

Southwest Planning Region

Local Workforce Development Areas

Allegheny County

City of Pittsburgh

Southwest Corner

Tri-County

Westmoreland-Fayette

Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act

Multi-Year Regional Plan

PY2025 - PY2028

Effective: July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2029

1.1. Identify the Region

Regional Plan Effective Date: July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2029

Workforce Development Region: Southwest Planning Region

Local workforce development areas that comprise the region:

- Allegheny County Workforce Development Area (SW005)
 - *Counties:* Allegheny County
- City of Pittsburgh Workforce Development Area (SW095)
 - *Counties:* Allegheny County
- Southwest Corner Workforce Development Area (SW165)
 - *Counties:* Beaver County, Greene County, and Washington County.
- Tri-County Workforce Development Area (SW110)
 - *Counties:* Armstrong County, Butler County, and Indiana County
- Westmoreland-Fayette Workforce Development Area (SW045)
 - *Counties:* Fayette County and Westmoreland County

Four local workforce development boards (LWDBs) oversee these local areas:

- **Three Rivers Workforce Development Board (TRWDB)**, d/b/a Partner4Work
 - Allegheny County Workforce Development Area
 - City of Pittsburgh Workforce Development Area
- **Southwest Corner Workforce Development Board (SCWDB)**
- **Tri-County Workforce Investment Board Inc.**, also known as Tri-County Workforce Development Board (TCWDB)
- **Westmoreland-Fayette Workforce Development Board (WFWDB)**

Southwest Region – Regional Plan Committee Members

- Robert Cherry, TRWDB
- Mary Salony, TCWDB
- Ami Gatts, SCWDB
- Janet Ward, WFWDB

Key Regional Planning Meeting Dates

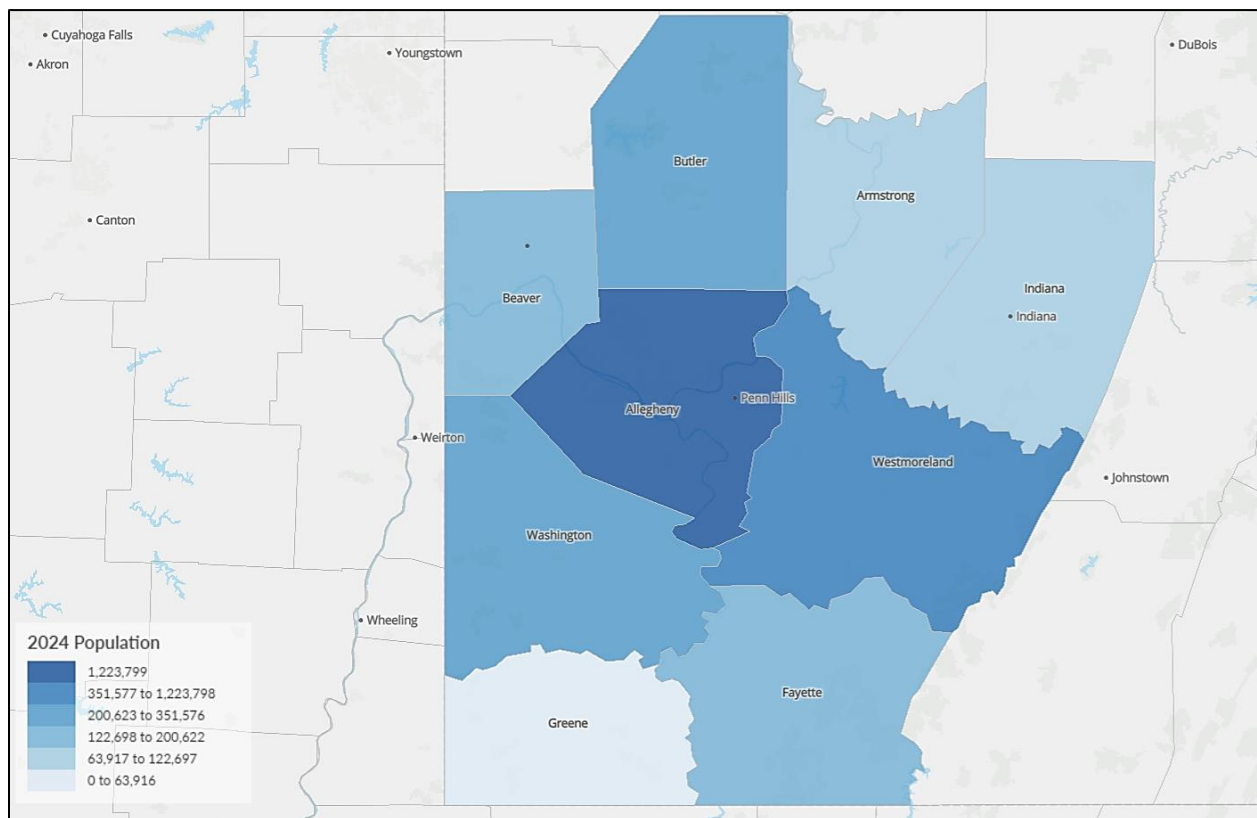
- October 1, 2024 (Regional Planning Meeting #1)
- December 11, 2024 (Regional Planning One-on-One Meeting, SCWDB)
- December 16, 2024 (Regional Planning One-on-One Meeting, TCWDB)
- December 16, 2024 (Regional Planning One-on-One Meeting, WFWDB)

1.2. Regional Analysis: Based on the analysis of the regional labor market and economic conditions, describe the region’s workforce and economic development-oriented vision and goals. Describe the collection and analysis of regional labor market data (in conjunction with the Commonwealth).

Regional Population

The Southwest Planning Region is comprised of the Allegheny County Workforce Development Area (WDA), City of Pittsburgh WDA, Southwest Corner WDA, Tri-County WDA, and Westmoreland-Fayette WDA. The region includes nine counties: Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Washington, and Westmoreland counties. Overall, the area is home to approximately 2,455,704 people.¹

Map 1: Population in the Southwest Planning Region



Source: Lightcast

The population data for Southwest Planning Region reveals varying trends across counties from 2014 to 2024. In total, the region experienced a decline of 25,416 people, or 1%. Allegheny County is most populous, with 1,223,799 residents or 50% of the total regional population. Butler County experienced the most significant growth, increasing by 14,749 people or 8%. Washington County also saw a modest growth of 1%. Conversely, several counties faced more significant population declines: Greene County experienced the largest percentage decrease at 10%, followed by Fayette County with an 8% decline.

¹ US Census Bureau. (2024). Quick Facts Tables. Census.gov.

Other counties, including Westmoreland, Beaver, Indiana, and Armstrong, saw decreases ranging from 2% to 5%. These trends indicate a blend of growth and decline, with some counties struggling with substantial population loss over the past decade.

Table 1: Population Change by County

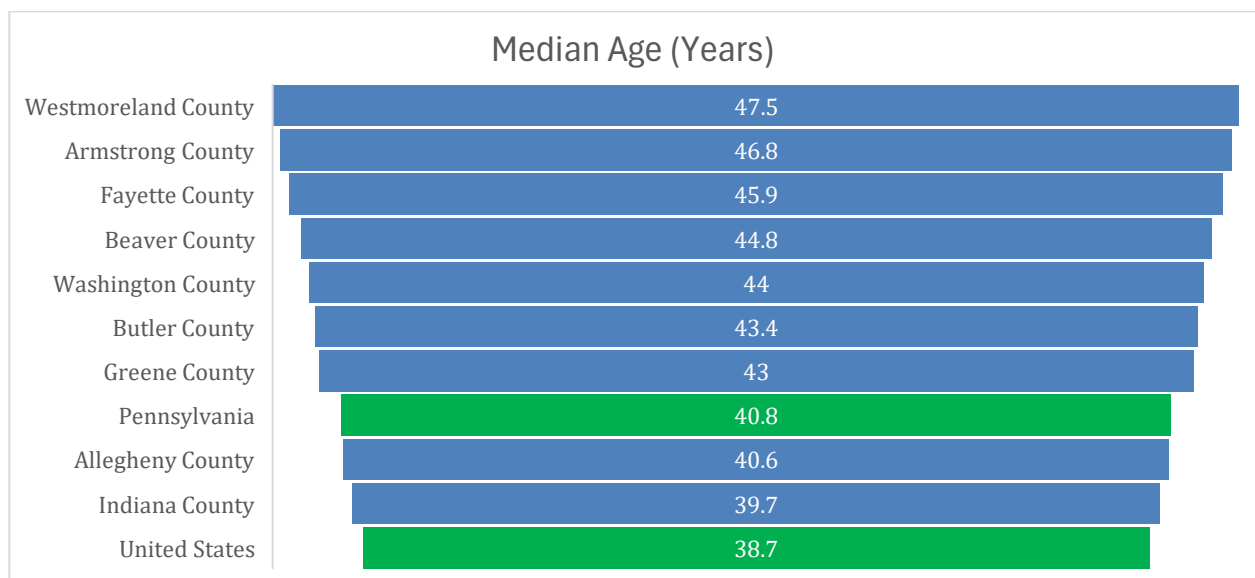
County	2024 Population	2014-2024 Change	2014-2024 % Change
Allegheny	1,223,799	-9,618	-1%
Westmoreland	351,577	-7,354	-2%
Washington	211,098	3,048	1%
Butler	200,623	14,749	8%
Beaver	165,991	-3,042	-2%
Fayette	122,698	-11,311	-8%
Indiana	83,083	-4,376	-5%
Armstrong	63,917	-3,714	-5%
Greene	33,983	-3,798	-10%
Total	2,456,769	-25,416	-1%

Source: Lightcast

Age

The Southwest Planning Region's population is older in comparison to state and national rates. The median age for counties in the region ranges from 39.7 years (Indiana County) to 47.5 years (Westmoreland County), compared to the median ages for Pennsylvania (40.8 years) and the United States (38.7 years).²

Chart 1: Median Age



² US Census Bureau. (2024). 2019-2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

An older population and an aging workforce in the region create the urgent need to strengthen the pipeline of youth and young adults prepared to fill jobs as older workers retire. As experienced workers leave the labor market, employers face potential skills gaps and labor shortages, making it critical to engage the next generation in workforce development. Strategies that can help address this need include those that promote career exploration and career pathway development, programs that connect in-demand industries and educational providers, and training programs, such as registered apprenticeships that enable young people to become employed more rapidly in high-demand industries while accessing on-the-job training and credentialing. Our region's strategies for delivering workforce development services to youth and young adults will be discussed in upcoming sections of this plan, including **Section 1.3** and **1.6**.

Race/Ethnicity

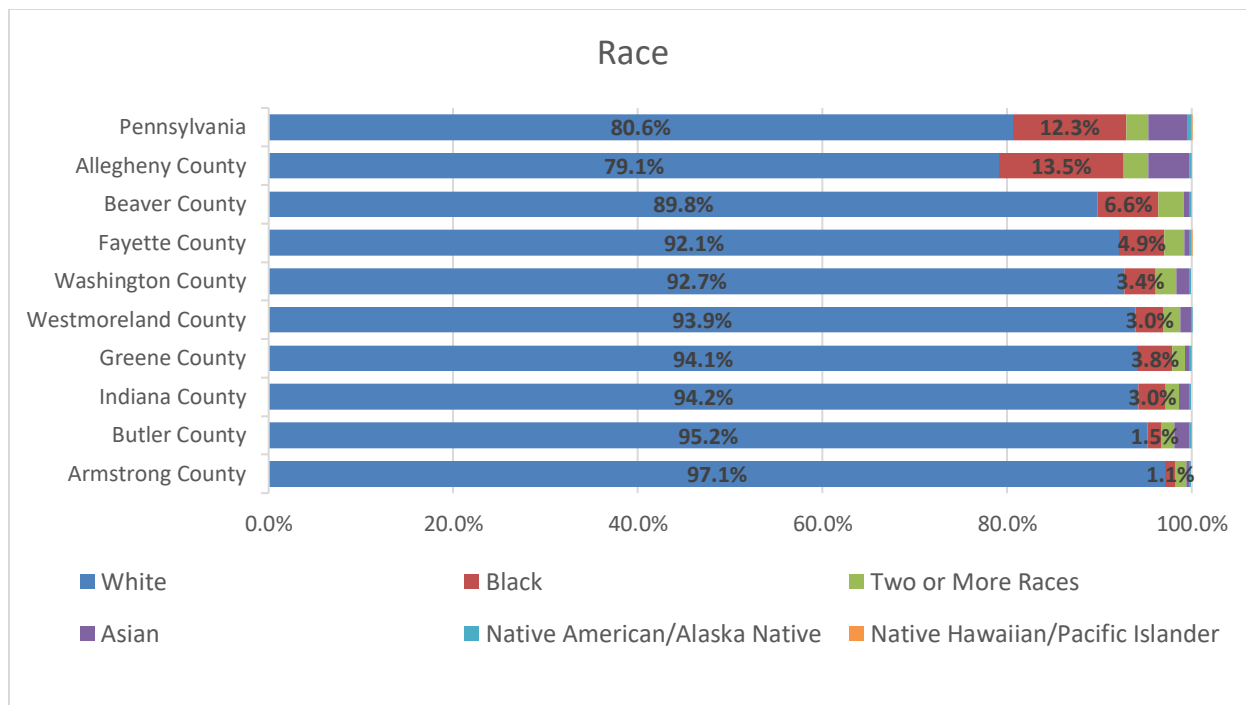
Both Pennsylvania and the Southwest Planning Region have a majority white population with 80.6% of Pennsylvanians identifying as white; the region's share of white residents ranges from 79.1% in Allegheny County to 97.1% in Armstrong County. The percentage of Black/African American individuals in the Southwest Planning Region ranges from 1.1% in Armstrong to 13.5% in Allegheny County, with the highest density of Black/African American individuals living in the City of Pittsburgh.

Over the past 10 years the Southwest Planning Region has grown more diverse, with a notable increase in the Hispanic/Latino population, especially in Allegheny County which saw its Hispanic/Latino population increase from 1.8% of the population in 2013 to 3.0% in 2023.³ The percentage of the population who are Hispanic/Latino ranges from 1.0% in Armstrong County to 3.0% in Allegheny County, which is still well-below the rate of 8.9% in Pennsylvania.

Chart 2: Race⁴

³ Ibid.

⁴ US Census Bureau. (2024). 2019-2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.



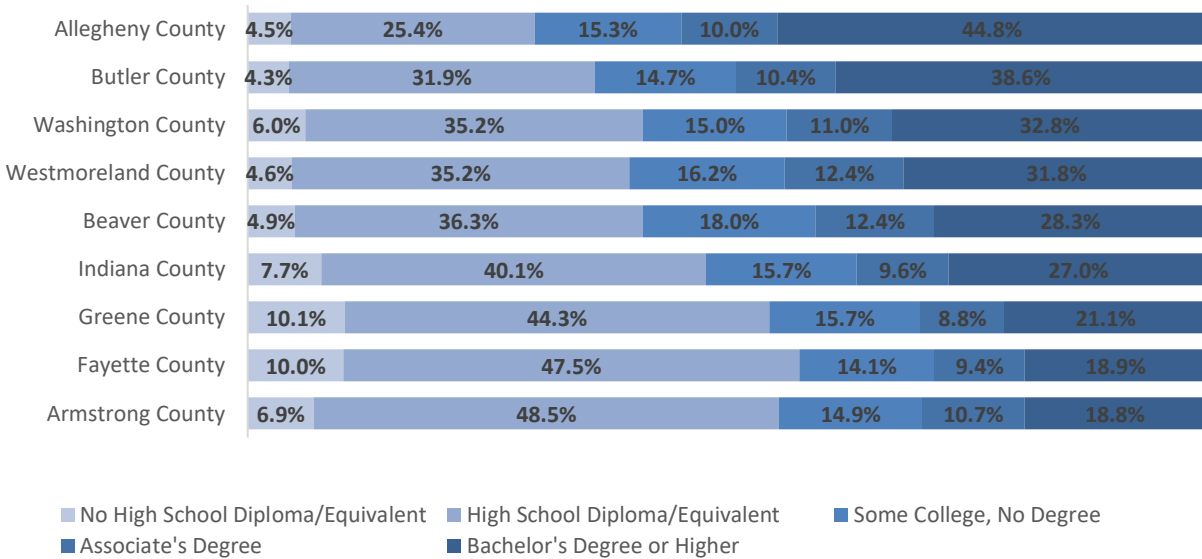
Education

In Pennsylvania, 93.0% of residents ages 25 and older have received a high school diploma/equivalent and 39.7% have received a bachelor's degree or higher. Comparatively, 94.5% residents in the Southwest Planning Region have received a high school diploma/equivalent and 33.7% have received a bachelor's degree or higher. **Chart 3** below highlights the educational disparities that exist across counties in the Southwest Planning Region. For instance, the percentages of adults with a bachelor's degree or higher vary substantially from 18.8% in Armstrong County to 44.8% in Allegheny County. Further, the percentage of adults whose highest educational attainment is a high school diploma or equivalent ranges widely from 25.4% in Allegheny County to 48.5% in Armstrong County.

Chart 3: Educational Attainment of Population Ages 25 and Over⁵

⁵ US Census Bureau. (2024). 2019-2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

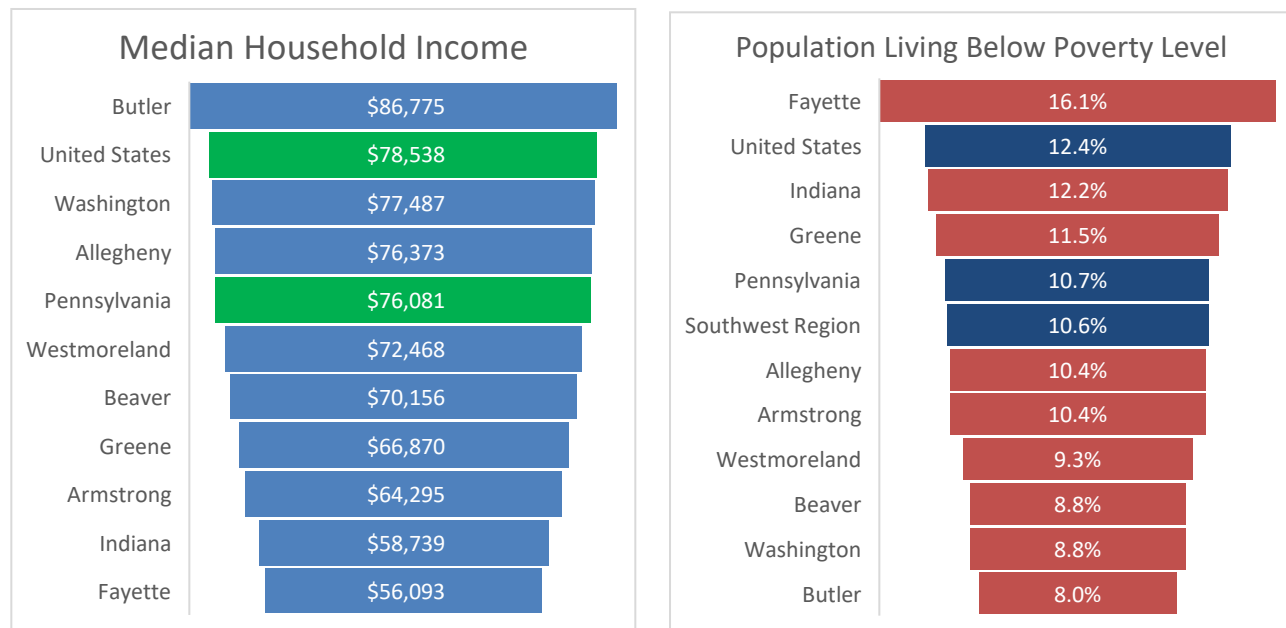
Educational Attainment (Individuals Ages 25+)



Income and Poverty

Income disparities exist when comparing counties within the Southwest Planning Region; median household incomes range from \$56,093 (Fayette County) to \$86,775 (Butler County). Allegheny County, Butler, and Washington counties have higher median household incomes compared to Pennsylvania (\$76,081), while Butler County is the only county with a median household income greater than national median (\$78,538). A similar percentage of people in the Southwest Planning Region (10.6%) are living below the poverty level compared to the rate for Pennsylvania (10.7%), while these rates are lower than the national rate (12.4%). The percentages of people living in poverty within the region varies from 8.0% in Butler County to 16.1% in Fayette County.

Chart 4: Median Household Income⁶; Chart 5: Living Below the Poverty Level⁷



Barriers to Employment

WIOA programs prioritize serving populations who are low income or who have other common barriers to employment or participation in education/training. The following table highlights key examples of target populations for WIOA services in the Southwest Planning Region:

Table 2. Populations with Barriers to Employment

Population	Data and Information
Low Income Individuals	Data from the ACS (5-Year Estimates, 2018-2023) indicated that 10.7% of Pennsylvanians ages 16 and older are living below the poverty level, compared to 10.6% in the Southwest Planning Region. The percentage of those 16 and older living below the poverty level in the region ranges from 16.1% in Fayette County to 8.0% in Butler County. Compared to the state, Fayette, Greene, and Indiana counties have a larger percentage of 16 and older individuals living below the poverty level. ⁸
Single Parents	Single parents face a variety of challenges including multiple demands on their time. The need for childcare and related expenses can also negatively impact their ability to maintain a job or grow a career. ⁹

⁶ US Census Bureau. (2024). 2019-2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Lindholm, M. (2021). Harvard Business Review. <https://hbr.org/2021/04/creative-strategies-from-single-parents-on-juggling-work-and-family>

	Approximately 28.8% of households with children in the Southwest Planning Region are single parent households, compared to 33.1% in Pennsylvania. The percentages of households with children that are single parent households range from 20.6% in Butler County to 34.3% in Fayette County.¹⁰
Reentry Population	Research conducted by The Brookings Institution, using the tax records of incarcerated individuals, indicated that for years prior to incarceration and for years following incarceration, formerly incarcerated individuals have a history of higher rates of unemployment and lower earnings when employed compared to those not incarcerated. Previously incarcerated individuals also tend to have lower education attainment, employment experience, and skill levels. These characteristics, in addition to employers' reluctance to hire previously incarcerated individuals can lead to chronic unemployment and low wages.¹¹ In 2023, a total of 6,759 people in Pennsylvania and 876 people in the Southwest Planning Region were sentenced by a court to a state correctional facility. In the Southwest Planning Region, the number of individuals sentenced ranged from 304 in Allegheny County to 11 individuals in Greene County. Additionally, in 2023, 11,396 individuals were released from state correctional institutions across Pennsylvania and 8,055 of them were released on parole.¹²
Individuals with Disabilities	Approximately 13.0% (167,954 individuals) of the working age population in the Southwest Planning Region have a disability, which is above the 11.7% rate in Pennsylvania. The percentage of working age individuals with a disability in the region ranges from 9.6% in Butler County to 17.5% in Fayette County. People with a disability experience higher unemployment rates and lower labor force participation rates across the region and state. For example, the unemployment rate for working age individuals with a disability in Pennsylvania was 12.8% compared to 4.7% for individuals without a disability. The labor force participation rate for working age individuals with a disability was 43.6% compared to 82.8% for individuals without a disability in Pennsylvania.¹³
Pregnant or Parenting Youth	Teen pregnancy or childbearing can lead to increased social or economic costs for teen parents and their children.¹⁴ Teenage mothers experience lower high school graduation rates compared to women who do not give

¹⁰ Federal Reserve Economic Data. (2024). <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/release/tables?eid=360857&rid=412>.

¹¹ Looney, A. & Turner, N. (March 2018). Work and opportunity before and after incarceration. The Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C.

¹² Pennsylvania Department of Corrections Annual Statistical Report. (2023).

¹³ US Census Bureau. (2024). 2019-2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

¹⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (November 2021). About Teen Pregnancy. <https://www.cdc.gov/teenpregnancy/about/index.htm>. Retrieved 12/20/2022.

	birth during adolescence.¹⁵ The children of teenage mothers are also more likely to drop out of high school, be incarcerated at some point during adolescence, give birth as a teenager, and face unemployment as a young adult.¹⁶ Using 2016-2020 data, the reported teenage pregnancy rate for ages 15 to 19 in Pennsylvania was 20.1%. Compared to the state, there was a lower rate of teenage pregnancy in Allegheny (17.5%), Beaver (20.0%), Butler (9.4%), Indiana (12.1%), Washington (15.0%), and Westmoreland (13.7%) counties. However, there were higher rates of teenage pregnancy for ages 15 to 19 in Armstrong (20.8%), Fayette (31.4%), and Greene (21.3%) counties during that same time.¹⁷
Technology/Internet Access	Seeking employment has largely become a digital process, reliant on digital literacy and broadband access. U.S. Census data from 2023 indicated that 94.8% of U.S. households have a computer and 89.7 % of households have internet access, and 92.9 % of Pennsylvania households have a computer and 88.5% have internet access. The percentage of households across the Southwest Planning Region with a computer ranges from 93.4% in Butler County to 88.3 % in Fayette County and access to the internet ranges from 89.8% in Allegheny County to 78.9 % in Indiana County. The number of households with a computer and/or internet access has decreased since 2021, which may in part be due to a shift away from remote and hybrid school and work.¹⁸
English Language Barrier	The percentage of the population who have indicated that they speak English less than ‘very well’ ranges from 2.5% of residents of Allegheny County to 0.5% of residents of Greene County.¹⁹ Local boards in the Southwest Planning Region work closely with our Title II Adult Education partners to connect job seekers with English language learning and related programming for individuals in need of the services to support their education and employment goals.
Substance Use Disorder (SUD)	Pennsylvania has identified opioid use as one of the Commonwealth’s worst public health crises in a generation. Between January 2018 and January 2024, 96,337 doses of Naloxone were administered by EMS and there were 58,065 emergency department visits for opioid overdoses across the Commonwealth²⁰. Moreover, 68,861 individuals 12 years old and older who

¹⁵ Perper K, Peterson K, Manlove J. Diploma Attainment Among Teen Mothers. Child Trends, Fact Sheet Publication #2010-01: Washington, DC: Child Trends; 2010.

¹⁶ Hoffman SD. Kids Having Kids: Economic Costs and Social Consequences of Teen Pregnancy. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute Press; 2008.

¹⁷ PA Department of Health. (2021). Enterprise Data Dissemination Informatics Exchange (IEDDIE).

¹⁸ US Census Bureau. (2024). 2019-2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Opendata PA, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Opioid Data Dashboard. <https://data.pa.gov/stories/s/9q45-nckt/>. Retrieved 12/4/2024.

	are living in the Southwest Planning Region have been identified as having a substance use disorder during 2020. Pennsylvania data indicate that 1,059 individuals across the Region have died due to substance overdoses during 2023.²¹ Substance use disorder can be associated with worker absenteeism, a reduction in productivity, increased hospitalization costs, and higher unemployment. Additionally, it is estimated that substance use disorder is associated with 17% per person productivity loss. The productivity loss is associated with a loss in wages ranging from \$6,931,744 in Greene County to \$408,766,285 in Allegheny County.²²
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Regional Labor Market

Overview

The Southwest Planning Region has a labor force of 1,228,464 people, including approximately 40,000 unemployed individuals. When comparing this to the size of the working-age, non-institutionalized population in the region, the labor force participation rate is 60.4%. The largest industries in the region include Healthcare and Social Assistance, Government, Retail Trade, Accommodation and Food Service, and Manufacturing. Collectively, these industries account for more than half of the employment in the region.

Chart 6: Southwest Planning Region Labor Force²³



Source: Lightcast

Chart 7 illustrates the trends in annual unemployment rates for the Southwest Planning Region, Pennsylvania, and the United States from 1990 to 2023. Across the three regions, unemployment rates exhibit cyclical patterns consistent with economic expansions and recessions. Peaks in unemployment

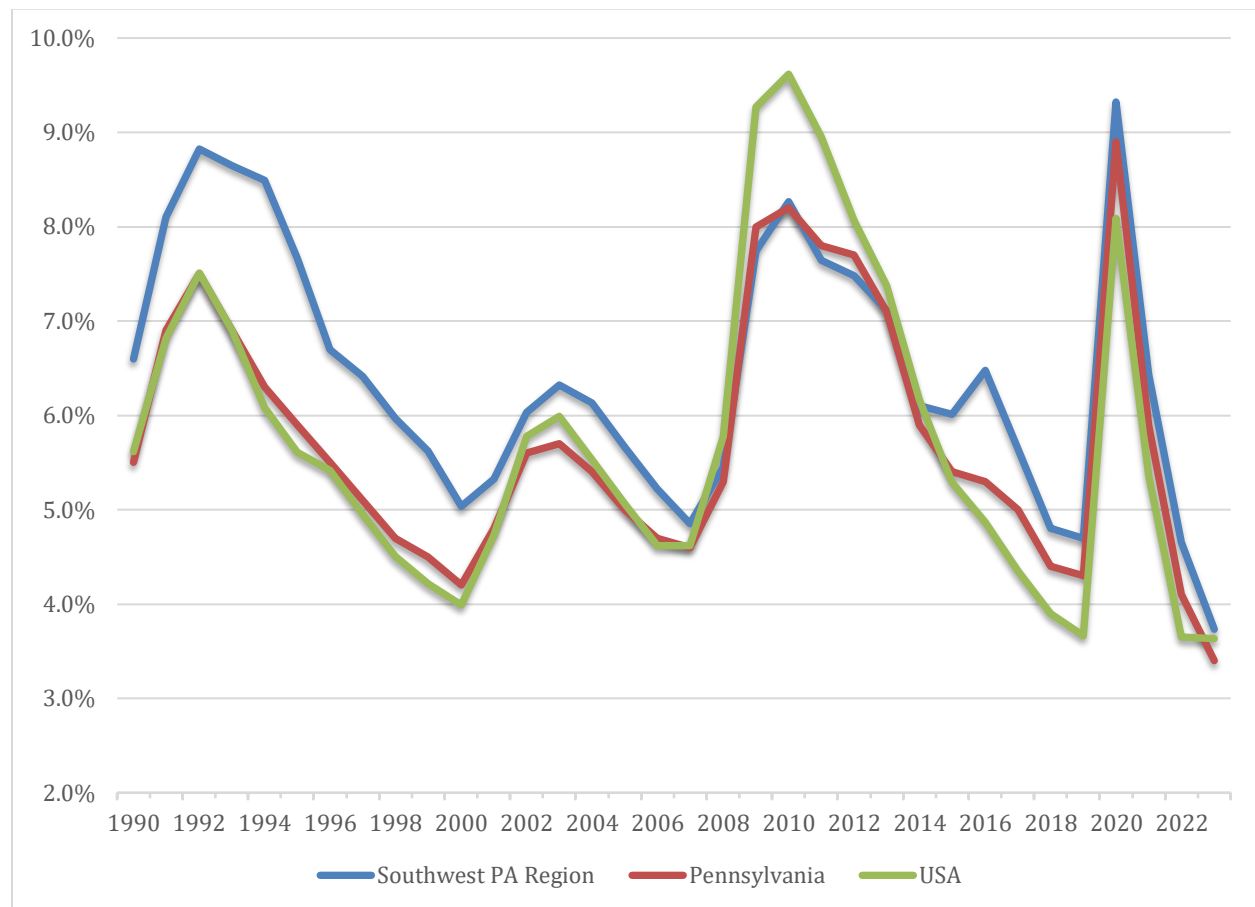
²¹ Opendata PA, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Opioid Data Dashboard. <https://data.pa.gov/Opioid-Related/Estimated-Accidental-and-Undetermined-Drug-Overdos/apm5-9wfy>. Retrieved 12/4/2024.

²² Opendata PA, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Opioid Data Dashboard <https://data.pa.gov/stories/s/enh4-nazt>. Retrieved 12/4/2024.

²³ Lightcast 2024.4

align with major economic downturns, notably in the early 1990s, early 2000s, the Great Recession of 2008–2009, and the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Post-recession recovery periods show all three regions returning to similar unemployment levels. The COVID-19 pandemic caused a dramatic spike in unemployment across all regions in 2020, followed by a rapid decline by 2022, reflecting a strong recovery.

Chart 7: Annual Unemployment Rate²⁴



Industries

The five largest industries in the region include Healthcare and Social Assistance, Government, Retail Trade, Accommodation and Food Services, and Manufacturing account for 52.3% of the regional employment. Overall, the region experienced a 4.9% decrease in employment between 2019 through 2024 with the largest percentage decreases occurring in Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction (-28.4%), Finance and Insurance (-23.6%), Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services (-9.2%), Construction (-9.0%), Wholesale Trade (-8.9%), and Utilities (-6.1%).

²⁴ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Unemployment Rate, retrieved from FRED, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis: <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/> (January 2025)

A smaller percentage decrease is projected between 2024 and 2029 with growth expected in Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation (+4.9%), Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting (+4.8%), Management of Companies and Enterprises (+3.6%), and Educational Services (+3.2%).

Table 3: Employment Changes by Industry²⁵

Industry	Employment (2024)	Past Employment Change (2019-2024)	Projected Employment Change (2024-2029)
Health Care and Social Assistance	207,025	-4.8%	0.8%
Government	123,468	-4.6%	-3.6%
Retail Trade	122,574	-4.2%	-4.8%
Accommodation and Food Services	100,668	-3.4%	0.3%
Manufacturing	89,873	-1.9%	0.0%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	84,825	-2.3%	-2.0%
Construction	68,101	-9.0%	-2.6%
Educational Services	65,339	-0.1%	3.2%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	63,700	-5.2%	-1.1%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	52,892	-9.2%	-3.3%
Finance and Insurance	48,015	-23.6%	-13.6%
Transportation and Warehousing	46,792	3.4%	0.9%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	39,895	5.7%	3.6%
Wholesale Trade	35,622	-8.9%	-5.9%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	25,607	0.8%	4.9%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	18,308	2.0%	0.6%
Information	17,220	-5.5%	-1.8%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	10,617	-28.4%	-7.5%
Utilities	5,905	-6.1%	-7.5%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	3,277	18.1%	4.8%
Total - All Industries	1,229,723	-4.9%	-1.5%

Location Quotients (LQ) quantify how concentrated a particular industry, cluster, occupation, or demographic group is in a region as compared to rate nationwide. Location quotients can reveal what makes a particular region unique in comparison to the national average. The location quotients for the 2024 key industry clusters are provided in **Table 4** below for the U.S., Pennsylvania, and the Southwest Planning Region.

Comparatively, the data indicate the Southwest Planning Region is more concentrated than the nation or the state in the following areas: Management of Companies and Enterprises; Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction; Utilities; Other Services (except Public Administration); Retail Trade; Educational Services; Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation; and Health Care and Social Assistance.

²⁵ Lightcast 2024.4

Table 4: Location Quotients by Industry²⁶

Industry	US	Pennsylvania	Southwest Planning Region
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	1	0.96	2.50
Management of Companies and Enterprises	1	1.51	2.17
Educational Services	1	1.70	2.10
Utilities	1	1.02	1.41
Health Care and Social Assistance	1	1.29	1.28
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1	1.00	1.16
Retail Trade	1	0.99	1.07
Other Services (except Public Administration)	1	1.01	1.05
Accommodation and Food Services	1	0.86	0.98
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	1	0.94	0.97
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	1	0.94	0.97
Construction	1	0.86	0.96
Finance and Insurance	1	1.11	0.96
Manufacturing	1	1.14	0.95
Transportation and Warehousing	1	1.16	0.87
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1	0.73	0.84
Wholesale Trade	1	0.93	0.80
Information	1	0.81	0.76
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	1	0.83	0.72
Public Administration	1	0.75	0.71
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	1	0.65	0.23

Occupations

Between 2019 and 2024, most occupations experienced declines in employment, with some seeing significant reductions of greater than 10%, such as Computer and Mathematical (-15.5%) and Office and Administrative Support (-14.0%). This trend reflects a broader shift in the labor market likely driven by automation, industry shifts, and other economic factors, including accelerated retirements that occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic. Projected changes from 2024 to 2029 show a slower pace of decline, with some occupations stabilizing or experiencing minimal decreases. Despite the trend toward stabilization, the total regional employment is still projected to decrease by 1.5% between 2024-2029.

²⁶ Lightcast 2024.4

Table 5: Employment Changes by Occupation

Occupation	Employment (2024)	Past Employment Change (2019-2024)	Projected Employment Change (2024-2029)
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	149,516	-14.0%	-6.8%
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	102,541	-4.4%	-0.5%
Sales and Related Occupations	100,327	-13.3%	-0.7%
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	97,837	2.6%	-4.6%
Management Occupations	86,826	25.1%	-0.2%
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	86,374	-7.7%	0.0%
Educational Instruction and Library Occupations	75,765	-2.0%	-0.4%
Business and Financial Operations Occupations	74,327	9.1%	-1.8%
Healthcare Support Occupations	64,664	-5.9%	4.3%
Production Occupations	60,018	-7.5%	-2.1%
Construction and Extraction Occupations	59,449	-9.9%	-2.6%
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	49,130	-4.5%	-2.0%
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	37,301	-3.3%	-1.0%
Personal Care and Service Occupations	34,576	-11.5%	2.1%
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	33,649	-15.5%	0.6%
Community and Social Service Occupations	25,248	-1.2%	1.5%
Protective Service Occupations	25,006	-5.2%	-2.5%
Architecture and Engineering Occupations	21,980	-12.9%	-0.1%
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	19,649	1.5%	1.0%
Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	10,520	-9.9%	1.2%
Legal Occupations	10,302	-8.8%	-3.8%
Military-only occupations	2,843	-7.8%	-5.7%
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	1,874	-2.7%	3.0%
Total	1,229,723	-4.9%	-1.5%

Regional Vision, Goals, and Priorities

The Southwest Planning Region shares the Governor’s vision of serving Pennsylvania’s residents and businesses through the creation of a skilled workforce. We embrace the priority goals outlined in Pennsylvania’s WIOA Combined State Plan, with their focus on 1.) Apprenticeship and Career & Technical Education; 2.) Sector Strategies and Employer Engagement; 3.) Youth; 4.) Continuous Improvement of the PA CareerLink® System; 5.) Barrier Remediation; and 6.) Addressing Workforce Shortages of Critical Industries.

Our region recognizes the importance of a coordinated and innovative workforce development system.

We strive to present a seamless face for PA CareerLink® services throughout Southwest Pennsylvania, while preserving local boards' flexibility to innovate in serving local workforce needs. We have established the following regional priorities and goals for a more effective, streamlined, and accessible workforce system that meets the needs of both job seekers and employers:

- **Recovery and Resilience:** Our region will increase its ability to sustain and recover from economic shocks by integrating employers into the development of a strong network of short- to mid-length training programs and stackable credentials. This system will be better able to react in real-time to employer and community needs. We have developed a wide range of partnerships to support diverse job opportunities and are focused on industries which will drive the regional economy. Together, we will ensure these industries have the talent available to continue to lead the local economy. We will codify lessons learned and understand why some interventions work better in some industries than in others. These lessons will prepare the system for responding to future shocks.
- **Increasing Opportunities for People facing Systemic Barriers:** Our region will work to increase training and employment opportunities for individuals facing systemic barriers to employment, with a focus on serving disadvantaged communities. Partnering with regional workforce development organizations, we will address both the supply and demand sides of the labor market—ensuring job seekers receive the necessary support during and after training while encouraging employers to establish accessible career pathways. We will enhance recruitment efforts and prioritize helping individuals overcome barriers and ensure training programs are within reach.
- **Improved Workforce Development System:** Our region will focus on continuous improvements to the existing workforce development system infrastructure, while developing a more cohesive regional workforce development network and creating significant workforce training opportunities aligned with industry demand.
- **Career Pathways and Talent Pipeline Development:** This will be addressed through an emphasis on building pathways into a wide variety of high-demand occupations, accessible without a 4-year college degree, through short-term training, apprenticeship, and other work-based training opportunities. As an example, the local boards in the Southwest Planning Region will support our partners in the Southwestern Pennsylvania New Economy Collaborative on an initiative to grow the region's existing robotics and AI-related workforce training portfolio to reach beyond the typical urban core and Tier 1 universities, where it is currently concentrated. This initiative is being funded through the U.S. EDA Build Back Better program.

Sections 1.3 and 1.4 provide greater detail on the strategies our region will employ to achieve these regional goals and priorities

1.3. Regional Strategy: Based on the analysis of regional labor market and economic conditions, describe the regional service delivery strategies for addressing the identified conditions through the coordination of appropriate services in the region.

The Southwest Planning Region will implement the following core service strategies to achieve the vision, goals, and priorities, ensuring responsiveness to the regional labor market and economic conditions identified in Section 1.2:

Employer Engagement and Businesses Services

Our region prioritizes building strong relationships with regional employers to help achieve the vision, goals, and priorities highlighted in Section 1.2. Workers in our region cross county lines for employment and regional employers draw their workforce from counties across Southwest Pennsylvania. These regional labor market trends mean that the same employers often interface with multiple LWDBs, underscoring the need for a regional and collaborative approach to employer engagement and business services that minimizes the administrative burden on the employers our region serves.

PA CareerLink® Business Services Teams

Much of our employer engagement and business services strategy is achieved through the work of PA CareerLink® Business Service Teams (BSTs), which are collaborative groups of staff across PA CareerLink® partner programs who provide a personalized and coordinated approach to employer engagement. BSTs collaborate regionally and work with chambers of commerce, economic development agencies, and other partners to understand the needs of local businesses and connect them with valuable resources. Employers can access a comprehensive package of services through PA CareerLink®, including hiring/recruitment assistance, work-based training (on-the-job training, customized training, etc.), participation in job fairs and on-site recruitment events, labor market information, tax credit and federal bonding guidance, Equal Employment Opportunity compliance resources, and other services.

Employers can complete PA CareerLink® registration on their own or contact PA CareerLink® business services staff for assistance. Job orders can be placed on the PA CareerLink® website once the employer has been approved, where it can be viewed by thousands of interested job seekers. Recruitment assistance will be offered to employers in terms of promoting their recruitment events through advertisement at the PA CareerLink® and resumes can be collected on their behalf. Recruitments and screening interviews can also be held on-site at PA CareerLink® locations.

Local areas in our region have adopted data tracking to assess outcomes of PA CareerLink® services on businesses. Success is measured by metrics such as numbers of job orders, job placements, work-based training programs, job fairs, repeat business customers, and other metrics. Our region is also committed to success in achieving “Effectiveness in Serving Employers” requirements under WIOA in collaboration with our PA CareerLink® partners and the Commonwealth.

Industry Partnerships

Industry partnerships (IPs) are collaborative efforts between workforce development boards, employers, training providers, and other stakeholders to address the workforce needs of specific industries or sectors. These partnerships are designed to foster sector strategies, which focus on aligning workforce development efforts with the demands of high-growth and high-demand industries. Each local board in our region oversees industry partnership programming for our local areas in industries, such as Manufacturing, Healthcare, and Construction. The local boards in our region regularly coordinate with each other to identify opportunities for alignment of our industry partnership efforts.

Local boards in our region currently oversee the following industry partnerships:

Local Workforce Development Board (WDB)	Industry Partnerships
Southwest Corner WDB	Advanced Manufacturing Construction & Building Trades Healthcare Steel Alliance
Three Rivers WDB	Construction Energy Financial Services Healthcare Information Technology Manufacturing
Tri-County WDB	Agriculture Healthcare Information Technology Manufacturing
Westmoreland-Fayette WDB	Healthcare Manufacturing

Coordination with Economic Development and Regional Initiatives

The Allegheny Conference on Community Development (ACCD), is a key regional economic development organization, which includes the Pittsburgh Regional Alliance, the Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce, and the Economy League of Greater Pittsburgh. The ACCD service area aligns with the Southwest Planning Region. ACCD released the report, *2020/2030 Next is Now: A 10 Year Vision of Vitality in the Pittsburgh Region*.²⁷ The report notes that the regional economy has experienced slow growth compared to statewide growth in Pennsylvania and growth nationally. The report emphasizes making economic growth a priority and sets three core goals:

- **Thriving People:** Improve the standard of living by 25% for all populations. This goal includes two components, average wage and per capita GDP.
- **Quality of Place:** Reduce greenhouse gas emissions to meet Paris Accord targets and implement strategies toward UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- **Strong Economy:** Double the projected job growth, resulting in 75,000 new jobs. This measure prioritizes job growth over GDP growth to factor in talent attraction targets.

The Southwest Planning Region's work will align with this vision of a thriving population and strong economy in the Pittsburgh region, as we establish strategies and goals to meet the needs of youth, job seekers, workers, and businesses across the Region.

Our region also engages with ongoing region-wide programs and initiatives. As an example, the Southwest Pennsylvania Partnership for Regional Economic Performance (PREP) consists of the economic

²⁷ Allegheny Conference on Community Development. (2020). *2020/2030 Next is Now: A 10 Year Vision of Vitality in the Pittsburgh Region*.

development partners of the nine-county Southwest PREP region working together to organize and achieve economic results. PREP partners offer one-on-one counseling, specialized workshops, online training, and financial incentives to new businesses and existing companies looking to grow. Each regional PREP team works together to coordinate the resources and services offered by local economic development service providers, including Local Development Districts (LDDs), Industrial Resource Centers (IRCs), Industrial Development Corporations (IDCs), and Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs). The local boards in our region are non-funded members of PREP and work with the funded PREP partners to continue efficient and effective coordination of workforce and economic development.

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

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

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

Coordination with K-12, Higher Education, and Adult Education

The Pittsburgh Region is fortunate to have an education environment that is both diverse and deep in post-high school opportunities for credentialing, including 88 regional universities and post-secondary career, technical and vocational schools. These organizations together confer more than 45,000 degrees annually, including 12,000 technology degrees and certificates.²⁸ The Southwest Planning Region regularly explores ways to leverage the higher education resources in our region to meet the increased demands for talent driven by events such as recent federal investments in advanced manufacturing, infrastructure, broadband, and clean energy – our aforementioned partnership with the SWPA New Economy Collaborative is a key example. Coordination with higher education also includes working closely with our

²⁸ Pittsburgh Regional Alliance (2020)

post-secondary Perkins partners, who are required one-stop system partners in each local workforce area. Further, each of our local boards will continue to strengthen our connections with community colleges in our region, as important resources for education and training.

Given the region's aging workforce and the potential of area youth, investing in the future talent pipeline is a key area of focus for the planning region. Each of the local boards in our region has formed relationships with K-12 schools and school districts in our areas, along with our area's applicable intermediate units, to capitalize on opportunities to form stronger connections between K-12 education and workforce development. This has included state-funded initiatives, such as Business Education Partnership grants that have funded programs to connect educators with employers to better understand regional talent needs, while also enhancing work-based learning and work-readiness skills development in schools.

A key example of success from these initiatives is *PartnerUp*, a career exploration program that was initially developed through a BEP grant in Allegheny County. Led by PNC Bank in partnership with a coalition of regional employers, this program offers an alternative path toward a professional career without the burden of student loan debt. Since its February 2018 launch, the program has created a talent pipeline of early career professionals ready to enter the workforce after high school graduation in entry-level roles. The program has been rolled out in over 50 high schools and to 6,000 students across the Southwest Planning Region and beyond, offering an in-school curriculum for participating junior and senior students. Throughout the program's five-year existence, 16 partner employers have participated and offered students the chance to land positions in a variety of industries. PNC has offered roles at the company to over 100 graduates of the program with dozens of others landing at partner companies. In the spring of 2025, PartnerUp is hosting a regional career fair that Partner4Work is supporting through an additional partnership with the Consortium for Public Education.

In addition, our region will continue to leverage our close partnerships with Adult Education Providers, which deliver a range of services aimed at equipping individuals with the foundational skills necessary for career success and economic mobility. These services include adult basic education, literacy and numeracy instruction, high school equivalency preparation, and English language acquisition for non-native speakers. Additionally, providers often offer career readiness training, digital literacy instruction, and contextualized learning programs that integrate workforce skills with academic education. These services are crucial to local workforce development areas as they address skill gaps, enhance employability, and prepare individuals for participation in job training programs or higher education. WIOA Title II – Adult Education providers are core partners to the PA CareerLink® system and often deliver services on-site at PA CareerLink® locations.

Registered Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeship Strategies

Expanding access to registered pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship opportunities will also be an important component of our regional strategy. The Southwest Planning Region will continue to establish partnerships with current registered apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs, and form new partnerships with employers, education providers (including post-secondary and career and technical centers), labor organizations, and other stakeholders to increase the registered apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programming in the region. A focus will be on increasing opportunity for those job seekers who can benefit from an apprenticeship program and grow the regional talent pool in related occupations.

To do this, our region will leverage our industry partnerships, local board memberships, and other connections to convene key stakeholders around apprenticeship. Our region will also ensure close coordination with Pennsylvania's Apprenticeship & Training Office (ATO). This will include regular communication with the Western Region Apprenticeship & Training Representative (ATR), helping to ensure partners are aware of the apprenticeship information and resources available through ATO, and applying for additional funding through ATO and other grants to support apprenticeship expansion.

In addition, each local workforce development area in the region has a menu of training options that may be used, where appropriate, to support registered apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship. These may include:

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

Our region will also consider ways of facilitating stronger connections between apprenticeship programs and PA CareerLink®. These may include: 1.) Encouraging employers/sponsors to post open RA jobs on the PA CareerLink® website; 2.) Making information available to PA CareerLink® customers about the process of how/when to apply to RAs; 3.) Encouraging local RAs to have their programs included on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL); 4.) Hosting informational sessions to educate RA sponsors about the funding and other resources available through PA CareerLink®; or 5.) Hosting job fairs that lead to RA opportunities. Our region will also ensure PA CareerLink® staff take advantage of training and resources offered through ATO and coordinate with our regional ATO representative to conduct additional apprenticeship related training as needed.

Local boards in our region have also prioritized professional development through staff participation in the Registered Apprenticeship Navigator Program, a year-long training initiative developed by the Keystone Development Partnership (KDP). This program equips workforce professionals with the skills to establish, manage, and expand apprenticeship programs. Participants, known as Navigators, complete 144 hours of virtual classroom instruction on topics such as program design, registration, project management, and mentorship, along with 2,000 hours of on-the-job training within their organizations. Upon completion, they earn credentials as Training & Development Specialists and become members of the Keystone Apprenticeship Alliance (KAA), a statewide network dedicated to advancing apprenticeships across diverse industries.

In addition, SCWDB is a participant in the U.S. Department of Labor's Apprenticeship Ambassador Initiative, which is a national network of employers, labor organizations, educators, and stakeholders committed to expanding Registered Apprenticeships across industries. Launched in 2021, it aims to promote apprenticeship awareness, scale innovative workforce practices, increase access for

underrepresented populations, and highlight the business benefits of apprenticeships. The initiative fosters new apprenticeship programs, outreach efforts, and resource development to strengthen workforce opportunities nationwide.

A searchable list of the current active registered apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships in the region is available [here](#).

Serving Targeted Populations and Individuals with Barriers

Across all our strategies, our region will prioritize programming that helps build our regional labor pool and helps our region's workers and businesses thrive. We will work to improve access to training and employment opportunities to individuals with systemic barriers to employment through outreach, recruitment, and barrier remediation services. Our region will also prioritize job quality as a key component for improving outcomes for workers and employers. This will include consideration of multiple job quality factors in addition to wage, such as health insurance, retirement, stable work schedules, paid leave, and other criteria. The Southwest Planning Region will identify potential job quality tools, that can be made available to partner employers to evaluate their job quality and to assess areas of improvement.

Greater detail on the strategies and specific programming our region will employ to serve target populations and individuals with barriers to employment is available in **Section 1.6** of this plan.

1.4. Describe the regional service strategies aimed at achieving the vision and goals established for the region.

Regional strategies aimed at achieving the vision and goals established for the region are described in multiple sections of this plan. Below is a summary of how our region will address key workforce development needs, along with section references for more detailed information.

Sector and industry strategies, including an apprenticeship strategy:

Our region has established strong industry partnerships in fields like healthcare, manufacturing, construction, and technology. Our local boards are also expanding registered apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs by coordinating with employers and training providers to address workforce shortages, focusing on high-demand industries and emerging sectors like clean energy and robotics. (See also **Section 1.3** and **1.5**)

Coordination of services with regional economic development services and providers:

The local boards in our region collaborate closely with organizations like the Allegheny Conference on Community Development, PREP partners, and the SWPA New Economy Collaborative to align workforce development with broader economic growth initiatives. These partnerships ensure workforce strategies are tied to regional economic priorities, such as attracting new businesses and advancing technology adoption. (See also **Section 1.3** and **1.5**):

Connecting targeted populations with barriers to employment to career services and training activities:

Our region prioritizes connecting people facing barriers—such as people who are low income, have a disability, have been impacted by the criminal justice system, and/or those experiencing substance use disorder—to career and training services through PA CareerLink® centers. Strategies include co-

enrollment with programs such as adult education, wraparound supportive services, specialized youth and reentry programs, and employer engagement to promote inclusive hiring practices. (See also **Section 1.3, 1.6, and 1.7**)

Employment of regional business services strategies, including how coordination of these strategies will impact the operational level of services:

Regional PA CareerLink® Business Services Teams (BSTs) work across local areas to offer coordinated recruitment, hiring, and training support to employers, reducing administrative burdens. Collaboration among BSTs and regular data tracking ensures businesses have consistent access to qualified candidates and workforce resources across the entire Southwest Region. (See also **Section 1.3**)

Coordination with secondary and post-secondary educational institutions to align strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services:

Our region actively partners with K-12 schools, community colleges, universities, and career and technical centers to align workforce and education strategies. Through initiatives like PartnerUp, collaboration with Perkins postsecondary partners, and expanded apprenticeship opportunities, our region is creating career exploration experiences for youth and building accessible entry points into career pathways for individuals entering the labor market, while aligning programs with employer needs. (See **Section 1.3**)

1.5. Describe the development and implementation of sector initiatives for in-demand industry sectors or occupations for the region.

Industry partnerships and sector strategies play a key role in fostering effective business engagement across the Southwest Planning Region. Each local board in our region manages industry partnerships, which help to provide a direct line of communication with employers, enabling our local boards to gather valuable insights into current and emerging workforce demands. By collaborating closely with industry leaders, we can identify critical skill gaps, prioritize in-demand occupations, and shape our investments in workforce development accordingly. This collaboration ensures that training programs are designed to meet the precise requirements of local industries, equipping job seekers with the skills and credentials needed for high-demand roles. Additionally, these partnerships help foster a dynamic and responsive workforce system that supports economic growth, addresses labor shortages, and enhances career opportunities for individuals in the region. A table listing the specific industry partnerships managed by the local boards within our planning region can be found in the table in **Section 1.3**.

To identify priority industries and sectors, our regional local workforce boards regularly analyze labor market data (e.g. data from the Center for Workforce Information & Analysis), engage with employers, and consult our partner economic development organizations. Through these efforts, we assess trends in job growth, wage potential, and demand for specific skills to pinpoint sectors critical to the region's economy. Additionally, the local boards in our region collaborate with industry leaders to understand current and emerging workforce needs, including identifying occupations with high vacancy rates or significant skill gaps. Input from community stakeholders, such as education and training providers, also helps ensure that selected industries align with the region's economic priorities and workforce capabilities. This data-driven and collaborative approach enables our region to focus efforts on industries with the greatest potential for sustainable growth and workforce impact.

Industry partnerships (IP) have led to the development of several promising and successful training initiatives in our region. For example, in Allegheny County, TRWB's Construction IP (also known as *4Construction*) has led to the creation of the *PIT2Work* pre-apprenticeship program. *PIT2Work* is a no-cost, five-week pre-apprenticeship training program in Allegheny County, hosted by Pittsburgh International Airport in partnership with Partner4Work and Pittsburgh Gateways Corporation. The program provides hands-on construction trade experience at the new airport terminal site, along with certifications such as OSHA 10-Hour and PennDOT Flagger. Graduates receive a daily stipend, transportation support, and connections to local trade unions, helping them secure careers in the construction industry. SCWDB has also been a strong supporter of the program, helping to enroll individuals from their LWDA in the pre-apprenticeship.

The local boards in the Southwest Planning Region have collaborated on other region-wide sector-based initiatives. This includes our participation in the Southwestern Pennsylvania (SWPA) New Economy Collaborative, discussed earlier in **Section 1.3**. The Collaborative was awarded \$62.7 million from the US Economic Development Administration's *Build Back Better* Challenge to fund five regional projects focused on robotics adoption, commercialization, and workforce development. Our role within this Collaborative will be to support training and upskilling of workers to connect them to "new economy careers" becoming available as a result of the Pittsburgh Region's growing robotics sector. WFWDB has led regional workforce partners in services to new employer Re:Build Manufacturing, coordinating on ensuring that jobs are posted within the PA CareerLink[®] system, OJT and other agreements are signed, and communication is clear. TCWDB, TRWDB, and WFWDB have identified flexible sources of funding to create an aligned system for job seekers looking to work at Re:Build and other employers.

As an example of a sector-focused apprenticeship initiative, our regional local workforce boards are collaborating on a project funded by a US Department of Labor *Building Pathways to Infrastructure Jobs Grant*, which will expand technology and advanced manufacturing registered apprenticeship programs (RAPs) that support high-demand career pathways that will support Southwestern PA's growing clean energy and broadband sectors. Our regional local boards will be partnering with the German American Chamber of Commerce, Pittsburgh Chapter, and Fortyx80 to deliver the registered apprenticeship programming.

In addition, through a grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) – Appalachian Regional Initiative for Stronger Economies (ARISE), our region will partner with workforce development boards across the tri-state region (including Pennsylvania, Ohio, and West Virginia) to identify strategies to successfully remove barriers for regional employers to participate in registered apprenticeships. Awarded in December 2024, SCWDB will serve as the project lead for this initiative with the goals of: 1) identifying barriers and opportunities related to apprenticeship in the realms of a) policy, b) industry/employers, and c) jobseeker and worker talent development; and 2) crafting a thorough and evidence-based strategy for developing and supporting a tri-state apprenticeship ecosystem. The project intends to determine the feasibility of incorporating apprenticeship as a key talent development strategy responsive to current and future industry needs in the tri-state region.

TCWDB has partnered with Steamfitters Local 449 on multiple Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) grants to expand workforce training and career advancement opportunities. A \$1.4 million ARC grant is funding no-cost training for workers in 15 coal-impacted counties in Pennsylvania, preparing up to 550 participants with skills in semiconductor manufacturing, HVAC-R, welding, and building information modeling at a state-of-the-art training center. This initiative aims to attract semiconductor employers to the region while helping displaced workers transition into high-demand industries. Additionally, a \$1.12 million ARC grant supports the training of 1,333 workers in advanced skills, providing opportunities for

upward mobility within their fields. Beyond the ARC grants, TCWDB's collaboration with Steamfitters Local 449 has also received support from a Pathways to Innovation Grant from the Commonwealth. As part of this initiative, TCWDB will engage schools to expand career pathways into the Steamfitters apprenticeship program, further expanding access to the skilled trades.

Furthermore, TRWDB collaborated with SCWDB to host the Healthcare Careers & Apprenticeships Expo, which featured over 40 vendors and attracted students from more than 35 schools. The event was sponsored by Dollar Bank and UPMC and was attended by PA Secretary of Labor & Industry Nancy A. Walker and PA Senator Wayne Fontana, highlighting the importance of strengthening the Commonwealth's healthcare workforce. The expo provided students with hands-on activities and insights into various healthcare career paths, fostering meaningful connections between vendors and attendees. The success of the event underscored the power of collaboration in enhancing the region's workforce. Our region will include TCWDB and WFWDB in the planning and execution of future expos, in addition to TRWDB and SCWDB.

Our region will continue to partner with organizations to create and expand apprenticeship opportunities in the region, including through industry partnerships, where appropriate. For example, the National Tooling and Machining Association (NTMA) coordinates registered apprenticeship opportunities focusing on manufacturing throughout the Southwest Region. There are several apprenticeship opportunities that center on construction across the region provided by the Carpenters, Western Pennsylvania Operating Engineers, and others. Our region will also work to build apprenticeship opportunities in non-traditional sectors, such as information technology and healthcare.

Section 1.3 describes in greater detail strategies for expanding apprenticeship opportunities in the region and for fostering closer connections and alignment between workforce development and education.

1.6. Describe how the region will connect employer labor force requirements and occupational demands with the region's labor force, including individuals with barriers to employment

Discussed in **Section 1.3**, the Allegheny Conference on Community Development released the report, *2020/2030 Next is Now: A 10 Year Vision of Vitality in the Pittsburgh Region*. The development of the report was led by a 35-member steering committee of regional leaders and was informed by obtaining feedback from 1,000 stakeholders in ACCD's 10-county region, as well as a summit of 1,000 stakeholders during summer 2019. The report notes a key regional challenge is that the economy has experienced slow growth compared to statewide growth in Pennsylvania and growth nationally. The report emphasizes making economic growth a priority and highlights several strategies, including but not limited to scaling talent attraction and retention efforts; removing barriers to opportunity to ensure people are not excluded from the benefits of increased economic growth; and creating a regional investment and growth environment that encourages business investment, job creation, high quality of place and opportunity for all.

Addressing barriers to employment and connecting individuals to quality career opportunities is core to the work of the Southwest Planning Region. Local boards within the region seek to serve special populations, such as veterans, and individuals with barriers to employment, including low-income individuals, recipients of public assistance, individuals who are basic skills deficient, out-of-school youth, and the re-entry population. Through the PA CareerLink® offices, the Southwest Planning Region aligns programming to meet the state and federal requirements for priority of service; more than 51% of those served will be priority of service populations under WIOA. The following are examples of how the Southwest Planning Region will continue to implement strategies for serving individuals with barriers to

employment:

Examples of Priority Populations

Veterans

Veterans receive priority of service at PA CareerLink® offices, meaning that a veteran or qualified spouse receives priority access to services and training opportunities. Additionally, Title I staff within the PA CareerLink® system work closely with Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER) in each local area. The LVER provide services geared specifically towards veterans, including intensive job development activities, the initiation of referrals to social services, and regular follow-up to ensure that the veteran receives the support needed. Additionally, the LVER coordinates with local veteran service providers, provides information about and referral to veterans programs, and reviews and analyzes the veterans program to ensure compliance with veteran standards. Our region will consider possibilities for future regional collaboration to effectively serve veterans.

Low Income Individuals

The WIOA Title I program is designed to support low-income individuals by providing comprehensive services that address their barriers to employment and help them achieve sustainable careers. Low-income individuals and recipients of public assistance are identified at the point of entry at local PA CareerLink® offices and informed of their entitlement to priority of service for WIOA Adult programming. Participants can access services such as career counseling, skills assessments, job placement assistance, and access to training programs tailored to in-demand industries. To address common barriers, the WIOA program offers supportive services such as childcare, transportation assistance, and funding for necessary tools, uniforms, or certification fees. Additionally, our regional PA CareerLink® offices collaborate with local human services agencies and community-based organizations to connect participants with other critical resources such as housing. By taking a holistic approach, the WIOA program empowers individuals to overcome challenges, gain marketable skills, and secure meaningful employment, ultimately fostering self-sufficiency and reducing economic disparities in the community.

Additionally, WIOA out-of-school youth (OSY), in-school youth (ISY), and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Youth Development Fund (YDF) programs each set income eligibility requirements to ensure services are reaching individuals who are low income and/or individuals with other barriers to employment. Further, each local workforce area sets a self-sufficiency wage standard, as a target entry-level wage for participants served. This standard serves as a guide for service delivery and job placement, to help focus on training and jobs that lead to economic self-sufficiency for the participant.

Our regional local boards also oversee Temporary Assistance for Employment Advancement and Retention Network (EARN) and Work Ready programming, which delivers employment and training services to individuals receiving TANF cash assistance. Our region will continue to identify alignment opportunities between TANF and WIOA employment programs to ensure participants are referred to programming best fit for their unique service needs. Opportunities include co-location of PA CareerLink® and TANF EARN/Work Ready programming.

Individuals with Disabilities

Eligible individuals who self-identify as having a disability are referred to the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) staff at PA CareerLink® for tailored services. These services include diagnostic evaluations, vocational counseling and guidance, vocational education, training, job placement, and individualized supportive services. OVR also provides pre-employment transition services (PETS) to

eligible and potentially eligible in-school youth with disabilities, helping them prepare for life after high school. Additionally, OVR supports businesses by assisting with onboarding pre-screened, qualified employees with disabilities.

Collaboration between OVR and Title I staff at PA CareerLink® ensures that job seekers with disabilities receive dual enrollment and access to a wide range of services. The Southwest Planning Region will continue to work with OVR to identify further opportunities for coordination and partnership, ensuring comprehensive and effective support for individuals with disabilities across the workforce system. Enhanced data sharing between these partners would be one potential opportunity for closer alignment.

Reentry Population

Workforce development programming for the reentry population, both pre- and post-release, can assist individuals in successfully transitioning from incarceration to employment, lead to a reduction in recidivism for these individuals, and promote economic self-sufficiency. The PA CareerLink® system in our region is available to provide a range of services tailored to meet the unique needs of this population, including career counseling, job search assistance, and access to training programs for in-demand occupations. Additionally, supportive services such as transportation, childcare, and help obtaining necessary identification or work-related tools can address common barriers to employment. Each local board has also developed specialized strategies and programming for serving individuals returning from incarceration in our local areas. Examples include:

- TCWDB oversees the Youth Reentry Program, which serves individuals ages 18-24 who were incarcerated or were subjected to the justice system. The program engages youth in a career pathway leading to postsecondary education, advanced training, and/or meaningful employment through secondary dropout reengagement and aligning individuals' skill sets and training gaps to pursue the relevant education and employment.
- TRWDB oversees multiple programs focused on serving individual impacted by the justice system. These include the *Pittsburgh Reentry Career Services (PRCS)* program, funded by a federal Department of Justice grant. PRCS partners with the PA CareerLink®, Center for Employment Opportunities, Action Housing, and Operation Better Block to provide employment and training supports for clients pre- and post-release at the ACJ and Renewal Centers. Through this initiative, TRWDB is also working directly with the Allegheny County Jail and employers to create a second chance fair hiring directory. TRWDB also oversees the *Young Adult Reentry Project (YARP)*. YARP provides employment, training, mentorship, and supportive services to justice involved youth ages 18-24.
- WFWDB coordinates the Westmoreland-Fayette Youth Re-Entry Program that aims to enhance reentry strategies for young adults ages 18 to 24 who have been involved in the juvenile justice system. Comprehensive case management and supportive services are delivered in tandem with mentoring support including facilitating access to vocational training, education, post-secondary information, soft-skills training, and transitional employment to increase job skills and readiness. If the returning youth does not have a high school diploma, youth will be worked back into the school system or connected to a local GED/remediation program. A primary goal of the program is to help participants gain unsubsidized, career-track employment that affords self-sustaining income.
- SCWDB oversees Youth Reentry Programming that connects justice-impacted young adults to workforce development resources, including employment and training services, work experience, case management and supportive services, and other resources.

Substance Use Disorder (SUD)

Workforce development programs can provide vital support to individuals experiencing substance use disorder (SUD), particularly in regions like Southwestern Pennsylvania that have been deeply affected by the opioid epidemic. These programs help to provide a pathway to recovery by addressing barriers to employment and offering opportunities for stability and long-term success. Programming may include skills training, career counseling, and supportive services tailored to the unique challenges faced by individuals with SUD, such as navigating gaps in employment. Collaboration with employers and industries is essential to create inclusive, recovery-friendly workplace policies. By equipping individuals with marketable skills and access to meaningful jobs, these interventions not only promote individual recovery but also contribute to the economic and social revitalization of communities hardest hit by the opioid crisis.

The Southwest Planning Region, with TRWDB as the lead applicant, has been awarded funding through the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) Investments Supporting Partnerships in Recovery Ecosystems (INSPIRE) Initiative. Through this initiative, the local boards in the Southwest Planning Region and our regional partners, are working to build and expand programs, partnerships, and efforts across the region to address the impacts of SUD. This project will engage adults in recovery from SUD in training (including Certified Recovery Specialist training), job placement, supportive services, and retention activities. The project will also partner with employers to establish and improve upon recovery friendly employment practices.

Adult Education

Individuals with basic skills deficiencies who enroll in Title I services through PA CareerLink® will be co-enrolled with Title II Adult Basic Education where appropriate. PA CareerLink® staff identify individuals who are basic skills deficient through an intake process, then refer these customers to appropriate literacy programs, including GED review classes, ESL, and math and English remediation courses. **Section 1.3** of this plan describe coordination with WIOA Title II – Adult Education in more detail.

Opportunity Youth

Our regional local boards invest in a diverse network of workforce development programs that connect opportunity youth—young people aged 16 to 24 who are not in school or working—with pathways to education and career opportunities. Our WIOA Youth programs prioritize services to out-of-school youth. These programs provide critical support, including job training, paid work experience, career counseling, and high school diploma recovery and GED attainment opportunities, to help young people overcome barriers to success and build a foundation for stable, meaningful employment. Where possible, our region will work to strengthen partnerships between our network of youth programs and other federally-funded programming. Coordination with established initiatives like Job Corps, YouthBuild, AmeriCorps, and the Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps enhances the effectiveness of workforce development efforts by combining resources and expertise. Job Corps offers residential education and job training, YouthBuild provides hands-on construction and leadership experience, and AmeriCorps emphasizes community service and skill development. The Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps further complements these efforts by providing young people with opportunities to gain valuable work experience in conservation, environmental stewardship, and public land maintenance, helping to develop skills in forestry, park management, and natural resource conservation. By aligning these programs with local workforce initiatives, communities can create a robust network of opportunities that equips opportunity youth with the tools they need to thrive while also addressing local workforce needs and strengthening the economy.

Employer Engagement and Apprenticeships

Our region will also leverage our industry partnerships, employer engagement capacity, and registered apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships (where appropriate) to connect special populations and individuals with barriers to career opportunities. This may include educating employers on the benefits of hiring individuals with certain barriers to employment and incentives, such as Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) and Federal Bonding programs that are available. This may also include working with our industry partners to develop specialized training to connect individuals to employment along career pathways within their respective industries. Industry-driven training, coupled with dedicated case management and wraparound services provided through PA CareerLink®, can help individuals mitigate potential barriers to employment, while obtaining the skills and credentials needed to successfully obtain employment at family-sustaining wages.

Registered apprenticeship programs are particularly promising models for helping individuals with employment barriers obtain jobs along a career pathway. By combining classroom instruction with paid, hands-on training, these programs allow participants to gain practical experience and industry-recognized credentials, while earning a wage on-the-job. The ability to “earn-while-you-learn” can help to alleviate the financial burden and opportunity cost of a forgone wage as a barrier to training participation.

Section 1.3 and **1.5** discuss in greater detail ways in which our region is working to create and expand registered apprenticeship opportunities in our region, including for individuals from underrepresented populations and with other barriers to employment. This includes a discussion of the menu of training options that may be used to support apprenticeship, convening stakeholders to support apprenticeship, facilitating stronger connections between apprenticeship programs and PA CareerLink®, and other information.

1.7. Describe the coordination of transportation and other supportive services for the region.

Supportive services are essential components of workforce development programs, as they address the various barriers participants often face in accessing training and securing employment. These services often include transportation assistance, childcare, housing support, tools/equipment required for training or employment, assistance with licensing/testing fees, and other services. By providing comprehensive services tailored to individual needs, workforce programs help participants stay engaged, complete training, and transition successfully into the workforce. Each local board in our region has an established supportive services policy outlining the supportive services resources available to participants. PA CareerLink® and other provider-level staff are also able to coordinate referrals to other service agencies as needed and available.

Transportation

Reliable transportation is a critical factor in obtaining and retaining employment, yet it remains a significant barrier for many job seekers in Southwest Pennsylvania. Without dependable transportation, individuals may struggle to reach job interviews, training programs, or workplaces on time, hindering their ability to secure or sustain employment. This challenge is especially acute in rural or suburban parts of the region where public transit options are sparse or non-existent. However, even in urban areas like Pittsburgh, gaps in transit coverage or unpredictable schedules can pose obstacles for workers with nontraditional hours or jobs located outside of central transit hubs.

The Southwest Planning Region has a diverse geographic landscape, from rural, sparsely populated areas

like Greene and Indiana Counties, to suburban, moderately populated areas like Westmoreland and Butler Counties, to the urban, more densely populated areas in and surrounding Pittsburgh. Each county has unique transportation needs and varying levels of public transportation systems. There are more public transportation agencies than Counties in our region, further complicating any efforts at coordination. **Table 10** provides data on commuters to and from the counties in the region. Other than in Allegheny County and Butler County, there is a larger number of people who are traveling outside of their county of residence than there are people traveling into their county for employment purposes.

Table 10. Commuting Data by County in the Southwest Planning Region

County	Incoming Commuters	Outgoing Commuters	Net Commuters (Incoming vs. Outcoming)
Allegheny County	216,934	101,986	114,948
Armstrong County	6,282	18,708	-12,426
Beaver County	23,247	43,459	-20,212
Butler County	43,035	42,702	333
Fayette County	12,781	26,348	-13,567
Greene County	6,419	7,774	-1,355
Indiana County	11,948	14,672	-2,724
Washington County	42,318	47,428	-5,110
Westmoreland County	52,073	78,903	-26,830

Commuting patterns and business density vary widely throughout the region. The economic influence of Allegheny County often draws residents of neighboring counties into Allegheny County for work. Allegheny County was home to nearly 60% of the jobs in the Southwest Planning Region in 2023.²⁹ **Table 11** displays average commute times and modes of transportation for the Southwest Planning Region. The average commute time across the region for workers 16 and older is 27.1 minutes, which is similar to commute times across Pennsylvania (27.1 minutes) and the nation (26.9 minutes). Lack of strong public transportation infrastructure between Allegheny County and some outlying counties and within the outlying counties means that workers frequently must rely on cars to commute to work. The majority (80.2%) of commuters across the region drive to work alone and 1.8% use public transportation. Workers in Allegheny County commuted by public transit at significantly higher rates (8.9%) compared to other counties in the region (0.3% to 2%), Pennsylvania (5.3%), and the U.S. (4.6%).

²⁹ EMSI, QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees and Self-Employed, 2023.

Table 11 Regional Commute Times and Transportation Methods³⁰

County	Average Travel Time to Work in Minutes	Drove Alone to Work Percent	Took Public Transportation to Work Percent
Allegheny County	26.9	69.2	8.9
Armstrong County	30.0	82.0	0.3
Beaver County	26.4	81.2	2.0
Butler County	27.4	82.0	0.5
Fayette County	26.7	83.5	1.1
Greene County	29.0	81.9	0.1
Indiana County	24.1	78.7	0.5
Washington County	26.6	80.9	1.3
Westmoreland County	27.0	82.5	1.2
Pennsylvania	27.1	74.4	5.3
United States	26.9	74.9	4.6

The COVID-19 pandemic also influenced commuting patterns for many occupations as employers shifted to remote and hybrid work options for their employees during and following the pandemic. Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics estimated that 35% of workers in the United States worked from home for some or all their work in 2023.³¹ As a result, a greater number of employees also have access to employment outside of their region of residence and employers can source workers from farther outside of their region of business. Data on the extent that this is occurring in the Southwest Planning Region, however, are not readily available.

Due to variations in local transportation options and changing commuting trends, each local board determines the best method to provide transportation assistance. Transportation will continue to be a barrier and a challenge to job seekers being successfully employed in long-term employment. The Southwest Planning Region workforce boards will continue to invest in transportation options to assist job seekers in meeting their education, training, and employment needs.

Childcare

The high cost of childcare, limited availability, and lack of flexible options often make it difficult for individuals to balance education/training participation or work and caregiving responsibilities. In many cases, the absence of affordable, reliable childcare forces parents to forgo employment opportunities or leave jobs, perpetuating cycles of economic instability. Addressing this barrier through accessible childcare solutions—such as employer-sponsored programs, subsidies, or on-site facilities—can empower caregivers to participate in the workforce, improve family financial stability, and support broader economic growth.

Access to affordable and quality childcare also continues to be a common barrier to employment in the Southwest Planning Region. The US Department of Labor (USDOL) Women’s Bureau released an analysis of childcare care costs in the United States as a percentage of the area’s family median income. **Table 12** displays the median annual costs of childcare in each of the counties in the Southwest Planning Region, displayed as a percentage of the county’s median family income. Costs vary by the age of the child, as well as whether care is provided in a childcare center or at home. With the region, the percentages of family

³⁰ U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 ACS 5-Year Data Profile.

³¹ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *American Time Use Survey 2023* (June 27, 2024)

income being spent on childcare range from 7.4% for home-based care for school-aged children in Butler County to 14.2% for childcare center-based services for infants in Indiana County. Butler County has the highest family median income and pays, on average, the smallest percentage of income (9.0%) toward childcare. Fayette County has the lowest family median income and pays the highest percentage of family income toward childcare (12.2%).

Table 12: Childcare Costs as a Percentage of Family Median Income³²

County (Family Median Income)	Infant (CB)	Infant (HB)	Toddler (CB)	Toddler (HB)	Pre-School (CB)	Pre-School (HB)	School-Aged (CB)	School-Aged (HB)	Average
Fayette (\$73,849)	13.0%	12.6%	13.0%	11.5%	12.2%	11.8%	11.3%	11.9%	12.2%
Greene (\$84,360)	11.7%	12.5%	11.3%	12.5%	11.0%	12.5%	11.2%	12.5%	11.9%
Washington (\$98,930)	12.2%	11.4%	11.4%	11.6%	11.1%	11.6%	10.0%	11.6%	11.4%
Indiana (\$78,873)	14.2%	10.1%	12.5%	9.7%	12.4%	9.4%	11.5%	9.8%	11.2%
Beaver (\$86,197)	11.8%	12.7%	11.4%	10.2%	11.1%	10.8%	10.1%	11.0%	11.1%
Armstrong (\$79,027)	12.1%	12.1%	11.4%	8.7%	11.4%	8.7%	11.8%	9.1%	10.7%
Westmoreland (\$91,249)	12.3%	10.2%	11.4%	9.9%	10.8%	9.6%	10.8%	8.7%	10.5%
Allegheny (\$102,710)	11.6%	8.8%	11.0%	8.0%	10.3%	8.0%	10.0%	8.5%	9.5%
Butler (\$107,507)	10.9%	7.9%	9.9%	8.2%	9.6%	8.2%	10.1%	7.4%	9.0%

Childcare Center-Based (CB); Home-Based Childcare (HB)

The Southwest Region will work to ensure our programs are able to facilitate the appropriate connections to childcare services for participants in need. Our region will also explore ways of partnering with existing organizations and agencies, such as the United Way of Southwestern PA, state and local human services agencies, community-based organizations, and others to address the challenge of childcare as a barrier to program participation and employment.

Broadband Access

Fast and reliable internet access is essential for individuals to successfully find and maintain employment. Reliable internet access enables job seekers to search for opportunities, submit applications, and participate in virtual interviews, while also making available online training and professional development resources. For workers, broadband is critical for remote work, communication with employers, and accessing digital tools needed for job performance.

³² National Database of Childcare Prices (2019-2022). US Department of Labor Women's Bureau. Updated November 2024. <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/wb/topics/childcare/median-family-income-by-age-care-setting-2022>

Residents in the Southwest Planning Region, particularly in rural locations, may still experience limitations to internet and broadband connections. As discussed in **Section 1.2**, the percentage of households with access to the internet ranges from 78.9% in Indiana County to 89.8% in Allegheny County, which can be compared to the national rate of 89.7%. Our region will continue to identify ways of addressing technology and internet access as a barrier for the job seekers and workers our programs serve. This will include strengthening program connections to existing federal and state-level broadband expansion programs, such as the *Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program*. We will also continue to make technology available through PA CareerLink® sites to assist people with their job search and leverage partnerships with public libraries and other community-based organizations providing neighborhood-based technology solutions.

1.8. Describe the region’s strategy to increase engagement on the statewide eligible training provider list.

Each local board in the Southwest Planning Region has established processes for review and approval of training providers and programs to the WIOA Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). Local boards strive to maintain a robust menu of quality training opportunities on the ETPL aligned with High Priority Occupations (HPOs) in the region and each respective local area. Training programs are assessed based on their alignment with an HPO, past performance outcomes (including job placement, median earnings, credential attainment, and program completion) and various other factors. The local boards in the region also regularly engage employers in in-demand industries through industry partnerships and sector strategies to assess employer priorities and hiring needs and develop training programs aligned with labor market demand. The Southwest Planning Region has also previously collaborated in petitioning for occupations to be added to the HPO list on a regional scale based on our knowledge of regional hiring needs and informed by employer engagement. Our region will continue to collaborate on collective outreach efforts to enhance the menu of quality training options in our region, while ensuring alignment with regional demand.

1.9. Describe how the region established administrative cost arrangements, including the pooling of funds for administrative costs, as appropriate, for the region.

The local boards in the Southwest Planning Region regularly collaborate on discretionary grant opportunities to deliver workforce development resources to the region. This typically involves a select board serving as the administrative lead for the grant, while establishing agreements with the remaining local boards to implement programs. Recent examples include the previously mentioned USDOL Building Pathways to Infrastructure Jobs and ARC – ARISE grants for which TRWDB and SCWDB serve as the administrative leads, respectively. To promote efficient and effective programming, our region will continue to identify opportunities, as appropriate, to establish agreements among our local boards to deliver services on a regional scale.

1.10. Describe the agreement between the local boards that describes how the planning region will collectively negotiate and reach agreement with L&I on local levels of performance for, and report on, the performance accountability measures described in section 116(c), for each of the local areas within the planning region.

Our region is committed to achieving positive employment outcomes for the job seekers, workers, and

employers that our workforce development system serves and, in turn, exceeding the negotiated WIOA performance levels we have set with the Commonwealth. The local boards in our region have agreed to individually negotiate WIOA performance measures with the Commonwealth. Our regional local boards have currently negotiated performance measures with the PA Department of Labor & Industry (L&I) for Program Year (PY) 2024 and PY 2025 for our respective local areas.

Through quarterly WIOA performance reports distributed by L&I, we will track progress toward achieving WIOA performance outcomes across the region and support each other in achieving outcomes as needed and appropriate.

1.11. Describe the region's process to ensure the public (including representatives of business, labor organizations, and education) had 30 days to review and comment on the contents of the proposed Regional Plan, and subsequent modification, if applicable, prior to Commonwealth submission.

To ensure compliance with WIOA requirements, the Southwest Planning Region provided the public, including representatives from business, labor, and education, a 30-day period to review and comment on the proposed Regional Plan before submission to the Commonwealth. Each local board in our region notified stakeholders of the opportunity to provide comments by posting on our respective websites and through other means such as email distribution lists, social media, and local publications. The plan was accessible online in each of our areas for a 30-day period, and comments were accepted through electronic means, such as email or an online form. All feedback was reviewed, summarized, and incorporated as appropriate, with a summary of public input included in the final plan (See Attachment 1).

Attachment 1: Public Comments on the WIOA Regional Plan

Public Comment:

Commenter:

Neil Ashbaugh

Agency or Business of Affiliation:

New Century Careers

Comment:

The need for training that is proven by third-party industry recognized credentialing that also is couple with career placement directly with industry partners is absolutely vital to maintaining and expanding the regional precision manufacturing industry of Southwestern PA. At New Century Careers, we promote tuition-free pre-apprenticeship training, National Institute for Metalworking Skills (NIMS) credentialing and offer free job placement assistance for individuals who have completed our MANUFACTURING 2000 (M2K) pre-apprenticeship program. NCC's network of over 130 manufacturers are always in need of these program completers. To further assist our partners, we are also a third-party sponsor for Registered Apprentices (Machinist, Robotics Technician) as well as a provider of customized incumbent worker upskilling and training.

For these reasons, we are fully supported and committed to working with partners in the region to engage, qualify, training, credential, place, and upskill technicians for the needs of this regions manufacturers and their need for a highly-skilled workforce for today, and into the future.

Southwest Planning Region Response:

Thank you for your comment. The Southwest Planning Region is steadfast in our commitment to building and maintaining industry partnerships. Feedback from industry leaders and training providers such as yourself is crucial to our strategy of bridging the gap between occupation demands and the region's labor force. Tuition-free pre-apprenticeship programs and accessible credentialing are among the practices necessary to ensuring individuals with barriers are not excluded from the benefits of economic growth, and we therefore commend the work of NCC and look forward to our continued partnership.

WIOA MULTI-YEAR LOCAL PLAN (PY2025 – PY2028)

The local area plan serves as a four-year action plan to develop, align, and integrate service delivery strategies to support the commonwealth's vision, strategic and operational goals within local workforce development areas; as well as the regional goals and strategies.

This plan is effective for the period of **July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2029.**

***Allegheny
County and the
City of
Pittsburgh***

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

Local Workforce Development Area (WDA): Allegheny County WDA; City of Pittsburgh WDA

Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB): Three Rivers Workforce Development Board (TRWDB), also known as Partner4Work

Fiscal Agent: TRWIB, Inc. (DBA, Partner4Work)

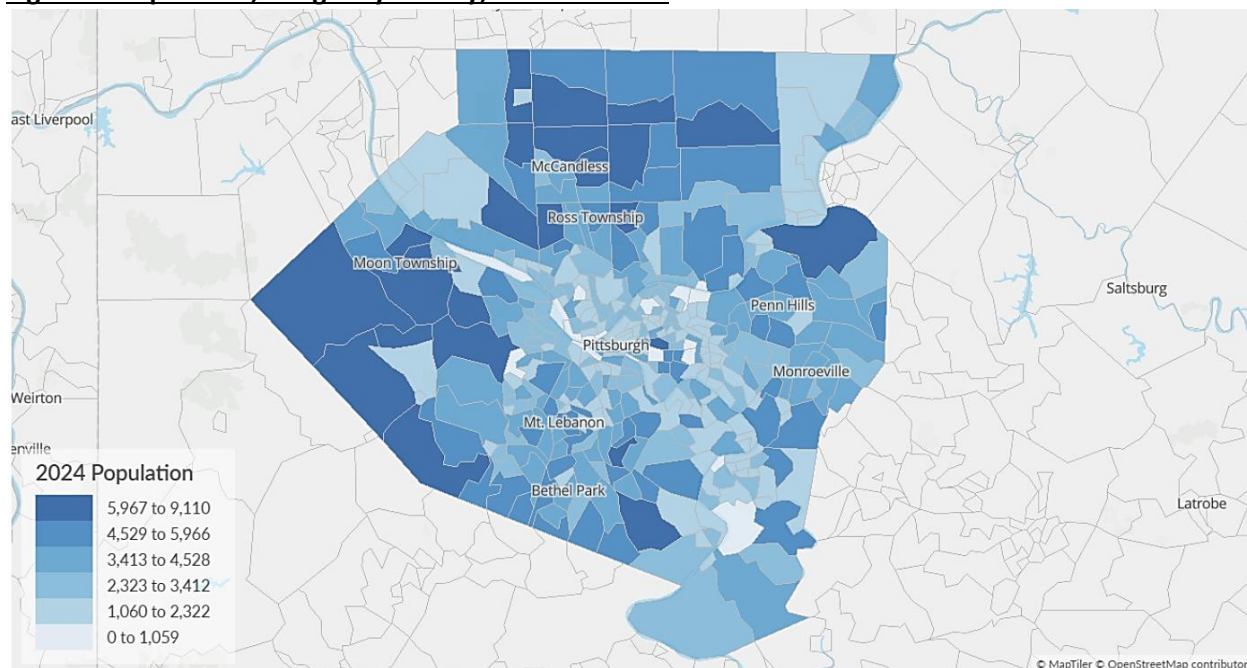
Administrative Entity / Staff to the LWDB: TRWIB, Inc. (DBA, Partner4Work)

Local Plan Effective Date: July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2029

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

The Three Rivers Workforce Development Board (TRWDB) is the local workforce development board (LWDB) for the Allegheny County and City of Pittsburgh workforce development areas (WDAs). To develop a thriving workforce, TRWDB drives and delivers strategic investments, provides expertise, and creates opportunities for businesses, job seekers, agencies, and policymakers in Allegheny County and the City of Pittsburgh. While our service area lies within the boundaries of Allegheny County, TRWDB programs have an impact on the labor market on a regional scale, serving job seekers and workers who commute to and from Allegheny County and employers whose business activities expand beyond county lines.

Figure 1. Population, Allegheny County, Census Tracts¹



Allegheny County has a population of 1,240,476 people, which accounts for almost half (49.9%) of the population in the Pittsburgh Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) and nearly a tenth (9.5%) of the population in Pennsylvania. Comparing 2014-2018 and 2019-2023 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates, Allegheny County's population has grown by 1.2%. This is a smaller growth rate compared

¹ U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) 2019-2023 5-Year Estimates. Retrieved from Lightcast; https://analyst.lightcast.io/analyst/?t=4mGg3#h=2wPnzRisTX~mYX_jpFQmmaUyAHk&page=community_indicators&vertical=edo&nation=us, -1/15/2025.

to the Pittsburgh MSA (3.5%), Pennsylvania (1.5%), and nationally (2.6%).² **Figure 1** shows Allegheny County's population by U.S. Census Tracts. The highest concentrations of population occur in the northern and western portions of the County.

Age

Table 1 provides population percentages by age group in Allegheny County, compared to percentages regionally, statewide, and nationally.³ With a median age of 40.6 years, Allegheny County's population is similar in age to Pennsylvania (40.8 years), but older compared to the median age in the United States (39.2 years). Further, Allegheny County is part of the Pittsburgh MSA, which has an even higher median age at 44.5 years. An older population and aging workforce in the region has led to a shrinking labor pool as more workers retire, creating labor shortages in key industries such as healthcare, manufacturing, and skilled trades. The impacts of an older population on Allegheny County's labor force and employment will be discussed later in this section and **Section 1.2**.

Table 1. Population Percentages by Age Group

Age	United States	Pennsylvania	Pittsburgh MSA	Allegheny County
<i>Median Age (years)</i>	39.2	40.8	44.5	40.6
Under 18 Years	22.2%	20.6%	18.9%	18.7%
18 to 24 Years	9.1%	8.9%	8.1%	8.7%
25 to 34 Years	13.7%	13.0%	13.1%	14.9%
35 to 44 Years	13.1%	12.4%	12.4%	13.0%
45 to 54 Years	12.4%	12.2%	12.0%	11.3%
55 to 64 Years	12.8%	13.9%	14.5%	13.7%
65 to 74 Years	10.0%	11.2%	12.4%	11.6%
75 Years and Over	6.8%	7.9%	8.6%	8.1%
Population	332,387,540	12,986,518	2,443,921	1,240,476

Race and Ethnicity

Table 2 shows population percentages by race and ethnicity in Allegheny County and its comparison geographies.⁴ Allegheny County has a larger percentage of individuals who are white (76.9%) compared to the United States (63.4%) and a similar percentage to Pennsylvania (75.8%). However, Allegheny County's population is more racially diverse compared to the Pittsburgh MSA as a whole, which has a population that is 85.2% white. Both Allegheny County and the Pittsburgh MSA have substantially smaller populations of people who are Hispanic or Latino (of any race) compared to percentages statewide and nationally. However, Allegheny County's Hispanic or Latino population's growth rate experienced a sharp growth rate increase from 3.5% between 2021 to 2022 to 19.1% between 2022 to 2023 (or 0.6 percentage points in the total Hispanic/Latino population), compared to an average of 4.3% annual growth rate increases from 2010-2021. If the population growth maintains a similar rate, the Hispanic or Latino population of Allegheny County will grow significantly in the next ten years.

² U.S. Census Bureau. (2025). 2019-2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

Table 2. Population Percentages by Race and Ethnicity

Race / Ethnicity	United States	Pennsylvania	Pittsburgh MSA	Allegheny County
White	63.4%	75.8%	84.1%	76.9%
Black or African American	12.4%	10.7%	7.9%	12.5%
Two or More Races	10.7%	6.1%	4.6%	5.2%
Asian	5.8%	3.7%	2.5%	4.1%
Some Other Race	6.6%	3.4%	0.9%	1.1%
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.9%	0.2%	0.1%	0.0%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	19.5%	8.9%	1.9%	3.0%
Total	332,387,540	12,986,518	2,443,921	1,240,476

Educational Attainment

Table 3 displays the educational attainment of the population (age 25 years and over) across the comparison geographies.⁵ Allegheny County has the largest percentage (43.2%) of individuals with a Bachelor's Degree or higher level of education compared to the region, state, and country. The United States and Pennsylvania have larger percentages of individuals without a high school education or its equivalent compared to Allegheny County and the Pittsburgh MSA.

Table 3. Educational Attainment

Highest Educational Attainment	United States	Pennsylvania	Pittsburgh MSA	Allegheny County
No High School Diploma or Equivalent	10.6%	8.1%	5.4%	4.5%
High School Graduate (includes equivalency)	26.2%	33.2%	31.4%	25.4%
Some College, No Degree	19.4%	15.3%	15.5%	15.3%
Associate's Degree	8.8%	8.9%	10.6%	10.0%
Bachelor's Degree	21.3%	20.6%	22.6%	26.0%
Graduate or Professional Degree	13.7%	13.9%	14.8%	18.8%
<i>Bachelor's Degree or Higher</i>	<i>35.0%</i>	<i>34.5%</i>	<i>37.4%</i>	<i>44.8%</i>
Population (25 years and over)	228,434,661	9,153,146	1,782,988	900,575

Household Income

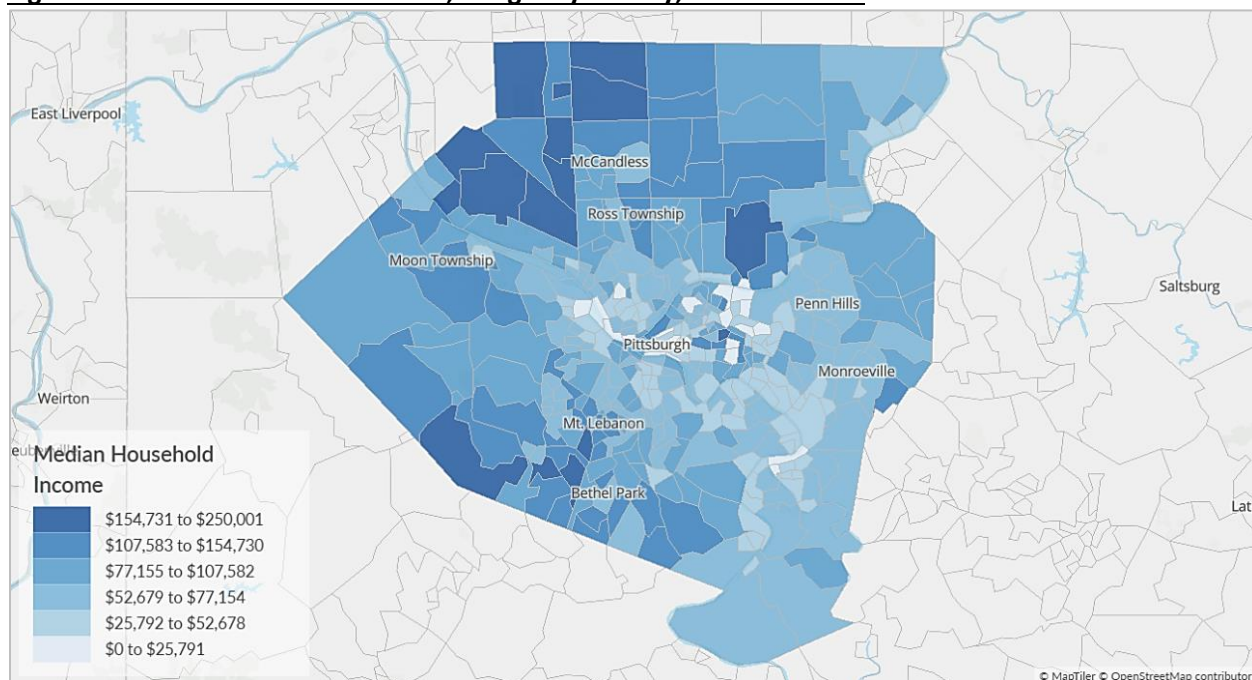
The median household income in Allegheny County is \$76,393, which is below the levels in the United States (\$78,538) and Pennsylvania (\$79,820), but above the median household income for the Pittsburgh MSA (\$65,894). Comparing ACS 2014-2018 and 2018-2023 5-year estimates, Allegheny County's median household income has increased by 22.6%. This is smaller than growth nationally (24.8%) and in Pennsylvania (23.1%), but a larger percent growth than in the Pittsburgh MSA overall (22.0%).⁶ **Figure 2** provides a map of the median household income in Allegheny County by U.S. Census tracts. The higher income levels are concentrated in the northeast and southern areas of Allegheny County along the county border, while the lower levels of income are in the center (City of Pittsburgh) and eastern portions of the

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

county.

Figure 2: Median Household Income, Allegheny County, Census Tracts⁷



Labor Force and Unemployment

Allegheny County is a driver of economic activity regionally and statewide. With a labor force of more than 626,000 people in November 2024, Allegheny County accounted for 53.5% of the total labor force in the Pittsburgh MSA and 9.8% of the labor force in Pennsylvania. The unemployment rate in Allegheny County was 3.2% in November 2024, which was below the unemployment rates in the Pittsburgh MSA, Pennsylvania, and the US.⁸

Table 4. Labor Force, Unemployment, and Employment (*Not Seasonally Adjusted*)

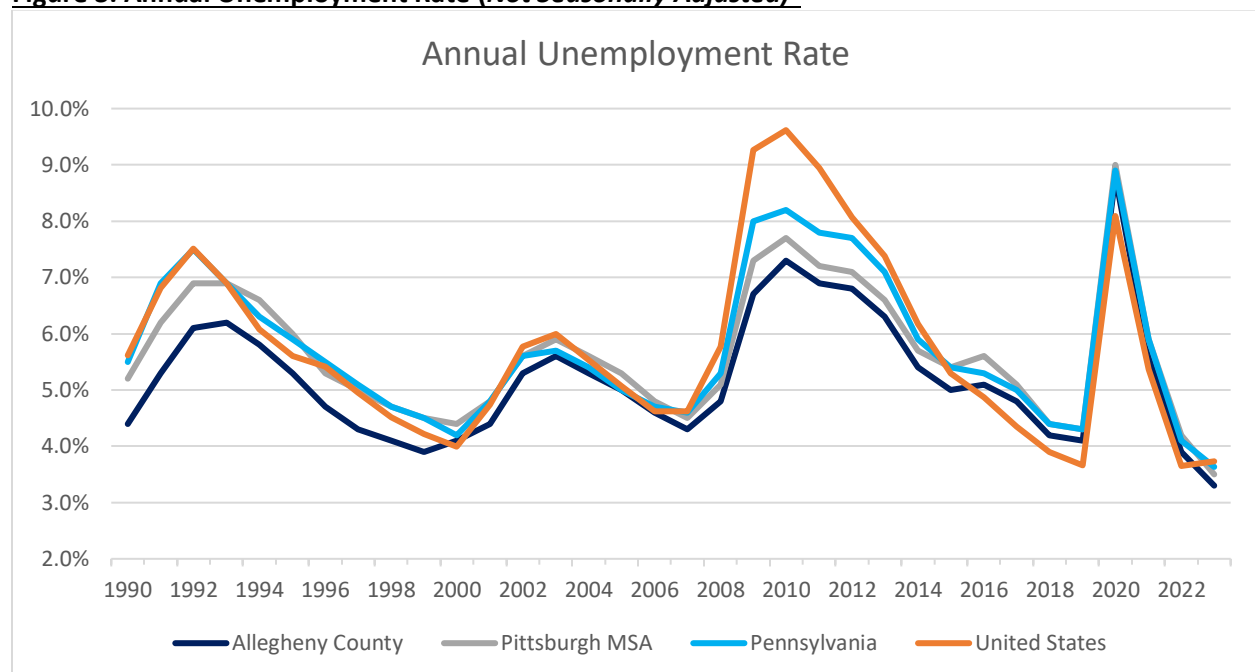
Labor Force and Unemployment	United States	Pennsylvania	Pittsburgh MSA	Allegheny County
Civilian Labor Force	168,547,000	6,531,351	1,181,220	630,451
<i>Labor Force Change (Jan. 2020 - Nov. 2024)</i>	2.5%	-0.7%	-3.7%	-3.3%
Employed	152,844,000	6,279,598	1,127,564	606,187
Unemployed	5,352,000	251,753	53,656	24,264
Unemployment Rate	4.2%	3.5%	4.5%	3.2%

⁷ U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) 2019-2023 5-Year Estimates. Retrieved from Lightcast; https://analyst.lightcast.io/analyst/?t=45n7J#h=mWDDz&page=community_indicators&vertical=edo&nation=us, - 1/15/2025.

⁸ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2025).

The unemployment rates across Allegheny County, the Pittsburgh MSA, Pennsylvania, and the U.S. have followed similar patterns over the past three decades, reflecting broader economic trends. Periods of economic downturn, such as the early 1990s recession, the early 2000s downturn, and the Great Recession of 2008-2009, show clear spikes in unemployment, with Pennsylvania and the U.S. often experiencing slightly higher peaks than Allegheny County. The most dramatic increase occurred in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, when unemployment rates skyrocketed as businesses shut down and layoffs surged. However, since then, unemployment has fallen sharply, reaching historically low levels in 2022 and beyond, indicating a strong labor market recovery. The unemployment rate in Allegheny County consistently trends slightly lower than the state and national averages, likely due to its diverse economy, strong healthcare and education sectors, and relatively stable job market.

Figure 3. Annual Unemployment Rate (Not Seasonally Adjusted)⁹



The size of the labor force in Allegheny County, Pittsburgh MSA, and Pennsylvania have not rebounded as quickly. **Figure 4** displays how the size of the labor force compares to the same month a year previous. Aside from April 2020-February 2021 and January 2024-August 2024, Allegheny County, the Pittsburgh MSA, and Pennsylvania have lagged behind the country for civilian labor force growth. This slower growth may be influenced by factors, such as stagnating population change, an aging workforce and accelerated retirements, migration trends, and other influences.

⁹ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2025), *Not Seasonally Adjusted*

Figure 4. Labor Force Percent Change from Previous Year (Jan 2020 – Nov 2024)

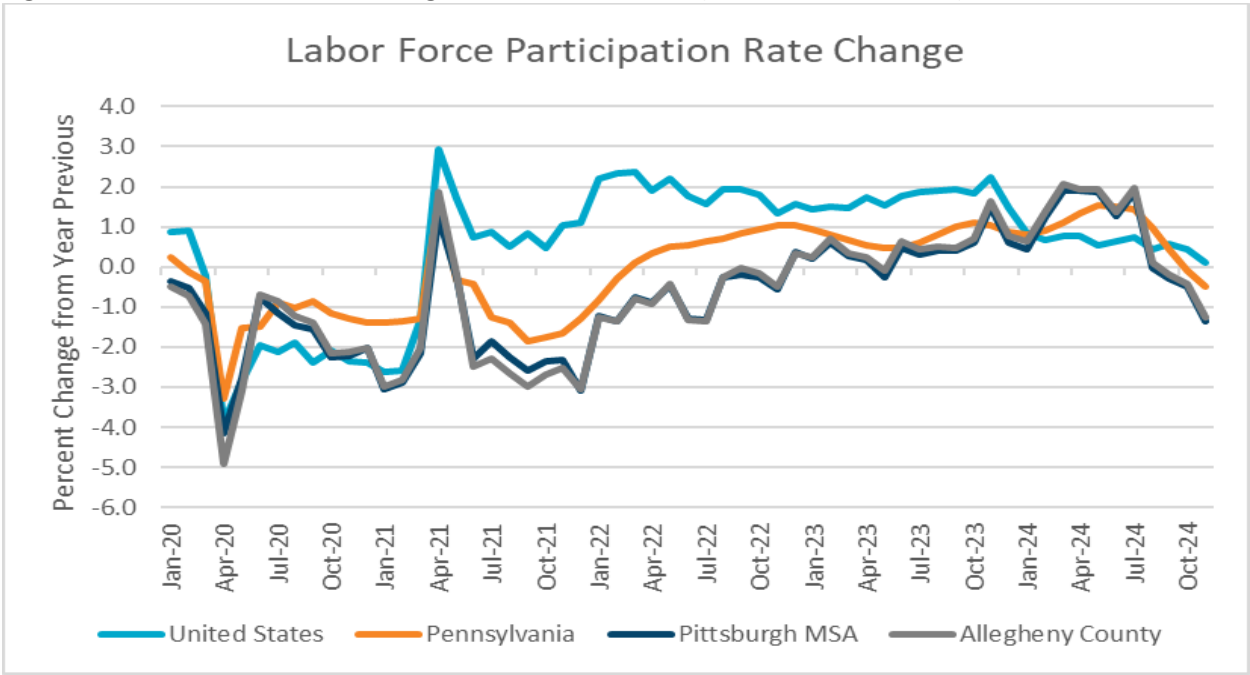
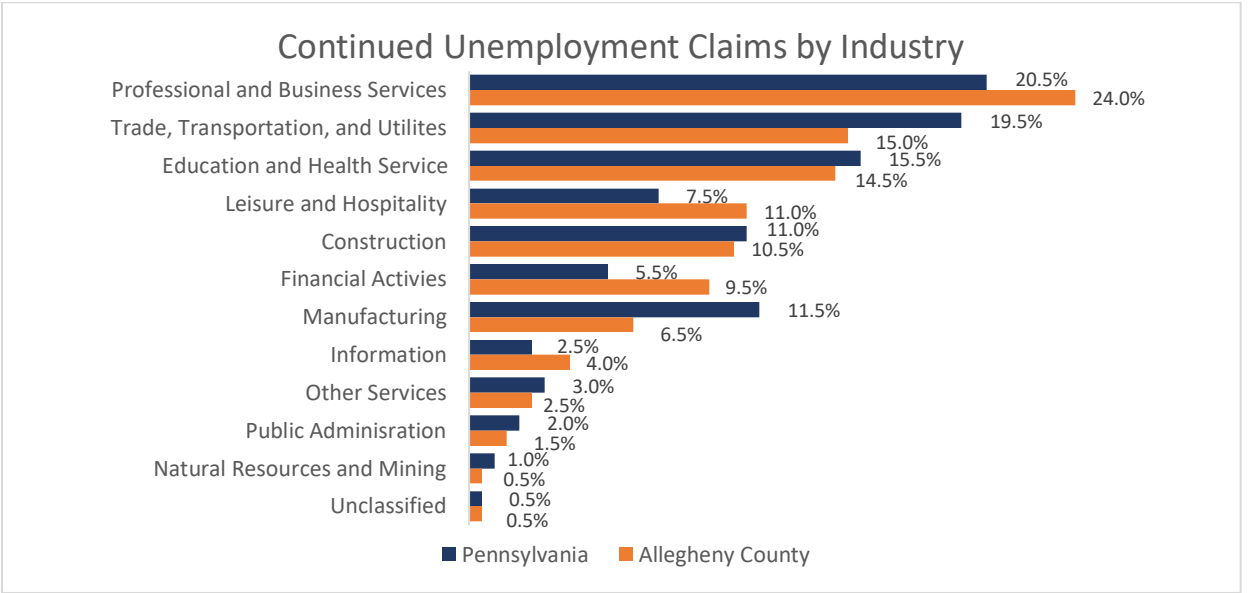


Figure 5 displays the percentage of continued Unemployment Compensation (UC) claims by industry for Allegheny County and Pennsylvania as of November 2024. Continued UC claims were heavily concentrated in Trade, Transportation, and Utilities; Professional and Business Services; Education and Health Services; and Leisure and Hospitality. These four industries accounted for more than 70% of continued claims in both Allegheny County and Pennsylvania.¹⁰

Figure 5. Unemployment Compensation, Continued Claims by Industry, November 2024



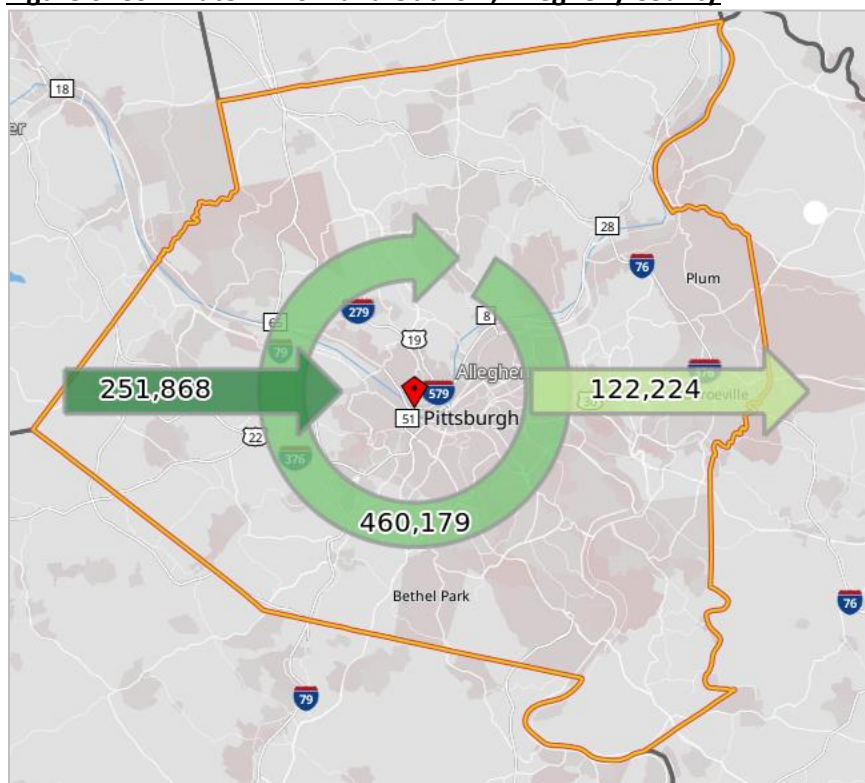
¹⁰ Center for Workforce Information & Analysis (CWIA), 2023.

Workforce Commute

Allegheny County and the City of Pittsburgh are a hub for labor market activity in the Pittsburgh region. **Figure 6** shows the inflow and outflow of private sector workers in Allegheny County. More individuals commute into Allegheny County for work than residents who commute from the County to outside locations for employment.¹¹

Regionally, while approximately 54.0% of workers in the Pittsburgh MSA live in Allegheny County, 63.0% of Pittsburgh MSA workers are employed there. An even greater difference exists between the percentage of Pittsburgh MSA workers living in the City of Pittsburgh (12.2%), compared to the percentage of Pittsburgh MSA workers who are working in the City of Pittsburgh (24.9%). **Figure 7** provides data on where Pittsburgh MSA workers are living versus where they are employed in the region.¹²

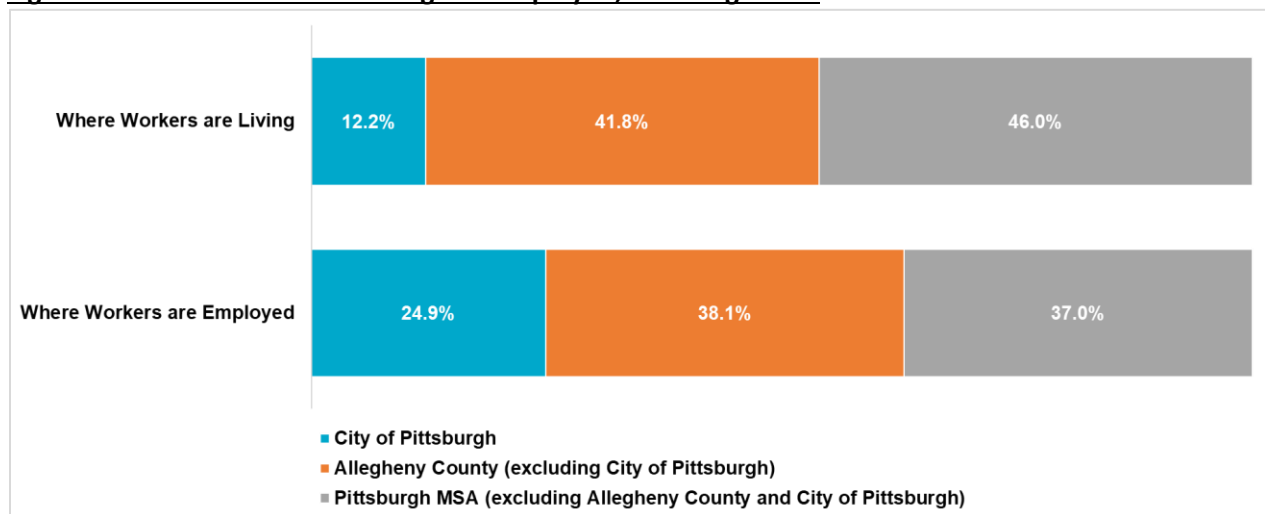
Figure 6. Commuter Inflow and Outflow, Allegheny County



¹¹ U.S. Census Bureau, On the Map, 2022.

¹² Ibid.

Figure 7. Where Workers are Living and Employed, Pittsburgh MSA



Populations with Barriers to Employment

In alignment with the vision of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), TRWDB prioritizes workforce development programming for populations, who have been historically marginalized or undeserved or have additional barriers to education and employment. Job seekers and workers within these population groups may require a more comprehensive set of employment and training services in combination with wraparound services (e.g., childcare, transportation, housing) to support retention and long-term outcomes for the customer. A list of key populations with barriers to education and employment is provided below along with data from Allegheny County.

Population	Data and Information
Low Income Individuals	ACS data indicate that 11.6% of residents in Allegheny County have lived below the federal poverty level in the past 12 months. This rate is higher for children (under 18) where 14.8% have lived below the poverty level. The poverty status also varies by race where 7.8% of white individuals have lived below the poverty level in the past 12 months compared to 22.9% of individuals who identified as a race other than white. ¹³
Single Parents	ACS data indicate that 26.8% of families led by a female householder, without a spouse present, lived below the poverty level within the past 12 months, compared to 8.1% of families overall. A report from Allegheny County Department of Human Services (ACDHS) discusses that households headed by single mothers are more likely to experience poverty than married couple households or households headed by single fathers.¹⁴ Nearly a third (32.3%) of children under the age of 18 in Allegheny County are living in a single parent household.¹⁵

¹³ U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) 2018-2023 5-Year Estimates.

¹⁴ Allegheny County Department of Human Services, Data Brief: Single Mothers in Allegheny County, March 2018. <https://www.alleghenycountyanalytics.us/index.php/2018/03/22/single-mothers-living-poverty/>.

¹⁵ U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) 2018-2023 5-Year Estimates.

Reentry Population	Employers may be hesitant to hire ex-offenders due to systemic bias.¹⁶ In 2023, there were 8,166 Allegheny County Jail bookings and 8,702 releases, with an average stay of 61 days. The Allegheny County Jail averaged 1,873 individuals each day in 2023. The jail population is mostly male (88%), Black or African American (64%) and between the ages of 25 and 44 (61%).¹⁷
Foster Care or Aging Out	An ACDHS analysis from 2020 demonstrated that youth in the child welfare system often do not fare as well as their counterparts who have not been in the child welfare system. The reasons are complex including a history of trauma, unstable housing, lack of family support, and others. These youth are more likely to access substance use disorder services, in-patient mental health services, or homelessness services. Further, youth aging out of the child welfare system were more likely to be arrested or convicted of a crime by age 21.¹⁸ On January 1, 2023, 1,251 children were in the Allegheny County foster care system.¹⁹ In 2021, over 1,200 students (or 0.8%) in Allegheny County's public schools were in foster care, higher than the Pennsylvania average of 11,854 or 0.7% of students.²⁰
Individuals with Disabilities	Clear differences exist in the employment and labor force statuses of people with and without a disability. In Allegheny County, 51.3% of individuals (16 or older) with a disability were in the labor force with an unemployment rate of 11.3%. In comparison, 71.8% of individuals in the same age range without a disability were in the labor force with an unemployment rate of 3.2%. The median earnings for individuals with a disability in Allegheny County are \$32,037, compared to \$49,973 for individuals without a disability.²¹
Pregnant or Parenting Youth	Teen pregnancy or childbearing can lead to increased social or economic costs for teen parents and their children²². Teenage mothers experience lower high school graduation rates compared to women who do not give birth during adolescence.²³ The children of teenage mothers are also more

¹⁶ H. Holzer, S. Raphael, and M. Stoll (2003). *Employment Barriers Facing Ex-Offenders*. Urban Institute.

¹⁷ Allegheny County Jail Population Management Dashboards, 2023.

¹⁸ Allegheny County Department of Human Services. Research Report: Youth Aging Out of the Child Welfare System: Analysis of Outcomes. January 2020.

¹⁹ Allegheny County Analytics, Point-in-Time Out-of-Home Placement.

<https://analytics.alleghenycounty.us/2021/01/07/child-welfare-placement-interactive-dashboard/>.

²⁰ "Students in Foster Care in Allegheny County: Analysis of New Enrollment Data." Research for Action. 2024.

²¹ U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) 2018-2023 5-Year Estimates.

²² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (November 2021). About Teen Pregnancy.

<https://www.cdc.gov/teenpregnancy/about/index.htm>. Retrieved 12/20/2022.

²³ Perper K, Peterson K, Manlove J. Diploma Attainment Among Teen Mothers. Child Trends, Fact Sheet Publication #2010-01: Washington, DC: Child Trends; 2010.

	likely to drop out of high school, be incarcerated at some point during adolescence, give birth as a teenager, and face unemployment as a young adult. ²⁴ The Pennsylvania Department of Health data (2018-2022) indicated that the birth rate in Allegheny County for teens ages 15 to 19 was 9.0 per 1,000 females, lower than that of Pennsylvania (12.3). ²⁵
Homelessness	ACDHS conducted a Point-in-Time (PIT) homeless count on January 30, 2024. Based on this PIT count, 1,026 individuals experiencing homelessness were identified, which was a 12.4% increase (113 individuals) compared to the count in 2023. The majority (84%) of these individuals were staying in emergency shelters, while 16% were unsheltered. ²⁶

1.2. Economic analysis - Describe strategic planning elements including a regional analysis of economic conditions.

More than half (53.0%) of jobs in Allegheny County are concentrated in the largest five industries. These include Healthcare and Social Assistance; Retail Trade; Government; Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services; and Accommodation and Food Services. Employment has experienced notable declines across multiple industries, with total employment decreasing by 4.3% from 2019 to 2024 and projected to decline another 2.1% by 2029. Stagnant population growth in Allegheny County has contributed to a decline in employed workers by limiting the available labor force and reducing the influx of new talent. With fewer young residents entering the workforce and an aging population retiring, businesses may struggle to find employees, hindering economic growth and job creation.

The largest amount of job growth is projected to occur in Healthcare and Social Assistance, and Educational Services. Both of these industries are projected to add 1,000+ jobs between 2024-2029. The largest amount of job loss is projected to occur in Finance and Insurance; Retail Trade; Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services; Wholesale Trade; and Government. Each of these industries is projected to lose 1,200+ jobs over the five-year period. **Table 5** displays industry employment and projected job growth data for Allegheny County.²⁷

²⁴ Hoffman SD. Kids Having Kids: Economic Costs and Social Consequences of Teen Pregnancy. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute Press; 2008.

²⁵ PA Department of Health (2022). Allegheny County Profile.

<https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/HealthStatistics/VitalStatistics/CountyHealthProfiles/Documents/current/allegheny.aspx>.

²⁶ Allegheny County Department of Human Services (2024). Census of Unhoused People.

<https://analytics.alleghenycounty.us/2022/09/07/point-in-time-count-of-people-experiencing-homelessness-annual-reports/>.

²⁷ Lightcast 2024.4

Table 5. Industry Employment and Projected Growth, Allegheny County

Industry	2024 Jobs	Past Employment Change (2019-2024)	Projected Employment Change (2024-2029)
Health Care and Social Assistance	132,389	-3.7%	1.1%
Government	65,851	-2.1%	-3.4%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	64,458	-7.0%	-2.6%
Retail Trade	64,450	-3.2%	-6.3%
Accommodation and Food Services	59,171	-4.7%	1.2%
Educational Services	56,249	-0.3%	2.8%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	36,736	-21.3%	-2.5%
Finance and Insurance	36,305	-7.4%	-18.2%
Manufacturing	35,595	-3.8%	-2.2%
Construction	35,437	-1.8%	-2.1%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	32,411	-10.8%	-6.5%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	29,811	3.8%	3.0%
Transportation and Warehousing	23,281	13.2%	1.1%
Wholesale Trade	17,523	-8.1%	-10.1%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	16,388	-3.8%	5.8%
Information	12,507	-7.9%	-2.7%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	11,822	5.7%	0.2%
Utilities	2,914	7.9%	-3.4%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	938	-52.5%	-9.7%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	859	70.9%	22.3%
Total	735,097	-4.3%	-2.1%

Occupations and Projected Growth

Allegheny County's five largest occupational clusters account for 44.1% of jobs in the area. These include Office and Administrative Support; Healthcare Practitioners and Technical; Sales and Related; Food Preparation and Serving Related; and Business and Financial Operations.

The largest amount of job growth between 2024-2029 is projected to occur within Food Preparation and Serving Related; Healthcare Support; Personal Care and Service; Management; and Computer and Mathematical occupations. Together, these five occupations are projected to add 7,300+ jobs during the five-year period. The largest amount of job loss is projected to occur within Office and Administrative Support; Sales and Related; Production; Business and Financial Operations; and Installation, Maintenance, and Repair occupations. Collectively, these occupations are projected to lose over 15,000 jobs between 2024-2029. **Table 6** shows employment and projected growth by occupation in Allegheny County.²⁸

²⁸ Lightcast 2024.4.

Table 6. Employment and Projected Growth by Occupation, Allegheny County

Description	2024 Jobs	Past Employment Change (2019-2024)	Projected Employment Change (2024-2029)
Office and Administrative Support	95,422	-14.2%	-8.3%
Food Preparation and Serving Related	59,348	-6.0%	-0.2%
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	58,717	-7.1%	0.1%
Sales and Related	56,127	-14.7%	-6.5%
Management	54,820	26.0%	-0.9%
Business and Financial Operations	50,570	8.1%	-3.3%
Transportation and Material Moving	48,669	4.7%	-1.5%
Educational Instruction and Library	48,481	0.2%	0.2%
Healthcare Support	39,048	-4.8%	4.7%
Construction and Extraction	29,089	-2.4%	-1.9%
Production	25,766	-8.7%	-4.5%
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	25,522	-4.6%	-3.5%
Computer and Mathematical	24,575	-16.1%	-0.6%
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	22,819	-3.5%	-0.3%
Personal Care and Service	21,644	-10.6%	2.8%
Protective Service	15,756	-3.1%	-2.8%
Community and Social Service	15,049	-2.1%	0.5%
Architecture and Engineering	13,379	-13.9%	-0.8%
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	13,377	0.6%	0.6%
Legal	7,861	-8.1%	-4.3%
Life, Physical, and Social Science	7,000	-10.3%	1.9%
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	566	1.0%	8.3%
Total	735,097	-4.6%	-2.1%

Employment Concentration (Location Quotients)

Location Quotients are 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 the Bureau of Economic Analysis, location quotients measure a region's industrial specialization compared to a larger region (in this case, the nation). The location quotients for the 2024 key industry clusters as delineated by Lightcast are provided in **Table 7** for the U.S., Pennsylvania, and Allegheny County.²⁹

Comparatively, the data indicates Allegheny County is more concentrated than the nation or the state in the following areas: Educational Services; Management of Companies and Enterprises; Health Care and Social Assistance; Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation; Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services; Finance and Insurance; Utilities; and Other Services (except Public Administration).

²⁹ Ibid.

Table 7. Location Quotient Comparisons for U.S., Pennsylvania, and Allegheny County³⁰

NAICS Title	US	Pennsylvania	Allegheny County
Educational Services	1	1.70	3.03
Management of Companies and Enterprises	1	1.51	2.71
Health Care and Social Assistance	1	1.29	1.37
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1	1.00	1.24
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	1	0.94	1.23
Finance and Insurance	1	1.11	1.21
Utilities	1	1.02	1.17
Other Services (except Public Administration)	1	1.01	1.02
Accommodation and Food Services	1	0.86	0.97
Retail Trade	1	0.99	0.94
Information	1	0.81	0.92
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1	0.73	0.91
Construction	1	0.86	0.84
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	1	0.83	0.73
Transportation and Warehousing	1	1.16	0.72
Wholesale Trade	1	0.93	0.66
Manufacturing	1	1.14	0.63
Government	1	0.75	0.63
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	1	0.96	0.37
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	1	0.66	0.10

Industry Partnership and Sector Strategies

Through labor market research and strategic employer engagement, TRWDB identifies priority industries for partnership. Our organization has currently established partnerships across six industries—Clean Energy, Construction, Financial Services, Healthcare, Information Technology, and Manufacturing—facilitating collaboration among businesses, training providers, the PA CareerLink® system, and other key stakeholders to assess hiring trends, and respond to skill shortages and other workforce challenges. By tapping into industry expertise, these partnerships enable the development of targeted workforce solutions, such as specialized training programs and career pathway initiatives, that enhance the talent pipeline and drive regional economic growth. This collaborative approach ensures that local job seekers gain the necessary skills and credentials to meet employer needs while advancing opportunities in high-growth sectors. The following are examples of employer-driven training programs that have been developed from industry partnership efforts:

- **Clean Energy:** TRWDB and the Southwest Corner Workforce Development Board provided funding to develop the curriculum for the first *Electric Vehicle Automotive Technician*

³⁰ Ibid.

Apprenticeship Program in the country. This program, implemented in partnership between the Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC) and the Pittsburgh Chapter of the German American Chamber of Commerce (GACC) will combine hands-on, full-time paid training with technical instruction, preparing workers for high-demand roles at dealerships, independent garages, and other related businesses.

- **Construction:** *PIT2Work* is a five-week, no-cost pre-apprenticeship training program designed to prepare individuals for careers in the construction trades. Hosted by Pittsburgh International Airport in partnership with TRWDB and Pittsburgh Gateways, the program offers participants hands-on experience at the new terminal construction site, industry certifications, one-on-one mentoring, and connections to local trade unions. Participants also receive a daily stipend and accessible shuttle service to and from the airport.
- **Financial Services:** *BankWork\$* is an eight-week, no-cost training program that prepares students for entry-level positions in retail banking, such as tellers, customer service representatives, and personal bankers. Developed in collaboration with TRWDB, the Pennsylvania Bankers Association, and several regional financial institutions, the program offers participants technical skills training, soft-skills development, coaching, mentoring, and interview preparation.
- **Healthcare:** *Freedom House 2.0* is a six-week, no-cost program that trains individuals from underserved communities for careers in healthcare. Developed in collaboration with UPMC Health Plan, TRWDB, and other partners the program offers participants instruction in basic anatomy and physiology, CPR, first aid, mental health first aid, and other public health topics. Participants receive a stipend, transportation assistance, and mentorship, with successful graduates guaranteed an interview with UPMC and other job placement support. This initiative builds upon the legacy of the original Freedom House Ambulance Service from the 1960s, aiming to diversify the healthcare workforce and improve community health outcomes.

TRWDB has also collaborated with our industry partners to establish several healthcare-focused registered apprenticeships in the Pittsburgh region, high-quality “earn-while-you-learn” training models that create pathways to careers in the industry. These include:

- Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)
 - Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)
 - Environmental Services (EVS)
 - Dietary & Food Services
 - Ophthalmic Technician
 - Surgical Tech
 - Facilities Maintenance Technician (FMT)
- **Technology:** *Apprenti PGH* is a technology-focused apprenticeship program which creates pathways into the tech industry. Developed in collaboration with the Pittsburgh Technology Council's nonprofit arm, FortyX80, TRWDB, and other partners, the program combines 12 to 14 weeks of paid technical training with a year of paid on-the-job experience, covering roles such as software analyst and web developer. Participants receive a stipend during classroom instruction and a salary during their apprenticeship, with all training costs covered by employer partners and grants.

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

Through robust labor market research, and feedback from our industry partnerships and employer engagement initiatives, TRWDB identifies in-demand skills and credentials and works with our partners to tailor training programs to meet labor market demands. By engaging directly with employers, TRWDB and our training partners can develop curricula that reflect real-world job requirements, incorporate industry-recognized certifications, and offer hands-on experience. This alignment enhances workforce readiness, improves job placement rates, and supports regional economic growth by ensuring a steady pipeline of skilled workers in high-demand fields.

The data presented in **Figure 8** for Allegheny County indicate that there are more individuals who have attended some college, received an associate degree, bachelor's degree, or a graduate degree than there are positions that demand those levels of education. Moreover, there are more positions requiring no formal education or a high school degree than there are portions of the population with the same level of educational attainment.³¹ While these data are a helpful starting point, they are only part of the story. TRWDB works closely with employers to identify skills and credentials necessary for jobs that go beyond general post-secondary degree categories.

Figure 8. Allegheny County Educational Attainment and Typical Education Requirements for Allegheny County Jobs (2023)

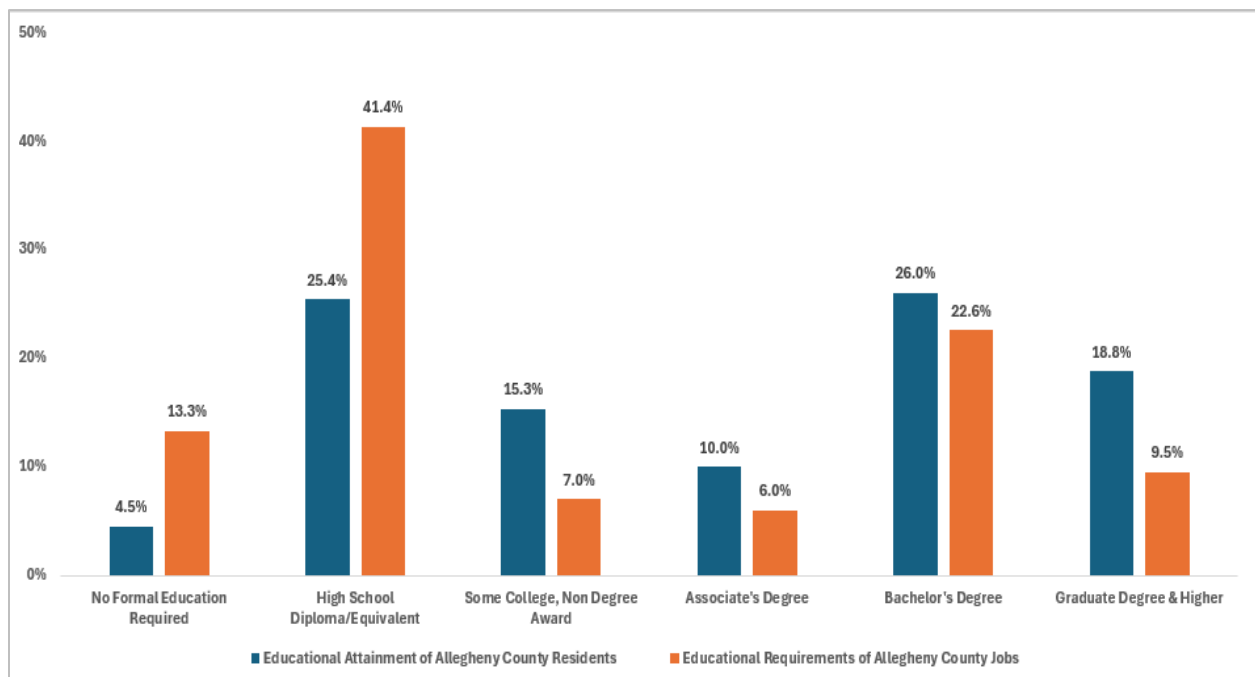


Figure 9 below shows the top 10 foundational skills in demand based on the number of online job postings in Allegheny County during 2024. Communication is the most sought-after skill, appearing in 78,900 postings, followed by customer service (56,046) and management (51,019). Other key skills include sales,

³¹ Lightcast 2024.4.

operations, leadership, problem-solving, and attention to detail, reflecting the need for both interpersonal and analytical abilities. Writing and planning, though lower on the list, remain essential for effective communication and strategic thinking. These skills are valued across industries, helping employees adapt, collaborate, and contribute to workplace success.

Figure 9. Top Foundational Skills by Number of Online Postings, Allegheny County (2024)

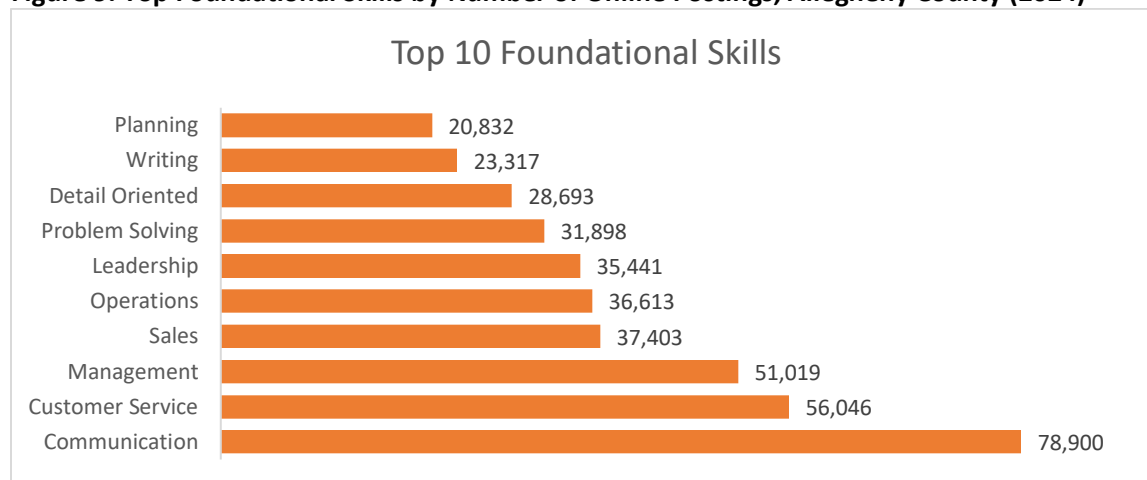


Figure 10 highlights the top 10 specialized skills in demand based on online job postings in Allegheny County during 2024. Nursing leads the list with 17,523 postings, followed by project management (15,674) and marketing (12,810), reflecting the need for expertise in healthcare, business operations, and business marketing. Other key skills include merchandising, auditing, selling techniques, accounting, data analysis, CPR, and finance, demonstrating demand across healthcare, finance, and business sectors. These specialized skills are critical for roles requiring technical knowledge and industry-specific expertise, helping professionals meet job-specific requirements and advance in their careers.

Figure 10. Top Specialized Skills by Number of Online Postings, Allegheny County (2024)



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

The Greater Pittsburgh Region benefits from a diverse and robust post-secondary education landscape, with 70+ universities and post-secondary institutions, which annually confer 45,000 degrees and certifications.³² While there are ample opportunities for individuals to access training and earn credentials, continuous improvement is essential. Strengthening workforce development efforts requires deeper employer engagement in work-based learning strategies, better integration of adult education with occupational training, and expanded efforts to foster a culture of lifelong learning across the region.

Workforce Development System Analysis

TRWDB oversees a local workforce system that is universally accessible, customer-centered, and focused on employer and job-driven training. Training is supported through a robust Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), which includes entities with a strong track record of connecting participants to quality employment. In addition, TRWDB offers accessible and flexible work-based training options, such as on-the-job training, customized training, and incumbent worker training. To further support workforce needs, TRWDB contracts directly with training providers to facilitate cohort-based training programs that prepare individuals for jobs in high-demand sectors and occupations. The following provides a list of training options available to eligible PA CareerLink® customers. Greater detail on how these different categories of training are delivered is available in **Section 3.8** of this plan.

- **Individual Training Accounts (ITA):** ITAs provide eligible individuals with funding to cover tuition and related costs for approved training programs. Participants can select training from an Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), ensuring they gain skills aligned with employer demand.
- **On-the-Job Training (OJT):** OJT programs reimburse employers for a portion of the wages paid to new hires while they receive hands-on training in the workplace. This approach helps businesses offset training costs while equipping workers with the skills needed for long-term employment.
- **Customized Job Training (CJT):** Designed to meet specific employer needs, customized training is developed in partnership with businesses to train workers for specialized roles. Employers typically share in the training costs and commit to hiring successful participants.
- **Incumbent Worker Training (IWT):** IWT helps businesses upskill their existing workforce to improve productivity, retain employees, and remain competitive. This training is often used to prevent layoffs, support career advancement, or introduce new technologies or processes.
- **Industry-Recognized Training Pipeline (IRTP):** Provides a menu of training options aligned with employer needs in high-demand industries. These programs are competitively procured, ensuring that selected training providers meet high standards for quality and effectiveness. To participate, providers must demonstrate strong employer partnerships and a clear pathway to employment, including industry-recognized credentials and direct hiring commitments.
- **Registered Apprenticeships (RA) and Pre-Apprenticeships (Pre-RA):** An RA is a structured, employer-driven training program that combines paid on-the-job learning with classroom

³² Pittsburgh Regional Alliance (2025)

instruction, leading to industry-recognized credentials and long-term career opportunities. A Pre-RA serves as a pipeline into these programs, providing foundational skills and hands-on experience to prepare individuals for success in a full apprenticeship. TRWDB continues to expand apprenticeship opportunities in high-growth sectors such as healthcare, technology, and clean energy. See **Section 1.2** for a list of examples.

The PA CareerLink® system takes a person-centered approach to workforce services, tailoring career and training support to each job seeker's needs. While some individuals may only require self-service tools or basic career services—such as job listings, labor market information, and referrals—others may need more comprehensive, individualized support. Individualized services can include skills assessments, career planning, and the development of an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) to guide job seekers toward sustainable employment. There is no required sequence of services before a job seeker can access training. Instead, eligibility for training is determined through an interview, assessment, and suitability evaluation to ensure it is necessary for employment or career advancement. Additionally, supportive services are available in accordance with TRWDB's *Supportive Services Policy* to help individuals fully participate in WIOA-funded programs and activities.

PA CareerLink® sites in Allegheny County/Pittsburgh continue to expand access to career services by offering a blend of virtual and in-person options to reach more job seekers. These services include online learning tools like SkillUp™ PA for short-term upskilling, remote and in-person career counseling, business services support, and interactive workshops. Career services are seamlessly integrated into upskilling opportunities, whether delivered in-person or remotely. In addition to expanding virtual access, PA CareerLink® leverages partnerships with libraries, community-based organizations, and other local partners to bring career services directly into communities, ensuring that more individuals—especially those facing barriers to access—can connect with employment and training opportunities. TRWDB remains committed to growing these efforts to reach underserved populations and enhance workforce accessibility.

Youth Workforce Development Activities

TRWDB braids Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Youth Development Funds with WIOA Youth funds to create a workforce development system that serves in-school and out-of-school young adults facing employment barriers. Programs are designed to align with WIOA's vision and best practices, ensuring that youth have access to work-based learning, career exploration, and skills training that prepare them for long-term success. Through a competitive procurement process, TRWDB invests in community-based providers that offer hands-on career experiences and pathways to employment or postsecondary education. These programs follow two primary models:

- Career Exploration and Experience – Youth engage with local employers through internships, cooperative education, job shadowing, summer jobs, paid or unpaid work experience, and pre-apprenticeships to explore various career paths and gain early exposure to the workforce.
- Pathways to Employment or Postsecondary Education – Youth participate in training programs, earn industry-recognized credentials, and gain work experience leading directly to employment or continued education.

Programs serve eligible youth ages 14-24, including high school and college students with barriers to employment, young people who have dropped out and need career transition support, and unemployed or underemployed young adults seeking career advancement. Participants receive individualized support

aligned with the 14 WIOA Youth Program Elements, including work experience, training, career counseling, mentorship, leadership development, financial literacy, and wraparound services to help them achieve their goals.

To expand work experience opportunities, TRWDB also administers Learn & Earn, a summer youth employment initiative in partnership with Allegheny County, the City of Pittsburgh, and a network of local organizations. This program provides disadvantaged youth with paid work experience, project-based learning, and career readiness training in high-demand industries. Since 2014, the Learn & Earn program and a dedicated network of providers, application support centers, worksites, funders, and businesses in Allegheny County have served nearly 12,800 young people who have earned more than \$13 million in wages.

More details on TRWDB's youth workforce development strategies and programming are available in **Section 3.4** of this plan.

Registered Apprenticeships

TRWDB is committed to expanding registered apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship opportunities by partnering with employers, training providers, and Pennsylvania's Apprenticeship & Training Office (ATO). Collaboration with the Western Region Apprenticeship & Training Representative (ATR) ensures partners stay informed about apprenticeship resources, funding opportunities, and best practices, while TRWDB continues to pursue additional funding to support expansion.

In December 2022, TRWDB was awarded funding through the PA Department of Labor & Industry Apprenticeship Building America (ABA) grant. Through this grant, TRWDB will lead the Allegheny County Apprenticeship Expansion Project and focus efforts on supporting apprenticeship in five key industries in the region: Construction, Financial Services, Information Technology, Healthcare, and Manufacturing. The project will focus on three core activities: Development of a regional apprenticeship (RA) plan; Registration of new RA and Pre-RA programs; and Expansion of existing pre-RA and RA programs. Details from this work are available in **Section 3.8** and **Section 4.3** of this plan.

A searchable list of the current active registered apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships in the region is available [here](#).

Adult Basic Education and ESL Services

WIOA Title II Adult Education providers offer essential services that help individuals develop the foundational skills needed for workforce success and career advancement. These services include basic literacy and numeracy instruction, high school equivalency (GED and HiSET) preparation, English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction, digital literacy training, and job readiness education. Providers also support individuals through career counseling, workplace preparation, and contextualized learning programs that align with industry needs. Many programs are embedded within the PA CareerLink® system, ensuring seamless access to workforce development services, job training, and employment opportunities. By addressing skill gaps and providing targeted support, WIOA Title II Adult Education plays a critical role in helping individuals overcome employment barriers and successfully transition into the workforce or post-secondary education.

Coordination between workforce and adult education services is enhanced by cross-training of staff, program referrals, and co-enrollment, ensuring individuals receive seamless support. Additionally, WIOA Title II Adult Education is represented on the TRWDB Board, reinforcing its role as a core workforce partner and ensuring that education services align with regional workforce development strategies. TRWDB remains committed to maintaining strong partnership with Title II providers to enhance access to education and workforce opportunities for all job seekers.

Workforce Development System - Strengths and Challenges

Strengths of the workforce development system in Allegheny County and the City of Pittsburgh include strong partnerships that drive referrals to PA CareerLink® Pittsburgh/Allegheny County, robust industry partnerships that align workforce services with labor market demand, and a track record of securing competitive public and private funding to expand workforce system capacity. A diverse network of training providers and enhanced data analysis capabilities also support data-driven decision-making, ensuring services are responsive to workforce needs. Additionally, TRWDB actively collaborates with regional and national partners to advance workforce policy, develop innovative programs, and exchange best practices.

Challenges remain in coordinating services across the complex one-stop delivery system and WIOA partner programs. Data-sharing limitations across different systems can lead to fragmented service delivery and duplication of efforts, as non-WIOA programs often use separate tracking systems. Additionally, navigating a workforce ecosystem with a high number of small businesses, post-secondary institutions, and school districts makes employer and education engagement complex. To address these challenges, TRWDB will work with WIOA partners and the one-stop operator to strengthen system-wide coordination through regular partner meetings, cross-training, common intake processes, and improved business services collaboration. As the referral tool within Pennsylvania's workforce development system expands, it will further enhance coordination and referral tracking. The competitive procurement of a one-stop operator and the development of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) among partners will also support ongoing efforts to streamline processes and improve collaboration within the public workforce system. Furthermore, limited funding for workforce development programs restricts the ability of the workforce development system to effectively connect job seekers with employers' evolving talent needs. Without adequate funding, training programs struggle to scale, adapt to industry shifts, and provide the skills-based education necessary to close critical workforce gaps, leaving both workers and businesses at a disadvantage.

Section 1.5 details broader challenges facing the regional labor market. **Sections 4.1** and **4.2** will detail how TRWDB and our partner local boards in the Southwest Planning Region will foster stronger connections and collaboration between the workforce development and economic development systems in our region.

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

The labor market in Allegheny County and surrounding region continues to evolve, shaped by shifting workforce expectations, technological advancements, and demographic changes. To remain competitive and support regional economic growth, TRWDB's Board of Directors have identified the following priority workforce issues:

- **Remote Work and Talent Mobility:** The rise of remote and hybrid work has transformed hiring practices, allowing employers to recruit talent beyond traditional geographic boundaries and giving job seekers access to opportunities outside the region. While this flexibility benefits workers, it also presents challenges for local businesses seeking to retain talent. Employers must adapt to these changes by developing remote work policies and offering incentives that enhance job satisfaction and engagement.
- **Evolving Technology and Skills Gaps:** Employers across industries face increasing challenges in filling critical talent gaps due to a shortage of workers with 21st-century skills. As technology evolves rapidly, businesses risk productivity losses and slowed innovation unless they can access a workforce equipped with the latest competencies. To remain competitive, employers need education and training systems that are agile and responsive, ensuring curricula align with emerging industry needs—particularly in sectors like healthcare, technology, and advanced manufacturing. Expanding access to skills-based training programs and employer-driven credentialing initiatives will be essential to sustaining economic growth and meeting workforce demands.
- **Workforce Shortages and Changing Job Expectations:** The region continues to experience a declining workforce due to an aging population and challenges in retaining recent graduates. At the same time, job seekers now prioritize factors beyond salary, including benefits, career growth, work-life balance, and professional development opportunities. Employers must take a holistic approach to job quality, offering competitive wages alongside robust support systems to attract and retain talent in an increasingly competitive labor market.
- **Strengthening Education and Workforce Alignment:** Greater collaboration among workforce development organizations, K-12 schools, and higher education institutions is needed to prepare students for in-demand careers. Early exposure to career pathways, work-based learning experiences, and targeted investments in technical and vocational education can help young adults make informed career choices. Strengthening partnerships between employers and educators will ensure that training programs provide the skills and credentials necessary for graduates to succeed in the workforce.

Addressing these challenges requires a coordinated approach that brings together employers, educators, policymakers, and workforce development organizations. By investing in skills development, improving job quality, and fostering stronger industry partnerships, Allegheny County can build a more resilient and adaptable workforce to meet the demands of a rapidly changing economy.

A key focus of our work will be to increase access to quality jobs and career paths to those jobs not only for job seekers and new hires, but also for incumbent workers. Working with employers to train and upskill their current workforce can improve job opportunities and increase wages for existing employees, while also opening entry-level opportunities for new hires. TRWDB will continue to explore opportunities to support incumbent workers, including through our industry partnership efforts and coordination with other initiatives like WEDnetPA.

2020/2030 Next is Now: A 10 Year Vision of Vitality in the Pittsburgh Region, 2020

The Allegheny Conference on Community Development (ACCD) is a key regional economic development organization, which includes the Pittsburgh Regional Alliance, the Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of

Commerce, and the Economy League of Greater Pittsburgh. The ACCD service area aligns with the Southwest Pennsylvania WIOA Planning Region. ACCD released the report, *2020/2030 Next is Now: A 10 Year Vision of Vitality in the Pittsburgh Region*.³³ The development of report was led by a 35-member steering committee of regional leaders and was informed by obtaining feedback from 1,000 stakeholders in ACCD's 10-county region, as well as a summit of 1,000 stakeholders during summer 2019.

The report notes a key regional challenge is that the economy has experienced slow growth compared to statewide growth in Pennsylvania and growth nationally. The report emphasizes making economic growth a priority and sets three core goals:

- Thriving People: Improve the standard of living by 25% for all populations. This goal includes two components, average wage and per capita GDP.
- Quality of Place: Reduce greenhouse gas emissions to meet Paris Accord targets and implement strategies toward UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- Strong Economy: Double the projected job growth, resulting in 75,000 new jobs. This measure prioritizes job growth over GDP growth to factor in talent attraction targets.

ACCD outlines strategies for achieving the above goals, including but not limited to scaling talent attraction and retention efforts; removing barriers to opportunity to ensure people are not excluded from benefits of increased economic growth; and creating a regional investment and growth environment that encourages business investment, job creation, high quality of place and opportunity for all.

TRWDB continues to work closely with ACCD to achieve economic development and workforce development goals for the region. ACCD is a key partner in facilitating connections with employers in key industries to assess priorities and hiring needs, informing the development of workforce and training programs and supporting alignment with employer demand.

NOTE: TRWDB hosted community engagement meetings in May 2025 to inform our final WIOA Local Plan submitted to the Commonwealth. Feedback from these sessions can be found in Attachment 5 of this document.

³³ Allegheny Conference on Community Development, *2020/2030 Next is Now: A 10 Year Vision of Vitality in the Pittsburgh Region*, 2020

2. STRATEGIC PLANNING QUESTIONS: Vision and Goals

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

Regional Vision and Goals

The Three Rivers Workforce Development Board (TRWDB) is part of the Southwest WIOA Planning Region, which includes TRWDB, Southwest Corner WDB, Tri-County WDB, and Westmoreland-Fayette WDB. Our region shares the Governor's vision of serving Pennsylvania's residents and businesses through the creation of a skilled workforce. We embrace the priority goals outlined in Pennsylvania's WIOA Combined State Plan, with their focus on 1.) Apprenticeship and Career & Technical Education; 2.) Sector Strategies and Employer Engagement; 3.) Youth; 4.) Continuous Improvement of the PA CareerLink® System; 5.) Barrier Remediation; and 6.) Addressing Workforce Shortages of Critical Industries.

Through a collaborative regional planning process, the local boards in the Southwest Planning Region have established the following workforce development goals for the region:

- **Recovery and Resilience:** Our region will increase its ability to sustain and recover from economic shocks by integrating employers into the development of a strong network of short- to mid-length training programs and stackable credentials. This system will be better able to react in real-time to employer and community needs. We have developed a wide range of partnerships to support diverse job opportunities and are focused on industries which will drive the regional economy. Together, we will ensure these industries have the talent available to continue to lead the local economy. We will codify lessons learned and understand why some interventions work better in some industries than in others. These lessons will prepare the system for responding to future shocks.
- **Increasing Opportunities for People facing Systemic Barriers:** Our region will work to increase training and employment opportunities for individuals facing systemic barriers to employment, with a focus on serving disadvantaged communities. Partnering with regional workforce development organizations, we will address both the supply and demand sides of the labor market—ensuring job seekers receive the necessary support during and after training while encouraging employers to establish accessible career pathways. We will enhance recruitment efforts and prioritize helping individuals overcome barriers and ensure training programs are within reach.
- **Improved Workforce Development System:** Our region will focus on continuous improvements to the existing workforce development system infrastructure, while developing a more cohesive regional workforce development network and creating significant workforce training opportunities aligned with industry demand.
- **Career Pathways and Talent Pipeline Development:** This will be addressed through an emphasis on building pathways into a wide variety of high-demand occupations, accessible without a 4-year

college degree, through short-term training, apprenticeship, and other work-based training opportunities. As an example, the local boards in the Southwest Planning Region will support our partners in the Southwestern Pennsylvania New Economy Collaborative on an initiative to grow the region's existing robotics and AI-related workforce training portfolio to reach beyond the typical urban core and Tier 1 universities, where it is currently concentrated. This initiative is being funded through the U.S. EDA Build Back Better program.

TRWDB Vision and Goals

Locally, TRWDB has set a mission, vision, and goals for the workforce development system in our area in alignment with the Governor's goals and goal established regionally.

Vision:

- TRWDB envisions a thriving and prosperous community, where all residents have access to expansive career opportunities and all businesses have access to a talented workforce.

Mission:

- To develop a thriving workforce, TRWDB drives and delivers strategic investments, provides expertise, and creates opportunities for businesses, job seekers, agencies, and policymakers in Allegheny County and the City of Pittsburgh.

To advance its mission, TRWDB has identified four key strategic priorities:

1.) Advance and deliver effective and user-centered programs that build a stronger regional workforce: TRWDB aims to enhance, expand, and innovate workforce programs to improve outcomes for job seekers, businesses, and regional workforce partners. Key strategies include:

- Ensuring services and programs produce valuable and meaningful outcomes for employers, jobseekers, and partner organizations.
- Building processes and making programmatic decisions based on data, customer feedback, and established research.
- Strengthening the integration, coordination, and accessibility of local workforce services.

TRWDB is committed to strengthening workforce programs by implementing data-driven strategies that enhance service delivery and improve outcomes for job seekers and employers. Our organization will codify and promote best practices in workforce development by analyzing successful models and ensuring service providers adopt proven methods. Additionally, TRWDB will expand career exploration and work-based learning opportunities for youth by leveraging WIOA Youth and TANF Youth Development Program (YDP) funds to connect transition-aged individuals with apprenticeships, internships, and other hands-on training experiences. To better align workforce services with employer needs, TRWDB will establish a structured framework to assess workforce practices across industries, ensuring training programs are directly responsive to business demands. Furthermore, employer-based training initiatives such as on-the-job training and registered apprenticeships will be developed to support businesses in hiring and upskilling workers.

In addition to enhancing workforce training, TRWDB will focus on building a data-driven decision-making process that strengthens workforce system coordination. This includes gathering employer, provider, and

job seeker feedback to inform program improvements and set quality assurance benchmarks to evaluate effectiveness. TRWDB will also expand our use of workforce data analytics, developing dashboards that synthesize labor market insights and performance metrics to guide strategic investments. Furthermore, TRWDB aims to increase accessibility and integration of workforce services by co-locating programs within PA CareerLink® centers and affiliated sites, reducing logistical barriers for job seekers. To improve coordination among service providers, TRWDB will develop referral networks and partnerships with employers, training institutions, and workforce agencies, ensuring a seamless pathway for job seekers from training to employment.

2.) Convening and Influencing Workforce Leaders to support data-informed decision-making and fieldwide innovation: TRWDB will take a leadership role in regional workforce decision-making by:

- Conducting research and analysis to track emerging trends and be the preeminent information source on regional workforce development.
- Informing and advising the region on emerging research, data, trends, and evidence-based practices.
- Influencing cross-sector relationships and strategic collaboration in service of a more cohesive and effective workforce system.

TRWDB is focused on leveraging data and collaboration to drive workforce innovation and improve decision-making across the region. To achieve this, TRWDB will conduct research and analysis to track emerging labor market trends, ensuring that businesses, policymakers, and workforce providers have access to real-time insights. By gathering and documenting employer and job seeker needs, TRWDB will develop data-driven workforce strategies that align with regional economic demands. Additionally, TRWDB will monitor national workforce trends and best practices to identify innovative approaches that can be adapted locally. These efforts will position TRWDB as a leading source of workforce information, enabling stakeholders to make informed decisions about training programs, hiring needs, and workforce policies .

Beyond research, TRWDB will actively inform and engage stakeholders by organizing industry forums, publishing workforce reports, and expanding outreach efforts. These initiatives will provide businesses, educators, and policymakers with up-to-date workforce data, tools, and best practices to strengthen regional workforce planning. To foster collaboration, TRWDB will facilitate cross-sector partnerships among employers, training providers, and community organizations, ensuring workforce solutions are developed through coordinated efforts. The organization will also host employer engagement sessions and strategic planning discussions to align workforce investments with industry needs. Through these initiatives, TRWDB aims to create a more cohesive and efficient workforce development system, where key stakeholders work together to address employment challenges and strengthen the regional economy.

3.) Expand our name recognition, credibility, and value proposition among our key partners: TRWDB seeks to increase its visibility, credibility, and impact within the workforce system by:

- Creating and implementing a business-to-business communications strategy to generate brand recognition and understanding of our offerings and expertise.
- Deepening our credibility among key partners.
- Building the infrastructure and capacity to amplify our efforts and value to the field.

TRWDB is committed to expanding our visibility, credibility, and impact as a leading workforce development authority in the region. To achieve this, TRWDB will develop and implement a comprehensive communications strategy to enhance recognition among businesses, policymakers, and community partners. This includes creating targeted messaging, service descriptions, and outreach materials that clearly define TRWDB's role and the value of its workforce initiatives. Additionally, TRWDB will increase media engagement by positioning leadership and board members as trusted experts in workforce development, ensuring broader public awareness of available programs and services . Beyond branding and communications, TRWDB aims to strengthen relationships with key partners and stakeholders by showcasing the outcomes and impact of our workforce programs. This involves increasing direct engagement with business executives, policymakers, and community leaders through regular outreach, strategic meetings, and participation on local boards. By fostering these relationships, TRWDB will reinforce its role as a trusted workforce advisor and resource. Additionally, our organization will expand internal capacity to support our outreach efforts by investing in our communications team, training board members to serve as workforce ambassadors, and streamlining internal processes to improve responsiveness. These efforts will ensure that TRWDB remains a go-to resource for workforce development solutions while continuing to strengthen partnerships that drive economic growth and employment opportunities

4.) Bolster our organizational infrastructure to support innovative programs and sustainable impact: To sustain long-term impact, TRWDB will enhance its internal operations, funding strategies, and workforce capacity by:

- Increasing unrestricted funding.
- Bolstering fiscal and programmatic integrity.
- Becoming an exemplary employer in the region.
- Building the TRWDB team's capacity.

TRWDB is dedicated to strengthening our organizational infrastructure to support long-term workforce innovation and sustainability. To achieve this, we will diversify funding streams by exploring fee-for-service models, expanding philanthropic partnerships, and seeking additional grants to sustain and scale workforce initiatives. By increasing unrestricted funding, we will have greater flexibility to invest in new workforce strategies and emerging industry needs. Additionally, we will enhance financial oversight and compliance measures to ensure that all workforce investments meet funding requirements and maintain high accountability standards.

To further improve our operational effectiveness, TRWDB will streamline internal processes and strengthen team collaboration by fostering a more integrated work environment. We will invest in staff development through professional training opportunities, ensuring that our team has the skills and expertise needed to drive workforce innovation. Additionally, we will evaluate and refine our organizational structure to optimize efficiency and support long-term growth. As an employer, we will prioritize strategies to attract and retain top talent, including regular assessments of compensation and benefits. These efforts will enable TRWDB to operate as a high-performing workforce leader, ensuring we can continue delivering high-quality services to job seekers, employers, and community partners.

2.2. Negotiated levels of performance - What are the local levels of performance that have

been negotiated with the governor and chief elected officials? How will the local board's goals relate to the achievement of these measures?

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) establishes a common set of performance measures to evaluate the effectiveness of workforce programs in helping job seekers gain employment, improve earnings, and develop valuable skills while ensuring that businesses can access the talent they need. These measures provide a standardized framework for assessing program success across states and local workforce boards. The WIOA performance measures include:

- **Employment Rate 2Q (Post-Exit):** The percentage of program participants employed (or employed or in post-secondary education for WIOA Youth) during the second quarter after program exit.
- **Employment Rate 4Q (Post-Exit):** The percentage of program participants employed (or employed or in post-secondary education for WIOA Youth) during the fourth quarter after program exit.
- **Median Earnings (Q2 Post-Exit):** The median wages earned by participants during the second quarter after exiting the program.
- **Credential Attainment Rate:** The percentage of participants who earn a recognized postsecondary credential or secondary school diploma during participation or within one year of exit.
- **Measurable Skill Gains:** The percentage of participants who demonstrate progress toward a credential or employment, such as completing training or passing an exam.
- **Effectiveness in Serving Employers:** A measure of how well workforce programs support businesses by addressing their hiring and skill development needs.

TRWDB's is strongly committed to achieving and exceeding the WIOA performance levels we set in collaboration with the Commonwealth. Our goals and strategies are designed to enhance education and training opportunities, improve employment outcomes, and support businesses in finding skilled workers, aligning with the broader objectives of WIOA. By expanding industry-aligned training programs, apprenticeships, and work-based learning opportunities, TRWDB ensures that job seekers receive practical, in-demand skills that lead to sustainable careers. A strong emphasis on labor market research and employer engagement helps align workforce services with regional hiring needs, ensuring that training programs directly connect participants to available job opportunities. Additionally, TRWDB's investment in career exploration programs for youth and targeted training for adults provides individuals at all career stages with the tools they need to enter, re-enter, or advance in the workforce.

For employers, TRWDB's strategies focus on building stronger partnerships with businesses to address workforce shortages and improve hiring outcomes. By engaging employers in program development and offering customized training, on-the-job learning opportunities, and apprenticeships, TRWDB helps businesses develop a skilled workforce tailored to their specific needs. Additionally, efforts to streamline workforce services, enhance program coordination, and strengthen internal capacity ensure that job seekers receive comprehensive support, improving long-term employment retention and earnings potential. Through these strategic initiatives, TRWDB is fostering a more efficient and effective workforce system, benefiting both job seekers and businesses across the region.

TRWDB's compliance and monitoring team conducts risk assessments of our funded subrecipients to inform us of the scope of program monitoring and technical assistance delivery. This team develops a

tailored plan for monitoring each program and produces regular reports on program and contract compliance for TRWDB program staff to review. Our data analytics team produces scheduled reports on program data, including enrollments, services, and performance outcomes, so TRWDB staff can regularly track progress toward achieving WIOA negotiated levels. TRWDB will also utilize WIOA quarterly performance reports distributed by the PA Department of Labor & Industry to assess our areas' achievement of WIOA outcomes and inform decision-making. Drawing on our evaluation and assessment data, we will conduct ongoing program improvement to create more accessible and effective programming for customers, including those with barriers to employment, and employers.

TRWDB's current negotiated WIOA performance levels and performance achieved is available in **Attachment 1** of this document.

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

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

Three Rivers Workforce Development Board (TRWDB) is the local workforce development board for the Allegheny County and City of Pittsburgh workforce development areas, providing policy, strategic direction, and oversight for the region's workforce development system. Staff of the TRWDB are employees of TRWIB, Inc. (D.B.A. Partner4Work). The chief elected officials for Allegheny County and the City of Pittsburgh have designated TRWIB, Inc. (D.B.A. Partner4Work) as the fiscal agent and administrative entity for WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth funding.

Additionally, TRWDB:

1. Administers the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Employment, Advancement, and Retention Network (EARN) and Work Ready programs for Allegheny County and the TANF Youth Development Program for both Allegheny County and the City of Pittsburgh;
2. Convenes stakeholders and cross-system partners, including employers, economic development entities, educational institutions, labor organizations, community-based organizations, government agencies, funders, advocacy groups, etc.; and
3. Collaborates with the other local workforce development boards in the state-defined Southwest Planning Region to develop goals and strategies for the broader region.

TRWDB maintains four standing committees to oversee its activities: Executive, Audit/Finance, Governance, and Program Optimization committees. Duties of the standing committees include:

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee provides oversight for the organization and ensures that the organization meets its mission and strategic direction. The Executive Committee is authorized to act on behalf of the full board in some cases. Special functions of the committee include:

1. Assessing the organization's annual performance and confirming the organization's compliance with existing legal, regulatory, and financial reporting requirements.
2. Working with the Audit/Finance Committee to prepare the organization's budget and assessing the organization's financial performance in relation to the budget at least four times per year.
3. Hiring, establishing compensation, and annually evaluating the performance of the Chief Executive Officer.

Governance Committee

The Governance Committee is a standing committee of the TRWDB Board. Its primary role is to oversee board member recruitment, engagement, and self-assessment while recommending policies and processes to ensure effective and efficient governance.

Audit/Finance

The Audit/Finance Committee is responsible for the direction and oversight regarding the overall financial management of TRWIB, Inc. Functions include reviewing and recommending the organization's annual budget (prepared by the staff) for final approval by the Board, long-term financial planning, monitoring actual vs. budgeted financial performance, establishment and monitoring of accounting policies and

procedures, hiring, setting the compensation, and overseeing the auditor's activities. It set rules and processes for complaints concerning accounting and internal control practices. The Audit/Finance Committee is also responsible for review and recommendation for approval of the final audited financial statements, as well as any communications received from the auditor regarding internal controls, illegal acts, or fraud. The Audit/Finance Committee also serves as the primary point of contact for any employee who suspects that fraud has been committed against the organization or by one of its employees.

Program Optimization Committee

The Program Optimization Committee advises on the oversight and implementation of all TRWDB workforce development programs serving Adults, Dislocated Workers, Youth and Young Adults, and employers and industry partners. The committee recommends distribution of funds, manages service contracts, and guides the vision of workforce development programs.

PA CareerLink® Operator

TRWDB selects the One-Stop Operator for PA CareerLink® Pittsburgh/Allegheny County through competitive procurement, as required by WIOA and its federal and state regulations. Typically, TRWDB utilizes Requests for Proposals (RFP) for the selection and the re-competition of operators every four years or more frequently as needed. All respondents to a TRWDB-issued RFP for One-Stop Operator Services are initially reviewed for completeness and compliance. Proposals passing the initial review are scored by qualified evaluators according to the outlined criteria, with attention to clarity, completeness and quality. High scoring proposals clearly demonstrate an ability and likelihood to effectively perform the Statement of Work, deliver the proposed program, and meet the standards and intended outcomes of the RFP. Certain bidders may be requested to participate in presentations or discussions with proposal evaluators and other TRWDB staff, at the discretion of TRWDB. Award recommendations from the evaluators are presented to the TRWDB Board of Directors for final decision.

The Operator is responsible for functional management and general operations of PA CareerLink® centers and facilitating collaboration and integration between all PA CareerLink® partners—required and non-required. Among other tasks, the Operator may employ several staff members to assist in managing the day-to-day operations of the PA CareerLink® locations, including general customer service and oversight of the Career Resource Center (CRC); facilitate regular meetings and communication between core partners of the PA CareerLink® system to discuss critical issues related to operations, service delivery and performance; and ensure adherence to the standards of PA CareerLink® certification. In performing these duties, the Operator will maintain and employ a current knowledge of applicable federal, state, and local policies and work closely with TRWDB and PA CareerLink® partners to develop strategies for implementing the Board's vision and WIOA Local Plan to achieve maximum collective impact of partners in the local area.

A completed organizational chart identifying the current PA CareerLink® one-stop operator and depicting a clear separation of duties between TRWDB and programmatic and service delivery entities is included in **Attachment 2**.

A detailed list of required partners is included in **Attachment 3**.

PA CareerLink® Partner Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

TRWDB, in collaboration with our chief elected officials and one-stop partners, enters a Memorandum of Understanding with PA CareerLink® partners outlining the roles and contributions of partners in the one-stop system, as well as how services will be coordinated among these programs. Access to each PA CareerLink® partner program is available at PA CareerLink® locations either directly or indirectly through referrals.

Through the MOU, PA CareerLink® partners are also committed to cross-training of staff, as appropriate, and to providing other professional learning opportunities that promote continuous improvement. Partners will promote system integration to the maximum extent feasible through:

- Effective communication, information sharing, and collaboration with the One-Stop Operator;
- Active involvement in joint planning, policy development, and system design processes;
- Commitment to and active involvement in the development of a joint mission, vision, goals, strategies, and performance measures;
- The design and use of common intake, assessment, referral, and case management processes;
- The use of common and/or linked data management systems and data sharing methods, as appropriate;
- Leveraging of resources, including other public agency and non-profit organization services;
- Participation in a continuous improvement process designed to boost outcomes and increase customer satisfaction;
- Establishing a point-of-contact(s) to serve as a liaison between the Partner program and PA CareerLink®; and
- Participation in regularly scheduled Partner meetings to exchange information in support of the above and encourage program and staff integration.

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

As the local workforce development board, TRWDB serves as a convener of workforce development partners and stakeholders to ensure an aligned workforce development system. Such coordination is crucial to collaboratively achieving the vision and goals outlined in this local plan in alignment with the vision and goals described in both the Southwest PA Regional Plan and Pennsylvania's Combined State Plan. The following section outlines the ways in which TRWDB ensures coordination with WIOA partner programs:

In accordance with WIOA, TRWDB issues Request for Proposals (RFP) to procure and ultimately identify qualified service providers to deliver Title I services in Allegheny County and the City of Pittsburgh. A list of partner programs and WIOA Adult/Dislocated Worker programs and activities with contact information is available in **Attachment 3** of this document.

Core Program Alignment

The core programs—Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Adult Basic Education, Wagner-Peyser and Vocational Rehabilitation—work in concert to effectively serve job seekers and employers. Strategies are informed by employer engagement and industry partnership efforts, as well as analysis of labor market information and other data, including data from the Center for Workforce Information & Analysis (CWIA), Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Census Bureau, Pennsylvania's workforce development system of record, and other sources. While each program has clearly defined activities to carry out, as defined by law, it is through coordination and cooperation that optimum outcomes can be achieved. TRWDB's alignment of core programs includes establishing effective sector strategies that combine guidance, education, training, and supportive services to prepare individuals for careers. Given individuals' needs and career goals, the system helps to guide individuals to appropriate programs and services. TRWDB promotes co-

enrollment when appropriate to align services and works closely with partners to prevent duplication of services among the core programs.

PA CareerLink® Pittsburgh/Allegheny County offices are the physical locations where, at a minimum, the services associated with each WIOA-mandated partner program are accessible. In addition, within each PA CareerLink® Pittsburgh/Allegheny County site information is provided and referrals are made to many partner program services, such as post-secondary recipients required under Pennsylvania’s Perkins plan and TANF and SNAP programs. For effective and efficient service to customers, integration of PA CareerLink® service delivery is critical. To fulfill our vision for effective and efficient service to customers, integration of PA CareerLink® service delivery is critical. Our goal is to ensure staff are aligned functionally within the PA CareerLink®, rather than by program. Aligned functions would include the greeting and initial intake and assessment of customers; skill and career development that includes the provision of career and training services; and business services that include building relationships with employers through local and regional initiatives, such as career pathway design, sector partnerships, and talent pipeline development. This alignment has the potential to offer direct access to a broader range of services that can be adapted and leveraged to address each customer’s unique needs. PA CareerLink® uses a triage approach to service delivery. Persons seeking assistance through the system can access job matching services online or in person. Staff is available to provide direct assistance to customers in both group and individual settings, and self-service resources are available in Career Resource Centers at PA CareerLink® locations and online.

Required and Additional Partner Program Alignment

TRWDB continues to strengthen connections with WIOA required and additional PA CareerLink® partners beyond coordination through the One-Stop Operator and MOU. Providers of Adult and Youth services facilitate referrals to PA CareerLink® when appropriate.

TRWDB provides direct connections for TANF recipients to access the full range of PA CareerLink® services. TANF is a partner in the local PA CareerLink® structure and is working with TRWDB to forge even stronger connections to career services provided under WIOA, including access to occupational skills training and work-based learning. TRWDB administers the TANF EARN and Work Ready programs for Allegheny County and ensures coordination between these programs and the one-stop system.

In 2025, TRWDB will begin facilitating the physical and programmatic integration of EARN and Work Ready service delivery into the current PA CareerLink® Downtown Pittsburgh and PA CareerLink® Allegheny East locations. The selected applicant(s) will be required to physically locate staff within PA CareerLink® Downtown Pittsburgh and PA CareerLink® Allegheny East centers. Program integration and physical co-location will expand referral networks to include the partners and services within PA CareerLink® and approved applicants will then become a core partner within the One-Stop system.

Resource Contribution

To support the operations of one-stop centers, WIOA requires local areas to establish cost allocation to determine Partners’ equitable share of one-stop center costs, including infrastructure costs, additional operating costs, and other shared costs attributable to the one-stop centers. The agreement defining that methodology is called the Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA), which is applied to the annual Operating Budget (OB) for the one-stop center to determine each Partner’s financial contribution to the costs of operating the one-stop centers. A more detailed breakdown of partner resource contribution can be found in the [2024 One-Stop Partner Memorandum of Understanding for the City of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County](#).

Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy

Literacy Pittsburgh and the Allegheny Intermediate Unit (AIU) are the Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy provider for Allegheny County. Literacy Pittsburgh is the largest provider of Title II services in Allegheny County. With its subgrantee, Goodwill of Southwestern PA, classroom services are provided on-site at both PA CareerLink® sites. Additionally, job seekers can enroll in any of the learning programs offered by both agencies. Literacy Pittsburgh program offerings include:

- **Career Readiness:** Classroom instruction and tutoring for GED® preparation, reading, writing, math, workplace, and digital literacy skills to meet personal and professional goals. Career planning services help students in all programs explore family-sustaining wage careers, assess fit, and develop and execute plans to enter training, post-secondary education, and or attain jobs.
- **English Language Learning:** Classroom instruction for immigrants to learn to speak, read and write English and to become familiar with American workplace skills and increase digital literacy. Citizenship classes prepare immigrants and refugees for the naturalization process, including the citizenship test. Our Immigrant Services and Connection program provides service coordination and case management for immigrants facing housing, food, and other barriers.
- **Family and Child Literacy Programs:** Family Literacy is a classroom-based program which helps develop parents' literacy and language skills while fostering a love of learning within their children.

The Allegheny Intermediate Unit (AIU), our secondary Title II provider, is a regional public education agency which offers adult literacy classes to job seekers through the one-stop system.

WIOA Title III Wagner-Peyser

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 (IEP); and case management. Services to employers include assistance in developing and posting job orders, referral of qualified job seekers to job openings and organizing job fairs. Both job seekers and employers are also provided with labor market information to help inform their activities.

Access to Wagner-Peyser Act Services will be provided within the local workforce development system through physical and programmatic resources described below. Bureau of Workforce Development Partnership & Operations (BWPO) is the State Workforce Agency (SWA) responsible for administering Wagner-Peyser Act services in accordance with federal regulations.

- a) Wagner-Peyser service focuses on providing a variety of employment related labor-exchange services including, but not limited to: job-search assistance, job referral, and placement help for job seekers, re-employment services to unemployment insurance claimants and recruitment services to employers with job openings. Services are delivered in one of three modes: self-service, facilitated self-help services and staff-assisted service delivery.
- b) Depending on the needs of the labor market, other services – such as assessment of job-seekers' skills, abilities and aptitudes, career guidance when appropriate; job-search workshops and referral to training may be necessary.
- c) The 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.

- d) Job seekers who are veterans receive priority referral to jobs and training, as well as veteran-specific employment services. PA CareerLink® delivers specialized services to individuals with disabilities, migrant and seasonal farm-workers, ex-offenders, youth, minorities and older workers.

WIOA Title IV Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)

As a core partner OVR provides Vocational Rehabilitation services for people with disabilities. Eligible OVR customers receive multiple services that may include but not be limited to; diagnostic, vocational counseling and guidance, vocational evaluation, restoration, training, job placement and pre-employment training services for eligible and potentially eligible high school students with disabilities. These individualized services are designed to prepare OVR customers to become qualified trained members of the workforce. OVR provides multiple services to the business community designed to assist businesses with onboarding pre-screened qualified employees with disabilities. OVR on-boarding supports for a qualified new hire can include reasonable accommodation consultation, initial probationary period 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 to retain current employees following an accident, injury or disability. Our statewide business services staff can identify resources to assist any organization on how to improve access compliance and steps to diversify their workforce to include citizens with a disability.

As a core partner, OVR provides Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor staff liaisons to each operating CareerLink® site in Pittsburgh/Allegheny County. Under local OVR management and supervisor direction, OVR liaison counselors have assigned workdays on-site in order to receive referrals for individuals seeking vocational rehabilitation services from system partners and to ensure partner communication across programs. In addition to liaison counselor staff, OVR business services staff engage in collaboration and partnership with to support the business needs of the community related to hiring people with disabilities.

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

TRWDB invests WIOA and other funding to maintain a diverse range of quality employment and training services available to job seekers and employers in our local workforce area. Through regular labor market analysis and employer/industry engagement, TRWDB assesses diverse hiring needs and works to maintain a robust menu of training options aligned with employer demand. Training options include classroom training funded through individual training accounts (ITA), work-based training (on-the-job training, incumbent worker training, customized job training, and apprenticeships), training through industry partnerships, and trainings for special populations.

Training providers are selected through competitive procurement or through application to the Eligible Training Provider List. **Section 4.4** will describe how TRWDB works to maintain quality and continuous improvement of the funded service providers and training providers within our local area, including criteria set for year-round WIOA providers, eligible training providers, and work-based training providers. Additional details on the availability of employment and training programs are provided below.

Access to Training

TRWDB has established a local policy and monitoring procedures to ensure WIOA requirements for Priority of Service for WIOA Adult participants are met when making funds for training available to customers. To support accessibility of training programs remotely or virtually, TRWDB also encourages training providers to make programs available online where feasible. The BankWork\$ training program, for example, developed both in-person and online instruction opportunities in response to challenges created by the pandemic, but maintains their hybrid training model five years later. As a fully remote option, individuals registered on the PA CareerLink® website may access free online training courses through the SkillUp™ PA program. In partnership with PA CareerLink®, SkillUp™ provides a platform wherein job seekers can explore career pathways, view local job postings, register for free online learning, and receive workforce services.

Individual Training Accounts (ITAs)

The local Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) for Allegheny County and the City of Pittsburgh includes a robust list of training programs providing training in high priority occupations in industries such as Healthcare, Information Technology (IT), Manufacturing, and Transportation. Registered apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships, and programs provided by the Community College of Allegheny County are among these programs. Funding to attend training programs on the ETPL is available to qualified WIOA participants through ITAs. To ensure quality of the ETPL, programs must meet performance benchmarks related to program completion, employment rates, median earnings, and credential attainment of their students. To inform customer choice, providers and programs must provide a variety of program-specific information, including a program description, program length, tuition/costs, prerequisites, and credentials offered.

Work-Based Training

TRWDB maintains a diverse mix of opportunities for work-based training (on-the-job, incumbent worker, customized job training, and apprenticeships) and work experience (youth work experience and transitional jobs). TRWDB works with PA CareerLink® staff and young adult service providers to engage with employers in key, high-demand industries and coordinate quality work-based training programs and work experiences connected to high priority occupations. These programs benefit both job seekers and employers. For example, businesses engaged in youth work experience programs get first-hand experience working with their workforce pipeline while young adults learn skills that can only be learned on the job. Work-based training programs subsidize hiring and training costs for employers and simultaneously enable job seekers to receive training in an in-demand occupation while earning a wage. The reimbursement rate for employers in OJT programs is set at 50% of OJT participant's wage. Employers may qualify for an increase to 75% of the OJT participant's wage based on locally established criteria. TRWDB continues to explore options to invest in incumbent worker training designed to benefit business and industry by assisting in the skill development of existing employees, including through coordination with programs such as WEDnetPA.

Industry-Recognized Cohort Programs

TRWDB also competitively procures cohort-based occupational training programs providing industry-recognized credentials. These programs are often supported using a blended funding model that may include funds such as WIOA, TANF, and other funding sources. The selected programs provide training in high-priority occupations, aligned with TRWDB's industry partnerships.

The initiative aims to:

- a) Establish cohort-based training opportunities serving young people ages 18-24, adults, and/or dislocated workers;
- b) Build referral systems within current program providers, including the PA CareerLink® system and providers of young adult programs, for participants interested in earning industry-recognized credentials;
- c) Provide pipelines to specific full time employment opportunities in priority industries for young people ages 18–24 who are ready to progress beyond youth programming as well as adults and dislocated workers looking for training that leads to employment along career pathways.

Trainings for Priority Populations

TRWDB invests funding in initiatives to provide employment and training services to specific populations with significant barriers to employment. Namely, TRWDB has developed and implemented both federal and state-funded programs to connect individuals with past or current justice system impact or involvement to quality education and training opportunities. Pittsburgh Reentry Career Services (PRCS), for one, is a program funded through the federal Department of Justice involves contracted partnerships with the PA CareerLink®, Center for Employment Opportunities, Action Housing and Operation Better Block to provide employment and training supports for clients pre- and post-release at the Allegheny County Jail and Renewal Work Release sites. TRWDB's state-funded program, Young Adult Reentry Project (YARP), provides quality employment, training, mentorship and supportive service opportunities to justice involved young adults ages 18-24. Clients in this program have access to quality case management from Operation Better Block throughout the entirety of the implementation period to support with retention.

DHS Co-Enrollment

As noted in **section 3.2**, TRWDB administers TANF EARN and Work Ready programs for Allegheny County and provides direct connections for TANF recipients to access the full range of PA CareerLink® services. The anticipated co-location of EARN and Work Ready providers at the Downtown and East PA CareerLink® sites with WIOA and One-Stop contracted providers will strengthen these connections and create an integrated service delivery model that comprehensively serves area residents based on individual need. To ensure the success of this venture, TRWDB's Priority Populations team will implement preliminary engagement with provider staff so that the transition to co-location and integration will be smooth and staff will be familiar with other providers and the corresponding menu of services available between TANF and WIOA. TRWDB will continue to coordinate with Keystone Education Yields Success (KEYS) and Education Leading to Employment and Career Training (ELECT) programs, as appropriate. The KEYS program supports TANF and SNAP recipients in pursuing postsecondary education by providing case management and supportive services. The ELECT program helps pregnant and parenting youth complete their high school education and prepare for employment or postsecondary training.

Priority of Service

TRWDB has established a Priority of Service Policy, aligned with the requirements of WIOA and related policies that prioritizes WIOA Adult services to participants who are low-income individuals, recipients of public assistance, and individuals who are basic skills deficient. Veterans and their spouses, though not included as a population with barriers to employment, are also a priority group under WIOA. Individuals are assessed at the time of enrollment to determine their qualification for priority of service. Our organization is committed to ensuring at least 51% of Adult participants served are among priority groups,

a benchmark established by the Commonwealth. In addition, both WIOA and TANF year-round youth and young adult programs have set eligibility requirements to ensure participants being served are low income and/or have an additional barrier(s) to employment.

Individuals eligible for priority of service shall be identified at the point of entry, whether that is PA CareerLink® site, online self-service application, or other WIOA Title I Adult provider location. Upon identification they shall be notified of:

1. Their entitlement to priority of service;
2. The full array of programs and services available to them;
3. Any applicable eligibility requirements for those programs and services.

PA CareerLink® or other WIOA Title I Adult provider staff must ensure individuals who qualify for priority of service receive career and training services before other non-covered individuals and receive first priority on any waiting lists that are maintained for training slots. However, once a participant is enrolled in a workshop, training, or service, they may not be displaced by an individual qualified for priority of service.

Understanding the Commonwealth goal for Adult participants from priority groups outlined in WSP- Priority of Service (April 28, 2022), TRWDB will regularly monitor reporting on the percentage of Adult participants who fall into a priority of service category. Should the year-to-date percentage of priority populations served fall below 50.1%, TRWDB will work with the WIOA Title I PA CareerLink® Operator and WIOA Title I Adult providers to identify areas for additional outreach to priority populations.

TRWDB regularly assesses local labor market and other relevant data (e.g., U.S. Census) to understand population needs, common barriers to employment, and which communities are most in need for workforce development services and resources. This helps to inform outreach efforts, program investments, and other activities intended to improve access to services for priority populations. TRWDB, with the One-Stop Operator and Partners, engage in strategic outreach to meet the unique needs and characteristics of diverse customers and partner organizations. Efforts include:

- Increasing our presence and reach in communities with highest needs
- Partnering with providers to reach priority audiences and support pathways to target industries
- Regular use of social media
- Co-locating TANF EARN and Work Ready providers to the One-Stop

Staff of Partners are trained to provide services to all, regardless of range of abilities, mobility, age, language, learning style, or comprehension or education level. Furthermore, monthly provider meetings- held alongside TRWDB program, policy, and compliance teams- support partner staff with ongoing education and promising practices for serving those individuals with high barriers.

See **section 4.8** of this document for more on serving individuals facing systemic barriers to employment.

Program Fund Transfers

TRWDB assesses in the first quarter of each calendar year the remaining balance of training funds available, the year-to-date enrollments of Adults and Dislocated Workers, and employer job opening

projections. These factors are used to determine if funding will be transferred between Adult and Dislocated Worker programming.

Additional Programs and Services

Through the PA CareerLink® Partner MOU, one-stop system partners have agreed to make a diverse set of employment services available to job seekers in addition to training. The table below shows a full list of services available:

Job Seeker Services		
Outreach, intake and orientation to the information, services, and resources available through the workforce system	Coordinated job seeker services of PA CareerLink® partners to streamline the customer experience	Access to occupational skills training through ITAs
Initial assessments of skill levels, aptitudes, abilities and supportive service needs	Development of an IEP to identify goals, objectives and appropriate combination of services	Adult education and literacy activities, including English language acquisition, provided in combination with training services
Comprehensive and specialized assessments of skills levels and service needs	Referral to training services; skill upgrading and retraining	On-the-Job Training (OJT) and Customized Job Training (CJT) opportunities
Access to employment and labor market information, including provision of information on in-demand industries and occupations	Job search and placement assistance	Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) opportunities
Performance information and program costs for eligible providers of training and education	Workforce preparation services (e.g., learning skills, punctuality, communication, interviewing, literacy, and professional conduct) to prepare individuals for employment or training	Access to Registered Apprenticeships and Pre-Apprenticeships
Information on the availability of supportive services and referral to such, as appropriate	Provision of supportive services to enable participation in workforce development programming	Individual and group-based career counseling and planning
Post-employment follow-up services and support	Access to work experience opportunities, such as transitional jobs and internships	Information on performance of training providers and programs
Determination of potential eligibility for workforce partner services, programs, and referral(s)	Basic information on Unemployment Insurance*	Information and assistance in applying for financial aid for training and education programs not provided under WIOA

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

The Program Optimization Committee of TRWDB advises on the development of strategies for connecting local area youth with meaningful careers, building on the work of its predecessor, the Youth Advisory Council. As a standing committee of the board, it is comprised of current members of TRWIB's Board of Directors and members of the community with expertise in workforce development. The committee is chaired by a member of the board who also serves on the Executive Committee.

TRWDB competitively procures providers interested in collaboration and connecting their programs and opportunities to curate strong career pathways from high school through adulthood for young people with systemic barriers to employment who have been traditionally marginalized within the workforce. Procurement for year-round youth programs takes place every four years, or as necessary, to identify community-based providers who will provide eligible youth or young adults ages 14-24 with innovative opportunities for experiential work-based learning that fall into one of two program models:

1. Career Exploration and Experience: Youth engage with local employers to experience a variety of careers and workplaces through opportunities such as internships, cooperative education, job shadowing, summer or transitional jobs, paid or unpaid work experience, pre apprenticeships (registered or with intent to register), or others.
2. Pathways to Employment or Postsecondary Education: Youth engage with local employers to gain work experience, participate in training and earn industry recognized credentials that will result in employment or enrollment in postsecondary education.

TRWDB contracts with successful bidders to run evidence-based programs serving in-school (ISY) and out-of-school youth (OSY) throughout the Allegheny County and the City of Pittsburgh. Efforts are made to ensure geographic coverage of programs and to invest in tested, outcomes-based, high impact, established models with the potential to be scaled. TRWDB's WIOA Youth programs prioritize services to OSY, meeting the WIOA requirement that 75% of WIOA Youth dollars are invested in programs for OSY. TANF-funded youth programs mostly serve ISY participants.

Programs are grounded in the communities they serve, with staff focused on providing culturally competent services and youth-driven programming for young adults disconnected from employment and education or at risk of dropping out of high school. OSY programs focus on connecting young adults quickly with academic remediation, occupational skills training, and the supports they need to be successful in the workforce and post-secondary education. ISY programs work with high school students on work experience and experiential learning.

TRWDB year-round programs focus on several populations of young adults:

- Programs affording youth in high school the ability to concurrently earn meaningful industry recognized credentials;
- Programs assisting youth and young adults currently in school, and in need of extra support, with career planning, work experience, job placement, and/or matriculation into occupational skills training and post-secondary education;
- Programs serving youth at risk of dropping out of high school, or those at risk of becoming disconnected from employment and post-secondary education after graduation;

- Programs serving young adults between the ages of 14-24, including opportunity youth and youth who are underemployed, connecting them with GED, HiSET or high school diploma retrieval, occupational skills training, and/or employment;
- Occupational skills training programs delivered in partnership with an employer, or group of employers, to underemployed young adults or those disconnected from employment and education; and
- Programs designed to quickly place out-of-school youth in employment and to support them through additional steps in their career pathway.

Throughout the RFP and contracting process, TRWDB ensures that all 14 youth program elements required under WIOA are provided in the system. To make certain this provision continues, TRWDB regularly monitors providers and, when necessary, provides technical assistance to providers. All TRWDB-funded youth programs are open to youth with disabilities.

Tutoring, study skills training, instruction and evidenced based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent or a recognized postsecondary credential: All youth contractors in Allegheny County and the City of Pittsburgh provide this element through their own organizations or through a connection with another agency.

Alternative secondary school services or dropout recovery services: Youth who are good candidates for earning a diploma should pursue that option before embarking on the path to get a GED. Research from the US Census Bureau shows that while adults who earn a GED or high school diploma have higher monthly earnings than individuals without these credentials, those with a high school diploma out-earn those with a GED.

Paid and unpaid work experiences that have both academic and occupational education components (which may include summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year, pre-apprenticeship programs, internships and job shadowing, and on-the-job training opportunities): All service providers that are contracted to provide OSY services in Allegheny County and the City of Pittsburgh are required to make paid and unpaid work experience available to their participants. Many ISY programs also prioritize paid and unpaid work experience. While all work experience is valuable, through the RFP process, providers were given additional points for the provision of paid work experience for participants. To facilitate the provision of work experience, TRWDB works with providers to connect them with businesses and to assist businesses in the development of work experience activities for participants.

Occupational skills training (which shall include priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that are aligned with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area involved): Applicants to the RFP with a program model that clearly provides occupational skills training aligned with in-demand industry sectors and with stackable, industry recognized credentials were given priority in the scoring process. TRWDB is working with youth services providers, training providers, and employers to develop career pathways that begin with these foundational skills and lead to high priority, family sustaining careers. Currently, TRWDB has contracts with youth service providers to provide occupational skills training in advanced manufacturing, healthcare, technology, retail, and other fields.

Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster: Evidence demonstrates that contextualized learning assists in the retention of skills and the development of cross-functional or soft skills. Where possible, TRWDB contracts with youth services providers that link academic with occupational education.

Leadership development opportunities (which may include community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors, as appropriate): Contracts are in place with providers who value leadership development for their youth participants. Opportunities for leadership development offered include volunteer experience, community service, and peer-to-peer mentoring.

Supportive services: Programs provide supportive services in-house or refer participants to other partners for supportive service needs. Services are provided based on an assessment of need via the participant's Individual Service Strategy or through the case management process. TRWDB's supportive service policy is available on the website at www.partner4work.org.

Adult mentoring: TRWDB's data shows that adult mentoring has a significant positive correlation with successful outcomes. Therefore, this is one of three program elements required for the period of participation and a subsequent period, for a total of not less than 12 months. TRWDB has engaged partners to help providers implement workplace mentoring strategies specific to opportunity youth seeking professional mentorship.

Follow up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation: All contracted youth providers are required to provide all participants with follow-up services. Per 20 CFR 681.580, these services must consist of more than an attempted contact to determine whether an individual is working.

Comprehensive guidance and counseling: All providers within Allegheny County and the City of Pittsburgh are required to offer career counseling and case management services. If they do not have expertise in house, providers also refer participants to external drug and alcohol counseling as appropriate.

Financial literacy education: Contextualized with paid work experience and other professional development education, contracted providers provide financial literacy education.

Entrepreneurial skills training: In conjunction with professional development training, contracted providers provide entrepreneurial skills training. Additionally, TRWDB is exploring cohort-based occupational skills training that would be grounded in entrepreneurial skills for youth participants.

Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services: All providers within Allegheny County and the City of Pittsburgh are required to offer career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services.

Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training: All providers within Allegheny County and the City of Pittsburgh work with youth to prepare them for the transition to postsecondary education and training.

TRWDB believes strongly in the value of data to drive program delivery. Additional reporting requirements have been instituted for all year-round youth providers, collecting data on the types and duration of

services provided with WIOA and TANF funding. These data are used to draw connections between services and outcomes so we can be sure to develop programs that are evidence-based and help youth achieve success. Through this research, TRWDB has determined that adult mentoring and work experience are strongly correlated with successful outcomes of program participants. TRWDB has therefore placed a strong emphasis on these two particular elements in our youth system.

Career Ready Allegheny

Career Ready Allegheny (<https://careerreadyallegheny.org/>) is a collaborative initiative designed to bridge the gap between education and industry within Allegheny County. By uniting local experts in education, workforce development, labor market research, and equitable learning practices, the platform provides students with access to work-based learning opportunities such as internships and job shadowing. Educators benefit from resources aligned with Career Education Work standards and a directory of local businesses committed to partnering with schools.

Launched in October 2024 and funded with private dollars, Career Ready Allegheny was developed through a partnership between TRWDB and several key organizations:

- Allegheny Intermediate Unit (AIU): A regional public education agency that advocates and advances equitable opportunities for every learner, providing specialized services and support to educators and administrators in the county.
- The Consortium for Public Education: A nonprofit organization working with schools across southwestern Pennsylvania on initiatives designed to strengthen and broaden school leadership, engage the community, and empower students.
- Remake Learning: A free peer network for educators and innovators in the greater Pittsburgh region, dedicated to helping educators connect and create more engaging, relevant, and equitable learning opportunities.

These organizations collaborated to create Career Ready Allegheny in response to feedback from local superintendents, employers, and more than 300 educators, aiming to foster an ecosystem where students can develop the skills needed to navigate career paths into the local economy.

Learn & Earn

The Learn & Earn Summer Youth Employment Program, offered by TRWDB, provides low-income youth ages 14-24 in Allegheny County and the City of Pittsburgh with paid work experiences across diverse career tracks aligned with in-demand occupations. This program is part of TRWDB's effort to create a continuum of services that bridges summer employment with year-round professional development opportunities, promoting personal growth, leadership, and career exploration.

Youth in the program complete work readiness training covering key topics such as time management, communication skills, financial literacy, resume writing, and conflict resolution. The program's innovative three-tiered structure addresses the diverse needs of participants while aligning with local workforce demands:

- **Tier 1: Early Career Exposure (Ages 14-15)**
Focuses on foundational skill-building and career exploration through activities such as job shadowing, workplace tours, and soft skills workshops. This tier sparks interest and raises awareness of career pathways.

- **Tier 2: Work Experience (Ages 16-18)**
Provides high school-aged youth with hands-on work experience and workforce readiness training. Participants gain practical skills through summer employment opportunities.
- **Tier 3: Career Pathway Development (Ages 18-24)**
Supports older youth and young adults transitioning to long-term careers through internships, pre-apprenticeships, and occupational training. Individualized coaching, mentorship, tuition support, and connections to Registered Apprenticeships or direct employment opportunities are included.

This tiered approach ensures targeted support for participants at various stages of development. By integrating career exploration, skill development, and work-based learning, the Learn & Earn program equips youth to succeed in tomorrow's workforce while fostering a pipeline of skilled talent for local employers.

An innovative partnership, TRWDB has worked with Allegheny County's Department of Human Services (DHS) to provide year-round programming to homeless and foster youth at the 412 Youth Zone, a drop-in center run by DHS. A single procured provider runs both the social service programs funded by DHS and the employment programs funded by TRWDB. The program recognizes that integrating social service supports and a sense of place with employment services for youth help to provide stability to participants. In best practice research this stability has been shown to help foster and homeless youth achieve better employment outcomes as well as to have more success in non-employment areas of their lives.

TRWDB works diligently to serve youth with disabilities through several programs and efforts; youth with disabilities are served across TRWDB's network of year-round programs. As a current example, TRWDB partners with Pittsburgh Public School's Start on Success program, which offers youth with learning disabilities co-op work opportunities, career exploration, work readiness activities, and 21st Century skill development to prepare them for competitive employment following high school. Beyond year-round programs, TRWDB also partners with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) to identify opportunities for co-enrollment into the Learn & Earn summer youth employment program, connecting youth with disabilities to quality work experience with employers in in-demand industries and occupations.

As a core partner, OVR collaborates with TRWDB to provide in-school youth with disabilities opportunities to participate in pre-employment transition services and other services to gain skills and knowledge to enter the workforce. In partnership with the local board and other youth services providers, OVR may provide both OVR eligible and potentially eligible in-school youth with disabilities services to enter competitive integrated employment. These meaningful opportunities allow in-school youth with disabilities to assess their own strengths and skills, while exploring vocational possibilities and removing barriers to employment.

Work-based learning is an important component for in-school youth with disabilities to engage in so that they may be afforded opportunities to discover career paths. Other services that may be provided to OVR in-school youth with disabilities may 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 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 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 provides students with disabilities an experience 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 a variety of occupational fields.

All youth-serving agency partners collaborate to provide services and share costs for youth with disabilities. Should a youth choose not to access OVR programs and services, the services of other agencies remain available in accord with the needs and individualized employment plan of the youth.

TRWDB has defined the “requires additional assistance to complete an education program to secure or hold employment” for ISY and OSY. This definition is available in the TRWDB WIOA Youth Policy Guide, found here: <https://www.partner4work.org/documents/policies/>. These eligibility determinations are reasonable, quantifiable, and evidence based. TRWDB has developed a process for regular monitoring and reporting to ensure that no more than 5% of ISY are determined eligible through this method.

TRWDB will also explore opportunities for strengthening connections to other young adult serving programs, such as YouthBuild, Job Corps, AmeriCorps, and the Pennsylvania Outdoor Corp. Coordination these established programs helps to create a more robust network of opportunities that equips young people additional skills and work experience. Job Corps offers residential education and job training, YouthBuild provides hands-on construction and leadership experience, and AmeriCorps emphasizes community service and skill development. The Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps further complements these efforts by providing young people with opportunities to gain valuable work experience in conservation, environmental stewardship, and public land maintenance, helping to develop skills in forestry, park management, and natural resource conservation. TRWDB will work with these providers and with Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker providers to facilitate opportunities for co-enrollment when appropriate, and develop mechanisms for tracking co-enrollment moving forward.

Improved communication and coordination strategies have helped to facilitate co-enrollments between WIOA and TANF Youth programs, ensuring the most holistic approach to helping youth meet their professional and educational goals. Enhanced coordination, facilitated through regular provider meetings and virtual connection, allows providers to share information, avoid duplication, and connect youth to a broader range of WIOA Youth Program Elements. In addition, a dedicated subcommittee focuses on building the right processes to ensure accountability and documentation, further strengthening the impact of these efforts.

TANF Youth Development Program (YDP)

TANF Youth Development Funding (YDF) is made available for the support and benefit of young people in Pennsylvania between the ages of 12 and 24 years, who are TANF recipients or whose family's monthly gross countable earned income does not exceed 235% of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines. TRWDB competitively procures for and currently oversees a diverse portfolio of providers through this funding. In addition, TANF Youth accounts for a portion of the funding used to support the Learn & Earn summer youth employment program, which TRWDB administers in partnership with Allegheny County and the City of Pittsburgh.

WIOA Youth 14 Program Elements

Each TANF YDP funded agency determines which of the 14 WIOA Youth Program Elements they will provide to program participants; all 14 elements are made available to TANF YDP participants in the local workforce development area. Some elements are built into program design and therefore are provided to all participants enrolled in programs. Others, like dropout recovery services, are available on an as-needed basis to program participants with an identified need for that specific element of support. TANF YDP funding in our local area is predominantly used for in-school youth, so dropout recovery services are a very small portion of WIOA elements funded through TANF YDF.

Outreach and Recruitment

Each funded program holds the primary responsibility for recruiting youth into their program. Methods for recruitment vary across providers, though the majority work with in-school youth for year-round programming and utilize the following methods: flyers within partnering school(s), recruitment events, school engagement, community outreach, and parent engagement. In general, TRWDB assists with recruitment by developing a strong referral network within our community and connecting youth providers with PA CareerLink®. Additionally, digital recruitment methods are also employed, such as the use of social media, text messaging, and local media for outreach.

TRWDB oversees the TANF EARN and Work Ready programs for Allegheny County exclusive of the City of Pittsburgh. These programs, along with the PA CareerLink® and other WIOA funded programs, are all part of recruitment networks. Information is also shared with the PA Department of Human Services County Assistance Office (CAO) about programming. For Learn & Earn, recruitment efforts begin in the early spring. Efforts include social media outreach, a network of Application Support Centers throughout the County, and utilizing the networks of Allegheny County, the City of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh City Council, and more to spread word about the application process.

TANF 2 Gen Programming

TRWDB recognizes the value of Two-Generation (2 Gen) workforce development programming, which is a holistic, family-centered approach. 2 Gen strategies focus on addressing the needs of both young people and their families simultaneously, creating pathways for economic stability and long-term success. By integrating education, workforce training, and supportive services for both generations, this approach helps break cycles of poverty and strengthens family well-being. By aligning services and fostering intergenerational economic mobility, 2 Gen models can enhance the impact of our workforce programs and better support families in our region.

Our organization will consider how TANF Youth and other funding might be leveraged to support two-generational approaches to workforce development, such as initiatives that provide career exploration, work-based learning, and skill-building for youth while also connecting their parents or caregivers to employment and training resources. As a current example, TRWDB collaborates with Goodwill of Southwestern PA to identify TANF-eligible families with students at Passport Academy, Clairton School

District, Brashear High School, Carrick High School, Westinghouse Academy, and Perry Academy, as well as those involved with the Juvenile Justice System who need career education services. Goodwill's youth program provides high school students (ages 14-18) with workforce preparation through career exploration, individualized career planning, skill development, and networking opportunities. The program offers life skills training, post-secondary education resources, experiential learning in various industries, and entrepreneurship education, incorporating job tours, job-shadowing, service-learning projects, and career mentoring, with participants receiving stipends or wages for immersive experiences.

Young Adult Work Experience

TRWDB recognizes that young adults learn to work by working and is therefore committed to building a young adult workforce development system that provides significant opportunities to build work experience. These include summer employment, paid and unpaid work experience opportunities throughout the year, job shadowing, and on-the-job training opportunities where individuals can earn a wage while receiving training. Required to expose 100% of youth to work-based learning and ensure 85% complete this element, each TANF funded year-round provider must forge partnerships with local businesses to ensure that programming is aligned with industry needs in the local area. TANF YDP providers also coordinate with TRWDB's industry partnerships to advise on the needs of young people in the workforce, create signature programming that leads to employment, and connect programs with businesses. TANF YDP providers pay youth more than minimum wage where appropriate and possible to encourage youth to participate in paid work experience.

Youth Program Incentives

The TRWDB Incentive Policy outlines the full requirements for the provision of program incentives to TANF YDP participants. The policy sets a cap on award amounts, requires consistency and fairness in the awarding of incentives, and requires fiscal controls in place for the storing and issuing of gift cards as incentives. TRWDB requires all TANF TDF providers utilizing incentives to have a program-level policy in place before incentives can be offered. Providers are required to outline how they will distribute incentives so that every participant receives the same incentives for the same outcomes. The TRWDB Incentive Policy is available at www.partner4work.org/documents/policies.

LWDB staff member who is responsible for the implementation, tracking, and reporting of the TANF YDF activities and expenditures:

Kiara Higgins

Senior Director Workforce Services
khiggins@partner4work.org
 412-552-7098

Kristin Kramer

Chief Financial Officer
kkramer@partner4work.org
 (412) 552-7088

TANF YDF Program Sites / Contact Information (as of PY2025)

<u>Auberle</u> 1101 Hartman St McKeesport, PA 15132 Abby Wolensky abbyw@aublerle.org 412-673-5800	<u>Aryse</u> 6101 Penn Ave Pittsburgh, PA 15206 Fernan Osorno Fernan@arysepg.org	<u>Pittsburgh Area Community Schools</u> 3856 S Water St Pittsburgh, PA 15203 Bridget Clement Bclement@cispac.org 412-361-4945
<u>Bloomfield–Garfield Corporation</u> 5149 Penn Avenue	<u>Goodwill of Southwestern Pennsylvania</u>	<u>City Charter</u> 436 Grant St, Suite 119

Pittsburgh, PA 15224 Alonso Diaz-Perez alonso@bloomfield-garfield.org 412-441-6950	118 52nd St. Pittsburgh, PA 15201 Tiffanee Heywood tiffanee.heywood@goodwillswpa.org 412-632-1756	Pittsburgh, PA 15219 Dr. Dara Allen Ware dwallen@cityhigh.org 412-690-2489
<u>Boys & Girls Clubs of Western Pennsylvania</u> 33 Terminal Way, Suite 435A Pittsburgh, PA 15219 Chris Watts cwatts@bgcwpa.org 412-782-5710	<u>Cafe Momentum</u> 268 Forbes Ave. Pittsburgh, PA 15222 Cheyenne Tyler cheyenne@cafemomentumpgh.org	<u>Neighborhood Learning Alliance</u> 5429 Penn Ave Pittsburgh, PA 15206 Kashif Henderson Henderson@wireless-neighborhoods.org 412-363-1914
<u>Garfield Jubilee Association</u> 5323 Penn Ave Pittsburgh, PA 15224 Joann Monroe Chico81637@gmail.com	<u>JFCS</u> 5743 Barlett St Pittsburgh, PA 15217 Becky Johnson bjohnson@jfcspgh.org 412-422-7200	<u>Youth Enrichment Services</u> 6031 Broad St Ste 202 Pittsburgh, PA 15206 Dr. Dennis Jones floyd.jones@mail.wvu.edu 415-259-8291
<u>Homeless Children's Education Fund</u> 1901 Center Ave, Suite 301 Pittsburgh PA 15219 Jason Flowers Info@homelessfund.org	<u>Legacy Arts Project</u> 7227 Tioga St. Pittsburgh, PA 15208 Erin Perry eperry@legacyartsproject.org 412-452-3847	<u>Homewood Children's Village</u> 801 N Homewood Ave Pittsburgh, PA 15208 Walter Lewis WLewis@hcvpgh.org
<u>Community Empowerment Association</u> 7120 Kelly St Pittsburgh, PA 15208 Rashad Byrdsong trbyrdsong@ceapittsburgh.org 412-371-3689	<u>New Century Careers</u> 305 Carson St. Pittsburgh, PA 15219 Neil Ashbaugh Ashbaugh@ncsquared.com	<u>Latino Community Center</u> 5750 Baum Blvd. Pittsburgh, PA 15206 Rosamaria Cristello rcristello@latinocommunitycenter.org 412-335-7446
<u>Pittsburgh Public Schools - SOS</u> 2323 Brighton Road Pittsburgh, PA 15212 Wayne Walters Wwalters1@pghschools.org	<u>Phase 4</u> 5850 Centre Ave. Pittsburgh, PA 15206 Terrie Suica-Reed tsuicareed@phase4lc.org 412-462-1241	<u>Tech 25</u> 112 Joseph Street Pittsburgh, PA 15210 Pete Spynda Pete@tech25.org
<u>Youth Guidance</u> 137 Bridge Street Homestead, PA 15120 Andrew Johnson Anjohnson@youth-guidance.org		

Description of how the LWDB monitors local providers and who is responsible for the monitoring:

Monitoring Process Overview

TRWDB, in collaboration with Department of Human Services (DHS), maintains subrecipient compliance through fiscal and program monitoring reviews. The frequency and intensity of these reviews depend on the risk level determined for each subrecipient organization. Throughout the monitoring, TRWDB will

identify subrecipients to bring attention to any compliance deficiencies and offer technical assistance. Upon the conclusion of monitoring reviews, monitoring results will be communicated to subrecipients and outline best practices, areas of concern, and findings requiring the submission of a Corrective Action Plan.

Risk Determination

To determine risk levels, subrecipients are required to respond to the Pre-Monitoring Assessment Tool. This tool determines the subrecipient's risk level by asking a series of questions regarding the subrecipient's administrative capacity, accounting system, and previous monitoring and audit results. TRWDB will also request that subrecipients submit organizational documents and policies demonstrating organizational compliance with Uniform Guidance requirements.

TRWDB will review Pre-Monitoring Assessment submissions, organizational documents and policies, and any other relevant materials and information to determine the subrecipient's risk level (high, medium, low).

Monitoring Reviews

Program monitoring reviews may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- On-site or desk reviews of participant case files or electronic reports to ensure compliance with required program activities including participant eligibility, service delivery, and outcomes documentation
- Reviews of program reporting for data integrity and performance tracking
- Evaluation of program compliance, performance, and best practices through a program monitoring tool
- Participant and staff interviews or surveys

Fiscal monitoring reviews may include, but are not limited to the following:

- On-site or desk reviews of:
 - Revenue and expenditure reports
 - General ledger transactions detail
 - Payroll registers and allocation reports
 - Contract budgets
 - Bank reconciliations
 - Indirect cost and cost allocation proposals
 - Invoices, cancelled checks, and other disbursement documentation
 - Participant and staff timesheets
 - External audit reports
 - Balance sheets
- Review of a fiscal compliance documents including financial documents, written policies and procedure manuals, and other items to ensure compliance with federal and state regulatory requirements
- Monitoring of expenditure of funds and notifications to subrecipient prior to end of the obligation and liquidation period to ensure funds are spent.
- Collection of data and reports from subrecipients as needed to meet specific federal and state requirements.
- Evaluation through a fiscal monitoring tool

- Staff interviews

Technical Assistance

If a monitoring review observes a compliance deficiency, TRWDB will communicate the observation to the subrecipient. The subrecipient will then have an opportunity to respond to the observation, request technical assistance, and resolve the initial observation through a secondary review. TRWDB will provide technical assistance to subrecipients as needed throughout the program year.

Monitoring Results

Upon the completion of all monitoring reviews, all subrecipients will receive an official monitoring results letter detailing observed best practices, areas of concern, findings, citations to relevant regulations and policies, as well as recommendations toward the resolution of compliance deficiencies.

Any compliance deficiency observed during a monitoring review that is subsequently addressed by the subrecipient and observed as resolved upon a secondary monitoring review year will be considered an **area of concern** in the monitoring results letter.

Any compliance deficiency observed during a monitoring review that is not addressed by a subrecipient and observed as unresolved upon a secondary monitoring review will be considered a **finding** in the monitoring results letter.

Corrective Action

Depending on the type and context of deficiency observed, a subrecipient may be required to submit a Corrective Action Plan in response to a finding. Corrective Action Plans must demonstrate the specific actions being taken by a subrecipient to resolve a finding. Such actions include staff training, the development of new organizational processes, the development of organizational policies required under the Uniform Guidance, and any other actions approved by TRWDB under the Corrective Action Plan.

When required, a Corrective Action Plan must be submitted to TRWDB within 30 days of the subrecipient's receipt of the monitoring results letter. Once approved, TRWDB will conduct a monitoring review of the Corrective Action Plan within 90 days of the Corrective Action Plan approval. The results of this monitoring review will be shared with the subrecipient stating whether the corrective action was implemented by the subrecipient and if the corrective action resolved the monitoring finding. If the corrective action plan was observed to be not implemented by the subrecipient, or did not resolve the finding through the corrective action, the subrecipient will be subject to additional actions or compliance requirements by TRWDB, up to and including contract termination.

LWDB Staff Responsible for Monitoring:

Brian Kreit,

Chief Compliance & Policy Officer

Bkreit@partner4work.org

412-745-0261

The TRWDB Compliance Team is staffed with a manager and two additional Specialists overseeing subrecipient monitoring for this program.

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

TRWDB fully supports the vision of WIOA and the Commonwealth for improved coordination and collaboration across WIOA programs and partners, including Adult Education and Literacy. TRWDB will continue to engage with our Title II Adult Education partner(s) during the development and implementation of programs and services. TRWDB's engagement with our Title II partners during the development of our One-Stop Memorandum of Understanding has informed much of the content in this local plan regarding coordination of services. TRWDB will also ensure our Title II partners have the opportunity to advise on our local plan development prior to our final submission to the Commonwealth, including through facilitated community engagement meetings planned for Spring 2025.

TRWDB staff and local board members will review local adult education provider applications under WIOA Title II, taking into consideration their alignment with the strategies, vision, and goals outlined in the local workforce development plan for Allegheny County and the City of Pittsburgh. TRWDB will utilize the process and scoring criteria established by the PA Department of Education and follow any additional guidance provided to the Board on the process. Procedures announced by the PA Department of Education call for the local Adult Education proposers for services in the local area to submit applications directly to PDE. PDE will perform an initial review to ensure compliance by the proposers with requirements established by the PDE. PDE will then share applications related to each workforce area with the appropriate workforce development board, along with the scoring framework that is being employed by the PDE. Local boards will then send recommendations regarding local Adult Education provider proposals to the PDE for consideration during PDE's final review, scoring, and selection process. PDE will make final decisions and inform the local board so that representatives of Adult Education providers can be included in service coordination meetings led by the one-stop operator.

WIOA Title II services are made available both on-site at PA CareerLink® locations and via referral to WIOA Title II partner programs. Please see **Section 4.5** for our detailed chart demonstrating how access to Title II and other partner services will be provided at each PA CareerLink® comprehensive site in the Pittsburgh and Allegheny County workforce development areas.

Allegheny Intermediate Unit (AIU)

The AIU is a regional public education agency and current Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy provider for Allegheny County. The AIU's Adult Education offerings include provision of adult literacy classes to job seekers through the one-stop system. The AIU's Family Literacy Program provides instruction, resources, and activities for families in Allegheny County to achieve their educational and employment goals.

Literacy Pittsburgh

Literacy Pittsburgh is a current Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy provider for Allegheny County. Literacy Pittsburgh makes classroom services available on-site at both PA CareerLink® – Allegheny East and PA CareerLink® - Downtown Pittsburgh. Additionally, job seekers can enroll in any of the learning programs offered by the agency. Program offerings from Literacy Pittsburgh are provided in **Section 3.2** of this document.

Literacy Pittsburgh is represented at monthly core partner meetings, where PA CareerLink® operations and services are discussed and monitored, with a focus on collaboration between Titles I, II, III, and IV. Additionally, Literacy Pittsburgh is represented at the bi-weekly Business Service Team meetings, focusing

on employer engagement and employer services across the core partners. Literacy Pittsburgh is invited and participates in monthly PA CareerLink® Staff meetings. A direct referral system has been established and is monitored for co-enrollment in Title I and Title II services. “As of July 2025, Literacy Pittsburgh contracts with Goodwill of Southwestern PA to deliver components of their Title II programming.

Literacy Pittsburgh works with TRWDB to identify and develop opportunities to collaborate to support job seekers and employers. As the Title II provider, Literacy Pittsburgh is represented on the Workforce Development Board, which serves to facilitate collaborative work on regional priorities. Literacy Pittsburgh works within signature projects of TRWDB to align adult basic education services to priority industries. Examples include the Introduction to the Construction Trades pre-apprenticeship program where the organization provides math instruction. Participants are co-enrolled with Title I where applicable. Pittsburgh Gateways and Literacy Pittsburgh have worked together to raise additional funds to expand the pre-apprenticeship program to include a GED preparation component. Further, Literacy Pittsburgh provides education services directly to employers to help with retention and advancement of incumbent workers.

3.6 Wagner-Peyser - 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.

TRWDB has established the WIOA One-Stop Partner Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with PA CareerLink® Pittsburgh/Allegheny County system partners and the chief elected officials (CEOs), Allegheny County Executive and Mayor of Pittsburgh. Through the MOU, TRWDB and our one-stop partners seek to establish a system that stands in contrast to a “traditional”/historical transaction-based model where each agency operates its own business and job seeker services functions, and participants move from place to place seeking services. Instead, the goal is to create integrated locations and a unified structure and process of proactive, transparent, and effective job seeker and business services, orchestrated by a seamless collaboration of talent development and support agencies. Through the MOU, all Parties agree to employ their best efforts in referring customers to other Parties, as allowable and applicable, when such referrals provide added value to customers. The primary principle of the referral system is to provide integrated and seamless delivery of services to workers, job seekers, and employers. To facilitate such a system, Parties agree to:

- Familiarize themselves with the basic eligibility and participation requirements, available services and benefits offered, for each of the Partners’ programs represented in PA CareerLink®;
- Develop materials summarizing their program requirements and make them available for Partners and customers;
- Develop and utilize common intake, eligibility determination, assessment, and registration forms;
- Provide substantive referrals to customers who are eligible for supplemental and complementary services and benefits under Partner programs;
- Regularly evaluate ways to improve the referral process, including the use of customer satisfaction surveys;
- Commit to robust and ongoing communication required for an effective referral process;

- Commit to actively follow up on the results of referrals and assuring that Partner resources are being leveraged at an optimal level; and
- Utilize the CWDS 2.0 function to allow for referrals between Partners and to make external referrals to partners not participating in the PA CareerLink® system.

With the implementation of our universal digital intake form, Job seekers are identified by shared staff at the point of entry and then referred to the appropriate program(s) to meet their needs. Our customer-centered IEP allows staff users across programs to collaborate to create, add to, and revise one IEP for a particular participant to ensure consistency and support alignment of services. Furthermore, to strengthen the professional skills of co-located partners' staff in PA CareerLink® centers, Partners commit to cross-training of staff, as appropriate, and to providing other professional learning opportunities that promote continuous quality improvement.

The One-Stop Partner MOU defines the parameters within which Wagner-Peyser and other WIOA partner programs operating in the Allegheny County and Pittsburgh WDAs can create a seamless, customer-focused service delivery system that aligns service delivery across the board and enhances access to program services. By realizing one-stop opportunities together, partners can build community-benefiting bridges, rather than silos of programmatic isolation. These partnerships reduce administrative burden and costs and increase customer access and performance outcomes. The MOU outlines the following ways in which coordination will occur among Wagner-Peyser and the remaining WIOA partner programs. Partners will promote system integration to the maximum extent feasible through:

- Effective communication, information sharing, and collaboration with the One-Stop Operator;
- Active involvement in joint planning, policy development, and system design processes;
- Commitment to and active involvement in the development of a joint mission, vision, goals, strategies, and performance measures;
- The design and use of common intake, assessment, referral, and case management processes;
- The use of common and/or linked data management systems and data sharing methods, as appropriate;
- Leveraging of resources, including other public agency and non-profit organization services;
- Participation in a continuous improvement process designed to boost outcomes and increase customer satisfaction;
- Establishing a point-of-contact(s) to serve as a liaison between the Partner program and PA CareerLink®; and
- Participation in regularly scheduled partner meetings to exchange information in support of the above and encourage program and staff integration.

All staff in the PA CareerLink® offices work together to ensure that job seekers have access to career training, labor exchange, and education services as necessary. At PA CareerLink® Pittsburgh/Allegheny County locations, adults and dislocated workers receive basic, individualized services, and training services if eligible. Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker providers work in partnership with Adult Basic Education, Wagner-Peyser, and OVR staff to coordinate across programs. Regularly scheduled leadership meetings are attended by representatives of Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker, Adult Basic Education, Wagner-Peyser, OVR, and shared center management staff. These meetings are used to set and implement strategy in alignment with federal, state, and local guidance. In addition, direct service supervisors from

core program partners attend regular supervisory meetings where daily operations are determined and managed.

TRWDB also works with its contracted youth and young adult service providers to ensure an appropriate referral network for program participants to access workforce and supportive services. To avoid service duplication and to provide for the best match between program and participant, youth programs are encouraged to work together. Further, to assist in best practices sharing and inform services provided to youth participants, TRWDB staff provide regular technical assistance to youth and young adult service providers.

3.7 Core Program Facilitation - How will the local board work with the entities carrying out core programs to:

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

TRWDB places strong importance on serving individuals with barriers to employment and is committed to meeting the Governor's goal that at least 51% of those receiving Title I Adult services will be individuals entitled to priority of service. To do so, TRWDB develops strong partnerships with Title I service providers and organizations serving individuals entitled to priority of service. TRWDB will leverage these partnerships to expand access to workforce services, make referrals, and explore co-enrollment for eligible individuals to meet unique client needs. Further, TRWDB will work closely with the PA CareerLink® Operator, in overseeing the one-stop operator duties described in **Section 3.2** and in ensuring that the one-stop partners adhere to commitments for sharing of responsibilities and resources identified in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that each partner maintains with the local board.

The core partners will work together to identify participant barriers at the point-of-entry to direct people to the appropriate services and inform the development of IEPs. Partners will work collaboratively, starting with initial introduction of services and eligibility determination process, to provide access to all available services of partners rather than referring the applicant to one partner for a limited menu of services. Each partner is responsible for eligibility determination of their respective program (e.g. Title II Adult Education determines eligibility for Title II programming). A role of the one-stop operator is to work with partners to expand outreach efforts for partner programs and services, including **programs such as WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Adult Education, Wagner-Peyser, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Veterans services**. Through the One-Stop Partner MOU, partners commit to working with the one-stop operator to establish a process for effective referrals to and from PA CareerLink® partner programs, including strengthening communication, developing a common intake process, staff training on eligibility requirements of partner programs, and additional efforts to ensure integrated and seamless delivery of services. The referral tool through PA's workforce development system of record is also utilized where appropriate to help facilitate referrals across core partner programs.

To further expand the access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, TRWDB-funded programs will remove barriers to enrollment where possible. TRWDB will utilize self-certification in accordance with federal guidance, state guidance and TRWDB's eligibility policy

to facilitate eligibility validation for individuals with barriers to employment. TRWDB will encourage our funded programs to consider self-attestation as a viable alternative, particularly among certain populations whose life circumstances may preclude immediate access to certain documents. Self-attestation may be used when document collection would delay or prevent a customer from enrollment in a program and moving ahead with services. When readily available or reasonably attainable, other methods of eligibility documentation or verification will be used in place of self-attestation. Where feasible TRWDB contracted providers will utilize telephone verification prior to the use of self-attestation for adult, dislocated worker, and youth populations.

TRWDB is also working with WIOA core programs to explore models for increasing co-enrollment where appropriate. Job seekers who enter PA CareerLink® without a high school diploma or GED are referred to Title II services before, or concurrently with, participation in occupational skills training. Basic skill deficient job seekers are referred to Title II services to increase English, computational, or computer skills. As an example, Literacy Pittsburgh (a WIOA Title II partner) provides adult education services to participants of the Intro to the Construction Trades pre-apprenticeship program to support English, computational, or computer skills development needs, while participants attend training leading to employment in the Construction industry.

Additionally, TRWDB is working closely with OVR staff to identify models to increase awareness and expand access to programs through OVR. This includes determining opportunities for co-enrollment of both youth and adult participants to ensure that individuals with a disability have robust employment services. Recognizing that Title III Wagner-Peyser programs represent the entry point to the public workforce system for a large share of job seekers, all RESEA workshops include a discussion of the Title I services available to our clients.

TRWDB is considering both brick-and-mortar and virtual solutions to further expand access for job seekers unable to reach the two PA CareerLink® sites in Allegheny County and the City of Pittsburgh. TRWDB and our PA CareerLink® partners have invested in new technology and tools for delivering virtual services such as SkillUp™ PA and BankWork\$, the latter delivered through a hybrid model of virtual/in-person training depending on each student's need. Job seekers can also access services such as job search, career advising, and veteran' services fully virtual through PA CareerLink®. Utilizing mobile PA CareerLink® staff and cross training of library staff, TRWDB is also partnering with the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh system to establish new access points for PA CareerLink® services while leveraging the infrastructure and resources of the local libraries. Community Based Organizations provide supportive services and case management to job seekers; Title I providers are also working in partnership with the United Way of Allegheny County to expand referrals to supportive services outside of the PA CareerLink®.

To further help those at the nascent stages of their careers, TRWDB works to develop career pathways linked with the ETPL and other training/credentialing programs to help job seekers understand options available to them and how training can be leveraged for success. TRWDB's employer engagement and industry partnership activities are key to mapping career pathway opportunities within industries, identifying skills, competencies, and credentials required for in-demand occupations along a particular pathway. TRWDB works closely with our PA CareerLink® and other workforce partners to help individuals access high-quality jobs, focusing on career pathways with multiple on and off-ramps depending on a person's individual need. Local workforce partners understand not every job seeker is immediately prepared to enter a high-skill occupation. Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs help identify numerous points of entry along a career pathway and establish steps to success, including career services and training, that are manageable for program participants to achieve. Through partnerships with education and training institutions, including career and technical centers, community college, and other

post-secondary training providers, skills training and credentialing programs are designed to provide participants with the qualifications need for employment along a career pathway.

TRWDB will promote career pathways, bringing employers and educators together as partners. As previously mentioned, employers must become full partners in career pathways, engaging in work-based learning in multiple ways to connect to classroom learning. TRWDB will also engage employers on a cross-sector basis to identify occupational skills that apply to multiple sectors, and to build entry skills (such as customer service and IT) in sectors such as Retail and Hospitality that can be applied to high-demand, high-quality jobs in multiple sectors.

Section 3.3 provides additional details on specific efforts to expand access to training opportunities leading to industry-recognized post-secondary credentials.

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

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

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

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

TRWDB invests training funds in programs linked to in-demand industries and occupations. ITAs provide funding for individuals to select from and attend a training program listed on the Statewide ETPL. Funds for ITAs are spent on programs that provide training in occupations on the High Priority Occupation (HPO) List, as determined by the Commonwealth, for Allegheny County and the City of Pittsburgh. Updated annually, the HPO List includes occupations that have high projected annual openings and high average wages. TRWDB petitions for additional occupations to be added to the HPO List, informed by labor market information and input from stakeholders (training providers, economic development organizations, employers, etc.) to further strengthen alignment between the HPO List and regional employer demand. In addition, TRWDB's dedicated industry partnership and community engagement staff conduct regular communication and outreach efforts to employers and workforce development partners to more closely align program and training investments with industry demand and the training needs of job seekers. This includes a review to ensure that courses in demand are on the ETPL or that other mechanisms are in place to meet the training need.

TRWDB sets maximum ITA amounts through the WIOA Title I Adult/Dislocated Worker Policy Guide available on our website at www.partner4work.org. The amount is set considering course type, funding availability, and local tuition costs. ITA applicants must first complete an objective assessment and interview with a PA CareerLink® employment specialist to determine their eligibility and that the individual is in need of training. ITA funding is not guaranteed to any participant and is contingent upon funding availability. All ITA programs must be completed within two years. Under limited circumstances, such as client barriers to employment, a person may qualify for more than one ITA. An assessment must determine additional ITA-funded training is necessary, the training must be connected to an HPO along a career pathway, and individuals must show proof of successful completion of all prior ITA-funded training. Additional ITA-funded training requires prior approval from TRWDB. TRWDB regularly monitors ITAs to ensure alignment with federal, state, and local policies. To ensure informed customer choice, providers and programs must provide a variety of program-specific information, including a program description, program length, tuition/costs, prerequisites, and credentials offered. This information is made available to customers when selecting a program of training on the ETPL.

TRWDB also provides access to funds for work-based training opportunities, including on-the-job training (OJT), customized job training, and incumbent worker training (IWT). These programs benefit both job seekers and employers by enabling job seekers to receive training while earning a wage and subsidizing costs for employers during the training period. For example, the reimbursement rate for employers in OJT programs is set at 50% of the participant's wage, with potential for an increase to 75% of the self-sufficiency wage based on locally established criteria. Employers are also able to access incumbent worker training (IWT) funds to upskill current workers, which works to address employer skill demand while also providing job security and opportunity for growth for current employees. Employers are reimbursed a percentage of training costs for IWT, which is set based on employer size. Customized job training (CJT) programs are an additional training option designed to meet the needs of a specific employer or group of employers. Employers are typically reimbursed 50% of the cost of training for CJT. TRWDB may contract directly with a training provider to facilitate training of a cohort of individuals for jobs in in-demand sectors or occupations.

Registered Apprenticeship

TRWDB has worked tirelessly to increase our capacity to provide and support the successful completion of apprenticeship opportunities. Please see below for the steps we have been taken to account for the registered apprenticeship structure in the use of contracts and ITAs:

Updating ITA Policies for RA and Pre-RA:

- Employment Requirements: Ensuring ITAs remain accessible for apprentices who are simultaneously employed during their training.
- Non-HPO Occupations: Adding disclaimers allowing ITA support for RA occupations that may not be on the local High Priority Occupation (HPO) list but are in-demand within the apprenticeship ecosystem.

Updating ITA Policies for RA and Pre-RA:

- Multiyear Training Timelines: Adjusting ITA policies to accommodate the extended duration of RA programs, ensuring support for all required Related Technical Instruction (RTI) over multiple years.

Prioritizing WIOA Funds for Apprenticeship:

- Customized Supportive Services: Ensuring policies allow for flexible use of supportive services (e.g., tools, transportation, childcare) to meet the unique needs of apprentices and Pre-RA participants.

Inclusion of RA and Pre-RA in Contracts and Agreements:

- Including provisions in employer contracts for OJT and IWT to support apprenticeships and ensure alignment with RA standards.
- TRWDB remains active in helping sponsors include their recently registered programs into the ETPL.

Promoting Equity and Access:

- Embedding language prioritizing the recruitment of underrepresented populations (e.g., individuals with barriers to employment) in RA and Pre-RA programs in all relevant policies.

Co-Enrollment:

- Including provisions in policies to encourage co-enrollment of RA participants in other WIOA-funded programs, maximizing access to resources like supportive services and career counseling.

In addition to those listed above, TRWDB will consider the following strategies developed through our work with Apprenticeship Building America:

OJT Policies Adaptations:

- Flexible Reimbursement Structures: Adapt On-the-Job Training (OJT) policies to align with the wage progression models common in RA programs, allowing for incremental reimbursements as apprentices advance through competency levels.
- Employer Support for Pre-RAs: Expand OJT to include Pre-RA participants, ensuring employers receive wage reimbursement during foundational training that leads into RAs.

Prioritizing WIOA Funds for Apprenticeship:

- Fund Allocation Priorities: Revise funding policies to explicitly prioritize WIOA funds for RA and Pre-RA programs, ensuring access to supportive services, ITAs, OJTs, and Incumbent Worker Training (IWT).

Local Board Policy Updates:

- Review and update all local board-approved policies to reflect the unique structure of RAs and Pre-RAs, ensuring compliance with federal WIOA regulations and alignment with apprenticeship priorities.
- Clearly define how WIOA funds will be used to support apprenticeship, including a breakdown of services (e.g., ITA for RTI, OJT for WBL, supportive services, IWT for upgrading skills). This will include creating flexibility to easily split specified amount of funding among RTI and OJTs, depending on the needs of the apprenticeship program/employer/sponsor.

TRWDB will continue to review, update, and adapt our program policies to reflect the unique structure of RAs and Pre-RAs, as needed. Adopted changes will prioritize the use of WIOA funds to expand access to apprenticeship opportunities, align policies with federal and state requirements, and support the career advancement of participants. These efforts will ensure apprenticeships remain a central and sustainable component of the region's workforce development strategy.

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

Allegheny County is home to six secondary Perkins Career and Technical Education centers and two postsecondary Perkins programs. TRWDB staff attend Perkins Stakeholders Group Meetings and offer labor market data relevant to secondary and postsecondary populations to help guide and implement programs of study. TRWDB has partnered with local CTCs during the development and implementation of Business Education Partnership programs, bridging connections between CTC programs and in-demand industries, while providing career exploration opportunities for students. TRWDB commits to coordinating with and providing support to our local CTCs during Perkins V Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA) processes by providing workforce development and labor market information on in-demand occupations, participating in efforts to obtain stakeholder input, including stakeholder committee(s) for the Perkins V CLNA, and other activities to support the completion of the CLNA. Post-secondary Perkins providers are WIOA required one-stop system partners, which ensures program information is made available to individuals at PA CareerLink® offices and referrals are made as appropriate.

While building connections with each of the 43 school districts in Allegheny County is a challenge, TRWDB regularly coordinates with secondary institutions through our network of year-round in-school youth programs, Learn & Earn, educational intermediaries like the Allegheny Intermediate Unit and Consortium for Public Education, and other funded programs. Such programs are designed to be complimentary and not duplicative of existing secondary and post-secondary education. Learn & Earn, for example, connects youth and young adults to meaningful work experience opportunities during the summer in between school years. An additional example, discussed in more detail in **Section 3.2**, is Career Ready Allegheny: a collaborative initiative designed to bridge the gap between education and industry by uniting local experts in education, workforce development, labor market research, and equitable learning practices to provide students with access to work-based learning opportunities such as internships and job shadowing. TRWDB continues to encourage programs at postsecondary educational institutions that train job seekers for high priority occupations to apply for inclusion on the ETPL. TRWDB also works with postsecondary training providers to create cohort-based training programs when appropriate.

TRWDB coordinates with our Title II Adult Education partners, named in **Attachment 3**, to appropriately refer customers to the important education, GED attainment, literacy, and other services offered through

these programs. Title II Adult Education programs provide direct access to services with staff physically present at the PA CareerLink® sites in Allegheny County and the City of Pittsburgh. TRWDB and our Title II Adult Education partner are also committed to working with the one-stop operator to develop more effective referral processes, engage in cross-training efforts among PA CareerLink® staff, and explore opportunities for improved service coordination and co-enrollment of participants.

Digital literacy and access to technology have become increasingly important to successful participation in education and training, and the employer demand for these skills has increased across a wide range of sectors. TRWDB will continue to develop strategies and partnerships for reducing technology barriers to education and employment for participants. This includes partnering with our local WIOA Title II program to provide digital literacy training to job seekers and training participants and working to connect participants with programs and resources that increase technology and broadband access to individuals. Support services may also be explored as a way of improving access to technology for program participants.

Sections 4.5 and 4.9 provide greater detail on how TRWDB and its partners will work to increase accessibility of workforce development programs and services in our area.

4. OPERATIONAL PLANNING: Local Area Workforce Delivery System

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

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

To address the needs of employers and job seekers in the local area, TRWDB implements a broad, collaborative business engagement strategy. This includes multiple activities led by internal team members as well as collaborative activities with PA CareerLink® partners and other employer-serving organizations.

PA CareerLink®

Through PA CareerLink®, TRWDB facilitates the connection of employers to qualified talent and increases awareness of the public workforce system resources available from partner organizations. Together, local partners help employers recruit talent through job matching services, hiring events, on-site interviewing, and other services. Through these services and events, employers reach new pools of job candidates at a cost-saving to them. PA CareerLink® partners also assist in creating work-based training options (on-the-job training, customized training, and incumbent worker training) to improve employers' talent acquisition strategies, access untapped talent pools, decrease on-boarding and talent development costs, and increase retention of talent. The Business Services Team at PA CareerLink®, comprised of representatives from the core partners, aligns and coordinates services provided to businesses through the system. PA CareerLink® business services staff provide direct business services, record and track services information and related data in Pennsylvania's workforce development system of record. Industry partnerships and sector strategies, managed by TRWDB staff, help to inform the work of the business services team and facilitate additional connections between employers in in-demand industries with PA CareerLink® services.

Rapid Response

Rapid Response staff at PA CareerLink® sites provide early intervention business services that assist workers and employers during the entire business cycle. Rapid Response coordinates layoff aversion and outplacement services for employers and workers affected by layoffs, plant closures, or natural disasters. It is not always event-driven; it is a pro-active approach to planning for and managing economic transitions. Rapid Response introduces the workforce and economic development systems and helps workers and employers navigate the Commonwealth's system of user-friendly resources and information to help transition workers into reemployment and assist businesses.

Industry Partnerships and Sector Strategies

At TRWDB, Industry Partnerships play a key role in achieving our employer and industry engagement goals by fostering collaboration between businesses, training providers, the PA CareerLink® system, and other

stakeholders. TRWDB has currently established partnerships with six priority industries—Clean Energy, Construction, Financial Services, Healthcare, Information Technology, and Manufacturing—convening employers in each industry to collectively identify workforce challenges, skill gaps, and hiring trends. By leveraging industry expertise, these partnerships help develop targeted workforce solutions, such as customized training programs and career pathway initiatives, that strengthen the talent pipeline and support regional economic growth. Through this collaborative approach, TRWDB ensures that local job seekers are equipped with the skills and credentials needed to meet employer demand while advancing career opportunities in high-growth industries.

Business Intermediaries

TRWDB partners with a diverse range of business intermediaries—including chambers of commerce, the Pittsburgh Technology Council, the PA Bankers Association, the United Steelworkers (USW), Catalyst Connection, and others—to enhance the impact of our workforce development efforts. These organizations serve as trusted connectors within their respective industries, helping to identify workforce challenges, validate training and credentialing opportunities, and facilitate employer engagement with the PA CareerLink® system. By leveraging the expertise and networks of these intermediaries, TRWDB’s workforce strategies are informed by real-time industry insights, leading to more effective training programs, stronger employer participation, and greater career opportunities for local job seekers. As examples, TRWDB collaborated with the Pittsburgh Technology Council to establish Apprenti PGH in the region, we partnered with the PA Bankers Association to bring BankWork\$ to the area, and TRWDB has partnered with Pittsburgh Gateways to scale the Introduction to the Construction Trades pre-apprenticeship model.

Career Pathways

TRWDB’s employer engagement and Industry Partnership activities are key to mapping career pathway opportunities within industries, and identifying skills, competencies, and credentials required for in-demand occupations along a particular pathway. TRWDB works closely with our PA CareerLink® and other workforce partners to help individuals access high-quality jobs, focusing on career pathways with multiple on and off-ramps depending on a person’s individual need. Local workforce partners understand not every job seeker is immediately prepared to enter a high-skill occupation. WIOA partner programs help identify numerous points of entry along a career pathway and establish steps to success, including career services and training, that are manageable for program participants to achieve. Close coordination with Title II Adult Education programs helps participants obtain literacy/numeracy skills, digital skills, English language proficiency, and GED credentials necessary for entry into a career pathway. Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation partners help individuals with a disability access the programming and support needed for placement along a career pathway. Both Title II and Title IV programs are co-located at PA CareerLink® locations. In addition, through strategic partnerships with education and training institutions, including career and technical centers, community college, and other post-secondary training providers, skills training and credentialing programs are designed to provide participants with the qualifications needed for employment along a career pathway.

Registered Apprenticeships and Pre-Apprenticeships

Employer and industry engagement efforts also support the development of registered apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship opportunities in our local area. For example, PIT2Work is a partnership among TRWDB, Pittsburgh International Airport (PIT), and the Pittsburgh Gateways Corporation to train individuals interested in the construction trades as pre-apprentices. As pre-apprentices, participants are qualified to pursue union apprenticeships and, ultimately, jobs on the Terminal Modernization Program (TMP) or beyond. PIT2Work is the fast track to trade certifications; the skills and certifications participants

receive from this program may be used for other work in the future. This has become a signature training program connected to the Construction Industry Partnership. Additionally, in the healthcare sector, TRWDB is working with large employers in the workforce area, such as the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) and Allegheny Health Network, to make strides in creating new pipelines and entryways to healthcare careers. TRWDB is currently directly involved with and supporting the following related activities:

- **Information Technology:** TRWDB works in partnership with Fortyx80 and the Pittsburgh Technology Council in establishing Apprenti PGH – Pittsburgh's IT apprenticeship program. Apprenti PGH is an employer-driven model offering two tracks: Cybersecurity Analyst and Software Analyst.
- **Clean Energy Sector:** Under the Building Pathways for Infrastructure Jobs Program, TRWDB established an Electrical Vehicle (EV) Auto Technician Apprenticeship in partnership with the German American Chamber of Commerce.
- **Healthcare:** TRWDB has partnered with UPMC on registering several apprenticeship programs including Facilities Maintenance Tech, Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), Environmental Services, Dietary & Food Services, Ophthalmic Technician, and Surgical Tech. TRWDB partnered with the PA Ambulance Authority to register an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) apprenticeship program, and we have established an additional CNA program with Presbyterian Senior Care.

We worked closely with the ATO in registering these programs and were able to leverage state funding to scale this work. TRWDB will continue to consider opportunities for expanding apprenticeship offerings in connection with our employer engagement and industry partnership work.

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

TRWDB staff meet with our ATO representative regularly related to the following cases:

1. We receive monthly updates on registered apprenticeships in our local area;
2. We work with our ATR for the 1st year review of every new apprenticeship we've been involved in getting registered; and
3. Our ATR reaches out to us every time there is a new RA in our local area so we can help get it on the ETPL and access funding through CareerLink.

Data and Outcomes

TRWDB will work with PA CareerLink® partner programs to regularly assess business engagement and services data available in PA's workforce development system of record to understand how employers are interacting with the workforce system and how well the system is meeting their needs. Participant and employer outcomes from work-based training programs are regularly reviewed. PA's workforce development system of record also provides the ability to assess how well the system is matching job seekers with hiring employers, such as through an analysis of job orders that are filled. TRWDB will work with our PA CareerLink® partners to set benchmarks and goals for serving employers to support continuous improvement efforts. In addition, TRWDB is committed to meeting negotiated levels for the WIOA Effectiveness in Serving Employers measure once fully implemented. Coordination with PA CareerLink® partner programs, industry partnership and sector strategies, as well as regional coordination efforts will be key components for increasing business engagement outcomes over current levels.

Economic Development and Regional Coordination

The upcoming section (**Section 4.2**) details how TRWDB collaborates with the other local workforce development boards in the Southwest Planning Region to bridge connections between workforce development and economic development. This includes collaboration with the Allegheny Conference on Community Development (ACCD) to align workforce initiatives with its 10-year vision for a thriving population, strong economy, and high quality of life. TRWDB will also engage with the Southwest Pennsylvania Partnership for Regional Economic Performance (PREP) to support business development and work with PA Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) programs like Engage! and WEDnetPA to enhance workforce training and employer support. Additionally, the local boards in the Southwest Planning Region partner with the Southwestern Pennsylvania New Economy Collaborative, which secured a \$62.7 million grant through the Build Back Better Regional Challenge to advance robotics and automation, creating long-term economic opportunities for individuals, businesses, and communities in the region.

Unemployment Compensation

The Office of Unemployment Compensation (UC) provides services to help employers understand their legal rights and responsibilities, which helps to reduce their cost of doing business. UC customer service staff conduct seminars on UC topics where these rights and responsibilities are explained. This also allows the opportunity to forge even stronger connections between employers and the PA CareerLink® system. Additionally, individuals who are likely to exhaust benefits are identified through the Reemployment Services Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) and are directed to come to PA CareerLink® for staff assistance. RESEA services are provided in Allegheny County and the City of Pittsburgh by Wagner-Peyser staff. Efforts are made to coordinate RESEA services with WIOA Dislocated Worker services; customers who are eligible for or have exhausted unemployment compensation are often also eligible for WIOA Dislocated Worker services, including training. Through employer information sessions, employers are made aware of these programs as an additional source of referrals and as a means of reducing the time individuals need to receive benefit payments. UC claimants with questions about their claims are referred to UC staff members through the Commonwealth website and phone system. Customers are also able to schedule time with UC staff at PA CareerLink® locations for in-person assistance with their UC claims.

Unemployment Compensation (UC) representatives are currently deployed in all the PA CareerLink® comprehensive centers. Customers and/or claimants may call a designated number to schedule an appointment with an unemployment compensations agent either in person or on occasion virtually. In the event UC staff are not present, claimants can use the CRC to connect with the unemployment compensation filing system. A kiosk system is being deployed throughout the commonwealth to assist with ID.me connectivity issues some claimants have encountered. The kiosk will assist identification verification in order for the claimant to have full access to their unemployment compensation claim dashboard on the state website.

During RESEA sessions, staff assess claimants' compliance with UC requirements and flag any potential eligibility issues, such as insufficient job search activities or failure to participate in mandatory workshops. When eligibility concerns arise, Allegheny County promptly refers these cases to the Pennsylvania UC office for adjudication.

Allegheny County actively supports UC claimants in compliance with Pennsylvania's UC law, which mandates claimants to "Register for Work and Conduct Work Search." Allegheny County ensures that UC claimants meet these requirements by facilitating their enrollment in the PA CareerLink® system and providing access to resources and services that align with their employment goals. PA CareerLink®

Allegheny County staff assist claimants in creating or updating resumes, registering for workshops, and exploring job opportunities to fulfill their work search requirements effectively.

For those UC Claimants looking to file an appeal, forms are provided and submitted via fax at no charge and with limited wait. Staff provide copies of the confirmation printout for all faxes sent on behalf of Claimants.

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

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

4.2. Promotion and Coordination of Entrepreneurial Skills and Microenterprise - 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?

Close coordination between workforce development and economic development is essential to fostering a thriving, resilient economy that benefits both businesses and job seekers. A well-trained workforce is a critical factor in attracting and retaining businesses, making it crucial for workforce development boards to align training programs with the needs of key industries. Through the WIOA Regional Plan for the Southwest Planning Region, TRWDB and our partner local boards have committed to forging strong partnerships with economic development agencies in our region. The following are examples of how we will strengthen connections with regional economic development activities:

- Collaboration with the Allegheny Conference on Community Development (ACCD): Through its 2020/2030 Next is Now: A 10 Year Vision of Vitality in the Pittsburgh Region report, ACCD sets the broad goals of 1.) "Thriving People", 2.) "Quality of Place", and 3.) a "Strong Economy", which are focused on improving standards of living, achieving regional sustainability goals, and growing the regional economy, respectively. TRWDB's work will align with this vision of a thriving population and strong economy in the Pittsburgh region, as our programs are designed to increase economic opportunities for job seekers, workers, and youth, while also helping employers get connected to the talent needed to continue to grow.
- Engaging with ongoing regional economic development programs and initiative: This will include participation with the Southwest Pennsylvania Partnership for Regional Economic Performance (PREP), which consists of the economic development partners of the nine-county Southwest PREP region working together to organize and achieve economic results. PREP partners offer one-on-one counseling, specialized workshops, online training, and financial incentives to new businesses

and existing companies looking to grow. The local boards in our region are non-funded members of PREP and work with the funded PREP partners to continue efficient and effective coordination of workforce and economic development.

- Coordination with PA Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) programs: These include programs, such as Engage! and WEDnetPA. Engage! is a DCED business retention and expansion program designed to interact with targeted companies. WEDnetPA is a unique, collaborative partnership of community colleges, state system universities and other educational institutions. The program provides qualified employers training funds for new and existing employees.
- Build Back Better Program: Each of the local boards in our region is also a partner to the Southwestern Pennsylvania (SWPA) New Economy Collaborative, which is an 11-county coalition of labor, nonprofit, and university partners advancing the region's robotics and automation cluster through public-private-philanthropic partnership. The Collaborative is one of 21 winners of the Build Back Better Regional Challenge, the marquee initiative of the U.S. Economic Development Administration's American Rescue Plan, which aims to boost economic recovery from the pandemic and rebuild American communities. The Collaborative was awarded a \$62.7 million grant to fund five regional projects focused on robotics adoption, commercialization, and workforce development. Together, these projects are designed to provide long-term opportunities for individuals, businesses, and communities in Southwest Pennsylvania to participate in our growing robotics sector and succeed in our evolving economy.

Locally, TRWDB actively collaborates with economic development entities (Urban Redevelopment Authority, Community Development Corporations, etc.), developers and unions in large-scale neighborhood-based development projects, such as a "first source" entity to facilitate entry into the building and construction trades for local and/or low-income residents who are interested in careers in the industry. TRWDB, with our funded service providers, serves as a resource to construction managers, contractors and unions for identifying and screening residents interested in the construction trades and facilitates the appropriate connections with training providers as needed to prepare individuals to access these opportunities.

TRWDB will also explore ways of expanding entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services to individuals in our workforce areas, creating opportunities for individuals to pursue pathways toward self-employment. As a current effort, each of TRWDB's funded WIOA youth programs ensure access to entrepreneurial skills training to interested participants either directly or through referrals. TRWDB's year-round and summer youth employment programs also connect youth to work experience with businesses, exposing them to multiple skills translatable to entrepreneurial and microenterprise activities, including business management, administration, and customer service. TRWDB also works in partnership with Riverside Center for Innovation, a leading, full-service small business incubator targeting disadvantaged entrepreneurs in the City of Pittsburgh. Interested individuals may be referred for incubation support, their three-tiered Entrepreneurial Cohort Training program, or any other number of programs and resources available through the Center.

Community action agencies deliver vital services such as job training, workforce development, housing assistance, financial literacy programs, childcare, transportation support, food assistance, and emergency services to individuals facing significant economic barriers. TRWDB will collaborate with the local community action agencies in our area, where possible, to expand access to quality employment and training services for these residents. Community action organizations are signed partners to our local One-

Stop Partner MOU, ensuring their services are accessible on-site or through referrals at PA CareerLink® locations.

Looking further ahead, TRWDB is optimistic about Governor Shapiro's *Ten-Year Strategic Plan for Economic Development in Pennsylvania*¹ and committed to achieving the Commonwealth's goal specified in the plan to "Open Doors for all Pennsylvanians," making sure every Pennsylvanian can secure a family-sustaining job and meaningful career.

Section 4.1 describes how TRWDB will measure outcomes and results from our programs that engage and deliver services to employers.

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

Regional Business Services Coordination

The WIOA Regional Plan for the Southwest Planning Region describes a collaborative approach to providing business services at a regional scale. Recognizing that employers conduct business across the boundaries of our local workforce development areas, this coordination is essential to streamlining the employer customer experience within the region. Our regional plan describes the following:

Much of our employer engagement and business services strategy is achieved through the work of PA CareerLink® Business Service Teams (BSTs), which are collaborative groups of staff across PA CareerLink® partner programs who provide a personalized and coordinated approach to employer engagement. BSTs collaborate regionally and work with chambers of commerce, economic development agencies, and other partners to understand the needs of local businesses and connect them with valuable resources. Employers can access a comprehensive package of services through PA CareerLink®, including hiring/recruitment assistance, work-based training (on-the-job training, customized training, etc.), participation in job fairs and on-site recruitment events, labor market information, tax credit and federal bonding guidance, Equal Employment Opportunity compliance resources, and other services.

Employers can complete PA CareerLink® registration on their own or contact PA CareerLink® business services staff for assistance. Job orders can be placed on the PA CareerLink® website once the employer has been approved, where it can be viewed by thousands of interested job seekers. Recruitment assistance will be offered to employers in terms of promoting their recruitment events through advertisement at the PA CareerLink® and resumes can be collected on their behalf. Recruitments and screening interviews can also be held on-site at PA CareerLink® locations.

Local areas in our region have adopted data tracking to assess outcomes of PA CareerLink® services on businesses. Success is measured by metrics such as numbers of job orders, job placements, work-based training programs, job fairs, repeat business customers, and other metrics. Our region is also committed to success in achieving "Effectiveness in Serving Employers" requirements under WIOA in collaboration with our PA CareerLink® partners and the Commonwealth.

Local PA CareerLink® Partner Coordination

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) among PA CareerLink® partners describes the menu of services that will be available to local employers as a shared responsibility of all partners. At a minimum, the below business services will be made available at each comprehensive PA CareerLink® Pittsburgh/Allegheny County location, as applicable to the program. Access to partner programs and services may be delivered through any of the following methods:

- Having a program staff member physically present at the PA CareerLink® site;
- Having a staff member from a different partner program physically present at the PA CareerLink® site and appropriately trained to provide information to customers about the programs, services, and activities available through the partner program; or
- Making available a direct linkage through technology (phone, Skype, etc.) to a program staff member who can provide meaningful information or services.

Business Services		
Serve as a single point of contact for businesses, responding to all requests in a timely manner	Provide information and services related to Unemployment Insurance taxes and claims	Assist with disability and communication accommodations, including job coaches
Conduct outreach regarding Local workforce system's services and products	Conduct on-site Rapid Response activities regarding closures and downsizings	Develop On-the-Job Training (OJT) contracts, incumbent worker contracts, or pay-for-performance contract strategies
Provide access to labor market information	Provide customized recruitment and job applicant screening, assessment and referral services	Provide employer and industry cluster-driven Occupational Skills Training through Individual Training Accounts with eligible training providers
Assist with the interpretation of labor market information	Conduct job fairs	Develop customized training opportunities to meet specific employer and/or industry cluster needs
Use of one-stop center facilities for recruiting and interviewing job applicants	Consult on human resources issues	Coordinate with employers to develop and implement layoff aversion strategies
Post job vacancies in the state labor exchange system and take and fill job orders	Provide information regarding disability awareness issues	Provide incumbent worker upgrade training through various modalities
Provide information regarding workforce development initiatives and programs	Provide information regarding assistive technology and communication accommodations	Develop, convene, or implement industry or sector partnerships

Additionally, business services staff can identify resources to assist employers in hiring 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 employees with disabilities. OVR on-boarding supports for a qualified new hire can include: reasonable accommodation consultation, On the Job Training (OJT) wage reimbursement, 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 to retain current employees following an accident, injury or disability.

Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER) staff work through PA CareerLink® to conduct outreach to employers and develop relationships with area businesses in addition to the services offered to job-seeking veterans. LVERs work to educate employers and promote the hiring of veterans.

The Office of Unemployment Compensation (UC) also provides services to ensure employers understand their legal rights and responsibilities, which helps to reduce their cost of doing business. UC customer service staff conduct seminars on UC topics where these rights and responsibilities are explained. This also allows for the opportunity to forge connections between employers and the PA CareerLink® system.

As previously described in this plan, industry partnerships support the work of PA CareerLink® business services activities by engaging employers in priority industries, along with education/training providers and other stakeholders, to align training and credentialing with the changing needs of employers and to increase the participation of students in these programs. This engagement connects employers to the resources available through PA CareerLink® and increases training and employment opportunities for PA CareerLink® customers. In addition, TRWDB's state-funded Business Education Partnership programs have helped facilitate direct connections between employers and secondary education and CTC programs.

Registered Apprenticeships

TRWDB will continue to equip frontline staff with robust training, clear metrics, and valuable resources so they are prepared to embed apprenticeships into the workforce system effectively, fostering stronger employer engagement and better outcomes for participants. The first training of this kind was held in November of 2024 in collaboration with Jobs for the Future; we recognize repetition and reinforcement will be key to long term success and are continuing to establish a replicable process for future trainings. TRWDB's Industry Partnership team will be working in close coordination with our Workforce Services Team and the ATO to deliver specialized training to the Business Services Team (BST) on Registered Apprenticeships to enhance their ability to engage employers effectively and communicate the benefits of apprenticeship programs. Details of the training are as follows:

Content of Training:

- Introduction to Apprenticeships: Overview of RA and Pre-RA programs, including their structure, benefits, and alignment with workforce development goals.
- Employer Engagement Strategies: Best practices for promoting RAs to employers, including information on funding opportunities like OJT reimbursements and ITAs.
- Participant Support: Guidance on co-enrollment, supportive services, and addressing barriers to participation for job seekers.
- Compliance and Reporting: Training on WIOA regulations related to apprenticeship and processes for tracking metrics and outcomes.

Delivery Format:

- In-person workshops or virtual training sessions facilitated by subject matter experts from the PA Department of Labor & Industry or apprenticeship sponsors.
- Online training modules for on-demand learning and reference.

Frequency:

- Initial onboarding training for new BST members and Job Developers.
- Quarterly refresher sessions to stay updated on best practices, policy changes, and new funding opportunities.
- The following metrics will be used to measure the quality and quantity of employer outreach and engagement:

Quantity:

- Number of employers engaged in apprenticeship-related conversations.

- Number of new RA or Pre-RA programs developed and registered.
- Number of employers enrolling apprentices through PA CareerLink®.

Note: TRWDB is currently working to determine the appropriate data collection process

Quality:

- Percentage of employers who commit to establishing an RA or Pre-RA program after engagement.
- Employer satisfaction with BST support, measured through surveys or follow-up interviews.
- Retention and success rates of apprentices placed through employer partnerships.

The following resources will be provided for the BST Team:

- **Employer Toolkits:** Materials outlining the benefits of RAs, steps for program registration, and funding opportunities (e.g., OJT, ITAs, grants).
- **Data and Analytics:** Access to labor market data and reports to identify industries and occupations best suited for apprenticeship development.
- **Templates and Guides:** Sample contracts, MOUs, and promotional materials for employer outreach.
- **Technical Assistance:** Direct support from the Commonwealth Apprenticeship and Training Office (ATO) and regional Apprenticeship Training Representatives (ATRs). BST members will be provided the Registered Apprenticeship Desk Guide and the Apprenticeship Strategic Plan Guide for PA CareerLink® Staff.

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

TRWDB diligently works to maintain the quality and continuous improvement of contracted service providers and eligible training providers in the one-stop delivery system in our local area. **Section 2** of this plan describes in detail how TRWDB will work to meet the Governor’s goal of “continuous improvement of the PA CareerLink® system.” Key components include:

- A dedicated **compliance and monitoring team** assesses the compliance risk for each of our funded sub-recipients and develops a monitoring plan for each program. During program monitoring, our compliance and monitoring team identifies program strengths, areas for improvement, and potential compliance issues. Depending on the results, the team may create a plan for technical assistance or require a sub-recipient to submit an improvement plan. This regular channel of communication between our compliance and monitoring team and sub-recipients helps to identify and resolve issues or concerns early into a program and supports regular program improvements.
- A **data analytics team** creates scheduled reports on program data, including enrollment numbers, services provided, outcomes achieved, potential compliance issues, and other relevant data to inform program decision-making. TRWDB also employs dedicated **labor market research** staff who regularly analyze regional labor market information and produce reports for internal and external stakeholders. This enables TRWDB and our partners to ensure program investments and decision making are informed by current trends and needs within our regional economy.

- **Cross-partner coordination**, including working closely with our local one-stop operator to oversee operations of PA CareerLink® sites, coordinate service delivery among one-stop system partners, and ensure PA CareerLink® certification criteria are consistently met.

TRWDB competitively procures year-round service providers for WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs typically once every four years. These providers are selected based on their experience, past performance, and ability to implement research, data, and best practice driven program models. Contracts are usually renewed annually considering program performance and other factors. WIOA provider staff perform timely data entry into PA's workforce development system of record that enables TRWDB to produce regular program reports, including data on enrollment, services, and employment and education outcomes. These reports inform decision-making and help to promptly address any program concerns. In addition, TRWDB competitively procures a one-stop operator typically once every four years to coordinate service delivery among PA CareerLink® partners and oversee the functional management and operations of PA CareerLink® sites in Allegheny County and the City of Pittsburgh. The operator may employ staff to support continuous improvement of the local one-stop system and ensure criteria for PA CareerLink® certification are met.

To ensure quality of providers on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), training providers must meet a list of requirements to be approved for initial eligibility. For example, training providers must be authorized by the Commonwealth to operate training programs in Pennsylvania, provide documentation that confirms financial capacity, and demonstrate compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as well as with WIOA nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions. For inclusion on the ETPL, training programs must also meet performance benchmarks related to program completion, employment rates, median earnings, and credential attainment of their students. Program applications must provide a variety of program-specific information, including a program description, program length, tuition/costs, prerequisites, and credentials offered to inform customer choice to help job seekers select among available training opportunities. In addition, providers on the statewide ETPL must reapply annually for approval to ensure this information is reviewed regularly.

To ensure alignment with the needs of employers and job seekers, all programs on the ETPL must be training in a High Priority Occupation (HPO), which takes into account the projected job availability and average earnings for an occupation. When necessary, TRWDB works with stakeholders (employers, training providers, economic development organizations, etc.) to petition for additional occupations to be added to the HPO List; labor market data and information from employers are used to support the argument that an occupation is in-demand in the region. TRWDB-funded work-based training programs, such as one-the-job training (OJT), customized job training (CJT), and incumbent worker training (IWT) also prioritize training in HPOs.

TRWDB staff work with the PA CareerLink® business services team and our industry partnerships to continuously engage employers in key industries, assess their hiring needs, and coordinate a variety of training opportunities (on-the-job training, incumbent workers training, etc.) to meet those needs. Information and feedback obtained from employers helps to ensure that local workforce and training services both connect individuals to necessary credentials and successfully prepare them for jobs in high demand industries. **Sections 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3** describe, in greater detail, our Industry Partnership and sector strategies which help inform TRWDB and our partners of the current and future talent needs of employers in our region.

PA CareerLink® Pittsburgh/Allegheny County collects feedback through customer satisfaction surveys, which allow job seekers and employers to share their experiences with services provided. These surveys help PA CareerLink® staff assess the quality of the customer experience, identify areas for improvement,

and ensure that services align with customer needs. By analyzing survey responses, staff can make data-driven decisions to enhance workforce development initiatives, streamline processes, and improve overall service delivery.

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

TRWDB is steadfast in our commitment to ensuring universal access to the array of education, training, and support services offered through the PA CareerLink® system; residents of Allegheny County must have the opportunity to progress along a clearly defined and guided career pathway that leads to economic self-sufficiency. Accordingly, TRWDB strives to maintain the highest quality of service to job seekers, incumbent workers, and employers through strategically located centers, technology, and creative partnerships with community organizations and other service providers.

Strategically Located Centers:

TRWDB operates two distinct one-stop locations: one in downtown Pittsburgh, widely accessible by public transportation, and one site in Wilkins Township- Allegheny East - that is well positioned to serve job seekers in the eastern and southern parts of Allegheny County. The PA CareerLink® Pittsburgh Allegheny East Office relocated from the Forest Hills neighborhood to the more central area of Wilkins Township in 2024.

Creative Partnerships with Community Organizations:

TRWDB continues to expand access to services through our partnerships with community-based organizations across the local area. As mentioned in **Section 3.4**, TRWDB pays special attention to geographic coverage during the competitive procurement of our youth and young adult programming to ensure young people can access services in or around their home communities, and that those services are delivered in a culturally competent manner. Additionally, TRWDB seeks to identify providers interested in collaboration and connection to curate strong career pathways for young people with systemic barriers to employment. Once contracted, regular provider meetings are held both in-person and virtually to facilitate connection and collaboration between programs.

As noted in **Section 3.2**, TRWDB will begin facilitating the physical and programmatic integration of EARN and Work Ready service delivery into the current PA CareerLink® Downtown Pittsburgh and PA CareerLink® Allegheny East locations. The co-location of EARN and WorkReady provider staff will expand referral networks and improve access to occupational skills training and work-based learning for clients of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in Allegheny County. TRWDB will continue to provide referrals to and build our partnerships with Keystone Education Yields Success (KEYS), SNAP Job Experience and Training Services (JETS), and Refugee programming.

Technology:

TRWDB is continuously exploring ways to leverage technology to help expedite service access and increase the ability to better serve job seekers and customers. An example of this effort includes the SkillUp™ PA program - noted in **section 3.3** - which provides a platform where job seekers registered on the PA CareerLink® website can explore career pathways, view local job postings, register for free online learning, and receive workforce services.

Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs coordinated with PA CareerLink® partners to implement an

electronic kiosk system within the local PA CareerLink® offices that enables all visitors to sign in and register for services from any partner. The electronic sign-in system collects general customer information, including reason for visit, to enable PA CareerLink® staff to direct each customer to the appropriate program staff and services. Translation services for individuals for whom English is not their first language, are also available.

Resources and programs available to support technological needs such as reliable internet access are made available at one-stop locations. Where appropriate, supportive services funding may also be explored to address barriers to technology. See more on our strategies to offer and improve digital literacy service delivery in **Section 3.9**.

The Unemployment Compensation (UC) Program, which is responsible for providing customer assistance in filing an unemployment claim in PA CareerLink® sites, offers claimants dedicated access to UC service center staff as well as access to important UC information. A computer may 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. Bilingual translation and sign language interpretation are provided when needed.

TRWDB has recently invested in innovative Virtual Reality (VR) technology to enhance career exploration for high school students. By providing immersive, hands-on experiences in a wide range of industries, students can explore careers without the cost and logistical challenges of in-person visits. VR technology is especially valuable for those interested in the fields of construction and healthcare, which have strict regulations limiting minors' direct participation, providing a unique opportunity to give youth and young adults a realistic preview of job tasks and environments.

Title II services are offered in a variety of formats through Literacy Pittsburgh. Workshops and trainings scheduled at PA CareerLink® may be delivered in-person, online, or in the hybrid form to meet the unique needs of the learner. For instance, while the *Internet Basics* course requires in-person attendance for the series, *Excel For Job Search* is delivered virtually and can be accessed off site or in the PA CareerLink® computer lab.

Access to Career Pathways:

Several sections within this document discuss how TRWDB will work with our partners to develop and support access to career pathway opportunities for individuals. As a key example, TRWDB partners closely with our Title II Adult Education partner, Literacy Pittsburgh, to help participants obtain the literacy, numeracy, digital skills, GED credentialing, and other services needed to successfully participate in training and obtain employment. Literacy Pittsburgh has supported students in a number of training programs aligned with TRWDB industry partnerships which provide skills/credentials necessary for entry-level employment along a career pathway. In addition, work-based training, such as OJT, CJT, and Register Apprenticeships can help employ individuals more immediately in jobs along a career pathway while they earn a wage during training. Outreach and career exploration initiatives are also key to opening access to career pathway employment, helping people understand the range of career possibilities available to them. Youth programs that provide experiential learning, labor market information that updates stakeholders on in-demand jobs, and initiatives like the previously mentioned Business Education Partnership and Career Ready Allegheny that bridge connections between employers and education are all ways of informing people of the career opportunities available.

Data Management Systems:

The PA workforce development system of record is the data entry point for all our WIOA-funded programs. TRWDB program and quality assurance staff regularly monitor program data entry to confirm

that all applicable WIOA-funded activities (to include participant and employer registrations, job postings, job matching, career planning, case progress notes, outcomes, and related data) are entered into PA's workforce development system of record in a timely manner to maintain compliance with federal and state statutes, regulations, and policies. WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth service provider staff are responsible for PA's workforce development system of record data entry.

Core partners, WIOA Title II (Adult Education) and Title IV (Vocational Rehabilitation), as well as several additional required partners, utilize separate data management systems for entering program-related information. Through the PA CareerLink® Partner Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), partners have committed to establishing mechanisms for securely sharing data and information across programs in support of system coordination. The MOU also establishes points-of-contact across partner programs to facilitate communication and support the referral process. These efforts will help to identify and outreach to individuals not currently enrolled in WIOA Title I or Title III, who may benefit from these services.

Access to Partner Services:

As a part of the PA CareerLink® Partner MOU, TRWDB has engaged our WIOA partners to define how access to services will be provided through the one-stop system. The chart below demonstrates how access to partner services will be provided at each PA CareerLink® comprehensive site in the Pittsburgh and Allegheny County workforce development areas.

Access Types:

1. Having a program staff member physically present at the PA CareerLink® site;
2. Having a staff member from a different partner program physically present at the PA CareerLink® site and appropriately trained to provide information to customers about the programs, services, and activities available through the partner program; or
3. Making available a direct linkage through technology (phone, Skype, etc.) to a program staff member who can provide meaningful information or services.

Program	Partner(s)	Direct Service Provider	PA CareerLink® - Allegheny East Access Type(s)	PA CareerLink® - Downtown Pittsburgh Access Type(s)
Department of Labor & Industry Programs				
WIOA Adult	TRWDB	Indirect; Sub-Recipients	1	1
WIOA Dislocated Worker	TRWDB	Indirect; Sub-Recipients	1	1
WIOA Youth	TRWDB	Indirect; Sub-Recipients	1	1
Wagner-Peyser	Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations	Yes	1	1
YouthBuild	Garfield Jubilee	Yes	2,3	2,3
Indian and Native American Program	COTRAIC	Yes	3	3
Senior Community Service Employment Program	AARP Foundation	Yes	2,3	Not Applicable
	Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh	Yes	Not Applicable	2,3

Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Program	PathStone	Yes	2,3	2,3
Job Corps	Pittsburgh Job Corps	Yes	2,3	2,3
Trade Adjustment Assistance	Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations (BWPO)	Yes	1	1
Jobs for Veterans	Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations (BWPO)	Yes	1	1
Unemployment Compensation	PA Department of Labor & Industry	Yes	1	1
REO Program	TRWDB	Indirect; Sub-recipients	1	1
Department of Education Programs				
Adult Education and Family Literacy	Literacy Pittsburgh	Yes	1,2,3	1,2,3
	Allegheny Intermediate Unit (AIU)	Yes	2,3	2,3
Vocational Rehabilitation	Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)	Yes	1	1
Perkins Post-Secondary CTE	Community College of Allegheny County	Yes	2,3	2,3
	Rosedale Technical College	Yes	2,3	2,3
	Pittsburgh Technical College	Yes	2,3	2,3
Department of Health and Human Services Programs				
TANF ³⁴ SNAP	PA Department of Human Services	Yes	2,3	2,3
Community Services Block Grant – Employment and Training Activities	Allegheny County Department of Human Services	Indirect; Subrecipients	3	N/A
	Pittsburgh Community Services, Inc.	Yes	N/A	2,3
Department of Housing and Urban Development				
HUD Employment and Training Activities	Allegheny County Housing Authority	Yes	2,3	Not Applicable
	City of Pittsburgh Housing Authority	Yes	Not Applicable	2,3
Additional Partners				
Foreign Labor Certification (FLC)	Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations (BWPO)	Yes	1	1
Rapid Response	Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations (BWPO)	Yes	1	1
New Employment Opportunities for	Equus Workforce Solutions	Yes	2,3	1

³⁴ Co-Location of TANF/SNAP Employment, Advancement, Retention Network (EARN) services will also further streamline referrals between TANF/SNAP services and other PA CareerLink® partner programs.

Non-Custodial Parents (NEON)				
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Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Through the MOU, each partner has agreed that “accessibility to the services provided by the PA CareerLink® centers and all partner agencies is essential to meeting the requirements and goals of the local service delivery system.” Partners agree that job seekers and businesses must be able to access all information relevant to them via visits to physical locations as well as in virtual spaces, regardless of gender, age, race, religion, national origin, disability, veteran’s status, or on the basis of any other classification protected under state or federal law. The MOU outlines priorities for physical accessibility, virtual accessibility, and communication accessibility. Partners to the MOU also agree to contribute to the design and use of common intake, assessment, referral, and case management processes; and the use of common and/or linked data management systems and data sharing methods, as appropriate.

To increase awareness of the one-stop delivery system among job seekers and businesses in our area, the MOU highlights a commitment among TRWDB, the one-stop operator, and one-stop partners to develop an outreach plan for businesses and outreach/recruitment plan for job seekers. The plan for reaching job seekers will include targeted efforts for populations most at-risk or most in need, including out-of-school youth. These outreach plans will also align with our area’s sector strategies and career pathway development efforts.

PA CareerLink® partners also developed a resource sharing agreement, which outlines how partners will jointly contribute funding and other resources to deliver services across the one-stop system. This process helps to ensure a coordinated and efficient use of workforce development funding and resources to implement one-stop system programming. Through the resource sharing agreement partners agree to a methodology for determining contribution amounts. TRWDB will continue to collaborate with PA CareerLink® partners to determine ways of leveraging additional funding and resources.

Section 4.9 will describe in greater detail how TRWDB, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), ensures the physical and programmatic accessibility of the one-stop delivery system to individuals with disabilities or other barriers.

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

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

Supportive services are designed to provide participants with the resources necessary to participate in WIOA career and/or training services. TRWDB, through coordinated and strategic partnerships with PA CareerLink® and a network of providers, ensures that appropriate and necessary services are available to

eligible participants in the City of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County. TRWDB staff have conducted community assessments of resources in the area and have included a link to United Way in the program policy to ensure WIOA dollars are only used when are not readily available through other resources and service providers. TRWDB maintains a supportive services policy that generally allows for the following supportive services to be provided, based on participant needs:

1. **Transportation Assistance** – Support for bus passes, gas cards, and ridesharing vouchers to assist with travel to work or training.
2. **Childcare Assistance** – Financial support for childcare expenses to enable participation in services.
3. **Clothing and Uniforms** – Vouchers for work-related clothing, uniforms, or interview attire.
4. **Equipment and Tools** – Vouchers for necessary tools or equipment required for training or employment.
5. **Driver's License or State ID** – Assistance with the cost of obtaining a driver's license or identification card.
6. **Licensing, Certification, and Educational Testing Fees** – Coverage for certain certification, licensing, or testing fees required for employment or education.
7. **Drug Testing and TB Testing** – Support for required drug or TB tests for employment or training.
8. **Criminal Background Checks and Clearances** – Financial assistance for background checks and clearances needed for employment or education.
9. **Union and Registered Apprenticeship Fees** – Support for non-employer paid costs associated with union or apprenticeship applications and participation.
10. **Reasonable Accommodations for Individuals with Disabilities** – Assistance with accommodations when no other funding sources are available.

Full details on TRWDB's Supportive Services Policy are available at www.partner4work.org.

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

TRWDB recognizes the importance of Rapid Response as an early-intervention service that helps workers and employers affected by layoffs, plant closures, or natural disasters. The primary objective of rapid response is to provide workers with the resources and services necessary to allow them to find new jobs or get the training and education needed for new careers, so they can return to work quickly. Rapid Response Coordination Services (RRCS) also help communities develop proactive and coordinated strategies to access Pennsylvania's economic development systems that help businesses at risk of closing to keep their doors open.

TRWDB plays a fundamental role in ensuring that early intervention services that assist workers and employers affected by layoffs, plant closures, or natural disasters are available in Allegheny County and the City of Pittsburgh. Through regular reports provided by PA CareerLink® Rapid Response staff, TRWDB monitors layoffs and business closure plans and provides support in coordinating timely, strategic and systemic response in major cases.

After learning of an impending planned closure or layoff, TRWDB communicates with the local Rapid Response team, which consists of TRWDB staff and PA CareerLink® staff (State Rapid Response staff, Business Services team, Unemployment Compensation staff and Career Counselors). This team works with the affected employer and employees to develop a customized plan of response. Each customized plan

includes strategies for disseminating information about unemployment insurance, health and pension benefits, job search activities, education services, training programs (e.g., WIOA, Trade Adjustment Assistance, and NAFTA), social services, community and economic development activities, emergency assistance, and crisis counseling.

PA CareerLink® staff adhere to Rapid Response and Trade Act guidance issued by the Commonwealth, including the requirements for Rapid Response early-intervention, and conducting a Benefits Rights Interview (BRI) and Enrollment Assessment (EA) for potential Trade-eligible participants. PA CareerLink® staff may support through a range of activities, including outreach and follow-up to clients, needs assessments and service strategy development, and helping to facilitate co-enrollment with WIOA Dislocated Worker programming, as appropriate and/or required. Additionally, per the state’s guidance, it is important to inform partners to keep in mind the different emotional stages of the transition process for workers who may not be receptive to outreach efforts. Maintaining realistic expectations and respect throughout service provision will support the principles and overall goals of Rapid Response.

TRWDB will continue to collaborate closely with our local rapid response team to ensure that dislocated workers receive timely support and access to reemployment services immediately following a layoff. Through targeted outreach initiatives, such as our participation with the PA Department of Labor & Industry’s *Dislocated Outreach Initiative* during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020-2021, TRWDB has strengthened efforts to connect affected workers with PA CareerLink® services, helping them navigate job searches, access training programs, and explore new career opportunities. By leveraging data-driven strategies and direct engagement, TRWDB and rapid response staff can proactively reach out to impacted workers, providing critical information on unemployment benefits, job placement services, and skills development programs. These efforts not only increase awareness of available resources but also improve long-term program participation, ultimately helping workers transition into new employment opportunities more efficiently.

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

TRWDB leverages all programs to promote co-enrollment and meet the needs and goals of individual participants, particularly those with barriers to employment. TRWDB has established a Priority of Service Policy, aligned with the requirements of WIOA and related policies, that prioritizes WIOA Adult services to participants who are low-income individuals, recipients of public assistance, and individuals who are basic skills deficient. Veterans and their spouses, though not included as a population with barriers to employment, are also a priority group under WIOA. Individuals are assessed at the time of enrollment to determine their qualification for priority of service. Our organization is committed to ensuring at least 51% of Adult participants served are among priority groups, a benchmark established by the Commonwealth. In addition, both WIOA and TANF year-round youth and young adult programs have set eligibility requirements to ensure participants being served are low income and/or have an additional barrier(s) to employment. The table below shows the percentage of WIOA participants served during Program Year (PY) 2023 that are among specific populations with barriers to employment.

Table 9. WIOA Participants Served Allegheny County / Pittsburgh

Population	WIOA Adult	WIOA Dislocated Worker	WIOA Youth
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Low-Income Individuals	57.7%	23.4%	77.0%
Individuals with justice system involvement	3.5%	8.2%	0.8%
Individuals with Disabilities (incl. youth)	12.2%	7.4%	9.6%
Single Parents	4.0%	12.3%	0.8%
Long-term Unemployed (27 or more consecutive weeks)	2.3%	8.2%	0.1%
English Language Learners, Low Levels of Literacy, Cultural Barriers	6.6%	7.0%	82.7%
Homeless Individuals / runaway youth	0.8%	0.4%	0.8%
Displaced Homemakers	0.3%	2.1%	0.1%
Youth in foster care or aged out of system	0.0%	0.0%	1.6%
Total Served (07/01/2023 - 06/30/2024)	517	243	767

Source: PA Department of Labor & Industry (2025)

Beyond year-round programs, TRWDB has funded several additional projects focused on serving individuals with barriers to employment and other special populations.

- TRWDB has developed and implemented both federal and state-funded programs to connect young adults and adults with past or current involvement with the criminal justice system to education and training opportunities. Examples include the USDOJ-funded Pittsburgh Reentry Career Services and the state-funded Young Adult Reentry Project, both described further in **Section 3.3** of this document.
- TRWDB has established Transitional Jobs (TJ) programs that are time-limited work experiences that help individuals with chronic unemployment build work histories. In addition to valuable work experiences, most of the TJ participants receive skills training in occupations such as construction or culinary.
- In partnership with Allegheny County and the City of Pittsburgh, TRWDB's Learn & Earn program focuses on providing low-income youth and youth with barriers to employment with quality summer employment and work readiness training.
- TRWDB embraces a holistic approach to TANF EARN and WorkReady program delivery which considers the comprehensive needs of clients and collaboration with partners that leverage resources to help participants succeed.

Wagner-Peyser

Wagner-Peyser services focuses on providing a variety of employment services, such as job-search assistance, job referral, and placement help for job seekers, re-employment services to unemployment insurance claimants and recruitment services to employers with job openings. Services are delivered in one of three modes: self-service, facilitated self-help services and staff-assisted service delivery.

Per our WIOA One-Stop Partner MOU, all Partners must cooperate with compliance monitoring that is conducted at the Local level to ensure that all PA CareerLink® programs, services, technology, and materials are physically and programmatically accessible and available to all. Additionally, staff members are trained to provide services to all, regardless of range of abilities, mobility, age, language, learning style, or comprehension or education level. An interpreter will be provided in real time or, if not available, within a reasonable timeframe to any customer with a language barrier. Assistive devices, such as screen-reading software programs (e.g., JAWS and DRAGON) and assistive listening devices must be available to ensure physical and programmatic accessibility within the PA CareerLink®.

WIOA Title IV

Through PA CareerLink®, WIOA Title IV eligible OVR customers also are able to access 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.

Section 3.3 provides a full list of job seeker services made available through the PA CareerLink® system, as agreed upon by partner within the PA CareerLink® Partner MOU.

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

To provide access to facilities and programming for individuals with disabilities, TRWDB and the other entities within the one stop delivery system will be in compliance with WIOA section 188 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). In the local one-stop facilities, the leasing agreement states that the landlord will be responsible for compliance with the laws and regulations relating to the building operations in the common areas associated with the grounds. The tenant will be responsible for compliance within the actual rented premises.

One-stop center staff have access to a variety of resources and information on Pennsylvania's workforce development system of record regarding services available to persons with disabilities including: information on training opportunities and links to online training; technology guides for using screen enlargement software, screen reading software, Windows Accessibility features, and the Text Telephone or Teletypewriter for the Deaf (TTY); information on the ADA and accessibility; alternate format handbooks; links to service providers and resources to assist persons with disabilities in removing barriers to employment; and links to information for employers interested in hiring a person with a disability including tax benefits, the ADA, and accommodations. As a result of efforts to engage agencies geared towards assisting persons with disabilities, PA CareerLink® also partners with Literacy Pittsburgh and the PA Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. WIOA Title II Adult Education and Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation are both core PA CareerLink® partners. To further support accessibility for all individuals, PA CareerLink® sites offer telephone translation services, as well as appropriate referrals to ESL services for customers who are English language learners.

OVR staff members meet regularly with other PA CareerLink® staff to identify opportunities for improvement of one-stop service delivery, including cross-training of core program staff and coordinating services to address the diverse needs of job seekers and reduce duplication. Furthermore, TRWDB will explore ways of expanding the local partnership with OVR, including through data sharing and other cooperative agreements.

TRWDB participates in regular reviews conducted by the Office of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) to ensure that the PA CareerLink® centers and all partners in service and training delivery meet the requirements of all EEO laws, policies, and regulations.

Affirmative Outreach

TRWDB works to ensure compliance with WIOA requirements for affirmative outreach (29 CFR § 38.40). This includes conducting regular training and technical assistance sessions with PA CareerLink® and other service provider staff on EEO policies, including requirements for affirmative outreach.

TRWDB and our funded partners have implemented several initiatives to reach special populations, including individuals covered by the affirmative outreach requirements. TRWDB partners with a network of community-based organizations across Allegheny County and the City of Pittsburgh to recruit and serve diverse populations of youth and young adults with barriers to employment. This decentralized approach leverages close connections between these organizations and their communities to support outreach and recruitment into WIOA and other funded programs. Nearly 80% of WIOA Youth participants served between July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024 identified as a member of a marginalized group, roughly than half (50.1%) identified as female, and just under 10% had a documented disability.

TRWDB also works with our PA CareerLink® partners and one-stop operator to conduct outreach on the availability of employment and training services to diverse populations of adults and dislocated workers. Through the One-Stop Partner MOU, PA CareerLink® partner agencies have committed to developing and implementing an outreach and recruitment plan for the region's job seekers, including targeted efforts for populations most at-risk or most in need. This includes leveraging social media and developing an outreach toolkit for PA CareerLink® partners. As discussed in other parts of the local plan, TRWDB and our PA CareerLink® partners have strengthened the capacity to deliver remote and virtual employment and training services to customers. Well over half (68%) of the WIOA Adult/Dislocated Worker participants served between July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024 identified as a member of a marginalized group, 47% identified as female, 32% were age 45 or older, and 6% identified as a person with a disability.

Section 1.1 of this plan provides information and research on structural barriers to employment in our area and additional initiatives of TRWDB to respond to these challenges.

5. COMPLIANCE

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

The PA CareerLink® Partner MOU for Allegheny County and the City of Pittsburgh is a critical agreement that establishes the framework for collaboration among workforce development system partners. It defines the roles, responsibilities, and financial contributions of each partner in the PA CareerLink® network, ensuring coordinated and efficient service delivery to job seekers and employers. The MOU enhances resource sharing, accessibility, and alignment of programs such as employment services, vocational rehabilitation, and adult education, fostering a seamless experience for individuals seeking employment and training. By promoting integration, cost-sharing, and performance accountability, the MOU strengthens the workforce system, improves outcomes, and supports economic growth within communities.

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

TRWDB partners with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) to further enhance the services provided to individuals with disabilities. This relationship has been formalized through partnership agreements that allow OVR to operate effectively in the local workforce development area.

OVR is represented on the Three Rivers Workforce Development Board (TRWDB) and OVR is a key partner in PA CareerLink® in Allegheny County and the City of Pittsburgh. Core WIOA partners meet regularly to address challenges to and improve one-stop service delivery (including to individuals with disabilities) through better service coordination, cross-training of staff, identifying opportunities for co-enrollment, and other efforts. TRWDB will also work with OVR to explore further opportunities for partnership through data sharing and additional cooperative agreements to better serve the needs of adults and youth with disabilities.

OVR provides vocational rehabilitation counselor staff liaisons to each operating PA CareerLink® site in Pittsburgh/Allegheny County. Under local OVR management and supervisor direction, OVR liaison counselors have assigned workdays on-site to receive referrals for individuals seeking vocational rehabilitation services from system partners and to ensure partner communication across programs. In addition to liaison counselor staff, OVR business services staff engage in collaboration and partnership to support the business needs of the community related to hiring people with disabilities. Through training and technical assistance, OVR serves as a resource for serving individuals with disabilities to one-stop center staff. One-stop center staff have received training on ADA compliance and law, TTY, benefits counseling, and disability awareness and sensitivity.

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

The purpose of the TRWDB's debt collection policy is to provide policy and procedures for debt collection associated with the mis-expenditure of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds.

References:

WIOA Section 184(c), 20 CFR 683.750, 20 CFR 683.420

PA Workforce System Policy 03-2015: Financial Management Guide
2 CFR 200 Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards

TRWIB, Inc. will utilize its debt collection process once there has been a finding of a mis-expenditure from an audit resolution. A debt is established when the final determination disallows any costs questioned in the audit. Grantees/fiscal agents must utilize an aggressive debt-collection system that ensures the collection of debts established as a result of sub-recipient audits. The collection of that debt is a separate process as described below.

Procedures

Each fiscal agent is required to coordinate the auditing of WIOA funds contracted to sub-grantees during each fiscal year. This includes ensuring that the fiscal agent issues a management decision within six (6) months to all sub-grantees after receiving the audit/monitoring report. The management decision must come in the form of a determination letter that the fiscal agent has reviewed and validated all pass-through funds and has taken corrective action to remedy audit findings affecting the pass-through funds. The fiscal agent must make a determination within 6 months of receiving the audit.

Regarding the resolution of audits of sub-grantees conducted in accordance with OMB Uniform Guidance, grantees are required to obtain copies of the single audits and the respective corrective action plans. Grantees must review the corrective action plan and determine if the information is sufficient to resolve all findings related to WIOA or state-funded programs. If there are costs questioned or if the corrective action plan does not resolve the administrative findings, the grantee/fiscal agent should follow the applicable resolution process. All audits performed under OMB Uniform Guidance must be resolved within six months after the receipt date of the audit report.

Following receipt of audit reports from the auditors for program-specific audits, the grantee/fiscal agent must submit a copy of the report to each agency audited for its review and comment. The preferred corrective action for mis-expenditure of WIOA funds is a lump sum repayment from non-federal sources. However, subject to BWDA approval, TRWIB may allow negotiation of short-term installment agreements instead of full lump sum repayments when the circumstances warrant. In the following situations, immediate repayment of the debt is mandatory and no installment payments can be utilized.

Funds must be returned immediately to the Department in cases of:

- Willful disregard of the requirements of WIOA, gross negligence, or failure to observe accepted standards of administration;
- Incidents of fraud, malfeasance, or misfeasance; and
- Illegal actions or irregularities that must be reported under OMB Uniform Guidance.

Following the issuance of a determination by the fiscal agent, the lower tier sub-recipient may appeal that determination by sending a written request with supporting details to TRWIB Chief Executive Officer. All appeals must be submitted by certified mail, return receipt requested. Federal regulations require that a hearing must be held within 60 days of the filing of the appeal. An appeal to the Department must be made through the UC Appeals System Administrator, UC Board of Review at:

Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry
UC Appeals System Administrator
UC Board of Review
651 Boas Street, Room 1116
Harrisburg, PA 17121

A copy must be provided simultaneously to USDOL and BWDA at the following addresses:

U.S. Department of Labor
Philadelphia Regional Administrator
The Curtis Center, Suite 825 East
170 S. Independence
Mall West
Philadelphia, PA 19106-3315

Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry
Bureau of Workforce Development
Administration
ATTN: Grants & Fiscal Services Division
651 Boas Street, Room 1200
Harrisburg, PA 17121

The UC Appeals System Administrator will appoint a hearing officer who will conduct a hearing and issue a decision within 60 days from the receipt of the appeal. Any party receiving an adverse decision from the Department may file an appeal to the Secretary of USDOL within 60 days of the decision; or if a decision is not issued within 60 days of the filing of the appeal at the state level, any party may file an appeal with the Secretary of USDOL within 60 days from when the state decision was due (a total of 120 days from the date on which the request for appeal was filed with the state.) All appeals to the U.S. Secretary of Labor must be submitted by certified mail, return receipt requested, to:

U.S. Secretary of Labor
Attention: ASET
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Ave. NW
Washington, D.C. 20210

A copy of the appeal must be provided simultaneously to the USDOL and BWDA at the following addresses:

Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry
Bureau of Workforce Development
Administration
ATTN: Grants & Fiscal Services Division
651 Boas Street, Room 1200
Harrisburg, PA 17121

U.S. Department of Labor, Philadelphia Regional
Administrator
The Curtis Center, Suite 825 East
170 S. Independence Mall West
Philadelphia, PA 19106-3315

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

TRWDB is dedicated to ensuring continuous improvement of the public workforce development system and remaining a high-performing local board, including through the following:

- **Commitment to achieving the Governor’s workforce development goals:** Section 2.2 of this document describes in detail how TRWDB’s strategies, vision, and goals align with and work to achieve the goals of the Governor described in Pennsylvania’s WIOA Combined State Plan. TRWDB will continue to prioritize strategies that support the broad goals of 1.) Apprenticeship and Career & Technical Education; 2.) Sector Strategies and Employer Engagement; 3.) Youth; 4.) Continuous Improvement of the PA CareerLink® System; 5.) Barrier Remediation; and 6.) Addressing Workforce Shortages of Critical Industries.
- **WIOA Performance Levels:** Section 2.2 of this document describes how TRWDB’s strategies, vision, and goals support the achievement of WIOA negotiated performance levels and how TRWDB regularly monitors and assesses progress in meeting WIOA performance requirements.

TRWDB is committed to exceeding our WIOA negotiated performance levels and will continue to ensure program investments and decision-making are informed and driven by program data and performance information.

- **Fiscal Integrity:** TRWDB has a dedicated fiscal department that will strive to maintain fiscal integrity of our programs, as demonstrated through regular financial audits of our organization and fiscal monitoring of our programs (at both the federal and state level). TRWDB has established an agreement with our local elected officials that outlines our role as fiscal agent for WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth funding. Further, TRWDB will adhere to the requirements of Uniform Guidance, the Commonwealth's Financial Management Guide, and all other applicable policies and regulations governing our organization and programming.
- **Compliance: Section 2.2** of this document describes how TRWDB has a dedicated compliance and monitoring team focused on maintaining compliance with all federal, state, and local legislation, regulations, policies, and guidance applicable to our programming. TRWDB develops both internal policies for our staff and program policies for our funded providers to maintain compliance during program implementation. Our team also conducts risk assessments, regular monitoring, and provides technical assistance to funded providers. TRWDB will fully cooperate with all federal and state monitoring procedures, as appropriate.
- **Best Practices:** TRWDB continuously works to develop new, promising, and best practices in service delivery through research, data, employer, and client driven program models. A recent innovation includes Career Ready Allegheny, which connects area schools with local community organizations and leading employers in the area's top industries, to carry out career exploration activities that simultaneously inform students and build a strong and qualified workforce for Allegheny County employers. Another is our forthcoming co-location of TANF EARN and Work Ready providers within the one-stop, in order to boost service connection and dual enrolment.
- **Serving Individuals with Barriers to Employment:** Descriptions of how TRWDB and our partners will work to outreach to populations with barriers to employment and develop programming to effectively serve these individuals can be found throughout this document. TRWDB will ensure at least 51% of WIOA Adult participants served qualify for Priority of Service under WIOA. TRWDB's WIOA and TANF funded young adult programming both set eligibility requirements to ensure services are prioritized for individuals with barriers to employment. In addition, TRWDB has developed specialized programming, focused on reaching individuals with specific barriers, including transitional jobs for those experiencing chronic unemployment and programs for individuals with past or current involvement with the criminal justice system. Enhancing accessibility to PA CareerLink® services through virtual and remote services and strategic community partnerships is another means of reaching people with barriers to employment. Further, coordination with PA CareerLink® partners and other organizations will ensure a strong referral network to comprehensively meet clients' needs.
- **Career and Training Services:** TRWDB continues to work to expand career services and training opportunities, ensuring alignment with employer and industry demand. This includes regular outreach to training providers to maintain a robust list of quality training offerings on the Eligible Training Provider List. Our industry partnerships and sector strategies are also a key tool for assessing industry priorities and building new training opportunities aligned with what

employers need. BankWork\$ (national model), and PIT2Work (pre-apprenticeship) are examples of training developed in close connection with industry partnerships. TRWDB has also leveraged multiple funding streams to competitively procure cohort-based training programs across several in-demand industries.

- **Regional Business Engagement:** Section 4.1 describes how TRWDB will collaborate on a regional scale to engage employers. This includes increased coordination with PA CareerLink® business services teams regionally, responding to the needs of businesses that cross county and workforce area boundary lines. Local boards in the Southwest Planning Region are also exploring opportunities to strengthen coordination with regional economic development efforts.
- **Sector Initiatives:** TRWDB's sector initiatives and industry partnership efforts are discussed throughout this document. TRWDB will continue to strengthen partnerships with employers across our six priority industries and develop programming closely aligned with industry needs.

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

TRWDB selected a contractor to facilitate a series of two community engagement sessions—one in-person and one virtual—in May 2025 to gather input for our final WIOA Local Plan submission. These sessions provided an opportunity for individuals and organizations across our network of stakeholders and partners to engage in meaningful discussions about workforce priorities and strategies. Attendees from business, education, labor organizations, program partners, public agencies, and other community stakeholders shared insights and recommendations which can be found in **Attachment 5** of this document.

TRWDB posted our WIOA Local Plan for the required 30-day public comment period (**5/8/2025 – 6/7/2025**), providing ample opportunity for community members to review and submit feedback. The plan was made available on our website, and we actively notified stakeholders through email outreach, social media, and public notices to ensure broad awareness. TRWDB recognizes that public feedback is a vital component of the planning process, so we provided multiple options for submission: an online form using Asana and standard email. By incorporating stakeholder perspectives, we strengthen our workforce strategies and create a more responsive and effective system. While we did not receive any public comments on the WIOA Local Plan, the community engagement sessions provided the opportunity for insight from roughly fifty community members and industry professionals. Proof of public comment posting can be found in **Attachment 4** of this document.

ATTESTATIONS

By checking the box adjacent to each line item, the local board attests to ensuring the compliance components and documents listed are (or will be) in place and effective prior to June 30, 2025. In the rare circumstance that something is not applicable, the local board must write "N/A" next to adjacent line item.

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

- ✓ The Three Rivers 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; one-stop operator local firewall (if applicable); file management; eligibility determination and verification; self-sufficiency criteria; self-attestation and certification random sampling; priority of service; training verification/refunds; individual training accounts; contracts for training services; statewide training providers list and eligibility verification; local area training provider list and eligibility criteria and process; "additional assistance" definition; work-based training policies including incumbent worker training, OJT, CT, and apprenticeship.
- ✓ 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.

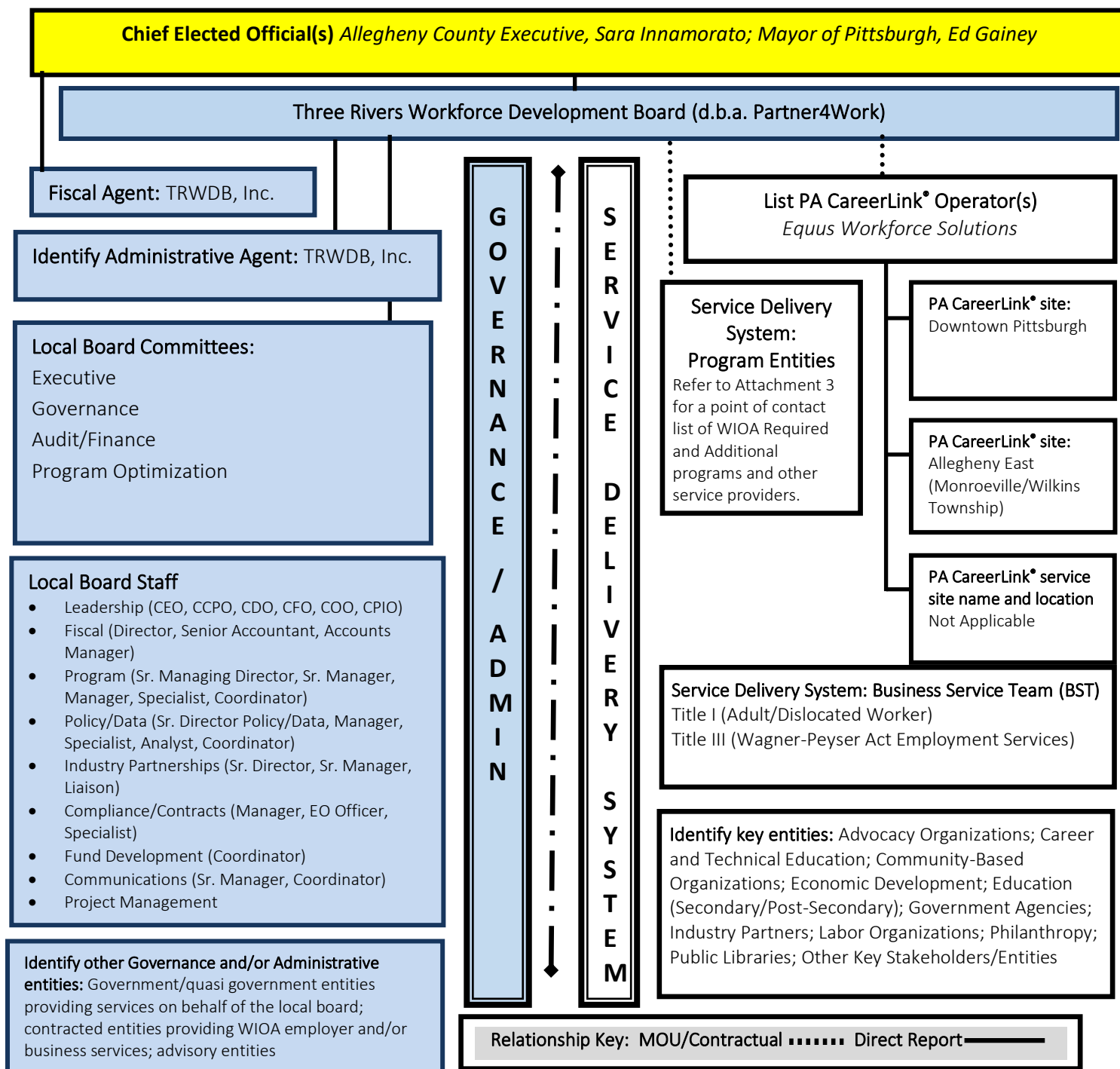
Attachment 1: Local Area WIOA Title I Programs Performance Accountability Tables

The Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry (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 (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.

Table A.1	LWDA Name: Allegheny County		
WIOA Title I Programs (Adult-Dislocated Worker-Youth) Performance Measures	<u>Attained</u> Performance Results	<u>Negotiated</u> Performance Goals	<u>Negotiated</u> Performance Goals
	*Program Year 2023	*Program Year 2024	*Program Year 2025
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)			
Adult	76.9%	76.0%	76.5%
Dislocated Worker	77.4%	75.0%	76.0%
Youth	68.9%	65.0%	66.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)			
Adult	77.3%	73.5%	74.0%
Dislocated Worker	77.6%	75.0%	76.0%
Youth	63.9%	62.0%	62.0%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)			
Adult	\$7,953	\$6,500	\$7,000
Dislocated Worker	\$10,948	\$9,500	\$9,750
Youth	\$3,040	\$2,750	\$3,000
Credential Attainment Rate			
Adult	68.6%	71.0%	71.5%
Dislocated Worker	69.7%	71.5%	72.0%
Youth	91.0%	87.0%	87.0%
Measurable Skill Gains			
Adult	63.7%	60.0%	60.0%
Dislocated Worker	51.9%	57.0%	57.0%
Youth	67.0%	82.0%	82.0%

Table A.2	LWDA Name: Pittsburgh		
WIOA Title I Programs (Adult-Dislocated Worker-Youth) Performance Measures	<u>Attained Performance Results</u>	<u>Negotiated Performance Goals</u>	<u>Negotiated Performance Goals</u>
	*Program Year 2023	*Program Year 2024	*Program Year 2025
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)			
Adult	76.5%	76.0%	76.5%
Dislocated Worker	71.9%	75.0%	76.0%
Youth	63.1%	65.0%	66.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)			
Adult	75.6%	73.5%	74.0%
Dislocated Worker	72.1%	75.0%	76.0%
Youth	62.0%	62.0%	62.0%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)			
Adult	\$6,962	\$6,500	\$7,000
Dislocated Worker	\$9,857	\$9,500	\$9,750
Youth	\$3,209	\$2,750	\$3,000
Credential Attainment Rate			
Adult	74.4%	71.0%	71.5%
Dislocated Worker	73.3%	71.5%	72.0%
Youth	86.8%	87.0%	87.0%
Measurable Skill Gains			
Adult	70.3%	60.0%	60.0%
Dislocated Worker	63.6%	57.0%	57.0%
Youth	80.8%	82.0%	82.0%

Attachment 2: WIOA Local Workforce Development System Organizational Chart



Organizational Chart Point of Contact List

Title	Point of Contact Name	Telephone and/or Email
Elected Official, County Executive	Sara Innamorato	800-581-9145
Elected Official, Mayor	Ed Gainey	412-255-2621
Fiscal Agent, Admin. Entity TRWDB	Robert Cherry, CEO	412-552-7090
Operator, Equus	Amy Sljva-Blystone	blystone@careerlinkpittsburgh.org
PACL® Site, Downtown Pittsburgh	Rose Alexander-Staples	412-248-5627 info.pgh@careerlinkpittsburgh.org
PACL® Site, Allegheny East	Rose Alexander-Staples	412-248-5627 info.pgh@careerlinkpittsburgh.org

Attachment 3: Local Workforce Development Delivery System Program/Partner List

Local Workforce Development Area name: Allegheny County and City of Pittsburgh

Effective Date: 07/01/2024

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.

Partner Program	Authorization/ Category	Partner Organization	Signatory Official	Contact Information
US Department of Labor Programs				
WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs	WIOA Title I – Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs	TRWIB, Inc. <u>WIOA Title I Adult/DW Providers:</u>	Robert Cherry, Chief Executive Officer	Centre City Tower, Suite 2400 650 Smithfield St. Pittsburgh, PA 15222 (412) 552-7090 rcherry@partner4work.com www.partner4work.org
Re-Entry Employment Opportunities (REO) Program	Reentry Employment Opportunities (REO) programs authorized under sec. 212 of the Second Chance Act of 2007 (42 U.S.C. 17532) and WIOA sec. 169	Dynamic Workforce Solutions, Goodwill of SWPA, Jewish Family and Community Service		
WIOA Title I - YouthBuild	YouthBuild WIOA Sec. 171 (29 USC 3226)	Garfield Jubilee	Joann Monroe, Executive Director	5323 Penn Ave. Pittsburgh, PA 15206 (412) 665-5200 chico81637@gmail.com www.garfieldjubilee.org
WIOA Title I - Indian and Native American Programs	Indian and Native American Programs (INA), WIOA sec. 166, 29 USC 3221	Council of Three Rivers American Indian Center, Inc. (COTRAIC)	Kerry Jevsevar, WIOA Director	120 Charles St. Pittsburgh, PA 15238 (412) 782-4457 kjevsevar@cotraic.org www.cotraic.org
National Farmworker Programs / Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker Programs	WIOA Title I - National Farmworker Programs / Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker Programs	PathStone Corporation, Inc.	Nita R. D'Agostino, Senior Vice President, Direct Services	412 McFarlan Rd., Suite E Kennett Square, PA 19348 (717) 234-6616 ndagostino@pathstone.org www.pathstone.org
Job Corps	WIOA Title I, Job Corps, Subtitle C	Job Corps – Pittsburgh	Bob Gottschalk, Center Director	7175 Highland Dr. Pittsburgh, PA 15206 (412) 441-8700 gottschalk.bob@jobcorps.org www.pittsburgh.jobcorps.gov
Senior Community Service Employment Program	Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), authorized under title V of the Older	AARP Foundation	Demetrios Antzoulatos, Vice President, Finance,	Kathy E. Tinney Project Director 2020 Ardmore Blvd. Pittsburgh, PA 15221 (412) 271-1580

	Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.)		Grants, Operations	ktinney@aarp.org www.local.aarp.org/Pittsburgh-pa
		Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh	Carlos Carter, President & CEO	Victoria Goins, Director of the Center for Economic Self Reliance 610 Wood Street Pittsburgh, PA 15222 (412) 227-4210 vgoins@ulpgh.org http://ulpgh.org/
Trade Adjustment Assistance Activities	Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), authorized under chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq.)	PA Department of Labor & Industry, Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations	Jeff Dick, Assistant Regional Director – Southwest Region	151 Pavilion Ln. Youngwood, PA 15697 (814) 248-6433 jedick@pa.gov https://www.dli.pa.gov/
Wagner-Peyser	Wagner-Peyser Act ES, as authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by WIOA Title III			
Jobs for Veterans State Grants	Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG), authorized under chapter 41 of title 38, U.S.C.			
Unemployment Compensation Programs	Unemployment Compensation Programs	PA Department of Labor & Industry	Maria Macus Deputy Secretary for Unemployment Compensation Programs	Kris Kessler 651 Boas Street Harrisburg, PA 17121 (717) 787-4971 krkessler@pa.gov https://www.dli.pa.gov/
National Dislocated Worker Grants (DWGs)	WIOA sec. 170	ARM Institute	Ira Moskowitz, Chief Executive Officer	Mill 19, 4501 Lytle Street Pittsburgh, PA 15207 (412) 785-0444 ira.moskowitz@arminstitute.org
US Department of Education Programs				
Adult Education and Family Literacy	WIOA Title II – Adult Education and Family Literacy Activities	Literacy Pittsburgh	Lori Como, Chief Program Officer	411 Seventh Ave., Suite 550 Pittsburgh, PA 15219 (412) 393-7640 lcomo@literacypittsburgh.org www.literacypittsburgh.org/
		Subgrantee: Goodwill of Southwest PA Allegheny Intermediate Unit (AIU)		
Vocational Rehabilitation	State VR program, authorized under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA Title IV	Office of Vocational Rehabilitation	Terry Huey, District Administrator	531 Penn Avenue Pittsburgh, PA, 15222 (412) 392-4950 thuey@pa.gov https://www.dli.pa.gov/Individuals/Disability-Services/ovr/Pages/default.aspx

Perkins CTE Post-Secondary Programs	Career and technical education (CTE) programs at the postsecondary level, authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.)	Community College of Allegheny County	Dr. Stephen Wells, Interim Chief Academic Officer	CCAC Office of College Services 800 Allegheny Ave., Room 233 Pittsburgh, PA 15233 (412) 237-3126 swells@ccac.edu www.ccac.edu/
		Rosedale Technical College	Dennis Wilke, President	215 Beecham Drive, Suite 2 Pittsburgh, PA 15205 (412) 521-6200 dennis.wilke@rosedaletech.org www.rosedaletech.org/
		Pittsburgh Technical College	Steve Lippiello, Chief Financial Officer	1111 McKee Road Oakdale, PA 15071 (412) 809-5222 lippiello.stephen@ptcollege.edu

Department of Health and Human Services Programs

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families	Programs authorized under the Social Security Act title IV, part A (TANF)	PA Department of Human Services	Felicia Drew, Acting Executive Director, Area 5 Manager	301 5th Ave, Ste 360 Pittsburgh, PA 15222 (412) 565-7572 fdrew@pa.gov https://www.dhs.pa.gov/Services/Assistance/Pages/CAO-Contact.aspx
Community Services Block Grant – Employment and Training Activities	Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act (CSBG) (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.)	Allegheny County Department of Human Services	Erin Dalton, Director	One Smithfield St Pittsburgh, PA 15222 412-350-6611 John.Litz@alleghenycounty.us https://www.alleghenycounty.us/human-services/index.aspx
		Pittsburgh Community Services, Inc.	Pamela Jeneé Wilbon, Interim Executive Director	249 North Craig St. Pittsburgh, PA 15213 412-904-4700 odellr@pghcsi.org https://www.pghcsi.org/

Department of Housing and Urban Development Programs

HUD Employment and Training Programs	HUD Employment and Training Programs	Allegheny County Housing Authority	Frank Aggazio, Executive Director	625 Stanwix St., 12 th Floor, Pittsburgh, PA 15222 (412) 402-2450 franka@achsng.com https://www.achsng.com/
		Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh	Caster D. Binion, Executive Director	200 Ross St., 9 th Floor Pittsburgh, PA 15219 (412) 456-5012 caster.binion@hacp.org https://hacp.org/

Additional Partners

Foreign Labor Certification (FLC)	PA Department of Labor & Industry, Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations	Jeff Dick, Assistant Regional Director – Southwest Region	151 Pavilion Ln. Youngwood, PA 15697 (814) 248-6433 jedick@pa.gov https://www.dli.pa.gov/
Rapid Response			

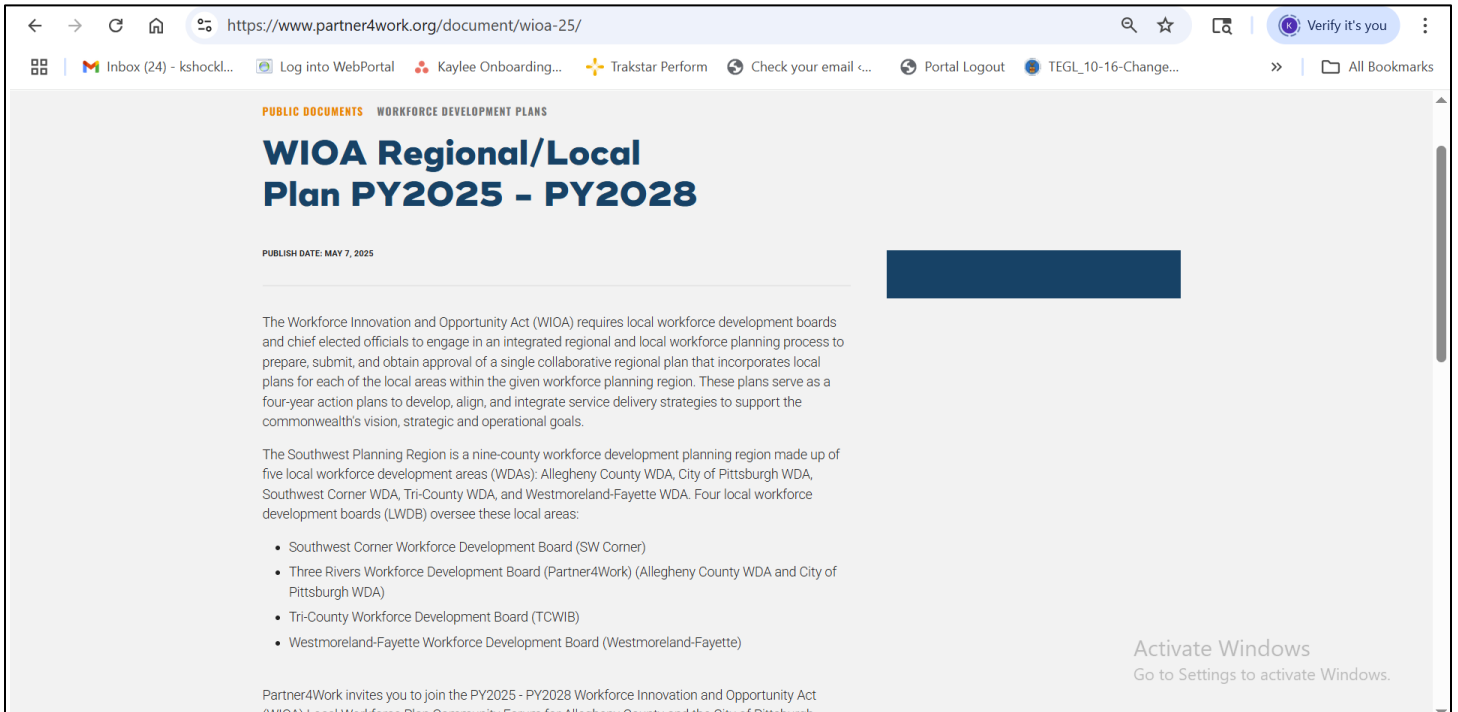
New Employment Opportunities for Non-Custodial Parents (NEON)	PA Department of Human Services	Equus Workforce Solutions	Mark Douglass, President	PA CareerLink Pittsburgh 914 Penn Avenue Pittsburgh, PA 15222 mark@equusworks.com
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Attachment 4: Public Comments

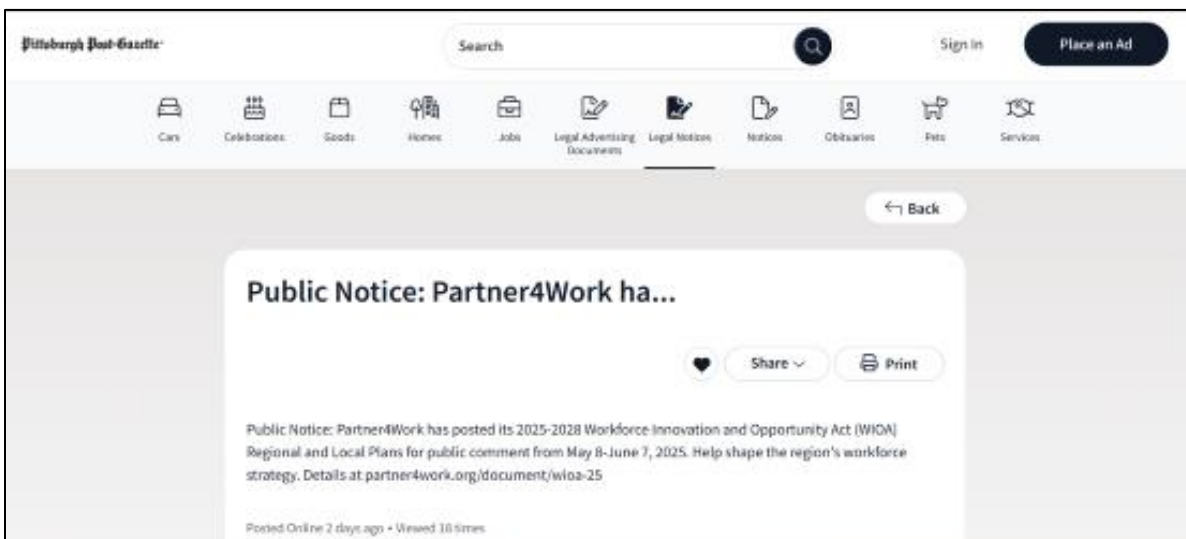
The WIOA Regional and Local Plan Modifications for the Southwest Pennsylvania Planning Region were posted for a 30-day public comment period from May 8, 2025 – June 7, 2025. No comments were received during this period.

Proof of Public Comment Posting

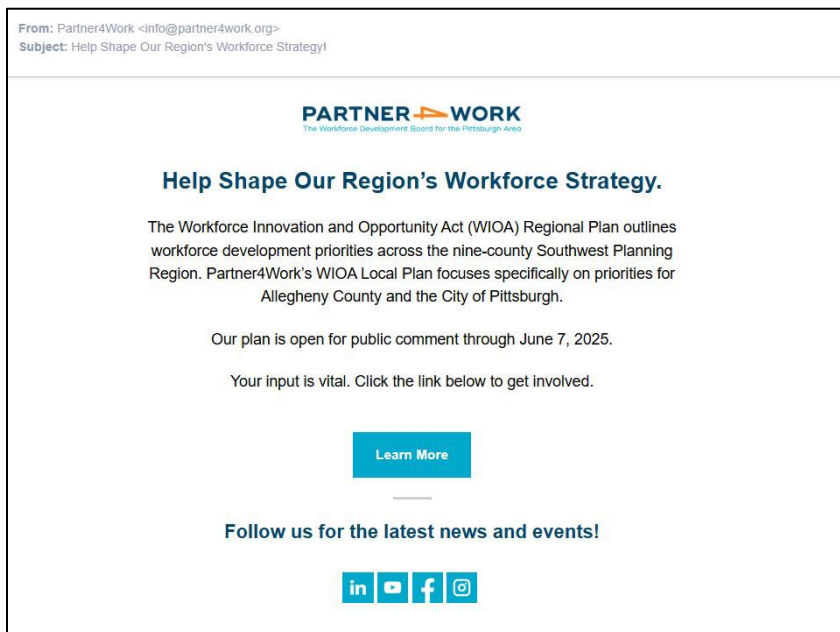
Website Posting (May 8, 2025): <https://www.partner4work.org/document/wioa-25/>



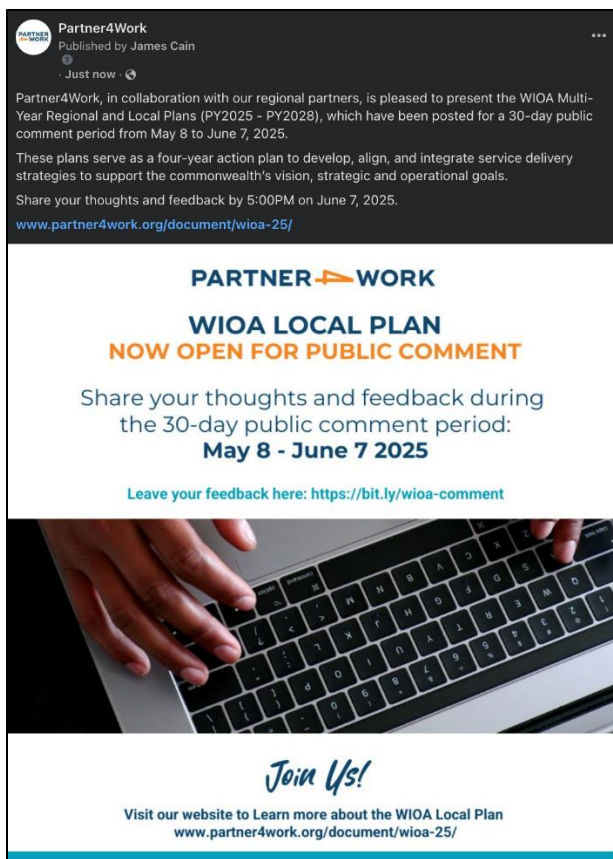
Public Notice (May 8, 2025): Pittsburgh Post Gazette



Email Blast (May 8, 2025):



Facebook (May 8, 2025):



Instagram (May 8, 2025):



WIOA LOCAL PLAN
NOW OPEN FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Share your thoughts and feedback during
the 30-day public comment period:
May 8 - June 7 2025

Leave your feedback here: <https://bit.ly/wioa-comment>



Join Us!

Visit our website to Learn more about the WIOA Local Plan
www.partner4work.org/document/wioa-25/

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Partner4Work, in collaboration with our regional partners, is pleased to present the WIOA Multi-Year Regional and Local Plans (PY2025 - PY2028), which have been posted for a 30-day public comment period from May 8 to June 7, 2025.

These plans serve as a four-year action plan to develop, align, and integrate service delivery strategies to support the commonwealth's vision, strategic and operational goals.

Share your thoughts and feedback by 5:00PM on June 7, 2025.

www.partner4work.org/document/wioa-25/

No comments yet.

1 minute ago

LinkedIn (May 8, 2025):



Partner4Work Pittsburgh
3,724 followers
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Partner4Work, in collaboration with our regional partners, is pleased to present the WIOA Multi-Year Regional and Local Plans (PY2025 - PY2028), which have been posted for a 30-day public comment period from May 8 to June 7, 2025.

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Share your thoughts and feedback by 5:00PM on June 7, 2025.

<https://lnkd.in/etVxQja3>

PARTNER WORK

WIOA LOCAL PLAN
NOW OPEN FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Share your thoughts and feedback during
the 30-day public comment period:
May 8 - June 7 2025

Leave your feedback here: <https://bit.ly/wioa-comment>

Join Us!

Visit our website to Learn more about the WIOA Local Plan
www.partner4work.org/document/wioa-25/

Attachment 5: Community Engagement Sessions Summary Report

Submitted by Common Cause Consultants
June 2, 2025

Executive Summary

Partner4Work conducted comprehensive stakeholder feedback sessions in May 2025, including both in-person and virtual formats, to assess the current state of the regional workforce development system and identify strategic priorities for enhancement. The feedback revealed a system with strong foundational elements but significant opportunities for improved coordination, data utilization, and service delivery. This analysis synthesizes input from workforce development providers, employers, and community partners across four strategic goals.

Key Themes Identified

Theme 1: Data-Driven Decision Making and System Intelligence

A consistent theme throughout the feedback emphasized the critical importance of robust data collection, analysis, and application. Stakeholders recognized that effective workforce development requires comprehensive labor market information (LMI) and systematic tracking of outcomes. However, participants identified significant gaps in data accessibility, consistency, and utilization across the system.

The feedback highlighted a need for standardized data collection processes, with particular emphasis on capturing meaningful outcomes rather than merely compliance metrics. Stakeholders called for integrated data systems that enable partners to share information effectively and make informed programmatic decisions. The integration of storytelling with data emerged as a powerful approach to demonstrating impact to stakeholders and policymakers.

Theme 2: Coordination and Collaboration Infrastructure

The most prominent theme across all feedback sessions was the urgent need for enhanced coordination and collaboration among workforce development providers. Stakeholders consistently identified fragmentation, duplication of services, and lack of systematic communication as major impediments to effective service delivery.

Participants emphasized the need for Partner4Work to serve as a "great uniter" or "conductor" that facilitates collaboration, reduces redundancy, and creates synergies among providers. The concept of a centralized repository of resources and a formalized network of providers emerged as critical infrastructure needs. Stakeholders expressed frustration with constantly changing contacts, services, and funding streams that create barriers to effective collaboration.

Theme 3: Accessibility and Barrier Mitigation

Stakeholders identified numerous systemic barriers that impede job seekers' success, including transportation challenges, housing instability, childcare needs, language accessibility issues, and accommodation requirements for individuals with disabilities. The feedback emphasized the need for a more holistic approach to addressing these barriers through enhanced wrap-around services and coordinated support systems.

Participants called for trauma-informed care training, cultural competency development, and improved accessibility accommodations. The importance of addressing institutional culture and creating inclusive environments was repeatedly emphasized throughout the feedback.

Theme 4: Employer Engagement and Industry Alignment

The feedback revealed a strong desire for deeper employer engagement and better alignment between training programs and industry needs. Stakeholders emphasized the importance of understanding employer perspectives on training effectiveness, career pathways, and skill requirements. The development of stronger partnerships with employers emerged as essential for creating sustainable employment opportunities and ensuring training relevance.

Theme 5: Professional Development and Capacity Building

Stakeholders identified significant professional development needs across the workforce development system. Key areas included trauma-informed care, cultural competency, disability sensitivity, artificial intelligence applications, and innovative service delivery methods. The feedback emphasized the need for specialized training tailored to Pittsburgh's unique characteristics and challenges.

System Strengths

Strong Data Foundation

The regional workforce development system demonstrates solid competency in data collection and analysis. Stakeholders acknowledged that the system is "very good with data" and recognized the value of being data-informed to achieve better outcomes and reduce redundancy. The existing emphasis on labor market information and outcome tracking provides a strong foundation for evidence-based decision making.

Committed Workforce Development Professionals

The feedback revealed a dedicated workforce of professionals committed to serving job seekers and employers effectively. Stakeholders demonstrated deep understanding of their clients' needs and showed willingness to adapt and improve service delivery. The emphasis on customer service, patience, and individualized approaches reflects a client-centered orientation.

Diverse Program Portfolio

The system offers a wide variety of programs and services across multiple sectors and skill levels. Stakeholders recognized the value of having numerous training options, apprenticeship programs, and career pathways available to job seekers. This diversity provides flexibility to address varying needs and economic conditions.

Industry Connections and Credentialing

The system has established connections with industry partners and maintains focus on industry-recognized credentials. Stakeholders appreciated the direct links between training programs and career placement services, which enhance employment outcomes for participants.

Areas Requiring Strengthening

System Coordination and Communication

The most critical area requiring strengthening is the coordination and communication infrastructure among workforce development partners. Stakeholders consistently identified the need for:

- A centralized, regularly updated repository of resources and program information
- Formalized communication channels among providers
- Regular convening of stakeholders to share information and coordinate services
- Clear protocols for referrals and service coordination
- Systematic reduction of service duplication

The feedback emphasized that improved coordination would lead to more efficient resource utilization, reduced client confusion, and enhanced service effectiveness.

Data Integration and Utilization

While the system demonstrates strong data collection capabilities, significant improvements are needed in data integration and utilization. Priority areas include:

- Development of shared data systems that enable cross-partner information sharing
- Standardization of data collection processes and definitions
- Enhanced focus on outcome measurement rather than compliance metrics
- Improved data accessibility for front-line staff and partners
- Integration of data analysis with strategic planning and program improvement

Accessibility and Inclusion

The system requires substantial strengthening in accessibility and inclusion practices. Critical needs include:

- Comprehensive staff training on disability accommodations and accessibility tools
- Development of consistent accommodation policies and procedures
- Enhanced language accessibility services
- Implementation of trauma-informed care approaches
- Cultural competency training for all staff
- Systematic assessment and improvement of physical and programmatic accessibility

Professional Development Infrastructure

The workforce development system needs enhanced professional development infrastructure to build staff capacity. Priority areas include:

- Regular, comprehensive training on emerging technologies and service delivery methods
- Specialized training tailored to Pittsburgh's unique characteristics and challenges
- Development of standardized curricula and credential programs for workforce development professionals
- Cross-training opportunities to enhance collaboration and understanding among partners
- Leadership development programs to build system-wide capacity

Employer Engagement Strategy

The system requires a more strategic and systematic approach to employer engagement. Strengthening priorities include:

- Development of dedicated employer engagement capacity and resources
- Creation of formal employer advisory structures
- Enhanced employer education about workforce development programs and partnerships
- Systematic collection and utilization of employer feedback
- Development of tiered employer partnership models based on investment and engagement levels

Funding Diversification and Sustainability

Stakeholders identified the need for enhanced funding diversification and sustainability strategies. Critical needs include:

- Development of private sector funding partnerships
 - Creation of fee-for-service models where appropriate
 - Enhanced grant writing capacity and coordination
 - Advocacy for increased public funding at local, state, and federal levels
 - Development of social impact financing mechanisms
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TRWDB Response to Feedback:

TRWDB thanks the many representatives from area business, government, foundation, and non-profit sectors who participated in the WIOA Planning Stakeholder Forums. Your feedback is valued. We are pleased to see the primary themes identified by participants are in alignment with those prioritized in our WIOA Local and Regional Plans: data-driven decision making, barrier mitigation, employer engagement, and industry connection.

TRWDB appreciates your feedback on system strengths, which include a strong data foundation, diverse program portfolio, and industry connections. Relevant and accurate data are critical to the success of those seeking to improve the local economy, and we are committed to ensuring our partners have the information they need to make informed programmatic decisions. In that same vein, we also recognize the value of a diverse portfolio of programs in order to meet the unique needs of job seekers and businesses in our region.

We appreciate the feedback on areas for strengthening identified during the community engagement forums. TRWDB recognizes the critical nature of accessibility and inclusion within the workforce development system. Strategies to ensure the accessibility of services are addressed in section 4.5 of the WIOA Local Plan. Additionally, we are grateful for the guidance on employer engagement, as this is another critical area for success. Please see section 4.1 within the Local Plan for a thorough outlining of our strategies to improve business and employer engagement across the system. Finally, the most critical area identified as requiring strengthening is the coordination and communication infrastructure among workforce development partners. TRWDB serves as a convener of workforce development partners and stakeholders in our region, and we recognize the importance of this role. Section 3.2 and other sections of the WIOA Local Plan describes how we plan to work with the entities carrying out all workforce programs in order to support overall service alignment.

TRWDB looks forward to future collaboration with partners and stakeholders as we work towards a thriving and prosperous region, where all residents have access to expansive career opportunities and all businesses have access to a talented workforce.