

Southeast Pennsylvania Workforce Development Region 2016-2017 Transitional Regional Plan

1.1 Provide the following:

- A. A reference name for the planning region;
- B. Identification of the local workforce development areas that comprise the planning region;
- C. Identification of the county(s) each local workforce development area serves;
- D. Identification of the key planning region committee members charged with drafting the regional plan;
- E. Indication of the local workforce development area each committee member is associated with; and
- F. A list of key planning region committee meeting date(s). [WIOA Sec. 106(a) and (c)]

A. Southeast Workforce Planning Region

B. The Southeast Workforce Planning Region is comprised of six local workforce development areas:

- Berks County Workforce Development Board
- Bucks County Workforce Development Board
- Chester County Workforce Development Board
- Delaware County Workforce Development Board
- Montgomery County Workforce Development Board
- Philadelphia Workforce Development Area

C. The region services six counties/city:

- Berks, Bucks, Chester, Delaware and Montgomery Counties
- City and County of Philadelphia

D. & E. The regional planning committee responsible for drafting the regional plan included:

Berks County:	Dan Fogarty
Bucks County:	Elizabeth Walsh
Chester County:	Pat Bokovitz
Delaware County:	Frank Carey
Montgomery County:	Jennifer Butler
City of Philadelphia:	Mark Edwards and Meg Shope Koppel

F. Key planning region committee dates:

- February 19, 2016—Kickoff meeting, including board chairs
- April 15, 2016—Draft discussion
- April 25, 2016—Draft plan review with WDB Directors

- May 26, 2016—Meeting with WDB Chairs and WDB Directors

1.2 Provide a labor market and economic analysis of the workforce development planning region. This regional analysis must include:

- A. The economic conditions;
- B. Labor force employment and unemployment data;
- C. Information on labor market trends;
- D. Workforce development activities;
- E. The educational and skill levels of the workforce, including individuals with barriers; and
- F. The development and implementation of sector initiatives for existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors or occupations for the region.

Indicate the sources of regional labor market and economic data. [WIOA Sec. 106(c)]

Regional Overview

The region is home to nearly 4,493,274 residents, which represents 35.1% of Pennsylvania’s population. A little more than one-third (34.7%) of the region’s population resides in City of Philadelphia, followed by Montgomery (18.2%), Bucks (13.9%), Delaware (12.5%), Chester (11.4%) and Berks (9.2%).

Local Area	Local Population	Percent of Regional Total
Berks	413,691	9.2%
Bucks	626,685	13.9%
Chester	512,784	11.4%
Delaware	562,960	12.5%
Montgomery	816,857	18.2%
Philadelphia	1,560,297	34.7%
TOTAL	4,493,274	100.0%

The region is an economic driver for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. While labor force participation rates have increased, the Southeast Pennsylvania region faces an interesting labor market. The region possesses a lower unemployment rate than the Commonwealth with some counties having among the lowest with all counties having a dramatic decrease from their height during the recent recession of 2008-2009.

Local Area	Unemployment Rate (Maximum)	Unemployment Rate (March, 2016)
Berks	9.3%	5.0%
Bucks	8.0%	4.7%
Chester	8.7%	3.8%
Delaware	8.4%	4.8%
Montgomery	8.7%	4.2%
Philadelphia	8.7%	6.7%
Pennsylvania		5.5%

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics and Center for Workforce Information and

Major industry sectors in the region include but are not limited to Advanced Manufacturing, Agriculture, Bio-medicine, Building and Construction, Business Services, Education, Health Care, Hospitality, Logistics, Real Estate & Finance, and Wood Clusters. The concentration of these clusters varies throughout the region with some areas, such as Berks, having a higher

concentration of manufacturing than other counties. Based upon jobs by NAICS industry cluster, the largest industry cluster is Health Care and Social Assistance followed by Retail Trade, then Educational Services. These amounts will vary across the region and reflect the alignment of resources and implementation of sector strategies.

The workforce development activities throughout the region are a mix of career and training services

reflecting the local context of the individual labor markets while also responding to the regional economic development and sector industry demands. The key to past and continued success is that in many cases, job seeker solutions are best convened at the county level with

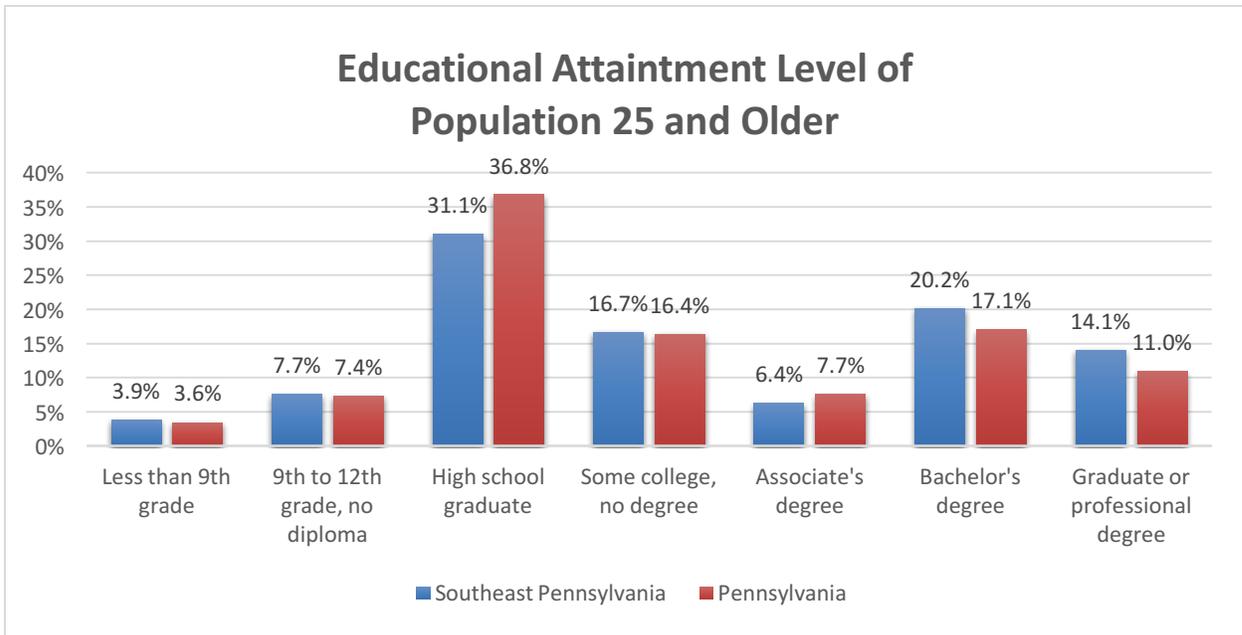
Jobs by NAICS Industry Sector - 2014	Count	Share
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	6,743	0.4%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	1,301	0.1%
Utilities	10,517	0.6%
Construction	72,542	3.9%
Manufacturing	152,041	8.2%
Wholesale Trade	83,860	4.5%
Retail Trade	192,929	10.4%
Transportation and Warehousing	62,251	3.3%
Information	37,269	2.0%
Finance and Insurance	114,332	6.1%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	25,204	1.4%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	159,095	8.5%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	49,291	2.6%
Administration & Support, Waste Management and Remediation	105,968	5.7%
Educational Services	175,478	9.4%
Health Care and Social Assistance	328,800	17.6%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	25,921	1.4%
Accommodation and Food Services	126,851	6.8%
Other Services (excluding Public Administration)	63,003	3.4%
Public Administration	69,882	3.8%
TOTAL	1,863,278	

human services, community college, community based organizations, and other workforce-related solutions accessed on a county basis. Each local transitional plan articulates specific examples of those workforce development activities.

The six Workforce Development Boards recognize that in order to respond to regional economic development and industry needs, to coordinate grant activities across county lines and to provide services to those individuals that may enter a neighboring PA CareerLink® center, there is a need for consistency of services. This is also an opportunity to share effective practices, build resources across the region and, in accordance with the Governor's priorities, effectively share data and information.

As part of this regional transitional plan, the Southeast Pennsylvania Workforce Board Directors will regularly share effective practices and utilize their monthly meetings to coordinate, collaborate and ultimately integrate activities where appropriate. This may include methods such as developing shared practices such as career pathways, core partner procedures, and common credentials attainment (especially around micro-credentials). Additional potential policy areas that support improving workforce development activities may be considered including a review of ITA and OJT policies, shared monitoring, and incumbent worker policies. Ensuring staff are consistently applying these efforts, common professional development, including PA CareerLink® manager professional development, will be considered. Education of staff in all counties about special projects and initiatives will provide the greatest impact of the dollars drawn to the region.

Educational skill levels of individuals in southeast Pennsylvania compare favorably to the Commonwealth. For those individuals over 25, the Southeast Pennsylvania has a higher percentage of individuals with an Associate's Degree with or higher at 40.6% compared to Pennsylvania at 35.8%. The region has a significantly higher percentage of individuals with education beyond high school with 57.3% (almost 6 out of 10) compared to Pennsylvania at 52.2%.



Source: US Census Bureau, 2014

These education levels vary significantly across the region, also. Demonstrating the need to understand local context, Philadelphia and Berks have the highest workforce levels of those individuals with less than a 9th grade education, therefore, given the demographics of each county, they require distinct local responses.

Educational Attainment by Local Area for Population Age 25 and Above							
Educational Attainment Level	Berks	Bucks	Chester	Delaware	Montgomery	Philadelphia	Region
Less than 9th grade	5.9%	1.8%	3.1%	2.6%	2.2%	6.1%	3.9%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	9.6%	4.7%	4.1%	5.5%	4.3%	12.4%	7.7%
High school graduate	38.7%	31.3%	23.7%	32.1%	24.9%	34.4%	31.1%
Some college, no degree	15.6%	18.3%	14.4%	17.1%	15.7%	17.4%	16.7%
Associate's degree	7.5%	7.4%	5.9%	7.3%	6.7%	5.2%	6.4%
Bachelor's degree	14.8%	22.3%	29.3%	20.8%	26.1%	14.2%	20.2%
Graduate or professional degree	7.9%	14.2%	19.5%	14.7%	20.1%	10.3%	14.1%

Source: US Census Bureau

Another significant consideration is the high percentage of individuals with some college and no degree. With 16.7% of the individuals possessing this foundation of post-secondary education, this is an area of review and discussion among the Workforce Development Boards. In keeping with Governor Wolf’s priority of increasing college degree and credential attainment, increasing integration between workforce development and post-secondary education, and better use of and sharing of data and information, this will be an area of consideration for Southeast Pennsylvania.

Sector initiatives have been and will continue to be a priority for Southeast Pennsylvania. As noted in Sections 1.4 and 1.9, the region has a long and successful history of various and innovative sector initiatives. The Boards will continue to pursue these initiatives, often done regionally, to best serve the sectors. In many situations, the companies comprising the priority sectors, such as health care, manufacturing, and agriculture, recruit and hire workers across the region. This requires sector solutions that are multi-county and regional. This integrates well with the more county based job seeker solutions. The Southeast Pennsylvania Workforce Development Boards will continue to pursue and engage regional solutions with both existing and emerging sectors.

1.3 Based upon the regional labor market and economic condition analysis as described in Appendix A's element 1.2 and *Pennsylvania's Workforce Development Plan (PY 2016 – PY 2019)*, describe the planning region's economic and workforce development oriented vision and strategic goals.

[WIOA Sec. 106(c) and Sec. 107(d)]

The Workforce Development Board partners of the Southeast Pennsylvania region have a long history of working together to achieve maximum collective impact in producing a highly-skilled workforce available to existing and prospective employers on a regional basis. The partners embrace the vision of the Governor's Combined State Plan that sets a framework for multiple levels of government working efficiently and in concert toward shared goals ("government that works"), expanding the education and training routes that lead to skills documentation valued by employers ("schools that teach"), and the transition to higher wage jobs tied to higher skills in the workforce through stronger alignment of economic development and workforce development actions ("jobs that pay"). The partners enthusiastically support advancement of a state system built on two bedrock principles where Pennsylvania has been a national leader in creating best practices for the national workforce development system: *sector-based planning* through industry partnerships, apprenticeships programs, and other employer-led training programs with coalitions tied to groupings of engaged employers not county or regional boundaries; and *career pathways* as the language of the education and training system that constantly focuses on employment goals while allowing for the flexibility of multiple on-ramps and off-ramps.

A solid base for planning and action was created in 2015 by the Workforce Boards and economic development partners of the Southeast Partnership for Regional Economic Performance (SE PREP). The Southeast Pennsylvania partners used a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry as an opportunity to enhance regional, cross-sector collaboration by bringing together the region's 5 Small Business Development Centers, 2 Industrial Resource Centers, 6 Economic Development Organizations, and 6 Workforce Investment Boards to address regional priorities and to establish a foundation for further collaboration. After nearly a year of collaboratively implementing the initiatives funded under the grant, the partners engaged an economic development consulting organization, Camoin Associates, to facilitate a strategic planning process and to develop a strategic plan for the region. As a result of the process, which

included review of multiple existing plans in the region, the partners identified several common regional workforce challenges and opportunities and developed strategies that built on existing organizations, plans, and relationships. The major regional challenges identified were:

- Addressing the aging workforce
- Engaging youth
- Coordinating employer needs with education and training programs in the region
- Job creation through small business development
- Developing a sustained and coordinated marketing and public relations campaign.

To address the challenges seven primary strategies were developed. The strategies recognize the funding limitations and uncertainties of the partners, but serve as a framework for joint action for the multiple workforce development boards in the region and for collaboration with economic development and education partners prioritizing the use of existing funds and in acquiring additional resources. The table that follows shows the seven strategies, the alignment with the five broad goals of the Pennsylvania Combined Workforce Development Plan, and the goals to be pursued by the five Workforce Development Board partners in Southeast Pennsylvania in the upcoming year.

SE PA Regional Strategies (2015 SE PREP Plan)	Alignment with PA Plan (Combined WIOA Plan)	SE PA 2016 Goals (SE PA Regional WIOA Plan)
1. Enhance partner awareness of resources, priorities and initiatives	Strengthen data sharing across agencies to create better understanding and to better target new initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage existing resources of service strategies & curricula • Create framework for region-wide sharing of information among PA CareerLink® staff, including meetings for all PA CareerLink® Managers in region • Expand train-the-trainer opportunities that service staff from multiple areas can attend
2. Identify New Funding Opportunities	Expand public-private investment in the development of existing & emerging workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquire additional public & private funding via varied coalitions of local areas to address high-priority needs

3. Develop Partnership Framework for Ongoing Collaboration	Engage employers via sector strategies (demand-side clarity) and connect education/training via career pathways (supply-side responsiveness)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate service approaches for key employer programs (OJT, incumbent worker training) to make them more user-friendly for employer customers
4. Develop a Sustained Outreach Campaign for Job Seekers and Employers	Present clear message to the public & employers through better alignment of state, regional & local plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share resources for public & employer awareness of programs & services • Develop career awareness messages that can be used by all workforce areas, with emphasis on array of pathways for young adults
5. Engage Employers Collaboratively	Engage employers via targeted industry sectors such as Industry Partnerships & WEDnet PA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish quarterly meetings of all regional Workforce Board chairs; use meetings as venue for connecting to regional economic development groups & industry sector leaders/associations
6. Facilitate Employer & Education Connectivity, including increasing opportunities for youth to participate in work-based learning.	<p>Establish career pathways as primary model for credentials attainment</p> <p>Develop multi-employer partnerships to improve the connection & responsiveness of workforce programs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote Career Pathways as language of the system & connection for education & training to employers • Expand sector-based employer engagement via Industry Partnerships, apprenticeships, and other programs
7. Raise Awareness of In-demand Skills & Occupations among Stakeholders	Strengthen data sharing related to specific skills needed, along with best practices for developing the skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create regional framework for creating micro-credentials and positioning of credentials on Career Pathways

1.4 Describe regional strategies used to facilitate engagement of businesses and other employers, including small employers and in-demand industry sector occupations. Describe methods and services to support the regional workforce system in meeting employer needs. [WIOA Sec. 106(c)]

The Southeast Pennsylvania Workforce Development region's economic and workforce development vision and goals are based upon regional economic development efforts and common needs of the priority clusters, their employers and their critical skill needs. The region has a strong and successful history of collaborating on regional economic and workforce development efforts for many years.

The regional economic development and business engagement strategies are often regional with employers and sectors crossing local workforce development areas geographic designations in order to obtain their needed skilled labor force. In response to the regional needs of employers, the six local workforce development board directors have a successful history of meeting regularly to develop programs, apply for funds, and implement regional efforts to address the needs of employers across the region. These partnerships for program implementation will be in direct response to the employer needs and consequently may be a full partnership of all six organizations (with one usually accepting the lead role) or could be fewer than all six depending upon the locations of employers, type of industry, funds available and other factors.

Examples of these programs include the AgConnect Partnership, Innovative Technology Action Group (itag), the Smart Energy Initiative of Southeastern Pennsylvania, and the Philadelphia Business Education Career Awareness Project to name a few. These program examples represent responses to various industry clusters throughout the region and complement the local workforce development area efforts.

Recently, the six local areas participated in a regional Southeast Pennsylvania Workforce and Economic Development collaboration project with their PREP partners. This project, funded with Jobs 1st funding initiative, helped identify priority efforts, implement successful pilot and other needed programs and enhance collaboration among workforce and economic development partners. This helped identify a successful framework for regional collaboration, however, there are no funds to continue this specific project.

To continue the momentum established by the Jobs 1st project, the six local workforce development boards will continue to emphasize and respond to the demands of employers throughout the region. To implement this, the Board Directors will continue to meet monthly and convene with their Workforce Development Board Chairs quarterly. These meetings will focus on improving the services to employers, industry clusters and skills sets necessary and in demand to complement and support local county-based efforts.

The Southeast Pennsylvania Workforce Development Region, as part of their transitional plan,

will discuss and consider the following topics (and others) as part of the quarterly meetings:

- ✓ Acquiring grants—the region has a successful history of acquiring grant funds to address critical regional needs and will continue to explore these opportunities as a region.
- ✓ Leveraging existing resources—in order to better serve employers, intermediaries, jobs seekers and others, the sharing of resources (such as curricula and service strategies), recruitment needed for skill needs in high demand for the region’s employers, and other related data and information.
- ✓ Incumbent worker policies—consider reviewing and developing consistent incumbent worker policies to best serve the region’s employers.
- ✓ Core partner procedures—consider development of protocols with partners such as OVR, Wagner-Peyser and Title II to better and more consistently serve employers and job seekers.
- ✓ Train-the-Trainer—development of training packages in venues where staff can access this training including improved employer engagement and business service strategies.
- ✓ Review local employer engagement strategies—one of the opportunities is to improve consistency, performance and services to employers throughout the region by reviewing and sharing effective practices related to employer engagement strategies.

As part of the transitional plan, the Directors will continue to reach out to the lead sectors throughout the region, work with intermediaries (such as Chambers of Commerce and Economic Development Organizations) both locally and regionally, and share labor market information in order to continually serve employers as effectively as possible.

1.6 Describe how the planning region will define and establish administrative cost arrangements, including the pooling of funds for administrative costs, as appropriate, for the region. [WIOA Sec. 106(c)]

The Southeast Workforce Planning Region has a long successful history of sharing resources. For many years, the Workforce Development Areas shared funds to employ a Regional Coordinator to address regional needs related to common job seeker and employer programs. Based upon experience, the six areas will use the groundwork from this past experience as a basis for sharing resources. In this case, the local areas employed evenly shared expenses based upon an equal division of the total costs shared equally among the various areas. Based upon the scope of work this was an appropriate method for sharing costs.

The Southeast Planning Region has experience working collaboratively with administering Industry Sector, Partnerships, special workforce initiatives, and most recently the Jobs 1st PREP Region Grant. These programs are based upon employer or job seeker priorities and the local areas have learned through this process to regionally prioritize activities to reflect these priorities with an eye toward a more regional impact. Toward that end, the six local areas will pursue funding streams, address economic development efforts, explore cost-sharing and cost-saving initiatives through local, regional, national, philanthropic and other funds as appropriate. The

specific determinations related to defining and establishing appropriate allocation of costs will be determined on a case by case basis.

Should this not be appropriate in the future then the local areas will agree upon a comparable formula to allocate funds. This could be based upon allowable methods based upon Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, Office of Management and Budget Circular, or similar guidance that is most efficient and effective for the circumstance. Every effort will be made with the interest of the efficient shepherding of public resources.

1.8 Outline regional transportation issues related to workforce development and ways the region will address needs identified. Include a description and/or map of the regional commuting patterns. [WIOA Sec. 106(c)]

Transportation is a critical factor to the success of an individual receiving education and training, getting to and from work, and a key success factor toward obtaining and keeping a job. This is particularly true for those individuals with barriers to employment including but not limited to ex-offenders now more commonly known as returning citizens, persons with disabilities, TANF recipients, veterans, and others. Additionally, many of the priority sector jobs available, such as health care, manufacturing, agriculture, retail sales, and management occupations require non-traditional working hours including evenings and weekend work. Managing these challenges while also including additional needs such as child care, further education, and other activities further amplifies the need of reliable transportation.

Southeast Pennsylvania Workforce Areas				
Means of Transportation to Work				
Local Area	Drive Alone	Car Pool	Public Transportation	Other
Berks	80.3%	10.7%	1.5%	7.5%
Bucks	81.6%	8.2%	3.0%	7.2%
Chester	77.7%	8.3%	3.0%	11.0%
Delaware	74.4%	6.7%	10.5%	8.4%
Montgomery	77.9%	7.1%	5.5%	9.5%
Philadelphia	50.6%	8.3%	26.8%	14.3%
<i>Source: American Fact Finder, US Census Bureau, 2014</i>				

In Southeast Pennsylvania, most people drive alone to work; 50.6% of those in Philadelphia and approximately 76.8% in the suburban counties do just that. Additional but much smaller percentages of individuals car pool, take public transportation, walk or work at home. This clearly demonstrates that reliable transportation and most likely ownership or use of a vehicle is critical to the long term work success of individuals throughout the region.

This is reflected in the regional commuting patterns across the region. The chart below illustrates the means of transportation to work. Based on the American Fact Finder US Census Data, fewer people drive to work in Philadelphia when compared to their neighboring Southeast Pennsylvania counties.

As has been stated many times, skill sets do not stop at county lines. Economic development and their employer engagement efforts are often a regional approach by the Southeast Pennsylvania Workforce Development Boards (see Section 1.9). Another way to illustrate that in transportation terms is the commuting across county lines (or in some cases state lines) to get to work. The analysis of the place of work versus the neighboring county or state illustrates a broad commuting pattern from suburban Philadelphia counties to Philadelphia while the Berks County labor force mostly works within Berks County.

Southeast Pennsylvania Workforce Areas Comparison of Place of Work vs. Residence			
Local Area	Work in the county	Work outside the county	Work outside of PA
Berks	74.6%	24.6%	0.8%
Bucks	57.3%	28.8%	13.9%
Chester	64.6%	27.1%	8.4%
Delaware	52.4%	40.1%	7.6%
Montgomery	63.2%	33.8%	3.0%
Philadelphia	75.6%	19.2%	5.2%

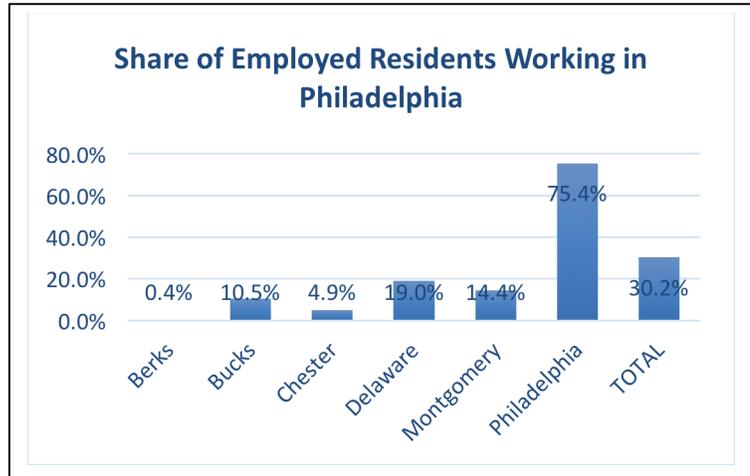
Source: American Fact Finder, US Census Bureau, 2014

Southeast Pennsylvania County-to-County Worker Flow							
	Berks	Bucks	Chester	Delaware	Montgomery	Philadelphia	TOTAL SE PA
Berks	140,819	410	1,916	187	4,231	243	147,806
Bucks	675	168,090	1,133	2,060	23,722	23,248	218,928
Chester	5,596	3,036	137,678	18,504	25,006	7,810	197,630
Delaware	505	2,754	17,870	137,988	11,758	21,802	192,677
Montgomery	12,727	48,414	25,673	28,144	245,619	59,970	420,547
Philadelphia	702	31,892	10,586	48,151	54,576	429,667	575,574
Other PA	15,270	5,574	5,107	1,399	3,976	3,114	34,440
Other USA	1,526	43,475	18,106	17,348	10,794	23,533	114,782
Other Int.	11	240	96	141	150	374	1,012
Total	177,831	303,885	218,165	253,922	379,832	569,761	1,903,396

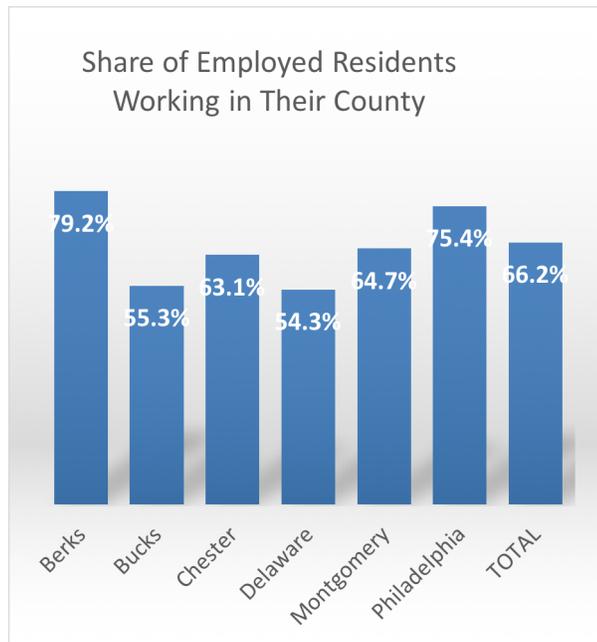
Source: US Census County-to-County Worker Flow Files 2000

Comparing where a person’s permanent residence is located versus where they work is also a manner of identifying commuting patterns. The vast majority of individuals work within their home county or contiguous county. Clearly a large number of residents in counties contiguous to Philadelphia are commuting to Philadelphia. The chart below shows the county of residents versus where persons are working.

All local workforce development areas in Southeast Pennsylvania have a majority of employed residents in their counties working within their counties. On average two out of three workers work within their county of residence with Berks having a high of 79.2% (almost 8 out of 10) and Delaware being the lowest at 54.3% but closely followed by Bucks County at 55.3%.



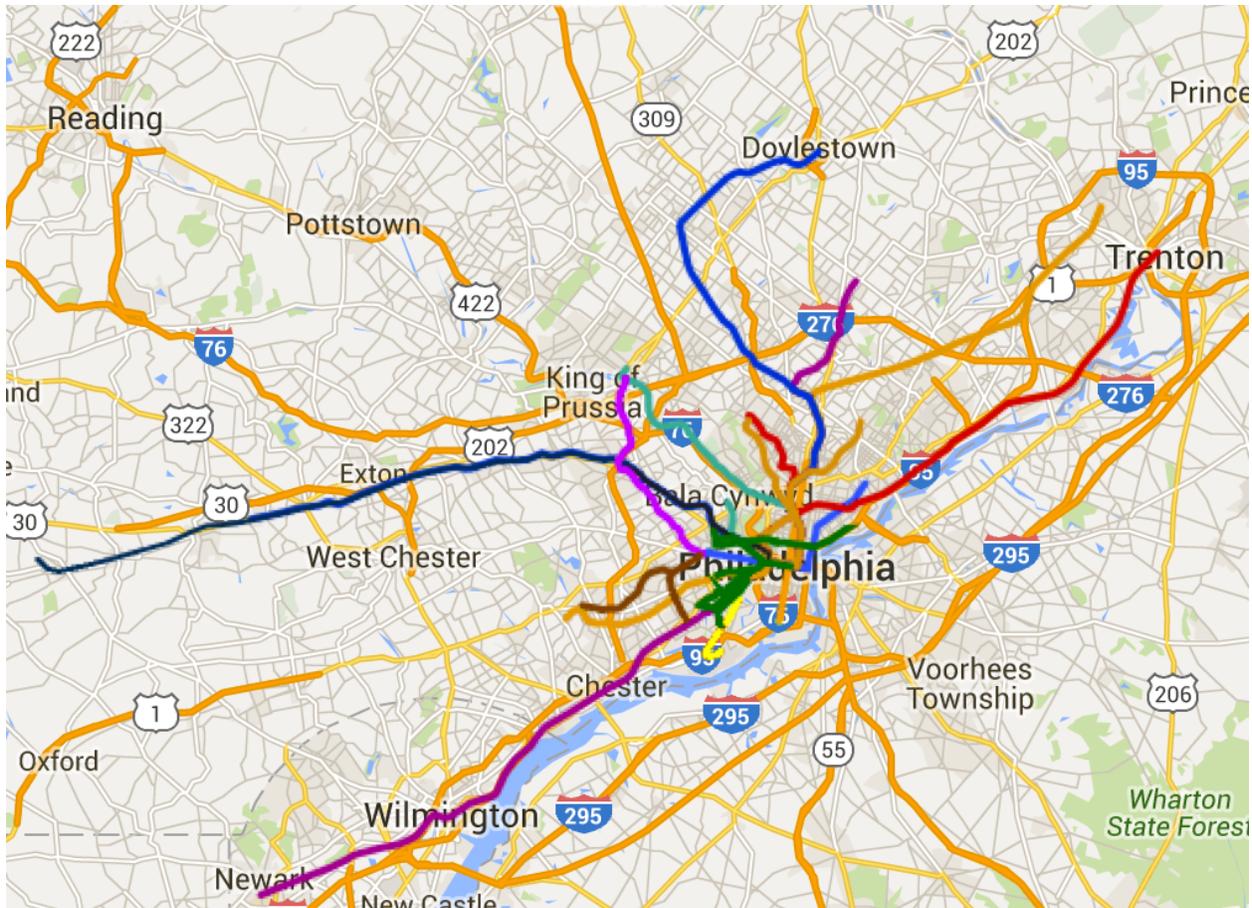
One of the significant issues for transportation planning for both individual commuting and public transportation is the level of employment in Philadelphia versus the other Southeast Pennsylvania counties. While Philadelphia does have a significant draw of residents employed in the city from neighboring Southeast PA counties, the level varies significantly largely due to geography.



Public transit has been and will continue to be a vital component of community life throughout much of Southeast Pennsylvania.

Southeast Pennsylvania is fortunate to have an extensive public transportation system with the Southeast Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) serving the region. While the SEPTA map below (from their website) shows the transportation venues throughout the Southeast Pennsylvania Workforce Development Area region, the use of public transportation varies within the counties. For example, Philadelphia has the highest percentage of individuals using public transportation at 27% with 11% in Delaware County and 4% in the remaining counties.

As can be seen from the SEPTA map of their routes, the services of SEPTA are concentrated in Philadelphia and Delaware County with limited services to other counties (and also neighboring states in some cases). While SEPTA is the sole provider in Philadelphia and Delaware Counties, the other counties have various local or county-based public transportation that complements SEPTA services or addresses various county needs.



Source: <http://www.septa.org/maps/system/>

The Job Access/ Reverse Commute (JARC) program funded by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) was established to address the unique transportation challenges faced by welfare recipients and low-income persons seeking to obtain and maintain employment. The JARC funding was used by SEPTA to provide additional service to passengers at times when regular transit operations would not be justified, such as the late evening, early morning, and on Sundays. Many low-income workers and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients in the region, particularly Philadelphia and neighboring counties rely on transit in order to work night shifts and on weekends.

All this being noted, the Southeast Pennsylvania Workforce Development Area works diligently to link with public transportation including ensuring that the PA CareerLink® centers and major contractors are on public transportation routes wherever possible. The Boards also work closely with employers and their sectors to address transportation issues.

1.9 Describe strategies and services the planning region will employ to coordinate workforce development programs/services with regional economic development services and providers. [WIOA Sec. 106(c)]

While all of the local workforce development boards in the Southeast Pennsylvania region maintain strong connections with their multiple local economic development organizations and chambers of commerce, as described in each local plan, the primary forum for connecting workforce development and economic development goals and services at the regional level has been the Southeast Pennsylvania Partnership for Regional Economic Performance (SE PREP). In 2015 the core partners of SE PREP brought together the region’s 6 county-based economic development organizations, 6 workforce boards, 5 small business development centers, and 2 industrial resource centers to address regional priorities, establish a foundation for ongoing collaboration, and create strategic goals to guide the individual strategies and tactics of each participating organization. The plan that resulted from the process focuses on the intersection of interests, challenges, and opportunities of the partners. The plan does not supersede any other plans but rather provides an overarching framework to focus on the core issue of primary interest to the Southeast Pennsylvania partners – creating a more highly-educated and trained workforce in the region as an enabler of business expansion and attraction. Key strategies from the plan and alignment with the state and regional WIOA plans are shown in Section 1.3.

The platform of knowledge and trust among workforce development organizations and economic development organizations in the region has resulted, and will continue to result, in quick concerted action to respond to needs and seize opportunities. Coalitions in various geographic configurations provide customized approaches to address key issues, all under the regional SE PREP platform that is used to share information, expand and replicate successful models, and assess overall regional impact on employer and job seeker customers. This process allows for flexibility and speed in crafting solutions and in sharing leadership on key initiatives, while maintaining focus on regional impact of the collective efforts. Shown below are examples of such coalitions that are serving to advance workforce skills in the region:

American Apprenticeship Grant

Purpose/Goals: Build new apprenticeship structures and pipelines in the region, specifically creating an IT apprenticeship enrolling 170 trainees and a Behavioral Health Technician apprenticeship enrolling 140 trainees. Leverage other funding sources to build and maintain pre-apprenticeship feeder programs. Create visibility for apprenticeship structures in the region to stimulate the growth of apprenticeships in other occupations.

Timeline: 5 years beginning December 2015

Key Partners: Philadelphia Workforce Development Board, Philadelphia School District, Communities in Schools, Youth Build, Job Corps, District 1199C Training & Upgrading

Fund, OIC, PHA

Coordinating Partner: Philadelphia Works

Business-Education Partnership Grant

Purpose/Goals: Raise student awareness of job and career opportunities and skill needed to access them. Increase work-based learning opportunities for youth through increased business sponsorship. Target the needs of special populations. Coordinate the message and engagement strategies for students, parents, teachers, counselors, and employers.

Timeline: April 2015 – June 2016

Key Partners: Montgomery County and Bucks County Workforce Development Boards and school districts in Montgomery and Bucks Counties

Manufacturing Alliance of Bucks & Montgomery Counties

Purpose/Goals: Connect manufacturers in the two counties to strengthen and grow the sector. Provide opportunities for increased networking, partnering, and sharing of information. Create and maintain a supply chain website. Raise money to support goals. Provide dedicated staff from the two Workforce Development Boards.

Timeline: Ongoing platform

Key Partners: Bucks and Montgomery County Workforce Development Boards, manufacturers in both counties

Southeastern Regional Workforce Development Partnership

Purpose/Goals: Develop training plans and awareness initiatives to ensure a reliable pipeline of talent for the manufacturing sector. Increase employer membership. Support work-based learning for students, including summer internships. Develop a pre-apprenticeship manufacturing program. Develop on-site career coaching models. Map manufacturing career pathways to showcase education/training leading to high wages in the sector.

Timeline: Formed in 2007, work is ongoing

Key Partners: Workforce Development Boards of Philadelphia, Bucks, Montgomery, and Delaware Counties, 50+ employers, School District of Philadelphia, Philadelphia Youth Network, regional/local economic development agencies, labor organizations, faith-based organizations

Southeast PA Region Workforce/Economic Development Collaborative: PA JOBS1st Grant

Purpose/Goals: Build a sustainable public/private partnership in Southeast PA to provide comprehensive and integrated workforce and economic development services. Address labor shortages facing manufacturers in Southeast PA through training and aggressive career

awareness and pipeline development campaigns.

Timeline: Ongoing platform (built with grant from July 2014 to July 2015)

Key Partners: Southeast PA PREP Partners, Workforce Development Boards of Berks, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia Counties

Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) Grant: Micro-Credentials for Target Populations

Purpose/Goals: Develop micro-credentials in the successful 12-week metalworking training program of the college. Serve four cohorts of ten students each. Target new populations and engage community partners in recruitment and preparation.

Timeline: October 2015 – September 2019

Key Partners: Bucks County Community College, Bucks County Workforce Development Board

Workforce Innovation Fund Grant: High Priority Occupations

Purpose/Goals: Embed micro-credentials in two new and two existing career certificate programs in the healthcare and manufacturing sectors. Focus on attracting dislocated workers, with special emphasis on long-term unemployed job seekers. Provide intensive, individualize career coaching for trainees to ensure training and job placement success.

Timeline: October 2015 – September 2019

Key Partners: Montgomery County Community College, Montgomery County Workforce Development Board

Sector Partnership National Dislocated Worker Grant

Purpose/Goals: Train 54 dislocated workers in High Priority Occupations in the Nursing, Bio-technology and Bio-manufacturing sectors. Employ a Career Pathways framework. Connect short-term training to 2-year and 4-year degree programs.

Timeline: July 2015 – June 2017

Key Partners: Southeast PA regional community college and workforce development boards

Southeast Pennsylvania Defense Transition Collaborative

Purpose/Goals: Assist distressed employers, adversely impacted by defense spending cuts, in the supply chain of major Department of Defense vendors. Create marketing and diversification plans to improve business outcomes for these employers. Connect employers to other potential markets.

Timeline: November 2015 – November 2017

Key Partners: Workforce development boards and economic development entities in Southeast PA region plus Lehigh and Northampton Counties

Philadelphia Business Education Career Awareness Project

Purpose/Goals: Create pathways programs in manufacturing sector for 14-24-year old students and young adults. Provide career awareness and internship opportunities for over 300 youth. Enhance career awareness through real-time labor market information and mapping of pathways.

Timeline: June 2015 – June 2016

Key Partners: School District of Philadelphia, Philadelphia Youth Network, Collegiate Consortium, Office of Career & Technical Education, Industry Advisory Committee, Manufacturing Alliance of Philadelphia, Southeast Regional Workforce Development Industry Partnership

AgConnect Partnership

Purpose/Goals: Connect farmers, to business resources, training, and financing to grow businesses and promote smart, sustainable agricultural economic development. Promote agriculture as a viable career option for students. Support training and financing programs to advance the sector, acquiring grants to assist.

Timeline: Ongoing Industry Partnership (since 2000)

Key Partners: Initiative of the Chester County Economic Development Council with partner support from Southeast PA workforce development boards, PA Department of Community and Economic Development, PA Department of Labor and Industry

Innovation Technology Action Group (ITAG)

Purpose/Goals: Develop programs and workshops for individuals and companies, promoting the latest technology and best practices in using it. Create a pipeline of qualified technically-trained workers. Host an annual Tech Summit conference for IT leaders to share knowledge and experiences on leading trends impacting business.

Timeline: Ongoing Industry Partnership (since 2009)

Key Partners: Workforce Development Boards of Bucks and Chester Counties

Given the size, diversity, and complexity of the broader Southeast PA region that includes over 1/3 of the commonwealth's population, the approach of sponsorship of initiatives by varying combinations of geographic and industry partners has served the region well. Many of these efforts, as shown above, are ongoing and funded for multiple years. As such, they lay the foundation for region-wide sharing of knowledge and best practices and spawning new initiatives that can be expanded and replicated as needed.

1.10 Describe how the planning region will establish an agreement concerning how the planning region will collectively negotiate and reach agreement with the Department on local levels of performance for, and report on, the performance accountability measures described in WIOA Section 116(c), for local areas and the planning region. [WIOA Sec. 106(c)]

Note: The Department, the local board and the CEO reach agreement on local targets and levels based on the negotiation process before the start of each program year. While the CEO remains ultimately responsible for ensuring the local area meets or exceeds such local targets and levels, performance negotiations must be coordinated regionally, requiring each planning region to establish an agreement describing how the region will collectively negotiate performance goals with the Department.

[proposed 20 CFR 677.210(b) and (c)] and [proposed 20 CFR 679.510(a)(2)]

The Southeast Workforce Planning Region recognizes the value and importance of performance measures related to effective performance outcomes. These measures have many intended and unintended consequences for the entire public workforce system including the job seekers, employers and various agencies and intermediary organizations that help align services based on satisfactory performance outcomes.

The local areas will review and analyze the local performance measures negotiated for the six local areas and based upon those results will then utilize this information and negotiation experience to collectively address the regional performance levels. Since the system is awaiting guidance on these measures (and on still to be determined additional state measures and employer measure(s)), the Southwest Workforce Planning Region will then identify the process to collectively address these outcomes.

During this initial transition year for WIOA outcome measures, each local board will report on and discuss these performance measures, address any potential or anticipated concerns that arise and support each local area as appropriate.

1.13 Describe how the planning region will connect any regionally targeted populations to occupational demands, **especially** individuals with barriers to employment. [proposed 20 CFR 679.540(b)]

The Southeast Workforce Development Region has significant regional populations in need of services and skills to meet the need of the region's sector employment needs. Each local workforce area has their priorities for serving target groups in their area.

During Program Year 2015, through Job 1st funds contracted with Camoin Associates to produce a report titled "Southeast Pennsylvania Workforce-Economic Development Collaboration Strategy" identified the aging workforce and youth engagement as regional target populations.

Additional regional labor market analysis then expands the regionally targeted populations to include veterans, returning citizens, low-income individuals, low educational attainment individuals, persons with disabilities and limited English proficiency. This list of targeted populations will be regularly reviewed and updated to determine any gaps or services necessary. Additionally, each local area has spent extensive time and research documenting, reaching out, and serving to the best of their abilities many targeted populations, as identified in their respective local plans. With a region as large, extensive and diverse as the six local workforce areas comprising Southeast Pennsylvania, the regionally identified target groups could comprise sub-group of areas or the entire region.

The Workforce Board Directors will continue to explore these areas as part of their monthly meetings. The Directors will also work in the context of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the Commonwealth's Combined Plan, and other significant stakeholders in reaching out to identify and address ongoing target population needs. As appropriate, they will work closely with local organizations and agencies that have a keen and in depth understanding of the critical challenges and opportunities in addressing these target populations.

Please see Addendum A for comments received on the regional plan. All comments are based on references already included in the regional plan.

Please see Addendum B for Southeast Pennsylvania Workforce Development Region local plans

- Berks County
- Bucks County
- Chester County
- Delaware County
- Montgomery County
- City/County of Philadelphia

Addendum A

Public Comments Received

From: Michael Lawrence mlawrence@communityworkforceadvancements.com
Subject: Re: WIOA/Philadelphia draft plan question
Date: May 17, 2016 at 5:24 AM
To: Horne-Beachy, Beth BBeachy@pahouse.net
Cc: mlawrence@communityworkforceadvancements.com



Ms. Horne-Beachy,

Thank you very much for your comment regarding the Southeast Pennsylvania Workforce Development 2016-2017 Transitional Regional Plan.

The Southeast Pennsylvania Workforce Development 2016-2017 Transitional Regional Plan is a regional plan that emphasizes general priorities and plans for workforce development activities during the 2016-2017 transitional year. This plan emphasizes broad trends such as awareness of resources and identification of new resources throughout the six local workforce development areas. Specific programs are not listed in the regional plan but we anticipate PowerCorps PHL along with other programs across Philadelphia to be among the many resources that address workforce needs in the local Philadelphia workforce area and across the region as appropriate.

We also encourage you to review Philadelphia's Transitional Local Plan. While PowerCorps PHL may not be specifically mentioned there, you should find that the Philadelphia Local Plan addresses strategies and priorities consistent with the programmatic emphasis of the AmeriCorps program and PowerCorps PHL.

Michael Lawrence

Mike Lawrence
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mlawrence@communityworkforceadvancements.com

On May 4, 2016, at 1:12 PM, Horne-Beachy, Beth <BBeachy@pahouse.net> wrote:

Good afternoon!

I work for PA Rep. W. Curtis Thomas (181st Legislative District/portion of Philadelphia). He asked me to take a look at the draft WIOA plan to see if PowerCorpsPHL was included.

The program was launched in 2013 and is a Philadelphia AmeriCorps initiative administered in partnership with EducationWorks and partners with the Philadelphia Youth Network, to support the city's environmental stewardship, youth violence prevention and workforce development priorities. Through the program young adults (18 to 26) participate in a 6-month term of service, working with partners in City departments on environmental challenges, such as storm water management, tree coverage and revitalized public land, followed by 3-months of intensive job placement services.

Can you tell me if I just overlooked the program in the draft?

Thanks.

Beth

Beth Horne-Beachy
Executive Director

House Commerce Committee
Rep. W. Curtis Thomas, Chairman (D)
Direct: 717-772-2007
Office: 717-787-9471

From: Michael Lawrence mlawrence@communityworkforceadvancements.com

Subject: Southeast PA Regional Plan

Date: May 23, 2016 at 12:40 PM

To: admincentral@steelvalley.org

Cc: Elizabeth Walsh ewalsh@bucksworks.org, Roy Vanderford rvanderford@innovativeworkforce.com, Meg Shope Koppel mshopekoppel@philaworks.org

ML

Mary Beth,

Good morning, please accept this email in response to your question to Elizabeth Walsh regarding the Southeast PA Workforce Transitional Plan. I have been asked to be the contact for any questions related to the SE PA Regional Workforce Transitional Plan.

Specifically, you had asked about the Southeast PA Defense Transition Collaborative. This grant is administered by the Philadelphia Workforce Development Board on behalf of the six local workforce boards in SE PA and Lehigh Valley LWDB (Lehigh and Northampton counties).

The contact person for this grant that assists with these calls to make the right connections is Trish Conti at Philadelphia Works and her phone number is 215-557-2593.

Thank you for reviewing the plan and for your comments on the plan. Should you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact me. Have a great day.

Mike

Mike Lawrence
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mlawrence@communityworkforceadvancements.com

From: Michael Lawrence mlawrence@communityworkforceadvancements.com
Subject: Re: District 1199C Training Fund comments on regional transitional plan
Date: June 1, 2016 at 2:22 PM
To: Peter Chomko pchomko@1199ctraining.org
Cc: Cheryl Feldman cfeldman@1199ctraining.org, Susan Thomas sthomas@1199ctraining.org, mlawrence@communityworkforceadvancements.com

ML

Mr. Chomko:

The Southeast PA Regional Workforce Development Boards are in receipt of the comments from District 1199C related to the Regional Transitional Plan.

he Greater Philadelphia Health Care Partnership, in comment on Section 1.9, page 15, regarding inclusion "in the list of "coalitions that are serving to advance workforce skills in the region" and asked to be considered as part of the members of the coalition. The SE PA Workforce Boards will consider this as part of the transition plan as the region moves forward to a more permanent, multi-year plan.

he Greater Philadelphia Health Care Partnership, in comment on Section 1.1, Page 1, strongly encouraged "the Commonwealth and the governments of New Jersey and Delaware to in future consider undertaking workforce planning efforts which cross state borders and consider the entirety of the Greater Philadelphia Region as a unified labor market". As the SE PA Region receives additional guidance from the Commonwealth and move from a transitional plan to a more permanent multi-year plan, the Boards will consider this based on guidance provided and opportunities available.

Thank you for your comments and suggestions.
Have a great day.

Mike

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Dear Mr. Lawrence,

On behalf of the Philadelphia-based District 1199C Training & Upgrading Fund – a 41 year-old non-profit, labor-management healthcare workforce development partnership – thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Southeast Pennsylvania Workforce Development Region 2016-2017 Transitional Regional Plan. The Training Fund serves students from throughout Southeastern Pennsylvania and Southern New Jersey, and commends the region's Workforce Development Boards for their commitment to collaborating to reduce poverty and improve labor market outcomes in our region. We would like to respectfully submit the following comments:

- *Section 1.9 (page 15):* Established with support from the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry in 2005, the Training Fund-sponsored **Greater Philadelphia Healthcare Partnership** (<http://www.greaterphilahealthcare.org/>) has worked for 11 years to build and strengthen the healthcare workforce throughout the Southeastern Pennsylvania region. GPHP has provided employment and training services to individual workers and to the employers of all sizes who make up its region-spanning network of industry partners. We respectfully request GPHP's inclusion in the list of "coalitions that are serving to advance workforce skills in the region" which begins on page 15, and are happy to provide the report's authors with any information necessary to ensure its inclusion.

• *Section 1.1 (page 1):* While we recognize that the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is

- *Section 1.1 (page 1)*. While we recognize that the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is responsible for determining the makeup of its workforce planning regions, we strongly encourage the Commonwealth and the governments of New Jersey and Delaware to in future consider undertaking workforce planning efforts which cross state borders and consider the entirety of the Greater Philadelphia Region as a unified labor market.

Once again, thank you for the valuable opportunity to contribute to this important planning process. The Training Fund is happy to be of continued assistance to our region's Workforce Development Boards, and invites representatives from any of the Southeast Pennsylvania Workforce Development Region's WDBs to contact us at any time.

Thanks again and have a pleasant day,

Peter Chomko

Research & Development Project Manager
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Facebook: [/GreaterPhilaHealthcare](https://www.facebook.com/GreaterPhilaHealthcare)

Twitter: [@PhilaHCPartners](https://twitter.com/PhilaHCPartners)

Combined Federal Campaign Number:
66571

Addendum B

Local Transitional Plans

- **Berks County**
- **Bucks County**
- **Chester County**
- **Delaware County**
- **Montgomery County**
- **City/County of Philadelphia**

Berks County Workforce Development Board: PY2016 Transitional Local Plan

WIOA requires each local workforce area to develop a local plan that supports and is submitted as a component of its associated regional plan. The narratives framed in the local plan will include more detailed, actionable plans and objectives, consistent with the local plan’s respective regional plan strategic visions and goals.

In addressing the elements outlined below, if the local board is not prepared to provide a complete response to a specific element at the time of plan submission, a response must be provided that indicates how the local board plans to fully address that particular element in the multi-year plan.

Transitional local plans are not expected to exceed 75 pages.

Section 1: Workforce and Economic Analysis.....	2
Section 2: Strategic Vision and Goals	22
Section 3: Local Area Partnerships and Investment Strategies	27
Section 4: Program Design and Evaluation.....	43
Section 5: Compliance	50
Appendix C (Part 1): Transitional Planning and Resources.....	55
Appendix C (Part 2): Local Area Proposed PY2016 Performance Goals.....	57
Exhibit A: Public Comments and Response (5/31/2016)	

Section 1: Workforce and Economic Analysis

Please provide a separate response for each of the elements listed below.

1.1 Provide an analysis of the economic conditions, including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations; and the employment needs of employers in those industry sectors and occupations.

[WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(A)] and [proposed 20 CFR 679.560(a)]

Note: Per WIOA Sec. 108(c), existing economic regional and/or local area analyses may be used if sourced data and/or derived analyses are economically relevant and current (i.e., within two years of the issuance of this guidance).

Berks County is a substantial (and growing) natural labor market area (LMA) which is contiguous with the federally-designated Reading Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) and the County serves as the focus of our regional community, government, economic and workforce development partners with a long track record of collaboration to develop and implement strategic economic strategies. In response to the historic challenges facing the Berks County economic region during the 2009 – 2010 recession, the Berks County Workforce Investment Board (WIB) joined seven other partners with primary responsibility for supporting effective economic and workforce development policies and programs in the region to develop the Berks County *Ride to Prosperity (RTP)* strategy. The *RTP* project helped regional leaders cultivate a deep understanding of the region’s key industry clusters which has since informed RTPs evolving strategy and action plans.

With regional economic recovery well underway by 2013, the Berks County WIB, along with its RTP Partners issued a progress report and refined the strategy under the title of *Ride to Prosperity Version 2.0*. *RTP 2.0* built upon the original work plans and laid out a new vision for the coming years focused on regional collaboration in five key areas, including *Workforce and Talent Development*. Reflecting its reputation for local workforce development expertise and analysis and the importance that the partners placed on workforce and talent, the Berks County WDB was assigned the leadership role in developing RTP’s Workforce and Talent Development strategies.

In mid-2015, the Berks County WIB was reappointed as the Berks County Workforce Development Board (WDB) just as our regional economy moved from *recovering* to *recovered* and the Berks County LWDA at or near “functional full-employment.” (see section 1.3)

Reason for optimism that the region’s current economy is stable and likely to continue growing was documented in a September 2015 report from the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia – *Identifying Opportunity Occupations in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware*. The report finds that the Reading MSA has the highest percentage of “opportunity occupations” of all eleven MSAs in the Philadelphia Fed’s three-state region. The Philadelphia Fed report went on to say that over a third (33.6%) of Berks County jobs meet their standards for “*opportunity occupations*” characterized by *above-average pay for workers without a bachelor’s degree* and concludes with:

It is true that certain broad occupational categories - such as healthcare practitioners; production; installation, maintenance, and repair; and construction and extraction – are more likely to offer work at

an above-average wage for those without a college degree than others. Economies that include higher levels of employment in these fields will offer more and better opportunities for workers with lower levels of education.

At the same time, Berks County employers and the Berks County Workforce Development Board (WDB) face significant workforce challenges driven by economic transformation and most notably by rapidly-changing local demographics. Berks County as a whole is characterized by an older, predominantly native-born white population which has long supplied the region's skilled talent needs, particularly for good paying middle-skill jobs in healthcare and in manufacturing. Most of this highly-skilled and experienced workforce combines at least a high school diploma with significant knowledge, skills and abilities acquired through decades on the job with local employers. However, much of the County's most available current and future talent resides within the City of Reading and has significantly different demographic characteristics.

Reading's population has been growing for the last two decades and reached 87,812 at the time of the 2010 Census - making it the fifth largest city in Pennsylvania with a population density of 8,951 people per square mile. This highly urbanized core city was also identified by the 2010 Census as having the highest percentage of citizens living in poverty in the nation. Besides being disproportionately poor, Reading residents are also often under-educated. Less than two-thirds of city residents have earned a high school diploma, compared to more than 85% nationally. Reading's demographic make-up has changed remarkably over the past twenty years; with fewer non-Hispanic white residents, a slow-growing black population (13%) and a Hispanic population that now makes up nearly 60% of the city's population. The *New York Times* reports that this change has been due primarily to a large influx of Hispanics from New York and other large cities and that many of these new residents have been drawn by cheaper housing and prospects for a better life. Reading's Hispanic population is much younger than that of the city and Berks County as a whole. The city's Hispanic adult population has even lower educational attainment - with less than half of Hispanic adults over age 25 having earned a high school diploma or GED. As a result of these changes, Reading is now home to a growing population of younger, less-skilled and less-educated workers and potential workers.

Despite the many challenges that the City faces, there is reason for optimism going forward. In 2015, the Franklin & Marshall College Local Economy Center (LEC) published the *Reading Economic Report* outlining the roots of Reading's economic crisis but also pointing to a particular advantage:

Reading still has a production-oriented workforce, and despite a long period of decline, manufacturing has shown some post-recession resilience both nationally and in Berks County. This sector, which provides more jobs than any other industry for Reading households, provides an important foundation for the City's economic future. The strength of this production base is still present, even as the City and Region continue to transition into a more diverse service-based economy.

With retirements from the local baby-boomer workforce now accelerating, Berks County will prosper if we can successfully prepare and connect the most City of Reading's younger, less-educated workforce with the great career opportunities generated by these retirements and continued regional economic growth over the next decade.

Reflecting this reality and a thorough local analysis of all regional industry clusters, the Berks County Workforce Development Board in June 2015 formally approved the following workforce development sector priorities for Program Years 2015-2019:

I. Priority A (*Driver Industry*): Manufacturing

- Largest sector by employment: 30,203 (18% of local employment)
- Berks County ranked 4th of the 150 largest U.S. metropolitan areas for job quality largely due to this “driver sector” (2014 Labor Market 150 Index)
- 519 establishments (including 2 of 3 largest employers – East Penn Manufacturing and Carpenter Technology Corp.)
- Strong Location Quotient: **LQ = 2.05 and projected to grow to 2.15 in 2020**
- Average annual earnings = \$55,000 (+ 33% in benefits/other compensation)
- Largest sector by annual economic output = \$3.4 Billion (23% of Berks GDP)
- Multiplier effect supports many jobs in other sectors / supply chain
- Continued productivity growth will drive increased economic output with relatively flat manufacturing job growth (i.e. Berks will be successful if we retain 30,000 manufacturing industry jobs thru 2025.)
- Demographic/Replacement crisis! 54% of manufacturing workers are age 45 or older – need ~ 6,000 - 8,000 new entrants by 2025.
- Current and future skills shortages for technical occupations, especially precision machining and industrial maintenance/mechatronics technicians.
- Failure to address talent pipeline/skills shortages will lead to reduced business investment and lower economic output with a significant negative impact on local economic prosperity.

II. Priority B (*Sustaining Industry*): Healthcare & Social Assistance

- 2nd largest sector by employment: 26,480 (15% of local employment)
- Largest employer (Reading Health Systems) and 9th largest employer (Penn State - St. Joseph Medical Center)
- Steady job growth since 2000 will continue – likely to surpass manufacturing as largest employment sector by 2022
- Good opportunities for middle-skill jobs and career paths; average annual earnings = \$47,700 (+ 15% in benefits/other compensation)
- Projected 2020 Location Quotient = 1.19, slightly above national average
- Excellent system of industry-recognized licenses and credentials
- Slightly less than 10% of Berks GDP
- Service industry with limited jobs multiplier effect
- Relatively normal age distribution
- Industry change/consolidation with implementation of Affordable Care Act

III. Priority C (*Watch Industries*):

❖ Logistics, Transportation and Warehousing:

- Approximately 5,600 jobs
- 10th largest employer – Penske Truck Leasing has over 1,500 employees and growing
- Otherwise, relatively flat employment growth projections thru 2020
- Average annual earnings = \$42,000 (+ 26% in benefits/other compensation)
- Projected 2020 Location Quotient = 0.89, slightly below national average
- New facilities on I-78 and across the larger region
- Lots of entry-level positions, but sector lacks strong career ladders
- Tremendous current demand (2015-2016) for CDL Drivers

❖ Agriculture

- Legacy industry - approximately 2,600 jobs (5%)
- Average annual earnings = \$31,500 (+ 22% in benefits/other compensation)
- \$160 Million annual output, projected to grow after years of decline
- Projected 2020 Location Quotient = **1.82**, well above the national average
- Tied closely to food production (manufacturing sub-sector)
- Lancaster County - related demand for technicians to service agricultural equipment

Construction is another important goods-producing sector which accounts for approximately 8,000 local jobs but has lagged other sectors in recovery. However, more local road and bridge construction projects have been initiated in 2015-2016 and the local commercial construction sector is now finally recovering. Residential construction is also slowly improving. This good news is tempered by aging demographic challenges among skilled construction trades occupations that are even worse than those found in manufacturing.

The local supply of talent in Information Technology (IT) occupations has largely been in balance with demand for the past decade and the region has seen some actual decline in IT companies and closely-associated large financial services companies. However, many IT occupations are also critical to the successful implementation of technology-based improvements strategies in key local sectors like advanced manufacturing, healthcare and logistics. Current job postings and recent interviews with local employers indicate that IT skills shortages are surfacing and will continue to grow over the next five years.

1.2 Provide an analysis of the knowledge and skills required to meet the employment needs of the employers in the local area, including employment requirements for in-demand industry sectors and occupations.
[WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(B)] and [proposed 20 CFR 679.560(a)]

As discussed above in Section 1.1, the Berks County *Ride to Prosperity (RTP)* strategy project helped regional leaders cultivate a deep understanding of the region’s key industry clusters and the Berks County WDB has further developed this sector-based analysis in determining workforce development sector priorities for Program Years 2015-2019. As a result, the Berks WDB is home to local labor market subject matter expertise in the knowledge, skills and requisite industry-recognized credentials needed to contribute to the growth of a qualified talent pool, the recruitment and retention qualified employees, and the upskilling of “home grown talent.” The Berks County WDB verifies the relevance of the training activities associated with the targeted occupations through outreach to employers. The WDB develops a detailed understanding of

the skills and experience related to current and future employment projections by utilizing print and on-line job ad analysis, employer surveys, employer feedback via in-person, phone and email interviews, and by active WDB participation in educational provider Occupational Advisory Committees and Industry Partnerships. Active partnership with economic development agencies is solicited to promote the growth of a competent workforce in support of economic development initiatives.

In addition, the Berks WDB and the PA CareerLink® Berks County Business Services Team employ occupational research capabilities using workforce development software, Transferable Occupational Relationship Quotient (TORQ) comparison, O*net and CIP/SOC comparison, and pre-employment assessments, such as Work Keys®, of the fundamental knowledge, skills, and abilities required by employers

Manufacturing Industry Needs: Berks County's singular Priority A Industry Sector is Manufacturing (see Section 1.1). Over the past two decades, many Berks County manufacturing employers have thrived in an increasingly competitive international economy by developing *world-class products, processes and people* – the defining characteristics of what we refer to as *advanced manufacturing*. During this transition, local employers benefited from a stable and experienced workforce which was able to adapt to the changing technological environment. Due to successful process improvement strategies and significant capital investment in new manufacturing technologies, local advanced manufacturing employers were able to increase output with the same number or even fewer employees. However, the retained employees need a higher skill level as reflected in advanced manufacturing's highest priority skilled technical occupations. In particular, our region's economic health is tied closely to our ability to maintain the historically-available supply of skilled precision machining occupations and industrial maintenance/mechatronics technicians.

Precision Machining – Precision machining occupations are consistently identified by the PA Dept. of Labor & Industry as “High Priority Occupations” which are in demand by employers, have higher skill needs, and provide family sustaining wages. Many Berks County employers are recruiting candidates directly from the two local CTC and Reading Area Community College (RACC) programs even before graduation/program completion and are willing to provide on the job upskilling immediately upon hiring.

Precision Machining careers follow well-established career paths and/or ladders that can result in greater job responsibility and wages approaching \$30 per hour in time.

In early 2015, the Berks County WDB produced a comprehensive supply vs. demand study *Precision Machining Occupations in Berks and Surrounding Counties*. Extensive face to face interviews with Berks County precision machining employers in 2014-2015 combined with a structured survey provided valuable feedback on initial projections derived from labor market information systems. The consensus is that the initial projected demand numbers were much lower than the employers expected needs for the next five years. Some of the anticipated precision machining openings will be to expanding production expansion driven by added business and tool acquisition. However, much more hiring will be required for replacement of employees leaving through pending retirements.

The unfortunate reality for local employers is that the Berks County CTCs cannot currently support demand for entrants to precision machining due to low enrollment. Qualified completers are being recruited for open positions prior to graduation. Employers report that they are left to attempt to recruit scarce talent from outside the region, lure incumbents from colleagues, settle for less qualified candidates, or have positions go unfilled for extended periods.

Three examples:

Employer A is adding 16 CNC Swiss Lathes to its production capabilities which will require the immediate hiring of 10 new CNC operators. “This growth, coupled with a decline in available talent, has required us to train within which is cause for concern due to a decline in a technical talent level.” Employer A's need for CNC operators is so immediate that it has relaxed a corporate recruiting policy mandating 3+ years of

experience as a requirement for hiring consideration. In early 2016, Employer A informed the Berks WDB that their continued ability to meet needs for precision machining talent will lead to further expansion and the addition of 150-200 good-paying skilled and semi-skilled jobs at the local medical device manufacturing facility.

Employer B is experiencing rapid growth in new markets for its products that is allowing the small 55 employee company to expand its precision machinist employment from 28 CNC operators and machinists in late 2014 to 60 by the end of 2016.

Employer C (50+ employees) states “Month long recruiting produces very few candidates and most lack the needed skills. Mean age is 47 years old. Anticipate future openings based on retirements, but even more based on future growth opportunities.”

In early 2015, the Berks WDB/Chamber of Commerce and the Berks WDB co-sponsored a broader Precision Machining employer survey which showed:

- 84% of Berks employers responding indicated that the projected pipeline for precision machining occupations will not support their needs during the next 4-5 years.
- Responses confirm the age demographics identified by our research, with respondents indicating 27% of their current machining employees occupy the 55-64 year old average age category.

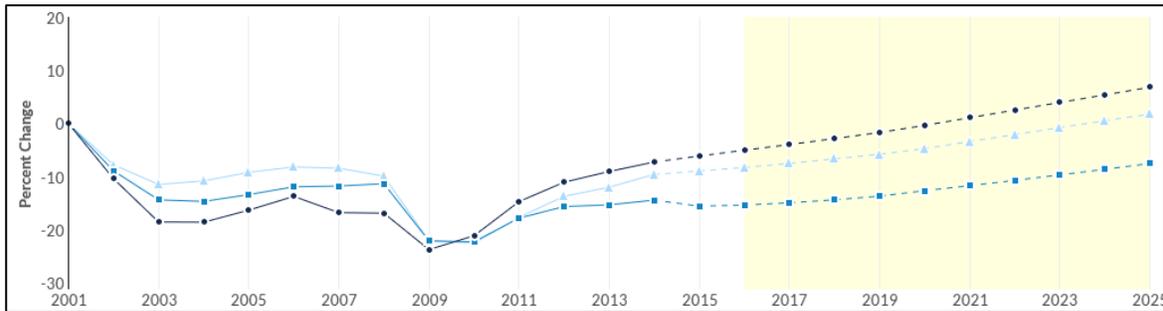
2015 Precision Machining Study - Conclusion:

Our investigation confirms that serious precision machining skills shortages will continue to grow for Berks and the surrounding region through at least 2020. This worsening shortfall carries a significant risk to the success of a key manufacturing sector in the region. The economic consequences of failing to find effective solutions are magnified by the concentration of machining employment in the seven county regional manufacturing sector, and the primary importance of this sector to our regional economy. Employers unable to recruit and develop the necessary talent will forfeit the opportunity for growth in customer orders or not receive appropriate return on investment. In February, 2015, the Berks Advanced Manufacturing Industry Partnership held an employer response forum with a total of 55 attendees and 20 employers represented. Attending employers voiced agreement with the critical need for a significantly enhanced talent pipeline initiative. As an outcome of this assessment, the Berks AMDM IP has entered into an enterprise to address incumbent worker and pipeline issues through the creation of two work groups. The ongoing work of both groups under the guidance of the AMDM IP has already begun.

- The “*Grow Your Own Talent*” Work Group met to review, critique, and recommend revisions to the Reading Area Community College (RACC) Machine Tool Technology A.A.S Degree and Apprenticeship curricula. Tactical and strategic incumbent worker training needs were addressed by six employer members of the work group. The revised programs were approved by the RACC Faculty Senate in June 2015.
- The “*Fill the Talent Pipeline*” Work Group met on February 26 and unanimously recommended the development of a RACC/CTC 2+2+2 Precision Machining Technical Academy to grow the number of talented high school students at both CTCs in Berks County.

10-year regional precision machining occupation trends were updated in early 2016 and are shown below:

Regional Precision Machining Occupation Trends



	Region	2016 Jobs	2025 Jobs	Change	% Change
●	Reading MSA	1,531	1,723	192	12.5%
■	Pennsylvania	32,796	35,830	3,034	9.3%
▲	United States	661,923	734,530	72,607	11.0%

Source: EMSI

Industrial Maintenance / Mechatronics Technicians – While precision machining employment is most often found in small or medium-size manufacturing employers focused on the production of parts and end-products, industrial maintenance / mechatronics technicians are needed in nearly every manufacturing establishment and many non-manufacturing establishments as well. Consistent employer feedback from our PA CareerLink® Berks County Business Services Team (BST) and the Berks County Advanced Manufacturing Industry Partnership (IP) Industry Partnership identifies employer demand and challenges in filling open positions around these occupations as having reached a critical stage in 2015-2016.

Specifically, at the Advanced Manufacturing IP meeting in June 2015, our employer members were adamant and unanimous in their affirmation that these occupations remain the highest priority and that all of the Standard Occupation Classification (SOC) codes applicable to this job family needed to be retained on the Berks 2015 High Priority Occupation list. Subsequently, the Berks County WDB led a successful regional petition to the state on behalf of eight other local WDBs within the region to make sure the targeted SOCs remained on all local HPO lists. Additionally, manufacturing members of the Berks County WDB raised this issue as a key priority at the quarterly WDB meeting in June 2015.

These critical in-demand Industrial Maintenance/Mechatronics Job occupations have been targeted by the WDB for priority workforce development activity. Evidence of the Job Family similarity in the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for the efficient performance of these SOC job functions is shown by the high level of Transferable Occupation Relationship Quotients within the SOCs that make up this job family.

It is important to note that, collectively, 26% of the current Berks County workforce employed in these targeted occupations is aged 55 years and older indicating a substantial need for replacement hiring in the next few years. The Industry Partnership is determined to circumvent the anticipated attrition’s toll by training qualified individuals that will assume these responsibilities in order to support continual growth from increased production requirements and acquisition of new technology.

The skill sets and key competencies for these targeted occupations closely match the skills local employers demand from graduates of Reading Area Community College’s (RACC) Schmidt Training & Technology Center

Mechatronics program. RACC has been pro-active in its response to this employer demand for qualified candidates skilled in the Industrial Maintenance/Mechatronics competencies by partnering with the two Berks Career & Technology Centers in the creation of a 2+2+2 Mechatronics Technical Academy, devoted exclusively to nurturing this career-path talent pipeline beginning at the secondary school level. Employers look to hire workers proficient, specialized, and ready to plug in “out of the gate.” Employers are constantly soliciting RACC for qualified job candidates.

Employer judgments about their ability to fill these openings in the next 5-10 years will impact their expansion planning decisions regarding capital investment in technology. Simply put, *companies will not invest in equipment that they cannot operate and maintain.*

2016 IMT/Mechatronics Initial Data – Our most recent analysis confirm a continuing rise in the employer demand for qualified industrial maintenance / Mechatronics occupations suggesting that Berks employer’s percentage of growth in new jobs will match or outgrow the statewide percentage over time. This increasing demand is particularly evident when focusing on the growth of replacement jobs. 62.2% of the current Berks workforce occupying industrial maintenance occupations is 45 years or older compared to 47% of the regional workforce in all industries. **By 2025, at least 25% to 30% of the total Berks County industrial maintenance workforce will be retired or near, at or above retirement age.**

Occupation Snapshot of IMT/Mechatronics Occupations in Reading, PA MSA

SOC	Title	Current					Historical			Forecast			
		Four Quarters Ending with 2015Q4			2015Q4		Total Change over the Last 5 Years	Avg Annual % Change in Employment 2010Q4-2015Q4			Over the Next 10 Years		
		Employed	Avg. Annual Wages	Location Quotient	Unemployed	Unempl Rate	Employed	Reading MSA	PA	USA	Replacement Demand	Total Demand	Avg. Annual Growth %
17-3023	Electrical and Electronic Engineering Technicians	225	\$44,400	1.33	5	2.1%	25	2.4%	0.4%	0.6%	51	-17	-0.8%
17-3024	Electro-Mechanical Technicians	19	\$47,900	1.08	0	n/a	2	2.5%	1.2%	1.2%	4	-1	-0.5%
17-3026	Industrial Engineering Technicians	144	\$49,900	1.77	3	2.2%	17	2.5%	0.2%	1.3%	38	-14	-1.0%
17-3027	Mechanical Engineering Technicians	82	\$51,800	1.35	2	2.3%	9	2.3%	1.2%	1.9%	19	-3	-0.4%
49-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers	583	\$69,600	1.07	10	1.6%	41	1.5%	1.0%	1.7%	116	5	0.1%
49-2094	Electrical and Electronics Repairers, Commercial and Industrial Equipment	104	\$46,900	1.31	4	3.3%	11	2.2%	0.8%	0.8%	17	-6	-0.6%
49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	725	\$45,600	1.78	13	1.8%	47	1.4%	1.1%	1.7%	194	85	1.1%
49-9043	Maintenance Workers, Machinery	238	\$48,500	2.12	5	1.9%	18	1.6%	0.9%	1.7%	37	2	0.1%
49-9044	Millwrights	85	\$54,700	1.68	2	2.0%	5	1.3%	1.1%	2.5%	17	7	0.8%
49-9071	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	1,779	\$42,400	1.07	65	3.2%	119	1.4%	0.8%	1.5%	466	-1	0.0%
	Manufacturing IMT Occupations	3,983	\$48,300	1.25	109	2.5%	294	1.5%	0.9%	1.5%	960	56	0.1%

Source: JobsEQ®

Data as of 2015Q4 unless noted otherwise

Healthcare and Social Assistance Industry Needs – The Berks County WDB has identified the Healthcare and Social Assistance sector as a “Priority B - Sustaining” Industry. The sector currently employs 26,480 workers (15% of local employment) and demonstrates steady employment growth that will likely overtake manufacturing as Berks County’s largest employment sector by 2022 (Section 1.1).

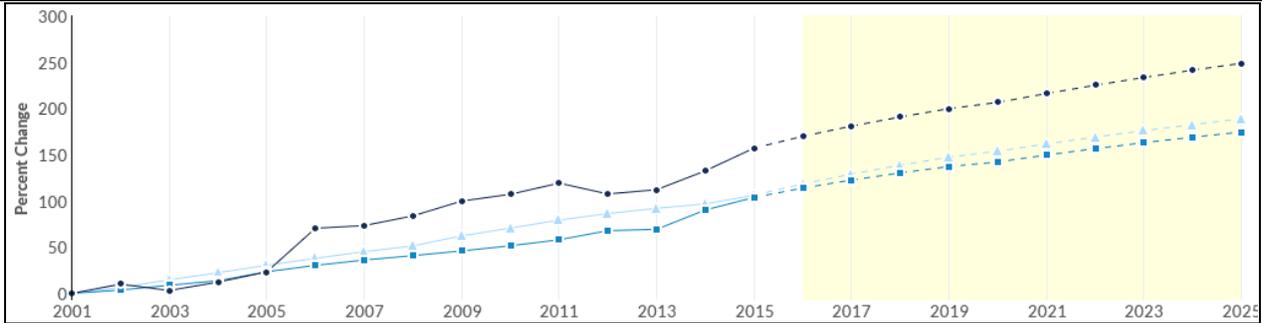
Our two local hospital systems are among the top 10 employers in Berks County – Reading Health System (#2 - 6,673 employees) and Penn State-St. Joseph’s Regional Health Network (#9 - 1,623 employees). Together, these large health systems incorporate multiple industry sub-clusters under their provider “umbrella.” This industry framework, coupled with the reality of an aging Berks population, prompted the Berks WDB in 2015 to focus on learning more about the needs of this evolving industry sector:

- In January 2015, Board staff participated in a roundtable with representatives of area hospital, healthcare agencies, and community-based organizations (CBOs) to discuss the emergent healthcare needs of the Berks County community and how an industry partnership might benefit the current and future employment demands of the region’s providers. The consensus of participants was that a potential employer partnership could focus initial planning activities on the healthcare industry sub-cluster that encompasses home-aid and home-healthcare services.
- In March 2015, the WDB’s Training & Industry Partnership Committee members were briefed by the Vice President – Human Resources of the Reading Health System on *Key Considerations Regarding Healthcare Labor*. The briefing included discussion of the current and future supply and demand for healthcare, and critical employment issues regarding hard to fill positions, shifts in care settings, and how the Affordable Care Act (PPACA) are impacting the delivery of healthcare services. The Committee learned that the industry is undergoing significant change in its payer model resulting in some moderation of hiring activity.
- In June 2015, the full WDB was briefed by the President & CEO of Penn State Health System – St. Joseph on the rationale and impact of their pending merger/partnership with a presentation on *“The Path of Changes in Healthcare”*. One of the key drivers for industry consolidation is the move from volume based outcome payment to value based outcome payment required by the Affordable Care Act (PPACA). Hospitals have to be able to provide more services and partnerships are advantageous.

This labor market information has led the WDB to focus particularly on the needs of the healthcare industry sub-cluster that encompasses home-aid and home healthcare services occupations. This industry is expected to show significant growth in the next several years, especially in the Home Health and Personal Care Aide occupations. However, evaluation and projections of these occupations is particularly challenging given the fragmented and changing environment. Unlike most other healthcare occupations, industry-recognized credentials in home healthcare are under-developed.

Industry Summary for Home Health Care Services Occupations		
1,832	29.2%	\$40,490
Jobs (2015)	% Change (2016-2025)	Avg. Earnings Per Job (2015)
10% above National average	Nation: 32.2%	Nation: \$33,809

Regional Trends: Home Health Care Occupations



Region	2016 Jobs	2025 Jobs	Change	% Change
● Reading MSA	1,923	2,485	562	29.2%
■ Pennsylvania	53,848	69,110	15,262	28.3%
▲ United States	1,478,328	1,954,667	476,339	32.2%

Occupations Employed by the local Home Healthcare Industry

Description	Employed in Industry (2015)	% of Total Jobs in Industry (2015)
Home Health Aides	837	45.7%
Personal Care Aides	223	12.1%
Registered Nurses	220	12.0%
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	114	6.2%
Nursing Assistants	98	5.4%

Observations on Home Healthcare Occupations:

- Registered Nurses (RNs) will remain one of the most attractive occupations and career paths for the foreseeable future. However, many RN opportunities will develop outside of the traditional acute care hospital environment.
- Local employer feedback indicates that due to the changes in healthcare delivery models in response to aging demographic and federal legislation (PPACA), the actual growth of Home Healthcare Industry employment may well exceed already significant growth projections from current models.
- There does not currently exist a sufficient training pipeline for qualified new entrants into most home healthcare occupations.
- In response, the Berks WDB has accepted the role as project manager for the evaluation, planning

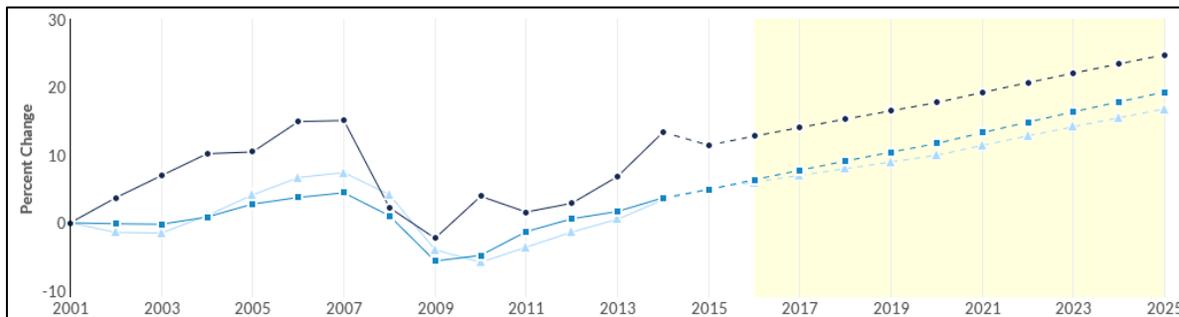
and development of a Berks County Health Care Industry Partnership (IP) to include area hospital, healthcare, social assistance agency, and CBO membership. The planned IP will serve as a forum for service providers to identify critical occupational employment needs and related relevant training activities for incumbents and new job seekers alike.

- A primary importance in this sector will be to focus on identifying and screening career-oriented entrants with barriers to employment into training programs that lead to placement in homecare employment opportunities. Following placement, career development planning will be critical to retain and grow new-hires and incumbents on pathways that result in better paying high-priority healthcare occupations.

CDL/Driver Needs – The *Logistics, Transportation, and Warehousing Industry* has been identified as a “Priority C – Watch Industry” by the Berks WDB’s sector strategy analysis (Section 1.1) and much smaller and less impactful than either the manufacturing or healthcare sector. However, within this sector the Berks WDB has identified a severe shortage of qualified **CDL Drivers** that threatens regional growth. In January 2016, Berks County employers listed **2,525** unique job postings for *Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers* (SOC 53-3032). These unique postings were actually reflective of a posting intensity of **9-to-1**, meaning for each one of these unique job postings, there were on average 9 postings. This is higher than the Posting Intensity for all other occupations and companies in the region (6-to-1), indicating that companies may be trying harder to hire this position (Source: EMSI Q1 2016 Data Set).

The following graph and table show the expected growth in total jobs and industries.

Regional Trends – CDL Drivers



	Region	2016 Jobs	2025 Jobs	Change	% Change
●	Reading MSA	2,842	3,144	302	10.6%
■	Pennsylvania	83,248	93,369	10,121	12.2%
▲	United States	1,912,675	2,107,360	194,685	10.2%

Source: EMSI

Observations on CDL/Driver Occupations:

- Both the EMSI and JobsEQ data sets project substantial growth in both new and replacement job openings for CDL Drivers over the next ten years.
- A CDL certification may be the surest credential and shortest path for job-seekers in the region to attain gainful employment at family-sustaining wages.

Percentile Earnings for Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers (53-3032)

\$17.08/hr. 25th Percentile Earnings	\$20.13/hr. Median Earnings	\$25.32/hr. 75th Percentile Earnings
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- Ongoing shortages of qualified candidates with CDL certifications throughout Eastern Pennsylvania have led to upward movement of these wages. Sign-on bonuses in excess of \$5,000 and other incentives have become common recruitment practices.
- By far, CDL training has been the topmost training activity in terms of Individual Training Account (ITA) funding expenditure in recent years and is likely to continue.
- Reflecting a national industry reality, regional employers report very high turnover among CDL drivers – sometimes reaching 50-100% annual turnover. However, a 2014 Berks WDB review of CDL training participants determined that even if new entrants did not stay long in their initial position, participant wage records showed that medium-term earnings met or exceeded expectations. If new CDL entrants did not stay with their initial placement, they consistently are able to find comparable employment within or without the occupation and industry.
- In response to the need for training, the Berks Career & Technology Center (BCTC) has ramped up its' CDL Training Program to abet reducing the demand versus supply gap by adding an English/Spanish Language CDL program that will tap into the significant Hispanic resident population in the Reading MSA. If successful, this and similar programs will provide qualified, licensed CDL Driver candidates to employers and a good family sustaining wage to a demographic that has traditionally experienced barriers to economic upward mobility.

Needs of the Regional Agriculture Food / Production Industry – The Berks WDB has identified *Agriculture* as a “Priority C – Watch Industry”, largely due to its close association with the larger region’s substantial food production and manufacturing sectors (Section 1.1). The WDB is now taking a closer look at local *Food and Beverage Manufacturing* in an effort to understand the current and future employment needs of this very important regional industry. With a combined Location Quotient of 2.04 or twice the percentage of regional to national employment in these industries, sustaining the 57 establishments that employ the 4,252 (Source: EMSI 2015 jobs) occupations in Berks County is a major concern.

Industry Snapshot of Food/Beverage Processing in Reading, PA MSA

NAICS	Industry	Current			Historical				Forecast		
		Four Quarters Ending with 2015Q4			Total Change over the Last 5 Years	Average Annual % Change in Employment 2010Q4-2015Q4			Over the Next 10 Years		
		Employment	Avg. Annual Wages	Location Quotient	Employment	Reading MSA	Pennsylvania	USA	Total Approx Repl Demand	Total Growth Demand	Avg. Annual Growth Percent
311	Food Manufacturing	3,662	\$47,953	1.95	269	1.5%	1.1%	1.0%	886	-285	-0.8%
312	Beverage and Tobacco Product Manufacturing	281	\$33,326	1.02	-142	-7.8%	5.1%	4.1%	70	-2	-0.1%
	Food Processing Occupations	3,943	\$46,909	1.83	127	0.7%	1.4%	1.3%	0	-287	-0.8%

Source: JobsEQ®
Data as of 2015Q4

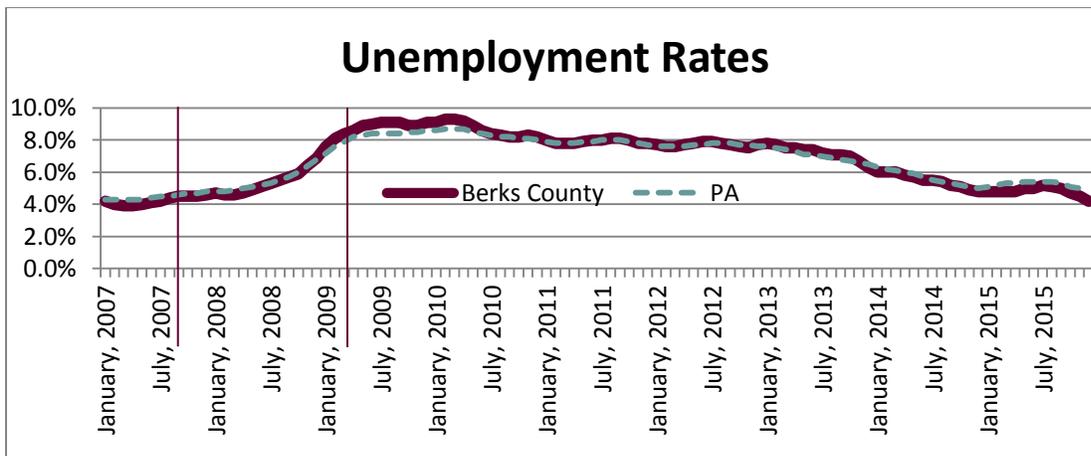
Observations on the Food/Beverage Industry:

- Initial 2016 research into critical occupations such as Industrial Maintenance/Mechanics Technicians for this sector, as in other industry sectors employing these high priority occupations, indicates that the employment numbers appear to be stable. However, preliminary data regarding the supply versus demand for replacement openings and the EMSI and JobsEQ dataset projection of a general downturn in industry employment is troubling.
- On-site employer visits also indicate that training and certifications in food quality control and process improvement may be a common industry need to be addressed through collaborative planning and consortia training.
- Research into these occupations and other industry employment needs is continuing with the ultimate goal of verifying employment datasets through employer surveys and interviews. Once more accurate employment statistics have been validated, recommendations regarding potential skills shortages and targeted solutions to any identified industry talent pool issues can be established with a more informed deliberation.

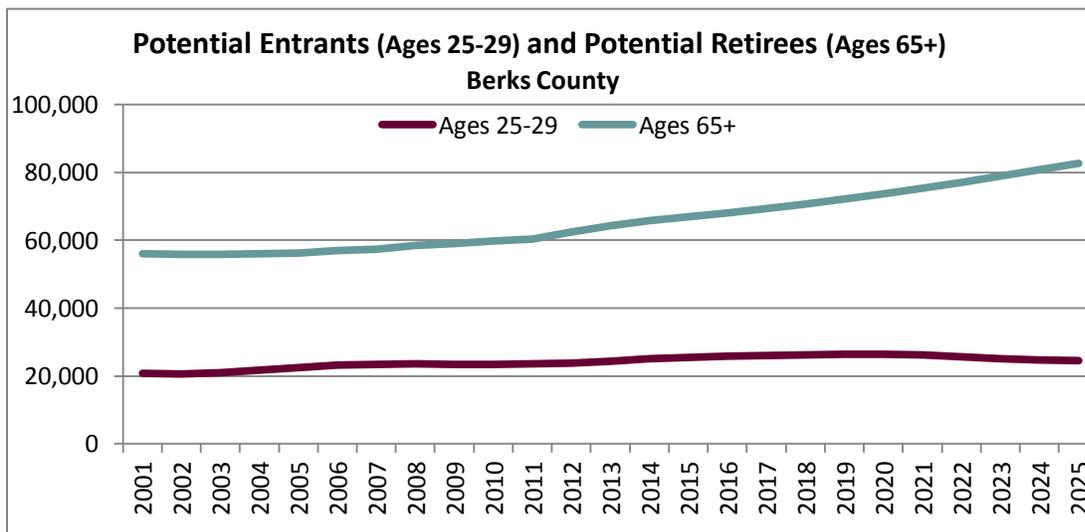
1.3 Provide an analysis of the local workforce, including current labor force employment (and unemployment) data, and information on labor market trends, and the educational and skill levels of the workforce in the region, including individuals with barriers to employment.
[WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(C)] and [proposed 20 CFR 679.560(a)]

As a result of the devastating recession of 2009-2010, the Berks County unemployment rate peaked in March 2010 at 9.3% with 19,600 individuals officially listed as unemployed. Following a long and slow recovery, the Berks County LWDA unemployment rate dropped to 4.1% in January 2016 - the lowest rate since June 2007 and measurably lower than the state (4.6%) and nation as a whole (4.9%). This sustained improvement took place within a steadily growing labor force reaching 213,900 – an increase of over 10,000 resident workers and job-seekers from pre-recession records set in 2007. At the beginning of 2016, employment in the Berks County LWDA reached a record high of 205,100 compared to 194,400 in 2007 – a significant increase of 10,700 employed individuals. The number of unemployed Berks County residents declined to 8,700, a 15% decrease from a year earlier and essentially equal to the 2007 average in a smaller labor force. The region’s estimated “U-6” unemployment/under-employment rate stood at 9.8%. Local job openings continue at historically high levels with January 2016 online job postings reaching 10,100 (less than one unemployed person per online job posting.) Layoff activity in the County remains below historical averages. All of these factors considered together place the Berks County LWDA at or near “functional full-employment” at the beginning of 2016.

As a result of this tightening labor market, private sector average weekly wages reached an all-time seasonally adjusted high of \$864.60 in December 2015, marking a nearly 50% increase over a low of \$582.30 in February 2010.



The most significant change taking place within the Berks County labor market is the aging of the available workforce. As described above in Section 1.1, Berks County is characterized by an older, predominantly native-born white population which has long supplied the region’s skilled talent needs, particularly for good paying middle-skill jobs in healthcare and in manufacturing. Most of this highly-skilled and experienced workforce combines at least a high school diploma with significant knowledge, skills and abilities acquired through decades on the job with local employers. From 2011 – 2025, the “potential retiree” population (ages 65+) is projected to grow by 33% from approximately 60,000 to just over 80,000. As a proportion of the total Berks County population, “potential retirees” will grow from 14.6% to 19.6% - from approximately 1 out of every 7 Berks County residents to nearly 1 out of every 5! Over the same decade and a half, the population of “potential entrants” into the labor force (ages 25-29) is projected to remain essentially flat, growing from 23,639 to 24,480 – a mere 3.5% increase. As a proportion of the overall local population, this important labor-force entering 25-29 year age group will remain at approximately 5.8%



Another significant characteristic of the Berks County labor force is a distinctive education-level profile. 17.2% of the County’s adult population (age 25+) has less than a high school diploma which is significantly higher than Pennsylvania (11.4%) and the U.S (14.1%). 38.4% of Berks County adults have a high school diploma or the equivalent and 15.4% of adults have “some college, no degree”. Therefore, a majority (53.8%) of Berks County adults successfully achieved a high school education but not an Associate’s Degree

or higher. Only 30% of Berks County adults persevered with their formal education to complete an Associate's Degree or higher. This profile may have been a good match for a 20th century economy, but it does not meet the needs of our region's current and future technology-driven workplace.

Residents of the City of Reading in particular are often under-educated. Less than two-thirds of city adult residents have earned a high school diploma, compared to more than 83% of the County as a whole (including Reading) and 85% nationally. The city's large Hispanic adult population has even lower educational attainment - with less than half of Hispanic adults over age 25 having earned a high school diploma or GED. As a result, Reading is home to a growing population of younger, less-skilled and less-educated workers and potential workers.

In March 2016 the O'Pake Institute at Alvernia University issued a timely *Brain Drain or Brain Gain – What's Happening in Berks County* report as part of the *Berks Vital Signs* series funded by the Berks County Community Foundation (BCCF). This report delved deeply into the education levels, migration patterns, and economic circumstance with a focus on the county's working age population and finds:

A. Education Levels

- “The percentage of 18 to 34 year olds in the county with a Bachelor's degree has risen steadily in Berks County but both the percentage and the growth curve lag behind both the state and the country.
- After factoring out the low educational attainment levels in Reading, the remainder of Berks County actually outperforms Pennsylvania and the nation as a whole.
- Both Latinos and White Non-Latinos residing in Reading fare worse in educational achievement than their counterparts in the nearby mid-size cities of Allentown, Lancaster and York.
- African American adults living in Reading are “roughly on par with their counterparts in the other cities in terms of schooling.”

B. Migration and Mobility

- Pennsylvania's statewide population has declined since 1980, but Berks County has experienced modest population growth during the same time period.
- Some of the region's increase over the last three decades is due to “normal replacement”, but much of the growth has resulted from positive net migration.
- In recent years, Berks County has benefited from a net influx of young adults (ages 25-34) “probably related to employment”.
- The County has experienced significant net in-migration from Southeastern Pennsylvania, particularly Montgomery County.
- There has also been “a significant migration of those with lower educational attainment to the Reading area from out-of-state and out of the country”
- The region is experiencing some out-migration of retirees.

C. Young Adult Employment and Poverty

- “Economic downturns in 1999-2001 and 2007-2009 adversely impacted job opportunities for young adults, more significantly in Berks County than in either the state or country as a whole.”
 - In 1990, over three-quarters of Berks County's young adults were employed – well above state and national averages.

- From 2009-2013 on average, just two-thirds of Berks County’s young adults were employed, only slightly higher than the state and national averages.
- Since 2002, the percentage of the County’s young adults (age 18-34) still living at home has increased from 24.3% to 33.1%. By 2013, “nearly 10,000 more young adults were living with their parents than had been the case a decade earlier.”
- Over the same time period, the percentage of the region’s young adults living in poverty rose from approximately 13% to nearly 20% (approximately 15,000 individuals). This disturbing trend saw Berks County’s young adult poverty rate rise from well-below to essentially equal to state and national averages.

Other Barriers to Employment

Besides the growing challenges of serious pockets of poverty and low-levels of education achievement, Berks County is home to many individuals with other significant barriers to employment. For example, over 17,000 residents speak English “less than very well” – a major barrier to gainful employment and to the education and training programs necessary to prepare for gainful employment.

Berks County is home to 48,990 individuals (age 16 and over) with a disability of which only 22.4% are currently employed. That leaves 38,000 individuals with disabilities and over age 16 not in the workforce. 22.2% of adult individuals with disabilities live below the poverty line - twice the rate of those with no disability.

Berks County is home to a large population of individuals with involvement in the criminal justice system and approximately 75% of all Berks County Jail inmates are unemployed upon release. The Berks County Adult Probation and Parole Office supervises approximately 7,600 individuals at any given time and there were over 1,100 individuals released from a State Correctional Facility to Berks County in 2014.

1.4 Provide an analysis and description of workforce development activities, including type and availability of education, training and employment activities. Include analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of such services, and the capacity to provide such services, in order to address the education and skill needs of the workforce and the employment needs of employers in the region.

[WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(D)] and [proposed 20 CFR 679.560(a)]

Due to ongoing forward-thinking and progressive business, educational and political leadership, Berks County is home to possibly the most comprehensive and accessible career and technical training and education (CTE) infrastructure of any region in the Commonwealth. With the encouragement and guidance of the Berks County WDB and fellow RTP partners, over the past five years **Reading Area Community College (RACC)** reached back to the County’s two excellent high school career and technology centers - **Berks Career and Technology Center (BCTC)** and **Reading Muhlenberg Career and Technology Center (RMCTC)** - to build comprehensive Technical Academy career pathways and the associated articulation agreements for high school CTE students to earn college credit for high-end technical coursework. In effect, the Technical Academy serves as an *honors program* for qualified CTC students, allowing them to acquire up to 27 college credits at no cost prior to high school graduation. Such focused and talented students are

highly sought after by local employers for paid internships during the school year, while on summer break and again upon high school graduation. Once hired, Technical Academy graduates may receive financial support from their employers while they complete their Associate's degree programs at RACC. RACC has been particularly effective in assisting qualifying students to access federal Pell grants to cover tuition costs. If the students wish to continue their technical training and education beyond RACC, they may do so at aligned 4-year institutions (e.g. **Penn State – Berks**) through additional articulation agreements that are part of the Technical Academy pathway.

While many regions in the state allowed advanced manufacturing and similar programs at their secondary Career and Technical Education Centers (CTCs) to wither or close, Berks' local leadership's commitment to excellence in such crucial programs remained rock-steady. As a result, **Berks Career and Technology Center (BCTC) and Reading Muhlenberg Career and Technology Center (RMCTC)** provide state of the industry facilities, equipment and instructors to all high school students in Berks County who are interested and qualified for high-demand careers in Mechatronics, precision machining, welding, health care technology, information technology, etc. BCTC operates two campuses, one at the east end of the County and one at the west end of the County. RMCTC is located at the center of the County, adjacent to the City of Reading and neighboring Muhlenberg Township where the school has developed a unique core competence in meeting the needs of the rapidly-expanding (and mostly young) Hispanic population of both municipalities. BCTC and RMCTC also provide excellent adult education and training programs and are often the providers of choice for displaced workers looking to retool for re-entry into the local job market.

Reading Area Community College (RACC) is geographically well-positioned at the center of the County (95% of RACC enrollees are County residents) and within the City of Reading (nearly 40% of enrollees are City residents) to serve the region's evolving future workforce. In fact, RACC is the only institution of higher education in the Commonwealth to be designated by the federal government as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) with 32% of the student body self-identifying as Hispanic.

RACC is also programmatically well-positioned to meet the education and workforce development needs of key regional industry sectors and employers. Recognizing that 21st Century careers require significant training and education beyond high school, local employers worked with and donated to Reading Area Community College (RACC) to launch the **Schmidt Training and Technology Center (RACC-STTC)** in 2006. In less than 10 years, RACC-STTC has become widely-acknowledged as the best advanced manufacturing training facility in the Commonwealth, with expanding programs (both *for credit* and *non-credit*) serving the needs of employers and students/job-seekers alike.

In addition to its world-class manufacturing programs, RACC offers a number of programs to meet the needs of Berks County's large and growing healthcare industry. For-credit programs include Associate degrees in Nursing, Medical Laboratory Technology, Respiratory Care and Electronic Health Records Technology as well as a clinical-based Licensed Practical Nursing (LPN) program. Seven additional non-credit career training programs are offered including Certified Nurse Aid (CNA), Phlebotomy with EKG Training, and Dental Assistant.

RACC is the Title II education coordinator for the Berks County region and partners with other adult education providers such as the **Literacy Council of Greater Reading-Berks** to meet the extraordinary needs for GED and ESL (English as a Second Language) in Reading and the surrounding municipalities. RACC's President and the college's Chief Information Office both serve on the Berks County WDB.

In keeping with Berks County's history of a local economy oriented to middle-skill occupations, Berks County is not home to a major research university. For some regions, this would be seen as a major deficiency but our employers know this to be a competitive advantage to be located in a region that can produce educated job-seekers with skills that better match their actual needs. For example, **Penn State – Berks** is a centrally located and thriving institution with a long tradition of providing high quality education relevant to the needs of local employers. Originally founded by local textile industrialists in 1933 as the Wyomissing Polytechnic Institute, the school became part of the Penn State system in 1958. Along with its growth as a full-scale academic institution to include resident student housing and the conferring of four-year degrees, Penn State – Berks continues to enroll large numbers of traditional and working adult students in rigorous degree programs (e.g. Electro-Mechanical Engineering Technology) geared toward the needs of Berks' strong regional industry sectors of advanced manufacturing and healthcare. Berks County is fortunate to also be home to three other colleges – **Kutztown University, Albright College, and Alvernia University** – each with robust ties to local industry, strong programs, and expanding articulation agreements to meet those needs.

The Reading Hospital School of Health Sciences offers a highly-regarded Registered Nursing program which is accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) and approved by the Pennsylvania State Board of Nursing. The school also offers accredited programs for many other health care occupations in association with the Reading Health System, the region's largest employer. In 2015, Berks County's St. Joseph's Regional Health System joined the Penn State Health system and became Penn State Health St. Joseph. This merger is anticipated to bring even more opportunities for our local workforce to access training and education programs to grow along with this steadily expanding industry sector. Alvernia University has a popular BSN – Nursing program while Penn State-Berks and RACC offer LPN-Nursing certifications.

The District Administrator for the **Berks-Schuylkill District Office of Pennsylvania's Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)** is a member of the Berks County Workforce Development Board and OVR is a partner in the PA CareerLink Berks County. Beginning in 2015, local OVR staff members have been particularly active with the Berks County WDB's Youth Committee and local education providers to implement OVR's new transition policy in reaching out to youth with disabilities and their families beginning at age fourteen (14) and at least two (2) years before graduation. OVR is now actively working with the Board's contractor *Keystone Area Goodwill* in planning the annual Summer Youth Employment Program for Students with Disabilities for 2016. As detailed in the State's WIOA Plan, OVR entered into a first in the state Interagency Agreement with the Berks Career and Technology Center (BCTC) effective in 2014 *to provide school-to-work transition services to OVR eligible youth with disabilities who are enrolled in approved training programs at the BCTC and attend one of the 16 public school districts within Berks County associated with BCTC.*

The Berks WDB Youth Committee collaborates closely with OVR and with the **Berks County Transition Coordinating Council (BCTCC)**, a highly successful public-private regional partnership serving the region's

population with significant barriers to employment. BCTCC brings together individuals with disabilities, educators, employers and service providers with the mission of assisting students with disabilities and their families' transition from secondary school to the post-secondary school world including post-secondary education and employment. BCTCC is a unique resource focused exclusively on students attending the 18 school districts located within Berks County.

The **Berks County Intermediate Unit (BCIU)** coordinates additional educational services for Berks County's eighteen public school services within Berks County and is also represented on the Berks County WD Board as well as the Board's Youth Committee. The **Berks Business Education Coalition (BBEC)** is chaired by a local business leader and the BBEC's membership includes the County's five colleges and the eighteen public school districts as well as business leaders. The BBEC is an active partner with the Berks County WD Board on programs to facilitate employer-educator collaboration and to provide local students with valuable work-based learning opportunities throughout the County. The BBEC's Executive Director is a member of the Board's Youth Committee. Both the BCIU and the BBEC partner with the Berks County WDB and our 18 local school districts to promote career awareness and preparation programs including *Project Lead the Way*, STEM Academies, STEM competitions, and employer engagements geared to the many career opportunities available within the region.

Berks County is also home to a comprehensive network of community-based organizations (CBOs) that cooperate with the local workforce development board to leverage private and public funding to assist job-seekers and their families reach economic prosperity. Many of these service providers receive financial support and coordinate efforts through the **United Way of Berks County** whose Executive Director serves on the Berks County WDB. Leaders from a number of workforce-focused CBOs also have been appointed to the Berks County WDB, including **Olivet Boys and Girls Clubs, Opportunity House and United Community Services (UCS) for Working Families**. Olivet runs highly successful after school and summer programs to help disadvantaged youth, primarily but not exclusively with the City of Reading, discover and achieve their career and educational goals. Opportunity House is located in the City of Reading and has been recognized for its innovative "green" recycling programs to provide jobs to local residents with significant barriers to employment while raising revenue by providing important services to the community. Located within the City of Reading and founded by the United Labor Council of Reading and Berks County, UCS has been awarded ongoing and highly-competitive federal YouthBuild grants to provide out of school youth with industry training and GED preparation. UCS was also recently awarded a federal AmeriCorps grant in coordination with its YouthBuild program.

Weaknesses in the local workforce development System. The most significant weaknesses in Berks County workforce development programs result from two primary systemic factors: (1) a lack of sufficient, reliable and flexible federal and state public funding and (2) often conflicting statutory and regulatory requirements to balance the competing needs and capacities of two very different customer types – (a) employers and (b) job-seekers, particularly those with barriers to employment.

1. **Weaknesses due to funding challenges.** With the possible exception of special Congressional actions such as the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009* in response to extreme circumstances, the local public workforce system historically receives funding well below what is

required to help all eligible job-seekers reach the level of qualifications required by employers with family sustaining jobs. As a result of this mismatch of needs between employers and available job-seekers, the Berks WDB is tasked with setting priorities for use of available funds. What makes this disconnection even more challenging to close is that federal funding comes to the WDB in various programmatic streams, each with its own restrictions. As a result, it is not uncommon for the Board to have funding for some programs with little local need while other programs have great local need and little available funding.

Annual core WIOA Title I federal funding is allocated to local workforce development boards via a somewhat complex formula that makes it nearly impossible for the Berks WDB to anticipate funding for the new program year (beginning July 1) prior to an annual allocation notice generally received only 8-10 weeks before the end of the current program year. For example, in early May 2015 the Berks County WDB learned that it would receive \$431,354 less for its three core WIOA Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth) in PY2015 than it received in PY 2014 – a 14.4% reduction. This led to significant staff cuts and other cost cutting measures being implemented at the WDB and at our PA CareerLink® Berks County one-stop American Job Center (AJC).

While the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania typically appropriates little annual funding for workforce development programs, the historic 9-month state budget impasse which began on July 1, 2015 led to the stoppage of most workforce development federal pass-through funding well into PY 2015. As a result, local Berks County WDB partners were delayed payments for contracted services. The local delivery system did not shut down, but the uncertainty driven by the budget impasse damaged our ability to reliably deliver anything beyond the most basic services to job-seekers and employers alike. In particular, activities sponsored by the Berks WDB's well-regarded Advanced Manufacturing Industry Partnership (IP) slowed to a crawl at a time when the training needs of participating employers grew increasingly acute.

- 2. Weaknesses due to conflicting statutory, regulatory and customer requirements.** The initial implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014 has led to positive steps forward for the public workforce system in many ways. However, WIOA does not resolve many of the conflicting statutory and regulatory requirements that require local WDBs to constantly balance the sometimes competing needs and capacities of two very different customer types. Employers always seek and need the best talent available, but local WDBs are often required by regulation and policy to fund programs and services designed to “place” job-seekers, particularly those with barriers to employment. As a result, local employers often have difficulty viewing the public workforce system as a demand-driven system focused on their needs rather than one overly-focused on the needs of job-seeker customers. Given this reality, the Berks County WDB has a good track record of balancing these sometimes contradictory priorities and keeping local employers engaged in the process.

A local non-systemic Berks County WDB weakness – working with ex-offenders. In early 2015, the Berks County's WDB identified an opportunity for improvement in working with the area's large ex-offender population. As a result, Berks County WDB staff reached out to community leaders experienced in working with this challenging population as well as to local employers with success in hiring individuals with this

particularly onerous barrier to employment. In July 2015, we included representatives of three Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) with specialized expertise in working with ex-offenders to join the newly-constituted Berks County WDB to help address this weakness. As a result, in March 2016 we were awarded a state CBO grant to expand and coordinate proven best practices among these partners.

Section 2: Strategic Vision and Goals

Section 2 responses will require input from members of the local workforce development board and other local stakeholders. Please provide a separate response for each of the elements listed below.

2.1 Describe local board's strategic vision and goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce (including youth and individuals with barriers to employment). Include goals relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) in order to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(E)]

The Berks County Workforce Development Board (Berks County WDB) has a well-established reputation for offering effective services and programs and for continuously improving the quality of services and programs. In response to the needs of local employers and job-seekers and in alignment with new WIOA requirements, the Berks County WDB is actively developing implementation and improvement strategies for Program Years 2016 – 2020. Areas of focus to *promote economic growth and economic self-sufficiency* include:

A. Meeting the Needs of Employers / The Retirements of Baby Boomers

From 2010-2014, much of the work of the Berks County WDB focused on the unique needs of unemployed and under-unemployed workers during a time of high unemployment and general labor surpluses. The extraordinary needs and numbers of displaced workers, long-term unemployed individuals, struggling veterans and individuals with barriers to employment were generally well-met in Berks County. However, 2015-2016 saw a dramatic shift to a general labor shortage in our local region and the priorities and services of the Berks County WDB have shifted accordingly.

The growing shortage of qualified candidates for critical and “opportunity” occupations is especially acute and local employers need help. While some of the current skills shortage results from the long, steady cyclical recovery from the Great Recession of 2009-2010, an underlying wave of baby-boomer retirements will drive continuing shortages even if regional economic growth stalls. Our employers have never seen anything like this in the past and the Berks County WDB will play a crucial role in continuing to develop and implement long-term solutions along with our Business Services Team (BST) and local partners.

A key priority will be to address the region's under-employment problem as measured by Berks County's estimated U-6 rate which stood at 9.8 % in February 2016. In order to do so, emphasis will be placed on assisting local employers with good jobs in key industries further develop the skills of their incumbent workers. A major challenge will be to prioritize sources of funding beyond the state Industry Partnership and WEDnetPA funding which has been too little and too unreliable from budget year to budget year for long-term planning and continuous improvement. Beginning in

PY2016, the Board will seek to take advantage of the permissible use of adult and dislocated worker funds allocated to the Board for training activities associated with incumbent workers. This focus on incumbent worker training will be especially attractive to small and medium-size employers with similar needs and scarce training resources. The strategy will help proven, trained incumbents develop and grow with the companies and allow the hiring of less-skilled new hires into these attractive career pathways. Many of these new hires will need assistance from other WDB-sponsored programs (e.g. OJTs) in order to take advantage of these proven career opportunities.

B. Local Industry Sector Priorities and Strategies

In June 2015, the Berks WDB approved one of Pennsylvania's clearest and best-researched local industry sector priorities (See Section 1.1). During a time of continuing constraints on available resources, these clearly established priorities guide the Board and staff in making sure that local employers with the attractive career paths get connected with the best available talent. With the manufacturing sector clearly identified as the Berks region's singular *Priority A – Driver Sector*, we will continue to work with our local economic development partners to expand and promote **Annual Berks County Manufacturing Day** events and prioritize advanced manufacturing pipeline development efforts as described above. The Berks County WDB's **Advanced Manufacturing Industry Partnership (IP)** will remain our flagship IP, but planning is already underway with community-based partners to launch a **Community-Based Homecare and Healthcare Industry Partnership** in PY2016 in keeping with the status of Healthcare and Social Assistance as the Berks County WDBs' single *Priority B – Sustaining Sector*. These and other local industry sectors will continue to be evaluated annually by the Board to ensure that federal and state workforce funds are most effectively spent where they can have the greatest long-term impact for employers and job-seekers alike.

C. Leading Initiatives for Disconnected and Under-employed Young Adults

The Youth Committee of the Berks WDB has identified a unique and crucial role for the Board as the key convener of local partners with the mission and capacity to meet the extensive needs of the County's Disconnected and Under-employed Young Adults and Out of School Youth (OSY). As a result, the Berks WDB has asked the County of Berks Purchasing Department to prepare and release a request for proposals (RFP) to identify organizations with the capacity to effectively implement local Title I Youth Programs focused on Out of School Youth (OSY) beginning at the end of the current program year (PY2015). The successful bidder(s) will be expected to coordinate their efforts with all other local partners involved in this challenging work.

The WDB recognizes that we currently lack comprehensive and current information regarding the size and critical characteristics of this elusive population that is difficult to find, to keep engaged and to stay connected with following program participation. In order to proceed with the best information available, the WDB will prepare and release a separate RFP seeking a contractor to research and profile disconnected and under-employed young adults. The resulting report will be presented to the Board by the end of 2016 and is expected to inform priorities and programs going forward.

D. Expanding and Sustaining Summer Youth Employment Programs for In School Youth (ISY)

While Title I Youth funding will largely be dedicated to OSY programs as appropriately required by WIOA, a major priority of the Berks WDB will be to sustain the gains of our successful In School

Youth (ISY) initiatives focused on Summer Youth Employment Programs (SYEPs). As recommended by the Youth Committee, Berks WDB staff is actively identifying non-Title I funding to expand our programs this summer (2016) to meet the needs of even more economically-disadvantaged youth. As mentioned previously, our local OVR office is now having great success in working directly with one of the Board's summer youth contractors *Goodwill Keystone Area* to identify ISY with special needs/disabilities who can be funded for summer jobs under OVR's new transition policy. Additional funding for youth who can participate without qualifying based on family income will be an important priority.

Relation of Goals to Negotiated Performance Measures. The Berks County WDB is widely recognized for sustained competence in developing and implementing strong processes to insure the proper oversight of its publicly-funded programs and has a proven track record of meeting annual negotiated performance measures. The Berks WIB (predecessor to the Berks WDB) met or exceeded all nine measures last year (PY2014) and never missed achieving the same negotiated common performance standard in consecutive years. In its first year in existence (PY2015), the Berks WDB is on track to once again meet or exceed all nine negotiated measures.

In the preparation of this one-year transitional local plan, many questions remain unanswered regarding how performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. Perhaps most importantly, as of mid-April 2016, the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) had not released final regulations describing the new measures included under WIOA nor specifics regarding any changes to the historic performance measures. At the same time, the state has not completed its negotiation with USDOL related to the state-level measures for PY2016. A lack of baseline historic data for the new metrics is another challenge. Finally, the state has not yet issued clear guidance as to how the new WIOA regional performance measures will be negotiated with the state's planning region, how this new process will influence how local measures are negotiated within the region, and how local measures are negotiated between the locals and the state. With all of this uncertainty, it is not yet possible to tie the Berks County WDB's goals and priorities listed above to the mandated WIOA performance measures with any specificity.

Acknowledging the existing regulatory reality as the entire system transitions to full implementation of WIOA, the Berks WDB is confident that the strategic priorities and goals included in this transitional plan are the right ones for local employers and job-seekers alike. In particular, the priority given to meeting the challenges local employers face with the wave of experienced "baby-boomer" worker retirements now underway will position the WDB to meet any new metrics designed to determine the WDB's *effectiveness in serving employers*. In particular, the emphasis that the Berks WDB will place on WIOA's permissible use of adult and dislocated worker funds allocated to the Board for training activities associated with incumbent workers will be especially attractive to small and medium-size employers with similar needs and scarce training resources. This will facilitate a closer and more consistent engagement with these employers, thereby allowing the WDB to understand and meet their recruitment and training needs. This strategy will help proven, trained incumbents develop and grow with the companies and allow the hiring of less-skilled new hires into these attractive career pathways. As a result, the WDB's performance will be enhanced against the more traditional employment, retention and earning metrics for eligible Adult, Dislocated and Youth job-seekers.

The Berks WDB's commitment to continuing our proven industry sector priorities and strategies will further support attainment of negotiated measures. In particular, this commitment will help the Berks WDB understand which *key credentials* are valued by industry and which credentials are not. At the same time, the WDB will continue to develop a broader expertise in understanding and *measuring skill gains* attained through a variety of training strategies, programs and partnerships.

The Berks WDB recognizes that perhaps its biggest challenge will be building strong programs and partnerships to help the region's disconnected young adults and under-employed young adults get sustainable career pathways to family-sustaining occupations with local employers. As mentioned above, experience has proven that this elusive population is difficult to find, to keep engaged and to stay connected with following program participation. As result, the Berks WDB determination to establish a leadership role within the region is essential to achieving negotiated Youth performance measures in all six specified areas of measurement.

Finally, a candid look as the root causes of the mismatch between the needs of current employers and the skills and qualifications of the available workforce leads the Berks WDB to the inescapable conclusion that too many Berks County residents, while they were still in our elementary and secondary school systems, did not receive the education, workplace skills and career knowledge that they need to succeed in our rapidly-changing economy. This is a national, state and local problem, but we know that many other developed countries do a better job in this area – particularly in providing in-school youth (ISY) with high quality work-based learning opportunities. By expanding and sustaining local summer youth employment programs (SYEPs), the Berks County WDB will help create the conditions for our current Youth (ISY) and future Adult and Dislocated Worker job seekers to more easily navigate the inevitable labor force disruptions they will encounter and to *find and maintain* gainful employment leading to *family-sustaining earnings*. This will promote wide-spread *economic self-sufficiency in accordance with WIOA 116(b) (2) (A)*. As a result, these individuals will also more likely become life-long learners who acquire *industry-recognized credentials* and are able to demonstrate *measurable skill gains* throughout their working careers. A local workforce with such qualities will serve as a competitive advantage for employers seeking to expand in or relocate to Berks County, the foundation of economic growth as targeted by the performance measures described in WIOA 116(b)(2)(A) .

2.2 Describe how the local board's vision and goals align with and/or supports the governor's vision and goals for the commonwealth's workforce development system. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(E)]

(See Appendix C: *Transitional Planning References and Resources*)

For the most part, the Berks County WD Board's vision and goals align well with the governor's visions and five broad goals for the Commonwealth's workforce development system.

- **Establishment of Career Pathways** – The Berks WDB supports the development of career pathways, but cautions that career pathways are best nurtured within a well-established industry sector strategy as developed and promoted by the Berks WDB. In our experience, career pathways independent of a robust local industry sector too often lead to occupational dead ends for job-seekers and unfilled positions for employers. This is especially detrimental for job-seekers with barriers to employment who have much less room for recovery from ill-advised training programs. The Berks WDB's focus on the needs of employers, strong sector strategies and sustained summer-employment programs for in-school youth all emphasize the mutual benefits of career pathways leading to high-priority occupations within expanding industry sectors.

- **Expanding the Pipeline of Workers for Targeted Industry Sectors** – There is nearly 100% alignment from the governor’s goal and the Berks WDB emphasis on Local Sector Strategies and Priorities described above in Section 2.1.
- **Increasing Opportunities for Youth to Participate in Work-Based Learning** - Here again, there is significant alignment between the governor’s goal and the Berks County WDB’s priority for the expansion and sustaining of Summer Youth Employment Programs for In-School Youth (ISY). We also expect to see an increased local emphasis on work-based training and pre-apprenticeship programs for disconnected and under-employed young adults. However, local employers outside of the construction sector remain reluctant to adopt the registered apprenticeship models actively promoted by the State Plan. While not actively promoting registered apprenticeships in the near term before employers are ready to adopt the model, the Berks WDB understands the proven value of apprenticeships and will seek to promote adoption over time.
- **Engaging Employers Directly to Ensure Closing of the Skills Gap.** Engagement of employers, particularly small to medium-size employers in key sectors like manufacturing is best accomplished at that local level through frequent and sustained personal contacts. The two priorities of the Berks County WDB that focus on supporting the needs of employers through funding incumbent worker training as authorized by WIOA and our emphasis on sector strategies support this goal. In addition, many Berks County employers are fully engaged with the Berks Business Education Coalition (BBEC), the Greater Reading Chamber of Commerce & Industry (GRCCI) and the Greater Reading Economic Partnership (GREP) to support career awareness and growing and sustaining summer youth employment programs.
- **Strengthened Data Sharing to Understand Outcomes** – This is less of a priority at the local level, but the Berks WDB looks forward to working with state initiatives in this area.

2.3 Note – the state-provided template omits section 2.3 for the local transitional plan.

2.4 Describe how the local board’s goals relate to the achievement of federal performance accountability measures. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(E)]

The Berks County Workforce Development Board (WDB) goals listed in section 2.1 are aligned with the broad WIOA goals of placement in employment or education/training, credential attainment, retention in employment/education/training, and effectiveness in servicing employers.

During the first year of WIOA implementation the WDB began to transition the year-round youth program to serve primarily out-of-school youth, in alignment with WIOA emphasis on serving this group. Beginning in program year 2016 the WDB will exclusively use WIOA youth funding to serve out-of-school youth through programs that offer GED and access to post-secondary education and training through individual training accounts, work-based learning opportunities tied to employer needs, and follow-up services that engage youth with continued supportive services and practical training (budgeting, etc.) that are aimed at ensuring their continued success after program exit.

Focusing on the manufacturing and healthcare sectors is meant to ensure that job-seeker customers of the PA CareerLink® Berks County are provided access to and information concerning the most promising jobs in the county, while benefiting employer customers through recruitment efforts targeted towards job-seekers meeting their skill requirements. This focus is translated at the PA CareerLink® Berks County to services such as individualized job development for adult and dislocated workers and the extensive use of work-based training to bring the job seeker and employer together. This two pronged approach is meant to increase the likelihood of employment and retention for the job seeker while meeting the hiring needs of the employer.

Section 3: Local Area Partnerships and Investment Strategies

Many of the responses in this section, such as targeted sector strategies, should be based on strategic discussions with the local board and partners. Please provide a separate response for each of the elements listed below.

- 3.1 Taking into account the analysis described in Appendix B - Section 1, describe the local board's strategy to work with the entities that carry out the core programs to align resources available to the local area, in order to achieve the strategic vision and goals described in element 2.1. This analysis should include:
- A. A descriptive overview of the local workforce development system; include key stakeholders and entities associated with administrative and programmatic/service delivery functions. Examples include elected officials, advocacy groups, local workforce development board and committee structure, fiscal agent, operator(s), required program partners, and major contractors providing Adult/Dislocated Worker/Youth program elements. Describe respective roles and functional relationships to one another;
 - B. A list of all local area PA CareerLink® centers; include address, phone numbers, and hours of operation; and
 - C. An attached organization chart that depicts a clear separation of duties between the local board and programmatic/service delivery entities. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(F)]

A. Local Workforce Development System

The Berks County Workforce Development Board (WDB) was appointed effective July 1, 2015 by the Berks County Board of Commissioners. The Board continues the work begun in 1999 by its predecessor organization the Berks County Workforce Investment Board (WIB). Federal funding under the *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014* provides most of the financial support for Board activities and programs.

The purpose of the Berks County Workforce Development Board is to identify the long-term, strategic workforce development needs of the community; propose strategies to meet those needs; set priorities; build partnerships to align resources in support of those strategies; test specific initiatives to advance those ends; and measure and evaluate results. We support the development and maintenance of a skilled and competitive workforce in alignment with the broader economic development efforts to attract, retain and grow business in Berks County.

Berks County WD Board members are unpaid members of the local community. By federal law and state policy, representatives of the local business community must constitute a majority of the Board's membership. Local labor organizations, community-based organizations, economic and community development entities and educational institutions are also represented on the Board. The Board normally holds public meetings once each calendar quarter and members also serve on Committees which meet regularly. Board Committees may also include non-Board members with particular workforce development experience and expertise.

The Board designates the operator(s) and oversees the operation of the PA CareerLink® Berks County (one stop delivery system).

Berks County is a single-county Workforce Development Area. The Chief Elected Official is the elected Chair of the Berks County Board of Commissioners, a body consisting of three Commissioners, elected for four-year terms as specified by the Third Class County code. The Berks County Board of Commissioners has

entered into a partnership with the WDB for the planning and governance of workforce activities authorized under WIOA with respective roles and responsibilities delineated in the partnership agreement effective October 1, 2014. This agreement is currently under review and will be updated to include WIOA requirements for PY2016. In general the WDB is responsible for the administration of these activities and acts as a convener and facilitator for broader workforce issues in the county and collaborates with neighboring boards on issues of importance that cross county borders or have mutual benefit to their respective workforces.

Berks County WDB staff are County of Berks employees reporting to the Chief Operating Officer/Director of Workforce Development, who in turn reports to the full WDB and administratively to the County's Chief Operating Officer. Staff assist the board in the development of its strategic vision and plans and manages the implementation of board initiatives; develop and facilitate community partnerships which advance the goals of the board; maintain relationships with Federal, Commonwealth, and other funding sources; and assures the flow of information to assist the board in oversight and decision-making processes.

The County has elected not to designate a Fiscal Agent for funds received under WIOA.

The Board is composed of the required mix of leaders from business, labor, education, community based organizations, and economic development entities as defined in WIOA and subsequent Federal and Commonwealth guidance. The Board meets quarterly to approve policy and conduct other high-level functions. The "heavy-lifting" work of the board is conducted in the committees of the board:

- *Executive Committee* which has responsibility, directly or through delegation to the Chief Operating Officer, for setting Board operating procedures and Board management issues; making recommendations to the Chief Elected Official on Board membership; tracking, through the Committee structure as appropriate, implementation of the Board's plans; maintenance of required working relationships with the Chief Elected Official, State and Federal authorities, and the Pennsylvania Workforce Development Association; setting broad policy direction for the Board; coordinating the work of the various committees; and Performance Appraisal of the Chief Operating Officer.
- *Fiscal Committee* reviews budgets for the broad allocation and distribution of funds and make recommendations to the full Board, as well as identifying and obtaining additional and/or more flexible funding to advance the Board's priorities.
- *Policy, Planning and Priorities Committee* has primary responsibility for working with Board staff to develop strategic plans for review and approval by the full Board. In particular, the Committee will develop and periodically review the Board's local plan(s) to ensure alignment with federal guidelines under WIOA, state policy and the Board's priorities. The Committee will provide input into other required plans, including WIOA regional plans.

The Committee conducts analysis of the current state of the local labor market: identifies and analyzes gaps; recommends priorities and strategies for Board action and support; and identifies opportunities for future priorities and strategies in need of further exploration. The Committee regularly reviews and updates the Board's industry sector strategies and priorities and makes recommendations for approval by the Board. The Committee has the principal responsibility for guiding and tracking implementation of the Board's plans, including development and maintenance of alliances, partnership and key working relationships – particularly those leading to regional planning efforts.

The Committee coordinates closely with the Board's Youth Committee (which has similar related planning responsibilities for youth programs overseen by the Board) and incorporates input from the Youth Committee into the overall planning process. The Committee assists in the development of local

and regional economic development, community development and education and literacy plans as appropriate.

The Committee develops and reviews general Board policies, including the Board's By-Laws and governance agreements as required.

Beginning in program year 2016 a working group will be devoted to reviewing the impact of Board activities on individuals with disabilities and the possible expansion to a regular standing committee if it makes strategic sense to do so.

- *CareerLink Oversight Committee* has primary responsibility for discharging the Board's responsibilities toward the "one-stop" system. These include making recommendations to the Board on:
 - the selection and retention of the One-Stop Operator; the approval of the Operator Agreement between the Board and the One-Stop Operator; the approval of the Partner Agreement between the Board and the One-Stop Partner organizations; and any major modifications to these agreements; and
 - the approval of the PA CareerLink® Berks County Business Plan submitted by the One-Stop Operator and any major modifications to the plan; and
 - the selection and retention of the Business Services subcontractor; and
 - the selection and retention of the Employment Advancement and Retention Network (EARN) subcontractor; and
 - policies integral to CareerLink Operations as appropriate (e.g. On-the-Job Training, Priority of Service policies, etc.)

This Committee regularly reviews usage and performance of the PA CareerLink® Berks County system through performance information, meetings and consultation with the One-Stop Operator management, and monitoring by Board staff. Through this process the committee may, from time to time, make recommendations to the One-Stop Operator on changes or improvements.

- The *Youth Committee* assists in the development of those portions of the Board's plan which pertain to youth and young adults; recommends to the Board priorities for the expenditure of Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act youth funding; recommends selection of youth and young adult service providers; and provides coordination and oversight of youth and young adult workforce development activities. In addition, the Youth Committee serves as a convening and coordinating body for larger community partnerships for youth and young adult workforce development.
- The *Training and Industry Partnership Committee* is charged with understanding employer training needs, particularly relative to key regional industry sectors and with making recommendations to the Board to meet those needs. This includes oversight of any Industry Partnerships (IPs) in which the Board may be engaged, particularly as they relate to incumbent worker training activities and funding. In addition, this Committee will review progress on performance on local and regional grants related to industry training needs and priorities. This group will assist with the development of regional sector-based training strategies to include career pathways and the identification of high priority occupations.

The Committee may also make recommendations to the Board regarding training provider qualifications or significant gaps in training capacity. The Committee will make recommendations regarding Board training policies in coordination with the CareerLink Oversight Committee as appropriate. The Committee may also be asked to review training vendor performance.

The current operator of the PA CareerLink® Berks County is a consortium composed of the PA Department of Labor and Industry, acting through its operational entity the Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations (BWPO), the County of Berks, and the PA Department of Human Services, acting through its operational entity the Berks County Assistance Office (CAO).

Funding sources represented by the members of the One Stop Operator Consortium include:

- BWPO - Wagner-Peyser, Veterans Employment Services, Trade Act
- County of Berks - WIOA Title I, TANF-EARN, TANF Youth Development, Industry Partnerships
- CAO – Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

The current major contractors of services in the PA CareerLink® Berks County are:

- Educational Data Systems, Inc. (EDSI): for EARN and Business Services
- ResCare: for Year-Round Youth Program and the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP)
- Goodwill Keystone Area for Summer Work Employment and Assessment Program (SWEAP) for high school students with disabilities.

WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker services are primarily provided by County staff assigned to the PA CareerLink Berks County.

A “team” structure has been developed around specific functions offered at the PA CareerLink® Berks County (business services, youth, etc.) all functionally supervised by the CareerLink Administrator who in turn is supervised by the Regional District Administrator (who is also the Commonwealth of PA’s Wagner-Peyser representative to the Berks County WDB).

The role of the Operator includes:

- Identifying and communicating to all partners and staff the vision, mission and values of the PA CareerLink Berks County.
- Assisting all partners to achieve the levels of performance expected of them by their funding sources.
- Providing all partners and staff with all information and communications needed for their optimal performance.
- Staff development.
- Providing guidance and oversight to the PA CareerLink® Berks County Administrator.

The WDB will provide to the operator the following:

- Information and guidance on the Strategic Plan and priorities for the area.
- Labor market and industry cluster information, especially on targeted industry clusters of interest to the WDB and High Priority Occupations.
- Information on Industry Partnerships, Incumbent Worker Grants and other discretionary and/or competitive funds obtained and activities conducted with those funds.
- Reports on oversight monitoring and evaluation of PA CareerLink® Berks County activities.
- Updates on WDB policies and initiatives.
- Additional funds for advertising and staff development, and incumbent worker upgrade programs as financial condition allows.

- Monthly income and expense statements on the Resource Sharing Agreement and separate statements on program income.
- Procurement of the lease for the physical location of the one stop center.
- Procurement and purchasing of necessary services, equipment, and materials financed through the Resource Sharing Agreement and program income.

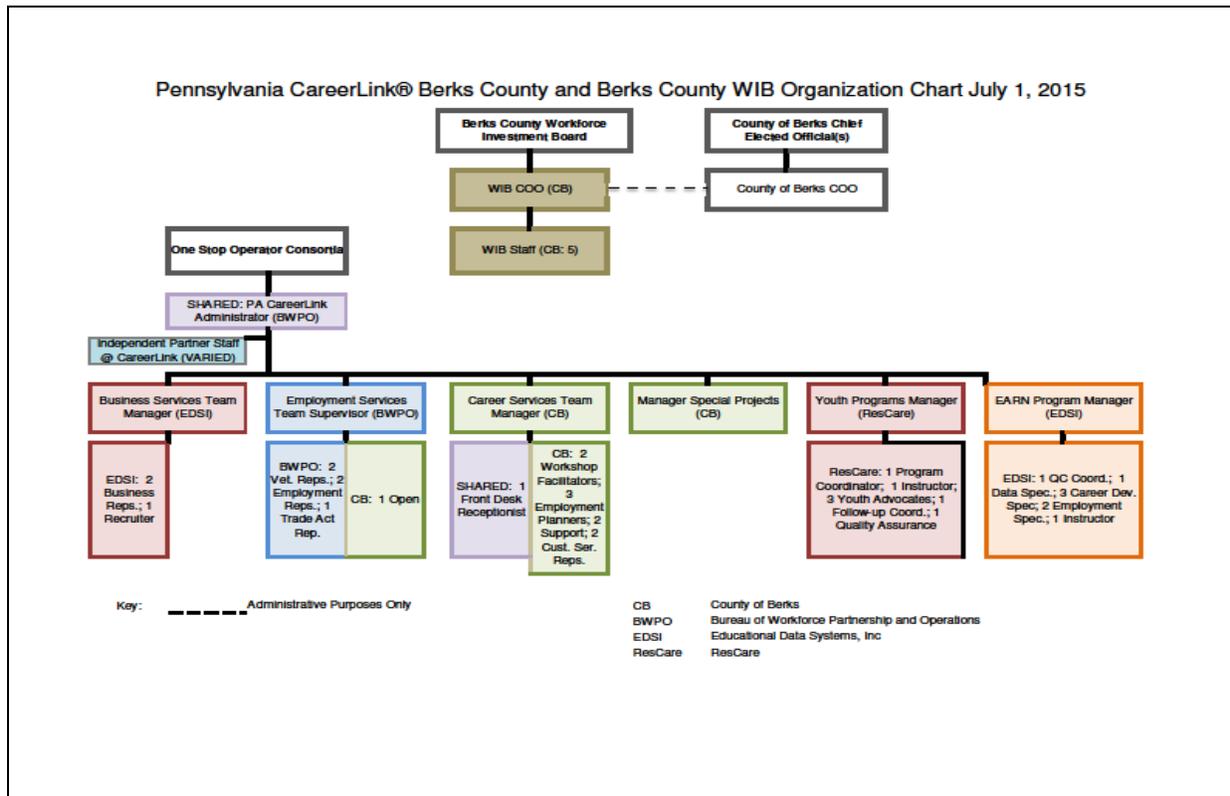
B. Location:

PA CareerLink® Berks County
 1920 Kutztown Road, Suite F
 Reading, PA 19604
 Job Seekers: 610-988-1300
 Business Services: 610-988-1395
 Administrative Office: 610-988-1310

Hours: 8:30 am to 4:30 pm Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday
 10:00 am to 4:30 pm Wednesday

The Resource Room is open Monday – Friday, 10:00 am to 3:00 pm.

C. Organization Chart



3.2 Describe the workforce development system in the local area that identifies the programs that are included in that system and how the local board will work with the entities carrying out core and other workforce development programs to support alignment to provide services, including programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, that support the strategy identified in the State plan under section 102(b)(1)(E). [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(2)]

Note: The six (6) core programs identified by WIOA are: Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Adult Education and Literacy, Wagner-Peyser Programs, and Vocational Rehabilitation.

Services under the WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker programs are delivered by the Career Services Team of the PA CareerLink Berks County, staffed by experienced full-time and part-time County of Berks staff. The Manager of the Career Services Team is a County of Berks employee who functionally reports to the Administrator – PA CareerLink® Berks County and administratively to the Chief Operating Officer of the County of Berks. The Title I Youth/Young Adult program is managed by a third-party contractor procured by the County of Berks through a competitive process planned and managed by the Berks County WDB and the County of Berks Purchasing Department. The Berks WDB staff and Youth Committee provide oversight and policy guidance over the course of the contract period.

Reading Area Community College (RACC) is the Title II (Adult Education and Literacy) education grant coordinator for the Berks County region and partners with other adult education providers such as the Literacy Council of Greater Reading-Berks to meet the extraordinary needs for GED and ESL (English as a Second Language) in Reading and the surrounding municipalities. RACC's President and the college's Chief Information Office both serve on the Berks County WDB. The Executive Director of the Literacy Council of Berks County serves on the CareerLink Oversight Committee.

Staff employed by the PA Department of Labor & Industry (L&I) Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations (BWPO) are located at the PA CareerLink® Berks County and provide Wagner-Peyser program services under the supervision of the Career Services Team Supervisor who in turn reports to the Administrator – PA CareerLink Berks County, who happens to be a BWPO staff person as well. BWPO's Regional Director serves on the PA CareerLink® Berks County Operating Consortium and was appointed to the Berks WDB effective May 1, 2016.

The Berks-Schuylkill District Office of Pennsylvania's Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) is a partner in the PA CareerLink Berks County. The District Administrator for OVR is a member of the Berks County WDB and beginning in program year 2016 will co-chair the WDB working group to review the impact of Board activities on individuals with disabilities and the possible expansion to a regular standing committee if it makes strategic sense to do so.

As described above in Section 1.3, the Berks County WDB closely collaborates with both local Career and Technical Centers (BCTC and RMCTC) and Reading Area Community College (RACC) to ensure that training programs align with industry needs and high priority occupations. All three schools are PA CareerLink® Berks County partners. In addition, the Berks County WDB COO serves on Executive Advisory Boards for both BCTC and RMCTC and reviews requests for state equipment grants, providing letters of support as appropriate. The Berks WDB COO and staff also participate on annual Perkins review committees for all three schools.

3.3 Describe how the local board, working with the entities carrying out core programs, will expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(3)]

The Board recognizes that the new training targets emphasize the targeting of individuals with barriers to employment, including low-income individuals and those who are basic skills deficient. During Program Year (PY) 2015 the WDB has prepared for this effort through the redesign of the youth program to one focused on serving disconnected young adults.

The WDB has also aggressively sought out grants that have as a focus this population. In partnership with three local community-based organizations the WDB has been awarded a Commonwealth Community-Based Partnership grant to work with returning citizens, the homeless and low-income single mothers. This grant will provide at least sixty individuals occupational skills training, supportive services, and job placement. The WDB has also submitted a LEAP 2 grant proposal to the Department of Labor to expand the Berks County Community Release Center to include services available at the PA CareerLink Berks County. If awarded this grant will serve at least two-hundred individuals in partnership with the Berks County Prison and Berks Connections/Pre-trial Services.

As mentioned above (Section 3.1.A), beginning in program year 2016 a working group of the WDB's Policy, Planning and Priorities Committee will be devoted to reviewing the impact of Board activities on individuals with disabilities and the possible expansion to a standing committee if it makes strategic sense to do so.

3.4 Identify and describe (for each category below) the strategies that are and/or will be used to:

- A. Facilitate engagement of employers, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations, in workforce development programs in addition to targeted sector strategies;
- B. Support a local workforce development system described in element 3.2 that meets the needs of businesses;
- C. Better coordinate workforce development programs with economic development partners and programs; and

This must include the implementation of incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, work-based learning programs, apprenticeship models, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies, career pathways initiatives or utilization of effective business intermediaries and other business services and strategies that support the local board's strategy in element 3.1.

[WIOA Sec. 108(b) (4) (A) and (B)].

- A. The Berks WDB believes that recruiting and retaining the right local business leaders to serve on the WDB is the most important factor in engaging employers, including small employers and employers in in-demand sectors or who employ workers in high priority occupations. This strategy is reflected in the diversity and positive contributions of the WDBs seventeen business sector representatives. The WDB's eight manufacturing employer representatives on the Board range from the County's top HR executive for the largest employer with over 7,000 employees to the owner of a high technology product manufacturer with only 15 full-time employees. The County's second largest employer is a regional health system represented on the WDB by its top HR executive and the President of the region's other health system is also on the WDB - helping us understand and respond to the region's rapidly-changing healthcare delivery system. With the WDB's renewed emphasis in 2015

on the *Agriculture/Food Production* and *Transportation & Logistics* sectors, WDB members were added with specialized experience in these areas as well. Other key business sectors represented on the Berks WDB include *Financial Services* and *Business & Professional Services*. The *Greater Reading Chamber of Commerce & Industry (GRCCI)* serves as the nominating entity for the Berks WDB and has been instrumental in identifying and recruiting an excellent cross-section of business representation on the Berks WDB.

The Berks County WDB has also been successful in assisting local eligible employers engage with RACC and Kutztown University's Small Business Development Center (KU SBDC) to access WEDnetPA reimbursement funding for qualifying higher-technology incumbent worker training needs. In 2014-2015, 58 local employers were awarded over \$408,000 from this valuable program to help offset the costs of training and upskilling over 3,900 employees.

As described in Section 2.1, a key emphasis of the Berks WDB will be placed on assisting local employers with good jobs in key industries further develop the skills of their incumbent workers. A major challenge will be to prioritize sources of funding beyond the state Industry Partnership and WEDnetPA funding which has been too little and too unreliable from budget year to budget year for long-term planning and continuous improvement. Beginning in PY2016, the Board will seek to take advantage of the permissible use of adult and dislocated worker funds allocated to the Board for training activities associated with incumbent workers. This focus on incumbent worker training will be especially attractive to small and medium-size employers with similar needs and scarce training resources. The strategy will help proven, trained incumbents develop and grow with the companies and allow the hiring of less-skilled new hires into these attractive career pathways. Many of these new hires will need assistance from other WDB-sponsored programs (e.g. OJTs) in order to take advantage of these proven career opportunities

The Berks WDB collaborates closely with *GRCCI*, the *Berks Business Education Coalition (BBEC)* and the Greater Reading Economic Partnership (GREP) on an ongoing basis to plan and sponsor activities that facilitate annual employer engagement in school-to-work activities. For example, the third annual Berks County *Students Interacting with Business* project in September 2015 included 24 local employers hosting facility tours for nearly 3,500 high school freshman from 15 area high schools. The following month, the first annual *Berks Manufacturing Day* offered public plant tours of local advanced manufacturing workplaces as well the opportunity for students and job-seekers to meet with 19 employer exhibitors. These events were followed in November 2015 with the second annual Berks *Building Bridges between School and Work Breakfast*, a symposium which brings together leaders from education and business to share best practices and strategies on how to build stronger connections to prepare a job-ready workforce. In March 2016, over 300 high school juniors and seniors from twenty area high schools attended the second annual Berks *Young Leadership Conference – Building Tomorrow's Leaders Today* at Penn State – Berks where they were given the opportunity to network with dozens of local business leaders and explore topics of leadership and career preparation.

The Berks County local workforce development system described in Section 3.2 has proven that it can adjust to the changing needs of local businesses as local conditions change. From 2010-2014,

much of the work of the Berks County WDB focused on the unique needs of unemployed and under-unemployed workers during a time of high unemployment and general labor surpluses. During this time period, most employers' had few open positions and high retention rates. Beginning in late 2014, the Berks WDB identified a dramatic shift underway to a general labor shortage in our local region and the priorities and services of the Berks County local workforce system shifted accordingly. As just one specific example, PA CareerLink® Berks County brought back its popular semi-annual Job Fair in October 2014 and has organized three subsequent job fairs. Participation in the job fairs during this time period has grown from 50 employers to over 75 employers, most seeking to fill a large variety of open positions.

Over the years and across the business cycle, the PA CareerLink® Berks County Business Services Team (BST) has established a reputation as a trusted partner with local employers. The region's growing shortage of qualified candidates for critical and "opportunity" occupations is especially acute and local employers need help. While some of the current skills shortage results from the long, steady cyclical recovery from the Great Recession of 2009-2010, an underlying wave of baby-boomer retirements will drive continuing shortages even if regional economic growth stalls. Our employers have never seen anything like this in the past and the Berks County WDB will play a crucial role in continuing to develop and implement long-term solutions along with our Business Services Team (BST) and local partners.

In order to avoid "employer fatigue" from multiple outreach activities, in late 2015 the PA CareerLink® Berks County and Berks County WDB formed an Employer Outreach Team that meets regularly to share information, coordinate employer outreach, maximize available resources, and tailor responses to the specific needs of individual employers. This team is comprised of individuals from Business Services, EARN, Young Adult, OVR and the WDB who come together monthly to discuss and share business/employer intelligence. The goals of the team are to ensure employers receive a consistent message from the team members, that employer visits are coordinated to maximize outreach efforts, diminish employer program fatigue, and to maximize job seeker placements through the sharing of hiring information.

- B. As described above in Section 1.1, the Berks County WDB has a proven track record of coordinating workforce development programs with regional economic development partners. For example, In 2015, the Berks County WDB worked closely with the Greater Reading Economic Partnership (GREP) to launch an updated version (2.0) of the award-winning **Careers in Years** public awareness campaign in support of the County's many "opportunity occupations" open to qualified Career and Technical school graduates as our local good producing industries.

Reflecting its historically strong reputation for local workforce development expertise and analysis and the importance that the partners placed on workforce and talent, the Berks County WDB has been assigned the leadership role in developing RTP's Workforce and Talent Development strategies. In 2016, the COO of the Berks WDB was elected co-chair of the Berks County *Ride to Prosperity* project which will continue to coordinate all of the regional economic development partners' to efforts and resources in support of workforce and talent development initiatives. The eight RTP partners are:

- The Greater Berks Development Fund (GBDF)
- The Greater Reading Economic Partnership (GREP)
- The Greater Reading Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GRCCI)
- The Berks County Industrial Development Authority (Berks County IDA)
- The City of Reading
- The Berks County Planning Commission
- The Greater Reading Convention and Visitors Bureau
- The Berks County Workforce Development Board (Berks County WDB)

Obviously, the successful collaboration among the Berks County *RTP* partners is more than just about developing written plans - it is real, vital and evolving. In January 2016, the Greater Reading Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GRCCI) publicly announced that it was formally joining merger discussions already underway between the Greater Reading Economic Partnership (GREP) and the Greater Berks Development Fund (GBDF). However the talks turn out, there is no doubt that the economic development leadership of the Berks County region will continue to integrate efforts leading to even greater prosperity. They will focus on regional workforce development as a strategic priority and work hand-in-hand with the region's community, education and workforce development partners, including the Berks County Workforce Development Board.

3.5 Note – the state-provided template omits section 3.5 for the local transitional plan.

3.6 Describe the workforce activities, including activities for youth with disabilities. Identify successful models and best practices for youth workforce activities relevant to the local area. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(9)]

The Board has elected to utilize WIOA Youth funds to target out-of-school youth who are either unemployed/underemployed or who lack the skills necessary to enter post-secondary education/training due to not completing high school/basic skills deficiency. Funded programs offer GED and access to post-secondary education and training through individual training accounts, work-based learning opportunities tied to employer needs, and follow-up services that engage youth with continued supportive services and practical training (budgeting, etc.) that are aimed at ensuring their continued success after program exit.

TANF Youth and other funds are used to target in-school youth through the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) and the Summer Work Employment and Assessment Program SWEAP. The WDB funds two versions of this program: SYEP targets the general population of youth age 16 to 18 while SWEAP targets youth with disabilities. Both have been in place at various funding levels for over a decade. SYEP draws youth primarily from the Reading and Muhlenberg Area School Districts which have the highest concentration of low-income youth in the county. Thought not a target for this program, youth with disabilities are enrolled in the general SYEP program.

SWEAP is targeted to youth with disabilities serving youth from many of the eighteen school districts in the county and is offered in partnership with the Berks County Transition Coordinating Council. This summer work experience is an integral part of the youth's Individual Education Plan providing a work experience tied

to the youth's interests and provides an assessment of skills and work readiness for the youth's educator. This program provides funding for job coaches who are normally transition coordinators themselves or special education teachers.

The regional Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) has always been part of this program through its role on the Berks County Transition Coordinating Council. However, beginning with the summer 2016 program, OVR will become a more active partner through funding approximately 50% of the youth in the program with the possibility of a greater percentage in future years. The WDB views the immersion of this program into the youth's education goals and the unique partnership with the Berks County Transition Coordinating Council, OVR and Goodwill Keystone Area (the program operator) to be a best practice.

3.7 Describe how the local board coordinates education and workforce investment activities with relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(10)]

The Berks County WDB closely collaborates with both local Career and Technical Centers (BCTC and RMCTC) and Reading Area Community College (RACC) to ensure that training programs align with industry needs and high priority occupations. All three schools are PA CareerLink® Berks County partners. In addition, the Berks County WDB COO serves on Executive Advisory Boards for both BCTC and RMCTC and reviews requests for state equipment grants, providing letters of support as appropriate. The Berks WDB COO also serves on annual Perkins review committees for all three schools.

As described above in Section 1.4, the Berks County WDB and fellow RTP partners facilitated an innovative 2+2+2 pathway from technical high school, to community college to 4-year institutions – *The Berks Technical Academy*. RACC has partnered with the County's two high school career and technical centers - Berks Career and Technology Center (BCTC) and Reading Muhlenberg Career and Technology Center (RMCTC) - to build comprehensive Technical Academy career pathways and the associated articulation agreements for high school CTE students to earn college credit for high-end technical coursework. In effect, the Technical Academy serves as an *honors program* for qualified CTC students, allowing them to acquire up to 27 college credits at no cost prior to high school graduation. Such focused and talented students are highly sought after by local employers for paid internships during the school year, while on summer break and again upon high school graduation. Once hired, Technical Academy graduates may receive financial support from their employers while they complete their Associate's degree programs at RACC. RACC has been particularly effective in assisting qualifying students to access federal Pell grants to cover tuition costs. If the students wish to continue their technical training and education beyond RACC, they may do so at aligned 4-year institutions (e.g. Penn State – Berks) through additional articulation agreements that are part of the Technical Academy pathway.

The best practice Berks Technical Academy is the most developed, but not the only example of how the Berks WDB local board coordinates education and workforce investment activities with relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services. The Berks County WDB regularly partners with other local WDBs in the Commonwealth in securing competitive state and national grants, such as the recent *Make It in America H-1B* grant. These funds have been effectively used from 2013 - present to support nearly 100 local participants in acquiring high-level advanced manufacturing industry-recognized credentials at RACCs' Schmidt Training and Technology Center and leading to hiring and promotional opportunities.

In March 2016 the Berks WDB was the lead applicant awarded a \$400,000 Innovation Grant for the Greater Reading – Lancaster Partnership for Youth Careers to promote career and technical education (CTE) in Berks County and Lancaster County. Berks Career and Technology Center (BCTC), Reading Muhlenberg Career

and Technology Center (RMCTC) and the Lancaster County Career and Technology Center (LCCTC). The Lancaster County WDB is also a partner in this grant. Under the grant, the five partners are coordinating a broad arrange of programs in PY2016 in both counties including 8th grade technical career explorations camps, summer work-based experience, and employer visits focused on CTE student retention and motivation.

The Berks WDB also works closely with the Berks County Intermediate Unit (BCIU) which coordinates additional educational services for Berks County's eighteen public school services within Berks County and is also represented on the Berks County WD Board as well as the Board's Youth Committee. The Berks Business Education Coalition (BBEC) is chaired by a local business leader and the BBEC's membership includes the County's five colleges and the eighteen public school districts as well as business leaders. The BBEC is an active partner with the Berks County WD Board on programs to facilitate employer-educator collaboration and to provide local students with valuable work-based learning opportunities throughout the County. Specifically, in PY2015 the Berks County WDB provided the BBEC with \$90,000 from the state Business Education Discretionary Grant program. The BBEC's Executive Director is a member of the Board's Youth Committee. Both the BCIU and the BBEC partner with the Berks County WDB and our 18 local school districts to promote career awareness and preparation programs including *Project Lead the Way*, STEM Academies, STEM competitions, and employer engagements geared to the many career opportunities available within the region.

Finally, the Berks County WDB maintains a close working relationship with the Higher Education Council of Berks County whose membership includes the presidents of the County's five non-profit and public institutions for higher education. The Higher Education Council of Berks County also serves as the nominating entity for education sector representatives appointed the WDB. The Berks WDB COO also serves on the Kutztown University Business Advisory Council where he provides guidance and recommendations on programs and local labor market information (LMI).

3.8 Describe efforts to coordinate supportive services provided through workforce investment activities in the local area, including facilitating transportation for customers. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(11)]

The Berks County Workforce Development Board, through PA CareerLink® Berks County, ensures that appropriate and necessary supportive services to assist youth, adults and dislocated workers in Berks County are available. PA CareerLink® Berks County employment planners are responsible for coordinating services and providing referrals to other state and local agencies offering supportive services such as transportation, child care, dependent care, housing, and needs-related payments. Employment planners must ensure that all other avenues and resources have been exhausted prior to expending program funds for supportive services. Documentation of the service being unavailable in the area will become part of the participant's file.

Each participant is given individualized case management services and plan development in order to eliminate possible dependency on supportive services. Supportive services award is based on individual participant needs, plan development, and in compliance with local policy and WIOA and any subsequent Federal and/or Commonwealth of Pennsylvania clarifications.

The primary means of facilitating transportation to customers in need is through the use of bus passes or mileage reimbursement – both of which are provided on a temporary basis, normally through the first month of employment.

Berks County has a well-developed internal system of public and private transportation services and most Berks County workers are actually “non-commuters” who benefit from commute times of less than thirty

minutes. Many residents take advantage of services provided by the Berks Area Regional Transportation Authority (BARTA) for their daily commute on its fixed-route buses or via Special Services (paratransit). In addition, Berks County commuters and employers have access to the Commuter Services of PA programs aimed at reducing traffic congestion and improving air quality in the region. Berks County commuters who register with Commuter Services of PA have access to (1) a confidential and free internet-based “ride matching” program, (2) a free emergency ride home program (ERH) that provides a back-up plan for emergencies, including reimbursement for the cost of a ride home up to six times per year up to \$100 per ride and (3) commuter tax incentives. Many Berks County employers take advantage of services including a free employee commute analysis, on-site transportation events, parking and work hour management assistance, teleworking guidance, and commuter tax incentive programs.

3.9 Describe strategies to implement the operational goals of the local one-stop system, maximizing coordination of services provided by the Department’s merit staff, and the local board’s contracted service providers in order to improve services and avoid duplication. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(12)]

Since 1999, the PA CareerLink® Berks County has shown the way in how to maximize staff coordination and services to the job seeker/employer customer through the functional alignment of staff. Integration at PA CareerLink® Berks County happens at both the staff and team manager levels. Some teams have mixed staff from multiple partners. Some teams have staff from a single partner organization. All teams have a dedicated manager/supervisor. Integration occurs through twice-monthly full staff meetings, twice-monthly team manager meetings and various staff development activities. In addition, staff from other organizations work on ®teams and participate in integration activities. These include Goodwill Keystone Area, AARP and Reading Area Community College work-study program. Partners whose employees participate as integrated team members are: PA Department of Labor and Industry - Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operation (PA L&I BWPO), County of Berks, ResCare Youth Services, EDSI Business Services Team, and EDSI EARN program. Other partners with employees who do not participate as integrated team members are Berks Career and Technology Center (BCTC) and Reading-Muhlenberg Career and Technology Center (RMCTC). Functional supervisors/managers are individuals who make work assignments and supervise the work of individuals regardless of payroll attachment. Agency managers serve as liaisons for employer-specific information and issues. Responsibilities are kept separate by making all staff aware of the distinction, setting the expectation that everyone understands and implements the distinction, and enforcing it.

Functional Alignment

Welcome Function: The Welcome Function at PA CareerLink® Berks County consists of two components: a Welcome Orientation and an Initial Assessment.

- The Welcome Orientation is a group activity offered three times a week on a drop-in basis, alternating between morning and afternoon sessions for the convenience of customers’ schedules. A PA CareerLink staff member facilitates the orientation and uses a PowerPoint presentation to reinforce the information presented verbally. Information is presented about a wide range of independent, expanded and comprehensive career services, including Resource Room services, explanations of JobGateway registration and use, career exploration and labor market information resources, workshops, assessment tools, case management and career advising, training opportunities, pre-training/pre-employment workshops, structured soft skills preparation, structured job search preparation, self-assisted job search, Career Center for Young Adults, WIOA eligibility and PA CareerLink events. All new PA CareerLink® Berks County customers are encouraged to attend a Welcome Orientation. Customers who choose not to attend a Welcome Orientation are offered a handout of independent career services they may participate in at any time, along with a schedule of Welcome Orientation events they may attend in the future.

- Immediately following the Welcome Orientation, each customer participates in an individual Initial Assessment with a PA CareerLink® Berks County staff member. Utilizing a specially-designed assessment form, staff members guide customers through an assessment of their labor force, Unemployment Compensation, Veteran and disability statuses, their career/employment goals, and their concerns about any factors that may impact their ability to achieve their goals. Considering the next type of service a customer may select, independent, expanded or comprehensive Career Services, the staff member guides them to participate in appropriate services. These may include JobGateway registration, workshops, resume writing assistance, assessments, job referrals, case management and application for WIOA eligibility and services. Staff members may also arrange for referrals to community agencies to assist customers with concerns beyond the scope of services delivered at the PA CareerLink® Berks County services, including child care, housing, health care and legal/financial issues.

Skill and Career Development Function

- Our Skill and Career Development Function assists customers who want more than just information or self-directed services. This function is carried out by members of our Employment Services Team and Career Services Team. It includes expanded (basic) career services; comprehensive (intensive) career services; and training Services.

Business Services Function

- Our Business Services Function starts with marketing and outreach to business and continues with many services leading to job posting fulfillment. This function is carried out by members of our Employment Services Team, Business Services Team (BST), Young Adult Team and the EARN Team.
- With so much activity underway, it is critical that employer outreach activities are coordinated and communicated among the various teams. This is accomplished through a structured Employer Outreach Team (EOT) that was established in 2016. The EOT is comprised of individuals from Business Services, EARN, Young Adult, OVR and the WDB who come together monthly to discuss and share business/employer intelligence. The goals of the team are to ensure employers receive a consistent message from the team members, that employer visits are coordinated to maximize outreach efforts and diminish employer program fatigue, and to maximize job seeker placements through the sharing of hiring information.

Public Welfare Function

- **Berks County Assistance Office.** Staff from the County Assistance Office (CAO) provides orientations to CAO referrals two mornings a week. During orientation they assist with JobGateway enrollments. Staff provides case management services to CAO clients and advises them of requirements to maintain eligibility for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits.
- EARN program function is staffed by the EARN Team. The program design includes a Welcome Function and Career Development function. The EARN Job Developer is part of the Business Services Function. The services delivered are described fully in Section 3h.

Young Adult Programs Function

- This function is staffed by the Youth Adult Team.

3.10 Describe how the local board will carry out a review of local applications submitted under WIOA Title II Adult Education and Literacy, consistent with the local plan (as described in WIOA Sec. 107(d) (11) and WIOA Sec. 232). [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(13)]

The Berks County WDB is awaiting further clarification from the state and the issuance of final federal regulations on how this process should be implemented. As a result, the WDB is not prepared to provide a complete and accurate response at the time of plan submission. Once this guidance is clarified, the WDB will address this particular element in the multi-year plan to be developed in PY2016.

3.11 Based on the analysis described in Appendix B - Section 1, identify the targeted populations that the local board plans to focus additional effort and resources towards. In terms of the targeted populations, briefly describe the local board's objectives, goals, and strategies.

The Berks WDB has identified four targeted populations on which to focus additional effort and resources in PY 2016:

- A. Disconnected and Under-employed Young Adults and Out of School Youth (OSY).** The Youth Committee of the Berks WDB has proposed a unique and crucial role for the Board as the key convener of local partners with the mission and capacity to meet the extensive needs of the County's Disconnected and Under-employed Young Adults and Out of School Youth (OSY). As a result, the Berks WDB has asked the County of Berks Purchasing Department to prepare and release a request for proposals (RFP) to identify organizations with the capacity to effectively implement local Title I Youth Programs focused on Out of School Youth (OSY) beginning at the end of the current program year (PY2015). The successful bidder(s) will be expected to coordinate their efforts with all other local partners involved in this challenging work.

The WDB recognizes that we currently lack comprehensive and current information regarding the size and critical characteristics of this elusive population that is difficult to find, to keep engaged and to stay connected with following program participation. In order to proceed with the best information available, and assuming that adequate funding is available, the WDB will prepare and release a separate RFP seeking a contractor to research and profile disconnected and under-employed young adults. The resulting report will be presented to the Board by the end of 2016 and is expected to inform priorities and programs going forward.

- B. Connecting Post-9/11 Veterans/Spouses to Employers and Educational Opportunities.** Employers in Berks County consistently seek assistance in connecting with Post 9/11 veterans, but despite making this an area of focus and funded outreach in 2015, the Berks WDB can claim little progress. However, Berks County is home to at least 500 veterans studying at our five public institutions of higher education and we look to develop outreach plans and events designed to connect these talented and motivated veterans with employers and career pathways, particularly in our priority industry sectors (Section 1.1). This strategy will involve engaging these veterans and spouses early in their academic studies to help shape their career decisions through accurate labor market information (LMI). Recruitment to the participating colleges might benefit from Berks County developing a reputation as a "veteran-friendly" educational community and local young alumni and professional networks will be strengthened.
- C. Serving Individuals with Disabilities.** Berks County is home to 48,990 individuals age 16 and over with a disability of which only 22.4% are currently employed. Over 38,000 individuals with disabilities over age 16 are not in the workforce. 22.2% of adult individuals with disabilities live below the poverty line - twice the rate of those with no disability. The Berks-Schuylkill District Office

of Pennsylvania's Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) is a key partner in the PA CareerLink Berks County. The District Administrator for OVR is a member of the Berks County WDB and beginning in program year 2016 will co-chair the WDB working group to review the impact of Board activities on individuals with disabilities and the possible expansion to a regular standing committee if it makes strategic sense to do so.

- D. Ex-offender / Formerly-incarcerated Individuals.** As described in Section 1.4, the Berks County WDB has identified an opportunity for improvement in working with the area's relatively large ex-offender population. In 2015, Berks County WDB staff reached out to community leaders experienced in working with this challenging population as well as to local employers with success in hiring individuals with this particularly onerous barrier to employment. As a result, we have included representatives of three Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) with specialized expertise in working with ex-offenders to join the newly-constituted Berks County WDB to help address this weakness. In March 2016 we were awarded a state CBO grant to expand and coordinate proven best practices among these partners. Also, in March 2016 the Berks WDB submitted a federal LEAP 2 grant in conjunction with one of these CBO partners Berks Connections Pre-Trial Services (BCPS) requesting funding to expand re-entry employment services offered at the Berks County Jail's Community Re-entry Center. The Berks WDB looks forward to building on these initial steps in PY2016.

3.12 – 3.13 Note – the state-provided template omits section 3.12 and 3.13 for the local transitional plan.

3.14 Briefly describe any additional funding outside of WIOA title I and state general funds, and how such funding will be leveraged in support of the local workforce system.

The Berks County WDB has experienced consistent success in securing special emergency funding for the regions' dislocated workers, including current funding from *Job-Driven National Emergency Grant (NEG)* and a *Sector Strategy Innovation (NEG)* in partnership with the Lancaster WDB and the Lehigh Valley WDB. The Berks WDB also consistently applies for and receives Rapid Response awards from the state to focus on the extraordinary needs or dislocated workers.

The Berks County WDB regularly partners with other strong local boards in the Commonwealth in securing competitive national grants, most recently the *Make It in America H-1B* grant. These funds have been effectively used from 2013 - present to support nearly 100 local participants in acquiring high-level advanced manufacturing industry-recognized credentials at RACCs' Schmidt Training and Technology Center and leading to hiring and promotional opportunities.

The Berks WDB joined four other local WDBs in a TechHire (H-1B) grant application submitted by the PA Department of Labor & Industry (L&I) in March 2016.

The Berks County WDB has been successful in securing current funding from a number of current state discretionary grants including a Business-Education Partnership grant, a Community-Based Organization (CBO) grant, and a Strategic Innovation Grant.

The Berks County WDB has also been successful in assisting local eligible employers engage with RACC and Kutztown University's Small Business Development Center (KU SBDC) to access WEDnetPA reimbursement funding for qualifying higher-technology incumbent worker training needs. In 2014-2015, 58 local employers were awarded over \$408,000 from this valuable program to help offset the costs of training and upskilling over 3,900 employees.

Section 4: Program Design and Evaluation

Many of the responses below should be based on strategic discussions between the local board and one-stop partners. Please provide a separate response for each of the elements listed below.

4.1 Describe the one-stop delivery system in the local area including:

- A. The local board's efforts to ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services, including contracted service providers and providers on the eligible training provider list, and ensure that such providers meet the employment needs of local employers, workers and jobseekers. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(6)(A)]
- B. How the local board will facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system in remote areas, through the use of technology, and through other means. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(6)(B)]
- C. How entities within the one-stop delivery system, including one-stop operators and the one-stop partners, will comply with WIOA section 188, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities, including providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities.
[WIOA Sec. 108(b)(6)(C)]
(See Appendix C: *Transitional Planning References and Resources*)

A. Continuous Improvement of Eligible Providers of Services

Sub-contractors are reviewed on a regular basis for adherence to contract provisions and progression towards the meeting of performance measures. Quality assurance tools are tailored to address the specific objectives or concerns relative to the activity, program or service being reviewed. Findings are contained in reports and include any concerns or serious deficiencies identified, recommendations for continuous improvement or corrective action and follow-up activities. As functional entities within the PA CareerLink® Berks County sub-contractor efforts are also reflected in the yearly PA CareerLink® Berks County continuous improvement summary submitted by the PA CareerLink® Berks County Administrator which is included in the annual PA CareerLink® Berks County quality assurance review and shared with the Board's CareerLink Oversight Committee.

Eligible training provider training submissions are reviewed for adequate content description, alignment with the local High Priority List, and acceptable performance prior to approval.

All programs conduct quarterly customer satisfaction surveys of their respective customers (employers, workers, jobseekers). These surveys are compiled by the CareerLink Administrator and shared with the WDB and WDB staff. Program with sub-par satisfaction are provided technical assistance by the WDB.

B. Access to Remote Areas

Berks County has a well-developed internal system of public and private transportation services with available public transportation connecting the core with the surrounding suburban communities. The PA CareerLink® Berks County is located within the urban area with a bus stop directly in front of the building and free ample parking. Many Berks job-seekers take advantage of regular public bus route service provided by the Berks Area Regional Transportation Authority (BARTA) during their job search and once placed in new employment. BARTA also offers one-way trips via Special Services (paratransit). Moving beyond the

suburban communities, primarily the western portions of the county, Berks becomes rural but by no means “remote”. This is not an area of concern for the WDB.

C. Accessibility

The PA CareerLink® Berks County is certified compliant with Equal Opportunity and Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility requirements by the Office of Equal Opportunity, PA Department of Labor and industry effective November 19, 2014. This certification is in effect until November 30, 2017.

The WDB also reviews compliance with Equal Opportunity and Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility requirements each year during the PA CareerLink® Berks County quality assurance review. All programs operating out of the PA CareerLink® Berks County are part of this review.

The PA CareerLink® Berks County provides twice per year training in Equal Opportunity and Americans with Disabilities Act requirements including the accommodations available at the PA CareerLink® Berks County.

4.2 Describe the local board’s assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(7)]

The Berks WDB is satisfied that the type and availability of adult and dislocated employment and training activities within the local workforce development system is quite robust - allowing for significant job-seeker choice among attractive pathways to family-sustaining employment. These activities for adult and dislocated workers begin with programs offered through the PA CareerLink® Berks County located in Reading which served nearly 13,000 visitors between July – December 2015 (not including EARN and Youth Program participants). A local delivery system focus on in-demand industry sectors in particular is meant to ensure that job-seeker customers of the PA CareerLink® Berks County are provided access to and information concerning the most promising jobs in the county. This focus is translated at the PA CareerLink® Berks County to services such as individualized job development for adult and dislocated workers and the extensive use of work-based training to bring the job seeker and employer together. This two pronged approach is meant to increase the likelihood of employment and retention for the job seeker while meeting the hiring needs of the employer customer.

As detailed above in Section 1.4, the PA CareerLink® Berks County partners with a broad range of education and training providers with complementary capabilities, including the most comprehensive and accessible career and technical training and education (CTE) infrastructure of any region in the Commonwealth.

4.3 Describe how the local board will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out in the local area with statewide rapid response activities. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(8)]

The Berks WDB’s Rapid Response Team is made up of experienced PA CareerLink® Berks County Title I and Wagner-Peyser staff, a local community-based organization with strong labor connections, and the state-assigned regional Rapid Response coordinator. Informal feedback from a focus group held with the Berks WDB Rapid Response Team and state regional Rapid Response staff on March 29, 2016 indicates that the Berks WDB Rapid Response Team is especially competent and assertive in meeting the needs of dislocated workers impacted by layoffs and plant closings. The team also coordinates efforts with the regional Strategic Early Warning Network (SEWN) Coordinator and to assist with this coordination, the COO of the Berks WDB serves on the SE PA Regional SEWN Advisory Council. The Berks WDB will continue to support such effective local and regional coordination going forward.

However, there is room for local improvement by placing a greater focus on layoff aversion strategies such as incumbent worker training. The painful experience of the Berks County WDB has been that dislocated workers often lack the 21st century skills to give them confidence that they can navigate the economic, social and even psychological challenges associated with job loss. We have found this to be especially true among long-tenured manufacturing production workers who often entered employment in the sector decades ago in a very different world. Through experience, seniority, and consistent contributions with their employers, these workers over time often earned their way to top pay rates, excellent benefits including maximum vacation and leave, and attractive work schedules (e.g. day shift positions.) Unfortunately, too often the job skills and process knowledge these workers acquired with a single employer is often firm-specific and not valued by other potential employers, even within the manufacturing sector. By contrast, higher-skilled manufacturing workers such as machinists, industrial electricians, and mechanics often develop and retain transferable skills that are in demand and can more quickly make the transition to jobs that approximate what they had with the previous employer. By placing a greater emphasis on WIOA's permissible use of adult and dislocated worker funds to support targeted incumbent worker training as described in Section 2.1, the Berks WDB looks to assist local employers expand and leverage their investments in word-class technology and processes in order to avert layoffs. When layoffs do occur, employees who took advantage of such training should more quickly make the transition back to family-sustaining employment.

4.4 Provide an analysis and description of youth workforce activities, including activities for youth with disabilities. Identify successful models and best practices, for youth workforce activities relevant to the local area. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(9)]

Note: This section must include a description of the program design elements as well as how the local area will implement the 14 program elements.

The Board has elected to utilize WIOA Youth funds to target out-of-school youth who are either unemployed/underemployed or who lack the skills necessary to enter post-secondary education/training due to not completing high school/basic skills deficiency. Programs offer GED and access to post-secondary education and training through individual training accounts, work-based learning opportunities tied to employer needs, and follow-up services that engage youth with continued supportive services and practical training (budgeting, etc.) that are aimed at ensuring their continued success after program exit.

The current program (the youth program is currently in the RFP phase – design elements may change as a result) is focused on the use of Career Pathway options for youth with the understanding that credential attainment is one step towards the ultimate goal of employment in a career pathway occupation or successful transition to a post-secondary course of study that prepares youth to enter career pathway occupations. All participants flow through the project following a prescribed plan delineated at enrollment. This plan is achieved as a result of the assessment activities and individual counseling.

Two tracks are available: one for young adults with a high school diploma/GED and one for those without. The goal for young adults with a secondary degree is either connection to employment or post-secondary education possibly funded through an individual training account (ITA) if appropriate. Transitional Employment (TE) is also an option for this group. The second track is similar but also includes GED instruction and paid work experience prior to placement. GED instruction is on average sixteen weeks in length with paid work experience incorporated after week four as an incentive for successful academic progress and to provide wages to incentivize continued program participation (experience shows individuals fail to stay with the GED program due to economic pressure).

The program operator for the WIOA year-round program makes available the fourteen youth elements either directly as part of their program offerings or through partnerships with other local social service agencies.

1. Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent or for a recognized post-secondary credential.

- Daily tutoring and small group instruction is available on site at the PA CareerLink® Berks County.
- The program provides GED instruction and attachment to post-secondary education/training as appropriate for the individual.

2. Alternative secondary school services or dropout recovery services.

- Referrals to alternate secondary schools if the participants needs cannot be met in the program. Linkages are established with "I LEAD" Charter School (a charter school in the Reading School District designed to provide a high school diploma for youth who have dropped out of the district) to expedite the process as required.
- Staff also meet on an ongoing basis with *Community in Schools*, a non-profit organization that has contracted with the Reading Areas School District to reduce dropout and re-engage disconnected 9th and 10th grade students.

3. Paid and unpaid work experiences that have as a component academic and occupational education.

- Paid work experience is offered to GED participants. Work experience exposes youth to various aspects of industry and entrepreneurship while providing hands-on skills instruction and "on-the-job experience."
- Transitional employment is offered as an available option to individuals.
- Job shadowing is accomplished via group field trips and one on one field visits based upon students career goals.

4. Occupational skill training.

- Youth are exposed to post-secondary environments, including opportunities for advanced training. Visits to college campuses and other post-secondary training institutions are accomplished. Assistance in completing entry applications and financial aid applications is also provided.
- Youth ITA's are available.

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

- Not currently available within the program. The WDB expects this element will become available beginning July 1, 2016 as part of the new program resulting from the current RFP process.

6. Leadership development opportunities.

- Leadership skills are developed through workshops including decision making, conflict resolution and community service skills. Civic leadership is enhanced through the community service projects, voter registration and community awareness projects i.e. current events.

7. Supportive services.

- Supportive services in the form of bus passes, uniforms etc. are available to youth enrolled in the program. Staff coordinate with other youth service organization to facilitate a two way referral network for youth in need of services beyond those offered in-house. In addition, the program provides a nutritional snack for youth during the morning break and in some cases upon arrival. These snacks enhance the participants ability to successfully participate in classroom activities

8. Adult mentoring for duration of at least twelve months.

- Adult mentoring in an on-going activity of program staff, employers and takes place concurrently with other program activities. Examples include but are not limited to guest speakers, worksite supervisors and program staff.

9. Follow up services.

- The program facilitates a combination of counseling, and workshops to motivate and engage exited youth. The Follow-Up Coordinator offers post-secondary guidance, and job searches for youth who have been exited with placement. In addition to contacting youth via mail and phone calls; a variety of other methods are used to contact youth such as Facebook, e-mail, and text messages to follow up with students. The Follow-Up Coordinator also provides incentives to youth every three months that continue to stay in post-secondary education and/ or retain a job to ensure progress towards retaining a year (plus) employment and/ or educational goals. The WDB regular monitors the use and distribution of such incentives.

10. Comprehensive guidance and counseling.

- Individual and group counseling is provided throughout program participation to discuss personal and career goals. Problems identified are addressed by staff immediately. If specialized counseling is required i.e. health, drug etc. referrals to the appropriate agencies is provided.

11. Financial literacy education.

- Financial literacy is incorporated into both program tracks using the FDIC Money Smart program.

12. Entrepreneurial skill training.

- Not currently available within the program. The WDB expects this element will become available beginning July 1, 2016 as part of the new program resulting from the current RFP process.

13. Labor market information.

- Labor market information is provided to program participants during individual and group counseling when personal and career goals are discussed.
- Such information is brought back to the program through staff participation on the Employer Outreach Team (EOT) and through WDB provided information.

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

- These are also incorporated in the regular individual and group counselling sessions and include topics associated with financial literacy, building support networks and ensuring secondary and tertiary back-ups for issues such as transportation and child-care.

As discussed in Section 3.6, TANF Youth and other funds are used to target in-school youth through the Summer Youth Employment program (SYEP) and the Summer Work Employment and Assessment Program SWEAP. The WDB funds two versions of this program: SYEP targets the general population of youth age 16 to 18 while SWEAP targets youth with disabilities. Both have been in place at various funding levels for over a decade. SYEP draws youth primarily from the Reading and Muhlenberg Area School Districts which have the highest concentration of low-income youth in the county. Though not a target for this program, youth with disabilities are enrolled in the general SYEP program.

SWEAP is targeted to youth with disabilities serving youth from many of the eighteen school districts in the county and is offered in partnership with the Berks County Transition Coordinating Council. This summer work experience is an integral part of the youth's Individual Education Plan providing a work experience tied to the youth's interests and assessment of skills and work readiness for the youth's educator. This program provides funding for job coaches who are normally transition coordinators themselves or special education teachers.

The regional Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) has always been part of this program through its role on the Berks County Transition Coordinating Council. However, beginning with the summer 2016 program, OVR will become a more active partner through funding approximately 50% of the youth in the program with the possibility of a greater percentage in future years. The WDB views the immersion of this program into the youth's education goals and the unique partnership with the Berks County Transition Coordinating Council, OVR and Goodwill Keystone Area (the program operator) to be a best practice.

4.5-4.7 Note – the state-provided template omits section 4.5 thru 4.7 for the local transitional plan.

4.8 Describe the process utilized by the local board to ensure that training provided is linked to in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area, or in another area to which a participant is willing to relocate. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(22)] and [WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(G)(iii)]

As mentioned in Section 1.1 and 1.2, the Berks County *Ride to Prosperity (RTP)* strategy project helped regional leaders cultivate a deep understanding of the region's key industry clusters and the Berks County WDB has further developed this sector-based analysis in determining workforce development sector priorities for Program Years 2015-2019. As a result, the Berks WDB is home to local labor market subject matter expertise in the knowledge, skills and requisite industry-recognized credentials needed to contribute to the growth of a qualified talent pool, the recruitment and retention qualified employees, and the upskilling of "home grown talent."

The Berks County WDB verifies the relevance of the training activities associated with the targeted occupations through outreach to employers. The WDB develops a detailed understanding of the skills and

experience related to current and future employment projections by utilizing print and on-line job ad analysis, employer surveys, employer feedback via in-person, phone and email interviews, and by active WDB participation in educational provider Occupational Advisory Committees (OACs) and Industry Partnerships (IPs). Active partnership with economic development agencies is solicited to promote the growth of a competent workforce in support of economic development initiatives.

The Berks WDB Training & Industry Partnership Committee meets quarterly to review opportunities for occupational growth and outcomes of in-force training initiatives. The committee membership is made up of industry sector employers, educators, and labor representatives. WDB staff with industry sector expertise is assigned to support the work of the committee.

Active engagement of our economic development partners in identifying in-demand occupations that will support economic growth is continuously solicited.

All training activity, including Industry Partnership Incumbent Worker, Individual Training Account, New-Hire OJT and Transitional Work Experience, and Apprenticeships are linked to High Priority Occupations (HPOs), and their relevant wage and educational attainment levels, within the priority Industry Sectors as defined by the full board. Requisite credentials are industry-recognized and are in great demand.

As described in Section 1.1, the Berks County workforce development area labor market is strong and provides many family-sustaining employment opportunities in a variety of industry sectors that link with quality local training programs. As a result, there is little need for job-seekers to relocate outside of the area to find appropriate employment. In addition, the Berks County's favorable geographic position adjacent to a number of other strong labor markets means that job-seekers can often find attractive job opportunities in neighboring counties within reasonable commuting distance. For example, many Berks County IT professionals find excellent job opportunities in Chester and Montgomery Counties while continuing to take advantage of the lower cost of living and high quality of life that residing in Berks County provides.

4.9 Describe the process and criteria the local board will use to include a wide range of providers and opportunities through the Local Training Provider List (LTPL). [Workforce System Policy 04-2015, *Eligible Training Providers*]

Note: Such criteria must include the factors listed in the WSP 04-2014 in addition to any criteria established by the local board. Eligibility of a provider and/or program must be based solely on measurable factors.

The Berks County WDB effectively manages the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) process as described above in Section 4.1.A. and will continue to do so in accordance with final federal guidelines and current state policy. However, the WDB is not prepared to provide a complete response to this specific element as the WDB does not yet understand how a Local Training Provider List (LTPL) will help the local workforce development system achieve the goals of WIOA, of the State Plan, of the SE PA Regional Plan, or of the Berks County WDB Local plan. As a result, we await further guidance from the final federal regulations and clarification from the state in this area. In the meantime, we will comply in good faith with the LTPL guidance that we receive and look forward to a more productive process and policy dialog with the state and other local WDBs on this new requirement throughout PY2016 in preparation of the multi-year plan.

Section 5: Compliance

Responses are focused on the local area's compliance with federal or state requirements. Please provide a separate response for each of the elements listed below.

5.1 Describe the replicated cooperative agreements, as defined by WIOA 107(d)(11), in place between the local board and the Department of Labor & Industry's Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) with respect to efforts that will enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities and to other individuals, such as cross training of staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers, and other efforts at cooperation, collaboration, and coordination. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(14)]

OVR is a signatory on the PA CareerLink® Berks County's Partner Agreement and Resource Sharing Agreement. These agreements encourage cooperation and collaboration among all partners in the effort to make the PA CareerLink® Berks County a seamless operation with regard to customer flow, service delivery and customer referral. There are two items of recent development that highlight this effort towards integration.

The OVR Job Developer in Berks County is a member of the Employer Outreach Team in the PA CareerLink® Berks County. This team is comprised of individuals from Business Services, EARN, Young Adult, OVR and the WDB who come together monthly to discuss and share business/employer intelligence. The goals of the team are to ensure employers receive a consistent message from the team members, that employer visits are coordinated to maximize outreach efforts and diminish employer program fatigue, and to maximize job seeker placements through the sharing of hiring information.

As stated earlier in section 3.6, beginning with the summer 2016 program OVR will become a more active partner in the Summer Work Employment and Assessment Program (SWEAP) targeted to youth with disabilities through funding approximately 50% of the youth in the program with the possibility of a greater percentage in future years.

5.3 Describe the competitive and non-competitive processes, as well as the process for sole-sourcing, used for procuring goods and services within the local area. This includes, but is not limited to, the process used to award funds to a one-stop operator and other sub-recipients/contractors of WIOA title I adult, dislocated worker, and youth services. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(16)]

As part of County government the Berks County WDB relies on the County of Berks Purchasing Department for the procurement of goods and services.

Board staff, with input and approval from applicable board committees, write the statement of work for all requests for proposal and participate in the review of all submitted proposals. The purchasing department assembles and advertises the RFP and conducts the contract process with proposal evaluation committees which include WDB members and staff. The WDB will occasionally request amendments to contracts if necessary (new yearly budgets, updating performance, etc.). In such instances, the purchasing department will review the request and conduct the amendment process. The Berks County Board of Commissioners approves all contract awards and amendments in public meetings.

The County of Berks Purchasing Department Procurement Guide governs all aspects of the WDB procurement process and is available for public review.

5.4 Describe the local area’s negotiated local levels of performance for the federal measures and their implications upon the local workforce system; attach the completed Performance Targets Template. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(17)]

Note: See Appendix C: Transitional Planning References and Resources “Performance Targets Template”.

As described in Sections 2.1 and 2.4, the Berks County Workforce Development Board (WDB) goals are aligned with the broad WIOA goals of placement in employment or education/training, credential attainment, retention in employment/education/training, and effectiveness in servicing employers.

During the first year of WIOA implementation in PY2015, the WDB began to transition the year-round youth program to serve primarily out-of-school youth, in alignment with WIOA emphasis on serving this group. Beginning in program year 2016, the WDB will use WIOA youth funding exclusively to serve out-of-school youth through programs that offer GED and access to post-secondary education and training through individual training accounts, work-based learning opportunities tied to employer needs, and follow-up services that engage youth with continued supportive services and practical training (budgeting, etc.) that are aimed at ensuring their continued success after program exit.

Focusing on the manufacturing and healthcare sectors is meant to ensure that job-seeker customers of the PA CareerLink® Berks County are provided access to and information concerning the most promising jobs in the county, while benefiting employer customers through recruitment efforts targeted towards job-seekers meeting their skill requirements. This focus is translated at the PA CareerLink® Berks County to services such as individualized job development for adult and dislocated workers and the extensive use of work-based training to bring the job seeker and employer together. This two pronged approach is meant to increase the likelihood of employment and retention for the job seeker while meeting the hiring needs of the employer customer.

The Berks WDB’s proposed negotiated PY2016 local levels of performance for the federal measures are found in Appendix C (attached). However, the Berks WDB is not prepared to provide a more complete response to this element at the time of plan submission. For example, WIOA’s required changes in youth programs that began in PY2015 have not yet yielded sufficient baseline historical data to project appropriate targets for these measures. More significantly, the US Department of Labor has missed statutory requirements to finalize WIOA regulations and it appears that the final regulations will not be published until sometime in June 2016. Without knowing what the final regulations will entail, neither the Berks WDB nor the state are being allowed sufficient time to properly negotiate the new common indicators of performance ahead of PY2016. In addition, the state has not yet defined a process for how it will negotiate regional performance target levels for the SE PA planning region as required by WIOA and which necessarily will impact the negotiation of our local measures. The best that the Berks WDB can do at this point is to propose setting the same target levels as the state recently proposed to the USDOL for PY2016. We look forward to final federal regulations and additional clarification from the state during the effective period of this local transitional plan so that a more complete response and more data-driven targets can be established for continuous improvement of performance in PY2017 and throughout the four-year local plan.

5.6 Describe the process used by the local board for the receipt and consideration of input into the development of the local plan in compliance with WIOA section 108(d). Describe the process to provide an opportunity for public comment prior to submission of the local plan. Be sure to address how members of the public, including representatives of business, labor organizations, and education were given an opportunity to provide comments on the local plan. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b)(20)]

The Berks County WDB has been in an active planning mode for WIOA implementation for nearly a year and much of the strategic planning and discussions with key stakeholders was already in development prior to the formal writing of this plan. The WDB's *Policy, Planning, & Priorities Committee* which is responsible for developing this proposed plan included experienced and engaged membership from a number of private employers representing various industry sectors, economic development, higher education, labor, community-based organizations (CBOs) and public service. In addition, an early draft of this plan was shared at the quarterly meeting with the Berks County Ride to Prosperity (RTP) economic planning team on April 14, 2016.

PA Local WDBs were given only 90-days from the state's issuance of the transitional plan templates (Appendices A and B) to the due date for plan submission on June 2, 2016. Included in this timeframe is the requirement for 30-day public comment periods for both the transitional regional and local plans. For all practical purposes, this left the local WDBs with only 60 days to prepare proposed local plans addressing all of the required elements. In the SE PA planning region, the preparation of six separate local transitional plans had to be coordinated with the cooperative development of the SE PA regional transitional plan. As a result, there was not as much time as would be preferred to gather and consider all possible input prior to the posting of the plan for public comment. However, members of the public, including additional representatives of business, labor organizations and education will be provided additional opportunities to provide local plan feedback during the public comment period from April 27 – May 26, 2016.

Keeping in mind that this initial WIOA plan is by design a transitional plan, the Berks WDB will continue to actively seek public input during the ongoing development of the four-year local plan in PY2016.

5.7 Prior to the date on which the local board submits a proposed local plan (i.e., no later than Thursday, June 2, 2016), the proposed local plan must be made available to members of the public through electronic and other means.

- A. Describe how the local board made the proposed local plan available for public comment. [WIOA Sec. 108(d)(1)];
- B. Describe how the local board collected and considered public comments for inclusion in the proposed local plan. [WIOA Sec. 108(d)(2)]; and
- C. If any comments were received that represent disagreement with the proposed local plan, include such comments within the local plan's attachments. [WIOA Sec. 108(d)(3)]

- A. The Berks WDB is posting the proposed transitional local plan on the County of Berks website – Berks WDB page for public review and comment from April 27 – May 26, 2016. The posting of the plan will be advertised by official public notice published in *The Reading Eagle* on April 27, 2016. The public notice will also advertise a public meeting to receive additional comment to be held at the PA CareerLink® Berks County on Friday May 13, 2016 from 9:30 – 11:00 am.

- B.** The public notice of the plan will specify that public comments be submitted to the resource account at info@bccl.org. Additional comment will be received at the public meeting on May 13, 2016. These comments will be reviewed by Berks County WDB staff as they are received and a summary of the comments and any changes to the plan as a result of this comment will be posted on the County of Berks website on the Berks WDB page.

- C.** Any comments that represent disagreement to the plan will be summarized and included as an attachment to the Berks WDB local transitional plan that will be submitted to the state as part of the required SE PA regional plan no later than June 2, 2016.

5.8 List the name, organization, and contact information of the designated equal opportunity officer for each PA CareerLink® center within the local area.

John W. Moser
Berks County Workforce Development Board
1920 Kutztown Road, Suite G
Reading, PA 19604
610-988-1358
jwmoser@bccl.org

5.9 By checking the box adjacent to each line item, the local board attests to ensuring the compliance components/documents listed are in place and effective prior to July 1, 2016.

Copies of the listed compliance components/documents are not required at this time, but may be requested during monitoring and/or auditing.

N/A Agreement between all counties and other local governments, if applicable, establishing the consortium of local elected officials

- ✓ Agreement between the chief elected official(s) and the fiscal agent, if a fiscal agent is designated
- ✓ Agreement between the local elected official(s) and the local workforce development board
- ✓ One-Stop Partner Agreement(s)
- ✓ Resource Sharing Agreement(s)
- ✓ Resource Sharing Agreement Budget(s)
- ✓ Local workforce development board 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 procurement policy
- ✓ Program management policy and process including equal opportunity for customers; supportive services; needs related payments; file management; eligibility; self-sufficiency criteria; individual training accounts; layoff assistance; priority of services; grievance for eligible training providers list; transitional jobs; stipends; and training verification/refunds
- ✓ Risk management policy and process including records retention and public access; public records requests; monitoring, grievance; incident; and disaster recovery plan

N/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/non-discrimination

N/A Professional services contract(s) for administrative services such as staffing and payroll, if applicable

Appendix C: Transitional Planning References and Resources

I. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Combined Workforce Development Strategic Plan (*State Plan*)

Governor Wolf's Strategic Vision for Workforce Development in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

On July 22, 2014, President Obama signed the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) providing a framework for Governors and states to make changes to their workforce systems. The federal law sets the parameters for the workforce system which is an integral part of the commonwealth's ability to serve jobseekers and employers. WIOA will enable the commonwealth to align workforce priorities across multiple partners, training providers, employers and others to ensure we are creating a skilled workforce for today and the future.

An effective workforce development system will be built on a foundation of alignment, innovation, employer engagement, accountability structures and improved data. Pennsylvania will look beyond WIOA to set broad goals for a comprehensive workforce development system that ensures access for all to "jobs that pay, schools that teach, and government that works." We will do this by providing the highest quality of service to jobseekers and employers through well-coordinated approaches at the state and local levels. System access will be enhanced through the use of technology and creative partnerships with community organizations and other service providers. While access will be improved for all jobseekers, the provision of services and training will be focused on those most in need and hardest to serve.

Our five broad goals for the commonwealth's workforce development system are:

- Establish career pathways as the primary model for skill, credential and degree attainment and provide all Pennsylvanians, with an emphasis on Pennsylvanians with barriers to employment, an opportunity to a job that pays.
- Expand the state's pipeline of workers for targeted industry sectors from entry level skills to middle skills through Industry Partnerships, WEDnetPA, and other innovative strategies.
- Increase opportunities for all youth to participate in work based learning through summer employment, pre-apprenticeship, apprenticeship and other similar experiences.
- Engage employers directly to ensure we are closing the skills gap and able to more quickly upskill or reskill the workforce to meet the current and future needs.
- Strengthen data sharing across state agencies and workforce development partners to understand education and employment outcomes and more effectively evaluate our efforts."

A. PY 2016 Combined State Plan to be found at [PA Workforce Development-Policy Documents](#)

B. [PA State Workforce Development Board](#) information

II. Department Policy and Guidance.

- A. Methods of Administration (MOA) will be accessible on a public site being established.
- B. Department Policy and Guidance (includes new and revised policies designed for initial implementation of WIOA) will be posted on the Labor & Industry website.

III. Center for Workforce Information and Analysis (CWIA).

The Department's Center for Workforce Information and Analysis (CWIA) will provide required labor market information and other economic data to assist in the development of regional and local plan economic analysis.

CWIA presents a wide range of data and information on their website: [CWIA Home Page](#)

CWIA staff will provide technical assistance regarding planning elements that necessitate an economic analysis.

IV. PY 2016 Performance Targets Template. (Attached)

V. Other Resources.

- [TEN 1-15; Promising Practices in Achieving Universal Access and Equal Opportunity: A Section 188 Disability Reference Guide; July 6, 2015](#)
- [TEGL 37-14; Update on Complying with Nondiscrimination Requirements: Discrimination Based on Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Stereotyping are Prohibited Forms of Sex Discrimination in the Workforce Development System; May 29, 2015](#)
- [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#)

Transitional PY16 Local Plan
Appendix C: Local Area WIOA Proposed Performance Goals

Name of local workforce development area: Berks County

WIOA Performance Measures	Proposed Local Area PY16 Performance Goals
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	
Negotiated Goals	
Adult	59.0%
Dislocated Worker	67.0%
Youth	58.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	
Negotiated Goals	
Adult	58.0%
Dislocated Worker	63.0%
Youth	57.0%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)	
Negotiated Goals	
Adult	\$5,000
Dislocated Worker	\$6,300
Youth	\$2,100
Credential Attainment Rate	
Negotiated Goals	
Adult	68.0%
Dislocated Worker	71.0%
Youth	60.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	
Negotiated Goals	
Adult	48.0%
Dislocated Worker	48.0%
Youth	48.0%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	
Negotiated Goals	
Adult	25.0%
Dislocated Worker	25.0%
Youth	25.0%

Exhibit A: Public Comment & Response

Response to CJP Comments to Berks County WDB Transitional Local Plan (5/31/2016)

The Berks County WDB welcomes the public comments and suggestions submitted by the Community Justice Project (CJP) in Harrisburg, PA regarding our proposed PY2016 Berks County WDB Transitional Local Plan.

State policy issued on *February 29, 2016* specifies the elements to be included in the local transitional plans and does not include elements to be addressed regarding priority of service. However, the guidance does include a certification (section 5.9) checklist specifying that local program management is in compliance with state policy and processes, including policy regarding priority of services. The Berks WDB adopted the required *Adult Priority of Services Policy* effective March 21, 2016 and the policy was reviewed and approved by PA L&I on May 16, 2016. The current *Adult Priority of Services Policy* has been posted on the Berks County WDB page of the County of Berks website. Further details regarding implementation of priority of service will be included in the Berks County WDB's multi-year plan to be developed in PY2016.

As stated in the local proposed transitional plan (Section 2.2; p. 25), the Berks WDB supports the development of career pathways but cautions that career pathways are best nurtured within a well-established industry sector strategy as developed and promoted by the Berks WDB. In our experience, career pathways independent of a robust local industry sector (such as advanced manufacturing or healthcare) too often lead to occupational dead ends for job-seekers and unfilled positions for employers. This is especially detrimental for job-seekers with barriers to employment who have much less room for recovery from ill-advised training programs. The Berks WDB *Training and Industry Partnership Committee* will assist with the development of regional sector-based training strategies to include career pathways and the identification of high priority occupations (Section 3.1.A; p.29). Further details regarding implementation of career pathways will be included in the Berks County WDB's multi-year plan to be developed in PY2016.

Transitional Employment (TE) provides limited, subsidized work experience for individuals with chronic unemployment or inconsistent/limited work history. In anticipation of full WIOA implementation, the Berks County WDB updated its Work-Based Training Policy at the beginning of PY2015 to specify that TE will be available to Berks County participants who are eligible under the Youth, Adult or Dislocated Worker funding streams. As described in the Berks WDB's local proposed transitional plan (Section 4.8; p.49), all training activity (including TE) is linked to High Priority Occupations (HPOs), and their relevant wage and educational attainment levels, within the priority Industry Sectors as defined by the full board. State policy issued on *February 29, 2016* specifies the elements to be included in the local transitional plans and does not include elements to be addressed regarding TE. However, the guidance does include a certification (section 5.9) checklist specifying that local program management is in compliance with state policy and processes, including transitional work. Further details regarding TE will be included in the Berks County WDB's multi-year plan to be developed in PY2016.

Community Justice Project Comments on the Berks County Workforce Development Board Local WIOA Transition Plan

(May 23, 2016)

The Community Justice Project (CJP)¹ submits these comments on behalf of Success Against All Odds and the many low-income clients CJP represents every year who seek to better their lives through better jobs. The Berks County Workforce Development Board WIOA Transition Plan (BCWDB Plan) was published for public comment on April 27, 2016, with comments due by May 27, 2016.

Because we work on behalf of low-income clients, our comments focus on: (i) priority of service for recipients of public assistance and other low-income, high needs persons; (ii) Career Pathways; and (iii) Transitional Jobs (subsidized employment).

I. Background

WIOA, like its antecedents -- the Workforce Investment Act and the Job Training Partnership Act -- places special importance on serving low-income, high needs groups. According to WIOA:

Priority for individualized career services and training services must be given to:

- (i) recipients of public assistance;
- (ii) other low-income individuals ;and
- (iii) individuals who are basic skills deficient

WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(E)

WIOA strengthens priority of service requirements under the Workforce Investment Act in a number of ways, including eliminating the provision under WIA that priority of services applies only when funds are limited. Under WIOA, priority of service must be provided, regardless of funding.

Strengthening the priority of service requirement was clearly needed, as a declining number of low-income persons were served under WIA, despite its priority of service requirement. National data show that only 48.7 percent of adult “exiters” who received training and/or intensive services through the WIA Adult funding stream were “low-income individuals” in Program Year 2013 – a marked decrease from 71.3 percent in Program Year 2001. **And only 3.8 percent of those served in Program year 2013 were TANF recipients.**²

¹ The Community Justice Project is a statewide project of the Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network focusing on impact advocacy. CJP has worked for many years with its client group Success Against All Odds to improve access to adult and postsecondary education for single parents participating in the TANF and SNAP programs.

² Comparison of nationwide data from PY2002 and PY2013 presented in Table II-1, Characteristics of Adult Exiters Who Received Intensive or Training Services, in Department of Labor Workforce Investment Standard Record Data (WIASRD) Data Books for PY2005 and PY2013, respectively. Online at:

Over the past decade and a half, WIA delivered training services to a declining share of low-income individuals, and WIA served a far lower percentage of low-income adults than the predecessor federal law in place before 1998, the Job Training Partnership Act, which required that 90 percent of the funds for adults were targeted for those who were low-income.³

In light of the underlying intent of WIOA, WIA, and the JTPA - and past failure by states to realize the goals of priority of service -- the Wolf Administration placed special emphasis on this key provision of WIOA in its March 17, 2016 WIOA State Plan. In order to ensure successful implementation of priority of service for recipients of public assistance and other low-income, high needs groups targeted by WIOA, the State Plan included:

- Service benchmarks for those entitled to priority of service;
- Specific guidance to Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) and CareerLinks on what “priority of service” means and how it works;
- A directive that LWDBs and Career Links provide detailed information on how they will address a range of issues critical to successful implementation of priority of service requirements.

(See, WIOA State Plan, pp. 10-11 and 67-70)

We focus in these comments on the last of these three priority of service provisions in the WIOA State Plan because an important purpose of the local and regional plans is for the LWDBs and CareerLinks to demonstrate that they have thought carefully about how they will ensure that training services are provided to low-income, high needs persons and have workable plans for so doing.

II. Comments

A. Priority of Service

In their local plans, LWDBs and PA CareerLink® centers are required to “state the additional methods by which they will apply the WIOA priority of service requirements and the commonwealth’s policy regarding priority of service,” by stating “in detail” how they will address specific issues critical to successful implementation of priority of service. (WIOA State Plan pp. 69-70)

The Berks County Workforce Development Board Plan says virtually nothing about priority of service and fails to state a coherent and comprehensive plan to ensure that public assistance recipients and other low-income

http://www.doleta.gov/performance/results/pdf/PY_2005_WIASRD_DataBook_Rev%208-14-2007.pdf (page 15) and http://www.doleta.gov/performance/results/pdf/PY_2013_WIASRD_Data_Book.pdf (page 21).

³ Frank, Abbey and Elisa Minoff. 2005. “Declining Share of Adults Receiving Training Under WIA Are Low-Income or Disadvantaged.” Washington, DC: Center for Law and Social Policy. Online at <http://www.clasp.org/resources-and-publications/files/0254.pdf>. See also: Ridley, Neil. 2010. “Strengthening Priority of Service for Low-Income Adults through WIA Reauthorization.” Washington, DC: Center for Law and Social Policy. Online at <http://www.clasp.org/resources-and-publications/files/WIAServices.pdf>.

persons will receive priority for Title I WIOA training services. The only we could find to services for low-income persons discusses services to youth, not even mentioning services for the Title I adults:

The Board recognizes that the new training targets emphasize the targeting of individuals with barriers to employment, including low-income individuals and those who are basic skills deficient. During Program Year (PY) 2015 the WDB has prepared for this effort through the redesign of the youth program to one focused on serving disconnected young adults.

(BCWDB Plan, p. 33)

Not surprisingly, the BCWDB Plan fails to detail how the agency will address the priority of service implementation issues set forth in the WIOA State Plan, despite the clear mandate to do so. This deficiency must be addressed.

Each of the issues related to successful implementation of priority of service implementation that LWDBs and PA CareerLinks are required to address is listed below. For each one, we explain why the issue in question is important to successful implementation of priority of service, and we offer suggestions as to how it might be effectively addressed.

(i) How [the LWDB and CareerLink] will obtain data reflecting each of the three categories of persons entitled to priority of service in their service area and the approximate numbers in each category.

This data is important in order to provide a sense of whether the LWDBs and CareerLinks (local agencies) are meeting the needs of the low-income communities they serve. While the Commonwealth intends to monitor LWDBs and PA CareerLinks to determine whether at least 70 percent of those served are persons entitled to priority,⁴ this in and of itself, does not tell us to what extent the needs of the low-income community overall are being met.

Comment: The BCWDB Plan should:

- Include county by county data easily obtained from DHS showing the number of persons receiving public assistance (TANF and SNAP) -- a core group of those entitled to priority -- from the Department of Human Services (DHS).
- State how it will obtain data reflecting the number of other low-income persons, we well as those who are basic skills deficient.

⁴ The commonwealth will monitor data reported by LWDBs and PA CareerLink® centers to determine the percentage of those served who are individuals with priority of service. Should this percentage be less than 70 percent, the commonwealth shall provide the LWDB or PA CareerLink® center with technical assistance to ensure that effective affirmative outreach efforts to individuals with priority of service are made. (WIOA State Plan, p. 68)

(ii) The outreach [the LWDB and CareerLink] will do to inform the public of Pennsylvania’s priority of service policy and how they will target this outreach to best reach those potentially eligible for priority of service and any agencies that serve them.

Because public assistance recipients and other low-income persons have been chronically and historically underserved, many in this community have little or no idea that training services are available to them through the LWDBs and CareerLinks, much less that they have priority for training. Local agencies will have to take specially tailored measures to reach this population. (Doing so will not only provide training opportunities for populations not previously served, but will help local agencies reach priority of service benchmarks established by the Commonwealth.) (WIOA State Plan, pp. 10-11 and 68).

The BCWDB Plan fails to include any strategy whatsoever for effective outreach to public assistance recipients and other low-income persons entitled to priority of service.

Perhaps the best strategy for outreach is for local agencies to connect with the Department of Human Services and work cooperatively with DHS state level policy makers and local County Assistance Offices to explore the needs of TANF and SNAP recipients within their service area for adult and postsecondary education, transitional jobs, and other services and to develop a collaborative system for those in need of such services to be screened, referred to, and served by the local agency.

Comment: The BCWDB Plan should include a commitment by the agency to work in partnership with DHS and its CAOs to develop a plan for outreach and provision of training services to persons receiving TANF and SNAP benefits that includes:

- A process for informing TANF and SNAP clients of the opportunities for training services available to them through WIOA, in addition to those available through DHS and its welfare to work contractors, or through both.⁵
- A process for assessing TANF and SNAP clients interested in WIOA training opportunities to determine their education level, aptitudes, barriers, career interests, and training needs/goals -- along with a breakdown of what agencies/contractors will be responsible for each aspect of this process.
- The provision of career counseling to inform TANF and SNAP clients about training and job opportunities in High Priority Occupations suited to their interests, aptitude, and experience.
- A system for referral of TANF and SNAP clients to the local WIOA agency for training services.⁶
- A process for sharing data regarding activities pursued by TANF and SNAP clients and the progress that have made.

(iii) How [the LWDB and CareerLink] will inform individuals seeking to access WIOA services of their priority of service, such as through posters and prominent placement of other information.

⁵Career Pathways programs are a good example of an important opportunity available through the WIOA system that is not available through DHS or its contractors. Transitional jobs may be another, depending on location.

⁶Under WIOA this can now be done by contract with DHS, an option that should be seriously considered.

This is important in order to ensure that those who contact the local agency for training services and do not know they are entitled to priority of service will be able to identify themselves as such and receive the priority to which they are entitled.

The WIOA State Plan, itself, suggests a couple of methods to educate the public about priority of service, but there are many more. A local agency could develop and play a video in the office waiting room, run public service announcements, place advertisements at bus stops, etc.

Comment: The BCWDB Plan should describe a range of strategic methods it will use to educate the public about priority of service.

(iv) When otherwise deemed eligible for program participation, how [the LWDB and CareerLink] will affirmatively identify persons entitled to priority of service and inform those individuals of the full array of services available.

While issue (iii), above, relates to self-identification, issue (iv) is concerns the problem of how to identify persons entitled to priority of service who seek WIOA services and who either do not know they have priority or have not disclosed this. Use of a screening tool may be the most effective way for the local agency to determine whether a client may be entitled to priority.

Comment: The BCWDB Plan should describe:

- The screening or other tool it intends to use to identify persons entitled to priority of service; and
- The counseling and written materials it will use to inform them of the range of services available to them and how priority of service works.

(v) The assessments [the LWDB and CareerLink] will use to identify barriers to employment among those entitled to priority of service and the services needed to address them.

Many of those entitled to priority of service have barriers to employment, such as those listed in the WIOA statute's definition of this term.⁷ The assessment process and tools employed by local agencies should include screening for barriers to employment, done in a manner that respects privacy, but nevertheless informs the client of the types of barriers for which assistance can be provided.

Comment: The BCWDB Plan should:

- Describe the process and tools that it uses or will use for assessment; and

⁷ "Individuals with barriers to employment" include: displaced homemakers; Indians, Alaskan Natives and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities including youth with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals; youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English language learners, individuals with low levels of literacy and individuals facing cultural barriers; eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers; individuals within two years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under TANF; single parents to include single pregnant women; and long-term unemployed individuals.

- Explain how this process will inform clients of the range of barriers to employment for which services or accommodations may be available, while respecting the client's right not to disclose personal information should she prefer not to do so.

Once a barrier to employment has been disclosed, services to address or accommodate that barrier will normally be needed. So, for example, a victim of domestic violence might be referred to an agency that can provide appropriate counseling services or safety planning while she is pursuing training services through the local agency. An ex-offender with a criminal history might be counseled and/or referred to a legal services provider for help with expungement. Properly addressing barriers requires knowledge of services available in the community for the range of barriers the agency is likely to encounter and developing relationships with service providers to facilitate referral.

Comment: The BCWDB Plan should describe how it will identify and facilitate access to appropriate services in the community to address the range of barriers to employment listed in WIOA.

(vi) The process by which [the LWDB and CareerLink] will develop Individual Employment Plans for persons entitled to priority of service that will address, in addition to training needs, any barriers to employment they may have.

WIOA eliminated sequential service requirements for those seeking Title I training services. This was a significant change and should serve to improve access to training services, especially for those entitled to priority of service.

Comment: The BCWDB Plan should describe each step in its simplified procedure for processing requests for Title I training and other services under Title I of WIOA. In doing so, the Plan should:

- Explain the role of assessments and how they are used;
- Spell out the content and specific steps involved in developing Individual Employment Plans;
- Describe the factors involved in deciding upon and developing plans for training services;
- Explain how the local agency will incorporate plans for addressing barriers to employment.

(vii) How [the LWDB and CareerLink] will ensure that they are serving the spectrum of persons entitled to priority of service, including those, such as English language learners, who may require more resources to serve.

This issue is similar to element (v), dealing with barriers to employment, but is more focused on those needing special services or accommodations, such as persons with limited English proficiency (LEP) and disabilities. These needs are common in the high needs groups covered by priority of service requirements. Addressing the needs of such persons is required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Americans with Disabilities Act and, thus, the importance of ensuring services to these groups goes without saying.

Access to Career Pathways programs, with their emphasis on adult education including English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL), is especially valuable for those with limited English proficiency. But identifying LEPs and providing interpretation and translated documents will be critical in order to facilitate equitable access and provide meaningful training services. Special attention to language access by LWDBs and CareerLinks in their

local plans is warranted given the importance of these services to persons with this particular barrier to employment and considering also Pennsylvania's poor performance in the past in serving LEPs:

While new provisions in WIOA do target workforce services to these basic skills deficient individuals, the record of career pathways models and other training programs in providing equitable access to individuals who are low-educated and/or LEP is very weak. This is an especially urgent concern in Pennsylvania, for example, where **only 2.5% of those exiting from Title I Adult intensive or training services in the 2014-15 program year were LEP.**⁸

The BCWDB Plan says very virtually nothing about how the agency will identify and serve LEP or disabled persons.

Comment: The BCWDB Plan should describe:

- How it identifies and tracks, through the education, training, and employment process, the primary language of people with limited English proficiency so staff will be prepared to provide accessible services;
- How it provides notice of the right to language services (oral communication through bilingual staff and/or interpretation as well as translated documents);
- How it affirmatively identifies persons with limited English proficiency, so as not to rely entirely on self-identification through notice of the right to language services. (This could include, for example, training of staff to recognize signs that a person is not sufficiently fluent in English to navigate the local agency's WIOA process.)
- How it provides notice to persons with disabilities of their rights under the ADA, including the right to reasonable accommodation.
- How accommodations may be requested and how they are determined.

(viii) How [the LWDB and CareerLink] will address the special needs of individuals with barriers to employment in the delivery of services, such as by assuring that appropriate career planning services are provided. This should include a detailed description of how appropriate career planning services will be provided, or arranged for, through collaboration with other agencies in the event that the LWDB or PA CareerLink® center lacks the required expertise.

WIOA defines "career planning" as:

[T]he provision of a client-centered approach in the delivery of services, designed—

(A) to prepare and coordinate comprehensive employment plans, such as service strategies, for participants to ensure access to necessary workforce investment activities and supportive services, using, where feasible, computer-based technologies; and

⁸ Margie McHugh and Madeleine Morawski, *Immigrants and WIOA Services, Comparison of Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Native and Foreign Born Adults in Pennsylvania* (National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy, March 2016), p. 4 (emphasis added).

(B) to provide job, education, and career counseling, as appropriate during program participation and after job placement.

(WIOA Sec. 3 (8))

We see this as involving two essential components -- career counseling and case management. Career counseling is key to making wise decisions about training services and training providers and should be a central component of the assessment and training program selection process for anyone seeking services from the local WIOA agency, including especially low-income persons, who may have lacked meaningful access to such assistance in their past.

Effective case management, as described in Section 3 (8) of WIOA, is critical to ensure that clients receive support, advice, and assistance, not only in the development of their training plan, but as they pursue their training program and must deal with the need for child care, transportation, and other supportive services, as well as barriers to employment that impact on their participation.

Comment: The BCWDB Plan should:

- Explain whether case management services, as described in Section 3 (8)(A), will be provided directly by the local agency and, if not, by whom it will be provided and under what arrangements;
- Describe the case management services that will be provided, how they will be provided, and how clients will access these services;
- Explain whether career counseling will be provided directly by the local agency and, if not, by whom it will be provided and under what arrangements;
- Describe how and at what points in a client's participation in the WIOA program process career planning is provided.

(ix) How [the LWDB and CareerLink] will ensure access to services, i.e., interpreters and translated documents, for English language learners, as well as for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing.

This is similar to issue (vii), but is more focused on how bi-lingual staff, language line or other telephone interpretation services, in-person interpreters, and translation services are used and whether adequate resources are devoted to these services.

Comment: The BCWDB Plan should:

- Identify the five most common languages spoken in the local agency's service area and the approximate number of persons who speak these languages;
- Identify how the local agency will document LEP persons' primary language in case records or files so staff will be prepared to provide accessible services;
- State the number of bi-lingual agency staff who speak any of the five most commonly spoken languages and their positions in the local agency;
- Explain whether and how it provides interpretation to LEP persons who seek training services;
- Explain how it trains staff to identify and meet the needs of LEP persons.

(x) How [the LWDB and CareerLink] will train staff to ensure that staff members have an understanding of who is entitled to priority of service and that the office is responsive to the needs of these groups.

Priority of services is only meaningful to the extent local agency staff understands and properly implement its requirements.

Comment: The BCWDB Plan should:

- Describe the curriculum it will use to train staff on priority of service requirements; and
- Explain who will receive this training (e.g., reception staff, line workers, management) and how often the training will be provided.

B. Career Pathways

As advocates for low-income public assistance recipients, we are particularly interested in the availability and quality of Career Pathways training programs. Career Pathways programs provide adult education (literacy/English-as-a Second Language/GED), career counseling, and transition to postsecondary education and job skills training. These programs have proven highly successful. States are strongly encouraged by WIOA to develop and operate such programs.

Over forty percent of adults receiving Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) lack a high school degree or GED. Yet, less than three percent of these parents are participating in GED programs. DHS does not operate Career Pathways or any other adult education programs for parents on TANF or SNAP. Providing access to Career Pathways programs to parents on public assistance through LWDBs and CareerLinks will provide a pathway from public assistance to employment at family sustaining wages -- a benefit not only to these families, but to the state as well.

The final WIOA State Plan requires that LWDBs and CareerLinks develop and operate Career Pathways programs, as defined in WIOA, and that such programs provide for entry at the literacy, ESL, GED, or postsecondary education level (See, Proposed WIOA State Plan, pp. 8-9)

The Berks County Workforce Development Board WIOA Transition Plan describes what appears to be an existing career pathways program:

With the encouragement and guidance of the Berks County WDB and fellow *RTP* partners, over the past five years **Reading Area Community College (RACC)** reached back to the County's two excellent high school career and technical centers – **Berks Career and Technical Center (BCTC) and Reading Muhlenberg Career and Technical Center (RMCTC)** – to build comprehensive Technical Academy career pathways and the associated articulation agreements for high school CTE students to earn college credit for high-end technical coursework. In effect, the Technical Academy serves as an *honors program* for qualified CTC students, allowing them to acquire up to 27 college credits at no cost prior to high school graduation.

(BCWDB, p. 17)

This is a good start, but more information is needed.

Comment: The BCWDB Plan should:

- Specify the elements of the Career Pathways programs it intends to operate, which should include at a minimum those required by WIOA;
- Identify the partners (such as Department of Education, Department of Human Services, Community Colleges, Career and Technical Schools) with whom the local agency intends to partner in operating Career Pathways programs;
- Explain the process that will be used to develop Career Pathways programs;
- State the number, location, and estimated time frame for operationalizing each Career Pathways program the local agency plans to establish.
- Explain how the local agency will provide priority of service to public assistance recipients and other low-income persons for Career Pathways slots.
- Explain how the local agency will ensure that the first step on its career pathways (Literacy, ESL or GED) is accessible to those entitled to priority of service.

C. Transitional Jobs

WIOA allows states to spend up to 10% of Title I funds on transitional jobs, i.e., subsidized employment, opportunities for participants. Access to transitional employment slots for low-income persons can provide valuable work experience that can lead to permanent employment. This is particularly important for recipients of public assistance, many of whom want to work but lack work experience. It also provides an important opportunity for those with criminal backgrounds.

The final WIOA state plan includes a requirement that LWDBs and CareerLinks use between 5% and 10% of their funds to provide transitional jobs and that they ensure that priority of service for transitional jobs is afforded to individuals who qualify for priority of service. (WIOA State Plan, p. 70)

The BCWDB Plan refers to paid work experience opportunities for youth, but says nothing about a transitional jobs program for Title I adults.

Comment: The BCWDB Plan should:

- State the amount of Title I funds that it will dedicate to transitional jobs and the percentage this represents, as well as the total number of jobs that it anticipates will be funded;
- Describe its plans and goals for raising additional funds for transitional jobs;
- Describe in detail the design of its transitional jobs program (Local agencies that operated Way to Work programs with TANF Emergency Funds in 2010 may want to look back to those programs and explain what they would do the same or do differently from Way to Work.)
- Describe how it will recruit employers to participate in the transitional jobs program, and if there are particular employers that it anticipates will participate;
- State whether the local agency will be the employer of record for clients in the transitional jobs program and, if not, whom the employer(s) of record will be.
- State whether the transitional jobs program will be incorporate “wraparound” or complementary services (e.g., job skills training), and describe the services provided, if so.
- Explain how the local agency will provide priority of service to public assistance recipients and other low-income persons for transitional jobs slots.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

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