

LWIA #21

EDR #1

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

LOCAL PLAN
2024

Chapter 4: Operating Systems and Policies

This chapter provides an overview of all operating systems and policies within the Local Workforce Innovation Areas (LWIAs). LWIAs must incorporate key documents into the plan that describe the one-stop delivery system and the services that are provided by the workforce partners.

- A. The Local workforce Innovation Area #21 **Memorandum of Understanding** provides a description of the one-stop delivery system, and other information that is essential to the establishment and operation of effective local workforce development systems as required by the WIOA Rule (20 CFT Part 678.705). The Memorandum of Understanding and any subsequent modifications is incorporated by reference into this plan.

The Local Workforce Innovation Area #21 **Service Integration Self-Assessment Tool** provides a description of how local workforce partners will align and coordinate services as required by the State of Illinois Service Integration Policy (WIOA Policy chapter 1, Section 13). The Service Integration Self-Assessment Tool, and any subsequent modifications, are incorporated by reference into this plan.

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

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

The workforce center staff have participated in webinars as well as workforce summits to plan and discuss the best way to integrate systems for case management and intake. Better use of IWDS and Illinois workNet will be discussed and plans will be considered to transition to an integrated system.

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

The Local Board will coordinate and facilitate access to services through IWDS, agency internet, Illinois workNet, and various communication systems. These systems will need updated as we move through this process. LWIA #21 has non-designated offices to ensure access in the rural and remote areas. A help-wanted ads/newsletter goes out weekly via e-mail to various individuals, agencies, and especially to job seekers. Printed

copies are available in the centers for individuals who do not have computer access or for anyone that will prefer a printed copy.

C. Describe how the Local Board will support the strategies identified in the Unified State Plan and work with entities carrying out core programs, including a description of (679.560(b)(1)(ii)):

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

The local Workforce Development Board (WDB), in coordination with their local Job Centers, will expand access to employment and training services by constantly promoting our regular WIOA funded programs by listing our program flyers in our weekly help wanted/newsletter and on our website. This information source goes out to hundreds of job seekers and agencies via e-mail. The various agencies then forward this to their customers with barriers to employment. Our program information is also distributed to our local chamber and business organizations.

Scaling up the use of Integrated Education and Training models to help adults get their Illinois High School Diploma and work on other basic skills and English language acquisition while earning credentials and industry-recognized credentials that lead to in-demand occupations.

Local adult education programs across LWIA 21 partner to offer Integrated Education and Training models (ICAPS) that promote Illinois High School Diploma attainment and English language acquisition while simultaneously participating in training that produces industry-recognized credentials. Lewis and Clark's Adult Education Program offers three in-demand IET/ICAPS pathways: 1) Construction where they receive the HBI-PACT industry-recognized credential; 2) Computer Careers where they receive the IC3 Digital Literacy credential. We support students in additional college programs as well with supported Integrated Education and Training models in Welding, Automotive Technology and Health Sciences Certified Nurse Assistant programming. In fact, we can customize IET's/ICAPS around most of the college's career programs. Students attending on campus or at any of the college's locations also receive a transition course as they finish their first semester in each pathway to ensure that they understand how to navigate their next step whether it is employment or further training. This relationship with their Transition Coordinator who is familiar with college and partner supports will continue to support students as they transition. Students will learn that pathways have on and off ramps; if they do need to go to work they will also understand how to return to college for further education to move them further along the pathway. This includes

service integration components and the ability to serve our rural as well as our urban students.

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

Lewis and Clark Community College operates one of the state's most successful dual credit programs. This includes both general education courses and career and technical education courses. The program allows high school students to get a jump-start on getting college degrees in high demand fields. L&C offers CTE courses in a few formats. In the past, the most likely format was for students to enroll in courses, like Welding or Automotive Technology at the high school and then those courses would go toward their college degree. Currently L&C is working with local high schools to help high school students attend L&C Courses on campus. This is called Concurrent Enrollment. This gives students direct access to the campus' technology and allows high school students to explore available high demand programs. Promoting this type of concurrent credit programming gives high school students access to all of the programs at the college in all sectors and could be scaled up to colleges and high schools across the area.

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

Currently local colleges in the region rely on partnerships with high schools, sharing information via college catalogs on websites and word of mouth to inform students about the availability of Prior Learning Assessments and/or Credit for Prior Learning. Local Boards could support increasing marketing efforts around such things as improved use of technology, nurturing strategic partnerships with local businesses or military personnel, or through more structured approach to academic planning and orientation.

Investigating how targeted marketing can identify segments of the labor force, such as mature workers and the underemployed, who may not require extensive education or training to qualify for jobs in high demand occupations

In the one-stop network, we are fortunate to have as partners the Illinois Department of Human Services and National Able, who work with such segments of the population.

The local Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS) office in Carlinville work with the ABAWDs in the local area. An ABAWD is a person between the ages of 18 and 49 who has no dependents and is not disabled. ABAWD stands for Able Bodied Adult Without Dependents. Most are low-income working adults on SNAP. SNAP rules require all recipients meet work requirements unless they are exempt because of age or

disability or another specific reason. Some of these working individuals are ABAWDs, or able-bodied adults without dependents. ABAWDs must meet special work requirements, in addition to the general work requirements, to maintain their eligibility.

The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is the only national employment program specifically for older Americans. It is authorized by the Older Americans Act and overseen through USDOL/ETA. The Title V program SCSEP program is designed to help older job seekers build skills and connections to employment opportunities in their community, and subsequently obtain meaningful employment. Participants achieve these goals through a combination of work experience and skills training. National Able Network (Able) delivers the program locally. Potential participants are referred to Able through a variety of methods, including direct referrals from the Job Centers. To qualify for participation in the SCSEP program, an individual must meet initial qualification requirements including: be 55 years or older; unemployed; seeking employment; have barriers to employment; have household income that does not exceed 125 percent of the federal poverty guidelines; require skill development to become “employment ready”; and be a resident in the state and county in which they are applying for services.

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

All of our grant funds also include sector-based grants and promote career pathways in high growth employment such as transportation and healthcare. Co-enrollment is also promoted when appropriate and necessary. At our local LWIB meetings, we discussed how to best facilitate the development of career pathways and co-enrollment. Various partners give reports that include these strategies.

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

All of our training programs result in recognized credentials such as a CDL license, CNA, LPN, RN, HVA, welding, etc. IWDS tracks credentials and each of the three funding streams have the credential rate as a performance measure.

Improving access to activities leading to a recognized post-secondary credential will be achieved by continuing to partner with the local community colleges and training providers to improve access to activities leading to recognized postsecondary credentials including industry recognized certificates, certifications, and portable and stackable credentials. In some instances, these colleges offer bridge programs to assist with

building contextualized reading, writing and math skills to prepare individuals for these programs. For example, both Lewis and Clark Community College and Lincoln Land Community College offer a Bridge to the Certified Nurse Assistant program to assist people with lower reading skills to better prepare for the CNA class and improve the likelihood of their passing their certification exam and earning their credential. Also receiving the CNA credential is an important first step in obtaining an LPN or RN degree.

How the local area is using multiple methods to provide orientations for customers, including but not limited to, virtual and asynchronous orientations

LWIA 21 offers orientations on a one-on-one basis (as needed) at the comprehensive one-stop in Carlinville as well as at the other outlying access centers. Information on WIOA and partner services is also offered by each of the partners as part of their individual intake process, both in-person and through virtual means. Also, a WIOA Partner Power Point has been developed for use in group orientations as well as community outreach and rapid response events.

How the local board will facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system through the use of technology and other means, such as online meeting software and mobile workforce centers

LWIA 21 provides a virtual meeting setting in the resource room at the Carlinville Job Center, which is open for use by all partners for any need related to workforce, economic or community development. The room includes ample meeting space, a large screen TV, access to virtual meeting options through a laptop and an Owl Labs Meeting Pro. Also, a WIOA Partner Point presentation is available, providing information on services and access points for service delivery. Additionally, a new interactive website has been developed by West Central Development Council that provides a variety of ways that customers, both job seekers and businesses, may access services available throughout the six county workforce area.

D. Provide information regarding the local coordination strategies with state (including the Unified State Plan), regional and local partners to enhance services and avoid duplication of activities, including a description of:

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

Title I (Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth)-On site. West Central Development Council, Inc./The Job Center provides the services for the Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth programs. The WIOA **Adult Formula Program** provides career and training

services through the American Job Center Network to help job seekers who are at least 18-years old succeed in the labor market. In the provision of individualized career services and training services, WIOA establishes a priority for serving low-income individuals, recipients of public assistance, as well as individuals who are basic skills deficient.

The WIOA **Dislocated Worker Program** provides career and training services to help job seekers who meet the definition of a dislocated worker. Additionally, separating service members are eligible for dislocated worker services as they transition from military to civilian careers if they meet the requirements. The goal of the Dislocated Located Worker Program is to help individuals return to the workforce with the skills they need to obtain quality employment in “in-demand” industries. These career and training services are provided through the one-stop delivery system at the American Job Center.

The Dislocated Worker Program’s delivery of career and training services is tailored to the individual needs of job seekers. The Dislocated Worker program is identified as a core program under WIOA and, among other things, is responsible for combined planning, shared performance indicators and aligned service delivery with other core and One-Stop Partner programs.

The WIOA **Youth Program** provides services for young adults to succeed in education and the workforce. WIOA provides a significant opportunity for coordination across all core and partner programs including planning, reporting, and service delivery. This creates an opportunity for the WIOA Adult Program to work closely with the WIOA Youth Program. Individuals who are 18-24 years of age may be eligible for both the WIOA Youth and Adult Programs and can be co-enrolled in the two programs. ETA encourages the WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs, along with the Employment Service, to coordinate closely with the WIOA Youth Program to maximize flexibility and service delivery to eligible populations. Some examples where enhanced coordination could take place are as follows:

- Referring 16-24 year old individuals to Youth Formula Program if they need more intensive support around specific program elements;
- WIOA allows all Out-of-School Youth (OSY) and In-School Youth (ISY), ages 16-24, access to Individual Training Accounts (ITAs), which expands training options, increases program flexibility, enhances customer choice, and reduces paperwork for all OSY.
- When using youth funds for ITAs, the Eligibility Training Provider List (ETPL) must be used. Accessing the ETPL allows the program to avoid further procurement processes.

- Utilizing work-based training opportunities for Youth Program participants co-enrolled as adults or dislocated workers, as identified in their Individual Service Strategy (ISS) as part of a career pathway.
- Title I Youth Program can partner with the VR program to coordinate the provision of services to youth with disabilities transitioning from school to post-school life, including postsecondary education and employment.
- Career pathway planning.
- The Title I Youth Program can partner with the Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program by co-enrolling OSY in Adult Education and Literacy Programs to expand educational services to those who are basic skills deficient.

Local program operators determine, for these individuals, the appropriate level and balance of services under the Youth and Adult programs. Such determinations regarding the appropriate program for the participant must be based on the service needs of the participant and if the participant is career-ready. This determination is based on an assessment of their occupational skills, prior work experience, employability, and the participant's needs. An important difference to note here is while receiving an assessment from the Adult, Dislocated Worker or Employment Service (ES) programs does trigger participation and inclusion in the performance accountability calculations, this is not the case for Youth. Local program operators must identify and track the funding streams which pay the costs of services provided to individuals who are participating in Youth and Adult Programs concurrently, and ensure no duplication of services. This can be documented through the IEP/ISS.

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

Adult Education programming in LWIA #21 is offered by Lewis and Clark Community College (L&C) in partnership with the Regional Office of Education #40 (ROE 40) and Lincoln Land Community College (LLCC). These programs will work closely with the one-stop delivery system in LWIA #21 to coordinate strategies concerning its programming. This includes participation on local Area Planning Councils (APCs), legislated councils that include all adult education providers and WIOA partners in each community college district. The work of the APCs is to ensure that adult education services are not duplicated and that they meet the adult education needs of all residents across the district and includes the following:

- Adult Basic Education and Illinois High School Diploma preparation classes for adults over the mandatory school age.
- English Language Acquisition/English as a Second Language (ELA/ESL) classes when needed.
- Project READ tutoring for all lower level adults, over the age of 16, in reading, math and ELA/ESL offered at convenient sites is offered in some capacity.
- Bridge Programming that lead to college and/or careers.
- ICAPS (integrated college and HSE instruction) for Manufacturing, TDL, Computer Careers, Construction and Healthcare for students to finish their Illinois High School Diploman and access college simultaneously
- The Highway Construction Careers Training Program (HCCTP) at LLCC is for individuals, especially disadvantaged, minorities, and females, interested in entering trades, especially those in the highway construction fields.
- The CEJA Ready For The Trades program is designed for equity-eligible populations interested in entering the trades throughout the Lewis & Clark district.
- CNA scholarships are available and provided through Illinois Valley Economic Development Corporation CSBG funds (financial need is necessary) or adult education funds.
- Additional supports for students including career services, access to additional financial assistance, the Access and Accommodations Center, the library resource center, computer labs and free parking.

On a broader scale, these programs are also involved in:

- Developing curriculums that align with the state's elementary and secondary education content standards which specifies what adult education learners should know and be able to do in the areas of reading, language arts, mathematics, and English language acquisition.
- Promoting transition from adult education to postsecondary education and employment through career pathways by providing adult education instructional services that are contextually related to workforce training and the needs of employers.
- Assisting immigrants and English language learners in (a) improving reading, writing, math, speaking, and comprehending the English language and (b)

acquiring understanding of American government, individual freedom, and responsibilities of citizenship.

- Establishing of high-quality professional development programs to enhance the instructional services provided by adult education providers.

The Local Workforce Development Board will carry out the review of local Adult Education/APC applications submitted under Title II annually. Typically, this will occur each year during the September board meeting. It may also be reviewed at other any other board meeting throughout the year..

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

Title III (Employment Services under Wagner-Peyser) – Onsite. (IDES has a representative onsite full-time at the Carlinville Job Center that is dedicated to RESEA workshops, but also provides assistance in the resource room and is a great referral source for services) IDES' Employment Services and outreach is a program designed to sustain economic growth by expanding employment opportunities to qualified job seekers who meet the demands of the employers. The program's objectives aim to reduce the loss of productivity by filling job openings as quickly as possible and to shorten the duration of individual's unemployment. For job seekers who are not job ready, Employment Services (ES), in cooperation with other workforce partners, assist clients with accessing training, employability development services, and other supportive services needed to realize their employment goals. Wagner-Peyser staff will assist with the intake process by assessing the client's needs, assisting with UI claims, and registering with Illinois Job Link in order for the claimant to immediately begin searching for work. Staff will also provide Labor Market Information to educate clients on the current employment outlook and determine if further training will be necessary to enhance employment opportunities. Clients may be directed to work-readiness workshops or referred to partner agencies and/or supportive services, depending on the needs of the client.

The ES program provides “universal access” to job seekers seeking employment and career services, provides referrals to partner programs, and provides reemployment services to individuals receiving Unemployment Insurance.

WIOA provides new opportunities for coordination and referrals for the Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs, as well as the Wagner-Peyser ACT ES, to collaborate with and enhance service delivery to individuals with disabilities, including those served under the Vocational Rehabilitation Program. Individuals with disabilities are included in the definition of an “individual with a barrier to employment at sec. 3(24) of WIOA and

should receive any and all American Job Center Services typically provided to any other job seeker.

Vocational Rehabilitation Service Activities under WIOA Title IV (679.560(b) (13)).

Title IV (Rehabilitation Services) – Onsite. Direct Linkage and Cross Training. Title IV of WIOA makes a number of significant changes to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, with some of the most extensive programmatic changes affecting the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program, authorized under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act. Many of WIOA’s changes, including those affecting the VR Program which is one of the six core programs of the One-Stop System , are designed to improve and align core programs towards the goal of assisting individuals with disabilities to maximize employment, economic self-sufficiency , independence, and inclusion and integration into society. To implement these new statutory requirements, the Department of Employment Services Programs impose new limitations on the payment of subminimum wages to individuals with disabilities. These final regulations, most of which took effect on September 19, 2016, were published at 81 FR55629 (Aug. 19, 2016).

WIOA makes the following key changes to the VR Program:

- Strengthens the alignment of the VR Program with other core components of the Workforce Development system by aligning requirements governing unified state planning, performance accountability, and integration into the One-stop Delivery System;
- Places heightened emphasis on coordination and collaboration at the Federal, State and local levels to ensure a streamlined and coordinated service delivery system for job seekers, including those with disabilities and employers;
- Includes a new definition of “competitive integrated employment” that combines, clarifies and enhances the two separate regulatory definitions of “competitive employment” and “integrated setting” for the purpose of employment under the VR Program, which had existed since at least 1997;
- Revises the definition of “employment outcome” in order to identify customized employment as an employment outcome under the VR Program;
- Places heightened emphasis on the provision of pre-employment transition services and transition services to students and youth with disabilities, as applicable, to improve their abilities to achieve competitive integrated employment; and
- Expands the scope of services that the VR agencies may provide to employers in order to increase opportunities for individuals with disabilities to achieve competitive integrated employment.

VR Counselors are responsible for determining whether an individual is eligible to receive VR services. In order to be eligible, an individual with a disability must meet the following criteria:

- Must be an “individual with a disability,” as defined in section 7(20)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act; and
- Require VR services to obtain, maintain, advance in or regain employment.

While an individual may be determined eligible to receive VR services, the VR agency may not be able to provide services to all eligible individuals due to insufficient staff and/or fiscal resources. In this instance, the VR agency must implement an order of selection (OOS) that establishes the priority categories by which individuals can be served based on the severity of their disability, with individuals with the most significant disabilities given priority under the OOS. For those individuals not in a priority category being served in the OOS, the State VR Agency must refer the individual to another program that may be able to meet their needs. Therefore, effective partnering with the Adult, dislocated Worker, Youth and Wagner-Peyser Act ES Programs is essential in order to ensure individuals with disabilities seeking employment and training services receive the services needed need for employment.

In order to align the core programs and create additional flexibility for the purposes of achieving the goals under WIOA, funds allocated to a local area for Adult and Dislocated Worker activities may be used to improve coordination between employment and training programs carried out in the local area for individuals with disabilities through the One-stop Delivery System. The local area will utilize this flexibility, consistent with the scope of a program’s authorized activities, to ensure a highly coordinated services delivery in coordination with VR Program activities to ensure the individuals with disabilities receive the services needed for their career, whether the allowable services are provided by the Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Wagner-Peyser Act ES or VR Program, or some combination thereof, including other community resources.

Additionally, the local area will coordinate with programs carried out by State agencies relating to intellectual and developmental disabilities, as well as local agencies and organization serving individuals with significant disabilities, including the local network of centers for independent living.

Relevant Secondary and Post-Secondary Education Programs and Activities with Education and Workforce Investment Activities (679.560(b)(9)).

Local area colleges participate as a provider of Title I services which reduces duplicated services. In the past, the Workforce Development Board has co-sponsored a career fair event with a local school district where students get to talk directly with local employers. Presenters typically talk about their own occupations during 3-6 breakout sessions with anywhere from 10-50 students per session. Presenters dress as they would on the job and bring their tools of the trade, and sometimes enhance their presentations with power point slides, photos and examples of work. Students and school staff are given the opportunity to learn about non-traditional high growth and some little-known occupations in addition to the more traditional jobs. Careers represent many walks of life and require a diversity of training and educational requirements from technical training to high level degrees. The Job Center also worked with local high schools to assist students with disabilities in a variety of opportunities and placements.

A secondary focus is the delivery of three online courses in welding that if taken concurrently with the face to face dual credit options could lead to two welding certifications – industry-recognized credentials - by the time a high school student completes high school. These students will be well on their way to transition to further welding credentials up to an including their AAS in Welding. They could also go to work or work while attending and completing college courses. The Job Center will offer paid work experience for eligible youth. It will be the goal of the project to find work experience that gives youth pathway-related experience.

A unique model will be explored - with the concurrence of the North Greene School Board, superintendent and high school principal, adults and out-of- school youth can be enrolled in the same high school classes if seats remain unfilled. This career pathway offers multiple entry and exit points and stackable credentials and aligns with priority sectors in local and regional WIOA plans.

For customers who enter the one-stop network without an academic and/or career plan, the utilization of career assessments, identification of an initial career goal and exploration of potential next steps within a career pathway may be explored in collaboration with our Community College Adult Ed partners and other post-secondary institutions.

Adult Education programs are transforming to better align Illinois High School Diploma to postsecondary education using two main strategies. The first strategy focuses on contextualized bridge programs. Rather than focusing solely on passing the test, these courses have been designed explicitly as a pathway to college. In the redesigned classes students attend more hours than traditional Illinois High School Diploma classes, receive

guidance and support from caring staff, and participate in contextualized curricula in either health sciences or technology fields. The second strategy is Integrated Instructional models called ICAPS in Illinois. Based on Washington State's I-BEST, these models were developed in response to the recognition that adults with less than a high school education could benefit from college credit in a technical skills field and a credential. In this model, basic skills experts and professional-technical faculty jointly design and teach college credit courses and also provide an additional academic adult education support class. These courses must be part of larger program that leads to college credential(s) and in-demand jobs. One of the strengths of these programs for adult learners is that energy is focused on innovative instruction and supports and with internal partners who already have existing partnerships with employers.

Perkins/Post-Secondary Career and Technical Education – Direct Linkage and Cross Training. The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (Perkins IV) was reauthorized to the new Perkins V Act of July 31, 2018. The legislation was renamed the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) is a principal source of federal funding to states for the improvement of secondary and post-secondary Career and Technical Education (CTE) Programs across the nation. The purpose of the Act is to develop more fully the academic knowledge and technical and employability skills of secondary education students and post-secondary education students who elect to enroll in CTE programs and programs of study. Through direct linkage, Lewis and Clark Community College will offer information regarding in-demand CTE programs meeting the requirements of the federal law. LCCC is providing a hotline service to One-stop Customers seeking Training and Education Program information.

Among the ways Perkins V post-secondary recipients can engage with core partners in the One-stop System are:

- Using common labor market data to inform local CTE program development;
- Aligning education, training and supportive services;
- Streamlining efforts to engage and involve employers in local program development;
- Establishing common definitions and measures for students performance, and;
- Making data on CTE students publicly available in training provider reports.

How the Local Board will support the state strategies identified under 676.105 and work with the entities carrying out core programs and other workforce development programs, including programs of study and career pathway programs under the strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C.2301

et. seq.) to support service alignment and needs identified in regional or local level assessments including the Perkins Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (679.560(b)(ii)).

Every college technical program has an advisory committee made up of local employers who advise faculty coordinators on current practices and make recommendations to maintain relevance and alignment to the workplace.

The region has seen continued growth and demand for post-secondary Career and Technical Education (CTE) in both higher completion rates and increased program offerings. All three local community college districts receive these federal funds from the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) to support post-secondary CTE programs. The Carl D. Perkins Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act of 2019 (Perkins V) is the most important piece of legislation affecting CTE in Illinois. Perkins V focuses state and local efforts on continuously improving programs to facilitate the academic achievement of CTE students by: strengthening the connections between secondary and post-secondary education; restructuring the way stakeholders, high schools, community colleges, universities, business and parents work together; and increasing state and local accountability standards. The intent of Illinois post-secondary CTE is to provide students with the skills and knowledge necessary to excel in the global economy. Career and technical education equip students with the foundational knowledge to explore a cluster of occupations and careers. As a student evolves through their educational experience, their focus is narrowed to a particular program. This process allows students to transition seamlessly while providing them with hands-on exploration, rigorous academics and the support necessary to succeed.

Lewis and Clark Community College and Lincoln Land College are dedicated to ensuring that all students have access to rigorous and relevant educational opportunities preparing them for success in college and careers and providing them with the academic and technical skills necessary to succeed in the 21st century knowledge and skills-based economy. Students participating in these programs are held to specific and reliable industry-based learning standards to ensure that they are fully prepared for both post-secondary education and the high-wage, high-skill and high-demand career of their choice. Additionally, Lewis and Clark recognizes the need for other alternative educational alternatives in response to the ever changing economy. For example, L&C offers an entrepreneurship certificate as part of its management degree program. Growing start ups and small businesses is key to a strong economy in LWIA 21.

A key to a robust career pathways system is portable, stackable credentials incorporated fully into the system, particularly at the post-secondary level. The incorporation of portable, stackable credentials has been an ongoing commitment of the post-secondary

CTE system since the implementation of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act (Perkins IV) and will continue and expand under Perkins V.

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

As per the Support Services Policy Letter, customers, other than Trade customers, may be reimbursed for transportation costs between their homes and the training sites. Every effort has been made to keep the determination of transportation payments as simple as possible while still being equitable. The Notice of Participation and the WIOA Travel Allowance form will be the official documents verifying mileage reimbursement and are necessary for authorizing supportive services payments for travel reimbursement to customers. In addition, many of the WIOA partners provide transportation support to students that may or may not be eligible for traditional WIOA assistance. For example, Lewis and Clark College provides transportation services, bus passes and bus tokens.

E. Provide a description of how the local area will provide adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities include:

A description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area (679.560(b) (6)).

Along with the work and training programs (Work Experience, OJTs and Classroom Training) provided by the formula grant and any other competitive grants the WCDC agency receives, the Career Services to be provided through the One-stop Delivery System for Adults and Dislocated Workers are as follows:

- Outreach, intake and orientation to information and other services available through the One-Stop Delivery system;
- Initial assessment of skill levels including literacy, numeracy and English;
- Labor exchange services;
- Provision of referrals to and coordination of activities with other programs and services, including programs and services within the One-stop Delivery system and, when appropriate, other workforce development programs;
- Provision of workforce and labor market employment statistics information, including the provision of accurate information relating to local, regional, and national labor market areas;
- Provision of performance information and program cost information on eligible providers of training services by program and type of providers;

- Provision of information, in usable and understandable formats and languages, about how the local area is performing on local performance accountability measures, as well as any additional performance information relating to the area's One-stop Delivery System;
- Provision of information, in usable and understandable formats and languages, relating to the availability of supportive services or assistance, and appropriate referrals to those services and assistance;
- Provisions of information and assistance regarding filing claims for unemployment compensation, by which the one-stop must provide meaningful assistance to individuals seeking assistance in filing a claim for unemployment compensation;
- Assistance in establishing eligibility for programs of financial aid assistance for training and education programs not provided under WIOA.

Services provided to Dislocated Workers include:

- Comprehensive assessments of an individual's skills and service needs
- Development of an individual employment plan
- Group counseling
- Individual counseling, career planning, resume preparation
- Case Management
- Short-term pre-vocational services
- Follow-up services after re-entering the workforce

Once enrolled in training services, Dislocated Workers may receive the following services:

- Occupational skills training, including training for non-traditional employment
- On-the-Job Training (OJT)
- Workplace training and cooperative education programs
- Skill upgrading and retraining
- Training programs operated by the private sector
- Job readiness training
- Adult education and literacy activities in combination with training
- Customized training
- Entrepreneurial training

A description of how the Local Board will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out in the local area with statewide rapid response activities (679.560(b) (7)).

The Local Area will provide a system of sequence employment and training services to the adult job seekers. Our local Job Centers promote customer choice and provide universal access to employment-related services. The approach is designed to empower individuals to obtain the services and skills they require to enhance their employment opportunities.

Rapid Response activities are coordinated with other agencies to provide as much information as possible to the effected workers. Rapid Response meetings are held as soon as possible when the area is made aware of a potential closing or lay-offs.

The meeting agendas are normally finalized with DCEO staff when there will be at least 50 (fifty) workers effected. Usually IDES, the local WIOA provider, Department of Insurance, as well as DHS are included in the workshops. Various information is given out which includes approved training programs, job hunting tips, local supportive service listings, Illinois workNet information, as well as other fact sheets and brochures about other available services. Job fair and other workshop information are also distributed at the meetings. In some cases, extra peer counselors are hired to help the laid-off workers return to work and keep close contact with job seekers. Sometimes local job training funds are not available so other funds are requested from DCEO as soon as possible.

F. Provide a description of how the local area will provide youth activities including:

A description and assessment of the type and availability of Youth Workforce Investment activities in the local area, including activities for youth who are individuals with disabilities which must include an identification of successful models of such activities (679.560(b) (8)).

An objective assessment is considered the first important step to determine if a youth is eligible for WIOA funded program or as a basis for referral to another program within the youth system more suitable to the needs of the youth customer. An object assessment is designed to ascertain basic skill levels, occupational skills, prior work experience, employability, career interests, aptitudes, income information, supportive service needs, and developmental needs.

Ideally, the objective assessment should be a joint and cooperative effort between the Job Center/Career Specialist and the youth applicant. The Career Specialist will assist the

youth in creating a career pathway by utilizing the Illinois workNet site to explore different careers and the academics/training to prepare for that career.

The Career Specialist will develop an Individual Service Strategy (ISS) that will become the career plan for our youth customers. The individual service strategy is important because it outlines the activities necessary to the youth participant to achieve his/her employment and education goals. Development of individual service strategy is considered to be a joint activity between the career specialist and the youth (and the youth's parent/guardian (if appropriate)).

The Job Center also sponsors Career Fairs at local high school for the youth.

A description of how local areas will meet the minimum expenditure rate for Out-of-School Youth.

In order to meet the 50% requirement for the Out-of-School Youth as currently outlined in a waiver initially approved in June 2022. WCDC has a very capable Fiscal Officer who works closely with the Career Specialists making sure to meet the mandated requirement. Reports are finalized monthly and reviewed by staff, board members, as well as the DCEO staff to ensure the current 50% requirement is met. In addition, Career Specialists keep in close communication with the local adult education providers and their students, many of whom are Out-Of-School Youth who are in need of paid work experience opportunities.

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

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

The local board uses a points system to determine priority populations per local policy, which includes a Priority-For-Services checklist based on the Veterans' Priority Provision of the "Jobs for Veterans Act." The checklist includes other barriers to employment and criteria to help ensure that funds are provided to the hardest-to-serve

Describe how the local workforce areas will ensure equitable access to workforce and educational services through the following actions:

- *Disaggregating data by race, gender and target population to reveal where disparities and inequities exist in policies and programs.*

Customer data will continue to be reviewed to ensure that disparities will be kept to a minimum. In addition, the recently released IDES Report “Women and Minorities in the Illinois Labor Force – 2022 Progress Report” will be utilized as part of an ongoing, comprehensive approach to developing planning strategies that will address disparities & inequities.

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

If disparities are discovered after review of data, goals will be set to better serve customers equitability. This was reviewed during our EEO audit and it showed all groups were being served fairly.

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

Our offices and staff will continue to promote STEM and parts of Illinois workNet to emphasize this. We will also continually work with the K-12 and community college system to further analyze data and trends, especially in light of the lessons learned during the pandemic and in recent months, as a way to be more inclusive of high school minority and female students as well as students with disabilities. This especially applies to the STEM fields, which were hit even harder during the pandemic and are still struggling to fully recover today. Efforts are already under way to promote local and regional events, as well as social media campaigns, that highlight the great need to fill training and immediate employment opportunities in a variety of STEM fields.

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

The Workforce Development Board and the One-Stop Partner Committee will explore how mentoring can be expanded to the various groups.

- *Providing training to workforce program staff on data-driven approaches to address equity gaps.*

Training will be provided if and when equity gaps exist.

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

Our areas still use various outreach offices to ensure that our services are located close to populations most in need and our website is promoted throughout the area. Maintaining the various offices throughout the 6 county service area is a continuing challenge, especially given the current budget situation, but we continue to look at different ways to not only keep the current offices open to serve the populations most in need, but also are continually exploring additional ways to provide services at partner locations, municipal offices, etc. Also, we are improving our means of providing information and services electronically through the website, social media and virtual presentations.

The design framework for youth programs in the local area, including how the 14 program elements will be made available within that framework (681.460)

The Workforce Development Board Youth Committee meets every other month and discusses many youth program ideas and issues, including the need to provide a more comprehensive and formalized way of delivering youth services while also directly addressing the required 14 youth program elements. In collaboration with the WIOA partners and as part of the human-centered design approach, a variety of steps are being explored moving forward in 2024.

H. Provide a description of training policies and activities in the local area, including:

How local areas will meet the annual Training Expenditure Requirement (WIOA Policy Chapter 8, Section 4)

The Fiscal Officer tracks the 50% direct training minimum requirement on a monthly basis. Reports are given out to staff and the board members for review.

How local areas will encourage the use of work-based learning strategies, including the local area goals for specific work-based learning activities and proposed outcomes related to these activities?

Our work-based learning strategies will include the use of Work Experience and OJT. Goals for these activities will be based on what is needed by customers and the various requirements of WIOA. Monthly, the customer will be evaluated on specific work based activities which include the following goals: attendance and punctuality, attitude toward work, attitude toward co-workers, complete tasks assigned, quality of work, and trainee's overall progress. During the work based learning activity, a general performance

appraisal will also be completed which rates the trainee unsatisfactory, below expectation, meets expectations or exceeds expectations. Also monthly, the work related skills attained by the customer is also listed and documented. The outcomes will be based on the employer's feedback on work-based activities. Additionally, WIOA partners such as Lewis and Clark College offer work-based learning experiences such as clinicals, internships, externships, field work and co-op placements.

Provide a copy of the local Individual Training Account Policy (Attachment B) and describe how training services outlined in WIOA Sec. 134 will be provided through the use of individual training accounts, including, if contracts for training services will be used, how the use of such contracts will be coordinated with the use of individual training accounts under that chapter, and how the Local Board will ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training programs regardless of how the training services are to be provided (679.560(b)(18))

The Individual Training Account Policy describes the Career Specialists' responsibilities in determining if WIOA funding will be used to enroll the customer into a training component. WIOA emphasizes the empowerment of individuals and encourages customer choice; however, it is the responsibility of the Career Specialist to provide appropriate guidance, aptitude testing and career exploration activities to ensure an appropriate training program match. The customer who is qualified will be provided with the LWIA #21 list of Job Center Board approved and certified training programs and the Statewide Training Program list. The training programs selected should be within fields related to in-demand occupations, based on current Labor Market Information with an emphasis on employment opportunities within LWIA #21's priority industry sectors.

Provide a copy of the local Training Provider Approval Policy and Procedures (Attachment C). Describe how the Local Board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services through the system and that the providers will meet the employment needs of local employers, workers and jobseekers.

The local Training Provider Approval Policy will be based on the current state policy on eligible training providers, the demand occupation training list criteria and our local additions (special requests). The agency policy letter describes specific details on the training provider application process, information to be entered into the IWDS system, training program certification, out-of-state certified programs and requirements, certification/re-certification timelines and dates. Once the data is collected from the potential training provider relevant to program duration, estimated cost for training, certificate or degree to be earned, entered employment rates, placement assistance, accreditations, etc., the Executive Director/Program Manager will transmit this information to the Workforce Development Board - Provider Review Committee via

email. They will be given a period of time to review the information and comment either “yea or nay” on whether to add the training provider and/or program to the approved list.

Provide information on local programs, policies and procedures to address and mitigate barriers to employment and training

LWIA 21 is always looking for ways to better identify, address and mitigate barriers. First, travel reimbursement is provided as well as other general and emergency support services. This has been highlighted in policy and is constantly reviewed by staff and the boards for relevancy and continuous improvement. Also, the partners are looking at ways to improve the referral system as a means to provide an improved and more inclusive approach to service delivery. Additionally, LWIA 21 has applied for and received 2 rounds of QUEST funding, which allows flexibility in providing training and services to customers that may not normally qualify under WIOA. A Walmart Community Grant was also awarded to LWIA 21 to assist with emergency or much needed items that may not normally be covered under WIOA.

I. Describe if the local workforce board will authorize the transfer of WIOA Title 1B workforce funds, including the maximum dollar amount and/or percentage that is authorized to be transferred on an annual basis.

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

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

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

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

WIOA Sec. 133(b)(4) allows the local board to transfer, if approved by the Governor, up to 100% of the funds allotted to the local area for adult activities or dislocated worker activities. The transfer of funds between funding streams will be analyzed each year and will be based on the waiting lists of our area. LWIA #21 usually has a larger waiting list of unemployed adults than of dislocated workers. Therefore, transferring of funding occurs mostly by transferring dislocated worker to adult funding. Specific amounts will change yearly according to need.

Currently only Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) is utilized, not transitional jobs or pay for performance contracts. Annual IWT funding is set aside from the Dislocated Worker funding stream based on historical data and projected future project needs.

Were there valuable lessons learned about remote delivery of services during the COVID-19?

Lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic for LWIA #21 included the need to develop a remote work policy for employees, to better address expectations from staff for working remotely and establish a method to evaluate technology for staff within the remote setting. Both have been addressed and continue to be addressed moving forward through policy and continuously upgrading and improving technology.

In what way(s) can the LWIA better analyze data by race, gender, and target populations to reveal where disparities and inequities exist in policies and programs?

LWIA #21 shall develop and clarify current policy/procedures related to the equality/underserved community including a system/process to track equality/underserved individuals and communities, training for staff, boards and build a specific marketing plan to reach equality/underserved individuals and communities.

How could an equity lens be applied to the operating systems and policies?

The equity lens could be applied to help better serve equality/underserved individuals and communities within LWIA#21. Policy will be developed to reflect minimum information needed to support equality among underserved individuals and communities.

Describe how the local area will utilize a customer-centered approach to its service delivery model, including the following:

How a customer-centered or human-centered approach will be used over the course of this plan to improve local service delivery methods

A customer-centered and human-centered design approach is already under way in LWIA 21. Initial training has been provided to all partner staff and this will be an ongoing agenda item for the One-Stop Partner Committee. This will be implemented moving forward through customer surveys, focus groups, etc. This will help improve and streamline services and service delivery while also providing a more focused approach on barrier mitigation and career pathways. Staff from all partners will be more informed and empowered to make impactful referrals and career counseling decisions within these customer driven concepts.

Any efforts to provide services to customers in the spaces where they commonly visit (i.e. using a bus or other mobile solution to provides services outside of the one-stop center or having a local workforce area representative available at a public library at set times)

All of the partners within LWIA 21 have made a commitment to providing services in a variety of ways besides the traditional one-stop center. With the recently completed Partner Power Point, information is travel ready for in-person presentations (examples include re-entry summits through the Illinois Department of Corrections, hiring events, career fairs, etc.) as well as through virtual orientations and meetings. Also, LWIA 21 staff are consistently meeting with Out of School Youth at Illinois High School Diploma classes and In-School Youth at the high schools and in the community.

Any efforts to review and update the referral process, including creating a universal referral process, utilizing an electronic referral management system, expansion of referral pathways, etc. If there are obstacle to updating the local area's referral process, describe them here

The LWIA 21 partners have reviewed the existing referral form and are looking at ways to improve the consistent use as well as the form itself. Also, the new West Central Development Council website will be helpful in providing information on services, local contacts, etc. for the partner referral process. In addition, the partners have looked at 2 electronic/online methods of referral, Unite Us and Unify, and are looking to incorporate one of these platforms into future referral processes.

How local areas will provide training and professional development opportunities to staff regarding equity, access, trauma-informed care and other topics concerning a customer-centered approach to service delivery

Through the One-Stop Partner Committee, LWIA 21 has access to many opportunities for training covering a variety of topics, including but not limited to equity, accessibility, trauma-informed awareness and care, DEIA and career pathways for all customers. This is accomplished through outside providers, such as WIOA Wednesdays, Workforce GPS and others as well as through our local partner network. Professional Development is ongoing and an agenda item at every committee meeting.

How the local area tracks non-enrolling basic services provided to reportable individuals

LWIA 21 tracks Core A Services through an IWDS report and reports it to all 3 boards and also shares the information with all partners. LWIA 21 staff is also looking at other

ways to gather and aggregate more detailed basic services as part of its approach of moving toward a more customer-centered and human-centered approach to providing high quality customer services and service delivery methods.

Chapter 5: Performance Goals and Evaluations

The chapter includes information on the actions the Local Board will take toward becoming or remaining a high performing board, consistent with the factors developed by the State Board (WIOA Sec. 101(d)(6)) and (679.560(b)(17)).

- A. Provide information regarding the local levels of performance negotiated with the Governor and chief elected official consistent with WIOA Sec. 116(c), to be used to measure the performance of the local area and to be used by the Local board for measuring the performance of the local fiscal agent (where appropriate), eligible providers under WIOA Title I Subtitle B and the one-stop delivery system (core and required partners as applicable) in the local area (679.560(b)(16)).**

WIOA Performance Measures (Modified 2022 – Reflecting PY 22 & PY 23)

Adult

- Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit 82.5%
- Employment Rate 4th Quarter after Exit 82.0%
- Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after Exit \$8,000
- Credential Attainment within 4 Quarters after Exit 81.0%
- Measurable Skills Gain 45.0%

Dislocated Workers

- Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit 85.0%
- Employment Rate 4th Quarter after Exit 84.0%
- Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after Exit \$9,800
- Credential Attainment within 4 Quarters after Exit 78.0%
- Measurable Skills Gain 52.0%

Youth

- Employment or Education Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit 76.0%
- Employment or Education Rate 4th Quarter after Exit 78.0%
- Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after Exit \$5,000
- Credential Attainment with 4 Quarters after Exit 74.0%
- Measurable Skills Gain 47.0%

Additional State Performance Measures

Our area continually strives to meet other state performance measures, which include meeting the 50% direct training minimum expenditure rate, the 80% obligation requirement, and the youth 20% work based learning expenditure requirement.

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

Local service levels will basically remain as reported on our planned levels that were submitted with our current plan for individuals enrolled into training and support services.

Customers using our local Job Centers will continue to be tracked using our current system. Reports are available on IWDS.

What existing service delivery strategies will be expanded based on promising return on investment?

We will continue to promote careers in healthcare and transportation due to their good return on investment. The majority of our approved training programs that we currently use have a high completion rate, high entered employment rate and a livable wage, which ends with a good return on investment. We continually meets and exceeds the various performance standards, which shows a good return on investment. When customers receive a credential and/or a degree, the return on investment continues and increases throughout their working career.

In the future, we are planning to expand funding for careers in Healthcare and CDL career pathways which based on our past performance measures has shown a good return on investment. We will also doing research on finding new grants to help cover more customers in these high growth, high paying careers which have shown to be a good return on investment. We will continue to educate our interagency staff, school systems, board members and customers that going into these high growth, high paying training options are a very good return on investment. We will continue to review labor market data on the industries and occupations that are seeing a good return on investment, as well as community colleges and other training providers who will also continue to ensure that training programs provide a good return on investment.

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

We are revisiting contracts to review which training has been successful and which had poor performance and making changes as needed.

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

- ***What return on investment and qualitative outcome data for various education and training programs will be collected to identify barriers to enrollment?***
 - Title IB provides a report to the LWIB every other month documenting planned vs actual enrollments per adult, dislocated worker and youth funding streams, universal number of customers visiting the resource room and number of services accessed in the resource room and current performance measures. Business hiring event surveys, customer profile forms, our common referral forms and customer satisfaction surveys are also collected and reviewed to identify barriers. In addition, annually, the average cost of training is calculated to determine if ITAs, books and materials, or supportive services costs need to be adjusted to better serve the customers.
 - L & C is participating in the Perkins V driven Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA) to use an equity lens to identify barriers to enrollment and to plan together around the needs identified, including evaluation. As a region, we should determine the types of evaluation we could do together as partners to identify barriers to enrollment as well as determine cost-effective approaches for overcoming those barriers.
 - In Adult Education, qualitative data is collected in the form of student input. Students are asked to give feedback regarding their satisfaction with instruction each semester and with programming each year at graduation. We also convene a monthly session for gathering student input into barriers as well as ideas for overcoming them. We also ask for their feedback into a variety of other aspects of programming, such as how to best conduct outreach for reaching other students.
- ***What are the most cost-effective approaches to taking down those barriers or helping residents overcome them?***

The most cost effective way toward taking down barriers is providing local training where feasible and offering supportive services such as mileage, to ensure rural customers can take advantage of training at various locations.

How can an equity lens be incorporated into the analysis of performance goals and implementation of evaluation activities?

LWIA#21 shall work with the 3 boards (Workforce Development, CEO and West Central Development Council) and staff to incorporate performance goals and implementation of evaluation activities within current activities. This includes supporting current relationships with community partners, business owners, and local chambers. Development of such relationships will help for participant placement and board member replacement.

Chapter 6: Technical Requirements and Assurances

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

A. Fiscal Management

Identify the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds described in WIOA Sec. 107(d)(12)(B)(i)(III) as determined by the chief elected official or the Governor under WIOA Sec. 10(d)(12)(B)(i) (679.560(b)(14)).

The CEO Consortium Board, consisting of the Chief Elected Officials of each of the six counties with LWIA 21, has chosen West Central Development Council, Inc. as the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds.

Provide a copy of the local procurement policies and procedures (Attachment D) and describe the competitive procurement process that will be used to award the subgrants and contracts for WIOA Title I activities (679.570(b)(15)).

We do seldom contract for WIOA Title I activities. However, we use several different training providers throughout our area. Our Procurement Policy and Procedures is found in Attachment D Section 9.

B. Physical and Programmatic Accessibility

Describe how entities within the one-stop delivery system, including one-stop operators and the one-stop partners, will comply with WIOA Sec. 188, if applicable, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101

et seq.) regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology and materials for individuals with disabilities, including providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities (679.560(b)(5)(iii)).

The Comprehensive One-Stop Center (The Carlinville Job Center) has a layout supporting a culture of inclusiveness in compliance with Section 188 of WIOA, the American Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and all other applicable statutory and regulatory requirements. This includes ensuring the Comprehensive One-Stop Center's location and layout are inclusive of individuals, regardless of their range of abilities and mobility. The physical characteristics of the facility, both indoor and outdoor, meet compliance with 29 CFR part 37, the 2010 or most recent ADA Standards for Accessible Design and the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards. Services are available in a convenient, high traffic and accessible location taking into account reasonable distance from public transportation and adequate parking (including parking clearly marked for individuals with disabilities). Indoor space will be designated in an "equal and meaningful" manner providing access for individuals with disabilities.

The LWIB and required partners are committed to establishing and maintaining high-quality workforce development systems and centers providing program participants the ability to move along their chosen career pathway, leading to high paying jobs in growing sectors of the economy offering long-term opportunities for stable employment. This will ultimately assist businesses in Illinois to be competitive in a global economy.

The Partners have adopted the State's vision which is to "promote business driven talent solutions that integrate education, workforce and economic development resources across systems to provide businesses, individuals and communities with the opportunity to prosper and contribute to growing the State's economy"

In furtherance of the plan developed for the Central Regional, LWIA #21 Partners will build a system that:

- Is employer-centric and built upon common efforts of our economic development partners with strong industry partnerships in place.
- Is holistically focused on the industry sectors that are being targeted.
- Uses regional labor market data for an up-to-date understanding of both the supply and demand sides of our regional economy, including the talent needs and qualifications of employers and our education and training systems effectiveness in meeting them.

- Builds upon educational efforts throughout the region to identify and create job relevant career pathways for all on-ramps within a given industry sector and their associated occupations.
- Advances opportunities for all job seekers including low skilled adults, youth, individuals with disabilities, veterans and other individuals with multiple barriers to employment.
- Create a system of workforce, education and economic development partners providing excellence in meeting the needs of businesses and individuals with multiple barriers to employment.
- Create a system of workforce, education and economic development partners providing excellence in meeting the needs of businesses and individuals thus growing a vibrant and robust regional economy.

Aspects of the vision that are currently in place include:

- Highlighting a business demand driven orientation implemented through sector strategy framework. The Partners are well versed in the need to train individuals for jobs in occupations paying a living & family-sustaining wage.
- The use of labor market information to understand the supply and demand side of the economy. Work-based learning projects are built through the use of labor market information. The Partners use a LMI product such as the Career Information System (CIS) to understand which occupations will be most in demand and what training is required to obtain jobs within that occupation.
- The Partners have worked together to implement career pathway initiatives in targeted sectors.
- Targeted services to individuals with barriers to employment are an area of focus. The Partners work with local community groups to identify persons, who with some encouragement, might benefit from WIOA services. We recognize in order for customers with significant barriers to employment to be successful, basic needs, education barriers, perceptions of work, peer pressure and a range of issues must be addressed. Career services need to include support and counseling services from grass roots people to work with persons facing multiple barriers on an ongoing basis.

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

DORS staff visit the outreach offices on a weekly basis to provide their services to people with disabilities; however, we have no cooperative agreement other than the Memorandum of Understanding between the partner agencies.

C. Plan Development and Public comment

Describe the process used by the Local Board, consistent with WIOA Sec. 108(d), to provide a 30-day public comment period prior to submission of the plan, including an opportunity to have input into the development of the local plan, particularly for representatives of business, education and labor organizations (679.560(b)(19)).

A legal notice (Attachment E?) was placed in the Macoupin County Enquirer Democrat in LWIA 21/EDR 1. This legal notice provided a brief description of the intent to submit the plan, and also contained a phone number (217/854-9642 ext. 1235) and email contact (matt.jones@west-central.org) so that interested parties could ask questions, request a copy of the plan and know where to file a written comment. The draft plan was also posted on the West Central Development Council at www.west-central.org. If comments had been received, they were to have been presented to the Workforce Development Board and such comments would have been considered by the board and the board would have determined what steps, if any, would be taken as a result of the written and oral comments. A summary of comments was to be included with any submission of a grant or other similar action, to the Department of Commerce. These actions were set to occur during the 30-day comment period, and any comments received were to be summarized in the plan.

How can an equity lens be applied to meet the administrative requirement of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act programs overall?

LWIA #21 shall review and clarify current policy for equal opportunity, non-discrimination, and physical accessibility found under Title 20: Chapter V: Part 683 Subpart B: § 683.285. This would include physical and programmatic accessibility and reasonable accommodation/modification in regards to the WIOA program, as required by sec. 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended; sec. 188 of WIOA; and the regulations implementing these statutory provisions.

Policy will be developed to reflect minimum information needed to support equality among underserved individuals and communities.

Lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic for LWIA #21 included the need to develop a remote work policy for employees, to better address expectations from staff for working remotely, track employee remote activity and establish a method to evaluate technology for staff within the remote setting.

Establish a clearer online presence related to future pandemic or emergency responses, which includes the following:

- Develop an online participant application/in office process
- Utilize more technology to assist participants in contacting the office
- Create an easier method of contact for participants with each of the offices including an easy to scan URL barcode.
- Single point of Contact online and on office doors
- Provide more information on the process to participants during the application stage
- Establish in-office systems to provide direct contact to participants

Develop and clarify current policy/procedures related to the equality/underserved community including the following items:

- Develop a system/process to track equality/underserved individuals and communities
- Establish training for staff and boards to better serve equality/underserved individuals and communities
- Build a specific marketing plan to reach equality/underserved individuals and communities
- Policy will be developed to reflect minimum information needed to support equality among underserved individuals and communities.

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

No comments were received on the Regional or Local Plan.

Provide information regarding the regional and local plan modification procedures.

Modification and updates to the plans will be made on an as-needed basis and approved by our CEO and our LWIB Chair. Our current local policies will be changed to reflect the changes in the regulations for WIOA when it is necessary.