

**2020 – 2024**  
**Workforce and Innovation Opportunity Act**  
**(WIOA)**

*EGR 1 – Northwest Indiana Workforce Board*

*Regional Plan*

*1/20/2021*

*Updated 9/30/2022*

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*\*Please update the Table of Contents prior to sending the plan to DWD.*

**Attachment A - WIOA Local/Regional Plan**  
**Workforce Development Board (WDB) Approval**

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I certify that the information contained herein is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and I submit this plan on behalf of the WDB listed above.			
This plan is approved for the Workforce Development Board by the Workforce Development Board Chair.			
Name:			
Title:			
Signature:		Date:	<a href="#">Click here to enter a date.</a>

## Optional Executive Summary

ES. Each local area may submit an executive summary of their plan, if desired; not to exceed 2 pages in length.

The Northwest Indiana Local Workforce Plan is an evolution of strategy development informed by labor market realities, partner relationships, emerging technologies, and knowledge of best practices. The plan period of 2020-2024 is a critical period for the workforce development system, both locally and regionally, as the nation has settled into what some describe as “the new normal.” The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in an economic and workplace calamity, shutting down entire industries for extended periods of time and changing the way every business operates. The economy had improved greatly since the recession of 2008, yet this pandemic has erased many of the gains made since during what was the longest economic expansion in the modern age. This new normal has presented the region with a number of challenges, but also many new opportunities.

The past few years of the recovery was characterized by young people and adults making gains economically after struggling to succeed for many years and employers having difficulty finding workers for job openings as unemployment sank to new lows and the size of the regions labor force declined. A local workforce development system must deal with both issues simultaneously and engage a broad array of partners and stakeholders in doing so.

The system must also balance the relationship between highly localized delivery of services to individuals and economies that are predominantly regional. In the case of Northwest Indiana, regional includes the influence of Chicago in economic growth strategies, certainly including issues of industry sectors, transportation, and skills demand in the multi-state area. The plan that follows is Northwest Indiana’s unique approach to rising to the challenges of the next five years. While the region may have been “forged in steel,” its economic future depends on creating a culture of lifelong learning required for a diversified economy with high-wage jobs. The plan is built on that premise.

The Northwest Indiana plan recognizes that meeting these challenge with require that both youth and adults must acquire new skills and credentials, and that the core partners defined by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) are necessary but not sufficient to address the totality of need. With that in mind, the Northwest Indiana Workforce Board (NWIWB) has worked to expand its influence in the region by joining with key partners to agree on collective impact goals and on the roles each organization will play in achieving the goals. In 2018, the Workforce Board joined with regional partners including economic development, education, community development to launch IGNITE the Region, Northwest Indiana’s Plan for Economic Transformation. This regional economic plan brought disparate groups together to work in five key areas, with the Board leading the “Talent” pillar of the plan. Then in 2020, the NWIWB and key regional partners in education, economic development, and social services took the next step of applying for, and securing a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Talent Region designation in the region. This coordinated strategy seeks to ensure every student is on

a learning path to adult prosperity, every adult Hoosier has access to training aligned to work with future growth opportunities and every employer has the tools they need to recruit, train and retain talent.

The following provides key drivers for the Northwest Indiana Local Plan, categorized by those function:

***Provide Employment Services***

- Provide innovation in access to jobs via virtual, non-linear, and experiential (OJT, work experience, internships) processes
- Increased communication of career opportunities and training pathways to all audiences
- Enhancement of the WorkOne brand, as part of the American Job Centers network, as the go-to place for information and assistance, to include increased access points at partner sites

***Provide Education & Training***

- Create credentials valued by employers on a sector-by-sector basis with condensed pathways leading to job entry
- Integrate work-based learning into career pathways so that employers are full participants in training, not just recipients, and also provide trainees with more earn-and-learn options
- Integrate foundational skills (soft skills) and remediation into occupational training in order to increase post-secondary retention rates and job placement success

***Offer Supportive Services***

- Provide a holistic approach in addressing customers' needs in the WorkOne system, particularly in addressing high-priority/high-need customers
- Provide intrusive case management to address early warning signals that can disrupt training and employment plans
- Support customers during early stages of job placement to address issues that can lead to losing jobs if not addressed

***Support Employers' Human Resources Needs***

- Provide direct assistance to employers via Business Services Representatives who specialize in specific industry sectors
- Develop targeted recruitment strategies that draw from WorkOne candidates and from the broader network of education and training partners
- Expand incumbent worker training approaches, to include backfilling of jobs with new candidates from the WorkOne network

***Develop & Coordinate Workforce Strategies & Policies***

- Work with the broader network of local partners via the regular convening of workforce partners to focus on common metrics and clarification of roles and responsibilities
- Continue to strengthen the development of local talent pipeline via the READY NWI education and employer partners to increase college/career readiness of K-12 students, college retention and success, and connections to local employers to retain talent in the region
- Strengthen and expand the WorkOne partners through regular coordination and strategy meetings, shared data, and shared expectations

***Provide Funding & Resources to Support the System***

- Provide efficiencies in the system by "blending and braiding" funding sources to maximize impact and allow customers to take full advantage of all resources available
- Continue to diversify funding sources from private and public sources to support both community planning and high-priority programs; special emphasis will be placed on identifying and acquiring funding to meet skill needs identified by employer sectors,
- Work with the READY NWI education partners to develop new funding partnerships that expand on success in acquiring funds from the Indiana Department of Education and the College Board

***Improve Job Quality & Access***

- Work closely with the Northwest Indiana Forum and local economic development partners to identify and develop skill pathways that attract companies with high-quality jobs to the region
- Develop career pathways that lead to high-wage jobs within industry sectors
- Form partnership with and give priority of service to employers in the region who demonstrate a commitment to exceptional human resources practices.

The Northwest Indiana Local Plan provides a solid foundation for addressing the challenges and seizing the opportunities on the next five years. With the commitment of local partners, it also recognizes that adjustments will need to be made to adjust to rapidly changing economic conditions and changing priorities of federal, state, and local government leaders.

## Section 1: Workforce and Economic Analysis

Please answer the following questions in 8 pages or less. The Department of Workforce Development has regional labor market analysts assigned for each of the Regions. These experts can assist in developing responses to the questions 1.1 through 1.3 below. **Questions that require collaborative answers for regions 5 & 12 are designated with an \*.**

**1.1\*** An analysis of the economic conditions including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations; and the employment needs of employers in those industry sectors and occupations. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(A)]

Northwest Indiana continues to face a shifting economic landscape that will require ongoing diligence in order to maintain strength and encourage prosperity between both its traditional economic focus and the developing needs of the regional economy. These are not new shifts, but they will impact the community and quality of life for decades to come. The region's past contains mixes of heavy industry, rural agriculture, and suburban sprawl. Due to the region's geographic advantage, manufacturing has long dominated the economy, with iron and steel manufacturing at the top.

Changes in the 1980s brought layoffs, bankruptcy and—in the early 2000s—consolidation to the industry. This rattled the regional economy that relied so heavily on a single industry that supported both suppliers and service industries. A few years later, the Great Recession of 2008-2009 was a setback to manufacturing once again.

Despite experiencing the longest economic expansion in history from 2009 until early 2020, manufacturing failed to levels of employment and productivity experienced before the Great Recession. The region and many industries took a hit with the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic in the spring of 2020, ending the economic expansion. Albeit too early to determine long term effects of the pandemic as reflected in the data, it appears that Northwest Indiana's economy has faced another setback before fully recovering from the last.

Today manufacturing still reigns in the region (in 2019, the industry contributed 34% of Gross Regional Product by itself) but Northwest Indiana's economy is stronger, more diverse, and more integrated with the Chicago, Greater Indiana, national and global economies than ever before. However, the economy continues to change and will require continued conscious efforts to meet new demand as a variety of challenges combined with a stagnant and aging local population pose new threats to continued prosperity.

**UPDATE** – In 2022, many of these same prevailing trends continue in Northwest Indiana. The aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated many of these trends and caused new economic conditions to arise as well. In Northwest Indiana, the biggest issue to emerge has been the availability of workers. For a region that has typically seen higher than average unemployment and worker availability, this has been a shock too many operating locally. In a typical month, according to Local Area Unemployment Statics data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and local job posting information, there were anywhere from five to eight job postings for ever unemployed person in the region.

**Existing Industries** - Northwest Indiana currently has a number of leading industries: Health Care and Social Assistance; Manufacturing; Transportation and Warehousing; Construction; Retail Trade; Accommodation and Food Services; and Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation, which all together employ more than 200,000 region residents, representing more than half of all employed workers in the region. We commonly deal some on list as one industry due to their shared employment characteristics. This grouping is referred to as HEART (Hospitality, Entertainment, Arts, Retail, and Tourism).

Description	2022 Jobs	2027 Jobs	2022 - 2027 Change	2022 - 2027 % Change
Health Care and Social Assistance	50,696	52,215	1,519	3%
Manufacturing	42,296	41,050	(1,245)	(3%)
Accommodation and Food Service	32,498	38,299	5,802	18%
Retail	39,098	37,385	(1,713)	(4%)
Construction	22,388	21,491	(897)	(4%)
Transportation and Warehousing	18,683	19,330	647	3%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	5,354	4,851	(503)	(9%)

EMSI 2022.4

Health Care and Social Assistance as an industry, though not more focused in Northwest Indiana compared to other regions nationwide, employs the most people and is expected to add the most new jobs. Occupations in this industry have higher skill requirements than others, ranging from post-secondary certification to doctoral level. The NWIWB supports its post-secondary partners who can offer this level of training.

Manufacturing remains one of the largest employing industries and paying good to great wages. Additionally, thanks to a number of factors including geographic advantages, manufacturing is a unique focus industry for Northwest Indiana, containing not just Primary Metal Production but many other smaller subsectors as well. While not evident in the table above, manufacturing is falling behind in addition of new jobs in comparison to other industries as its current skilled and experienced workforce is aging. This challenge has been magnified as a result of the pandemic, as nearly a third of those employed in the industry are over 55 years of. As more of these workers retire, these positions will need to be filled. Since these occupations require a skilled workforce, new employees need to be trained now to meet the need. Local employers are aware of this issue, and seem willing to invest in new workers to meet this coming need.

Transportation and Warehousing (also known as Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics, or TDL) proves significant to the region due to its geographical position and the needs of manufacturers to move their products throughout the country.

Construction employs a significant number of people and, although also not much more focused in the region than in other places across the country, is nonetheless a crucial industry in that it is responsible for the execution of investment growth that supports so many other economic activities in the region.

In regards to the areas HEART, this industry cluster also faces a challenge as the historical brick and mortar business model has become outdated as more consumer activity moves to online retailers. As a result of this, employment is expected to decline slightly. Although commonly known for entry-level,



low-skill and/or low-wage employment, these industries offer opportunities for employees to upskill to areas of management and operations within the sector.

**Emerging Industry Sectors** – Looking at the economy in Northwest Indiana a bit differently, we see there are a number of industries expected to increase in employment over the next five years. The top two industries by growth in Northwest Indiana also happen to be among the top three industries in total regional enrollment. Rounding out this list are professional, scientific, and technical services, Transportation and Warehousing, and Information.

Industry	2022 Jobs	2027 Jobs	2022 - 2027 Change	2022 - 2027 % Change
Accommodation and Food Services	32,498	38,299	5,802	18%
Health Care and Social Assistance	50,696	52,215	1,519	3%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	10,745	11,641	897	8%
Transportation and Warehousing	18,683	19,330	647	3%
Information	2,111	2,494	382	18%

EMSI 2022.4

**In-Demand Occupations** - Looking at occupations currently in demand according to top five employed occupations by industry, the region's heritage is apparent in the types of occupations topping the lists. As will be discussed with regards to educational attainment, the current makeup of Northwest Indiana's economy offers gainful employment for many whose education is ignored by the standard educational attainment measures. Construction and Manufacturing both employ those who undergo less formal education and/or apprenticeships and yet are earning good wages as highly trained and skilled workers. Even Health Care and Social Assistance, aside from Registered Nurses, employs large numbers of certified or licensed workers rather than those with degrees.

Industry	Description	2020 Jobs	2030 Jobs	Change (2020 - 2030)	% Change (2020 - 2030)	Median Hourly Earnings
Health Care	Home Health and Personal Care Aides	4,147	4,830	682	16%	\$12.43
	Medical Assistants	2,502	2,796	294	12%	\$18.86
	Nurse Practitioners	592	830	238	40%	\$62.77
	Registered Nurses	7,666	7,883	216	3%	\$39.84
	Medical and Health Services Managers	994	1,200	206	21%	\$52.13
TDL	Motor Vehicle Operators	6,739	6,371	(368)	(5%)	\$26.34
	Material Moving Workers	1,951	2,057	107	5%	\$16.36
Adv. Manufacturing	Metal Workers and Plastic Workers	9,382	8,043	(1,338)	(14%)	\$20.77
	Other Production Occupations	5,014	4,794	(220)	(4%)	\$21.00
	Assemblers and Fabricators	4,313	4,078	(234)	(5%)	\$17.79

	Material Moving Workers	3,460	3,280	(180)	(5%)	\$16.01
	Other Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	2,603	2,575	(28)	(1%)	\$23.12
Construction Trades	Construction Laborers	3,629	3,584	(45)	(1%)	\$24.71
	Carpenters	2,004	1,809	(196)	(10%)	\$24.22
	First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers	1,339	1,235	(104)	(8%)	\$38.04
	Electricians	1,212	1,017	(195)	(16%)	\$37.65
HEART	Fast Food and Counter Workers	10,964	11,858	894	8%	\$11.91
	Retail Salespersons	9,263	9,046	(218)	(2%)	\$13.16
	Cashiers	8,437	7,252	(1,186)	(14%)	\$11.80
	Cooks	5,120	6,886	1,766	34%	\$13.96
	Waiters and Waitresses	5,046	6,375	1,329	26%	\$11.50

EMSI 2022.4

Another perspective considers the specific occupations projected to grow and create openings (meaning employers will need workers to fill those openings). This information demonstrates the fact that occupations can necessitate a focus even if they are not growing overall as employers need to fill important opening to keep their operations running. Often times, these high turnover occupations serve as springboard feeders into more career oriented positions that provide good wages. The top ten are shown below as an example:

Rank	Occupation	2020 Jobs	2030 Jobs	Total Openings	Growth Openings	Replacement Openings
1	Food and Beverage Serving Workers	18,904	22,067	42,899	3,163	39,688
2	Retail Sales Workers	20,557	19,275	30,819	(1,282)	30,679
3	Material Moving Workers	16,566	16,653	23,024	87	22,509
4	Cooks and Food Preparation Workers	8,352	10,327	15,844	1,975	13,776
5	Motor Vehicle Operators	12,837	12,801	14,895	(36)	14,200
6	Construction Trades Workers	14,577	13,784	14,005	(793)	13,641
7	Information and Record Clerks	10,233	10,089	12,871	(144)	12,411
8	Home Health and Personal Care Aides; and Nursing Assistants, Orderlies, and Psychiatric Aides	8,177	8,859	11,061	682	10,263

9	Building Cleaning and Pest Control Workers	7,454	7,889	10,715	435	10,027
10	Metal Workers and Plastic Workers	10,271	9,016	9,813	(1,255)	9,603

EMSI 2022.4

**1.2** An analysis of the knowledge and skills required to meet the employment needs of the employers in the local area, including employment requirements for in-demand industry sectors and occupations. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(B)]

According to the NWIWB's survey of local employers and supported by data provided by the Department of Workforce Development, many of the foundational or "soft" skills are common across in-demand occupations in the major industries; workers are expected to exhibit solid oral and written communication skills, basic computer skills, be detail-oriented, and be good at customer service. Training in these areas makes people more hireable in the eyes of employers, and more likely to find success in their chosen field.

However, no amount of soft skills will help without the occupational or "hard" skills a job demands. These of course vary from job to job even within industries, but we can consider both top-listed occupational skills as well as top certifications that the region's top industries require.

Industry	Certifications	Occupational (Hard) Skills
<b>Health Care and Social Assistance</b>	Associate/Bachelor's degrees; Certified Nursing Assistant; Certified Registered Nurse; Licensed Practical Nurse; HHA Disabilities Specialty; Certified Medical Assistant; EMT-B	Accurate and Detailed Record Keeping; Administration and/or Monitoring of Medication; Record Vital Medical Information; Consult and Coordinate with Healthcare Members to Assess, Plan Implement or Evaluate Patient Care Plans, Monitor Patients Care; Prepare Patients for Examinations and Treatments; Diagnostic and Procedural Coding Software; Data Entry; Medical Terminology; Wrap and Healthcare and Home Care Coordination; Basic Life Support; Critical Care and Triage; Microsoft Office and Health Technology Software; CPR and KEG
<b>Manufacturing</b>	NIMS Credentials; Industrial Maintenance; Computer Numerical Controlled Language (CNCL); Certified Production Technician (CPT); Six Sigma; AWS Welding (NIMS); Occupational	Equipment Maintenance; Preventative Inspections; Quality Assurance; Process Controls Instrumentation; Safety; Package and Process Material; Blueprint and Measurement Reading; Microsoft Office; Inventory Control; Continuous Improvement; Welding and Fabrication; Monitoring and

	Safety & Health Administration; Associate/Bachelor's degrees	Assembling; Pneumatics; Operating Heavy Equipment
<b>Construction</b>	Trade Apprenticeship; Valid Driver's License; Operator Certification; Project Management Professional (PMP) Certification; Engineering Degree	Building Construction; Operating Heavy Equipment; HVAC; Building Maintenance; Project Planning; Blueprint and Measurement Reading; Inventory Control; Safety; Quality Assurance; Continuous Improvement; Entrepreneurship; Electrical; Monitoring and Assembling; Carpentry
<b>Transportation and Warehousing (TDL)</b>	Valid Driver's License; CDL Class A; Logistics; APICS (Inventory and/or Supply Chain focuses) Certification; Certified Logistics Technician	Vehicle Operating; Maintenance; Preventative Maintenance Inspections; Package, Process and Distribute and Deliver Material; Inventory Control; Microsoft Office; Quality Assurance; Operating Heavy Equipment; Safety; Continuous Improvement; Maintain Databases; Cost Control; Inventory Technology Tools; Communications Technology; Diesel Mechanic Functioning
<b>HEART</b>	START Certification; Hospitality; National Retail Federation (NRF) Certification; Loss Prevention Certification; Certified Production and Inventory Management (CPIM)(APICS); Associate/Bachelor's degrees	Sales; Food Preparation; Customer Service; Cash Register; Inventory Management and Control; Asset Protection; Microsoft Office; Continuous Improvement; Maintain Database

As with foundational skills that employers in all sectors require, Northwest Indiana employers in all sectors are also citing a need for higher levels of technical skills including a base of information technology (IT) proficiency needed for their individual applications. As businesses of all industries adopt new technologies into their operations, a greater level of skills is needed by the workforce. The NWIWB is committed to building a stronger base of IT and related STEM skills in the region through its relationship with local K-12 school districts and regional colleges who participate in the READY NWI Education Team. As the NWIWB continues to identify specific needs through sector-based work with employers, it will communicate these needs to all levels of students including current K-12 and college students, youth enrolled in WIOA programs, and adults developing career paths or skill upgrades.

Advancing interest and learning in IT will begin in early K-12, continue into post-secondary programs, and connect employers via work-based learning opportunities. Current programs in the region include coding academies, maker fairs, and robotics competitions to stimulate interest in IT via hands-on experiences in K-12. Training funds for post-secondary are targeted to specific employer needs, with training providers including Ivy Tech and Purdue Northwest. The NWIWB is committed to building on these initiatives and continuing to identify funding sources and partners who will prepare our future workers with a base of IT knowledge that will be increasingly required for employment success.

**Update** – 2022 and the post-pandemic labor market and economy are facing many of the same skill challenges as before. The most resounding skill missing from the labor marker currently seems to be the soft skills and employability skills mentioned first.

With the unemployment rate locally sitting much lower than it historically has in the region, employers have had to look to population that they had typically ignored to find talent. As a result, many employers are finding that the level of soft skill possessed by these new labor market entrants are behind their previous typical applicant.

**1.3** An analysis of the local workforce, including current labor force employment (and unemployment) data, and information on labor market trends, and the educational and skill levels of the workforce in the region, including individuals with barriers to employment and youth. WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(C)]

Northwest Indiana has experienced a decline in both the labor force, and labor force participation rate since the recession in 2010. While experiencing a slight population increase from 2014-2018, Northwest Indiana saw a smaller population in the labor force each year. Despite these labor force declines, all other macro level numbers have improved. Similar to the state, the region has experienced a decline in unemployment, coupled with an increase in employment, over that same span (2014-2018), the workers employed in the region increased by nearly 10,000.

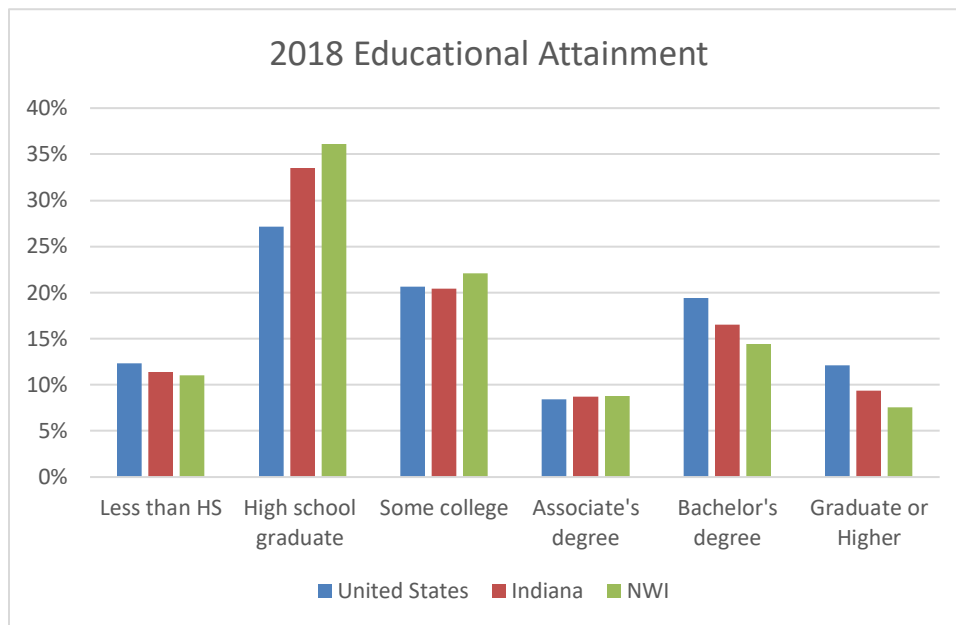
This growth trend, however, was interrupted not just in the region, but also the state and nation as a whole by the calamity of the COVID pandemic. Northwest Indiana set a record for the highest unemployment in the region at 19.6% in April of 2020. Since this high, unemployment has dropped to 7.8% as of the most recently available data (September 2020), but unemployment in the region remains higher than the states rate of 5.8% in the same month. It is unclear if and when employment and unemployment will return to pre-pandemic levels given the regions industrial mix and potential for permanent closures.

The numbers show Northwest Indiana to be home to a well-educated and skilled population. The educational attainment of the population has been increasing as well. The chart below shows the increase of higher levels and decrease in population with less than a high school diploma over the past 5 years according to Census Bureau data.

Northwest Indiana	2014	2018
Less Than HS	12%	11%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	37%	36%
Some college, no degree	22%	22%
Associate's degree	8%	9%
Bachelor's degree	13%	14%
Graduate or professional degree	7%	8%

These strong numbers are in large part due to the high performing education partners located here. While Northwest Indiana (NWI) is home to fewer residents boasting high levels of education, the region

possesses higher levels of middle education and fewer individuals with less than a high school education. The graph below clearly illustrates the middle heavy nature of attainment in the region compared to the state and nation.



Another trend present in the region is the shift in age distribution of the population. While both the region and the state as a whole have seen the overall population age, Northwest Indiana is starting from a higher baseline and has seen greater expansion of the higher age groups than the state. In 2009 according to the Census Bureau, 33% of the region's population was 50 or older compared to 32% for the state overall. In 2019, however, this population has grown to 38% for the region compared to only 35% for the state. This increasingly older population may at least part of the explanation for the decrease in labor force participation rate.

As described earlier, the improved economic conditions in the state and region had improved the workforce outcomes of youth before the pandemic. Youth unemployment in the region, much like overall unemployment, has been decreasing since the recession. The table below shows the significant improvement in the youth unemployment rate in the recent years.

Unemployment	2014	2018
16 to 19 years	27%	22%
20 to 24 years	18%	12%
Total Youth	21%	15%

Over this same time span, the youth labor force participation rate has declined, falling to 55% from 59% in 2014. This mirrors the labor force decline experienced in the overall labor force. This runs contrary to the prevailing trend that more youth move into the workforce as unemployment declines. Also contrary to convention, the post-secondary enrollment rates for you have also been declining in recent years, suggesting that youth are neither working nor enrolling in education.

Other populations with barriers to employment in the region are individuals with disabilities and households where English is not spoken as the first language. Disabled persons in the region have a labor force participation rate of 39% and an unemployment rate of 14.4% in 2018. Individuals in households not speaking English as the first language had a labor force participation rate of 52% in 2018.

**Update** – As discussed previously, Northwest Indiana continues to face many of the same issues as at our previous update. The biggest change has been the decrease in labor force participation. While seasonally adjusted monthly labor force data is not available for the region, for a sheer size perspective, NWI's labor force has not been able to keep up with local demand. This decline in the available pool of workers has been met with simultaneous desire for more workers from the business side. Given the regions aging population, near 40% of all labor market participants are 55 or older, it becomes clear that employable workforce availability is the most acute issue the region faces.

## Section 2: Strategic Vision and Goals

Please answer the following questions of Section 2 in 10 pages or less. Section 2 responses should reflect input from members of the local workforce development board and other community stakeholders.

**Questions that require collaborative answers for regions 5 & 12 are designated with an \*.**

**2.1** Provide the board's vision and goals for its local workforce system in preparing an educated and skilled workforce in the local area, including goals for youth and individuals with barriers to employment. As to youth, describe unique goals for in-school youth and out-of-school youth. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(E)]

**Vision:** A NWI workforce that is highly skilled, motivated and diverse, earning sustainable or higher wages and actively engaged in skill advancement and lifelong learning.

**Mission:** To mobilize and integrate the leadership, services and resources of the community to support workforce development.

### CORE GOALS

- Increase skills of current workforce to align with economic development strategies and key industry clusters
- Improve employer access to qualified workers and awareness of training resources
- Insure youth in NWI are positioned for continued education/learning and workforce success
- Encourage and support an entrepreneurial spirit
- Assure compliance and efficient operations of a workforce development system
- For in school youth, align education with the needed business skills (i.e. specific technical skills, soft skills) through the Work Ethic Initiative
- For out-of-school youth, build understanding of the skills needed to make it in the workforce

### STRATEGIES

- Maintain engagement and communication with economic developers, entities and employers to determine current and future skill needs

- Maintain education campaigns on local workforce issues including pipeline alignment of the k-12 system and post-secondary education.
- Manage our connections to key resources in the workforce and education arena
- Support efforts on programming that plant and nurture the seed of entrepreneurship
- Stay current on both compliance and best practices regarding governance and implementation of workforce services

#### **GOALS TO ADDRESS CUSTOMERS WITH BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT**

- Identify barriers to employment that customers have and then engage the resources of multiple organizations to address each customer's needs via a customized plan;
- Provide self-service and on-line service options for those customers whose needs can be met with these options, freeing valuable staff time for high-priority customers identified by Priority of Service protocols;
- Provide intrusive advising and training connections for customers who need to upgrade skills or require new skills as a result of changes in demand in the labor market;
- Ensure that the customer continues ownership of his/her career plan throughout engagement with the WorkOne Center, constantly assessing the customer's level of engagement and motivation.

**2.2** Describe how the board's vision aligns with and/or supports the strategic vision of Governor's Workforce Cabinet (GWC) as set out in the WIOA State Plan.

<https://www.in.gov/gwc/files/Indiana%20Strategic%20Workforce%20Plan.pdf>

Indiana's strategic vision is to create a talent system that affords all Hoosiers equitable opportunities for lifelong learning and increased personal economic mobility and provides employers the talent to grow and diversify their workforce.

We will endeavor to increase intergenerational social and economic mobility by:

- Ensuring quality pathways that provide opportunities for career advancement, personal prosperity, and well-being for all Hoosiers;
- Partnering with Indiana employers and education and training providers to identify and close the skills gap while meeting emerging talent needs; and
- Strengthening Indiana's economy by aligning programs and funding to meet current and future workforce needs.

NWIWB is highly supportive of the state of Indiana, Governor's Workforce Cabinet (GWC), and Department of Workforce Development vision, strategic plans, and initiatives. Under NWIWB guidance Region 1 has a strong affiliation with K-12 system through Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) as well as the NWIWB's READY NWI initiative, which brings secondary and post-secondary educators together with the workforce system. These programs help ensure quality pathways for youth, and were a key driver behind the planning undertaken to become a Governor's designated 21<sup>st</sup> Century Talent Region, that will identify skill gaps and address education and training needs; and has put into the communities'



pandemic emergency programs and funding, to align programs and funding to meeting current and future workforce needs.

Likewise, efforts such as the NWIWB Youth Committee, made up of youth experts, education, and employers, bring to life the employment reality of Region 1 out-of-school youth. Industry based consortiums made up of companies, training organizations, and other experts help ensure that local input into training is address the current and future needs outlined by employers.

NWIWB has also pursued relationships and secured funding to add value to programs and services offered in Region 1. By bringing additional resources into the Region, the NWIWB adds value and addresses unmet or under-addressed needs that align with the GWC goals. Leveraging these funding sources allows Region 1 to broaden the definition of local need or serve individuals and companies that may be under resourced by current funding. Examples have been training and upskilling for retail industry, manufacturing upskilling for incumbent workers, and additional funds to address high demand

**2.3 Describe how the board’s goals contribute to each of the five GWC goals.**

[https://www.in.gov/gwc/files/Indiana%20Strategic%20Workforce%20Plan\\_Draft\\_2.6.2020.pdf](https://www.in.gov/gwc/files/Indiana%20Strategic%20Workforce%20Plan_Draft_2.6.2020.pdf)

The GWC’s strategic plan includes a number of strategies under each goal. While local boards are required to respond to each goal, they are not expected to address how each strategy under each goal will be implemented. It is up to the discretion of the local board to determine what strategies best fit the local needs.

**Goal 1. Focus on meeting the individual needs of Hoosiers.** Indiana has created a talent development system comprised of wide-ranging workforce training and education programs. Hoosiers need to be able to find and navigate this often complex system to find the best option that meets their current and often immediate needs, fulfills their aspirations, and equips them with the skills and knowledge for socioeconomic mobility. Career pathways that help diversify the skills and talent within Indiana must be designed and delivered with the individual’s economic sustainability and mobility as the focal point. These career pathways will help diversify the skills and talent within Indiana to promote economic opportunities for Hoosiers. We need to ensure that we do not focus merely on programmatic requirements and funding streams, but rather what an individual needs and aspires to in order to be successful. We must include an intergenerational approach to communicating, offering, and delivering services in order to meet an individual’s ambitions and current and future economic needs. This system may not look the same for each person, and it may not provide the same resources for each person. It will be customizable to an individual’s goals and aspirations in order to achieve social and economic mobility.

The NWIWB strives to treat each customer of the system as an individual. We understand that when an individual seeks out services, they do so with their own unique skills, motivations, and circumstances. As a result, our goal is to provide a workforce system that meets them where they are, geographically,

educationally, and emotionally. Given the challenges and opportunities presented by the recent pandemic, this has become even more important.

From our service deliver viewpoint, we strive to make our services known as widely as possible. We understand that some customers would prefer to engage with the system virtually, and have made strides to provide the same level of service for those individuals. Increased self-serve and online options allows staff to provide greater levels of assistance to more high priority customers needing a greater level of service. We have also increased the variety of our advertising and marketing initiatives.

We also understand that Hoosiers engaging with the system do so at different stages in life in terms of education, motivation, and circumstance. As a result, our goal is for the career advising team to treat each customer as such. Any individual seeking services through the system develops a customized, personalized plan. This plan takes into account their current level of skills, career ambitions, and any barriers that might prevent them from reaching their full potential. In order to achieve this strategy, the NWIWB strives to move past services based on specific funding streams and grants by securing funds and partnerships outside of WIOA and state resources.

**Goal 2. Integrate state systems to facilitate greater access to information, resources, and services for constituents, businesses, state personnel, career coaches or navigators, and case managers.** In addition to acquiring skills, education, and jobs that put them on the path to social and economic mobility, constituents also must understand that they have continuous access to the talent development system throughout their working lives. For sustained economic success and personal growth, Hoosiers will need to continually engage with, and pursue, lifelong learning opportunities, which could exacerbate the complexities of this multifaceted system. Indiana must integrate our state and federal resources to help simplify navigation of this system for constituents. Our current program-by-program approach to serving constituents and businesses has resulted in a profusion of program-specific solutions. If the talent development system is to better serve our Hoosiers and improve their lives, we must align and simplify access to this array of resources and services. Strategic coordination of systems and collaboration across state agencies will begin breaking down to better empower our Workforce Development Boards, outreach personnel, and local partners.

In order to elevate the level of knowledge and understanding of the system, the NWIWB has adopted a number of goals aimed at easing access to the workforce development system, Region residents are far more likely to engage with the system if it is designed with them, as opposed to reporting requirements, in mind.

The best way to extinguish a spirit of lifelong learning is to present roadblocks and closed doors. In order to facilitate knowledge of and access to the system, the NWIWB seeks to continually cultivate relationships and partnerships. Open lines of communication are maintained with required partners and other first line entities residents engage to seek out help. Information sharing is paramount as referrals cannot be made to unknown resources. This integration helps to foster an attitude of “no wrong door” in the region.

To further improve this integration, the NWIWB strives to move past services based on specific funding streams and grants by securing funds and partnerships outside of WIOA and state resources. This will

allow services to be braided, bridging the gaps where one program ends and another begins and keeping customers more engaged throughout their interaction with the system.

Finally, with the help of employer and education partners, the NWIWB is striving to develop a more robust network of work and learn programs across the region. Though the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Talent Region designation and the work of industry sector groups, we want to make these types of programs more available. Not only do they provide good paying, career track jobs, but they also foster a spirit of lifelong learning that passes from parent to child as youth witness continued education along a parent's career span.

**Goal 3. Align programs towards creating a healthy, engaged, and talented citizen.** Often, our programs deal with the aftermath of either situational or systematic difficulties. Some government programs perform triage on crises occurring in Hoosiers' lives, rather than curbing the systemic inequities through early intervention strategies. We envision a realignment of our programs to include an emphasis on prevention and early intervention that will elevate opportunities for success. The most vital and entrenched strategy we have for early intervention is our early education and K-12 education systems. By expanding access to early education, we can begin providing advantageous programs to Hoosier children. As our students progress through our educational system, better integration of academic and technical skills and knowledge will provide Hoosiers with more opportunities for future mobility. Our education and workforce programs for adults will focus on finding the right fit for the individual person and equipping Hoosiers with the skills needed for career advancement and longevity. By assisting multiple generations in advancement towards quality health, societal engagement, and preparation for the jobs of today and tomorrow, we can foster an environment where economic mobility is attainable for more Hoosiers.

The goals of the NWIWB align directly with those of the GWC. The NWIWB sees education, and early intervention to be paramount in our endeavor to keep Northwest Indiana competitive, and thriving. Lessons learned through the recent pandemic have only increased awareness of the need for proactive workforce strategies.

One such strategy focusing on K-12 education long championed by the NWIWB is the READY NWI initiative. The NWIWB, in its role of the employer engagement arm for READY NWI, expects to further increase work-and-learn options for students at both the college and high school levels. The NWIWB and its Youth Council have for years championed a Work Ethics Certification, similar to the one created at the state level, with regional K-12 schools over the last decade, and a key component of the certification is work-based demonstration of maturity with key elements that have been identified by regional employers.

Along similar lines, a program offering an apprenticeship in Child Development Associate (CDA) aims to not only provide workforce training to customers through a proven work and learn model well-trained, but also provide graduates go on to connect help children in a myriad of different institutions ranging from day cares to Pre-K facilities.

The Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) program in which qualified staff work with high school students to begin career exploration, development of soft skills, and job searching. JAG participants complete

career assessments, taught employability skills through core competencies as well as through employer presentations. Also, they participate in a Career Association where they develop leadership and personal skills, and complete service learning activities through community service. In addition to gaining skills for the workforce, in-school youth are provided with career awareness activities including postsecondary education opportunities through college fairs and tours, postsecondary educational guest speakers, and college tours.

**Goal 4. Maximize state and federal resources through impact-driven programs for Hoosiers.**

In Indiana, there is a great deal of overlap between the populations served through our various state and federal programs focusing on either social services and/or workforce training. An interdependence of social, medical, and other support services can help Hoosiers overcome employment obstacles. To capitalize on Indiana's investments into these programs, we must include impact data in our evaluation of successful services. In addition to considering inputs (e.g., attendance and participation rates) and outputs (e.g., program completers and graduates) of these programs, we will also examine the outcomes (e.g., wages and improvement in socioeconomic status). We need to understand the return on investment we earn from each of our programs in order to ensure it is truly impacting the lives of Hoosiers.

The NWIWB's strategic goals are rooted in a demand driven workforce system that is responding to local needs and challenges. NWIWB has focused since its inception on the responsibility of meeting the needs of the customers and stakeholders interfacing with the local/regional workforce investment system. Most of the NWIWB's goals relate to at least one of the federal performance accountability measures. To monitor and deliver on this, we have and will continuously measure the required federal results, while identifying areas to improve, and making necessary course corrections.

To further extend the return on investment into programs, the NWIWB continually cultivates and builds relationships with both required partners as well as other community partners to strengthen the system. This relation management provides multifaceted benefit to customers, businesses, and the community. By striving for such synergy, the system is made to be easier to access for customers, more responsive to employer demand, and more efficient in terms of cost and service delivery.

**Goal 5. Foster impactful relationships between businesses, community partners, and government agencies.** In order to create a more robust talent development system and advance our populous towards economic mobility, the private sector must be a partner to drive training. We need to deepen our current partnerships with engaged businesses and expand our outreach to involve more businesses. Simultaneously, Indiana must increasingly diversify its economy to ensure we keep up with the rapid pace of the global change. The first step is promoting coordinated communication of the state's programs to all Indiana employers so no matter the size or type of business all are empowered to engage. This involves synchronization from state agencies to local regions to ensure our employers know and understand the multitude of state opportunities to engage with the talent development system. Successful business engagement must deliver value to employers, which will require our talent development programs to be more accessible and user-friendly for employers. We must also start to engage with businesses holistically, rather than focusing solely on their current needs. Our ultimate goal is to change the culture of how employers play a role and invest in their own workforce development as opposed to the government steering and telling employers what to do. Our engagement practices will shift employers from simply being the customers of the workforce system to active participants in the creation and implementation of workforce development and wraparound service solutions. Fostering and showcasing business investments in their people will highlight the mutual benefits of the talent development system for both employers and individuals.

The NWIWB has long sought to increase the connection of the business community with the workforce development system. Many of our stated goals and strategies address this directly. The workforce system is not made up of any partner individually, but requires integration and communication between all parts; business, education, development organizations, and community partners.

The NWIWB seeks to boost these connections through a number of initiatives. First, the newly created 21<sup>st</sup> Century Talent region in Northwest Indiana's purpose is to boost these connections. This work involves meeting measureable and attainable goals that will foster relationships. These goals are:

- Maintain the dashboard intended to serve all regional partners to deepen consistent collaboration through shared goals and operating practices,
- Analyze data and identify baseline and progress metrics for regional talent attraction and connection by the summer of 2021,
- Adopt an equity focus across the region with the intention of narrowing the achievement gap for minority and underserved high school students by increasing graduation rates by 3 percent each year,
- Increase employer engagement with the education and workforce systems in high-demand industry sectors, to be measured by increasing the number of internship or apprenticeship opportunities available to youth and adults by 10 percent each year, and
- Increase the number of high school graduates with post-secondary credentials by 5 percent each year

Additionally, staff to the NWIWB are working in concert with economic developers and businesses in the Region on the new regional economic development plan launched in 2018 Ignite the Region. Staff serve as chair of the "Talent" pillar of this initiative, one of the five focuses.

The NWIWB also leads collaboration efforts directly with businesses through industry sector groups. These groups in healthcare, manufacturing and construction have led to numerous new integrated strategies including introducing work and learn models in the construction industry, boosting visibility of construction trades to high school students, and boosting the capacity of nursing programs by organizing businesses and educators into a shared platform for clinical education. The NWIWB looks to further this work in technology, by a convening cross-sector partnership to find areas of collaboration between different industries utilizing similar talent.

**Update/Progress:** The NWIWB continues to work toward creating initial benchmarks for these goals outlined in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Talent Region Designation. While some data points have clear, verifiable sources that is not the case for all. We are still working to establish clear data in some cases. Despite the absence of those benchmarks, the Board has begun work to address many of the strategies outlined. The NWIWB was the only Board in the state to be included in a Regional Economic Acceleration and Development Initiative (READI) application. The Board's inclusion brings important resources to the region to expand JAG, fund additional work-based learning initiatives, expand the connection between education and employers, and upskill incumbent workers.

**2.4\*** Describe how the board's goals relate to the achievement of federal performance accountability measures. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (1) (E)] See WIOA Section 116 (b) (2) (A) for more information on the federal performance accountability measures.

The goals outlined in WIOA and federal performance measures serve as indicators of the expectations for meeting the needs of customers—students, jobseekers, workers, and employers. WIOA Section 116 (b)(2)(A) outlines the performance accountability measures across all core programs as:

- Unsubsidized employment in 2nd Qtr. after exit (includes education/training for youth)
- Unsubsidized employment in 4th Qtr. after exit (includes education/training for youth)
- Median Earnings,
- Credential Attainment Rate (for all except Wagner-Peyser)
- Measurable Skills Gain (for all except Wagner-Peyser)
- Employer Satisfaction

Similar to WIOA and the strategic goals of the GWC, the NWIWB's strategic goals are rooted in a demand driven workforce system that is responding to local needs and challenges. Most of the NWIWB's goals relate to at least one of the federal performance accountability measures. In addition, we have included a goal to speak to a need of our local economy. If we are to regain the ground lost during the COVID pandemic, continue to recover to pre-recession of 2008 levels, we need an increase in small business ventures and an entrepreneurial spirit which pushes toward innovations.

Since its inception, the NWIWB has focused on the responsibility of meeting the needs of the customers and stakeholders interfacing with the local/regional workforce investment system. The WIOA performance indicators are included on the Board's Program Performance Dashboard for review at each meeting. To monitor and deliver on this, we continuously measure the required federal results while identifying areas to improve and making necessary course corrections. Each of the GWC and NWIWB goals push the system to focus on specific areas which yield results related to the WIOA performance measures.

**2.5\*** Describe any additional indicators used by the local board to measure performance and effectiveness of the local fiscal agent (where appropriate), contracted service providers and the one-stop delivery system in the local area. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (17)]

The NWIWB establishes performance goals for each key item on the NWIWB dashboard. Goals are set for the region as well as for each youth service provider. Each goal is broken down into specific targets that are set for overall utilization of the Work One system. Ultimately, all goals and targets demonstrate trends to achieving WIOA performance measures and the NWIWB strategic goals.

The NWIWB uses several reports and performance metrics in addition to the Common Measures for evaluating programs supported by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Wagner-Peyser, Trade Adjustment Act, etc. These indicators include:

- Customer visits to the Work One offices and the purpose of visits
- Completion, credential, and placement rates for customers who receive training (for the Region and by Service Provider)
- Youth performance, including enrollments, credentials, placements into postsecondary education, employment, and the military, as well as the Common Measures
- Customers receiving case management
- Customer placements into unsubsidized employment by service providers
- Surveys of customers visiting the WorkOne centers

The NWIWB's Youth Employment Council tracks several indicators on a bi-monthly basis for individual service providers and the overall program. Included are: reaching enrollment goals of youth in the WIA Youth program; completion of objectives for each individual youth program; and provision of case management services.

The NWIWB aggressively tracks performance toward end-of-year goals. On a bi-monthly basis, the NWIWB and One Stop Operator review performance reports, which includes a monthly and year-to-date comparison of actual performance versus goals. Service providers analyze their own performance data and submit monthly reports to the One Stop Operator including strategies to meet key performance targets and any concerns. The WorkOne Operator reviews the data for each service provider and

responds to each provider's monthly report. The Operator conducts an in-person review session with each service provider on a quarterly basis to discuss performance in key areas and contribution to the WorkOne system in Northwest Indiana. The NWIWB reviews a one-page dashboard report of job seeker services delivered and attached comments from the WorkOne Operator staff in addition to reports from the Business Services Team. Those metrics include the number of businesses served, the percentage of job orders filled, and the amount of outreach activities performed by the team.

The NWIWB also monitors spending targets. Management staff review the information monthly in order to determine trends and to take any corrective action necessary. Northwest Indiana plans to spend at least 90% of all funding within the program year.

The NWIWB also receives a Return on Investment Report on Adult and Dislocated Worker WIOA Services which gives information about what their investment is yielding, yearly monitoring reports presented by the Department of Workforce Development, and the annual audit of the organization.

### Section 3: Local Area Partnerships and Investment Strategies

Please answer the following questions of Section 3 in 15 pages or less. Many of the responses below, such as targeted sector strategies, should be based on strategic discussions with the local board and partners. The local board is not required to complete the questions shaded in gray at this time.

**Questions that require collaborative answers for regions 5 & 12 are designated with an \*.**

**3.1** Taking into account the analysis in Section 1, describe the local board's strategy to work with the organizations that carry out core programs (*Core programs include: Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth Services, Title II Adult Education and Literacy, Title III Wagner-Peyser, and Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation*) to align resources in the local area, in support of the vision and goals described in Question 2.1. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(F)]

In 2014, the NWIWB's One Stop Operator created the NWIWB WIOA Partners Collaborative. This group includes membership of Vocational Rehabilitation, TANF/FSSA, Impact (ResCare), Wagner Peyser, Regional Adult Education, and WIOA providers (WorkOne Adult, Dislocated Worker DLW), Youth and Business Services departments). The NWIWB WIOA Partners Collaborative brings together the essential support networks for servicing customers from these programs and funding streams. The group meets bimonthly. Focused on creating strategies to accomplish the NWIWB goals, these meetings serve as a scheduled time to share employer demands, training and up-skilling opportunities, creation of shared professional development sessions, and creation of cross network referral highways, as well as funding and programming synergy.

The WorkOne offices also have partner groups that support the local WorkOne. These groups have members from all of the WIOA core programs, the WIOA required partners, and also faith communities, post-secondary, and local nonprofits. These groups meet bi-monthly on the alternating months from the WIOA Partnership Collaborative meetings. We have positioned these groups to be county focused instead of city focused which will allow for a broader involvement and impact. The work of the WorkOne partners group is to carry out the goals set by the NWIWB and the strategies set by the NWIWB WIOA Partnership Collaborative. Progress toward goals will be reported out at the NWIWB WIOA Partnership Collaborative meetings via a dashboard.



**3.2\*** Identify the programs/partners that are included in the local workforce development system. Include, at a minimum, organizations that provide services for relevant secondary and post-secondary education programs, provision of transportation, Adult Education and Literacy, Wagner-Peyser, Trade Adjustment Assistance, Jobs for Veterans State Grant, Senior Community Service and Employment Program, Vocational Rehabilitation, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program, and programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (2), (10), (11), (12) & (13)]

- WIOA Title I, Adult and DLW (*CWI, Inc. & Goodwill Industries of Michiana, Inc.*).
- WIOA Title I, Youth (*Goodwill Industries of Michiana, Inc. and JobWorks, Inc.*).
- WIOA Title II, Adult Education, Literacy, and English Language Support (*CWI and a Network of Community Providers*).
- Wagner-Peyser and State Labor Exchange (WP), Trade Adjustment Assistance Act (TAA), Unemployment Insurance (UI), and Veterans (JVSG) (*State of Indiana Department of Workforce Development*).
- Vocational Rehabilitation (VR),
- Temporary Aide to Needy Families (TANF).
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).
- Older Americans Act, Title V (SCSEP) (*National Able, Inc., Goodwill Industries of Michiana, Inc., and AARP FOUNDATION, Inc.*).
- National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP), Migrant and Season Farmworker (*Proteus, Inc.*).
- Technical Education Act, programs at the postsecondary level (*Ivy Tech Community College*).
- Community Services Block Grant Act (CSBG), Employment and Training Activities (*Northwest Indiana Community Action Network*).
- Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) through OCRA, Employment and Training Activities (*SCILL, Inc.*).
- Job Corps at Camp Atterbury (*MTC*).
- Transportation Partner – N/A

**3.3\*** Describe efforts to work with each partner identified in 3.2 to support alignment of service provision and avoid duplication of services to contribute to the achievement of the GWC's goals and strategies. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (2), (10), (11), (12) & (13)]

- **WIOA Title I, Adult and DLW (*CWI, Inc. & Goodwill Industries of Michiana, Inc.*).** WIOA Adult and DLW funded service provider staff are integrated into the One Stop system by function. Services offered include career and training services to help job seekers who are at least 18 years old succeed in the labor market. In the delivery of career services and training services funded by WIOA Adult, WIOA establishes a priority of service for serving low-income individuals, recipients of public assistance, as well as individuals who are basic skills deficient. The WIOA Adult and DLW programs offer career advising where appropriate, funding for training where appropriate and available,

sharing of employer demand and employer intelligence, onsite access to Indiana's labor exchange database Indiana Career Connect (ICC) for job orders and job search activity, informational level career search workshops offered at One Stop Centers, and sharing of career cluster documents and career pathway information. Per DOL TEGL, 16-16, The WIOA Adult program is responsible for combined planning, shared performance indicators across the One Stop system, and service delivery alignment with other One Stop partners. Case management and career advising, training, and employer services are coordinated with the One Stop Partners in relation to functional position. The foundation of the One Stop system's customer experience across all partners starts with customers registering within the ICC system.

- **WIOA Title I, Youth (*Goodwill Industries of Michiana, Inc. and JobWorks, Inc.*).** Service provider staff funded by WIOA Youth are integrated into the One Stop system by function where possible and appropriate. Tailored youth career and training services are available for One Stop system customers between the ages of 16-24 who meet the established eligibility criteria and where resources allow. Services may be delivered at a One Stop Center, a school, or a local partner's location. Career services, training services, and employer related services are closely coordinated with the functions of the One Stop Partners' services.
- **WIOA Title II, Adult Education, Literacy, and English Language Support (*CWI and a Network of Community Providers*).** Adult Education services support the One-Stop system by assisting adults and out of school youth to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and economic self-sufficiency. Specifically, the Adult Education team assists with high school completion, post-secondary entrance testing, education remediation, literacy, and increasing English language skills. They also assist immigrants and other English language learners acquiring an understanding of the American system of Government, individual freedom, and the responsibilities of citizenship. Adult Education programs are co-located within the One Stop Centers where possible. The foundation of the One Stop system's customer experience across all partners starts with customers completely registering within ICC.
- **Wagner-Peyser and State Labor Exchange (WP), Trade Adjustment Assistance Act (TAA), Unemployment Insurance (UI), and Veterans (JVSG) (*State of Indiana Department of Workforce Development*).**
  - The Wagner-Peyser (WP) Act of 1933 establishes the Employment Service (ES), a nationwide public labor exchange that provides employment services. The ES brings together employers seeking workers and job seekers. In the State of Indiana, Indiana Career Connect (ICC) serves as the labor exchange system and is available for all One Stop Partners. Key elements of this include: job matching, resume preparation, and access to labor market information; assistance in listing and filling job vacancies, including basic screening and referral of qualified job seekers. The foundation of the One Stop system's customer experience across all partners starts with customers completely registering within ICC.
  - DWD WP staff are integrated into the One Stop system by function and deliver services ranging from career advising, employer support, job matching, placement, workshops, assessments and testing, and basic over the shoulder assistance for job search processes. Services may be delivered at a One Stop Center, a school, or a local partner's location. Case management and career advising, training, and employer services are coordinated with the One Stop Partners in

relation to functional position. The foundation of the One Stop system's customer experience across all partners starts with customers completely registering within ICC.

- UI staff members deliver services virtually throughout NWI. Customers can access services through the Uplink system. Links are established on customer computers at all partner locations where possible. In addition, customers have direct access to the UI staff via specified phone lines inside several of the WorkOne Centers. The foundation of the One Stop system's customer experience across all partners starts with customers registering within the ICC system.
  - TAA and Reemployment TAA (RTAA) are collectively referred to as the TAA program and provide assistance to workers who have been adversely affected by foreign trade. The program seeks to provide adversely affected workers with opportunities to obtain the skills, credentials, resources, and support services to become reemployed. Case management and career advising, training, and employer services are coordinated with the One Stop Partners in relation to functional position.
  - JVSG provides key services to Veterans and eligible spouses. The Disabled Veteran Outreach (DVOP) staff are specialists who provide key case management and career advising services to Veterans with significant barriers to employment. Local Veteran Employment Representatives (LVER) provide outreach to employers to help Veterans achieve employment. All services follow specific federal regulations and guidance letters. All JVSG participants must be co-enrolled and have a common exit with the Wagner-Peyser Act ES. Case management and career advising, training, and employer services are coordinated with the One Stop Partners in relation to functional position.
- **Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)**, Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VR) provides quality individualized services to enhance and support people with disabilities to prepare for, obtain or retain employment. The individual will work closely with a VR counselor throughout the process. Through active participation in their rehabilitation, people with disabilities achieve greater levels of independence in their work place and living environments. VR staff members provide itinerant services in the Region's full service One-Stop WorkOne Centers (Gary, Hammond, LaPorte and Portage). They ensure all VR related job-seeking and job-ready clients are engaged in services. VR case management and career advising, training, and employer services are coordinated with the One Stop Partners in relation to functional position.
  - **Temporary Aide to Needy Families (TANF)**. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) provides cash assistance and supportive services to assist families with children under age 18, helping them achieve economic self-sufficiency. Children under 18 who are living with their parent(s) or relative such as a grandparent, aunt, uncle etc., who meet specific nonfinancial criteria and whose countable family monthly income meets the following income guidelines. IMPACT services are a critical element of Indiana's welfare reform initiatives which places an increasing emphasis on "work first." "Work First" means that individuals are expected to accept a job when it can be secured with their existing education and skills. Services offered through IMPACT partners address a broad range of barriers that may inhibit individuals from seeking and maintaining employment. IMPACT case management and career advising, training, and employer services are coordinated with the One Stop funded partners in relation to functional position.
  - **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)**. SNAP support is designed to raise the nutritional level of low income households. It enables low-income families to buy nutritious food

through Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards. To qualify for SNAP applicants must meet certain non-financial and financial requirements. Provisions of IMPACT as described above are also applied to SNAP participants.

- **Older Americans Act, Title V (SCSEP) (*National Able, Inc., Goodwill Industries of Michiana, Inc., and AARP FOUNDATION, Inc.*)**. SCSEP is a community service and work-based job training program for older Americans. The programs provide training for low income, unemployed older Americans and supportive services that allow them to participate in the training. Participants must be at least 55 years old, unemployed, and have a family income of no more than 125% of the federal poverty level. Case management and career advising, training, and employer services are coordinated with the One Stop Partners in relation to functional position. In addition, the programs may be co-located in a One Stop Center.
- **National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP), Migrant and Season Farmworker (*Proteus, Inc.*)**. NFJP is a program of services for migrant and seasonal farmworkers. The program provides career and training services, youth services, housing assistance services, and related assistance to eligible participants. Case management and career advising, training, and employer services are coordinated with the One Stop Partners in relation to functional position.
- **Technical Education Act, programs at the postsecondary level (*Ivy Tech Community College*)**. The purpose of the Technical Education Act is to develop more fully the academic, career, and technical education skills of postsecondary students who elect to enroll in CTE programs. The program assists with aligning education and training. The staff of the regional postsecondary universities coordinate with the One Stop system and partners with regard to the training in in-demand occupations for participants as funding allows. Employer services are coordinated with the One Stop Partners in relation to functional position.
- **Community Services Block Grant Act (CSBG), Employment and Training Activities (*Northwest Indiana Community Action Network*)**. CSBG services are focused on the reduction of poverty, the revitalization of low-income communities, and the empowerment of low-income families and individuals in rural and urban areas to become fully self-sufficient. Case management and career advising, training, and employer services are coordinated with the One Stop Partners in relation to functional position.
- **Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) through OCRA, Employment and Training Activities (*SCILL, Inc.*)**. The local HUD programs work to improve lives by providing quality, affordable housing options and promoting education and economic self-sufficiency for community members. Case management and career advising, training, and employer services are coordinated with the One Stop Partners in relation to functional position.
- **Job Corps at Camp Atterbury (*MTC*)**. Job Corps is a national program that operates in partnership with States and communities. Services are provided to youth age 16-24 include: academic, career, and technical education, service-learning, and social opportunities primarily in a residential setting, for low-income young people. The One Stop Partners collaborate to further support Job Corps with outreach, recruitment, career transition services, and connection with local job opportunities.

**3.4** Identify how the local board will carry out a review of local applications submitted under WIOA Title II Adult Education and Literacy, consistent with the local plan and state provided criteria. See the [Multi-Year Adult Education Competitive Grant Application \(Request for Application\)](#). [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (13)].

The RFA for adult education and literacy (WIOA Title II Adult Education and Literacy Act) is distributed statewide by the Department of Workforce Development. As mandated the NWIWB in their role of coordinating activities with education and training providers within the local Workforce Development Area (“WDA”) will review and acknowledge all applications proposing to offer Adult Education services within Region 1 prior submission to DWD. At a minimum the NWIWB will review eligible providers’ application materials to determine whether the applications are consistent with local plans. Upon completing this review, the local WB will submit a recommendation to DWD confirming alignment or gaps with the local plan. Prior to awarding of contracts, DWD may require applicants to make revisions, or request additional input from the NWIWB to better align adult education an English Language Learning services with local workforce plans.

**3.5\*** Describe how the local boards are partnering with economic development and promoting entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (5)]

The NWIWB, Executive Staff to the Board, and One Stop Operator have a long history of working with local and regional economic development organizations to promote and support business attraction, expansion, and retention efforts. Numerous companies have been successfully located in Northwest Indiana because of the NWIWB and One Stop Operator staff’s ability to provide prospective employers with a thorough analysis of the available workforce by occupation and experience, wage data, industry growth, and other key metrics as well as to determine they will be able to meet their hiring needs.

The NWIWB has in recent years taken an active leadership role economic development initiatives in the region. The NWIWB, with the Northwest Indiana Forum and other partners, secured a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Talent Region designation, making NWI the first entire economic growth region to be recognized as such. This talent region designation signals even closer collaboration between the NWIWB and other organizations to advance opportunity in the region. Staff to the Board also serves as Chair of one of the five core focus areas, or pillars, of *Ignite the Region*, NWI's new economic development plan launched in 2018.

The NWIWB, Executive Staff to the Board, and One Stop Operator staff actively participate in economic development organizations, boards, and committees and maintain memberships with local chambers of commerce. Individual NWIWB members serve on the board of directors of the Northwest Indiana Forum, the private sector regional membership organization representing the voice of private business and economic development in Northwest Indiana as well as other community based economic development organizations.

The economic development and business organizations with which we are members or have a working relationship include:

- ***Regional economic development includes:*** The Northwest Indiana Forum, Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Commission, Regional Development Authority and One Region.
- ***Eleven local economic development organizations(LED0):*** Portage Economic Development Corporation (PEDCO), Valparaiso Economic Development Corporation, Duneland Economic Development Company, Gary Economic Development Corporation, City of Hammond Economic Development Corporation, Greater LaPorte Economic Development Corporation (GLEDC), Starke County Economic Development Corporation, Jasper County Economic Development Corporation, Newton County Economic Development Corporation, Michigan City Economic Development Corporation, Pulaski County Economic Development Corporation
- ***Nine chambers of commerce:*** Lakeshore, Greater LaPorte, Valparaiso, Greater Portage, Chesterton, Munster, Michigan City, Gary, Crossroads

Work with the regional economic development entities includes serving on their boards as well as engagement with the NWIWB and staff. A monthly presentation is made to the Northwest Indiana Forum on key strategies, activities, and outputs occurring in education and workforce development in the region. This relationship with the NWI Forum led to the launch of the region's first "Manufacturing Summit." During the week preceding the summit, the NWIWB was responsible for the engagement of 113 manufacturing employers with 8300 students to promote the sector and create awareness about the career paths available in the field.

The local economic development organizations rely on the NWIWB for data necessary to demonstrate existing and future talent so employers can be assured that NWI has the human resources required to build a productive business. The system is called to help facilitate hiring or to orchestrate training which will build the workforce required with the necessary skills. LEDOs look to the NWIWB for resources to support the hiring and expansion for existing employers as the NWIWB has a solid understanding of the local K-12 system, Career and Technical Education centers, post-secondary institutions and additional educational programs offered throughout the region. The NWIWB is looked to as an entity which is working to align the education and workforce systems with economic develop so they are called upon for consultation by LEDO's when they are thinking about utilizing funds such as from redevelopment commissions to generate new workforce programs. In addition, the NWIWB has been able to work with LEDO's to provide incumbent worker training to assist their local employers maintain their workforce and in several instances this type of strategy has even been instrumental in keeping businesses in Northwest Indiana.

### ***Entrepreneurial Skills Training and Microenterprise services***

The NWIWB sees the need to help job seekers make the leap to these 21st Century job opportunities and has addressed the issue of transferable skills which can be used in a career path as well as those skills which are needed for people to start their own business as either an entrepreneur, an independent contractor, or through a microenterprise effort. These transferable skills include managing resources, project management, financial management, communication skills, and marketing skills. Several of the occupations in demand for our region require an entrepreneurial spirit and lend well to independent contracting to be successful. When we see this we work with training providers to include skill development for independent contracting work. These elements include budgeting, tax forms, forming a business, insurance, tracking and billing, etc.

Inside the WorkOne offices we provide opportunities for customers to access services of the Small Business Development Centers by allowing the local SBDC to offer workshops in offices. Staff themselves are familiar with what the SBDC has to offer and will support customers in their development of skills needed for entrepreneurship (also known as independent contracting). Work One staff will be provided with updated information and training from SBDC staff on all the plethora of services which they offer so that they are equipped to manage referrals for those folks who are interested in starting a business or

for micro business. Career Advisors also cover with job seekers the importance of showing an employer commitment by approaching work with an entrepreneurial spirit regardless of the occupation.

For youth programming, we have incorporated skill development for each enrolled youth on entrepreneurship information. The NWIWB has partnered with Junior Achievement (JA) to implement the Personal Finance and Be Entrepreneurial programs in the JAG classroom. These two programs align with the second and third program elements of financial literacy and entrepreneurial skills training. Through these JA programs the JAG Specialists have been trained and continue implementing this Junior Achievement curriculum. (Also, Entrepreneurship Plan is a team competition in the CDC).

**3.6** Describe how the local area is partnering with adult education and with out of school youth regarding business services.

The Business Services Team is connected to both adult education and out of school youth. There are multiply Adult Education sites within Region 1. Talent Recruiters, members of the Business Services team who engage and link skilled candidates to employment opportunities, are assigned to Adult Education sites to help connect adult education students to general labor market information, employer expectations, job leads, work based learning opportunities, and hiring events.

Our out of school youth service providers have staff who specialize in providing work based learning opportunities such as work experience and on the job training to the out of school youth population. These staffers develop work sites, place the youth at the sites, and follow along with the youth throughout participation in the work based learning activity. While these staffers develop the sites, they coordinate services with the Business Service staff to avoid duplication and increase opportunities. The youth staff are in the process of being incorporated in part with Business Services in order to increase the sharing of business intelligence and resources.

**3.7** Based on the analysis described in Section 1.1-1.3, describe plans to focus efforts and resources on serving priority of service populations in the local area, including how this will be managed. Include any other priority populations the local area will focus on.

The NWIWB has long been a strong supporter of community –building efforts with partners and other stakeholders to support the mission of meeting employer need for a skilled workforce. We work closely with our core required partners, and faith and local community-based organizations at a regional level in order to foster a referral and resource network wherein our shared community can access reliable and relevant services from childcare to workforce.

To provide ease of access and support, NWIWB created a web of Access Points across NWI in 2010. Access Points are comprised of our local nonprofits, libraries, and faith-based organizations that partner with the WorkOne offices to provide over-the shoulder assistance to customers at their organizations. Typically, these organizations serve many of our priority of service populations. These agencies are recommended by local governments, area business men and women, and many other forms of referral. The organizations signed on as Access Points are trained by the local WorkOne to deliver over-the-



shoulder assistance to individuals utilizing UpLink, Virtual WebChat, UI Call Center, Indiana Career Connect, and other resources. They are also there to suggest the use of the WorkOne for more in-depth services specifically targeted for re-entry customers, Veterans, individuals interested in training, individuals needing more in-depth employment counseling, and those wanting to work with the Career Advisors in the WorkOne.

In recent years, we have built further in-roads with long standing partners in order to address Priority of Service populations. While we are required to uphold MOU partnerships with Title I partners we approach all partners with the same spirit of commitment since we are all working to achieve a common goal in serving the community. We currently define priority of service populations as identified by the DWD policy as well as any other population identified by the Governor, DWD, or the NWIWB.

***Low Income, Homelessness, TANF (Impact), Food Stamp Recipients***

The One Stop Operator will continue to engage and support our local faith and community based organizations through increasing the number of available Access Points in the community. These sites are mainly in faith based and community based organization environments and are situated in areas where access to the WorkOne offices is difficult. These partners serve to support workforce development needs of the community for customers who are typically low income. We manage the presence of and attendance from the community to these Access Points monthly through reporting provided by One Stop management.

Local WorkOne's will continue to host local community partner meetings which provide a stronger cohesion to any resource and referral network established at the regional level. We will continue to manage this through monthly reporting and office specific strategies that build the resources network as a crucial part of meeting the needs of our priority of service customers and community at large. In 2016 we will move this to a county level initiative instead of a city focus. By engaging our community partners, we will enhance the referral highways thus increasing the number of priority-of-service customers we serve.

***Basic Skills Deficient***

Continue to assess for skills deficiencies in our Adult customers at the individualized level through staff analysis and quantitative assessments as outlined in the DWD Policy 2019-04 WIOA Title I Adult Priority of Service. At a minimum our focus will be to refer those basic skills deficient customers to our regional Adult Education providers for remediation, HSE, ESL, and other services involving educational support. We currently have nine regional adult education providers that form with WorkOne the regional consortium and partner more robustly at the local level.

**3.8\*** Based on the analysis described Section 1, identify up to three industries where a sector partnership is currently being convened in the local area or where there will be an attempt to convene a sector partnership and the timeframe. Describe how you will be partnering to achieve defined goals.

With the NWIWB serving as the primary employer engagement partner in the regular convening of workforce partners structure, and with the priorities established by WIOA, the Board has moved to a more formal and highly-visible sector-based strategy to engage the region's employers as partners in identifying skill needs, promoting career opportunities, and serving as partners in training design and

work-based learning. The NWIWB has a number of active sector partnerships, most notably in Healthcare, Manufacturing, and Construction.

The strategy to date has included serving the needs of business by Business Services Representatives who have a specific industry focus for transactional recruitment and screening. These services will continue to be refined and offered to all employers as part of the WorkOne employer services strategies. Intelligence gained from sector-based planning groups and panels is immediately passed on to Business Services staff for action. The Business Services staff continually acts as the eyes and ears on the ground to bring information back to sector planning groups on the results of implementing new training and employment strategies.

To support the new sector framework and to strengthen the Board's role in recruiting employers to the wider array of engagement opportunities with key partners, the Board developed an Employer Partner Commitment Form and piloted it initially with its own members. An individual employer can choose, from an array of options, to participate with the Board and its partners, with the three major levels for partnering being:

- Planning Partners – providing information on skill needs, expected hiring levels, curriculum review to identify proper alignment of certifications with specific skill needs
- Communications Partners – participating with regional schools in events, mentoring, site visits, videos and other means to showcase regional career opportunities
- Training and Education Partners – Providing work-based learning opportunities in partnerships with schools in order to connect classroom work with on-the-job experiences.

The Healthcare Consortium is composed of all of the region's major hospital systems, other local providers including mental health providers, post-secondary institutions with healthcare programs, and other healthcare training providers. This group meets monthly to discuss health workforce issues in the region and coordinate for a more interconnected system. Most recently, The Consortium worked to implement a shared online platform designed to streamline the clinical scheduling process for nursing students in the region, building capacity within that occupation and allowing students to more easily access good paying jobs.

The manufacturing Consortium in Northwest Indiana has morphed a bit in recent years to better reflect the diversity of manufacturers in the region. In Lake County and the surrounding area, sector work has focused more on primary metal manufacturing and industries within that supply chain. Work in this area has led to a state certified "Earn and Learn" program dubbed the Hammond Precision Machining Academy. Other Sector work in manufacturing has been focused in La Porte County in coordination with a Skill-Up 3 grant awarded by the state. This initiative has led to the creation of a compressor academy to help students learn the skills to fill manufacturing jobs in La Porte Counties Compressor manufacturing companies.

Finally, work is currently underway to develop a cross-sector industry group focused on technology in the region. The NWIWB has identified technology skills as some of the most important going forward to keep our region competitive and ensure companies are able to source the talent they need locally. The work of this group will focus on solving technology related problems that can have a region wide effect.

The NWIWB will continue to serve as the primary table for connecting sector-based initiatives in all key sectors so that common and sector-specific needs can be identified, prioritized, and addressed within the context of the broader regular convening of workforce partners.

### **3.9 A-D**

Responses may include the implementation of incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, work-based learning programs, apprenticeship models, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies, career pathways or utilization of effective business intermediaries and other business services and strategies that support the local board's strategy in 3.1. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (4) (A) & (B)]

Identify and describe the strategies and services that are and/or will be used to:

**A.** Facilitate engagement of employers, including small employers with in-demand industry sectors and occupations, workforce development programs, in addition to targeted sector strategies.

The NWIWB has identified five industry sectors for intensive outreach and service delivery in the WorkOne structure: Manufacturing and Construction, Healthcare, Transportation Distribution and Logistics, Professional Services, and Hospitality Entertainment Arts Recreation and Tourism. Each industry sector is assigned a WorkOne Business Services Representative (BSR) that serves to assist and deliver services to small, medium, and large sized businesses, providing job postings, screening and recruitment, and training engagement. To address greater challenges in identifying a skilled workforce, on the job training and incumbent worker training may be used. BSR's deploy real-time solutions based on an employer's individual need.

In addition to the work at the BSR level, the NWIWB convenes industry sector groups focused on specific target industries in the region. These groups help to connect the workforce development system with employers and educators with interest in those sectors.

**B.** Support a local workforce development system described in 3.2 that meets the needs of businesses.

The Work One system has aligned its work around the NWIWB's sector strategies that have specific training aligned with jobs in demand that support economic development and allows for alignment with jobs in each of our communities which will build a stronger pipeline of job ready workers while improving our educational attainment. The WorkOne Business Services Team coordinates its business services with job seeker services that are provided at the WorkOne offices by utilizing Indiana Career Connect, the statewide job matching system. The WorkOne Business Services Team creates and shares with both staff at a region-wide level as well as with community partners with a vested interest in workforce development efforts. Industry and employer specific intelligence is shared to educate the WorkOne centers and key community organizations on job demand and industry expectations. This information allows the WorkOne centers to prepare job seekers in a way that meets the needs of hiring employers. Also vital to the success of delivering skilled workers to employers is the Business Services Recruiter. Recruiters in the one stop system are responsible for matching WIOA enrolled customers to available job opportunities as well as identifying job seekers outside of the one-stop system that may meet the need of an employer and engaging them with the WorkOne center.

Training is a key issue being addressed by the NWIWB. In order for businesses to remain competitive in their industry, oftentimes the introduction of new technology, processes, or procedures is necessary. While opportunities exist to train job seekers in preparation for employment, addressing the growth and development of incumbent workers remains a critical element to the overall retention and success of the business in NWI. Therefore, incumbent worker training is another strategy that will be used by NWIWB to assist employers facing these challenges of skill shortages in their business. In some cases, incumbent worker training may be delivered in a cohort made up from one or multiple employers.

Work based learning (work experiences, on-the-job-training, internships, and apprenticeships) is another strategy used to expose youth and adults to a work environment in a specific industry. Youth and adults that may not have been exposed to an industry work environment can participate in this kind of learning opportunity to better prepare them for a future job opportunity at the company or with another company. Employer engagement in work based learning provides both benefit to the employer in a potential future employee, as well as benefit to the job seeker needing exposure to and a level of experience in a specific occupation in an industry.

<p><b>C. Better coordinate workforce development programs with economic development partners and programs.</b></p>
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The Northwest Indiana Workforce Board has a long history of working with local and regional economic development organizations to promote and support business attraction, expansion, and retention efforts. Numerous companies have been successfully located in Northwest Indiana because of the NWIWB and One Stop Operator staff's ability to provide prospective employers with a thorough analysis of the available workforce by occupation and experience, wage data, industry growth, and other key metrics as well as to determine they will be able to meet their hiring needs.

The NWIWB, Executive Staff to the Board, and One Stop Operator staff actively participate in economic development organizations, boards, and committees and maintain memberships with local chambers of commerce. Individual NWIWB members serve on the board of directors of the Northwest Indiana Forum, the private sector regional membership organization representing the voice of private business

and economic development in Northwest Indiana as well as other community based economic development organizations.

The economic development and business organizations with which we are members or have a working relationship include:

- **Regional economic development includes:** The Northwest Indiana Forum, Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Commission, Regional Development Authority and One Region.
- **Eleven local economic development organizations:** Portage Economic Development Corporation (PEDCO), Valparaiso Economic Development Corporation, Duneland Economic Development Company, Gary Economic Development Corporation, City of Hammond Economic Development Corporation, Greater LaPorte Economic Development Corporation (GLEDC), Starke County Economic Development Corporation, Jasper County Economic Development Corporation, Newton County Economic Development Corporation, Michigan City Economic Development Corporation, Pulaski County Economic Development Corporation
- **Nine chambers of commerce:** Lakeshore, Greater LaPorte, Valparaiso, Greater Portage, Chesterton, Munster, Michigan City, Gary, Crossroads

The local economic development organizations turn to the NWIWB system for data necessary to demonstrate existing and future talent so employers can be assured that NWI has the human resources required to build a productive business. The system is called to help facilitate hiring or to orchestrate training which will build the workforce required with the necessary skills. LEDOs look to the NWIWB for resources to support the hiring and expansion for existing employers as the NWIWB is familiar with all the schools, Career and Technical Education centers, post-secondary institutions, and the programs offered throughout the entire region. The NWIWB is looked to as an entity which is working to align the education and workforce systems with economic development so they are called upon for consultation by LEDOs when they are thinking about utilizing funds such as from redevelopment commissions to generate new workforce programs. In addition, the NWIWB has been able to work with LEDOs to provide incumbent worker training to assist their local employers maintain their workforce and in several instances this type of strategy has even been instrumental in keeping the business in Northwest Indiana.

The staff meet with the LEDO's across the region on a monthly basis to determine initiatives as well as to discuss key sector strategies. The NWIWB has organized its work around sector strategies and has aligned those sectors according to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Talent Region plan and the Ignite the Region plan with the regional focus on which are the high demands sectors for Northwest Indiana.

<p><b>D. Strengthen linkages between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs.</b></p>
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To strengthen linkages between One Stop system and UI programs, such as REA/WPRS and Jobs for Hoosiers, we will continue to approach the staff that deliver these programs, the customers participating and any outcomes of such programs a central part of our Basic service offerings, integrated into our flow and seamless within our program delivery. To that effect, the staff that coordinate these programs inside our offices are fully integrated on teams that offer customers information about

training, career advising, workshops, etc. In addition, these orientations for these programs often include a brief presentation from either staff or through PowerPoint about what additional services are available to these UI recipients

**3.10** Including WIOA and non-WIOA funding, what percentage of total funds would you project will be used for training annually?

We project that 33% of our available allocation will be used for training annually. Numerous grant applications to the Department of Labor, HUD, and the EPA in which the NWIWB was a significant partner may also bring funding for the region for training and other services. We believe the investment we have made in our partnership building which will allow the leverage of resources can only result in both the alignment and receipt of new funding for workforce development.

**3.11** If the local board is currently leveraging funding outside of WIOA Title I funding and state general funds to support the local workforce development system, briefly describe the funding and how it will impact the local system. Break down the description by adult, dislocated worker and youth. If the local board does not currently have oversight of additional funding, describe any plans to pursue it.

The NWIWB has broadened its ability to build a workforce system in NWI by both securing new funds and by leveraging funds of partners in workforce development. For example, funds have been received from a number of local and regional community foundation over the years to enhance our work in a number of our communities. Community Foundation funds have been received to pilot a program for adults and dislocated workers in NWI as well as to expand career awareness activities for youth and teachers in high schools.

Private donations and small grants have also been received to support and expand adult education programming so that individuals have greater access to both on-site and virtual learning in their quest to prepare for the high school equivalency exam.

The NWIWB continues to seek additional funding to support and expand the workforce system. Most recently, the NWIWB successfully applied for a number of funding opportunities to respond to the COVID-pandemic. These funds are being utilized to augment our ability to provide training to adults and dislocated workers, offer temporary employment to displaced workers, and help businesses upskill their workforce.

**3.12 Optional:** Describe any collaboration with organizations or groups outside of your local area, interstate or intrastate, and what outcomes you plan to achieve as a result of the collaboration.

Collaboration, cooperation, and coordination is a guiding principle with the NWIWB, staff and WorkOne and Adult Education providers. The NWIWB is a member of the statewide Indiana Workforce Board Association. The organization's focus on workforce development and workforce board improvement has

allowed us to learn about best practices around the state to utilize in NWI and have also shared ideas with others who have been asked to participate in this work. In addition, our partnership has extended Staff to the NWIWB serves on the Great Lakes Employment and Training Association (GLETA) board. GLETA has bi-monthly meetings with Region V Department of Labor staff who provide up to date information on key issues surfacing with the ETA including items relating to the implementation of WIOA. In addition, the sharing of best practices amongst the participating members from 10 states is advantageous in the development of new programming.

The same is true by the participation on the Midwest Urban Strategies. This group is a coordinated effort on behalf of 13 Department of Labor urban workforce development boards to marry traditional workforce development practices with economic development. They are able to identify best practices and challenges of working in urban communities and do have the opportunity to identify potential problems which could surface in service delivery which could prevent our region from experiencing the same. Another advantage is the opportunity to collaborate in pursuing new funding opportunities for common populations.

The NWIWB is a member of the National Association of Workforce Boards. NAWB provides annual capacity building for board members and key staff on new trends in all facets of workforce development at the board, management, and service delivery levels.

These associations give us a more comprehensive understanding of workforce challenges, opportunities and solutions including leverage of funding which allows us to use available funding more efficiently and effectively.

## Section 4: Program Design and Evaluation

Please answer the following questions of Section 4 in 15 pages or less. Many of the responses below, such as career pathways and individual training accounts, should be based on strategic discussions with the local board and partners. **Questions that require collaborative answers for regions 5 & 12 are designated with an \*.**

**4.1** Describe how the local board, working with the entities carrying out core programs (*Core programs include: Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth Services, Title II Adult Education and Literacy, Title III Wagner-Peyser, and Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation*), will expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment and out of school youth. Include referral processes with one stop partners. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (3)]

All core partners are represented on the NWIWB's Northwest Indiana WIOA Partners Collaborative group and have representation on each of the WorkOne Partner groups. Partnership extends well beyond just this group of core partners. To expand our services, we have representation from all of the WIOA outlined partners, faith community, local government, training providers, and other community stakeholders. During these meetings, referral networks, recruitment strategies, strengths, challenges, and opportunities are discussed. In addition, weekly email communication goes out to partners in order to serve as a connection to the workforce system and includes information about training opportunities, hiring events, employer intelligence, hot jobs, and additional opportunities for partnering with the NWIWB.

Looking ahead, we anticipate that foot traffic in centers will decrease due to the ongoing pandemic, and customer's preference for virtual services. To counteract this, we are partnering with our referral and resource networks even more closely to ensure that motivated individuals who need our assistance are sent to our offices. We are also continually evaluating our technology options and the satisfaction of customers utilizing these new means of service. Additionally, we are working more closely with our local universities and colleges to connect with their career services networks, advisory committees where possible and program chairs of in-demand degree and certificate programs. We have achieved sizeable success through this route in that many of their students need last semester financial assistance that we can provide.

### ***Providing Assistance to Customers with Barriers to Employment***

Some of our urban centers have significant levels of poverty, educational disparities, and inflated levels of ex-offenders in the population, so we rely significantly on our core and community based program partners to help overcome the barriers through supportive and supplemental resources. We partner with the core program partners through a regional Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) designed to build networks of referrals and shared resources. We also partner with them at a local level through community partner meetings which often include not only required MOU Partners, but also faith and community based organizations, Veterans support groups, postsecondary and Adult Education providers. Lastly, in terms of access, we also provide local Access Points for customers that cannot access the One Stop offices so that the community can have a well-informed community center where information and basic assistance is readily available.



The NWIWB and its WorkOne partners serve communities throughout the region that have a relatively high level of individuals with disabilities. All regional efforts to serve these individuals, including those from a community of educational disparity or a community with concentrations of persons with significant disabilities, begin with the collaboration of core program partners that include Adult Education and Vocational Rehabilitation.

The partnership is coordinated and forged through ongoing meetings at the local WorkOne offices and at the regional level through meetings facilitated by the WorkOne Operator, as well as through a universal referral system utilized by the partners. This referral system works both ways, as individuals are referred to and from the WorkOne offices. When an individual comes to a WorkOne office seeking services that partners provide, such as high school equivalency attainment or workplace accommodations for clients with disabilities, a referral form is initiated and a referral is made while case management continues, along with follow up with the partner agency to ensure coordination of services. The converse is also true as partners refer their own clients who have needs for employment and/or training in addition to services provided by the partner.

Region 1 has a comprehensive strategy for engaging out of school youth. It begins with outreach where there are three approaches. The first is internal outreach to jobseekers in the WorkOne system. All individuals between the ages of 18 – 24 who enter the WorkOne offices are first screened for eligibility for the out of school youth program and are provided with information on the array of services offered through the youth program. The second approach to outreach is working with partners including Adult Education and Vocational Rehabilitation. Career Pathway Facilitators are co-located at Adult Education sites and work exclusively with youth that are Adult Education students. The partnership with Vocational Rehabilitation facilitates the capture of those youth that are transitioning from school to work. Students with disabilities work on developing transitional plans. The partnership with Vocational Rehabilitation also serves to capture those youth who are leaving high school and are in need of workforce services offered through the youth program. The final approach to outreach is a grassroots effort with community organizations that serve out of school youth. Youth staff members reach out to community organizations that provide services such as shelter for homeless, health care, transportation, and child care to engage youth in targeted demographics such as homeless youth and parenting youth.

The second part of the NWIWB's engagement strategy is to provide ongoing coordinated services during participation. Specifically included is occupational training that provides youth with skills needed for many in-demand occupations as well as work based learning activities in areas of interest. Work based learning activities not only provide the youth with technical skills and soft skills, but the youth are also earning money. In addition, staff provides monthly guidance and counseling with to the participants to ensure they are working on achieving goals and addressing any barriers that develop that prevent them from success. Staff continues engagement with youth throughout their participation.

The final part of engagement is during the follow up phase. Staff continues to work with youth during this phase to ensure that they are successful in employment and/or postsecondary training. If the need for additional services is identified, referrals and connections are made.

**4.2** Describe how the local board will facilitate and develop career pathways and utilize co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs, and improve access to activities leading to a recognized post-secondary credential, including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate. <https://www.in.gov/gwc/2445.htm> [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (3)]

### **Career Pathways**

The NWIWB has fully adopted a Career Pathways structure aligned with the framework of the State of Indiana and the U.S. Department of Labor. As such the NWIWB will continue to make Career Pathways the “language of the system” in blending classroom training with work-based learning aimed at filling identified skills gaps on a sector-by-sector basis. To live up to that commitment, the NWIWB is taking simultaneous actions to implement the structure using the six key elements of a comprehensive Career Pathways system. Actions include:

1. Build cross-agency partnerships:
  - Major regional organizations charged with coordination of workforce development, education, and economic development now meet regularly to address roles, goals, and success measures;
  - READY NWI provides an ongoing forum to address college/career readiness for K-12, higher education success for post-secondary programs, and integration of career and technical education (CTE) programs as valued option for students;
  - Core WorkOne partners meet monthly to review employer demands, coordinate access to sector-based training programs, and develop information for career guidance for job seekers tied to sector needs and available programs.
2. Engage employers & conduct gap analysis:
  - NWIWB is leading efforts to create ongoing forums for employer engagement with education providers in each key sector including Manufacturing, Construction, Healthcare and IT;
  - Using the NWIWB’s Employer Engagement Commitment Form, employers are being recruited for hands-on participation within the Career Pathways structure, with an emphasis on work-based learning (this has been employed successfully with recent Skill UP Indiana proposals);
  - Following the creation of an initial Annual Indicators Snapshot for the regional cross-agency partnership group, the partners have charged the NWIWB with creating a more robust demand-supply analysis that identifies gaps in skill production.
3. Clarify roles & responsibilities:
  - Roles of NWIWB and other regional partners in education and economic development are being formalized, along with creation of formal structures for communications among the partners;
  - The NWIWB role includes ongoing recruitment of employers for planning and actions on behalf of the broader partnership;

- Roles of READY NWI and the Adult Education Consortium have all been examined and clarified via the coordination meetings of regional partners.

4. Design programs:

- The Career Pathways Structure has been implemented in designing sector-based programs in Manufacturing and Healthcare and will be employed with all sectors;
- Work-based learning provided by employers has been fully integrated with classroom training in recent program designs for existing WIOA funded programs and for new proposals (Skill UP Indiana, Walmart Retail Program, USDOL America's Promise proposal);
- Via the READY NWI initiative, educators will utilize the Career Pathways framework for connecting K-12 career clusters to college majors and students' career plans in transition.

5. Identify funding needs & sources:

- CWI leads fund development efforts for the multiple partners related to workforce development and career planning initiatives
- Funds development is tied to identified current needs (such as production technicians, maintenance technicians in manufacturing) and longer-term needs for growth of the region (such as STEM skills, IT);
- Recent successes for fund development using a Career Pathways framework include IDOE grants for STEM skills, Lumina Foundation, Skill UP Indiana grants, Retail Trades grant; employer contributions and local foundations have supplemented grants and have supplied matching funding.

6. Align policies & programs:

- Monthly meeting of WorkOne core partners coordinate policies and procedures for multiple funding sources;
- The NWIWB is aligning high school CTE programs with needs of employers and with post-secondary programs;
- NWIWB staff are working in coordination with the Indiana DWD and other state workforce areas to develop Eligible Training Provider List processes that promote Career Pathways; coordination will also be sought for policies related to college completion and prior learning assessments.

**Co-enrollment**

The NWIWB approaches our entire workforce system as a partner based system and deeply value the integration of programs that assist in the mission to meet employers' needs for a skilled workforce. In all of our programs that are currently in place, Adult Ed, Wagner-Peyser, VETS, WIOA Adult/DLW, TAA, and other funding streams that are intermittently accessed (such as NEG) there is co-enrollment under an integrated WIOA umbrella application and case management. In addition, we co-enroll core partner program customers as referred and appropriate.

Our approach to co-enrollment fosters an environment wherein customers have an easier means to access and understand our services; in short it provides a more customer friendly environment and service offering. The NWIWB's approach to a common integrated co-enrollment expectation allows for better efficiencies when servicing an employer, creates a broader customer base, and a better customer experience. This all ultimately helps the workforce system maintain efficiency and maximize our use of resources. As we approach the imminent integration of additional programs such as Vocational Rehabilitation and TANF-IMPACT we expect that this principle and practice of integration and co-enrollment will follow in the same footsteps.

**4.3 A-E** Describe the one-stop delivery system in the local area as required by WIOA Sec. 121(e). See below subparts for specific areas that must be addressed. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (6) (A-D)] (4.3 D is a collaborative answer for Regions 5 & 12).

**A.** Describe the local board's efforts to ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services, including contracted services providers and ensure that such providers meet the employment needs of local employers, and workers and jobseekers. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (6) (A)]

The current service providers in Region 1 are the Indiana Department of Workforce Development, JobWorks, Goodwill and Center of Workforce Innovations. Together, the employees of all organizations work side by side to meet the needs of people seeking jobs, and employers seeking workers. To a visitor, there is no distinction between the two groups and the way in which customers are served. The goal of the WorkOne system in Region 1 is to meet employer needs for a skilled workforce. To this end, employer intelligence is shared across programs to insure that industry sector focus, career pathway information, and goals align with the NWIWB strategies.

Continuous improvement starts with a series of NWIWB benchmarked goals and shared expectations. Including:

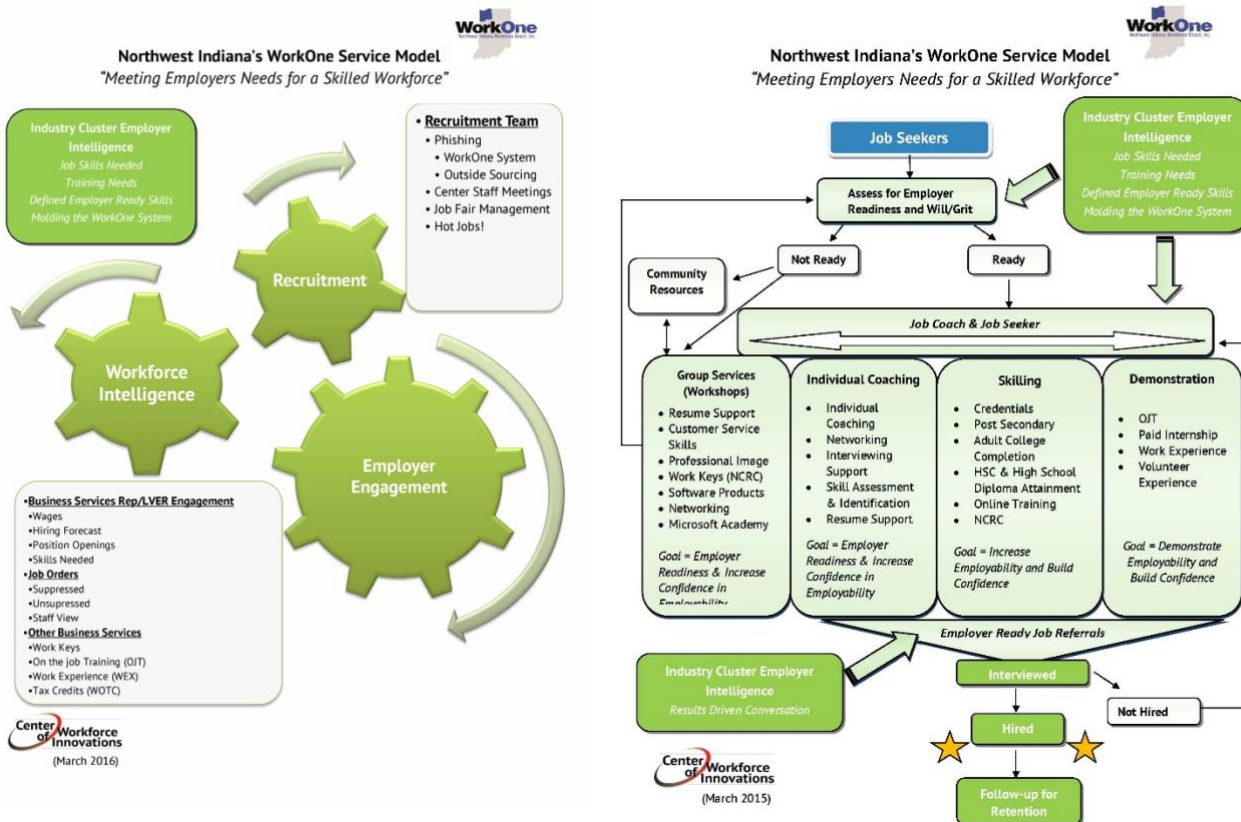
- Shared vision and strategy across all programs and services including
  - Resources, Informational Services
  - Career Advising, Skills Training, and Work based learning
  - Business Services
- Functional job descriptions which include aligned Core Values, Behaviors and Metrics based upon these above three areas
- WIOA Common Measures
- Performance Management Dashboards

Service provider standards and goals are written into their contract statement of work. Outcomes include: system goals and program performance.

One Stop management staff in collaboration with youth providers and Center managers discuss strengths and opportunities for improvement. Quarterly meetings with provider management review all

contract and performance terms noting needed action. CWI and provider staff offer joint trainings, meetings, and case conferencing.

Below is a depiction of the NWI Regional model for the flow of employer intelligence and program services. As employer intelligence is gathered it is disseminated throughout the system and the system adjusts to respond to employer demand:



**B.** Describe how the local board will facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system in remote areas, through the use of technology, and through other means. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (6) (B)]

Region 1 has access to many E-tools that assist customers to connect virtually with staff members. Currently, the Region utilizes Zoom for access to customers on varying levels; Workshops, Career Services, Enrollment, and Events. Another tool that is often used is Avocado, which allows staff members to text & call through an app. This has allowed flexibility when working remotely has been required. It helps to ensure continuity with customers. On a state level, there has been work on piloting a virtual platform through Microsoft Teams; this has allowed for the use of electronic signatures and uploading of documents straight to Indiana Career Connect (ICC). Several other tools exist for organization, such as appointment scheduling, interviewing, and assessments that a customer can complete at home to show proficiency or practice proficiency in particular skill areas. The local board

has continuously facilitated expansion of technology as required and integration with systems that have been put in place by the Department of Workforce Development (DWD). One area of concern, is the customer's access to technology to participate in the process virtually.

**C.** Describe how entities within the one-stop delivery system, including one-stop operators and the one-stop partners, will comply with WIOA section 188, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 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. [See WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (6) (C), 29 CFR 38 and DWD Policy 2016-09]

All aspects of the WorkOne network of services in Region 1 are dedicated to ensuring facilities, programs, equipment, and staff are available and accessible to all in need of service. Offices, facilities, equipment, and systems are formally monitored through an ADA process no less than once a year for compliance, accessibility, and capacity to serve anyone with special needs. Equipment adaptations can be requested by staff at any time, with all offices having programs, equipment, and training to meet hearing, visual impairments, and other physical needs. Programs such as large text, voice activated systems, and adjustable tables are examples of equipment adaptations. Monitoring provides a report on areas needing improvement as well as qualitative feedback on staff capacity to assist special needs. Veterans' staff are trained and equipped with specialized skills in dealing with any unique needs of veterans; while partnerships and MOU agreements with Vocational Rehabilitation provide more extensive support when outside the realm of WorkOne skills. On an annual basis the WorkOne staff is trained to provide better understanding on how to respect and respond to the full range of barriers to employment that may need to be addressed with applicants to the system. This includes training on assistive technologies, workplace accommodations, diversity training, and disability awareness.

The Region 1 WorkOne system aims to ensure that all customers entering and accessing services receive adequate support to the maximum extent possible. The WorkOne centers maintain strict adherence to ADA standards and provide all accommodations as needed for customers. An active project management database is maintained and annual surveys for ADA compliance are conducted. The NWIWB and its service partners strive to make customers who need accommodations or adaptive technology or services as comfortable as possible as they access services at the WorkOne offices and via phone and on-line connections. Assistive technological devices currently in use include: 21 inch monitors, auditory trainer, Braille labeled keyboards, CCTV, Dragon voice recognition software, ergonomic keyboards, Franklin speaking dictionary, height-adjustable tables, JAWS screen reader, Kurzweil 1000 text reader, Magic screen enhancer, motorized workstation, Sharp voice synthesized calculator, tactile image enhancer, Windows XP and accessibility options, Zoom Text screen enhancer. An active contractual relationship is maintained with the DWD-provided vendors for face-to-face and telephonic interpreter services to assist those that have limited English proficiency and need these auxiliary aids.

**D.\*** Describe the roles and resource contributions of the one-stop partners agreed to per DWD Policy 2018-04 Memoranda of Understanding and Infrastructure/Additional Costs Funding Guidance. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (6) (D)]

Infrastructure costs are defined as non-personnel costs that are necessary for the general operation of the One-Stop System, including; but, not limited to:

- Rental of the facilities;
- Utilities and maintenance;
- Equipment, including assessment-related products and assistive technology for individuals with disabilities; and,
- Technology to facilitate access to the One-Stop System, including technology used for the center's planning and outreach activities.

All parties in the Northwest Indiana Regional One Stop System recognize that these costs are applicable to all required Partners based on relative benefit received. Partners not colocated may not contribute to each infrastructure line item if there is no relative benefit received. All partners receiving benefit from items such as the referral system and agree to contribute to the referral system based on proportionate use. Each partner's contributions to these costs, however, may vary, as these contributions are based on the proportionate use and relative benefit received, consistent with the Partner programs' authorizing laws and regulations and the Uniform Guidance.

All costs are included in the partnership agreement, allocated according to Partners' proportionate use and relative benefits received, and reconciled on a semi-annual basis against actual costs incurred and adjusted accordingly. The one-stop operating budget is expected to be transparent and negotiated among Partners on an equitable basis to ensure costs are shared appropriately. All Partners negotiated in good faith and seek to establish outcomes that are reasonable and fair.

**E.** Describe how one-stop centers are implementing and transitioning to an integrated technology enabled intake and case management information system for core programs and programs carried out by one-stop partners. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (21)]

This year has facilitated many changes to the way Career Services are delivered to the customer. At present, if a customer possesses the technology, the entire process from enrollment to job placement can occur without an in-person office visit. In most cases, the system has become hybrid; basic services and individualized career counseling occurring virtually with a customer visiting an office in-person to drop off documentation and/or signatures. The integration has allowed flexibility in customer services however, making office appointments much shorter in duration, which allows Career Advisors to assist more customers overall.

**4.4** An analysis and description of adult and dislocated worker workforce development activities, including type and availability of education, training and employment activities. Include analysis of the strengths and opportunities of such services, as well as the capacity to provide such services, in order to address the needs identified in 1.2. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (1) (D) & 108 (b) (7)]

***Basic Career Services (aka Resources)***

The basic services communicate employer expectations and career opportunities through available resources and workshops. These services are delivered in both virtual, self-guided experiences, and across partner locations. Staff are focused on outstanding customer service, assessment delivery, upselling of additional WorkOne services, and communicating employer and career pathway information; service delivery is at a fast pace and offered in a welcoming environment. Customers engage in an initial conversation with staff to understand their needs, what help they may need looking for employment, the WorkOne Northwest overview of WorkOne Services, and general information on local employer demand such as available hot jobs and upcoming skills training. The bulk of these services are delivered through the resources area and are self-help and informational in nature. In addition, employer driven skills testing such as WorkKeys are also delivered by staff under the Basic Career Services area. Workshops in a virtual and/or informational format are offered daily at the WorkOne offices at this Basic Career Services level.

Outcomes for this service include speed of service (wait times), conversions to individualized service, and customer experience measured by our net promoter score. All outcomes are currently meeting or exceeding established targets.

***Analysis of Basic Career Services***

Basic career services are a valuable offering as they allow for self-service, informational customer driven services to the one-stop system for customers who may not be able to benefit from a deeper level of investment from our Career and Training service offerings. They allow the One Stop system to provide service to the community and job seekers entering the offices and virtually accessing these offerings to obtain the short term help that they need to access job, career, and education information. Basic career services also allow employers to have a steady stream of skilled job seekers ready for opportunities they may have listed on the job exchange.

Strengths of the basic level of services is the connection to partners and community resources, as well as the outstanding customer service as measured by our excellent net promoter score. The weaknesses in basic career services are few but important. While they do allow for us to screen for motivated customers that should be able to benefit from deeper level of investment through Individualized Coaching and Up Skilling (training) services it often presents a predicament in the fact that many motivated customers bypass our system altogether by accessing virtual basic services without ever



stepping foot inside our One Stop system. To address this, we will rely on referral paths with our partners and innovative value-added marketing campaigns.

### ***Individualized Career and Coaching Services (aka Coaching and Career Advising)***

Customers seeking career assistance are assigned to a Career Advisor, serving as a case manager and career coach. These services are delivered from a client-centric perspective, rooted in a deep understanding of regional employer demand, and hone in on the industry specific skill analysis, career path exploration, upskilling, and job matching. All Career Advisors, regardless of funding stream, work one-on-one with customers, beginning with the delivery and interpretation of an assessment, as well as the development of an Individualized Employment Plan (IEP), following the customer throughout their interactions with WorkOne services in one on one coaching sessions, and into placement and follow-up.

There are two main categories of work with the customer: Group Services and Individual Coaching. Career Advisors assign online instructional and/or pre-vocational services, and refer employer ready customers to job orders in Indiana Career Connect. They may also set up pre-vocational training services, such as referral to Adult Basic Education, and/or a paid internship (aka, Work Experience). Certain workshops are offered at the Individualized Career Services level. These workshops go beyond Basic and informational and require experienced staff to facilitate skills development validated by skill demonstration. Only customers at the Individualized level with an assigned Career Advisor can attend Individualized level workshops.

Outcomes for this service include days to employment, case load size target, coaching sessions with customers, and common measure performance. Other than coaching session targets, outcomes are currently meeting or exceeding established targets.

### ***Analysis of Individualized Career and Coaching Services***

Individualized Career services often are our most robust offering as they allow our One-Stop System to invest in job seekers through individual and group coaching, assessment of skills, including making them aware of their transferrable skills, mock interviewing, etc. All of these service offerings provide the job seeker and employers a tangible benefit of making them ready for employment and a career. At the core of these services are two strengths: career advisors understanding of regional employer intelligence and demand and the strong relationships career advisors develop with their customers.

There are two challenges to these services though: often, job seekers need significant assistance in overcoming barriers and many of these barriers are not areas for which we can provide direct services, resulting in referrals to our partners. To address this, we are working to seamlessly connect the system with partners who have experience and expertise in addressing specific barriers. The second challenge is the speed at which career advisors deliver services. We will be setting expectations that the days to placement metric decrease over the next three years, allowing caseloads to turn at least twice throughout the program year. This initiative will require consistent coaching and feedback to the Career

Advisor team and strong professional development (PD) opportunities. The One Stop Operator will initiate PD sessions which focus on creative interventions with enhanced employer demand information paired with career pathway materials.

### ***Work Based Learning (aka Demonstration) and Up-Skilling Services***

For customers needing skills development beyond the resources available at WorkOne, Career Advisors recommend occupational skills training. Training happens in one of two ways, either through the typical training in a classroom or facility that offers certificate or degree-based program training (considered an Individual Training Account, or ITA) or through Work-Based Learning skills demonstrations in an On-the-Job-Training (OJT) or Work Experience. Each Career Advisor is assigned a minimum number of customers who receive training services each year and the Career Advisor is responsible for following the customer, documenting progress, and ensuring that the customer receives the certification associated with the training. Since VETS funded Career Advisors cannot enter WIOA services the process is performed in tandem with a non-VETS funded Career Advisor. For customers that are adults, there are currently four programs of classroom/facility training: WIOA Adult; WIOA Dislocated Worker; Next Level Jobs; and Scholarships.

Outcomes for this service include completion rates, credential rates, employment, employer experience, and common measure performance. Other than credential rates, outcomes are currently meeting or exceeding established targets.

### ***Analysis of Work Based Learning and Training***

Work-based learning and training is a robust way of upskilling the community job seekers allowing them to obtain an increase in skills to become more marketable to employers. Both of these offerings make workforce development increasingly critical in the conversation around economic development and allow for us to create as well as sustain the recognized link between education and economy. The challenge sometimes presented by work based learning is that employers may not be willing to take the risk of experiential learning due to workers' compensation limitations and risk. We are working with employers to explore additional ways to support the process. The challenges presented by training services is the lack of diverse set of training providers that can respond quickly to the needs of employers and work with us to develop in a short time frame a training program that is industry recognized and presents a credential that is acceptable. We continue to explore the creative attraction methods for gathering additional training providers to the region. Accessing copies of credentials and hinging the credentialing process to the training syllabus is a significant challenge. The NWIWB's industry based consortium model is addressing these issues by forcing different conversations with training providers which highlight the mode of delivery by the training providers. An additional challenge is the employers' discussion of skills and not credentials. We will be working to change our language to discuss skills and how a credential is a tool for verifying skill demonstration.

### ***Recruitment and Referral to Employment***

We provide employers with recruitment services. All WorkOne staff have responsibilities in the recruitment process for skilled workers to meet employer demand:

- **The Business Services Representatives and Recruiters:** bring employer demand and employer intelligence back to the system. Responsibilities include posting job orders to Indiana Career Connect and understanding employer screening practices, as well as gathering additional needed information to find candidates. Recruiters actively review job orders in Indiana Career Connect and available job listings across the region from a multitude of sources. Additionally, Recruiters screen qualified candidates outside of WorkOne that are a potential match for an open and available job order, seeking a potential enrollment and placement.
- **The Resource Specialist team:** meet employers demand by identifying employer-ready skilled workers for employers. Through increased awareness of available jobs in ICC and skills necessary, Resource Specialists support the identification of potentially skilled workers.
- **The Career Advisor team:** meet employer demand by locating and creating skilled workers for employers. Career Advisors actively review job orders in Indiana Career Connect. Through increased awareness of available jobs and the skills necessary, matches are made with both customers for future enrollment and customers on existing caseloads.

Outcomes for this service include job order management, business services actively managed accounts, employer engagement penetration rates by industry, employment, employer experience, and common measure performance.

### ***Analysis of Recruitment and Referral to Employment***

The strength of our recruitment and referral to employment is that it provides an opportunity for us to take a proactive step in meeting the needs of employers through skilled workers. There are significant efforts that we have built around this process which have allowed us to respond in business time to the needs of the employers. The challenge presented in this is that while we have access to a good size of employer ready customers, many of our customers that make it into the Individualized (“enrolled”) career services level are often those that need more investment and are not always ready. In other words, it takes time to get them ready and this time does challenge our system to respond to business needs in business time.

### ***Placement and Follow-up***

Placement is the ultimate goal for all of our programs. However, placement is not enough; we work with our customers to ensure that the placement is a sustainable placement.

Once the customer is placed into unsubsidized employment and has a planned exit to employment, it is vital that WorkOne maintain quarterly contact to ensure that he or she is receiving any needed job retention assistance or services. We have identified Career Services staff who serve as Transition Career Advisors. These staff track, document and ensure that the participant successfully meets their planned outcome goals and successful outcomes on the WIOA performance measures. Transition Career

Advisors, when appropriate, provide limited services necessary to help prevent job loss or enter employment.

Outcomes for this service include exit screen completion, employment, employer experience, and common measure performance.

### ***Analysis of Placement and Follow-up***

The strength of our efforts to assist customers in obtaining employment and following up with them rest in our ability to develop a rapport with them quickly and help them at a rapid pace both so that they are in a place to provide for themselves and their families as well as meet the employer's needs. Follow up services that are offered after placement allow for us to ensure that the customer retains their position and if possible grows and advances through ongoing coaching and encouragement. The challenges presented by the placement process specifically rest with the significantly complicated process by which our staff and our system obtains performance calculations and common measure success. Another challenge present in both placement and follow up is the reality that customers do not always notify us that they have obtained employment. The new Transition Specialist positions were created to specifically address this issue.

**4.5** Describe how the local board will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out in the local area with statewide rapid response activities, as described in section 134 (a) (2) (A). [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (8)].

Rapid Response services in Region 1 are designed to respond quickly and communicate with key stakeholders and partners. Key members of the Rapid Response Team include a representative of the Business Services Team, select WorkOne staff, and in some cases, a local economic development organization, who meet with a company to determine the needs of the affected workers. The regional plan specifies that an initial meeting with the affected company will occur within 48 hours of an announced layoff or closure. After this initial meeting, the team develops a business support plan. This plan outlines the needs of the company and its affected workers and provides a general overview of Rapid Response services to be provided. A Business Services Representative facilitates the implementation of services through a Rapid Response team comprised of WorkOne, TAA, and UI staff. The team works with the company to outline a process of engagement which works for both the company and the impacted workers. The team then provides customized orientation sessions to the affected workers. These initial sessions include an overview of workforce services, including Unemployment Insurance, job search assistance, training, and placement assistance. The affected workers complete a survey, which includes basic demographic information including geographic location, gender, veteran status, and level of educational attainment, as well as any information on services desired by the affected worker. These surveys are divided by geographic location and delivered to a Center Manager in each WorkOne as well as the state contact.

Additional partners at Rapid Response events have included representatives from community colleges, United Way, and community-based organizations that may also provide services as part of rapid response activities. The NWIWB developed a partnership with the Department of Labor's Employee Benefits Security Administration. This division is responsible for providing information on COBRA benefits, pensions, health plans, and HIPPA. Representatives of the Employee Benefits Security Administration also participate in Rapid Response orientations with affected workers.

In an effort to meet unique demands or in response to the number of employees being dislocated, the Rapid Response team develops specialized models which incorporate and expand on the process above. Regardless of the structure of the intervention the focus is on getting the impacted workers back into the workforce as quickly as possible. Throughout the process, staff at WorkOne offices follow-up with customers and tell them about rapid job matching opportunities and are encouraged to continue their engagement via WorkOne services to further accelerate the process the Business Services Team is marketing the skills of the impacted workers to other businesses. Frequently we will see these workers be quickly picked up by a different employer.

When a company has filed or plans to file a TAA petition, an overview of TAA services is provided during the orientation session. After a company becomes TAA certified, they are provided with an orientation of TAA services and the initial paperwork is completed. TAA staff then submits the required paperwork to the local DWD manager for approval before submission to the state contact.

**4.6** An analysis and description of the type and availability of youth workforce activities for in school youth, including youth with disabilities. If the same services are offered to out-of-school youth, describe how the programs are modified to fit the unique needs of in-school youth. For each program, include the following: length of program and availability/schedule (i.e. 2 weeks in July); % of youth budget allocation; WIOA program elements addressed by the program, with specific focus on how the 5 new elements have been incorporated; desired outputs and outcomes; and details on how the program is evaluated. Include analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of such services, and the capacity to provide such services, in order to address the needs identified in 1.2. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (9)]

Region 1 continues to implement Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) for the main in-school youth program. JAG serves youth in high school who have multiple barriers to employment including the risk of dropping out of high school. Teachers, guidance counselors, school administration, and current JAG participants refer youth, including youth with disabilities, to the JAG Program. This program year, through a pre-employment transition services grant from Vocational Rehabilitation, Region 1 is able to provide additional support for youth with disabilities as they transition from school to work or school to school. As a result, for Program Year 2020, youth with disabilities currently make up 10% of the total number of JAG participants.

The JAG Program is a year-round program with 25% of the WIOA youth allocation being spent on in-school youth. JAG participants complete career assessments and are taught employability skills through core competencies and employer presentations. Also, they participate in a Career Association where they develop leadership and personal skills, and complete service learning activities through community service. In addition to gaining skills for the workforce, in-school youth are provided with career awareness activities including postsecondary education opportunities through college fairs and tours, postsecondary educational guest speakers, and college tours. All seniors are encouraged to complete two college applications, take the ACT, SAT, or other entrance exams, and file for FAFSA and apply for scholarships. The majority of these activities occur in a classroom setting during the school year (August – May). The average amount of time a participant spends in these activities is 160 hours.

As mentioned previously, participants are taught employability skills in the classroom. They are also provided the opportunity to gain hands on skills through work based learning activities such as job shadowing, work experience, and internships. Work based learning which takes place during the school year and throughout summer also incorporates classroom activities such as employment counseling, job search, and career exploration allowing the participant to focus on work place expectations and job skills. For JAG participants who are also enrolled in CTE, occupational skills training is also an option. Through supportive services, WIOA in-school funds are used to pay for the JAG participant's exam fee and credentialing license.

While the out of school youth are offered the same services, the approach in implementing services and activities are different from the in school model. The out of school youth program is year round and makes up 75% of the WIOA youth budget. As mentioned previously, most of the in-school youth activities are in a classroom setting to groups of students. Out of School youth activities are for the most part individualized with the exception of workshops which could be one on one or in groups. In addition to individualized services there are two specific programs for out of school youth that Region 1 continues to implement. One of the programs targets those youth who are currently attending adult education centers. The youth staff, known as Career Pathway Facilitators, work in partnership with certified, licensed Adult Education teachers to integrate career awareness, workforce services, and supportive services into their educational participation. This methodology creates an environment dual or stackable credentials can be achieved thus shortening the length of time from basic education to careers, jobs, or higher education. We find retention and persistence increases as outcomes can be obtained simultaneously rather than by traditional sequential methods. The other program is the Out-of-School JAG Program. This program is located out of the Gary WorkOne office. All participants of the Out-of-School JAG program are drop outs. The focus of the Out-of-School JAG program is re-entry into high school or Adult Education classes leading to attainment of a High School Equivalency. This model incorporates educational coursework in conjunction with the 20 employability competencies associated with the Out-of-School JAG program.

The JAG Program incorporates all program elements with the exception of alternative secondary school services, handled by referral only. The new program elements are incorporated through the various activities. Some JAG students participate in career and technical education throughout the region. The majority of these students are earning occupational skills certification in various career fields and JAG program then features speakers from those career fields to provide students first hand career information. In addition, through supportive services, JAG is able to pay for exam fees and credential licensing which may otherwise limit a student's ability to complete their training. Thus the first new program element is incorporated nicely into the JAG program and other locations where the students take Career and Technical Education courses.

We continue to partner with Junior Achievement (JA) to implement the Personal Finance and Be Entrepreneurial programs in the JAG classroom. These two programs align with the second and third program elements of financial literacy and entrepreneurial skills training. Through these JA programs the JAG Specialists have been trained and continue implementing this Junior Achievement curriculum. As mentioned previously employers are invited as guest speakers to provide information on specific careers and industry as well as what is currently needed in the workplace. While all JAG participants complete career assessments using Indiana Career Explorer, and enter their skills and work experience in Indiana Career Connect. The combination of all these activities aligns with the fourth new program element of providing labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors of occupations. Finally, the last new program element, activities that help prepare for and transition to postsecondary education/training, is incorporated through guest speakers from higher educational institutions, college tours, and the completion of college applications, entrance exams, filing for financial aid, and applying for scholarships.

Outputs for the JAG Program include mastery of the core competencies, evidence of community based service learning projects, graduation rates of JAG students being greater than that of the school, scholarships awarded meeting or exceeding the previous year's amount, and 20% of funding spent in work based learning activities. Outcomes include meeting JAG and WIOA performance standards. The program is evaluated in a number of ways. First is the school corporation's willingness to continue with the program. The strength of our partnership with the designated school systems and the service we provide to the students are important factors to evaluate. The second area of evaluation is based on meeting the performance standards designated under both JAG and WIOA. The final area of evaluation is a ROI of the program. The services provided to the in-school youth under JAG provide the youth with the tools needed to transition to life after high school.

<p><b>4.7</b> Identify how successful the above programs have been and any other best practices for youth workforce activities relevant to the local area. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (9)]</p>
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The JAG Program continues to be very successful. Three of the lower performing school corporations in the state are Gary Community School Corporation, School City of East Chicago, and School City of

Hammond. In 2019, Gary Community School Corporation and School City of East Chicago received a D rating from the state, and School City of Hammond received a C rating with all corporations having graduation rates lower than the state average graduation rate of 86.4%. However, the JAG programs had higher graduation rates than those of School Corporations and the state average with the Gary JAG graduation rate of 90.7%, East Chicago JAG graduation rate of 97.3%, and the JAG Hammond graduation rate of 94.9%. In addition, 84.3% of all JAG participants went on to employment and/or postsecondary education. Finally, Region 1 met all JAG performance standards issued by DWD for the past 5 years.

One best practice associated with the in school WIOA youth program has been the incorporation of the Region 1 Work Ethic Initiative and the Governor's Work Ethic Certificate Program into the JAG Program. The objectives of Work Ethic compliment the core competencies of JAG as well as the activities provided through WIOA funded service. Therefore, all JAG participants are encouraged to participate in the Work Ethic programs. Seniors participate in GWEC and underclassmen participate in the Regional Work Ethic program in preparation for the GWEC. Early data shows that this has been a successful addition to the JAG Program, 41% of JAG participants from all the schools participated compared to 21% of Non-JAG students participating from the same school. The percentage of those that earned the certificate is also higher, 60% of JAG students compared to 33% of non-JAG students. In addition, JAG has a higher percentage of special populations participating in work ethic compared to non-JAG students. Specifically, 58% JAG students of color and 42% special education students earned the certificate compared to 19% of non-JAG students of color and 37% special education students.

The Out of School program continues to build on the success of the partnership with Adult Education. Currently 40.5% of all Adult Education students are individuals under the age of 25. Through this program, the participants have increased the number of stackable credentials and have increased transition to employment or postsecondary education. In addition, Region 1 achieved all WIOA performance standards last year.

As mentioned earlier, youth staff called Career Pathway Facilitators work exclusively with Adult Education students. A best practice that has resulted in this initiative is the locating these staff working with the participants at the Adult Education sites. By meeting the participant at the Adult Ed site, the Career Pathway Facilitator is able to conduct more one on one sessions, ensure that the youth continues to participate in Adult Education, and work more as a team with the Adult Education Instructor. The collaboration that has resulted between the Adult Ed staff and WIOA youth staff has allowed for more integration of both programs.



**4.8** Describe process utilized by the local board to ensure that training provided is linked to in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area, or in another area to which a participant is willing to relocate. Include a description of the process and criteria used for issuing individual training accounts. If training contracts are used, describe processes utilized by the local board to ensure customer choice in the selection of training programs, regardless of how the training services are to be provided [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (19)]

#### **Linking Training to In-Demand Occupations**

The NWIWB has an established Occupations in Demand (OIC) Policy and List. NWIWB utilizes local labor market information systems to identify targeted industries and occupations prioritized for funding. This creates the Regional Occupations in Demand Policy. The list is evaluated on a regular basis to insure relevance to employer demand and economic shifts. NWIWB utilizes information from a variety of sources: electronic LMI tools, economic modeling, qualitative information from employers, economic developers, and information on economy growth trends and predictions. After all of this is taken into consideration, we then start to narrow down what should be on the list. Wages are then layered on top of this. We continue to work the list to see where the demarcation for growth is. Given the economic trends this can change over the years and across industries. Once the list is finalized, the NWIWB votes on the list. In Region 1, demand occupations are organized by “Primary Industry Clusters” containing demand occupations. Those clusters include: 1) Health Care; 2) Distribution, Logistics & Transportation; 3) Advanced Manufacturing; 4) Professional, Financial Services, and Technology; 5) Construction Trades; 6) Hospitality, Amusement, Recreation, and Tourism; and 7) Other Not Elsewhere Categorized (NEC).

The One Stop Operator maintains an OID guidance staff tool which outlines skills, education, and credentials by industry. Staff typically use the guide in their daily work with customers to insure the customer understand the specific options. To aid customers in understanding training and career options, career cluster documents for each industry outline industry employer expectations, an overview of positions with wages and needed credentials, and career pathways.

The staff to the NWWIB work with training providers in the area to ensure that employer demanded technical skills are being developed by the training offerings. The needs of employers are gathered through our ongoing conversations in our sector strategies. In the event that training providers are not available in the area, the staff utilize INTraining to highlight training providers from other regions and work to expand the available training offerings.

#### ***Customer Choice and Setup of an Individualized Training Account***

Skills training happens in one of two ways, either through the typical training in a classroom or facility that offers industry recognized credentials or degree-based program training (considered an Individual Training Account, or ITA) or through Work-Based Learning skills demonstrations in an On-the-Job-Training (OJT). For customers that are adults, there are four funding streams of classroom/facility training: WIOA Adult; WIOA Dislocated Worker; and Next Level Jobs. Each of these programs has their

own eligibility requirements. The NWIWB requires the use of providers from INTraining that deliver an industry recognized credential for an in-demand occupation.

Customer understanding and choice is important for a successful training experience. It is the expectation that the Career Advisor, prior to setting up an individualized training account and entering any customer into Occupational Skills Training services, will assess the customer for alignment along the career pathway, discuss relevant labor market information about the chosen occupation, review training providers for the occupation being sought, and document this in a case note. A customer must demonstrate that he or she has the skills and qualifications to successfully complete the selected training program and are unable to obtain grant assistance from other sources to pay the costs of such training. If an individual does not score high enough on the TABE (if it is taken) or other required assessment to enter training, referral to Adult Education for remediation is required. This is all documented through assessment services and case notes.

A critical component in this process is the review and update of the IEP. This update must demonstrate the customer's skills gap and how the occupational skills training closes the gap ensuring the customer is ready for employment post-training.

**4.9** Describe how Jobs for Hoosiers and RESEA activities are coordinated and carried out in the local area and how these activities will be incorporated into WIOA programming.

In an effort to better serve RESEA participants, it is expected that approximately 20% of RESEA participants will be co-enrolled in WIOA DLW career advising services based on assessment of needs. As the RESEA customers bring in job search logs, it is vital that the staff reviewing these logs, whether they are RESEA Career Advisors or not, ensure the quality of the customer's job searches listed by checking to see if the companies listed are hiring and if the jobs for which the customer is searching are relevant to their work history and skill sets. If the customer has marketable skills, it is essential that they be informed of the available jobs through ICC that the Business Services team has obtained from regional employers.

**Process for Dislocated Worker Consideration for RESEA Customers:**

As has been established in NWIWB Dislocated Worker Policy on "Unlikely to Return," all RESEA customers are eligible for Dislocated Worker services as long as they receive RESEA services prior to enrollment into WIOA services. Based upon the initial conversation where RESEA Career Advisor assesses for motivation and evaluate the participant's marketable skills, RESEA customers will be given the opportunity to meet with a WIOA Career Advisor for co-enrollment. RESEA services are entered into the case management database by the RESEA Career Advisor, and WIOA services are entered by the Career Advisors of the WIOA service provider. Customers who are not motivated or lack the interest in meeting with a Career Advisor will still have access to RESEA services.

If the customer is working at the Individualized level, then the Career Advisor enrolls the customer into all eligible WIOA DLW programs, then interprets an assessment of the customer, jointly develops the Academic and Career Plan with the customer, and provides regular employment counseling services. If the customer prefers to work with a Career Advisor at a different WorkOne location, then an appointment in Appointment Plus is scheduled and the application is created for that future appointment.

<b>4.10</b> Describe strategies to engage workers and employers impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and how services will be provided.
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All of the services of WorkOne have continued to be provided throughout the COVID 19 pandemic through variations of our regular services. Even though we were not able to meet with our customers in person for a few months, we were able to regain our level of services through the creative use of technology. Meetings with employers have continued via telephone and/or ZOOM calls. Email has also been utilized to share information and to ensure that open communication has been ongoing.

We continue to post open positions for employers on Indiana Career Connect and social media outlets. Career Advisors have kept in communication with job seekers through phone calls and texting. With the offices now open by appointment, these modes of communication have been amplified by the ability to meet in person once again with safety protocols in place. Our Workshop Team has offered ongoing virtual workshops since this spring and is now offering a combination of in-person and virtual opportunities to meet the needs of the community. New topics that have been added to assist job seekers with changes in the job search process in the age of COVID include Global Pandemic: Adjusting to the New Normal and Today's Interview. Job fairs have been either virtual utilizing ZOOM or in person with social distancing and other precautions in place including masks and plastic screens. We have also partnered with Growing Opportunities for Latinos in America and Causes for Change to provide hiring events that focused on the needs of Spanish speakers and people with disabilities.

The Next Level Rapid Recovery Grant money was an essential part of the success in our region. The NLJ program allowed us to train workers who were displaced due to COVID for new careers. Many of these opportunities would not have been possible without that additional funding. Next Level Jobs was also highly impactful for thirty-five area employers who were able to retain and upskill employees. The allowances of the Rapid Recovery Grant for related to the areas of approved training, waiver of retention dates and permissibility of internal training were key to the success of this program for employers. We will continue to seek out innovative ways to provide services to both job seekers and employers in the safest way possible.

## Section 5: Compliance

Please answer the following questions of Section 5 in 12 pages or less. Most of the response should be staff driven responses as each are focused on the organization's compliance with federal or state requirements. **Questions that require collaborative answers for regions 5 & 12 are designated with an \*.**

**5.1** Describe any competitive process planned to be used to award the sub-grants and contracts in the local area for activities carried out under WIOA Title I. State the names of current contracted organizations and the duration of each contract for adult, dislocated worker and youth services. Attach contracts as Exhibit 1. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (16)]

The NWIWB has elected to complete a competitive process to award sub-grants and WorkOne service delivery contracts. If necessary, assistance will be requested from the Department of Workforce Development to create, manage and finalize the process in order to prohibit undue influence or guidance from the current sub-grantees and contract holders. A Request for Proposal is issued specifying the services needed (Staff to the WDB, One Stop Operator, Fiscal Agent and WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker Service Delivery). Once the proposal and bids are received, a special committee comprised of NWIWB members review and rate each bid. This group then makes a recommendation for approval by the full NWIWB. The current sub-grantee and contract holder is Center of Workforce Innovations, Inc.

Youth service provision is also contracted by means of a competitive process. The process is a Request for Proposal is issued and published for access by all interested parties. Once the bid packages are received by the fiscal agent, an impartial rate and review process occurs. Reviewers are selected from a broad base of departments and backgrounds. Reviewer responses are collated and tabulated to determine a rating for each bid. A cost and price analysis is completed as the reasonableness of expense test. Lastly, a recommendation is made to the CWI President/CEO for review and presentation to the Northwest Indiana Workforce Board for final selection. The youth services providers for PY 22 are: Goodwill Industries of Michiana, Inc., JobWorks, Inc, [Gary Alumni Pathway to Students](#), [Boys and Girls Club of Greater Northwest Indiana](#), [Mental Health of America of Northwest Indiana](#), and [TradeWinds Services, Inc.](#). The contracts of both providers are current through June 30, 2023. Renewal options are considered on a yearly basis up to four years' total are based on program and fiscal performance. Current contracts for PY 22 are:

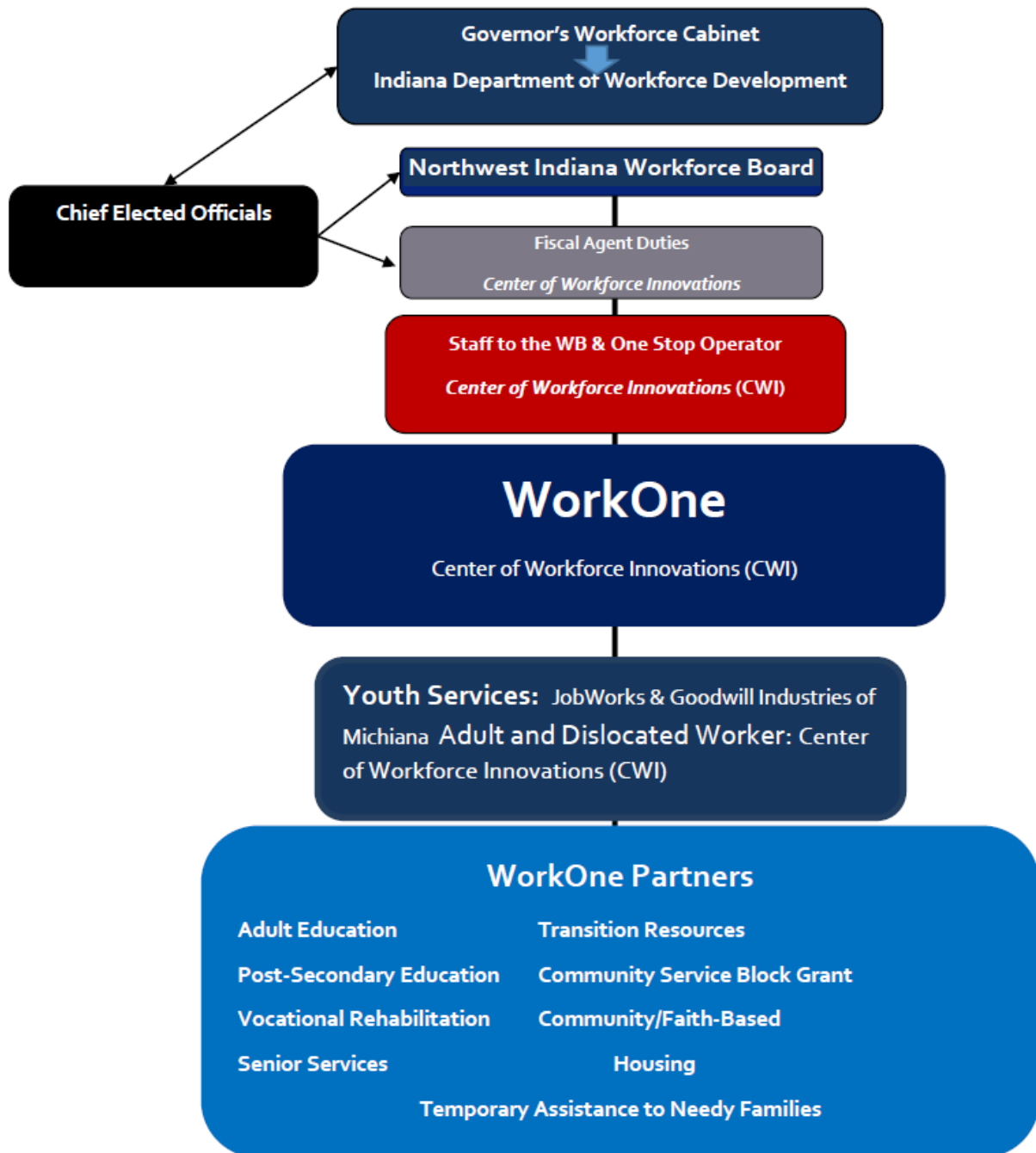
- Goodwill Industries of Michiana, Inc. -
- JobWorks, Inc.
- [Gary Alumni Pathway to Students](#)
- [Boys and Girls Club of Greater Northwest Indiana](#)
- [Mental Health of America of Northwest Indiana](#)
- [TradeWinds Services, Inc.](#)

In all cases, a Request for Proposal is issued to begin the procurement process for Youth service providers. The NWIWB establishes very specific objectives, tasks descriptions, and required metrics for success. A broad distribution of the Request for Proposal is undertaken to encourage a wide range of

respondents including minority, women owned, and veteran owned businesses. The following items are considered:

- Adequate financial resources or the ability to obtain them;
- Ability to meet the RFP design specifications at a reasonable cost;
- Ability to meet performance goals;
- Satisfactory record (must be validated) of past performance in delivering the proposed or similar services, including demonstrated quality of services and successful outcome rates from past programs;
- Ability to provide services that can lead to the achievement of competency standards for customers with identified deficiencies;
- Satisfactory record of integrity, business ethics, and fiscal accountability;
- The necessary organization, experience, accounting and operational controls;
- Expertise with the management information system or a plan to obtain functional capacity upon contract award.

**5.2** Provide an organization chart as Exhibit 2 that depicts a clear separation of duties between the board and service provision.



**5.3** Describe any standing committees or taskforces of your Local Board, including the role and scope of work of your youth committee (or youth representatives on the WDB if you do not have a committee).

The Youth Employment Council continues to be a standing committee of the Northwest Indiana Workforce Board. The Youth Employment Council on behalf of the Northwest Indiana Workforce Board determines the needs of youth in Region 1 and addresses those needs through special initiatives such as Work Ethic, collaboration with others including Junior Achievement and Ready Northwest Indiana, and targeted use of WIOA funding. The goals of the Youth Employment Council include ensuring youth are positioned for continuous education, learning and workforce success; aligning education with the needed business skills (i.e. specific technical skills, soft skills); and helping impoverished youth understand the skills needed to make it in the workforce. In addition, the committee issues the Request for Proposals for procuring youth service providers and recommendation to the Board; monitors the WIOA programs and providers; and develops an annual work plan for approval by the Board to ensure alignment with regional goals and expectations.

The Board also maintains an Executive Committee that is authorized to take action between Board meetings except for issues related to:

- Amending the Articles of Incorporation or the Bylaws;
- Adopting an agreement or plan for merger or consolidation;
- Proposing a corporate transaction involving sale or disposition of the assets of the corporation; or
- Recommending the dissolution of the Corporation.

In addition, board members serve on industry sector partnerships group such as the Health Care Consortium and the La Porte Innovation Networks, a manufacturing consortium formed during Skill UP 3.

**5.4** Provide the name, organization, and contact information of the designated equal opportunity officer for WIOA within the local area.

**WIOA Equal Opportunity Officer (EEO)**

Nora Wiergacz  
Center of Workforce Innovations  
2804 Boilermaker Ct Suite E  
Valparaiso IN 46383  
[NWeirgacz@cwicorp.com](mailto:NWeirgacz@cwicorp.com)  
219-462-2940 Ext. 1049

**5.5** Identify the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds as described in WIOA Sec. 107 (d) (12) (B) (i) (III). [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (15)]

The County Local Elected Officials have selected their fiscal agent to be:

**Organization:** Center of Workforce Innovations, Inc.

WIOA Local Plan

**Address:** 2804 Boilermaker Court, Suite E, Valparaiso, IN 46383-8418  
**Telephone Number:** (219) 462-2940  
**E-mail Address:** [lwolo@cwicorp.com](mailto:lwolo@cwicorp.com)

**5.6** Indicate the negotiated local levels of performance for the federal measures. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (17)]

**WIOA Adult**

Indicator	Target PY22	Target PY23
Credential Rate	65.45%	65.45%
Employment Q2	80.15%	80.15%
Employment Q4	75.15%	75.15%
MSG	61.00%	63.00%
Median Earnings	\$7,132	\$7,131.50

**WIOA Dislocated Worker**

Indicator	Target PY22	Target PY23
Credential Rate	62.65%	62.65%
Employment Q2	79.10%	79.10%
Employment Q4	74.85%	74.85%
MSG	61.00%	63.00%
Median Earnings	\$8,158	\$8,157.50

**WIOA Youth**

Indicator	Target PY22	Target PY23
Credential Rate	64.30%	64.30%
Employment Q2	79.15%	79.15%
Employment Q4	80.15%	80.15%
MSG	65.00%	65.00%
Median Earnings	\$3,576	\$3,576.00



**5.7** Provide a description of the replicated cooperative agreements, as defined by WIOA 107(d)(11), in place between the local board and the Department of Human Services' Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Services with respect to efforts that will enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities and to other individuals, such as cross training of staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers, and other efforts at cooperation, collaboration, and coordination. See Local Plan References and Resources. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (14)]

All required One Stop Partners participate as partners in the One Stop System referred to as the Northwest Indiana Regional One Stop System (also known as the network of WorkOne in NWI). This partnership with the Northwest Indiana Workforce Board (NWIWB), is intended to benefit the employers and citizens in our communities.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VR) is one of these partners and provides quality individualized services to enhance and support people with disabilities to prepare for, obtain or retain employment. The individual will work closely with a VR counselor throughout the process. Through active participation in their rehabilitation, people with disabilities achieve greater levels of independence in their work place and living environments. VR staff members provide itinerant services in the Region's full service One-Stop WorkOne Centers (Gary, Hammond, LaPorte and Portage). They ensure all VR related job-seeking and job-ready clients are engaged in services. VR case management and career advising, training, and employer services are coordinated with the One Stop Partners in relation to functional position.

The Partners convene at least quarterly to review commitments to each other, system outputs and outcomes, and ensure customer access. Each partner agrees to participate in the meetings in person or remotely to maximize services to customers and avoid duplication. The partners will utilize the regular meetings to analyze available data and ensure that opportunities for system improvement are identified and pursued.

**5.8** Describe the process for getting input into the development of the local plan in compliance with WIOA section 108(d) and providing public comment opportunity prior to submission. Be sure to address how members of the public, including representatives of business, labor organizations, and education were given an opportunity to provide comments on the local plans. If any comments received that represent disagreement with the plan were received, please include those comments in Exhibit 3 attached to this Local Plan. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (20)]

The NWIWB Plan for PY20, following approval for initial posting by the NWIWB at its November 2020 meeting, made the plan available on the Regional WorkOne website (<http://www.gotoworkonenw.com/>) for 30 days. After drafting and preliminary approval from the WDB, the plan was posted for public comment from November 25, 2020, through December 28, 2020. Notice of plan availability was sent to local elected officials, business organizations, economic development groups, and other groups that have requested such information from the NWIWB. The plan was also reviewed at a meeting of the WIOA Partners Collaborative during the comment period. There were no comments received which needed to be incorporated in the plan. The final plan was approved by the WDB and submitted to the Indiana Department of Workforce Development on January 28, 2021.

**5.9** Describe the board's process, frequency and schedule for monitoring adult, dislocated worker and youth services, including who conducts monitoring visits for your agency, training these staff receive on monitoring or site evaluation, and a listing of all upcoming planned or scheduled monitoring visits, all forms used during the review process and in Exhibit 4 attached to this Local Plan. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (22)]

#### ***Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Services Monitoring***

Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Services are monitored on a regular basis throughout the program year. Monitoring occurs on a quarterly basis. First quarter 2021 monitoring will take place in January 2021.

There are four types of monitoring. The first is an informal monitoring through both oral and written communication between management staff and staff providing Adult and Dislocated Worker services and the WIOA Youth service provider. This monitoring includes progress towards goals such as enrollments, training, and work based learning activities; compliance with policy; and technical assistance needs. Informal monitoring of Adult and Dislocated Worker, is conducted by the Becky Fry, Regional WorkOne Manager, Natalie Aponte, Skills Training Manager, and with some assistance from the WorkOne Center Managers. For the Youth Providers the informal monitoring is done by Becky Fry, Regional WorkOne Manager for Out of School Youth and Tamara Stump, Senior Workforce Associate for In-school Youth.

The second type of monitoring is desktop monitoring which is completed on a weekly basis. This monitoring includes review of eligibility, data validation, and performance using reports generated by MIS and review of data in ICC. Desk top monitoring is done by the WorkOne One Center Managers, the Regional WorkOne Manager, and the Senior Workforce Associate who go over the reports with staff.

The third type of monitoring is contractual compliance monitoring conducted on a quarterly basis with the youth service provider. During the monitoring each contract/metric item is reviewed with the provider, letting them know what areas have been completed, which are satisfactory and which areas need improvement. Technical Assistance is also provided at these meetings. While technically not a contractual monitoring, a similar approach is conducted on a monthly basis with Adult and Dislocated Worker WorkOne Services Managers. Contractual Monitoring is completed by Tamara Stump, Senior Workforce Associate.

The fourth type of monitoring is a formal operational and program monitoring. This monitoring is completed once a year and conducted by an individual outside of the Operations Department. This monitoring includes interviews with all service staff as well as CWI Adult and Dislocated Worker Services Managers and Management Staff from the youth provider organizations; file review of customers in the approved state case management system; and interviews with the Business Services Team and a review of data in the CRM. Upon completion of formal monitoring, a report is developed and sent to management of all service providers. Formal operational and program monitoring for WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs is conducted by Tamara Stump, Senior Workforce Associate. However, CWI allows for the option of a third party to conduct monitoring in the event that the regular monitor cannot complete the monitoring.

In addition to the monitoring of WIOA services, ADA and EO monitoring also occurs on a yearly basis. This monitoring is led by the EO officer and other CWI staff trained to assist. EO and ADA monitoring is conducted by the contracted EO officer Nora Wiergacz with assistance by the Senior Workforce Associate.

Staff conducting the Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth services monitoring have over 20 years of experience in workforce development including program management, policy development, and procurement. In addition, staff have been trained in EO monitoring and review and have completed training in technical requirements for the approved case management system which is necessary in order to complete file review. Additionally, staff members are trained in relevant guidance and policies on the local, state, and federal level to ensure that all are understood and communicated from monitors, program and project managers, WorkOne managers and front-line staff.

#### ***Fiscal Monitoring***

There are three types of fiscal monitoring. The first is an informal monitoring through both oral and written communication between CWI Fiscal Staff and sub providers. This monitoring includes ensuring that subproviders understand the requirements of Federal statutes, regulations and the terms and conditions of the Federal award; ensure that subproviders obtain appropriate training in current grant administrative and program compliance requirements; and providing technical assistance needs. This monitoring is conducted by the CWI Fiscal Department including Erin Sizemore, Chief Financial Officer, Jordan Burk, Staff Accountant, and Lori Cheek, Fiscal Assistant.

The second type of monitoring is desktop monitoring which is completed on a monthly basis. This monitoring includes a review of programmatic and financial reports prepared and submitted by the subrecipient as well as a review of the subrecipient budgets to ensure that spending is on track. All desk type reviews include following up on areas of concern. In addition, to the monthly monitoring, all subproviders are required to undergo an annual audit and submit the report of the audit to CWI for review. CWI follow up on any areas of concern. This monitoring is completed by Erin Sizemore, Chief Fiscal Officer.

The third type of monitoring is a formal fiscal monitoring of the subproviders. This is completed once a year and conducted by either Erin Sizemore, Chief Fiscal Officer or CWI has included the option of a third party to conduct the monitoring if the Chief Fiscal Officer cannot complete in a timely manner. This monitoring includes site visits to the subrecipient to review financial and programmatic records and assess compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and provisions of the subaward and interviews with

all fiscal and management staff employed by the subproviders. Upon completion of formal monitoring, a report is developed and sent to the subproviders.

**5.10** Describe your professional development plan for all youth staff, including the frequency, type (in-person, self-guided, web-based, etc.), and topics addressed.

Region 1 employs three types of professional development offered to individuals who work with youth and young adults. The first is related specifically to the rules and regulations of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. New staff are provided training in eligibility determination, program elements, follow-up, performance management, and records management. Other staff are provided refresher training as needed, but also receive regular training on performance outcomes and records management. This type of training is done by one on one and in small groups.

The second type of training is related specifically to the position of the staffer and the program they implement. In-school youth staff implement the JAG Program. Staffers attend a statewide JAG training once each year and also have the opportunity to attend the Annual National JAG Training. In addition, during Christmas break and the summer, the JAG staff come together and take turns sharing best practices and refresher training as needed. Staff known as Career Pathway Facilitators who work with Adult Education students only participate in joint training with Adult Education staff from CWI. These professional development sessions focus on the components of Adult Education services and WIOA youth services, common goals, and working jointly with customers. Regular Out of School Youth Staff along with the Career Pathway Facilitators attend state training (Young Adult Summit) once a year. This training includes break-out sessions such as work based learning, working with difficult customers, trauma informed care, and special population groups such as homeless youth or youth involved in juvenile justice system. In addition to the state training, Out of School Youth Staff attend professional development along with the other staff at the WorkOne offices.

The third type of professional development is outside local, state, and national conferences focused on youth programming in general. Staff is encouraged to attend at least one conference a year. Examples of conferences attended include the Indiana Youth Institute's Kids Count Conference, the Adult Education Summer Institute, and the National Youth Symposium Conference. While most of the professional development is in person, staff also participates in webinars on various topics throughout the year.

**5.11** Provide a list of all local policies. Copies of documents are not required at this time but may be requested later.

Supportive Services Policy – NWIWB WIOA General 1	3/23/2017	3/23/2017
Assessment Policy - WIOA Adult, DLW, and Youth	3/23/2017	3/23/2017
NWIWB Transitional Jobs - Adult Work Experience	3/23/2017	3/23/2017

Definition for DLW- Unlikely to Return – NWIWB WIOA 3(15)(A)(iii) Change 1	9/28/2017	9/28/2017
Equal Opportunity Policy - NWIWB WIOA Section 188 and 29 CFR Part 37	7/1/2015	9/18/2018
Individual Training Policy – NWIWB WIOA Section 134(b) (3)	2/4/2016	2/4/2016
Monitoring and Oversight – NWIWB WIOA 20 CFR 683.410	5/17/2016	5/17/2016
NWIWB - Occupations in Demand – WIOA Sec. 134, Change 1	5/20/2016	5/20/2016
On the Job Training Policy - NWIWB WIOA Section 134 (c)(3)(H)(ii)(I), Change 1, Ref TEGL 13-15	3/17/2016	3/17/2016
Priority of Service Policy – NWIWB WIOA General 1	3/17/2016	3/17/2016
NWIWB Eligibility Policy – WIOA	3/23/2017	3/23/2017
Occupational Skills Training and Providers Policy for Youth and Young Adults - NWIWB WIOA Section 129(c )(2)(D)	7/1/2015	4/18/2016
Supportive Services Policy for Youth and Young Adults – NWIWB WIOA Section 129 c 2(G)	7/1/2015	7/1/2015
Work Based Learning Policy for Youth and Young Adults – NWIWB WIOA section 129 (c ) (4)	7/1/2015	7/1/2015
Criteria for Requires Additional Assistance Eligibility for Youth and Young Adults – NWIWB WIOA Section 129 (a )(1)(B)	7/1/2015	7/1/2015
Incumbent Worker Training Policy	3/23/2017	7/25/2019
Rescission of Drug Screen Requirements for Training-Level Customers	7/1/2018	7/1/2018
Career Decision Pathway Model - One Stop Operator Policy, Learning Department WIOA Section 129	7/1/2015	7/31/2017
Eligibility Determination and Data Validation for Youth and Young Adults - One Stop Operator Policy, Learning Department WIOA Section 129 (a)(1)	7/6/2015	12/6/2018
Objective Assessment for Youth and Young Adults - One Stop Operator Policy, Learning Department WIOA section 129 ( c ) (1) (A)	6/2/2007	8/28/2018
Individual Service Strategy for Youth and Young Adults - One Stop Operator Policy, Learning Department, WIOA section 129( c ) (1)	7/1/2015	5/3/2017
Tracking of Skills Gain and Credentials - One Stop Operator Policy, Learning Department, WIOA section 116 2 (A)(V)	10/20/2015	10/20/2015
One Stop Operator Confidentiality Policy for access of participant information and Indiana Career Connect Use by Temporary Staff, Interns, or Work Experience	7/1/2015	7/1/2015
One Stop Operator Policy – Facilities Management	7/1/2015	7/1/2015
One Stop Operator Policy - WorkOne Dress Code	7/1/2015	7/1/2015
Customer Service Standards	8/28/2018	8/28/2018
LEP Access to Services	5/7/2007	5/7/2007
Process for Reasonable Accommodations	11/6/2017	11/6/2017
Northwest Indiana Customer Engagement & Service Delivery Flow	7/1/2019	7/1/2019
Updated Priority of Services for Veterans	6/16/2016	6/16/2016
NWIWB Equal Opportunity Policy - WIOA Section 188 & 29 CFR Part 38 (Change 3)	8/27/2020	8/27/2020

Coordination of Funding for Training and Financial Award Analysis (WIOA  
Adult & DLW Funding Streams)

1/26/2018

1/26/2018

DWD Memo 2020-05  
Attachment B - Program Participants for PY20

	Program Participants	Program Funding (WIOA)	Additional Funding (State)	Additional Funding (Federal)	Total Budget	Budget per Participant	Explanation (Optional)
WIOA Adult	2,800	\$2,893,820			\$2,893,820	\$1,033	
Dislocated Worker	200	\$971,421			\$971,421	\$4,857	
Youth (In School)	520	\$728,000	SJAG - \$350,000 TANF - \$155,411 Pre-ETS - \$229,418	0	\$1,462,829	\$2,813	520 - JAG Participants from 13 programs
Youth (Out of School)	1,093	\$3,141,563	0	0	\$3,141,563	\$2,874	693 WIOA only, 230 Co enrolled Adult Ed students, 30 OOS JAG, 140 Special Projects
ABE	1,700		\$953,946	\$384,286	\$1,338,193	\$787.17	
WorkINdiana	N/A						
Wagner-Peyser	DWD						
Veterans (Overall)							

*Each program should reflect all participants enrolled, regardless if they are co-enrolled in another program. Explanations of projections are encouraged.*