



July 1, 2023

Mike Narcavage, WDB Chairperson  
Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission  
312 Main Street  
Towanda, PA 18848

Dear Mr. Narcavage,

The Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry, or Department, has approved the Northern Tier Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Program Year (PY) 2021-2024 local plan modification with conditions. Please see a copy of the "conditions" attached. A local plan modification must be fully compliant with all federal and state statutes, regulations, policies, and grant agreements to receive full approval by the Department.

Currently, the Department is coordinating with representatives of Northern Tier to finalize components of the local area plan modification. Conditional approval is effective through the end of the calendar year (i.e., December 31, 2023). Upon acceptance of all required items by the Department, the local plan modification will be fully ratified and full approval will be extended through June 30, 2025.

Approval of this plan modification does not constitute approval of any practice that conflicts with federal and state statutes, regulations, or policies, nor does approval preclude the commonwealth from, at its discretion, readdressing any part of the plan if content is found that conflicts with such statutes, regulations, or policies.

You and your staff are to be commended for your successful efforts to develop the PY 2021-2024 Local Plan Modification in alignment with WIOA and the commonwealth's WIOA Combined State Plan Modification.

Please direct specific questions regarding your plan, the planning process and/or future requests for plan modification to Christopher Manlove at (717) 787-9804 or [cmanlove@pa.gov](mailto:cmanlove@pa.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brenda Dupstadt". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Brenda Dupstadt  
Bureau of Workforce Development Administration Director

cc: Honorable Thomas Henry, Chairman, Wyoming County Commissioner, LWDA Chief Elected Officer (CEO)  
Melissa Fleming, Deputy Director, Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission



# **Northern Tier Workforce Development Board**

## **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Local Plan Modification**

**Effective Dates: July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2025**

**Public Comment Period:**

**July 8, 2023 – August 6, 2023**



Local Workforce Development Area name: Northern Tier Workforce Development Board

Effective Date: July 1, 2023

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

**1.1. Identify the composition of the local area’s population and labor force.**

The Northern Tier Region is a 4,000-square-mile rural area located in northcentral Pennsylvania which includes Bradford, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Tioga and Wyoming Counties. These counties constitute both the Workforce Delivery Area and the Local Development District. The Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission (NTRPDC) houses the community, economic and workforce development programs for the region. With approximately 171,112 residents, the Northern Tier has a low population density. Area residents live in small communities spread over large tracts of agricultural land and forests.

**Population**

The population in the Northern Tier Region has declined since the 2010 census and is projected to continue that trend over the next five years, while the population in Pennsylvania is projected to grow slightly. The population in the Northern Tier changed from 179,014 to 173,121 resulting in a decline of 3.3% between 2015 and 2020. During the same time period, population in the state has changed from 12,784,795 to 12,812,575, resulting in a growth of 0.2%. Over the next five years, the population for the region is projected to continue to decline by 2.0% while the population is projected to grow by 0.3% in Pennsylvania. All counties within the Northern Tier Region are projected to experience a decline. The Northern Tier Region represents 1.4% of Pennsylvania’s population.

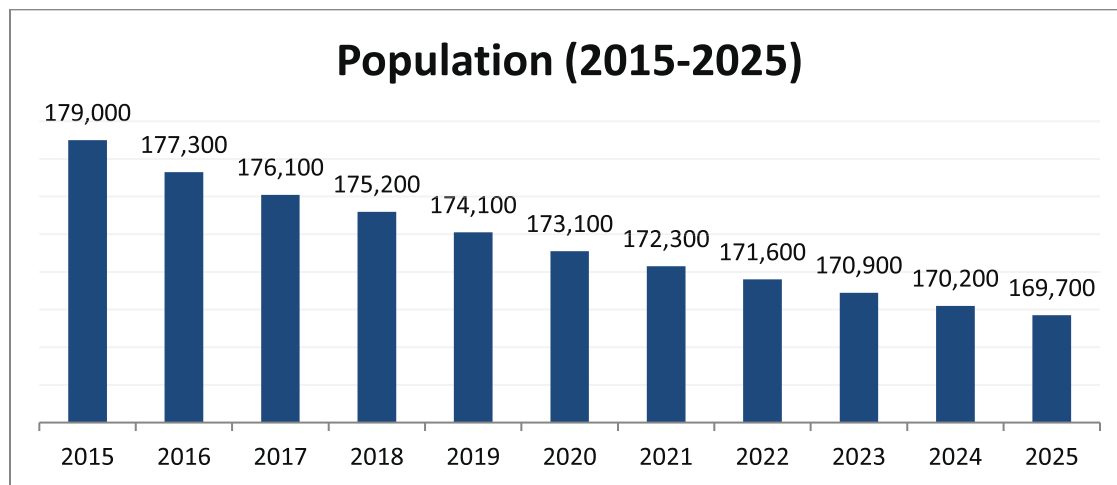


Figure 1: Population Decline  
Source: EMSI (Economic Modeling Specialists, International), 2020.4

According to American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, the median age for the region is 45.8. Comparatively, the current year median age for the state is 40.8. Sullivan County has the highest median age in the region at 53.7, while Bradford County has the youngest median age of 44.5.

According to data from the US Census Bureau, the population 65+ in the Northern Tier is 38% larger than the same age group for the United States, additionally the Northern Tier is 20% below the nation for the age 20-24 population. These statistics support the growing workforce challenges that arise as large numbers of seasoned workers retire leaving a shortage of skilled workers.

Of the region's current year estimated population, 97% are White, 0.9% are Black, 0.3% are American Indian or

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Alaska Native, 0.5% are Asian, 0.0% are Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, 1.7% are Hispanic, and 1.2% are Two or More Races. The population of the state of Pennsylvania overall is more diverse: 80.8% are White, 11.1% are Black, 0.2% are American Indian or Alaska Native, 3.3% are Asian, 0.0% are Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, 2.0% are Other Race and 2.4% are Two or More Races. The region's current Hispanic population is only 1.7%, while the state's current estimated Hispanic population is 7.1%. Sullivan County is the most diverse county in the region with 95.6% Caucasian, 2.4% Black, 1.9% other race. Five-year projections are not expected to increase or decrease significantly in any one demographic group.

Race and Ethnicity	2015		2020		2025	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
White	174,283	97.4%	167,917	97.0%	164,075	96.7%
Black	1,376	0.8%	1,620	0.9%	1,784	1.1%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	488	0.3%	499	0.3%	518	0.3%
Asian	930	0.5%	933	0.5%	965	0.6%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	49	0.0%	52	0.0%	55	0.0%
Two or More Races	1,888	1.1%	2,101	1.2%	2,270	1.3%
Non-Hispanic	176,314	98.5%	170,237	98.3%	166,579	98.2%
Hispanic	2,700	1.5%	2,884	1.7%	3,088	1.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>179,014</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>173,121</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>169,667</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Figure 2: Population by Race and Ethnicity

Source: EMSI (Economic Modeling Specialists, International), 2020.4

### Educational Attainment

It is estimated that 46% of the population age 25 and over in the Northern Tier has a high school diploma or equivalency and 25% have some college or an associate's degree and 19% have earned a Bachelor's Degree or higher. Projections for 2025 expect the former to increase slightly while the latter will decrease slightly (Figure 3). Sullivan County has the highest percentage of the population who does not have a high school diploma or GED (10.4%) and Wyoming County has the highest percentage with a Bachelor's degree or greater (19.6%).<sup>1</sup>

Currently, it is estimated that 6.3% of the population age 25 and over in the Northern Tier Region had earned a Graduate Degree and higher, 11.3% had earned a Bachelor's Degree, 8.6% earned an Associate's Degree and 16.4% had some College. For comparison, 54.3% of Pennsylvanians have received some level of postsecondary education, 35.5% are high school graduates no post-secondary experience and 10.2% have less than a high school diploma (Figure 3).

The highest number of unemployment rates by educational attainment is for those that have earned less than a high school diploma or GED (11.4%) and the lowest percentage of unemployment group by educational attainment is for those that have earned a Bachelor's degree or higher (2.2%)<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; 2016-2020

<sup>2</sup> Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; 2016-2020

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Educational Attainment						
Level	2015		2020		2025	
Less Than 9th Grade	3,213	2.5%	3,693	2.9%	3,803	3.0%
9th Grade to 12th Grade	9,758	7.6%	10,048	8.0%	10,288	8.3%
High School Diploma	59,233	46.4%	58,849	46.6%	58,022	46.5%
Some College	20,946	16.4%	20,659	16.4%	20,304	16.3%
Associate's Degree	11,046	8.6%	10,818	8.6%	10,668	8.6%
Bachelor's Degree	15,215	11.9%	14,319	11.3%	13,917	11.2%
Graduate Degree and Higher	8,296	6.5%	7,957	6.3%	7,683	6.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>127,707</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>126,343</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>124,684</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>High School or Lower</b>	<b>72,204</b>	<b>56.5%</b>	<b>72,590</b>	<b>57.5%</b>	<b>72,113</b>	<b>57.8%</b>
<b>Bachelor's or Higher</b>	<b>23,511</b>	<b>18.4%</b>	<b>22,277</b>	<b>17.6%</b>	<b>21,600</b>	<b>17.3%</b>

Figure 3: Educational Attainment  
Source: EMSI (Economic Modeling Specialists, International), 2020.4

### Income

The number of households in the region increased slightly from 2014 to 2019 by .04%, estimated at 72,079 for 2019. The highest percentage of households (32.8%) earned between \$50,000 to \$99,999 (32.8%). The second highest households (25.6%) earned \$25,000 to \$49,999.<sup>3</sup> The median household income in 2019 is reported as \$53,617 for the region compared to the state median income at \$61,744. In 2019, 11.2% of the Northern Tier population were reported to be living with income in the past 12 months below the poverty level which is a slight decrease from the 11.9% estimated for 2014.

### Employment

In 2021 the Northern Tier Labor force was 82,500 of which 77,600 were employed. Unemployed individuals accounted for 4,900 resulting in an annual average unemployment rate of 6.0%. In January 2022 the unemployment rate was reported as 5.0%. The July unemployment rate of 4.3% for the Northern Tier was the same as Pennsylvania's unemployment rate and above the US rate which was 3.5% for the same time period.

Of the initial unemployment claims filed in 2020, the highest were seen for those in the Construction Industry (19.9%) followed by Leisure and Hospitality (17.8%) and Manufacturing (14.8%). Continued claims as of August 2022 were highest in Trade, Transportation and Utilities (30.7%), Education and Health Services (18.2%) and Construction at (12.7%)

Figure 4: Unemployment Rates  
Source: CWIA Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS)

### Populations with Barriers

#### Poverty

Among the factors that often contribute to poverty are unemployment and underemployment. Many people live in poverty because they have multiple barriers and are unable to find or retain employment. In 2020, 10.96% were reported to be living with income in the past 12 months below the poverty level which is a slight decrease from 11.2%

<sup>3</sup> Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; 2015-2019

estimated for 2019. Of those living in poverty 28.3% are in the labor force showing a significant number of underemployed or working poor, however this number has decreased from previous years. Single parents are more likely to be living in poverty, with 34.8% of households (5,667) in the region considered single parent households.<sup>4</sup>

### **Disability**

According to the Division for Social Policy and Development Disability, in developing countries, 80% to 90% of persons with disabilities of working age are unemployed, whereas in industrialized countries the figure is between 50% and 70%. Persons with disabilities are frequently not considered potential members of the workforce.<sup>5</sup> Perception, fear, myth and prejudice continue to limit understanding and acceptance of disability in workplaces everywhere. Myths abound, including that persons with disabilities are unable to work and that accommodating a person with a disability in the workplace is expensive. Contrary to these notions, many companies have found that persons with disabilities are more than capable.

According to the American Community Survey 5-Year 2016-2020 estimates, when looking at the region, 4.8% of the population has a disability.

In the region, unemployment is higher for those with a disability (12.6%) compared to those without a disability (4.7%). Wyoming County has the largest labor force participation rate for individuals with disabilities at 46.5% and Tioga has the highest unemployment rate for persons with disabilities (14.3%).<sup>6</sup>

### **Formerly Incarcerated**

According to the Urban Institute<sup>7</sup>, most individuals released from prison held some type of job prior to incarceration and want legal, stable employment upon release. Some criminal justice research suggests that finding and maintaining a legitimate job can reduce former prisoners' chances of reoffending, and the higher the wage, the less likely it is that individuals will return to crime. However, most former prisoners experience difficulty finding a job after release. During the time spent in prison, many lose work skills and are given little opportunity to gain useful work experience. Moreover, the availability of job training programs in prison has declined in recent years. A large proportion of former prisoners have low levels of educational attainment and work experience, health problems, and other personal characteristics that make them hard to employ. Once in the community, not only are many employers reluctant to hire convicted felons, but many former prisoners are legally barred from certain occupations.

According to the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, approximately six in ten released inmates are rearrested or reincarcerated within three years of release from prison. Those returning to rural areas are more likely to be reincarcerated. More than half of those who return to prison within three years of release do so within the first year. The first year is the highest risk period for recidivism. Younger released inmates are more likely to recidivate than older inmates. A released inmate under 21 at time of release is twice as likely to recidivate within three years.<sup>8</sup>

### **Foster Care**

Research obtained from Children's Rights has shown that youth who age out of foster care are less likely than youth in the general population to graduate from high school and are less likely to attend or graduate college. By age 26, approximately 80% of young people who aged out of foster care earned at least a high school degree or GED compared to 94% in the general population. By age 26, 4% of youth who aged out of foster care had earned a 4-year college degree, while 36% of youth in the general population had done so. In the region, approximately 12 children age out of foster care each year.

### **Teen Pregnancy**

According to Youth. Gov., the high social and economic costs of teen pregnancy and childbearing can have short- and

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<sup>4</sup> Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; 2016-2020

<sup>5</sup> Source: The Division of Social Policy and Development

<sup>6</sup> Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; 2016-2020

<sup>7</sup> Source: Urban institute is a non-profit organization dedicated to elevating the debate on social and economic policy.

<sup>8</sup> Source: Pennsylvania Department of Corrections

long-term negative consequences for teen parents, their children, and their community. Through recent research, it has been recognized that pregnancy and childbirth have a significant impact on educational outcomes of teen parents.

1. By age 22, only around 50 percent of teen mothers have received a high school diploma and only 30 percent have earned a General Education Development (GED) certificate, whereas 90 percent of women who did not give birth during adolescence receive a high school diploma.
2. Only about 10 percent of teen mothers complete a two- or four-year college program.
3. Teen fathers have a 25 to 30 percent lower probability of graduating from high school than teenage boys who are not fathers.

Children who are born to teen mothers also experience a wide range of problems. For example, they are more likely to:

- have a higher risk for low birth weight and infant mortality;
- have lower levels of emotional support and cognitive stimulation;
- have fewer skills and be less prepared to learn when they enter kindergarten;
- have behavioral problems and chronic medical conditions;
- rely more heavily on publicly funded health care;
- have higher rates of foster care placement;
- be incarcerated at some time during adolescence;
- have lower school achievement and drop out of high school;
- give birth as a teen; and
- be unemployed or underemployed as a young adult.

These immediate and long-lasting effects continue for teen parents and their children even after adjusting for the factors that increased the teen's risk for pregnancy—e.g., growing up in poverty, having parents with low levels of education, growing up in a single-parent family, and having low attachment to and performance in school.

According to the PA Department of Health Birth Statistics 2014-2018, the teenage pregnancy rate for the Northern Tier Region ranges between a low of 17.8 in Wyoming County to a high of 27.8 in Bradford County. These ranges are higher than the state level of 16.3 for the same time period.<sup>9</sup>

### **Homeless**

According to the National Coalition for the Homeless, meaningful and sustainable employment is the key to creating and maintaining housing stability. Unemployment, underemployment, and low wages relative to rent are frequent causes of homelessness and burden millions of families with the risk of becoming homeless. At the same time, individuals experiencing homelessness face obstacles to finding and maintaining employment.

Homeless shelters are few and far between in the Northern Tier Region. The PA CareerLink® works with organizations that will temporarily assist the homeless and agencies they can call upon in the case of an emergency.

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act defines youth homelessness as:

- Children sharing housing due to economic hardship or loss of housing;
- Children living in "motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camp grounds due to lack of alternative accommodations";
- Children living in "emergency or transitional shelters";
- Children whose primary nighttime residence is not ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation (e.g., park benches, etc.); and
- Children living in "cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations".

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<sup>9</sup>Source: PA Department of Health Birth Statistics 2014-2018

**Additional Barriers**

Populations with barriers typically do not have just one barrier but often multiple barriers. Key populations include generally those in poverty, disability and returning citizens. Emphasis on some youth/young adult populations could include teen pregnancy (depending on the county), youth aging out of foster care, and TANF. Labor market information demonstrates the need for ongoing priorities of those with barriers as they relate to WIOA. Strong partnerships with community organizations are key to ensure those with barriers are referred to appropriate services. Other barriers found in our region are related to substance abuse, transportation and lack of sufficient child care.

- 1.2. *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?*

The most valuable information regarding skill gaps in the region comes from employers directly. We have established relationships with our employers at the board level as well as through our industry partnerships such as manufacturing and healthcare, through public outreach meetings and with our economic development partners that also assist in connecting workforce and employers. PA CareerLink® business services staff and partners also have opportunities to interface with employers to identify their needs. Other ways to identify skills gaps is to examine labor market data such as occupational demands and job postings, growth projections and skills projections.

These relationships and data gathering efforts help us to keep a pulse on industry requirements. Employers frequently state that they can provide training, but need workers with “employability skills;” ability to pass a drug test, show up to work on time, be dependable, etc.

One way to measure the skills gap is to compare the current educational attainment with the expected employment growth by educational level. According to data available from American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates for 2016-2020, the adult population 25+ 19% of the region has a bachelor’s degree higher and approximately the same percentage of employment shown for 2020 requires a bachelor’s degree or higher. . The expected growth in employment requiring a bachelor’s degree is expected to grow by 3.7%. The highest percentage of employment change is expected for those with an associates degree 6.7% Approximately 25% of the Northern Tier population ages 25-64 have some college or an associate’s degree.

**Employment Growth Rates by Educational Attainment Level for Northern Tier WDA**

Area	Educational Grouping	Employment (2020)	Projected Employment (2030)	Percent Change (2020-30)
Northern Tier	On-the-job training	33,260	34,250	3.0%
Northern Tier	Long-term training	2,590	2,670	3.1%
Northern Tier	PS education or experience	11,980	12,110	1.1%
Northern Tier	Associate degree	1,050	1,120	6.7%
Northern Tier	Bachelor's degree	9,220	9,560	3.7%
Northern Tier	Advanced degree	2,030	2,150	5.9%



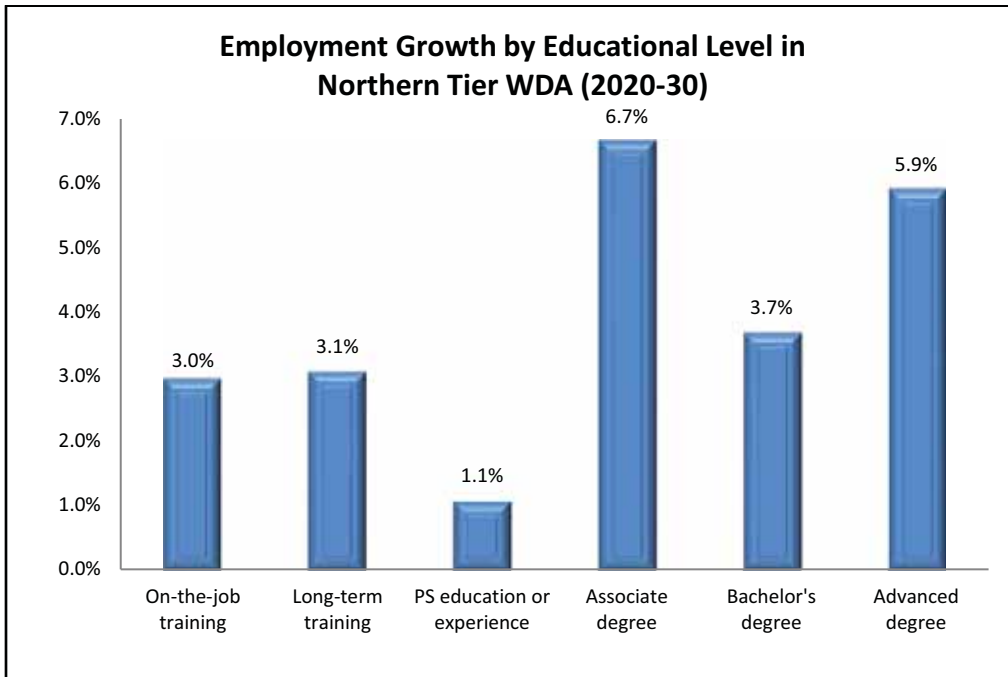


Figure 5: Long-Term Occupational Employment Projections (2020-30)  
 Source: Center for Workforce Information and Analysis

During times of low unemployment local employers often expressed their frustration in finding workers that held the essential work skills or soft skills needed to be a good employee. The labor pool was at a low and those that were available to work did not necessarily have the skill needed to be a good employee. That is when the NTWDB began to look at designing a program that would help those individuals with multiple barriers to employment, specifically targeting individuals involved in the criminal justice system.

The Fit4Work Reengagement Project was designed to help individuals with multiple barriers to become successful in the workforce and their community. The focus is on individuals who have been disengaged from the workforce due to incarceration or other barriers contributing to long term unemployment. The program includes pre-release activities for incarcerated individuals including an overview of PA CareerLink® service and initial assessment. The classroom portion teaches the foundational and work readiness skills that help address and overcome barriers with the help of various resources available throughout the community. Classroom work includes personal and financial management, soft skills, workplace education and preparation. Some topics include how to interview with a criminal background, resume writing and career exploration. All students receive a certificate of completion and a professional resume. Fit4 graduates may participate in a work-based training providing hands-on work experience for those who cannot easily transition to employment. This way completers can earn a wage and gain work skills while continuing to address barriers. This program helps to address the need for entry level workers that are hard to find when unemployment rates are low and also assists those with barriers to gain employment.

Labor Market trends can be examined by looking at Long Term Industry Projections as well as other Labor Market Information. According to Long-Term Industry Projections for the Northern Tier Workforce Area total employment is expected to increase by 2.9%, adding 1,730 total jobs. The greatest employment change by percentage is within Leisure & Hospitality projected to have a 16.7% increase adding 630 jobs. Professional & Business have the second highest at 6.3% at 220 jobs and Construction is third highest with a 5.2% increase with 100 jobs by volume. Education and Health Services is only projected to have a 4% increase, however this percentage accounts for an additional 540 jobs the second highest in volume. Education and Health Services also accounts for the largest employment sector in the Northern Tier. Those Industries predicted to decrease in jobs are Manufacturing, Agriculture, Mining & Logging, Federal State & Local Government and Self Employed Workers. Of those industries predicted to decline, Manufacturing faces the biggest loss of employment by volume at -150 jobs. The region's workforce and economic development agencies are working to identify strategies to attract and train talent to reverse the decline in

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manufacturing employment. Several initiatives detailed in this plan, directly address the challenges. Manufacturing, because of the strong supply chain effects, is a critical to the region.

**Long-Term Industry Projections for Northern Tier WDA (2020-30)**

Industry	Employment (2020)	Projected Employment (2030)	Employment Change (2020-30)	
			Volume	Percent
Total Jobs	60,130	61,860	1,730	2.9%
Goods Producing Industries	13,880	13,810	-70	-0.5%
Agriculture, Mining & Logging	4,210	4,180	-30	-0.7%
Construction	1,910	2,010	100	5.2%
Manufacturing	7,760	7,610	-150	-1.9%
Services-Providing	40,630	42,460	1,830	4.5%
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	11,470	11,910	440	3.8%
Information	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Financial Activities	1,700	1,710	10	0.6%
Professional & Business Services	3,490	3,710	220	6.3%
Education & Health Services	13,350	13,890	540	4.0%
Leisure & Hospitality	3,780	4,410	630	16.7%
Other Services, Except Public Admin.	2,200	2,300	100	4.5%
Federal, State & Local Government	4,140	4,020	-120	-2.9%
Self-Employed Workers	5,630	5,590	-40	-0.7%

Source: Long-Term Industry Employment Projections (2020-30)

\*Data may not add due confidentiality

The High Priority Occupation List for the Northern Tier provides educational attainment needs, average wages and annual openings for jobs highest in demand for our region. The NTWDB works with local training providers to ensure that there is an adequate supply of trained workers for these high priority occupations. The High Priority Occupations provide a confirming view of the occupations that will lead toward quality jobs in the Northern Tier Region. The highest projected number of annual jobs in the Northern Tier is for Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers which requires post-secondary education. The second highest with annual openings is for Farmers, Ranchers & Other Agricultural Managers which requires work experience which is defined as a high school diploma and training gained through hands-on work in a similar occupation. Of those occupations on our High Priority list only 37% require some level of post-secondary education.

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Center for Workforce Information & Analysis  
7/22/22

2022 High Priority Occupations for Northern Tier Workforce Development Area

SOC Code	SOC Title	Educational Attainment	Wages (2021)			Employment			
			Entry Level	Annual Average	Exper. Level	Estimated 2018	Projected 2028	Percent Change	Annual Demand
11-9013	Farmers, Ranchers & Other Agricultural Managers	WK EXP	N/A	N/A	N/A	2,680	2,620	-2.2%	257
13-1071	Human Resources Specialists	BD	\$40,630	\$66,340	\$79,200	170	170	0.0%	16
13-2011	Accountants & Auditors	BD	\$42,510	\$69,290	\$82,680	400	410	2.5%	38
17-3025	Environmental Engineering Technologists & Technicians	AD	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
19-4031	Chemical Technicians	AD+	\$40,600	\$53,360	\$59,740	\$70	\$70	\$0	\$7
21-1018	Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder & MH Counselors	BD	\$29,510	\$44,260	\$51,630	\$190	\$200	\$0	\$21
25-2021	Elementary School Teachers	BD+	\$51,260	\$68,610	\$77,290	\$750	\$780	\$0	\$61
25-2031	Secondary School Teachers	BD+	\$55,430	\$72,170	\$80,540	\$540	\$570	\$0	\$42
29-1141	Registered Nurses	BD	\$57,400	\$72,990	\$80,780	\$1,260	\$1,300	\$0	\$81
29-2041	Emergency Medical Technicians & Paramedics	PS	N/A	N/A	N/A	150	160	6.7%	12
29-2055	Surgical Technologists	PS	\$41,500	\$47,060	\$49,850	100	110	10.0%	9
29-2061	Licensed Practical & Licensed Vocational Nurses	PS	\$37,150	\$45,610	\$49,840	370	380	2.7%	29
31-1014	Nursing Assistants	PS	\$26,980	\$31,630	\$33,950	760	790	3.9%	89
31-9092	Medical Assistants	PS	\$28,820	\$34,100	\$36,730	200	250	25.0%	29
31-9097	Phlebotomists	PS	\$29,580	\$35,080	\$37,830	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
33-3012	Correctional Officers & Jailers	MT OJT	\$32,490	\$51,310	\$60,710	140	130	-7.1%	11
33-3051	Police & Sheriff's Patrol Officers	MT OJT	\$39,300	\$66,250	\$79,730	310	310	0.0%	21
37-1011	Supervisors - Housekeeping & Janitorial Workers	WK EXP	\$26,450	\$40,540	\$47,590	90	100	11.1%	11
37-1012	Supervisors - Landscaping & Groundskeeping Workers	WK EXP	\$32,650	\$45,670	\$52,180	100	100	0.0%	12
39-5012	Hairstylists, Hairstylists & Cosmetologists	PS	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
41-1011	Supervisors - Retail Sales Workers	WK EXP	\$26,000	\$40,120	\$46,780	810	800	-1.2%	87
41-2022	Parts Salespersons	MT OJT	\$22,500	\$31,560	\$36,090	380	380	0.0%	46
43-3021	Billing & Posting Clerks	MT OJT	\$27,930	\$39,950	\$45,960	250	270	8.0%	30
43-4111	Interviewers	ST OJT	\$26,950	\$35,960	\$40,460	70	70	0.0%	9
43-5032	Dispatchers	MT OJT	\$33,390	\$55,190	\$66,090	140	150	7.1%	14
43-5071	Shipping, Receiving & Inventory Clerks	ST OJT	\$28,540	\$37,930	\$42,630	170	160	-5.9%	17
43-6013	Medical Secretaries & Administrative Assistants	MT OJT	\$27,080	\$32,820	\$35,700	140	170	21.4%	19
45-2092	Farmworkers & Laborers: Crop, Nursery & Greenhouse	ST OJT	N/A	N/A	N/A	660	670	1.5%	108
47-2031	Carpenters	LT OJT	\$30,780	\$42,680	\$48,630	300	320	6.7%	33
47-2073	Operating Engineers	MT OJT	\$36,050	\$47,270	\$52,880	560	560	0.0%	66
47-2152	Plumbers, Pipefitters & Steamfitters	LT OJT	\$42,290	\$57,720	\$65,430	90	90	0.0%	11
47-5051	Rock Splitters, Quarry	ST OJT	\$31,890	\$38,950	\$42,490	240	240	0.0%	32
49-1011	Supervisors - Mechanics, Installers & Repairers	WK EXP	\$46,330	\$70,500	\$82,590	270	280	3.7%	27

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Center for Workforce Information & Analysis  
1/22/22

2022 High Priority Occupations for Northern Tier Workforce Development Area

SOC Code	SOC Title	Educational Attainment	Wages (2021)			Employment			
			Entry Level	Annual Average	Exper. Level	Estimated 2018	Projected 2028	Percent Change	Annual Demand
49-3021	Automotive Body & Related Repairers	LT OJT	\$28,110	\$42,660	\$49,940	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
49-3023	Automotive Service Technicians & Mechanics	PS	\$25,680	\$38,250	\$44,540	380	380	0.0%	37
49-9021	Heating, A/C & Refrigeration Mechanics & Installers	PS+	\$32,820	\$45,400	\$51,690	140	150	7.1%	15
49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	LT OJT	\$40,790	\$58,160	\$66,840	290	300	3.4%	29
49-9052	Telecommunications Line Installers & Repairers	LT OJT	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
49-9071	Maintenance & Repair Workers, General	MT OJT	\$25,680	\$37,860	\$43,950	730	760	4.1%	75
51-4011	CNC Machine Tool Operators	MT OJT	\$33,800	\$44,900	\$50,440	240	250	4.2%	26
51-4041	Machinists	LT OJT	\$33,120	\$45,100	\$51,080	90	90	0.0%	9
51-4081	Multiple Machine Tool Setters/Opr/Tenders	MT OJT	\$27,520	\$38,230	\$43,580	130	120	-7.7%	13
51-4121	Welders, Cutters, Solderers & Brazers	MT OJT	\$36,910	\$49,210	\$55,360	190	200	5.3%	22
51-8031	Water/Wastewater Treatment Plant & System Operators	LT OJT	\$34,490	\$45,420	\$50,890	230	210	-8.7%	19
51-8092	Gas Plant Operators	LT OJT	\$54,440	\$70,110	\$77,940	230	250	8.7%	29
51-9061	Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers & Weighers	MT OJT	\$31,970	\$44,210	\$50,330	270	220	-18.5%	25
53-1048	Supervisors - Transportation & Material-Moving Workers	WK EXP	\$35,240	\$53,820	\$63,100	180	190	5.6%	21
53-3032	Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	PS	\$34,960	\$46,210	\$51,830	2,220	2,310	4.1%	266
53-3033	Light Truck Drivers	ST OJT	\$20,920	\$36,300	\$43,980	250	260	4.0%	29

Educational Attainment Abbreviations:

Short-term or Moderate-term training (ST OJT or MT OJT) – basic tasks and skills are learned through a period of on-the-job training. A high school diploma may be required.  
 Long-term training (LT OJT) – a high school diploma and at least one year of on-the-job training or an apprenticeship.  
 Related work experience (WK EXP) – a high school diploma and training gained through hands-on work in a similar occupation.  
 Postsecondary training (PS or PS+) – training is gained through a postsecondary training program. Some period of related work experience may be required.  
 Associate Degree (AD or AD+) – degree completed after two years of full-time schooling beyond high school. Some period of related work experience may be required.  
 Bachelor's Degree (BD or BD+) – degree completed after four years of full-time schooling beyond high school. Some period of related work experience may be required.  
 Master's Degree (MD or MD+) – degree completed after two years of full-time schooling beyond a bachelor's degree. Some period of related work experience may be required.  
 Doctoral (PhD) or First Professional Degree (PROF) – degree programs requiring 3-6 years of education at the college or university level beyond a four-year bachelor's degree.

Figure 7: 2022 High Priority Occupations for the Northern Tier  
 Source: Center for Workforce Information and Analysis

Top Job Skills projections are also used to identify skills gaps. These projections include detailed work activities and are shared with local secondary and post-secondary education to ensure they understand the demand and can incorporate into curriculum when possible. These are also useful when designing local workshops for jobseekers and our youth populations. Some examples of these activities are order materials, supplies or equipment, clean work areas, calculate costs of goods or services, greet customers. Some of the skills predicted to be highest in demand for 2028 employment include spreadsheet software, data base user interface and query software and office suite software and word processing software.<sup>10</sup>

One of the areas identified as a gap in our region is digital literacy. The NTWDB realizes the importance of digital literacy to employment which is supported by the skills projections listed above. The availability of broadband is a significant barrier to the growth of our communities and economy of the Northern Tier region, especially during a time when so many services are provided remotely. Another challenge is ensuring our communities have the digital literacy skills needed to navigate in the current environment. The NTWDB has provided digital literacy services to our underserved communities throughout our region. Services include the basics of using a computer, navigating the digital world and being digitally responsible to more comprehensive applications such as office suite software. This enables our customers to have the tools and knowledge needed to gain service through a multitude of digital platforms and have the digital skills needed to be competitive in the workforce.

Listed below are top qualifications reported for online job postings for the Northern Tier Region. Commercial Driver's

<sup>10</sup> Source: CWIA Occupational Employment Projections, 2018-2028  
 US Department of Labor's Occupational Information Network (O\*NET) Database  
 Top Hard Skills

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License (CDL) is listed most frequently followed by Licensed Nurse Practitioner and Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA). This data supports the training most in demand of the Northern Tier Region. For the 2021 program year trainings provided through Individual Training (ITA) accounts in the Northern Tier, 31% were for training in the healthcare field and 59% for CDL drivers.

### Top Qualifications

Qualification	Postings with Qualification
American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP) Certified	97
American Registry of Radiologic Technologists (ARRT) Certified	21
ANCC Certified	110
ASE Automobile Service Consultant	89
Associates Degree in Nursing	64
Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) Certification	180
Bachelor of Science in Business	47
Bachelor of Science in Business Administration	35
Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN)	314
Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy	37
CDL Class B License	124
CDL Class C License	31
Certificate of Clinical Competence in Speech-Language Pathology (CCC-SLP)	58
Certified Forklift Operator	24
Certified Nursing Assistant	612
Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant	25
Certified Pharmacy Technician	43
Certified Public Accountant	40
Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA)	61
Certified Registered Nurse Practitioner	33
Commercial Driver's License (CDL)	9,064
Critical Care Registered Nurse (CCRN)	50
Doctor of Medicine (MD)	36
Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD)	42
Doubles Endorsement	74
Family Nurse Practitioner	22
Gerontological Nurse Practitioner	43
Hazmat Endorsement	326
Immunization Certification	32
Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW)	55
Licensed Insurance Producer	29
Licensed Practical Nurse	747
Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC)	38
Licensed Social Worker	38
Licensed Vocational Nurses	166
Master of Business Administration (MBA)	80
Master of Science in Nursing (MSN)	61
Medical License	92
Medical Technologist	63
Nurse Practitioner	498
Patient Care Technician	50
Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner	42

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Radiologic Technologist	27
Registered Dietitian (RD/RDN)	26
Registered Respiratory Therapist	60
Series 7 General Securities Representative License (Stockbroker)	29
ServSafe Certification	60
Tanker Endorsement	190
Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) Card	422
Trauma Nurse Core Course (TNCC)	33

Figure 8: Top Qualifications

Source: EMSI (Economic Modeling Specialists, International), 2020.4

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

The Northern Tier Region faces challenges in aligning existing labor force skills and education and training activities with the needs of regional employers. The biggest challenges faced by our region are the small number of training providers coupled with the small population. While we continue to look to recruit other training providers to offer programs for employers, it is often difficult to recruit enough participants to “fill a class” in order for a training provider to be able to offer any selected course. Additionally, while this gap could be filled (in theory) by offering on-line and computer-based training, the lack of internet access and digital literacy skills in pockets of our region is a significant barrier for some. In recent years online and hybrid models of class offerings have become more acceptable, providing more training options for our participants. It also allows for training providers to provide a class to those they may not otherwise reach or have the capacity to do so if required to be in person only. This became especially apparent during the COVID-19 pandemic when we all had to change the way we provide service.

Challenges include ensuring that school and training program curricula matches employer needs and can be created and implemented in a timely manner. The lack of short-term credential availability is a definite barrier to our jobseekers and employers both. More short-term programs are needed to allow for greater opportunity for our jobseekers to meet the demands of our local employers. Other challenges include engaging out of school youth to complete high school and/or post-secondary training to attain the skills required by employers, matching the skills of job seekers to employer needs as well as identifying and eliminating barriers to employment for disadvantaged populations.

Specific strategies that the Northern Tier workforce development area will continue to build upon include:

- Continue our work with industry partnerships introducing the Next Generation model to ensure goals are employer driven and offer the opportunity for employers to share skill needs related to high-growth and high-demand occupations, including identification of education and training, workforce and economic needs shared throughout an industry or across industries. Coordinate efforts to connect employers with resources needed to utilize incumbent work training in order to upskill the current workforce and open up entry-level positions.
- Sharing labor market information and workforce needs with the training providers to ensure their programs meet the needs of our employers, continue our work towards identifying career pathways and increasing our efforts to better match job seekers to jobs that are self and family supporting.
- The Business Education Partnership (BEP) has created a better connection between the area businesses and educational opportunities and the region’s school system. Over the last several years the program has grown exponentially. We now have six (6) career coaches working in nineteen (19) schools, including two (2) Career and Technology Centers, throughout the region who are working with students on career readiness. Coaches engage students in career exploration and pathway activities and connect students with local employers to participate in work-based activities. Thousands of students are impacted a year. During the past year coaches have been challenged to adjust to an ever-changing school schedule which has only grown the

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capabilities of the program. Examples include adapting career readiness to remote learning, developing creative activities that can be done outside of the classroom such as business scavenger hunts and a library of local employer interviews viewable by students on our YouTube channel. Coaches are instrumental in connecting students with local business to offer work-based opportunities and help educators to organize events such as career days and tours to post-secondary institution or company tours. A goal for program year 2020 is to connect parents with career activities. As of December 2020, 449 parent impacts have been reported. The coaches have also expanded their work to include elementary and middle schoolers. Coaches also recruit employers to participate with schools for implementation of the Chapter 339 Mandate for career exploration.

- Continued collaboration with the regional PREP team including Engage! Regional PREP partners include local and regional community and economic development agencies, Chambers of Commerce, Small Business Development Centers (SBDC), North East Industrial Resource Center (NEPIRC), Workforce Development, WEDnet providers and planning commissions. By working closely with our PREP partners, we have developed a regional network of providers that work together to meet the economic and workforce needs of the Northern Tier. Collaboration results in joint projects, education and outreach to communities about the services available, a strong referral system and a forum to discuss strategic measures needed to meet the needs of our local businesses. Referrals are made to the PA CareerLink® system and workforce partners at the county level, as well as at the board level. Cumulative and anecdotal information is shared as deemed appropriate.
- Coordination of services to include leveraging of funds. Continued communication with our training providers including connecting to employers, recruitment for programs and making appropriate referrals. Our regional training providers attend our regional PREP meetings. This provides a forum for us to discuss local employers' needs for training, skills and education. Providers also attend Youth Committee and WDB meetings. Providers are given local labor market information supplied to us by the Center for Workforce Information and Analysis (CWIA), results of any surveys implemented by the board and feedback from our Business Service Teams. This enables them to be responsive to input given by employers regarding their needs.
- PA Careerlink®. Local management teams meet bi-monthly and regional meetings take place on a quarterly basis. Service strategy, performance, problems, solutions and protocol are all discussed. Business services, with an emphasis on partnerships and long-term sector strategies are an evolving process within the region as we work to understand employers who are willing to work with our customers with barriers. The WDB establishes annual goals for the business services team in order to meet employer challenges and continuously improve service.
- Fit4Work Reengagement Project. This is a basic skills development program that works on entry level work-readiness and job skills for individuals who lack these basic skills, with an emphasis on those that have multiple barriers to employment. Particular focus for this program is for those that have been involved with the criminal justice system. The program combines classroom training with work-based experiences providing the individual with the basic foundational skills needed to become employed and keep a job. Focus is on overcoming barriers in order to become a productive member in the workplace and within their communities. This program was designed as a result of local employers expressing the lack of available workers with basic employability skills needed to fill jobs. These strategies provide employers with workers that can often fill entry level positions allowing employers to train and promote their incumbent staff. Efforts to expand employer relationships that will provide opportunities for those involved in the criminal justice system continue.
- Expanding Pre-Apprenticeship programs. Over the past few years, we have offered pre-apprenticeship programs to offer career awareness opportunities as well as job skills development. We continue to have discussions with our local CTEC's and high schools about pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship

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- opportunities. We will continue to partner with our CTEC's and educators to expand these offerings.
- Apprenticeship opportunities. As a state approved apprenticeship sponsor, we educate local businesses about the advantages of taking a “learn while you earn” approach with their workers. The method provides workers with the hands-on training and related technical instruction needed to upgrade skills to obtain a better job. Sponsorship includes providing technical assistance in the development of the apprenticeship and submission to the Pennsylvania Apprenticeship Training Office for approval of the program. The NTWDB has also secured funding to offset the costs of apprenticeship training for the student and employer by supporting related technical instruction and support services. One of the WDB's professional staff has become certified under the Apprenticeship Navigator program. This improves the knowledge needed to be the resident expert on Apprenticeships, to assist in the education of the benefit to both employers and jobseekers of participating in an apprenticeship program and to assist with the design requirements of a program.
  - Digital Literacy. The availability of broadband is a significant barrier to the growth of our communities and economy of the Northern Tier Region, especially during a time when so many services are provided remotely. There are several organized efforts being made to improve upon the lack of broadband in our area. Another challenge is ensuring our communities have the digital literacy skills needed to navigate in the current environment. The NTWDB has provided digital literacy services to our underserved communities throughout our region. Services include the basics of using a computer, navigating the digital world and being digitally responsible. This provides our customers the tools and knowledge needed to gain service through a multitude of digital platforms. Digital literacy curriculum has also been adjusted to fit the needs of incumbent workers as requested by local employers.

### 1.4. *Provide an analysis of local area workforce development activities, including education and training.*

The NTWDB continues to develop and strengthen the partnerships and participation in the workforce development system with three major groups: employers, educators and service agencies. The NTWDB will maintain and continue to develop an effective and efficient workforce system that attract partners, build alliances and coordinates resources.

The workforce development system consists of core partners including Title I - WIOA, Title II - Adult Education, Title III - Wagner-Peyser Act and Title IV-Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. Department of Health and Human Services as well as other agencies within the community provide services to job seekers especially those with barriers to employment. These agencies include but are not limited to the county Office of Children and Youth, Literacy, Area Agency on Aging, mental health agencies, Drug & Alcohol, probation and parole, YMCA and Community Action.

The workforce service delivery in the Northern Tier Region is provided through our PA CareerLink®, part of the American Job Center Network. Within the local PA CareerLink® system, there is a commitment to quality and an understanding that the system is customer-driven. The PA CareerLink® provides universal service for everyone. As such, the local design of the PA CareerLink® centers is focused on: universality; customer choice; integrated systems and results-based accountability. In addition to the partners participating at the PA CareerLink® centers we have a strong referral network of community-based agencies that work with us. These agencies have a long history of providing quality services to their communities. There are two PA CareerLink® comprehensive centers and four affiliate sites operating within the region. These sites are strategically located in areas for individuals that cannot realistically travel to a comprehensive site due the distance. Mobile and remote services are also available for individuals that cannot physically get to our facilities due to the geography or lack of transportation.

NTWDB staff meet regularly with the PA CareerLink® Operator, there are bi-monthly meetings of the PA CareerLink® management teams and monthly staff meetings. All partners meet no less than quarterly. Service strategy, performance, obstacles, solutions and protocol are all discussed. Communication is key to ensuring service delivery is non-duplicative and accessible to all populations.

## **Strengths**



**Cooperation and Effectiveness**

Operating within the unique system of a rural area, the NTWDB has established partnerships with economic development agencies, Chambers of Commerce, business and industry, post-secondary providers including Career and Technical Centers and University partners. Our Business Education Partnership has made great strides in connecting employers to school districts and K-12 education. The Chamber and other economic development agencies reach out quickly to our workforce system whenever a need arises to support a local business. This comprehensive and holistic approach, which utilizes partners across the board, will enable better services for the businesses of the Northern Tier.

Shortly after the start of the pandemic, as the economy started plans to reopen, the NTWDB teamed with NTRPDC to develop and distribute a needs survey for our local businesses. Feedback from the surveys were used to determine the most immediate needs identified by our businesses. The biggest concerns voiced by our employers while reopening the economy were health and safety practices including PPE requirements and how to obtain PPE. As a result, mass emails containing the most up-to-date information were distributed. Follow up took place for those requiring additional assistance. Referrals to our partners such as the Small Business Development Centers or PA CareerLink® were made to ensure businesses were connected with those best able to assist them. The survey resulted in the development of a COVID-19 business resource guide that was sent electronically to local businesses and posted on our website. The guide was also featured in the PA Careerlink® bi-weekly newsletter distributed to employers in our region. The resource guide included information on topics such as the Federal CARES Act, mitigation efforts, business loan information, unemployment compensation, webinars and workshops.

At the start of the pandemic PA CareerLink® partners were called upon to develop a strategic workforce service delivery plan in order to maintain service to customers. Partner staff worked swiftly to adjust and refocus their efforts to change the way we provide services. Transitioning to first a hybrid system, and then to a total remote system of delivery required creative ways to maintain the integrity of our programs. This transition included making sure our staff had the proper equipment and technological skills needed to create opportunities for our customers. Customers are now able to receive services remotely through a variety of media platforms.

The Business Services Team (BST) was able to increase their employer base, as many employers found a need to hire during the pandemic. The BST formed a response team to organize outreach efforts throughout the region for employers during the pandemic. BST distributed information to local employers through a bi-weekly newsletter update. The newsletter, along with social media outlets, assisted in getting vital information to our employers as quickly as possible.

**Priority Sectors**

The local area's priority sectors of healthcare and social assistance, manufacturing, transportation and logistics, natural gas/energy and retail/hospitality provide residents with a broad array of career choices. Throughout the years partnerships in Healthcare, Manufacturing and Transportation and Logistics have provided the opportunity for local employers to work directly with our PA CareerLink® centers and NTWDB staff to understand needs and create training opportunities to meet the needs of employers. The NTWDB has successfully relaunched the Northeast healthcare industry partnership which includes Luzerne/Schuylkill, Lackawanna and Pocono Workforce Workforce Development Boards and covers a total of 12 counties. This partnership will accommodate the local employers of the Northern Tier to provide a forum to prioritize workforce and economic development needs locally. To date, the partnership has engaged healthcare providers, supported career outreach and exploration activities related to healthcare and has developed a health care career guide, outlining career pathways in the healthcare industry which is shared in our schools and also with our adult customers that may be interested in starting a career or changing to a career in healthcare. The NTWDB supports efforts to coordinate and assist in the development of entry-level training opportunities to assist local residents get jobs in emerging industries.

**Variety of Education and Training Providers.**

While the Northern Tier Region is very rural, we do have a number of post-secondary education and training

providers that includes two career and technical centers that provide hands on training. Mansfield University is located in the region as are branch campuses of Lackawanna College, Pennsylvania College of Technology and Penn State Extension. WDB staff participates on many of the advisory boards of these institutions and are able to provide information and input regarding our employer needs. Post-secondary providers located within our five counties include:

1. Mansfield University
2. Lackawanna College
3. Pennsylvania College of Technology
4. Penn State Extension
5. Susquehanna County Career and Technology Center
6. Northern Tier Career Center

### **Demand-Driven Activities**

The workforce system partners collaborate on services to the business community in a number of ways, from joint visits to job fairs to more comprehensive projects like the Fit4Work Reengagement Project. These projects are a collaboration of our employers, the NTWDB, PA CareerLink® center staff, and local schools to offer a certificate program that includes soft skills training and hands-on training to individuals who have barriers to employment who are interested in pursuing opportunities within our local industries.

### **Customer-Focused Services**

WDB staff continues to work with the PA CareerLink® Operator regarding integration and non-duplication of services in our centers. Staff in the centers work together to collaborate on services for cost efficiencies and better services to our customers. The local design of the PA CareerLink® centers is focused on: universality; customer choice; integrated systems and results-based accountability. In addition to meeting the required performance standards, PA CareerLink® partners must ensure that customers have easy access to services without being hindered by the obstacles related to funding streams and agency distinctness. Customers must also be afforded an opportunity to investigate all of the available services and training options, including statistics and satisfaction rates prior to choosing a career path. Many services, including the Career Resource Center, are available to anyone coming through our doors without eligibility restrictions.

### **Mobile Services.**

In an effort to provide career development services to those in our region that are unable to travel to one of our PA CareerLink® and affiliate sites, mobile services are provided throughout the region. Staff are housed in various locations throughout their respective county. These sites may vary from the town library to the local McDonalds. A PA CareerLink® staff person is available to provide assistance, including PA CareerLink® registrations, job search, resume writing and referrals. Dates and locations are advertised and shared with local partners. Over 100 additional customers were served through mobile service in 2019. While our ability to provide mobile service slowed in 2020 due to the pandemic, we were able to quickly adjust to provide our services remotely to our customers through a variety of platforms. This method, while effective for many, does not accommodate those with limited or no internet service or no digital literacy skills. We continue to evaluate alternative methods to provide service to those that are not able to get into one of the offices.

### **Business Education Partnership**

Over the past several years, our Business Education Partnership has worked closely with the school districts to expand career exploration activities within the K-12 education system, enhance curriculum to meet employers' needs and connect youth to employers. During the 21-22 school career readiness activities resulted in 10,332 career projects completed, of which 1,687 of those were for elementary students. Employers were connected to these students through various activities including career fairs, mock interviews, panels, career cafes, tours and job shadow opportunities. Each year the NTWDB sets additional goals in order to expand and build this program. This program has been instrumental in educating educators about career readiness and the opportunities that are available in their local area for their students. Coaches have also been able to bridge the gap between education and the business community. The program also helps educators to incorporate knowledge they gain from employer

relationships into their curriculum. These efforts are preparing our emerging workforce and assist in our goal of building a talent pool for our employers.

**Apprenticeship opportunities**

Apprenticeship has been around for a millennium because it is an effective and equitable training model. The “earn while you learn” strategy is appealing to employees who need sustainable wages while learning new skills. It is beneficial to employers because they receive highly trained employees who learn skills specific to the Employer’s needs because they are trained on the job, within their employer’s walls. The apprenticeship model is also beneficial to individuals with barriers and opportunity youth because the model allows learners to work with their mentor(s)/journey person(s) at their own pace while being paid to learn on the job. The technical education component can be tailored for individual learning styles. NTRPDC intends to provide information regarding apprenticeship opportunities to EARN, TANF, WIOA customers as well as those involved in special projects such as re-entry. These populations with barriers to employment can especially benefit from the RA model because of its ability to be tailored to meet any individual’s specific needs.

According to state records, there are eight entities in the Northern Tier Region sponsoring registered apprenticeship with 16 occupations represented. However, due to several facilities closing, the number is down to five registered apprenticeship programs with sponsors within the region. The NT WDB/NTRPDC seeks to build upon existing registered apprenticeship programs both within and outside the region to help local employers implement the model. There are several businesses that participate in apprenticeship programs sponsored by entities outside of our workforce development area. NTRPDC seeks to inform businesses, job seekers, students and others about the availability of registered apprenticeship programs both in and outside of the workforce development area (WDA). NTRPDC also seeks to bring awareness to pre-apprenticeship opportunities and has presented school districts with group sponsored programs available to them.

NTRPDC was approved as a Registered Apprenticeship sponsor in August 2018. The manufacturing industry was targeted because of a shortage of machinists. The healthcare industry has also been identified because of in-demand occupations such as LPN, CNA and EMT. NTRPDC seeks to build better infrastructure for registered apprenticeship in targeted industry clusters such as these. Engaging employers has been done through open information sessions as well as referrals from NTRPDC Economic Development and Business Services Team members. NTRPDC will work with businesses in need of the apprenticeship training model to develop or find group sponsored programs (such as NTRPDC’s machinist program) for specific occupations that are in demand. The group sponsored model will benefit small businesses by alleviating the administrative tasks of sponsoring programs

**Weaknesses**

**Lack of training providers/courses**

While our local training providers are a strength, the number of training providers is also an area of weakness, as it is difficult to start and gain momentum behind new programs when there are small numbers of potential participants. While our local training providers are eager to explore new ideas, it is difficult to run classes when there are less than 10 participants for a program. Many of our courses are more broad than specific, (such as mechatronics) when employers have only a handful of people who require training.

**Lack of awareness of the local resources**

While we continue to make outreach a priority and we have relationships with many organizations and businesses, there are still many that are not aware of our services or the benefits available. Business struggles with how the various facets of the workforce system or partners are interconnected. We will continue to promote the resources and services available in our region for employers and job seekers to take advantage of. This is done by continued outreach meetings and events to communities, businesses, education, local elected officials and other community agencies that serve the same populations.

**Limited Work-Based Learning Opportunities**

Many careers in the Northern Tier Region may be best addressed by learning on the job and/or through a mix of

work and learning activities. However, traditionally the workforce system in our area does not always provide an array of relevant work-based learning opportunities to fill these needs. The State Local Internship Program (SLIP) has proven to be valuable in developing work-based learning opportunities for our young adults creating a structured, paid internship in order to gain valuable experience, establish networks and explore career pathways. These opportunities for youth have also been expanded by the BEP program, however these same work-based opportunities are lacking for the Adult population.

**Lack of Public Transportation**

The current transportation system does not provide adequate access to all parts of the region where career opportunities are available. Due to the rural nature of the Northern Tier Region, transportation has always been and continues to be a significant barrier for many of the residents. The Northern Tier Region is a 4,000-square mile rural area with its population located in small communities across vast areas of agricultural land and forests. Access to public transportation is restrictive or nonexistent. Limited fixed bus routes are available in Bradford, Sullivan and Tioga Counties along with a taxi service. Susquehanna and Wyoming Counties have access to a Shared-Ride transportation service. Shared rides and taxi service can prove to be cost prohibitive when transportation is needed across several miles for multiple days. Bus routes are often not conducive to traditional work hours and are not available during non-traditional work hours. Individuals often cannot accept work due to their location and inability to get to the workplace at the designated time, often depending on others for a ride. Others are unable to maintain employment because they do not have reliable transportation. Transportation proves to be a barrier for many of our PA CareerLink® customers and we see a significant amount of our EARN clients unable to complete required classroom hours. As a solution the Northern Tier piloted a Van Ride program in Tioga County, which has the highest number of EARN enrollments. The van service is to transport participants to the EARN learning center on a priority basis. First priority is given to those that do not have access to public transportation through the bus service and second priority is to those participants spending more than one hour each way using public transit. The goal of the project is to increase EARN participation which leads to greater success of the program completion and employment. Close to 50 EARN clients have utilized the van services resulting in over 1,700 rides which has increased participation significantly.

**Limited Childcare Services**

The area does not have enough childcare providers for individuals who are currently working during, or interested in working, especially during the second or third shifts. This was especially true during the height of the pandemic when individuals were unable to find childcare, forcing some to leave their jobs in order to stay home with their children. Oftentimes, individuals must rely on family or friends for childcare which is not always a reliable solution.

**Gaps in Youth Services**

We have addressed many gaps through our Business Education Partnership and have made great progress over the past several years making the connection between students, educators and local employers. While we have made great strides in our work with students it is still difficult for us to recruit opportunity youth into programs as there are few public places where out they “hang out.” We have developed a youth taskforce made up of career advisors throughout the region to develop youth service strategies including recruitment.

**Lack of High-Speed Internet or Internet**

There are still many pockets of the region that lack internet connectivity and many areas also do not have high speed internet. This creates a barrier to employment preventing the ability to search for and find jobs, creates social isolation especially in the current climate when social distancing protocols are in place and results in individuals that are digital literacy deficient.

**Limited Resources**

Many of the area’s unemployed workers possess at least one barrier to employment. The Board may not have the depth of resources required to fully serve all those in need, including development of specific programs. As populations with barriers are increasing, resources are often decreasing.

**Business Participation**

While we are successful in outreach to employers and getting them to meet to learn more about what we are doing in the region, it is challenging to get the employers to follow through on the ideas and commitments discussed. For example, apprenticeship opportunities are something that we work to educate employers about, we have a lot of interest, but oftentimes it is the smaller employers that are interested and they end up not having the right candidate or the right ratio of journeymen to apprentice or simply do not have the time to do what is required of an apprenticeship model.

1.5. Describe strategic planning elements including a regional analysis of economic conditions.

**Regional Overview**

Understanding where and what the jobs are emphasize a demand side understanding of the labor market. This section reviews general employment trends, then sector trends and finally the county level occupations. The Northern Tier Region has a significant employer base. Comparing the density of the employment Concentration (through Location Quotients), concentrated employment opportunities in the region and historical and emerging sector trends help better understand the gaps for employers and businesses across the Northern Tier Workforce Area.

Location quotient (LQ) is a valuable way of quantifying how concentrated a particular industry, cluster, occupation, or demographic group is in a region as compared to the nation. Per EMSI, LQ can reveal what makes a particular region “unique” in comparison to the national average. The Location Quotients for the key industry clusters as delineated by the Center for Workforce Information by Local Workforce Area are as follows:

Figure 9: Industry Cluster Statistics

Industry Cluster Statistics for Northern Tier WDA												
	Agriculture and Food Production	Advanced Manufacturing	Building & Construction	Bio Medical	Business Services	Education	Energy	Healthcare	Hospitality, Leisure & entertainment	Logistics & Transportation	Real Estate, Finance & Insurance	Wood, Wood Products & Publishing
Q21 Employment	2,892	4,431	4,214	102	3,134	5,238	3,325	8,512	4,338	2,343	1,544	3,459
Percent WDA Employment	5.51%	8.44%	8.02%	0.19%	5.97%	9.97%	6.33%	16.21%	8.26%	4.46%	2.94%	6.59%
Employment Growth (2016-2021)	-95	-475	-319	-20	323	-361	18	-915	-595	332	-32	-647
Percent Growth (2016-2021)	-3.18%	-9.68%	-7.04%	-16.39%	11.49%	-6.45%	0.54%	-9.71%	-12.06%	16.51%	-2.03%	-15.76%
Q21 Average Wage	\$46,834	\$57,470	\$49,957	\$55,846	\$66,477	\$48,957	\$87,353	\$58,221	\$17,638	\$59,010	\$59,931	\$65,875
Q21 National Location Quotient	1.48	1.16	1.13	0.15	0.45	1.08	3.28	1.05	0.76	1.02	0.51	5.11

Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

Those industry clusters with high concentrations in the region are Wood, Wood Products & Publishing, Energy, Agriculture and Food Production, Building & Construction, Transportation & Logistics and Advanced Manufacturing. Given the history of extraction industries including Wood, Wood Products & Publishing and Energy, particular attention may need paid to these clusters.

Additionally, long term industry cluster projections for the Northern Tier Region also provide a window to employer demand to match job seeker supply. When looking at long-term industry projections, Construction, Education & Health Services and Leisure & Hospitality account for the most anticipated growth in the region.

According to Long-Term Industry Projections for the Northern Tier Workforce Area total employment is expected to increase by 2.9%, adding 1,730 total jobs. The greatest employment change by percentage is within the Leisure and Hospitality projected at 16.7% resulting in approximately 630 jobs. Education and Health Services account for only 4% of growth, but result in almost as many jobs with an estimated 540 jobs. Those Industries predicted to decrease in jobs are Manufacturing, Agriculture, Mining & Logging, State & Local Government and Self-employed workers. Of those industries predicted to decline, Manufacturing faces the biggest loss of employment by volume at -150 jobs.

**Employment and Occupations**

Often analysis of specific occupations across a rural area provides for interesting and sometimes skewed data. Further analysis is appropriate in these cases. Largest and fastest growing occupations offer a snap shot of the jobs.

Occupations related to the Healthcare industry and Food Service are at the top of the list for fastest growing occupations in the Northern Tier.

**Fastest Growing Occupations in the Northern Tier WDA (2020-2030)**



The image shows a large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border. The top portion of the box is filled with a solid grey color, serving as a header area. The rest of the box is white and empty, indicating that the data for the fastest growing occupations in the Northern Tier WDA (2020-2030) has not been provided or is to be added later.

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**By Volume Change:**

Occupational Title	Employment Change (Volume)
Home Health & Personal Care Aides	320
Cooks, Restaurant	170
Fast Food & Counter Workers	130
Laborers & Freight, Stock & Material Movers	110
Stockers & Order Fillers	90
Construction Laborers	90
Passenger Vehicle Drivers	80
Retail Salespersons	80
Bartenders	80
Waiters & Waitresses	70
Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	70
Packaging & Filling Machine Operators	70
Janitors & Cleaners	50
Secondary School Teachers	50
Industrial Machinery Mechanics	40
Maintenance & Repair Workers, General	40
Construction & Building Inspectors	40
General & Operations Managers	40
Medical & Health Services Managers	40
Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, & Mental Health Counselors	40

Long-Term Occupational Projections show the largest increase in Protective, Food, Building & Personal Service at 9.3%. Healthcare Practitioners, Technicians and Support come in second at 7.7% employment change followed by Transportation and Material Moving at 7.5%. A decline in Office & Administrative Support (-7.2%) and Production (-2.5%) are anticipated. The highest annual demand (1,435) is for Protective, Food, Building & Personal Service occupations.

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Long-Term Occupational Projections for Northern Tier WDA (2020-30)					
Occupational Title	Employment (2020)	Projected Employment (2030)	Employment Change (2020-30)		Annual Demand
			Volume	Percent	
Total, All Occupations	60,130	61,860	1,730	2.9%	6,920
Management, Business & Finance	4,780	4,910	130	2.7%	423
Computer, Engineering & Science	1,890	1,900	10	0.5%	143
Education, Legal, Social Service, Arts & Media	4,990	5,210	220	4.4%	456
Healthcare Practitioners, Technicians & Support	6,920	7,450	530	7.7%	652
Protective, Food, Building & Personal Service	8,540	9,330	790	9.3%	1,435
Sales & Related	5,640	5,640	0	0.0%	759
Office & Administrative Support	6,820	6,330	-490	-7.2%	663
Farming, Fishing & Forestry	1,600	1,650	50	3.1%	258
Construction & Extraction	3,770	3,890	120	3.2%	407
Installation, Maintenance & Repair	3,390	3,460	70	2.1%	326
Production	6,070	5,920	-150	-2.5%	639
Transportation & Material Moving	5,730	6,160	430	7.5%	763

Source: Long-Term Occupational Employment Projections (2020-30)  
 \*Data may not add due confidentiality

Figure 11

In 2021, Healthcare is ranked our biggest industry sector in the Northern Tier making up 16.21% of the jobs. Education ranks second at 9.97% and Manufacturing is third at 8.44% which a decrease from 13.2% of employment in 2020.

Industry sectors with projected job loss for 2016-2021 includes Manufacturing, Retail Trade, Finance and Insurance and Government (includes public education). Manufacturing has a LQ of 1.16, but is projected decrease over the next five years by -9.68% a loss of 475 jobs.

While declines in production and workforce have been significant over the last several years it still accounts for 8.44% of the jobs (8,357) in the region. The region has traditionally been an area with a high concentration of manufacturing.

**2. STRATEGIC PLANNING: Vision and Goals**

*2.1. What are the local board’s strategic vision and goals for preparing its workforce?*

Consistent with the state plan, WIOA provides local regions the opportunity to align workforce priorities across multiple partners, training providers, employers and others to ensure we are creating a skilled workforce for today and the future. Therefore, the local workforce system will work to better serve individuals with barriers to increase the employment, retention, and earnings of customers, develop career pathways, support sector strategies and increase credential attainment through short-term training opportunities, pre-apprenticeship, Registered Apprenticeship and Incumbent Worker training. The Northern Tier’s economic future depends on a workforce able to compete in today’s global economy. In order for the region to be economically competitive and its residents to acquire careers that pay family-sustaining wages, the region needs to ensure that its workforce system is steered by business and job seeker needs. A skilled and well-trained workforce can be achieved by better aligning the workforce development system with industry and education to competitiveness of the five-county workforce area.

The vision of the Northern Tier Workforce Development Board (NTWDB) is that the local area will be a destination of choice for employers and jobseekers, where existing businesses experience growth and where new businesses are eager to locate because of the excellent job opportunities, economic vitality, quality of life and the presence of a



skilled workforce.

The **mission** of the NTWDB is to provide responsive and innovative leadership that meets the current and future needs of employers and jobseekers.

The current goals of the NTWDB include:

1. Partner with secondary schools to enhance the youth talent pipeline and increase work-based opportunities for our youth
2. Continue to engage industry sectors to address their recruitment, retention and training needs and develop career pathways
3. Strengthen relationships with economic development and education to offer a seamless, integrated network of support to regional businesses
4. Enhance customer-focused services to priority populations through our PA CareerLink® centers
5. Work with partners to increase and promote training opportunities that include Pre-Apprenticeship and Apprenticeship models, credential attainment and increase digital literacy

The local area's mission, vision, and strategic goals, the local area as well as the state seek a business focused workforce system with a special care given to those with barriers. This focus creates a better link between business and jobseekers. It allows business to grow and create more jobs. At the same time, it allows jobseekers to be trained in the skills that employers need. Both the state and the local area supports training for high priority occupations, career pathways, better job matching, and programs that address skill gaps.

It is important to note, the workforce regional footprint is the same as the local designated area.

- 2.2. *What is the local board's strategy to work with the entities that carry out the core programs to align resources available to the local area, in order to achieve the strategic vision and goals for the local area?*

The NTWDB's vision and policy directs investment in workforce preparation, skill development, education and training. These investments are targeted and align with assisting youth, job seekers and employers. The NTWDB aligns regional resources and acts as the intermediary 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.

The NTWDB is responsible for setting the standards of operations of the PA CareerLink® sites and overall workforce systems in the Northern Tier. The PA CareerLink® Committee is responsible for conveying the standards set by the NTWDB by developing and implementing policies and procedures that coordinate partner activities and resources into a seamless, non-duplicative delivery system.

The Board's strategy to achieve its vision and goals reaches beyond the entities that carry out the core programs. The NTWDB will continue to pursue strategies that are aligned with the state's strategic vision and goals including:

- Innovative strategies:
  - Continue to develop alignment between economic development, workforce development and education
  - Continue to develop alignment between business and education to ensure curricula is matched to business needs. Continue to assist in matching the education level of our community to the needs, based on timely labor market information.
  - Better connect to all industries to identify workforce priorities. Ensure our PA CareerLink® centers

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continue to outreach to local industry to keep a pulse on needs and provide appropriate business services.

- Career Pathways:
  - Build on those already developed in manufacturing and other industries and incorporate state resources as they become available
  - Encourage development and use of career pathways in training provider curricula.
  - Continue to develop career pathway initiatives reflecting the progression of the paths available within the Northern Tier
  - Continue to educate youth about career pathways through the BEP program
- Intra-Regional Planning
  - Continue to collaborate with Northeast PA WDBs and other WDAs on programs and initiatives when practical such as coordinating Next Generation Industry Partnerships and explore sector strategies.
  - Foster partnerships with our bordering Workforce and Economic Development partners across the border to New York with whom we share a workforce.
  - Maintain already established partnerships and make new connections to community-based organizations and other non-traditional partners to enhance services and eliminate barriers
- Enhance youth programming:
  - Continue to expand and build upon our Business and Education Partnership
  - Workforce staff meets regularly with transition councils, school administrators, guidance counselors and teachers to educate them on programs and accept feedback/input about what youth and young adults in the Northern Tier need in terms of career planning and preparation. Regular discussion, updates and open communication prevent duplication of services.
  - Continue to connect youth to local business to expand work-based opportunities
  - Educate organizations serving youth 0-14 to incorporate career exploration opportunities into their programs and services
- Convening all partners- this includes education providers, economic development agencies (local and regional), workforce partners, employers and other community-based agencies, etc. on a regular basis to ensure all have access to the labor market information to make strategic decisions.
- Increase monitoring of all programs and offer technical assistance to ensure performance measures are met.
- Increase the use of technology to provide opportunities to job seekers and employers and ensure digital literacy. Provide training and cross-training opportunities for staff in the PA CareerLink® centers and other partners.

2.3. *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?*

As discussed in the **response to 2.1**, the mission of the Northern Tier Workforce Development Board is **to provide responsive and innovative leadership that meets the current and future needs of employers and jobseekers**. The goals that it has established to support its mission are aligned with the governor's vision and goals as articulated in the Commonwealth's WIOA combined state plan. Moreover, these goals collectively promote the economic growth and self-sufficiency of the Northern Tier Workforce Development Region by improving the overall quality of its labor force as well as support the recruitment and retention efforts of its local businesses.

### **Commonwealth Goal 1: Career Pathways and Apprenticeship**

The Board's Goal 2, "Continue to Engage Industry to Address Recruitment, Retention and Training Needs and Develop Career Pathways" speaks directly to the Commonwealth's goal to Establish Career Pathways and Apprenticeship. The Board recognizes the value of Career Pathways Plans and continues to work with regional partners to appropriately utilize career pathways for sector focused initiatives. The NTWDB will work to strengthen relationships with industry and our PA CareerLink® to implement pathway models with particular focus on our priority industries. The Board's Goal 5, "Work with partners to increase and promote training opportunities that include Pre-Apprenticeship and

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Apprenticeship models, credential attainment and increased digital literacy” also supports the Governor’s goal to increase pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs. The NTWDB is an apprenticeship sponsor and works to promote and implement apprenticeship models in the Northern Tier Region.

The NTWDB works closely with secondary and post-secondary institutions within the area by attending advisory committee meetings, other assemblies and shares updates on projects as well as labor market information. School districts are sent Pennsylvania’s In-Demand Occupations list as well as the Northern Tier High Priority Occupations List each year. NTWDB staff, including an RA Navigator, have close relationships with school districts, CTEs and post-secondary schools through numerous projects, the LWDB, Youth Committee and others. The on-staff RA Navigator seeks information on existing apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs that might potentially benefit students, employers, job seekers, etc. within the LWDB and disseminates information to appropriate parties in an effort to raise awareness about opportunities. This work is done with the help of the PA Apprenticeship and Training Office’s (ATO) Apprenticeship Training Representative (ATR) that covers the Northern Tier. When more information is requested, the RA Navigator coordinates informational meetings for employers, job seekers, students, school administrators, etc. to learn about specific programs. These coordination efforts help connect adults, dislocated workers, opportunity youth and others with barriers access to high quality training programs.

### **Commonwealth Goal 2: Sector Strategies and Employer Engagement**

The Board’s Goal 2, Continue to engage industry sectors to address their recruitment, retention and training needs and develop career pathways and the Board’s Goal 3, “Strengthen relationships with economic development and education to offer a seamless, integrated network of support to regional businesses both support the vision of the Commonwealth. The Northern Tier WDB is part of the NEPA Next Generation Manufacturing Industry partnership, which includes collaboration with three other Workforce Boards including Poconos (lead), Luzerne/Schuylkill and Lackawanna. The NEPA IP resulted in various services to the manufacturing industry including a series of professional produced videos highlighting manufacturing jobs and also a resource guide including the four workforce areas including education and training, economic development and business resources. The NTWDB will continue industry engagement using the Next Generation model. The NTWDB will also continue to strengthen our partnership with our PREP partners and the Engage! program, including PA CareerLink® Business Services team to enable them to provide business with the most up-to- date information regarding services available throughout the workforce and economic development system.

### **Commonwealth Goal 3: Youth**

The Board’s Goal 1, “Partner with secondary schools to enhance the youth talent pipeline and increase work-based opportunities for our youth.” The NTWDB continues to strengthen the system’s impact on the secondary school system to increase career awareness, pathways and develop career readiness for students. As a key component of its youth pipeline and sector engagement strategies, the Board will continue to expand upon work-based learning opportunities for our youth including, but not limited to, job shadow, work experience, internships, co-op programs, pre-apprenticeships, and apprenticeships to meet specific skill needs of employers in the region. The Northern Tier Career Coaches continue to work within the schools, and business community, to make the connection between learning opportunities and local business. The NTWDB will continue to develop recruitment strategies to attract youth with the help of the already established youth taskforce. The NTWDB and PA CareerLink® will continue to strengthen and develop new partnerships to ensure a comprehensive referral system is in place to make appropriate referrals to our youth and opportunity youth including Job Corps, post-secondary opportunities, TANF, Literacy, OVR, work-based learning and wellness agencies that provide mental health, physical health or substance abuse services.

### **Commonwealth Goal 4: Continuous Improvement of the Workforce Development System**

The Board’s Goal 3, “Strengthen relationships with economic development and education to offer a seamless, integrated network of support to regional businesses” supports the improvement of the Workforce Development System. The NTWDB will continue to convene all regional partners including education providers, economic

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development agencies (local and regional), workforce partners, employers and other community-based agencies to ensure that all partners have access to the labor market information to support the connection between education and training and the economy and align training provider curricula to the needs of existing and emerging sectors. Additionally, through its industry partnerships, the NTWDB will continue to convene employers from the targeted sectors along with education and training providers and other partners to identify the specific skill needs and related training curricula that are required to fill the in-demand, growth, and emerging occupations of the local area. The NTWDB will continue to monitor the effectiveness of existing education and training activities by collecting information on programs that are being supported by WIOA funds as well as the funds of core partners. It will identify the programs that have the strongest ties to employers' needs and the best success rates for producing graduates and job placements.

As noted earlier, NTRPDC and the NTWDB, attained Registered Apprenticeship sponsor status in 2018. Since then, we have worked with employers in different industries to promote the registered apprenticeship model. Partnering with employers and educational training providers to develop new programs for in-demand occupations is a priority for our businesses to have a highly skilled workforce. There are limited Registered Apprenticeship opportunities in our region. The NTWDB seeks to increase the number of apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs available to employers and job seekers in the region.

The local board has met with and given foundational apprenticeship information to the region's Business Services Team (BST). The BST meets with new and existing employers regularly and has informational materials to give employers about apprenticeship. Referrals are made to the Navigator/local board staff for those employers that are interested in more information and individual meetings are scheduled. NTRPDC Economic Development staff also have apprenticeship information to disburse to employers and partners during meetings and initiate referrals the same as the BST. All companies participating in job fairs within the region are also given apprenticeship materials.

Finally, The NTWDB, NTRPDC, and PREP will continue to collaborate and coordinate our efforts while utilizing DCED's Executive Pulse system. This is the economic development system of record for tracking served and business services. This will enable us to better coordinate business outreach services, share information and measure results.

### **Commonwealth Goal 5: Strengthening the One-Stop Service Delivery System**

The Board's Goal 4, "Enhance customer-focused services to priority populations through our PA CareerLink® centers". The NTWDB works with the PA CareerLink® to create innovative strategies to deliver service for customers facing multiple barriers to employment. One such program is the Fit4Work Reengagement Project focused on developing employability skills combined with a work-based learning experience for those with multiple barriers with a focus on those involved with the criminal justice system. Currently the NTWDB is working to identify communities within our area that are deficient in digital literacy. Identification of these areas will help to direct the PA CareerLink® staff in determining where mobile service may be best provided as well as building upon current digital literacy offerings. PA CareerLink® staff have been able to utilize various platforms to provide services to our customers both virtually and remotely, but understand that not all that need assistance have the digital literacy skills, internet or equipment to utilize services in this way. PA CareerLink® partners and staff participate in events and attend meetings to conduct outreach and provide an understanding of services to the community. PA CareerLink® staff also participate in regional training at least twice annually to participate in professional development and cross-training activities. The Business Services Team (BST) is updated on the various initiatives and programs available from both the workforce and economic delivery systems. BST makes and accepts referrals from Executive Pulse and collaborates with partners to strategize the best method of service.

- 2.4. *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?*

As shown in the Performance Measures Table included as **Attachment 1**, the Board and the local elected officials have agreed to adopt the levels of WIOA performance that have been established by the governor for the Commonwealth. The Board's five primary workforce goals discussed in the **response to 2.1** fully support these measures and the Board further promotes performance achievement by including these factors as part of its

expectations in agreements with subcontractors and the PA CareerLink® partners. The goals of the NTWDB ensure that our area achieves the federal performance accountability measures. For the past several years, board members have engaged in high-level strategic discussions with our local partners about better serving our customers while meeting the federal performance accountability measures. Our Board recognizes that it will be more challenging to meet some of these measures as small downturns and upturns in the economy have a huge impact on our local numbers. It is also more challenging to enhance our focus on harder to serve populations identified in WIOA as well as the WIOA Combined State Plan. The goals that have been developed by the board support these measures as well in several ways.

1. Partner with secondary schools to enhance the youth talent pipeline and increase work-based opportunities for our youth.
2. Continue to engage industry sectors to address their recruitment, retention and training needs and develop career pathways
3. Strengthen relationships with economic development and education to offer a seamless, integrated network of support to regional businesses
4. Enhance customer-focused services to priority populations through our PA CareerLink® centers
5. Work with partners to increase and promote training opportunities that include Pre-Apprenticeship and Apprenticeship models, credential attainment and increase digital literacy

**NTWDB Goal 1: Partner with secondary schools to enhance the youth talent pipeline and increase work-based opportunities for youth**

- This goal will assist in identification of recruitment of young adults that are in need of our service. The programs and services that we offer that meet the needs of youth will meet the WIOA Performance Indicators for youth of employment in second quarter rate, employment in fourth quarter rate, and could impact measurable skill gains and credential attainment rate.
- Youth receive career pathway information which leads them to placement in education or employment. The attainment of a degree or certificate ensures that youth are on a career pathway that will lead to a future job with the family sustaining wages. This all leads to a better prepared workforce of higher quality, which helps business grow in the local area and thus supports the local vision.

**NTWDB Goal 2: Continue to engage industry sectors to address their recruitment and retention and training needs and develop career pathways**

- This goal will have an impact on several of the WIOA Title I Performance Indicators. More specifically, if the workforce system is better connected to the private sector this will result in an improved “Employment in Second Quarter Rate” as we better understand business needs. As we better prepare individuals for jobs in the local labor market there will be a better “Employed in Fourth Quarter Rate” (retention) for them as well. Median earnings measured during the second quarter after exit can also be impacted.
- This NTWDB Goal will also have an impact on the “Credential Rate” and “Skill Gains” as we continue to discuss the opportunities of credentials with our post-secondary providers as well as our career pathways efforts. We will see more individuals with the right education and training for the jobs in our labor market with the knowledge of the career pathways to move along in the company/industry.
- As more skill gaps are identified programs will be developed. This is expected to positively impact retention rates.

**NTWDB Goal 3: Strengthen relationships with economic development and education to offer a seamless, integrated network of support to regional businesses**

- Similar to Goal 2, this goal will also improve the following WIOA Performance Indicators: “Employment in Second Quarter”, “Employment in Fourth Quarter”, for the same reasons as indicated above.
- The NTWDB has established partnerships with economic development agencies, business and industry, post-secondary providers including Career and Technical Education Centers. The board will enhance these partnerships by putting in place additional MOUs as well as generate increased referrals through the

increased outreach and promotion of the resources available within the workforce development system.

**NTWDB Goal 4: Enhance customer-focused services to priority populations through our PA CareerLink® centers**

- This goal focuses primarily on WIOA performance indicators including “Employment in Second Quarter Rate,” “Employment in Fourth Quarter” and “The percentage of program participants who obtain a recognized postsecondary credential, or a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.” It could also impact Measurable Skill Gains.

**The NTWDB Goal 5: Work with partners to increase and promote training opportunities that include pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship models, credential attainment and increase digital literacy.**

- This goal focuses on education opportunities and will focus primarily on “Credential Attainment” and “Measurable Skills Gains” and also includes “Employment Second Quarter” and “Employment Fourth Quarter”.

The Board gauges its progress in meeting planned outcomes through the following indicators that are regularly reviewed and reported by the PA CareerLink® Committee:

- Number of first visits and total visits to the PA CareerLink®
- Number of persons completing occupational skill training and/or receiving certifications
- Number of high school equivalency diplomas achieved
- Number of individuals enrolled in EARN<sup>11</sup>
- Number of individuals enrolled in Job Search Center
- Number of business services provided
- Market penetration rates

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

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

**Organization Chart**

An Organization Chart that depicts the structure of the Northern Tier Local Workforce Development Area is included as **Attachment 2**.

The current local workforce system structure that has been developed in the Northern Tier WDA was a collaborative effort of the local elected officials, the Workforce Development Board and the Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission. The appropriate agreements and boards have been established in the region to respect the individual roles of policy vs. program. The roles and relationships of each stakeholder follow.

**Chief Local Elected Official (LEO)**

The Local Workforce Development Board membership is appointed by the officers, who must be commissioners, of the Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission’s Executive Committee. The five officers of that committee are the Chief Elected Officials (CLEOs) for the Workforce Development Board. Appointments are signed by the designated signatory of the CLEOs. Local Chambers of Commerce recommend business members to the CLEOs for nomination to the workforce development board. The CLEOs then appoint the members to the workforce development board.

The functions of the CLEOs include, but are not limited to: maintaining administrative oversight and liability for funds through participating on the NTRPDC Executive Board; designating a sub grant recipient or fiscal agent; appointing local board members; assisting in the development of the local plan; and negotiating local performance standards and other duties set forth by the Act. The Local Elected Official/ NTWDB Agreement spells out the specific relationship between the LEO and the NTWDB.

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The CLEOs maintain administrative oversight and liability for funds through participating on the NTRPDC Executive Board; designates a sub grant recipient or fiscal agent; appoints local workforce development board members; assists in the development of the local plan; and other duties set forth by the Act. This includes:

- Establish and appoint a Workforce Development Board to assist in carrying out provisions of the Act, as identified within the Local Elected Officials Agreement.
- Develop the mission, strategic vision, and policies for the WDB.
- Identify and close gaps in local / regional workforce resources.
- Develop and approve local plan that meets requirements of state and federal guidelines.
- Designate operators of the PA CareerLink® (one-stop delivery system) and oversee their operations.
- Certify providers of workforce development and training in the area.
- Develop performance based accountability measures and use them to assess programs, measure customer satisfaction, and issue “consumer report:” or “report cards” on providers of training.
- Promote private sector participation in the local workforce development system.
- Develop and approve the WDB and related budgets.
- Receive additional non-federal, state, and other workforce funds as an integrated system.

**Fiscal Agent and Administrative Entity.** The LEO has appointed the Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission as Fiscal Agent and Administrative Entity.

Responsibilities include:

- Oversee the contracting process between Workforce Development Board and service providers.
- Submitting accurate and timely financial reports.
- Ensuring expenditures are allocated to cost categories correctly and within cost limitations.
- Timely reconciliation of records and reports, at least on a quarterly basis.
- Oversee/monitor fiscal activities of the Local Workforce Development Area.
- Oversight of the receipt, disbursement, accounting and reporting of program operations funding.
- Maintaining adequate internal controls.

### **Northern Tier Workforce Development Board**

The Northern Tier Workforce Development Board shall provide, in partnership with the NTRPDC Executive Board, the policy, program guidance and independent oversight services for all activities under the plan for this workforce development area pursuant to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. In addition, the Northern Tier Workforce Development Board, in mutual agreement with the NTRPDC Executive Board, is designated the administrative entity to conduct oversight responsibility in the course of normal and customary activities pursuant to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. This consent in no way circumscribes or limits the Executive Board’s authority to exercise independent oversight activities.

Staff to the NTWDB are employees of Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission. This structure was developed and approved by the LEO, WDB, and NTRPDC and is described in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Agreement (WIOA) and the Local Elected Officials Agreement. Staff serves the Executive Committee and NTWDB by providing monitoring, oversight, policy and strategy development, technical assistance, project development and additional funding opportunities.

Bradford County Action and Trehab are the WIOA Title I Operators. A PA CareerLink® Center is in two of the five counties.

There are currently five (5) board staff including the following. The mailing address for all of the following staff as well as telephone and fax numbers are the same except where noted:

Melissa Fleming, WDB Director

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Jody McCarty, Program Administrator  
Rachel Selleck, Project Development Manager  
Bonnie Warner, Quality Specialist/EO Officer  
Patty Sturzen, Workforce Coordinator

All NTWDB staff work at this physical location: Northern Tier Regional Planning & Development Commission, 312 Main Street, Towanda, Pennsylvania 18848

**Email:** [info@northerntier.org](mailto:info@northerntier.org)

**Telephone:** 888-868-8800 or 570-265-9103

**Fax:** 570-265-7585

### **Standing Committees of the WDB**

There are four (4) committees of the Northern Tier Workforce Development Board as described below.

#### **Frequency of Meetings**

All committees meet quarterly in accordance with the WDB meeting and also when necessary as special circumstances arise. Meetings are often conducted with the use of technology such as email, conference calls and virtual meetings being sensitive to time and travel demands on Board members. Members are asked to volunteer for the committee to which they can bring their expertise and experience. Committees are also open to interested parties who are not WDB members. The additional members are non-voting members who have expressed an interest in assisting the NTWDB in meeting our goals and objectives.

The committees are as follows:

#### **PA CareerLink® Committee**

Frequency of Meetings: Quarterly in accordance with the WDB meetings, or as needed.

Membership: WDB members and WIOA required partners in the Workforce Delivery System, as well as other members requesting to serve on the committee and as approved by the board.

Responsibilities and Activities:

- Reviews PA CareerLink® as the retail side of the workforce system, its current benchmarks, who the partners are and services provided
- The committee consists of NTWDB Staff, private sector, and non-profit groups
- The committee will evaluate both sites and offer input for improving services (employer and individual) and provide new ideas. This could include outreach opportunities, the process for engaging employers, etc.

#### **Fiscal Committee**

Frequency of Meetings: Quarterly in accordance with the WDB meetings, or as needed.

Membership: WDB and Executive Committee members and other members requesting to serve on the committee and as approved by the board.

Responsibilities and Activities:

- Conducting financial oversight
- Ensuring WIOA funds are spent in the most cost-effective manner
- Assisting with budget development
- Approving, monitoring and recommending budgets
- Reviewing financial monitoring and audits
- Analyzing strategic plans and determining financial impact
- Presenting financial information and recommendations to the Board



### Youth Committee

Frequency of Meetings: Quarterly in accordance with the WDB meetings, or as needed.

Membership: The Youth Committee consists of appointed voting WDB members from the appointed membership as well as non-voting members as approved by the board.

Responsibilities and Activities:

- The primary role of the Youth Committee is “to provide information and to assist with planning, the operational oversight, and other issues relating to the provision of services to youth (Section 681.100).”
- Identify eligible providers of youth workforce development activities in the local area
- Develop performance and report measures for youth providers in addition to those required by WIOA

### Local Management Committee

Frequency of meetings: Quarterly in accordance with the WDB meetings, or as needed

Membership: The directors of the county assistance offices, EARN providers, other local DHS program partners, Bureau of Employment Programs representative and community agencies providing services to low-income individuals

Responsibilities and activities:

- Provide programmatic oversight and strategic plan guidance and feedback to the local EARN program.
- Coordinate referrals from the CAOs to the EARN program.
- Provides a forum for employment and training providers and other stakeholders to connect and discuss best use of local resources to serve low-income individuals on their path toward self-sufficiency.
- Maximize community resources to find solutions to significant barriers faced by individuals served in employment and training programs.

### Equal Opportunity Officer

The EO officer for the Northern Tier Region is Bonnie Warner, WIOA Quality Specialist, [warner@northerntier.org](mailto:warner@northerntier.org).

Responsibilities include monitoring and investigating LWDA activities and activities of its subrecipients to ensure compliance with nondiscrimination and EO obligations under WIOA Title I. The EO officer reviews written policy to ensure that they are nondiscriminatory, develops and publishes LWDA procedures for processing discrimination complaints and ensuring those procedures are followed. Provides complaint forms and resolves EO complaints informally in consultation with the Office of Equal Opportunity Specialist. Coordinates EO activities and maintain communication with the Office of Equal Opportunity Specialist. EO Officer ensures that annual training is provided to local PA CareerLink® staff, LWDB staff and service providers. EO officer is responsible for dissemination of information and works with the Equal Opportunity Liaisons assigned to each PA CareerLink® center to ensure that customers are aware of their rights and report incidents related to potential discrimination or accessibility.

PA CareerLink® EO Liaison for Bradford is Allen Hubler, Site Supervisor, BWPO, [ahubler@pa.gov](mailto:ahubler@pa.gov). Tioga EO Liaison is Maria Nobles, Site Supervisor, BWPO, [mnobles@pa.gov](mailto:mnobles@pa.gov).

- 3.2. *What are the programs 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?*

The NTWDB’s vision and policy directs investment in workforce preparation, skill development, education and training. These investments are targeted and align with assisting youth, job seekers and employers. NTWDB aligns regional resources and acts as the intermediary to promote partnerships among businesses, non-profit agencies,

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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. The NTWDB is responsible for setting the standards of operations of the PA CareerLink® sites and overall workforce systems in the Northern Tier Region. The PA CareerLink® Committee is responsible for conveying the standards set by the LWDB by developing and implementing programs, policies and procedures that coordinate partner activities and resources into a seamless, non-duplicative delivery system. To accomplish this vision, the following resources and programs are utilized in accordance with federal and state regulations (A program provider list can be found in Attachment 3):

- Title I (Adults, Dislocated Workers and Youth)
- Wagner-Peyser Act employment services administered by DOL
- Title II Adult Education and Literacy Act Program administered by the Department of Education
- Activities authorized under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965
- Career and Technical education programs at the postsecondary level authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Act of 2006.
- Department of Human Services- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) authorized under Section 403(a)(5) of the Social Security Act.
- Activities authorized under chapter 2 of Title 2 of the Trade Act of 1974
- Activities authorized under chapter 41 of title 38, United States Code
- Employment and Training programs carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act
- Employment and Training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws
- Native American Programs;
- Reentry Employment under Second Chance Act;
- Youth Build Title I Section 171.
- Migrant and seasonal farmworker programs; and
- Programs authorized under part A of Title IV of the social Security Act

### **PA CareerLink® Operator**

Our one-stop operator was selected following a competitive procurement process as outlined in TEGL 15-16, dated January 17, 2017. The Operator was last procured in May 2021 for an effective start date of July 1, 2021. The LWDB members reviewed each proposal and selected Bradford County Action, Inc. (BCA) as the PA CareerLink® operator for the region. BCA employs the Site Administrators, and holds the operational duties outlined in WIOA and the policies of the Commonwealth. These roles include functional management to ensure seamless service delivery and oversee the operations of the one-stop. The operator is an intermediary to the partners and ensures an effective referral mechanism is in place for the benefit of individuals and partners while also serving as an ambassador for the one-stop system to the community.

### **Title I WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth**

The Northern Tier currently has two Title I Providers. Bradford County Action, Inc. (BCA) is the WIOA provider for Bradford County and Trehab is the WIOA provider for Sullivan, Susquehanna, Tioga and Wyoming Counties. Both entities provide career and training services to our Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth populations as well as provide service to employers through the Business Services Team.

The WDB continuously reviews the performance of the Title I Providers for Adult and Dislocated Worker and Youth Services through performance measures data, monitoring of programs and reporting including

- Successful attainment of the WDB's goals including enrollment in key activities, career services, workshops, work-based training, and other training.
- Review of expenditures including attainment of 80% obligation in Adult, Dislocated Worker, and

- Youth; and comparison of budget to expenditures
- Meeting expenditure goals such as ensuring service to those with barriers makes up 51% of the customer base, 30% of funds are spent on training and at least 20% of youth funding is spent on work-based activities.

### **Wagner-Peyser Act Programs**

Services under the Wagner-Peyser Act are provided by partners from the Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations (BWPO), Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry. BWPO staff provide core services to customers including orientation to service, intake, provide workshops, vocational counseling, employee profiling and job matching and posting of job orders. BWPO staff also provide Rapid Response and RESEA services. BWPO are present in both comprehensive PA CareerLink® centers and travel to affiliate sites to provide services such as RESEA.

### **Programs authorized under the Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973**

Programs authorized under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are provided by the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) and available through the PA CareerLink® System. These program services include vocational counseling and guidance, vocational evaluation, restoration, training, job placement and pre-employment training services for eligible individuals with disabilities.

### **Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy**

Title II programs are provided by local Adult Literacy Training Providers, depending on the availability of literacy training in the individual counties. The Title II provider, Bradford County Action (BCA), has utilized this entire region to ensure the delivery of high-quality services. BCA provides a full range of service from literacy to activities including high school equivalency (HSE) instruction and testing, services that support post-secondary and career readiness goals to adults that are basic skills deficient. Services include English language acquisition when needed. Representation of Title II Adult Education and Literacy exists within the system. Title II services are co-located in the comprehensive sites and provide mobile service to other areas in the region.

### **Activities authorized under Title V of the Older American's Act of 1965**

Services are provided within the local PA CareerLink® system by the local SCSEP organizations including Area Agency on Aging, AARP Foundation and Associates for Training and Development and PathStone. These services are targeted to seniors through the PA CareerLink® system and include vocational counseling, paid work experience programs, employment training, and independent living counseling.

### **Postsecondary vocational education activities authorized under Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act.**

Vocational Technical School and Career and Technology Center partners provide these services as part of the PA CareerLink® services. Program services include the dissemination of information relative to financial assistance to attend post-secondary training and the provision for post-secondary occupational skills training.

### **Temporary Assistance to Needy Families**

The local County Assistance Offices through the State Department of Human Services provide services through TANF, authorized under Section 403(a)(5) of the Social Security Act. These services are targeted to welfare recipients and include information dissemination of welfare benefits. The services act as the sole determinant for eligibility of those benefits and are the referral resource to a multitude of local services, programs, and training options. The EARN Program receives referrals directly from the local County Assistance Office to provide TANF recipients with job readiness workshops, barrier remediation, job search skills, short term work experience, vocational education opportunities and follow up support during employment. The program is designed to move the TANF recipient from dependency on welfare benefits to self-sufficiency

### **Activities authorized under Chapter 2 of Title II of the Trade Act of 1974**

These activities include Trade Adjustment Assistance Program administration, including tuition assistance to

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Dislocated Workers who have lost their jobs due to imports. Program services, authorized under this funding and provided within the PA CareerLink® system, include rapid response to employees in the event of massive layoff or plant closure, tuition assistance for post-secondary occupational skills training, and income subsidies to assist candidates while in training. This service is provided by BWPO, Department of Labor and Industry.

### **Jobs for Veterans State Grant program activities authorized under Chapter 41 of Title 38 United States Code**

Veterans' activities are provided by Local Veteran's Employment Representatives (LVER) Veterans Representatives and Disabled Veteran Outreach Programs (DVOP) from BWPO, Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry. Services include career counseling, job development, case management, information on veterans' benefits, and tuition assistance for skill training. Veterans' services are made available in PA CareerLink® centers and affiliate sites.

### **Employment and Training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act**

These services are available within the PA CareerLink® System through local community action agencies or limited-purpose agencies (e.g., farm worker organizations). The PA Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) is the agency that provides the required one-stop training and employment activities under the Community Services Block Grant at the state level.

### **Employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)**

Where applicable, employment and training activities are provided by the existing Housing Authorities through the PA CareerLink® System. Services include information on HUD-funded employment and training activities, housing assistance, and housing subsidies.

### **Programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws**

The Department of Labor & Industry Unemployment Compensation (UC) deputation operates programs authorized under state and federal UC laws. Services provided in the PA CareerLink® include dissemination of information on the UC laws and claims assistance. UC telephones and computers are designated in the PA CareerLink® to provide access to those seeking to file applications and claims for UC benefits.

### **National Farmworker Jobs Programs**

The National Farmworkers jobs (NFJP) program is nationally directed, locally administered program of services for migrant and seasonal farmworkers (MSFWs). In Pennsylvania, the NFJP is administered by Pathstone Corporation. The NFJP is not local, however, PA CareerLink® staff offers information for assistance.

### **Job Corp**

Red Rock Job Corps Services, located in Sullivan County is a no-cost education and career technical training program administered by the U.S. Department of Labor that helps young people ages 16 to 24 improve the quality of their lives through career technical and academic training. The Job Corps program is authorized by Title I-C of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (supersedes WIA 1998). PA CareerLink® staff make and receive referrals from Job Corp.

### **Commission of Native American Affairs**

Purpose is to reduce unemployment among Native Americans, traditionally the least serviced and poorest group in the United States. The Council of Three Rivers American Indian Center has operated an employment and training program since 1976. The Commission of Native American Affairs is not local, however PA CareerLink® staff offer information about these services as needed.

### **YouthBuild**

YouthBuild provides education, counseling and job skills to unemployed young adults between ages 16 and 24, generally high school dropouts. Students learn construction trade by building homes for their own communities. YouthBuild is not local, however, PA CareerLink® staff offer information about these services as needed.

### **Programs authorized under section 212 of the Second Chance Act of 2007**

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Reintegration of Ex-Offenders (REO) targets court-involved youth, young adults, and adult ex-offenders through a variety of discretionary grant awards. There are no local Second Chance Act programs, however, PA CareerLink® staff offer information about these services as needed.

The PA CareerLink® Operator holds regularly scheduled meetings with the paying partners in the PA CareerLink® which are representatives from the WIOA Title I Operators, Title II, Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations, Department of Human Services and Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. The site administrators, who are responsible for both the comprehensive PA CareerLink® sites in the region, also attend these meetings. Meeting agendas, minutes and comprehensive reports are provided at every meeting.

The PA CareerLink® Operator, Title I and Title II Program Directors along with PA CareerLink® site administrators attend WDB meetings. BWPO and OVR have representation on the WDB. PA CareerLink Administrator updates are a standing agenda item at the WDB meetings. This provides assurance that the WDB plans and goals are clearly defined and relayed to the partners ensuring appropriate alignment of services.

The purpose of the PA CareerLink® is to create a seamless system of service delivery that will enhance the access to individual program services while improving long term employment outcomes for both job seeker and employer customers receiving assistance. The PA CareerLink® Operator designs the integration of systems and coordination of services, develops in cooperation with the fiscal agent an acceptable Operating Agreements utilizing equal access as the cost allocation methodology, evaluates performance and customer needs, maintains the one stop service plan, acts as a liaison with the NTWDB, promotes the PA CareerLink®, recruits partners, assures adherence to the provisions of Memorandum of Understanding, defines and provides means to meet operational goals, share and maintain data, responds to community needs, facilitates team building, and recommends to the NTWDB when necessary the need for additional affiliate sites. The NTWDB determines the number and type of PA CareerLink® sites in the area, defines minimum requirements for each site, sets performance standards, reviews, monitors, and evaluates performance, charters PA CareerLink® sites, and negotiates the memoranda of understanding of the PA CareerLink® partners to provide services.

There currently are two comprehensive PA CareerLink® sites in the Northern Tier Region. PA CareerLink® – Bradford/Sullivan is located at 312 Main Street, Towanda and PA CareerLink® Tioga is located at 56 Plaza Lane, Wellsboro. The PA CareerLink® Site Administrators are responsible for oversight of both comprehensive sites and affiliated sites within the region. There is one BWPO Supervisor at each comprehensive site.

Due to the rural nature of our region, four affiliated sites are strategically located in our remaining counties ensuring representation throughout the Northern Tier. These sites make it possible to provide services in those areas in which it is not conducive for customers to access one of the comprehensive sites. All four sites are operated by WIOA Title I and EARN and provide full-time WIOA service staff offering WIOA and EARN services as well as links to services provided by other partners through the comprehensive sites such as Veteran and RESEA services. All four sites fall under the umbrella of the comprehensive PA CareerLink® Bradford/Sullivan.

Affiliated sites have a Trehab WIOA Supervisor on site and the locations are as follows:

Sullivan County: 7406 Route 487, Suite 3, Mildred 570-928-2127, M-Th 8-4  
Susquehanna County: 36 Public Avenue, Montrose 570-278-3818, M-Th 8-4  
1302 Main Street, Susquehanna 853-1103, M-W: 7-5, Th: 7-4:30  
Wyoming County: 102 Warren Street, Tunkhannock, 570-836-6840, M-W: 7-5 Thurs: 7-4:30

3.3. *How will the local board work with the entities carrying out core programs to:*

*Expand access to employment, training, education and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly individuals with barriers to employment. Facilitate the development of career pathways and co-enrollment.*

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The NTWDB's vision and policy directs investment in workforce preparation, skill development, education and training. These investments are targeted and align with assisting youth, job seekers and employers. The NTWDB aligns regional resources and acts as the intermediary 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.

The NTWDB is responsible for setting the standards of operations of the PA CareerLink® sites and overall workforce systems in the Northern Tier. The PA CareerLink® Committee is responsible for conveying the standards set by the NTWDB by developing and implementing policies and procedures that coordinate partner activities and resources into a seamless, non-duplicative delivery system. Operational compliance concerns are addressed by the Workforce Development Board through continuous oversight and monitoring of WIOA programs and the workforce system as a whole.

Individuals entering the PA CareerLink® center receive a comprehensive orientation to partner services. Additionally, service overview is presented at various events throughout the community such as job fairs, career awareness events and various meetings attended by local workforce staff such as chamber or committee meetings. After the individual has received an orientation to services they then meet with a Career Pathways Navigator (CPN) in order to assess needs and make appropriate referrals.

Referrals to Title I meet with a Career Advisor to determine eligibility. For the purposes of determining eligibility, documentation is required as evidence supporting the legitimacy of an individual's acceptability for participation in WIOA funded programs. Eligibility must be confirmed by the local workforce staff and a supervisory/secondary review of eligibility determination is completed for all WIOA participants. This review is done prior to the customer receiving a WIOA service. WIOA allows for self-certification to validate certain eligibility requiring documentation which may cause undue hardship for the participant to obtain, especially those individuals with barriers. Staff must make every effort to obtain documentation to verify eligibility as self-certification is a last resort. Staff must case note all attempts made to obtain documentation prior to the use of self-certification. The use of telephone verification and documentation inspection verification to verify eligibility is allowable, especially in consideration of individuals with barriers. The use of telephone verification is preferred to self-certification and will be attempted prior to self-certification. Information obtained must be recorded in a Telephone/Document Inspection Verification form. WIOA program operators must report all WIOA program participants that utilize the self-certification form on their monthly cumulative participant reports. This information is utilized by LWDB staff to monitor a random sample of WIOA participants with self-certification for review. Monitoring staff conduct review of 10% of files with self-certifications on a quarterly basis. This is done to ensure self-certifications are done in compliance with the LWDB policy. Verification of eligibility through document inspection is appropriate when documents cannot be or may not be copied.

All Title I participants go through a needs assessment and are dual enrolled in programs deemed appropriate in order for the individual to meet their employment goals. Examples include co-enrollment in EARN programs or literacy programs such as HSE instruction. Individuals eligible under TAA are also dual enrolled in the WIOA Dislocated Worker program.

A description of Title II services is included in PA CareerLink® orientation. The Title II provider in our area is also a Title I provider within the region. This creates a unique opportunity for knowledgeable staff to make appropriate referrals between the programs. Title II representatives also participate in PA CareerLink® outreach services to educate the community about the services available through Title II.

Title IV services are also presented when an individual is first orientated to PA CareerLink® services. Additionally, signs are placed in the career resource centers informing individuals that additional assistance is available to them while at the PA CareerLink®. The intake form upon arrival at the PA CareerLink® includes the ability for a customer to self-identify as being in need of vocational rehabilitation services. Once the individual is assessed the Career

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Pathways Navigator will make referrals to the program if deemed appropriate. 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.

The PA CareerLink® management team continuously examines ways to align the PA CareerLink® service delivery system to more directly address issues involving underemployment, business services, and service to special populations. This population includes dislocated workers including displaced homemakers, migrant/seasonal workers, TANF customers, veterans, minorities, women and those with additional barriers to employment including older individuals, ex-offenders, persons with disabilities and persons with limited English proficiency. The PA CareerLink® Management Team assists the NTWDB in ensuring availability of employment and training services to these special populations. Services for these individuals are equal to any other including all of the PA CareerLink® workshops, one-on-one services with staff, testing, referral process, as well as online opportunities such as PA CareerLink®.

The NTWDB recognizes the intent of Congress through WIOA to utilize our funding to better serve those with barriers to employment. While we have historically served this population through our system there is now a heightened sensitivity to their needs. Services will continue to be refined to best meet their needs and to collaborate with partner agencies on the removal of barriers. Below please find more detailed information on service strategies for specific populations with barriers to employment: Other strategies include:

Our Title I provider is also our HSE provider who provides HSE services for individuals who are incarcerated before they are released. We work on lining up services and support before they are released. Incarcerated individuals get an overview of PA CareerLink® services and a preview of the Fit4Work Reengagement Project. They also do individual meetings to provide an initial assessment and develop a service strategy to prepare for employment after release.

Customers in our PA CareerLink® centers are supported by Career Pathways Navigators who provide assessment and referral services as well as help job seekers understand the career pathways available in local industries and how to develop the knowledge, skills and abilities to be qualified for job opportunities on those pathways. They also help job seekers link to educational and employment opportunities within the region. The jobseeker is able to obtain information about high priority occupations and available trainings that would prepare them for their career goals and earning postsecondary credentials. Career Pathways Navigators have information available on pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship opportunities through the Eligible Training provider List (ETPL), the ATO's site on PA CareerLink® and through the LWDB's RA Navigator.

Those seeking training leading to a recognized postsecondary credential would meet with a Career Advisor to determine the best course of action to attain their educational and occupational objectives. Work with the Career Advisor includes assessment of current interests and skills and the development of an Individual Employment Plan that outlines the steps needed to meet their goals. The career advisor also works with the participant to identify and overcome barriers they may have to training and/or employment. Different training options leading to postsecondary credential attainment are explored including but not limited to ITAs, pre apprenticeship and apprenticeships and online options such as SkillUp. The participant will make a decision based on what they determine to be the best training option for them. Title I providers offer transitional work experience to individuals that lack a work history and may be harder to employ due to barriers. These work sites are developed in cooperation with local municipalities or businesses to up to four weeks or more of work experience. We offer mobile services to provide easier access to our PA CareerLink® services for those with transportation barriers.

The PA CareerLink® utilizes technology to conduct virtual workshops. During the pandemic, PA CareerLink® quickly transitioned to remote service delivery utilizing technology to conduct virtual intake and workshops using a variety of platforms. Our PA CareerLink® and affiliate sites created YouTube channels which house a variety of pre-recorded workshops jobseekers can access at any time. Navigating the PA CareerLink® system, resume writing, interviewing, career exploration and financial problem solving are examples of the workshops added to our list of virtual service.

Live workshops also have been made available on different social media platforms. Hybrid models were created allowing individuals to attend in person, following social distancing protocols, while simultaneously allowing for others to attend virtually.

*3.4 What strategies will be implemented in the local area to improve business/employer engagement that:*

- *Support a local area workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area;*

Based on employment figures, the largest industries within the region area are Health Care, Government (including public education), Manufacturing and Retail Trade. When reviewing figures for the largest average wages by these industries, manufacturing, education, energy, health care, and transportation and warehousing have the largest salaries. Industries that have high location quotients in the area include manufacturing, health care, energy, and building and construction.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, the NTWDB focuses on industry partnerships and communication as a crucial strategy in identifying skills needs, promoting career pathways, matching jobseekers to available jobs and training. In addition, the NTWDB utilizes the High Priority Occupation List when reviewing regional and sector strategies.

These strategies link to the state as Pennsylvania promotes a workforce system based on the needs of employers, promotes career pathways, promotes industry partnerships, plans to better connect jobseekers and employers, and wants to utilize the HPO List more effectively.

The NTWDB cooperation with the Local Development District (LDD), the Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission (NTRPDC), which is the agency housing services of both the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) and the LWDB, creates a partnership that is efficient and well-rounded. Employer outreach is necessary for both groups and the shared information helps identify challenges and develop solutions to those strategies. By further developing these partnerships, engagement is improved as well.

The NTWDB has implemented several regional strategies to facilitate engagement of businesses and other employers. These methods include:

**Industry Partnerships**

Industry Partnerships are an important strategy for meeting the skills needs of businesses, the career goals of workers and the economic development goals of the Commonwealth. Industry Partnerships bring together multiple employers in the same industry cluster to address common or overlapping human capital needs such as recruitment, retention and training. The overall goal of an industry partnership is to increase the local and global success of the industry as a whole. The industry partnerships are also providing stronger connections between job seekers and employers in local areas where the workforce system must be designed to support the needs of regional employers.

The NTWDB has been the lead in a Healthcare partnership and partners with the Northeast region on Manufacturing partnerships. By working with new and emerging businesses within these clusters, we have been successful in aggregating training needs for multiple firms with similar needs. This has helped us create an employer-driven approach to workforce development. By increasing the economies of scale, the partnerships have been able to provide incumbent worker training to employers at a lower cost. The partnerships have also helped to align the services of education and training providers with private sector and employer needs, have helped us share best practices, and have established relationships that accelerate industry-wide product and process innovation. The partnerships have also implemented programs that help address the challenges of connecting youth to careers. The NTWDB will continue to build on the successes achieved in its partnership as it implements the Commonwealth's

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<sup>12</sup> Source: Economic Modeling Specialists, International (EMSI), 2020.4



Next Generation model throughout the region.

### **Small Businesses and New and Emerging Industries**

The Northern Tier Region is made up of mainly small employers – in fact, after each of the county’s top employers, all of the employers are small businesses.

Small businesses need a comprehensive suite of services available at the PA CareerLink® centers from helping customers identify resources for entrepreneurship, self-employment and small business development to acting as their human resources department when they are ready to make their first and subsequent hires. Most often small business is referred to agencies such as the Scranton & Wilkes University Small Business Development Centers or the Northeast Industrial Resource Center for further assistance. We will continue to strive for the goal that PA CareerLink® staff and in particular Business Service Teams have the knowledge of all opportunities available to employers.

In addition, all businesses including whether they are small or part of a new/emerging industry will benefit from the On-the-Job Training Program (OJT). On-the-Job Training (OJT) is training provided by the employer to a Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) eligible trainee, who has completed the required individualized career services available via the PA CareerLink® centers, has been unsuccessful in obtaining employment through such services, and has been approved for OJT participation by the Title I staff.

- *Manage activities or services that will be implemented to improve business engagement;*

### **Business Service Teams**

The Northern Tier Regional Business Service Team (BST) has representation from each county made up of core program staff. The BST meets quarterly as a region and also have county specific meetings in their respective areas. They identify employers for outreach and communicate with the PA CareerLink® staff to identify job seekers that would be a good match for the employer needs. The BST works to reach goals determined by the NTWDB such as increased market penetration rates, employer retention and creating increased awareness of services, including training opportunities to the business community through outreach efforts. The BST has meets with NTWDB staff and is kept up to date on the programs available through our PREP. The team is using the Executive Pulse system to share information with the economic development partners in the region, make and receive referrals.

OVR meets the needs of businesses by providing no cost services to include ADA Awareness training, ADA Accessibility evaluations, accommodation recommendations for current employees and retention services. OVR also continues to partner with employers with On-the-Job Training (OJT), providing 100% wage reimbursement to businesses that hire OVR customers.

Additionally, OVR business services staff can identify resources to diversify their workforce to include individuals with barriers to employment. Specifically, for individuals with disabilities, OVR provides multiple services to the business community designed to assist businesses with onboarding pre-screened qualified applicants with disabilities. OVR onboarding supports for a qualified new hire can include: reasonable accommodation consultation, initial probationary wage reimbursement (on the job training – OJT), referral on tax credits or deductions. OVR also offers no-cost consultation on the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) accessibility standards and helping a business retain current employees following an accident, injury or disability.

This past year the BST formed a response team to organize outreach efforts throughout the region for employers during the pandemic. BST distributed information to local employers through a bi-weekly newsletter update. The newsletter, along with social media outlets, assisted in getting vital information to our employers as quickly as possible. The BST was able to increase their employer base, as many employers

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found a need to hire during the pandemic. Challenged with coming up with innovative ways to serve the business community during this time were able to conduct virtual recruitments and created an introductory video of service to employers. Employer Spotlights are created and posted on their YouTube channel which includes an interview with a local employer to educate others about their business, positions they need to fill and skills needed for these jobs.

- *Better coordinate regional workforce and economic development strategy, messaging, engagement and programs; and*

The NTWDB and PA CareerLink® staff meet with the local and regional economic development providers. This allows for information sharing, planning and coordination of outreach strategies. Our workforce staff also utilize the Executive Pulse system to help facilitate referrals, information sharing and outreach tracking.

The NTWDB participates in PREP meetings where partners discuss strategies to better serve employers, share best practices and updates on current events that are available to our local businesses. Sharing information and resources with community partners ensures a solid referral system in which employers can be directed to the appropriate agency for service, which includes PA CareerLink®. The overall goal of Engage! directly correlates with the goals of the BST helping to retain existing business and helping them to grow. On occasion, employer visits include multiple partners representing a variety of service, presenting a team approach. Another approach to employer engagement is expanding upon available service. For example, since becoming a Registered Apprenticeship Sponsor, the NTWDB has come into contact with employers we have not necessarily had a strong working relationship with previously. Apprenticeship is another strategy used to assist employers with their workforce development needs. Historically, this method of training has been almost non-existent in our region. The BST has been instrumental in referring businesses to NTWDB staff for apprenticeship information. In an effort to cultivate the model in the region, the BST has been trained to identify and refer any businesses who might benefit from registered apprenticeship.

The regional Business Services Team (BST) has developed strategies to align with target goals to increase business engagement, such as increasing employer penetration rates by 5% annually. Efforts include reaching out to new business to explain service and also identifying existing business that typically has not utilized PA CareerLink® services. Focus is on those businesses that represent high priority occupations. The BST also realizes the importance of maintaining current relationships and generate reports that identify employers that have not used the PA CareerLink® system in a year. BST members reach out to these businesses which often results in a service being provided.

Apprenticeship informational materials have been developed by the NTWDB for BST members, NTRPDC and PA CareerLink® staff to disburse to partners and businesses during meetings to discuss available training options for incumbent or new workers. Any company requiring more information about registered apprenticeship is then referred to local board staff for individual meetings. The NTWDB recently received a Next Generation Industry Partnership grant for Diversified Manufacturing. This next Generation approach is business-led and industry driven. Plans to convene local manufacturing stakeholders exists to determine and prioritize challenges faced by the industry. Solutions to challenges such as recruitment, hiring, training, retention and skilled workers include the registered apprenticeship model. Members of the industry partnership will be educated about the apprenticeship model and provided an opportunity to collectively build apprenticeship opportunities based on their collective needs. This strategy is expected to result in movement to expand apprenticeships in our region, supporting the incumbent workforce, OJT and customized training opportunities. Once a successful apprenticeship has been established efforts to expand to the development of pre-apprenticeships will be made. This includes collaboration with our local CTECs to create pre-apprenticeship programs. The NTWDB has strong relationships with our CTECs which already have the infrastructure to provide and develop pre-apprenticeship programs. These strategies are expected to assist industry to create jobs and present opportunities for workers and students to obtain and retain self-sustaining employment.

We have improved business engagement through our Business Education Program (BEP). Career Coaches that work in the schools are charged with reaching out to and establishing relationships with local employers to educate

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students about career opportunities and pathways. These employers participate in a variety of activities including career fairs, tours, panels, mock interviews and presentations. This exposure also opens the door to having employers provide youth with work experiences, internships and job shadow opportunities. During the 19-20 school year, coaches completed more than 8,000 career education projects/assignments with Northern Tier students and made connections with 69 employers. The connection to businesses was lower than previous years due to the pandemic.

Teacher in the Workplace (TIW) has been instrumental in fostering relationships and improving engagement with employers. During the 19-20 school year Tioga County school districts participated in Career Ready Rounds, meeting with local employers to learn about the skills and education needed for in demand jobs. This project also allowed time for educators to work together to develop curriculum to be used in their classrooms based on what they learned from local employers.

The NTWDB partnered with NTRPDC to recruit local high schools and manufacturers to participate in the What's So Cool About Manufacturing? Contest. High school students learn about the manufacturer they are partnered with and develop a short video highlighting the manufacturer. The video is entered into a regional contest, the winner of which competes in a statewide contest. In the 2019 competition we had a total of eight (8) schools along with eight (8) manufacturers participate. The competition was held again in 2020 with a higher number of schools participating to start, however some schools were unable to finish their videos due to the pandemic and the fluctuating school schedule. In the end, nine (9) schools submitted videos with the help of our local manufacturers. This is a great example of both workforce and economic development working together to engage local business.

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

### **Unemployment Insurance Linkages**

The local area complies with the Commonwealth's Register for Work and Work Search law by helping unemployed individuals register on the PA CareerLink® system. There are computers dedicated to UC in each of the centers. Through the UC Connect program claimants are able to connect with a UC agent through in-person appointments at the PA CareerLink® centers. UC agents are available on a weekly basis.

At the PA CareerLink® centers, they are provided with an orientation of services and are given an initial assessment to determine their specific workforce needs. Based on their unique circumstances, they may be referred to additional services and resources, such as job search workshops, staff-assisted job-search activities, partner programs, supportive services, and/or training activities to help them secure a new job, or begin a new career.

Any potential UC eligibility issues identified during RESEA, or any other UC Claimant interaction are referred to the State's Unemployment Insurance department for resolution.

Additionally, the Office of UC Service Centers conducts seminars on a variety topic relating to the rights and responsibilities of employers. UC Representatives have presented several of these seminars in the Northern Tier Region in collaboration with PA CareerLink®. These seminars are often well attended and give employers a unique opportunity to meet with a UC representative to discuss issues or concerns and become educated on rights and responsibilities they may not otherwise seek out if not presented in this format. The collaboration between UC Service Centers and PA CareerLink® helps to enhance already established employer relationships and attract employers new to the overall system.

*3.5 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?*

### **Coordination with Regional Workforce and Economic Development Strategy**

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The NTWDB works closely and collaboratively with the state and local areas and economic development for the sustainability of existing businesses and the growth and creation of small, new and emerging industries. The NTWDB continues to strengthen ties to economic development and supports all the local industry partnerships.

The one stop centers also work closely with new and emerging industries, the NTWDB, and economic development to determine and meet critical needs. By learning about workforce needs from data, economic development, and employers themselves, NTWDB is able to better design workforce and training programs with service providers and educational entities. The collaboration allows a case management system that communicates employer needs across multiple entities and allows for the leveraging of resources to meet those needs.

Ongoing efforts between economic development and the NTWDB are crucial in order to achieve regional prosperity. A region that has a strong workforce that is adaptable to new technologies and has success in attracting business is better able to retain business. This will allow the community to grow. By working with business to determine their skill needs for existing and emerging employers to prepare for high-growth occupations, the local area is better prepared to work with the needs of under-skilled workers. Workers that are under-skilled can be assessed to their aptitudes and skills levels and then advised of career pathways.

The workers are then presented with training opportunities as well as supportive services. Partnerships include the Governor's Action Team (GAT), of Partnerships for Regional Economic Performance (PREP) which include the Small Business Development Center (SBDC), Northeast Pennsylvania Industrial Resource Center (NEPIRC), and county economic development partners among others offer support to meet the needs of employers and jobseekers.

### **Training for Self-Employment**

Entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services should provide the basics of starting and operating a small business. Individuals who are interested self-employment are referred to community partners, such as the Small Business Development Center, and the North East PA Industrial Resource Center and the Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission to receive specialized assistance that includes but is not limited to:

- Entrepreneurship education that provides an introduction to the values and basics of starting and running a business. These programs often guide individuals through the development of a business plan and may also include simulations of business start-up and operation.
- Enterprise development which provides support and services that incubate and help individuals develop their own businesses. Enterprise development programs go beyond entrepreneurship education by helping individuals access small loans or grants that are needed to begin business operation and by providing more individualized attention to assist in the development of viable business ideas.
- Access to micro-loans and grants available to start or expand businesses
- Consulting and business assistance services to help start or expand businesses.

The NTWDB partners with SBDC to provide entrepreneurial workshops through the PA CareerLink®. All PA CareerLink® staff are educated about the availability of services provided by SBDC, NEPIRC and NTRPDC. NTRPDC staff have participated in BST meetings to educate PA CareerLink® staff about the services available to entrepreneurs including Loans, Export and Procurement services available through NTRPDC. PA CareerLink® customers are exposed to the idea of entrepreneurship through career exploration workshops. Customers interested in starting their own business are referred to SBDC for an initial consultation, many of which take place at NTRPDC which is housed in the same building as PA CareerLink®. Our Career Coaches also be promote entrepreneurship in middle and high school students.

#### *4.1 Provide a descriptive overview of the local area workforce delivery system, including key stakeholders and entities in the local area.*

The workforce development system consists of WIOA core partners Title I, Title II - Adult Education and Literacy Acts, Title III- Wagner-Peyser Act employment services and the Title IV-Office of Vocational Rehabilitation as well as other

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community-based agencies which provide services to job seekers in particular those with barriers to employment. These agencies include but are not limited to Health and Human Services, Job Corps, Community Action agencies, behavioral health agencies, juvenile and adult probation agencies and homeless and housing agencies.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014 requires that each local workforce development area has at least one comprehensive one-stop center providing an accessible marketplace for employer and job seekers to be effectively matched. In Pennsylvania, the one-stop centers are known as PA CareerLink® centers. The Northern Tier Workforce Development area has two Comprehensive PA CareerLink® centers and four affiliate sites strategically located throughout the region.

Bradford County Action (BCA) is the competitively procured PA CareerLink® operator for the region. BCA employs the Site Administrators, and holds the operational duties outlined in WIOA and the policies of the Commonwealth. These roles include site functional management to ensure seamless service delivery and oversee the functional supervision. The operator is an intermediary to the partners and ensures an effective referral mechanism is in place for the benefit of individuals and partners while also serving as an ambassador for the one-stop system to the community. The competitive process for services includes a request for proposal, which are then reviewed and scored by the local board, which makes a recommendation to the executive board of local elected officials for approval.

Local Elected Officials are included in correspondence with the board and are encouraged to offer input and feedback on the direction and operations of the workforce system. Staff of the board meet with stakeholders, local elected officials, advocacy groups and anyone willing to offer suggestions and input to the system. These meetings range from county-level meetings, to business organizations, to regional meetings with staff from many of the workforce service providers. The value of these meetings is two-fold as everyone in attendance learns the missions of others at the table, which then improves the referral and understanding of the workforce system.

### **Selection of One-Stop Operator**

NTRPDC, with the agreement of the chief elected local officials, is authorized to designate or certify one-stop operators and to terminate for cause the eligibility of such operators. To be eligible to receive funds made available to operate a one-stop center, an entity:

Shall be designated or certified as a one-stop operator through a competitive process and

Shall be an entity (public, private, or nonprofit), or consortium of entities (including a consortium of entities that, at a minimum, includes 3 or more of the one-stop partners described in subsection 121(b)(1)), of demonstrated effectiveness.

NTRPDC will also ensure that in carrying out activities, one-stop operators

1. Disclose any potential conflicts of interest arising from relationships of the operators with particular training service providers or other service providers.
2. Do not establish practices that create disincentives to providing services to individuals with barriers to employment who may require longer-term services, such as intensive employment training an education service.
3. Comply with Federal regulations, and procurement policies, relating to the calculation and use of profits.

NTRPDC shall award grants or contracts on a competitive basis through careful identification and transparent procurement of eligible system operator(s); youth program provider(s); and adult/dislocated worker program provider(s) that at a minimum provide career services as defined in WIOA section 134(c)(2). Career services described in WIOA Section 134(A) for eligible adult and dislocated workers shall be provided through the one-stop delivery system directly through one-stop operators identified pursuant to section 121(d) , or through contracts with service providers (subrecipients) which may include contracts with public, private for profit and private non-profit services providers approved by the local board.

Title I Providers, BCA and Trehab, provide Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth employment and training services. Title II programs are provided by local Adult Literacy Training Providers, depending on the availability of literacy

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training in the individual counties. The Title II provider, Bradford County Action (BCA), has utilized this entire region to ensure the delivery of high-quality services. Services under the Wagner-Peyser Act are provided by partners from the Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations, Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry. These services are provided within the PA CareerLink® System and include employee profiling, job matching, job search assistance, workshops and posting of employer job orders. Programs authorized under Title IV of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are provided by the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and available through the PA CareerLink® System. These program services include 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.

The EO officer for the Northern Tier Region is Bonnie Warner, WIOA Quality Specialist, [warner@northerntier.org](mailto:warner@northerntier.org). Responsibilities include monitoring and investigating LWDA activities and activities of its subrecipients to ensure compliance with nondiscrimination and EO obligations under WIOA Title I. The EO officer reviews written policy to ensure that they are nondiscriminatory, develops and publishes LWDA procedures for processing discrimination complaints and ensuring those procedures are followed. Provides complaint forms and resolves EO complaints informally in consultation with the Office of Equal Opportunity Specialist. Coordinates EO activities and maintain communication with the Office of Equal Opportunity Specialist. EO Officer ensures that annual training is provided to local PA CareerLink® staff, LWDB staff and service providers. EO officer is responsible for dissemination of information and works with the Equal Opportunity Liaisons assigned to each PA CareerLink® center to ensure that customers are aware of their rights and report incidents related to potential discrimination or accessibility.

PA CareerLink® EO Liaison for Bradford is Allen Hubler, Site Supervisor, BWPO, [ahubler@pa.gov](mailto:ahubler@pa.gov). Tioga EO Liaison is Maria Nobles, Site Supervisor, BWPO, [mnobles@pa.gov](mailto:mnobles@pa.gov).

The NT WDB has a strong working relationship with key stakeholders in the region. Building on these relationships and expanding to reach new partners improves collaboration and leveraging of resources. Key stakeholders in the Northern Tier Region include:

- Chambers of Commerce
- SBDC
- PREP Network (Economic Development Partners)
- County Department of Human Services
- Department of Corrections/County Jails
- Domestic Relations
- Housing & Redevelopment Authority
- Social Security Administration
- Drug and Alcohol
- Transportation Authority
- PA Probation and Parole

*4.2 Identify the one-stop partners (required and other) authorized to provide required and other programs within the local area. Describe briefly the role(s) of the one-stop partners (required and other).*

A complete listing of the PA CareerLink® Partners that are authorized to provide services in the local area is found in the Partner Provider List included as **Attachment 3**. This chart identifies the comprehensive and affiliate locations, the services available at each, and the roles and resource contributions of each of the partners.

### **TITLE I Services:**

#### **WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs**

Our Title I providers provide basic, individualized and training in the PA CareerLink® centers. They also provide staff

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who act as a Career Pathways Navigator in collaboration with the Wagner-Peyser staff to conduct initial assessments and make appropriate referrals to services. They completely staff the Career Resource Center (CRC) and provide the majority of available workshops. They also provide financial resources to support the financial obligations for the space and technology for the Career Resource Center. They conduct the orientations in the correctional facilities, provide our mobile services and coordinate our *Fit4Work* programming. EARN services are also provided by our Title I providers.

The WIOA Adult program is designed to assist those 18 and older who are in need of employment or career advancement. Priority of service is given to participants that are recipients of public assistance, low-income or basic skills deficient. Career services include assessments, individual employment plans and career counseling. If a participant is determined unlikely or unable to obtain or retain employment which leads to self-sufficiency, they may be in need of training services.

Dislocated Worker programs assist workers before or after a layoff in identifying needs in order to develop a streamlined service strategy to facilitate rapid reemployment. This includes identifying training opportunities that may be needed to re-enter the workforce.

### **WIOA Youth**

Youth programming is designed to service eligible youth and young adults through high-quality case management support toward educational attainment. Services include career guidance and exploration, summer and/or year-round work experience, skills training opportunities and support service. The goal for youth participants is advancement into post-secondary education or gaining employment with a self-sustaining wage. Youth programs are prioritized for out of school youth and youth with significant barriers to success, such as youth with a disability, pregnant or parent and those subject to the juvenile/adult justice system.

### ***Wagner-Peyser Act Programs***

Wagner-Peyser staff provides employment services to job seekers and employers through PA CareerLink® centers. Services to job seekers include, but are not limited to: job search and job placement assistance; career counseling; needs and interest assessments; proficiency testing; workshops; development of an individual employment plan; and case management. Services offered to employers, in addition to referring job seekers to available job openings, include: help developing job-order requirements, matching job seekers' experience with job requirements, skills and other attributes, helping employers with special recruitment needs, arranging for job fairs, helping employers analyze hard-to-fill job orders, helping restructure jobs and helping employers deal with layoffs.

Both job seekers and employers are also provided with labor market information to help inform their activities.

Wagner-Peyser staff are co-located in the PA CareerLink® centers and contribute financial resources to support the obligations for the space and technology for the Career Resource Center. They provide Career Pathway Navigation services and conduct workshops. They also provide services under the RESEA (Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments).

### ***Programs authorized under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973***

Programs authorized under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are provided by the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and available through the PA CareerLink® System. These program services include 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.

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 prepare OVR customers to become qualified trained members of the workforce increasing regional workforce diversity and the overall number of skilled workers available to business in the region. OVR contributes financial resources to support the obligations for the space and technology of the center.

**Department of Human Services**

The local County Assistance Offices through the State Department of Human Services provide services through TANF, authorized under Section 403(a)(5) of the Social Security Act. These services are targeted to welfare recipients and include information dissemination of welfare benefits. The services act as the sole determinant for eligibility of those benefits and are the referral resource to a multitude of local services, programs, and training options. Local county assistance offices make referrals to the EARN and SNAP programs. The local county assistance offices contribute financially to the operation of both comprehensive PA CareerLink® sites. They are also part of our referral system and share information to better serve our customers.

**Activities authorized under Title V of the Older American’s Act of 1965**

Activities authorized under Title V of the Older American’s Act of 1965 are provided within the local PA CareerLink® system by the local Area Agencies on Aging and older work organizations, such as AARP. These services are targeted to seniors through the PA CareerLink® system and include vocational counseling, paid work experience programs, employment training, and independent living counseling. They can provide a Greeter staff person as an in-kind contribution to the operation of our PA CareerLink® centers and are part of our referral system.

**Postsecondary vocational education activities authorized under Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act.**

Vocational Technical School and Career and Technology Center partners provide these services as part of the PA CareerLink® services. Program services include the dissemination of information relative to financial assistance to attend post-secondary training and the provision for post-secondary occupational skills training.

We work with them to develop training programs that meet the needs of our local employers, collaborate on projects and they are part of our referral system.

**Activities authorized under Chapter 2 of Title II of the Trade Act of 1974**

Trade Act programs are focused on getting participants reemployed and ensuring those individuals maintain employment. The TAA Program includes training, employment and case management services, job search allowances, relocation allowances, Trade Readjustment Allowances (TRA), Reemployment Trade Adjustment Assistance (RTAA) and Alternative Trade Adjustment Assistance (ATAA), and the Health Coverage Tax Credit (HCTC) (a benefit available to eligible TAA recipients which is administered by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS)).

The TAA program was first established at the USDOL by the Trade Act of 1974, and has been amended several times. Individual workers who are members of the certified worker group apply for benefits and services at a PA CareerLink® office. Individual workers who meet the qualifying criteria may receive: job training; income support in the form of Trade Readjustment Allowances (TRA); job-search and relocation allowances; Health Coverage Tax Credit (HCTC) as determined by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS); and for workers age 50 and older, a wage supplement in the form of Re-Employment Trade Adjustment Assistance (RTAA; (ATAA)). Additionally, all workers covered by a certification are eligible for employment and case-management services, including basic and individualized career services either through the TAA program or through and in coordination with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the Wagner-Peyser Act (reference TEGl No. 3-15)

These activities include Trade Adjustment Assistance Program administration, including tuition assistance to Dislocated Workers who have lost their jobs due to imports. Program services, authorized under this funding and provided within the PA CareerLink® system, include rapid response to employees in the event of massive layoff or plant closure, tuition assistance for post-secondary occupational skills training, and income subsidies to assist candidates while in training. This service is provided by BWPO, Department of Labor and Industry.

**Veteran’s activities authorized under Chapter 41 of Title 38 United States Code**

JVSG is a BWPO administered program which assures the commonwealth will be able provide special individualized services to disabled veterans. Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) staff work in conjunction with PA CareerLink® partners to identify veterans and establish an appropriate plan to meet the individuals’ employment and



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training needs. These specialized counselors work directly with disabled veterans in the provision of labor exchange services, securing appropriate training services and obtaining appropriate employment at a family sustaining wage. In addition, the JVSG allows for Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER) to do employer outreach and promote veterans as job seekers who have highly marketable skills and experience.

BWPO is responsible for administering and staffing the JSVG grant position.

### **Employment and Training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act**

These services are available within the PA CareerLink® System through local community action agencies or limited-purpose agencies (e.g., farm worker organizations). These services are provided by our Title I providers in the PA CareerLink® centers.

### **Employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)**

When applicable, employment and training activities are provided by existing Housing Authorities through the PA CareerLink® System. Services include information on HUD-funded employment and training activities, housing assistance, and housing subsidies. They are not part of the resource sharing agreement. The NTWDB has reached out to the local HUD provider and they do not currently apply for or receive HUD training and employment funding.

### **Programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws**

In accordance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the Unemployment Compensation (UC) Program is responsible to provide meaningful assistance to individuals seeking assistance in filing an unemployment claim in PA CareerLink® sites. Assistance to individuals filing an unemployment claim will be provided by offering a courtesy telephone at PA CareerLink® sites which is dedicated to serving one-stop customers in a timely manner. In addition, a computer may also be provided to allow one-stop customers access to unemployment compensation services online along with informational UC postings, signs, pamphlets and forms for UC claimants and employers.

The cost of the space utilized for the UC courtesy telephones and computers (25 square feet for each device) will be negotiated and detailed in separate operating budgets.

### **Programs authorized under Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (adult basic education and literacy training).**

Bradford County Action (BCA) is the Title II provider in our region. Adult basic education provides assistance to those that are basic skills deficient. This includes a gamut of services, from literacy to activities that support post-secondary and career readiness goals. Services include English language acquisition when needed. As one of the leading service providers, BCA is aligned with Tech Prep, and youth initiatives.

They provide Adult Basic Education and high school equivalency services and assessment services through PA CareerLink® centers through in-kind staff support and contribute financially to the operating budget.

### **Second Chance Act of 2007 Programs authorized under section 212**

There are currently no programs available under the Second Chance Act in our area. They currently provide no financial contribution to the PA CareerLink® centers in the region. PA CareerLink® can provide information as needed. Referrals will be made as appropriate to contacts listed in Attachment III. No financial contribution is made.

### **YouthBuild**

YouthBuild provides education, counseling and job skills to unemployed young adults between ages 16 and 24, generally high school dropouts. Students learn construction trade by building homes for their own communities. YouthBuild is not local, however, PA CareerLink® staff offer information about these services as needed. No financial contribution is made.

### **Commission of Native American Affairs**

Purpose is to reduce unemployment among Native Americans, traditionally the least serviced and poorest group in

the United States. The Council of Three Rivers American Indian Center has operated an employment and training program since 1976. The Commission of Native American Affairs is not local, however PA CareerLink® staff offer information about these services as needed. No financial contribution is made.

The following required partners are not located in the Northern Tier Workforce Development Area and therefore not represented in the local service system: YouthBuild Program, National Farmworker Jobs Programs, Native American Programs, Reentry Employment Opportunities (REO) Programs and Employment and Training Activities-Department of Housing and Urban Development. Referrals to neighboring service providers are available upon request.

*4.3 How will the local board facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop service delivery system?*

The Board will continue to facilitate access to services provided through the PA CareerLink® system as follows:

**Strategically Located Centers**

As discussed in the **response to 3.2 above**, the Board has established comprehensive Centers and affiliates in each county to provide easy access to all partner services. Comprehensive Centers offer a courtesy phone and UC computer to assist UC claimants obtain faster service in resolving any questions or issues.

**Providing Access in Remote Areas**

The Board will provide and expand services in the remote locations of the region through the following strategies:

The Title I providers travel and provide time at community facilities, like libraries, where they can meet with customers and provide services to provide PA CareerLink® services. They can help job seekers register in the PA CareerLink® system. Location and times are advertised allowing customers to make an appointment or walk in. Staff will also assist with job search information and referral, resume development and provide education on the variety of programs and services available through the PA CareerLink® centers. Since we have implemented these services, we have seen a steady increase in traffic in our mobile locations and served over 100 individuals in 2019. There are many obstacles to utilizing technology remotely across the region. There are many areas that still lack broadband internet services, and many customers lack the skill set and confidence to participate online. Efforts are being taken to increase digital literacy activities throughout the region. While the PA CareerLink® had some virtual presence, since the pandemic remote service delivery has increased including pre-recorded libraries of workshops and virtual workshops, intakes and employer recruitments.

**Utilizing Case Management Systems**

The system as a whole utilizes PA's workforce development system of record, to provide specific information to jobseekers and employers in their respective efforts to obtain employment and find the best employees. New customers watch an orientation to PA CareerLink® services. This is followed by registration in PA CareerLink®. Customers then meet with a Career Pathways Navigator who conducts an initial assessment of the individual to determine what their needs are and to make referrals. The role of the Career Pathway Navigator is to streamline the individual's initial experience at the PA CareerLink® ensuring everyone that walks through the door meets with a staff person. Career Pathway Navigators include both merit and non-merit staff. The Career Pathway Navigator remains the customer's main point of contact throughout the customer's experience utilizing PA CareerLink® services. The Career Pathways Navigator conducts follow up to make sure the customer is on track to receive the services they need, which also prevents duplication of service. A service under labor exchange is entered into the system after initial assessment. Depending on their needs, they may be sent to a WIOA information session, at which time eligibility for WIOA services would be determined. To promote the timeliness and accuracy of information, Career Pathway Navigators and BST personnel are required to enter information into the systems within 24 hours of customer interaction.

### **Coordinating with Adult Education**

To ensure that individuals participating in basic education and English learning programs have direct connections to career pathways leading to high-quality jobs, the NTWDB will work with its Adult Education partners to identify strategies that improve access. The Title II provider has a presence within the PA CareerLink® in the Northern Tier, providing both TABE assessments to customers and GED® classes. Title II staff participate in PA CareerLink® meetings and cross-training events that take place throughout the year. All PA CareerLink® staff are educated about the Adult Education and Literacy programs available through our Title II provider and make and accept referrals as appropriate. Title II services are included in the introductory orientation provided to all customers entering the PA CareerLink®. This provides an awareness to the customer about the services provided through Title II upon entering the PA CareerLink®. After orientation, the PA CareerLink® Navigator meets with the customer to determine the best course of action and referrals are made as appropriate. This may include co-enrollment with Title I and Title II programs. All referrals and case notes and services are recorded in the PA CareerLink® system of record.

### **Meeting the Needs of Individuals with Barriers to Employment**

The PA CareerLink® management team continuously examines ways to align the PA CareerLink® service delivery system to more directly address issues involving underemployment, business services, and service to special populations. This population includes dislocated workers including displaced homemakers, TANF customers (EARN, SNAP), veterans, minorities, women and those with additional barriers to employment including older individuals, ex-offenders, persons with disabilities and persons with limited English proficiency. The PA CareerLink® Management Team assists the NTWDB in ensuring availability of employment and training services to these special populations. Services for these individuals are equal to any other including all of the PA CareerLink® workshops, one-on-one services with staff, testing, referral process, as well as online opportunities such as PA CareerLink®.

### **Improving Access to Services for English Language Learners and Individuals with Barriers to Hearing**

As part of its service strategy, the Board requires that the PA CareerLink® Center to partner with community agencies that can provide ESL and interpretative services. Telephone-based translation services may be used for languages other than English, if necessary. Instant language assistant (ILA) devices are available in each PA CareerLink location to provide immediate language assistance and opportunity for one-on-one conversation for non-English speaking customers. A TTY telecommunication device, amplified telephone receiver speakers and the provision of the PA Certified American Sign Language Interpreter upon request in advance are available for the deaf and hard of hearing individuals. Computer aided software, Jaws and ZoomText, along with CCTVs ensure access for individuals with visual impairments.

Examples of language assistance requests received is as follows:

1. EARN program was serving a participant whose native language was Spanish. The participant spoke and understood some English but was anxious to participate in a peer-to-peer group meeting. EARN staff engaged the services of a translator who provided assistance with dialog as requested during the meeting. The participant felt they were included in the group meeting and able to participate.
2. Spanish speaking customers have been provided the Spanish translation of the NT Customer Intake Survey and shown the Spanish translation option located on PA CareerLink® portal.

Reasonable accommodations requested by employees and participants & response provided to request include:

Employees:

1. Provide a work from home schedule for an employee during surgery/treatment for cancer.
2. Private office space provided for employee to do virtual counseling at work for their mental health.
3. Employee was having difficulty viewing information on their existing computer screen. Employer provided this employee with a larger secondary monitor to accommodate the employee's visual needs.
4. Employee requested accommodations to improve the comfort of their workspace. Employee was provided with an adjustable desktop, large screen monitor, ergonomic chair and cushioned floor mat to stand while working.

Participants:

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1. A PA CareerLink® customer indicated to a staff person that they had a visual impairment. Staff were able to assist the customer at the established ADA workstation through the use of ZoomText software.
2. A hearing and vision impaired customer came to the PA CareerLink office for services. Once the staff person was made aware of the disability, they were able to direct the customer to an assistive device. The customer was able to view documents through the use of a CCTV which enlarges the print of any document.
3. A WIOA title I customer took a WorkKeys pretraining exam and failed to pass one section of the testing. The individual later disclosed that they were diagnosed with dyslexia and had difficulty taking tests. PA CareerLink® were able to request an accommodation through WorkKeys® customer support which allowed the questions to be read to the customer. The customer was then successful in passing the exam requirements.
4. PA CareerLink® customer indicated that they had hand-eye coordination issues. The customer was directed to the ADA workstation where they were able to use the larger mouse and one-handed keyboard to meet their computer accessibility needs.
5. PA CareerLink® customer using a wheelchair, was able to utilize the adjustable height table at the ADA workstation allowing them to utilize other office resources independently.

*4.4 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*

The Board requires that the PA CareerLink® centers and any affiliated sites are fully accessible to any individuals who may be interested in receiving employment and training services. Each site is certified annually for compliance with EO/ADA requirements by the Office of Equal Opportunity, PA Department of Labor and Industry. The Office of Equal opportunity provides technical assistance training and resources to local staff to ensure compliance with WIOA Section 188 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

Each PA CareerLink® site is certified by the Office of Equal Opportunity as being ADA Compliant and are examined by the local OVR Administrator to ensure accessibility. Staff are trained to operate Zoom text and JAWS software found on the ADA compliant computer in each career resource area. Staff are also trained in the use of TTY devices. New technologies are sought to improve access by individuals with disabilities. Sites have accessible restrooms, entrances and exits. OVR personnel conduct periodic training for PA CareerLink® staff regarding serving individuals with disabilities. The board's Equal Opportunity policy and complaint procedure is explained and distributed to all new WIOA participants.

The NT Equal Opportunity Officer offers multiple training opportunities on a variety of subjects each year. During 2020, training was provided on Preventing Workplace Harassment, Americans with Disabilities Act, Equal Opportunity and Accessibility during COVID-19. Future training topics planned include confidentiality, OVR overview, and reasonable accommodations. One-Stop partners participating in local training include WIOA Title I, Trade Title II, Wagner Peyser Title III, and Veterans.

OEO annual compliance reviews have resulted in improvements to:

1. Policy—Updates to NT LWDA EO/Nondiscrimination Policy, NT LWDA EO/Discrimination Complaint processes and policy. Both policies along with the NT Limited English Proficiency Plan are reviewed and approved by the NTWDB annually.
2. Training—Increased training for both NT EO Officer, LWDB Staff, LWDA Operator, one-stop partners and service providers.
3. Communication—Increased notification and communication of EO/ADA rights for program participants through display of office notices in multiple locations, website & social media postings and brochures/flyers. This includes availability of continuing notification to individuals with

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impaired vision through alternate formats. Closed captioning is part of any recorded video presentations. Appropriate use of EO tagline & EO Office contact information for all written and electronic WIOA Title I promotional materials.

4. Affirmative Outreach—Babel notice was put in place for use in NT LWDA. Training has been provided to staff, providers and partners on requirements of the notice. Increased awareness to ensure all staff are available to participants with hearing impairments through TTY or PA Relay 711 services. Local DEIA workgroup organized in 2022 to discuss current outreach efforts and accessibility of services.
5. Facility & Service Accessibility—Comprehensive staff training on various disabilities and accessibility needs has increased awareness of everyone. Equal Opportunity and ADA facility reviews, along with the addition of assistive technologies such as Fusion software (Jaws & ZoomText), iPads, ZoomText keyboards, CCTVs and ILA (Instant Language Assistant) devices support accessibility of the public and program participants.

Expand knowledge of LWDB, PA CareerLink® operator & service providers to improve web site accessibility for all citizens within the Northern Tier region. This would include making textual web site content accessible to those who are non-English speaking, have low vision or other disability. Adding an accessibility widget to a web site. Providing closed captioning of video content for deaf and hard of hearing. An annual review of web site accessibility is added to local monitoring process.

A letter received from the Department of Labor & Industry, Office of Equal Opportunity, dated October 20, 2022, provided notice that the NT LWDA was determined to be compliant with EO/ADA Accessibility requirements through December 31, 2022. No further compliance monitoring has been conducted.

PA CareerLink® staff host external job fairs and events in ADA compliant spaces only. All flyers and email notices about these events contain the message: “Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Equal Opportunity Employer/Program.” All flyers also contain PA CareerLink® office contact information, TDD/TTY telephone number, and the NT EO Officer’s contact information.

Overall, the Board promotes full accessibility by requiring that its Operator, Partners, and Site Administrator:

- Conduct and participate in training of staff members and partner personnel regarding services to individuals with disabilities.
- Provide outreach and referral to agencies within the local area, including OVR that offer services to individuals with disabilities.
- Maintain an updated list of resources available within the local area for use by staff and customers in accessing needed services.
- Advocate for individuals with disabilities and barriers to employment by advising and informing them about resources available within the PA CareerLink® centers and throughout the local area and coaching them on how to apply for needed resources.
- Utilize a Limited English Proficiency policy, including providing access to language interpretation services when needed.
- Provide assistive technology items for persons with disabilities, such as adaptive keyboard and mouse, foam wrist rest, headset and/or adjustable work stations.
- Conduct a physical inspection of all assistive technology/equipment to ensure functionality on a regular basis.
- Coordinate staff training on assistive technology and equipment to ensure that personnel are fully-trained in usage and application.
- Help individuals with disabilities who may require additional assistance with the registration process.
- Maintain required federal and state notices and postings.

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The Board requires that PA CareerLink and affiliate sites, along with WIOA Title I service providers, ensure reasonable measures are taken to include individuals from various protected groups including different sexes, racial and ethnic/national origins, religions, limited English proficiency, disabilities, and ages. All offices work closely with various partners, providers and community organizations through meetings and outreach to improve training and/or employment opportunities for these individuals. Examples of outreach efforts include:

- Coordination between WIOA Title I and OVR staff to assist individuals with disabilities who qualify for OVR services and WIOA Title I programs and activities. Job search assistance, paid work experience, on-the-job training, etc. are discussed to develop the best service delivery strategy for the customer while providing the same level of program participation.
- Referral activities and strategies with partner organizations specializing in services to older workers. PA CareerLink® hosted workshops are often attended by this customer group and the partner organization makes use of the PA CareerLink® facilities for onsite program meetings and targeted recruitments.
- Staff attend school district council meetings, outreach/referrals to independent living agencies and recovery centers to assist individuals with disabilities with work experience, job search and other services.
- Out of school youth flyers are distributed targeting young mothers, as well as, presenting information at other local programs serving women.
- Local literacy agency regularly attends PA CareerLink® partner meetings and referrals are made to assist limited English proficiency individuals.
- Mass mailing/emailing of program information is prepared several times a year and distributed to Social Security Administration, local churches, County Assistance Office, WIC, libraries, Area Agency on Aging and other community resources.
- Service provider staff continually request input from local organizations contacted in their pursuit to provide serves to target populations. Service providers report any interactions and needs to the NT EO Officer at least quarterly. To date there has been no input from local agencies.

*4.5 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.*

The board and one stop partners regularly seek ways to improve and increase training opportunities for the region. Labor market information is used to align training needs to the area's industry needs and demands. The local board also participates in industry partnership discussions, Business Education Partnership meetings, employer meetings, business services, partner meetings, all of which revolve around meeting the needs of the employers, workers, and job seekers.

In accordance with WIOA Section 122 and Workforce System Guidance No. 02-2015, and in collaboration with the PA Department of Labor and Industry, the NTWDB solicits training providers within and outside of our local area to ensure a competitive market designed to promote consumer choice and achieve successful implementation of data-driven career pathways and sector strategies.

The WIOA Title I Contractor is Trehab, Inc. in Sullivan, Susquehanna, Tioga and Wyoming Counties. Bradford County Action is the WIOA Title I contractor in Bradford County. The contracts are awarded following a Request for Proposal (RFP) process, which is completed by staff and an ad hoc committee of the LWDB. The contracts with the contractors are for one year with the Northern Tier Workforce Development Board voting on an option to renew subsequent years. The contractors meet with and report to the LWDB at every meeting and all statistics are presented in monthly reports.

Only training programs that appear on the ETPL list and lead to a high priority occupation in the Northern Tier are

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funded with WIOA training dollars through ITA's (Individual Training Accounts). Through the ETPL list, customers can compare performance measures, program costs, and curriculum information from various schools to assist them in selecting the best training option in their selected field. Each training program on the ETPL list must meet the required performance measure levels, which ensures that workforce dollars yield the best possible results. The ETPL list is always adapting to workforce needs and trends with our customers and employers leading the change. If a customer or business requires a course not on the ETPL that leads to an HPO, the local board works with service providers to determine educational providers, explain the process to the providers and then review the application to ensure the training provider will produce positive outcomes.

The local board ensures continuing improvement with both fiscal and programmatic monitoring of Title I, EARN and PA CareerLink® offices. Quality outcomes and common measure attainment is expected for customers in individualized services and training services. Therefore, service providers are expected to continuously improve. Any areas in need of corrective action which are noted by the local board during monitoring need formal responses from service providers. The local board then requires additional steps to be taken or approves the action. If no improvement is made after this step, technical assistance is offered.

The High Priority Occupation list is reviewed annually with employers, industry partnership members and education. Feedback is shared with training providers to help them align their programs of study with needed employment skills and job openings in the current economy. The petition process is used to refine the initial High Priority Occupation list, adding occupations based on input from business and educators. This allows training providers to submit programs that meet local employer demand for a skilled workforce.

### *4.6 Provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area.*

Every two to three years the board conducts an assessment of the type and availability of the Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs by managing a competitive request for proposal process. The Board regularly reviews the type of programs available to adult and dislocated workers in the local area including training services available through the Eligible Training Provider List as described in the **response to 4.5**. An RFP is advertised in the newspapers and online, proposals are received, scored by members of the NTWDB, approved by the full NTWDB and contracts are then negotiated.

This process is completed through an analysis of the WIOA, a review of current activities related to performance, surveys of local employers and their intermediaries, feedback from regional partner and industry partnership meetings, and a comparison of program delivery type/availability to peer best-in-class local workforce development areas both within the Commonwealth as well as in other states. Through this review, the Board identifies service gaps, confirms the need for specific services with employer and sector groups, and adjusts policies and programming to address identified needs as may be required.

The WDB provides access to workforce services at the PA CareerLink® Center. In addition to partner programs, it also competitively procures services as needed to meet local labor market needs.

Upon entry in the system, all individuals complete a customer information survey which serves as a common intake form and provides a brief assessment to establish service needs. Customers are then provided with an overview of PA CareerLink® services and meet with a Career Pathway Navigator (CPN). The CPN role is fulfilled by both Wagner-Peyser and WIOA staff. The CPN reviews the customer information survey and assesses the need with the customer to determine appropriate service. Individuals are directly referred to the specific services that best meet their needs. For example, interpretation and/or translation services may be utilized to assist customers who do not speak English well. The CPN will make referrals to both internal and external partners.

Adult and Dislocated Worker workforce activities are provided under the broad categories of Basic Career Services, Individualized Career Services, and Training Services. Basic Career Services are available to any customer, while

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Individualized Career Services and Training Services are reserved for individuals who meet WIOA eligibility requirements. If an individual is referred to Title I programs and requires individualized or training services, the NTWDB's priority of service policy applies. Potential WIOA participants are identified through referrals from other partners, general eligibility intake form when entering the PA CareerLink®, outreach opportunities in which services are explained to community members in an effort to provide service to those that need additional assistance in finding employment or upskilling in order to retain employment.

WIOA eligible individuals are assigned a WIOA Career Advisor who will also make co-enrollment referrals or determinations. This pertains to OSY as well as Adult and Dislocated Workers. The Career Advisor, along with the participant, develop an Individual Employment Plan (IEP), or Individual Service Strategy (ISS) for OSY, which will identify career goals and career pathways needed to accomplish employment goals. This may include training services through an Individualized Training Account (ITA) or it may be the individual is best suited for work-based training such as transitional or on-the-job training opportunities.

For those older OSY who are interested in training, the NT WDB co-enrolls participants in the Adult program. When the youth is co-enrolled into both the OSY program as well as the Adult program, the youth has access to services and funding from both programs, depending on needs and goals as outlined in their ISS/IEP. This includes basic career services, individualized career services, and training services. The participant's Career Advisors from both the OSY program and the Adult program coordinate to streamline and avoid duplication of services and to make the program tailored to the participant's needs and goals.

With the implementation of WIOA, there is no longer a sequence of service requirement. Therefore, individuals who are determined eligible and suitable for Adult or Dislocated Worker services do not have to participate in any type of Individualized Career Service activity prior to being enrolled into Training Services.

### **Basic Career Services include:**

- Information about services available through the PA CareerLink® Center
- Initial assessment of needs
- Referral to appropriate services
- Self-directed or staff-assisted job search
- Workshops, such as resume writing, interviewing skills, and job search Information:
  - Labor market
  - Training provider
  - Supportive service
  - Unemployment
  - Financial aid
  - Relocation assistance

### **Individualized Career Services include:**

- Eligibility determination
- Comprehensive assessment
- Individual Employment Plan (IEP) defining the customer's specific goals and pathway for achievement
- Career counseling and planning
- Short-term prevocational services
- Internships and work experience
- Workforce preparation activities
- Financial literacy services
- Supportive services

Overall, the PA CareerLink® Center offers a wide variety of services to assist customers with job preparation and job search. Resource rooms offer computers with Internet access, as well as printing, mailing, phone and fax services



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during regular business hours. Further assistance is available through resume and cover letter development, mock interviewing, job postings and job search tip sheets. Jobseekers can meet with employers conducting on site interviews and also sign up for job readiness workshops. Specialized information is available on high school equivalency attainment, Unemployment Compensation, Youth programs, and career services for Veterans, persons aged 55 and over, and individuals with disabilities. Various services and activities are available to individuals both virtually and in person to fit the individual's needs. Supportive services include activities designed to eliminate barriers to employment, such as assistance with transportation, work-related tools or clothing, and child care.

### **Training Services include:**

- ITA
- OJT
- Customized training
- Job readiness training
- Workplace training/co-op programs
- Skills upgrading and retraining
- Pre-apprenticeship / Apprenticeship
- Transitional jobs
- Incumbent worker training

To be enrolled into a Training Service activity, individuals must meet programmatic eligibility requirements and must also be identified as unlikely to obtain or retain self-sufficient employment or higher wages, need training to obtain or retain self-sufficient employment or higher wages, and have the skills and qualifications to participate in training (i.e., appropriateness for training).

Training must be directly linked to an in-demand industry sector or High Priority Occupation, or a sector that has a high potential for sustained demand or growth. Such training may be delivered via an ITA, training contract, or a combination of both. Training providers are found through the Eligible Training Provider List which establishes eligibility and provides information about training institutions and their programs. Additionally, work-based training opportunities are used to provide jobseekers with the valuable hands-on training needed to obtain a self-sustaining wage. Examples of these work-based trainings would be an OJT or transitional training opportunity.

We are focusing on the population(s) who lack transportation, have criminal backgrounds and/or poor work history and/or history of domestic violence, and/or those with low income and/or are skills deficient or have disabilities. Out of school youth are eligible for ITA's, OJT's, paid/unpaid work experience, internships, job shadowing, incumbent worker training and pre-apprenticeship/apprenticeship. OSY can also be co-enrolled in the adult program.

Most PA CareerLink® required partners, with some exceptions, provide basic career services to our customers. At a minimum, required partners contribute staff to PA CareerLink® Resource Centers, conduct workshops or initial assessments and referrals. These services are universally accessible to all customers. PA CareerLink® sites are certified as ADA compliant annually and materials in alternative format for persons with disabilities are available. Interpretive services are also made available for persons with limited English proficiency. Efforts are made to ensure that persons with disabilities are afforded access to all services provided within the PA CareerLink® sites.

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 prepare OVR customers to become qualified trained members of the workforce increasing regional workforce disability and the overall number of skilled workers available to business in the region.

The OVR plays a significant role in recruitment and outreach to populations with disabilities. OVR serves on the Northern Tier NTWDB, further ensuring that service barriers for persons with disabilities are identified and eliminated. Financial resources of the PA CareerLink® sites and OVR are coordinated in order to cover shared customer training and supportive service costs. In addition, the PA CareerLink® utilizes customer assessments

conducted by OVR.

The Northern Tier has funded and continues to support sensitivity training for PA CareerLink® staff. Monthly PA CareerLink® staff meetings provide an open forum for all partnering staff to discuss solutions in the provision of service. Front line staff participate in cross-training to educate each other about the specific populations they focus on from a programmatic standpoint offering insight for appropriate referrals. As with all customer groups, referrals are also made to non-PA CareerLink® partner service agencies in an effort to bridge service gaps. PA CareerLink® staff work with OVR partner staff on an on-going basis to take a proactive approach to ensure that the one-stops retain their ADA compliance status with its adaptive technologies, the TTY line, and the availability of resource materials in alternative formats (Braille, large print). A region-wide inventory has recently been completed to determine what materials or technology may be needed to ensure the most up to date materials are made available to our customers.

*4.7 How will training services be provided through the use of individual training accounts (ITA) that fund programs of study, or through the use of contracts for training services that fund work-based trainings.*

### Training Services Overview

Historically, the Board has primarily used ITAs to fund occupational skills training activities for its customers. Based on a customer's specific needs and circumstances, he or she may choose to enroll in training activities using an ITA or a work-based learning program. Moreover, an ITA-funded training may also be completed in conjunction with work-based learning activities, such as OJT, customized training, and internships. Such coordination will be clearly identified in the customer's IEP.

Each customer will be given the option of selecting the training provider that best meets his or her particular needs from any of the entities that are included on the Local Training Provider List (LTPL) as well as any organizations that have been deemed suitable for work-based learning activities.

An overview of the Board's ITA and work-based learning policies is provided below:

### ITAs

The Board may enroll individuals who are determined eligible and suitable for training services into occupational skills training programs utilizing an ITA. It has adopted the following policies for the provision of ITAs.

The following criteria must be met in order to receive an ITA:

- Must be a resident of Bradford, Sullivan Susquehanna, Tioga or Wyoming County.
- Must meet the WIOA eligibility requirements, have received at least one basic or individualized career service and have been determined to be unable to obtain or retain employment through such services.
- \*Score at a proficient level on the WorkKeys® Assessment for the occupational profile for which they are requesting training.
- Do not already possess a **marketable** degree. Prior approval from NTRPDC must be obtained for customers that have a degree but may be in need of additional training to obtain employment (*See ITA Approval Request Form*).
- Are unable to obtain grant assistance from other sources to pay the cost of training including DHS program funds, TAA, and PELL, or require WIOA assistance in addition to other sources of grant assistance.
- Have selected a training program that appears on the Pennsylvania Eligible Training Provider List of training programs and is considered a high priority occupation for the Northern Tier Region.
- For occupations in contiguous areas, an ITA may be granted if there is a proven demand, occupation provides a sustainable wage and the customer has expressed a willingness to relocate or commute (*see ITA Approval Request Form*).
- The individual has not received WIOA funded training in the past.
- The individual has not defaulted on a student loan. The customer must have the default status removed prior to the approval of ITA funding.
- All eligible youth must receive their GED or diploma prior to receiving training funds.

\*Note: In addition to taking the WorkKeys® assessment, all OSY must be TABE tested per WIOA program

guidelines.

### **ITA Policy**

The Northern Tier Workforce Director may waive conditions contained in this policy under extraordinary circumstances and/or funding considerations for best utilization of training funds.

ITA funding is not a guarantee to any participant and is contingent on funding availability.

The maximum amount of an Individual Training Account (ITA) is \$6,000 per customer for a maximum of two years. The NTWDB analyzes costs of approved training programs to determine if ITA amounts are in line with the trainings our WIOA clients are participating in. If the average costs of trainings increase or decrease significantly the WDB will adjust the ITA cap accordingly. Trainings lasting more than two years from start of WIOA funding to completion of training must be submitted to the Northern Tier Workforce Board for approval prior to granting funding request.

Registered Apprenticeships on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) qualify for ITA funding. The NTWDB has an approved *Apprenticeship Policy* that outlines funding options for eligible participants. ITA and OJT funding are outlined in the policy and can be used either separately or in conjunction for apprentice training.

Expenses covered include tuition, fees, books and school supplies if required by the school for course completion.

The PA CareerLink® Staff must track all ITA expenditures and obligations on the *ITA Calculation Sheet*. Note: The *ITA Calculation Sheet* does not take the place of the cost sheet included in the ITA packet.

All ITA's are limited to funding for (1) training provider and (1) training program. Should subsequent training be required, or if special circumstances require that the customer change training providers, prior approval must be received from the Northern Tier Workforce Development Board.

All other forms of Federal, State or local aid (Title IV, PELL, PHEAA, SEOG, etc.) will be used first to offset the cost of the ITA. The Northern Tier Workforce Development Board will neither duplicate, nor pay in addition to, Title I funds that have been awarded by another Workforce Development Area.

The WIOA Title I provider will issue a contract with the training institution for all customer approved training. The training institution will invoice the WIOA Title I provider for amount of tuition in contract minus expenses covered by other funding sources. Should the customer not complete the program for any reason, the standard refund policy of the provider institution will apply.

### **Customer Responsibility**

The customer must submit a completed *Application for Individual Training Account* at least two (2) weeks prior to the start of classes. The ITA Application is developed to get customers thinking and to assist customers in creating a troubleshooting tool belt for situations that may arise while completing the ITA. For example, does the training fit customer's lifestyle or career goals, does customer have reliable childcare and / or transportation, does customer have their finances budgeted while they are in training. ITA applicants will work on application very closely with their Career Advisor. The Career Advisor will support and assist customers in creating plans to fill in any gaps they may have. This will help the customer build a relationship with Career Advisor if supportive services are needed. While not all problematic situations that may arise can be planned for, having some type of plan or guide to follow will provide confidence and assurance to the customer. They will also have a comfortable relationship with career advisors when aid is needed. This application includes:

- A written justification for the training
- Documentation of employment opportunities in the local area
- A listing of total cost of training, including tuition, fees, supplies, tools, books, etc.

The customer must obtain the minimum WorkKeys® scores required by their occupational choice. If the customer

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does not obtain required scores, he/she will be scheduled for remediation. Remediation can be offered through WIN software, one-on-one instruction or other appropriate remediation tools. If the Career Advisor determines that TABE testing may be more appropriate for the individual a waiver for WorkKeys® may be requested in writing to the Northern Tier Workforce Development Board. In addition to taking WorkKeys®, all Out of School Youth must be TABE tested as per WIOA guidelines. Testing accommodations can be coordinated with Title I providers when appropriate.

Customers **must** apply for the federal Title IV (PELL) grant program by completing a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FASFA), given that the training is grant eligible. Customer must provide a copy of their Student Aid Report (SAR) to their Career Advisor. If unavailable, verification must first be received from the training institution. Grant awards will be applied prior to the use of WIOA funds.

The customer must maintain at least a 2.0 GPA on a 4.0 scale or meet the training institutions minimum requirement (if stricter). Academic probation will suspend the ITA until such time that the student is no longer on academic probation.

The customer must agree to contact the PA CareerLink® Career Advisor a minimum of once per month and provide school time and attendance records, grades, progress reports, and verification of diploma or certificate upon training completion. Failure to do so may result in the discontinuation of funding.

The customer is responsible for repayment of the ITA should Title IV aid (or other state/local aid) be received after the disbursement of ITA funds.

### **Work-Based Learning**

The Board has historically encouraged work-based learning programs as part of the OJT (on the job training) support, such as work experience, internships, co-op programs, apprenticeships, and transitional jobs to meet any unique/specific skill needs of employers in the area.

Future strategies to promote these efforts may include:

- Targeting high-growth industries for potential work-based learning opportunities.
- Educating employers, including chambers and industry associations, about how work-based training can enhance their businesses by decreasing turnover and improving productivity.
- Assisting businesses by streamlining work-based learning paperwork requirements.
- Assessing job candidates to determine their eligibility and suitability for work-based learning opportunities.
- Identifying career pathways in the targeted sectors that align with work-based learning activities.
- Including work-based learning as part of its agendas and topics of discussion during business forums and summits
- Requiring the Business Services Team to actively promote work-based learning as key service for local businesses.
- Establishing time periods and caps for work-based learning activities.

Board policies related to OJTs include: On-the-Job Training Activities will be provided in accordance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and accompanying regulations. On-the-Job Training Activities can only be provided for customers meeting the priority service guidelines established by the Northern Tier Workforce Development Board.

On-the-Job Training will be used as a mechanism for providing eligible adults and dislocated workers with the means to obtain training in order to receive full-time, self-sustaining unsubsidized employment.

On-the-Job Training can be used only after the participant has been unable to attain employment through basic and individualized career services.

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SVP and DOT Codes will be used to determine the duration of the OJT. An OJT cannot be provided for positions that pay less than \$10.00 per hour. It is the Northern Tier Workforce Development Board's Policy to reimburse up to 50% of the wage of the participant for positions paying \$10.00 an hour or more. In addition, no OJT will be written for more than 26 weeks in duration regardless of the SVP level.

If an OJT is being used in addition to an ITA, the amount of the OJT and ITA combined shall not exceed the maximum allowable ITA amount of \$6,000. Amounts exceeding \$6,000 will result in disallowed costs unless prior approval from NTRPDC is given.

### OJT Length

Employers are paid only for the extraordinary costs they are assumed to incur in training a participant. OJT shall be limited to a period not in excess of that generally required for the acquisition of skills needed for the position within a particular occupation. A participant could also start and stop training under a training plan to accommodate cyclical or seasonal needs. SVP and DOT Codes will be used to determine the duration of the OJT. DOT codes and SVP levels can be accessed at [www.onetonline.org](http://www.onetonline.org). **It is the Northern Tier WDB's policy that no OJT will exceed a 26-week training period, regardless of SVP level.**

OJT may be linked with classroom training, either concurrently or sequentially. If the employer provides the related classroom instruction, he/she may be reimbursed for the actual costs incurred, as long as it is over and above the training that would be provided to regular employees. Time spent in the classroom may count against the OJT maximum compensable training depending on the structure of the training schedule. This also affects the time available for OJT and should be taken into account in developing the training plan.

- Generally, each occupation will be identified by referring to the Dictionary of Occupational Titles, the appropriate 9-digit DOT code will be assigned to the training occupation in the OJT contract.
- By using the assigned DOT code, the occupation will be assigned a vocational preparation (SVP) level by using the selected characteristics of occupations as defined in the Dictionary of Occupational Titles.
- The SVP level will be converted into the maximum allowable training time using the attached chart.
- The length of an OJT can increase or decrease based on special circumstances or the background of the individual. Such circumstances could include a disability, which could require a longer training time, or prior experience of familiarity with the job which would allow the training time to be shortened.
- Reasons for significant adjustments to the standard training time for a given occupation, especially where the participant has had some prior experience with the job, will be documented on the participant's ISS (Individual Service Strategy). The ISS will include a justification in each case where the length of training exceeds that normally provided, as well as the suitability of the OJT itself. Any participant requiring more than the pre-determined length of training by using the method described above, will require NTRPDC approval. Request for approval must be submitted to NTRPDC in writing.

### Apprenticeship

There are several ways in which WIOA training funds may be used to support participation in registered apprenticeships and apprenticeship models. Apprenticeships, whether federal or state registered, can be funded for a combination of classroom training and on-the-job training up to the maximum individual amount of \$6,000 and \$1,000 for pre-apprenticeships. Training may be done by the employer of record or a third party contracted by the employer to deliver the training. This funding allocation can be made available to a single participant utilizing any of the available funding resources below. For additional information regarding each training program, refer to the NTRPDC program-specific policy.

- Individual Training Accounts (ITAs): Because WIOA allows registered apprenticeships to be eligible for Pennsylvania's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), ITAs may be developed for registered apprenticeship training.

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- In order for someone to receive funding for a non-registered apprenticeship program, the program must be on the state's ETPL.
- NTRPDC will develop an ITA contract with any registered apprenticeship program sponsor that administers an eligible registered or non-registered (but ETPL approved) apprenticeship.
- On the Job Training (OJTs): An OJT contract may be developed with an apprenticeship program for training participants.
  - NTRPDC will develop OJT contracts with an employer. The OJT contract may be made to support some of, or the entire OJT portion of the apprenticeship program, subject to the funding limitations outlined in NTRPDC's OJT policy.
  - In order for an apprenticeship to qualify for an OJT contract, the employer and participant are subject to the requirements outlined in NTRPDC's OJT policy. Specifically:
    - An employer must certify that the position will meet the NTRPDC's OJT self-sufficient wage policy of \$10.00/hour at a minimum of 30 hours per week with evidence that the position is on a career pathway towards higher level and/or higher paying jobs upon completing the OJT (or apprenticeship program).
    - Alternatively, apprenticeships must be able to show an actual career pathway progression by which an individual will attain self-sufficiency within a reasonable period of time.

### *4.8 Provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of youth workforce investment activities in the local area.*

The NTWDB acts in several ways to provide activities beneficial to all youth and young adults of the region. There is and will continue to be promotion of an intensive network of services to address the special educational and employment needs of persons on the margins of the mainstream workforce (dropouts, those with disabilities, persons reentering the workforce after long absences). The workforce system will provide the emerging workforce with adequate career guidance that leads to a successful school-to-work transition.

The NTWDB works with in school youth (ISY) and out of school youth (OSY), or opportunity youth, in a number of ways. Recruiting and outreach to opportunity youth has become a priority for the Northern Tier Region. 75% of WIOA youth funding must be spent on opportunity youth. In the Northern Tier, we dedicate the majority of our WIOA funding to the OSY population. Title I providers have started mobile services to reach those in outlying areas who may not have consistent transportation to PA CareerLink® offices. Currently, the Summer Program provides participants work experience, soft skills, career exploration activities and academic enrichment. This program is made possible by a number of community partnerships and collaboration in each of the five counties that it operates in. Title I providers are currently working on expanding this program to include year-round work experiences for all participants. TANF Youth Development Funding (YDF) is leveraged to provide more eligible youth with paid work experiences during the summer months.

Through the Business Education Partnership, the local WDB has been fostering relationships with local high schools and has linked numerous youth with businesses in the Northern Tier to educate our students about employment opportunities available to them in their own areas. The Business Education Partnership (BEP) seeks to provide career education and exploration activities in collaboration with local guidance departments to ensure students learn important soft skills and other career information before entering the workforce. Through the BEP, the local board has six career coaches in thirteen (13) school districts (which in some cases includes elementary, middle and high schools) and two (2) CTEC's. The project began in 2015 and, on average, has impacted more than 5,000 students per year since its start.

The NTWDB and Youth Committee distributes labor market information regularly to local school districts, parents, and it is shared with program participants. Youth and young adults are exposed to career and training opportunities

throughout their program participation. Employer visits, career fairs, trips to post-secondary trainers and speakers from local industry are provided to educate youth on in-demand occupations. Both the LWDB and Youth Committee will continue to provide ongoing labor market information and look to increase efforts by reaching out to churches and other community-based organizations that serve youth and young adults. The committee will begin to evaluate and revamp existing programs to stay current with employment trends and employer needs. The Northern Tier Youth Committee is comprised of a number of youth experts from around the region. The Chair of the committee is the Business and Community Liaison at Red Rock Job Corps. Other members include directors from local CTC's, a prior participant, OVR, school counselors and several others. Input is always relevant and helps improve programming. Collaboration between workforce staff, the Youth Committee, local school districts, OVR, welfare and many human service agencies ensure that youth and young adults most in need of services are identified and provided with the activities and support needed to achieve employment success. Building a strong relationship between participants and their career advisors is an important part of the overall strategy to keep youth and young adults engaged in the program long enough to attain their goals. Using the Individual Service Strategy (ISS) as a roadmap to achieve their goals, the youth/young adult participates in a wide variety of activities designed to prepare them for a career success. Bradford County Action, Inc., Trehab (Title I Providers) and WDB staff currently participate in a career pathways group that meets to discuss educational needs and trends of the region. Others participating in the group include local CTEC's, postsecondary education, Title II provider and PA CareerLink® staff.

Recognizing that students with disabilities are too often unprepared to transition into post-secondary education or employment, OVR provides a pool of services called Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS) to better prepare these students for life after high school. These skills gains will help to meet one of the intentions of WIOA, to better prepare students with disabilities to graduate high school and work toward meaningful careers. Both the local OVR counselors and the Youth Program Manager sit on Transition Councils for schools in our region. We have discussed PETS and service providers who employ them in each county. Students have been referred to OVR from workforce staff to these services.

### **Customer Experience**

Career advisors meet with potential participants to explain the program and provide information before the enrollment process begins. All policies, requirements and services are discussed before enrollment occurs. Career advisors let potential candidates know of eligibility requirements and what documents they need to provide for verification. After eligibility is determined, a youth meets with their career advisor to develop an Individual Service Strategy (ISS). They work together to identify strengths, goals, talents, etc. From there, a specific plan is formed for each individual.

### **The key steps and milestones of the program design include:**

1. A *Customer Tracking Form* is completed by the customer and reviewed by staff. The *Customer Tracking Form* captures information to initially identify young adults in need of services.
2. The next step is the determination of program suitability. The *Suitability Determination Form* is used to document the client's barriers including help with education; language; lack of work experience; work maturity issues; child care; transportation; emotional or mental disabilities; drug/alcohol; legal concerns; housing; domestic concerns; physical limitations/disabilities; or medical issues. If it is determined that the services provided through WIOA are not suitable for the customer at this time, referrals to appropriate agencies are documented on the *Suitability Determination Form*.
3. Once suitability has been determined, the *Customer Agreement Form* will be reviewed with the participant, signed and placed in the customer file.
4. An appointment is made to determine program eligibility. Eligibility is the process to determine whether the customer meets program barrier in income (in certain cases) guidelines.
5. Once it has been determined that the customer meets WIOA program Eligibility, a supervisor must review the eligibility determination using the *Eligibility Determination Review* form. The supervisor's review must be done prior to the customer receiving a WIOA funded service. The registration can then be completed in PA CareerLink®. All supporting documentation will be maintained in the customer file.
6. Young adults (ISY and OSY with barriers C or I) that do not meet income eligibility may be enrolled under the

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5% eligibility exception if participant enrollments for the year will allow. The determination to allow a young adult into the WIOA program under the 5% eligibility exception rule can only be made by the NTRPDC Workforce Program Manager. Eligibility exceptions can be requested using the *5% Exception Form*.

7. The customer is assigned to a Career Advisor.
8. The customer is scheduled for an Objective Assessment using TABE.
9. O\*NET will be used to measure aptitude and career interests.
10. All Out-of-School Youth (OSY) must be pre-tested using TABE 11 &12, no later than 60 days following the date of participation. The date of participation is the first day the client receives a WIOA funded service. Youth with disabilities are to be provided with reasonable accommodations as appropriate.
11. All OSY that are Basic Skills Deficient must be post-tested (using TABE 11 &12) at a minimum of every 60 days following the pre-test until post-educational functioning levels of above 8.9 are attained for the participation year. Individuals may still receive basic skills remediation services as determined by the Career Advisor after the EFL levels of above 8.9 are achieved.
12. In-School-Youth (ISY) may be TABE tested when the Career Advisor is unable to obtain information on the students' academic levels.
13. The customer is scheduled for an individual meeting with their Career Advisor to develop an *Individual Service Strategy (ISS)*.
14. All fourteen required program elements under WIOA must be available and provided as appropriate.
15. The ISS is completed and updated per the Northern Tier ISS Policy.
16. WIOA program services will be entered in to the PA CareerLink® system no later than 30 days of the action (e.g. service start date/end date, hold date, exit date). Program participation begins the date the customer receives a value-added service funded by the program.
17. Support Services can be provided and are based on significant need, as demonstrated as an inability to attend activities without such services. *The Northern Tier Supportive Services Policy* guidelines must be followed. If services are given, the *Support Services Determination Form* must be completed.
18. At a minimum, quarterly meetings and activities will be provided to ISY 9-11<sup>th</sup> grade. Career advisors will meet with high school seniors and all OSY at least monthly. All customer contacts, activities, supportive services, incentives, customer progress, etc. must be documented in the case notes.
19. Customers wishing to enroll in advanced training/occupational skills training through an Individual Training Account (ITA) must meet the eligibility criteria under the *Northern Tier Individual Training Account Policy*. All ITA policy and procedures must be followed.
20. Incentives are available for young adults and will be awarded in accordance with the *Northern Tier Incentive Policy*.
21. Career Exploration is mandatory for all young adults.
22. Program exit occurs when the customer has not received any services funded by the program or a partner program for 90 consecutive calendar days and has no planned gap in service and is not scheduled for future services.
23. Follow-up services must be provided to all customers after they exit the program. The *Northern Tier Follow-up Services Policy* must be followed.

### **WIOA youth and WIOA young adult's awareness of career pathways**

Youth participants are offered career exploration workshops. If they are interested in training opportunities. We explain the career pathway. All participants are O\*NET tested as part of the assessment process.

### **Work-based learning opportunities**

Provided as identified in the Individual Service Strategy, and arranged by the scheduling of the summer employment experience, work experience, job shadowing, and On the Job training (OJT). 20% of WIOA funds must be for work experiences for youth.

### **Work readiness training program curriculum and competencies**

All youth participating in work experiences are assessed for work readiness at the beginning and end of their work experience. Depending on the skill levels during the initial assessment, the career advisor and worksite supervisors



mentor youth on those competencies that still need to be developed.

**Financial literacy education**

New WIOA elements and is centered on education awareness from financial aid to budgeting and financial life skills. Youth participating in the program who are determined to be in need of financial literacy education will be exposed to partner banking institutions to learn about financial products, credit, credit reports, identity theft and others to help them make informed financial decisions.

**Program measurement and continuous improvements**

Will be monitored on a regular basis as mentioned through youth staff meetings and the Youth activity report presented to the Workforce Development Board and Youth Council each quarter. Included in the report are success stories highlighting the activities throughout the program year, barriers to employment and caseloads. Programmatically, each youth has an Individual Service Strategy plan that is a live and ongoing document capturing services and may be modified at any point to reflect the interest and changes to assist the youth to be successful.

**Youth and young adult preparation to training or post-secondary education**

Begins with the development of the ISS. Employability Counselors will open discussion with the youth and young adults regarding their education and employment goals. Recognizing many youth maybe unsure or unaware to the options and opportunities, Career Exploration workshops will provide the background and competencies for youth to research career interest and occupational skills information to make an informed choice. Youth and young adults will have the opportunity to speak with people in the respective career fields, job shadow, company tours, and use web based sites to review a variety of information from an interest inventory to High Priority Occupations and skill requirements. Determined by need, youth and young adults will have the opportunity through the summer employment experience and work experience placement to be exposed to the world of work.

**Education and training programs**

May include the Northeast PA Industrial Resource Center (NEPIRC), Individual Training Accounts (ITAs), On-The-Job Training (OJT), summer employment, work experience, and job shadowing to explore career interest and/or exposure to the world of work. Each provides training or experiences that will prepare the youth for mapping their career choice or securing unsubsidized\_employment. Recognizing the limits on funding, the focus is on work experience. Additionally, many of the young adults may be dual enrolled with other WIOA programs accessing financial aid for schooling or employer based contracts for employment. Job shadowing on site with various employers will expose the youth and young adults to job profiles and have the opportunity to speak with employees in jobs of interest. All of these activities are captured in the youth's ISS. OSY (Out of School Youth) are eligible for ITA's. (ITA and OJT policies are located on pages 68-71.)

**Education and training program may lead to employment**

Through the linkage with the role of the Business Service Representative and networking with additional partners in the function of job development and job placement. This is provided following the region's OJT policies.

**Support Services**

Support services will be addressed through the collaboration with partner organizations and appropriate referrals to the relevant organization. As mentioned, transportation, lack of family support network, housing, child care costs, and lack of work experience or lack of a high school diploma/GED are significant barriers to not only employment but in many cases the partner services needed to prepare a youth for education and employment opportunities. Career advisors commit a significant amount of time coordinating referrals and partner services prior to and in concert with the Individual Service Strategy leading to training and employment. In many cases staff collaborating with a housing authority or additional human services is necessary prior to enrolling a youth into Job Ready workshops, GED preparation, or work experience opportunities.

Supportive services are available to customers attending training services for child care and transportation needs. ISY and OSY are also eligible for support services while active in the program and during follow up. Such support

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services can include work related supplies, transportation costs, etc. These services are evaluated at an individual level for each customer and can include a number of other services. In order to help determine which support services are most effective in our area, monthly support service reports are generated by the WIOA Title I provider. NTWDB staff review reports monthly to ensure appropriateness of services, trends and cost analysis to determine if change to current policy is needed. Economic conditions and availability of funding are also a determining factor. Information is provided to the NTWDB and any change in policy must have NTWDB approval prior to implementation. Customers are also eligible for a gas stipend based on attendance for training services to offset the travel costs. The NTWDB continually evaluates supportive service and needs-based payment policies to determine whether the current policies are sufficient for the economic conditions.

### **Performance, Administration, and Project Management**

Northern Tier Workforce Development's focus is on building partnerships that prepare today's youth to be tomorrow's productive citizens through education and employment opportunities driven by linkages with the PA CareerLink® system and its partners. Monitoring and tracking youth performance measures begins with the PA CareerLink® which is the State's database of record for any agency serving WIOA customers. Title I provider staff use PA CareerLink® for all eligibility determinations, entry of services and tracking performance measures. In addition, the enrollment goals, demographics, support service awards, work experience slots and expenditures, and WIOA performance measures are tracked weekly through an internal spreadsheet. The Youth report and success stories are presented each quarter to the Youth Committee and NTWDB.

Compliance and proper documentation begin with all eligibility determination and enrollment documentation upon completion being sent to the Administrative office for filing. The youth program manager and workforce development quality specialist/EO officer completes programmatic monitoring of programs and subcontractors. There are ongoing coordination meetings with front line staff. Career advisors meet with potential participants to explain the program and provide information before the enrollment process begins. All policies, requirements and services are discussed before enrollment occurs.

The Northern Tier provides youth with effective and comprehensive activities that encourage school completion, improving educational attainment, and promoting effective linkages to employers. Because of the strong connections that exist between our program providers, CAO's, school districts, training providers, OVR, PA CareerLink® and numerous human service agencies, youth and young adults most in need of services are identified and provided with activities and support needed to achieve academic and employment success.

Youth program services are designed to facilitate academic and employment success. Activities and services are provided that help youth and young adults build their employment potential by increasing skills employers seek and setting them on the path toward a career that leads to independence and self-sufficiency. Dropout prevention is a priority and services are provided to help youth stay in school and obtain their high school diploma. GED instruction is provided for OSY that lack a diploma and is the first step in helping them with their employment and career goals. Additional services are available to help youth further their education or connect them to a job. Working closely with the participant, OVR, parents and school staff, we can determine special needs of our youth with disabilities and work together to help them overcome barriers to their future careers.

Potential program participants are required to complete a common application which helps the career advisors identify eligible participants and the services they may need. An interview with the youth/young adult and their parents/guardian (if under 18 years old) is the next step in determining program eligibility, and to explain the services available through the program. Once program eligibility has been determined it must be verified with required documentation. Such documentation includes information to verify family size, family income in the previous 6 months, residence, citizenship or eligibility to work in the US, disability status, age, barrier status, and Selective Service Registration status (if applicable). After program eligibility is determined by the youth career advisor, it is reviewed and verified by WIOA Title I supervisor before program services are provided.

The career advisor will perform an assessment of the individuals' academic levels, skill levels, and service needs to

development an Individual Service Strategy (ISS) for the client. The ISS is a detailed, unique, individual strategy for each youth participant that is the basis for the overall case management strategy. A successful case management approach includes assessing and interpreting needs; developing, strategies to help reach educational, training and employment goals; providing tools and resources to help overcome personal barriers; documenting youth participation, referral outcomes, service decisions, summaries of one-on-one meetings and achievements; and providing follow-up services. Case management provides an opportunity for staff to build a working relationship with the participant and with key organizations in order to assist youth in meeting their objectives.

Young adult case managers work with Adult/DW case managers when a participant is eligible, or it would be beneficial, for the participant to co-enroll in programs. Northern Tier participants have been co-enrolled in both Youth and Adult and Youth and DW programs concurrently. Both an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) and an ISS are developed. Goals and activities are different for each of the programs to eliminate duplication of services.

All program elements are designed to permit access and appropriate activities for youth with disabilities. These elements assist all youth in attaining academic and employment success. LWDB staff will monitor program systems to ensure that the required program elements are being offered and that program eligibility requirements are followed.

**1. Tutoring, study skills training, instruction and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies leading to secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent or for recognized post-secondary credential**

Youth career advisors work closely with high school guidance staff and are notified when a student has dropped out of school or if a student may be in danger of dropping out. Activities intended to educate students on the advantages of staying in school are offered. ISY found to be in need of additional academic assistance are enrolled in a tutoring program for more intensive, individual academic services where they receive one-on-one tutoring. OSY in need of a high school diploma attend GED instruction, or are assisted in re-entering high school.

**2. Alternative Secondary School Services or drop-out recovery services as appropriate**

Services are coordinated with school districts that have alternative school services within their curriculum. Career advisors will work closely with clients who may need alternative secondary school services. Career advisors meet with potential participants to explain the program and provide information before the enrollment process begins. All policies, requirements and services are discussed before enrollment occurs.

**3. Paid and unpaid work experiences that have academic and occupational education as a component of the work experience which may include the following types of work experiences:**

- a. **Summer employment opportunities and other opportunities available throughout the school year**
- b. **Pre-apprenticeship programs**
- c. **Internships and job shadowing**
- d. **On the job training opportunities**

Work experiences such as participation in pre-apprenticeship programs, OJT's, internships and job shadowing are planned structured learning experiences that take place in a work environment for a limited period of time. These experiences are offered throughout the program year in the private for profit sector, the non-profit sector or the public sector. They are designed to enable youth to gain exposure to the working world and its requirements. Work experiences help youth acquire the personal attributes, knowledge and skills needed to obtain a job and advance in employment. The purpose is to provide the youth/young adult with the opportunities for career exploration and skill development.

Work experiences may be subsidized or unsubsidized. Summer experiences are part of the year-round comprehensive strategies for addressing the youth/young adult's employment and training needs. The program allows young people to earn a paycheck while exposing them to the real world of working. When possible, summer employment opportunities are directly linked to academic and occupational learning. In addition to working, they

participate in career readiness activities such as instruction on resumes and job interview skills, labor market information, job search techniques and visits to employers and post-secondary schools. Both participants and employers involved in a work experience activity are surveyed on the overall effectiveness of the program and provide input on any changes that they feel may be beneficial. Assessment tools are used to measure foundation and worksite specific skills. Incentives are awarded for successful completion of the summer employment component.

**4. Occupational skill training, which includes priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized post-secondary credentials that align with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the Northern Tier**

Individualized Training Accounts are used as a mechanism for providing eligible OSY with the means to finance and obtain occupational skills training in order to obtain unsubsidized employment. The training program must lead to a high priority occupation in the Northern Tier Region and the training program must appear on the ETPL. The Career Advisor provides information and counseling that allows the young adult to make informed decisions. They also advise the young adult by suggesting choices relevant to their assessed needs and the goals determined appropriate.

**5. Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster**

Career advisors will evaluate pathways for youth/young adult participants and offer education opportunities for specific occupations or occupational clusters along with workforce preparation activities for the chosen occupation or cluster. Our program service providers' work in partnership with local CTC's to offer classes such as basic computer skills or remedial math to those that may benefit prior to enrolling in post-secondary education/training.

**6. Leadership development opportunities, including community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors**

Leadership development opportunities are provided for the youth through team building activities, peer tutoring, community service activities and linkages with other youth programs. Youth have participated in community beautification projects, wrapped presents for Toys for Tots, volunteered at a food pantry and other various non-profit organizations.

**7. Supportive Services**

Linkages to community service programs, assistance with transportation costs, assistance with childcare costs, referral to medical services and assistance with uniforms (including items need for on-the-job safety) and work related tool costs are provided. Supportive Services provide participants with options to overcome barriers to employment, education and training.

**8. Adult mentoring for a duration of at least 12 months that may occur both during and after program participation**

Adult mentoring is offered during and after program participation. We have limited access to approved mentors in our region. Career advisors can act as a mentor as long as the services provided are not part of normal case management and are individualized for the participant and targeted toward that participant's program goals.

**9. Follow up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation**

Follow-up services are provided for not less than 12 months after the youth/young adult completes program participation and are based on the needs of each individual. Follow-up services can include: 1) support and case management that encourages job retention; 2) supportive services as needed; 3) PA CareerLink® workshops; 4) regular contact with the youth/young adult customer's employer including assistance in addressing work related problems as they arise; 5) assistance in obtaining better paying jobs; 6) career development and further education; 7) adult mentoring 8) tracking progress of youth in employment after training.

**10. Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling as**

**well as referrals to counseling as appropriate to the needs of the individual youth**

Guidance and counseling is provided on an on-going basis through the Youth Career Advisor, linkages with school guidance counselors and referrals to outside counseling needs when appropriate.

**11. Financial literacy education**

Career advisors will utilize existing curricula, such as GCF Learn Free's Everyday Life Money Module, to provide financial literacy education. They will also reach out to area banking institutions to schedule workshops for presentations throughout the year.

**12. Entrepreneurial skills training**

Career advisors will utilize existing information such as beresource.com, information on the SCORE websites, etc. to provide entrepreneurship training to interested youth/young adults. They will also work to engage local entrepreneurs in presentations and possibly mentoring for those interested participants.

**13. Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the Northern Tier Region such as career awareness, career counseling and career exploration services**

Career advisors ensure that youth are counseled on occupational trends, skill levels needed for jobs as well as other Labor Market Information. Youth/young adults also receive information and counseling on High Priority Occupations of the Northern Tier.

**14. Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to post-secondary education and training**

Our program service providers work in partnership with local CTEC's to offer classes such as basic computer skills or remedial math to youth that may benefit prior to enrolling in post-secondary education. Assistance with researching and applying for financial aid and scholarships is also provided.

Other services that may be provided to OVR in-school youth with disabilities include:

- Counseling and guidance from professional vocational rehabilitation staff to explore career and training options as well as understand VR services. Independent Living Skills training will allow students to gain knowledge to perform the daily tasks essential for maintaining or obtaining independence. Independent Living Skills can include the following: household budgeting and financial management; utilizing public transportation; navigating through the social services system.
- Self-Advocacy Training to assist students with disabilities to gain knowledge on opportunities to participate in pre-employment transition services, disability awareness, advocating during an IEP process, understanding transition processes and advocating for themselves in post-secondary education, employment, and coordinating social services.
- Workplace Readiness Training will provide students with knowledge needed to find and maintain competitive integrated employment. Curriculums can include soft skills training, interview skills, job readiness, job-seeking skills, HR practices, and other skills needed to become "workplace ready".
- Job Shadowing will provide students with disabilities a one to five-day job shadowing experience, for a maximum of 25 hours per school year, in an occupation of interest within a community integrated setting. Students will be provided an opportunity to shadow employees and obtain an overview of the knowledge, tasks, and abilities needed to work in this field.

Criteria for youth that requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment to employment include:

Northern Tier WDB

Additional Assistance Barrier Criteria Policy

For Out of School Youth (OSY) and In School Youth\* (ISY) defined as meets one of the following:

**Employment**

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- Has no history of unsubsidized work
- Has been unable to maintain unsubsidized employment with the same employer for six months or more
- Has been actively seeking employment for at least two months but remains unemployed

### Transportation

- Lack of consistent and available public and/or personal transportation as identified in their Individual Service Strategy (ISS)

### At-Risk Youth

- Has an incarcerated or deceased parent(s)

\* Not more than 5 percent of the ISY assisted may be eligible based on paragraph (1)(C)(iv)(VII), which refers to the barrier for an ISY who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment.

When an ISY is enrolled under the additional assistance barrier, written notice must be given to local board staff from the service provider. The Youth Workforce Program Manager will monitor the number of ISY enrolled under the additional assistance barrier to ensure that our area does not exceed 5%.

As previously mentioned, opportunity youth are targeted with the majority of the LWDB's WIOA youth funding. The LWDB leverages TANF Youth Development Funding (YDF) to provide opportunities for more youth, especially ISY. The TANF Youth Development Program (TANF YDP) is implemented much the same as our WIOA youth programming, including Individual Service Plans, O\*Net and TABE testing and academic and employment goals. The program can serve youth from age 12 (or those who have completed 5th grade) to 24 years old (at the time of enrollment). Eligible youth are those that are from TANF receiving households or whose personal monthly gross countable earned income does not exceed 235% of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines (FPIG). Opportunities for work experiences for eligible TANF YDP participants is a priority. The LWDB offers both summer and year-round work experiences. The LWDB serves approximately 60-80 youth each program year with about 2-3% coming from TANF receiving households. (In program year 2019, more than 100 eligible youth were served.) More frequently, youth are eligible for the program because their individual income is below 235% of the FPIG.

Program participants must meet the criteria below and provide verification to the Title I provider:

1. Be between the ages of 12 (or has completed the 5th grade) and 24 years at the time of enrollment.
2. Have her/his identity verified through SSN.
3. Be a PA resident.
4. Be a U.S. citizen or a TANF-eligible non-citizen.
5. Have personal monthly gross earned income that does not exceed 235% of the FPIG.

Summer program participants complete academic enrichment as a component of the program. During the 30-hour academic enrichment period, participants are exposed to career education and exploration as well as some of the 14 WIOA Youth Program Elements (outlined on pages 63-65). The academic enrichment component is not always possible for year-round participants. However, each TANF YDP participant must participate in at least one of the 14 WIOA Youth Program elements. The more common Program Elements that participants are exposed to include work experiences, leadership development activities, supportive services, financial literacy education and services that provide labor market information.

The LWDB's WIOA Title I providers, Bradford County Action, Inc. and Trehab, Inc. are responsible for gathering participant eligibility verification and implementing programs. LWDB staff oversee and collaborate with Title I providers to provide programming. After gathering eligibility documents for possible TANF YDP participants, Title I providers use PA CareerLink® to verify participant eligibility through the Preliminary Screening Tool as outlined through the LWDB's *Preliminary Screening Tool Policy*. Title I providers participate in quarterly Direct Service Team (DST) meetings with each of their individual county's CAO offices to increase participation and provide current program guidelines and services offered through the TANF YDP and review referral processes. They also use local

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school districts, Transition Councils, OVR, CTECs, social media, radio and others for recruitment.

The goal of assisting youth to become ready to work is always a priority in our planning efforts. Projects are designed to begin with the youth participating in various aspects of career awareness (such as O\*Net) while improving their academic abilities, then developing their resume (including PA CareerLink® enrollment) and completing work readiness activities. All participating youth are encouraged to test their job readiness skills with paid work experience placements.

Paid work experience participants are paid in two tiers. Pay is \$9.00/hour for the first tier, as most participants are entering into their first work experience through this program. There is also the possibility of earning \$11.00/hour if specific skills, abilities or learning is required for other positions. Due to LMI for our rural area, the LWDB, with recommendations from the Youth Committee, decided that these rates would be best for the program.

Title I Providers offer work Readiness activities such as orientation, O\*Net, resume writing, interviewing and soft skills. They partner with local bank staff who provide financial/budgeting information. Local manufacturers provide tours and occupational presentations to participants. School districts, local probation departments, businesses and others host participants for work experiences and offer supervision and mentoring. Higher education agencies offer tours and financial literacy education for TANF YDP participants. Various local professionals and community members provide presentations on their occupations, youth program elements and career pathways. All partners provide these services as no cost. Title I providers recruit local businesses and other partners through a variety of channels such as word of mouth, cold calls, social media, radio and meetings.

TANF YDP participants have the opportunity to earn incentives for worksite excellence and full participation in academic enrichment (AE). The process is explained during orientation to all participants. In order to receive a stipend for AE, participants must complete all 30 hours of academic enrichment which is evidenced by project completion for each of the activities as well as sign in sheets. In order to receive worksite excellence incentives, participants must be nominated by their supervisors for showcasing excellent employability skills during their work experience. TANF YDP participants are also eligible for all incentives as outlined by the WIOA Youth Incentive Policy:

### YOUNG ADULT PROGRAM

#### INCENTIVE POLICY

Effective 10/1/19

1. A \$50 gift card will be awarded to a customer that obtains a GED while participating in the program.
2. A \$25 gift card will be awarded to a customer that obtains unsubsidized employment or is placed in post-secondary education by the 2nd quarter after exit. Employment must be verifiable under PA Wage Records.
3. A \$50 gift card will be awarded to a customer that remains employed or in education/training for the 4th quarter after exit. Employment must be verifiable under PA Wage Records
4. A \$25 gift card will be awarded to participants who obtain a credential for a professional, industry, employer organization or a product manufacturer or developer while participating in the program. Refer to WIN Notice 02-05, Page 43, and TEGL 15-10 for definitions of allowable credentials.
5. A \$25 gift card will be awarded to customers who achieve a measurable skill gain during participation in the program. (1 gain/person/participation period)
6. \$10 gift cards will be awarded to customers who achieve their individual goals as stated in their 10 for 10 plan. Each of the completed steps of their individual 10 step plan is eligible for a \$10 gift card incentive. A maximum of 10 \$10 gift cards can be given to each individual for this incentive. The incentive cannot exceed \$100 per participant. Incentives cannot be given for a goal that is met that is already outlined as one of the above program gains.

\*Customers are eligible for one incentive in each of the above categories. Customers cannot receive more than one incentive for the same program gain.

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The LWDB also seeks to implement TANF YDF projects for groups of eligible participants. Projects completed have included STEM learning opportunities, expansion of work experience opportunities to include STEAM and funding for local CTEC students for their CNA testing fees.

Below is information for LWDB staff responsible for implementation, tracking and reporting TANF YDP activities. This staff member is also responsible for the compilation and submission of the DHS Qualification Spreadsheet on DocuShare.

Northern Tier Regional Planning & Development Commission  
Jody McCarty  
570-265-1516  
mccarty@northerntier.org

Below is information for the contracted Title I providers in the five-county region who are responsible for TANF YDP programming and activities:

Bradford County Action  
500 William Street Towanda, PA 18848  
Penne Watkins  
pwatkins@bradfordcountyaction.org  
570-265-4434  
Trehab, Inc.  
42 Plaza Lane Wellsboro PA  
Breanna Repard  
brepard@trehab.org  
570-662-8117

LWDB staff monitor the TANF YDP the same as it does WIOA Youth programs. Files are selected randomly from each of the five counties for review each program year. LWDB staff also monitor worksites for safety, learning and Child Labor Law compliance. LWDB staff members responsible for monitoring are:

Jody McCarty  
Program Administrator  
570-265-1516  
mccarty@northerntier.org  
Bonnie Warner  
Workforce Development Quality Specialist/EO Officer  
570-265-1513  
warner@northerntier.org

As previously mentioned, Job Corps staff members participate in the LWDB's Youth Committee. Job Corps also has representation in local PACLs regularly for recruitment. All Title I providers are connected to Job Corps recruiters and referral process are in place when staff meet with appropriate/interested youth. There are no YouthBuild or AmeriCorps programs in the Northern Tier Region.

### *4.9 How will the local board coordinate workforce investment activities and ensure they are carried out in the local area with statewide rapid response?*

The Northern Tier region has a unified strategy/approach to the integration of Rapid Response, Dislocated Worker and Trade services. PA CareerLink® staff and the NTWDB have worked closely with the Rapid Response Coordination Services of the Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations in organizing Rapid Response events and in continuously developing service strategies to best suit the needs of displaced workers. Efforts include creating a unified system and sharing duties to provide services to dislocated workers, including initial assessments, determining training needs, career guidance, case management to job development, support services and on-site



customized workshops.

The process begins at the local level. The local rapid response team consists of staff from both job seeker and business services and includes both merit and non-merit staff. If there is notification of a potential layoff or closure the local rapid response team contacts our Rapid Response Coordinator. The coordinator then reaches out to the affected company and schedules a fact-finding meeting. During these meetings information about the current workforce is obtained along with details about the layoff or closure from the company management representatives. The local rapid response team along with the coordinator and often an unemployment compensation representative will provide a rapid response session with the displaced workers at the worksite (when possible) to discuss the many services available to them through the PA CareerLink® system. During this session, if not before, displaced workers are asked to complete a survey to help determine their needs. For example, an individual may need help with resume building or need to obtain a GED or training assistance. The surveys are then reviewed by the local rapid response team so they can ensure those needs are being met through available workshops, referrals, etc.

Benefits Rights Interviews (BRI's) are conducted for individuals whose companies are affected by Trade. These sessions help the individual to understand benefits that are available to them under the Trade Act.

Often times, the local rapid response team will offer employability workshops on-site to workers if permitted by the company. In some cases, employers, will allow an on-site job fair to give other employers in the area an opportunity to meet with their workforce. The local team works with other employers throughout the region that require the same set of skill sets possessed by the displaced workers in an effort to connect the two.

During the pandemic, the Rapid Response team and Rapid Response Coordinator provided virtual rapid response sessions with displaced workers. Sessions were recorded so workers could participate at a later date if necessary.

*4.10 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).*

To connect and coordinate workforce programs with relevant secondary and postsecondary education offerings and to avoid duplication of efforts, the NTWDB has agreements with the Title II Provider to deliver classes to increase academic skills and personal development skills and include components of career education. The NTWDB further supports local Career and Technical Centers and secondary schools through dual enrollment programs. Additionally, it utilizes Chapter 339 Career Guidance Plan Development as a coordinated effort for college and career readiness. The Board provides access to postsecondary opportunities and financial aid information through the PA CareerLink® system, and its statewide list of approved training providers. The NTWDB shares information gathered from employer interaction in order to provide additional input to the schools. The NTWDB also assists the educational providers as they work through the ETPL process and add courses to the training lists. All of the efforts combined have the goal of supporting the strategies of the Commonwealth and the local board.

The NTWDB maintains a close partnership with the two CTEC's that exist within the region. CTE representatives from both secondary and postsecondary serve on the Youth Committee and provide valuable input to service strategies aligning our youth with the education needed to fulfill employer needs. Youth Committee members are responsible for planning, evaluation and improvement of programs and activities offered to our young adults. The NTWDB staff sits on the CTE Advisory and Occupational committees and provides input regarding the Perkins Act. The NTWDB shares and reviews relevant labor market information including the identification of high priority occupations along with skills and occupation projections for the Northern Tier Region. The high priority occupations list for the Northern Tier is shared with both our secondary and post-secondary Perkins partners and includes the number of anticipated annual openings, annual average wage and educational attainment needed for that particular occupation. This Labor Market data can be used to develop and implement CTE programs and activities. The NTWDB provides a Career Coach in each of the CTC's to provide career exploration activities, promote career awareness and connect students to work-based opportunities. The NTWDB provides input to the CTEC based on employer feedback.

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NTWDB staff includes a Registered Apprenticeship (RA) Navigator who facilitates the Northern Tier PAsmart Apprenticeship Ambassador Network. Utilizing partnerships described above with CTECs, Title II Providers, secondary and post-secondary education and other training providers, the LWDB works to promote registered apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship opportunities within the LWDA. The RA Navigator delivers information to school districts about available pre-apprenticeship opportunities, meets with training providers and employers to discuss participating in apprenticeship programs and distributes information on RA from others areas to students, schools, job seekers, etc.

The RA Navigator has had informational meetings with WIOA Title I providers, BST members and others so that they are aware of registered apprenticeship and pre-registered apprenticeship opportunities as well as how to make referrals if anyone needs more information. The RA Navigator works with the ATO's Apprenticeship and Training Representative designated to the Northern Tier to learn about available and developing apprenticeship programs that can be introduced in the region.

### *4.11 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.*

The language in the Resource Sharing Agreement outlines specifically how PA CareerLink® staff work with OVR and other partner staff to ensure integrated service delivery throughout the local workforce system. Throughout the region, Title I WIOA staff work together with BWPO, OVR and SCSEP staff to provide a seamless array of services to support both job seekers and employers. Examples include the development of the customer information survey which was created as a joint effort between partner staff to develop one initial assessment to be used with a customer at point of entry, the development of a PA CareerLink® orientation so that the same initial information is given to each new customer, all partners contribute the staffing of the career resource center, the Career Pathway Navigator role is filled by both Wagner-Peyser and WIOA staff, both of which enter labor exchange services in PA CareerLink®. The Northern Tier Region continuously strives to provide a seamless, integrated system for our customers. All partner staff are encouraged to provide input and strategies for the improvement of service delivery. Business service teams are made up of Wagner-Peyser including TAA and Veterans staff, OVR and WIOA who work together to provide service to local businesses through the region.

In addition to monthly staff meetings, PA CareerLink® management and partner meetings also take place to ensure the strategies for maximizing coordination are effective. PA CareerLink® Operators also report out at each WDB meeting.

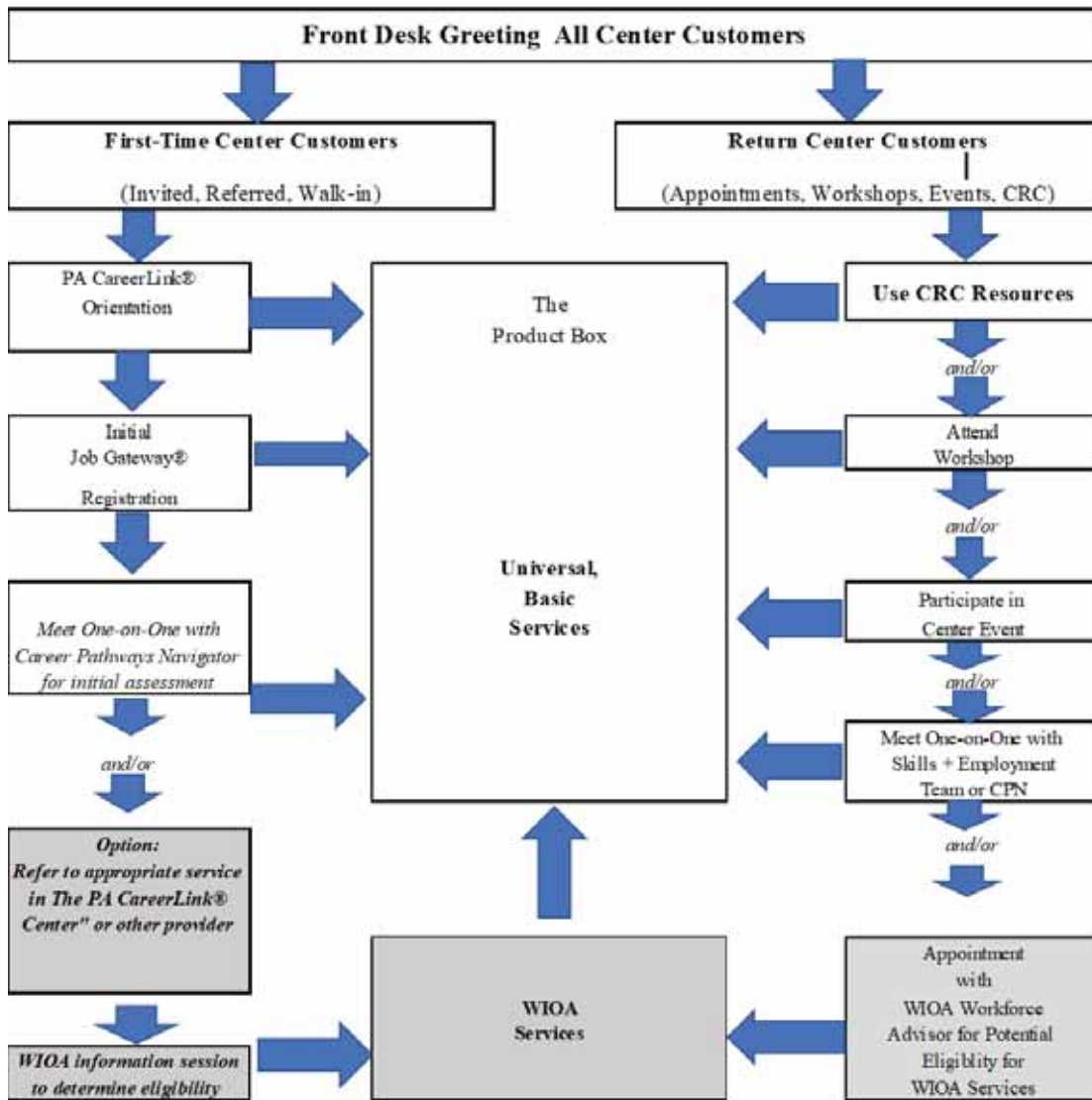
The one-stop operator provides functional supervision of the PA CareerLink® Center Site Administrators who acts as a functional leader within the one-stop. In that role, they have the authority to organize and supervise partner staff in order to provide the best services to customers without duplicating functions. Key responsibilities of the Site Administrator include:

- Integrate systems and coordinate services for the center and its Partners, placing priority on customer service.
- Integrated Workforce Service Delivery, as defined by WIOA, which includes organizing and providing services by function (not by program), when permitted by a program's authorizing statute and as appropriate, and by coordinating policies, communication, outreach, service and training efforts to ensure the best possible customer experience
- Service integration focusing on serving all customers seamlessly (including targeted populations with barriers to employment) by providing a full range of services staffed by cross-functional teams, consistent with the purpose, scope, and requirements of each program.
- Ensuring ease of access, that programs are easy to enroll and navigate, and there is a smooth flow to the menu of services available through the workforce system.

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There is an on-going evaluation and all efforts are taken to have a proactive approach to ensure that the staff enhance the services to individuals with disabilities. This includes the maintenance of the Career Resource Area, with its adaptive technologies, the TTY line, and the availability of resource materials in alternative formats (Braille, large print). OVR staff also sits in on PA CareerLink® offices monthly meetings when possible to discuss service strategies and participates in cross training of front line staff to discuss program specific services and appropriate referrals. OVR has an employer representative that sits on our Business Services Team. Our OVR representative has partnered with other staff to provide employer workshops throughout the region.

The process flow for all first time and returning customers is as follows:



All staff, regardless of partner affiliation work together to provide appropriate services.

*4.12 How will the local board coordinate WIOA title I workforce investment activities with adult education literacy activities under WIOA title II? See additional PDE requirements*

Currently, our Title II provider is the same as our Title I provider. The staff and management team have been integrally involved in this planning process. There have been meetings discussing the strategy and direction of this plan. The local board, through its local plan, provides information relevant to local goals and strategies.

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Representation of Title II Adult Education and Literacy exists within the system. Regular communication and active participation is necessary on both Title II and the NTWDB for seamless and integrated services of its customers. Title I and Title II discussions, feedback, strategic planning, operational planning occur simultaneously. The Board invites the Title II Adult Education and Literacy providers to present updates at both a PA CareerLink® staff meetings as well as at WDB meetings and cross training efforts are made during PA CareerLink® training sessions.

An explanation of Title II services is included in the orientation of services to customers entering the PA CareerLink®. Indicators that a referral to Title may be identified on the customer information survey (common intake form). Individuals that are determined to need additional basic skills or GED instruction, for example, may be referred to Title II through the PA CareerLink® system. Title II customers may also be referred to other PA CareerLink® partners for service. Dual enrollment with programs such as the Adult or EARN may occur. Individuals have also been co-enrolled in the Fit4Work Reengagement Project. Title II also provides assessments to our WIOA Title I clients. All WIOA, EARN and TANF customers are referred to Title II in the same way, when appropriate.

Local boards are not directly involved with WIOA Title II solicitation and procurement; the Title II competition is run solely by PDE and all funding decisions are made solely by PDE. The local boards will review applications submitted to PDE for WIOA Title II funds for alignment with the goals and strategies of the local area plan, and then provide recommendations to PDE on ways to improve alignment, if applicable.

Federal regulations require PDE to establish the process by which the local board will review WIOA Title II applications for alignment with the local area plan and submit recommendations to PDE for improvement of alignment. PDE will receive applications for Title II funds and then distribute applications to the appropriate LWDB for review. PDE will develop related review documents and rubrics and provide them to the local board along with training on how to conduct the review and return the documents to PDE. All local boards must use the review documents and rubrics provided by PDE. Local boards have the flexibility in determining which members of the local board participate in the review of applications. The review may be led by local board staff, but cannot be limited to local board staff. Board members connected to entities that submit applications for WIOA Title II funds or have other conflicts of interest cannot participate in the review.

### *4.13 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, in the local area?*

As outlined in the flowchart Section 4.11, all individuals who go to one of our region's PA CareerLink® centers are greeted by a staff. Staff ask all customers if they will need assistance during the application or registration process in order to fully participate in PA CareerLink® services, as not all disabilities are visible or obvious. Disability disclosure is voluntary and any information will be kept confidential. Customers who disclose a disability are informed that they may request a reasonable accommodation. After their initial greeting and completing a common intake form, customers watch a 5-minute Prezi presentation, that provides a quick orientation to the programs and services available at the PA CareerLink® center. This is followed by a discussion with a Career Pathways Navigator, who conducts an assessment of the individual's needs and competencies and potential barriers to employment that may be faced. The navigator also gives them an overview of the various career pathways available in the industries throughout the region and explains the knowledge, skills and abilities required for the high priority occupations where there are job opportunities. Referrals to appropriate services and/or agencies are then made based on the needs of the jobseeker. This may mean referrals to partners within the PA CareerLink® such as OVR or Title II or it could be to those outside of the center for services such as mental health or housing.

If appropriate, individuals are referred to a WIOA informational session that explains the various programs and services available. During this presentation, WIOA eligibility is assessed and individuals are then referred to appropriate training and/or supportive services. Returning customers can continue to meet with a Career Pathways Navigator who can help them link to employment.

WIOA Title IV eligible OVR customers receive multiple services from qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors

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.

Outreach services are provided at various meetings and that the PA CareerLink® partner staff participate in including, but not limited to advisory board for CTEC, career events, job fairs. Students visit the PA CareerLinks® to learn about services and occupation opportunities available in the area. BEP Career Coaches are familiar with PA CareerLink® services and relay that information to students. A PA CareerLink® calendar of events/workshops is created monthly and hot job lists weekly to be shared with community partners. Visits to county jails are made by Title I staff to provide orientation to services for individuals that will soon be released. PA CareerLink staff attend meeting with intermediate units and student. Mobile services are provided throughout the communities at places such as public libraries to ensure outreach to those individuals that may have transportation barriers. PA CareerLink® also uses a variety of social media platforms to reach out to customers. PA CareerLink® in your community events take place all across the region providing an opportunity to showcase services available through PA CareerLink® These “pop-up” events are designed to increase outreach to underserved communities.

*4.14 What services, activities, and program resources will be provided to businesses and employers, in the local area?*

We have a regional BST that meets on a quarterly basis that is comprised of Wagner-Peyser, Veterans, Title I, including Rapid Response Team members, and OVR staff to discuss what is going on in the area and to align services in the region. The regional staff talk about industry sectors that are growing and identify target sectors and/or employers for outreach. BST members work together toward goals set by the NTWDB such as increased market penetration, outreach, expand the number of work-based training opportunities and retention of business customers.

OVR meets the needs of businesses by providing no cost services to include ADA Awareness training, ADA Accessibility evaluations, accommodation recommendations for current employees and retention services. OVR also continues to partners with employers with On-the-Job Training (OJT), providing 100% wage reimbursement to businesses that hire OVR customers. 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 and workplace tours.

Each county has BST representatives that conduct outreach with specific employers in specific counties. BST representatives visit any new employers that are identified by the Chambers or PREP partners. Our BST representatives use the Executive Pulse system, the system of record for the economic development partners. This allows our BST staff to both collect and provide information on referrals to other partners in the region. They also use the PA CareerLink® system to identify which employers in the system have not had a service in the past year. These employers will be a priority for a visit. BST also organizes employer events and participate in job fairs. They coordinate with career advisors to serve job seekers by communicating information about employee openings available through local employers and encouraging employers to post job openings in the PA CareerLink® system. They also provide education to employers on how to most effectively utilize PA CareerLink® and create information videos such as the Employer Spotlight interviewing employers about their business, their jobs and expectations.

BST members in the LWDB have participated in RA training completed by an RA Navigator. They have materials to present to employers about registered apprenticeship just like they present other possible workforce options like OJT. A referral process has been established for those employers wanting more information about the training model. A refresher/more in-depth training is being planned for BST members to attend in the near future which will include an overview of the PA CareerLink® Apprenticeship and Training Office website and available resources on it, specifically, the Registered Apprenticeship Desk Guide for PA CareerLink® Staff.

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Business and employers engage with education through a variety of activities and local initiatives. Through our Business Education Program (BEP), Career Coaches have maintained and established new relationships with our local employers. Career Coaches work to educate students about career opportunities and connect them with local employers. During the 19-20 school year the Career Coaches helped to organize eight (8) career fairs throughout the region connecting students in K-12 with local employers from a variety of industry. Local employers had the opportunity to showcase their business and talk to students about career opportunities, what those occupations look like, the skills and training needed to obtain these jobs and career pathways. The career fairs are just one example of the almost thirty events held this year through our BEP program. Overall, throughout the 18-19 school year over 200 employers were connected with over 6,000 students helping to educate our emerging workforce about the opportunities available in their own backyard. These connections also result in paid work, internship and job shadowing opportunities for our youth.

The business community also connects to education through our Teacher in the Workplace initiative in Tioga County. All three school districts in Tioga County participated in Career Rounds throughout the 19-20 school year. Local educators had an opportunity to meet with businesses to learn about the skills and training needed to perform jobs in high demand industries. Educators were able to work together to develop curriculum based on their experience with the local business that will be used in the classroom. The NTWDB plans to expand this program to other parts of the region.

Registered apprenticeship opportunities also provide another avenue for employers to engage with education. The related technical education required of the apprenticeship model has to be developed and agreed upon between the employer and the training institution helping to create career pathways.

During the 19-20 school year the NTWDB partnered with NTRPDC to recruit and participate in the What's So Cool About Manufacturing? (WSCM) contest. This project engaged eighth graders from school districts throughout the region to participate in a video contest showcasing a local manufacturer. Students work with a teacher coach and visit the manufacturer they are paired with to film and edit a video which is entered into a regional contest. The regional winner is then entered into a statewide contest. This project educates students about the career opportunities within the manufacturing sector and also gives exposure to the company. The Northern Tier had schools and manufacturers work together during 2019 and 2020 submitting contest videos.

Rapid Response team members, also representative of BST, participate in Rapid Response sessions with local employers which may be reducing their workforce or closing down operations. These team members help both the jobseekers and employers navigate the workforce system. Assistance can include outreach to other local employers that may be looking for the same skill set as the displaced workers.

Specialized services offered by OVR to employers include pre-screened, qualified job candidates with disabilities. Support for new hires may include reasonable accommodation consultation, OJT, tax credits or deductions and consultation on the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) accessibility standards.

Unemployment Compensation is represented at Rapid Response sessions providing both jobseekers and employers the information they need to proceed during layoffs or closures. Services provided to employers also include seminars on unemployment compensation topics informing employers of rights and responsibilities.

#### *4.15 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?*

The transportation issues related to workforce development revolve around the lack of a local or regional transportation system. The system that does exist visits most communities twice daily at most. Any workforce customer without a vehicle or driver's license must rely on others for a ride, or face extremely restrictive windows to get to the PA CareerLink®, training, or employment. While the system provides the best service possible under the circumstances, the financial hurdles and lack of demand makes expanding these systems extremely cost prohibitive.

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The area has two different service providers who offer a ride-share, low-income, and senior transportation program. One provider serves Bradford, Tioga and Sullivan Counties, and the second services Susquehanna and Wyoming Counties. All transportation providers are partners with the system.

The area addresses the issue with an increase in the hub and spoke concept, which sends staff to other community partners on a regular basis that will extend the services without bricks and mortar. The Title I providers travel to community facilities, like libraries, where they can meet with customers and provide PA CareerLink® services. During 2019, over 100 people were served through our mobile service that may not have otherwise had the opportunity to access service. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, these services were prohibited during 2020. Mobile services have now resumed but it is taking time to reestablish our presence throughout the community.

Information is readily available and referrals are made to community partners to address a variety of needs such as child care, child support, dependent care, housing, Medicaid, CHIP, SNAP, TANF, transportation and counseling services. Referrals are made to a variety of community partners including the Social Security Administration, County Assistance Office, Drug and Alcohol services, BeST Transit, Literacy, Child Support, Housing Authority, Homeless shelters, community churches, food pantries, Domestic Relations – child support, mental health providers, abuse and rape crisis centers, legal services, credit counseling and veteran's services.

Northern Tier had implemented a pilot a van program in Tioga county to assist individuals with their transportation barriers. The Pilot Van Program is to assist EARN (Employment, Advancement and Retention Network) participants to and from the learning centers and keep them engaged in required activities as mandated by their Agreement of Mutual Responsibility (AMR). The project goals are to increase program participation by eliminating a significant barrier for many individuals receiving cash assistance in the Northern Tier. This project is gave EARN Participants the helping hand to get to the Learning Center easing the burden of trying to find transportation while also limiting time spent on the bus for those that do have access to public transport. This service has improved participation which leads to greater placement and retention. Since the program began, Tioga County EARN program Work Participation Rate (WPR) has consistently increased and as of June 2019, Tioga County was number 1 with their WPR out of Pennsylvania State. Plans to expand this program to Adult and Dislocated Worker were in play, unfortunately, due to the pandemic the program and expansion was placed on hold during 2020. Since then programs have adjusted to remote service plans which has helped many to receive service even with transportation barriers. If demand increases plans will be to revive and expand this service.

The following data and map outline the commuter patterns for the Northern Tier. Even though 14,915 workers commute to the region for employment, 32,079 (52%) travel outside the region for employment resulting in a net flow of -17,164.

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**Inflow/Outflow Report, Northern Tier WDA, 2019**

	<b>Count</b>	<b>Share</b>
Employed in the WDA	44,573	100.0%
Employed and Living in the WDA	29,658	66.5%
Employed in the WDA but Living Outside	14,915	33.5%
Living in the WDA	61,737	100.0%
Living and Employed in the WDA	29,658	48.0%
Living in the WDA but Employed Outside	32,079	52.0%
Net Commuting In/Out*	-17,164	

\*A positive number indicates the number of individuals working in the WDA but living outside is higher than the number of individuals living in the WDA but employed outside. A negative number indicates the opposite.



5.1 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.

The Memoranda of Understanding that are currently between the NTWDB and the PA CareerLink® partners define the expectations, service levels, and resource contributions of each organization. Additionally, with respect to the provision of services to individuals with disabilities, the NTWDB will utilize Office of Vocational Rehabilitation’s (OVR) expertise regarding assessment, career pathways development, education training and placement services. OVR has a very effective professional development program that will assist in assuring proper cross training of staff, technical assistance and sharing information. The NTWDB will encourage the sharing of PA CareerLink® information that can assist in serving mutual clients.

The Northern Tier Workforce Development Board and our PA CareerLink® partners ensure continued compliance with WIOA Section 188, applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and “The ADA Standard For Accessible Design.” We are committed to following and adhering to all provisions of the U.S. Department of Labor Rule: “Implementation of the Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity provisions of the WIOA” and, the “State Nondiscrimination Plan.” Dissemination of information related to those topics previously listed as well as compliance



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accordingly is under the charge of the LWDA's designated Equal Opportunity Officer. Our EO officer works with individuals appointed in each PA CareerLink® center, referred to Equal Opportunity Liaisons to ensure that customers are aware of their rights and to report any incidents related to potential discrimination or accessibility. Through mutual efforts those identified above utilize the PA Department of Labor and Industry, Office Equal Opportunity (OEO) "State Employment Security Agency (SESA) Technical Assistance (TA) Training Manual, which requires the use of the nondiscrimination and EO Self-Evaluation Guide." Training to support the liaisons and EO Officer as well as technical assistance is provided by the Office of Equal Opportunity.

In addition to and in accordance with Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 37-14, board staff will coordinate with the Equal Opportunity Officers in each of the PA CareerLink® centers in our region to ensure the following:

- Use this TEGL and attachments when reviewing our existing policies and procedures and make any changes necessary to implement the guidance discussed in the directive.
- Ensure that workforce staff are familiar with Attachment I to this TEGL – "Key Terminology for Working with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Persons." to assist with more effective communication with LGBT customer and employees of the workforce system.

### *5.2 What is the process the local board uses to ensure the collection of the debts of lower-tier sub-recipients, as a result of audits?*

In accordance with WIOA Section 184(c); 20 CFR 683.750, issuance of a final determination completes the audit resolution process. A debt is established when that final determination disallows any costs questioned in the audit. The collection of that debt is a separate process with specified time frames and procedures. The final determination contains the first official demand for repayment of the debt. Please refer to the flow chart at the end of this chapter.

Following issuance of the final determination, the audited entity will have 30 days from issuance to submit an appeal. That appeal will be a request for a formal review of the final determination before an impartial hearing officer of the Department. The debt collection process will be stayed pending a decision regarding the appeal. However, the debt becomes delinquent on the first day following issuance of the final determination, whether or not an appeal has been filed.

Interest on the delinquent debt will begin to accrue at that time according to the prevailing rate determined by the U.S. Treasury and will accrue during the entire time of the appeal process. This interest is waived if the debt is paid before the 31st day following issuance of the final determination. If the appeal is upheld, all interest will also be waived. However, if the appeal results in any disallowed costs, interest will be assessed on the amount disallowed.

If no appeal of the final determination is filed, a lump-sum repayment from non-federal funds is due to BWDA within 30 days after issuance of the final determination. The commonwealth, at its discretion, may negotiate short-term installment agreements in lieu of lump-sum payment.

In general, the options available are as follows:

- **Option 1:** The Grantee pays the full amount in a lump sum by sending a cashier's check, drawn on non-federal funds and payable to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
- **Option 2:** The Grantee may contact the Department to negotiate a short-term installment agreement (generally executed over a period of three years or less) in lieu of a lump-sum payment
- **Option 3:** In rare instances, a local workforce development area may request an offset/deduction as outlined in WIOA Sec. 184(c). An offset/deduction may only be applied if misexpenditures were not part of a pattern of misexpenditure and not due to willful disregard of the requirements of WIOA regulations, gross negligence, and failure to observe accepted standards of administration. In addition, an offset/deduction may only be applied if WIOA Sec. 184(c) has been fulfilled. If an offset/deduction is granted, the Department must deduct an amount equal to the misexpenditures from the Local area/fiscal agent's subsequent year's allocation from funds available for

administrative costs.

Upon full repayment of the outstanding debt, the commonwealth will issue a satisfactory resolution letter acknowledging receipt of repayment, closing the audit process. However, the commonwealth reserves the right to reopen the audit in the event the USDOL disagrees with the final resolution. Should repayment not be received within the 30-day period, a second notice will be sent by certified mail. This notice will state that repayment must be submitted within 30 days of issuance of the letter. It will also state that interest on the outstanding debt began to accrue on the first day following issuance of the final determination.

If repayment of the outstanding debt is not received within 30 days after issuance of the second notice, a final notice will be sent by certified mail. The final notice will state that the Department must receive repayment within 10 days of issuance. It will also list the amount of accrued interest due on the debt. The notice will also state that should repayment of the debt and interest not be received, appropriate legal and/or programmatic sanctions may be instituted. These sanctions may include the following:

- Withholding a percentage of payments until the audit is resolved satisfactorily;
- Withholding or disallowing administrative costs;
- Withholding the federal funds until the audit is resolved;
- Determination of ineligibility, suspension, or debarment through the commonwealth's Contractor Responsibility Program; and
- Referral to the Office of the Attorney General for collection.

*5.3. Which actions(s) is the local board taking (or will take) towards becoming or remaining a high-performing board?*

The board continually monitors its performance and the overall performance of the local system. This includes continually monitoring labor market information and gathering input from regional employers along with developing new programs and partnerships to meet the needs of the region. The NTWDB consistently seeks out ways to improve upon service, especially to those that have multiple barriers to employment. Some examples of implemented programs include mobile services and the Fit4Work Reengagement Project. By continually monitoring its performance measures, the board is constantly evaluating its performance and seeking input from stakeholders.

The board strives to improve upon our service to our local employers developing strategies and methods of services to meet the needs of local business including the development of the BEP Career Coach program, applying for and becoming a certified apprenticeship sponsor and participating in Next Generation Industry Partnership initiatives.

The board also ensures that it maintains high performance by conducting periodic updates or modifications to the region's strategic plan. Over the next year, the board will also consider a self-evaluation process to identify areas of improvement or best practice.

*5.4 What is the process the local board uses to provide an opportunity to have input into the development of the local plan, particularly for representatives of business, education, labor organizations, program partners, public agencies, and community stakeholders*

The board held several meetings with local partners and stakeholders to gather their input and discuss methods to continue to enhance the local and regional workforce system. These meetings include outreach meetings in each of the five counties in the Northern Tier. These meetings are open to the public and include attendees from local business, secondary and post-secondary education providers, local elected officials, state representatives, community and economic development agencies, Partnerships for Regional Economic Performance (PREP) and human service agencies. These outreach meetings provide a forum for local partners to discuss current economic and workforce needs, strategies and barriers. Feedback from these meetings are incorporated into our local strategic plan. These meetings coupled with Title I, PREP, Youth, Workforce Board and Executive Committee input provide for a well-rounded group of contributors

## PY2021-2024 WIOA Multi-Year Local Area Plan

with extensive knowledge about the communities we serve in the Northern Tier region. The same process is used for the modifications to the local plan.

### *5.5 What is the process the local board uses to provide a 30-day public comment period prior to submission of the plan?*

To ensure an open opportunity for public comment, the Board published the Northern Tier Local WIOA Plan modification on its website for the 30-day period beginning on July 8, 2023 and ending August 6, 2023. The notice of public comment was also published in a widely circulated newspaper publication. Additionally, notification of the availability of the WIOA Local plan modifications for public comment was also directly distributed via email to stakeholders across the region.

No public comment was received during the 30-day comment period.

## Attachment 1: Local Area WIOA Title I Programs Performance Accountability Tables

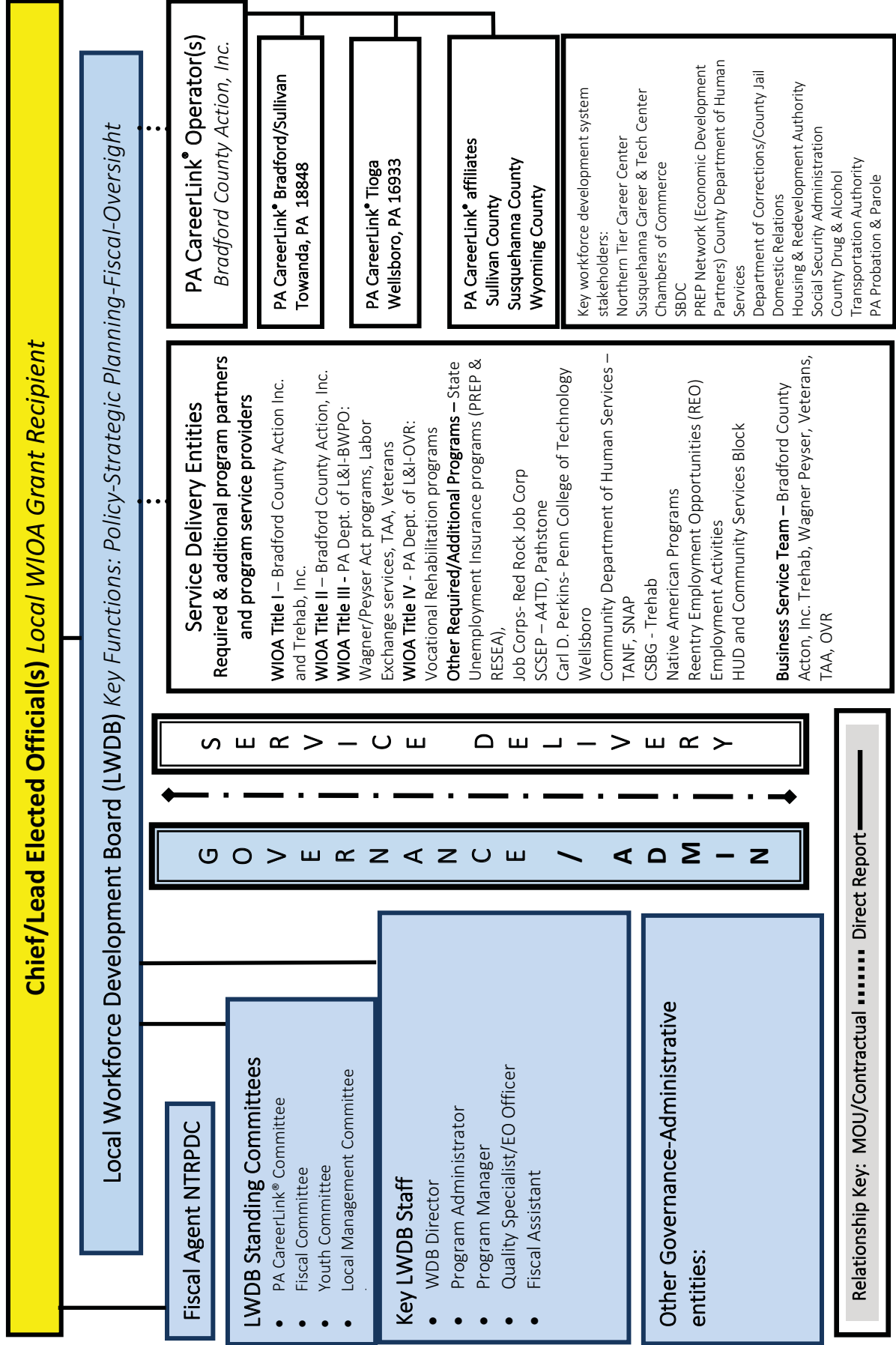
The Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry, or L&I, negotiates WIOA Title I programs performance goals with the U. S. Department of Labor on a two-year program cycle, which aligns with the WIOA planning requirement of reviewing WIOA Local Area Plans every two years. In an effort designed to meet or exceed the state WIOA performance goals, PA negotiates these same goals with PA’s local workforce development areas, or LWDA, to optimally set each local area’s WIOA Title I performance goal levels so that, collectively, the state negotiated performance goals are met or exceeded. The *Local Area WIOA Title I Programs Performance Accountability Tables* are for the benefit of the public and must be updated **annually with L&I supplied information as it becomes available**. The completed tables must be publicly posted with the local area plan. The LWDB does not need to perform a WIOA plan modification as the tables are revised; email notification to local area workforce development stakeholders including L&I will suffice.

**Table A instructions: Local boards must edit the table’s three columns with the appropriate program year(s) to correctly match the attained performance results from the most recent\* program year and most recent\* LWDA-negotiated performance goals for the next two program years.**

Table A	LWDA Name: Northern Tier		
WIOA Title I Programs (Adult-Dislocated Worker-Youth) Performance Measures	<u>Attained Performance Results</u>	<u>Negotiated Performance Goals</u>	<u>Negotiated Performance Results</u>
	*Program Year 2021	*Program Year 2022	*Program Year 2023
<b>Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)</b>			
Adult	86.3%	85%	86%
Dislocated Worker	75.6%	78%	79%
Youth	55.0%	66%	68%
<b>Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)</b>			
Adult	83.0%	83%	84%
Dislocated Worker	74.4%	75%	76%
Youth	64.3%	65%	67%
<b>Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)</b>			
Adult	\$8,032	\$7,400	\$7,600
Dislocated Worker	\$8,497	\$7,800	\$8,000
Youth	\$4,250	\$4,000	\$4,250
<b>Credential Attainment Rate</b>			
Adult	65.8%	68%	70%
Dislocated Worker	81.0%	79%	80%
Youth	50.0%	65%	66%
<b>Measurable Skill Gains</b>			
Adult	49%	51%	51%
Dislocated Worker	50.0%	59%	60%
Youth	55.0%	56%	58%

## Attachment 2: WIOA Local Workforce Development System Organizational Chart model

The organizational chart is for the benefit of the public and must be used to describe the attributes of the local workforce development system. This chart should be reviewed annually for revisions. The local board may supplement this model with clarifying charts. If multiple pages are needed to represent the local system, ensure that "Governance/Administrative" and "Service Delivery" information is displayed on separate pages respectfully. Use of model sub-titles is required. Publicly post the organizational chart with the local area plan. A WIOA plan modification is not required when revision occurs with this document.



Attachment 3: WIOA Local Workforce Development Delivery System  
Program Partner-Provider List

Local Workforce Development Area name: Northern Tier Workforce Development Area  
Effective Date: July 1, 2020

Local Workforce Development Boards, or LWDBs, are requested to publicly post the PA CareerLink® Workforce Service Delivery System Program Partner/Provider List to address the public's need for access to service as mandated by the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act, or WIOA. The LWDB should ensure that the Program Partner/Provider List reflects the current PA CareerLink® Memoranda of Understanding(s). Local area plan modifications concerning this subject matter are not required to be submitted to the Department if the list is posted on the LWDB public website.

Program Name	Program Authorization	Local Area Partner/Provider
POC address	POC telephone	POC website/email& POC
WIOA Title I Adult/Dislocated Worker and Youth Services	WIOA Title I Program	Bradford County Action, Inc. <a href="http://www.bradfordcountyaction.org">www.bradfordcountyaction.org</a>
500 William Street, Towanda PA 18848	570-265-4434	Penne Watkins <a href="mailto:pwatkins@bradfordcountyaction.org">pwatkins@bradfordcountyaction.org</a>
WIOA Title I Adult/Dislocated Worker and Youth Services	WIOA Title I Program	<a href="http://Trehab">Trehab</a> <a href="http://www.trehab.org">www.trehab.org</a>
36 Public Avenue Montrose, PA 18801	570-662-8117	<a href="mailto:Breanna.Repard">Breanna Repard</a> <a href="mailto:brepard@trehab.org">brepard@trehab.org</a>
Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service Program	Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.C.S. 49 et. Seq.), as amended by WIOA Title III	PA Department of Labor & Industry  <a href="http://www.dli.state.pa">www.dli.state.pa</a>
Bureau of Workforce Partner Operations 329 Pine Street, Williamsport, PA 17701	570-327-3501	Bruce Jones <a href="mailto:brujones@pa.gov">brujones@pa.gov</a>
Vocational Rehabilitation State Grant Programs	Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973	Office of Vocational Rehabilitation <a href="http://www.dli.pa.gov">www.dli.pa.gov</a>
208 W. Third Street Williamsport, PA 17701	570-327-3600	<a href="mailto:Heather.Nelson">Heather Nelson</a> <a href="mailto:nelson@pa.gov">nelson@pa.gov</a>
Jobs for Veterans State Grant Programs	38 U.S.C. Chapter 41	PA Department of Labor & Industry  <a href="http://www.dli.pa.gov">www.dli.pa.gov</a>
Bureau of Workforce Partner Operations 329 Pine Street, Williamsport, PA 17701	570-327-3501	Bruce Jones <a href="mailto:brujones@pa.gov">brujones@pa.gov</a>
Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)	Title II of the Trade Act of 1974	PA Department of Labor & Industry  <a href="http://www.dli.pa.gov">www.dli.pa.gov</a>

Bureau of Workforce Partner Operations 329 Pine Street, Williamsport, PA 17701	570-327-3501	<a href="#">Bruce Jones</a> brujones@pa.gov
Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)	(43 U.S.C. 601 et. seq)	Department of Human Services, Local CAO <a href="http://www.dhs.pa.gov">www.dhs.pa.gov</a>
Main Street, Towanda, PA 18848	570-265-9186	Tammie West twest@pa.gov
Job Corps	WIOA Title I, Subtitle C	Red Rock Job Corp <a href="http://www.redrock.jobcorps.gov">www.redrock.jobcorps.gov</a>
Route 487 North, Lopez, PA 18656	800-733-5627	<a href="#">Jill Payne</a> Payne_Jill@jobcorps.org
State Unemployment Insurance (UI) Program	Social Security Act 9 of 1935	William L. Trusky, Jr. Deputy Secretary for UC
61 Boas Street, Harrisburg, PA 17121	717-783-7107	witrusky@pa.gov
Department of Community Economic Development	Employment and Training activities carried out under Department of Housing and Urban Development	Trehab
36 Public Avenue, Montrose, PA 18801	570-278-3338	Dennis Phelps, Executive Director
Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP)	Title V of Older Americans Act of 1965	A4TD, Pathstone A4td.org
3 Berry St. Tioga, PA 16946	570-404-7744	Louise Wyble <a href="mailto:swyble@4td.org">swyble@4td.org</a>
Postsecondary Career & Technical Education (Perkins V)	Carl D. Perkins Vocational & Applied Technology Act of 2006	Penn College of Technology <a href="http://www.pct.edu">www.pct.edu</a>
22 Walnut St. Wellsboro, PA 16901	570-724-7703	<a href="http://www.pct.edu">www.pct.edu</a>
The following required partners are not located in the Northern Tier Workforce Development and therefore not represented in the local service system: Youth Build, National Farmworker Jobs Programs, Native American Programs, Reentry Employment Opportunities (REO) Programs, and Employment Activities – Department of Housing and Urban Development. Referrals to neighboring service providers are available upon request.		

Attachment 4: Local Workforce Development System Supporting Data

Template:

LWDB Name: Northern Tier Workforce Development Board

Section 1.1:

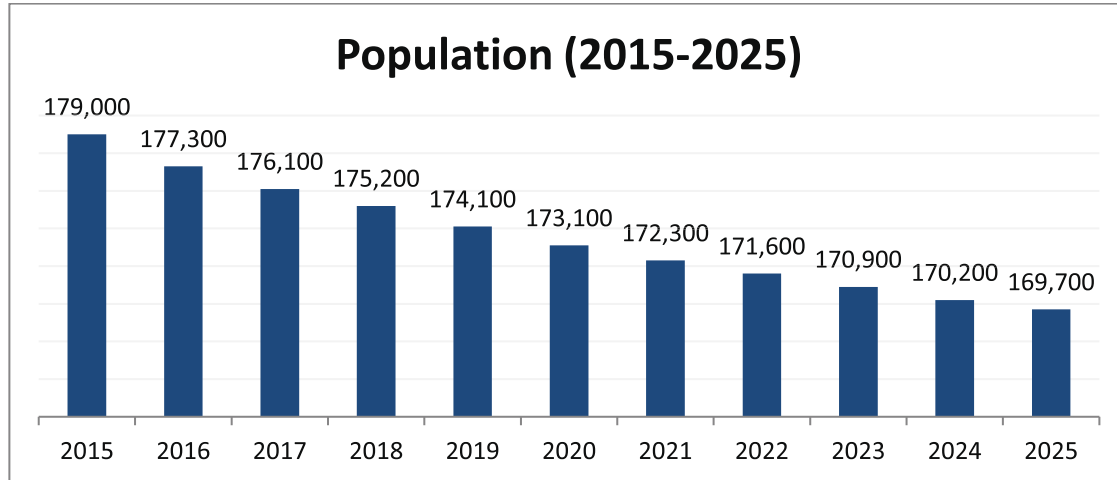


Figure 1: Population Decline  
Source: EMSI (Economic Modeling Specialists, International), 2020.4

Race and Ethnicity	2015		2020		2025	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
White	174,283	97.4%	167,917	97.0%	164,075	96.7%
Black	1,376	0.8%	1,620	0.9%	1,784	1.1%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	488	0.3%	499	0.3%	518	0.3%
Asian	930	0.5%	933	0.5%	965	0.6%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	49	0.0%	52	0.0%	55	0.0%
Two or More Races	1,888	1.1%	2,101	1.2%	2,270	1.3%
Non-Hispanic	176,314	98.5%	170,237	98.3%	166,579	98.2%
Hispanic	2,700	1.5%	2,884	1.7%	3,088	1.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>179,014</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>173,121</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>169,667</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Figure 2: Population by Race and Ethnicity  
Source: EMSI (Economic Modeling Specialists, International), 2020.4



Attachment 4: Local Workforce Development System Supporting Data

Educational Attainment						
Level	2015		2020		2025	
Less Than 9th Grade	3,213	2.5%	3,693	2.9%	3,803	3.0%
9th Grade to 12th Grade	9,758	7.6%	10,048	8.0%	10,288	8.3%
High School Diploma	59,233	46.4%	58,849	46.6%	58,022	46.5%
Some College	20,946	16.4%	20,659	16.4%	20,304	16.3%
Associate's Degree	11,046	8.6%	10,818	8.6%	10,668	8.6%
Bachelor's Degree	15,215	11.9%	14,319	11.3%	13,917	11.2%
Graduate Degree and Higher	8,296	6.5%	7,957	6.3%	7,683	6.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>127,707</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>126,343</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>124,684</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>High School or Lower</b>	<b>72,204</b>	<b>56.5%</b>	<b>72,590</b>	<b>57.5%</b>	<b>72,113</b>	<b>57.8%</b>
<b>Bachelor's or Higher</b>	<b>23,511</b>	<b>18.4%</b>	<b>22,277</b>	<b>17.6%</b>	<b>21,600</b>	<b>17.3%</b>

Figure 3: Educational Attainment  
Source: EMSI (Economic Modeling Specialists, International), 2020.4

Figure 4: Unemployment Rates  
Source: CWIA Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS)

Section 1.2:

**Employment Growth Rates by Educational Attainment Level for Northern Tier WDA**

Area	Educational Grouping	Employment (2020)	Projected Employment (2030)	Percent Change (2020-30)
Northern Tier	On-the-job training	33,260	34,250	3.0%
Northern Tier	Long-term training	2,590	2,670	3.1%
Northern Tier	PS education or experience	11,980	12,110	1.1%
Northern Tier	Associate degree	1,050	1,120	6.7%
Northern Tier	Bachelor's degree	9,220	9,560	3.7%
Northern Tier	Advanced degree	2,030	2,150	5.9%

Figure 4: Employment Growth Rates by Educational Attainment  
Source: CWIA

Attachment 4: Local Workforce Development System Supporting Data

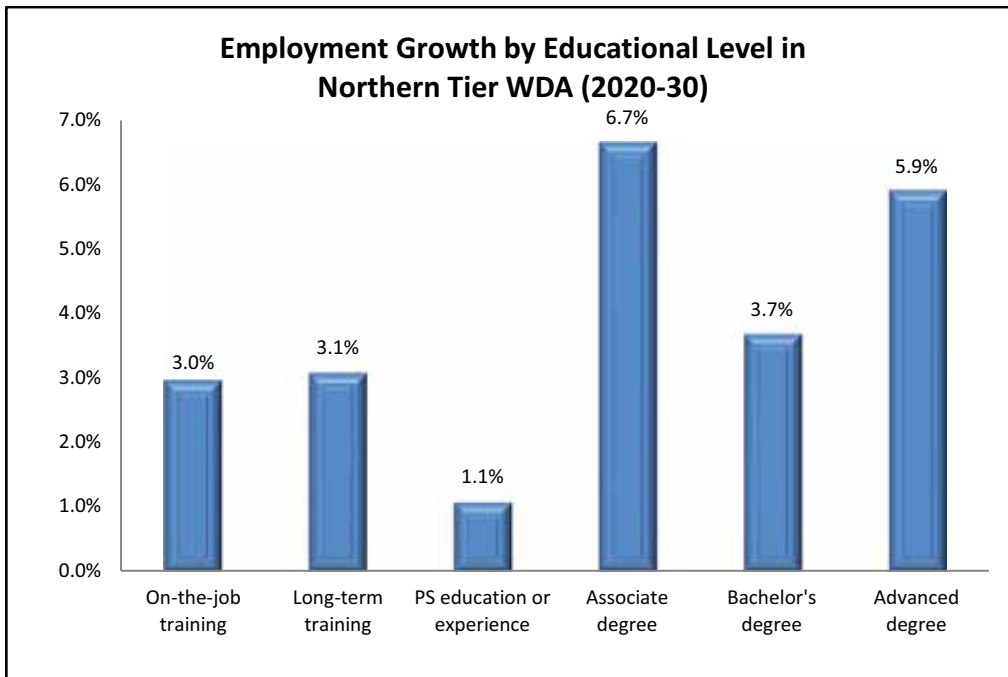


Figure 5: Long-Term Occupational Employment Projections (2020-30)  
Source: Center for Workforce Information and Analysis

**Long-Term Industry Projections for Northern Tier WDA (2020-30)**

Industry	Employment (2020)	Projected Employment (2030)	Employment Change (2020-30)	
			Volume	Percent
<b>Total Jobs</b>	60,130	61,860	1,730	2.9%
<b>Goods Producing Industries</b>	13,880	13,810	-70	-0.5%
Agriculture, Mining & Logging	4,210	4,180	-30	-0.7%
Construction	1,910	2,010	100	5.2%
Manufacturing	7,760	7,610	-150	-1.9%
<b>Services-Providing</b>	40,630	42,460	1,830	4.5%
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	11,470	11,910	440	3.8%
Information	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Financial Activities	1,700	1,710	10	0.6%
Professional & Business Services	3,490	3,710	220	6.3%
Education & Health Services	13,350	13,890	540	4.0%
Leisure & Hospitality	3,780	4,410	630	16.7%
Other Services, Except Public Admin.	2,200	2,300	100	4.5%
Federal, State & Local Government	4,140	4,020	-120	-2.9%
<b>Self-Employed Workers</b>	5,630	5,590	-40	-0.7%

Source: Long-Term Industry Employment Projections (2020-30)

\*Data may not add due confidentiality

Attachment 4: Local Workforce Development System Supporting Data

Figure 7: 2020 High Priority Occupations for the Northern Tier  
 Source: Center for Workforce Information and Analysis

Center for Workforce Information & Analysis  
 7/22/22

2022 High Priority Occupations for Northern Tier Workforce Development Area

SOC Code	SOC Title	Educational Attainment	Wages (2021)			Employment			
			Entry Level	Annual Average	Exper. Level	Estimated 2018	Projected 2028	Percent Change	Annual Demand
11-9013	Farmers, Ranchers & Other Agricultural Managers	WK EXP	N/A	N/A	N/A	2,680	2,620	-2.2%	257
13-1071	Human Resources Specialists	BD	\$40,630	\$66,340	\$79,200	170	170	0.0%	16
13-2011	Accountants & Auditors	BD	\$42,510	\$69,290	\$82,680	400	410	2.5%	38
17-3025	Environmental Engineering Technologists & Technicians	AD	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
19-4031	Chemical Technicians	AD+	\$40,600	\$53,360	\$59,740	\$70	\$70	\$0	\$7
21-1018	Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder & MH Counselors	BD	\$29,510	\$44,260	\$51,630	\$190	\$200	\$0	\$21
25-2021	Elementary School Teachers	BD+	\$51,260	\$68,610	\$77,290	\$750	\$780	\$0	\$61
25-2031	Secondary School Teachers	BD+	\$55,430	\$72,170	\$80,540	\$540	\$570	\$0	\$42
29-1141	Registered Nurses	BD	\$57,400	\$72,990	\$80,700	\$1,280	\$1,360	\$0	\$81
29-2041	Emergency Medical Technicians & Paramedics	PS	N/A	N/A	N/A	150	160	6.7%	12
29-2055	Surgical Technologists	PS	\$41,500	\$47,060	\$49,850	100	110	10.0%	9
29-2061	Licensed Practical & Licensed Vocational Nurses	PS	\$37,150	\$45,610	\$49,840	370	380	2.7%	29
31-1014	Nursing Assistants	PS	\$26,980	\$31,630	\$33,950	760	790	3.9%	89
31-9092	Medical Assistants	PS	\$28,820	\$34,100	\$36,730	200	250	25.0%	29
31-9097	Phlebotomists	PS	\$29,580	\$35,080	\$37,830	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
33-3012	Correctional Officers & Jailers	MT OJT	\$32,490	\$51,310	\$60,710	140	130	-7.1%	11
33-3051	Police & Sheriff's Patrol Officers	MT OJT	\$39,300	\$66,250	\$79,730	310	310	0.0%	21
37-1011	Supervisors - Housekeeping & Janitorial Workers	WK EXP	\$26,450	\$40,540	\$47,590	90	100	11.1%	11
37-1012	Supervisors - Landscaping & Groundskeeping Workers	WK EXP	\$32,650	\$45,670	\$52,180	100	100	0.0%	12
39-5012	Hairdressers, Hairstylists & Cosmetologists	PS	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
41-1011	Supervisors - Retail Sales Workers	WK EXP	\$26,800	\$40,120	\$46,790	810	800	-1.2%	87
41-2022	Parts Salespersons	MT OJT	\$22,500	\$31,560	\$36,090	380	380	0.0%	46
43-3021	Billing & Posting Clerks	MT OJT	\$27,930	\$39,950	\$45,960	250	270	8.0%	30
43-4111	Interviewers	ST OJT	\$26,950	\$35,960	\$40,460	70	70	0.0%	9
43-5032	Dispatchers	MT OJT	\$33,390	\$55,190	\$66,090	140	150	7.1%	14
43-5071	Shipping, Receiving & Inventory Clerks	ST OJT	\$28,540	\$37,930	\$42,630	170	160	-5.9%	17
43-6013	Medical Secretaries & Administrative Assistants	MT OJT	\$27,080	\$32,820	\$35,700	140	170	21.4%	19
45-2092	Farmworkers & Laborers: Crop, Nursery & Greenhouse	ST OJT	N/A	N/A	N/A	660	670	1.5%	108
47-2031	Carpenters	LT OJT	\$30,780	\$42,680	\$48,630	300	320	6.7%	33
47-2073	Operating Engineers	MT OJT	\$36,050	\$47,270	\$52,880	560	560	0.0%	66
47-2152	Plumbers, Pipefitters & Steamfitters	LT OJT	\$42,290	\$57,720	\$65,430	90	90	0.0%	11
47-5051	Rock Splitters, Quarry	ST OJT	\$31,890	\$38,960	\$42,490	240	240	0.0%	32
49-1011	Supervisors - Mechanics, Installers & Repairers	WK EXP	\$46,330	\$70,500	\$82,590	270	280	3.7%	27

# Attachment 4: Local Workforce Development System Supporting Data

Center for Workforce Information & Analysis  
7/22/22

## 2022 High Priority Occupations for Northern Tier Workforce Development Area

SOC Code	SOC Title	Educational Attainment	Wages (2021)			Employment			
			Entry Level	Annual Average	Exper. Level	Estimated 2018	Projected 2028	Percent Change	Annual Demand
49-3021	Automotive Body & Related Repairers	LT OJT	\$28,110	\$42,660	\$49,940	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
49-3023	Automotive Service Technicians & Mechanics	PS	\$25,680	\$38,250	\$44,540	380	380	0.0%	37
49-9021	Heating, A/C & Refrigeration Mechanics & Installers	PS+	\$32,820	\$45,400	\$51,690	140	150	7.1%	15
49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	LT OJT	\$40,790	\$58,160	\$66,840	290	300	3.4%	29
49-9052	Telecommunications Line Installers & Repairers	LT OJT	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
49-9071	Maintenance & Repair Workers, General	MT OJT	\$25,680	\$37,860	\$43,950	730	760	4.1%	75
51-4011	CNC Machine Tool Operators	MT OJT	\$33,800	\$44,900	\$50,440	240	250	4.2%	26
51-4041	Machinists	LT OJT	\$33,120	\$45,100	\$51,080	90	90	0.0%	9
51-4081	Multiple Machine Tool Setters/Oprs/Tenders	MT OJT	\$27,520	\$38,230	\$43,580	130	120	-7.7%	13
51-4121	Welders, Cutters, Solderers & Brazers	MT OJT	\$36,910	\$49,210	\$55,360	190	200	5.3%	22
51-8031	Water/Wastewater Treatment Plant & System Operators	LT OJT	\$34,490	\$45,420	\$50,890	230	210	-8.7%	19
51-8092	Gas Plant Operators	LT OJT	\$54,440	\$70,110	\$77,940	230	250	8.7%	29
51-9061	Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers & Weighers	MT OJT	\$31,970	\$44,210	\$50,330	270	220	-18.5%	25
53-1048	Supervisors - Transportation & Material-Moving Workers	WK EXP	\$35,240	\$53,820	\$63,100	180	190	5.6%	21
53-3032	Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	PS	\$34,960	\$46,210	\$51,830	2,220	2,310	4.1%	266
53-3033	Light Truck Drivers	ST OJT	\$20,920	\$36,300	\$43,980	250	260	4.0%	29

### Educational Attainment Abbreviations:

Short-term or Moderate-term training (ST OJT or MT OJT) – basic tasks and skills are learned through a period of on-the-job training. A high school diploma may be required.  
 Long-term training (LT OJT) – a high school diploma and at least one year of on-the-job training or an apprenticeship.  
 Related work experience (WK EXP) – a high school diploma and training gained through hands-on work in a similar occupation.  
 Postsecondary training (PS or PS+) – training is gained through a postsecondary training program. Some period of related work experience may be required.  
 Associate Degree (AD or AD+) – degree completed after two years of full-time schooling beyond high school. Some period of related work experience may be required.  
 Bachelor's Degree (BD or BD+) – degree completed after four years of full-time schooling beyond high school. Some period of related work experience may be required.  
 Master's Degree (MD or MD+) – degree completed after two years of full-time schooling beyond a bachelor's degree. Some period of related work experience may be required.  
 Doctoral (PhD) or First Professional Degree (PROF) – degree programs requiring 3-6 years of education at the college or university level beyond a four-year bachelor's degree.

Page 2 of 2

Figure 7: 2022 High Priority Occupations for the Northern Tier  
 Source: Center for Workforce Information and Analysis

## Top Qualifications

Qualification	Postings with Qualification
American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP) Certified	97
American Registry of Radiologic Technologists (ARRT) Certified	21
ANCC Certified	110
ASE Automobile Service Consultant	89
Associates Degree in Nursing	64
Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) Certification	180
Bachelor of Science in Business	47
Bachelor of Science in Business Administration	35
Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN)	314
Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy	37
CDL Class B License	124
CDL Class C License	31
Certificate of Clinical Competence in Speech-Language Pathology (CCC-SLP)	58
Certified Forklift Operator	24
Certified Nursing Assistant	612
Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant	25
Certified Pharmacy Technician	43
Certified Public Accountant	40

Attachment 4: Local Workforce Development System Supporting Data

Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA)	61
Certified Registered Nurse Practitioner	33
Commercial Driver's License (CDL)	9,064
Critical Care Registered Nurse (CCRN)	50
Doctor of Medicine (MD)	36
Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD)	42
Doubles Endorsement	74
Family Nurse Practitioner	22
Gerontological Nurse Practitioner	43
Hazmat Endorsement	326
Immunization Certification	32
Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW)	55
Licensed Insurance Producer	29
Licensed Practical Nurse	747
Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC)	38
Licensed Social Worker	38
Licensed Vocational Nurses	166
Master of Business Administration (MBA)	80
Master of Science in Nursing (MSN)	61
Medical License	92
Medical Technologist	63
Nurse Practitioner	498
Patient Care Technician	50
Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner	42
Radiologic Technologist	27
Registered Dietitian (RD/RDN)	26
Registered Respiratory Therapist	60
Series 7 General Securities Representative License (Stockbroker)	29
ServSafe Certification	60
Tanker Endorsement	190
Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) Card	422
Trauma Nurse Core Course (TNCC)	33

Figure 8: Top Qualifications  
 Source: EMSI (Economic Modeling Specialists, International), 2020.4

Section 1.5

**Industry Cluster Statistics for Northern Tier WDA**

	Agriculture and Food Production	Advanced Manufacturing	Building & Construction	Bio-Medical	Business Services	Education	Energy	Healthcare	Hospitality, Leisure & Entertainment	Logistics & Transportation	Real Estate, Finance & Insurance	Wood, Wood Products & Publishing
B21 Employment	2,892	4,431	4,214	102	3,134	5,238	3,325	8,512	4,338	2,343	1,544	3,459
Percent WDA Employment	5.51%	8.44%	8.02%	0.19%	5.97%	9.97%	6.33%	16.21%	8.26%	4.46%	2.94%	6.59%
Employment Growth (2016-2021)	-9%	-47%	-31%	-20	323	-361	18	-91%	-59%	332	-32	-647
Percent Growth (2016-2021)	-3.18%	-9.68%	-7.04%	-16.39%	11.49%	-6.45%	0.54%	-9.71%	-12.06%	16.51%	-2.03%	-15.78%
B21 Average Wage	\$46,834	\$57,470	\$48,957	\$55,846	\$66,477	\$48,957	\$87,353	\$58,221	\$17,638	\$58,010	\$58,931	\$65,875
B21 National Location Quotient	1.48	1.16	1.13	0.15	0.45	1.08	3.28	1.05	0.76	1.02	0.51	5.11

Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

## Appendix E: Local Area Plan template

### 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, 2023. 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.

The Northern Tier 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.

Agreement between all counties and other local governments, if applicable, establishing the consortium of local and chief elected officials.

Agreement between the chief elected official(s) and the fiscal agent, if a fiscal agent is designated.

Agreement between the local area elected official(s) and the LWDB.

LWDB policy and process that provides for nomination, appointment and removal of board members; resolutions; bylaws; code of conduct; and conflict of interest.

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.

Local area procurement policy that must describe formal procurement procedures.

Local area MOU.

Program management policies and processes must include equal opportunity for customers; complaints and grievances; supportive services; 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.

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.

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.

It is best practice to have professional services contract(s) for administrative services such as staffing and payroll, if applicable.

Attachment 4: Local Workforce Development System Supporting Data

**By Volume Change:**

Occupational Title	Employment Change (Volume)
Home Health & Personal Care Aides	320
Cooks, Restaurant	170
Fast Food & Counter Workers	130
Laborers & Freight, Stock & Material Movers	110
Stockers & Order Fillers	90
Construction Laborers	90
Passenger Vehicle Drivers	80
Retail Salespersons	80
Bartenders	80
Waiters & Waitresses	70
Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	70
Packaging & Filling Machine Operators	70
Janitors & Cleaners	50
Secondary School Teachers	50
Industrial Machinery Mechanics	40
Maintenance & Repair Workers, General	40
Construction & Building Inspectors	40
General & Operations Managers	40
Medical & Health Services Managers	40
Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, & Mental Health Counselors	40

Figure10: Fastest Growing Occupations in the Northern Tier  
Source: Long-Term Occupational Employment Projections (2020-2030)

Long-Term Occupational Projections for Northern Tier WDA (2020-30)					
Occupational Title	Employment (2020)	Projected Employment (2030)	Employment Change (2020-30)		Annual Demand
			Volume	Percent	
Total, All Occupations	60,130	61,860	1,730	2.9%	6,920
Management, Business & Finance	4,780	4,910	130	2.7%	423
Computer, Engineering & Science	1,890	1,900	10	0.5%	143
Education, Legal, Social Service, Arts & Media	4,990	5,210	220	4.4%	456
Healthcare Practitioners, Technicians & Support	6,920	7,450	530	7.7%	652
Protective, Food, Building & Personal Service	8,540	9,330	790	9.3%	1,435
Sales & Related	5,640	5,640	0	0.0%	759
Office & Administrative Support	6,820	6,330	-490	-7.2%	663
Farming, Fishing & Forestry	1,600	1,650	50	3.1%	258
Construction & Extraction	3,770	3,890	120	3.2%	407
Installation, Maintenance & Repair	3,390	3,460	70	2.1%	326
Production	6,070	5,920	-150	-2.5%	639
Transportation & Material Moving	5,730	6,160	430	7.5%	763

Source: Long-Term Occupational Employment Projections (2020-30)  
\*Data may not add due confidentiality

## Attachment 4: Local Workforce Development System Supporting Data

Figure 11: Long-Term Occupational Employment Projections  
Source: CWIA

<b>Inflow/Outflow Report, Northern Tier WDA, 2019</b>		
	<b>Count</b>	<b>Share</b>
Employed in the WDA	44,573	100.0%
Employed and Living in the WDA	29,658	66.5%
Employed in the WDA but Living Outside	14,915	33.5%
Living in the WDA	61,737	100.0%
Living and Employed in the WDA	29,658	48.0%
Living in the WDA but Employed Outside	32,079	52.0%
<b>Net Commuting In/Out*</b>	<b>-17,164</b>	

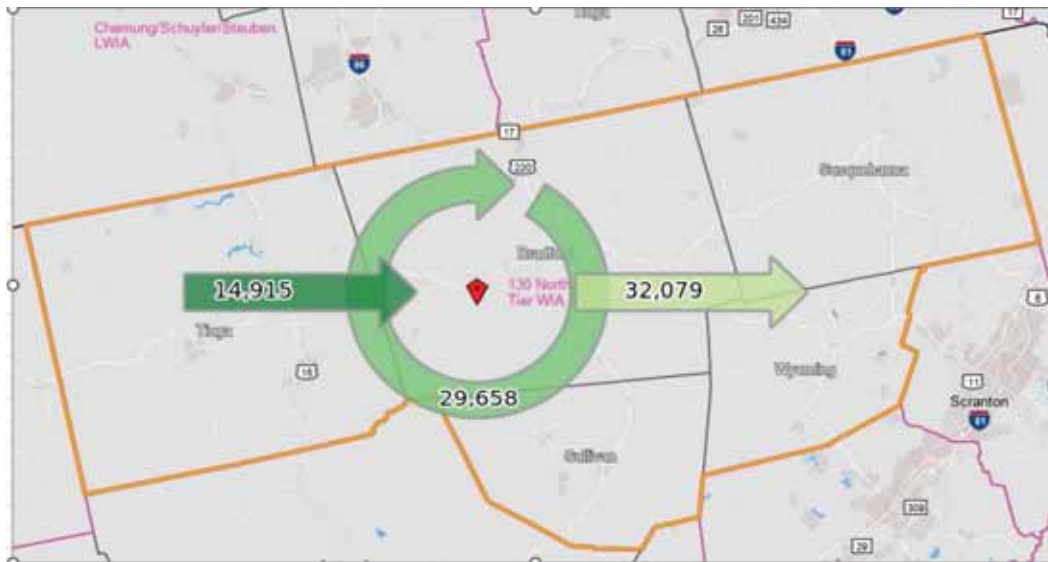


Figure 12: Inflow/Outflow report 2019  
Source: CWIA



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