quotient for six of the nine counties. This is due to the rural nature of the counties and the importance of agriculture. The third sectors with the most favorable quotient are Financial Activities, Information, and Manufacturing. Information is missing data from five of the nine counties. Leading industries are Agricultural Production, Manufacturing, Wholesale Trade, Transportation and Warehousing, and Health Care and Social Services.

⁴ For clarity on what resources to use, regions can discuss the most appropriate data to select with their local IDES labor market economist.

	Construction	Education and Health	Financial Activities	Information	Leisure & Hospitality	Manufacturing	Natural Resources & Mining	Professional & Business Services	Trade, Transportation & Utilities
Henderson				*					
Warren				*				*	
Knox									
Hancock									
McDonough									
Schuyler				*					
Adams				*					
Brown						*	*		
Pike				*					

Key: Favorable Quotient: Dark Blue Highlights Neutral: Light Blue Highlights Not enough data: *

c. What industries and occupations have favorable demand projections based on growth?

The industries and occupations that have favorable demand projections based on growth can be found in the chart that is listed below. The area showing the greatest growth is Natural Resources and Mining in six of the nine counties. Manufacturing and Trade, Transportation, and Utilities show the second largest favorable growth in five out of the nine counties. The construction industry is also a growth area.

	Employment Growth								
	Construction	Education and Health	Financial Activities	Information	Leisure & Hospitality	Manufacturing	Natural Resources & Mining	Professional & Business Services	Trade, Transportation & Utilities
Henderson					*				
Warren								*	
Knox									
Hancock									
McDonough									
Schuyler				*					
Adams									
Brown				*		*	*		
Pike				*					

d. What industries and occupations have favorable demand projections based on replacements?

Health care and manufacturing are the industries that have the most demand in the region. The reason is that those currently employed in the area are approaching retirement age or leaving the area for other reasons. A sample of those occupations include CNC operators, mechanics, welders, nursing assistants, practical nurses, and truck drivers.

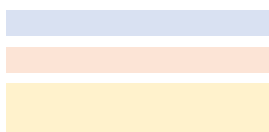
e. What industries and occupations are considered mature but still important to the economy?

Retail Trade is the only industry that is considered mature in EDR 10. EDR 10 agrees that classifying Retail Trade as a mature industry is correct and that we do not consider it extremely important to the area due to the number of individuals who are currently doing on-line shopping.

f. What industries and occupations are considered emerging in the regional economy?

Emerging industries and occupations in EDR 10 are Construction, Utilities, Financial Activities, Professional and Business Services, Leisure and Hospitality, and other services. Leading industries are Agricultural Production, Manufacturing, Wholesale Trade, Transportation and Warehousing, and Health Care and Social Services. Please see the table listed below:

WEST CENTRAL REGION				
EMPLOYMENT BY MAJOR INDUSTRY CATEGORY				
NAICS Title	2018 Employment	Projected 2028 Employment	Net Employment Change 2018-2028	Percent Employment Change
TOTAL, ALL INDUSTRIES	98,943	97,903	-1,040	-1.1%
Self Employed Workers	4,230	4,229	-1	0%
Agricultural Production	7,147	7,330	183	2.5%
Natural Resources & Mining	411	433	22	5.2%
Construction	2,755	2,708	-47	-1.7%
Manufacturing	10,122	10,161	39	.4%
Wholesale Trade	5,971	6,475	504	8.1%
Retail Trade	10,389	10,029	-360	-3.5%
Utilities	303	304	1	.3%
Transportation & Warehousing	3,824	3,964	140	3.4%
Information	852	808	-44	-5.3%
Financial Activities	4,001	4,034	33	.9%
Professional & Business Services	4,232	4,139	-93	-2.2%
Educational Services	9,346	8,501	-845	-9.4%
Health Care & Social Services	15,531	16,002	471	3.0%
Leisure & Hospitality	8,007	7,396	-611	-7.9%
Other Services	3,898	3,785	-113	-2.9%
Government	7,924	7,605	-319	-4.1%



Manufacturing, Retail Trade, Health Care & Social Services and Wholesale Trade are the sectors with the highest expected growth rate.

Western Illinois Occupations by Sector

<p><u>Healthcare</u> Nurses LPN (in hospitals) Patient Access Staff Pharmacist Physicians Dietitian Surgical Technician</p>	<p><u>Manufacturing</u> Welder Electrical Technician Maintenance Mechanic Tool Room Operator CNC Operator HVAC Automation Technician Maintenance Technician</p>	<p><u>Construction Trades</u> Highway Construction Carpenter Electrician Iron Worker Laborer Millwright Operating Engineer</p>
<p><u>Education</u> Teachers</p>	<p><u>Utilities</u> Journeyman Line Worker</p>	<p>Painter Pipefitter Plumber</p>
<p><u>TDL</u> Forklift Operators CDL Drivers Material Handlers</p>	<p>Pipefitters Engineers Engineer Technicians</p>	<p><u>Entrepreneurship</u></p>
	<p><u>IT</u> IT Developer</p>	<p><u>Agri-Business</u> Ag Precision Technicians Diesel Mechanics</p>

g. What sources of supply and demand data were used to determine the targeted industries occupations and skills?

The source used to determine the targeted industries and occupations is information from the Bureau of Labor Statistics that was provided by the Illinois Department of Employment Security, Illinois Board of Higher Education, and the Illinois Community College Board.

2. Employment needs of employers in existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations (§ 679.560(a)(1)(ii));

Occupations in the targeted industry sectors may require more and/or different skill sets post-COVID. Most of the key occupations continue to require on-the-job training or completion of a certificate program. The occupations requiring a certificate that are in existing and emerging in-demand sectors include mechanics (both diesel and auto), medical assistants, nursing assistants, licensed practical nurses, welders, CNC operators and truck drivers. These certificate programs align with local career clusters and pathways. Staff will continue to track the skill requirements that have changed. Education partners are also addressing these changes through their advisory committees

3. Knowledge and skills needed to meet the employment needs of the employers in the region, including employment needs in in-demand industry sectors and occupations (§ 679.560(a)(2));

a. What are the targeted career pathway clusters in the region?

Health Sciences is one of the career pathways clusters that will be targeted in West Central Illinois region. This pathway aligns with the in-demand existing and emerging sectors and occupations while fulfilling many of the occupations that are showing a supply gap.

The other career pathway cluster that will be targeted in EDR 10 is Manufacturing, TDL, Agribusiness and Construction Trades. This cluster will cover manufacturing, transportation, distribution and logistics which are targeted sectors, but will also cover construction that is also an occupation where demand is greater than supply. All of these occupations fall under the Thinker Career Path.

b. What are the skills that are in demand in the region?

There is a set of common skills that are in demand in the region. Those skills are sometimes referred to as soft skills or essential skills. The skills include active listening, critical thinking, speaking, reading comprehension, and time management. Certain occupations also demand coordination, operation monitoring, social perceptiveness and service orientation. These skills are all part of the Thinker Career Path.

c. How well do the existing skills of job seekers match the demands of local businesses?

Post COVID, skill requirements have changed. The WIB is conducting a business survey, in partnership with the Economic Development Entities and Chambers of Commerce, to identify new skill requirements and trends. Results of the survey will be shared with secondary and post-secondary Career Technical Education partners.

4. Regional workforce considering current labor force employment and unemployment data, information on labor market trends, and educational and skill level of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment⁵ (§ 679.510(a)(1)(iv) and § 679.560(a)(3)).

a. How is the region changing in terms of demographics, labor supply and occupational demand?

Although the West Central EDR has many geographic advantages, due to the region's rural environment there are various challenges the region faces including: 1) limited access to opportunities geared toward major metro areas; 2) inadequate access to broadband; 3) lack of local community transportation services; and 4) decaying infrastructure. There are three major

⁵ The term "individual with barrier to employment" means one or more of the following populations: displaced homemakers, low-income individuals, Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians, individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities, older individuals, ex-offenders, homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths, youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system, individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers, eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers, individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act, single parents, including pregnant single women, long-term unemployed individuals, and such other groups as the Governor determines to have barriers to employment (WIOA Sec. 3(24)).

population centers in the West Central EDR which together share 67.2% of the EDR population- Adams County (30.3%), Knox County (23.1%) and McDonough County (13.8%). The main population centers within these counties are Quincy (Adams County) with a population of 40,587; Galesburg (Knox County) with a population of 31,215; and Macomb (McDonough County) with a population of 19,684.

The southern subregion of the West Central EDR (Adams, Brown and Pike counties) are part of the John Wood Community College District. The central subregion of the West Central EDR (Hancock, McDonough and Schuyler counties) are part of three community college districts-Carl Sandburg College, Spoon River College and John Wood Community College. The northern subregion of the West Central EDR (Henderson, Knox and Warren counties) are also part of three community college districts-Carl Sandburg College, Spoon River College and Black Hawk College.

In 2018, the West Central EDR had an estimated population of 216,417 according to the Annual County Resident Population, June 2019. The West Central EDR’s population has decreased by 9,043 individuals from 2013. The West Central EDR’s population is continuing to age. In 2018, the region’s population 65 and older was 20.5% compared to 2013 when the population over 65 was 18.3%. This is also compared to the state of Illinois whose population over 65 was 16% in 2018 and 13.5% in 2013. Due to the population loss and the retirements during COVID employers continue to operate on less than full staffing. Addressing labor supply concerns is a key priority for economic development entities and part of the WIB’s strategic priorities.

According to the American Community Survey, 2017, the average poverty rate in the West Central EDR was 15.1%; higher than the state of Illinois poverty rate of 13.5%. According to the US Census Bureau Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates for 2014, the average poverty rate in the West Central EDR was 15.2% and the state of Illinois was 14.3%. In addition, almost 63% of the individuals below poverty are ages 18-64, and just over 53.4% are female. The chart, found below, compares the percent of the population below poverty in EDR 10 to the state of Illinois.

Age	Under 5	5 to 17	18 to 64	65 +
EDR10	21.24	16.5	15.81	7.93
Illinois	17.8	15	10.7	8.6

Percent of Population Below Poverty by Education Level				
Education Level	Less than HS Diploma	High School/GED	Associates or Some College	Bachelor’s Degree or Higher
EDR 10	27.45	13.93	11.5	3.54
Illinois	22	12.5	9.0	3.9

Based upon data projections, it is expected that the number of persons living in poverty, or in the low to moderate category, will continue to rise. There will continue to be a great need for skills training and development in targeted and employable fields to move individuals and families out of poverty and into employment opportunities that pay a living wage. Services and employment opportunities must be available to address these gaps.

b. What special populations exist in the region, what is their magnitude, and what are the policy and service implications to meet the needs of these individuals?

The West Central Region has a somewhat diverse population. Additional target populations statistics for EDR10 West Central provided by the Illinois Department of Employment Security are:

Low Income Indicators:

• TANF Cases Monthly Average 2017	443
• TANF Persons Monthly Average 2017	1,049
• SNAP Households Monthly Average	16,882
• SNAP Persons Monthly Average	33,349

Disability Indicators:

• DHS/DVR Vocational Rehabilitation Program FY 2019	
○ Served Age Less Than Age 25	1,011
○ Plan Status Less Than Age 25	560
○ Successful Employment Less Than Age 25	92
○ Served Age 25 and Over	596
○ Plan Status Age 25 and Over	204
○ Successful Employment Age 25 And Over	78

Foster Care Indicators:

• DCFS Foster Care 2019 by Placement Type Total	452
○ Foster Care (Dept/Fictive/Private)	184
○ Relative	253
○ Institution/Group Home	15
• DCFS Exiting Foster Care 2019 Age 18 And Over	
○ Cook County	439
○ Downstate	406
○ State	845

DOC Indicators:

• Adult Prison Population (Committing County)	833
• Adult Parole Population (Residing County)	564
• Juvenile Justice Detention Admissions	311

Other Indicators:

• Migrant/Seasonal Farm Workers (WIOA Eligible)	0
• Single Parents	
○ Male Head of Household, No Wife Present	8,120
○ Female Household, No Husband Present	25,974
• Adult Population at Risk	
○ Age 16 and Over w/out a HS Diploma	11,919
○ Immigrants	992

Pre-COVID, connecting with individuals in underserved populations was primarily through the agencies with a common customer base. Post-COVID, community organizations and non-traditional partnering agencies are being invited to participate in planning and implementation efforts.

B. Describe the development and implementation of sector initiative for in-demand industry sectors or occupations for the planning region (§ 679.510(a)(1)(iii)).

Plans must answer the following questions:

1. How will the workforce partners convene employers, foundations and regional institutions to help lead sector partnerships and make coordinated investments?

In EDR 10, Economic Development entities convene sector meetings, business/education roundtables and other business partnership meetings. The WIB will host meetings with foundations and regional institutions. EDR staff already have a working relationship with the Community Foundation, the Galesburg Community Foundation, the Tracy Family Foundation, the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs, and Illinois Manufacturing Excellence Center.

2. Identify the established active industry sector partnerships in the region (as defined in Illinois’ Next Generation Sector Strategies Guide⁶)?

The West Central Illinois Economic Development Region agrees with the state of Illinois that Sector-based training programs are one of the most effective ways to positively impact jobseekers and employers by reducing costs and increasing productivity for business while increasing wages and career opportunities for workers. In order to accomplish this, there needs to be strong and clear coordination between education and workforce development partners who are already engaging target industries.

EDR 10 sector partnerships will focus on multiple economic development issues that are relevant to our targeted industries in the region. The sector partnerships will be convened by Economic Development entities and the WIB. A true sector partnership should not only address talent pipeline needs but also provide an opportunity for aligning efforts shared by everyone in the targeted industry.

It is not easy to convene targeted industries in the area due to time constraints of the employers within a sector. With this being the case, EDR 10 will continue to work on the sector

⁶ Regional team are encouraged to review Illinois’ Next Generation Sector Strategies Guide that is posted on <https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/network/Pages/SectorStrategies.aspx>

partnerships that have already been established. Those sector partnerships are in the area of Manufacturing, Transportation, and Healthcare. Labor market statistics continue to support our efforts in those three areas.

3. What other sector-based partnerships exist in the region? If any exist, are they business-led and what is their role in planning?

Strong partnerships with businesses in EDR 10 focus on equipping employers with the support and tools they need to define in-demand skills and articulate those needs to education and training providers. EDR 10 partners have been working with local businesses and are involved in manufacturing, healthcare and transportation, distribution and logistics sector-based partnerships. Strategies to assure that sector initiatives are on target include hosting meetings in counties to determine if there are additional sector priorities within the nine county West Central EDR.

Manufacturing Sector Partnerships includes businesses in Adams, Hancock, Knox, McDonough and Warren counties. These partnerships include economic development, the WIB and educational entities. The purpose of the partnerships is to track the emerging trends and economic impacts facing the industry and local companies. Training and workforce needs are a standing agenda item. Several related activities are hosted by the community colleges.

- Carl Sandburg staff host a monthly breakfast discussion on current employer job and skillset needs.
- Knox County Area Partnership for Economic Development
Talent Connect Knox County (TCKC) is a marketing initiative created by the Knox County Area Partnership for Economic Development. TCKC is a coordinated, year-round multi-channel marketing push designed to influence area youth and their parents to engage in Career Technical Education in the community's three core growth industries. Specifically, those growth industries are Advanced Manufacturing, Healthcare and Transportation. Through strategic marketing and special events, TCKC will make careers in these three growing fields appeal to high school age youth. The goal for the program is to fill to maximum capacity all of the area's high school and community college training programs for these three industries.
- Manufacturing Expo at John Wood Community College includes local businesses, K-12 educational entities, community service agencies, economic development, universities and John Wood Community College. Employers assist with planning the event, student manufacturing tours and employer presentations.
- Manufacturing Career Day at Carl Sandburg College for sophomores and juniors is held on a yearly basis.
- Center for Manufacturing Excellence/Carl Sandburg College holds an annual welding competition.

- MAEDCO Manufacturing Roundtable includes manufacturing companies with Education, Economic Development and the WIB.
- Tri-State Makerfest
The annual Tri-State Makerfest is a celebration of Manufacturing, Logistics and Skilled Trades. Twenty-one companies set up interactive displays to introduce students and the general public to their products and services. A special session is held for 10th – 12th grade students who are bused in from Illinois, Missouri and Iowa high schools. In 2019, over 400 students attended this event. Students tour the John Wood Community College's Workforce Development Center to see demonstrations of the equipment used in the JWCC training programs.
- GREDF Counselor/Teacher Manufacturing Company Tours
The first event was held in October 2020; counselors and teachers were afforded the opportunity to tour local manufacturing companies to gain knowledge about the academics and skills necessary for students to be successful in the manufacturing environment.

Healthcare Sector Partnerships include businesses in Adams, Hancock, Henderson, Knox, McDonough, Pike and Warren counties. These partnerships include economic development, the WIB and education. The purpose of the partnerships is to track the emerging trends in the healthcare industry as well as training and workforce needs. Currently there are several education initiatives to address the training needs. A new round of health sector meetings will begin this summer. Examples of training initiatives include:

- Hancock County Health Careers Fair for high school students.
- Carl Sandburg College offers a variety of health career pathways to meet the needs of local employers. Students can start with the following courses that will get them into the healthcare sector after completing one semester: Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA) offered on both the Galesburg and Carthage campuses; Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) offered on the Galesburg campus; and Phlebotomy courses offered in both Galesburg and Carthage. In addition, Carl Sandburg offers one-year certificate programs including Health Information Management and others. Associate of Applied Science degrees are also offered including Registered Nursing. Dual credit is offered for high school students considering a health career pathway. To meet employer needs for surgical technologists, Carl Sandburg has a cooperative agreement with Illinois Central College (ICC) for students to enroll in ICC's Surgical Technology program after completing prerequisites courses at Carl Sandburg College.
- JWCC sponsors Career, Technical and Health Education Career Expos at local High Schools and outer JWCC campus locations. Focus is on high demand occupations and how secondary and postsecondary education aligns with those regional career projections. John Wood also offers a Healthcare Careers Expo each November to expose students to a variety of different career opportunities within the healthcare field and connect them to area health care employers.

Transportation, Distribution and Logistics (TDL) Sector Partnerships are currently being formed. The WIB hosted several TDL Roundtables in partnership with economic development entities in Adams, Brown and Knox counties.

- The Sharkey Transportation Scholarship is a scholarship that addresses truck driver shortages in the region. Sharkey Transportation and John Wood Community College have partnered to offer a Truck Driver Training Scholarship program. In exchange for a signed contract to drive for the company for one year, Sharkey will pay 100% of the available to 10 qualified students. The agreement between Sharkey Transportation and JWCC provides training and employment for deserving individuals while opening an additional recruitment channel for Sharkey.

4. What other public-private partnerships exist in the region that could support sector strategies and what is their role in planning?

The following are additional public-private partnerships that exist in the region that could support sector strategies:

- Community College Advisory Boards – local businesses support program review and curricular updates to ensure programs offered at community colleges are relevant and the skills provided are needed in the workforce
- Hancock County high school career fair
- Pike County virtual job fair
- Industry Showcases for Manufacturing, Healthcare and Trades. This is a hands on experience for students to experience different aspects of the targeted industry
- Speakers in the classroom to let students ask questions in their usual setting
- Class tours of area businesses to see what the workplace setting is like and to meet several different employees to ask questions
- Class trips to a facility such as IMTS or the JUMP Center
- Job shadow connections
- Middle school career fair
- Career Signing Day
- High School Career Fair – Quincy Area Vocational Center and Carl Sandburg College host an annual high school Career Fair. This event is heavily attended by the

business community. Students have an opportunity to visit business and educational booths to learn more about in demand workforce skills to secure employment

- WGEM (television/radio) sponsored Job Fair - 40-50 employers host a job fair with a local media outlet. The effort is to highlight head of household employment opportunities in the tristate area
- Sophomore Career Day – John Wood Community College is the hosts site the sophomore career day arranged by Quincy Area Vocational Training Center for over 700 area high school sophomores. Students make selections from twelve potential career areas, then come to campus to hear presentations from business leaders and John Wood faculty about careers in the chosen sector
- Externships – the John Wood Community College Career Services Department can connect students with externship opportunities that provide short term job shadowing (1-2 days) to allow students to see what a typical day on the job is really like and give them a glimpse of a future career.
- Internships – Career Services at John Wood Community College gives students an opportunity to experience a prospective career and earn college credit at the same time through its internship program. Students gain practical experience by applying methods and theories learned in the classroom to develop and refine skills. Internships can be paid or unpaid and typically range from 80-320 hours on the job.
- Work Readiness certificate in Pike and Brown Counties was adopted and implemented to recognize students who demonstrate the soft skills that are desired by employers. Soft skills that are vital to the workforce of tomorrow include: organizational skills, respect, team work, positive attitude communication skills and a strong work ethic. This program is unique in that it is based on the core fundamentals of education, skills and performance as a complete unit
- Galesburg Promise is a public, private partnership between the mayors of each city and the business sectors within each community. Galesburg Promise has a similar tuition funding process for graduating seniors. Warren County has the Sampson Promise, a program similar to the Galesburg Promise program
- Who Run The World – GIRLS! GIRLS! sponsored by Great River Economic Development Foundation
- Business Education Roundtables

5. What neutral conveners with the capacity to help establish sector partnerships exist in the region and what is their role in planning?

In counties with formal Economic Development Entities, many times these agencies act as neutral conveners in partnership with the WIB. The Workforce Innovation Board of

Western Illinois (WIB) Executive Committee, in cooperation with the staff, developed the planning process.

As part of the process, a portion of one WIB meeting was designated to discuss the regional plan elements. The WIB Chair and other members of the Executive Committee lead this discussion.

The Plan was written by WIB and partner staff. The final Plan was approved by the WIB Executive Committee and the Chief Elected Officials Consortium.

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.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, workforce partners have convened regularly to share resources while collectively addressing needs and strategizing responses. The WIB will continue to emphasize and respond to the talent demands of employers throughout the Region. Moving forward to ensure a thriving post-COVID recovery, the WIB will work to anticipate the needs of regional employers and align service delivery to meet those needs.

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

An equity lens will be developed that will contain the standard elements of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Any plan considered will include equity dimensions of involvement, process, values and assumptions, and outcomes, from a perspective that highlights how practices hold potential to shift power toward inclusion and equity.

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

- A. Provide an analysis of workforce development activities, including education and training, in the region. This analysis must include the strengths and weaknesses of workforce development activities and capacity to provide the workforce development activities to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment, and the employment needs of employers (§ 679.560(a)(4)). 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:**
- 1. Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of workforce development activities in the region.**

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, the partners were working together and embraced the strengths of service integration. The pandemic has caused partners to silo efforts out of necessity. The pandemic safety guidance brought forth the regional dependence on in-person/on-site activities. Gaps in connectivity and limited flexibility in service delivery compounded the difficulty of employment support efforts. For example, since COVID-19 pandemic began, all Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) agencies closed to the general public or were limited by scheduled appointments only. The restricted hours of operation forced communication via phone and technology. This type of communication highlighted the technology challenges in our rural areas. It is the intention of the region's partners to continue foster service integration, reaffirm the structure for regional success, and address gaps.

Building on existing platforms supports continuous improvement efforts. A strength identified by the region is IDES's Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program. This program allows claimants to be referred to partners for connection to partner services. Additionally, Illinois Job Link, state employment platform, connects employers to job seekers. IDES utilizes Illinois Job Link to connect job seekers to employers. During COVID-19 pandemic Illinois Job Link proved to be a successful and trusted resource to job seekers. Development of connections between partners, employers and potential employees, as demonstrated with the use of RESEA and Illinois Job Link, are proven methods to increase effectiveness and efficiency of referrals.

It is important to note generational differences in workforce demographics and changes needed to meet workforce demand.

There are up to five generations in today's workforce — including traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Gen X, Millennials and Gen Z — and they all share the common experience of

navigating through recent challenges, displaying resilience and quickly adapting to a different type of workplace. This has caused a significant shift in the way workers view their jobs, with many reevaluating their purpose and employment situations. Ideas that may have caused friction in the past, such as differing opinions on professionalism, more relaxed working conditions, casual attire and flexible schedules, may be non-issues in today's business landscape.

Jorgensen, 2021

As the workforce transitions, EDR 10 is now prominently composed of members of the Generation X, Millennials, and Generations Z generational groups. Jorgensen's described shifts in the workplace are seen in the region's employees desire for work-life balance and flexibility in work scheduling. An obstacle identified by workforce partners is a need for workplace policy to be updated to meet the needs of potential employees. Smith (2021) also described the shift in workplace presence, "Following the pandemic, 25 percent of Millennials and 22 percent of members of Generation Z would like to work in the office "a little to a lot less often" than they did before." Increasing flexibility in scheduling and employee benefits to attract strong candidates and support employee longevity is a tactic that the region's employers are considering.

As the region is extremely rural, support systems for working family members is limited. Affordable and accessible childcare is one the largest barriers to potential employees. Traveling to work can also be difficult in a rural setting with limited public transportation. Constrained economic growth and declining community resources are causing a great export of talent from our area and also hinders the area from bringing in new talent. Community leaders and their constituents are tasked with making our communities richer in diversity and culture. Communities need more than economic development to maintain the current talent and attract new talent; communities need to be welcoming and present a strong quality of life.

A strength identified within the region is a culture of problem solving." As a region, we need to change our approach from being reactive to the needs set before us to being proactive by implementing forward-thinking skill development and opportunity creation. This is achieved through career exposure and internship opportunities, focusing on parent/care provider involvement in career exploration with their children, connecting potential employers with K-12 programs, Adult Education programs, and higher education. Placing the highest priority on parent/care provider mentorship within the community and increased interaction with mentors from two- and four-year institutions, drives proactive approaches.

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.

Carl Sandburg College offers a variety of academic programs with stackable levels to provide students with the ability to choose a program that best fits their abilities and career goals. To address equity and connectivity issues brought forward by the pandemic, Sandburg supports

students through the loaning out of institutional technology, crisis grants from the Sandburg Foundation and the federal government, and privately funding grants.

Sandburg representatives meet monthly with workforce and industry partners to better understand the needs of the local workforce and assess curriculum with workforce best practices, resulting courses and programs alignment with industry needs. To adjust to COVID-19 guidelines, partner and advisory meeting were held virtually. The new platform increases attendance at the meetings and, due to success of meeting outcomes, this meeting method will continue. The physical capacity of the college allows for additional training programs. A strong base of qualified faculty is in place to assist in the development and implementation of new and enhanced training.

Industry partner feedback indicates the need for soft-skill training surrounding teamwork, communication, and career readiness. Sandburg's Employability Skills Academy (ESA), a college program offered to Sandburg students as well as community partners, is well-positioned to address this concern. Sandburg is well-positioned to support this through the Employability Skills Academy program developed and offered in-house to students in academic programs and through community and corporate education.

The Carl Sandburg College's Career Expo, held every spring, is an excellent way for students and community members to network with prospective employers, learn about their hiring needs and even explore new career paths. At the Expo, connections are formed between businesses looking for qualified candidates in a wide variety of careers and applicants. Opportunities for immediate interviews are offered and some participants even leave having gained employment. During the pandemic, virtual career exploration experiences were made available to students. Also, following safety guidelines, Sandburg's Career Expo was offered on multiple days to allow for increased participation.

Employability Skills Academy is a sixteen-hour program, offered through Carl Sandburg College, focused on enhancing student success and retaining employment. The academy responds to the needs of the business sector while, at the same time, the College's commitment to the standards of quality expected by our community. Upon successful completion, graduates receive a certificate of completion that may be added to their resume/portfolio, which highlights their skills to prospective employers.

Career Counseling services at Carl Sandburg are provided to TRIO Student Support Services (SSS) students. Services are designed to be individualized, with opportunities to small and large group experiences. Examples on services include:

- Individualized Student Success Plan
- Customized intake process that includes questions about career and provides resources for career exploration.
- 1:1 career counseling
- Career Site visits with professionals in various fields to job shadow/talk with them about their background career path, etc. Visits include industries in healthcare, engineering, business, law enforcement, counseling and social work;
- Access to Career Cruising and post-assessment review/advising

- Academic advising to ensure that students are taking appropriate pre-requisites for a major in their chosen field when they transfer

Carl Sandburg College hosts Kids on Campus annually. This summer program is for students in grades K-6 and it gives youth an opportunity to have fun while exploring a variety of courses without the pressure of homework and grades. Kids on Campus is open to all students, regardless of academic standing. Instructor teaching credentials are not required; however, expertise and enthusiasm are essential. Area schoolteachers and community members volunteer to be Kids on Campus instructors. High school students are also recruited to assist as volunteers as those involved in clubs and organizations have required leadership or service hours are also recruited to assist as volunteers to complete. The Kids on Campus program gives students a chance to complete those hours. Examples of subject areas include: Art, Science, Math, History, English, Writing, Cooking, Astronomy, Health, Physical Fitness, Performing Arts, Adventure and Nature, Geography, Culture and Traditions, Self-Empowerment and Robotics.

John Wood Career Services staff meet bi-annually with the Career Services Advisory Council and have included a Zoom attendance option for participants. The Advisory Council is a mutually beneficial partnership including members from a variety of local industries. It has been particularly helpful during the pandemic to be more aware of hiring challenges, brainstorm how JWCC may be able to help and share updates about various programs at the college.

In the fall of 2020, John Wood partnered with GREDF to replace the traditional Makerfest with a virtual option. This gave high school students a chance to learn about local manufacturing, logistics and careers in skilled trades. In the fall of 2021, the invitation was extended to area high schools to tour the Workforce Development Center at JWCC. Several high schools responded and brought groups of students to visit the facility to learn more about JWCC CTE programs and potential career pathways.

The Healthcare Careers Expo was offered as a virtual event for high school students in 2020 and 2021. The Expo included videos on a variety of different careers in health care and included information about the specific healthcare programs offered at JWCC. All participants were given a complimentary JWCC t-shirt for participating in the event.

John Wood Career Services continues to offer Career Cruising to interested individuals. This is an online career assessment tool which helps narrow down areas of interest and look at possible career paths. Testing for paraeducators is offered through ACT Work Keys, by appointment, at the Quincy Campus, Mt. Sterling Education Center, and the Southeast Education Center.

JDUB Academy is traditionally offered for three weeks during the month of June through Community-Based Outreach at JWCC. This program is for students in grades kindergarten through 12th grade and classes span a variety of interest areas including agriculture, archery, baking, computers, drama, healthcare, science, welding, robotics and more. During the summer of 2020, John Wood was forced to cancel all in-person classes for JDUB Academy because of the pandemic. However, an online STEAM class for kids was offered and had 28 participants. In 2021, John Wood will return to its traditional in-person program but will still offer online STEAM classes for kids.

During 2020 and 2021, John Wood Career Services utilized Zoom for a variety of purposes including meetings with students to conduct mock interviews, general job search assistance, provide resume assistance and internship processes.

JWCC and ROE #33 Adult Education programs partner with local employers to provide local or on-site English Language (ESL) classes to increase employee job success, retention, and promotion.

3. Analyze the capacity of the regional partners to provide activities to address the needs of employers.

The in-demand industries in the region include health care, transportation, distribution and logistics and manufacturing. Bridge/Integrated Education and Training, provided collaboratively by area business and service organizations prepare students for in-demand occupations. The focus of these efforts is to allow students to complete Health Care, Manufacturing, Transportation, Distribution and Logistics bridge courses and successfully transition to post-secondary education.

The Business Service Teams provide services delivered by the WIOA partners that assist employers in:

Recruitment and Hiring:

- Applicant recruitment
- Business and/or industry-specific recruiting events
- Assistance in writing job descriptions
- Taking and electronically posting job orders
- Screening, Selection and Referral
- Online access to resumes
- Use of facilities for recruitment and interviewing

Training Assistance:

- Analysis of employee education and training needs
- Training program development
- Incumbent Worker training
- Adult Basic Ed/General Equivalency Diploma/English as a Second Language for employees (on or off-site)
- Work-based learning such as internships and apprenticeships

Information:

- Workforce and other labor market information
- Human resource consulting
- Tax credit information

- ADA, EEO and other workplace compliance information
- Unemployment Insurance information
- Lay-off aversion

4. How well do existing training programs in the region and local areas prepare job seekers to enter and retain employment with regional businesses?

Training programs in the area have the capacity to meet the skills necessary for the job seeker to obtain employment and enter the workforce.

There are many challenges in retaining employment. In addition to the challenges previously mentioned such as rural transportation and childcare, other challenges included the ability to sustain a regional workforce, including a lack of soft skills, and need to “grow” your own workers (keeping younger workers in the community, and being work ready, i.e., passing drug tests). Innovative solutions such as providing additional intern sites for young workers, going to schools to share information about regional workforce opportunities, collaborating with substance abuse partners to strengthen the communication with Economic Development entities and enhancing advertising of workforce opportunities within region are potential solutions.

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.”

All WIOA Partners are meeting each month in Quincy, Galesburg, and Macomb to develop tactics to achieve the goals developed during the Service Integration Self-Assessment. The Quincy One-Stop Operator and Individual partners are on schedule to improve service integration in the coming year. Details of the partners specific service integration activities are listed below:

- Improving Customer Service
- Customer input drives service design for job seekers, employers, and system customers
- Cross-training (resource training) on program information occurs among staff
- Career Pathway strategies drive service delivery and collaboration efforts among partners
- Communication occurs across one-stop partners
- Coordination of Business Services

B. Describe how transportation and other supportive services are coordinated within the region (§ 679.510(a)(1)(vi)). 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:

1. What regional organizations currently provide or could provide supportive services?

EDR 10 has many varied agencies helping in providing supportive services. Those agencies include:

- Department of Human Services - childcare, elder care, food
- DHS/Division of Rehabilitation Services - transportation, dental, glasses, medical supplies, physicals, assistive technology
- Division of Rehabilitation Services – vocational counseling, job coaching, job retention services, required employment physicals, assistive listening devices, programs for individuals with visual impairments, interpreter services, assistance with training and supplies, transportation, childcare, personal assistants, homemaker, maintenance home health, home delivered meals, adult day care, assistive equipment, environmental modification, respite services
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- Workforce Offices of Western Illinois - transportation, childcare, elder care, dental, glasses, software & supplies required for training, vehicle insurance
- Regional Offices of Education - child care, jump drives, transportation, training supplies
- Western Illinois Regional Council and Two Rivers Regional Council CSBG - food pantry, shelter, clothing and utility assistance
- Community Colleges - transportation, special needs accommodations, counseling
- Child Care Resource and Referral and West Central Child Care Connection - financial assistance for childcare
- Quana and Housing Authorities - housing assistance
- Salvation Army - emergency housing, food assistance
- Goodwill - employment workshops, basic computer training
- Bella Ease/Teen Reach - transportation, employment assistance

2. What policies and procedures will be established to promote coordination of supportive services delivery?

When looking at supportive services, EDR 10 attempts to work collaboratively with all local resources in virtually all our program components in order to eliminate the likelihood of service duplication. We look at the service delivery system, analyzing the internal and external resources available to deal with the identified problems. LWA 14 will continue to develop supportive service policies in place that promote coordination among community providers.

All mandatory partner staff may make and receive referrals. A standardized referral form has been developed and is available to be utilized by the partners. The form is initiated by referring partner staff and returned by referral recipient partner staff for tracking purposes. LWA 14 staff periodically check with the partners on value of the referral process and to track utilization of the process. This review of the referral process will also identify areas that are not being met by the partners current supportive service policies.

Carl Sandburg College takes great pride in the support services offered at the College. Students in the Galesburg area have free access to the Galesburg Transit System on a year-round basis. Bus ridership has greatly increased since the implementation of this program. In compliance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Disability

Support at Carl Sandburg College seeks to make the classroom equally accessible to students with disabilities by providing students with tools and accommodations intended to remove barriers imposed by their unique disabilities. Accommodations are available to all students, whether they attend the Galesburg campus, the Carthage campus, the Annex, online or as dual credit students. Classroom accommodations can be arranged via a Letter of Accommodation, drafted with Academic Support staff, at any point throughout the semester for students with documented disabilities. Letters of Accommodation are individualized in order to provide students with the unique supports they need, while also considering class and program requirements and competencies. The Academic Support office additionally provides resources and guidance, accommodated testing, and equipment loans (including laptops and tablets, assistive technologies like handheld video magnifiers and smart pens, and scientific and graphing calculators); Academic Support partners with DRS to arrange disability testing and secure funding for students with disabilities, participates in the local Transition Planning Committee (intended to help high school students transition to college or work after graduation), attends high school IEPs to facilitate guidance toward college enrollment, and makes regular referrals to the campus Tutoring Center, housed in the same office.

Sandburg employs two faculty counselors. These individuals are available to provide short term services to students. Appointments are available to discuss academic issues, stress, and related topics. Sandburg has a partnership with Bridgeway to refer students for longer term needs and any situation beyond the scope of campus services.

Division of Rehabilitation Services – vocational counseling, job coaching, job retention services, required employment physicals, assistive listening devices, programs for individuals with visual impairments, interpreter services, assistance with training and supplies, transportation, childcare, personal assistants, homemaker, maintenance home health, home delivered meals, adult day care, assistive equipment, environmental modification, respite services

Sandburg employs a student success coach to monitor the Starfish Retention System as well as do follow up with students. This individual also monitors trends in attendance and works with faculty as well as students to increase student success.

John Wood Community College support services will provide a wide range of intensive services to assist learners in pursuing their educational goals. John Wood provides services to help students succeed in the classroom, find resources to afford college, transfer to a four-year college or university and explore career options. Tutoring, disability services, cultural activities, degree planning, and test preparation are just a few opportunities available to help students succeed at John Wood.

John Wood has a Disability Services Coordinator on staff to ensure we provide appropriate resources and support services which will ensure students with disabilities the opportunity to competitively pursue a college education. In addition, the Disability Services Coordinator assists other college departments in providing access to services and programs in the most integrated setting possible. Students with disabilities at JWCC have the right to:

- equal access to courses, programs, services, activities and facilities offered through the college.

- an equal opportunity to learn, and to receive reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services.
- appropriate confidentiality of all information regarding their disability and to choose to whom, outside of the college, information about their disability will be disclosed, except as disclosures are required or permitted by law.
- information, reasonably available in accessible formats.

Reasonable accommodations are individualized and flexible, based on the nature of the documented disability and the academic environment. Below is a partial list of common academic accommodations:

- accessible classroom location/furniture
- alternative ways of completing assignments
- assistive computer technology
- assistive listening devices
- sign language interpreters
- notetakers
- separate testing location
- use of calculator
- extended time on exams
- texts on tape
- readers and scribes

John Wood Community College offers professional counseling services to provide personal support with the goal to promote social, academic, and career success in all students. It provides a safe place and someone to talk with about college and life experiences, overcoming obstacles, engaging in student life activities and improving student success. All Personal Counseling Services are free to all enrolled students and **are available on the John Wood main campus as well as all outlying centers and the Workforce Development Center. John Wood offers students access to TAO Connect, which is an interactive, web-based program that provides guided activities to help overcome anxiety, depression and other common mental health concerns and is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Resources are also available to John Wood faculty and staff to help them recognize signs of serious emotional distress in students and give appropriate responses and referrals to deal with identified concerns. The JWCC Counseling Department has published a list of websites and apps that provide resources for students who may be dealing with specific mental health concerns. The list is available on the JWCC website under the Counseling Services tab.**

Included in John Wood Student Services Department is Academic Talent Search (ATS) and Upward Bound. These are Federal TRIO programs funded 100% by the Department of Education. The programs are dedicated to assisting students in identifying and maintaining healthy academic habits from elementary through high school. The programs provide free help to 170 qualifying John Wood students who are first generation college students, meet income guidelines, or have a disability. Goals for the TRIO programs include increasing retention rates and grade point averages of participants to facilitate successful graduation from John Wood or transfer to a chosen college or university. TRIO also aims to foster an institutional climate supportive of the success of individuals in the targeted groups. John Wood has seen remarkable success with the TRIO programs. During the 2020-21 academic year, the

average grade point average for program participants was 3.01 and 98.68% were in good standing with the college. There was an 82.89% retention rate with students either remaining enrolled at JWCC or transferring to another institution. Examples of services provided to students who are supported by TRIO at John Wood include academic support such as individual and group tutoring in developmental English and math, referrals to community service agencies, and advocacy and assistance for students with disabilities to access on-campus resources.

In late 2020, John Wood was able to utilize grant money received as a result of COVID relief funds to retain a Student Success Coach in our academic advising department. Our Student Success Coach works with students who fall into the category of “average” in the area of academic success (not the best or worst students academically). This group of students are found to be the least connected to campus resources and therefore are susceptible to decreased academic success or retention. In choosing students to receive services from the Student Success Coach, the following criteria are considered:

- For current students: cumulative GPA of 2.0-2.7 who are not connected to other academic services (TRIO)
- For new students admitted directly from high school: cumulative high school GPA between of 2.0-2.8 who are not connected to other academic services (Academic Talent Search)
- For students who have dropped out of JWCC and are re-enrolling: cumulative GPA of 2.0-2.7

John Wood Community College was able to successfully continue supportive services to students despite the ongoing COVID pandemic. Through utilization of Zoom and Microsoft Teams, meetings between students receiving services and JWCC supportive personnel were able to safely continue. When in-person meetings were necessary, precautions such as masking, social distancing and use of plexiglass shields were utilized to ensure student and staff safety. John Wood also makes use of online platforms such as Canvas, Starfish and virtual tutoring to continue service delivery to students in need of supportive services. John Wood is proud that supportive services, though they may have looked a little different, have continued nearly uninterrupted throughout the pandemic.

JWCC Adult Education coordinates support services with local providers to assist students with transportation, childcare, assistive and adaptability equipment, literacy, career counseling and transition services using grant funding in accordance with state and federal guidelines.

Spoon River College provides support services to ensure that qualified students with documented disabilities have equal access to all educational opportunities offered by the college. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Spoon River College does not discriminate against individuals with disabilities, and provides reasonable accommodations to assist students in accessing the college admissions process, courses, and activities. The disability support services office at Spoon River College coordinates with the Division of Rehabilitation Services and assists with accommodations to the classroom environment for students with documented disabilities.

To increase access to support services and further identify students with mental health needs, Spoon River College employs a counselor. The counselor, who has earned advanced professional degrees and is licensed by the State of Illinois, works with students who may experience (but not limited to) stress, depression, anxiety, trauma, relationship issues, and academic struggles. SRC Counseling Services provides free, brief, confidential, accessible, and professional therapy directed at helping students succeed in the college environment. When specialized long term services are needed, the counselor assists in making a referral to off-campus professionals.

The Student Success Coach serves as an advocate to make sure that students are aware of all services, including academic support and college and community resources so that students have every opportunity to be successful in pursuing their educational goals. The Success Coach is available to discuss student concerns such as work, childcare, housing, transportation, time management or other personal matters that interfere with academic performance. The Success Coach can help identify possible solutions or refer students to the appropriate resources within the region.

In the five-county region of Hancock, Henderson, Knox, McDonough, and Warren there exists a network of social service agencies which provide programs and services targeted towards low-income citizens. The social service networking within the region allows for greater coordination of services to meet the clients' multiple needs. The prioritizing of the Community Services Block Grant program components is accomplished by considering the internal and external resources available and how we can work most collaboratively to effectively serve the client population.

The Western Illinois Regional Council-Community Action Agency utilizes its five-county outreach program to collaborate with dozens of other groups to better serve our clients. Linkages are ongoing so that when people are assessed at intake, referrals are made to connect clients with essential services. For example, the "Loaves and Fishes" organization (a food pantry comprised of a group of local churches) refers clients to us who need vital services such as shelter, clothing and utility assistance. This group refers their unserviceable clients to the WIRC-CAA for our services and for our organization to utilize our large referral base to link these clients to various supportive services, such as employment training and educational opportunities.

The analysis of resources and service delivery shows that CSBG funding is coordinated with other public and private resources, which maximizes the efficient use of our resources to serve the low income. This means increased case management services, leveraging of funds, technical assistance, and counseling services are provided with each of the CSBG components.

The WIRC-CAA utilizes its five-county outreach program to collaborate with dozens of other groups to better serve our clients. Linkages are ongoing so that when people are assessed at intake, referrals are made to connect clients with essential services. For example, the "Loaves and Fishes" organization (a food pantry comprised of a group of local churches) refers clients to us who need vital services such as shelter, clothing and utility assistance. This group refers their unserviceable clients to the WIRC-CAA for our services and for our organization to utilize our large referral base to link these clients to various supportive services, such as employment training and educational opportunities.

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Two Rivers Regional Council of Public Officials provides services through the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG). Services include Rental assistance, school supplies, 2 food pantries, the REACHOUT CENTER (thrift store), Christmas basket project, toy drive for grandparents and parents at Christmas time, programs for at-risk youth that include scholarships for post-secondary schooling, and a referral system to other needed services. Brown County United Way and Schuyler County United Way grants provide emergency assistance to households such as but not limited to car repairs, medication, utility assistance, and food; both of these grants are administered through CSBG. We also provide services to the homeless population with a hotel/motel voucher program Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity grants provide Weatherization services and utility assistance through the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), Emergency Furnace program and reconnect services. Also, Ameren Illinois grants are available to assist with a utility bill payment program and Warm Neighbors Cool Friends.

Regional Office of Education # 33 programs will follow state and federal rules and regulations to provide support services to students utilizing grant funding. Adult Education support services include Social Work Services, Assistive and Adaptive Equipment, Student Transportation, Guidance Services, Assessment and Testing, Volunteer Literacy Services, Career Counseling and Transition Services.

Agencies providing support services to adult learners eligible for enrollment in Adult Education program are invited to be members of the Area Planning Council. The APC identifies services currently being offered to this population, produces a plan for the continuation of these services, identifies populations not being served, and instructional and support services not being offered, and develops a plan for providing services to meet identified gaps in service.

The Workforce Office will be the last provider of services. If a support service is needed or required for the participant to continue or complete training, support services may be provided if it is determined no other agency can provide that service. All support services are provided at the lowest possible cost via comparison bids or sole provider situations.

If public transportation is not available/practical, mileage reimbursement will be offered at the current Federal privately owned vehicle rate per mile for Workforce programs, Trade, and 1 EC participants. Workforce programs will not be the first source for funding.

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

1. What economic development organizations, WIOA service providers or businesses are actively engaged in regional planning?

Economic development organizations participating in regional planning include:

- Great River Economic Development Foundation
- Hancock County Economic Development Corporation
- Henderson County Economic Development Corporation
- Knox County Area Partnership for Economic Development
- Macomb Area Economic Development Corporation
- Pike County Economic Development Corporation
- Schuyler County Economic Development Commission
- City of Monmouth Community and Economic Development Department
- City of Mt Sterling.
- EDA Economic Development Districts administered by Two Rivers Regional Council and Western Illinois Regional Council

Employers from the following growth sectors have been active participants in regional planning efforts:

- Manufacturing
- Healthcare
- Transportation, Distribution and Logistics
- Members of the WIB's Business Engagement Task Force

WIOA Partners have been active participants in developing the plan:

- Carl Sandburg College
- Department of Employment Security
- Department of Human Services
- DHS Division of Rehabilitation Services
- John Wood Community College
- John Wood Community College Adult Education
- National Able
- ROE #33 Adult Education
- Two Rivers Regional Council
- Western Illinois Regional Council
- Western Illinois Works

2. What economic development organizations, WIOA service providers or businesses were invited to participate but declined?

No organization that was asked to participate refused to assist in this regional plan.

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

All partners are contributing to the MOU infrastructure, service delivery and systems delivery costs as shown in the Resource Cost Sharing Agreement.

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 COVID pandemic led to a disconnect between workers and employer's expectations due to the dynamic of minimum wage increasing at the same time as the reduction in workforce or layoffs. By the time people could go back to work, they were looking for higher paying jobs without increasing their job skills.

Workforce needs to target employers and gather their input as to why they are having difficulty filling positions as well as what their willing to do to entice quality job seekers to fulfill their positions. In addition, workforce needs to obtain information from job seekers as to why they are scrutinizing the jobs they are willing to accept.

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.

An equity lens will be developed that will contain the standard elements of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Any plan considered will include equity dimensions of involvement, process, values and assumptions, and outcomes, from a perspective that highlights how practices hold potential to shift power toward inclusion and equity.

References:

Jorgensen, N. (2021, October 16). *Blurred lines in a multigenerational, hybrid workforce*. Forbes.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbeshumanresourcescouncil/2021/10/15/blurred-lines-in-a-multigenerational-hybrid-workforce/?sh=5c5188ad8b68>

Smith. A. (2021, September 10). *Generational mindsets affect the workforce*. Society for Human Resource Management.

<https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/global-hr/pages/generational-mindsets-affect-workforce.aspx>

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

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

The local vision of West Central EDR 10 is to foster a region-wide workforce development system that supports the needs of individuals and business to ensure West Central Economic Development Region has a skilled workforce to effectively compete in the state and global economy.

This vision statement aligns with the State of Illinois’ vision statement by regionally addressing the economic needs of individuals and businesses via resources that can foster both a regional and Statewide workforce development system that ensures Illinois has a skilled workforce to effectively compete in the global economy. West Central EDR 10 will apply the State’s guiding principles to our regional economic strategies and augment the vision statement.

The Workforce Innovation Board of Western Illinois has adopted the guiding principles in order to prepare an educated and skilled workforce. The WIB priorities include meeting the workforce needs of business, alignment of programs with career pathways, and preparing job seekers for the todays and tomorrow’s jobs.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, workforce partners convened regularly to share resources while collectively addressing needs and strategizing responses. The WIB continues to emphasize and respond to the talent demands of employers throughout the Region. Moving forward to ensure a thriving post-COVID recovery, the WIB will work to anticipate the needs of regional employers and align service delivery to meet those needs.

Across the country, communities continue to face challenges in linking job seekers to gainful employment. Since the onset of the pandemic, the entire workforce landscape has changed:

- Partners have been forced to acquire the equipment and knowledge needed to work and provide services remotely instead of in-person;

- An unprecedented number of unemployment claims were filed in March and April of 2020 putting a tremendous strain on the State Workforce Agency (IDES);
- Mass layoffs and intermittent employer shutdowns have caused both stress and trauma for individuals and families, not only due to income concerns, but also due to childcare shortages.
- Due to the uncertainty of the job market, many individuals have, and still are, reassessing their employment outlook and what a secure future means to them. This led to what many are calling the “The Great Resignation” of 2021 when over 20 million people quit their jobs.

Innovative solutions are needed to address the unique challenges brought on by the pandemic, as well as skill shortages facing the west central Illinois economy. The Workforce Innovation Board of Western Illinois is uniquely positioned to advance systemic workforce development initiatives and has long been successful in this endeavor. In order to expand career opportunities for youth and adults throughout the West Central Economic Development Region (EDR), the WIB will focus its efforts in assuring that all individuals, no matter where they may be on the west central Illinois workforce pipeline, have access to multiple career information and/or services. The workforce partners will endeavor to work with both job seekers and employers to navigate the separation between expectations of both parties that has been highlighted by the pandemic. We will investigate how to best make use of virtual technology available to us to communicate with our customers and deliver quality services

In order to guarantee that the West Central EDR has a pool of workers readily available to employers, the WIB will continue to analyze future needs of employers, both regionally and locally. To ensure that all in-demand occupations are being addressed and that there is integration and collaboration of services among partners, the WIB will develop a workforce plan for each county within the West Central EDR.

In response to the Covid- 19 pandemic, the Workforce Innovation Board of Western Illinois has modified the ways in which the board meets and communicates plans and activities. When face-to-face meetings are not an option, now virtual meetings are conducted. This also carries over as a new way to communicate with state and local stakeholders to continue the dissemination of regional plans and goals. Through new resources such as a partner-based website and social media, employment opportunities and the filling of said positions can still be accomplished.

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.

West Central Illinois Goals and Strategies

Goal 1: *Workforce Development Partners will be united around regional clusters*

The WIB has identified the regional clusters that the partners will prioritize during the upcoming years. Those clusters are: Transportation, Distribution and Logistics, Manufacturing, Health Care, and Construction Trades and Agribusiness. Career Pathways and Sector Partnerships are two inter-related strategies that will be utilized to coordinate a strategy around the regional clusters. The WIB will continue to spearhead initiatives that bring together employers and training providers, working closely with the community colleges to secure support for short and long-term training programs that meet the region's expressed goals. By developing appropriate career pathways that include assessments, training curricula and compatible work-based learning opportunities, the workforce system can prepare structured sequences of activities that will fully prepare youth and adult jobseekers for successful employment.

As the Covid-19 pandemic impacts our regions abilities to meet in larger groups, communication methods evolve, resulting new and improved contact methods. More training opportunities are offered on-line which make career transitions much easier in some cases. Many meetings, including job fairs and meetings between training providers and employers, are conducted remotely via visual and telecommunication methods, allowing improved participation and productivity.

Goal 2: Prepare workers in the Western Illinois Economic Development Regions for a career

Structured work-based learning experiences such as On-the-Job-Training (OJTs), paid and unpaid internships and work experience will supplement education and training courses when possible. In addition, the WIB will promote incumbent workforce training in support of short-term, skills upgrade training for regional employers to remain competitive in their industry or economy and to retain a skilled workforce in the region. Increasing apprenticeship opportunities will continue to be a key retention strategy.

On-the-job training, incumbent worker training, and apprenticeships continue as an active part of Economic Development Region 10's plan to prepare workers to meet the needs of local employers. While at some points production slowed, by adhering to Covid testing protocols and improved social distancing in the workplace, employers returned to near full or full capacity production. Now many employers require routine tests and the wearing of masks when within close proximity to others.

One of the primary impediments, for the potential workforce in the EDR, to overcoming employment barriers is obtaining career technical skills. To assist in the development of occupational skills, services will be enhanced by systematically involving the educators in the public schools and in Adult Education programs in the process of building foundational skills. Existing youth services will be improved by working with employers through sector partnerships. This employer centered needs-approach will enrich youth services by providing unique and direct access to private sector employer opportunities. With strengthened youth services around industry sectors, employers will be able to connect to a wider pool of qualified out-of-school youth and offer internship opportunities for both in-school and out-of-school youth.

The WIB will work with system partners to align workforce development and education programs and resources while ensuring that each partner established goals will be met.

Goal 3: Coordination between job seekers and employers

The WIB will prioritize training services for in-demand occupations, increase the capacity to assess and screen individuals based on employer criteria, facilitate the development of training programs for in-demand occupations and gather information from employers that confirm the critical skills employees need to enter and be successful in today's workforce.

To ensure the proper mix of educational, training and support services is available to all members of the community, workforce will continue to engage education and training providers, economic development and private sector WIB members in program planning. In addition, specific communication and outreach strategies will be developed that target individuals most at need for services including basic skills deficient individuals, returning citizens and individuals with disabilities. The WIB will continue to identify potential funding resources and revenue streams to expand its capacity to deliver services and align its human capital to the current and emerging economy.

Through the expansion of both state and local virtual job fairs, our region is making advances to distribute employment opportunities to aid both job seekers and employers. Through updated and extended versions of on-line training, new and improved career opportunities are available to a wider spectrum of individuals with the plan to reach more of the harder to serve. Although transportation in our rural areas remains a problem, through continuing initiatives to make high speed connectivity available to more rural areas it is hoped that improved training and information sharing are achieved.

Goal 4: Communicate throughout the region and globally, in partnership with economic development, the workforce quality and career opportunities in western Illinois

The WIB will continue to align members of all partner business service teams to ensure that businesses are being served by the entire WIOA system while establishing the continuum of service between all partners. The WIB will also continuously improve services by developing protocols to learn from and respond to business needs, provide leadership to address current and future business needs and trends and evaluation of services through a customer surveys.

There will be a multi-faceted action plan that connects the region's communities to workforce development services and resources.

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

- **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));**

EDR 10 will continue to utilize the Economic Development entities in western Illinois to assist with the outreach to the business community, including small business and in-demand sectors. The WIB's Business Engagement Task Force will guide this process.

- **To support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area (§ 679.560(b)(3)(ii));**

Employers throughout the region will be surveyed to determine current and future needs, industry trends, and local and regional partnership opportunities. Sector initiatives will be designed after reviewing the survey responses and feedback from local sector meetings. Illinois Department of Employment Security Labor Market Information and the Business Engagement Task Force will guide the survey content. In addition, information from the Perkin's Self - Assessment and Business Retention & Expansion visits conducted by the Economic Development entities will be incorporated into the survey content, process and report.

The Quincy Workforce Center, an American Job Center, has formed a business services team that meets regularly and coordinates business outreach. Galesburg and Macomb partners will form business services teams in 2022.

- **To better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development (§ 679.560(b)(3)(iii));**

Coordination with Economic Development Entities will continue to be strong. Activities requiring the business community participation is planned in partnership with and often led by the numerous economic development entities.

- **To strengthen linkages between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs (§ 679.560(b)(3)(iv));**

Illinois Department of Employment Services will continue to participate in Rapid Response activities in the region. In addition, IDES shares information and services available from all partners with UI claimants and has partners either present or be available for one-on-one meetings with Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments (RESEA) participants.

- **To promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services (§ 679.560(b)(4)); and**

Community College Programs

Carl Sandburg College is currently creating an entrepreneurial certificate in an academic/credit bearing setting is currently underway. They are collaborating with a local economic

development partner to offer a series of community education courses during the spring of 2020 which will cover multiple topics related to entrepreneurship

John Wood Community College works with their advisory committees as well as conducts regular visits to our industry partners to identify the education and skills required for the workforce. Advisory committees help us ensure that our training programs and curriculum are relevant to adequately prepare the workforce for jobs of today. Industry partners range from large corporations to microenterprise facilities. Many of our educational programs offer the skills necessary to promote entrepreneurial opportunities.

Due to the COVID-19 National Health Emergency, many activities were conducted remotely.

The Spoon River College program in Small Business Management offers a mix of transfer and career courses for the student interested in business and entrepreneurship. The program may also fulfil a niche for the small business entrepreneur to gain skills needed to be successful in the development of a new business. The program is designed to provide students with a background in business organizations and operations, as well as management training necessary for advancement to supervisory positions in small business. The Small Business Management program offers an Associate in Applied science degree with embedded certificates. This program is part of the Business Management & Administration career cluster.

Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities (CEO) Program

- The Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities program is a yearlong course designed to introduce ambitious high school students to local businesses and entrepreneurs. Throughout the year students meet with local businesses, learn from guest speakers, participate in a class business, write business plans and start their own business. This program operates in Adams, Brown, Hancock, Knox, McDonough, Pike, and Schuyler counties.
- **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)).**

Funds are designated for incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, and apprenticeship programs. Economic Development entities will lead in the implementation of industry and sectors strategies. These strategies will be developed after the business survey has been completed. The WIB supports the efforts of secondary and post-secondary education's efforts in career pathway initiatives. West Central Illinois EDR 10 staff work with manufacturing organizations, organized labor and other local entities to meet the needs of local and regional employers and will coordinate with bordering states and local workforce areas.

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

The WIB will work to build a regional network of partnerships to develop and implement outreach strategies based on an analysis of regional labor market factors, sector trends, hiring challenges, and potential solutions for business partners. Three WIB regional strategies are:

- use information about clients' needs, challenges, history, and practices to offer effective assistance and workforce solutions, as applicable.
- serve as a liaison amongst employers, area economic development organizations, and education providers; and,
- create partnerships with local educational and training providers, employers, and CBOs to implement apprenticeship programs and other work-based learning opportunities.

Internships are embedded in a variety of programs at the three community colleges (Carl Sandburg College, John Wood Community College and Spoon River College) in the area and those without look for opportunities for students to gain work-based experiences through job shadowing, industry tours, and in-class visits from industry representatives. The colleges work with advisory committees to gauge the need for required internships as well as opportunities to offer alternative work-based experiences for students.

Apprenticeships are an important part of our regional strategy. Although the region has not been overly successful to date, the Business Service teams will continue to promote and develop apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships.

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 Carl Sandburg College's Institutional Effectiveness Department reviews programs annually to ensure programs meet the needs indicated by labor market data as well as advisory committee surveys and feedback. Program review processes provide the opportunity to seek avenues in which educational programs can be created or revised to allow for a prompt entry into the workforce. John Wood Community College and Spoon River College have a similar process.

Where possible, the region will try to combine shorter training programs with on-the-job training. In addition, there will be an increased effort to work the community colleges internship component of the various approved training programs. The goal is to assist job seekers in obtaining a career in as short of time as possible.

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

- **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.**

Partners have been working with local businesses that are involved in manufacturing, healthcare and transportation, distribution and logistics sector-based partnerships. The WIB acts as a neutral convener and has launched each sector partnership by featuring a manufacturing, healthcare and transportation, distribution and logistics industry key speaker at quarterly Board meetings. In addition, meetings will be hosted in each of the nine counties of EDR 10 to determine if there are additional sector priorities based on data that will assist the region in making additional informed decisions.

Economic Development entities will play a leading role in coordinating workforce development and education partners. The Economic Development entities and Chambers of Commerce will work with the WIOA partners in strengthening their business services to maximize their effectiveness while minimizing any duplication of services.

- **Expanding career pathway⁷ opportunities through more accelerated and work-based training and align and integrate programs of study leading to industry-recognized credentials and improved employment and earnings.**

Carl Sandburg College, John Wood Community College and Spoon River College work closely with its advisory committees consisting of agency, industry, secondary, and post-secondary partners to identify pathways to careers and determine industry sought credentials. Where the opportunity exists, credentials are embedded into programs. For credentials obtained externally post program completion, training is geared toward preparing students with the knowledge and skills necessary to obtain such credentials. A similar process is also utilized by the other two community colleges in the region.

In order to expand career pathway opportunities, the regional partners will collaborate to increase program capacity by reducing duplicative services, building programs at greater scale and leveraging the efficiencies created by a stronger alignment of system resources. Partners will work together with employers to expand bridge and stackable credentials programs to support a broad spectrum of jobseekers looking for career progression and link work-based learning approaches such as apprenticeships, internships and on-the-job training programs that meet industry demands. The WIB will continue to spearhead initiatives that bring together employers and training providers, working closely with the community colleges to secure support for short and long-term training programs that meet the region's expressed goals. By developing appropriate career pathways that include assessments, training curricula and compatible work-based learning opportunities, the workforce system can prepare structured sequences of activities that will fully prepare youth and adult jobseekers for successful employment.

- **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.**

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

To ensure the proper mix of educational, training and support services is available to all members of the community, the WIB will continue to engage education and training providers, economic development and private sector WIB members in program planning. In addition, specific communication and outreach strategies will be developed that target individuals most in need of services including basic skills deficient individuals, ex-offenders and those with disabilities.

Community Colleges maintains a strong working relationship with social agencies, area regional offices of education, and k-12 partners within its district to assist diverse populations in locating support services needed to obtain an education and succeed in the workforce. By understanding the external resources available through each partner, students are referred to a variety of services available including training related to language skills, tuition assistance, childcare assistance, transportation assistance, and employability skills.

In addition to helping students increase English language skills and obtain high school equivalency, Adult Education programs provide education and support services to help adult learners access employment and succeed in the workforce. Information on career pathways and employment readiness skills are a part of the curriculum and core subjects such as reading, math, science and social studies are contextualized to the workforce. Bridge classes in Manufacturing, Health Care, and Logistics offer industry recognized credentials to program participants as well as opportunities to gain valuable insight into job responsibilities and employer expectations. Support services address potential barriers such as transportation and childcare needs helping to improve the likelihood of on the job success.

- **Expanding information for employers and job-seekers 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 continue to utilize labor market information provided by the US Department of Labor, the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Illinois Department of Employment Security, Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), regional industry sector studies and other labor market data to continue to provide information to employers and job seekers.

As the state develops the data infrastructure that will integrate labor market information with state education and workforce longitudinal data systems as well as aligning the integration of economic development and labor market information resources that will support regional planning, regional sector partnerships, career services and labor market information for employers and jobseekers, EDR 10 will participate in state sponsored training to better understand labor market projections and the state longitudinal data system.

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 onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 had a sudden, devastating effect on the regional economy and workforce system in West Central Illinois. Employers struggled with business closures or reductions, supply chain disruptions, changes in consumer demand, and lack of a reliable skilled workforce. Workers struggled with job loss due to layoff or an inability to work. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic further compounded issues of an aging workforce and wage disparity making offering training programs that meet the needs of employers and are accessible to all residents more important than ever. Employers are facing waves of retirements, removing some of the most experienced and skilled workers from the workforce. Most of these openings require workers with at least an associate degree and strong employability skills. Full and equitable recovery requires a collaborative, ongoing regional analysis and subsequent action planning of all available data relative to economic growth, employer needs and skilled job seeker availability.

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.

An equity lens will be developed that contains the standard elements of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Any plan considered will include equity dimensions of involvement, process, values and assumptions, and outcomes, from a perspective that highlights how practices hold potential to shift power toward inclusion and equity.

This chapter provides an overview of all the operating systems and policies within the Local Workforce Innovation Areas (LWIAs). LWIAs must incorporate key documents into the plan that describe the one stop delivery system and the services that are provided by the workforce partners. LWIAs are required to provide *updated* information and analysis noting any significant impacts of the COVID-19 National Health Emergency and what steps will be taken to address the challenges and opportunities that are associated with the local operating system and policies.

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

- *The Local Workforce Innovation Area 14 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 14 Service Integration Action Plan provides a description of how local workforce partners will align and coordinate services as required by the State of Illinois Service Integration Policy (WIOA Policy Chapter 1, Section 13). The Service Integration Action Plan and any subsequent modifications is incorporated by reference into this plan.*

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

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

Until the state integrates technology across partner programs, LWA 14 will make available a computer for client use so they can connect with area services that are a part of the one-stop delivery system. Additionally, outreach staff for agencies that have sites in surrounding, more rural portions of the service area, will have laptop access to the same information which can be made accessible to returning customers. It is anticipated that relevant program staff for all partners will be trained on access assistance, any required documentation needed listed and provided with a complete roster of services available through the one-stop and a directory of needed information in order to access services. This will be developed and tested prior to the implementation at the one-stop to ensure access to the system.

The LWA 14 Partners have also requested grant funding through the WIOA statewide workforce innovation program to develop a pre-application form common to all workforce partners. This form would be accessible via a website which will be developed and will benefit customers and

staff throughout the local workforce area by reducing the number of forms to be completed by customers and allow for quicker eligibility determination.

A website has been developed that will increase access to services by providing information on all available workforce services throughout the service area provided by partners located in the One Stop as well as those located off-site. All partners use a common referral form to ease the movement of customers between partners and allows partners to track outcomes for the customer and providers. Partners are now working on an assessment form that will allow certain basic customer information to be shared between partners lessening the amount of time it will take a customer to access additional partner programs and services. All partners to the MOU list the steps to access their programs and services.

The website is now in the final preparation stages and some components are available to the public now. <https://www.westernillinoiswioapartners.org/>. A common application form is now available and shared basic assessment form is also near completion.

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

One-stop services will be provided either on-site or via standard mail, email, telephone, computer software applications or web-based services. The method used to facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system varies throughout the nine-county area. To facilitate front line staff interaction, Partners will participate in the development of a LWA14 partner website. The website will provide information on resources available in each of the nine counties, an on-line interagency referral form and a common pre-application form for individuals to submit a request for services shared with all partners. In addition, staff may at times use third-party or partner sites to provide services to rural customers.

Illinois Department of Employment Security uses IllinoisJoblink.com (IJL) to manage client information for Wagner-Peyser, Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker, and Veteran clients. Additionally, IJL is used to input employer information including job listings. Combining the client and employer information into one system allows the above IDES programs to connect jobseekers and employers through referrals. IDES Unemployment Insurance and Trade Readjustment Assistance uses the Illinois Benefit Information System (IBIS) to monitor and track claims from unemployed individuals. Both these systems communicate key information with each other and can be accessed by any partner by a non-disclosure agreement with IDES.

Workforce has eight county offices to serve the nine-county workforce area which not only provide career and training services but also serve as front line staff for other agencies by assisting with unemployment and job link applications, disseminating applications and basic information for other agencies, local community centers and food pantries. The county offices also provide referral to other local and social service within the county or nearby. Translation services are also available for customers where English is a foreign language. All offices have phone, internet, fax and computers available to link customers with the services they need and to

serve as an advocate when necessary. Staff routinely meet with other agencies to share program information and improve ways to integrate services and the referral process.

- **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.**

During the pandemic, LWA 14 has adjusted application and initial contact methods to make it easier to accomplish the necessary paperwork and assessments remotely. Through to use of proctored TABE testing, Video based remote communication and the use of digital signature we have managed to continue to provide services. With these added contact and completion methods we expect to improve our overall application and service process as an unexpected benefit while learning to provide services remotely.

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

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

As the current partners continue to meet on a regular basis, an agenda item at the meetings will be to discuss if any of the current partner agencies are currently working with new partners or if any new agency/partner has been identified. If additional potential partners are identified they will be invited to participate in the partner meetings. Only by all partners helping in identifying potentially new partners, will the area be able to expand services to all individuals, including individuals with barriers to employment.

The covid pandemic has hindered many of the partner efforts to provide services and attract participants due to the fear of infection, however many agencies have made great efforts to create methods to provide services remotely.

- **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.**

Although the covid pandemic has slowed and caused delays in many services the Workforce office has continued to provide services remotely. In many ways the newly obtained ability to complete applications and assessments remotely has made it easier to provide training and employment options to individuals with employment barriers.

The upscaling of remote service options has also made GED and post-secondary training more accessible to individuals needing to improve basic and English language skills. Remote presentations via Zoom and other remote communication methods are now being used to keep Adults and language learners informed of employment options and advanced educational opportunities.

Carl Sandburg College is working through collaborative efforts between the community colleges, K-12 providers, and community service agencies to establish pathways for career development and education. Working in conjunction with Adult Education providers under ICCB's Adult Education Strategic Plan, community colleges afford opportunities for career development and credit attainment. Through Bridge programs and ICAPS, students gain the knowledge required to simultaneously achieve a high school equivalency diploma and an industry credential.

Spoon River College is dedicated to its Career and Technical Education and Adult Education programs working closely together to continue to build strong Integrated Education Programs. Students will be working to obtain their GED while sharpening basic and English language skills, as necessary.

The Regional Office of Education #33 and Smithfield are collaborating to serve adults who are English language learners to acquire relevant language skills and knowledge focusing on Smithfield job performance enhancement. This IET model class takes place in a Smithfield company training room. The Adult Volunteer Literacy program oversees this class; adult students who participate are taught by a Smithfield trainer and volunteer tutors about Smithfield job related workforce skills such as communication skills between co-workers and supervisors, safety, hygiene, and employee handbook usage.

John Wood Community College's Adult Education program offers bridge classes in manufacturing and healthcare which allow adult learners to gain career information, industry knowledge and skills, and earn certifications or credentials in these high demand employment areas. This is done while improving basic reading, math, and English skills, and earning a high school equivalency. The program is currently developing Integrated Education and Training programs that will enable students to earn credentials in welding and CNA while obtaining their GED/high school equivalency. The college partners with workforce programs, employers, and other LWIA partners to provide support services for students in these programs.

- **Using the insights and lessons learned from successful dual credit programs to scale up similar efforts in other sectors and regions;**

LWA 14 continues to advance dual credit opportunities to all counties and school systems in our nine-county area and continue to offer post-high school options for qualified and interested youth.

Carl Sandburg College has operated a successful dual credit program for many years throughout the district. Part of the success of this program is contributed to the individual services provided to the students as well as the school districts to ensure students are taking courses towards their

chosen career pathway. Frequently, the school districts need assistance with career exploration for their students to assist them in choosing career pathways. Our Associate Vice President of Academic and Student Planning works closely CTE administration and faculty to identify CTE dual credit opportunities. One example includes the offering of Information and Communication Technology certificate courses as dual credit which prepare students to acquire industry recognized credentials such as Cisco, A+, CompTIA Security and a wide range of Microsoft certifications upon completion of stackable certificates. Multiple courses included in the stackable certificates are also transfer courses. Carl Sandburg College plans to continue to developing additional opportunities using a similar model. Doing so provides students an avenue by which to seek employment after each of the certificates and/or, in the case of Information and Communication Technology, apply the transfer courses if they choose to continue in a bachelor's degree program.

Spoon River College has modeled a program with Canton High School called "Running Start". Our plan is to continue working with district high schools to review opportunities for expansion of CTE dual credit throughout the district including the "Running Start" program.

John Wood Community College has a program called Smart Start. Smart Start is a program designed for High School students to provide them an opportunity to earn college credits while still in high school. Students can take advantage of Smart Start classes in several different ways. Courses are offered in partnership with area high schools. Our Coordinator of High School & Prospective Student Relations works closely with those area high school counselors to monitor results and develop new dual credit opportunities.

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

Currently, Carl Sandburg College has a Prior Learning Assessment process where methods of communication are laid out. Most effective communication methods include one-on-one communication with the prospective or current students. Carl Sandburg integrates Prior Learning Assessment messaging in recruitment and individual academic planning. PLA is discussed with students that are entering the college and will be communicated through program brochures.

Spoon River College students with a variety of experience may develop a portfolio of professional experiences in order to apply for course credit. This portfolio is a collection of samples of previous work which would document learning. This portfolio is then submitted for evaluation. This portfolio must indicate that the student has met all objectives of the course in order to receive credit. This determination will be made by the faculty member responsible for the course.

Approved credit through this process will be posted to the student's transcript after a minimum of fifteen (15) credit hours toward a degree have been earned at the college. Twenty-five percent of the required credits must be completed prior to awarding credit for prior learning to certificate seeking students. Spoon River College will continue to work towards determining the most

effective marketing methods for informing students of these opportunities of prior learning assessments.

At John Wood Community College students learn about our Prior Learning Assessment process (PLA) during the admission process. Students work with their advisor as well as the CTE staff and faculty to determine if their prior learning and experiences would qualify for acceptance in their field of study.

- **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;**

LWA 14 will incorporate digital marketing through social media to try to reach individuals that may need minimal training to qualify for jobs in high-demand occupations. At the present time the WIB wants to utilize social media to a greater extent than what is currently being done. The WIB will investigate using applications such as Hootsuite and Zoho to save time and to gain analytics on the results of using social media. Since not all individuals in our area may have access to utilize various social media, additional efforts will be made to reach these individuals through more standardized methods including print advertising and word of mouth. Our community college partners will also be reaching out to these segments of the labor force.

Carl Sandburg College uses digital advertisements to target specific segments of the labor market. By using vendors who can geofence and use behavioral traits to target individuals, Sandburg is able to advertise various programs. Each advertisement is program specific in order to clearly define markets. The College uses past demographic and economic data to identify both locations and segments. This has led to over 5,500 visits to our websites and 2,500 + physical visits to our campus.

John Wood Community Colleges uses digital and targeted marketing advertising in partnership with an outside vendor to market specific campaigns through identifiable demographics, behaviors, goals, call to action and labor force objectives. For FY19 our digital marketing resulted in 1,241 physical campus visits and 2,665 website visits. Digital campaign tactics include geofencing, key words, CMR lists, conversion zones and retargeting. New for FY20, JWCC is using this same vendor to include social media messaging to better capture ROI. Campaign parameters include all device types including mobile, desktop and laptop and tablets.

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

Each member of the Workforce Innovation Board (WIB) brings an area of expertise and shares that knowledge with all members of the Board. This shared information provides an opportunity for the development of career pathways in both program design and work-based learning experiences. The WIB has promoted career pathways through sector presentations at its quarterly meetings. The WIB will continue to spearhead initiatives that bring together employers and training providers, working closely with the community colleges to secure support for short and long-term training programs along career pathways that meet the region's expressed goals.

Co-enrollment, though not a new concept, will be addressed in a different manner under WIOA. A customer of a partner agency will now be considered a common customer as each partner agency is more aware of customers being served by other partner agencies. Through WIOA, partner agencies will share information through the referral process and case management of co-enrolled customers. This will minimize the redundancy of a customer working with multiple agencies as well as leveraging the efficiencies created by a stronger alignment of system resources. A new shared assessment form is in the final development phase that will be available on the new partner website at www.westernillinoiswioapartners.org.

Carl Sandburg College began reworking curriculum in 2017 to first, and foremost, address industry needs, but to also develop curriculum with multiple entry and exit points that can be started during high school. The ICT curriculum has been approved by ICCB and became available beginning the Fall of 2019. Students may begin this curriculum during high school with courses from the Computer Support Associate Certificate. Currently Galesburg Area Vocational Center (GAVC) offers 12 of the 15 credit hours over the course of one academic year. This certificate builds through a total of 5 certificates which can be completed in 4 semesters. Welding, CNC I, CNC II, and Automotive are other programs that follow similar plans.

John Wood Community College career pathways have been developed in multiple CTE programs. Being part of three Department of Labor TAACCCT grants helped develop many of those career pathways. One example is a program is with Western High school. Students in their junior year begin our basic welding program. At the completion of their senior year, they we have earned the Basic Welding certificate which ladders into the Industrial Welding certificate. Currently the college is in the process of doing a similar program with the Agriculture and Electrical programs.

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

The Workforce Office of Western Illinois offers transportation assistance for in-person training for clients to obtain marketable credentials in both post-secondary degrees and certificates, including industry recognized credentials. We can also provide computers and assistance with internet access for remote learning options.

Spoon River College is dedicated to its Career and Technical Education and Adult Education programs working closely together to continue to build strong Integrated Education Programs. Students will be working to obtain their GED while sharpening basic skills and English fluency as necessary.

Spoon River College students with a variety of experience may develop a portfolio of professional experiences in order to apply for course credit. This portfolio is a collection of samples of previous work which would document learning. This portfolio is then submitted for

evaluation. This portfolio must indicate that the student has met all objectives of the course in order to receive credit. This determination will be made by the faculty member responsible for the course.

Approved credit through this process will be posted to the student's transcript after a minimum of fifteen (15) credit hours toward a degree have been earned at the college. Twenty-five percent of the required credits must be completed prior to awarding credit for prior learning to certificate seeking students. Spoon River College will continue to work towards determining the most effective marketing methods for informing students of these opportunities of prior learning assessments.

Carl Sandburg College presents a career fair each year for high school students. The fair gives student the opportunity to learn about career opportunities at the College as well as opportunities in apprenticeship training. The dual credit coordinator and staff at Sandburg actively promote CTE opportunities to area students. They also work closely with high school personnel to enhance and increase the educational opportunities available for high school students. The Sandburg Marketing Department promotes educational opportunities to students. Included in these efforts are opportunities for certificates as well as longer term programs.

Within John Wood Community College's ABE and ESL program, bridge classes to manufacturing, logistics, and Healthcare that pave the way to transition into post-secondary and industry recognized credentials are offered. The dual credit coordinator works closely with CTE Administration and faculty to identify CTE dual credit opportunities. Students learn about PLA during the admission process. Students work with their advisor as well as the CTE staff and faculty to determine which PLA are relevant. JWCC Marketing department uses various forms of marketing to reach all segments of the labor force. We work closely with area high schools and vocational centers to develop career pathways, offering industry-recognized credentials such as MSSC certifications, AWS, OSHA and NIMS.

- **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.**

LWA 14 will continue to develop new networks with agencies and organizations that work with the underserved populations in each community. Staff will be working more closely with the county health departments and neighborhood organizations.

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 the following, noting any significant implications of the COVID-19 National Health Emergency, where applicable:

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

Workforce Offices of Western Illinois will provide Adult and Dislocated Worker services which will include job search assistance, referral to other appropriate agencies and services,

comprehensive assessments and development of individual employment plans, career planning, job readiness training, occupational skills training, (up to a maximum of two years and in a growth occupation that allow workers to earn a self-sufficient wage), on-the-job training, internships, apprenticeship programs, support services during training and follow up services.

Anyone enrolled in Workforce Services must be a citizen of or authorized to work in the United States and registered with Selective Service, if male, over 18 years of age. Applications for workforce services must be signed by a parent or guardian for anyone under the age of 18. Eligibility for Adult services is based on family income. Priority for individualized career services and training service shall be given to Veterans or qualifying spouses and individuals who are recipients of public assistance, or other low-income individuals or Individuals who are basic skills deficient.

Dislocated workers are individuals who: have been laid off or terminated due to plant closure, mass layoff or are unemployed through no fault of their own. Self-employed individuals and displaced homemakers may also be eligible, including spouses of active military forced to quit a job due to re-stationing of military spouse. Temporary layoffs do not qualify; the job loss must be permanent. The program is designed to train/retrain dislocated workers and assist in their transition to new employment.

Services for youth include work experience, GED preparation, career technical education; financial literacy education; labor market and employment information about in – demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area; activities that help youth prepare for and transition to post-secondary education and training; tutoring; study skills training; leadership development opportunities; adult mentoring; comprehensive guidance and counseling, supportive services such as transportation reimbursement or bus passes, childcare assistance, career exploration, and internships to prepare them for the world of work; and, on-the-job training. The program may also assist eligible students with dual credit courses.

Out-of-school youth must be aged 17-24, not attending any school, and meet one or more additional conditions, which could include: School dropout; within the age of compulsory attendance but has not attended for at least the most recent complete school year calendar quarter; holds a secondary school diploma or recognized equivalent and is low-income and is basic skills deficient or an English language learner; subject to the juvenile or adult justice system; homeless, runaway, in foster care or aged out of the foster care system, eligible for assistance under Section 477, Social Security Act, or in out-of-home placement; pregnant or parenting; an individual with a disability; low income person who requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment.

In-school youth must be aged 17-21, attending school, low income, which may include free & reduced lunch and/or food stamp recipients, and meet one or more additional conditions, which could include: Basic skills deficient; English language learner; an offender; homeless; runaway; in foster care or aged out of the foster care system; pregnant or parenting; an individual with a disability; individuals who require additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment.

While all services remain available, during the covid-19 pandemic, communication and service methods have been expanded to include the use of remote communication, training and the acquisition of digital signatures to enable eligibility determinations and the continued advancement of high school and post high school training.

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

Regional Office of Education #33 Adult Education and literacy program periodically invites Workforce representatives to classrooms. Students are encouraged to apply for Workforce services, and the ROE#33 Transition Specialist collaborates with Workforce staff to help with the application process. Through monthly WIOA Partner meetings and Area Planning Council meetings, ROE#33 Adult Education coordinator, Transition Specialist, CTE director and Workforce representatives meet to discuss support strategies and improving partnership.

John Wood Community College provides an Adult Education/GED class two afternoons each week in the One Stop. Workforce staff provide information on program services each month at new student orientation sessions throughout the district. IDES presents an eight-week Employment 101 training which focused on job search skills and career preparation. The One Stop calendar of workshops and events is provided to all students and program brochures for WIOA partner agencies are available in the classrooms. Staff participates in WIOA partner frontline staff training and service integration meetings to keep current on partner services in order to provide effective referrals for students.

The WIB's Executive Committee reviews and comments on all of the Adult Education plans covering the West Central Region.

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

Wagner-Peyser (WP) has been involved in multiple cross trainings with other partners in the workforce system. These will occur on a continuous basis. Additionally, WP staff work closely with other workforce partners to refer clients to needed services.

Wagner-Peyser staff are currently coordinating with the Unemployment Insurance Program on the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) grant through the Department of Labor. The Unemployment Insurance Program profiles the clients monthly and provides the list to the Wagner-Peyser staff. Wagner-Peyser, in turn, sets up a meeting with these clients and provides them information and services to assist in their attempts to find gainful employment. Any barriers that arise during these assessments are discussed with the clients being referred to appropriate partner services and/or workshops.

Wagner-Peyser staff also review job seeker resumes in Illinois Job Link, make appropriate job referrals and schedule interviews for job seekers with local employers who are attending our monthly hiring events. Wagner-Peyser staff also review the recent Illinois JobLink registrations and call the claimants to inform them of available partner services and assist them in further

updates of their resume to enhance the possibility of success in obtaining employment before their Unemployment benefits are exhausted.

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

The Illinois DHS-Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) is the State's lead agency serving individuals with disabilities. DRS works in partnership with people with disabilities and their families to assist them in making informed choices to achieve full community participation. In this process we work with all regional employers, all levels of education and all educational institutions within the Region, and independent living opportunities.

Transition services are available for all secondary students with disabilities. Services facilitate and support the movement of high school students into adult life activities, primarily and ultimately employment. DRS will link students with community services provided by other agencies. Transition is a process involving a partnership with individuals, school services, post school services and local communities that results in maximum levels of employment, integration and community participation.

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

During the month of October, DRS works with individual employers to bring Disability Mentoring Day experiences to persons with disabilities. Participants can be secondary school students or adults. Participants are offered the opportunity to tour job sites, meet with employers, and get hands on experiences in the world of work.

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

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

Many persons with disabilities benefit from job placement assistance. DRS staff work with individuals to explore careers, especially those with promising growth opportunities in the Region. Pre-placement work with individuals includes resume development and interview skills. DRS engages with specialized community providers to purchase placement, job coaching and supported employment opportunities for some individuals. For all individuals, all necessary supports are available to guide the individual along a successful path to choose, get and keep employment of their choice.

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

Carl Sandburg College and Spoon River College’s relevant secondary and post-secondary education programs and activities with education and workforce investment activities include: Curricular alignment, secondary to post-secondary, through Programs of Study.

- a. Dual Credit Classes
- b. Work-based learning
- c. Career Fairs and Expos

Services for students:

- d. Career exploration and development
- e. Job search assistance
- f. Workshops—resume writing, interviewing, etc.
- g. Academic advising
- h. Counseling
- i. Placement testing
- j. Transfer and Career & Technical Education degree and certificate credit programs
- k. Financial assistance
- l. Accommodations for students with disabilities
- m. Perkins CTE grant—academic and financial assistance for students enrolled in CTE programs, equipment for CTE programs, professional development for CTE faculty, career services.

Activities/services with employers:

- n. Customized training for incumbent workers and dislocated workers.
- o. Rapid response for dislocation events.

Referral process with one-stop partners:

- p. Individuals referred by one-stop partners through direct linkage to community college.
- q. College provides placement testing, orientation, assistance with enrollment and application for financial assistance.

- r. College also provides other services listed above.
- s. Students enrolled in programs referred through direct linkage and from information provided by partners to other one-stop partners for services not provided by or available at the college.

John Wood Community College's Strengthening Career and Technical Education (CTE) for the 21st Century Act ensures all students can benefit from high-quality CTE programs that prepare them for high-skill, high-wage employment. The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act provides federal support to state and local secondary and postsecondary education CTE programs that provide students the knowledge, skills, and experience necessary to succeed in the today's competitive marketplace. We work with our advisory committees as well as conduct regular visits to our industry partners to identify the innovative CTE programs that provides education and skills required for the workforce. The advisory committees and these visits help identify barriers to employment that they have seen. We then implement changes to our programs and career service activities to reduce those barriers. Where appropriate, we incorporate work-based learning opportunities. We incorporate general skills that are necessary for success in the labor market, including the integration of academic knowledge and technical skills applied to the workplace, interpersonal, analytical and organizational skills, and personal qualities that enable individuals to interact effectively with others.

Transportation and other appropriate supportive services provide by Perkins Student Support Services are designed to help students in Career and Technology programs successfully complete an Associate in Applied Science (AAS) degree or a short-term Certificate in their chosen field of study by removing emergency barriers to success. Perkins Services are available to students who are academically or economically disadvantaged. This may include students who are:

- t. Disabled
- u. Displaced homemakers
- v. Single parents
- w. Students with limited English proficiency
- x. Nontraditional students-a gender-based designation

Support Services May Include:

- Textbook Loans
- Bus Passes
- Mileage Assistance
- Equipment Loans
- Provision of Required Supplies
- Tutoring
- Referral Services

JWCC has developed multiple career pathways across existing curriculum to incorporate dual credit opportunities with secondary schools within the district. Examples are: CNA, Computer Aided Design, Welding, Manufacturing, Industrial Maintenance Technology, Agriculture and traditional AA programming such as Math, Science, Humanities, Literature, Diesel Mechanic, Truck Driver Training and Auto Technology. A special pilot program was conducted in spring 2016 with the Quincy Alternative School where two bridge programs were implemented:

Manufacturing and Health Care. Due to the success of the pilot, JWCC began offering a traditional Manufacturing career track in the fall of 2016 to 8-10 low income students.

To expose high school age women and minority to careers in science, technology, engineering, and math, we host two major High School outreach events each year. At these events, we include information about non-traditional career for all students. As examples we include women in welding, truck driving, and manufacturing and men in Healthcare careers. Guest speakers are of individual in these non-traditional careers provides information about their experiences. The major event targeting Manufacturing and Logistics is called Markerfest, approximately 400 HS students from within our district as well as outside our district attend this event. We also offer a Healthcare EXPO that attracts approximately 200 HS students. We offer summer STEM camps that focuses on high school aged students. The 2019 stem camps include topics such as Welding, Make Your First Video Game, and Roblox Makers. In 2020 will be adding additional new STEM topics. We also we attend multiple career days at the High Schools exposing women and minority to those STEM careers.

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

The WIB will utilize the data from the Perkin’s Self-Assessment to guide the development of strategies aligning Career and Technical Education with the WIOA partners for the next 4 years. The Self-Assessment process has not been completed so the results are not currently available. After completion of the assessment the WIB will work with the partners in assuring that any core and other WIOA programs and services that are missing are designed and implemented.

- **Provide a copy of the local supportive service policies and describe how the Local Board will coordinate the provision of transportation and other appropriate supportive services in the local area (§ 679.560(b)(10)) and include information on the supportive services by each local program as appropriate.**

LWA 14 support services policy: Workforce customers are eligible to receive Supportive Services once they are enrolled in an activity such as CRT, OJT, WE or Internship. The intent of these services is to provide participant support during training and possibly during post completion follow-up services. Transportation assistance may be considered if not available from any other source. Mileage reimbursement will be determined based on the number of roundtrip miles and verified using an internet mapping service. Public transportation will be utilized if available and practical. Transportation will not be provided unless participant is actively involved in training. Funds for transportation will not be available until approved by the

Career & Employment Specialist. There will be no retroactive payment or payments prior to receipt of all required forms. Childcare assistance will be based on availability of childcare

assistance from other resources. Childcare will not be provided unless the participant is active in training. Participants will first apply for childcare assistance through Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R). Payment amounts will be based on the number of children requiring childcare and the actual hours of attendance. Assistance will not begin until the Childcare Request and Financial Information Sheet is completed and approved by the Program Manager. There will be no retroactive payments.

As the WIB continues to work with the WIOA partners on the implementation of Service Integration supportive services will be a primary area of focus.

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 (§ 679.560(b)(6)).**

Adult and Dislocated Worker services include job search assistance, referral to other appropriate agencies and services, comprehensive assessments and development of individual employment plans, career planning, job readiness training, occupational skills training, (up to a maximum of two years and in a growth occupation that allow workers to earn a self-sufficient wage), on-the-job training, customized training, apprenticeship programs, support services during training and follow up services. All these services are provided through a standardized process which includes submission of an initial questionnaire followed by a preliminary assessment to ascertain the plans and goals of the inquirer. Following the initial assessment if services are deemed appropriate an application and additional assessment, testing and career planning take place. Once the application and assessment have been completed the applicant is enrolled in the IWDS system and services can then begin. Since the onslaught of Covid, many of the initial application and assessment steps have been converted to remote activities, including several training options but area training facilities have stepped up and made training available remotely, when necessary and in-person whenever possible.

Registration is required for most, but not all, services provided under WIOA Title 1B. The registration process is important as preliminary eligibility is determined, and the potential applicant may or may not need to be referred to another agency or organization that can meet their needs. Persons who are required to register must meet certain eligibility requirements, depending on the fund source used and the type of service to be provided.

Adult employment and training activities are provided in order to meet the needs of job seeker customers and the goals of the local workforce system. It should be noted that all of the services listed below might not be available in those counties without a comprehensive one-stop center. A minimum of 50% of combined program expenditures will be for direct training.

A menu of career and local services available for adults includes, but is not limited to:

- Outreach and orientation to the One-Stop Center/System
- Initial assessment of skill levels, aptitudes, abilities and support services
- Labor Market Information

- Consumer reports information and delivery system performance information
- Information on other One-Stop partner services and supportive services
- Information on filing UI claims
- Resource Room usage – “How to” individual or group sessions (e.g. writing a resume)
- Internet browsing – job, information, and training searches
- Internet accounts
- Talent referrals
- Eligibility determination
- Follow-up services, including counseling for registrants after entering employment
- Individual job development
- IJL and WorkNet Registration
- Screened referrals (testing and background checks done before referral or when operating as the employer’s agent)
- Comprehensive and specialized assessment, including diagnostic testing and interviewing
- Development of individual employment plan
- Group counseling
- Individual counseling and career planning
- Case management
- Short term pre-vocational services

A menu of training services available for adults includes, but is not limited to:

- Occupational skills training
- On-the-Job Training
- Paid work experiences, including internships
- Skill upgrading and retraining
- Job readiness training
- Adult education and literacy activities in combination with training
- Customized training
- Transitional Employment

Dislocated worker employment and training activities are provided in order to meet the needs of job seeker customers and the goals of the local workforce investment system. It should be noted that all the services listed below might not be available in those counties without a comprehensive one-stop center. A minimum of 50% of combined program expenditures will be for direct training.

A menu of career and local services available for dislocated workers includes, but is not limited to:

- Outreach and orientation to the One-Stop Center/System
- Initial assessment of skill levels, aptitudes, abilities and support services
- Labor Market Information
- Consumer reports information and delivery system performance information
- Information on other One-Stop partner services and supportive services
- Information on filing UI claims
- Assistance in establishing eligibility for other non-WIOA training and education
- IJL and WorkNet Registration
- Resource Room usage – “How to” group sessions (e.g. writing a resume)

- Job referrals (informational, e.g. job scouts, ES referrals in non-exclusive hiring arrangements, short-term or seasonal placements)
- Internet browsing – job, information, and training searches
- Talent referrals
- Eligibility determination
- Follow-up services, including counseling for registrants (those previously receiving intensive/training services) after entering employment
- Individual job development
- Screened referrals (testing and background checks done before referral or when operating as the employer’s agent)
- Comprehensive and specialized assessment, including diagnostic testing and interviewing
- Development of individual employment plan
- Individual counseling and career planning
- Case management
- Short term pre-vocational services

A menu of training services available for dislocated workers includes, but is not limited to:

- Occupational skills training
 - On-the-Job Training
 - Paid work experiences, including internships
 - Skill upgrading and retraining
 - Job readiness training
 - Adult education and literacy activities in combination with training
 - Customized training
- **A description of how the Local Board will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out in the local area with statewide rapid response activities (§ 679.560(b)(7)). As part of the 2022 modification, describe how adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities will address the impact and recovery from the COVID-19 National Health Emergency.**

LWA 14 will continue to coordinate Rapid Response meetings or workshops to provide on-site information to workers, as appropriate. During the pandemic all Rapid Response activities were presented via virtual workshops. This practice will continue whenever possible. The meeting includes information to workers about filing a claim for Unemployment Insurance, registering on IllinoisJobLink.com, labor market information, job search and placement assistance, interest inventories, classroom training, on-the-job training, apprenticeships, and retraining services designed to help participants retain employment when feasible, or obtain re-employment as soon as possible. All dislocations, regardless of size, are provided the same information. All services are available to all laid off workers.

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 (§ 679.560(b)(8)).

Services for youth include work experience, GED preparation, Career and Technical education; financial literacy education; labor market and employment information about in – demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area; activities that help youth prepare for and transition to post-secondary education and training; tutoring; study skills training; leadership development opportunities; adult mentoring; comprehensive guidance and counseling, supportive services such as transportation reimbursement or bus passes, childcare assistance, career exploration, and internships to prepare them for the world of work; and, on-the-job training. The program may also assist eligible students with dual credit courses.

Services to youth are provided through a standardized process which includes submission of an initial questionnaire followed by a preliminary assessment to determine the youth's plans and goals. Following the initial assessment if services are deemed appropriate, then an application and additional assessment including testing and career planning take place. Once the application and assessment have been completed the applicant is enrolled in the IWDS system and services can then begin.

Youth with disabilities receive the same services as all other applicants but in some cases the inquirer may also be referred to other agencies to provide additional support services as needed resulting in co-enrollment with other agencies. Other supports may and have been in the form of job coaches, special accommodations and specialized equipment. Work schedules and activities may and have been adjusted to promote a positive training and work experience. Through the addition of a shared general assessment form via the WIOA partners website it is now easier to work with co-enrolled participants and reduce redundancy of forms. Via improved remote communication methods, it is also easier to provide services to all customers, especially those with disabilities.

Elements listed below are included in the approved youth plan.

- Key design components of youth program
 - An objective assessment of each youth registrant:
 - The objective assessment will be linked to the fourteen required youth elements and local area needs.
 - Development of an individual employment plan for each youth registrant:
 - Individual employment plans will be developed to address all areas, identified in the assessment, which require WIOA funding or linkage to one of the system partners.
 - Preparation for postsecondary educational opportunities, linkages between academic and occupational learning, preparation for employment, and effective connections to intermediary organizations that provide strong links to the job market and employers:
 - LWA 14 already has strong ties to economic development agencies and business associations such as local Chambers of Commerce. Program designs requiring linkage between education and the

employer will continue to be a priority under WIOA. Employer needs analyses will be used to establish criteria for evaluation of programs to be funded.

The WIB has formed a Youth Committee which will assist in providing guidance in developing the fourteen (14) elements. These elements will be provided in coordination with community agencies that have been identified through three LWA-wide youth forums. The Youth Committee will develop a matrix that identifies gaps and linkages in the provision of these elements:

- Tutoring, study skills training, and instruction leading to secondary school completion, including dropout prevention strategies
- Alternative secondary school offerings
- Paid work experiences, including internships and job shadowing
- Occupational skills training
- Leadership development opportunities (community service, peer-centered activities)
- Supportive services
- Adult mentoring for a duration of a least twelve (12) months, that may occur both during and after program participation
- Follow-up services for at least twelve (12) months after program completion
- Comprehensive guidance and counseling, including drug and alcohol abuse counseling, as well as referrals to counseling
- Integrated education and training for a specific occupation or cluster
- Financial literacy education
- Entrepreneurial skills training
- Services that provide labor market information about in-demand industry sectors and occupations
- Postsecondary preparation and transition activities

Successful providers of youth activities will be identified through the following criteria: demonstration of a successful track record; experience in working with youth populations (particularly with the dropout segment); experience with employment and training programs that incorporate comprehensive and intensive program design elements; and demonstration of creative approaches to youth programs with comprehension of performance measurement. Other factors that will be considered include cost and a provider's association with continuous improvement initiatives.

Youth services are coordinated with the following agencies:

- Foster care programs:
Services will be coordinated with the Department of Children and Family Services and subcontractors.
- Education:
Services will be coordinated with local middle and senior high schools, career and technical education systems, Regional Offices of Education, Community Colleges and other local training providers. The WIB has approved funding dual credit programs for disadvantaged youth. This initiative will be targeted to students who are in their junior or senior year. Students who meet the eligibility guidelines may qualify for funds to pay for their tuition, books, and fees when enrolled in dual credit class or classes. Programs will

include any academic program approved by the school district and offered by the community college. Programs currently funded by school districts or any other sources of funds will not be covered by WIOA funds.

- Public assistance programs:
Services will be coordinated with Department of Human Services Local Offices
 - Other youth programs:
Services will be coordinated with other youth serving agencies, entities, and individuals throughout the western Illinois. A partial listing of these include the Career Technical Systems, Carl Sandburg College, Chaddock, Counseling Center of Pike County, IDES, DHS-DRS, Housing Authorities, Jamieson Community Center, Job Corps, John Wood Community College, Ninth Judicial Circuit Court Service Department, Recovery Resources, Regional Offices of Education, Park Districts, Spoon River College, Transitional Living Program, Transitions of Western Illinois, and University of Illinois Extension Services. Other entities will be invited to participate in and coordinate with the delivery of youth services.
- **A description of how local areas will meet the minimum expenditure rate for out-of-school youth.**

To assist in meeting the minimum expenditure rate for out-of-school youth, the Youth Committee will assist in identifying youth serving agencies and developing outreach and recruitment plans. Partnerships with alternative schools and promotional materials (flyers, brochures, etc.) and social media will also be used for recruitment purposes.

LWA 14 – Western Illinois has and will continue to request the waiver to allow a 50% expenditure rate for out-of- school youth. LWA 14 contracts with the local adult education providers to provide programs to serve this youth population.

- **As part of the 2022 modification, describe how youth activities will address the impact and recovery from the COVID-19 National Health Emergency.**

Recruitment of youth remains a difficult. Through youth contractors and interagency members youth are referred to the local workforce office. Community College have utilized remote learning. Laptops are being provided to youth enrolled in classroom training. Due to the continued need for workers companies are now considering pre-apprenticeship, OJT and work experience programs. Staff continue to use social media. This type of recruitment will be expanded.

G. Provide a description of how the local area will provide services to individuals with barriers to employment⁸ as outlined in the Unified State Plan:

⁸ The term “individual with barrier to employment” means one or more of the following populations: displaced homemakers, low-income individuals, Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians, individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities, older individuals, ex-offenders, homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths, youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system, individuals who are

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

Through in-depth assessments job seekers will be provided customized services to help overcome their employment barriers. If needed referrals and co-enrollment of agencies will be utilized to provide the necessary, wrap around services needed to meet an individual's specific needs. It may also be necessary to provide additional job search resources or additional skills training through classroom training or on-the-job training.

Eligible customers identified as belonging to the priority populations designated below will be provided career and training services through the workforce office. The extent of those services will be identified in the individual employment plan. Planned service levels to the populations listed will be construed as goals rather than required minimum service levels. However, these populations are considered as members of a group or groups who face certain inequities in and access to the workforce and their participation in WIOA will be emphasized. Services to priority populations will be enhanced by WIOA partners enumerating their services and access to those services in the MOU. Also, the partner commitment to service integration as outlined in the MOU, makes it easier to access services to more than the initial partner. The Executive Committee of the WIB will review services to the following groups and appropriate modifications to the plan will be affected as particular needs are identified.

a. Dislocated workers:

Dislocated workers will be provided career and training services. Supportive services will be provided, but only to enable participation.

b. Displaced homemakers:

Displaced homemakers, who have been dependent on the income of another family member but are no longer supported by that income, is unemployed or underemployed and is experiencing difficulty in obtaining or upgrading employment, may receive assistance with funds allocated for the dislocated worker program. Displaced homemakers will be provided career and training services. Supportive services will be provided, but only to enable participation.

c. Low-income individuals:

Low-income individuals will require a complete menu of services. Supportive services will be provided to address transportation and access to technology issues associated with this group. Low-income individuals requiring additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or secure or hold employment (this includes someone who is or from a single-parent home, has limited work experience, lacks transportation or difficulty obtaining childcare / elder-care, or is a member of a family in crisis or experiencing other personal difficulties). These individuals will require a complete menu of services.

English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers, eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers, individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act, single parents, including pregnant single women, long-term unemployed individuals, and such other groups as the Governor determines to have barriers to employment (WIOA Sec. 3(24)).

Supportive services will be provided to address transportation and access to technology issues associated with this group.

d. Public assistance recipients:

Services to this group are currently coordinated with the Department of Human Services Division of Human Capital Development. Services developed under WIOA for this population will continue implementation of the multi-agency strategy of service to public assistance recipients.

e. Minorities:

In communities where minority populations experience higher than average unemployment rates, WIOA partners will continue to network with local organizations to recruit individuals to participate in employment and training programs.

f. Individuals training for nontraditional employment:

Both female and male customers will be counseled to consider areas of nontraditional employment if appropriate. Career information will be available to help individuals make informed career choices.

g. Veterans:

Veterans will be given Priority of Service and provided with a complete menu of services. Their participation will be coordinated with the IDES Veterans Representatives located at the one-stop center. Veterans will be afforded access to services in accordance with the Jobs for Veterans Act, enacted into Public Law 107-288 on November 7, 2002 and DCEO PY'10 WIA Policy Letter No. 10-PL-59.

h. Individuals with multiple barriers to employment:

Customers with multiple barriers to employment will be given the highest priority for participation in the program. It is anticipated that this population will require comprehensive services, long-term participation, and high levels of supportive services.

i. Older workers (55 years and older):

Older workers will be provided with the complete menu of services. Their participation will be coordinated with National Able, the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP). Emphasis will be placed on training programs that provide or upgrade the technical skills needed for employment in the current labor market.

j. Basic Skills Deficient individuals:

These individuals will require a complete menu of services. Supportive services will be provided to address transportation and access to technology issues associated with this group.

• **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 population to reveal where disparities and inequities exist in policies and programs.**

The Workforce Office will review demographic information to identify previously served and underserved populations, utilizing the target population summary and local serves by customer characteristics reports from the Illinois Workforce Development System. Services will be marketed in low-income areas and dissemination of program information through county Department of Human Services offices and the Adult Education and English as a foreign

language programs. Outreach will also be conducted at area high schools to make under-served populations aware of services.

It seems that data disaggregating information gathered to reveal where disparities exist and ensuring workforces are strategically located to populations most in need go hand in hand. The logical source for this information seems to be the upcoming 2020 Census. There are Census projects being undertaken throughout Illinois to ensure the greatest level of response is received and most especially, in the areas where there are pockets of hard-to-reach respondents which would relate to those most in need and should be targeted for workforce services. This information and data once obtained could be formulated and presented through regional trainings to frontline staff which will expose the equity gaps and depict areas for targeted focus.

o Developing equity goals in conjunction with the education system and prepare action plans to achieve them.

LWA 14 will convene meetings with members of the regions educational systems to identify gaps and establish goals and plans to serve underserved populations in the region.

LWA14 staff will receive periodic training on how to identify equity gaps to aid in development of strategic decisions based on data analysis and interpretation. Through the identification of equity gaps and under-served population plans will be developed to improve services to these populations.

Carl Sandburg College will continue to work with the education system to develop equity goals. Action plans will be developed in cooperation with local partners. Area agencies will continue to receive information from Carl Sandburg staff regarding available programs and opportunities at Sandburg. A major goal in this area is to make sure that all partners and potential students are aware of the wide range of assistive services available at Carl Sandburg. Carl Sandburg is in compliance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disability Act of 1990. Sandburg will continue to make classrooms and educational opportunities equally accessible to students with disabilities by providing students with tools and accommodations to remove barriers. Accommodations are available to all students. Accommodations are also available for guests of the College who would like to visit campus for a meeting or an event.

Regional Office of Education #33 will assist in monthly partner meetings taking place in Galesburg and Macomb to:

1. Develop an effective universal referral process among services
2. Invite the local service providers' frontline staff for the purpose of cross-training and collaboration between services
3. Share updates from partners and their upcoming events and needs, and brainstorming collaborative service encouraging active participation

This frequent informative meeting enables partner staff to be knowledgeable to serve the clients in equitably. For example, when a client visits ROE#33 for an adult education class and other needs are identified that could be addressed by local partners, the ROE#33 frontline staff knows where to refer the client.

John Wood Community College Adult Education programs aim to provide equity in education by providing instruction and support services based on students' individual needs to increase the likelihood of success for each learner. Career pathway plans are developed with each adult learner providing opportunities to closely coordinate services with partner agencies. Regular frontline staff training provides more timely referrals and opportunities to identify gaps in service provision.

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

LWA 14 will work in conjunction with high schools and community colleges to offer career fairs and provide information on careers in STEM fields.

WIOA partners will work collectively to determine the best practices for goal development in the education system and prepare action plans that are best suited for their specific area needs. Once this is accomplished, how to expose more students to STEM opportunities can be also determined and advanced; again, working collaboratively with the focus on where there is the greatest need and promoting through the best means in the unique educational system to the area. This same method can be used for adult educational focus, targeting the greatest need and utilizing the community college/university/workforce delivery system to the greatest advantage.

Carl Sandburg College hosts a TRIO Upward Bound Math-Science program which promotes students to explore careers in the STEM fields. The program, which serves Abingdon-Avon, Galesburg, Knoxville, Monmouth-Roseville, and ROWVA school districts in Knox and Warren Counties, is designed to help high school students excel in secondary and post-secondary education. The program serves 60 area high school students, grades 9-12 on an annual basis. Once a student has been selected to participate in the program, he or she will continue to receive Upward Bound Math-Science (UBMS) services throughout their high school career.

UBMS provides services to students throughout the year to encourage personal and academic development. Program staff focus on engaging workshops and guest speakers who can introduce a variety of STEM careers. Rising sophomores and juniors attend a 6- week summer program with additional instruction in the fields of Math, Science, Literature, and Foreign Language. The summer program appeals to the high school students because of the individualized course instruction and interactive experiments and activities. Each spring, participants are given the opportunity to visit local colleges where they interact with their math/science faculty and participate in hands-on activities in their labs. UBMS females who meet the cumulative GPA requirements are also invited to attend the Women in STEM leadership conference in May of each year. This conference is held on a college campus in the Chicagoland area and includes other high school women from across the country. The students can live in a college residence hall, network with professionals, and learn from one another.

JWCC hosts a summer academy (JDUB Academy) at each of their campus locations throughout the region annually (Quincy, Pittsfield, and Mt. Sterling). This summer program is for students in

grades K-12 and gives area youth an opportunity to have fun while exploring a variety of academic programs with a special focus on STEM. The JDUB Academy is open to all students, regardless of academic or socioeconomic status. A special business and industry scholarship has been developed with area business partners and is offered to students who meet established income guidelines. Instructor teaching credentials are not required; however, a special focus is placed on recruiting existing college and K-12 instructors from area schools. The JDUB Academy gives students a chance to explore courses in the following areas: Engineering, Robotics, Welding, Math, Chemistry, Aeronautics, Art, Music Appreciation, Renewable Energy, Veterinarian Medicine, Foreign Language, Health Sciences, Computer Science, Culinary Arts, Photography, Leadership, Adventure and Emergency Services.

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

Workforce program mentoring will be included in internship positions and work experience for adults & older youth. Direct mentoring with seasoned employees in internships will aid interns in “real world situations” and workforce preparation.

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

Workforce has offices located in eight of the nine counties that comprise the LWA 14 service area and participate in all available interagency councils to make services available to all populations.

Carl Sandburg College currently offers classes at the Main Campus in Galesburg, the Branch Campus in Carthage, Illinois and at the Annex in downtown Galesburg. In addition, a wide range of online offerings are available. The College is continually monitoring the needs of the community and will not hesitate to expand the locations where classes are offered or the methods of delivery as needs arise. Using the comparative as listed above, strategic approaches to specific locations can be delivered.

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

Spoon River College is a sponsor of a relatively new program called “Girls Unplugged”. This program targets middle school aged girls of all populations in order to educate them on the opportunities available in the STEM fields. These are often careers considered non-traditional for girls. This program is currently being piloted at Ingersoll Middle School in Canton, IL.

John Wood Community College has a Cultural Diversity Club (CDC) dedicated to raising awareness of the various cultures present at JWCC and of other cultures around the world. This organization is open to all students, staff, and faculty who are interested in sharing information

about their world and learning more about the world around them. The organization deals with issues that are prevalent in all cultures, such as the many forms of discrimination or prejudice, and it explores the differences that separate people, such as religion, language, and customs. John Wood Community College received the Quincy Area Chamber of Commerce Inaugural Diversity and Inclusion Award for commitment to inclusive programs and intentional efforts to make all feel welcome and valued.

Two major high school outreach events are held each year. Makerfest provides high school students with an exposure to Manufacturing and Logistics careers, approximately 400 HS students from within our district as well as outside our district attend this event. We also offer a Healthcare EXPO that attracts approximately 200 HS students. Besides these two major events, we attend multiple career days at the High Schools. We are a member of the Adams County work team that has developed a mentoring program that is being used by businesses in our area. We continue to provide professional development opportunities for our workforce staff. Workforce services are provided at JWCC as well as the One Stop location.

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 (WIOA Policy Chapter 8, Section 4⁹);**

The WIB Executive Committee, Chief Elected Officials Consortium and staff track the adult and dislocated worker expenditures to verify that the training minimum will be met. Staff will make any necessary changes throughout the year to ensure results will be obtained prior to the end of the program year.

- **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 activities will help individuals with minimal work history to establish some degree of work history and better enable them to secure unsubsidized employment that will meet their needs. Work experience will be provided to individuals to help develop work habits and build a resume. Workforce staff will use a public sector database to help identify Work Experience opportunities and develop outreach and recruitment plans.

Internships within the private sector will provide work-based learning for those in training.

The WIB utilizes the Economic Development Entities in Western Illinois to assist with the recruitment of private sector work-based learning sites. Staff develop both public and private sector sites. Career Specialists coordinated internship opportunities with the community colleges.

- **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**

⁹ <https://apps.il-work-net.com/WIOAPolicy/Policy/Index/250>

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

See Attachment B

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

The Workforce Innovation Board of Western Illinois (WIB) has adopted WIOA NOTICE NO. 20-NOT-8, Change 2 dated February 14, 2022, as the official training provider approval policy for LWA 14.

If there is a reason to submit a program not included on the state demand occupation list for consideration, the WIB Executive Committee will review the documentation supporting the Demand Occupation Petition and approve the request to submit the program for review and approval.

Once determined eligible, the provider may submit individual programs via a Training Program Record in IWDS (<http://iwds.state.il.us>), as outlined in Attachment A to 15-WIOA-5.3. They must link the program to a demand occupation. The provider must comply with all non-discrimination and equal opportunity provisions. The WIB Executive Committee takes action on a submitted program within 30 days.

Through the Program Evaluation tool in IWDS, each program under each eligible provider is evaluated according to the following standards yearly:

- The program must show a minimum of 10 exiters to be held to performance standards. Once the 10 exiter threshold is reached, the minimum requirements are:
 - 40% for Entered Employment
 - 40% for Retained Employment
 - \$2,000 in Earnings
 - 20% in Credential Attainment

If a program does not meet any one of these measures, it will be considered to FAIL performance and must be removed from the Training Provider List for at least one year. Training providers are notified yearly of their list of currently approved programs and the performance evaluation results. Training programs may be excluded from the TPL if there is not local need for the program. If any training provider provides false information in relation to any aspect of the training program record or data collection, the program/provider could be removed from the TPL as well.

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

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

The Executive Committee of the WIB approves the transfer of funds on behalf of the WIB. Approval is based on the demand for services. LWA 14 has a policy of transferring funds to address a waiting list for training. The transfer of funds is also approved by the Chief Elected Officials Consortium.

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

The WIB utilizes both adult and dislocated work funds to provide incumbent worker services. The Executive Committee on behalf of the WIB approves the percentage of funds designated for incumbent worker training. The source of funds is based on the demand for individual training. In recent years adult eligible individuals have utilized ITA's and dislocated workers have shown minimal demand, so incumbent worker training has been funded through the dislocated worker allocation.

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

The Executive Committee, on behalf of the WIB, designates 5% of the adult funds for transitional employment. These funds will be targeted to individuals requiring the benefit of a work experience program to establish a work history and references. For example, as a recipient of one of the National Dislocated Worker Opioid Crisis grants, the transitional employment program will be available to assist individuals in treatment recovery programs ready for employment.

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

Currently LWA 14 does not have performance-based contracts. If this changes, WIOA Sec. 133(b) (2-3) will be followed.

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, 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).

LWA 14 will continue to utilize the Partners website for recruitment and referral. Social media presence and connection with the library system will be enhanced.

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)

An equity lens will be developed that will contain the standard elements of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Any plan considered will include equity dimensions of involvement, process, values and assumptions, and outcomes, from a perspective that highlights how practices hold potential to shift power toward inclusion and equity.

CHAPTER 5: PERFORMANCE GOALS AND EVALUATION – LOCAL COMPONENT

The plan must include information on the actions the Local Board will take toward becoming or remaining a high performing board, consistent with the factors developed by the State Board (WIOA Sec. 101(d)(6)) and (§ 679.560(b)(17)). LWIAs are required to provide *updated* information and analysis noting any significant impacts 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.

Finally, the local area needs to utilize Social Media more than what has been done in the past. Social Media is a low-cost strategy to reach the rural areas and to recruit younger adults. The LWIA 14 partners now have a Facebook page with information about apprenticeships, job training, youth services, and job search activities to improve access to programs and services.

LWIA 14 partners have developed a referral process between partners that helps to provide a seamless delivery of services while tracking the outcomes for the participant.

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

LWA 14 performance measures are as follows:

Performance Year :	2020	2021
Youth Employment Rate Q2 (YER2) :	75.0%	75.0%
Youth Employment Rate Q4 (YER4) :	74.0%	74.0%
Youth Median Earnings Rate Q2 (YMER) :	\$3,275.00	\$3,275.00
Youth Credential Attainment Rate (YCAR) :	78.0%	78.0%
Youth Measurable Skills Gain (YMSG) :	39.0%	39.0%
Adult Employment Rate Q2 (AER2) :	82.0%	82.0%
Adult Employment Rate Q4 (AER4) :	75.0%	75.0%
Adult Median Earnings Rate Q2 (AMER) :	\$6,500.00	\$6,500.00
Adult Credential Attainment Rate (ACAR) :	80.0%	80.0%
Adult Measurable Skills Gain (AMSG) :	52.0%	52.0%

DW Employment Rate Q2 (DER2) :	82.0%	82.0%
DW Employment Rate Q4 (DER4) :	82.0%	82.0%
DW Median Earnings Rate Q2 (DMER) :	\$7,000.00	\$7,000.00
DW Credential Attainment Rate (DCAR) :	80.0%	80.0%
DW Measurable Skills Gain (DMSG) :	43.5%	43.5%

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?**

There are numerous service delivery strategies that are necessary for the nine rural counties in LWIA 14 to be successful. With the diversity of counties, the WIB is interested in comparing the Economic Impact county to county. What works in one county will not work in all counties so there is not a specific strategy for the region. Some strategies that were in their infancy in 2020 were delayed or discontinued due to COVID.

One strategy that continues is working with the NAACP and faith-based organizations in reaching out to the minority communities. Over forty-six per cent of African Americans in the area are below poverty. Several projects have been started in working with the NAACP. A new strategy will be to reach out to the faith-based organizations in the area in addition to the NAACP.

Finally, the local area needs to utilize Social Media more than what has been done in the past. Social Media is a low-cost strategy to reach the rural areas and to recruit younger adults.

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

At the present time there are no service delivery strategies that will be curtailed or eliminated.

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

The Workforce Innovation Board of Western Illinois will be examining how they can better partner and utilize the resources of the United States Department of Agriculture. The region/local area is part of the Tri-State Region with Northeast Missouri and Southeast Iowa. This area has been designated by USDA as a Great Region for its community's regional approach to creating economic opportunity and job creation in rural communities, yet little has been done to foster the unique partnerships and consortium opportunities for the communities in the Tri-State Region.

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

According to the article, “Evaluating Workforce Programs: A Guide to What Policymakers Need to Know to Structure Effective, User-Friendly Evaluations” by Kripicio, Mabe, and Yarborough that was published on September 2011, for the John J. Helkdrich Center for Workforce Development; the ultimate goal of any workforce program is to help an individual find, keep, or get promoted in a job. The local area will utilize out-come based evaluations to assist in evaluating the return on investment.

Information on individuals enrolled in the program will be collected and analyzed. The local area will analyze unsuccessful participants to determine goals were not completed and how the program design could be altered to support the individual to achieve their goals. Only by identifying what prohibits participants from completing their program goals can a local area see what changes need to be made. Were the participants unsuccessful due to personal issues, supportive services that are needed but not being met, is a better assessment needed to assist participants in selecting their career pathway, or other factors?

At the same time, outcome data will be collected on the successful completer. Both the unsuccessful and successful completers training program, and training provider will be noted while gathering the information to see if there is a trend.

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

While LWIA 14 is collecting out-come based data the WIB will be working with additional partners/agencies to help in improving the supportive services infrastructure. By working together to braid funding of our current and newly identified partners/agencies, additional supportive services will be available for participants.

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

The Workforce Partners are committed to creating a quality, flexible and responsive workforce development system that meets the needs of both the employer and the job-seeker customer. The partners will continuously seek the input of our customers to assure the system is responsive to customer needs; Ensure that the delivery of services is physically, geographically and programmatically accessible to all. There is an expectation that the system will continuously improve the delivery of services by providing staff with the necessary tools to achieve these goals.

Partners are committed to the vision statement and have addressed the physical, geographic, and programmatic accessibility of services both in the One-Stop Center and at partner locations throughout the system. Each partner will address tailoring programs to meet the needs of each county.

These activities are reported to the local WIB and to the WIOA Partners at the regularly scheduled meetings.

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 Covid-19 Pandemic reduced the amount of face-to-face contact with customers. While virtual contact kept programs operating, it was difficult to provide the same level of services. Also, it was extremely difficult to quantify the level of customer satisfaction during this period. Although the Covid-19 pandemic has limited some in-person communication and connections, it has also caused state and local agencies to look “outside the box” and develop new ways to reach out to customers. Through the expansion of both state and local virtual job fairs, our region is making advances to distribute employment opportunities to aid the connection of job seekers with employers in a faster, safe and more convenient way. In these next two years, the Workforce Office will take measured steps forward, in-line with the State’s COVID-19 guidance, to reach out more to both job seekers and employers and increase their connection to aid in bringing the local economy along in recovery.

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

LWA 14 will continue to review the data to identify underserved populations. Recruitment efforts will be expanded to include new partners with connections to the individuals in these communities

CHAPTER 6: TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS AND ASSURANCES – LOCAL COMPONENT

This chapter includes the technical requirements and assurances that are required by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA Sec. 121 (c)(2)(iv)). Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA Sec. 121 (c)(2)(iv)). 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) (§ 679.560(b)(14)).**

Western Illinois Works, Inc.

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

See Attachment A

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 (§ 679.560(b)(5)(iii)).**

Section 188 of the Workforce Innovative and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014, Title 29 CFR Part 38, Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity (EO) Regulations is fulfilled through policies and procedures established by the United States Department of Labor and Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. The LWA 14 designated EO Officer is responsible for local monitoring and assurance of compliance with WIOA Section 188 Non-discrimination and Equal Opportunity Regulations. Equal Opportunity policies and procedures are in place to assure LWA 14 staff are knowledgeable and efficient with their delivery of services as they assist and address the needs of individuals with disabilities. Regular communication, collaboration, and cooperation between the WIOA Partners helps to form a secure basis that enables LWA 14 to fulfill our obligations under WIOA Section 188 Regulations. WIOA Partners will work with customers, including those with disabilities, to overcome any barriers to employment and self-sufficiency. Cross training of front-line staff is part of the one-stop plan for PY 2020 so that WIOA Partners will have awareness of each other's basic services and can provide accurate information and guidance to all customers. WIOA Partners, through the MOU, attest that all programs are accessible throughout the area and all service delivery sites are physically accessible.

In May 2020, the State's Office of Equal Opportunity Monitoring and Compliance suspended on-site EO/ADA monitoring due to the corona virus pandemic. To assist the State Office in conducting desk reviews and remain in compliance with the State's nondiscrimination plan, the State disseminated self-assessment tool forms which were completed and compiled for submission by the LWA 14 Local Equal Opportunity Officer. These forms included a Self-Evaluation Tool which was completed by the LWA 14 Local Equal Opportunity Officer and a WIOA Contractor and Provider ADA Evaluation which was sent to and completed by training providers. Due to the continued nature of the corona virus pandemic, the State's Office of Equal Opportunity Monitoring and Compliance again suspended on-site EO/ADA monitoring in September 2021 until further notice. Forms like the year before were again provided by the State and completed and compiled by the LWA 14 Local Equal Opportunity Officer. Future scheduling of local EO monitoring will be coordinated and conducted in accordance with further guidance from the State's Office of Equal Opportunity Monitoring and Compliance.

The LWA 14 Local EO Officer and staff participation in virtual trainings related to Equal Opportunity and Accessibility has progressed since the beginning of the corona virus pandemic. As with other facets of training, technology has enhanced the accessibility of EO-related virtual trainings, and LWA 14 will likely continue to utilize these and potentially even more advanced training schemes in a post-pandemic time period

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

Not Applicable

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 (§ 679.560(b)(19)).**

The draft plan was posted on the WIB's website: www.wiworkforce.com. Two public hearings were held on March 9, 2022, via Zoom. Public Notices were placed in the Galesburg, Macomb and Quincy papers. WIB members, CEO members and partner organizations were notified of the Public Comment Period and the Public Hearing.

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

No public comments were received.

- **Provide information regarding the regional and local plan modification procedures.**

Modifications to the Plan will comply with state guidance.

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

LWA 14 will continue to recruit community-based organizations with connections to underserved populations.

ATTACHMENT A

PROCUREMENT POLICY

The fiscal agent shall be responsible for effecting appropriate regulations and procedures for securing services, supplies, and equipment at the lowest possible cost consistent with satisfactory standards for quality and service. The fiscal agent, in accordance with good administrative practices, is responsible for settlement of all contractual and administrative issues arising out of procurement in support of a grant. These include, but are not limited to, source evaluation, protests, disputes, and claims. Violations of law will be referred to local, State, or Federal authority having proper jurisdiction.

CODE OF CONDUCT

The fiscal agent in order to maintain the integrity of the expenditure of public funds and to avoid any questionable or improper conduct will take every reasonable course of action. The expenditure of funds will be administered in an impartial manner, free from personal, financial or political gain. The fiscal agent's executive staff and employees will avoid situations, which give rise to suggestions that any decision was influenced by prejudice, bias, special interest or personal gain. Staff members in a position to make or influence a procurement decision in which that person has an economic interest are required to disqualify themselves from participation in procurement decisions. Conflict of interest standards may be violated whenever improper participation occurs, regardless of outcome.

Members of the Workforce Innovation Board of Western Illinois and the Chief Elected Officials Consortium of Western Illinois, standing committee, board subcommittee or workgroup convened to advise and/or participate in board activities must neither participate in any decision-making capacity, nor cast a vote on, or contribute to any part of an evaluation process (developing criteria, scoring, reviewing responses) for the provision of services by such member, or any organization which that member directly represents, or such members' general partner or outside business endeavor, or any organization that the member serves on or is an employee of that business or organization. Nor on any matter which would provide any direct financial benefit to that member or that member's immediate family defined as member's spouse, member's children, and member's brother or sister.

Persons and entities involved in the competitive process to select a one-stop operator using Federal funds must be free of apparent or real conflicts of interest. Under the Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR 200.318(c)(1), conflicts of interest would arise when the employee, officer, or agent, any member of his or her immediate family, his or her partner, or an organization which employs or is about to employ any of the parties

indicated has a financial or other interest or a tangible personal benefit from a firm considered for a contract.

Consistent with WIOA sec. 121(d)(4)(A), disclosure of any real or apparent conflict of interest, whether individual, or organizational. Written standards of conduct must identify the process for recusal of individuals or organizations that are members of the WIB who disclose a real or apparent conflict of interest.

As specified in 20 CFR 678.610(c) and in conformity with 20 CFR 679.430 for demonstrating internal controls and preventing conflict of interest, the written standards of conduct must include a description of the use of firewalls to mitigate conflict of interest in circumstances including, but not limited to, situations where an entity acts in more than one role in the one-stop delivery system or performs more than one function in the procurement process, as well as situations where the non-Federal entity uses a sole source selection.

TRANSPARENCY AND RESPONSIBILITY

The entire procurement process must be performed under a process that promotes transparency and responsibility from the planning phase to the closeout phase.

The Western Illinois Works officers, employees, or agents shall neither solicit nor accept gratuities from service providers/contractors or potential service providers / contractors.

All procurement transactions shall be conducted in a manner that provides open and free competition. Competition accomplishes key objectives and assures that prices paid are reasonable, encourages innovation and quality, and supports the integrity and independence in selection procedures.

Information the WIB is required to make available to the public includes written conflict of interest policy, procurement policies, the procurement solicitation, entities that have submitted bids or proposals, an abstract of those bids or proposals, the identity of the selected one-stop operator, and total award amount and duration of the contract with the one-stop operator. Such awards and contracts will be posted on the WIB's website, as required.

SELECTION PROCEDURES

Procurement procedures shall not restrict or eliminate competition.

Solicitation of offers shall incorporate a clear and accurate description of the technical requirements for the services to be procured. The description shall include a statement of the qualitative nature of services to be procured and establish standards to which the service must conform. All requirements to be fulfilled and all factors to be used in the evaluation of proposals shall be clearly stated in solicitation of offers.

Awards shall be made to service providers that demonstrate the ability to meet objectives of proposed procurement.

Primary consideration in the selection of agencies or organization will be the effectiveness of the agency or organization in delivering services based on demonstrated performance. Such a determination shall be made in writing and criteria may include adequate financial resources; ability to meet the program design specifications at a reasonable cost; the ability to meet performance goals; a satisfactory record of past performance; a satisfactory record of integrity, business ethics, and fiscal accountability; necessary organization accounting and operational controls, and the technical skills to perform the work. Consideration in selection of agencies or organizations may be given to agencies or organizations that may be considered high risk.

Criteria determination of high-risk status may include history of unsatisfactory performance; financially unstable; has not conformed to terms and conditions of previous award; has a management system which does not meet the regulations. If the agency or organization is determined to be high risk, special funding restrictions that address the high-risk status may be included in the award. The agency or organization will be notified in writing of the funding restrictions, the reasons for imposing them, the corrective actions that must be completed before they will be removed and the timeframe for completing corrective action, and the method of requesting consideration of the restrictions imposed. Funding restrictions may include but are not limited to: payment on a reimbursement basis; additional monitoring; establishing additional prior approvals, requiring additional and/or more detailed financial or performance reports.

Proper consideration will be given to community-based organizations, appropriate education agencies, and training programs operated by the private sector in occupations for which demand exceed supply.

Prior to releasing procurement awards the Excluded Parties List System (EPLS) and the System for Award Management (SAM) must be reviewed to confirm the bidding agencies are approved for consideration. The Excluded Parties List System includes information regarding the entities debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, excluded or disqualified under the non-procurement common rule, or otherwise declared ineligible from receiving Federal contracts, certain subcontracts, and certain Federal assistance and benefits. This information may include names, addresses, DUNS numbers, Social Security Numbers, Employer Identification Numbers or other Taxpayer Identification Numbers, if available and deemed appropriate and permissible to publish by the agency taking the action. The Excluded Parties List System may be accessed at www.sam.gov.

Both current and potential federal grantees are required to register in System for Award Management in order to receive Grants.gov-advertised grant awards, Recovery Act funds, or any other federal financial assistance by the federal government. Potential grantees may be private non-profit agencies, educational organizations, state and regional agencies, etc. Grantees are required to complete a one-time registration to provide basic information relevant to procurement and financial transactions. Registrants must update or renew their registrations at least once per year to maintain an active status. System for Award Management may be accessed at www.sam.gov.

Consideration in the selection of training programs will be given to:

Training in occupations determined to be in sectors of the economy that have high potential for sustained demand or growth.

Development of programs which contribute to occupational development, upward mobility, development of new careers, overcoming sex stereotyping in occupations traditional for the opposite sex.

Commercially available training packages, including advance technology, may be purchased for off the shelf prices, if such packages are purchased competitively and include performance criteria.

Appropriate education agencies shall have the opportunity to provide educational services, unless it is demonstrated that alternative agencies would be more effective. Standards and procedures with respect to awarding of academic credit and certifying educational attainment in programs conducted shall be consistent with all requirements of applicable Federal, State and local laws and regulations.

The fiscal agent shall not fund any occupational skills training program unless the level of skills provided in the program are in accordance with guidelines established by the Workforce Board.

Funds shall not be used to duplicate facilities or services available in the area, unless it is demonstrated that alternative services or facilities would be more effective.

No funds will be used for public service employment, sectarian activities, customized or skill training at a relocating establishment, and on-the-job training resulting from a displaced employee.

A list shall be maintained of potential service providers who have expressed an interest, in writing, in being considered for awards. All potential service providers, who have expressed an interest, shall be sent requests for proposals for the area or areas of service for which they wish to be considered.

Every effort will be made by the fiscal agent to assure that small and minority firms and women's business enterprises be utilized whenever possible. Qualified small and minority firms and women's business enterprises will be placed on solicitation lists and notified whenever they are potential sources. Consideration will be given dividing total requirements and to establishing delivery schedules in solicitations to accommodate and/or encourage participations by small and minority businesses and women's business enterprises.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

As a condition to the award of funding under WIOA from the Department of Labor, the Contractor assures, with respect to operation of the WIOA-funded training or activity, that it will comply fully with the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions in Sec. 188 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998; USDOL Regulation 29 CFR Part 38, as amended; USDOL Regulations at 29 CFR Parts 31 and 32, including the Nontraditional Employment for Women Act of 1991; Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 as amended; the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987; Executive Order 12250; Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967; Federal Equal Pay Act of 1963; Illinois Equal Pay Act of 2003; U.S. Department of Labor Regulations at 28 CFR Part 42, Subparts F & H; Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended Victims Economic Security and Safety Act; the Veterans' Priority Provisions of the "*Jobs for Veterans Act*", Public Law 107-288.

RIGHT TO APPEAL

Any respondent who has submitted a response to the RFA may appeal the decision of the contract award. The process for appealing the decision is as follows:

All protest, appeal or complaints must be submitted in writing via email to LWA14 at lwa14@grics.net within (5) working days of the award announcement. The appeal must include justification for the appeal in the request. The appeals process will allow for a hearing, if requested, and a decision will be made within ten (10) working days of the appeal submission.

TYPES OF PROCUREMENT

Service providers shall be selected by one of the following methods: non-competitive proposals, competitive proposals, sealed bids, or small purchase procedures in accordance with the procedures listed below.

Non-Competitive Proposals

Non-competitive proposals may be used only when the award of a contract does not conform to small purchase, sealed bids or competitive proposals and one of the following circumstances exists:

- a. The Provider / contractor is determined to be the only known source available to perform the work as required.
- b. A public emergency for the requirement will not permit delay in implementation resulting from competitive solicitation.
- c. After solicitation of a number of sources, competition is determined inadequate.

In the event that attempts at securing a minimum of two (2) responsive offers fail and it is determined that competition is inadequate, it is required that arms-length negotiations on technical cost aspects be carried out and documented. A written record of the negotiating process should be maintained sufficient to demonstrate that the objectives of lowest price, fairness, impartiality, and independence have been appropriately safeguarded in the absence of competition.

Competitive Proposals

Service Providers shall be selected by requests for proposals, requests for application, or invitations for bid. The solicitation process will be carried out in a manner so as not to directly or indirectly limit the bidding to any one bidder. A minimum of three (3) bids will be secured and the absence of three (3) bids will require justification. Competitive bidding may be conducted formally or informally, depending upon the circumstances. All competitive bids are publicly solicited. Agencies identified on the service provider listing will be sent copies of the solicitation documents for the areas in which they have expressed an interest. Advertisements will be placed in the appropriate local paper and public service announcements may be made in the media. If appropriate, bids shall be opened publicly at the time and place specified in the solicitation documents. Any and all bids may be rejected if the bidders cannot demonstrate ability to meet the requirements of the solicitation documents. The fiscal agent must notify unsuccessful bidders within thirty (30) days of the decision. Competitive bid threshold is \$150,000.00.

Request for proposal (RFP)

The RFP is appropriate when there are no established standards associated with the performance of a service or program requirement. The RFP's statement of work will clearly define the service to be performed by means of specifications or minimum requirements, quantities, performance dates, and a statement of quality expected. The development of the RFP will include how consideration will be allocated between price and quality of service, the method of conducting technical evaluations of proposals received and selection of procedures for awardees. The responsible bidder is determined to have the qualifications, competency, experience, technical and financial resources to carry out the work as stated and expected. The response to solicitation documents must be in accordance with the instructions and requirements of documents, including responding by using a required format. The award would be made to the responsible bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the program with price

and other factors considered, except that any and all proposals may be rejected if the potential bidder cannot meet the requirements of the RFP.

Invitation for BID (IFB)

An invitation for bid (IFB) consists of a publicly solicited offer for a firm-fixed-price contract. The solicitation document contains a precise statement of work and complete specifications of work to be performed. The IFB is appropriate for use when purchasing services for which there is a known industry/professional standard governing the quality and tests for acceptability for the work to be performed. The service provider's qualifications, terms, conditions, and requirements are stated, permitting only one interpretation. Bid comparisons and provider selections are based solely on the basis of price. Agencies identified on the service provider list will be sent copies of the IFB, when appropriate. The IFB will be advertised in the appropriate local newspaper a minimum of ten (10) working days prior to the bid submission due date. Bids shall be opened publicly at the time and place specified in the IFB. If appropriate, an award shall be made by written notice to the bidder whose bid meets the specifications of the IFB, including responding by using a required format, and is the lowest in price received. Any and all bids may be rejected if the bidders cannot demonstrate or meet the conditions of the IFB.

ONE STOP OPERATOR

Information about the selection and certification of the one-stop operators will be made available to the public on a regular basis through electronic means and open meetings (WIOA secs. 101(g) and 107(e)) and made available to auditors and Federal reviewers. Information will be posted to the WIB website.

When selecting a one-stop operator, awards will be made to responsible entities that possess the ability to successfully perform under the terms and conditions of the proposed procurement. Consideration will be given to the entity's integrity, compliance with public policy, record of past performance, and financial and technical resources (2 CFR 200.318(h)).

OSO Selection Timeline:

Spring 2017 – OSO operator RFA issued.

July 1, 2017 – Selection process completed, and contract issued.

June 1, 2018 – Performance review completed, and contract extended thru June 30, 2019.

Spring 2019 – OSO operator RFA issued.

RIGHT TO APPEAL

Appeals will follow the LWA 14 process. One Stop Operator selection appeals may be submitted to the Executive Committee of the WIB.

BIDDER'S CONFERENCE

A bidder's conference may be held for competitive procurement following public announcement in the local paper, WIB website and/or in the solicitation package. The purpose of the bidder's conference is to clarify the proposal request document and to respond to questions. If new or correcting information is given during the conference, it will be made available to all who received the solicitation package.

EVALUATION OF BID RESPONSE

An evaluation tool will be developed for each proposal. The fiscal agent will complete the evaluation too. The fiscal agent will conduct research as necessary to evaluate the proposals. The Fiscal Agent prohibits the use of imposed in state or local geographical preferences in the evaluations of bids or proposals except in those cases where applicable Federal statutes expressly mandate or encourage preference. The primary consideration in selection of agencies or organizations will be the effectiveness of the agency or organization in delivering services based on demonstrated performance. Criteria for performance may include, but are not limited to, ability to meet performance goals; quality of training; characteristics of participants; and cost. Each eligible proposal will be reviewed, and a proposal review summary will be completed and attached to the proposal. A cost or price analysis will be performed with each procurement action. The method or degree of analysis for each procurement action is dependent upon the facts surrounding the solicitation. Independent estimates may be made prior to the receipt of bids or proposals based on catalog or market prices of commercial products sold in substantial quantities to the public. All cost will be evaluated to determine they are allowable, reasonable, and necessary.

The fiscal agent will maintain records, which detail the history of procurement. The records will include but are not limited to: method of procurement and criteria for selection or rejection of a service provider.

Information contained in the proposals submitted by offerors/bidders is maintained in a manner that is confidential, to avoid the use of the information to another offeror/bidder's advantage and to prevent collusive bidding.

Attachment B:

LOCAL WORKFORCE AREA 14
WESTERN ILLINOIS

Individual Training Account (ITA) Policy

ITA authorizations will be based on the cost of each training program.

The ITA will include the costs for tuition, books, fees and supplies.

Participants must apply for financial aid unless the program does not qualify for financial assistance.

Pell grants will be used for training-related costs that exceeds \$15,000.00 unless extenuating circumstances warrant an exception.

Effective date: August 4, 2016

Blanche Shoup, Director