



Beaver County • Greene County • Washington County

## **Southwest Corner Workforce Development Area**

**PY 2025 - 2029 WIOA Multi-Year Local Plan**

Effective July 1, 2025

### **SOUTHWEST CORNER WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

*Serving on behalf of the Chief Local Elected Official Board of the  
Pennsylvania Counties of Beaver, Greene, and Washington*

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**3.7. Core program facilitation** - How will the local board work with the entities carrying out core programs to:

- Expand access to employment, training, education, supportive services, and co-enrollment for eligible individuals, particularly individuals with barriers to employment.
- Facilitate the development of Career Pathways in core programs (specify on-ramps from adult education).
- Improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential (industry-recognized certifications or portable, and stackable certifications).

**3.8. ITA Accounts** - How will training services be provided using ITAs, fund programs of study, or through the use of contracts for training services that fund work-based trainings.

**3.9. Coordination with education programs** - How will the local board coordinate relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities with workforce investment activities to support strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of service(s).

#### **4. OPERATIONAL PLANNING: Local Area Workforce Delivery System**

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**4.1. Business and Employer Engagement** - What strategies will be implemented in the local area to improve business and employer engagement that:

- Support a local area workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area;
- Manage activities or services that will be implemented to improve business engagement;
- Better coordinate regional workforce and economic development strategy, messaging, engagement, and programs; and
- Strengthen linkages between the PA CareerLink® service delivery system and unemployment insurance (UI) programs.

**4.2. Economic Development** - How will the local board coordinate local area workforce investment activities with regional economic development activities that are specific to a local area? How will the local board promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services?

**4.3. Business and Employer Program Support** - What services, activities, and program resources will be provided to businesses and employers in the local area?

**4.4. Continuous Improvement** - Describe how the local board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers through the system and that such providers will meet the employment needs of local area employers, workers, and job seekers.

**4.5. Technology and Remote Access** - Through the use of technology, how will the local board facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop service delivery system, including in remote areas?

**4.6. Transportation and Supportive Services** - How will the local board coordinate WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with the provision of transportation and other appropriate supportive services in the local area?

**4.7. Rapid Response** - How will the local board coordinate workforce investment activities and ensure they are carried out in the local area with statewide rapid response?

**4.8. Individuals with Barriers to Employment** - What services, activities and program resources will be provided to participants, including those outlined at WIOA Sec. 3(24), Individuals with a Barrier to Employment, and WIOA Sec. 188, in the local area?

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

## **5. COMPLIANCE**

**106**

**5.1. MOU assessment(s)** - Describe the cooperative agreements that define how all local area service providers will carry out the requirements for integration of and access to the entire set of services available in the local area one-stop delivery system.

**5.2. Fiscal responsibility** - What is the process the local board uses to ensure the collection of the debts of lower-tier sub-recipients, because of audits?

**5.3. High-performing board attainment** - What action(s) is the local board taking (or will take) towards becoming or remaining a high-performing board?

**5.4. Public Notice** - What is the process the local board uses to provide a 30-day public comment period prior to submission of the plan, and describe the opportunity for input into the development of the local area plan, particularly for representatives of business, education, labor organizations, program partners, public agencies, and community stakeholders?

## **ATTACHMENTS**

**110**

## **ATTESTION**

## 1. STRATEGIC PLANNING: Local Area Workforce and Economic Analysis

### 1.1. Workforce analysis - Provide an analysis of the regional workforce, including the composition of the local area's population and current labor force employment data.

[20 CFR § 679.560(a)(3). Reviewed by CWIA, Grant Services, and PA WDB]

The Southwest Corner Workforce Development Area is comprised of Beaver, Greene, and Washington Counties in Southwestern Pennsylvania. The Southwest Corner Workforce Development Board (SCWDB) serves as the local connector between the PA Department of Labor and Industry and the region's PA CareerLink® offices.

#### POPULATION

The population in the Southwest Corner rebounded in 2020, following a decades-long decline. As of 2023, the region's population has increased by 0.4% since 2018, growing by 1,798. Population is expected to increase by another 0.4% between 2023 and 2028, adding 1,576. (Figure 1).<sup>1</sup>

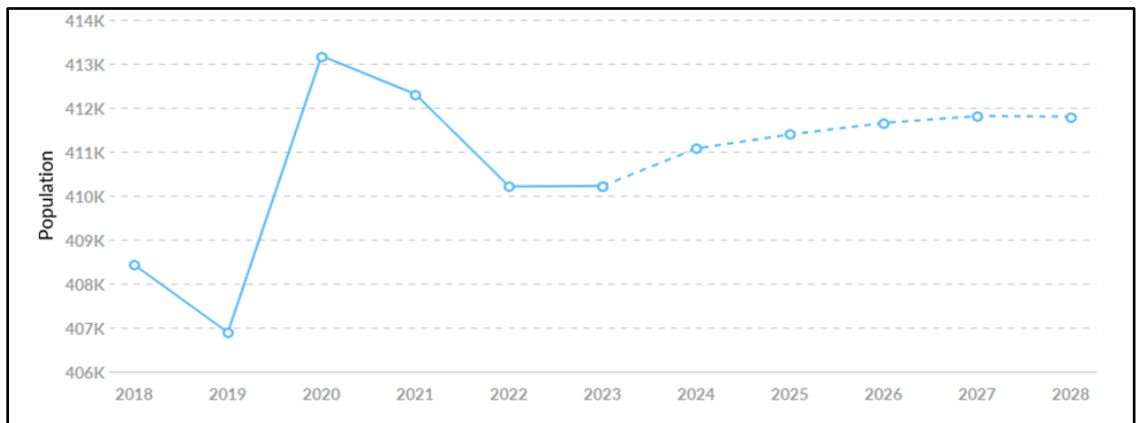


Figure 1: Population Trends

The Southwest Corner region is older than the national average, with fewer millennials and more baby boomers. The aging demographic highlights the workforce challenges as the baby boomers continue to retire, increasing the shortage of skilled labor across industries. It also increases the necessity for apprenticeship programs, where senior workers play an important mentorship role to new apprentices, and in doing so are able to transfer institutional knowledge to them before they retire.

The Southwest Corner region is predominantly white, with nearly 25% more veterans than similarly-sized regions. The region is also relatively safe, with violent and property crimes at less than half the national average (Figure 2).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Source: EMSI (Economic Modeling Specialists, International), 2023

<sup>2</sup> Source: <https://data.census.gov/>

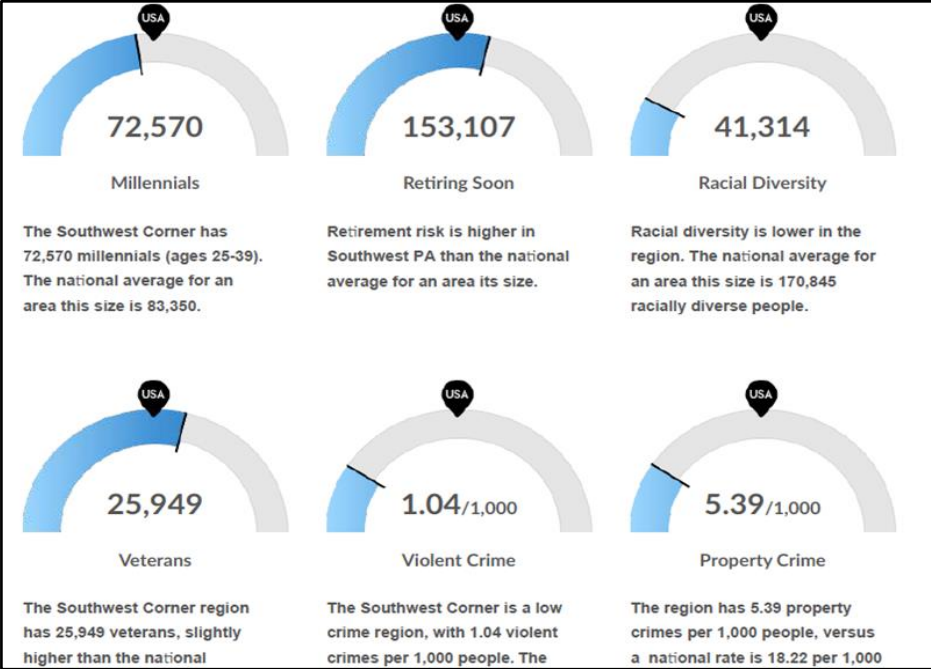


Figure 2: Population Demographics

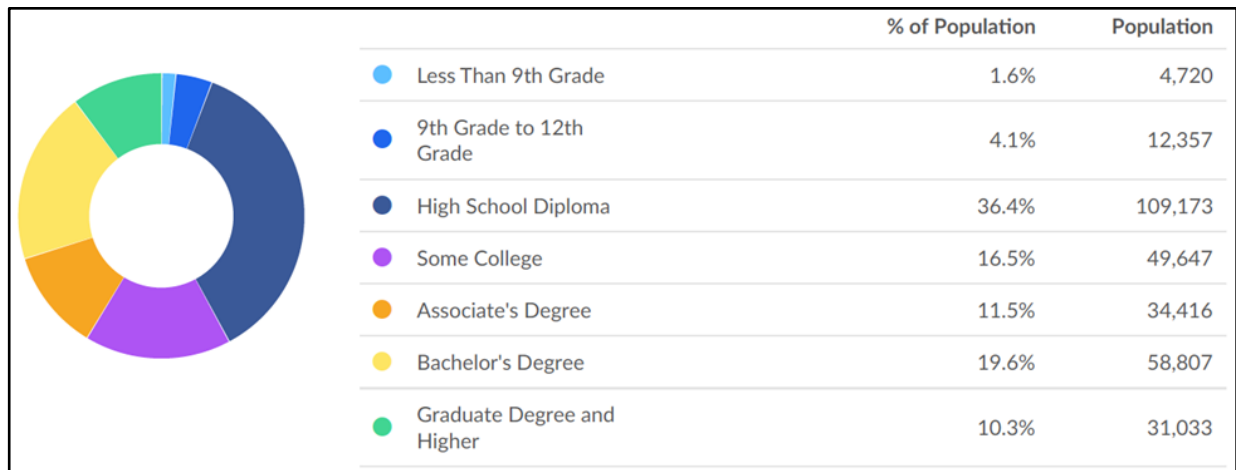
**EDUCATION**

The Southwest Corner region is becoming more educated over time, also reversing a years-long trend. In 2023, 42.1% of the population in the Southwest Corner had a High School education or lower while 29.9% had a Bachelor’s degree or higher, compared to 2020 when 47.6% of the population in the region had a High School education or lower and 25.1% had a Bachelor’s degree or higher (Figures 3 & 4).<sup>3</sup> Taken together with the population increases indicated above, it shows that the Southwest Corner region is attracting more educated people to the region.

Level	2015	2020	2023
Less Than 9th Grade	2.2%	2.5%	1.6%
9th Grade to 12th Grade	5.6%	5.6%	4.1%
High School Diploma	39.5%	39.5%	36.4%
Some College	16.8%	16.9%	16.5%
Associate's Degree	10.4%	10.5%	11.5%
Bachelor's Degree	16.9%	16.6%	19.6%
Graduate Degree and Higher	8.6%	8.5%	10.3%
High School or Lower	47.3%	47.6%	42.1%
Bachelor's or Higher	25.5%	25.1%	29.9%

Figure 3: Educational Attainment Over Time

<sup>3</sup> Source: EMSI, 2023



**Figure 4:** Educational Attainment in 2023

## INCOME

In 2022, the median household income in the Southwest Corner area grew to \$70,751, more than 17% higher than the 2019 annual income of \$60,414. Income grew faster than the 15% growth rate during the prior five years (2014-2019). The majority of income gains were among higher income households. While households making less than \$50,000 dropped by about 14%, households making more than \$100,000 increased by 27%. Households making between \$50,000 and \$100,000 stayed relatively steady (Figure 5).<sup>4</sup> Evaluated with the data above, it shows that the more educated populations moving to the Southwest Corner region are attracted to the growing number of high paying jobs.

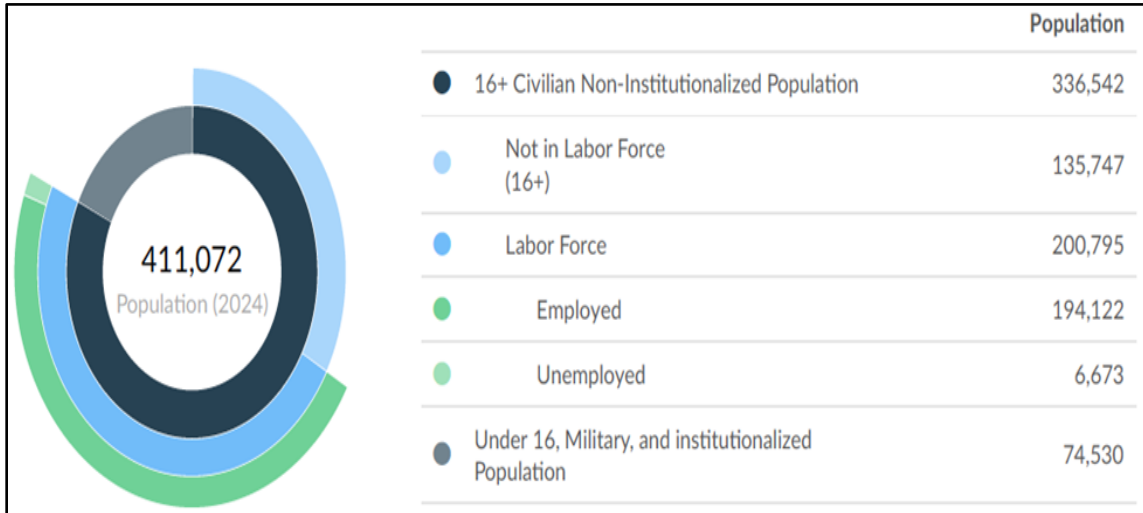
Households and Household Income				
Income	2019	2022	Change	Percent Change
<b>Total Households:</b>	<b>170,345</b>	<b>173,156</b>	2,811	1.7%
Less than \$24,999	33,138	28,306	-4,832	-14.6%
\$25,000 to \$49,999	38,813	33,584	-5,229	-13.5%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	52,535	53,297	762	1.5%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	27,118	30,098	2,980	11.0%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	10,440	14,503	4,063	38.9%
\$200,000 or more	8,301	13,777	5,476	66.0%
Median Household Income	\$60,414	\$70,751	\$10,337	17.1%

**Figure 5:** Household Income

<sup>4</sup> Source: 2015-2019 ("2019") and 2018-2022 ("2022") 5-Year American Community Survey

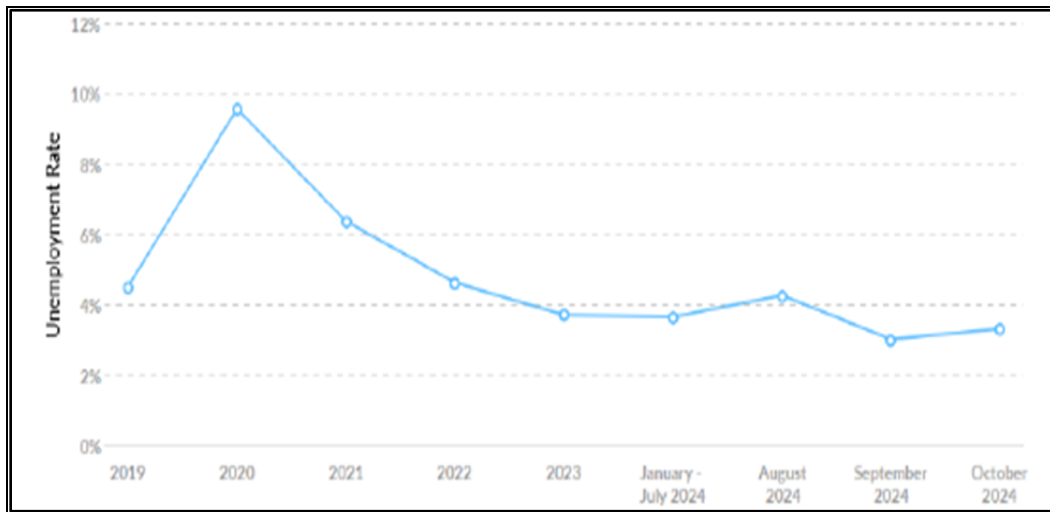
**EMPLOYMENT**

The Southwest Corner region had a total population of 411,072 in 2024, with 336,542 aged 16 and older (Figure 6).<sup>5</sup>



**Figure 6:** Labor Force Breakdown

The region had an October 2024 unemployment rate of 3.3%, decreasing from 4.5% from five years before. Unemployment peaked at nearly 10% in 2020 but has been steadily decreasing since then and is now below pre-COVID levels (Figure 7).<sup>6</sup>



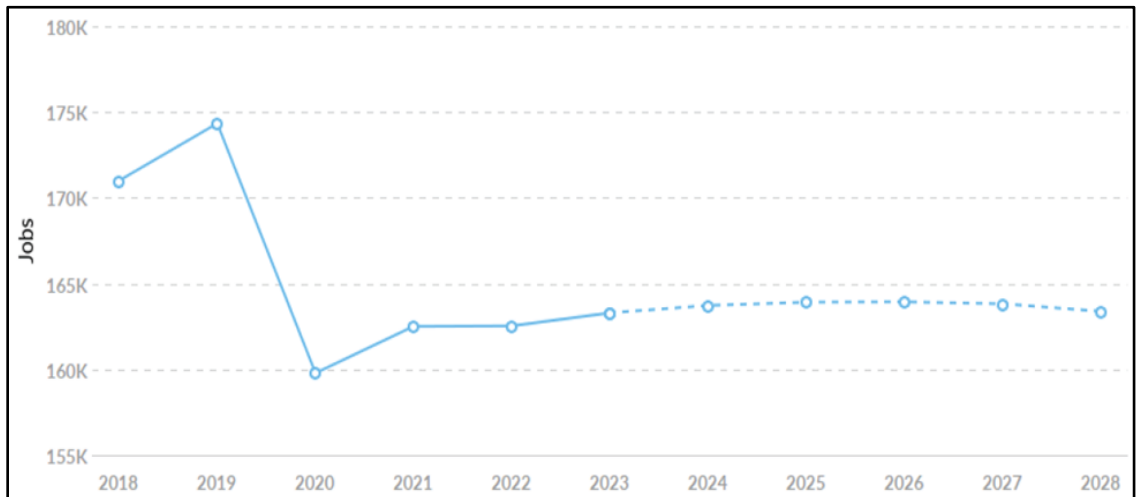
**Figure 7:** Unemployment Rate over Time

<sup>5</sup> Source: 2018-2022 (“2022”) 5-Year American Community Survey

<sup>6</sup> Source: 2018-2022 (“2022”) 5-Year American Community Survey

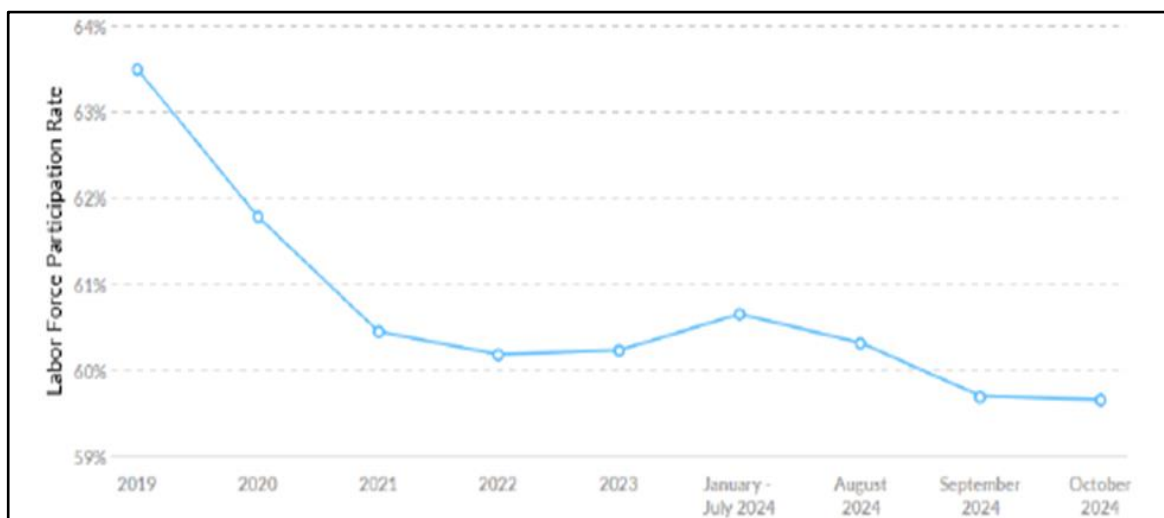


From 2018 to 2023, jobs declined by 4.5% in Southwest Corner WDA from 170,991 to 163,291. This change fell short of the national growth rate of 4.5% by 9.0%. The total number of jobs is expected to remain steady in the coming years (Figure 8).<sup>7</sup>



**Figure 8: Job Trends**

The Southwest Corner workforce area had a labor force participation rate of 59.7% in October 2024, a low after five years of gradual decline (Figure 9).<sup>8</sup> The historically low unemployment rate coupled with a similarly low labor force participation rate potentially indicates a mismatch between the skills of the workforce and the jobs available. Training and reskilling programs, such as apprenticeships, can help encourage workers to reenter the workforce and meet the growing need for technically-skilled workers.



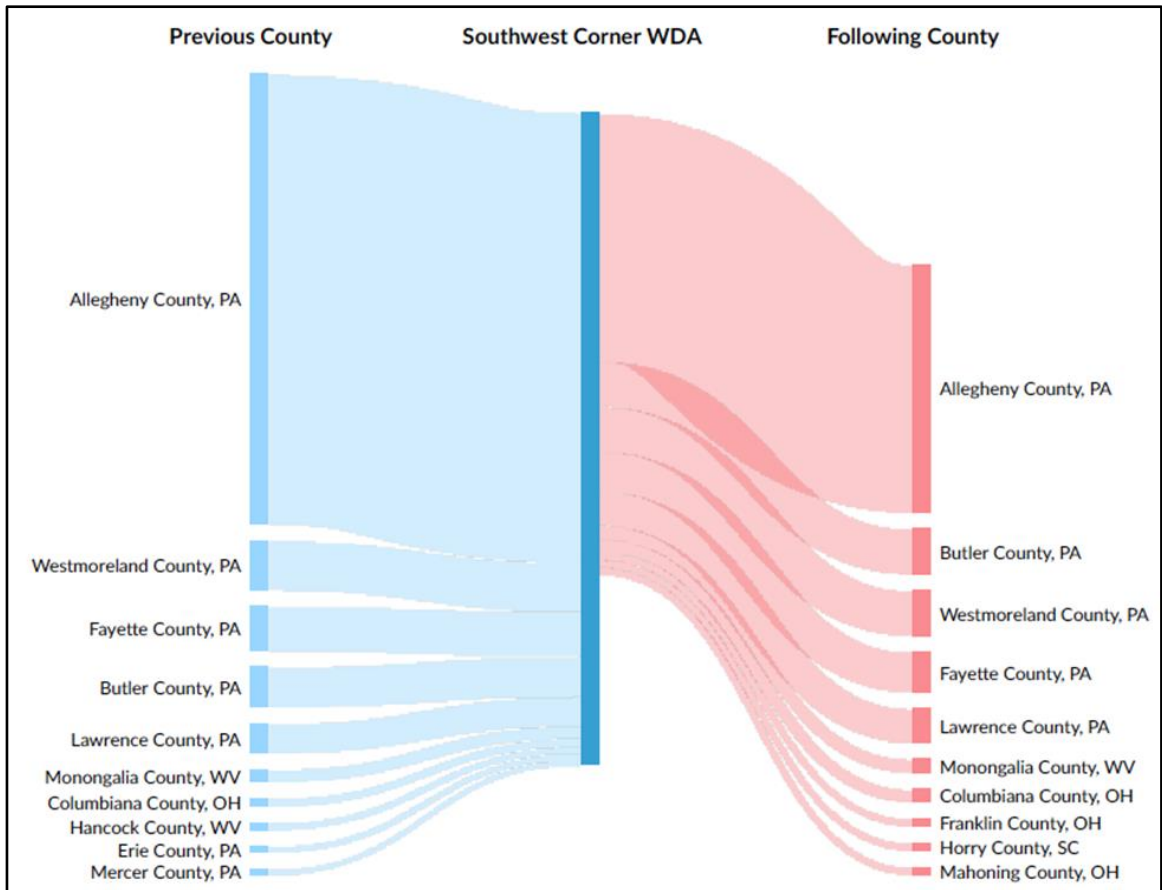
**Figure 9: Labor Participation Rate over Time**

<sup>7</sup> Source: 2018-2022 ("2022") 5-Year American Community Survey

<sup>8</sup> Source: 2018-2022 ("2022") 5-Year American Community Survey

**MIGRATION PATTERNS**

The total Net Migration into the Southwest Corner WDA in 2022 was 1,458. Figure 10 below shows migration patterns in and out of the region. The left column shows residents of other counties migrating to the Southwest Corner workforce area. The right column shows residents migrating from the region to other counties. A significant portion of migration (2,486 residents) coming into the region hail from Allegheny County.<sup>9</sup>



**Figure 10: Regional Migration Patterns**

**COMMUTING PATTERNS**

The Southwest Corner area is in a Shared Labor Market (Figure 11). Just over 60,000 people both live and work in the WDA. More than 63,000 people work in the region but live elsewhere, while nearly 90,000 people live in the WDA but travel outside the region to work. As a result, the majority of jobs in the Southwest Corner region (51.3%) are filled by employees living outside the region. Likewise, more Southwest Corner residents work outside the region (59.8%) than in it (40.2%).<sup>10</sup> The inflow and outflow of labor is significant, highlighting

<sup>9</sup> Source: Lightcast Q4 2024 Southwest Corner Data Set

<sup>10</sup> Source: Center for Workforce Information and Analysis (CWIA)

the need for the region's LWDBs to work together to meet the workforce needs of employers and job seekers.<sup>11</sup>

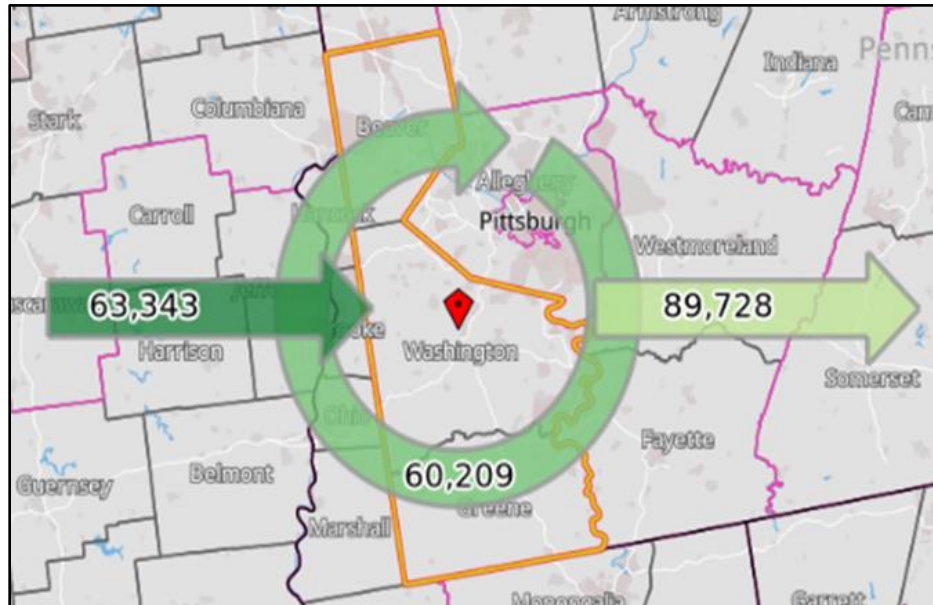


Figure 11: Regional Commuting Patterns

### POPULATION WITH BARRIERS

Populations with barriers remain a particular focus of the Southwest Corner workforce system and the WIOA services delivered through the region's PA CareerLink® offices. These barriers include:

**Poverty** - Among the factors that often contribute to poverty are unemployment and under-employment. Many people live in poverty because they are unable to find a job that pays a living wage or to find a job at all. In the Southwest Corner the poverty rate was 9.2% in 2019, a slight decrease from 2019 (9.4%). Unemployment in this group dropped slightly from 23.2% in 2019 to 22.6% in 2022. A more substantial 7.4% drop occurred over the prior five years, showing a continued but stabilizing long-term increase of the working poor in the region.<sup>12</sup>

**Disabilities** - Those with disabilities face a number of barriers to employment, including individual and systemic perceptions and prejudice that make employers hesitant to hire people with disabilities. In the Southwest Corner, individuals with disabilities accounted for 12.2% of the population in 2022, a 3.4% decrease from 2019. The Labor Force Participation Rate is only 42.8% for individuals for disabilities, about half of that

<sup>11</sup> The difference between "Living in the WDA" in the commuting data and the "employed" total in the LAUS data is due to the scope of employment considered. The commuting data only includes residents working in private jobs, whereas the LAUS data includes all employed residents (both public and private jobs). Public jobs are often excluded from commuting data due to residency requirements that can distort patterns. To maintain consistency with past reporting, this year's commuting data continues to use only private jobs. Moving forward, there is an opportunity to discuss whether to include all jobs, but for now, the lower commuter data numbers reflect this distinction.

<sup>12</sup> Source: 2018-2022 ("2022") 5-Year American Community Survey

for individuals with no disabilities (83.5%). Likewise, the Unemployment Rate for individuals with disabilities is almost three times as high (12.2%) as those without disabilities (4.6%).<sup>13</sup> This combination of barriers makes this population particularly hard to serve.

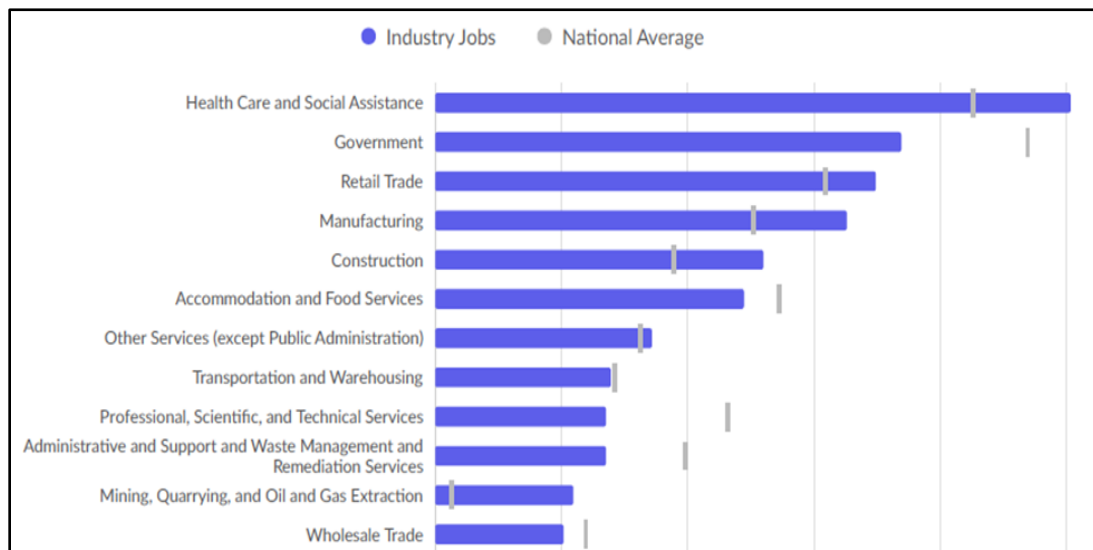
**Ability to Speak English** - The inability to speak English while living in the U.S. can be a barrier to employment, but is not particularly prevalent in the Southwest Corner region. In 2022 there were 3,474 individuals ages 5 and over “who speak English less than very well”, a 6.6% increase over the previous 3 years. However, these individuals account for less than 1% of the region’s population.<sup>14</sup>

**Single Parent Households** – Single parent households struggle with childcare more often than multiple-parent households. During 2019 there were 11,979 single parent households with children under 18 years of age (31% of all family households), a 4.3% decrease since 2019.<sup>15</sup>

**1.2 Economic analysis – Describe planning elements including a regional analysis of economic conditions.**  
*[20 CFR 679.560(a)(i) and (ii). Reviewed by ATO, CWIA, and PA WDB]*

**IN-DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTORS**

The top 5 industries in the Southwest Corner area accounted for 55% of all jobs in the region. With the exception of the Government sector, each had a location quotient greater than ‘1’. Manufacturing jobs grew 3% over the past five years, the only top 5 industry to grow in that time frame. Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction had a Location Quotient of 9.67, far higher than the national average, indicative of the strong natural gas industry in the region (Figure 12).<sup>16</sup>



**Figure 12: Largest Industries**

<sup>13</sup> Source 2018-2022 (“2022”) 5-Year American Community Surveys

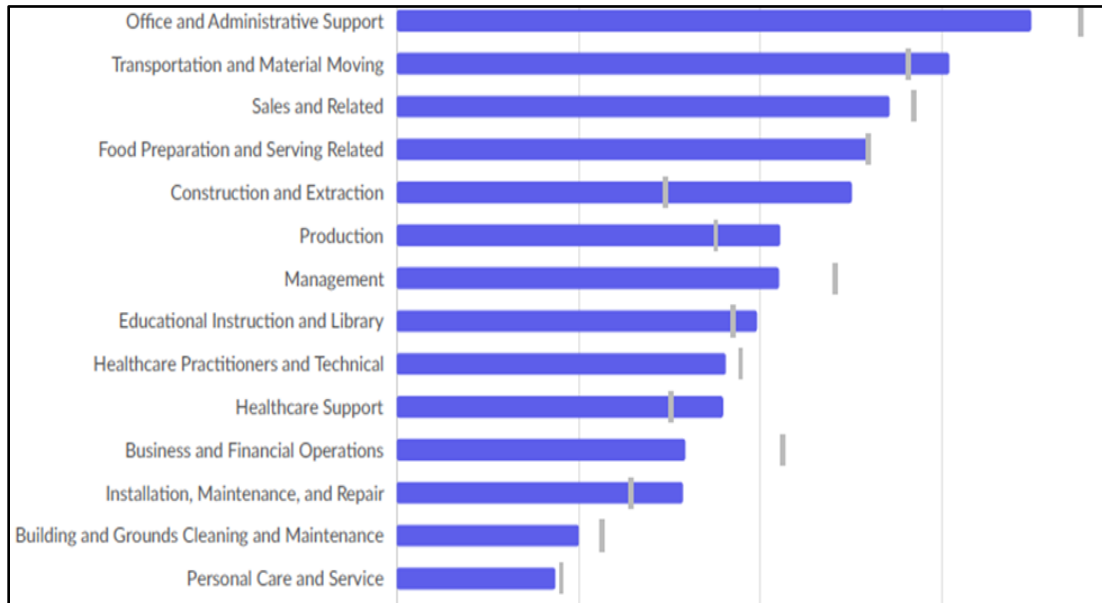
<sup>14</sup> Source 2018-2022 (“2022”) 5-Year American Community Surveys

<sup>15</sup> Source 2018-2022 (“2022”) 5-Year American Community Surveys

<sup>16</sup> Lightcast Q4 2024 Southwest Corner Data Set

**IN-DEMAND OCCUPATIONS**

Administrative, transportation and sales jobs are most prevalent in the Southwest Corner WDA. The manufacturing (production), construction, and healthcare sectors are also major employers in the region (Figure 13). University of Pittsburgh Medical Center is the largest employer, with 927 employees, and Highmark Health (736), PNC Bank (726), and Valley Health System (711) round out the top four.<sup>17</sup>



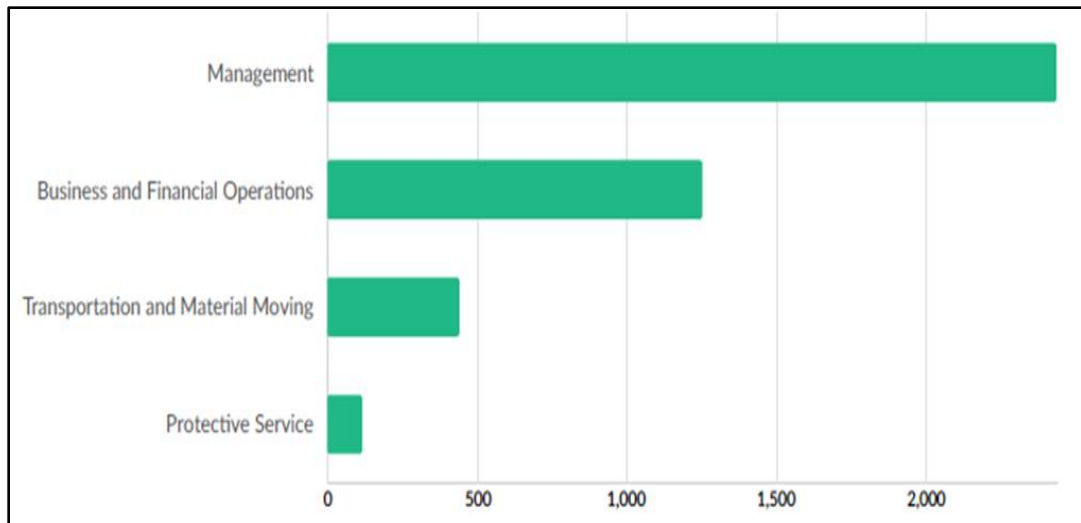
**Figure 13:** Largest Occupations

**FASTEST GROWING OCCUPATIONS**

There are three occupations that are growing rapidly: Management, Business/Financial Operations, and Transportation/Materials Moving (Figures 14 and 15). The growth in Management and Business/Financial Operations occupations supports the conclusions drawn from the data on EDUCATION and INCOME (pp. 6-7), namely that the more educated populations moving to the Southwest Corner region are attracted to the growing number of high paying jobs. Salaries for Management and Business/Finance positions, \$218,829/year and \$113,164/year respectively, account for two of the top six average industry salaries in the region.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Lightcast Q4 2024 Southwest Corner Data Set

<sup>18</sup> Lightcast Q4 2024 Southwest Corner Data Set



**Figure 14: Top Occupation Jobs Growth**

Occupation	2018 Jobs	2023 Jobs	Change in Jobs	% Change in Jobs
Management	8,087	10,525	2,438	30%
Business and Financial Operations	6,691	7,944	1,253	19%
Transportation and Material Moving	14,774	15,216	441	3%
Protective Service	3,336	3,452	116	3%

**Figure 15: Top Occupation Jobs Growth - Past Five Year**

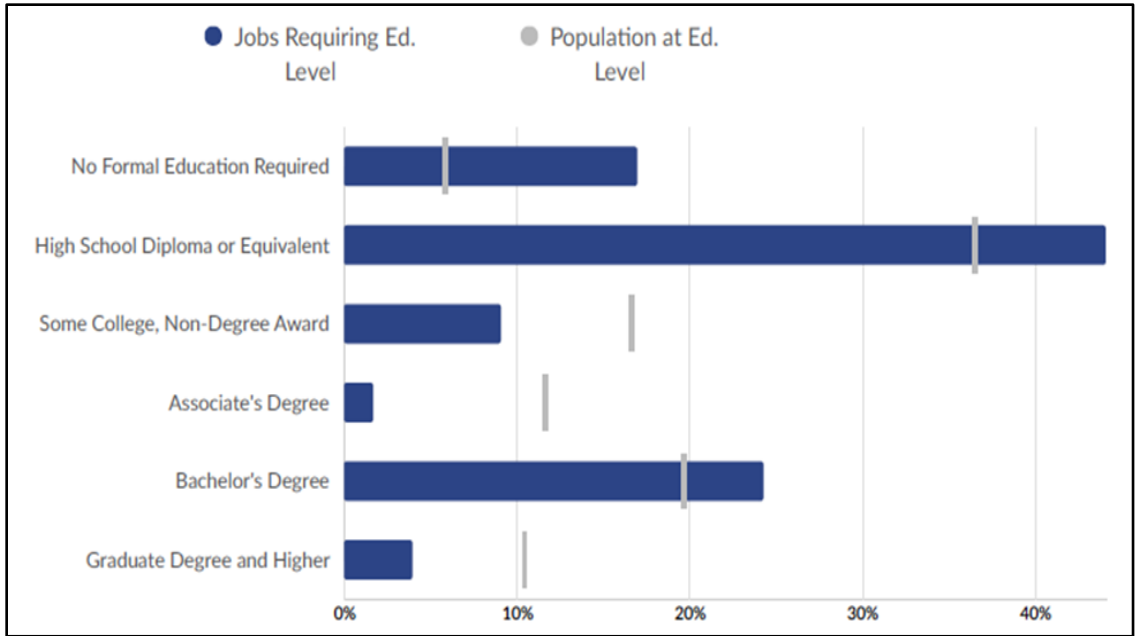
**1.3. Skill Gap analysis - How are skills gaps defined in the local area? Provide a description of the skills that are required to meet the needs of employers in region and local area?**

*[20 CFR 679.560(a)(2). Reviewed by CWIA and PA WDB]*

**REGIONAL EDUCATION LEVELS**

There is some mismatch between the educational levels that jobs require in the region, and the population available to meet them (Figure 16). In the Southwest Corner region, 28% of the population has some college or an Associate’s Degree, but only 11% of the jobs in the region require such training. As a result, there is some underemployment among individuals with some college but less than a Bachelor’s Degree.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Lightcast Q4 2024 Southwest Corner Data Set



**Figure 16:** Education Levels Required vs Population

Regular feedback from regional employers across industries confirms that they are facing a lack of skilled labor. They need employees with technical and trades skills that can best be gained through an apprenticeship program or a short-term training program like those offered by community colleges. Apprenticeship programs can provide a credential that’s equivalent to a four-year degree to individuals that have pursued training beyond high school but for any number of reasons were unable to complete a four-year degree, helping to close the skills gaps in the region.

### **IN-DEMAND SKILLS**

Nursing, Merchandising, and Project Management are the top in-demand skills in the region (Figure 17). The unique job postings also reflect these needs (Figure 18).<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Lightcast Q4 2024 Southwest Corner Data Set

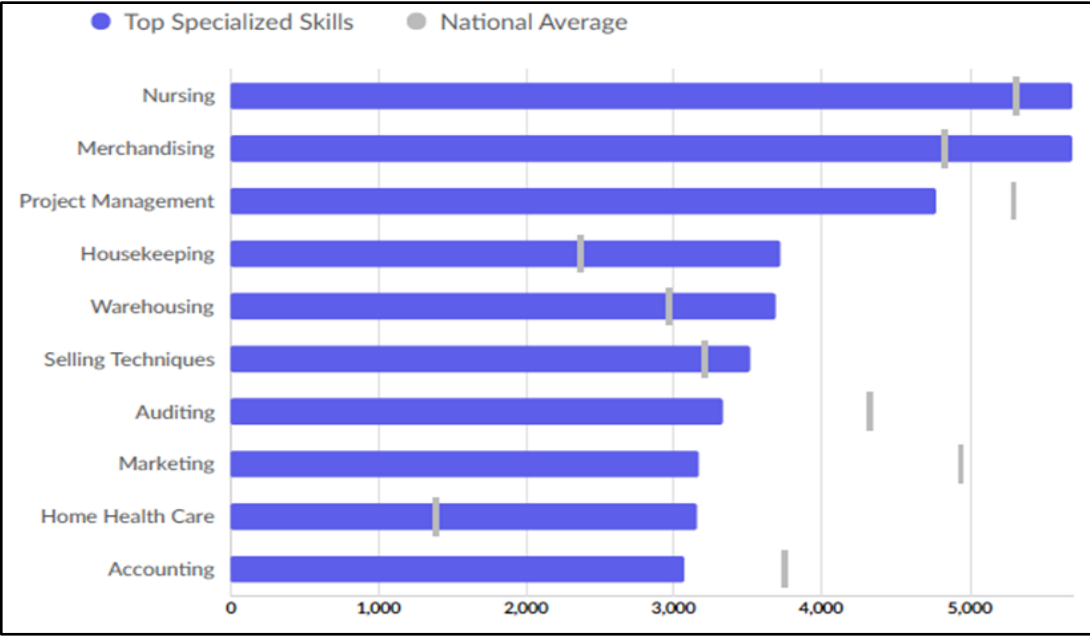


Figure 17: In-Demand Skills



Figure 18: Unique Average Monthly Posting



## KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL REQUIREMENTS FOR IN-DEMAND SECTORS AND OCCUPATIONS

Figure 19 below provides additional details on the In-Demand Sectors described in Figure 12 (p 12).

Industry	2018 Jobs	2023 Jobs	Change in Jobs	% Change in Jobs	2023 Location Quotient	2023 Earnings Per Worker
Health Care and Social Assistance	26,770	25,191	(1,579)	(6%)	1.18	\$65,116
Government	19,460	18,473	(987)	(5%)	0.79	\$77,946
Retail Trade	18,200	17,479	(721)	(4%)	1.13	\$45,017
Manufacturing	15,894	16,293	398	3%	1.30	\$94,558
Construction	15,555	13,013	(2,542)	(16%)	1.38	\$83,974
Accommodation and Food Services	12,241	12,218	(22)	(0%)	0.90	\$24,173
Other Services (except Public Administration)	8,667	8,588	(79)	(1%)	1.06	\$37,728
Transportation and Warehousing	7,310	6,936	(374)	(5%)	0.98	\$81,476
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	7,611	6,765	(846)	(11%)	0.59	\$96,480
Waste Management and Remediation Services	6,093	6,750	657	11%	0.69	\$54,446
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	7,014	5,483	(1,531)	(22%)	9.67	\$148,100
Wholesale Trade	5,172	5,080	(92)	(2%)	0.86	\$100,096

**Figure 19: Largest Industries Revisited** <sup>21</sup>

The **Healthcare** industry employed 25,191 (15.4% share) workers in the region in 2023. It's notable that healthcare skills are most in-demand in the region, even though the number of jobs in the healthcare sector shrank by 6% over the previous five years. The implication is that more individuals with healthcare training are needed to maintain current levels of service. Many of these positions will require job seekers to possess a post-secondary degree and/or state licensing. In the case of Nursing Care Facilities, many workers (aides) are required to complete an in-house training program and pass a test within a few months of employment.

The **Construction** industry employed 13,013 workers in the region in 2023. Although the industry is shrinking, it still accounts for 8% of the jobs in the region. Apprenticeship training programs applied to college credits and Career and Technical training are usually required for Building and Construction Workers. Short-Term Training and State Licensing is required for Heavy and Tractor Trailer Truck Drivers. Utility worker jobs range from customer service representatives to meter readers, heavy equipment operators and skilled trades' people (i.e. welders, electricians, plumbers, boiler makers, steamfitters, etc.). Training requirements are as diverse as the job duties ranging from On-The-Job training to Career & Technical and Apprenticeship programs and Post-Secondary education.

**Advanced Manufacturing** employed 16,293 workers in 2023 (10% of regional jobs), and the sector continues to grow. To be competent in these positions, workers need to possess a combination of math, computer, engineering and diagnostics skills. Many of the area's local training providers offer Mechatronics type courses to meet the employers' needs. The SCWDB has managed a Next Generation Advanced Manufacturing Industry Partnership in the region since 2017.

<sup>21</sup> Lightcast Q4 2024 Southwest Corner Data Set

**1.4. Workforce Development Activities analysis - Provide an analysis of local area workforce development activities, including education and training.**

*[WIOA Sec. 106©(1)(D); 20 CFR 679.510(a)(1)(vii); and 679.560(a)(4). Reviewed by ATO, CWIA, and PA WDB]*

**WORKFORCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE SOUTHWEST CORNER**

The Southwest Corner Workforce Development Area has a full-complement of workforce services to offer to both businesses and individuals in the region. The services available to individuals include a wide array of career services, including the on-line job search/job matching system, GED/Remediation services, training, pre-vocational training, career exploration, career resources, academic/vocational assessments, employability skills workshops, networking opportunities and onsite and online recruitment events, etc. The PA CareerLink® centers provide universal career resource room access.

Our system’s relationship with key education providers including community colleges, universities, technical schools, local school districts, career & technology centers and other training providers provide us with opportunities to explore opportunities to bridge learning and skills gaps that exist between job seekers and our key industry partners. Several post-secondary schools and career & technology centers are partners within our PA CareerLink® system.

SCWDB analyzes the latest labor market data available to understand the workforce development needs of the region’s employers, job seekers and incumbent workers. The SCWDB also closely monitors their PA CareerLink® Centers’ Business Service Teams’ interactions with the region’s employers. The SCWDB makes use of the information to determine the type of training delivery appropriate to meet the needs of the region's employers and job seekers. In many cases, workforce development needs only require short term On-the-Job training. All training support targets High Priority Occupations (HPO).

The SCWDB has meaningful relationships with its neighboring Local Workforce Development Boards, local economic development organizations, training providers and community and faith-based organizations to form a community of practice to improve their understanding of the region’s training needs. The Southwest Corner WDB recognizes that the growth and success of the regional economy relies and benefits greatly from the communication and collaboration with these partners.

**PA CAREERLINK® ONE-STOPs**

The Southwest Corner PA CareerLink® centers have co-located partners that are responsible for the delivery of the services listed above including partners funded through:

- WIOA Title I: Adult, Dislocated Worker, National Emergency Grant/Opioid Program, Rapid Response
- WIOA Title I: Youth (In-school and Out-of-School youth ages 14-24) and TANF Youth, Business Education Partnership, State Local Internship Program
- WIOA Title II: Adult Basic Literacy Education
- WIOA Title III: Wagner Peyser; Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA); Trade Readjustment Allowance (TRA)
- WIOA Title IV: Office of Vocational Rehabilitation – Services to persons with disabilities. The Office of

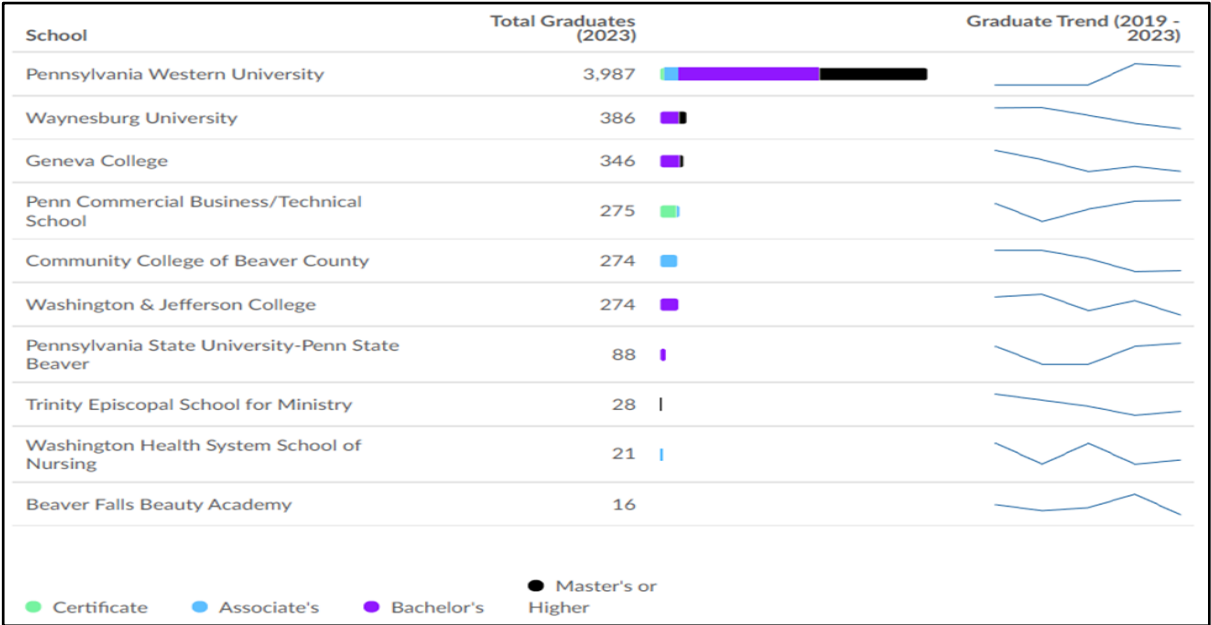
Vocational Rehabilitation assists Pennsylvanians with disabilities to secure and maintain employment and independence under Title IV-Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Eligible OVR customers receive multiple services that may include but not be limited to; diagnostic, vocational counseling and guidance, vocational evaluation, restoration, training, job placement, individualized support services; and pre-employment training services for eligible and potentially eligible high school students with disabilities. OVR also provides multiple services to the business community designed to assist businesses with onboarding pre-screened qualified employees with disabilities.

- US DOL Veterans
- Community Development Block Grant programs
- WIOA Title V: Senior Employment Services

WIOA authorizes "career services" for adults and dislocated workers. There are three types of career services available: basic career services, individualized career services, and training services. These services will be provided in any order and in no required sequence providing staff the flexibility to target services to the needs of the customer.

**EDUCATIONAL PROVIDERS**

In 2023, there were 5,709 graduates in Southwest Corner WDA. This pipeline has grown by 3% over the last 5 years. The highest share of these graduates come from "Registered Nursing/Registered Nurse" (Bachelor's), "Sport and Fitness Administration/Management" (Master's or Higher), and "Business Administration and Management, General" (Master's or Higher) (Figure 20).



**Figure 20:** Regional Education Providers

The SCWDB maintains outstanding relations with the postsecondary workforce providers throughout the Southwest Corner and the Southwest PA Region. SCWDB also connects with local post-secondary provider partners in its PA CareerLink® centers, including California University of PA, Penn Commercial Business &

Technical School, Douglas Education Center, Pittsburgh Institute of Aeronautics, Rosedale Technical College, Community College of Beaver County, All-State Career School, Beaver County CTC, Western Area CTC, Mon Valley CTC ,and Greene County CTC. SCWDB staff and Title I Providers serve in advisory capacity for some local post-secondary providers and programs. SCWDB also partners with regional joint-apprenticeship programs. The SCWDB will continue to pursue and develop these relationships to best serve the job seekers and employers in the workforce area and the Southwest PA Region.

As part of our continuous improvement efforts, the SCWDB is diligently looking to enhance the delivery of information on local career opportunities within the school districts in the Southwest Corner. SCWDB has hosted events for local guidance counselors and apprenticeship representatives from local trades to discuss this pathway for youth. The Business Education Partnership program in the area is also focused on opening the doors of local employers and industries to area youth. SCWDB values and appreciates the opportunities granted by local 4-year university programs, but wants to be sure that school personnel are knowledgeable of the great opportunities that can come from a 2-year degree, technical training, or apprenticeship. While this connection is currently a weakness nationwide, SCWDB looks to make it a strength and be a leader in this area over the next few years.

**REGIONAL APPRENTICESHIPS**

As detailed in the sections that follow, the SCWDB partners with a number of apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs throughout western and southwestern PA. Regional RAPs and Pre-RAPs (Figure 21 and Figure 22) that the SCWDB partners with include:

<b>Apprenticeship Sponsor</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Program Type</b>
German American Chamber of Commerce (GACC) - Pittsburgh	Mechatronics, Polymer Process Technician, Technical Sales Representative	Group Non-Joint
Catalyst Connection (Regional Manufacturing Extension Partner and Industrial Resource Center)	Industrial Manufacturing Technician	Group Non-Joint
Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC)	Mechatronics	Group Non-Joint
New Century Careers – Machinist Training School	Manufacturing	Group Non-Joint
Community College of Beaver County	Mechatronics	Group Non-Joint
12 Building Trades	Building & Construction	Group Joint

**Figure 21: Regional Apprenticeship Programs**

Pre-Apprenticeship Sponsor	Sector	Partners
German American Chamber of Commerce (GACC) – Pittsburgh	Manufacturing	Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC), Community College of Beaver County (CCBC)
Beaver County Career & Technology Center	Building & Construction	Community College of Beaver County (CCBC)
Catalyst Connection	Manufacturing	NABTU
Reentry Bridge to Success The Johnson Shaw Foundation	Building & Construction	Building Trades

**Figure 22:** Regional Pre-Apprenticeship Programs

Please see Attachment for a list of SCWDB Registered Apprenticeships.

### INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS

The SCWDB has expanded our efforts to address business and employer needs through Industry Partnership that engage our targeted high priority industries including: Advanced Manufacturing, Building & Construction, and Freight & Logistics. The Southwest Corner WDB also maintains sustainability funds to support these industry partnership activities.

- **Advanced Manufacturing:** The SCWDB launched a Next Generation Manufacturing Sector Partnership in July of 2017 as an opportunity to engage business leaders from the high-demand manufacturing sector. Through the launch process, the employers discussed numerous challenges, strengths, and benefits to collaborative efforts under the scope of the Next-Gen Partnership format. An ongoing connection to the local and regional Advanced Manufacturing employers in Southwestern Pennsylvania assists in identifying partnership participants. The SCWDB Director and Business Services Team Leaders from the SCWDA’s two Title I service providers for the 3-county area facilitate quarterly partnership meetings either in person or virtually. These meetings bring together manufacturing industry leaders and provide a forum for them to collectively identify the priority action items needing addressed in order for them to grow and compete. Since inception, this partnership has made significant progress in addressing the following action items:
  - o Establishing and/or expanding registered apprenticeship training programs as a way of creating a pipeline of skilled workers.
  - o Upskilling the current workforce to remain competitive and promote from within to replace the most highly skilled workers aging out of the workforce.
  - o Promoting family sustaining manufacturing career opportunities to youth, parents, and educators through school programs, internships, and industry tours. The SCWDB assisted the partnership to launch the **manufacturingswpa.com** website. This website is a valuable tool to inform youth, parents, and educators about local manufacturing facilities, their products/services, career and training opportunities offered, and willingness to participate in career awareness activities. Building upon this group’s progress, the SCWDB sees this group becoming a true collaborative voice and clearinghouse of the sector’s needs.

- **Building & Construction:** The Building and Construction Trades Industry Partnership (BCTIP) is a regional initiative supporting the construction industry in Beaver, Washington, and Greene Counties. The program is focused on strengthening the industry through collaboration with community-based recruitment strategies and increasing the skill level and competitiveness of the incumbent workforce. Priorities include better informing the community about construction careers and building strategies that connect minorities, women and youth with opportunities in the skilled building trades. BCTIP was formed as a way to build a collaborative and regional strategy to address these issues. The IP also supports the current workforce with training needed to adapt to rapid advances in the materials, techniques and technologies related to construction. The partnership has regularly trained over 1,000 incumbent workers annually.

IPs can support a large portion of employers' investment costs of training incumbent workers. This training leads to the development of the employer's workforce, while often offering promotions and wage gains opportunities for their employees. Training and promotion of incumbent workers frequently leads to the availability of entry level jobs for less skilled workers and growth opportunities for employers. Early experiences with all partnerships have been positive and are focused on strengthening the industries locally and working with educators to prepare youth for these careers. Additional potential Next Generation Sector Partnerships will also be explored as demand and priorities are identified.

- **Healthcare:** The SCWDB focuses on assisting employers in filling their workforce shortages and in upgrading skills in first responders, recovery specialists, and medical professionals. One approach SCWDB is taking is supporting apprenticeship programs. For example, in addition to the EMT, AEMT and Paramedic trainings, the Board will work with local employers to develop a registered apprenticeship focused on paramedic training. By participating in registered apprenticeship programs, individuals will be able to "learn and earn" while preparing for their certifications and satisfy their classroom and field requirements. This model will also assist in sustainability of the project, as registered apprenticeship models have many opportunities for funding from different sources. The SCWDB views this opportunity to assist in the development of a non-traditional apprenticeship model as a potential best practice and will be replicable across other occupations.

The SCWDB has had a lot of success and will continue to support opportunities to create "fast-track" training programs to fill the much-needed roles within the healthcare system. SCWDB works together with employers to post job orders on CWDS, recruit applicants, screen for eligibility and do On-The-Job training contracts for an entry level position. These much-needed positions include a one-month training program, and for eligible applicants, a short-term OJT contract is written.

The SCWDB partnered with the other 21 PA Workforce Boards to support the AFSMCE District 1199C Training & Upgrading Fund, SEIU Healthcare PA Training & Education Fund, and Pennsylvania Health Care Association's joint proposal to offer Direct Care Worker Training throughout Southeastern and Western Pennsylvania. Bringing together our Commonwealth's two largest healthcare unions and the voice of Pennsylvania's long-term care, assisted living and personal care providers, this partnership represents the best opportunity to create a sustainable statewide infrastructure to support the frontline workers and high-road employers caring for older and disabled Pennsylvanians. Over this grant term, the partners will

collaborate with each other, their respective members, and the PA CareerLink® system to deliver training to at least 1,000 Pennsylvanians.

- **Steel Alliance** This partnership is a joint effort by SCWDB and the Three Rivers Area Labor Management Committee. The Pennsylvania Steel Alliance is a partnership of Pennsylvania’s steel companies and the labor unions united to educate the public and elected officials about the positive impacts of the steel industry and the policy issues affecting the industry’s growth. Steel Alliance members include labor organizations and steel companies across the state, as well as organizations that support the steel industry. Our members work together to support policies and initiatives: to grow the steel industry in Pennsylvania and create new jobs and greater economic prosperity in Pennsylvania. We welcome industry, labor union, economic, workforce development, community, education and government partners who align with our mission and values. The steel industry has a major impact on Pennsylvania’s economy and produces significantly higher than average wages.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

The SCWDB enjoys a close working relationship with local and regional economic development organizations. Working together to serve employers only adds to the quality of services industry can expect from the Southwest Corner. SCWDB became a contract partner for the Department of Community and Economic Development Engage! Business Retention and Expansion program in 2020. This program enables the SCWDB director and business services team leaders from the SCWDA’s two Title I service providers for the 3-county area to meet with business leaders from high-demand industries to identify their opportunities and challenges. The team then works with these business leaders to develop an action plan connecting them to the resources needed to capitalize on their opportunities and overcome challenges. The SCWDB will further build upon these activities by creating a regional Business Service Team to work with the BSTs in each PA CareerLink® center.

### **1.5 What are the challenges the local area face in aligning existing labor force skills and education and training activities with the needs of regional employers?**

*[Reviewed by CWIA and PA WDB]*

#### **LABOR SUPPLY/DEMAND MISMATCH**

As noted at the beginning of Section 1.3, there is a mismatch between the region’s talent pool and the skills employers need. In the Southwest Corner region, 28% of the population has some college or an Associate’s Degree, but only 11% of the jobs in the region require such training. As a result, there is some underemployment among individuals with some college but less than a Bachelor’s Degree. While many jobs are available (especially in the priority sectors in the workforce area), employers continually note critical shortages of talent.

One of the contributing reasons for this supply demand mismatch is the continued opinion of parents directing their children to attend college for a professional degree rather than the technical skill credentials. There are benefits from all post-secondary education and training, not just primarily four-year colleges and universities.

Recent changes in the labor market, supported by the emphasis on licensing, credentials and certifications in the labor market also recognize additional and usually post high school competency attainment. When reviewing the area's High Priority Occupation list, it is evident that Southwest Corner has many jobs that do not necessarily require an advanced degree.

The SCWDB will work to address these issues through greater recognition of apprenticeship opportunities and collaborating with K-12 schools to better educate students and their parents. SCWDB is committed to educating youth, parents, and educators on the benefits of all educational opportunities post high school, primarily opportunities presented through apprenticeships, community colleges, and education through career and technology centers.

Another way to help address the Supply Demand mismatch is to upgrade the skills of the current workforce. The SCWDB will continue to expand the incumbent worker training available to employers throughout the counties, especially those in the clusters and sectors offering the most appropriate career-oriented positions.

Finally, addressing the needs of those with barriers to employment in the target populations identified by WIOA and significant in the county will continue to be a priority. For example, Transportation is also a barrier with limited transportation opportunities short of driving your own vehicle. The Southwest Corner Workforce Development Area continues to partner with community-based organizations and others with the expertise to address these needs and will continue to do so.

## **BASIC SKILLS GAPS**

Through surveys and other outreach, job seeker employability skills have been identified as a vital need in the region. The breakdown of job seeker skill needs falls into two categories: basic literacy skills and soft skills. Regardless of their career pathway, people need a higher level of basic literacy skills which are oriented to the workplace. These include reading, math, understanding instructions, and use of basic information technology.

Soft skills such as attendance, punctuality, planning for emergencies, handling difficult people, working in teams, problem-solving, and getting along with others complement basic literacy skills and make work better for people. At a higher level, people need technical skills that can range from welding and fabricating to information technology.

The Southwest Corner Workforce Development Board partners in the following projects to elevate the skills of job seekers and incumbent workers to meet the workforce needs of the region's employers.

- Southwest Corner Ecosystem Project – Multi Craft Core Curriculum Apprenticeship Readiness Program (MC3) (Building and Construction)
- United Steelworkers Union, District 10 – Manufacturing Skills Standards Council – Certified Production Technician training program (Manufacturing)
- Expansion of Registered Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeship Programs (all industries)



## 2. STRATEGIC PLANNING: Vision and Goals

### 2.1. Local Board's Strategic Vision and Alignment with the Governor's Strategic Vision - What are the local board's strategic vision and goals for preparing its workforce and its strategy for achieving the vision and goals? How will the local board's vision and goals align with, support, and contribute to the governor's vision and goals for the state's workforce development system, as well as any of the goals and strategies articulated in the regional plan?

*[WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(E), (b)(1)(F), and (b)(2); 20 CFR § 679.560(a)(5), (a)(6), and (b)(1)(ii). Reviewed by ATO and PA WDB]*

The SCWDB will align with, support, and contribute to the governor's vision and goals for the state's workforce development system by:

#### **Goal 1. Apprenticeship and Career & Technical Education:**

The SCWDB has long supported and will continue to support registered apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship. As a local area with strong apprenticeship programs already in existence, SCWDB works to position itself as a promoter of both existing programs to participants and of the Registered Apprenticeship model to businesses who may benefit from developing an apprenticeship.

Apprenticeship training programs must be directly linked to in-demand occupations in the Southwest Corner and lead to employment wages that satisfy SCWDB target placement wage. The ITAs will fully explain the details of the training, including length of training, mandatory training hours, training locations, and cost of training. Also, the process will have to identify key elements for WIOA performance, including start dates, exit/entered employment dates, participant performance, documentation requirements, industry credentials and reporting. A Customer must be accepted by a registered apprenticeship's program apprenticeship training provider prior the execution of an ITA. Apprenticeship training providers, or joint apprenticeship training providers, are formal training representatives of the company, trade, or group of employers, who identify the minimum qualifications applicants must meet in order to apply for their apprenticeship program. Minimum qualifications and credentials to apply may include education, ability to physically perform the essential functions of the occupation, ability to pass drug tests, and proof of age.

Having a first – hand apprenticeship experience has helped SCWDB gain valuable insight and technical skills which will help contribute toward SCWDB's long term apprenticeship expansion goals. SCWDB employs a graduate of the Registered Apprenticeship (RA) Navigator Program. The (RA) Navigator is an apprenticeship program that trains people to develop and manage apprenticeship programs. Registered in the State of Pennsylvania, RA Navigators help grow the apprenticeship ecosystem through regional partnerships and provide technical assistance to unions, employers, industry associations, community organizations, training providers, and the workforce system,

The Southwest Corner Workforce Development Board (SCWDB) is dedicated to working closely with employers to expand existing apprenticeship programs, particularly in industries where there is a high

demand for skilled workers, such as healthcare, manufacturing, and information technology. Apprenticeships provide a powerful pathway for individuals to gain hands-on, industry-specific experience while earning wages, making them an effective solution for both job seekers and employers. By partnering with employers, the SCWDB helps to identify gaps in the workforce and areas where apprenticeship programs can be scaled or developed to meet the growing demands of these critical industries. These expanded apprenticeship opportunities not only help businesses address immediate labor shortages but also support long-term workforce development by ensuring that workers acquire the specialized skills needed to succeed in today's fast-evolving job market. In industries like healthcare, manufacturing, and information technology, apprenticeships offer a unique opportunity for individuals to gain technical expertise while receiving mentorship from experienced professionals. This creates a pipeline of qualified, job-ready candidates who are prepared to fill essential roles, helping businesses maintain high standards and improve overall productivity. The SCWDB will continue to support employers in creating and expanding apprenticeship programs by offering guidance, resources, and access to funding opportunities. We will also work to increase awareness of apprenticeship as a viable career path, particularly among younger job seekers and underrepresented groups. By promoting apprenticeships across various sectors, the SCWDB aims to create a more robust, skilled workforce that is well-positioned to meet the demands of today's and tomorrow's job markets.

In recognition of the SCWDB's efforts around apprenticeship, The U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Apprenticeship has recognized the Southwest Corner Workforce Development Board as an Apprenticeship Ambassador for its support in promoting, expanding, and diversifying Registered Apprenticeship.

We work very closely with our CTCs, they are a part of our Industry Partnerships connecting with employers and community partners. The SCWDB Board utilizes a common support platform to guide the services and activities of the workforce development system. The Board works collaboratively with the appropriate post-secondary institutions to guide and advise on postsecondary education offerings. The Board also provides labor market information, and related information to secondary education institutions and the additional post-secondary institutions throughout the county. CTCs are included in Sector Partnerships. The Local Board encourages CTCs to add their programs to the ETPL list and provide HPO information for our local area in order to include CTE as an option for WIOA funds/ITAs.

**Incentivizing Employers:** One of the key strategies the Southwest Corner Workforce Development Board (SCWDB) will continue to pursue is incentivizing employers to participate in workforce development initiatives, particularly in creating and expanding apprenticeship programs, hiring underserved populations, and offering training opportunities. By offering tax incentives, subsidies, and other financial benefits, we aim to make it more attractive for businesses to invest in workforce development, ultimately contributing to the long-term sustainability of these programs. These incentives can help businesses offset the costs associated with training, hiring, or offering work-based learning opportunities such as apprenticeships, internships, and on-the-job training. For example, businesses that invest in training workers or creating apprenticeship programs would benefit from tax credits or direct financial subsidies that reduce their operational costs, making it easier for them to continue and expand these initiatives. This not only supports the businesses

directly but also helps to ensure a consistent flow of qualified workers in high-demand industries. Incentives like these can play a crucial role in encouraging businesses, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), to participate in workforce development programs that they might not otherwise be able to afford. For many small businesses, the costs of training and developing talent can be a significant barrier. Offering financial support through tax breaks or subsidies alleviates some of that financial burden and encourages a stronger partnership between employers and workforce development programs. By providing these financial incentives, SCWDB not only supports local businesses in meeting their workforce needs but also ensures that more individuals—particularly those from underserved or marginalized communities—have access to sustainable employment opportunities. In turn, these incentives help create a more resilient, diverse, and skilled workforce that benefits both businesses and the broader regional economy.

## **Goal 2. Sector Strategies and Employer Engagement**

The Southwest Corner Workforce Development Board aligns regional resources and works to promote partnerships among businesses, non-profit agencies, economic development providers, educational institutions, community-based organizations, and employers. Through working together, stakeholders enhance the skills needed for workforce inclusion, employability, and educational and training levels of the current and future workforce. To accomplish this vision, all resources and programs are utilized in accordance with federal and state regulations.

- SCWDB is utilizing its Industry Partnership in Building and Construction, to partner with local employers, labor organizations, and to support the Apprenticeship Readiness program which prepares individuals, including adults, dislocated workers, and youth, to enroll and succeed in apprenticeship programs. At the conclusion of the program, if the individual chooses not to enter apprenticeship, he/she will still be prepared to enter the workforce with technical and soft skills that are recognized in the workplace.
  - SCWDB will encourage employers to offer internships, apprenticeships, and on-the-job training to create pathways to permanent employment.
  - SCWDB will continue to support incumbent worker training to help adults who are already employed upskill for advancement opportunities.

The creation of our Industry Partnerships has proven to be a valuable strategy in fostering collaboration among employers within similar industries. These regional employer coalitions bring together businesses that face common challenges and opportunities, creating a space for them to share best practices, insights, and innovative approaches to workforce development. One of the key areas of focus has been work-based training and apprenticeship programs, where employers work together to design and implement training opportunities that are more aligned with the evolving needs of their industries. By pooling resources, these employers are able to amplify their impact. Rather than working in isolation, companies can combine their efforts to offer more comprehensive and diverse training programs, which ultimately benefits a larger pool of potential workers. This collaborative approach not only strengthens the workforce but also ensures that the skills developed are directly relevant to the specific demands of the industry, making training programs more effective and tailored. Moreover, through these partnerships, employers are able to tap into a shared talent pipeline, ensuring that they have access to a skilled workforce that meets the industry's standards and qualifications. The development of apprenticeship programs within these coalitions offers individuals a unique

opportunity to gain hands-on experience while earning wages, creating a direct pathway from education and training to employment. The regional employer coalitions have also created a platform for ongoing dialogue, where businesses can collectively address workforce challenges, such as skills gaps or workforce shortages, and explore innovative solutions together. This sense of collaboration not only improves training and recruitment efforts but also fosters stronger connections within the local economy, driving sustainable growth for both employers and the community. By continuing to strengthen and expand these Industry Partnerships, we ensure that workforce development is driven by the needs of employers, with a focus on creating meaningful career opportunities for workers and building a more resilient, skilled workforce in our region.

### **Goal 3. Youth**

- Youth Future-Ready Workforce: SCWDB will continue fostering a workforce that is equipped with the skills required to excel in high-demand industries and emerging sectors. SCWDB will continue to provide early intervention through career exploration, internships, and mentorship. Implement programs that focus on work readiness, employability skills, and postsecondary transitions.
  - SCWDB will continue to grow youth-focused career pathways that integrate work-based learning, including internships and apprenticeships.

The Southwest Corner WDB has created a strategic vision and goals to address the needs of youth and individuals with barriers to employment and ensure that our programs are impactful and aligned with the demands of the local economy. These efforts will not only provide individuals with the skills necessary for employment but also contribute to the development of a workforce that supports sustainable economic growth and innovation.

- The Southwest Corner Workforce Development Board (SCWDB) places a strong emphasis on partnering with local universities, colleges, trade schools, and Career and Technical Centers (CTCs) to develop and sustain close working relationships that directly support workforce development efforts. These partnerships are vital for ensuring that the curriculum offered by educational institutions is closely aligned with the evolving demands of the job market and the specific requirements of local employers. By working collaboratively with educational institutions, SCWDB helps to ensure that training programs and courses are designed with input from employers and industry experts. This alignment allows students and job seekers to acquire the skills and certifications that are in high demand, making them more competitive in the workforce. It also helps bridge the gap between education and employment, providing a clearer pathway from training to meaningful career opportunities. SCWDB works with these institutions to regularly assess and update curriculum, ensuring that it reflects the most current industry standards and technological advancements. Whether it's through new certifications in emerging fields like IT, healthcare, or advanced manufacturing, or through hands-on, industry-driven training opportunities, these collaborations ensure that workers are equipped with the specific knowledge and skills needed for success. These partnerships also create opportunities for dual enrollment, apprenticeships, and internships, allowing students to gain real-world experience while still in school. By fostering these relationships, SCWDB helps ensure that both students and employers benefit from a well-prepared, highly skilled workforce that is ready to meet the demands of today's competitive job market.

- **Work-Based Learning Opportunities** - The Southwest Corner Workforce Development Board (SCWDB) is committed to enhancing our partnerships with local schools and Career and Technical Centers (CTCs) to ensure that students gain valuable, hands-on experience that directly prepares them for the workforce. By strengthening these collaborations, we aim to facilitate the implementation of internships, cooperative education, and externship programs that provide students with practical, real-world experience in their chosen fields. These experiential learning opportunities are crucial for helping students bridge the gap between classroom instruction and the demands of the job market. Internships, cooperative education, and externships allow students to apply what they've learned in a professional setting, giving them a competitive edge when they graduate and begin their job search. These programs also offer employers the chance to evaluate potential future employees in a real work environment, helping them identify qualified candidates for full-time positions. By expanding and formalizing these programs, SCWDB ensures that students can transition smoothly into full-time employment upon graduation. With firsthand experience in their respective industries, students are better equipped to meet the expectations of employers and excel in their roles from day one. Additionally, these hands-on experiences often lead to job offers from the companies that host the internships or externships, further enhancing employment outcomes for students. Through these strengthened partnerships with schools and CTCs, SCWDB is working to create a seamless pathway from education to employment, ensuring that students not only gain the skills they need but also the practical experience that will make them highly sought-after by employers in the region. These partnerships will be enhanced with our local schools and CTCs so that the implementation of internships, cooperative education, and externships, will provide students with hands-on experience and make it easier for them to transition into full-time opportunities upon graduation.
- **The Employer Forums and Roundtables** provide a valuable space for employers to come together and discuss the workforce challenges they are facing. These forums create an opportunity for employers to share the training strategies they are currently utilizing, giving them a chance to learn from one another's experiences and successes. These conversations often spark collaborative projects and initiatives, which allow businesses to pool their resources, create more comprehensive training programs, and tackle workforce development issues on a larger scale. The collective wisdom of these discussions often leads to creative solutions that benefit the entire business community in the region. In addition to fostering collaboration among employers, the Employer Forums and Roundtables have been integrated into our Business and Education Partnership Grant services. This integration allows for a deeper connection between local employers and educators, as we bring together administrators and educators from Career and Technical Centers (CTCs) and K-12 schools to participate in these events. By involving educators in these conversations, we help bridge the gap between the education system and industry needs, ensuring that training and curriculum are aligned with the skills required by employers in the area. These collaborative efforts between employers and educational leaders strengthen the partnership between business and education, leading to more targeted and effective workforce training. By including both employers and educators in the same conversations, we create a comprehensive approach to workforce development that starts with early education and continues through technical training and apprenticeship programs, ultimately ensuring that students are better prepared to enter the workforce with the skills employers need. The combination of employer-driven conversations and educational input ensures that we are not only addressing the current workforce challenges but also proactively preparing for future

labor market needs. By continuing to hold these forums and roundtables, we strengthen the relationship between business and education, ensuring a workforce that is ready, skilled, and adaptable to the changing demands of our regional economy.

**Goal 4:** Continuous Improvement of the PA CareerLink® System:

- Through policy and partnership cooperation, a comprehensive plan to deliver services consistently across all four Southwest Corner PA CareerLink® offices has been established. Our area has worked to successfully streamline the PA CareerLink® customer flow/triage processes and standardize all common forms for our four offices in the Southwest Corner. The SCWDB created and implemented a PA CareerLink® staff professional development (and onboarding) training called “The PA CareerLink® Way” for all staff and partners. This local area onboarding guide and training was developed to introduce or reintroduce staff to the expectations and roles of staff at the PA CareerLink® centers. This training and guide does not replace the information staff receive from the HR department at staffs’ employer(s) of record, and staff will always be responsible for the functions of their jobs as assigned by their respective employers. However, while co-located at the PA CareerLink® centers, the SCWDB wants to ensure a team like approach while serving customers and conducting services, and each site has specific goals and responsibilities to achieve. This “PA CareerLink® Way” guide and training process, familiarizes staff with the roles and purposes of the Southwest Corner Workforce Development Board, the PA CareerLink® centers, our customers, and our responsibilities to our community and region. The goal of the SCWDB is to work together, as a team, streamline our efforts and ensure that all partners are included and trained accordingly.
- In addition to streamlining staff development, all four PA CareerLink® offices in the Southwest Corner have worked together to create universal processes, forms, orientations, workshops, etc. so that the customer experience in each of our locations is similar. At the beginning of the pandemic, the SCWDB realized that resources could be limited to our customers. Our PA CareerLink® site administrators were tasked to coordinate e-events/e-workshops. They have successfully created a “regional” calendar of online events. Any customer can attend one of our workshops regardless of which location is offering it and all are posted on the CWDS system of record. This effort has not only reduced duplication of effort/service but has also ensured a full menu of services during this unprecedented time and lessens the staff planning and instructional time involved. The SCWDB will continue to build on these efforts moving forward.
- Participant referrals are made using the PA CareerLink® referral module. The primary principle of the referral system is the provision of a seamless delivery of service to both job seekers and employers.
- As a service-driven organization, SCWDB operates on a full-time, in-person basis. Our team, including both SCWDB staff and contractors, are dedicated to delivering hands-on support to job seekers and employers. This means that we do not have remote workdays for our staff or contractors, as our mission relies on direct, personal engagement with the individuals and businesses we serve. The nature of our work requires us to maintain a strong, consistent in-person presence, ensuring that we

are available to provide the services, guidance, and resources that are essential to the workforce development process.

- Although our area operates on an in-person basis, remote services are not only necessary during times of crisis but also beneficial for some clients, particularly those who face barriers such as transportation challenges, geographic isolation, or health concerns. As a result, we have implemented and will continue to maintain remote service options for clients who may benefit from them. This could include virtual career counseling, remote job search assistance, online training opportunities, or phone-based support. While we remain committed to in-person, full-time operations at our physical locations, these remote service options are now a permanent part of our service delivery model. We believe that by providing both in-person and remote services, we can better meet the diverse needs of our rural population, ensuring that all clients, regardless of their location or circumstances, have access to the workforce development resources they need to succeed.

The primary focus of our PA CareerLink® centers is to provide comprehensive workforce development services, be accessible to employers, job seekers and incumbent workers, and have success resulting in economic self-sufficiency and a workforce trained to employer qualifications. Workforce development services are funded by combinations of WIOA funds and other grant funds that are applied for by the LWDB. The service delivery network includes PA CareerLink® Operator Consortium and PA CareerLink® partners (both mandated and voluntary). These partners are invested in the PA CareerLink® system to enrich services provided to job seekers and employers.

The SCWDB is focused on continuous improvement by actively seeking partnerships with organizations whose services and goals align with our strategy and vision. This collaboration allows us to leverage complementary strengths, drive innovation, and work together toward shared objectives. By choosing the right partners, we ensure that our growth and development are supported by synergies that enhance our long-term success and strategic direction. The PA CareerLink® offices also work closely with off-site community partners including: Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development, County(s) Drug & Alcohol entities; Behavioral/Mental Health entities; Industry Associations, local school districts, Local and State Correctional Facilities, CTCs, and post-secondary training providers. See **Attachment 3** for a complete listing of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for all required partners and additional partners.

The SCWDB remains focused on ensuring that universal access is granted to all customers entering the Southwest Corner PA CareerLink® centers and who are in need of basic career services. If additional services are needed an initial assessment, plan of action (individual employment plan - IEP) and recommendations are made for customers in need of career and/or training services. Training services may include skill training or on-the-job training.

In order for our staff to stay informed and up to date, we prioritize regular training, communication, and the sharing of relevant industry developments. By ensuring that our team has access to the latest information, tools, and best practices, we empower them to make well-informed decisions and contribute

effectively to the company's goals. This ongoing learning process helps maintain a competitive edge and fosters a culture of continuous improvement within our organization.

- Most recently the SCWDB leadership and frontline staff completed Workforce and Career Development Certification training which provides 20 core competencies that workforce development professionals should possess to provide customers with optimal services and expertise in the areas of assessment, career planning, business services, working with various populations, and ethics.

**Goal 5: Barrier Remediation**

The Southwest Corner WDB will ensure participants are provided the information and resources for successful training and career readiness activities and result in positive outcomes for personal success, as well as performance accountability. Our goals are aligned with preparing an educated and skilled workforce, with a focus on youth and individuals with barriers to employment. Our vision and goals include:

- Eligible participants: SCWDB will ensure that all individuals, particularly those facing barriers (e.g., individuals with disabilities, veterans, individuals with criminal records, economically disadvantaged individuals, and others), have access to training, education, and employment opportunities.
  - We will provide reentry programs and resources that include job readiness training, employer partnerships, and legal assistance to help individuals with criminal records reintegrate into the workforce.
  - A Transitional Jobs (TJ) training policy has been developed in the Southwest Corner that connects individuals with barriers to employment who are chronically unemployed or have an inconsistent work history with opportunities to build workplace skills and job readiness.
  - Support Services will address the needs for clothing, equipment, childcare, and transportation, etc. options to help individuals engaged in education, training, and employment opportunities.
- Collaborative Partnerships: SCWDB will continue to maintain effective and positive relationships with local educational institutions, employers, community organizations, and service providers to build a robust ecosystem that supports workforce development.
  - SCWDB will encourage partnerships with local schools and community colleges to ensure curriculum alignment with in-demand skills.
  - SCWDB will provide direct engagement between employers and program participants through job fairs, career expos, and industry-specific networking events.
  - With the implementation of Industry Partnerships, the SCWDB will assist in providing employer input on training curriculum and identify emerging skills required by local businesses.
- On-The-Job Training: Southwest Corner Workforce Development Board has established a local policy for OJT opportunity administration. Policy contains detailed descriptions of minimum wage per hour for participation, contracting, training requirements, and employer/trainee expectations.



- Transitional Jobs are short-term, paid positions that serve as a critical stepping-stone for individuals to gain valuable work experience and develop skills that will help them secure permanent employment. These roles are particularly beneficial for individuals who may face significant barriers to entering the workforce, such as those with criminal records, long-term unemployed individuals, or at-risk youth. By providing these individuals with the opportunity to prove their skills in a real-world work environment, transitional jobs increase their chances of transitioning into stable, long-term employment. The Southwest Corner Workforce Development Board (SCWDB) is committed to identifying employers who are willing to create transitional job opportunities specifically for these underserved populations.
- Online Training Opportunities: The Southwest Corner Workforce Development Board (SCWDB) recognizes that a one-size-fits-all approach does not meet the diverse needs of job seekers and workers in our region. To ensure that individuals have access to a broad range of training opportunities, we will continue to collaborate with training providers to integrate online training programs alongside in-person, work-based learning options. This combination of learning modalities allows individuals to gain valuable skills in a flexible, accessible way that accommodates different learning styles and schedules.

Online training programs offer the convenience of learning from anywhere, which is especially beneficial for individuals in rural areas who may face transportation barriers or have other time constraints. By incorporating these online programs, we ensure that workers can enhance their skills at their own pace while still benefiting from structured, high-quality educational content. These online options can be particularly helpful for upskilling or reskilling in areas that are in high demand, such as technology, healthcare, and manufacturing. At the same time, in-person work-based opportunities, such as apprenticeships, on-the-job training, and internships, provide hands-on experience that reinforces the skills learned online. These work-based learning opportunities allow individuals to apply what they've learned in real-world settings, giving them practical experience that boosts their employability and prepares them for long-term career success. By offering both online training and in-person work-based experiences, the SCWDB is creating a more comprehensive, adaptable workforce development system that meets the needs of job seekers at every stage of their career journey. This dual approach ensures that individuals have access to the tools and resources they need to develop skills that are directly aligned with employer expectations, enhancing both employability and career advancement opportunities. As we continue to expand these training options, we will work closely with industry partners, educational institutions, and community organizations to ensure that the programs offered are relevant, accessible, and aligned with the evolving needs of the workforce. Southwest Corner WDB will continue to work with providers to include online training program options that work alongside in-person work-based opportunities.

- Digital Skill Development - In an effort to increase digital skill development in the Southwest Corner, will offer opportunities under Computer Reach, a Pittsburgh-based nonprofit organization, which is managing the PA Digital Navigator Project. This project is part of the National Digital Navigator Corps Project launched by the National Digital Inclusion Alliance and funded by Google.org. The purpose is to bridge the digital divide in rural Western PA. by:

- providing community members with personal computers
- assisting them in accessing affordable internet home services
- and providing them with digital skills training and tech support

This program has been incorporated into our services by interviewing enrolled youth and/or adults and referring them to the Project's Digital Navigator. To date, staff have referred over 200 youth/adults/families to the project who have received laptop computers and opportunities to have one-on-one instructional support.

- Monitoring and Evaluating Success - Southwest Corner WDB will continue to track/monitor work-based training programs to ensure that they meet the employers' and area's needs.

The Southwest Corner Workforce Development Board (SCWDB) is committed to continuously building on the goals and strategies we've established to create more pathways to sustainable employment for individuals across our region. By refining and expanding our workforce development initiatives, we aim to provide job seekers with the tools, resources, and opportunities they need to achieve long-term career success. These pathways will not only help individuals secure meaningful employment but also support career advancement and upward mobility. A key aspect of this effort is strengthening the relationships between employers and the workforce. By fostering ongoing communication and collaboration, we ensure that employers have access to a pool of skilled and prepared candidates, while workers gain valuable insights into industry expectations and job market trends. These strengthened partnerships will help create a dynamic, responsive workforce ecosystem where employers' needs are met, and job seekers are equipped to succeed in their careers. Furthermore, we will continue to focus on improving overall outcomes for both individuals and businesses. This includes enhancing workforce retention, reducing skills gaps, and ensuring that individuals are equipped with the right skills to meet the demands of a constantly changing job market. By focusing on these key areas, the SCWDB will contribute to a stronger, more resilient regional economy that benefits both employers and workers alike. Through these ongoing efforts, we are dedicated to creating a sustainable and inclusive workforce development system that provides lasting economic opportunities, supports workforce diversity, and ensures that all individuals, regardless of their background, have access to the resources they need to thrive in today's economy.

#### **Goal 6: Addressing Workforce Shortages in Critical Industries**

SCWDB will increase its ability to sustain and recover from economic shocks by integrating employers into the development of a strong network of short- to mid-length training programs and stackable credentials. This system will be better able to react in real-time to employer and community needs. We have developed a wide range of partnerships to support diverse job opportunities and are focused on industries which will drive the regional economy. Together, we will ensure these industries have the talent available to continue to lead the local economy. We will codify lessons learned and understand why some interventions work better in some industries than in others. These lessons will prepare the system for responding to future shocks.

The SCWDB prioritizes short term work based training and stackable credentials as a way to fast-track unemployed individuals into the workforce. The PACL's regularly host Industry focused recruitment events. SCWDB works together with employers to post job orders on CWDS, recruit applicants, screen for eligibility and do On-The-Job training contracts for an entry level position. These much-needed positions include a one-month training program, and for eligible applicants, a short term OJT contract is written.

**2.2. Negotiated levels of performance - What are the local levels of performance that have been negotiated with the governor and chief elected officials? How will the local board's goals relate to the achievement of these measures?**

*[WIOA Sec. 108(b)(17); 20 CFR § 679.560(b)(5); WIOA 116(c); 20 CFR § 679.560(b)(16). Reviewed by CWIA]*

We will identify strategies that align with the Federal Performance Accountability Measures. Our Workforce Development Board's goals are in direct alignment with the Federal Common Performance Measures.

The Southwest Corner Workforce Development Board has and will continue to meet and/or exceed both federal and state performance measures. The interaction of workforce development, economic development, and education at the Board level, sets the agenda for developing a skill ready workforce; identifying necessary training pathways and listing in-demand employment opportunities to meet required performance indicators. All SCWDB actions and goals are instituted to exceed performance measures and provide high-quality services for job seekers and employers in the region.

SCWDB programs will use the federal performance measures for WIOA as performance goals for programs and sub-recipients. The measures will be reviewed at quarterly WDB meetings and monitored by the Oversight Coordinator. Persistent attention to the levels throughout the year will allow Board, CLEO, and Staff to adjust strategies in the event of an unmet level. These measures include employment, median earnings, credential attainment, measurable skill gains, and effectiveness in serving employers.

1. Improve Employment Outcomes - Employment Rate and Median Earnings: The goal to improve employment outcomes aligns directly with our vision and goals for both participants and employers. By providing equal access and in-demand opportunities for training and career readiness, the SCWDB will prepare a pipeline of skilled workers for employers therefore improving employment outcomes that lead to higher median earnings for program participants.

SCWDB staff and sub-recipients will target high priority occupation and industries for job development in WIOA programs to meet and exceed employment and earning performance levels. Continuation of services and retention strategies to assist in keeping employment will be vital to succeed, for both the participant and program.

2. Increase Credential Attainment: The goal to increase credential attainment directly correlates with the indicator measuring the percentage of participants who earn a recognized credential or secondary school diploma after completing the program. By offering a wide array of career paths and training/credentialing opportunities that respond to the needs of our employer population, the SCWDB is confident that this will increase participant skill levels, and in turn will lead to improved credential attainment measures and ultimately positively impacting employment rates.

3. Enhance Skill Development- Measurable Skill Gains: Goals related to enhancing participants' skills are tracked by the SCWDA Title I providers. The providers ensure that participants are making progress in acquiring and demonstrating new skills by consistently tracking and entering data related to educational or training milestones. This process involves coordination with participants, schools, training providers, and employers to ensure timely updates and support.
  - Skill gains and effectively serving employers are paramount to success in services. SCWDB plans to institute tools to measure success in these areas. Proposed strategies include, but are not limited to:
    - o Employer and participant surveys;
    - o Increase vs decrease of employer job orders to gauge satisfaction; and
    - o Pre and post-training inventories to measure occupation skill gains for employer
4. Improve Employer Engagement and Satisfaction - Effectiveness in Serving Employers: The Southwest Corner WDB and our PA CareerLink® Business Services Teams will continue to provide employers with qualified candidates and also be proactive in addressing specific workforce needs, which can be tracked and measured as part of the program's success.

By aligning our negotiated levels with the performance accountability measures we can ensure that objectives are effectively contributing to the desired outcomes in employment, credential attainment, skill development, and employer engagement.

The Southwest Corner Workforce Development Board uses the negotiated performance measures as the indicators for contracted service providers and the one stop operator. Our area has been very successful in meetings and/or exceeding all measures for many years. We are confident that we will continue to meet and/or exceed our performance levels.

Factors such as program enrollment, active participants, placements and other relevant outcome measures, wage at placement and retention are incorporated into the LWDB's strategic plans and reviewed quarterly by the LWDB.

The negotiated levels reflect the efforts of the local workforce system to provide quality employment services and include goals for the percentage of adults, dislocated workers, and youth in terms of employment, median earnings, credential attainment rate, measurable skill gains, and effectiveness in serving employers. The levels provide a means for the public and policy makers to assess how successful the local workforce system is in providing quality services and helping the unemployed obtain jobs.

***Please see Attachment 1 for the Southwest Corner Workforce Development Board Title I Programs Performance Accountability Table.***

### **3. OPERATIONAL PLANNING: Local Area Workforce System and Investment Strategies**

- 3.1. Local workforce system structure - **Provide a descriptive overview of the workforce system structure, including key stakeholders and entities in the local area.**

*[Reviewed by OS and PPCS]*

The Boards of Commissioners of Beaver, Greene and Washington counties are the grant recipients for WIOA Title I funds. The Southwest Corner Chief Local Elected Officials (CLEOs) appoint members to the LWDB, ensuring a majority of private sector business representation and they represent High Priority Occupations in the Southwest Corner. The Chief Local Elected Officials work in cooperation with the LWDB to develop and approve the Local Plan, as well as the budget.

The Southwest Corner Local Elected Officials have designated the Washington Greene County Job Training Agency, Inc. (WGCJTA, Inc.), (a 501(c)3), as the fiscal agent and administrative entity that provides staff to the Southwest Corner WDB. Its duties include administrative and fiscal responsibilities of accounting, budgeting, financial and cash management functions, procurement and purchasing functions, property management functions, monitoring, contracting and audit functions and reporting. As staff to the WDB, the Washington Greene County Job Training Agency, Inc. also assumes leadership roles for WDB related activities.

The Southwest Corner Local Workforce Development Board is made up of twenty-nine (29) members. The Southwest Corner WDB, on behalf of the CLEOs, serves to oversee all workforce development activities within the three-county region. Primary responsibilities of the SCWDB include system governance, strategic direction, fiscal oversight, and administration of workforce operations. SCWDB members work closely with WGCJTA, Inc. staff and the CLEOs to set direction of programs, perform competitive procurement for system offerings including Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs, and PA CareerLink® Operators. Board members have led their expertise and leadership to these activities to ensure that the system is operating in the best interest of the job seeker and employer communities. CLEOs and SCWDB review and approve the budget for all activities within the system. Also, quarterly reports are presented, discussed and approved to ensure that spending is proper, mandated spending levels are adhered to and proper breakdown of administrative and program funds are strictly tracked and reported. All activities are developed collaboratively by SCWDB, WGCJTA, Inc. and CLEOs, offering full transparency of activities and an open dialog for oversight within the local workforce system.

Based on the required role of the SCWDB membership, the LWDB has developed five (5) standing committees to give extra focus to the major activities within the workforce system. These committees meet as needed and scheduled and always report back to the full board membership. In upcoming meetings, SCWDB committees will meet directly prior to the full board meeting, to develop a natural flow and discussion to board activities.

#### **PA CareerLink® Operator**

The identity of the operator consortium is provided in Attachment 2.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act requires that each local area have at least one comprehensive one-stop service center, which is known in Pennsylvania as the PA CareerLink®/American Job Center. SCWDB operates four (4) PA CareerLink® centers – Beaver County, Greene County, Mon Valley and Washington County. SCWDB is responsible for coordinating and aligning workforce services and investment strategies to better reflect the needs of their local or

regional economies. SCWDB oversees the PA CareerLink® and service providers and, as the entity accountable to the Commonwealth for the performance of the workforce investment system in its area, makes every effort to ensure that workforce development services are effectively and efficiently provided.

The Operator's Key responsibilities are:

The duties of the One-Stop Operator shall include the following and be assigned to the appropriate Operator staff, which must include the PA CareerLink® Administrators and Support Staff:

- Supervision of the PA CareerLink® Administrator and Support Staff.
- Establishes and communicates specific and measurable PA CareerLink® performance standards in conjunction with the Southwest Corner Workforce Development Board, SCWDB Committees and input from PA CareerLink® site staff.
- Facilitate the Business Services Teams and ensuring the sharing of information and resources among all service partners.
- Assure compliance with One-Stop center certification criteria.
- Ensure center staff are cross-trained, as appropriate, to increase staff capacity, expertise and efficiency.
- Creation and implementation of a marketing and outreach plan for the community and employers. This plan should include, but not be limited to: flyers, social media, we-newsletters, meeting attendance and promotional materials.
- Serve as an intermediary with all the one-stop partners.
- Ensure the scheduling of workshops and events at the PA CareerLink® centers and assuring representation by partner staff at outside events such as job fairs and career fairs.
- Ensure that an effective partner referral mechanism is in place for the benefit of individuals and the partners' performance, and that the mechanism is followed.
- Implement an action plan that is developed in conjunction with partners who supports the SCWDB's local plan to meet the needs and expectations of all key stakeholders.
- Develops continuous improvement processes to respond to immediate operational needs while ensuring that short-term actions support long-term objectives.
- Ensures quality service delivery to customers with special needs and maintains a current enhancement plan.
- Capture data related to services, projections, costs, etc.; prepare reports and analysis of the data; and make recommendations for adjustments and improvements.
- Maintain required metrics and data as required, including but not limited to foot traffic and workshop registration.
- Know and understand the parameters under which the partners provide services and each partner's performance measurement goals.
- Identify workshop needs; engage with volunteers to put on workshops.
- Recommends, maintains and retires onsite technology and services needed for the operation of the one-stop center.
- Maintain PA CareerLink® centers calendar and scheduling.
- Ensure that the Workforce Development Board mission and objectives are met and carried out.
- Ensure the involvement and inclusion of and integration with the Youth, EARN Program, and all other programs at the PA CareerLink® centers.
- Ensuring that customer service standards are met and that action is taken as needed to modify approaches.

- Maintaining relationships with human service providers and educational providers and recruitment of additional service partners.
- Continuously assess customer needs and feedback to make recommendations to partners and WDB for continuous improvement.
- Review, updating and continuous improvement of each center customer flow to include, but not be limited to, triage of all customers to determine their needs and their applicable Priority of Service status, and ensure service delivery based on that status.
- Disseminating applicable updates from the SCWDB, Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry, and the Federal Department of Labor Employment & Training Administration.

Our operator procurement process consists of request for proposal, submission of proposals, proposal evaluation, review process and project commencement. Competitive procurement process follows the SCWDB PAOL Operator Procurement Policy, all SCWDB policies can be found at [Southwest Corner Workforce Development Board](#).

***The committees of the SCWDB include:***

**SCWDB Executive Committee**

**Description/Duties**

The Executive Committee of the WDB shall consist of the Chairperson, First and Second Vice-Chairpersons, Secretary, and Treasurer as voting members. Two (2) CLEOs shall sit on the Executive Committee in an ex-officio capacity. Any county not represented on the Executive Committee shall have a representative appointed by the Chairperson to sit on the Executive Committee as a voting member.

The Executive Committee shall meet as often as is necessary to carry on the routine business of the WDB and shall have the authority to act on behalf of the WDB when time does not permit the full WDB to meet. The term of the Executive Committee will coincide with terms mentioned in WDB By-Laws, Article III, Section 4.

**General Tasks**

- Ensure that SCWDB demonstrates leadership in meeting the mission of improving workforce quality to support economic development.
- Evaluate effectiveness of SCWDB and SCWDB committees in regard to proper management and oversight.
- Follow all laws and regulations of WIOA and ensure that services are being properly procured and provided in relation to customers, including job seekers and employers.
- Support full SCWDB in decision making process, and perform board duties if necessary when a full meeting is not feasible, while always reporting and conceding to the full board

**SCWDB Fiscal Committee**

### **Description/Duties**

A seven-person bipartisan committee which is comprised of representatives from the CLEOs (3), the WDB (3) and the Fiscal Agent (1). The WDB Chair shall appoint a WDB representative from each county to serve on this committee. The WDB chair may appoint him/herself and/or any other WDB Officer to serve on this committee.

This committee is a fiscal oversight and review committee and will also have budget recommendation responsibilities.

### **General Tasks**

Exercise proper fiduciary stewardship, budget for new opportunities, and ensure adequate board oversight of financial concerns.

### **SCWDB Business Development/PA CareerLink® Committee**

#### **Description/Duties**

This committee will provide information, recommendations, and assistance with planning, implementation, and oversight, as well as other issues related to PA CareerLink® operations, to include their involvement in the development of the job description and request (regardless of the method) used to procure system operators.

- This committee will oversee business development operations within the PA CareerLink® centers and system.
- Review performance in relation to employer engagement in line with metrics negotiated and agreed upon between Commonwealth and SCWDB.

#### **General Tasks**

- Provide oversight and guidance of the PA CareerLink® Operator procurement process:
  - Define Deliverables
  - Work with the Local Board and staff to determine funding amounts and sources, if applicable
  - Oversee the Procurement timeline and process
  - This committee is solely responsible for evaluating operator proposals
  - Make award recommendations to the full Board
  - Oversee other procurement activities as necessary
- Hold meetings
- Record official minutes of all meetings and submit for full Board review
- Analyze information provided by the federal and state entities regarding the workforce delivery system in order to develop recommendations for the full Board.
- Approve local certification criteria and requirements
- Review (from the operator) and present to the full Board, relevant reports that include, but are not limited to, foot traffic reports that include referral information.
- Review (from the operator) results of customer (participant and employer) surveys and report results to the full Board.



- Review results of partner surveys and report the results to the full Board
- Evaluate Operator performance and report to the full board.
- Report local issues and trends to the full Board.
- Develop corrective actions to present to the full Board to remediate operator and/or delivery system deficiencies
- Review Resource Sharing Agreement Budgets
- Review contract-established performance metrics, ensure proper monitoring and corrective actions are being applied.
- Annually review PA CareerLink® Operator performance and make recommendations to the local board whether to extend contract or re-procure an operator.
- Work with procured PA CareerLink® Operator to ensure all necessary service providers and partners are in each center.

**Employer Relations:**

- Review performance of PA CareerLink® Business Service Teams to ensure that employer-related employer penetrations and connections are in line with performance level metrics negotiated and agreed upon between Commonwealth and SCWDB
- Work with procured PA CareerLink® Operator to ensure all necessary processes are in place in each center to provide highest-quality assistance to employers, including but not limited to job order assistance, assessment coordination, recruitments, and referrals.
- As business leaders, advocate for PA CareerLink® system and services with colleagues.

**Championing Board Activities:**

- Assists SCWDB in improving public understanding of the workforce development issues. Specifically focused on increasing employer interest and participation in the PA CareerLink® system.
- Assist staff with communications to provide information on programs and services.

**SCWDB Quality Assurance Committee**

**Description/Duties**

- Focus on Job Seekers, Service Providers, and training providers
- This committee assists the WDB with analyzing labor market information and High Priority Occupations.
- Committee will ensure that training providers are providing training to meet demand occupations. It is also responsible for developing opportunities for career pathways and incorporating industry partnerships in all system designs.
- Review performance in relation to job seekers and funded training in line with metrics agreed upon between Commonwealth and SCWDB.

## **General Tasks**

- Provide oversight and guidance of the Title I procurement process:
  - Define Deliverables
  - Work with the Local Board and staff to determine funding amounts and sources, if applicable
  - Oversee the Procurement timeline and process
  - Committee is solely responsible for evaluating operator proposals
  - Make award recommendations to the full Board
  - Oversee other procurement activities as necessary
- Analyze Title I performance in relation to SCWDB performance level metrics agreed upon between Commonwealth and SCWDB
- Committee will ensure that structure exists to improve the quality of the existing, potential, and future workforce in the Southwest Corner WDA through strategic partnerships.
- Review activities and reports from SCWDB monitor to ensure that proper oversight and reviews are being performed and if necessary, effective corrective actions are being implemented.

## **SCWDB Youth Council Committee**

### **Description/Duties**

This committee will support and advise the SCWDB in the establishment and delivery of youth services, as well as promote career pathways and tangible opportunities for youth.

### **General Tasks**

- Help to identify gaps in services and develop a strategy to use competitive selections or community partnerships to address the unmet needs of youth
- Coordinate youth policy
- Ensure quality services
- Review of leveraged financial and programmatic resources
- Provide oversight and guidance of youth program-specific procurement processes:
  - Define deliverables
  - Work with the Local Board and staff to determine funding amounts and sources, if applicable
  - Work with the Local Board and staff to determine the procurement method
  - Oversee the Procurement timeline and process
  - Work with the Local Board and staff to craft guidelines and scoring criteria for any youth-related RFPs to be put out for bid
  - Work with the Local Board and staff to craft responses to potential bidders' questions
  - Evaluate submitted bids/proposals
  - Recommend eligible youth services providers and/or administrators to the local board
  - Oversee other procurement activities, as necessary

In addition to these standing committees, there is an ad-hoc **Governance Committee** (a/k/a Nominating) is focused on best practices for board development, compliance to WDB bylaws,

recommending committee member appointments and removals, committee structure, assists in the review, updating and development of policies as needed. The Chairperson shall appoint a Nominating Committee prior to the last scheduled meeting of an even numbered calendar year to address the nomination of a slate of Officers and Executive Committee members and to specifically review the PA CareerLink® Partner member of the WDB. The Committee shall review the membership of the WDB in accordance with the requirements of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) not less than annually.

The Chair may appoint ad hoc committees to address any needed action or special project that is outside the scope of the committees identified above.

***Please see Attachment 2 for the organizational chart for the Southwest Corner Workforce Development Board System Organizational Chart.***

The individual responsible for ensuring equal employment opportunities and civil rights protection is:

**Ryan Russell**, Fiscal Specialist

Washington Greene Co. Job Training Agency, Inc.

351 West Beau Street, Suite 300, Washington, PA 15301

Phone: 724-229-5083 ext. 17

Email: [rrussell@washingtongreene.org](mailto:rrussell@washingtongreene.org)

While HUD itself is not a required partner, since 2009, WDA area has received Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funding to facilitate an Entrepreneurship Education Program for low-to-moderate income Beaver County residents. As a PA CareerLink® Beaver County partner, they facilitate a monthly Entrepreneurship Education 10-workshop series at the PA CareerLink® office. The SCWDB partners with the HUD directly and with their subcontractor to offer employment and training services through the Resident Opportunity and Self Sufficiency program (ROSS) in our PA CL's.

**3.2. Programs included in local workforce delivery system - **What programs are included in the local workforce delivery system and how will the local board work with the entities carrying out all workforce programs to support service alignment?****

*[20 CFR § 679.560(b)(1) and (b)(5)(iv). Reviewed by OS and PPCS]*

The Southwest Corner Workforce Development Board (SCWDB) is committed to aligning regional resources and fostering strategic partnerships among a wide range of stakeholders, including businesses, non-profit organizations, economic development providers, educational institutions, community-based organizations, and employers. These collaborations are essential for enhancing workforce inclusion, employability, and the educational and training levels of both the current and future workforce. By working together, we ensure that individuals gain the skills necessary to thrive in today's economy, while also meeting the evolving needs of local businesses. This collective effort enables us to create a robust workforce development ecosystem that is aligned with the priorities of the region.

The primary focus of our PA CareerLink® centers is to offer comprehensive workforce development services that are accessible to all—employers, job seekers, and incumbent workers. We aim to provide services that help individuals achieve economic self-sufficiency and ensure that the workforce is equipped with the skills and qualifications demanded by employers. These services are funded through

a combination of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds and other grant funding that the Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) applies for. The funding allows us to maintain and expand services that benefit both job seekers and employers in our region.

Our service delivery network is comprised of the PA CareerLink® Operator Consortium and a diverse group of PA CareerLink® partners, both mandated and voluntary. These partners play a critical role in enriching the services provided to job seekers and employers, ensuring that we meet a broad range of needs. Through collaboration, these partners contribute to a seamless system that delivers effective workforce development programs.

To further enhance the coordination and effectiveness of our workforce development efforts, the SCWDB has completed a decision-making strategy initiative to establish consistency with our Prioritized Goals across all four comprehensive PA CareerLink® locations. This initiative helps ensure that we maintain a unified approach to service delivery, creating standardized processes and practices that benefit both job seekers and employers across the region.

Title I follows the same procurement process as the Operator, as detailed in L3.1

***Please see Attachment 3 for the Local Workforce Development System Program Partner-Provider List.***

To ensure this happening, the SCWDB has completed a decision-making strategy initiative to establish consistency with Prioritized Goals across all four comprehensive PA CareerLink® Offices.

***The prioritized goals are as follows:***

<b>Priority</b>	<b>Prioritized Goals</b>
1	Development of Southwest Corner “PA CareerLink® Way” training model designated by the Commonwealth as best practice for the area. Develop on boarding “training session” that will cover all topics of MOU for new partners and partner employees.  Implement Employee Test or Survey focused on Knowledge of “PA CareerLink® Way” following orientation/training – All employees score at least 80% on the test.
#2	Ensure that our customers' job search needs or other individual needs for each visit are accomplished 100% of the time. Ensure that Needs Assessment Forms are completed thoroughly 100% of the Time. Provide Ideal Customer Experience 100% of the time: 1) Welcome 2) Questions and Direction 3) Meet with Advocate
#3	All staff will have a better understanding/knowledge of what partners have available. Increase partner participation, increase services to customers, & decrease duplication. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase referrals amongst Partners – through CRC &amp; CWDS referral Process</li> <li>▪ Accomplish Strategic Plan</li> <li>▪ Our jobs are easier – Better collaboration</li> <li>▪ We understand each other’s goals and help each other to achieve those common performance goals.</li> </ul> Increase Partner participation on Functional Teams, i.e., Employer Penetration, Job Seeker services and Business Services.
#4	Develop a tracking system to get results into the system. Increase collaboration among SCWDB BST’s and more consistency in the delivery of business services across SCWDA.  Increased footprint of SCWDB BST.
#5	Decide on structure and resources and align the purpose of our Business Services team. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Define and establish the goal of "Increasing Employer Penetration."</li> <li>▪ All Partners will enter all of their current employer customers in the database.</li> <li>▪ All Partners will participate in Employer Penetration by adding one person to the BST.</li> </ul>
#6	Develop/Improve Reentry Process. Frontline staff ( <i>and community partners</i> ) attended Reentry Employment Specialist (RES) Training and received certifications from the National Institute of Corrections. The training was hosted by the Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole

These goals were then prioritized and updated to identify the most pressing barriers and obstacles to overcome. This will serve as a solid foundation and template for the integration of services consistently in the four PA CareerLink® Offices.

The PA CareerLink® offices also work closely with off-site community partners including: Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development entities, PA Apprenticeship and Training Office, Washington Drug and Alcohol Commission, Inc. and County(s) Drug & Alcohol entities; Behavioral/Mental Health

entities; Industry Associations, local school districts, Local and State Correctional Facilities, Career & Technology Centers, and post-secondary training providers.

Universal access is granted to all customers entering the PA CareerLink® offices and in need of basic services. Services are tracked in the Commonwealth Workforce Development System or CWDS. An initial assessment, plan of action (individual employment plan - IEP) and recommendations are made for customers in need of career and/or training services (Based on the initial assessment of knowledge, skills, and abilities). If a customer cannot obtain employment through basic services, they are evaluated for training services. Training services may include skill training or on-the-job training. The customer is exited upon securing suitable employment or choosing to no longer participate in PA CareerLink® services, at which time, follow-up services are conducted for no less than twelve months.

Our PA CareerLink® staff members are also trained to assist employer customers with employment needs such as recruitment assistance, assessment and testing and labor market information. An area-wide Business Services Team with representation from each local site is planned and will be overseen by the SCWDB. To support the area-wide BST, the SCWDB plans to support this through available funding.

A Business Services Team exists in each PA CareerLink® office location. Services and trainings include:

- Adult education and literacy activities
- Customized training
- Entrepreneurial training
- Job readiness training
- Occupational skills training, including training for non-traditional employment
- On-the-Job Training Programs
- Skill upgrading and retraining
- Training programs operated by the private sector
- Training services that are developed and implemented by a partner agency

Through policy and partnership cooperation, a comprehensive plan to deliver services has been established. A referral method for customers exists between the PA CareerLink® Operators and the PA CareerLink® Partners. The primary principle of the referral system is the provision of a seamless delivery of service to both job seekers and employers.

**WIOA Adult:** Through a competitive bidding process, the WIOA Adult providers in the Southwest Corner are Job Training for Beaver County, Inc. and Southwest Training Services, Inc. authorized under WIOA, the Adult program is one of the WIOA Title I core programs designed to assist participants in obtaining employment. Priority of service is given to participants deemed to be recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient. Additionally, if the participant is also found to be an eligible Veteran or spouse of a Veteran, priority of service is also extended to the covered person. Through the Adult program two types of services are made available. The first type of services is known jointly as career services, and the second is training services. A participant who, after an interview, evaluation, or assessment, and career planning, is determined to be unlikely or unable to obtain or retain employment which leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from

previous employment, may be in need of training services. However, to participate in a training program, the participant must have the skills and qualifications to successfully participate in the selected training program and be otherwise eligible in accordance with the priority of service system.

### **Core Program Alignment**

Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Adult Basic Education, Wagner-Peyser and Vocational Rehabilitation – work in concert to effectively serve job seekers and employers. Strategies are informed by employer engagement and industry partnership efforts, as well as analysis of labor market information and other data, including data from the Center for Workforce Information & Analysis (CWIA), Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Census Bureau, Pennsylvania’s workforce development system of record, and other sources. While each program has clearly defined activities to carry out, as defined by law, it is through coordination and cooperation that optimum outcomes can be achieved. SCWDB’s alignment of core programs includes establishing effective sector strategies that combine guidance, education, training, and supportive services to prepare individuals for careers. Given individuals’ needs and career goals, the system helps to guide individuals to appropriate programs and services. SCWDB promotes co-enrollment when appropriate to align services and works closely with partners to prevent duplication of services among the core programs. The alignment of local goals and strategic planning with the Governor’s goals, as outlined in Pennsylvania’s WIOA Combined State Plan, is detailed in Section 2.1, including specifics on how they align with the local vision and objectives.

**WIOA Dislocated Worker:** Through a competitive bidding process, the WIOA Dislocated Worker providers in the Southwest Corner are Job Training for Beaver County, Inc. and Southwest Training Services, Inc. Dislocated Worker programs assist workers before or after layoff by identifying individual needs, and identification of those needs through basic skills training, on-the-job or customized training programs and apprenticeship opportunities to help facilitate rapid reemployment. Dislocated workers are triaged at the point of entry to identify potential program eligibility. This initial intake and triage allows for the development of a streamlined service strategy that maximizes the funding of all entities in carrying out core reemployment activities. Individuals that are deemed Trade eligible are co-enrolled under WIOA Dislocated Worker for case management and support services.

**WIOA Youth:** Currently, through a competitive bidding process, Job Training for Beaver County, Inc. and Southwest Training Services, Inc. were chosen as the WIOA Youth providers in the Southwest Corner. Youth programming is designed to serve eligible youth, ages 14-24, through a variety of services including the 14 WIOA elements (listed in section 4.4). The ultimate goal for youth participants is to enter into post-secondary education, enter the military, or obtain employment with a family-sustaining or self-sustaining wage. Youth program services are prioritized for out-of-school youth (OOSY) and youth with significant barriers to success, such as a disability, being a pregnant or parenting youth, or being subject to the juvenile/adult justice system. Partnership with various systems, including training providers, welfare, adult probation, community services, literacy, housing, health, and community-based organizations, offers the opportunity to streamline services and offer a full range of services and support that lead to academic and employment success.

**Wagner Peyser:** Wagner Peyser services are provided by the PA Department of Labor and Industries Bureau of Workforce Development & Partnerships (BWPO). Wagner-Peyser staff are co-located in the PA

CareerLink® centers and provide employment services to job seekers and employers. Services to job seekers include but are not limited to: needs/ interest assessments; job search and job placement assistance; career counseling; workshops; development of an individual employment plan; and case management.

Services to employers include, but are not limited to, assistance in utilizing the PA CareerLink® CWDS system, along with developing and posting job orders. In addition, referral of qualified job seekers to job openings and coordinating job fairs.

**Adult Education and Literacy:** Adult Education and Literacy programs in the Southwest Corner are provided by the following entities:

Class based instruction:

- PA CareerLink® Beaver County Provider: Literacy Pittsburgh
- PA CareerLink® Greene County Provider: Intermediate Unit #1
- PA CareerLink® Mon Valley Provider: Intermediate Unit #1
- PA CareerLink® Washington County Provider: Intermediate Unit #1
- Penn Commercial - Intermediate Unit 1

Tutoring:

- Beaver County Jail – Literacy Pittsburgh
- Community College of Beaver County- Literacy Pittsburgh
- Washington County – IU 1 in partnership with Literacy Council of SW PA

For adults who are deficient in basic skills, adult basic education is a critical partner in establishing career pathways. Funded programs provide a full range of adult basic education services from beginning level literacy through high adult secondary and transition activities to support college and career readiness, and where needed including English language acquisition activities. Programs provide basic skills instruction in the context of work readiness and incorporate workplace preparation activities and career awareness and planning in instruction and services.

Programs provide case management services to their students in two key areas:

- 1) helping students address barriers to participation in adult basic education programming. Case managers connect students with social services to address needs such as childcare, transportation, housing, health care and others (moved this sentence), *and*
- 2) helping students use employment and/or postsecondary education/training to prepare and plan for entry onto a career pathway. Case managers connect students with social services to address needs such as childcare, transportation, housing, health care and others. They also provide information on employment and postsecondary education/training opportunities and assist students in completing the necessary steps to take advantage of those opportunities.

**Vocational Rehabilitation:** The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) provides services to individuals with disabilities to help them secure and maintain employment and independence. These services are designed to ensure individuals with disabilities become qualified trained members of the workforce,



increasing regional workforce diversity and the overall number of skilled workers available to business in the region. Eligible OVR customers receive multiple, individualized services that may include but not be limited to: diagnostic, vocational counseling and guidance, vocational evaluation, restoration, training, and job placement.

Under WIOA, OVR has the ability to provide both eligible and potentially eligible in-school youth with disabilities with pre-employment transition services (PETS) to better prepare these students for life after high school. PETS services may include but not be limited to; paid work experiences, job shadowing, workplace readiness training, and career guidance. OVR also provides multiple services to the business community designed to assist businesses with onboarding pre-screened qualified employees with disabilities.

OVR staff are instrumental in informing and training PA CareerLink® staff on topics and updates pertinent to disability and employment issues. They also assist in providing input regarding accommodation needs, within our centers, for persons with disabilities. An “accommodation” line item is part of our PA CareerLink® centers’ Resource Sharing Agreements to ensure the availability of funds when a need is determined.

**3.3. Adult and Dislocated Worker training activities - Provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area.**

*[20 CFR § 679.560(b)(6). Reviewed by DHS, OS, and BWPO]*

The SCWDB MOU for PA CareerLink® partners emphasizes that the primary principle of the needs assessment tools and referral system is to provide integrated and seamless delivery of services to workers, job seekers, and employers. In order to facilitate such a system, Partners agree to:

- Familiarize themselves with the basic eligibility and participation requirements, as well as with the available services and benefits offered, for each of the Partners’ programs represented in the SCWDA PA CareerLink® system
- Develop materials summarizing their program requirements and making them available for partners and customers
- To utilize common intake, eligibility determination, assessment, and registration forms
- Familiarize themselves and utilize the SCWDB endorsed Needs Assessment Tools to ensure proper data collection from all potential SCWDB PA CareerLink® network customers
- Provide substantive referrals – in accordance with the SCWDB training and best practices – to customers who are eligible for supplemental and complementary services and benefits under partner programs
- Regularly evaluate ways to improve the referral process, including the use of customer satisfaction surveys
- Commit to robust and ongoing communication required for an effective referral process
- Commit to participating in entering services to the PA CareerLink® system of record (CWDS) in order to ensure proper documentation of customer contacts, updates, and outcomes, and
- Commit to actively follow up on the results of referrals and assuring that Partner resources are being leveraged at an optimal level
- Have staff trained and using PA CareerLink® (CWDS) system of record for referrals to partners and following up on referrals made to staff.

At the beginning of each program year, the SCWDB conducts a thorough review of the local high-priority occupation list. This review also includes a detailed evaluation of the training programs currently listed on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). The aim is to ensure that the local workforce development system remains responsive to the evolving needs of the labor market and addresses the skill gaps of the regional workforce.

During this review, if gaps in available training programs are identified—whether due to emerging industry needs, technological advancements, or shifts in the job market—SCWDB will identify appropriate local training providers and relevant programs to meet these demands. SCWDB collaborates with these providers to help them understand the application process for submitting new programs to the ETPL.

Once potential training providers and programs are identified, SCWDB provides targeted support to assist them in completing the necessary paperwork and meeting the required criteria for inclusion on the ETPL. This process ensures that the local training programs available to job seekers align with in-demand occupations, equipping individuals with the skills necessary to succeed in the workforce.

By facilitating the expansion of training options, the SCWDB aims to strengthen the local economy, enhance the employability of residents, and better match job seekers with employers seeking skilled workers. The identification of key discrepancies in employment and training activities is essential for ensuring that the Southwest Corner is able to meet the demands of current and future industries. The SCWDB's goal is to bridge gaps in skills, employment opportunities, and access to training opportunities. One key discrepancy identified is:

The Mismatch Between Job Seeker Skills and Employer Demand:

- The SCWDB will strive to implement Sector-Specific Training programs that align with the specific needs of growing industries in the region.
- The SCWDB will collaborate with local businesses and training providers to address skill gaps and ensure workers are job-ready upon completion.
- The SCWDB will continue to provide opportunities for current employees to upgrade their skills through workshops, Incumbent Worker Training, or apprenticeship programs.

The SCWDB recognizes WIOA's focus on serving individuals with barriers to employment and ensuring access on a priority basis regardless of funding levels. In accordance with WIOA priority of service requirements, the SCWDB's priority of service policy gives priority to public assistance recipients, low-income individuals and individuals who are basic skills deficient (including English language learners) when providing individualized career services and training services using WIOA title I Adult program funds. In addition, the SCWDB policy provides priority of service to veterans and their eligible spouses.

The SCWDB continually reviews local area labor force data to identify the need to prioritize additional groups. *For example*, in addition to the priority groups outlined above, the SCWDB recently discovered that many additional individuals are struggling to attain self-sufficiency. While giving first priority to the targeted groups as outlined above, the SCWDB revised its priority of service policy to also provide WIOA Adult Individualized career and training services to individuals whose annualized previous 6-months family income

does not exceed 200% of the Federal Poverty Income Level Guidelines published annually by the US Department of Labor. In addition, the SCWBD provides WIOA Adult work-based training service including registered apprenticeships, on-the-job training (OJT), and customized training to WIOA Adults who are either unemployed or employed at a level below this self-sufficiency income level.

**The Southwest Corner Quarterly Performance Reports for WIOA Adults-Dislocated Workers-Youth:** These reports show participants served and demographics. The SCWBD compares that data with the CWIA County Profiles to ensure we are effectively engaging the three priority groups and refine outreach and intake strategies accordingly.

The SCWBD utilizes strong partnerships and referral relationships with local community and faith-based organizations as well as the LWDA's network of public libraries to inform the public of **Pennsylvania's Priority of Service Policy**. These entities provide for an extension of services that all job seekers, including those in remote areas, may otherwise not have access to. Social media is also a key method of outreach. Information about workshops, individualized services, job leads, training opportunities, job fairs and much more is posted on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. Radio and digital outreach are also utilized to inform the public of available employment and training services and related events (ex. job fairs, reentry resource fairs, summer youth programming, etc.) and respective priority of service.

The SCWBD has developed outreach strategies with not only PA CareerLink® partners, but a multitude of additional community partners, including DHS programs, EARN, KEYS, ELECT programs and community and faith-based organizations, to ensure that those most in need are identified and served. These outreach strategies include referrals across this multitude of community partners. Leveraging these partner relationships enables the SCWBD to recruit priority populations in need of assistance. The SCWBD MOU for PA CareerLink® partners as well as MOUs with additional local partner organizations outline these referral processes and associate data sharing to capture and record characteristics of individuals served.

Individuals seeking WIOA services are informed about their priority of service through prominent signage and information displayed at each of the Southwest Corner Workforce Development Area's four PA CareerLink® centers including posters, brochures, and displays clearly outlining the eligibility criteria for priority service groups like low-income individuals, veterans, individuals with disabilities, and those lacking basic skills, ensuring everyone is aware of their potential priority status when accessing WIOA programs. During the intake process, staff assess an individual's eligibility and inform them if they qualify for priority service.

Every individual seeking service(s) receives an **initial assessment of skill levels** including literacy, numeracy, and English language proficiency, as well as aptitudes, abilities (including marketable education and job skills), skills gaps, supportive service needs, and barriers to participating in necessary employment and training services and obtaining/retaining self-sufficient employment.

In the Southwest Corner, Title I and Title II Providers provide a unified approach to assessment. The Title I and Title II Providers utilize the same reading and math assessments, including CASAS and TABE. This purposeful collaboration ensures consistency and coherence, allowing for a more seamless integration of

services and a better understanding of student progress, retesting, and needs. By aligning their assessments, both providers can more effectively track student achievement and support educational success.

Upon completion of the assessment process outlined above, the appropriate combination of services needed to address barriers identified through the assessment process is identified and incorporated into an individual employment plan (IEP). The IEP is mutually developed and agreed upon by both staff and the job seeker.

The SCWDB provides services to the spectrum of persons entitled to priority of service, including English language learners (ELLs) through the following strategies:

- **Language Support:** For ELLs, services include translation assistance, bilingual staff, and/or language-specific workshops to ensure that they fully understand the services available to them.
- **Interpreter Services:** Offers access to interpreters and bilingual support materials, either in-person or via remote technology, to bridge any language gaps.
- **Language Instruction:** Provides access to language development programs, such as ESL (English as a Second Language) classes through our partnerships with our Title II providers and the Literacy Council of Southwestern PA.
- **Cultural Competency:** Facilitates staff training sessions on cultural competencies to ensure they understand the specific challenges faced by ELLs, such as cultural differences and language barriers, and how to navigate these issues respectfully.
- **Veterans:** Specialized counseling, workshops, job fairs, or training that addresses veterans' unique challenges and skills.
- **Low-Income and Disadvantaged Individuals:** Access to subsidized programs, financial aid, and career training that may be necessary to overcome barriers to employment.
- **Individuals with Disabilities:** Accessibility modifications through our partnership with OVR, adaptive technology, and inclusive training programs to ensure equal access to opportunities.
- **Individualized Assessment:** When individuals enter the system, a thorough needs assessment identifies their specific barriers (e.g., language proficiency, job skills, educational background).
- **Referral Systems:** For those who may need additional support, there is a clear pathway to other services, such as language courses, housing assistance, or job readiness training.

By combining these strategies, the spectrum of persons entitled to priority services are supported inclusively, ensuring that all individuals, including English language learners, receive the additional resources they need to successfully access services and opportunities.

Addressing the needs of individuals with barriers to employment requires a multi-faceted approach, particularly in ensuring that they receive tailored career planning services. Below is a comprehensive framework for how the SCWDB addresses these needs, including how appropriate career planning services will be provided or arranged through collaboration when necessary.

- **Identifying Barriers:** The first step is to assess and identify the specific barriers that individuals face, such as:

- **Lack of Skills or Education:** Low educational attainment, limited technical or vocational skills.
- **Disability:** Physical or mental health conditions that affect the ability to work.
- **Substance Abuse or Legal History:** Previous incarceration or substance use issues.
- **Childcare or Transportation Issues:** Limited access to reliable childcare or transportation options.
- **Language Barriers:** For non-native speakers, this might include limited English proficiency.
- **Long-Term Unemployment:** Individuals who have been out of the workforce for extended periods may need more intensive support.
- **Personalized Career Counseling:**
  - Every individual receives one-on-one career counseling to explore their strengths, interests, and aspirations.
  - Case Managers are trained to assess barriers and help participants identify realistic and achievable career goals.
  - Discussions cover transferable skills, job readiness, career development pathways, and long-term employment stability.
- **Assessment Tools:** Use of standardized assessment tools (e.g., skill inventories, interest inventories, and aptitude tests) to guide the career planning process.
- **Job Readiness and Skill Development:**
  - **Workshops:** Each of the SCWDB's PA CareerLink® offices offer group workshops on resume writing, job interview techniques, and soft skills development.
  - **Training Programs:** Provides access to skills training including classroom, on-the-job training, registered apprenticeships, GED programs, vocational certifications, and apprenticeships.

#### **Specific Populations:**

- **For Individuals with Disabilities, the SCWDB**
  - Collaborates with disability services and vocational rehabilitation organizations to help individuals access appropriate services.
- **For Veterans:**
  - Collaborates with veteran-specific agencies, to ensure they receive the appropriate career resources by tailoring career planning to address the unique needs of veterans, including translating military experience into civilian job qualifications by accessing the CWDS Military Occupation Translator.
- **For Individuals with Substance Abuse or Legal Barriers:**
  - Works with local community organizations that offer counseling and rehabilitation services.
  - Provides wraparound services such as legal assistance, drug treatment programs, and access to second-chance employment initiatives.
  - The SCWDB also leverages other funding sources including Youth Reentry grants and Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) grants targeted to providing specialized employment and training support to these populations.
- **For English Language Learners (ELLs):**
  - Partners with local ESL programs including Title II (Literacy Pittsburgh and Intermediate Unit 1) and the Literacy Council of Southwestern PA to provide language and workforce development training.

- Title I Provider provides access to bilingual frontline staff to assist the ELL population in utilizing Title I and PA CareerLink® services.
- **Referral Systems:** Has incorporated a strong referral system to ensure individuals are connected with the appropriate agency or program based on their specific barriers. By utilizing the MOU used for each of the SCWDB’s PA CareerLink® centers, as well as the internal referral module in CWDS.
- **Individualized Case Management:** For individuals with significant barriers, case managers are assigned to provide ongoing support, check-in regularly, and adjust the career plan (IEP; ISS) as needed.
- **Follow-Up Services:** Case Management staff provides 12 months of follow-up support after initial placement into employment, ensuring individuals retain employment.
- **Support Services:** Connects individuals to essential support services to reduce external barriers that may impede their success in the workforce.

To effectively serve individuals entitled to priority of service, staff are well-trained to recognize the eligibility criteria and are equipped to respond appropriately to their needs. Training ensures that staff understand the challenges and requirements of each priority group and are capable of providing relevant services. Here’s how staff training is structured:

- Staff receive clear training on how to effectively implement WIOA priority of service provisions as outlined in TEGL 7-20, as well as the SCWDB’s local Priority of Service policy.
- The SCWDB ensures staff are familiar with the policies and regulations that govern priority of service in workforce programs (e.g., WIOA – Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Veterans Priority of Service). This includes the right to receive services first or with priority in cases where demand for services exceeds available funds.
- Staff are trained on using assessment tools, including basic skill level assessments, to identify which individuals are eligible for priority of service. These tools help staff to assess clients’ barriers to employment, skill levels, and specific service needs.

### **Utilization of PA CareerLink® CWDS Functionality for Intake, Eligibility Determination, and Registration**

To streamline service delivery and ensure consistency in data collection, the Southwest Corner leverages the full functionality of the Commonwealth Workforce Development System (CWDS). This includes but is not limited to, digital intake, participant registration, and eligibility determination for WIOA Title I and related programs. The Commonwealth Workforce Development System (CWDS) is the system-of-record for tracking and recording services, activities, and outcomes for programs funded under Titles I, III, and IV and allows for dual and multi-program enrollment.

The Digital Intake Form is the initial step in the process to enroll customers and serves as a central, user-friendly process for collecting preliminary participant information. On a customer's first point of contact at the PA CareerLink®, they are directed to complete the Digital Intake Form via the

CWDS system. This form captures essential demographic, employment, and service need information, which then facilitates early identification of potential barriers to employment and helps guide appropriate referrals.

PA CareerLink® staff members review the submitted intake data in real time within CWDS, allowing for timely outreach and engagement. The information is then used to triage participants for further assessment or immediate referral to suitable services. The customer is then instructed to complete a registration on CWDS.

Once an individual expresses interest in WIOA Title I services they schedule an appointment to meet with a case manager to review the registration information and to discuss employment and/or training services.

Title I Eligibility Specialists meet with job seekers onsite at PA CareerLink® that same day. Documents are collected to determine whether these individuals are eligible to receive WIOA services and which funding stream they are eligible for, including whether or not they meet the SCWDB's Priority of Service Policy and/or Veteran's Priority of Service Policy for covered veterans and eligible spouses.

The Southwest Corner WDA validates eligibility of individuals through review and retention of required documents outlined in TEGL 19-16 including, but not limited to, birth certificates, social security cards, selective service verification, public assistance and/or food stamp COMPASS screens, wage records, proof of number in family, unemployment compensation records, and a DD214 if a veteran. In cases where the lack of hard copy verification would impede delivery of services, telephone and/or self-attestation is used as specified by program statutes. Prior to using self-attestation, SCWDB programs will first confirm that other sources of documentation are unable to be obtained. In addition, staff are instructed to engage both telephone and self-attestation as a method of last resort when usual paths to verify eligibility have been exhausted.

Each applicant must accept the Civil Rights statement in CWDS and will be presented with a copy of their civil rights and sign a Statement of Receipt of Applicant/Participant Rights. They will also be presented and sign the Complaint and Hearing Procedures and the release of information form.

Staff initiate the CWDS WIOA Application within the system. This application includes detailed questions regarding income, employment status, public assistance, and other eligibility criteria. All required documentation is uploaded and stored securely within CWDS. The applicant and staff person must sign the application online. The file will have a Supervisory Review where all documents are confirmed in CWDS.

Case Management Staff are responsible for recording the appropriate data into the Commonwealth Workforce Development System (CWDS). CWDS functionality ensures that eligibility determination is aligned with state and federal guidelines. Once eligibility is confirmed, staff can proceed with entering WIOA services directly into the system - assessments, case notes, and progress tracking are managed within CWDS, enabling a comprehensive and continuous record of the participant's journey through the workforce system. All information is securely stored in the participant's electronic case file within CWDS, allowing for ongoing service tracking and case notes. Individual Employment Plans (IEPs) are created in CWDS and updated throughout participation.

Co-enrollment Process. Co-enrollment across programs is a local priority and strategies for improving these processes are on-going. Staff are trained to assist individuals in accessing all available programs within the PA CareerLink®.

The SCWDB has implemented the following process to transfer program funds between Adult and DW programs (as needed) to help ensure sufficient training opportunities for eligible participants. The Southwest Corner Workforce Development Board (SCWDB) holds quarterly meetings with contractors to review and discuss grant expenditures, ensuring that resources are allocated appropriately to meet the needs of both Adult and Dislocated Workers (A and DW). These regular meetings provide an opportunity for contractors to report on their spending and assess whether adjustments are needed to better serve these two groups of workers, particularly in response to shifting demands or challenges that may arise throughout the year.

In situations where funding levels need to be adjusted, such as when there is a need to transfer funds between the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs, the SCWDB carefully evaluates how much funding can be reallocated while ensuring that both programs continue to effectively serve their respective clients. The SCWDB takes into account the number of individuals being served, the availability of resources, and the goals of each program to determine an appropriate transfer amount.

Once this amount is determined, the proposed fund transfer is taken to the Chief Local Elected Official (CLEO) board and the Workforce Development Board (WDB) for review and approval. This approval process ensures transparency and accountability, and that all stakeholders are informed and aligned in their decision-making. By taking this collaborative approach, the SCWDB can maintain flexibility in responding to changing workforce needs while ensuring that resources are used efficiently to maximize impact.

The Southwest Corner Workforce Development Board (SCWDB) is dedicated to closing the gap between job seeker supply and employer demand by conducting thorough labor market assessments. These assessments are based on both job seeker needs and employer requirements, ensuring that workforce development efforts are tailored to address the most pressing skills gaps and employment opportunities in our region. By continually evaluating labor market trends, the SCWDB ensures that its programs and services remain aligned with the needs of employers and job seekers alike. This ongoing assessment is a



critical part of the Board's strategy for maintaining a responsive and adaptive workforce development system. The SCWDB reviews performance data from various programs and services, particularly focusing on key performance measures such as job placement rates, skill development, and the ability of job seekers to secure sustainable employment. By analyzing these outcomes, the Board can assess the effectiveness of current programs and identify areas for improvement.

In collaboration with the One-Stop Operator, PA CareerLink® Partners, and other community stakeholders, the SCWDB reviews the services provided to target groups, including individuals with barriers to employment such as those with disabilities, veterans, long-term unemployed individuals, and others facing significant challenges in the labor market. This collaborative review process ensures that the workforce development system is providing the necessary support and services to meet the needs of all job seekers, especially those who face the greatest barriers. Based on the findings of these reviews, the SCWDB will adjust its priorities and service offerings to ensure that they align with the current and future needs of employers and job seekers. This might include revising training programs, offering additional resources, or adapting service delivery models to better serve specific populations. The Board's ongoing commitment to continuous improvement will guide the procurement of new services, ensuring that workforce development efforts remain relevant, effective, and responsive to emerging trends in the labor market. By staying proactive in evaluating labor market trends and adjusting to meet the changing needs of both job seekers and employers, the SCWDB is building a dynamic workforce system that fosters long-term economic growth and success for both individuals and businesses in the region.

Adult and Dislocated Worker employment and training activities in Southwest Corner Workforce Development Area include:

### **Career Services**

- Provision of Labor Market Information (LMI), including job vacancies, skills gaps, High Priority Occupations, Career Pathways
- Outreach and Orientation
- Intake and eligibility determination
- Assessment
- Referrals to appropriate services
- Performance and cost information for training programs
- Follow-up services
- Development of an Individual Employment Plan (IEP)
- Career Planning and Counseling
- Short-Term prevocational services and workshops
- Internships, work experiences, and transitional jobs
- Connections to apprenticeships
- Job Location Services

### **Training Services**

- Individual Training Accounts

- On the Job Training
- Incumbent Worker Training
- Transitional Employment
- Registered Apprenticeships
- Customized Job Training

### **Other Services**

- Adult Basic Literacy Education services through Title II providers, Intermediate Unit #1, and Literacy Pittsburgh
- Financial Counseling and other Supportive Services
- Grant-funded services for specific populations, including National Emergency Grants and programs focuses on the opioid crisis in local communities
- SkillUP™ PA - Southwest Corner has incorporated SkillUP PA via the local area's online portal and provides workshops and presentations on this free online training opportunity.

Activities are assessed in a variety of ways, through the local oversight and monitoring process, via the collection and review of job seeker surveys, and through contractor performance reporting. The oversight and monitoring process includes programmatic and file reviews to ensure compliance with contractual and programmatic requirements. Surveys and performance reports give a narrative and numerical view of the programming, to determine areas of success and areas of improvement.

The SCWDB reviews and discusses performance reports in detail throughout the program year. The appropriate committee reviews workforce programming proposals submitted annually, providing scores and feedback, determining any gaps in service that need to be addressed, and ultimately recommending program and provider selections to the Board as a whole.

The Board utilizes data and anecdotal evidence to determine the need for future programming. The specific data on the long-term unemployed is reviewed upon availability, and the SCWDB will meet with partners and other community groups as necessary.

The SCWDB is fortunate that the majority of the post-secondary schools in the workforce area have training programs that are State approved for the Eligible Training Provider List. The SCWDA Title I providers use the ETPL list to write ITAs, to develop Career Pathways and support apprenticeships on the Local Training Provider List.

The SCWDB follows the state's **Priority of Service Policy, WSP 04-2022**, as follows;

### **Basic Career Services**

Basic Career Services will remain available for all individuals regardless of eligibility requirements as long as funding is available to support such services.

### **Individualized Career Services and Training Services**

Priority of service shall be given to Title I Adult-Eligible Participants, in the following order, as long as funding is available to support such services:

1. Veterans and spouses who fall into one or more of the following categories:

- Recipient of public assistance
- Other low-income individuals
- Individuals who are basic-skills deficient
- Underemployed and low-income

2. All other persons who fall into one or more of the following categories:

- Recipient of public assistance
- Other low-income individuals
- Individuals who are basic-skills deficient
- Underemployed and low-income

3. Veterans and spouses who do not fall into the above categories

4. All other Title-I Adult Eligible Participants who do not fall into the above categories

The SCWDB has been prioritizing older and out-of-school youth for a number of years, before the implementation of WIOA emphasized this population. The specialized services provided by the programs procured ensure quality services for youth throughout the county.

**3.4. Youth workforce investment activities - Provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of youth workforce investment activities in the local area.**

*[20 CFR § 679.560(b)(8). Reviewed by DHS and BWPO-Youth]*

Our WDB's **Youth Council Committee** is continually discussing best practices, unique programming ideas and streamlining referral methods and service provision. The Youth Council Committee is made up of SCWDB Board members and community leaders with expertise or interest in Youth activities. This committee represents a wide cross section of HPO employers and service providers. These individuals bring expertise related to the recruiting, training and employment of youth, and are dedicated to ensuring a youth program that is inclusive, successful, and leads to expanded opportunity for area youth.

The SCWDB builds relationships with employers who are willing to give younger adults opportunities. We do this by work-based learning, apprenticeships and internships that allow OSY to gain hands-on experience. We also collaborate with stakeholders such as local governments nonprofits community groups to ensure coordinated approach to OSY services. Provide a supportive environment which includes mental health services, case management, and support systems OSY navigate barriers like substance abuse mental health challenges and criminal records.

Developing strong career pathways for youth is essential for helping them transition successfully from education to the workforce. The SCWDB utilizes a combination of education, mentorship, skill-building,

and partnerships with local industries. The SCWDB's key steps to creating effective career pathways for youth include:

- Introducing youth to a wide range of careers by incorporating career exploration activities such as partnering with K-12 to facilitate career days, guest speakers, and industry tours. The SCWDB also utilizes virtual reality career exploration headsets which enable students to explore and try different careers while eliminating transportation barriers.
- Providing opportunities for internships, job shadowing, volunteer work, or part-time jobs. These experiences help youth understand the realities of different professions and gain first-hand knowledge.
- Utilizing tools like career interest surveys and personality tests to help youth understand their strengths and interests, guiding them towards suitable career options.
- Partnering with our local career and technical education centers which provide training programs that teach both academic knowledge and practical skills for specific industries, such as healthcare, information technology, or manufacturing.
- Establishing partnerships with local businesses and industries to help K-12 align education programs with real-world job market demands.
- Collaborating with businesses and the PA ATO to create pre-apprenticeship/registered apprenticeship and internship opportunities that allow students to gain practical experience and build professional networks.
- Providing workplace readiness instruction to teach students about professional behavior, workplace expectations, and the importance of punctuality, responsibility, and attitude in building a successful career.
- Teaching students how to write resumes, prepare for interviews, and search for job opportunities effectively.
- Helping students identify clear pathways to postsecondary education, whether that's college, community college, vocational school, or certification programs.
- Partnering with PHEAA and community foundations to provide assistance with scholarships, grants, and other financial aid options to ensure that cost is not a barrier to postsecondary education or training.
- Ensuring that career pathways are inclusive of all youth, regardless of their background, socioeconomic status, or ability.
- Engaging parents/guardians in the career development process.

By incorporating these elements, we are able to create well-rounded and accessible career pathways that support youth in making informed decisions about their futures, gaining the necessary skills for success, and navigating their chosen career paths with confidence.

The SCWDB places emphasis on the need to provide services to older youth by aligning our workforce development programs with the needs of this demographic including:

- Developing programs that address the specific challenges and opportunities faced by older youth including completing education, entering the workforce, or gaining work experience.
- Partnering with educational institutions, vocational training centers, and employers to create pathways that help older youth acquire the skills necessary for in-demand occupations.
- Recognizing that older youth may face barriers like transportation, childcare, or financial instability, the SCWDB offers supportive services to address these challenges including stipends, transportation assistance, and connections to housing and childcare resources, ensuring that youth can successfully participate in workforce development programs.
- Targeting outreach and recruitment efforts to ensure that older youth are aware of the services available to them under WIOA. They may focus on individuals who are out of school, in foster care, or who have disabilities, ensuring that these populations receive the resources they need to succeed.
- Collaborating with other community organizations, businesses, and training providers to create a comprehensive support network.
- Prioritizing opportunities for work-based learning, such as internships, apprenticeships, and on-the-job training.
- **Eligibility for TANF YDP and the criteria needed to qualify for this program.**

The Southwest Corner providers provide a comprehensive, systemic approach to the year-round youth program that addresses WIOA and TANF administrative needs, as well as program activities that support the policies and priorities of the Southwest Corner Workforce Development Board.

**TANF Youth** – To be considered a qualified participant for the TANF Youth Development Program (**TANF YDP**), an individual must:

- Be between the ages of 12 (or having completed the 5<sup>th</sup> grade) and 24 years;
- Have her/his identity verified through SSN;
- Be a Pennsylvania resident;
- Be a U.S. citizen or a TANF-eligible non-citizen;
- Have a household monthly gross earned income that does not exceed 235% of the FPIG
- Have the willingness to engage in the program's activities

The SCWDB prioritizes increasing co-enrollment of youth into partner programming through established relationships and referral processes with PA CareerLink® partners and other community partners. SCWDB providers help guide the youth through the co-enrollment process and monitor progress towards their goals and adjust the co-enrollment plan as needed. The SCWDB's Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) for each SCWDB PA CareerLink® center defines the roles and responsibilities of each partner, ensuring alignment with the participant's service strategy. Weekly PA CareerLink® staff and partner meetings as well as Local Management Committee (LMC) meetings ensure communication among all partners.

- **Co-enrollment for TANF YDP and TANF EARN participants.**

For TANF Youth Development Program (YDP) and TANF EARN participants, co-enrollment means participants are enrolled in TANF programs and WIOA, allowing access to a broader range of services and resources to improve employment outcomes.

The coordination and organization of services is provided for all enrolled individuals under WIOA and TANF programs. Through the development of an Individual Service Strategy (ISS) and/or an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) and the assessment of skill levels, the Southwest Corner providers work together with various partners, to provide the most appropriate services. Our providers focus on the coordination of service delivery through case management along with WIOA programming elements.

- **Services for co-enrolled TANF YDP and TANF EARN participants.**

The services provided under these two programs focus on empowering participants, (youth and adults), to become self-sufficient through a variety of means. Services provided to each group include:

**TANF Youth Development Program (YDP) Participants:** TANF YDP targets youth, between the ages of 14 to 24, who are part of low-income families. Services in the Southwest Corner WDA under TANF YDP are designed to promote education, work readiness, career exploration, and life skills and include:

- **Education Support:** Assistance with high school completion, GED preparation, or other educational goals to help youth gain necessary credentials.
- **Work Experience and Internships:** Opportunities for youth to gain job experience through internships, pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeships, and work-based learning.
- **Career Counseling and Job Readiness Training:** Workshops and activities are provided on resume building, interview preparation, professionalism, mock interviews, and other career-related skills.
- **Life Skills Development:** Teaching essential life skills, such as financial literacy, communication skills, time management skills, etc.
- **Mentorship and Guidance:** Support is provided to help youth develop a sense of responsibility and self-esteem.

**TANF Employment, Advancement, and Retention Network (EARN) Participants:**

The TANF EARN program focuses on supporting adults, primarily those who are parents or guardians, with a focus on employment readiness, career advancement, and long-term self-sufficiency. Services in the Southwest Corner WDA for EARN participants include:

- **Employment Services:** Assistance with job search, resume writing, job placement, and job retention services to help participants secure and keep a job.
- **Career Counseling and Advancement:** One-on-one counseling to help participants identify career paths, including education or training opportunities, in order to advance in a current career or transition into a new career.
- **Training and Education:** Access to occupational training through the use of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) or other credentialing opportunities that increase employability and potential for higher-paying jobs.

- **Childcare and Transportation Assistance:** Financial support for childcare and transportation services to remove barriers to employment, enabling them to focus on their careers or education.
- **Financial Literacy and Budgeting:** Workshops or one-on-one assistance in learning how to manage finances, budget, and save money for long-term financial stability.
- **Job Retention Support:** Ongoing support to help participants retain their jobs once employed, with access to problem-solving assistance, mental health support, and other resources when needed.

The SCWDB incorporates the following **14 WIOA Youth Program Elements** into our TANF YDP:

1. Tutoring, study skills training, and instruction leading to secondary school completion, including dropout prevention strategies
2. Alternative secondary school offerings or dropout recovery services
3. Paid and unpaid work experiences with an academic and occupational education component.
4. Occupational skills training, with a focus on recognized postsecondary credentials and in-demand occupations
5. Leadership development activities, e.g., community service, peer-centered activities
6. Supportive services
7. Adult mentoring
8. Follow-up services for at least 12-months after program completion
9. Comprehensive guidance and counseling, including drug and alcohol abuse counseling
10. Integrated education and training for a specific occupation or cluster
11. Financial literacy education
12. Entrepreneurial skills training
13. Services that provide labor market information re: in-demand industry sectors and occupations
14. Postsecondary preparation and transition activities

SCWDB oversees the EARN Program for all counties and all EARN program staff is located in our PA CareerLink® offices; therefore, enabling them to participate in DST and/or LMC, which includes EARN, KEYS and Elect Programs meetings and regularly seeking out age eligible EARN clients to co-enroll in skills trainings and paid work experiences. Eligible EARN clients are co-enrolled in the TANF Youth Program for training and work experience.

The SCWDB contracts with youth Providers and they are responsible for outreach/intake and delivery of services to TANF participants. Our recruitment methods include engagement with our Local County Assistance offices, in our 3-county area, to coordinate referrals of TANF eligible youth. Direct mail notifications are sent to eligible youth informing them about available services. Youth Program flyers are shared with EARN Staff and clients, as well as CAO case workers and management. Eligible EARN clients

are co-enrolled in the TANF Youth Program for training and work experience. All partners working out of the PA CareerLink® offices are actively referring age-appropriate clients to the Youth Program. Staff also facilitate outreach sessions at public housing sites.

The SCWDB prioritizes work experiences for TANF youth, enhanced by high-quality academic and workforce development programming by:

- Designing programming that provides a seamless connection between classroom learning and hands-on work experiences.
- Providing structured work experiences such as internships, apprenticeships, or job shadowing, where youth can apply their academic learning in real-world settings.
- Offering Workplace Readiness Training in resume writing, interview techniques, professional communication, and other job readiness skills.
- Leveraging employer partnerships to create pathways to meaningful work experiences for TANF youth.
- Tailoring work experience opportunities to individual career interests through assessments and career planning, ensuring that youth are placed in opportunities that align with their interests and aptitudes.
- Providing opportunities for youth to explore different industries and careers through virtual career exploration, job shadowing and informational interviews with professionals in various fields.
- Ensuring that youth participating in work experiences are receiving academic support that enhances their ability to succeed in both their academic and workforce endeavors by coordinating with school counselors and Title II providers.
- Providing supportive services needed for youth to participate in programming and/or enter post-secondary education or employment.
- Providing case management support to ensure youth are meeting academic goals, adhering to work expectations, and addressing any personal challenges they face.

- **TANF YDP services differ from your Adult EARN services.**

While both TANF YDP and TANF EARN promote self-sufficiency among low-income individuals, the services are tailored to different populations with different needs. The TANF YDP serves youth (ages 14-24), helping them prepare for education and career success and TANF EARN serves adult TANF recipients, *typically parents or guardians*, focusing on immediate employment and long-term career growth. The differences between the two programs and services include:

**Focus of Services**

- TANF YDP’s focus is to support education, skill-building, and career exploration for youth.
- TANF EARN’s focus is on employment, job retention, and financial stability for adults.

**Education and Career Readiness**

- TANF YDP programming provides academic support, including tutoring, GED preparation, and assistance with postsecondary education enrollment.
- TANF EARN offers vocational training and workforce development to help individuals (adults) gain employment in high-demand industries.

**Work Experience and Job Training**



- TANF YDP program includes work experiences, internships, apprenticeships, and volunteerism work to introduce youth to career pathways.
- TANF EARN program services include job placement services, work experience programs, and employer connections for full-time employment.

**Life Skills and Supportive Services**

- TANF YDP programs focus on financial literacy, communication skills, time management, and goal-setting.
- TANF EARN programs assist with childcare, transportation, and job retention to ensure employment stability.

**Case Management Approach**

- TANF YDP case management includes mentorship and guidance while encouraging personal and professional growth.
- TANF EARN case management provides intensive case management to help adults overcome employment barriers, such as lack of education or work history.

Primary Goals for TANF YDP is education & career exploration while the primary goals for TANF EARN is to achieve immediate employment & career growth.

The SCWDB aligns its hourly wage rates with the Governor’s priorities as defined in Executive Order 2016-02 Amended.

The Southwest Corner Workforce Development Board is committed to optimizing regional resources and fostering collaboration across a diverse network of stakeholders. This includes businesses, nonprofit organizations, economic development agencies, educational institutions, community-based groups, and employers. By working in partnership, these stakeholders are able to strengthen and expand the skills necessary for promoting workforce inclusion, increasing employability, and improving educational and training opportunities for both the current and future workforce.

To achieve this collective vision, the Workforce Development Board ensures that all resources and programs are fully aligned with federal and state regulations, guaranteeing compliance, and maximizing the impact of every initiative. The collaborative efforts focus on creating a sustainable and adaptable workforce that meets the evolving demands of the region’s economy.

**LWDB staff member responsible for implementation, tracking, and reporting TANF YDF activities and expenditures:**

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**TANF 2 Gen Youth Development Program-Youth Provider Sites in the LWDA: Designated TANF Provider Contact Person(s)**

**Rich Strother**, Executive Director

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The SCWDB, in conjunction with Department of Human Services, is responsible for monitoring the local providers for youth and TANF Youth programming. The Southwest Corner Workforce Development Board (SCWDB) is committed to ensuring that all funding and program requirements under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) are met, particularly those related to youth services. One of the key requirements is that 75% of local WIOA youth funds must be allocated to serving out-of-school youth (OOSY), a priority that the SCWDB takes seriously to ensure that youth who face significant barriers to employment and education have access to the resources and opportunities they need. In addition to this funding requirement, the SCWDB ensures that work-based learning opportunities are provided for both in-school youth (ISY) and out-of-school youth (OOSY), with a minimum of 20% of youth funds allocated to work-based learning experiences. These experiences—such as internships, apprenticeships, and job shadowing—are invaluable for youth to gain hands-on experience, develop critical work skills, and build professional networks, all of which enhance their employability after completing their education or training. The SCWDB is dedicated to serving all youth in the region, regardless of their status as in-school or out-of-school youth. The Board follows established guidelines to ensure that youth participants have access to all 14 of the WIOA youth program elements. These elements include services such as tutoring, mentorship, financial literacy education, career counseling, leadership development, and more. The specific services provided to each youth participant are determined based on their individual needs and goals, ensuring that each young person receives a personalized approach to workforce development. By adhering to these guidelines and funding requirements, the SCWDB ensures that all youth—whether in school or out of school—are supported in their journey toward educational attainment, career development, and long-term success. The Board’s commitment to these standards guarantees that youth have the resources they need to overcome barriers and thrive in today’s competitive job market. They ensure that the requirement for 75% of local WIOA youth funds to be spent on out-of-school youth is met and that work-based learning for both in-school (ISY) and out-of-school youth (OOSY) meets the 20% minimum expenditure.

The SCWDB applies the following criteria for youth requiring additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment:

- Having little or no successful work experience (OOSY - one of the following)
  - Checking WEX on PA CareerLink® online system resume - having less than 9 months of unsubsidized WEX
  - On resume - no WEX
  - On resume - no job for more than 2 months at a time

- Long and unsuccessful work search (OOSY)
  - Can show that they have been actively searching for work for at least 2 months – produce a work search record or printout from PA CareerLink® online system
- Little, if any, exposure to successfully employed adults (ISY/OOSY)
  - Through self-certification that there have not been employed adults in their household. Should indicate a reason like family lived on public assistance or parent/s on disability or unable to work
- Being at risk of dropping out of school (ISY)
  - Guidance counselor could provide verification
- Having poor school attendance (ISY)
  - Guidance counselor could provide verification
- Behavioral problems at school (ISY)
  - Guidance counselor could provide verification
- Having significant personal or family problems affecting daily functions (ISY/OOSY)
  - Self-certification indicating the problems
  - Social Service letter
  - Guidance counselor letter for ISY
- Having limited English proficiency (ISY/OOSY)
  - If English is not their first language, may have to use self-certification
  - For OOSY, is within the category low income & Basic skills deficient or English language learner
- Having limited access to reliable transportation
  - Only if WIOA services can eliminate
- Aging out of foster care
  - Now considered a barrier in itself

As an area, the 5% limitation is not an issue and is not technically utilized by the Title I Providers. If and/or when utilized, criteria for inclusion under this category would be verified by the Case Manager and clearly documented in the individual's case file to demonstrate that it is reasonable, quantifiable, and evidence based. Enrollments under this category will be approved on a case-by-case basis by the Title I Supervisor. This important step will ensure that documentation is complete and that the 5% limitation is not exceeded. If it would be utilized, we would monitor by accessing Ad-Hoc Report 061 which will list youth enrolled in the 5% category. This report is made part of our Title I's annual audit and shared with the SCWDB.

Collaboration with our Office(s) of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) to provide services to individuals with disabilities. These services are designed to ensure individuals with disabilities become qualified trained members of the workforce, increasing regional workforce diversity and the overall number of skilled workers available to business in the region. Eligible OVR customers receive multiple, individualized services that may include but not be limited to: diagnostic, vocational counseling and guidance, vocational evaluation, restoration, training, and job placement.

Under WIOA, OVR has the ability to provide both eligible and potentially eligible in-school youth with disabilities with pre-employment transition services (PETS) to better prepare these students for life after high school. PETS services may include but not be limited to; paid work experiences, job shadowing, workplace readiness training, and career guidance. OVR also provides multiple services to the business community designed to assist businesses with onboarding pre-screened qualified employees with disabilities.

The SCWDB contracted providers will be members of Transition Councils for each county, working hand-in-hand with Guidance Counselors and Transition Coordinators to develop cooperative and collaborative projects and initiatives to benefit our area's youth. Our youth service providers are engaged in serving all youth, regardless of barrier, to the best of their abilities and have excellent working relationships and referral mechanisms in place with multiple youth-serving organizations to meet the specific needs of the youth we serve.

As a core partner, OVR has the ability to collaborate with the local Workforce Development Board to provide in-school youth with disabilities opportunities to participate in pre-employment transition services (PETS) to better prepare these students for life after high school. These skill gains will help to meet one of the intentions of WIOA, to better prepare in-school youth with disabilities to graduate high school and work toward meaningful careers.

Through resource leveraging with other youth development programs, SCWDB is able to effectively support and fill gaps in the family, educational, and social frameworks that are often missing in the lives of at-risk youth. Ensuring youth receive access to all 14 WIOA Youth Program Elements, the WDB partners with a number of local entities such as:

- All Southwest Corner Workforce Development Area School Districts
- Career and Technology Centers
- Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
- County/State/Federal funded organizations including Housing Authority(s) of Beaver, Washington, and Greene counties
- Local county assistance offices
- Local municipalities and townships
- Community Based Organizations such as Title II providers, alternative schools, and county juvenile justice systems

The linkages afforded through the SCWDB PA CareerLink® system partners further assure coordination and elimination of duplicate services. Our local SCWDB PA CareerLink® centers facilitate onsite contact with the above-mentioned organizations. This contact provides opportunities for youth referral and ongoing case management interaction.

**14 Program elements include:**

1. **Tutoring, study skills training, instruction and evidenced based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary diploma or its recognized equivalent or a recognized postsecondary credential:** Our availability of services will include assessment

and testing to identify need, referral to online tutorial assistance, adult literacy organization, remediation, or GED instruction.

2. **Alternative secondary school or dropout recovery services:** - Our youth service providers' partner with agencies that receive funds through Job Corps, Carl Perkins, Adult Literacy, etc. to support alternative secondary school and dropout recovery services.
3. **Paid and unpaid work experiences** that have both academic and occupational education components (which may include summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year, pre-apprenticeship programs, internships and job shadowing, and on-the-job training opportunities): Summer employment opportunities linked to academic and occupational learning.
  - Our summer youth employment program, an integral component of our year-round program, offers participants the opportunity to gain hands-on work experience, interact with a positive peer group, avoid "learning loss" associated with inactivity during summer months, and develop "soft" skills (e.g., promptness, reliability) that are valued by employers.
  - In addition to the summer youth employment program, we offer opportunities for youth to participate in work experiences, internships, and job shadowing throughout the year for the purposes of career exploration and skill development. Work experiences take place in the private (for-profit or non-profit) or public sector. WIOA and TANF funds may be used to pay wages and related benefits as appropriate, according to the objective assessment and individual service strategy.
  - Collaboration with our local Office(s) of Vocational Rehabilitation ensures individuals with disabilities have access to a comprehensive range of services to eliminate employment barriers.
  - Collaboration with the juvenile justice system - Our WIOA Title I Providers in the Southwest Corner have coordinated and implemented Juvenile Restitution programs (voluntary program – This agreement will be agreed upon between our Title I providers, Probation offices, youth, and their parents.) with their respective County Juvenile Probation Departments and County Clerk of Courts offices. Our Title I Providers secure a work experience opportunity paying youth an hourly rate. Placement for each youth is done by considering the youth's skills, residency, and available transportation in relation to the job site. Upon referral and agreement with the County(s) Juvenile Probation Department, the youth and their parents, a restitution plan is developed. This program has enabled the youth to provide a service to their community, work to pay off restitution fees, and still receive a paycheck for the work they do. The program has also provided the youth with an adult mentor that will be a role model and provide positive reinforcement.
4. **Occupational skills training** (which shall include priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that are aligned with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area involved): Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster: We combine GED preparation with paid work experience opportunities to establish a career ladder and strengthen linkage to employment.

5. **Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster:** Currently, our Title I Providers provide an industry recognized credentialing opportunity with the National Retail Federation Customer Service certification program. Both Title I programs are certified testing centers with certified proctors on staff. Classroom instructional support will be provided for out-of-school enrolled youth - Instruction will be done Monday through Friday on a regularly scheduled basis. This credential meets the criteria for common performance measures. Also included with credentialing are youth that attend a post-secondary training as well as on-the-job training experiences. These individuals will earn recognized credentials after successful program completion.
6. **Financial literacy education:** Financial literacy education is incorporated into the work experience orientation program with speakers from area banks. Virtual financial literacy workshops have also been developed. Our Title I Provider has created a YouTube page that has the workshops available to anyone that has access to the Internet. This has been shared with our local districts and CTCs. In addition, the library has online financial literacy programs and periodic group training.
7. **Leadership development opportunities** (which may include community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors, as appropriate): We provide opportunities for youth to develop leadership skills through the following activities: community and service learning projects; peer mentoring and tutoring; organizational and team work training, including team leadership training; training in decision-making -including determining priorities; citizenship; and life skills training (e.g., parenting, work behavior, budgeting); training in positive social behaviors through self-esteem building, cultural diversity training, and work simulation activities, etc. ) Virtual and in-person workshops have been and will continue to be provided to our area's youth for leadership and professional development purposes.
8. **Follow-Up services** for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation: Our youth service providers remain in contact with participants for at least twelve months after they complete the program to make sure their transition to work or post-secondary education or training is smooth. Follow up services are tailored to individual needs. Examples include interventions to address work-related problems, assistance in advancing or securing a better job, career development and further education, work-related peer support groups, and adult mentoring. A Youth Retention Specialist is on our Title I provider's staff, dedicated to follow up services and successful transition following exit of the program.
9. **Comprehensive guidance and counseling** - We recognize the pressures that face teenagers today, so we partner with other agencies to provide the services they need to help them make good choices and protect their health and safety. Individual needs are ascertained during the initial intake and throughout the program. Our Title I staff have youth program case managers that serve as single points of contact for youth engaged in our programs. Partnerships exist with OVR, drug & alcohol, housing, domestic violence, juvenile probation, and other agencies.
10. **Entrepreneurial skills training:** The SCWDB encourages our Title I providers to utilize their network to refer youth to entrepreneurial programs. One such program is the Junior Achievement of Western PA "JA Be Entrepreneurial" program. This introduces students to the essential components of a practical business

plan, and challenges them to start an entrepreneurial venture while still in high school. Make referrals to and support Junior Achievement for Western PA entrepreneurial programs within local school districts. This curriculum allows for the students to:

- Recognize characteristics and practices of successful entrepreneurs.
- Evaluate an entrepreneurial idea based on product, customer, and competitive advantage criteria.
- Demonstrate business-planning skills for venture start-up, promotions, financing, management, and ethical decision-making.

The SCWDB's Title I Youth providers facilitate summer camps and other work experiences in order to expose youth to the skills required to successfully create and operate a small business.

We will also utilize the expertise of the Small Business Administration (SBA), the University of Pittsburgh Small Business Development Center. All three of our counties operate small business incubators that are connected to the SCWDB to provide opportunities for our local area youth to learn more about becoming an entrepreneur.

**11. Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local areas, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services:**

The SCWDB uses data provided by CWIA for high priority occupations, in-demand industries, and forecasting reports that drive our local economy. One way that the SCWDB delivers Career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services is by incorporating cutting-edge technology, such as Virtual Reality (VR) career exploration, into their offerings. Using Oculus headsets, these VR simulations provide an immersive, hands-on training experience that allows trainees to explore various industries and occupations in a way that traditional methods cannot replicate. Through this innovative approach, trainees can engage in realistic, interactive simulations that replicate real-world tasks and environments, giving them a taste of the work, they might pursue in the future. These VR-based simulations are guided by a digital coach, who provides personalized instruction, ensuring that each participant receives expert guidance tailored to their specific needs. The digital coach not only helps learners navigate the simulation but also offers feedback based on their actions, which is essential for skill development and improvement. The immersive nature of the VR experience also allows trainees to receive immediate, data-driven performance assessments. By tracking actions and evaluating the quality of work, the system helps students identify areas for improvement, enabling them to refine their skills in real time. This method of training is particularly valuable for industries where hands-on experience is critical but traditional training methods may be costly or difficult to implement.

**12. Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training:** SCWDB makes available resources to prepare participants for Four-Year Colleges, Community Colleges, Trade Schools and other opportunities through tutoring, study skills training and instruction leading to completion of secondary school, including drop-out prevention strategies.

**13. Adult mentoring:** Based on assessment, adult mentoring would be available to youth through online tutorials, literacy organizations and job coaching opportunities.

14. **Support Services:** Support Services are an ongoing service utilized to assist and enable program participation or to secure or retain employment. Our providers will continue to provide supportive services when deemed necessary and not available through partnering agencies.

**3.5. Coordination between Title I and Title II - How will the local board coordinate WIOA title I workforce investment activities with adult education literacy activities under WIOA Title II?**

*[20 CFR § 679.560(b)(12). Reviewed by PDE-ABE]*

The SCWDB coordinates WIOA Title I workforce activities with Title II adult education and literacy activities by implementing the following strategies that promote seamless service delivery and meet the diverse needs of participants:

- Having established partnerships with adult education providers (Title II) including MOUs, ensuring that these entities are involved in the local workforce development planning process.
- Engaging both, Title I and Title II providers in local workforce plan development and when appropriate, co-enrolling participants.
- Our four PA CareerLink® centers serve as a central location where both Title I and Title II services are delivered. This helps participants access educational services (like adult basic education, GED prep, ESL) while also receiving workforce services (such as job search assistance, skills training, and placement).
- Title II Adult Education providers collaborate on the local plan via in-person meetings, and email follow-up.

Our Southwest Corner Workforce Development Board meets with our local area’s Adult Basic Education (ABE) partners at the quarterly WDB meeting at the request of the providers. The Title II providers are regular attenders to the quarterly meetings and one representative currently serves on the SCWDB. The providers prepare information for the board regarding their delivery of services, collaboration between each other, the PA CareerLink®, the Title I Providers, and the SCWDB. The Board will provide any suggestions as necessary and vote to recommend the plan as presented to the PA Department of Education (PDE) for approval. The discussion and vote are recorded in the SCWDB minutes.

A Title II representative is also a member of our workforce development board. Title II provider presents their plans to the workforce board, where it is out-lined, then discussed and voted on, to adopt or change, as needed.

**How Title I services and other PA CareerLink® services are provided to participants in Title II programs.**

**Title I Services for Title II Participants** – The Southwest Corner Title I providers offer employment and training services to individuals, including those in Title II programs, through PA CareerLink®. These services include:

**A. Career Services (*Basic & Individualized*)**

- Job Search Assistance: Help with job searches, resume writing, and interview preparation.
- Labor Market Information: Guidance on in-demand jobs and career pathways.
- Skills Assessment: Identifying strengths and areas for career development.



- Career Counseling: One-on-one assistance to develop employment goals and also conduct job searches.

#### **B. Training Services**

- Occupational Skills Training: Participants can access vocational training, apprenticeships, digital literacy services, or certificate programs in HPO fields.
- Work-Based Learning & Internships: Title II participants can engage in work-based learning experiences to gain workplace skills.

#### **C. Supportive Services**

- Transportation Assistance: Helps participants attend training and employment programs.
- Work Readiness & Soft Skills Training: Includes financial literacy, communication, and job retention skills.

### **PA CareerLink® Services for Title II Participants**

The Southwest Corner Title II providers, *Literacy Pittsburgh and Intermediate Unit #1*, are co-located within each of our 4 PA CareerLink® offices. Our PA CareerLink® offices provide comprehensive employment and workforce development resources to individuals in Title II programs, ensuring that they have access to job opportunities and career development and career advancement. These services include:

#### **A. Co-Enrollment with WIOA Programs**

- Title II participants can be co-enrolled in WIOA Title I programs for job placement and training programs.

#### **B. Workforce Preparation & Employer Connections**

- Job Fairs & Employer Networking: Opportunities to meet with hiring employers and explore career options.
- Workshops: Training in resume development, digital literacy, and job interview techniques.

#### **C. Integrated Education & Training (IET)**

- Many Title II programs combine literacy instruction with workforce skills training, allowing participants to improve basic skills while gaining job-specific training.

#### **D. Referral & Collaboration with Local Partners**

- PA CareerLink® partner referrals are made via the CWDS online referral system as well as internal and external referrals. Our Title I and Adult education providers, community colleges, and employers work together to connect Title II participants with education and career opportunities.

By integrating our area's Title I and PA CareerLink® services, Title II participants can build literacy and job skills simultaneously, enhancing their employment prospects and long-term career success.

### **3.6. Wagner-Peyser Act - Describe the plans, assurances, and strategies for maximizing coordination, improving service delivery, and avoiding duplication of Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.) services and other services provided through the one-stop service delivery system.**

*[20 CFR § 679.560(b)(11). Reviewed by BWPO]*

The SWDB's approach to workforce development efforts have always been centered on quality customer service to job seekers and employers, the leveraging of various resources and funding streams to eliminate duplication of services, collaboration with other partner agencies, and support for a service delivery structure which maximizes access to all customers. We have collaborated with other workforce areas in our region and worked to support regional approaches to the workforce needs of Southwestern Pennsylvania.

The SCWDB, through the PA CareerLink® Operator Consortium, ensures that a comprehensive cross-training and development plan is established for the PA CareerLink® sites and staff. This plan includes formal "PA CareerLink® Way" cross-training for all new and existing PA CareerLink® staff.

This cross-training results in seamless delivery of comprehensive services and appropriate exchange of information while avoiding duplication. Our PA CareerLink® centers utilize a customer flow model based on customer needs. The customer flow procedure incorporates a method to identify customer needs upon entry and provides immediate engagement and connectivity to services during the customer's first visit. Our customer flow model includes a cohort of individuals that are served jointly by WIOA, Wagner-Peyser, and other partner staff, specifically at basic service level.

Co-enrollment of participants across programs and funding streams, when appropriate, encourages the coordination and leveraging of resources among partners and facilities. Co-enrollment is a strategic necessity in the context of limited resources. PA CareerLink® partner staff work with co-enrolled participants across programs and funding streams when appropriate and coordinate as needed to assure that the participant receives the services that are needed.

Our provision of services to job seekers allows for customer choice, through ITA and OJT services, and maximizes the use of DOL resources to support training that meets the needs of both job seekers occupational goals, and the job skills needed by employers in the labor markets we serve.

WIOA and BWPO staff work closely together to provide the basic career services needed by most customers and make the most efficient use of the staffing resources available in our WDA. At the same time, this allows us to maintain a high level of funding devoted to training services in our counties. The effectiveness of this approach is also reflected in the long and consistent record of meeting common performance measures.

Our service delivery structure allows for flexibility in strategies, access to a wide range of services, and the ability to share and effectively utilize the resources available in the Southwest Corner WDA.

**3.7. Core program facilitation -How will the local board work with the entities carrying out core programs to:**

- **Expand access to employment, training, education, supportive services, and co-enrollment for eligible individuals, particularly individuals with barriers to employment.**
- **Facilitate the development of Career Pathways in core programs (specify on-ramps from adult education).**
- **Improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential (industry-recognized certifications or portable, and stackable certifications).**

*[20 CFR § 679.560(b)(2). Reviewed by OS, BWPO, OVR, and ATO]*

Title II programs participate in quarterly partner meetings to share information and make referrals for co-enrollment.

Title II providers include information on Title I programming at new student orientation and Title II case managers refer completed students into Title I programs that lead to a recognized postsecondary credential.

Title II program regularly cross-train with PA CareerLink® staff on eligibility requirements for participation in Title II programming. Title II has staff onsite and available to answer question and take referrals. They also provide direct access via telephone and email as options as an option for those who prefer this method. Title II staff regularly participate in PA CareerLink® activities and promote their programs in the centers.

Literacy Pittsburgh works closely with the Title I and PA CareerLink®, cross-referring students. Many success stories come from this partnership. Adult education students are included in PA CareerLink® Resources Fairs and Hiring Events. Coordination is also done with EARN programs across all three counties.

Strategies to promote and develop **Career Pathways** in adult education programs aim to create clear and accessible routes to employment and training opportunities. These pathways support individuals by equipping them with skills that align with market demands and enhance their job prospects. Below are several key strategies used to promote and develop these pathways:

1. **Industry Partnerships:** Collaborating with local industries, employers, and workforce development organizations ensures that training programs are aligned with current job market needs. These partnerships help to create targeted curricula and offer direct pathways to employment opportunities.
2. **Credentialing Programs:** Offering certifications and credentials that are recognized by employers helps individuals gain concrete qualifications. These can include industry-specific certificates, licenses, or digital badges that demonstrate proficiency and enhance employability.
3. **Work-Based Learning:** Incorporating internships, apprenticeships, or on-the-job training as part of adult education programs provides practical experience and strengthens the connection between education and real-world employment. This hands-on experience can be crucial for building confidence and skills.
4. **Career Counseling and Advising:** Providing one-on-one career counseling and advising helps adult learners understand their career options, set realistic goals, and develop personalized plans for achieving them. These services also help individuals navigate the job market and connect with potential employers.
5. **Stackable Credentials:** Designing programs with stackable credentials allows learners to gradually build their qualifications. They can earn foundational certifications and continue their education to achieve more advanced qualifications over time, making the path to employment more flexible and attainable.
6. **Support Services:** Offering additional support, such as tutoring, childcare, and transportation assistance, helps remove barriers that may prevent adult learners from succeeding in education and transitioning to employment. These services ensure that learners can stay on track and complete their programs.
7. **Outreach and Recruitment:** Actively promoting the available career pathways to adult learners through community outreach, workshops, and informational sessions increases awareness and participation in the programs. This can include targeted outreach to underrepresented groups or individuals in need of upskilling.

8. **Technology Integration:** Incorporating online learning platforms and digital tools enables adult learners to access training and educational resources more flexibly. This is especially beneficial for working adults or those with family responsibilities who may not have the time or ability to attend in-person classes.
9. **Employer Engagement:** Encouraging employers to participate in the educational process by providing input on curriculum design, offering job placements, or sponsoring training programs or work experiences helps ensure that the training programs are aligned with the needs of the workforce.

“Eligibility to receive services under WIOA Title IV may only be determined by a qualified OVR Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor. Vocational rehabilitation counselors determine eligibility for and work with customers to develop an Individual Plan for Employment, providing services necessary to meet their specific vocational goal. As a core partner, OVR provides Vocational Rehabilitation services for people with disabilities. Eligible OVR customers receive multiple services that may include but not be limited to, diagnostic, vocational counseling and guidance, vocational evaluation, restoration, training, job placement and pre-employment training services for eligible and potentially eligible high school students with disabilities. These individualized services are designed to prepare OVR customers to become qualified trained members of the workforce. OVR recognizes the value of customer access to various services and resources and encourages co-enrollment across programs as appropriate.”

Expanding access to employment, training, education, supportive services, and co-enrollment for eligible individuals, especially those facing barriers to employment, is essential to promoting economic mobility and reducing disparities within the Southwest Corner.

Our PA CareerLink® centers gather information on the populations they serve. We utilize this data to ensure that we provide priority of service as outlined in the Governor’s State Plan, with priority given to veterans, recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, ex-offenders, and individuals who are basic skills deficient. Those found to be

- 1) Recipients of public assistance,
- 2) Other low-income individuals, and
- 3) Individuals who are basic skills deficient will obtain priority of service status. In addition, Veterans will also obtain priority of service status. Priority of service allows eligible individuals to take precedence over non-covered persons in obtaining services.

As per federal guidance in Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 03-15, Veterans and eligible spouses continue to receive priority of service for all DOL-funded job training programs, which include WIOA programs. Veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of public assistance, low income, or basic skills deficient will receive first priority. Non-veterans who are recipients of public assistance, low-income or basic skills deficient will receive second priority. Veterans and eligible spouses not included in priority groups will receive third priority and all other individuals will receive last priority.

The SCWDA will continue to collaborate with all of our many partnering organizations to help individuals with barriers to employment access the essential resources (in addition to utilizing WIOA funds allocated to

the region to serve those with barriers to employment) necessary to overcome the barriers to assure that training and placement needs are met with quality employment outcomes.

We will continue to collaborate with the Department of Human Services (DHS) to connect our workforce development services to meet the needs of the individuals we serve. Our EARN providers and TANF Youth Providers and DHS utilize data sharing practices to identify and serve individuals who are dually enrolled.

The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) provides services to individuals with disabilities to help them secure and maintain employment and independence. These services are designed to ensure individuals with disabilities become qualified trained members of the workforce, increasing regional workforce diversity and the overall number of skilled workers available to business in the region. Eligible OVR customers receive multiple, individualized services that may include but not be limited to; diagnostic, vocational counseling and guidance, vocational evaluation, restoration, training, and job placement. Under WIOA, OVR has the ability to provide both eligible and potentially eligible in-school youth with disabilities with pre-employment transition services (PETS) to better prepare these students for life after high school. PETS services may include but not be limited to; paid work experiences, job shadowing, workplace readiness training, and career guidance. OVR also provides multiple services to the business community designed to assist businesses with onboarding pre-screened qualified employees with disabilities.

PA CareerLink® centers are overseen by the competitively-procured One-Stop Operator Consortium. Our PA CareerLink® partners assist in the collaboration and provision of services to the special populations that each partner serves. The region's PA CareerLink® center staff will collect information to identify clients with barriers to employment.

The SCWDA's PA CareerLink® partnering agencies and organizations (only listed are RSA and Community Partnerships):

**WIOA Title I - Adult/Dislocated Worker/Youth Programs**

- Job Training for Beaver County, Inc.
- Southwest Training Services, Inc.

**WIOA Title II - Adult Basic Literacy Education Programs**

- Intermediate Unit I
- Literacy Pittsburgh

**WIOA Title III - Wagner Peyser**

- Bureau of Workforce Partnership & Operations
- Trade Act
- Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG)

**US DOL Veterans**

**WIOA Title IV Program –OVR and contracted programs serving persons with disabilities:**

- Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Transitional Employment Consultants (TEC)
- Mon Valley Initiative

**WIOA Title V Programs**

- Beaver County Area Agency on Aging
- Southwestern PA Area Agency on Aging
- Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh

**Department of Human Services - County Assistance Offices****EARN Program Providers**

- Job Training for Beaver County, Inc.
- Washington Greene County Job Training Agency, Inc.

**Unemployment Compensation****TANF Youth Program Providers**

- Job Training for Beaver County, Inc.
- Southwest Training Services, Inc.

**Worker's Compensation Office of Adjudication****Community Development Block Grant and Housing/Homeless Programs**

- Blueprints, Inc.
- Housing Authority of Beaver County

**Career and Technology Centers**

- Beaver County Career & Technology Center
- Greene County Career & Technology Center
- Mon Valley Career & Technology Center
- Western Area Career & Technology Center

**Community Colleges**

- Community College of Beaver County

**Colleges and Universities**

- Penn West University – California
- Rosedale Technical College

**Business & Technical Schools**

- All State Career School
- Douglas Education Center
- Penn Commercial Business & Technical School

**Employers/Staffing Agencies**

- Resource MFG
- Express Employment Pros

and, many other agencies, county and community-based organizations and training providers throughout the region. The following information details the largest population(s) of individuals in the region with **barriers to employment.**

Populations with barriers remain a particular focus of the Southwest Corner workforce system and the WIOA services delivered through the region’s PA CareerLink® offices. **These barriers include:**

**Poverty** - Among the factors that often contribute to poverty are unemployment and under-employment. Many people live in poverty because they are unable to find a job that pays a living wage or to find a job at all. In the Southwest Corner the poverty rate was 9.2% in 2019, a slight decrease from 2019 (9.4%). Unemployment in this group dropped slightly from 23.2% in 2019 to 22.6% in 2022. A more substantial 7.4% drop occurred over the prior five years, showing a continued but stabilizing long-term increase of the working poor in the region.<sup>22</sup>

**Disabilities** - Those with disabilities face a number of barriers to employment, including individual and systemic perceptions and prejudice that make employers hesitant to hire people with disabilities. In the Southwest Corner, individuals with disabilities accounted for 12.2% of the population in 2022, a 3.4% decrease from 2019. The Labor Force Participation Rate is only 42.8% for individuals for disabilities, about half of that for individuals with no disabilities (83.5%). Likewise, the Unemployment Rate for individuals with disabilities is almost three times as high (12.2%) as those without disabilities (4.6%).<sup>23</sup> This combination of barriers makes this population particularly hard to serve.

**Ability to Speak English** - The inability to speak English while living in the U.S. can be a barrier to employment but is not particularly prevalent in the Southwest Corner region. In 2022 there were 3,474 individuals ages 5 and over “who speak English less than very well”, a 6.6% increase over the previous 3 years. However, these individuals account for less than 1% of the region’s population.<sup>24</sup>

**Single Parent Households** – Single parent households struggle with childcare more often than multiple-parent households. During 2019 there were 11,979 single parent households with children under 18 years of age (31% of all family households), a 4.3% decrease since 2019.

**Citizenship and Language Proficiency** - The U.S. Census Bureau reports that there are 2,879<sup>25</sup> individuals living in the region who are not U.S. Citizens. Similarly, the U.S. Census Bureau reports that there are 2,207<sup>26</sup> individuals in the region who speak English less than “Very Well”. The SCWDA notes that lack of English proficiency does not necessarily prevent immigrant workers from obtaining employment, but those who are proficient boast higher income at all levels of educational attainment.

SCWDB will promote career pathways, bringing employers and educators together as partners, one way we do this is Business Educator Breakfast Roundtables. Employers must become full partners in career pathways, engaging in work-based learning in multiple ways to connect to classroom learning. SCWDB will also engage employers on a cross-sector basis to identify occupational skills that apply to multiple sectors, and to build entry skills that can be applied to high-demand, high-quality jobs in multiple sectors.

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<sup>22</sup> Source: 2018-2022 (“2022”) 5-Year American Community Survey

<sup>23</sup> Source: 2018-2022 (“2022”) 5-Year American Community Survey

<sup>24</sup> Source: 2018-2022 (“2022”) 5-Year American Community Surveys

<sup>25</sup> Source: 2023: ACS 1-Year Estimates Detailed Tables 51601

<sup>26</sup> Source: 2023: ACS 1-Year Estimates Detailed Tables B05001

SCWDB has a menu of training options that may be used, where appropriate, to support registered apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship. These may include:

- a) Individual Training Accounts (ITAs): ITA funds can be used to support the related technical instruction (RTI) component of an RA program, including tuition, fees, books, equipment, and other training-related costs.
- b) On-the-Job Training (OJT): OJT contracts with employers may be able to support on-the-job learning component of RA through wage reimbursements.
- c) Incumbent Worker Training (IWT): in accordance with WIOA regulations, IWT contracts with employers can support the cost of training and upskilling for existing employees who have been employed by the same business for a period of six months or longer.
- d) Customized Job Training (CJT): CJT may be able to assist RAs by supporting the cost of training designed to meet the needs of one or more employers.
- e) Supportive Services: Eligible individuals may be able to receive additional services that help them participate in a registered apprenticeship or pre-apprenticeship, which may include fees, books, supplies, childcare, transportation, tools, and uniforms.

**3.8. ITA Accounts - How will training services be provided using ITAs, fund programs of study, or through the use of contracts for training services that fund work-based trainings.**

*[20 CFR 679.560(b)(18). Reviewed by ATO, OS, and BWPO]*

The Southwest Corner WDB ensures that the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) will be available for PA CareerLink® staff members who are responsible for assessing individuals for training programs and referring them to appropriate high-quality training. The SCWDB will follow the state's petitioning process to possibly add additional training programs to the list that may not be included. We will continue to work with Registered Apprenticeship programs and encourage inclusion on the ETPL. To ensure quality of the ETPL, only programs that meet the minimum performance measures related to program completion, job placement rates, median earnings, and credential attainment of their students will be approved for inclusion.

We will continue to work together, with employers and training providers, in the development of appropriate and industry relevant training opportunities. Southwest Corner Workforce Development Area current training cap is \$8,000. This cap is used for training costs associated with ITAs, OJTs, and other individual training activities. This cap amount was developed with input from the local training providers and is revisited as necessary. SCWDB feels that this amount is still viable according to the cost associated with many of the training programs currently on the ETPL.

The SCWDB uses its ITA process to cover costs associated with apprenticeships. A registered apprenticeship is a formalized, structured training program that combines on-the-job learning with related practical and technical classroom instruction in a highly skilled occupation. Like other training programs, apprenticeships must be included on the State-managed Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). The ITAs will fully explain the



details of the training, including length of training, mandatory training hours, training locations, and cost of training. Also, the process will have to identify key elements for WIOA performance, including start dates, exit/entered employment dates, participant performance, documentation requirements, industry credentials and reporting. SCWDB is working with the Director of the Apprenticeship and Training Office, the PA Department of Labor & Industry, local registered apprenticeship training providers, and Title I providers in order to create a fully functional policy that will be another avenue for individuals to receive valuable training under WIOA. Customized job training (CJT) programs are an additional training option designed to meet the needs of a specific employer or group of employers. Employers are typically reimbursed 50% of the cost of training for CJT. SCWDB may contract directly with a training provider to facilitate training of a cohort of individuals for jobs in in-demand sectors or occupations.

Information related to training options, available programs, training research, LMI, career outlook, and cost of training is discussed with each interested participant. Also discussed is the makeup of the course so that the participant will be making an informed decision on training possibilities and enrollment. This must be done in order to provide the best pathway to successful training completion and the eventual result of quality employment.

The Southwest Corner WDB will approve training providers on the approved Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) that are offering training programs aligned with state and region in-demand occupations and sectors.

Providers of training are required to submit, as part of their application, performance and outcomes on the training programs/courses submitted, while ensuring individuals with barriers to employment are served.

The Eligible Training Provider List is used to provide our job seeker customers with information regarding the types of training opportunities available, both in our workforce area and also in other parts of the state, as well as out-of-state training opportunities. Information is also available regarding occupational skills that are in demand within the State and within our WDA, and other performance related data that assists them in making informed training choices.

In order to be added to the statewide Eligible Training Provider List, a provider must complete and sign a Training Provider Assurances and Authorization form and submit, to our SCWDB, the following information:

- A one-page outline of the current procedure for obtaining performance levels;
- Documentation verifying the performance information;
- The most recent school catalog or outline/curriculum for each program;
- Grievance procedures;
- A copy of its state license;
- Form PDE 3808 outlining courses approved by the PA Dept. of Education/ Private Licensed School Act (if applicable);
- A copy of its current accreditation certificate (if applicable); and
- Financial statements, an annual report or other evidence that sound fiscal practices are employed.

Programs must train students for "high priority occupations" in our area, as defined by the state. Training providers requesting assistance in completing the application process are assigned a "point of contact," a staff person, employed by one of our WIOA Title I providers. Training providers are required to retain documentation to support their applications for a period of three years.

Our staff reviews applications to make sure they are accurate and complete prior to forwarding them to the state for final approval. If we reject an application, we notify the training provider within thirty days. Training providers have thirty days to appeal our decision.

The statewide training providers/programs (ETPL) list is updated when new programs are approved. Providers must also submit Annual Performance data in addition to adding programs for each new PY. Individual training accounts can be applied only towards programs on this list. Training providers must retain records concerning participant enrollment and performance throughout the period of participation plus a minimum period of three years following the participant's completion or termination.

To maintain their status on the approved statewide list, training providers must meet performance expectations and supply factual information/statistics on the ETPL which is designed to help eligible participants make informed choices. Performance measure indicators, for both the "All Students" and the "WIOA Participants" populations, include:

- Program completion rate;
- Entry into unsubsidized employment at second quarter after exit;
- Entry into unsubsidized employment at fourth quarter after exit;
- Median earnings during second quarter after exit; and
- Attainment of post-secondary credentials.

Training providers with poor performance are required to develop a corrective action plan, in consultation with our staff and approved by the state, which identifies the deficiency and outline specific steps to be taken to correct it.

**3.9. Coordination with education programs - How will the local board coordinate relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities with workforce investment activities to support strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of service(s).**

*[20 CFR § 679.560(b)(9). Reviewed by ATO, PDE-ABE, and PDE-CTE]*

Title II participants are invited to and participate in programming offered through the local boards and PA CareerLink®.

The SCWDB Board utilizes a common support platform to guide the services and activities of the workforce development system. The Board works collaboratively with the appropriate post-secondary institutions to guide and advise on postsecondary education offerings. The Board also provides labor market information, and related information to secondary education institutions and the additional post-secondary institutions throughout the county. Our SCWDB Director, Title I Providers and PA CareerLink® Site Administrators are members of our area's Career & Technology Centers' advisory boards, as well as our Youth Providers being

members of county(s) transition councils and closely involved in Individual Education Plan (IEP) meetings. SCWDB also serves on workforce advisory committees for local K-12 educational institutions.

The increased focus on business engagement under WIOA legislation has enabled the board to develop new programs and enhance existing programs. This includes a greater use of certifications and credentials that are critical to Southwest Corner and the Southwest PA Region employers, as well as, increasing the suite of Work Based Learning Opportunities available to both the education and employer sectors. The Board expects the work-based learning to be a coordinated and measurable bridge from education to employment. The measurement and evaluation will allow the most effective programs to be maintained and duplicative and/or underperforming programs to be eliminated.

Industry Partnerships are another example of how the SCWDB's business engagement supports coordination between secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities with workforce investment activities.

- Establishing and/or expanding registered apprenticeship training programs as a way of creating a pipeline of skilled workers.
- Upskilling the current workforce to remain competitive and promote from within to replace the most highly skilled workers aging out of the workforce.
- Promoting family sustaining manufacturing career opportunities to youth, parents, and educators through school programs, internships, and industry tours. One partnership launched a website for job opportunities. This website is a valuable tool to inform youth, parents, and educators about local manufacturing facilities, their products/services, career and training opportunities offered, and willingness to participate in career awareness activities.

SCWDB has representation from our local Career & Technology Centers (CTCs) at every PA CareerLink® center. Each of our CTCs has workforce development representation on their advisory boards and occupational advisory committees. CTCs are included in Industry Partnerships. The Local Board encourages CTCs to add their programs to the ETPL list and provide HPO information for our local area in order to include CTE as an option for WIOA funds/ITAs. WDB Director is working closely with Apprenticeship groups and linking them with CTCs to create a pipeline of students for Apprenticeship programs. When planning or developing processes to address the Comprehensive Needs Assessment in the CTE system, SCWDB will lean on these leaders and partners to assist in directing SCWDB responses.

#### **4. OPERATIONAL PLANNING: Local Area Workforce Delivery System**

##### **4.1. Business and Employer Engagement - What strategies will be implemented in the local area to improve business and employer engagement that:**

- **Support a local area workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area;**
- **Manage activities or services that will be implemented to improve business engagement;**
- **Better coordinate regional workforce and economic development strategy, messaging, engagement and programs; and**

- **Strengthen linkages between the PA CareerLink® service delivery system and unemployment insurance (UI) programs.**

*[20 CFR § 679.560(b)(3). Reviewed by ATO, BWPO, OVR, and UC]*

The SCWDB’s work-based training program offering presents a great opportunity for fostering increased employer engagement, implementing sector strategies, and encouraging industry partnerships, as these types of training allow employers to train their employees while continuing to be productive members of the workforce.

- **Registered Apprenticeships (RA)** - The SCWDB partners with RA sponsors, employers, and post-secondary education providers in using RA opportunities as a career pathway for job seekers and as a job driven strategy for employers and industries. The SCWDB funds RA programs through individual training accounts (ITAs), on-the-job training (OJT), and incumbent worker training (IWT). The SCWDB also partners with PA apprenticeship and training office staff to educate employers on the benefits of RA and provide technical assistance in establishing RA programs.
- **On-the-Job Training (OJT)** - OJT continues to be a key method of delivering training services to adults and dislocated workers. The SCWDB provides a 50 percent trainee wage reimbursement to employers to offset the costs of training.
- **Customized Training (CT)** - The SCWDB offers customized training to meet the specific requirements of an employer or group of employers with the commitment that the employer(s) hire an individual upon successful completion of the training.
- **Incumbent Worker Training (IWT)** - The SCWDB utilizes IWT to provide both workers and employers with the opportunity to build and maintain a quality workforce. By providing a 50 - 90% training cost reimbursement based on workforce size, IWT can help employers avert potential layoffs of employees by ensuring employees obtain the skills necessary to retain employment. IWT helps employers maintain a skilled workforce and provides career pathway opportunities for employees by increasing the skill levels of employees so they can be promoted within the company and create backfill opportunities for less-skilled employees.
- **Industry and sector strategies**  
The SCWDB has embraced and expanded our efforts to address business and employer needs through industry partnership opportunities. The SCWDB has had a regional Building and Construction Industry partnership since 2008 to address employer and trade union demands for longer term training including apprenticeship and incumbent worker training. The SCWDB has also had an Advanced Manufacturing Industry Partnership since 2017. In 2021, the SCWDB worked with employers to launch a Healthcare industry partnership which works with our regional partners to work across our county lines.
- **Career lattices and pathways initiatives (including how they are connected to adult education)**  
The SCWDB facilitates semi-annual Business Education Partnership Roundtable discussions between industry leaders and educators to help high school students establish career pathways. During these roundtable discussions, leaders from local high-demand industries share information about their career and career pathway opportunities, including registered apprenticeship programs, along with the skill set

required for entry into these positions. Secondary school educators discuss student career interests and opportunities for employers to present their career opportunities to students including career fairs and classroom presentations. In addition, SCWDB Title I staff discuss services provided through the youth program including industry tours, internships, paid work experience, job shadowing and summer career exploration camps, and work with both educators and employers to engage youth in these activities.

SCWDB hosted and will continue to host, annually, a regional Healthcare Careers and Apprenticeship Expo, that drew more than 650 students from 39 school districts this year. The event featured 50 organizations providing interactive demonstrations that showcased the diverse landscape of healthcare career opportunities. These demonstrations included setting up OCULUS headsets, which provide Virtual Reality Career Exploration in various career clusters and occupations, focusing on exploration in healthcare. Students discovered that healthcare careers extend far beyond traditional clinical roles, encompassing everything from facility maintenance to healthcare analytics. The Expo also highlighted valuable apprenticeship pathways through the presence of representatives from the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry's Apprenticeship and Training Office (ATO). In addition, we had representation from the local PA CareerLink® offices who were able to share a range of resources available to attendees, including resume building and interview skills. These workforce development experts engaged directly with students, providing guidance on accessible entry points into the healthcare sector.

SCWDB Title I staff also partner with our local Title II adult education providers to not only provide wrap-around supportive services for high school dropouts participating in GED classes, but also to engage them in WIOA Youth and Adult employment and training services to help them continue to advance along a career pathway upon GED obtainment. This partnership has resulted in high-school dropouts establishing career pathways in high-demand industries as CNAs, EMTs, welders, commercial truck drivers and building and construction trades apprentices.

- **Expanding apprenticeship models to include development of pre-apprenticeship programs** to serve as a feeder to existing registered apprenticeship programs or in concert with development of new registered apprenticeship programs;

The SCWDB has implemented the following key strategies to expand apprenticeship models including the development of pre-apprenticeship programs. These strategies are designed to ensure a smooth transition from pre-apprenticeship to registered apprenticeship programs, while aligning with industry needs and ensuring workforce readiness:

- **Industry Engagement:** Partnering with local employers and industry associations to identify high-demand occupations in need of skilled workers. This ensures that both pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs align with the regional labor market's needs.
- **Sector-Based Strategy:** Focusing on our high priority industry sectors, including healthcare, building and construction, and advanced manufacturing enables the SCWBD to tailor programs to meet the growing skill demands of these industries.

- **Core Competency Focus:** Pre-apprenticeship programs are designed to provide foundational skills required for success in a registered apprenticeship. These programs may include soft skills (communication, teamwork, professionalism), basic technical skills, and safety training.
- **Pathway Design:** The programs are structured to provide clear pathways into registered apprenticeships, ensuring that participants are prepared for the technical and physical demands of apprenticeship work.
- **Academic and Vocational Training:** The SCWDB partners with our area’s educational institutions, including Community College of Beaver County and Community College of Allegheny County to develop related classroom instruction to supplement hands-on learning while aligning with high school curriculums.
- **Alignment with Registered Programs:** The SCWDB works closely with local employers and apprenticeship sponsors such as the German American Chamber of Commerce to ensure pre-apprenticeship program curriculum aligns with the specific skills and competencies required by the industry.
- **Support for New Apprenticeship Models:** In cases where existing apprenticeship programs are insufficient or unavailable, such as in the healthcare industry, the SCWDB works with employers to develop new registered apprenticeship models, integrating pre-apprenticeship as a feeder system for these new programs.
- **Mentorship and Job Placement Support:** The SCWDB partners with local employers and pre-apprentice program sponsors to ensure program participants have access to mentors or advisors who can guide them through the transition into full apprenticeship programs. In addition, job placement services provided through the SCWDB’s four PA CareerLink® centers help ensure that pre-apprenticeship participants successfully secure an apprenticeship placement upon completion.
- **Targeted Recruitment Efforts:** The SCWDB’s Title I providers conduct outreach to engage individuals who are likely to benefit from pre-apprenticeship programs, including underserved populations, young adults, veterans, and others who may not have had access to traditional workforce training.
- **Awareness Campaigns:** The SCWDB partners with local employers to conduct high school career presentations, career fairs, and student tours to ensure potential candidates understand the benefits of pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship pathways.
- **Community and School Partnerships:** The SCWDB and its Title I Providers partner with local schools and community/faith-based organizations to identify individuals who may be ideal candidates for pre-apprenticeship programs.
- **Wraparound Services:** The SCWDBs ensures individuals in pre-apprenticeship programs have access to support services such as transportation and required tools and clothing to help them complete their training.

- **Career Counseling:** The SCWDB's Title I Providers provide career counseling to help participants address challenges and plan for long-term career advancement once they enter a registered apprenticeship.
- **Continuous Program Evaluation:** The SCWDB regularly evaluates the success of both pre- apprenticeship and registered apprenticeship programs, using data to track participant outcomes (e.g., completion rates, job placement success, retention in apprenticeship programs) and adjust strategies as necessary.
- **Leveraging State and Federal Resources:** The SCWDB has been successful in seeking funding from various sources to support the development and expansion of pre-apprenticeship programs.
- **Scalability and Replication:** To ensure long-term success, the SCWDB partners with employers, training providers and pre-apprenticeship/registered apprenticeship program sponsors to ensure these programs are scalable and can be replicated across our LWDA and others to create a sustainable workforce development pipeline.
- **Partnership with Apprenticeship Networks:** The SCWDB works closely with the PA Apprenticeship and Training Office to share best practices, leverage resources, and ensure that programs are well-integrated into broader workforce development strategies.

The SCWDB utilizes business intermediaries to bridge the gap between workforce development systems and the needs of employers. These intermediaries help foster collaboration between businesses, training providers, and workforce agencies to ensure that training programs align with industry requirements, and that workers are ready to fill skills gaps. Our strategy for leveraging business intermediaries includes:

- **Industry-Specific Intermediaries:** The SCWDB works with several industry-specific intermediaries including the Keystone Development Partnership and the Steel Valley Authority who have deep knowledge of specific industries, such as manufacturing, healthcare and building and constructions. These intermediaries have established relationships with employers, making them well-positioned to facilitate communication and collaboration between businesses and workforce development systems.
- **Employer Associations & Chambers of Commerce:** The SCWDB collaborates with several regional and sector-specific employer associations, chambers of commerce, and trade groups including the German American Chamber of Commerce, the Washington County Manufacturers Association, and the Builders Guild of Western PA to tap into networks of businesses that can provide insights into the local labor market and workforce needs.

The Southwest Corner WDB recognizes that the growth of the regional economy relies on strategic collaboration between the Workforce Development Areas, Community and Economic and Industrial Development agencies. Below is a list of the Economic and Industrial Development Boards and organizations that the Southwest Corner WDB has either representation on, or a close working relationship:

- Allegheny Conference
- Allegheny County Economic Development

- Armstrong County Department of Economic Development
- Beaver County Chamber of Commerce
- Beaver County Corporation for Economic Development\*
- Beaver County Hub for Innovation and Entrepreneurship
- Catalyst Connection
- Clarion University Small Business Development Center
- Community Development Corporation of Butler County
- Duquesne University
- Economic Growth Connection of Westmoreland County
- Fay-Penn Economic Development Council
- German American Chamber of Commerce
- Greene County Business Incubator
- Greene County Chamber of Commerce
- Greene County Planning and Development
- Greene County Industrial Development, Inc.
- Ignite Business Center
- Indiana Economic Development Corporation
- Monongahela Chamber of Commerce
- Mon Valley Alliance
- Mon Valley Initiative
- Mon Valley Regional Chamber of Commerce
- Partner4Work
- Pittsburgh Regional Alliance
- Private Industry Council of Westmoreland/ Fayette
- Regional Industrial Development Corporation
- Riverside Center for Innovation
- Saint Vincent College
- SEWN
- Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission
- Steel Valley Authority
- TEAM
- Tri-County Workforce Development Board
- University of Pittsburgh
- University of Pittsburgh Small Business Development Center
- Urban Redevelopment Authority
- Washington County Authority
- Washington County Council on Economic Development
- Washington County Chamber of Commerce



- Westmoreland County Case Management & Supports, Inc.
- Westmoreland/Fayette Workforce Investment Board

Our workforce development programs are designed to support continued economic development in the region. The lead organization for the Commonwealth's PREP Program is the Local Development District: Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC). PREP partners provide a powerful network of regional experts who can help business owners address nearly every type of challenge facing their companies. In addition to the services provided directly by specific PREP partners, the network can also help businesses access critical state and federal resources, such as loans, grants, technical assistance, or other support. The SPC services also include Business Financing, Government Contracting Assistance, International Trade Assistance, Non-Profit Assistance, Transportation Planning, Research and Information, and Local Government Services. Each year, the Southwest Region RESEA partners provide services to local customers, primarily local businesses but also individual residents who are looking to learn about business start-up and management.

- **Industry Advisory Groups:** The SCWDB facilitates building and construction, healthcare and advanced manufacturing industry partnerships comprised of industry leaders from small and large companies. The SCWDB convenes regular partnership meetings enabling these industry leaders to provide updates on industry needs and requirements which ensures the SCWDB's workforce strategies continue to align with industry requirements.
- **Employer Recruitment and Outreach:** The SCWDB along with, our PA CareerLink® Business Services Teams, as connectors between local businesses and the workforce development system. They help recruit employers to participate in Southwest Corner training programs, apprenticeship initiatives, industry partnerships, business education partnership roundtable discussions between industry leaders and secondary school educators, and other workforce development strategies.
- **Workforce Needs Assessment:** Our partnerships assist us in assessing the specific skills gaps and workforce needs within our high-priority industries by gathering and analyzing data from employers. This information helps us understand trends and skill shortages and design programs that are responsive to real-time market demands.
- **Skill Alignment:** The SCWDB partners closely with Intermediaries such as the German American Chamber of Commerce (GACC), which sponsors manufacturing pre-apprenticeship and registered apprenticeship programs, to ensure skills being taught in training programs are aligned with the competencies that employers need. The GACC facilitates ongoing communication with local manufacturers to refine and adjust training curricula, ensuring that workers are prepared for the latest industry standards.
- **Collaborative Program Design:** The SCWDB uses our Industry Partnerships and employer roundtables to help design workforce programs that are tailored to the specific needs of employers. These partnerships help ensure that businesses are not only involved in identifying training needs but are also invested in the program's success, whether through co-designing training content or offering real-world experience.

- **On-the-Job Training and Work-Based Learning:** The SCWDB and our Apprenticeship Navigator facilitate partnerships where employers provide on-the-job training, internships, apprenticeships, and other work-based learning opportunities for participants. This connection to real-world job experiences enhances the effectiveness of workforce development programs and provides employers with a pipeline of skilled talent.
- **Developing Sector-Based Training Programs:** SCWDB encourages our workforce board member to guide us in the development of sector-based workforce development programs that focus on high-demand occupations. These programs are designed in response to specific employer needs within industries such as healthcare, construction, or advanced manufacturing.
- **Tailored Training & Upskilling Initiatives:** Industry Partnership's inform the customization of training programs to ensure that workers are equipped with the specific skills and certifications needed in the targeted industry. This can include specialized training in emerging technologies, certifications, or safety standards.
- **Incentive and Funding Opportunities:** SCWDB along with our economic development agencies work to connect employers with financial incentives, grants, or subsidies that are available for hiring, training, or retaining workers. These incentives help reduce the burden on employers and make workforce development initiatives more attractive.
- **Human Resources Support:** SCWDB often connects and may assist employers with human resource needs, such as recruiting qualified workers, designing effective training programs, or navigating workforce development regulations. They may also advise on workforce retention strategies and employee development practices.
- **Labor Market Information Sharing:** Intermediaries such as Keystone Development Partnership play a critical role in gathering labor market intelligence and providing the SCWDB with up-to-date data on employment trends, emerging industries, and skill requirements. This helps the SCWDB make informed decisions about workforce development priorities and strategies. The SCWDB also utilizes the Center for Workforce Information and Analysis for LMI statistics.
- **Skill Demand Forecasting:** By working closely with employers and CWIA we are able to forecast future skill demands and labor shortages. This allows us to proactively develop programs that prepare workers for jobs that will be in high demand in the coming years.
- **Long-Term Employer Engagement:** The SCWDB leverages our employer relationships to help ensure businesses remain engaged in our workforce development initiatives over the long term, including our industry partnerships. This ensures our workforce development strategies are not one-time initiatives but are embedded in the ongoing practices of local industries.

SCWDB employs a Strategic Employer Outreach Coordinator who works with our providers' business services representatives (BSRs) stationed at each of the four SCWDB PA CareerLink® centers. These BSRs

facilitate employer engagement by leading and/or serving on the PA CareerLink® centers' Business Services Team (BST). Within the scope of the overall mission of the Local Workforce Development Board and the PA CareerLink® system, these business services teams work to enhance the SCWDA's community and economic vitality by partnering with businesses, community and economic development organizations, and educational institutions. The BST supports employers as customers to attract and retain a qualified workforce. Particular emphasis is placed on emerging and targeted industries that have been designated as growth fields and the high-priority occupations contained therein.

In addition to a business services representative, the BST is composed of representatives from local post-secondary education providers, EARN, Title II, Rapid Response, BWPO, OVR, and the PA CareerLink® veterans' representatives. The BST members work together to:

- Assist employers with PA CareerLink® online registration and job posting and conduct PA CareerLink® online job posting review and approval
- Coordinate with L&I Central Office staff, employers, and employer agents in the creation and/or appropriate management of foreign labor job postings.
- Provide recruitment support through the PA CareerLink® system including the screening and referral of qualified registered candidates and training services customers, hiring events
- Help employers attract and retain a skilled workforce by engaging them in work-based training programs including OJT and IWT.
- Provide information and resources related to federal bonding, the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) Program, and other programs designed to support employers.
- Assist employers with strategies for the aversion of layoffs, and provide support for workforce reductions through Rapid Response activities
- Support for Career Pathway development by facilitating employer engagement with secondary and post-secondary education providers.
- Provide local connections to economic development resources including grants, tax relief, and financing
- Provide customized Labor Market Information (LMI)

The SCWDB utilizes industry partnerships to engage employers within in-demand industries including healthcare, building and construction, and advanced manufacturing. These partnerships help businesses identify their workforce, education & training, and economic development needs, connect with public and community resources, and identify opportunities for collaboration. IP, WIOA and other funds are used to support training needs including registered apprenticeships, through the use of OJTs, IWTs and ITAs.

In addition to supporting employers through industry partnerships, the SCWDB has business services representatives (BSRs) stationed at each of the four SCWDB PA CareerLink® centers. These BSRs facilitate employer engagement by leading and/or serving on their PA CareerLink® center's Business Services Team

(BST). Within the scope of the overall mission of the Local Workforce Development Board and the PA CareerLink® system, these business services teams work to enhance the SCWDA's community and economic vitality by partnering with businesses, community and economic development organizations, and educational institutions. The BST supports employers as customers to attract and retain a qualified workforce. Particular emphasis is placed on emerging and targeted industries that have been designated as growth fields and the high-priority occupations contained therein.

The SCWDB's Strategic Employer Outreach Coordinator works with Title I leadership teams and BWPO PA CareerLink® Program Supervisors which are tasked with the management and administrative roles of the business services function.

The SCWDB has hired a Strategic Employer Outreach Coordinator, who is also a Registered Apprenticeship Navigator, who works with our business intermediators, Chambers, Industry Partnerships, and providers. At the board level we create Business Education Roundtables, convening Industry Partnerships and contracts with our Chambers of Commerce for programming. This includes, but is not limited to reporting, data collection for employer activity, and leveraging existing funds to maximize employers training opportunities.

The SCWDB is committed to collecting data directly from our employers by way of surveys, in-person employer visits, Industry Partnership meetings, and WDB convenings. The SCWDB works with our local chambers to share and gather data to drive our efforts.

The Southwest Corner Workforce Development Board (SCWDB) includes two county economic development representatives as members, ensuring direct input from local economic development perspectives. Additionally, the SCWDB collaborates closely with local chambers of commerce to support regional events, where we collect, share, and analyze data to predict future economic trends and forecasts. This partnership helps to provide valuable insights for employers and industries, allowing them to make informed decisions and stay ahead of emerging workforce needs.

The SCWDB realizes Local workforce development boards (LWDBs) play a crucial role in connecting businesses with skilled talent by offering a range of services tailored to employers' needs. The adoption of these services by businesses and employers depends on several factors, including the alignment of services with industry demands, the ease of access to support, and the perceived value to businesses. The key to successful adoption lies in our ability to align our services with the specific needs of businesses, communicate the value of these services effectively, and provide ongoing support to ensure businesses can access and benefit from them. The SCWDB has successfully developed a wide range of employer services that our businesses find valuable, from talent recruitment and customized training to financial incentives and work-based learning programs. The SCWDB utilizes the following strategies to ensure businesses and employers utilize our programs and services:

- **Building Trust and Relationships:** The SCWDB proactively engage with businesses to develop trust and establish long-term relationships. This includes regular outreach efforts, attending industry events, and forming advisory councils with key industry stakeholders.

- **Customized Communication:** The SCWDB uses sector-based approaches to engage employers, including industry partnerships, to ensure our services are tailored to the specific needs of industries like healthcare, manufacturing, and building and construction. These approaches increase employer buy-in.
- **Awareness Campaigns:** The SCWDB actively promotes our services through outreach strategies like employer workshops, onsite visits/tours, and employer-specific presentations during industry partnership meetings. Being aware of our services makes employers more likely to adopt and take advantage of them.
- **Talent Pipeline Development:** The SCWDB assists businesses by providing access to a pool of skilled workers by conducting pre-screening, facilitating onsite recruitment events at our four PA CareerLink® Centers, as well as job fairs and other targeted hiring initiatives.
- **Job Matching:** The SCWDB assists employers in registering on the PA CareerLink® website to post job openings and identify candidates with appropriate skills. This helps employers find qualified workers and job seekers find relevant employment opportunities.
- **On-the-Job Training** - On-the-job training helps employers expand their hiring pool, offset the cost of training new employees, and enhances career pipeline initiatives.
- **Incumbent Worker Training:** This training allows businesses to train their current employees in new skills, certifications, or technologies, helping them retain top talent and reduce turnover. This training also helps businesses create succession plans by identifying and developing internal talent to fill key roles, ensuring they have a pipeline of future leaders and reducing reliance on external hiring for senior positions.
- **Youth Paid Internships and Work Experience Opportunities:** These programs help employers assess potential future employees while offering youth hands-on experience.
- **Apprenticeships and Pre-Apprenticeships:** These programs allow businesses to train workers on the job while providing them with a structured learning experience.
- **Transitional Job Program:** The SCWDB facilitates a 6-week paid transitional job program to help individuals with employment barriers attach to the workforce. This program removes the upfront cost for employers and enables them to evaluate potential new hires through work-based learning experiences.
- **Hiring Incentives and Tax Credits:** SCWDB business services representatives help businesses access a range of financial incentives, including hiring subsidies, and tax credits, such as the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) which encourage employers to hire from targeted groups.
- **Personalized Business Solutions:** SCWDB business services representatives conduct onsite visits/tours with businesses to assess their specific workforce needs.
- **Industry Partnerships/Strategic Workforce Planning:** By facilitating industry partnerships, the SCWDB assists companies in developing long-term workforce strategies, forecasting talent needs based on

business growth, and understanding regional labor market trends. This helps businesses plan for future workforce requirements and avoid talent shortages.

- **Connection to Community Economic Development:** BST members share information about CED services with employers and connect employers with the local CED organizations for assistance securing capital improvement funds, addressing needed infrastructure improvements, technical assistance with permitting, etc.
- **Access to Diverse Talent Pools:** The SCWDB helps employers access diverse talent pools, including underserved communities, veterans, and people with disabilities. By connecting employers to these talent pools, the SCWDB facilitates greater inclusivity in the workforce.
- **Adapting to Employer Feedback:** By continuously evaluating the effectiveness of services and making adjustments based on business input, continuously improves our offerings to better meet employer needs.

The SCWDB utilizes industry partnerships to engage employers within in-demand industries including healthcare, building and construction, and advanced manufacturing. These partnerships help businesses identify their workforce, reshaping policy, education & training, and economic development needs, connect with public and community resources, and identify opportunities for collaboration. IP, WIOA and other funds are used to support training needs including registered apprenticeships, through the use of OJTs, IWTs and ITAs.

**Strengthening Employer Outreach & Communication:** Along with our roundtables and surveys the SWDB will enhance our communication by utilizing social media, newsletters, and online portals to communicate workforce services more effectively to businesses.

SCWDB will Expand Industry Partnerships & Collaboration

- **Industry-Led Advisory Councils:** Establish employer-led advisory groups to co-develop training programs tailored to their needs.
- **Employer Champions & Ambassadors:** Encourage engaged businesses to serve as advocates, sharing success stories with peers.
- **Partnerships with Economic Development Organizations (EDOs):** Align employer engagement efforts with business attraction and expansion initiatives.

The SCWDB will increase our Data-Driven Decision-Making with

- **Labor Market Intelligence for Employers:** Provide real-time labor market insights on hiring trends, wages, and skill gaps.
- **Predictive Workforce Analytics:** Use data to anticipate industry needs and proactively adjust training programs.
- **Employer Engagement Metrics:** Track key metrics such as employer participation rates, job placements, and repeat engagement levels to assess effectiveness.

The SCWDB will increase visibility by considering:

- Employer Recognition Programs: Publicly recognize businesses actively engaging in workforce initiatives.
- Storytelling & Success Case Studies: Showcase impactful workforce programs and employer partnerships to encourage wider participation.

All Title I staff who work at one of the four SCWDB's four PA CareerLink® centers have been well trained on the UI claims filing activities and, on the rights, and responsibilities of claimants and information necessary to file a claim. To ensure access to services for participants who identify as English language learners, over-the-phone-interpreting is used. In addition, these staff work closely with ES staff to coordinate services with the RESEA program.

When ES staff conduct in-person or virtual RESEA orientation, SCWDB Title I staff participate in the orientation process by presenting an overview of available WIOA services followed by brief 1-1 assessment meetings to schedule services and/or initiate appropriate referrals. When ES staff conduct virtual RESEA orientations, RESEA participants are referred to WIOA staff for intake and further assessment of employment goals, barriers, and service needs, including training needs. In addition, SCWDB WIOA staff, and other partners, facilitate monthly workshops onsite at each of the four PA CareerLink® centers on topics including resume and cover letter writing and interviewing skills which ES staff can refer RESEA participants to. This RESEA program coordination ensures unemployment compensation (UC) claimants who may need additional job skills, training, or other reemployment services to find new employment receive needed WIOA individualized and training services.

SCWDB WIOA staff facilitate monthly workshops onsite at each of the four PA CareerLink® centers on topics including resume and cover letter writing and interviewing skills to assist UC claimants in complying with PA UC law "Register for Work and Work Search" requirements. All Title I staff working in one of the SCWDB's four PA CareerLink® centers are trained to assist UC claimants utilizing the career resource center to complete a job seeker registration on the PA CareerLink® website, including their individual job search preferences, and conducting a customized work search. UC referees hold UC hearings in all of the PA CareerLink® centers.

"As a core partner, OVR participates in Employer Engagement and provides multiple services to the business community designed to assist businesses with onboarding pre-screened qualified employees with disabilities. OVR on-boarding supports for a qualified new hire can include reasonable accommodation consultation, on the job training reimbursement, referral on tax credits or deductions. OVR also works with businesses through connecting students involved in OVR's pre-employment transition services. Services under pre-employment transition services include programs like paid work experiences, job shadowing, workplace tours. OVR also offers no-cost consultation on the Americans with Disability Act (ADA), accessibility standards and helping a business to retain current employees following an accident, injury, or disability. Statewide business services staff can identify resources to assist any organization on how to improve access compliance and steps to diversify their workforce to include citizens with a disability."

"Unemployment Compensation (UC) representatives are currently deployed in all the PA CareerLink® comprehensive centers. Customers and/or claimants may call a designated number to schedule an appointment with an unemployment compensation agent either in person or on occasion virtually. In the

event UC staff are not present, claimants can use the CRC to connect with the unemployment compensation filing system. A kiosk system is being deployed throughout the commonwealth to assist with ID.me connectivity issues some claimants have encountered. The kiosk will assist identification verification in order for the claimant to have full access to their unemployment compensation claim dashboard on the state website. The One-Stop Operator also works with the Office of UC Service Centers Customer Services Section to coordinate seminars for employers, which address UC topics such as rights and benefits. These services provide additional opportunities to inform employers of all services provided by PA CareerLink® partners. For those UC Claimants looking to file an appeal, forms are provided and submitted via fax at no charge and with limited wait. Staff provide copies of the confirmation printout for all faxes sent on behalf of Claimants. Our goal is to educate the unemployed job seeker with the toll-free numbers he/she needs to use and provide booklets and brochures that describe the application process including UC handbooks.”

“LWDBs will ensure identified local staff meet with the local ATO representative at least annually to review current Registered Apprenticeships in the local area.”

**4.2. Economic Development – How will the local board coordinate local area workforce investment activities with regional economic development activities that are specific to a local area? How will the local board promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services?**

*[20 CFR § 679.560(b)(4). Reviewed by DCED]*

The SCWDB will continue to work closely with our peer Local Workforce Development Boards and economic development providers across Southwestern Pennsylvania to identify and learn of emerging opportunities for Southwest Corner residents. This includes all the RESEA partners including local economic development providers, regional organizations (such as the Allegheny Conference and Catalyst Connection) and the Small Business Development Centers. Our region also engages with ongoing region-wide programs and initiatives. As an example, the Southwest Pennsylvania Partnership for Regional Economic Performance (PREP) consists of the economic development partners of the nine-county Southwest PREP region working together to organize and achieve economic results. PREP partners offer one-on-one counseling, specialized workshops, online training, and financial incentives to new businesses and existing companies looking to grow. Each regional PREP team works together to coordinate the resources and services offered by local economic development service providers, including Local Development Districts (LDDs), Industrial Resource Centers (IRCs), Industrial Development Corporations (IDCs), and Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs). The local boards in our region are non-funded members of PREP and work with the funded PREP partners to continue efficient and effective coordination of workforce and economic development.

The local boards in our region also plan to collaborate with Engage! program partners. Engage! is a PA Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) business retention and expansion program designed to interact with targeted companies. Engage! works to retain existing businesses in a community and to help them grow and expand by building relationships with business owners or key decision makers and economic and workforce development partners. Engage! programs work closely with businesses to:

- Identify needs and match resources to help existing businesses and industries address their challenges to become more competitive and successful.



- Demonstrate to local businesses and industries that the community recognizes and depends on their contributions to the local/state economy.
- Build business and community capacity to sustain growth and development.
- Understand and address the common themes articulated by PA businesses in order to drive policy and the menu of PA DCED and partner services for long range business retention and expansion efforts.

The SCWDB is also a partner to the Southwestern Pennsylvania (SWPA) New Economy Collaborative, which is an 11-county coalition of labor, nonprofit, and university partners advancing the region’s robotics and automation cluster through public-private-philanthropic partnership. The Collaborative is one of 21 winners of the Build Back Better Regional Challenge, the marquee initiative of the U.S. Economic Development Administration’s American Rescue Plan, which aims to boost economic recovery from the pandemic and rebuild American communities. The Collaborative was awarded a \$62.7 million grant to fund five regional projects focused on robotics adoption, commercialization, and workforce development. Together, these projects are designed to provide long-term opportunities for individuals, businesses, and communities in Southwest Pennsylvania to participate in our growing robotics sector and succeed in our evolving economy.

Toward that end, the SCWDB relishes its leadership role, in partnership with the Local Elected Officials, in guiding the public workforce system in general and the workforce development system. As a large workforce area in Pennsylvania, Southwest Corner is fortunate to have a progressive group of partners to address job seekers' skill and supportive service needs. With that strong foundation, the SCWDB implements a network anchored by the core partners (and those other partners) in the PA CareerLink® offices. While this network helped guide investments and actions in the past, the Board will focus on the functional development of programs and activities focused on employer and sector needs. The lead role of the SCWDB Board will be to guide and advise on employer and sector demand strategies while incentivizing through various means the desired performance outcomes for all involved.

The Board shall make a special effort related to integrating all partners of the PA CareerLink® into the system that would then include ensuring appropriate services to those target groups including but not limited to those with disabilities, returning citizens, immigrant population and low-income individuals.

Working closely with the local and regional economic development and post-secondary education partners, the PA CareerLink® will work closely with and refer individuals to appropriate entrepreneurship training and services. PA CareerLink® centers work with the University of Pittsburgh Small Business Association to provide workshops and seminars within the centers for individuals interested in entrepreneurship and small business creation/expansion. These sessions focus on all aspects of small business development, including funding, accounting, laws, competition, and expansion. The SCWDB will explore additional options for entrepreneurship training for the area and the region.

In Beaver County, the Community Development Program of Beaver County, facilitates a series of entrepreneurship education workshops for low to moderate income Beaver County residents. The “Entrepreneurship Education for Potential Business Owners Program” provides participants with foundational small business development information/ exercises as a strategy for self-assessing the sustainability of their

business idea/plans. The program offers thirty (30) hours of customized programming scheduled monthly and delivered through a series of ten (10) workshops. Discussions, lectures, and innovative hands-on exercises addressing the feasibility and responsibilities of owning and operating a small business collectively engage workshop participants. Complementing the workshops are opportunities for participants to schedule a one-on-one workshop follow up consultation, network with guest speakers/ mentors to inform them about additional activities and resources. The Southwest Corner PA CareerLink® centers also work with the University of Pittsburgh Small Business centers on providing the “Mechanics of Starting a Business” program within the centers. This program helps with structure, resources, funding options, and developing a business plan.

**4.3. Business and Employer Program Support - What services, activities, and program resources will be provided to businesses and employers in the local area?**

*[20 CFR § 679.560(b)(3). Reviewed by ATO, BWPO, OVR, and UC]*

Within the scope of the overall mission of the SCWDB and PA CareerLink® system, each SCWDA PA CareerLink® Business Services Team (BST) works to enhance the community and economic vitality of the area it services by partnering with businesses, community and economic development organizations, and educational institutions. The BST supports employers as customers to attract and retain a qualified workforce. Particular emphasis is placed on emerging and targeted industries that have been designated as growth fields and the high-priority occupations contained therein. BST goals include:

- Forming and strengthening existing alliances with the business community, economic development organizations, educational institutions, and community-based organizations to provide value-added services that can benefit business and augment our delivery of services
- Establishing and maintaining relationships with small and medium employers, local chambers of commerce, local community and economic development organizations, and other organizations that represent employers
- Convening industry partnerships
- Facilitating federal, state, and local resources designed to meet the economic and workforce development needs of employers which include:
  - Assisting employers with PA CareerLink® online registration and job posting
  - PA CareerLink® Online job posting review and approval
  - Coordinating with L&I Central Office staff, employers, and employer agents in the creation and or appropriate management of foreign labor job postings
  - Recruitment support through the PA CareerLink® offices including the screening and referral of qualified registered candidates and hiring events
  - Connections to support for candidate onboarding, including the On-the-Job Training (OJT) Program, Customized Job Training (CJT) Program, and Pre-Apprenticeships

- Connections to support for incumbent worker support including Apprenticeship and the Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) Program
- Information and resources related to federal bonding, the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) Program, and other programs designed to support employers
- Assisting employers with strategies for the aversion of layoffs, and provide support for workforce reductions through Rapid Response activities
- Support for Career Pathway development
- Local connections to economic development resources including grants, tax relief, and financing
- Customized Labor Market Information (LMI)
- Promoting the hiring of veterans through the Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER)
- Market the services of PA CareerLink®, demonstrating how those services can benefit businesses and their employees
- Prioritize funding and resources to best serve the goals of the BST
- Assist employers with recruitment and retention services
- Align supply-side referrals to employers – helping employers to recruit from Title I and Title III without knowing where the referral comes from
- Explaining labor and employment laws to help employers comply with discrimination, wage/hour, and safety/health regulations
- Ensuring the Commonwealth Workforce Development System (CWDS) accurately reflects business services activities including case notes, staff notes services, and hire information
- Ensuring the Commonwealth Workforce Development System (CWDS) is free from fraudulent activity by conducting employer and job posting verification
- For program partners not specifically represented on the BST, describe how these partners are connected to employers (e.g., provision of adult basic education and workplace literacy information to employers)

The SCWDB works closely with all CEDs in our area. BST members share information about CED services with employers and connect employers with the local CED organizations for assistance with capital improvement funds, addressing needed infrastructure improvements, technical assistance with permitting, etc. Local CEDs also include BST members in meetings with new businesses looking to expand or relocate to the area to discuss workforce recruitment and training services. Further, the SCWDB is an Engage! contractor, which meets quarterly with all economic development in our region as representative, as well as being a PREP partner.

The SCWDB's regional coordination of messaging and engagement play a critical role in ensuring that employer needs are met, and that all program providers collaborate efficiently to deliver services. This coordination ensures consistent messaging, maximizes the impact of employer visits, streamlines the tracking of business-related services, and ensures a unified approach when working with employers. Through strategic messaging, multi-partner visits, and a shared data management system, employers receive targeted, efficient

support tailored to their workforce needs. Collaboration during employer visits allows for a more holistic service offering, and the tracking and sharing of data ensures that services are continually improved and aligned with employer demands. This integrated approach leads to better outcomes for businesses, workers, and the regional economy as a whole. The SCWDB employs the following strategies to accomplish this:

- **Unified Communication Strategy:** The SCWDB BSTs follow a unified messaging strategy that ensures all communication with employers is consistent and relevant. This includes creating a clear value proposition about the services offered and how we can address the specific workforce challenges businesses face.
- **Branding and Outreach Materials:** The SCWDB worked with BST partners to develop a joint PA CareerLink® business services guide. This ensures businesses are presented with a cohesive, easily digestible message, regardless of which provider or partner they engage with.
- **Coordinated Employer Engagement Calendar:** The SCWDB business services teams coordinate outreach activities such as job fairs, employer roundtables, and industry-specific informational sessions. These events are strategically scheduled across the region to ensure maximum attendance and participation from local employers. Outreach efforts are synchronized so that employers are not overwhelmed by too many visits from different partners, ensuring that engagements are streamlined and impactful.
- **Multi-Partner Visits:** During employer visits, BSTs coordinate with various program providers to offer a comprehensive set of services including representatives from local community colleges, workforce intermediaries, PA Apprenticeship Training Office/apprenticeship program sponsors, and other workforce development organizations. By visiting employers together, representatives present a full spectrum of services, from recruitment and hiring support to training, incumbent worker upskilling, and workforce planning. Each partner during these visits may bring a different perspective on how to address the employer's workforce needs.
- **Utilize PA CareerLink® Website as System of Record:** To track the services provided to each employer, SCWDB BST staff record services and staff notes in the PA CareerLink® system. This allows all program partners to enter data on the services they've provided, such as job postings, recruitment efforts, training interventions, or wage subsidies. By sharing this data in the PA CareerLink® system, it ensures that no employer is visited multiple times by different service providers offering the same or redundant services.
- **Tracking Business Engagement:** The PA CareerLink® system also tracks key metrics like:
  - The number of employer visits.
  - Types of services offered.
  - Follow-up actions (e.g., referrals for additional programs).
  - Employer satisfaction or outcomes (e.g., hires, training completions).
  - Participation in work-based learning opportunities (e.g., internships, apprenticeships).
- **Employer Feedback:** The SCWDB and its BST partners utilize data from employer interactions combined with surveys to assess the effectiveness of workforce development strategies. This information is shared with all partners.
- **Adjusting Strategies Based on Data:** The SCWDB analyzes employer feedback and PA CareerLink® employer services data to adjust outreach strategies and engagement approaches.

The SCWDB BSTs make the following services available to business customers:

1. **Job Posting and Recruitment Services:** Employers can access a range of recruitment services through the Southwest Corner's four PA CareerLink® offices.
2. **Labor Market Information:** Valuable labor market information (LMI) regarding trends, wages, employment projections, and industry data helps employers make informed decisions about staffing needs, wages, and market conditions.
3. **Job Matching and Referral Services:** The PA CareerLink® website enables employers to post job opportunities and identify potential candidates that meet their hiring criteria. BST staff assist businesses in posting jobs, reviewing resumes, and conducting candidate screenings.
4. **Customized Recruitment and Placement:** Businesses can request customized recruitment activities including onsite recruitments or informational session services.
5. **Employee Training Programs:** Employers can access programs like on-the-job training (OJT), incumbent worker training, and customized training for employees to develop specific skills.
6. **Support for Registered Apprenticeships:** SCWDB BST staff support the development and expansion of Registered Apprenticeship (RA) programs. Employers can receive technical assistance to establish or expand apprenticeship programs as well as work-based training program financial support for training apprentices.
7. **Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC):** Employers receive assistance in applying for and understanding these tax credits.
8. **Layoff and Dislocation Services:** If businesses need to downsize, SCWDB BST staff provide access to rapid response services to assist with layoffs. The regional rapid response coordinator is stationed at the SCWDB's PA CareerLink® Beaver County office.
9. **Apprenticeship Programs and Industry Partnerships:** In addition to Registered Apprenticeships, businesses have access to industry partnerships.
10. **Educational and Training Provider Networks:** SCWDB BST staff connect employers with local community colleges and other post-secondary training providers to develop curriculum tailored to industry needs or upskill current workers. Many programs are eligible for WIOA funding, which may assist with training costs.
11. **Economic Development Resources:** Economic development agencies provide businesses with resources including grants for business expansion.

The PA Office of Vocational Rehabilitation is a PA CareerLink® partner and a component of the business services team in each of the SCWDB's four PA CareerLink® centers. This arrangement enables cross system

collaboration in making WIOA Title IV (Rehabilitation Act of 1973) employer-based services available to business customers by:

- Sharing information on all employers, employer needs, and local community employer initiatives.
- Ensuring the organization and coordination of the recruitment of employers to facilitate placement of individuals with a disability.
- Establishing and maintaining working relationships with local employers to promote the use of the PA CareerLink® employment programs and services.
- Working closely with local chambers of commerce to identify new employers to the area, contact these employers, and arrange appointments to visit them.
- Working with employers to answer questions, resolve problems and address complaints in order to continually improve and maximize the effectiveness and value of the PA CareerLink® business services.
- Answering employer questions concerning PA CareerLink® programs and services available.

Specific WIOA Title IV employer-based services include:

- Providing pre-screened, qualified candidates
- Helping retain current employees
- Providing accommodation solutions
- Consultation on job analysis, worksite modification and reasonable accommodations
- Information about assistive technology
- Disability etiquette training
- ADA Consultation
- Work-based training reimbursements
- Supported employment opportunities
- Information on tax credits

The SCWDB facilitates semiannual Business Education Partnership Roundtable discussions between industry leaders and educators to help high school students establish career pathways. During these roundtable discussions, leaders from local high-demand industries share information about their career and career pathway opportunities, including registered apprenticeship programs, along with the skill set required for entry into these positions. Secondary school educators discuss student career interests and opportunities for employers to present their career opportunities to students including career fairs and classroom presentations. In addition, SCWDB Strategic Employer Outreach Coordinator and providers discuss services available through the youth program including industry tours, internships, paid work experience, job

shadowing and summer career exploration camps, and work with both educators and employers to engage youth in these activities.

“LWDBs will ensure BST members are provided the Registered Apprenticeship Desk Guide and the Apprenticeship Strategic Plan Guide for PA CareerLink® Staff.”

The SCWDB has hired a Strategic Employer Outreach Coordinator, who is also an Registered Apprenticeship Navigator, who works with our business intermediators, Chambers, Industry Partnerships, and providers. At the board level we create Business Education Roundtables, convening Industry Partnerships and contracts with our Chambers of Commerce for programming. This includes, but is not limited to reporting, data collection for employer activity, and leveraging existing funds to maximize employers training opportunities. The Strategic Employer Outreach Coordinator will assist the employer with the initial CWDS interaction and then connect them with appropriate PA CL’s and BST representatives.

Each of the Southwest Corner PA CareerLink® centers has its own Business Service Team (BST), led by the Elite Team, which:

- Reaches out to local employers, especially those in key industry clusters, to let them know about services available to them through the PA CareerLink® system and to collect information about employer needs (current and future) related to worker skills, training, hiring, physical space, and other aspects of workforce development;
- Develops and implements strategies to increase the number of employers registered on the PA CareerLink® system and the number of job orders posted;
- Develops linkages with local economic development initiatives.

The business service teams are also responsible for:

- Conducting orientations for new employers; helping employers register on the PA CareerLink® online system, writing job descriptions, posting job orders, and identifying and screening applicants;
- Connecting employers to internal and/or external services or agencies that can support employer goals and meet employer needs; providing employers with information about grants available to train new workers (on-the-job training) or upgrade the skills of existing workers (customized job training, incumbent worker grants);
- Compiling and disseminating local labor market information, including prevailing wages; and
- Providing employers, through a partnership with the PA Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, with information about employee assistance programs (EAP).
- Other employer engagement and/or referral opportunities include:
  - Sector Partnerships
  - Collaborations with Small Business Administration–Small Business Development Centers
  - Memberships with Chambers of Commerce/Community Economic Development organizations
  - Pre-Apprenticeship/Apprentice Training Programs; and
  - Work-Based Learning including
    - Internships/Co-ops
    - Work Experience

- Transitional Jobs
- Customized Job Training (CJT)
- On-the-Job Training (OJT)
- Incumbent Worker Training (IWT)
- o WEDnetPA training
- o Registered Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeship Desk Guide for PA CareerLink® Staff - consider adding a description of it and why it is important: “This guide provides PA CareerLink® staff with an overview of strategies to connect jobseekers and employers to Registered Apprenticeship (RA) programs. It includes detailed information on how to utilize various WIOA funding streams to support RA programs, subject to local policy, procedures, and funding availability. This guide also provides detailed instructions on how PA CareerLink® staff may help their local area meet targeted Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) indicators.”
- o BST could utilize the ATO created Employer Needs Assessment when working with employers.
- o The [Registered Apprenticeship Strategic Plan Guide](#) is meant to help Workforce Development Boards map and support the apprenticeship ecosystem in their regions and identify strategies to connect individuals to opportunities within it.

Business Service Teams (BSTs) provide area employers with integrated services to address their employment and training needs. They also provide employers with information on services available through our PA CareerLink® centers. The Business Service Teams have prioritized outreach efforts towards our targeted Industry sectors to support the growth and development of key sectors of the economy. BST outreach efforts have assisted the SCWDB in identifying skill gaps, training needs and other pertinent issues confronting business and industry in the region.

The services that the BSTs offer employers go beyond those services provided by the PA CareerLink® centers. There is a close working relationship with other employer service organizations such as the Chamber(s) of Commerce, Economic Development Agencies, the Small Business Development Centers in our region, and other statewide, county, and local agencies that provide services to both existing and startup businesses. Through electronic communications such as e-mail and our local websites, the BSTs provide, support, and disseminate a large volume of information regarding services available to the business community. Information regarding possible WARN or large-scale layoffs are communicated between our local workforce area and the Regional Rapid Response Unit. Contact with these employers takes place as quickly as possible in an attempt to determine if any services or resources available can assist the impacted employer in averting the layoffs. All BST members are familiar with OJT services and other training services that may be available to assist businesses, either with recruiting and expansion plans, or possibly with training or upgrading services for their existing workforce. The BSTs facilitate Job Fairs to assist their customers in their ongoing recruitment needs, as well as provide individualized business recruiting assistance through the PA CareerLink® centers or in other locations.



**4.4. Continuous Improvement - Describe how the local board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers through the system and that such providers will meet the employment needs of local area employers, workers, and job seekers.**

*[20 CFR § 679.560(b)(5)(i). Reviewed by OS and BWPO]*

Training providers must offer and maintain focus on trainings that provide quality outcomes, not only for the participants, but for the communities and employers in the area. By aligning their programs with the goals and expectations of the SCWDB, they are focusing their programs on skills and needs most relevant to local employers. The SCWDB reviews performance of training and communicates industry needs to training providers so that programs can be developed or modified to meet industry demand. Providers must supply a variety of program-specific information, including a program description, program length, program delivery methods, tuition/costs, prerequisites, and credentials offered.

SCWDB staff work with the PA CareerLink® business services team and our industry partnerships to continuously engage employers in key industries, assess their hiring needs, and coordinate a variety of training opportunities (on-the-job training, incumbent workers training, etc.) to meet those needs. Information and feedback obtained from employers helps to ensure that local workforce and training services both connect individuals to necessary credentials and successfully prepare them for jobs in high demand industries.

All four SCWDB PA CareerLink® centers collect feedback through customer satisfaction surveys, which allow job seekers and employers to share their experiences with services provided. These surveys help PA CareerLink® staff assess the quality of the customer experience, identify areas for improvement, and ensure that services align with customer needs. By analyzing survey responses, staff can make data-driven decisions to enhance workforce development initiatives, streamline processes, and improve overall service delivery.

The Southwest Corner WDB ensures that the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) will be available for PA CareerLink® staff members who are responsible for assessing individuals for training programs and referring them to appropriate high-quality training. The SCWDB will follow the state's petitioning process to possibly add additional training programs to the HPO list that may not be included. We will continue to work with Registered Apprenticeship programs and encourage inclusion on the ETPL. To ensure quality of the ETPL, only programs that meet the minimum performance measures related to program completion, job placement and retention rates, median earnings, and credential attainment of their students will be approved for inclusion. We will continue to work together, with employers and training providers, in the development of appropriate and industry relevant training opportunities. The Southwest Corner WDB will approve training providers on the approved Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) that are offering training programs aligned with state and region in-demand occupations and sectors.

Providers of training are required to submit, as part of their application, performance and outcomes on the training programs/courses submitted, while ensuring individuals with barriers to employment are served.

The Eligible Training Provider List is used to provide our job seeker customers with information regarding the types of training opportunities available, both in our workforce area and also in other parts of the state, as well as out-of-state training opportunities. Information is also available regarding occupational skills that are in demand within the State and within our WDA, and other performance related data that assists them in making informed training choices.

In order to be added to the statewide Eligible Training Provider List, a provider must complete and sign a Training Provider Assurances and Authorization form and submit, to our SCWDB, the following information on an annual basis:

- A one-page outline of the current procedure for obtaining performance levels;
- Documentation verifying the performance information;
- The most recent school catalog or outline/curriculum for each program;
- Grievance policy and procedures;
- A copy of its state license (if applicable);
- Form PDE 3808 outlining courses approved by the PA Department of Education/ Private Licensed School Act (if applicable);
- A copy of its current accreditation certificate (if applicable); and
- Financial statements, an annual report or other evidence that sound fiscal practices are employed.

Programs must train students for "high priority occupations" in our area, as defined by the State. Training providers requesting assistance in completing the application process are assigned a "point of contact," a staff person, employed by one of our WIOA Title I providers. Training providers are required to retain documentation to support their applications for a period of three years.

Our staff reviews applications to make sure they are accurate and complete prior to forwarding them to the state for final approval. If we reject an application, we notify the training provider within thirty days. Training providers have thirty days to appeal our decision.

The statewide training providers/programs (ETPL) list is updated when new programs are approved. Individual training accounts can be applied only towards programs on the current ETPL approved list. Training providers must retain records concerning participant enrollment and performance throughout the period of participation plus a minimum period of three years following the participant's completion or termination.

To maintain their status on the approved statewide list, training providers must meet performance expectations and supply factual information/statistics on the ETPL which is designed to help eligible participants make informed choices. Performance measure indicators, for both the "All Students" and the "WIOA Participants" populations, include:

- Program completion rate;
- Entry into unsubsidized employment at second quarter after exit;
- Entry into unsubsidized employment at fourth quarter after exit;
- Median earnings during second quarter after exit; and
- Attainment of post-secondary credentials.

Training providers with poor performance are required to develop a corrective action plan, in consultation with our staff, and approved by the State, which identifies the deficiency and outline specific steps to be taken to correct it.

The Southwest Corner WDB will comply with the provisions as outlined in WSP 04-2015, Appendix B when submitting applications for training services to be included on the Local Training Provider List (LTPL). Over the years, we have developed strong working relationships with our various training providers and closely with both our employer and training provider communities to identify any training or skill gaps identified in our region. The LTPL (similar to the statewide ETPL) will catalog training providers and their respective training services/programs exempted from the statewide ETPL eligibility requirements. We will ensure that this list remains up-to-date and will disseminate this list consistent with the requirements of this policy (WSP 04-2015) and through the PA CareerLink® system. Only providers that the local board determines to be eligible will be included on this list. This list will consist of training services contracted at the local workforce level.

**4.5. Technology and Remote Access - Through the use of technology, how will the local board facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop service delivery system, including in remote areas?**

*[20 CFR § 679.560(b)(5)(ii). Reviewed by DHS, OS, BWPO, OEO, OVR, UC, and PDE-ABE]*

“Staff will be trained to provide services to all, regardless of range of abilities, mobility, age, language, learning style, or comprehension or education level. All requests for accommodations must be addressed and reasonable accommodations will be made available to customers as necessary to ensure physical and programmatic accessibility to all customers within the PA CareerLink®. Such accommodations will include but are not limited to an interpreter provided in real time or, if not available, within a reasonable timeframe to any customer with a language barrier, assistive devices, such as screen-reading software programs (e.g., JAWS and DRAGON), and assistive listening devices.”

**Enhanced Communication and Transparency of SCWDB Programs and Services:**

The SCWDB is committed to ensuring full transparency in the communication of its program services and available resources. To achieve this, SCWDB will leverage state-of-the-art technology to effectively reach all sectors of its target audience, ensuring that businesses, job seekers, and workforce partners have clear, accurate, and timely access to workforce development opportunities.

**Utilizing Data for Continuous Program Improvement:**

SCWDB will incorporate data-driven decision-making by utilizing:

- Commonwealth-provided data and locally generated workforce intelligence to assess program effectiveness.
- Relevant labor market and workforce data to empower customers with informed program choices.
- Additional state agency data, particularly from the Pennsylvania Department of Education, to enhance workforce alignment with educational initiatives.

Through the strategic use of these data sources, SCWDB will continuously refine and improve workforce programs, ensuring they remain responsive to regional labor market demands.

### **Expanding Outreach and Engagement Through Digital Platforms:**

SCWDB will enhance its communication and outreach strategies by:

- Revamping and continuously updating the SCWDB website to improve accessibility, navigation, and user experience.
- Expanding social media outreach to connect with a broader audience, including job seekers, employers, and workforce stakeholders.
- Leveraging Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry technology and digital tools available through PA CareerLink® offices to strengthen service delivery and engagement.

These digital enhancements will allow for greater visibility and engagement across the workforce community.

### **Digital Literacy Plan and Delivery for PA CareerLink®**

To enhance the digital skills of PA CareerLink® job seekers, and to ensure they are equipped to effectively navigate online job searches, utilize career development tools, and engage in virtual workforce services the Southwest Corner PA CareerLink® offices offer:

1. Workshops:
  - Monthly calendars for all Southwest Corner PA CareerLink® offices are readily available and also added to the PA CareerLink® events section for in-person and virtual workshops. Some workshops offered are:
    - Navigating PA CareerLink® Website
    - Resume and Application Help Online
    - Skill UP™ PA / Metrix Learning
    - How to Use LinkedIn
    - Civil Service – How to apply – process and tips
    - Networking and On-line Job Searching
2. Access to Equipment and Internet:
  - Career Resource Centers and Computer labs with high-speed internet are readily available during business hours with staff available to assist as needed.
  - Printed guides and digital resource sheets are available.
3. Self-Paced Learning Resources:
  - Customers can access free online platforms like Skill UP™ PA and GCFLearnFree.org.
4. Digital Access Support:
  - Southwest Corner Title I Provider has collaborated with Computer Reach, a Pittsburgh-based nonprofit organization, which is managing the Washington County and Greene County PA Digital Navigator Projects. These projects are part of the National Digital Navigator Corps Project launched by the National Digital Inclusion Alliance and funded by Google.org. The purpose is to bridge the digital divide in rural Western PA. by:
    - providing community members with personal computers
    - assisting them in accessing affordable internet home services
    - and providing them with digital skills training and tech support

Individuals/Families can receive laptop computers and opportunities to have one-on-one instructional support by the Digital Navigators. To date, over 200 individuals/families have been referred.

5. Multilingual and Accessible Materials:

- In order to ensure that digital literacy content is accessible to non-English speakers and individuals with disabilities translated materials, devices and adaptive technologies are available in our PA CareerLink® offices a few technologies available are:
  - ILA (Interpreting and Language Assistance) device to provide language translation or interpretation services.
  - Propio Language Services
  - UbiDuo is available to facilitate face-to-face conversations between individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing and those who can hear. It enables real-time, text-based communication without the need for an interpreter or internet connection.
  - A translator (Peer Specialist) has been added to our PA CareerLink® Mon Valley, which has the most heavily non-English speaking population. This individual is able to assist in the CRC and help customers.
  - In addition, printed materials are developed for translation to ensure that non-English speaking customers have equal access to resources.

### **Ensuring Digital ADA Compliance in PA CareerLink® Offices**

1. Accessible Website Design:
  - The PA CareerLink® website is designed to meet WCAG 2.1 (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) standards.
  - Features include screen reader compatibility, keyboard navigation, alt text for images, and proper color contrast for readability.
2. Assistive Technology Availability:
  - Onsite computer labs are equipped with assistive technologies such as:
    - Screen readers (e.g., JAWS)
    - Screen magnification software
    - Alternative input devices (e.g., trackballs, large print keyboards)
    - Adjustable workstations
3. Captioned and Transcribed Content:
  - All instructional videos and virtual sessions provide closed captioning.
  - Transcripts can be made available for recorded content and training modules.
4. Accessible Virtual Services:
  - Virtual workshops and one-on-one appointments are conducted using platforms that support accessibility features (e.g., Zoom with live captioning).
  - Customers can request ASL interpreters or other accommodations in advance.
5. Staff Training on Digital Accessibility:

- PA CareerLink® staff receive regular training on how to support customers with disabilities in accessing online tools and services.
  - Staff are trained to recognize and respond to accommodation requests quickly and effectively.
6. ADA Accommodation Requests:
- An outlined process is in place for customers to request accommodations both in-person and online.
7. Regular ADA Compliance Walk Throughs:
- ADA Walk throughs are done on an annual basis to address compliance and/or provide recommendations regarding accessibility.

Intermediate Unit 1 (IU1) delivers distance learning opportunities through virtual platforms such as Zoom and Google Classroom. These tools allow IU1 to provide remote instruction classes in adult basic education, high school equivalency preparation, and English as a Second Language (ESL). This provides access to services for learners in rural and underserved communities across the local area. To help learners participate in distance learning, IU1 offers a Chromebook loaning program to students. Additionally, supplemental learning resources are available for all students through Aztec for ABE and GED preparation, and Burlington English for ESL instruction.

Literacy Pittsburgh offers distance learning and distance education to all students. Distance education is provided through the Zoom platform for our remote instruction and is supplemented with use of Google Classroom as a learning management system (LMS). Remote instruction is available for our adult basic education, high school equivalency preparation, and English as a Second Language (ESL) programming, helping learners to better access our services across the local area. To help learners participate in distance education, Literacy Pittsburgh has a technology lending program that includes Chromebooks, laptops, tablets, and WIFI hotspots as available. Additionally, supplemental distance learning is available for all students through Essential Education and Khan Academy for ABE and GED preparation and ELLII and USA Learns for ESL instruction.

**Strengthening Workforce System Collaboration and Participation:**

To foster greater collaboration across the workforce system, SCWDB and its Southwest Corner PA CareerLink® offices will:

- Encourage participation in all SCWDB meetings and events by extending invitations to workforce stakeholders, employers, educators, and community partners.
- Enhance communication efforts to widely distribute Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) information, ensuring that employers and job seekers are well-informed of workforce resources and services.
- Utilize electronic distribution methods to share critical workforce publications and updates efficiently.

Through these initiatives, SCWDB aims to increase engagement with the entire regional workforce system, fostering a more inclusive and responsive workforce development network.

**4.6. Transportation and Supportive Services - How will the local board coordinate WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with the provision of transportation and other appropriate supportive services in the local area?**

*[20 CFR § 679.560(b)(10). Reviewed by OS]*

Our Workforce Area benefits from a high level of service integration between WIOA, Wagner-Peyser, Trade Adjustment Act, and other workforce training programs. Our area's workforce system partners, including EARN, Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Basic Literacy Education, Department of Human Services, Community Action, US DOL Veterans, and providers of training actively communicate and coordinate resources, including funding for supportive services and transportation for co-enrolled customers. It can become challenging without this level of coordination, and we are strengthening these relationships through continued communication and planning.

Our Southwest Corner Workforce Development Board, through our PA CareerLink® centers, leverages supportive services provided by all community partners to eliminate job seekers' barriers to employment. Through coordinated and strategic partnerships with PA CareerLink® and a network of providers, the SCWDB ensures that appropriate and necessary services are available to assist adults, dislocated workers, and youth in the Southwest Corner. SCWDB has supported the efforts of the Regional Transportation Alliance of Southwestern Pennsylvania, which is also supported by CLEOs from all of our represented counties Imagine Transportation 2.0: A Vision for a Better Transportation Future initiative. To facilitate remote access to services for members of rural communities, the Federal Communications Commission recently announced an estimated 327,000 rural Americans living and working in Pennsylvania will gain access to high-speed broadband through the Commission's Rural Digital Opportunity Fund Phase I auction. The SCWDB's three counties are all rural and received funding under this initiative to enhance broadband services. This will further enhance access to virtual services for our county's residents.

Local Resource Directories for each of our PA CareerLink® sites are part of our orientation to services and are provided to all individuals during their initial assessment. PA CareerLink® staff will assist with determining service need and provide referrals to other state and local agencies offering supportive services such as transportation, childcare, dependent care, housing, and needs-related payments.

In order to eliminate any duplication of service, identification of available services and/or identification of services that have been exhausted are determined prior to expending program funds for supportive services. Each participant is given individualized case management services and plan development in order to eliminate possible duplication. Supportive services are based on individual participant needs, plan development, and in compliance with local policy and WIOA and any subsequent Federal and/or Commonwealth of Pennsylvania clarifications.

The primary means of facilitating transportation to customers in need is through the use of bus passes or travel reimbursement – both of which are provided on a temporary basis, normally through the first month of employment and in line with the WDA policy. A needs related payment/transportation allowance is paid to WIOA Adult and Youth individuals attending training at least 12 hours a week provided that they are not

working and not receiving unemployment compensation. \$10 a day will be paid for each date of attendance documented on the two-week timesheet that is signed at the school and sent in.

A needs related payment/transportation allowance for WIOA Dislocated Workers will be paid to those attending training at least 12 hours a week provided that they are not working and not receiving unemployment compensation AND they started training by the end of the 13th week following their layoff. \$10 a day will be paid for each date of attendance documented on the two-week timesheet that is signed at the school and sent in. Depending on the grant source and requirements, SCWDB may adjust the supportive services policy accordingly.

In addition to needs related payments, we also offer transportation allowances in the amount of \$5 or \$10 per day (\$10 if > 20 miles' round trip) to participants enrolled in a WIOA classroom training program.

**4.7. Rapid Response - How will the local board coordinate workforce investment activities and ensure they are carried out in the local area with statewide rapid response?**

*[20 CFR § 679.560(b)(7). Reviewed by BWPO]*

Early intervention is of utmost importance when assisting companies and workers that are affected by layoffs, closures, or other unforeseen events. The Southwest Corner Workforce Development Board and the PA CareerLink® centers in our area play a key role in ensuring that needs are identified, and service provision is at the forefront.

The SCWDB is fortunate to have the western regional rapid response coordinator co-located at PA CareerLink® Beaver County. This individual also participates in business services team meetings and quarterly workforce board meetings. When notice of a layoff occurs, The SCWDB's standard operating procedure includes a reciprocal notification relationship with Rapid Response Coordination Services (RRCS) and collaborates to provide a comprehensive strategy and plan for response. This reciprocal agreement enables SCWDB staff who become aware of potential layoffs or closures to notify RRCS.

When the Rapid Response meetings occur (either onsite or virtually), our local Rapid Response Team, (which includes: SCWDB staff, State Rapid Response staff, PA CareerLink® staff – including BWPO staff, Title I staff and Business Services Team reps, Unemployment Compensation and Health Care entities) disseminate information regarding unemployment insurance, pension benefits, health care benefits, education and training services/programs, job search activities, crisis counseling, emergency assistance, and community and economic development activities. The goal is to get workers affected by layoffs engaged in our workforce development system as soon as possible to provide for rapid re-employment and/or re-training. SCWDB's Title I staff then conduct follow up outreach to impacted workers to encourage them to utilize reemployment services and identify next steps.

The Southwest Corner is seeing a number of significant layoffs in our workforce area. Recently, the SCWDB was awarded additional Rapid Response funding to assist with our layoffs. The majority of the funds are to support the training/retraining needs and employment initiatives of the dislocated population.



**4.8. Individuals with Barriers to Employment - What services, activities and program resources will be provided to participants, including those outlined at WIOA Sec. 3(24), Individuals with a Barrier to Employment, and WIOA Sec. 188, in the local area?**

*[Reviewed by BWPO, OVR, and OEO]*

Our PA CareerLink® centers gather information on the populations they serve. We utilize this data to ensure that we provide priority of service as outlined in the Governor’s State Plan, with priority given to veterans, recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, ex-offenders, and individuals who are basic skills deficient. Those found to be 1) Recipients of public assistance, 2) Other low-income individuals, and 3) Individuals who are basic skills deficient will obtain priority of service status. In addition, Veterans will also obtain priority of service status. Priority of service allows eligible individuals to take precedence over non-covered persons in obtaining services.

As per federal guidance in Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 03-15, Veterans and eligible spouses continue to receive priority of service for all DOL-funded job training programs, which include WIOA programs. Veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of public assistance, low income, or basic skills deficient will receive first priority. Non-veterans who are recipients of public assistance, low-income or basic skills deficient will receive second priority. Veterans and eligible spouses not included in priority groups will receive third priority and all other individuals will receive last priority.

The SCWDA will continue to collaborate with all of our many partnering organizations to help individuals with barriers to employment access the essential resources (in addition to utilizing WIOA funds allocated to the region to serve those with barriers to employment) necessary to overcome the barriers to assure that training and placement needs are met with quality employment outcomes.

We will continue to collaborate with the Department of Human Services (DHS) to connect our workforce development services to meet the needs of the individuals we serve. Our EARN providers and TANF Youth Providers and DHS utilize data sharing practices to identify and serve individuals who are dually enrolled.

The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) provides services to individuals with disabilities to help them secure and maintain employment and independence. These services are designed to ensure individuals with disabilities become qualified trained members of the workforce, increasing regional workforce diversity and the overall number of skilled workers available to business in the region. Eligible OVR customers receive multiple, individualized services that may include but not be limited to; diagnostic, vocational counseling and guidance, vocational evaluation, restoration, training, and job placement. Under WIOA, OVR has the ability to provide both eligible and potentially eligible in-school youth with disabilities with Pre-Employment Transition Services to better prepare these students for life after high school. These services may include but not be limited to; paid work experiences, job shadowing, workplace readiness training, and career guidance. OVR also provides multiple services to the business community designed to assist businesses with onboarding pre-screened qualified employees with disabilities.

PA CareerLink® centers are overseen by the competitively-procured One-Stop Operator Consortium. Our PA CareerLink® partners assist in the collaboration and provision of services to the special populations that each

partner serves. The region's PA CareerLink® center staff will collect information to identify clients with barriers to employment.

The SCWDA's PA CareerLink® partnering agencies and organizations (only listed are RSA and Community Partnerships):

**WIOA Title I - Adult/Dislocated Worker/Youth Programs**

- Job Training for Beaver County, Inc.
- Southwest Training Services, Inc.

**WIOA Title II - Adult Basic Literacy Education Programs**

- Intermediate Unit I
- Literacy Pittsburgh

**WIOA Title III - Wagner Peyser**

- Bureau of Workforce Partnership & Operations
- Trade Act

**US DOL Veterans**

**WIOA Title IV Program –OVR and contracted programs serving persons with disabilities:**

- Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Transitional Employment Consultants (TEC)
- Mon Valley Initiative

**WIOA Title V Programs**

- Beaver County Area Agency on Aging
- Southwestern PA Area Agency on Aging
- Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh

**Department of Human Services - County Assistance Offices**

**EARN Program Providers**

- Job Training for Beaver County, Inc.
- Washington Greene County Job Training Agency, Inc.

**Unemployment Compensation**

**TANF Youth Program Providers**

- Job Training for Beaver County, Inc.
- Southwest Training Services, Inc.

**Worker's Compensation Office of Adjudication**

### **Community Development Block Grant and Housing/Homeless Programs**

- Blueprints, Inc.
- Housing Authority of Beaver County

### **Career and Technology Centers**

- Beaver County Career & Technology Center
- Greene County Career & Technology Center
- Mon Valley Career & Technology Center
- Western Area Career & Technology Center

### **Community Colleges**

- Community College of Beaver County

### **Colleges and Universities**

- PennWest University - California
- Rosedale Technical College

### **Business & Technical Schools**

- All State Career School
- Douglas Education Center
- Penn Commercial Business & Technical School

### **Employers/Staffing Agencies**

- Resource MFG
- Express Employment Pros

and, many other agencies, county and community-based organizations and training providers throughout the region.

The following information details the largest population(s) of individuals in the region with barriers to employment. Populations with barriers remain a particular focus of the Southwest Corner workforce system and the WIOA services delivered through the region's PA CareerLink® offices. **These barriers include:**

**Poverty** - Among the factors that often contribute to poverty are unemployment and under-employment. Many people live in poverty because they are unable to find a job that pays a living wage or to find a job at all. In the Southwest Corner the poverty rate was 9.2% in 2019, a slight decrease from 2019 (9.4%). Unemployment in this group dropped slightly from 23.2% in 2019 to 22.6% in 2022. A more substantial 7.4%

drop occurred over the prior five years, showing a continued but stabilizing long-term increase of the working poor in the region.<sup>27</sup>

**Disabilities** - Those with disabilities face a number of barriers to employment, including individual and systemic perceptions and prejudice that make employers hesitant to hire people with disabilities. In the Southwest Corner, individuals with disabilities accounted for 12.2% of the population in 2022, a 3.4% decrease from 2019. The Labor Force Participation Rate is only 42.8% for individuals for disabilities, about half of that for individuals with no disabilities (83.5%). Likewise, the Unemployment Rate for individuals with disabilities is almost three times as high (12.2%) as those without disabilities (4.6%).<sup>28</sup> This combination of barriers makes this population particularly hard to serve.

**Ability to Speak English** - The inability to speak English while living in the U.S. can be a barrier to employment but is not particularly prevalent in the Southwest Corner region. In 2022 there were 3,474 individuals ages 5 and over “who speak English less than very well”, a 6.6% increase over the previous 3 years. However, these individuals account for less than 1% of the region’s population.<sup>29</sup>

**Single Parent Households** – Single parent households struggle with childcare more often than multiple-parent households. During 2019 there were 11,979 single parent households with children under 18 years of age (31% of all family households), a 4.3% decrease since 2019.

**Citizenship and Language Proficiency** - The U.S. Census Bureau reports that there are 2,879<sup>30</sup> individuals living in the region who are not U.S. Citizens. Similarly, the U.S. Census Bureau reports that there are 2,207<sup>31</sup> individuals in the region who speak English less than “Very Well”. The SCWDA notes that lack of English proficiency

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

*[20 CFR § 679.560(b)(5)(iii), 29 CFR § 38.40. Reviewed by OS, BWPO, and OEO]*

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) the Southwest Corner WDB will take steps to ensure that appropriate auxiliary aids and services are made available when necessary to afford an individual with a disability an equal opportunity to participate in and receive benefits of our services as well as provide the following notification on our promotion materials: “Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.”. An “accommodation” line item is part of our PA CareerLink® Memorandum of Understanding to ensure funding is available when needed.

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<sup>27</sup> Source: 2018-2022 (“2022”) 5-Year American Community Survey

<sup>28</sup> Source: 2018-2022 (“2022”) 5-Year American Community Survey

<sup>29</sup> Source: 2018-2022 (“2022”) 5-Year American Community Survey

<sup>30</sup> Source: 2023: ACS 1-Year Estimates Detailed Tables 51601

<sup>31</sup> Source: 2023: ACS 1-Year Estimates Detailed Tables B05001

All Southwest Corner PA CareerLink® locations are accessible for individuals with disabilities. Cross-training for PA CareerLink® partnering staff is conducted by the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation staff (as requested) for the purpose of understanding technology and materials available for customers with disabilities and, most importantly, addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities. Each location is equipped with assistive technology items for persons with disabilities, such as adaptive keyboards and/or adjustable workstations. A Limited English Proficiency policy is developed within each PA CareerLink® center, including the providing of access to language interpretation services. Within the Career Resource Centers in each PA CareerLink® centers, partner staff assist individuals with disabilities and language barriers with registration, computer usage, referrals, and job search activities. These processes are appraised annually through a compliance review and will also be reviewed during the SCWDB PA CareerLink® certification process. SCWDB EEO officer is a member of the review and certification process team to ensure compliance with all required statutes related to these populations.

The Operators shall ensure that all facilities, technology, and services, partner services and outreach materials are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Equal Opportunity (EO) guidelines.

## 5. COMPLIANCE

### 5.1. MOU assessment(s) - Describe the cooperative agreements that define how all local area service providers will carry out the requirements for integration of and access to the entire set of services available in the local area one-stop delivery system.

*[20 CFR § 679.560(b)(13). Reviewed by OS]*

Working under the leadership and role of the One Stop Operator, the local area service providers, through the primary responsible partners in the PA CareerLink® offices, will collaborate and share information, outcomes, and shared resources. This will be expected by all partners throughout the public workforce system. The PA CareerLink® will utilize the expertise of the partner agencies to assist and advise the other partners in the public workforce system regarding the appropriate integration of and access to the entire set of services available in the local area one-stop delivery system. The Memorandum of Understanding will serve as a master agreement and represent the floor of anticipated and expected cooperative and collaborative efforts among all partners. Through the leaderships of SCWDB and PA CareerLink® Operators, Site Administrators have instituted cross-training activities at staff meetings and partner meetings to expand familiarity and continue integration of partner activities.

For example, recognizing the value of and subject matter expert (SME) talent of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation offices and their staff and in accordance with Section 107 of the WIOA legislation, the Board will utilize OVR expertise regarding assessment, career pathways development, education training and placement for individuals with disabilities. OVR has a very effective professional development program that will assist in assuring proper cross training of staff, technical assistance and sharing information. The Board will encourage the sharing of CWDS information that can assist in serving mutual clients. This will provide for significant collaboration and information sharing. With OVR as a partner in the PA CareerLink® and holding a seat on the Board, we are optimistic that this relationship will grow to better serve individuals with disabilities. Similar

professional development and information sharing will be completed by all the partners and other community organizations engaged with activities, services, and assistance in the public workforce system.

OVR has cooperative agreements in place through the PA CareerLink® Business Plan and MOU. These agreements outline the relationship between OVR and the local board. The purpose of the PA CareerLink® is to create a seamless system of service delivery that will enhance access to services while improving long term employment outcomes for both jobseeker and employer customers receiving assistance. As the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation is a partner and a SCWDB Operator, their assistance is sought at all levels to ensure that there is adequate outreach to persons with disabilities, and that services are accessible to all customers. SCWDB, the appropriate SCWDB Committee, and Operator Consortium will ensure that cross-training is established for each PA CareerLink® and its staff. The purpose of the cross-training is to facilitate full access to services and the appropriate exchange of information.

PA CareerLink® and WIOA services will be available to all job seekers, including those with disabilities. Services include, but are not limited to:

- Career Resource Center with career exploration activities, job search (self-directed/ computer-based) via PA CareerLink® online system and job referral with staff help in decision making process;
- Candidate matching/placement assistance;
- Labor market information and job vacancy listings;
- Job seeker workshops;
- Follow-up contact after job placement;
- Case management, job club activities, short-term pre-vocational services, and other intensive services;
- Short-term pre-vocational services such as adult basic education, English as a second language, basic computer literacy, interviewing skills, soft skills, and training services.

OVR also works directly with the Business Services Team, enhancing business outreach; recruitment and referral for job vacancies primarily for targeted business and industry; job candidate qualification review; provision of economic, business and workforce trend data and information; organized service delivery around business and industry needs; referral to human resource and other business services; and job development. The integrated partner resources of the PA CareerLink® system also affords employers with a single contact site for finding qualified candidates, accessing training services and becoming involved in local initiatives. The career resource center will also offer employers Internet access for screening resumes and candidates and for reviewing on-line regional and statewide labor market information on the Commonwealth's CWDS system. There will also be information regarding issues like unemployment insurance, Equal Employment Opportunity, complying with the ADA and available training services.

The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation will identify and service the disabled community and provide business development services, which includes the Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

**5.2. Fiscal responsibility - What is the process the local board uses to ensure the collection of the debts of lower-tier sub-recipients, because of audits?**

*[Reviewed by Fiscal]*

If an audit indicates a debt owed or disallowed cost, staff will follow-up with an on-site monitoring of the issue. Should the monitoring confirm the finding in the audit, a letter would be issued indicating the finding, the amount due to be returned, and a due date. Should this occur, a provider would be noted as “High Risk” in the Risk Assessment stage of monitoring for the next year and monitored accordingly. Any funded disallowed cost will be recaptured through credit of outstanding funds due to sub-recipient. If a sub-recipient is unable to repay or unwilling to agree to contractually agreed upon recollection methods, SCWDB will seek advice of solicitor and work with the PA Department of L&I to achieve an effective and full correction of disallowed, illegal, or misspent funds.

**5.3. High-performing board attainment - What action(s) is the local board taking (or will take) towards becoming or remaining a high- performing board?**

*[20 CFR § 679.560(b)(17). Reviewed by PA WDB]*

The Board is currently functioning as a high-performing Board in that it consistently achieves the following:

- Attains the Governor’s goals as described in the PA Combined Plan;
- Meets the local area negotiated federal performance goals;
- Sustains fiscal integrity;
- Receives successful monitoring reports and other evaluations by federal and Commonwealth oversight staff
- Researches new and/or improved methods to assist individuals with barriers to employment;
- Achieves training expenditure targets; *and*
- Develops sector initiatives, administers four Industry Partnerships
- Expanding its collaboration with the other local workforce boards that are contiguous with the Southwest Region, to implement broader-based regional workforce initiatives; and
- In the future, it will implement the actions necessary to remain a high-performing Board in accordance with any guidance that may be issued by the Commonwealth. In the meantime, it is researching the following types of activities for action:
  - Increasing the use of technology to further improve access for customers, including returning citizens, those with disabilities, and others with barriers to employment, including ESL customers

The SCWDB understands its development and leadership role in aligning, guiding and directing the county(s) public workforce system through strategic funding allocation, sharing of labor market information and other LMI intelligence, and maintaining a strong performance accountability system. Through this multi-faceted approach, the Board will work closely with all contracted service providers to ensure optimal services to job seekers and employers. Working as a team leader with all contracted partners, the Board will utilize the performance accountability measures, employer satisfaction and effective sector engagement as a basis of continuous improvement for all partners involved in the system. The SCWDB also maintains an effective and

efficient procurement system that will be utilized to continually identify those contracted providers that are most competitive in providing high quality services to job seekers and employers.

**5.4. Public Notice - What is the process the local board uses to provide a 30-day public comment period prior to submission of the plan, and describe the opportunity for input into the development of the local area plan, particularly for representatives of business, education, labor organizations, program partners, public agencies, and community stakeholders? [20 CFR § 679.560(b)(19). Reviewed by PPCS]**

The SCWDB conducted a survey of all IP employers, board employers and other local employers that engage with us to gather input for our final WIOA Local Plan submission. This survey will provide an opportunity for individuals and organizations across our network of stakeholders and partners to provide input about workforce priorities and strategies. We have engaged representatives from business, education, labor organizations, program partners, public agencies, local transportation agencies, our local management committee members, and other community stakeholders to share insights and recommendations that will shape our plan. This collaborative approach ensures that our local workforce development strategies are responsive and aligned with the needs of our region.

The SCWDB WDB's process to obtain input on this Plan includes:

- **Public Notice:** A notice is published in regional newspapers, as well as on our website [www.southwestcornerwdb.com](http://www.southwestcornerwdb.com) announcing the release date of the draft Plan with the opportunity to provide comments. Hard copies of the plan were also made available at our Southwest Corner Workforce Development Board office for 30 days.
- **30-Day Comment Period:** The date on which the Plan is released and made available to the public marks the start of a 30-day public comment period during which comments on the published draft are accepted.
- **All comments** should be sent to:  
**Ami Gatts**, Director  
Southwest Corner Workforce Development Board  
351 West Beau Street, Suite 300  
Washington, PA 15301  
[agatts@washingtongreene.org](mailto:agatts@washingtongreene.org)



**ATTACHMENT 1**

WIOA Title I Performance Accountability Table

**ATTACHMENT 2**

Southwest Corner Workforce Development Area Organizational Chart

**ATTACHMENT 3**

PA CareerLink® Workforce Service Delivery System Program Partner/Provider List

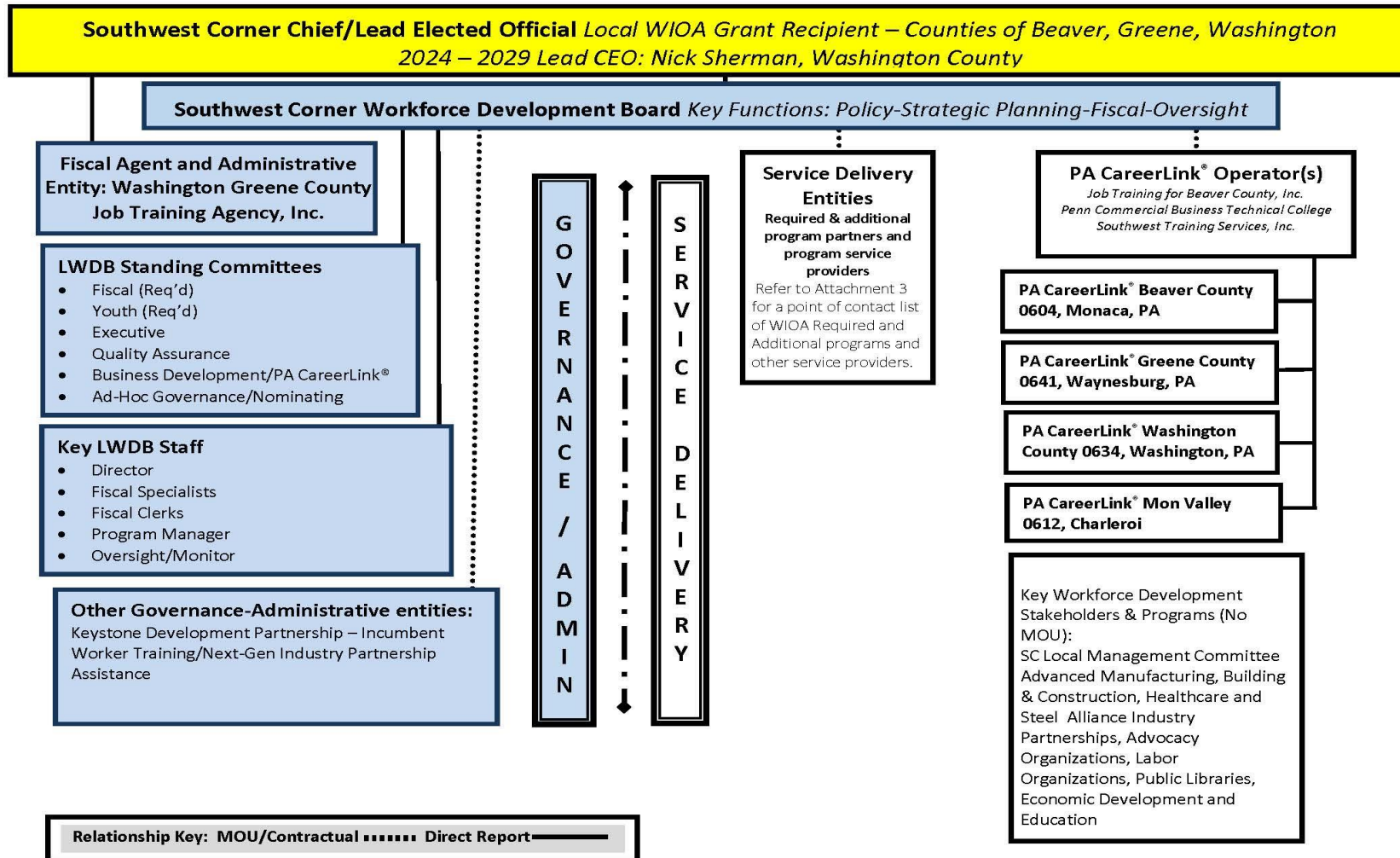
**ATTESTATIONS**

**WIOA Title I Performance Accountability Table**

**ATTACHMENT 1**

Table A	LWDA Name: Southwest Corner Workforce Development Board		
WIOA Title I Programs (Adult-Dislocated Worker- Youth) Performance Measures	<u>Attained Performance Results</u>	<u>Negotiated Performance Goals</u>	<u>Negotiated Performance Goals</u>
	*Program Year 2023	*Program Year 2024	*Program Year 2025
<b>Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)</b>			
Adult	79.1%	77.5%	80.0%
Dislocated Worker	91.4%	86.0%	87.0%
Youth	87.9%	83.0%	83.0%
<b>Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)</b>			
Adult	83.6%	79.0%	79.5%
Dislocated Worker	87.8%	86.0%	87.0%
Youth	88.5%	81.0%	82.0%
<b>Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)</b>			
Adult	\$9,907	\$8,200	\$8,300
Dislocated Worker	\$11,230	\$10,400	\$10,500
Youth	\$4,547	\$4,000	\$4,250
<b>Credential Attainment Rate</b>			
Adult	68.9%	75.0%	76.0%
Dislocated Worker	81.4%	80.5%	81.0%
Youth	92.2%	84.0%	85.0%
<b>Measurable Skill Gains</b>			
Adult	74.4%	69.0%	70.0%
Dislocated Worker	82.6%	75.0%	76.0%
Youth	83.6%	75.0%	76.0%

Southwest Corner Workforce Development Area Organizational Chart



## ATTACHMENT 3

### PA CareerLink® Workforce Service Delivery System Program Partner/Provider List

Local Workforce Development Area name: **Southwest Corner Workforce Development Area**

Effective Date: **July 1, 2024 as listed in the MOU as of June 30, 2025**

#### PA CareerLink® Beaver County

Program/Program Authorization	Local Partner	Address	Contact Information
Youth Workforce Investment Activities <i>WIOA Title I, Subtitle B, Chapter 2, EARN</i>	Southwest Corner Workforce Development Board	351 West Beau Street, Suite 300 Washington, PA 15301	Ami Gatts 724-229-5083 x 16 agatts@washingtongreene.org
	Job Training for Beaver County, Inc.	285 Beaver Valley Mall Monaca, PA 15061	Rich Strother 724.728.4860 x 230 rstrother@jtbc.org
Adult/Dislocated Worker Employment and Training Activities <i>WIOA Title I, Subtitle B, Chapter 3, EARN</i>	Southwest Corner Workforce Development Board	351 West Beau Street, Suite 300, Washington, PA 15301	Ami Gatts 724-229-5083 x 16 agatts@washingtongreene.org
	Job Training for Beaver County, Inc.	285 Beaver Valley Mall Monaca, PA 15061	Rich Strother 724.728.4860 x 230 rstrother@jtbc.org
Adult Education and Literacy Activities <i>WIOA Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program</i>	Literacy Pittsburgh	411 Seventh Avenue Ste. 525 Pittsburgh, PA 15219	Lori Como 412-393-7640 lcomo@literacypittsburgh.org
Vocational Rehabilitation State Grant Programs <i>Title I of the Rehabilitation act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 720 et. seq.), as amended by WIOA Title IV</i>	Commonwealth of PA Office of Vocational Rehabilitation	1745 Frew Mill Rd # 1 New Castle, PA 16101	Gail Steck 724-656-3070 gsteck@pa.gov
Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) <i>Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et. seq.)</i>	Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh	The Warner Center 332 Fifth Avenue Fourth Floor Pittsburgh, PA 15222	Carlos Carter 412-227-4210 ccarter@ulpgh.org
Post-Secondary Career & Technical Education (Carl Perkins) <i>Carl D. Perkins Vocational &amp; Applied Technology Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et. seq.) and (as amended Pub. L. No. 155-224)</i>	Community College of Beaver County	Maintenance Center 1 Campus Drive Monaca, PA 15061	Shelly Moore 724-480-3410 shelly.moore@ccbc.edu
Trade Adjustment Act (TAA) <i>Title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et. seq.)</i>	Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations	285 Beaver Valley Mall Monaca, PA 15061	Jeff Dick 724-434-5627 x 3106 jedick@pa.gov
Employment and Training Activities carried out under the Community Service Block Grant <i>Community Services Block Grant Act (CSBG) (42 U.S.C. 9901 et. seq.)</i>	Beaver County Community Services Program	Beaver County Courthouse 810 Third Street Beaver, PA 15009	Marlene Landrum 724-770-2046 mlandrum@beavercountypa.gov

<p>Programs authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act</p> <p><i>Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et. seq.), as amended by WIOA Title III</i></p>	<p>Bureau of Workforce Partnerships and Operations</p>	<p>285 Beaver Valley Mall Monaca, PA 15061</p>	<p>Jeff Dick 724-434-5627 x 3106 jedick@pa.gov</p>
<p>State Unemployment Compensation Program</p> <p><i>Social Security Act 9 of 1935 (Title III, IX, and XII) and Federal Unemployment Tax Act (FUTA) of 1939</i></p>	<p>PA State Unemployment Compensation</p>	<p>651 Boas Street Harrisburg, PA 17121</p>	<p>Maria Macis 717-783-1972 mamacis@pa.gov</p>
<p>Temporary Assistance for Needy Families</p> <p><i>43 U.S.C. 601 et. seq.</i></p>	<p>PA Department of Human Services</p>	<p>171 Virginia Avenue Rochester, PA 15074</p>	<p>Dean Richmond 717-787-8307 drichmond@pa.gov</p>
<p>Native American Training Programs</p> <p><i>WIOA Title I, Sec. 166 (29 U.S.C. 3221)</i></p>	<p>Council of Three Rivers American Indian Center, Inc.</p>	<p>120 Charles Street Pittsburgh, PA 15238</p>	<p>Kerry Jevsevar 412-782-4457 x 219 kjevsevar@cotraic.org</p>
<p>Job Corps Training Program</p> <p><i>WIOA Title I, Subtitle C</i></p>	<p>The Pittsburgh Job Corps Center</p>	<p>7175 Highland Drive Pittsburgh, PA 15206</p>	<p>Bob Gottschalk 412-365-6868 gottschalk.bob@jobcorps.org</p>
<p>US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)</p> <p><i>Employment and Training activities carried out under Department of Housing and Urban Development</i></p>	<p>Housing Authority of the County of Beaver</p>	<p>300 State Avenue Beaver, PA 15009</p>	<p>Kathy Walter 724-775-1220 kwalter@beavercountyhousing.org</p>
<p>Jobs for Veterans State Grants</p> <p><i>38 U.S.C. Chapter 41</i></p>	<p>Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations</p>	<p>285 Beaver Valley Mall Monaca, PA 15061</p>	<p>Jeff Dick 724-434-5627 x 3106 jedick@pa.gov</p>
<p>Second Chance Act</p> <p><i>Second Chance Act of 2007, Sec. 212 (42 U.S.C. 17532) and WIOA Title I, Sec. 169</i></p>	<p>Beaver County Behavioral Health and Development Services</p>	<p>1070 Eighth Avenue 2nd Floor Beaver Falls, PA 15010</p>	<p>Gerard Mike 724-891-2827 gmike@bcbh.org</p>
<p>Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers Program</p> <p><i>WIOA Title I, Sec. 167</i></p>	<p>Pathstone</p>	<p>400 East Avenue Rochester, NY 14607</p>	<p>Tracy Jones 610-925-5600 tjones@pathstone.org</p>
<p>**Additional Partner</p>	<p>Workers Compensation</p>	<p>1171 S Cameron Street Harrisburg, PA 17104</p>	<p>Jeff Dick 724-434-5627 x 3106 jedick@pa.gov</p>
<p>**Additional Partner</p>	<p>Rapid Response</p>	<p>Rapid Response Services PA Department of Labor &amp; Industry 651 Boas Street, Room 1220 Harrisburg, PA 17121</p>	<p>Jeff Dick 724-434-5627 x 3106 jedick@pa.gov</p>

**Additional Partner	PA Unemployment Compensation Board of Review	651 Boas Street Harrisburg, PA 17121	Maria Macis 717-783-1972 mamacis@pa.gov
**Additional Partner	Department of Agriculture	2301 N Cameron Street Harrisburg, PA 17110	Sara Gligora 717-346-0426 sgligora@pa.gov

*The following required partners are not located in the SCWDB service region and therefore not represented in the local service system. Referrals to neighboring service providers are available upon request; YouthBuild Program.*

**PA CareerLink® Greene County**

<b>Program/Program Authorization</b>	<b>Local Partner</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Contact Person</b>
Youth Workforce Investment Activities <i>WIOA Title I, Subtitle B, Chapter 2</i>	Southwest Corner Workforce Development Board  Southwest Training Services, Inc.	351 West Beau Street Suite 300 Washington, PA 15301  90 W Chestnut Street Suite 150 Lower Level Washington, PA 15301	Ami Gatts 724-229-5083 x 16 agatts@washingtongreene.org  Lisa Neil 724-229-1350 x 237 lneil@swtraining.org
Adult/Dislocated Worker Employment and Training Activities <i>WIOA Title I, Subtitle B, Chapter 3</i>	Southwest Corner Workforce Development Board  Southwest Training Services, Inc.	351 West Beau Street Suite 300 Washington, PA 15301  90 W Chestnut Street Suite 150 Lower Level Washington, PA 15301	Ami Gatts 724-229-5083 x 16 agatts@washingtongreene.org  Lisa Neil 724-229-1350 x 237 lneil@swtraining.org
Adult Education and Literacy Activities <i>WIOA Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program</i>	Intermediate Unit #1	1 Intermediate Unit Dr. #1 Coal Center, PA 15423	Rachel Zilcosky 724-938-3241 x 276 Rachel.Zilcosky@iu1.org
Vocational Rehabilitation State Grant Programs <i>Title I of the Rehabilitation act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 720 et. seq.), as amended by WIOA Title IV</i>	Commonwealth of PA Office of Vocational Rehabilitation	201 West Wheeling Street Washington, PA 15301	Darla Openbrier 724-223-4430 x 251 dopenbrier@pa.gov
Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) <i>Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et. seq.)</i>	Southwestern PA Area Agency on Aging, Inc.	305 Chamber Plaza Charleroi, PA 15022	Mary Harris 724-489-8080 harris@swpa-aaa.org
Jobs for Veterans State Grants <i>38 U.S.C. Chapter 41</i>	Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations	200 Greene Plaza Waynesburg, PA 15370	Jeff Dick 724-434-5627 x 3106 jedick@pa.gov
Employment and Training Activities carried out under the Community Service Block Grant <i>Community Services Block Grant Act (CSBG) (42 U.S.C. 9901 et. seq.)</i>	Blueprints, Inc.	150 West Beau Street #106 Washington, PA 15301	Trenna Passalaqua 724- 225-9550 tpassalaqua@myblueprints.org
State Unemployment Compensation Program <i>Social Security Act 9 of 1935 (Title III, IX, and XII) and Federal Unemployment Tax Act (FUTA) of 1939</i>	PA State Unemployment Compensation	651 Boas Street Harrisburg, PA 17121	Maria Macis 717-783-1972 mamacis@pa.gov

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families <i>43 U.S.C. 601 et. seq.</i>	PA Department of Human Services	100 Greene Plaza Waynesburg, PA 15370	Dana Valente 724-953-4435 dvalente@pa.gov
Programs authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act <i>Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et. seq.), as amended by WIOA Title III</i>	Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations	200 Greene Plaza Waynesburg, PA 15370	Jeff Dick 724-434-5627 x 3106 jedick@pa.gov
Native American Training Programs <i>WIOA Title I, Sec. 166 (29 U.S.C. 3221)</i>	Council of Three Rivers American Indian Center, Inc.	120 Charles Street Pittsburgh, PA 15238	Kerry Jevsevar 412-782-4457 x 219 kjevsevar@cotraic.org
Job Corps Training Program <i>WIOA Title I, Subtitle C</i>	The Pittsburgh Job Corps Center	7175 Highland Drive Pittsburgh, PA 15206	Bob Gottschalk 412-365-6868 gottschalk.bob@jobcorps.org
Trade Adjustment Act (TAA) <i>Title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et. seq.)</i>	Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations	200 Greene Plaza, Waynesburg, PA 15370	Jeff Dick 724-434-5627 x 3106 jedick@pa.gov
US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) <i>Employment and Training activities carried out under Department of Housing and Urban Development</i>	Blueprints, Inc.	150 W Beau St #106 Washington, PA 15301	Trenna Passalaqua 724- 225-9550 tpassalaqua@myblueprints.org
Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers Program <i>WIOA Title I, Sec. 167</i>	Pathstone	400 East Avenue Rochester, NY 14607	Tracy Jones 610-925-5600 tjones@pathstone.org
Post-Secondary Career & Technical Education (Carl Perkins) <i>Carl D. Perkins Vocational &amp; Applied Technology Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et. seq.) and (as amended Pub. L. No. 155-224)</i>	Greene County Career & Technology Center	60 Zimmerman Drive Waynesburg, PA 15370	Mark Krupa 724-627-3106 krupam@greenectc.org
**Additional Partner	Rapid Response	Rapid Response Services PA Department of Labor & Industry 651 Boas Street, Room 1220 Harrisburg, PA 17121	Jeff Dick 724-434-5627 x3106 jedick@pa.gov
EARN	Washington Greene County Job Training Agency, Inc.	351 West Beau Street, Suite 300 Washington, PA 15301	Ami Gatts 724-229-5083 x 16 agatts@washingtongreene.org
**Additional Partner	Penn Commercial	242 Oak Spring Road Washington, PA 15301	Marianne Albert 724-222-5330 x 228 malbert@penncommercial.edu



**Additional Partner	JENNMAR Services	160 Technology Drive Ste 202 Canonsburg, PA 15317	Stacey Parker 724-514-7656 sparker@jenmar.com
**Additional Partner	All State Career School	1200 Lebanon Road #101 West Mifflin, PA 15122	Stephanie Sedar 412-823-1818 stephanie.sedar@allstatecareer.edu
**Additional Partner	Department of Agriculture	2301 N Cameron Street Harrisburg, PA 17110	Sara Gligora 717-346-0426 sgligora@pa.gov
**Additional Partner	Westmoreland County Community College Senior Community Service Employment Program	145 Pavilion Lane Youngwood, PA 15697	Debra Woods 724-925-4027 woodsde@westmoreland.edu

*The following required partners are not located in the SCWDB service region and therefore not represented in the local service system. Referrals to neighboring service providers are available upon request: YouthBuild Program; Reintegration of Offenders Programs.*

**PA CareerLink® Washington County**

<b>Program/Program Authorization</b>	<b>Local Partner</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Contact Person</b>
Youth Workforce Investment Activities  <i>WIOA Title I, Subtitle B, Chapter 2</i>	Southwest Corner Workforce Development Board	351 West Beau Street Suite 300 Washington, PA 15301	Ami Gatts 724-229-5083 x 16 agatts@washingtongreene.org
	Southwest Training Services, Inc.	90 W Chestnut Street Suite 150 Lower-Level Washington, PA 15301	Lisa Neil 724-229-1350 x 237 lneil@swtraining.org
Adult/Dislocated Worker Employment and Training Activities  <i>WIOA Title I, Subtitle B, Chapter 3</i>	Southwest Corner Workforce Development Board	351 West Beau Street Suite 300 Washington, PA 15301	Ami Gatts 724-229-5083 x 16 agatts@washingtongreene.org
	Southwest Training Services, Inc.	90 W Chestnut Street Suite 150 Lower-Level Washington, PA 15301	Lisa Neil 724-229-1350 x 237 lneil@swtraining.org
Adult Education and Literacy Activities  <i>WIOA Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program</i>	Intermediate Unit # 1	1 Intermediate Unit Drive #1 Coal Center, PA 15423	Rachel Zilcosky 724-938-3241 x 276 Rachel.Zilcosky@iu1.org
Vocational Rehabilitation State Grant Programs  <i>Title I of the Rehabilitation act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 720 et. seq.), as amended by WIOA Title IV</i>	PA Office of Vocational Rehabilitation	201 West Wheeling Street Washington, PA 15301	Darla Openbrier 724-223-4430 x 251 dopenbrier@pa.gov
Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)  <i>Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et. seq.)</i>	Southwestern PA Area Agency Aging, Inc.	305 Chamber Plaza Charleroi, PA 15022	Mary Harris 724-489-8080 harris@swpa-aaa.org
Trade Adjustment Act (TAA)  <i>Title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et. seq.)</i>	Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations	90 W Chestnut Street Suite 150 Lower-Level Washington, PA 15301	Jeff Dick 724-434-5627 x 3106 jedick@pa.gov
Jobs for Veterans State Grants  <i>38 U.S.C. Chapter 41</i>	Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations	90 W Chestnut Street Suite 150 Lower-Level Washington, PA 15301	Jeff Dick 724-434-5627 x 3106 jedick@pa.gov
Employment and Training Activities carried out under the Community Service Block Grant  <i>Community Services Block Grant Act (CSBG) (42 U.S.C. 9901 et. seq.)</i>	Blueprints, Inc.	150 W Beau Street #106 Washington, PA 15301	Trenna Passalaqua 724- 225-9550 tpassalaqua@myblueprints.org
State Unemployment Compensation Program  <i>Social Security Act 9 of 1935 (Title III, IX, and XII) and Federal Unemployment Tax Act (FUTA) of 1939</i>	PA State Unemployment Compensation	651 Boas Street Harrisburg, PA 17121	Maria Macis 717-783-1972 mamacis@pa.gov

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families <i>43 U.S.C. 601 et. seq.</i>	PA Department of Human Services	95 West Beau Street Suite 300 Washington, PA 15301	Susan Kretz 717-787-8307 skretz@pa.gov
Programs authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act <i>Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et. seq.), as amended by WIOA Title III</i>	Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations	90 W Chestnut Street Suite 150 Lower-Level Washington, PA 15301	Jeff Dick 724-434-5627 x 3106 jedick@pa.gov
Native American Training Programs <i>WIOA Title I, Sec. 166 (29 U.S.C. 3221)</i>	Council of Three Rivers American Indian Center	120 Charles Street Pittsburgh, PA 15238	Kerry Jevsevar 412-782-4457 x 219 kjevsevar@cotraic.org
Job Corps Training Program <i>WIOA Title I, Subtitle C</i>	The Pittsburgh Job Corps Center	7175 Highland Drive Pittsburgh, PA 15206	Bob Gottschalk 412-365-6868 gottschalk.bob@jobcorps.org
US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) <i>Employment and Training activities carried out under Department of Housing and Urban Development</i>	Blueprints, Inc.	150 W Beau Street #106 Washington, PA 15301	Trenna Passalaqua 724- 225-9550 tpassalaqua@myblueprints.org
Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers Program <i>WIOA Title I, Sec. 167</i>	Pathstone	400 East Avenue Rochester, NY 14607	Tracy Jones 610-925-5600 tjones@pathstone.org
Post-Secondary Career & Technical Education (Carl Perkins) <i>Carl D. Perkins Vocational &amp; Applied Technology Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et. seq.) and (as amended Pub. L. No. 155-224)</i>	Community College of Allegheny County		Beth Ison 412-237-3013 bison@ccac.edu
**Additional Partner	Rapid Response	Rapid Response Services PA Department of Labor & Industry 651 Boas Street, Room 1220 Harrisburg, PA 17121	Jeff Dick 724-434-5627 x 3106 jedick@pa.gov
EARN	Washington Greene County Job Training Agency, Inc.	351 West Beau Street Suite 300 Washington, PA 15301	Ami Gatts 724-229-5083 x 16 agatts@washingtongreene.org
**Additional Partner	All State Career School	1200 Lebanon Rd #101 West Mifflin, PA 15122	Stephanie Sedar 412-823-1818 stephanie.sedar@allstatecareer.edu
**Additional Partner	Western Area Career & Technology Center	688 Western Avenue Canonsburg, PA 15317	Michael Milanovich 724-746-2890 x 114 mmilanovich@wactc.net
**Additional Partner	Douglas Education Center	130 7th Street Monessen, PA 15062	Tony Baez Milan 724-684-3684

			tbaez@dec.edu
**Additional Partner	Penn Commercial	242 Oak Spring Road Washington, PA 15301	Marianne Albert 724-222-5330 x 228 malbert@penncommercial.edu
**Additional Partner	PennWest University California	250 University Avenue California, PA 15419	LaTrobe Barnitz 814-676-6591 lbarnitz@pennwest.edu
**Additional Partner**Additional Partner	Department of Agriculture	2301 N Cameron Street Harrisburg, PA 17110	Sara Gligora 717-346-0426 sgligora@pa.gov
**Additional Partner	Rosedale Technical College	215 Beecham Drive Pittsburgh, PA 15201	Denis Wilke 412-521-6200 Kim.bell@rosedaletech.org

*The following required partners are not located in the SCWDB service region and therefore not represented in the local service system. Referrals to neighboring service providers are available upon request: YouthBuild Program; Reintegration of Offenders Programs.*

**PA CareerLink® Mon Valley**

<b>Program/Program Authorization</b>	<b>Local Partner</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Contact Person</b>
Youth Workforce Investment Activities <i>WIOA Title I, Subtitle B, Chapter 2</i>	Southwest Corner Workforce Development Board	351 West Beau Street Suite 300 Washington, PA 15301	Ami Gatts 724-229-5083 x 16 agatts@washingtongreene.org
	Southwest Training Services, Inc.	90 West Chestnut Street Suite 150 Lower-Level Washington, PA 15301	Lisa Neil 724-229-1350 x 237 lneil@swtraining.org
Adult/Dislocated Worker Employment and Training Activities <i>WIOA Title I, Subtitle B, Chapter 3</i>	Southwest Corner Workforce Development Board	351 West Beau Street Suite 300 Washington, PA 15301	Ami Gatts 724-229-5083 x 16 agatts@washingtongreene.org
	Southwest Training Services, Inc.	90 West Chestnut Street Suite 150 Lower-Level Washington, PA 15301	Lisa Neil 724-229-1350 x 237 lneil@swtraining.org
Adult Education and Literacy Activities <i>WIOA Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program</i>	Intermediate Unit # 1	1 Intermediate Unit Drive #1 Coal Center, PA 15423	Rachel Zilcosky 724-938-3241 x 276 Rachel.Zilcosky@iu1.org
Vocational Rehabilitation State Grant Programs <i>Title I of the Rehabilitation act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 720 et. seq.), as amended by WIOA Title IV</i>	PA Office of Vocational Rehabilitation	201 W Wheeling Street Washington, PA 15301	Darla Openbrier 724-223-4430 x251 dopenbrier@pa.gov
Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) <i>Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et. seq.)</i>	Southwestern PA Area Agency Aging, Inc.	305 Chamber Plaza Charleroi, PA 15022	Mary Harris 724-489-8080 harris@swpa-aaa.org
Trade Adjustment Act (TAA) <i>Title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et. seq.)</i>	Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations	130 McKean Avenue Charleroi, PA 15022	Jeff Dick 724-434-5627 x 3106 jedick@pa.gov
Employment and Training Activities carried out under the Community Service Block Grant <i>Community Services Block Grant Act (CSBG) (42 U.S.C. 9901 et. seq.)</i>	Blueprints, Inc.	150 W Beau Street #106 Washington, PA 15301	Trenna Passalaqua 724- 225-9550 tpassalaqua@myblueprints.org
State Unemployment Compensation Program <i>Social Security Act 9 of 1935 (Title III, IX, and XII) and Federal Unemployment Tax Act (FUTA) of 1939</i>	PA State Unemployment Compensation	651 Boas Street Harrisburg, PA 17121	Maria Macis 717-783-1972 mamacis@pa.gov
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families <i>43 U.S.C. 601 et. seq.</i>	PA Department of Human Services	130 McKean Avenue Charleroi, PA 15022	Susan Kretz 724-223-4311 skretz@pa.gov

Programs authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act <i>Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et. seq.), as amended by WIOA Title III</i>	Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations	130 McKean Avenue Charleroi, PA 15022	Jeff Dick 724-434-5627 x 3106 jedick@pa.gov
Native American Training Programs <i>WIOA Title I, Sec. 166 (29 U.S.C. 3221)</i>	Council of Three Rivers American Indian Center	120 Charles Street Pittsburgh, PA 15238	Kerry Jevsevar 412-782-4457 x 219 kjevsevar@cotraic.org
Job Corps Training Program <i>WIOA Title I, Subtitle C</i>	The Pittsburgh Job Corps Center	7175 Highland Drive Pittsburgh, PA 15206	Bob Gottschalk 412-365-6868 gottschalk.bob@jobcorps.org
US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) <i>Employment and Training activities carried out under Department of Housing and Urban Development</i>	Blueprints, Inc.	150 W Beau Street #106 Washington, PA 15301	Trenna Passalaqua 724- 225-9550 tpassalaqua@myblueprints.org
Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers Program <i>WIOA Title I, Sec. 167</i>	Pathstone	400 East Avenue Rochester, NY 14607	Tracy Jones 610-925-5600 tjones@pathstone.org
Jobs for Veterans State Grants <i>38 U.S.C. Chapter 41</i>	Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations	90 W Chestnut Street Suite 150 Lower-Level Washington, PA 15301	Jeff Dick 724-434-5627 x 3106 jedick@pa.gov
**Additional Partner	Rapid Response	Rapid Response Services PA Department of Labor & Industry 651 Boas Street, Room 1220 Harrisburg, PA 17121	Jeff Dick 724-434-5627 x 3106 jedick@pa.gov
EARN	Washington Greene County Job Training Agency, Inc.	351 West Beau Street Suite 300 Washington, PA 15301	Ami Gatts 724-229-5083 x 16 agatts@washingtongreene.org
**Additional Partner	Transitional Employment Consultants (TEC)	330 Central Avenue Washington, PA 15301	Kendra Casella 724-225-3535 kcasella@tecwg.org
**Additional Partner	Douglas Education Center	130 7th Street Monessen, PA 15062	Tony Baez Milan 724-684-3684 tbaez@dec.edu
**Additional Partner	Penn Commercial	242 Oak Spring Road Washington, PA 15301	Marianne Albert 724-222-5330 x 228 malbert@penncommercial.edu
**Additional Partner	PennWest University California	250 University Avenue California, PA 15419	LaTrobe Barnitz 814-676-6591 lbarnitz@pennwest.edu
**Additional Partner	Mon Valley Career & Technology Center	5 Guttman Ave, Charleroi, PA 15022	Neil Henehan 724-489-9581 nhenehan@monvalleyctc.org

**Additional Partner	Mon Valley Initiative	303-305 E 8th Ave #305, Homestead, PA 15120	Laura Zinski 412-464-4000 zinski@monvalleyinitiative.com
**Additional Partner	Department of Agriculture	2301 N Cameron Street Harrisburg, PA 17110	Sara Gligora 717-346-0426 sgligora@pa.gov

*The following required partners are not located in the SCWDB service region and therefore not represented in the local service system. Referrals to neighboring service providers are available upon request: YouthBuild Program; Reintegration of Offenders Programs.*

## ATTESTATIONS

By checking the box adjacent to each line item, the local board attests to ensuring the compliance components and documents listed are (or will be) in place and effective prior to June 30, 2025.

**In the rare circumstance that something is not applicable, the local board must write “N/A” next to adjacent line item.**

The following components and documents, including local workforce system policies, must be reviewed and revised as to be aligned with WIOA for the current planning cycle unless it is established as a best practice. Each item must be available to L&I at any time during the planning process and monitoring or auditing processes. L&I is not requiring copies of such documents to be attached to regional or local area plans at this time.

- 
- x The Southwest Corner Local Workforce Development Area attests that each of the below referenced policies contain any required language or content and were last revised, if necessary, by this plan’s effective date.
  - x Agreement between all counties and other local governments, if applicable, establishing the consortium of local and chief elected officials.
  - x Agreement between the chief elected official(s) and the fiscal agent if a fiscal agent is designated.
  - x Agreement between the local area elected official(s) and the LWDB.
  - x LWDB policy and process that provides for nomination, appointment, and removal of board members; resolutions; bylaws; code of conduct; and conflict of interest.
  - x Financial management policy and process including cost allocation plan; internal controls; cash management; receipts of goods; cost reimbursement; inventory and equipment; program income; travel reimbursement; audit requirements and resolution; annual report; property management; debt collection; and allowable costs.
  - x Local area procurement policy that must describe formal procurement procedures.
  - x Local area MOU.
  - x Program management policies and processes must include equal opportunity for customers; complaints and grievances; supportive services; one-stop operator local firewall (if applicable); file management; eligibility determination and verification; self-sufficiency criteria; self-attestation and certification random sampling; priority of service; training verification/refunds; individual training accounts; contracts for training services; statewide training providers list and eligibility verification; local area training provider list and eligibility criteria and process; “additional assistance” definition; work-based training policies including incumbent worker training, OJT, CT, and apprenticeship.
  - x It is best practice to have a risk management policy and process including records retention and public access; public records requests; monitoring, grievance; incident; and disaster recovery plan.
  - x It is best practice to have a human resources policy and process including employee classification; benefits; holidays and PTO; recruitment and selection; employee development; discipline; layoffs, terminations, and severance; sexual harassment; and equal opportunity and non-discrimination.
  - x It is best practice to have professional services contract(s) for administrative services such as staffing and payroll, if applicable.