



2024 - 2028

Southeast Economic Development Region 7

&

Local Workforce Innovation Area 23

Workforce Regional Plan





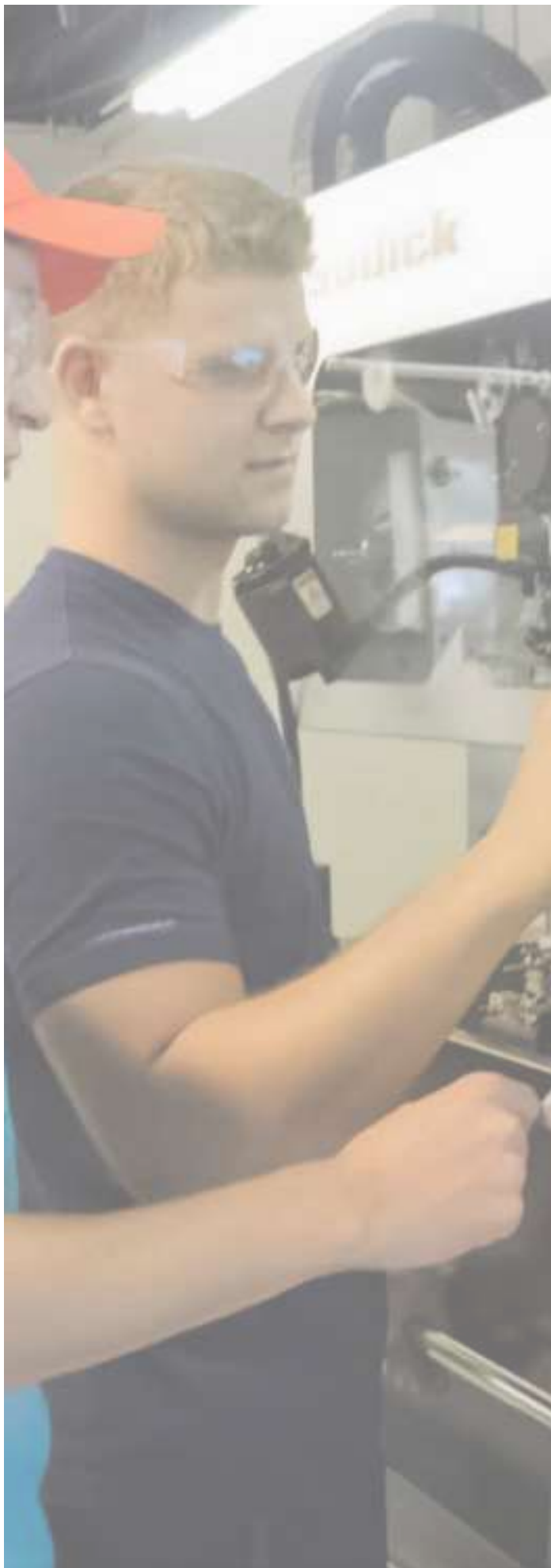


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INTRODUCTION

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014 is designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. To foster regional collaboration, states identify regions within their state to promote alignment of workforce development programs with regional economic development strategies. In Illinois, the Governor defined the Southeastern Economic Development Region 7 (SEDR) to include the following counties: Clark, Clay, Coles, Crawford, Cumberland, Edgar, Effingham, Fayette, Jasper, Lawrence, Marion, Moultrie, and Richland counties. For the purposes of the local plan, the Local Workforce Innovation Area 23 (LWIA 23) consists of all those thirteen counties. The first three chapters of this plan fulfill the WIOA regional planning requirements intended to develop, align, and integrate service delivery strategies; support the state’s vision and strategic and operational goals; and coordinate resources among multiple local workforce innovation areas (LWIA) in a region. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 address the local planning component of the plan. It contains information about operative systems and policies, performance goals and evaluation and technical requirements and assurances in LWIA 23.

Planning Region

Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Local Workforce Innovation Areas (LWIA) administer public workforce programs. An LWIA is composed of one or more counties that provide workforce development services under the leadership of a business-led Local Workforce Innovation Board (LWIB). For the regional plan, Economic Development Regions are considered as the planning region. An Economic Development Region (EDR) is a designated region consisting of a combination of local areas (or a single local area) that are partially or completely in a single planning region, labor market area, or other appropriate contiguous sub-area of a State, that is designated by the State under WIOA section 106(a), or a similar interstate region that is designated by two or more States under WIOA section 106(b).

This regional plan has been developed for the Southeastern Economic Development Region (SEDR) or EDR 7, which is comprised of solely LWIA 23 as shown in the map.

Vision Statement and Guiding Principles

The Southeastern Economic Development Region (SEDR) is driven by the State of Illinois’ workforce vision and guiding principles approved by the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board comprised of business, workforce, education, and state agency officials.

Vision - “Provide business-driven talent and data-driven solutions that integrate education, workforce, and economic development resources across systems to provide businesses, individuals, and



communities with the opportunity to prosper and contribute to growing the regional and state economies.”

Guiding Principles

- Demand-Driven Orientation
- Strong Partnerships with Business at All Levels
- Pathways to Careers of Today and Tomorrow
- Cross-agency Collaboration and Connections
- Integrated Service Delivery
- Equitable Access and Opportunity for all Populations
- Clear Metrics for Progress and Success
- Focus on Continuous Improvement and Innovation

Strategies

The SEDR will apply the following key strategies developed in the Illinois WIOA Unified Plan to ensure that future workforce, education, and economic development partnerships are business led while offering individuals clear opportunities to build and upgrade their skills and advance their careers.

- Uses a customer-centered approach to service delivery
- Advances diversity, equity, inclusion, and access
- Supports, informs, and enhances employers’ talent strategies
- Assists employers as they adopt a culture that promotes equity and accessibility
- Educates and supports job seekers regarding how to navigate the labor market
- interacts with job seekers in the places where they live and visit

Plan Development and Coordination

The SEDR or LWIA 23 Regional Plan has been developed in accordance with the WIOA federal and state guidelines for the purpose of developing, aligning, and integrating service delivery strategies; supporting the state’s vision and strategic and operational goals; and to coordinate resources among multiple partners in the region. The SEDR will undertake the processes and strategies outlined in this plan over the next four years in partnership with all WIOA core and required partners by integrating services as outlined in the IWIB Service Integration Policy (WIOA Policy 18-WIOA-1.13). Service integration is defined as a combination of strategies to align and simplify access to one-stop center services and supports for employers, job seekers and system customers with the goal of providing the best experience possible. Service integration may occur across entities delivering specific services or programs, across time as customer needs change, or both.



The Local Workforce Innovation Board (LWIB) from LWIA 23 along with regional workforce system partners will work together to enhance the productivity and competitiveness of communities by linking employers and individuals to the employment and training services they need. Effective coordination at the regional level will allow the workforce resources of the entire region to respond quickly to address workforce needs of local communities and individuals.

Regional Planning Strategies

- Development of diverse regional partnerships to advance talent development;
- Establishment of regional service strategies, including use of cooperative service delivery agreements
- Alignment of business and job seeker service delivery strategies to create a world class talent pipeline
- Development and implementation of sector initiatives for in-demand industry sectors or occupations for the planning region
- Collection and analysis of regional labor market data (in conjunction with the state) which must include the local planning requirements at § 679.560(a)(1)(i) and (ii)
- Coordination of administrative cost arrangements, including the pooling of funds for administrative costs, as appropriate
- Coordination of transportation and other supportive services as appropriate
- Coordination of services with regional economic development services and providers
- Establishment of an agreement concerning how the planning region will collectively negotiate and reach agreement with the Governor on local levels of performance for, and report on, the performance accountability measures described in WIOA Sec. 116(c) for local areas or the planning region

Local Planning Strategies

- Direct investments in economic, education and workforce training programs to focus on providing relevant education and training to ensure that individuals, including youth and individuals with barriers to employment, have the skills to compete in the job market and that employers have a ready supply of skilled workers;
- Apply job-driven strategies in the one-stop system;
- Enable economic, education and workforce partners to build a skilled workforce through innovation in, and alignment of, employment, training, and education programs; and
- Incorporate the local plan into the regional plan per 20 CFR 679.540.

The core programs and agencies overseeing them for each LWIA are:

1. Title I Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth
 - a. C.E.F.S



2. Title II Adult Education
 - a. Lake Land College
 - b. Illinois Eastern Community Colleges
 - c. Kaskaskia College
3. Title III Employment Programs under Wagner-Peyser
 - a. Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES)
4. Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation
 - a. Department of Human Services - Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS)

Regional Planning Team

In accordance with the Governor's vision for the State Workforce System, the SEDR's regional planning team included representatives from the following core and required partners:

- C.E.F.S. Economic Opportunities Corporation - *Title I*
- City of Salem Economic Development
- Coles Together
- Crawford County Development Association (CCDA)
- Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity (DCEO)
- Department of Corrections (DOC)
- Department of Human Services - Division of Family and Community Service - *TANF*
- Department of Human Services - Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) - *Title IV*
- East Central Illinois Development Corp. (ECIDC)
- Eastern Illinois Education For Employment System 340 (EIEFES)
- Effingham Regional Career Academy (ERCA)
- Effingham Regional Growth Alliance (ERGA)
- Elevate/Small Business Development Center @ Eastern Illinois University (SBDC-EIU)
- Embarras River Basin Agency, Inc. (E.R.B.A.) - *CSBG*
- Greater Wabash Regional Planning Commission (GWRPC)
- Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) - *Title III*
- Illinois Eastern Community Colleges (IECC)
 - Adult Education – *Title II*
 - *Perkins V*
 - Industry & Business
- Illinois Manufacturing Excellence Corp. (IMEC)
- Industry & Business/Small Business Development Center at IECC (SBDC at IECC)
- Kaskaskia College (KC)
- Kuhl's Trailer Sales*
- Lake Land College (LLC)
 - Academic Services – Technology Division

- Adult Education – Title II
- Center for Business and Industry
- Perkins V
- LWIA 23 - Local Workforce Innovation Board & Staff
- New York University - Re-Entry Employment Grant
- North American Lighting*
- Pump Repair Specialists Inc., PRSI*
- Shelby County Economic Development Corp. (SCEDC)

**Denotes private sector/employer representation*



1. ECONOMIC & WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

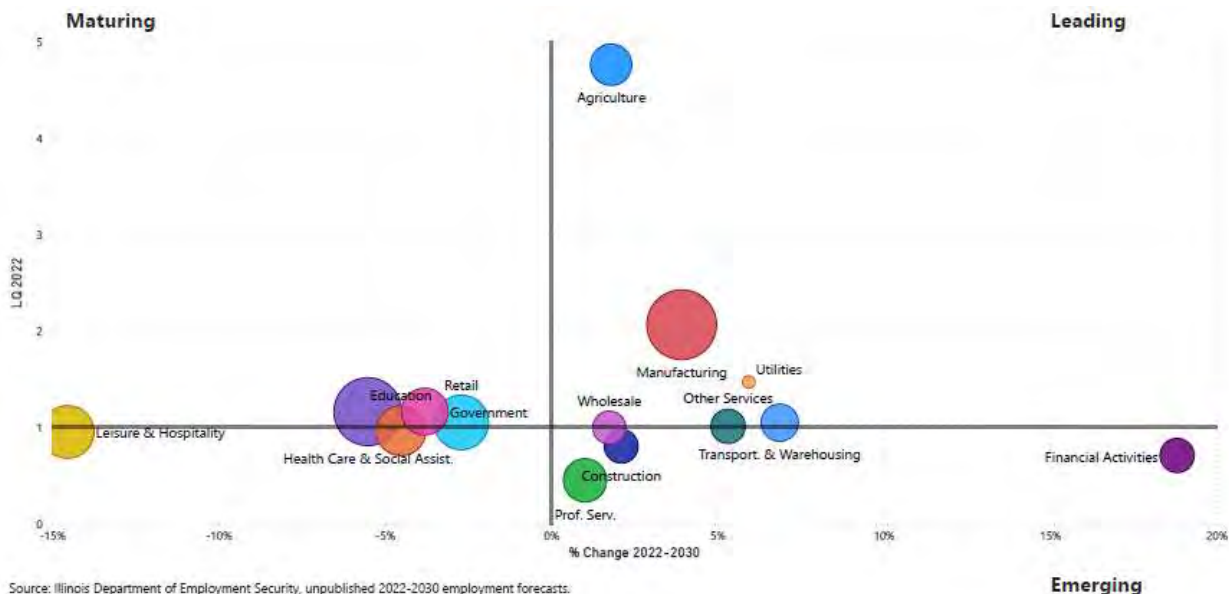
This chapter provides an analysis of the region’s workforce and economic factors. In creating the SEDR Regional Plan for program year 2024-2028, economic conditions encompassing both existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations were investigated. Supply and demand data was reviewed in the Occupational Employment Projections report provided by the Illinois Department of Employment Security as well as the Supply Gap Analysis and other reports in the 2024 Regional Plan Data Packet for SEDR 7. The data reports included statistics on the number of jobs established within the region, favorable location quotients, job growth numbers, job annual replacements, and information regarding leading, emerging, and maturing industries.

1.A Regional Analysis

Below is an assessment of the Southeast Region’s labor market, based on current and future economic conditions.

Economic conditions largely influence which industries and occupations will be in-demand throughout the upcoming decade. Economic conditions include local demand for goods and services, demand for exported goods and services, and macroeconomic conditions including the strength of the U.S. dollar, health of the financial system, and continuing viability of the physical and technological infrastructure that enables trade between regions and between countries.

Figure X.X – Employment and Location Quotients by Sector



1.A.1.a. Targeted Industries & In-Demand Occupations

Targeted Industries

Through analysis of data garnered from the *SEDR 2024 Regional Data Packet* and data reports ran through *Lightcast*, along with considerations of quality-of-life impact, the workforce ecosystem partners determined that the same targeted industries from the previous regional plan will maintain their priority status in the next four years. Those targeted industries were determined to be:

1. Manufacturing
2. Transportation, Distribution, Logistics
3. Healthcare (including childcare)
4. Construction
5. Education

In-Demand Occupations

The occupations found to be in-demand based on projected job openings over a ten-year period, have been broken down by education requirement.

In-demand occupations *not* requiring an industry credential include:

- Retail Salespersons
- Stockers and Order Fillers
- Fast Food Workers
- Cashiers
- Light Truck Drivers
- Laborer & Freight, Stock, and Material Movers
- Restaurant Cooks
- Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers
- Maintenance and Repair Workers
- Sales Representatives
- Machinists
- Childcare Workers
- First-line Supervisors of Food Prep and Serving Workers

In-demand occupations requiring a *certificate or license* include:

- Nursing Assistants (CNAs)
- Automotive Service Technicians
- Preschool Teachers
- Medical Secretaries
- Hairstylists



- Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs)
- Diesel Engine Mechanics
- Emergency Medical Technicians & Paramedics
- Library Technicians

In-demand occupations requiring an *Associate's Degree* include:

- Registered Nurses (RNs)
- Dental Hygienists
- Computer User Support Specialists
- Computer Network Support Specialists
- Paralegals
- Radiologic Technologists
- Computer Occupations, other
- Physical Therapist Assistants
- Health Technicians/Surgical Assistants

In-demand occupations requiring a *Bachelor's Degree* include:

- Project Managers & Business Operations Specialists
- Accountants & Auditors
- Elementary School Teachers
- Software Developers & Quality Assurance Analysts
- Secondary School Teachers
- Market Research Analysts
- Insurance Sales Agents
- Human Resource Specialists
- Computer Systems Analysts

In-demand occupations requiring an *Education Beyond a Bachelor's Degree* include:

- General & Operations Managers
- Financial Managers
- Management Analysts
- Sales Managers
- Clergy
- Marketing Managers
- Medical & Health Services Managers
- Administrative Services & Facilities Managers
- Computer & Info Systems Managers
- Lawyers

Industries with Favorable Location Quotients

Figure X.X (above) graphically depicts each sector of the region’s economy. The vertical axis represents each sector’s location quotient (LQ), while the horizontal axis depicts the percent growth in payroll jobs in that sector between 2022 and 2030. The size of each bubble demonstrates the current size of the region’s workforce in that sector.

As shown in the figure, the Southeast Region contains several industrial sectors with favorable LQs. Agriculture, Manufacturing, and Utilities are three outstanding sectors in the region, as determined by the region’s LQs. Construction, Transportation & Warehousing, Education, and Healthcare & Social Assistances also have favorable LQs.

Favorable Demand Projections - Growth

As Figure X.X demonstrates, the industries projected to have the greatest percent job growth in the region are Financial Activities, Transportation & Warehousing, and Utilities. The Other Services and Manufacturing industries are also anticipated to add payroll jobs at a modest pace through 2030. The projected increase in jobs is due to favorable economic growth trends in the region.

Table 1.1 displays the occupations which are anticipated to add personnel because of economic growth. Based on Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) projections, most job growth will occur in Transportation and Material Moving occupations, as well as in Management occupations.

Occupation Title (SOC 2-digit)	Median Annual Salary	Estimated annual job openings from economic growth
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	\$39,221	84
Management Occupations	\$86,052	58
Food Preparation and Serving Occupations	\$28,661	49
Healthcare Support Occupations	\$32,592	34
Business and Financial Operations Occupations	\$62,618	32

Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security Employment Projections Program

Favorable Demand Projections - Replacements

According to the IDES occupational projections, the highest number of replacement positions will be available in Transportation and Material Moving, as well as in Production and Food Preparation occupations. A number of Sales and Office and Administrative Support positions will also become available in the region through 2030.

Table 1.2: In-demand occupations based on projected replacements

Occupation Title (SOC 2-digit)	Median Annual Salary	Estimated annual job openings from replacements
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	\$39,221	919
Production Occupations	\$41,506	906
Food Preparation and Serving Occupations	\$28,661	862
Sales and Related Occupations	\$30,583	839
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	\$39,231	794

Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security Employment Projections Program

Important but Maturing Industries

The percent of jobs in industrial sectors such as Health Care & Social Assistance, Retail Trade, and Government are each slightly higher in the region as compared with the United States, and are classified as maturing. However, in 2022 these sectors accounted for over 31% of the region’s total employment, and will remain a vital source of jobs going forward.

Emerging Industries

The percent of jobs in industrial sectors such as Professional & Business Services, Financial Activities, Construction, and Wholesale Trade are each lower in the region as compared with the United States, and are classified as emerging.

Projected Key In-Demand Occupations

Through analysis of data garnered from the *SEDR 2024 Regional Data Packet* and data reports ran through *Lightcast*, along with input from local-level information, the workforce ecosystem partners determined that the projected key in-demand occupations in the next ten years will be:

- Certified Nursing Assistants
- Licensed Practical Nurses
- Registered Nurses
- Automotive Techs/Mechanics
- EMTs and Paramedics
- Physical Therapist Assistants
- Teacher Assistants
- Childcare Workers
- Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers
- Industrial Maintenance Technicians

Supply & Demand Data Sources



Supply and demand for occupations are provided through the Illinois Department of Employment Security's (IDES) Employment Projections program. The skills correlating with those occupations were identified by IDES through occupational descriptions obtained via O*Net Online.

1.A.2 In-Demand Industry Employment Needs

The following analysis is segmented by the extent to which education credentials are required for an entry-level position. Among occupations requiring a certificate or license, the top three occupations by projected annual openings are Nursing Assistants, Automotive Service Mechanics, and Preschool Teachers.

Among occupations requiring at least an Associate's degree, the top three occupations by projected annual openings are Registered Nurses, Dental Hygienists, and Computer User Support Specialists.

Among occupations requiring at least a Bachelor's degree, the top three occupations by projected annual openings are Project Management & Business Operations Specialists, Accountants & Auditors and Elementary School Teachers.

Among occupations requiring education beyond a Bachelor's degree, the top three occupations by projected annual openings are General & Operations Managers, Financial Managers and Management Analysts.

1.A.3 Knowledge & Skills Needed

Targeted Career Pathway Clusters

Based on the Southeast Region's list of in-demand occupations, the following details form the basis for an ongoing nurturing of local career pathways.

- Health Sciences
 - Support Services pathway
- Manufacturing
 - Production pathway
 - Maintenance, Installation, & Repair pathway
 - Quality Assurance pathway
 - Logistics pathway
- Transportation, Distribution, & Logistics
 - Transportation Operations pathway
 - Sales & Service pathway
- Education & Training
 - Teaching & Training pathway
- Construction & Architecture
 - Construction pathway
 - Maintenance & Operation pathway

[\[list of cluster titles available here\]](#)

In Demand Skills

After review of several sources, the most common top skills for in-demand occupations across sectors, are: Active listening, reading comprehension, critical thinking, service orientation, social perceptiveness, learning strategies, resilience, mentoring, and digital literacy.

Hot Skills by Job Postings – *Lightcast*

- Sign Language
- Mentorship
- Multilingual/Spanish
- Budgeting
- Board Certified
- Case Management
- Clinical Practices
- Smart Phone Operation
- Information Systems
- Economics
- Detail Oriented
- Analytical Skills
- Quality Management

Skills Gap

The current and projected labor market information indicate that the current skills gap between the needs of manufacturing, education, healthcare, transportation/logistics/warehousing, and construction employers and the skills of the available workforce will continue to increase.

Based on manufacturing employer surveys conducted in the region, current skill gaps identified by employers include difficulties to find applicants with the specific experience, training, skills and/or certification that they are seeking. Employers also identified customer service, attendance, time management, punctuality, communication skills, and accountability as examples of improved soft skills needed.

Other factors related to job applicants or employees not being able to pass drug tests or background checks, frequent turnover in employees, unacceptable work schedules, and job applicants not interested to work for the wage or salary offered. Preliminary results from this employer survey indicate that the labor force in the region lacks specific hard skills (occupational skills) as well as some soft skills. Other hiring issues indicated by employers include lack of relevant work experience and issues with work schedule and compensations.

To address the skills gap within the region, regional workforce partners have begun hosting employer panels, roundtables, and TPM[®] Collaboratives, to collect data on their needs for targeted industry sectors. The Business Services Team is involved in employer outreach to gather information about skills and training needs of the employers in the region. Collecting

ongoing input from employers will inform future efforts to address the skill gap.

1.A.4 Analysis of Regional Workforce

Regional Changes in Demographics & Labor Supply

In total, the region’s population in 2022 was 266,331. Of the total, 94.3% of the population reported their race as White, while 3.2% were Black, 0.7% were Asian, 0.3% were American Indian, and 1.5% were either Pacific Islander or multi-race. In terms of demographics, the region has seen some demographic shifts between 2002 and 2022. In particular, the number of Black (+38%), Asian (+45%), and Pacific Islander/Multi-race (+131%) residents has risen dramatically in percentage terms, although the regional population of these racial groups has not increased by more than 5,000 residents each. Between 2002 and 2022, the number of

	2002	2012	2022
Labor Force	141,927	138,695	129,977
Unemployment	8,729	11,924	5,127
Unemployment Rate	6.2%	8.6%	3.9%
Payroll Employment			
Natural Resources and Mining	900	1,300	700
Construction	5,100	4,200	4,400
Manufacturing	23,000	18,900	19,200
Wholesale trade	4,400	4,300	3,900
Retail Trade	12,700	11,700	11,800
Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	4,700	5,100	5,600
Information	4,300	1,400	1,500
Financial Activities	4,100	4,100	4,200
Professional and Business Services	5,800	6,200	4,800
Educational and Health Services	14,900	16,000	17,800
Leisure and Hospitality	9,000	8,700	11,100
Other Services	4,100	4,000	4,400
Government	21,600	20,200	19,400
Federal Government	1,100	900	800
State Government	5,900	5,500	5,400
Local Government	14,600	13,800	13,200

Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

residents

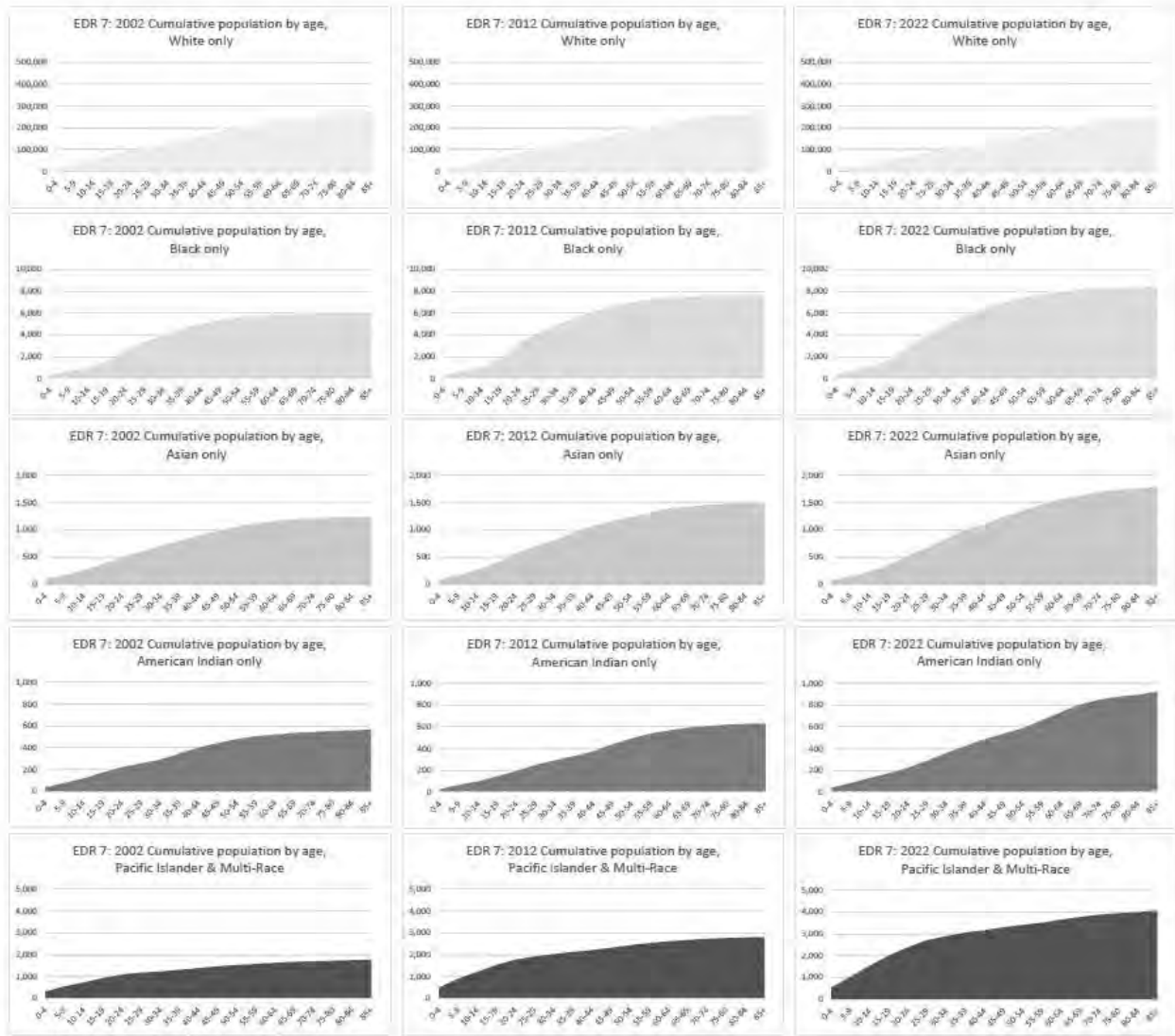
under age 20 dropped 18.6%, while the number of residents age 60 and over increased 21.2%.

As seen in table 1.3, the region’s labor supply has contracted since 2002, in part due to the modest shift in local labor demand from industries such as information and manufacturing, as well as a decline in government employment at the federal, state, and local levels. Current labor force data shows unemployment is at an all-time low of 3.9%. However, the labor force



participation counts have decreased significantly from 2012 to 2022. Do note that payroll employment is rounded to the nearest hundred in table 1.3.

Population age profile by race: 2002, 2012, 2022



Source: U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates Challenge Program

Special Populations in the Region

In this region, special populations include disabled persons, justice-involved individuals, a small homeless population, persons aged out of foster care, migrant workers, persons facing language or culture barriers, single parents, long-term unemployed individuals, persons living in qualified census tracts, and persons who are deficient in basic workforce skills.



Low-income indicators¹

▪ TANF Persons, May 2023:	1,093
▪ TANF Cases, May 2023:	425
▪ SNAP Cases, April 2023:	28,499
▪ SNAP Households, April 2023:	14,744

Foster care²

▪ DCFS Foster Care 2023 in July 2023, by placement type	
○ Total:	1,031
○ Relative care:	593
○ Foster care:	428
○ Group home / other:	10

Justice-involved population³

▪ Adult prison population (committing region):	947
▪ Adult parolee population (residence region):	569

Persons with disabilities⁴

▪ Total:	42,130
○ Hearing difficulties:	13,530
○ Vision difficulties:	7,474
○ Cognitive difficulties:	15,908
○ Ambulatory difficulties:	21,083
○ Self-care difficulties:	7,966
○ Independent living difficulties:	14,420

¹ Source: Illinois Department of Human Services

² Source: Illinois Department of Children & Family Services

³ Source: Illinois Department of Corrections

⁴ Source: American Community Survey 5-year estimates



1.B Support for the Development of Sector Initiatives

Convening Sector Partnerships

The Local Workforce Innovation Board is to serve as the conveners of the workforce system, bringing together employers and community partners to promote economic growth through these partnerships and ensure alignment between education and workforce services. Active participation of all LWIB members and close collaboration with partners, including public and private organizations, is vital to this success.

As the convener, the LWIB will determine the relevant employers, foundations, institutions, and other stakeholders in the region who have a vested interest in the sector partnerships you aim to create or maintain. The LWIB will establish clear objectives of the partnership through defined the goals and deliverables, whether that is addressing specific workforce needs, promoting economic development, or enhancing collaboration between industries and education. The LWIB will craft a communication plan to reach out to stakeholders and generate interest in participating. Utilize various channels such as emails, newsletters, social media, and personal outreach to ensure broad engagement.

The responsibility to organize and facilitate convening events resides with the LWIB. LWIA 23 aims to host events such as conferences, forums, or workshops to bring stakeholders together. These events provide opportunities for networking, sharing best practices, and brainstorming ideas for collaboration. Through the convening events, an interactive design convening events will encourage dialogue and collaboration among stakeholders. Another responsibility of the LWIB is to offer resources, tools, and technical assistance to support stakeholders in establishing and maintaining sector partnerships. This could include funding opportunities, research insights, capacity-building workshops, and access to skilled facilitators. Through sector partnerships, the LWIB aims to empower stakeholders to take ownership of the sector partnerships by providing opportunities for leadership roles and decision-making. LWIA 23 encourages diverse perspectives and ensure representation from all relevant sectors. To facilitate continuous learning and improvement, mechanisms for ongoing evaluation and feedback to assess the effectiveness of the sector partnerships and identify areas for improvement will be created and enforced.

Ultimately, LWIA 23 aims to foster a culture of continuous learning and adaptation to evolving workforce needs and market dynamics. Sector partnerships provide an ideal opportunity for local workforce partners to effectively support each other, drive collaborative efforts to address workforce challenges and to promote regional economic prosperity.

Active Sector Partnerships

Several sector-based partnerships exist in the Southeast Economic Development Region.

- Illinois Eastern Community Colleges and Lake Land College boast a *Center for Business and Industry*.

- Perkins V requires the regional post-secondary *Career & Technical Education programs to conduct Advisory Committee* meetings at least annually. These sector partnerships play an integral role in industry/sector-education alignment. The role of the advisory committees comprised of stakeholders play a direct role in regional planning by analyzing current sector happenings, identifying gaps, and forming strategies to improve the problems affecting the sectors.
- *Illinois Manufacturing Excellence Center (IMEC)* is a sector-based partnership in SEDR. IMEC is a team of improvement specialists and technicians dedicated to providing manufacturing organizations in Illinois with the tools and techniques to create sustainable competitive futures. The experienced hands-on team at IMEC works closely with its clients to plan critical business improvements in the areas of Leadership, Strategy, Customer Engagement, Operations, and Workforce.
- *Illinois Manufacturing Association (IMA)* is a sector-based advocacy agency for Manufacturing interests in Illinois. The partnership with IMA members manifests in recruiting and training opportunities. Through partnership with IMA, the LWIB is able to stay abreast of current policies and events impacting the Manufacturing sector. This is helpful in planning and strategizing within the EDR.
- *Illinois Rural Health Association (IRHA)* is a sector-based collaborative association whose mission is to strengthen health systems for rural residents and communities through advocacy, education, networking, and leadership. The partnership between IRHA and LWIB opens doors of communication and networking opportunities in which needs are addressed and information/resources are shared. The communication is helpful in short-term and long-term planning within the region.

Identifying and supporting additional business-led sector-based partnerships in the region is a priority of the LWIA 23 Business Services Team.

Public-Private Partnerships

Other public-private partnerships exist in the region that could support sector strategies as follows:

- *Effingham Chamber Workforce Readiness* which works with area businesses and manufacturers to assess employee skill sets needed. As an external stakeholder, the participants play an indirect role in planning.
- *Entrepreneur programs within the schools*, such as: ClassE, CEO, and Excel help introduce students to business opportunities. As an external stakeholder, the participants play an indirect role in planning.
- *Marshall Career Readiness school initiative* which prepares students for workforce training and career readiness upon graduation from high school by promoting career planning and exploration. As an external stakeholder, the participants play an indirect role in planning.

- *Organized professional society groups such as SHRM and CFO* can provide information as to the skills and abilities needed not only in the organizations they represent, but in those of their group members. As an external stakeholder, the participants play an indirect role in planning.
- *CTEC-Construction Trades, Effingham County* is a non-profit educational program dedicated to equipping students with skills and experience needed to secure a job within the construction trades upon high school graduation. As an external stakeholder, the partnership plays an indirect role in planning.
- *Labor Union representatives* from targeted in-demand sectors on the LWIA Board can aid in developing training and employment opportunities. As an external stakeholder, the participants play an indirect role in planning.
- *Effingham County Childcare Committee*, part of the Effingham County board's effort to research and identify underlying issues with the childcare services in Effingham County, and to develop a plan to overcome the workforce-related hurdles.

In general, WIOA staff will coordinate with other entities that offer supportive services to increase awareness of what each entity can provide to customers so as to not duplicate services and maximize funds efficiently. Specific policies and procedures will only generate from formal partnerships with an MOU and a direct role in regional WIOA economic development planning.

Neutral Conveners

LWIA 23 staff to the LWIB serve as a neutral convener in the region. In addition to the public-private partnerships listed above, a multitude of entities with the capacity to establish sector partnerships exist in the region and provide direction in planning through their work with SEDR industries and businesses including: Chambers of Commerce, Small Business Development Centers, and Economic Development Organizations across the region may also serve as neutral conveners:

- *LWIA 23 Board members and Chief Elected Officials* provide oversight to all partners to ensure accessibility to and delivery of services available to community members and customers.
- *Chambers of Commerce and Economic Development Organizations* throughout the region all focus on working with member businesses to facilitate and enhance relationships within their respective communities in areas such as workforce development and economic growth.
- *University of Illinois Extension* creates and provides accessible, practical educational programming within the EDR 7 region.
- *Regional Planning Commissions and Development Organizations* are partnerships focused on revitalizing neighborhoods, improving access to affordable housing, or providing social services. They often take on infrastructure projects and economic development initiatives to attract industry to the region.

1.C Talent Pipeline Management® Employer Collaboratives



Manufacturing Collaborative

Manufacturing businesses across the region are actively engaged with the US Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Talent Pipeline Management® initiative. The LWIA 23 Business Services Team has facilitated the Collaborative to Strategy Three of the TPM® six strategies.

Healthcare Collaborative

Healthcare employers across the region are actively engaged with the US Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Talent Pipeline Management® initiative. The LWIA 23 Business Services Team has facilitated the Collaborative to Strategy Two of the TPM® six strategies.

IT Collaborative

IT employers across the region are actively engaged with the US Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Talent Pipeline Management® initiative. The LWIA 23 Business Services Team has facilitated the Collaborative to Strategy One of the TPM® six strategies.

Hospitality Collaborative

Hospitality businesses across the region are actively engaged with the US Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Talent Pipeline Management® initiative. The LWIA 23 Business Services Team has facilitated the Collaborative to Strategy Two of the TPM® six strategies.

At this stage, the workforce system is supporting the needs of the participating employers by facilitating dialogue, identifying common pain-points, and prioritizing pain-points in order to develop a solution-oriented plan.

1.D Economic Development Opportunities

Southeast Illinois holds potential for economic development across various sectors and touching many aspects of quality of living. Several opportunities identified by the SEDR workforce ecosystem partners include:

- *Agribusiness*: support growth of agribusiness, food processing, and ag technology.
- *Renewable Energy*: regional potential for wind and solar energy development; investing in renewable energy infrastructure can create jobs and contribute to sustainability goals
- *Manufacturing*: strategic location near major transportation routes makes the region suitable for manufacturing and logistics hubs. Encouraging manufacturing diversification and offering incentives for companies to establish operations can stimulate economic growth.
- *Education and Healthcare*: Investing in education and healthcare infrastructure can create job opportunities and attract professionals to the region. Developing educational institutions and healthcare facilities can also improve the quality of life for residents.
- *Technology and Innovation*: Supporting entrepreneurship, technology startups, and innovation hubs can foster a culture of innovation and attract talent and investment to

the region. Providing resources and incentives for tech companies can drive economic development.

- *Small Business Development:* Supporting small businesses through financing programs, technical assistance, and networking opportunities can stimulate economic activity and create employment opportunities in various sectors.
- *Infrastructure Development:* Improving infrastructure such as transportation networks, broadband internet access, and utilities can enhance connectivity and accessibility, making the region more attractive to businesses and residents.
- *Workforce Development:* Investing in workforce training programs and education initiatives aligned with emerging industries can prepare the local workforce for job opportunities and attract employers seeking skilled workers.

Regional workforce partners intend to foster collaboration amongst businesses, educational institutions, and community organizations with the ultimate outcome of Southeastern Illinois achieving sustainable economic development and improve the quality of life for its residents.

1.E Economic Challenges

Southeastern Illinois faces several economic development challenges that need to be addressed to promote growth and prosperity in the region:

- *Decline of Traditional Industries:* The region has historically relied on industries like manufacturing, which have faced challenges such as automation, globalization, and environmental regulations. Evolving these industries for new technologies and efficiencies while mitigating job losses and supporting affected communities is a significant challenge.
- *Population Decline and Brain Drain:* Many rural areas in Southeastern Illinois experience population decline as younger generations leave in search of better economic opportunities and amenities in urban areas. This "brain drain" can lead to a shrinking workforce, reduced consumer spending, and a loss of community vitality.
- *Limited Access to Capital:* Small businesses and entrepreneurs in the region may struggle to access financing and investment capital, hindering their ability to start or expand operations. Improving access to capital through loan programs, grants, and incentives can stimulate entrepreneurship and economic growth.
- *Infrastructure Deficiencies:* Aging infrastructure, including roads, bridges, water systems, and broadband internet access, can impede economic development by limiting connectivity, transportation efficiency, and access to essential services. Addressing infrastructure deficiencies requires significant investment and coordination among government agencies and stakeholders.
- *Skills Mismatch and Workforce Development:* The mismatch between available jobs and the skills of the local workforce can hinder economic growth. Investing in workforce

development programs, vocational training, and education initiatives tailored to the needs of emerging industries can help bridge this gap and enhance employment opportunities.

- *Limited Diversification*: Overreliance on a few industries, such as agriculture and manufacturing industries, can make the region vulnerable to economic downturns and market fluctuations. Encouraging diversification into emerging sectors and supporting entrepreneurship can enhance resilience and economic stability.
- *Perception and Marketing*: Southeastern Illinois may suffer from negative perceptions or lack visibility compared to more urbanized regions. Effective marketing and branding efforts can showcase the region's assets, attract investment and tourism, and improve its competitive position.
- *Policy and Regulatory Barriers*: Complex regulations, bureaucratic hurdles, and inconsistent policies can create barriers to business growth and investment. Streamlining regulatory processes, reducing red tape, and creating a business-friendly environment can encourage economic development in the region.

Addressing these challenges requires collaboration among businesses, educational institutions, community organizations, and other stakeholders to develop holistic strategies and initiatives that promote inclusive and sustainable economic development in Southeastern Illinois.

1.F Workforce Equity Lens: Collecting & Analyzing Labor Market Information

SEDR workforce leaders use labor market information in development of the regional plan. Labor market information analyses for SEDR illuminated many inequities in our communities, which influence our goals for access to workforce services across populations.

According to the *2024 EDR 7 Data Packet* children under the age of 5 (20.2%), females (15.5%), African Americans (38.8%), and individuals lacking a high school diploma or equivalent (26.3%) are more likely to live below poverty in our region. Correlations between education attainment and earned wages are evident. Thus, workforce partners are committed to providing workforce services in a way that addresses these disparities. Plans for strengthening our workforce will focus on increasing access to education and training to those experiencing poverty.

Our workforce leaders are morally obligated to create an equitable workforce system by ensuring all jobseekers can access training and employment via an accessible, coordinated workforce system. SEDR partners will strive to advance equity through targeted and strategic outreach efforts to the identified populations facing barriers to success and creating opportunities for individuals facing poverty to train for in-demand occupations with self-sustaining wages. Workforce leaders take on the responsibility to encourage all community services, local employers, and public departments to conduct formal equity analysis to determine service gaps.

2. STRATEGIES FOR SERVICE INTEGRATION

This chapter covers regional service strategies, including use of cooperative service delivery strategies and the connection of job seekers with employers.

2.A Workforce Development Activities

The SEDR is utilizing the American Job Center (AJC) model to create a more integrated, career driven, public workforce system. The public workforce one-stop local delivery system brings together key workforce, education, and other partners to serve and connect job seekers and employers. The Effingham One-Stop Center strives to:

- Provide job seekers with the skills and credentials necessary to secure and advance in careers with wages that sustain themselves and their families.
- Provide access to all individuals the opportunity to prepare for, obtain, and advance in high quality in-demand jobs.
- Enable employers to easily identify and hire skilled workers.
- Provide employers access to work-based learning opportunities for their current workforce.

2.A.1 Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, and Threat (SWOT) Analysis

As part of the WIOA regional planning process, partners analyzed the strengths and weaknesses of workforce development activities.

Strengths

- Strong collaborations between public and private sectors
- Demonstrated community dedication to workforce development
- Network of community colleges, educational institutions, and training providers in the region responding to education and skill needs of the workforce and considering employer needs
- Higher rates of residents with Associates Degrees compared to the state which creates a well-trained workforce
- Development of Talent Pipeline Management strategies to reinforce talent pipeline from CTE programs, pre-apprenticeships, and apprenticeships
- Multiple grants active in the region dedicated to skills training
- Active and vibrant Business Services Team working towards providing a common voice to market available programs to local employers

Weaknesses

- Deficiency in referral and service alignment due to lack of shared data and common referral processes
- Lack of on-demand transportation services for the rural region
- Lack of shared messaging of workforce ecosystem results in low visibility and missed opportunities to serve job seekers and employers
- Funding or Resource limitations of partners

Opportunities

- Growing demand for English as a Second Language (ESL)/English Language Acquisition (ELA) programs
- Narrative change around higher education and student loan debt aversion – more high school completers going directly to workforce
- Projected growth potential in many areas of business and industry
- Transformational relationships with employers to assess and identify future needs and develop new or enhanced programs to address the new needs
- Additional funding opportunities/grants to enhance current services or offer new services
- Develop a common intake/referral system to improve customer experience

Threats

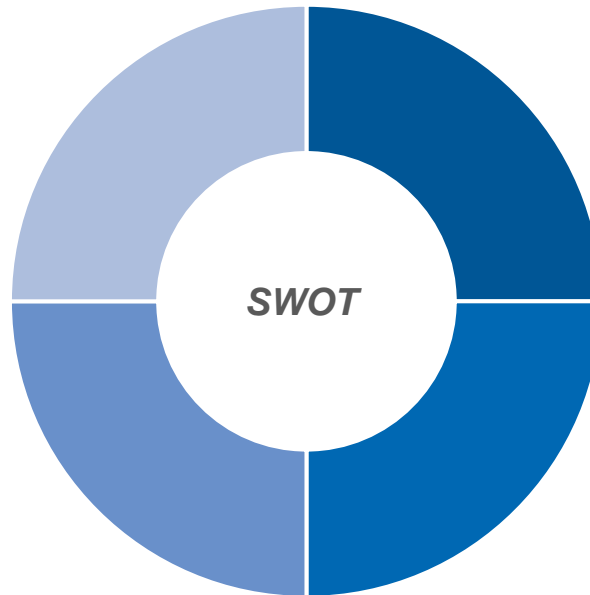
- Narrative change around higher education and student loan debt aversion – less skilled workers for entry-level positions
- Social factors – i.e., increased substance abuse/addiction impacting workforce participation; lack of public transportation options; scarcity of affordable childcare; lack of mental health services and resources
- Aging and impending retirement of many workers; overall decline in population levels
- Declining employability skills of new workforce generation

STRENGTHS

- Public-Private Collab
- Community Dedication
- Network of Colleges, University, Training Providers
- TPM® Facilitators
- High Pop. With Associates Degrees
- Skills Training Grants
- Vibrant Business Services Team

OPPORTUNITIES

- Growing ESL/ELL Population
- More High School Grads going to Workforce.
- Projected Growth Potential in multiple Sectors
- Transformational relationships with industry



WEAKNESSES

- Deficiency in Referral System
- Lack of on-demand Transportation
- Lack of common messaging for Workforce System
- Limited Resources

THREATS

- Less Skilled workers for Entry-level Positions
- Social Factors – lack of childcare; lack of transportation, lack of mental health services and resources
- Aging and impending Retirement
- Decline in Population

2.A.2 Regional Capacity for Education & Skills

Regional partners provide workforce development activities to address workforce education and skill needs (including to those of individuals with barriers to employment) by offering:

- Career and Technical Education at the secondary and post-secondary levels
- Customized upskilling for incumbent workers
- Job training services
- Job search assistance
- Career counseling
- Interview practice
- Resume development
- Labor Market Information
- Employment workshops
- Career and interest assessments
- Accessibility and special accommodations for people with disabilities
- Access to ILJobLink.com
- Unemployment information
- Rapid Response events meet affected employees where they are



- Referral to additional supportive services (SNAP, Medicaid, emergency funds, scholarships, utility assistance, etc.)
- Collaborating with the SEDR partners, including cross-training among partners, to better facilitate service delivery
- Adult Education and ESL/ELA offered in multiple modalities
- Increased accessibility through multiple modalities, i.e., virtual services: apply online; meet with customers virtually; offer online webinars; virtual outreach events; and Virtual Job Fairs

2.A.3 Regional Capacity for Employer Needs

SEDR is dedicated to serving local employers in ways that will lead to growth and prosperity. The LWIA 23 Business Services Team is an integrated team of workforce development partners seeking to connect employers and the workforce. Workforce development activities help local businesses develop and implement training programs for current and potential employees. Our programs offer workforce solutions, workforce training, and a workforce ecosystem. The purpose of the LWIA 23 Business Services Team is to promote long-term economic stability and growth by addressing the needs of businesses, workers, and communities through development of ongoing strategies and activities.

The goal of the LWIA 23 Business Services Team (BST) is to design a workforce system that is valuable to the business community and serves as a first-touch point to meeting their business needs. The services available through the partners of the LWIA 23 Business Services Team include:

- Access and analysis of Labor Market Information
- Assisting employers with job postings and resume review on Illinois JobLink
- Assistance with Virtual Job Fairs, in-person job fairs, and hiring events
- Consult on a customized recruitment plans and
- Provide pre-hire training for eligible applicants (work experience)
- Consulting to develop and funding for Incumbent Worker Training projects
- Rapid Response and Layoff Aversion assistance
- Work experience and internships
- On-the-Job Training for eligible new employees
- Developing a Department of Labor Registered Apprenticeship Program
- Talent Pipeline Management[®] strategy facilitation/sector partnerships
- Transition services for employees and/or students to the next phase of education or to the workforce
- Understanding needs of employers through activities such as regional roundtable meetings and professional advisory committees

- Assisting with community workforce promotional events such as Manufacturing Day, 8th Grade Career Conference, Trades Expo, and career fairs.
- Connecting employers with education providers to enhance job exploration and career pathways before secondary school

2.A.4 Existing Training Programs

Existing training programs in SEDR prepare job seekers to enter and retain employment with regional businesses as evidenced by the following data:

LWIA 23 Program Year 2022		
	Performance Measurement	Actual Outcome
ADULT	Employment Rate Q4	88.17%
	Credential Attainment	- 67.05%
DISLOCATED WORKER	Employment Rate Q4	80.43%
	Credential Attainment	- 72.09%
YOUTH	Employment Rate Q4	78.43%
	Credential Attainment	58.33%

The region’s ability to prepare job seekers to obtain and retain employment is not accurately tracked outside of WIOA service participants. From the results of the WIOA workforce services, we can surmise that the training programs are adequate in preparing job seekers to enter and retain employment, with the understanding that individual case management also increase employment and retention rates as well.

2.A.5 Summary of Commitments of Program Partners

All SEDR partners will need to work in collaboration in order to identify and realize effective, employer-driven sector partnerships. The partners within the region will work in a collaborative manner to use their respective programs and resources to create solutions that meet the industry and job seeker needs and are right sized for regional demand.

- Educational partners, particularly the community colleges in the region will work with OneStop partners on creating programs to serve the needs of employers in the region. These programs will be aligned with career pathways.
- OneStop partners will work in coordination with economic development organizations in the region to strengthen relationships with employers in primary and secondary targeted industry sectors.
- Sector partnerships will be created based on industry priorities. The regional economic development organizations, including Chambers of Commerce will play an important role on reaching out regional employers within each targeted industry sector.

Based on these coordinated efforts the region will develop integrated business services for the WIOA core programs.

WIOA emphasizes integrated service delivery. An integrated workforce system encourages partners to develop and share a common vision that supports the development of effective, high quality American Job Centers (AJC) - known as the Effingham OneStop Center in LWIA 23 - that connect customers with the full range of services available in their communities. While integrating services is not a new concept, the WIOA regulations strengthen the ability to align investments in workforce, education, and economic development to regional in-demand jobs.

The SEDR started developing service integration strategies in 2018 to align and simplify access to workforce services. In 2024, the strategies were reassessed. Workforce partners in the region are committed to implementing strategies to coordinate services and to maintain continuous improvement measures. Major priorities in the Region include communication across partners, which includes improving and expanding technological capabilities that can facilitate referrals; clear communication of job expectations to staff; facilitate sharing of customer data; value and respect staff; utilize customer input to design and deliver services. Because many of the challenges of integrating services across multiple areas and multiple programs cannot truly be solved at the local level, the Region continues to request from the State technological solution(s) that are system-wide, cross-program and customer-centered such as a single system-wide case management system. The LWIAs identified goals for service integration in their action plans. The following is the compiled list of the goals in order of priority across the SEDR:

1. *Communication across all One-Stop partners*
 - b. Develop/improve communication vehicles such as newsletters, meetings, event calendars, etc.
 - c. Collaborate with Business Services Team for LWIA 23 to review referral system and develop a feedback process
 - d. Create and utilize brochure of partners services



- e. Increase knowledge of Career Pathways using common language across partner agencies
 - f. Update Asset Map quarterly
2. *Customer data sharing*
- a. Explore potential common intake system
 - b. Analyze results from customer satisfaction survey; share analysis with One-Stop Operator and Consortium Committee
3. *Value and respect Staff*
- a. Solicit frontline staff input for consideration in developing local policy
 - b. Ensure staff provided with time to discuss customer service, continuous improvement service integration, working relationships at regular staff meetings
4. *Utilize customer input to design and deliver services*
- a. Continue to use/revise/update existing customer satisfaction tools
 - b. Consider development of a universal intake form
 - c. Seek opportunities to implement an automated tracking system
 - d. Utilize online forms and applications
 - e. Assess value of creating an FAQ on partner programs for customers to use
 - f. Discuss and share customer input with One-Stop Operator, LWIA 23 Consortium Committee, and the LWIA 23 Business Services Team.

As the partners work on these goals, the OneStop Operator Consortium will coordinate efforts to be more cost effective and better serve customers. Some goal-related strategies that have been implemented, or are in process, are a common referral system, data intake from OneStop customers, and monthly or quarterly newsletters.

2.B Transportation & Other Supportive Services

The following list includes a wide variety of organizations in the SEDR that provide transportation or other supportive services such as work clothing, childcare, and work physicals.

Transportation Services

• *Rides Mass Transit District (RMTD)*: operates public transportation services in seventeen counties, eight of which are within SEDR. RMTD offers fixed routes, hoppers, express service, direct door-to-door service, and ADA paratransit service buses. In addition to the local residential and in-district scheduled route services, RMTD also schedules out of district trips. RMTD even offers a free app to install on a smart device for real-time tracking and route viewing. www.ridesmtd.com

- *Dial-A-Ride*: provides safe, convenient, reliable, and low-cost general public transportation in Coles County and Douglas County. Service is provided within rural areas or between rural and urbanized areas. Dial-A-Ride provides demand response transportation whereby riders call ahead to request a specific pick-up time and location. There are also fixed routes with scheduled pick-up/drop-off points and the Coles County Zipline service.

www.dialaridetransit.org/

- *Central Illinois Public Transit (CIPT)*: provides safe, convenient, reliable, and low-cost general public transportation in the counties of Christian, Clay, Effingham, Fayette, Montgomery, Moultrie, and Shelby. All vehicles are wheelchair accessible and ADA compliant. Service is provided within rural areas or between rural and urbanized areas. CIPT provides demand response transportation whereby riders call ahead to request a specific pick-up time and location. CIPT offers fixed route service in Effingham. www.cefseoc.org/transportation-cipt

- *Salvation Army*: social service program provides money or vouchers to pay for gasoline, bus passes, or taxi fare for necessary local or out-of-town travel.

www.centralusa.salvationarmy.org/

- *Lake Land College Forsythe Emergency Fund*: emergency assistance to assist students with gas cards, Dial-A-Ride vouchers, or taxi fare for travel to/from classes.

- *DHS-Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS)*: provides financial assistance for eligible customers towards the cost of transportation who are in vocational and academic training at the post-secondary level. DRS is also able to assist with transportation costs to access employment until the customer's first paycheck. DRS is also able to assist with the cost of vehicle modifications necessary to enable a customer to safely drive a vehicle independently.

Work Clothing

- *Salvation Army*: provides quality and affordable items for those in our community. Items on sale include clothing, furniture, household essentials, books, movies, antiques, and much more. Salvation Army also provides emergency assistance to help with mortgage/rent, utility bills, clothing, medication bills, and other needs in order to keep families in their homes.

www.centralusa.salvationarmy.org/

- *Standing Stone Community Center*: Provides five vouchers for clothing per family per month. Individuals can access donated interview suits and other professional attire for low-income individuals working to secure and/or retain gainful employment.

<https://www.standingstonecc.com/>

- *Catholic Charities*: sells donated clothing items for women, men, and children.



- *Goodwill*: sells secondhand clothing and home goods. The revenue generated goes to train adults for employment, prepare young people for life and work, and help veterans readjust to civilian life.

Childcare

- *Child Care Resource & Referral at Eastern Illinois University*: provides childcare referrals, information on evaluating quality childcare, and assistance in paying for childcare for income eligible families in Clark, Coles, Cumberland, Edgar, Moultrie, and Shelby counties.
- *Project Child*: administers the Illinois Department of Human Service's (IDHS) Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) to families in southern Illinois. This program provides low-income, working families with access to quality, affordable child care. This child care allows them to continue working and/or complete their education. All families are required to cost-share on a sliding scale based on family size, and income.
- *Child Care Resource and Referral Network*: maintains a free online database of quality childcare providers in the state. www.ccrn.com/

Physical Exams

- *County Health Departments*: provide basic and preventative health care including physical exams to uninsured and underinsured adults.

Other Services

- *2-1-1 for Essential Community Services hotline systems*: provides easy access to information and referral to resources for case managers and participants. A directory of all social service agencies in Crawford, Marion, and Moultrie counties is maintained by Providing Access to Help (PATH), including mental health, housing, transportation, medical, vocational, and educational services.
- *Community Online Resource Director (CORD)*: provides contact information for community agencies and programs by category, agency, or keywords. Includes agencies with a presence in Clark, Coles, Cumberland, Douglas, Edgar, Effingham, Fayette, Jasper, Shelby, and Moultrie counties.
- *Community Navigators*: Social service navigators support community members in their effort to find, understand, and obtain assistance. Community Navigators help connect community members to services such as: transportation; food banks; homeless shelters; substance abuse counseling; legal aid; veterans services, and more. Community navigators are usually based out of the local libraries. The following local libraries offer community navigator services: Charleston, Mattoon, and Effingham.
- *Resource Navigators at Community Colleges*: Beginning January 1, 2023, each public institution of higher education in Illinois is required to designate a member of staff to serve as a

Benefits Navigator to help students in need to determine eligibility for benefit programs and identify campus wide and community resource support. The designated staff member will participate in a Communities of Practice (CoP) held by Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) to coordinate with Benefits Navigators at other public institutions of higher education to develop best practices. Below, IBHE includes links to resources that may be beneficial to Benefits Navigators.

Promoting Coordination of Supportive Service Delivery

Transportation and other supportive services are coordinated with SEDR through various partners and organizations. Using the *Regional Asset Map*, partners will refer customers to other partners within SEDR who provide the required service. For example, when an individual is participating in an approved TANF work and training activity, DHS will provide supportive service for transportation. By intentionally working as a net of support, SEDR partners can braid funds and efficiently respond to customer need without duplicating resources.

2.C Coordination of Services with Economic Development Organizations

Several economic development organizations participated in the WIOA regional planning process and are actively engaged in regional planning initiatives.

- City of Salem Economic Development
- Coles Together
- Crawford County Development Association (CCDA)
- Team RED at DCEO
- East Central Illinois Development Corp. (ECIDC)
- Effingham Regional Growth Alliance (ERGA)
- Elevate/Small Business Development Center @ Eastern Illinois University (SBDC-EIU)
- Greater Wabash Regional Planning Commission (GWRPC)
- Shelby County Economic Development Corp. (SCEDC)
- Small Business Development Center @ IECC (SBDC-IECC)

These organizations provide strong leadership within their respective geographic areas of service to meet the needs of business and grow their local economies.

All invited economic development organizations that participated in the development of the regional plan reviewed the data and provided input on regional industries and occupational growth and provided important insight on the key sectors of manufacturing, healthcare, education, building & construction, and transportation-distribution-logistics.

2.D Coordination of Costs

The coordination of administrative costs arrangements, possible pooling of funds for administrative costs, etc. for the One-Stop center is reviewed annually and documented in the MOU budget updates. All partners agree to use full-time equivalency (FTE) as the basis for determining cost-sharing and infrastructure. All partners will be responsible for their fair share of the Infrastructure and Delivery System costs for the Comprehensive One-Stop based on their agencies FTE's or a minimum of .25 FTE as required by the State Interagency Group. FTEs are determined by the number of staff that are physically located in the building for each agency that offer Career Services. If an agency has no staff member located in the building, they have agreed through negotiations to a .25 FTE to calculate their share of the costs. All partners will be billed biannually. By pooling and braiding partner funds, the SEDR can efficiently respond to regional needs without duplicating resources.

2.E Workforce Equity Lens: Regional Service Integration Strategies

A workforce equity lens is incorporated throughout SEDR's regional plan. In fact, equity is ingrained in the very fiber of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Each regional workforce leader expresses a commitment to equity and intentional coordination of service delivery strategies to job seekers and employers. Review of the most recent *Economic Development Region 7 Data Packet* emphatically shows disparities in income, education attainment, and poverty levels for households with a female head and for People of Color when compared to men-lead households and Caucasian individuals. Using an equity lens, targeted and specific outreach will focus on those populations facing disparities. Considering the target populations, workforce agencies and partners will implement the following new tactics or expand on current tactics such as:

- Survey Head Start parents (predominantly single mothers, low-income, low education attainment) during in-home visits to identify interest and opportunity for additional support services such as Adult Education, skills training, unemployment benefits, or disability services. The intended result will be increased and intentional referrals to partners.
- Contact local employers in areas with Spanish-speaking populations to offer workplace ESL courses while simultaneously offering occupational Spanish skills to native English speakers in efforts to break down communication barriers on the job.
- Work with local employers who hire individuals without a high school diploma or GED[®] to offer workplace GED[®] preparatory classes.
- Focus initial Apprenticeship Navigator efforts in establishing apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships in the healthcare field where we see heavy populations of women and women of Color in low paying positions like certified nursing assistants and in-home health caregivers. Offering career pathways to higher paying positions such as LPN and RN to the most in-need populations will increase equity in pay and skills.
- Continue case management style of assessing need and providing assistance to overcome barriers to success as this is the most effective method of addressing inequities on an individual level. Each partner agency provides superlative case-by-case



support to help individuals along their identified career paths. WIOA partners will continue to serve those most in need of services.



3. VISION, GOALS, & STRATEGIES

This section outlines the role of local boards in coordinating regional workforce, education, and economic development activities. It includes input from business, education and workforce development stakeholders who helped develop strategies that are consistent with existing plans.

3.A Strategic Vision

The SEDR Local Workforce Innovation Board (LWIB) 23 has generally adopted the state's strategic vision to support regional economic growth; however, localized the vision to focus mainly in the Southeast Economic Development Region (SEDR) or colloquially known as LWIA 23. The vision for the region is expressed as:

“Our vision is to provide business-driven talent and data-driven solutions that integrate education, workforce, and economic development resources across systems to provide businesses, individuals, and communities with the opportunity to prosper and contribute to growing the regional and state economies.”

Our vision aligns with the State of Illinois' vision, as declared in the 2024-2028 State of Illinois WIOA Unified State Plan, to foster a statewide workforce system that will meet employers, jobseekers, and community members where they are, centering customer experience in an interoperable, equitable, and accessible manner to ensure all customers achieve their goals. We will support employers by building diverse, quality career pathways and provide effective training, education and economic opportunities for jobseekers and communities to thrive.

The SEDR envisions a regional workforce ecosystem that:

1. Uses a customer-centered approach to service delivery
2. Advances diversity, equity, inclusion, and access
3. Supports, informs, and enhances employers' talent strategies
4. Assists employers as they adopt a culture that promotes equity and accessibility
5. Educates and supports job seekers regarding how to navigate the labor market
6. Interacts with job seekers in the places where they live and visit

See full list of [goals in Attachment XYZ](#)

3.B Goals for Preparing an Educated & Skilled Workforce

The SEDR Workforce Ecosystem will prepare an educated and skilled workforce by aligning and integrating partner programs and services. This alignment will include programs that focus

on employer needs for a skilled workforce while working to improve access to sector-based education and training services to those facing barriers to employment. The region will use a diverse array of models to achieve training goals including:

- *Expand Career Pathways* focused on the primary targeted industry sectors of healthcare, transportation & warehousing, and manufacturing. Pathway creation for the secondary targeted industry sector, construction, will also be explored. These pathways will contain multiple entry and exit points to connect individuals of varying abilities with realistic and meaningful opportunities.
- *Expand Apprenticeships & Earn and Learn Opportunities* by leveraging the relationships between economic development partners and employers in the targeted industry sectors. Integrated business services will be developed so that employers can access training resources from all relevant partners.
- *Expand Talent Pipeline Solutions* that reengineer the concept of education and training design with the employer at the center. The region will further develop the already existing programs based on the concepts outlined in the talent pipeline approach.

Each WIOA program partner will evaluate existing programs with respect to the goal of preparing an educated and skilled workforce. For programs under Title I and Title IV, this may mean a review of the current curriculum funded within the targeted industry sectors. Programs under adult education may want to expand contextualization of curriculum around workforce and academic readiness. As a region, partner programs will review current assessment processes and tools and develop, to the extent possible, common assessment practices that address the needs of the targeted industry sectors.

Partners will work towards consistent program design that enables them to meet the following WIOA performance measures:

1. Percent Employed 2nd Quarter after exit (Adult Programs)
 - a. Placement in Employment/Education 2nd Quarter after Exit (Youth Programs)
2. Percent Employed 4th Quarter after exit (Adult Programs)
 - a. Placement in Employment/Education 4th Quarter after Exit (Youth Programs)
3. Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after Exit (All Programs)
4. Credential Attainment (up to 1 year after exit)
5. Measurable Skill Gains (All Programs except Wagner-Peyser)
6. Effectiveness in Serving Employers (All Programs)

The core program partners will meet with their respective partner agencies locally throughout each year to determine best practices on how to achieve local goals.

Each local area will utilize the following information when negotiating local goals:

- Illinois Department of Employment Security data for the region



- Previous 4 years of each area’s local goal outcomes
- Previous 4 years of regional goal outcomes
- Regional economic development data regarding employer trends such as closings, expansions, rising/declining sectors, changes in demographics, etc.

3.C Strategies

Employer Engagement

The LWIA 23 Workforce Ecosystem will undertake the following strategies to **engage employers** in workforce development programs:

- Work with the region’s economic development organizations to identify employers (large and small) throughout the region from the identified sectors of:
 - Manufacturing
 - Healthcare
 - Education
 - Transportation & Warehousing
 - Construction – Including Trade Unions
- Establish opportunities for employers to participate in functional teams designed to:
 - Identify existing career pathways in the identified industry sectors.
 - Explore development of career pathways in those industry sectors that do not currently have one.
 - Explore the establishment of talent pipelines in the regions identified growth sectors.
 - Partners from education, workforce development, and economic development will create a common message to market these functional teams to targeted employers and seek their participation.
- Through a collaborative effort, partner agencies will investigate the viability of developing employer-led initiatives to create apprenticeship programs in the manufacturing, healthcare, transportation, and construction sectors.

Meet Business Needs

The LWIA 23 Workforce Ecosystem will undertake the following strategies to **meet the needs of businesses** in local and regional workforce development:

- Coordinate business services among the partners to improve on existing models and expand on existing retention models.
 - Coordinate with all partners to communicate one message to employers that represents all services available.
 - Meet with businesses to address barriers to growth.



- Leverage regional resources to help businesses launch or accelerate international trade programs.
- Identify technology transfer opportunities within the public and private sectors that can be leveraged for growth.
- Share information on regional, state, and federal financial tools for business development.
- Work with regional partners and economic development councils to foster a shared understanding of the needs of business and the skill needs of businesses in the targeted sectors.
- Improve outreach and recruitment of potential employees by leveraging existing federal, state, and regional career guidance tools and expanding their use throughout the region.
- Improve skills assessment of jobseekers by utilizing existing resources and identifying new tools.

The LWIA 23 Workforce Ecosystem will work to design policies and programs that facilitate better coordination between workforce and economic development programs. For example, enhanced career services (i.e., reemployment workshops, referrals to training and education providers, and direct referrals to jobs) offered at the comprehensive Effingham OneStop Center and affiliate WorkNet sites will strengthen the relationships between workforce development and unemployment insurance programs. With co-location and/or direct linkages between the two, recipients of unemployment insurance will be able to connect to all partner services in the region through the OneStop Center. In addition, partner programs can connect with recipients of unemployment insurance via Illinois JobLink to share individualized information about relevant programs and services.

Coordinate with Economic Development

The LWIA 23 Workforce Ecosystem **coordinates workforce development programs with economic development** by working with existing public and governmental organizations or agencies, such as:

- SCIGA, South Central Illinois Growth Alliance
- Effingham Regional Career Academy
- Center for Business and Industry, Lake Land College
- Greater Wabash Regional Planning Commission
- Paris Economic Development Corporation
- Coles Together



Strengthen Linkages between OneStop and Unemployment Insurance

The LWIA 23 Workforce Ecosystem **strengthens linkages between the One-Stop delivery system and Unemployment Insurance** programs by:

- Conducting joint orientations with UI claimants and Title I customers
- Regular review of referral process for effectiveness and potential improvements
- Cross-training OneStop Center staff for different programs at the OneStop Center
- Conduct combined Rapid Response meetings
- Title I trained to assist participants with use of the electronic job-matching system, IllinoisJobLink.com
- Data-sharing agreements

Promote Entrepreneurial Skills

Within the LWIA 23 Workforce Ecosystem, there are several organizations that are **promoting entrepreneurial skills training** and micro enterprising services. Workforce partners work with current organizations to provide referrals and support to individuals and businesses seeking entrepreneurial skills training and micro enterprising services:

- The Greater Wabash Regional Planning Commission covering SEDR counties of Crawford, Richland, and Lawrence has an economic plan with a strategy of creating a support system including programs and resources for entrepreneurs within the region.
- The SEED (Sustainable Entrepreneurship through Education and Development) Center at Eastern Illinois University (Charleston), provides free entrepreneurial coaching and mentoring, in addition to internship and scholarship opportunities.
- The Business Essentials Support and Technology Center (BEST), located at the Effingham Chamber of Commerce provides information, assistance, and services to individuals interested in starting a business and, for existing businesses, access to resources critical to making smart business decisions.
- The Elevate CCIC Innovation Center, funded through a Google grant and the USDA Coles County office, aids startup businesses in the region by creating a mixed-use, co-working space that provides resources and opportunities to nurture innovation and economic prosperity in the region through a collaborative community of entrepreneurs.

High schools in across the region have formed entrepreneurship clubs to help participants acquire 21st century skills of problem solving, teamwork, self-motivation, responsibility, higher-order thinking, and communication. Juniors and seniors in area high schools acquire a project-based experience by working with the local business community. The yearlong courses utilize business and education partnerships to provide an overview of business development and processes. Business investors provide funding, expertise, meeting space, business tours and one on one mentoring.

Additionally, iCREATE K-12 curriculum and community CREaTE Teams are being piloted by the University of Illinois Extension in Clark, Crawford, and Edgar counties. These innovative programs help promote awareness, knowledge and skill building to create a habit and culture of young entrepreneurial-based thinking.

Implement Workforce Initiatives

- Increase Incumbent Worker Training projects – promote IWT projects as a manner to address the skills gap for employers suffering during the skilled labor shortage induced by the pandemic.
- Provide On-The-Job training programs – promote OJT projects as a manner to help entry-level workers get to work and to help employers retain workers through training. High costs of turnover and an “employee’s choice market” have put a burden on employers which OJT reimbursements may alleviate.
- Development of Department of Labor Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs)
- Develop Industry and sector strategies through Talent Pipeline Management® strategy framework
- Work with education providers to implement guided career pathways and stackable credentials
- Career exploration for adult and youth creating a pathway for education and the workforce
- Provide youth and adult Work Experience - promote Work Experience as a potential support for local employers as well as an opportunity to work directly with future talent pools before they enter the workforce.
- Coordinate to provide wrap around services to customers and businesses which include work-based learning initiatives such as on the job training, incumbent worker, and work experience.



- Design business services and strategies through the Business Service Integration Team to meet the needs of local business and industry in SEDR

3.D Regional Strategies to Increase Apprenticeship

Regional strategies to **increase apprenticeships** and other work-based learning opportunities include:

- The Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) initiative for regional business roundtables by combining economic development regions to roll out apprenticeship programs with the revised navigator and intermediary roles.
- Coordinating meetings with business and industry and the area representative of the USDOL Office of Apprenticeship.
- Informing county leadership on the apprenticeship initiative and concept by providing information at County Board meetings.
- Working with economic development organizations to conduct regional business forums in order to introduce apprenticeship opportunities and detail work-based learning funding sources.
- Educating the private sector WIB members about apprenticeships and seeking their assistance in creating interest in their respective counties.
- Coordinating with community colleges in LWIA 23 to act as a resource to businesses and industries desiring to develop apprenticeships and related curriculum.
- Providing work experience for youth based on youth interests and skills.

LWIA 23 will employ an Apprenticeship Navigator to lead the LWIA 23 Apprenticeship Consortium of local partners in raising awareness of apprenticeship benefits and opportunities to local employers and job seekers. Through DCEO's Apprenticeship Expansion Grant, the Navigator position will be the initial contact for all things apprenticeship and will guide local businesses through the development of registered apprenticeships. The Navigator will work closely with local intermediaries – Lake Land College's Center for Business and Industry, Kaskaskia College, and Illinois Eastern Community Colleges – to support individuals through apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs. The new Navigator can expect the support of all regional workforce development partners and the LWIA 23 Business Services Team (BST). Our goal is to establish at least five new apprenticeship programs by June of 2024. The initial project will be to focus on career pathways and apprenticeships in health care, specifically supporting home health caregivers and nursing assistants on a pathway to Licensed Practical



Nursing and Registered Nursing. Also, a top priority, will be to implement Talent Pipeline Management with young adults interested in vocational training resulting in an earn-and-learn apprenticeship model for local employers.

3.E Initiatives to Shorten Time from Credential to Employment

Shortening the time from credential to employment requires a coordinated effort between the LWIB and the education system. Promising initiatives to achieve this goal and potential implementation methods are as follows:

Industry-Aligned Training Programs

Develop training programs that are directly aligned with the skill needs of local employers. Work with industry partners to identify in-demand skills and competencies and design curriculum accordingly. This could involve creating short-term certificate programs, apprenticeships, or on-the-job training initiatives. Engage employers in the design and delivery of training programs to ensure that curricula are relevant and responsive to industry needs. Work with employers to establish partnerships, advisory boards, and workgroups that provide input on program development and offer opportunities for work-based learning and employment.

Stackable Credentials

Implement a system of stackable credentials that allow individuals to earn credentials incrementally while gaining relevant work experience. Work with educational institutions to design pathways that enable learners to build upon their existing skills and credentials as they progress towards higher-level qualifications.

Accelerated Learning Models

Explore innovative learning models such as competency-based education, accelerated degree programs, or boot camps that enable individuals to acquire skills more rapidly. Collaborate with educational providers to design flexible and intensive learning experiences that focus on real-world application and hands-on training.

Work-Based Learning Opportunities

Expand work-based learning opportunities such as internships, co-ops, and industry placements that allow individuals to gain practical experience while earning credentials.



Partner with employers to create structured learning experiences that integrate classroom instruction with on-the-job training.

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)

Implement PLAR processes that enable individuals to receive credit for prior learning and work experience. Work with educational institutions to develop assessment mechanisms that evaluate and validate individuals' existing skills and knowledge, allowing them to accelerate their progress towards credentials.

Data Sharing and Performance Tracking

Establish mechanisms for data sharing and performance tracking to monitor the effectiveness of initiatives aimed at shortening the time from credential to employment. Collaborate with educational institutions to collect and analyze data on student outcomes, employment placement rates, and employer satisfaction to inform continuous improvement efforts.

Multiple Learning Modalities

Invest in digital learning platforms or online resources that provide flexible and accessible training options for individuals seeking to acquire new skills or upgrade existing ones. Explore and implement competency-based education for appropriate training programs. Explore flexible scheduling and delivery models for educational programs, such as evening classes, weekend workshops, or hybrid learning formats. Partner with educational institutions to offer alternative learning pathways that accommodate the needs of working adults and non-traditional learners. Collaborate with educational institutions to leverage innovative approaches to delivering curriculum content and facilitating interactive learning experiences.

Career Pathway Navigation Services

Offer career pathway navigation services to help individuals identify their skills and career goals, explore available training options, and navigate the credentialing process. Work with educational institutions to provide personalized guidance and support services that facilitate individuals' transition to employment.

Continuous Improvement and Evaluation

Establish mechanisms for continuous improvement and evaluation to assess the effectiveness of initiatives aimed at shortening the time from credential to employment. Work collaboratively with educational institutions to collect and analyze data on student outcomes, employer



satisfaction, and workforce needs, and use findings to inform programmatic adjustments and strategic planning efforts.

By implementing these initiatives collaboratively, the LWIB and the education system can work together to shorten the time from credential to employment, ensuring that individuals are equipped with the skills and qualifications needed to succeed in the workforce.

3.F Align & Integrate Education, Workforce Development, and Economic Development

In support of the state goals to **align and integrate education, workforce development, and economic development**, the EDR 7 team will:

- Work with current projects on a local level. Due to the size of SEDR, it is extremely difficult to ensure that all local parties are acting in the same manner. There is also diversity within industry that may make this difficult. Therefore, to keep business engaged, our communications must be clear, concise, meaningful, and value-added.
- Integrated Business Service Team is collaborating with partners and employers.
- Educate local education leaders on labor market indicators.
- Utilize Perkins Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment to educate local education leaders.
- Utilize and expand skills gap surveys.
- Work with youth programs and regional planning groups that have goals and strategies to develop a consortium that includes the business community; K-12 community and higher education; create a Partners in Education group (PIE) for each of their community college areas; develop opportunities for tours/internships/job shadowing between K-12 and the business community; give the region's K-12 students the tools, knowledge, and a plan necessary for successful employability upon high school graduation; work with Leadership programs in the region's K-12 schools; in partnership with community colleges, providing dual-credit opportunities for target sectors for SEDR
- Integrated Business Service Team meets with economic development leaders to communicate services provided to community members.

Sector Partnerships

Fostering the improvement and expansion of regional **sector partnerships** will allow a regional focus on critical in-demand occupations. Employer-driven sector partnerships play a



crucial role in aligning and integrating education, workforce, and economic development initiatives by fostering collaboration and coordination among key stakeholders. SEDR Workforce Ecosystem will foster collaboration by identifying industry needs, using industry feedback to develop curriculum, facilitate the creation of work-based learning experiences, enhance professional development opportunities, and establish clear pathways to careers through Talent Pipeline Management® development.

Career Pathways

Expand **career pathway** opportunities through more accelerated and work-based training and align and integrate programs of study leading to industry-recognized credentials and improved employment and earnings. Steps required to expand career pathways opportunities include:

- Increase and expand Incumbent Worker program through the collaboration and integration of partners and business services.
- Utilize business services team to assist with expanding career pathways.
- Post-education survey to employers to establish if employee meets their needs.
- Guided pathways developed at community colleges.
- Stackable credentials increase opportunities.

Career Services

Expand career services and opportunities for populations facing multiple barriers to close the gap in educational attainment and economic advancement through career pathways and improved career services and expansion of bridge programs. The following will be possibilities that will be available to customers:

- Workforce and community college partners collaborate to increase bridge programs providing work-based learning during the bridge program.
- Vocational Rehabilitation partners can assist with career assessment services and training opportunities to persons with disabilities.
- DHS/TANF assistance with training opportunities.
- Title I partners provide individualized employment plans and individualized training plans.
- All partners will work with customers that have multiple barriers to employment and share data to cross reference potential services to the customer from other partner agencies.
- Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) partners provide individualized case management for those that are facing multiple barriers to provide holistic approach to goal attainment.



3.G Goal Monitoring & Evaluation

State Goal 1 - Illinois Workforce Development System is an example of excellence in its approach to collaboration and customer service.

LWIA Goal 1 - The Workforce Development System uses a customer-centered approach to service delivery.

Job Seeker Service Integration: The OneStop Operator Consortium and partners will continue efforts to align service delivery in a way that best helps the customers through intentional, diligent assessment and continuous improvement processes.

- Measure: LWIA 23 OneStop Operator Consortium will complete a new service integration self-assessment tool in February 2024. The self-assessment will serve as a foundation for identifying and implementing specific goals and strategies aimed at enhancing the overall effectiveness of integrated services. Progress on goals and strategies will be monitored and reported quarterly to the LWIB Consortium Committee.

Business Services Integration: The LWIA 23 Integrated Business Services Team will systematically identify, review, and leverage existing data related to a customer-centered approach to business service delivery. The team will focus on pinpointing areas for improvement in service delivery and integration. Additionally, the BST will actively seek input from business partners to identify and implement innovative methods for measuring the effectiveness of a customer-centered approach. The BST will collaborate with business partners through focus groups, surveys, and regular feedback sessions to gather input on the effectiveness of service delivery. Existing data collection processes will be optimized for efficiency and relevance to customer-centered metrics. The team will identify and implement at least two innovative methods for measuring customer-centered service delivery, ensuring practicality and effectiveness.

- Measure: By the conclusion of the four-year plan, achieve a 5% improvement in customer satisfaction scores related to business services. Additionally, enhance data utilization by 15% and identify innovative methods for measuring customer-centered service delivery by Quarter 3 of Program Year 2025.

Streamlining Referrals: The LWIA 23 OneStop Operator (OSO) Consortium and partners will conduct a comprehensive review of the current referral process, encompassing a broader examination of service integration. The goal is to recommend efficiencies and best practices to enhance the referral process for both customers and staff. Additionally, the partners will explore and establish enhanced referral streams from non-WIOA partner programs to foster collaboration and expand service reach. The OneStop Operator will collaborate with staff, stakeholders, and external partners to gather insights into the current referral process. Best



practices will be identified through benchmarking with similar programs, and a structured plan will be developed to implement the recommended improvements. Efforts will be made to establish partnerships with external programs to create seamless referral streams.

- Measure: Develop a referral tracking system by Program Year 2028. Additionally, establish partnerships with at least three required partners, leading to a 15% increase in referrals from required partner sources. Progress will be monitored and reported quarterly.

LWIA Goal 2 - Core partners in LWIA 23 advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and access.

Identify and Strategically Craft Message: Core partners in LWIA 23 will actively advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and access through a comprehensive strategy that involves data analysis and strategic outreach activities. This includes identifying and addressing disparities in service delivery, ensuring equitable access, and promoting an inclusive environment for both job seekers and employers. The core partners will collaborate with community organizations, advocacy groups, and local leaders to conduct meaningful data analysis, identifying disparities and barriers in service delivery. A strategic plan will be developed to implement targeted outreach activities that address the identified issues and engage underrepresented populations effectively.

- Measure: Over the four-year plan duration, achieve a 10% increase in the representation of underrepresented populations accessing workforce services. Conduct at least four strategic outreach activities each year, resulting in a 10% increase in participation from historically underserved communities. Regular data analysis will be conducted to monitor progress and adjust strategies accordingly. The goal is to achieve the specified improvements by the end of Program Year 2028, with ongoing monitoring of participation rates by the target audience and adjustments as needed.

State Goal 2: Illinois' Workforce Development System will enhance employers' abilities to hire and retain skilled workers that meet their emerging needs.

LWIA Goal 3: The Workforce Development System supports, informs, and enhances employers' talent strategies.

Promote Talent Pipeline Management Strategies®: LWIA 23 will actively support, inform, and enhance employers' talent strategies by implementing Talent Pipeline Management® (TPM®) facilitation. The LWIA 23 Business Services Team will educate business leaders throughout the region on TPM® sector strategies. This includes conducting informational presentations and facilitating TPM® Collaboratives to operationalize public-private partnerships, sector partnerships, and various Talent Pipeline Management® concepts. The Business Services Team will collaborate with industry experts, education providers, and business associations to

develop and deliver educational content on TPM[®] sector strategies. Collaborative sessions will be designed to encourage active participation and partnership formation. The team will establish connections with local businesses and industry associations to identify and engage potential participants for TPM[®] Collaboratives.

- Measure: Engage with at least 100 business leaders through informational presentations and TPM[®] Collaboratives by Program Year 2028. Additionally, achieve a 10% improvement in employer satisfaction scores related to talent strategies.

Expanding Apprenticeships: LWIA 23 Business Services Team (BST) will optimize support for employers' talent strategies by enhancing the existing apprenticeship infrastructure. The focus is on aligning partners, funding, and services to seamlessly integrate within the LWIA 23 workforce ecosystem. To achieve this, LWIA 23 will target innovative programs in Educational Services (K-12 Teachers), Health Care, Technology/Cybersecurity, Transportation, and the Supply Chain, with the aim of expanding current or creating new Department of Labor (DOL)-Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs). The BST will collaborate with industry associations, educational institutions, and businesses in the targeted sectors to identify opportunities for apprenticeship program development or expansion. Partnerships will be formed to secure funding and support services, ensuring the sustainability and effectiveness of the apprenticeship programs. The team will leverage existing resources while actively seeking additional funding sources to achieve the established goals.

- Measure: Establish or expand at least twenty (20) new and/or existing DOL-Registered Apprenticeship Programs by Program Year 2028. Additionally, achieve a 10% increase in employer satisfaction scores related to apprenticeship programs.

LWIA Goal 4: The Workforce Development System will build out tools and practices that can help employers adopt a culture that promotes equity and accessibility.

Promote Importance and Benefits of Equity & Accessibility: The LWIA 23 Business Services Team will actively integrate existing equity and accessibility tools into their business services to assist employers in fostering a culture that promotes equity and accessibility within their organizations. This includes providing guidance on inclusive hiring practices, reasonable accommodations, and diverse workforce development. The team will collaborate with local equity and inclusion organizations to leverage existing tools and resources. They will develop partnerships with a minimum of two TPM[®] Collaboratives (sector partnerships) to pilot and refine the integration of these tools into their business operations, ensuring practicality and effectiveness.

- Measure: Coordinate or facilitate a minimum of one equity and accessibility workshop or training session for each Talent Pipeline Management[®] Collaborative annually. Lead Collaboratives to design a process to track and measure successful implementation of equity and accessibility practices.

State Goal 3: Illinois' Workforce Development System will use customer-centered and data-informed practices to improve the quality of the job seeker experience in pursuing fulfilling career pathways in a manner that is equitable and accessible.

LWIA Goal 5: The Workforce Development System educates and supports job seekers regarding how to navigate the labor market.

Navigating the Labor Market: The workforce partners will enhance the quality of the job seeker experience by implementing targeted educational programs and support services. This includes providing comprehensive guidance on navigating the labor market, understanding career pathways, and acquiring the necessary skills for sustainable employment. The SEDR workforce system will collaborate with local educational institutions, training providers, and employers to develop and offer relevant educational programs. Workshops and one-on-one counseling sessions will be conducted to equip job seekers with essential skills, such as resume building, interview preparation, and understanding industry trends.

- Measure: Achieve a 10% increase in job seeker satisfaction and a 3% increase in job placement rates by Program Year 2028. Progress will be reviewed quarterly.

LWIA Goal 6: The Workforce Development System interacts with job seekers in the places where they live and visit.

Beyond the OneStop Center: The Core WIOA partners will research, assess, and consider best practices regarding service delivery outside of the Effingham OneStop Center and access WorkNet offices. This involves identifying and implementing innovative strategies to expand accessibility and effectiveness in delivering workforce services to a broader audience across an expansive rural area. The Core WIOA partners will collaborate with community organizations, local businesses, and technology providers to explore and implement alternative service delivery methods, such as virtual workshops, mobile service units, and online resources. Pilot programs will be established in collaboration with at least two community partners to test and refine these methods.

- Measure: Increase service reach to job seekers residing in underserved counties by 15% by the end of Program Year 2028. Conduct regular assessments and quarterly reviews to evaluate progress and adapt strategies.

3.H Workforce Equity Lens: Implementation of Regional Strategies

A workforce equity lens is incorporated in the implementation of regional workforce, education, and economic development strategies in that all partners identify disparities and advocate for inclusion for those most in need. Drilling into regional data, workforce partners are painfully aware that women earn less than male-led households; People of Color are more likely to experience poverty and less likely to obtain postsecondary education than Caucasian populations in our region.

Southeast Economic Development Region does not boast a metropolis, rather the region is chiefly rural and spans a vast geographical area of approximately 6,250 square miles. Transportation, specifically lack of mass public transportation systems, pose obstacles for rural residents to get to work, school, or resources in person. Long drive times to meet in a central location pose time constraints on local business and education partners, making it difficult for even those with reliable transportation to join in-person meetings on location. Adoption of hybrid meeting modalities will increase accessibility for job seekers, customers, and partners alike.

Education partners offer options for distance learning, with the intent on making education accessible for students without transportation or responsibilities that require them to stay at home. Several programs at the colleges and high schools offer assistance to increase access to online capabilities through lending laptops or providing free WIFI hotspots. Asynchronous classes provide flexibility for students to work and care for their families while working on classwork in a time that fits their hectic schedules. Such flexible modalities will significantly affect women with families, with intentions to mitigate the disparities in income and education.

Local community organizations now offer online applications in addition to the standard paper application. A new development in the pandemic is the ability to share sensitive documents via encrypted email while maintaining security integrity.

Economic development organizations in the region embraced informational webinars free to any local business on a variety of pertinent topics. Webinar topics include but are not limited to: access to capital for starting a business; apprenticeships; Illinois' Business Enterprise Program (BEP); COVID-19 relief resources; FAME component of Advantage Illinois; and many more. This tactic brought information and resources directly to local small businesses that faced the brunt of the pandemic's economic impact. Economic development organizations committed to using multiple modalities in spreading awareness of state and federal programs available to small business owners. Economic development partners continue to emphasize opportunities for equity-focused initiatives, such as Fund for Advancement of Minority Enterprises (FAME) and Business Enterprise Program (BEP) for businesses owned by minorities, women, and persons with disabilities.



4. OPERATING SYSTEMS & POLICIES

4.A Coordination of Planning Requirements

The Local Workforce Innovation Area 23 *Memorandum of Understanding* provides a description of the one-stop delivery system, and other information that is essential to the establishment and operation of effective local workforce development systems as required by the WIOA Rule (20 CFR Part 678.705). The Memorandum of Understanding and any subsequent modifications is incorporated by reference into this plan. (See Attachment)

The Local Workforce Innovation Area 23 *Service Integration Action Plan* provides a description of how local workforce partners will align and coordinate services as required by the State of Illinois Service Integration Policy (WIOA Policy Chapter 1, Section 13). Information from the initial *Service Integration Action Plan* is included below. Any subsequent modifications to the *Service Integration Action Plan* are incorporated by reference into this plan. (See Attachment)

4.B Local Policies & Agreements

The following policies and agreements can be found in the Appendix Section:

- Chief Elected Official (CEO) Functions and Agreement Between Multiple Chief Elected Officials
- Chief Elected Official Delegation of Authority and Acknowledgment of Financial Liability
- Local Workforce Innovation Board (LWIB) Certification and Recertification Requirements
- One-Stop Operator Procurement
- Career Planning
- General Follow-Up Services
- Selective Service Registration Requirements
- Youth Eligibility
- Service Priorities
- Veterans' Priority of Service Requirements
- Individual Training Accounts
- On-the-Job Training
- Incumbent Worker Training
- Work Experience (WEX) and Transitional Jobs
- Training Provider and Training Program Eligibility – Eligible Training Provider List
- Supportive Services

- Privacy and Security
- Property Control for Property Purchased with WIOA Funds
- Compliant and Grievance Procedures (Nondiscrimination)

4.C Technology in the OneStop Delivery System

Intake & Case Management Information System

Identifying, implementing, and transitioning to an integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information system for programs carried out in LWIA 23 will continue to be a topic of interest for the region. Numerous discussions, both formal and informal, have revolved around the issue of integrated information systems. Within our Service Integration *Self-Assessment Action Plan* (Attachment X), we acknowledge a common database with uniform application will enable agencies to track customer progress and potential early warning alerts for vulnerable students/customers/clients. There are major obstacles preventing the adoption and implementation of an integrated system despite the universal opinion that all partners and stakeholders would benefit dramatically. All state partners would have to agree to the shared system; however, it would not be easily feasible on a local level without support from the State level. LWIA 23 spans across thirteen counties, parts of three community college districts, parts of four Regions of Education (ROE), and two IDHS regions. The efforts required to get the entire LWIA onto an integrated system are beyond that of a region and will have to span multi-regions in multi-agencies. The initiative needs to begin at the State level to produce viable, useful, accurate database interface. The LWIB will continue to explore options and strategies that may work for our unique region, but ultimately will continue to advocate for and highlight why we need better integration of case management information systems at the State level.

The Effingham OneStop Center and access sites have committed to identifying ways to use ADA-accessible technology to connect the career services listed above with the clients that need them. The OneStop Operator Consortium recently discovered a digitized intake process allowing for check-in through the website and/or tablets at the front desk. The digital intake process could potentially allow the OneStop Center to streamline client referrals as well as document the different services being utilized by clients throughout all of the counties in the area. The goal is to get a demonstration of this digitalized intake process and explore similar products available to us with the goal to choose and implement such a process until a formal statewide intake and referral system is created.

Multiple Methods for Orientations



Facilitating Access to Services through Technology

The LWIB will facilitate access to services provided through the One-Stop delivery system, including those in remote areas, through the use of technology and other means. This will be accomplished as follows:

The Title I service provider has satellite WorkNet offices in Fayette, Coles, Marion, Crawford, Richland, and Lawrence counties in addition to the Effingham One-Stop Center/Illinois workNet Center with Career Planners present on location. All WIOA Career Planners have access to laptop computers that allow the Career Planners to complete intakes and assessments anywhere in the thirteen-county region. If a customer is unable to travel to meet CEFS personnel or lacks the technology to access services remotely, a Career Planner will go to the customer.

Title I service offers an online application and the option to meet customers via Zoom, by telephone, at public locations, or at outdoor open-air venues convenient to the customer. Title I services will continue to be offered in multiple modalities indefinitely.

Customers seeking Title IV services can access services through the internet, telephone call for services, or visit one of the DHS offices in person. Customers seeking specific vocational rehabilitation services can also arrange to meet with vocational rehabilitation counselors in other locations. By using the web-based case management system with access via remote technology through laptops with air cards or similar means, counselors can meet with customers almost anywhere. Customers seeking IDES services can access services in-person or through technological methods.

All other partner services will be available via technology. All partners recognize the importance of being flexible to adjust to circumstances at the moment to meet the need of the individuals we serve.

4.D Support of Strategies Identified in the Unified State Plan

4.D.1 Expanding Access for Individuals Facing Barriers to Success

The Local Workforce Innovation Board (LWIB) plays a crucial role in expanding access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals through workforce development initiatives and programs. The LWIB for LWIA 23 supports the WIOA State Plan strategies for expanding access by using a customer-centered approach in assessing accessibility of our services, accessibility of our OneStop Center, develop a marketing plan to increase awareness of the local workforce system, and ensure frontline staff has the resources and skills necessary to best serve customers.

Scaling Integrated Education & Training Models



To support scaling up the use of integrated education and training (IET) models to help adults obtain their State of Illinois high school diploma, the LWIB will strengthen the partnership with adult education providers; develop outreach strategies to reach adults who could benefit from IET programs, especially underserved populations; provide holistic wrap-around services; and advocate for supportive policies at the local and state levels.

Holistic Business Services for Employers

Supporting holistic support for employers involves addressing their various needs beyond just finding qualified candidates. The LWIA 23 Business Services Team will provide local employers assistance in workforce planning; recruitment and hiring support; training and skill development; retention strategies; access to incentive programs; networking and collaboration opportunities; and feedback mechanism. By providing holistic support for employers, the local workforce board can help businesses thrive, strengthen the local economy, and create more opportunities for job seekers and workers in the community.

Effective Marketing of Priority Learning Assessments

The Local Workforce Innovation Board for LWIA 23 recognizes that more knowledge and understanding of Prior Learning Assessments must be achieved before providing assistance in developing a marketing method on the subject.

Targeted Marketing to Labor Force Segments

The Local Workforce Innovation Board (WIB) will support targeted marketing efforts to segments of the labor force such as mature workers, the underemployed, and younger job seekers in several ways:

- *Segmented Messaging:* Develop segmented marketing messages tailored to the specific needs and interests of each target group. Highlight the value proposition of workforce development services in addressing their unique challenges and helping them achieve their career goals.
- *Multichannel Marketing:* Utilize a variety of communication channels to reach different segments of the labor force effectively. This may include traditional channels such as print media, radio, and television, as well as digital channels such as social media, email marketing, websites, and online advertising.
- *Partnerships and Collaborations:* Forge partnerships with community organizations, educational institutions, employers, industry associations, and other stakeholders that

have existing relationships with the target groups. Collaborate on marketing campaigns and outreach efforts to leverage their networks and reach a broader audience.

- *Targeted Outreach Events*: Organize targeted outreach events and workshops specifically tailored to the needs and interests of each segment of the labor force. For example, host job fairs, career exploration sessions, skill-building workshops, and networking events focused on mature workers, the underemployed, or younger job seekers.
- *Personalized Assistance*: Offer personalized assistance to individuals within each target group, including one-on-one career counseling, resume writing assistance, interview preparation, and job search support. Tailor the support services to meet the unique needs and preferences of each individual.
- *Resource Materials*: Develop and distribute resource materials such as brochures, flyers, and online content that provide information about available workforce development services, training programs, job opportunities, and support resources. Ensure that these materials are accessible, easy to understand, and culturally relevant.
- *Testimonials and Success Stories*: Showcase testimonials and success stories from individuals within each target group who have benefited from workforce development services. Highlight their experiences, achievements, and the positive impact that participation in training programs or employment services has had on their lives and careers.
- *Data-Driven Approach*: Use data analytics and market research to identify trends, preferences, and opportunities within each target group. Monitor the effectiveness of marketing campaigns, track engagement metrics, and adjust strategies based on feedback and insights gathered from target audience interactions.

By implementing targeted marketing strategies tailored to the needs and preferences of mature workers, the underemployed, and younger job seekers, the local WIB can effectively raise awareness of available workforce development services, expand access to employment opportunities, and empower individuals to achieve their career aspirations.

Development and Co-Enrollment in Career Pathways

By supporting the facilitation and development of career pathways and co-enrollment in core programs, the LWIB can help individuals gain the skills and credentials needed to succeed in the workforce, meet the talent needs of local employers, and drive economic growth and prosperity in the community. The LWIB in LWIA 23 will do this through established partnerships with educational institutions, employers, and other stakeholders to develop comprehensive career pathways that align with local labor market demands. The LWIB, through the service provider, will provide career coaching service to help individuals identify



their interests, skills, and career goals. Local employers will be actively engaged in the development and implementation of career pathways through input and hosting work-based learning opportunities list internships, apprenticeships, on-the-job training, and employment opportunities for program completers.

Improving Access to Industry-Recognized Credentials

The Local Workforce Innovation Board (WIB) supports access to activities leading to a recognized post-secondary credential through various initiatives and partnerships. In alignment with the WIOA State Plan, LWIA 23 will utilize the following strategies:

- *Resource Navigation:* Provide information and guidance to individuals on the various post-secondary education and training opportunities available in the local area. This includes assistance with navigating the application process, understanding financial aid options, and accessing support services.
- *Credential Attainment:* Encourage and motivate individuals in the goals to earn credential attainment in alignment with their career goals and in-demand training programs. Potential credentials may include short-term certificate programs, industry-recognized certifications, apprenticeships, and degree programs.
- *Work-Based Learning Opportunities:* Facilitate work-based learning opportunities such as internships, apprenticeships, and co-op programs that allow individuals to gain hands-on experience in their chosen field while earning a recognized post-secondary credential. Partner with employers to create and support these opportunities.
- *Supportive Services:* Offer financial assistance programs such as scholarships, grants, and tuition assistance to help individuals cover the costs associated with post-secondary education and training programs. Collaborate with educational institutions, employers, and community organizations to leverage funding resources. Provide wraparound support services such as academic advising, career counseling, tutoring, childcare, transportation, and assistance with basic needs to help individuals overcome barriers to accessing and completing post-secondary education and training programs.
- *Career Pathway Development:* Work with educational institutions, employers, and industry associations to develop career pathways that align with local workforce needs and lead to recognized post-secondary credentials. These pathways should provide clear progression routes from education and training programs to employment opportunities.
- *Outreach and Recruitment:* Conduct outreach and recruitment efforts to target populations that may face barriers to accessing post-secondary education and training, including low-income individuals, minorities, veterans, individuals with disabilities, and



displaced workers. Develop targeted marketing materials and outreach strategies to raise awareness of available opportunities.

- *Data Collection and Evaluation:* Collect and analyze data on the outcomes of individuals participating in post-secondary education and training programs to assess program effectiveness and inform continuous improvement efforts. Track metrics such as completion rates, credential attainment, employment outcomes, and wage gains.

By implementing these strategies, the LWIB can effectively support access to activities leading to a recognized post-secondary credential, helping individuals gain the skills and credentials needed to succeed in the workforce and advance their careers.

4.E Local Coordination Strategies

Title I – Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth

Under WIOA Title I, LWIA 23 provides Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth employment and training activities through CEFS Community Action Agency, as described in the MOU.

Adult & Dislocated Worker

CEFS conducts case assessments and case management procedures for participants. Each customer will have an Individual Employment Plan, which will include: short and long-term goals, achievement objectives, types of service needed, and employment and follow-up services. Reading and math tests are given to assist with further case management decisions. A Career Scope test is administered to establish where the customers' strengths are and to help them with a career decision. Counseling is also provided to each customer on an individual basis. Career Planners handle all aspects of customer service from orientation, intake and eligibility determination, assessment, case management and counseling, referrals and advocacy, provision for support services, placement to employment, and follow-up. This strategy has been very successful over many years, ensuring personalized service, coordination with other resources in the community, and accountability. This provides a remarkable overall customer experience.

All WIOA customers are eligible for self-assisted career services. If a customer needs staff-assisted career services, an application and assessment are completed and the customer is registered. Career Scope is used as an assessment tool and completed for all customers interested in training. Each customer is given a Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) Math and Reading to assist in the assessment process. An Individual Employment Plan is completed on all customers including the following information: field of interest, short and long-term goals, length of training program, type of supportive services needed, employment and follow-up services needed. A self-sufficiency review form is also completed. At this point based on these assessments the best training option is decided. Veterans are a priority.



Youth

In collaboration with CEFS (Title I provider), LWIA 23 provides services to both Youth In-School (Ages 14-21) and Youth Out-of-School (Ages 16-24). Through partnerships with local businesses, the Pathways Program, and ERBA, CEFS connects with youth to provide skills and training for the workforce. Youth/young adult customers may receive vocational training in WIOA-approved programs, GED® tutoring/attainment, job search assistance, resume development, paid work experience, mentoring and development of leadership skills, job readiness training, financial literacy, and additional supportive services such as uniforms, transportation, child care, required learning materials/tools, and more as needed.

Title II – Adult Education & Literacy Activities

Lake Land College

Lake Land College Adult Education serves all or part of the following counties: Christian, Clark, Clay, Coles, Crawford, Cumberland, Douglas, Edgar, Effingham, Fayette, Jasper, Macon, Montgomery, Moultrie, and Shelby. Lake Land College Adult Education Staff can be contacted by phone during college business hours.

Lake Land College serves individuals seventeen years of age or older with adult basic education (evidence-based reading instruction and math instruction), ASE/GED® prep, and English Language Acquisition (ELA) support. It also provides Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs resulting in industry-recognized credentials, such as the ICAPS welding certificate and a Bridge basic nursing assistant (BNA/CNA) program.

All Adult Education students meet with a Transition Coordinator at multiple points throughout their educational journey. The Transition Coordinators continually assess the students' needs and make additional referrals as needed, creating an environment supporting diversity, equity and inclusion for all students and staff.

Adult Education High School Equivalency (HSE) classes are developed to prepare a student for the GED® test. Students are assessed upon referral or during orientation. Orientations are held monthly at Lake Land College's extension centers and twice a year at the class locations; individually based on student needs and barriers to education. Orientations include meeting with an advisor, completing needed paperwork and assessment testing to assist the instructor on placement. Students are also referred to other WIOA partner services based on information attained during orientation and advisor meetings.

ELA students attend an orientation also, with an assessment based on English language skills (CASAS). Students are provided resources and English language skills in the classroom for



the time that is comfortable for them. ELA classes are offered on site to assist employers with employment or promotion barriers.

Illinois Eastern Community Colleges

Illinois Eastern Community Colleges (serving the counties of Clay, Crawford, Jasper, Lawrence, and Richland) provides the Adult Education and Family Literacy (AEFL) Program. IECC Adult Education staff can be contacted by phone during normal business hours. AEFL is a grant funded program that offers a variety of courses to meet the diverse needs of the individuals enrolling in the program. Classes and supportive services are offered at no cost to students. IECC AEFL program offers curriculum and instruction that are aligned with the current high school standards and career-and-college-readiness expectations. Adult Secondary courses are designed to prepare students for the GED[®] exam and prepare students for college and/or the workforce.

- Individuals enrolling in the program must be 16 years of age or older
- Individuals under the age 18 must provide formal separation documentation from the public school system
- All individuals enrolling in the program must complete the required assessments for class placement, advisement, and/or referrals.
- IECC currently offers a Career Bridge course and an ICAPS welding certificate.
- Transition assistance is available for all AEL students through the Coordinator of Transition Services.
- Students are also referred to other WIOA partner services based on information attained during orientation, transition, and advisor meetings.

The IECC Adult Volunteer Literacy (AVL) program is grant-funded by the Secretary of State and offers tutoring to meet diverse needs of learners. AVL also provides English as a Second Language (ESL) for those individuals below a ninth-grade level.

Kaskaskia College

Kaskaskia College Adult Education and Literacy (KC-AEL) has High School Equivalency certificate preparatory classes at eight different sites across the college district. Classes are offered at KC Greenville Education center, KC Nashville Education Center, KC Trenton Education Center, Centralia Library, Marion County Court Services, KC Salem Education Center, Case-Halstead Public Library Carlyle, and KC Vandalia Campus.

Kaskaskia College (serving Bond, Clinton, Fayette, Marion, and Washington counties) provides Adult Education and Literacy programs. All programming is grant funded. The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) grant funds the Adult Secondary Education (ASE) and Adult Basic Education (ABE) programming. Classes are normally two times per week for three hours per session. The Adult Volunteer Literacy (AVL) program is grant-funded by the Secretary of State and offers tutoring to meet diverse needs of learners. AVL also provides English as a



Second Language (ESL) and Adult Basic Education (ABE) for those individuals below a ninth-grade level. All classes, programming, and tutoring are offered at no cost to students. All KC-AEL programs offer curriculum and instruction that align with the current high school standards and career/college readiness expectations.

In LWIA 23, the community colleges, including Lake Land College, Kaskaskia College, and Illinois Eastern Community Colleges, hold the funding for Title II--Adult Education and Literacy. The Area Planning Council meets twice per year to disseminate information regarding students eligible for WIOA services. The core and required partners share information to eliminate duplication of services while discussing opportunities for students. During the spring of each year, all Area Planning Councils are required to present the APC plan to the LWIB Board to show the services offered in each area by each of the Title II providers. If more than one provider is offering services in the same area, the LWIB Board will determine the services offered.

Title III – Wagner-Peyser Act Services

Illinois Department of Employment Security's (IDES) Employment Services and outreach is a program designed to sustain economic growth by expanding employment opportunities to qualified job seekers that meet the demands of the employers. The program's objectives aim to reduce the loss of productivity by filling job openings as quickly as possible and to shorten the duration of an individual's unemployment. For job seekers who are not job ready, Employment Services, in cooperation with other workforce partners, assist clients to access training, employability development services, and other supportive services needed to realize their employment goals. Wagner-Peyser staff assist with the intake process by assessing the client's needs, assisting with Unemployment Insurance (UI) claims, and registering with Illinois JobLink in order for the claimant to immediately begin searching for work. Staff also provide Labor Market Information (LMI) to educate clients on the current employment outlook and determine if further training will be necessary to enhance employment opportunities. Clients may be directed to work-readiness workshops or referred to partner agencies and/or supportive services, depending on the needs of the client.

Employment services offered include assessments for job placement, job search assistance, and online job application processing. Employment Security is responsible for increasing community awareness about the services provided via job fairs, community collaborations, onsite recruitments, resource linkage and presentations to both job seekers and employers. Wagner-Peyser Employment Services are available for all U.S. citizens and those eligible to work in the U.S.

IDES also employs dedicated staff who conduct outreach to migrant and seasonal farmworkers to inform them of services available in the American Job Centers (AJCs), their employment rights, and how to file any employment-related complaints. IDES also employs a *Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker (MSFW) State Monitor Advocate* who monitors whether MSFWs are receiving equitable services as required under Wagner-Peyser.

Section 7b of the Wagner-Peyser Act provides that 10% of the state's allotment under the Wagner-Peyser Act is reserved for providing activities including but not limited to services for groups with special employment needs. IDES focuses its use of Wagner-Peyser 7b funds on services to youth through Hire the Future (HTF), and to returning citizens through Re-Entry Employment Services (RESP).

Hire the Future is designed to provide qualified candidates for employers seeking to fill positions within their respective companies. HTF strives to give the youth of Illinois opportunities to gain work experience with employers who understand the importance of encouraging career growth by collaborating with those employers as well as other workforce partners to hold youth-centered hiring events. In addition, IDES staff conduct outreach to schools to present information regarding career planning through the Illinois Career Information System (CIS) and other employment readiness topics.

Re-Entry Employment Services offers assistance to Returning Citizens (persons who are residents of a given area who were previously involved with the justice system) by helping them to overcome their employment hurdles and barriers to employment. Employment Services staff administer direct case management through Illinois JobLink to returning citizens. This assistance begins with an assessment interview and may include: referrals to other WIOA workforce partners; staff assisted services; career guidance; job search activities; referral to employment opportunities; resume assistance; and, interview coaching. In addition, IDES staff strive to develop relationships with employers who may be open to hiring Returning Citizens so that quality employment referrals can be made.

Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment

Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA). RESEA is an Unemployment Insurance eligibility program funded by the U.S. Department of Labor to assist unemployment insurance claimants with returning to work. IDES's Economic Information and Analysis Division (EI&A) has developed a predictive analog that identifies claimants with the highest propensity for exhausting UI benefits, in addition to transitioning veterans receiving Unemployment Compensation for Ex-Service Members (UCX). UI claimant participation in RESEA is required, for those identified, to remain eligible for UI benefits. Services provided by the RESEA teams include, but are not limited to, orientations to the American Job Centers and services offered



by our workforce partners, development of individual employment plans, labor market information, career information, job readiness assistance, employment retention services and referrals to employment, training, and educational services.

WorkShare Illinois

WorkShare IL is Illinois' Short-Term Compensation (STC) program. WorkShare IL is a voluntary unemployment insurance program that provides employers with an alternative to layoffs during an economic downturn. IDES administers this program and coordinates with DCEO on outreach to employers who may see this layoff diversion program as a solution in order to keep trained employees engaged and on the job.

Foreign Labor Certification

IDES assists employers in complying with federal requirements when they seek to hire foreign workers under the federal H2A (seasonal agricultural jobs) and H2B (non-agricultural jobs) visa programs. IDES assists with activities to ensure that if there are not enough qualified U.S. workers available to perform the work and that the hiring of foreign workers will not adversely affect the wages and working conditions of similarly employed U.S. workers. IDES staff assist with the posting of employer job orders into IJL, inspection of housing for agricultural workers, and conduct field visits.

Work Opportunity Tax Credit

Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) is a federal income tax credit incentive provided to private sector employers. An employer may be eligible for WOTC when they hire from certain target groups of job seekers who face employment barriers. The requirements for the program are set by the Internal Revenue Service and the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. WOTC is an incentive for employers and is intended to help individuals move from economic dependency, while participating employers can reduce their income tax liability. IDES processes WOTC certification requests submitted by employers.

Fidelity Bonding Program

The U.S. Department of Labor established the Fidelity Bonding Program (FBP) to provide fidelity bonds that guarantee honesty for "at-risk," hard-to-place job seekers. The bonds cover the first six months of employment. There is no cost to the job applicant or the employer. The bonds issued by the FBP guarantee the job honesty of job seekers to employers who want to



hire them. IDES assists employers who can request the bonds as an incentive to hire these applicants.

IDES Business Services

The Business Services Team (BST) comprises of both Wagner-Peyser and JVSG (Veterans) Staff. The BST provides outreach to businesses and community organizations in support of IDES Services such as the State Labor Exchange system (Illinoisjoblink), WorkShare IL, Fidelity Bonding, and WOTC, as well as Workforce Partner Initiatives. Working with workforce partners, BST plans and organizes in-person and virtual events including: hiring events, career fairs, employer seminars, employer/jobseeker workshops, veteran resource fairs, veteran stand-downs, and veteran workshops. The BST provides outreach assistance to workforce partners and sends out email blasts in support of employer and jobseeker events and initiatives.

Jobs for Veterans State Grant Program

The Jobs for Veterans State Grant Program (JVSG) has its own four-year “Stand-Alone” State Plan that is approved by the U.S. Department of Labor – Veterans Employment and Training Services. IDES manages the federal Jobs for Veterans State Grant ensuring that eligible Veterans and spouses receive priority of service to successfully meet their training and employment needs. The JVSG Grant supports the following: Disabled Veteran Outreach Program Representative (DVOP) also known as the Veteran Career Coach and Local Veteran Employment Representative (LVER) also known as the Veteran Business Specialist. Veteran Career Coach-DVOP provides individualize career services utilizing a case management framework to eligible Veterans and spouses who have self-identified as having one or more Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) as defined by the Department of Labor – Veterans Employment and Training Services. Veteran Business Specialist-LVER provides outreach to employers in support of Veteran Programs and to advocate for all Veterans seeking employment, regardless of SBE. Veterans and other eligible persons seeking employment assistance and not meet the SBE criteria can receive services at the AJC’s.

JVSG staff conduct virtual Illinois Veteran Transition Pathways (IVTP) workshops each quarter to incarcerated veterans in Correctional Centers throughout Illinois.

The JVSG team also provides employment services to Chapter 31 referred veterans from the USVA - Veteran Readiness and Employment.

Re-Entry Virtual Job Fair



This initiative began with collaboration between NYU Re-Entry Grant, Man-Tra-Con, IDOC, and IDES Business Services. NYU in partnership with Man-Tra-Con provides training and employment counseling to participants returning to EDRs 7, 8, and 9 residing within facilities in the EDRs. IDES Southern Region Business Services Manager Hosts and organizes this event for EDRs 7, 8, and 9. The format provides basic overview of services available and information from local employers actively recruiting. IDES Business Services unit along with Title I partners Man-Tra-Con, Southern 14, St Clair County, Madison County, and CEFS actively recruit employers to present during event. IDOC invites returning citizens within 90 days of release as of event date and provides space and technology for participants to view and participate in the event. IDES Southern Region Business Services Manager compiles all presentation materials together and hosts the event via WebEx every two months. Man-Tra-Con presents for all WIOA services. The event ends with a Q & A session after presentations. Current participation levels are over one-hundred individuals.

Regional Office of Education Career Fairs

IDES Business Services recognize the importance of youth initiatives to support talent pipelines. Thus, strong partnerships with Regional Offices of Education (ROEs) are established and nurtured through collaborative efforts to hold K-12 career fairs. IDES Business Services will continue to plan, support, promote, and expand K-12 Career Fairs in support of EDRs focus on youth initiatives.

Rapid Response Job Fairs

As part of the Rapid Response efforts to WARNO activities, IDES Business Services partners with Title I Partners to plan and host job fairs for those affected by layoff. The job fairs consider positions and skills of affected job seekers to ensure that employers recruited provide the best possible match to skills and equivalent pay.

Job Fairs/Hiring Events/Workshops

IDES will actively seek to partner with Title I partners in planning, organizing, and advertising Job Fairs/Hiring Events/Workshops within the Region. IDES assists with outreach activities to employers and jobseekers.

Outreach



IDES Business Services conducts outreach to employers in support of IDES services as well as Partner services. IDES Business Services will upon request send out “email blasts”, or targeted email campaigns, for partner services to include WIOA Initiatives, Apprenticeships, Adult Education Programs, Workshops, Seminars, and hiring events. IDES Business Services will also conduct in-person outreach to support our partner initiatives with employers.

Title IV – Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Vocational Rehabilitation works in partnership with individuals with disabilities and their families to assist them in making informed choices to achieve full community participation through employment, education, and independent living opportunities. The primary focus of Vocational Rehabilitation is to assist individuals with significant disabilities in obtaining and retaining competitive, integrated employment through an individualized planning process.

Illinois Department of Human Services-Division of Rehabilitation Services (IDHS-DRS) provides services to individuals with disabilities who desire employment and are age 14 and over. DRS offers services to youth through *Secondary Transition Experience Program* or STEP. STEP also includes instruction in self-advocacy, job exploration counseling, workplace readiness training, counseling on post-secondary education, and work-based learning experiences. Services include job placement assistance, vocational counseling and guidance, information and referral services, assessment and evaluation, job retention training, and mental and physical restoration services. These services are also available for youth with disabilities who do not participate in STEP.

DRS also provides services to adults with disabilities. These services include vocational counseling and guidance, information and referral services, assessment and evaluation, job placement assistance, job retention training, and mental and physical restoration services. Through these services, customers may also receive assistance such as short- and long-term training programs to receive a certificate or degree, on-the-job evaluation, on-the-job training, job coaching and placement follow-up.

Customers seeking vocational rehabilitation services can access IDHS-DRS services through the internet, call for services, or come in person to one of the IDHS-DRS offices. Customers seeking specific vocational rehabilitation services can also arrange to meet with vocational rehabilitation counselors in other locations. By using the web-based case management system with access via remote technology through laptop computers, counselors can meet with customers almost anywhere.

Career & Technical Education: Secondary & Post-Secondary



Strong working relationships continue to grow amongst LWIA 23 WIOA, Perkins V, and Eastern Illinois Education for Employment System #340 (EIEFES). The directors of these programs often meet, confer, share information resources, and engage each other in planning and decision-making. Perkins offers supportive services to Special Populations, which generally overlap WIOA's target populations. In determination to provide optimal wrap-around supports, Perkins and CEFS often refer customers/students to each other and make conscientious efforts to avoid duplication of services. Through a case management approach and communications between the two programs, students/customers are offered an equitable, individual plan that fits their needs with the goal to remove as many barriers to success as possible.

The LWIA 23 staff attends, as best as possible, Career and Technical Education (CTE) program's advisory committees for each of the community colleges within SEDR. By having a presence at the advisory committees, WIOA strategies can be better broadcasted to CTE instructors and business partners as well as further enhance partnership and collaboration.

Perkins V Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment

To advance robust coordination between workforce and educational services throughout the region, the Perkins programs of the three community colleges in SEDR will complete a Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA), a data-driven strategic planning tool with all appropriate partners to assess for equity gaps and collaboration opportunities. The LWIA 23 Director participates on the CLNA team for Lake Land College and contributed to discussions as well as participated in workshops sponsored by Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) and Office of Community College Research and Leadership (OCCRL). Other partners were represented on the team as well, such as the local Education for Employment Director and Adult Education Director. For the development of this plan, the Perkins representatives from all three of the region's community colleges were invited and actively engaged.

Local Supportive Services Policies

It is the policy of Local Workforce Innovation Area 23 (LWIA 23) to provide supportive services to customers in accordance with the aforementioned definition. Such supportive services may include, but not limited to, transportation, child care (including associated costs as required), or any other supportive service allowable under the Act. Supportive Services funds shall not be used to duplicate services provided by any other public or private source that are available to participants without cost. All supportive services requests will be made on an individual basis. Program directors, or their designee, will have discretion as to the amount and types of supportive services available based on budget restrictions, the cost of the supportive service,



the appropriateness of the service to the authorized activity, and the allowability of the supportive service under law.

See Supportive Service Policy Attachment XYZ

4.F Adult & Dislocated Worker Training Activities

Training Activities

All customer eligibility, intake, and orientation are consistent across access sites and at the comprehensive Effingham One-Stop Center. Eligibility consists of providing proof that the customer is at least 18 years of age, is authorized to work in the United States, and is in compliance with the Selective Service Act. Veterans are a priority for services followed by customers who are basic skills deficient. The application and assessment of basic skills, aptitudes, and abilities are then completed. At this time, the customer is required to be enrolled in a Title I program. The Family and Community Development (FCD) Model is used to complete an extensive assessment of customers' needs across multiple dimensions in his or her life. The assessment battery is the key to effective case management, allowing the career planner to determine the individual and family needs beyond workforce issues and to provide or arrange services that nurture progress toward self-sufficiency.

Assessment and case management continues throughout enrollment through each customer's Individual Employment Plan (IEP), which includes: short and long-term goals, achievement objectives, types of services needed, and employment and follow-up services. Additional testing, including reading and math tests, are given to assist with further case management decisions. A Career Scope test is administered to identify the customers' strengths and to help them with career decisions. Individual counseling is also provided to each customer. Career Planners handle all aspects of customer service from orientation, intake and eligibility determination, assessment, case management, counseling, referrals and advocacy, provision for support services, placement to training and/or employment, and follow-up. This strategy has been very successful over many years at ensuring personalized service, coordination with other resources in the community, and accountability, therefore providing a remarkable overall customer experience.

All WIOA customers are eligible for self-assisted career services. If a customer requires staff-assisted career services, an application and assessment are completed, and the customer is registered. The Career Scope assessment tool is completed for all customers interested in training. Each customer is given a Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) in Math and Reading to complete the assessment process. After assessments are completed and reviewed, training options are decided upon in the development of the Individual Employment Plan, which is completed on all customers and includes the following information: field of interest, short and



long-term goals, length of training program, type of supportive services needed, and employment and follow-up services needed. A self-sufficiency review form is also completed for the Individual Employment Plan.

The WIOA customer is then registered for training services:

- *Classroom Training*: Classroom training is provided to customers in a LWIB approved-training program in a high-growth and high-demand occupation field. The Individual Training Account (ITA) amount is \$8,500 per fiscal year, per customer, with exceptions on a case-by-case basis.
- *On-the-Job Training (OJT)*: On-The-Job training is provided to customers who are starting a new job and have a skills gap between current job skills and job skills required to complete the new job. OJT contracts are developed with goals and objectives for learning new skills and can be provided for up to six months.
- *Work Experience*: Paid work experience is provided to customers who have no past work experience, have no recent work experience, or have a poor work history. Each month, goals are set to learn soft work skills needed to obtain and retain unsubsidized employment. At the end of each month, progress toward these goals is reviewed by the customer, career planner, and worksite supervisor, and new goals are set for the next month.

Other training provided to employers is Incumbent Worker Training (IWT). Each year, the LWIB may allocate an amount of Dislocated Worker or Adult funds for IWT, up to the percent allowed by law.

Through targeted outreach and customer enrollment, the Title I Service Provider aims to address the deficient of skilled employees in the local workforce. Adult and Dislocated Worker programs provide supportive services and mentorship to job-seekers as they navigate the workforce and progress on their chosen Career Pathway. This will include the aforementioned classroom training, On-the-Job Training, and Work Experience. The mentorship provided by Career Planners includes a built-in accountability checker and incentivizes individuals facing barriers to persevere and maintain gainful employment as well as self-sufficiency.

Title I will work with all workforce partners as part of the Business Services Team to engage with local employers to assess their needs to achieve growth. Incumbent Worker Training will encourage local employers to upskill their current staff and promote from within their companies. Apprentices in any newly developed apprenticeships will be vetted to determine if they qualify for WIOA services. By proactively vetting apprentices, WIOA funding may be used to alleviate financial burden for employers to provide training. The development of pre-apprenticeships will be considered to create an intentional talent pipeline from local schools to the local workforce.



Rapid Response Activities

The LWIB will follow the Rapid Response procedures developed by DCEO. The Illinois Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act (“Illinois WARN”) effective January 1, 2005, requires employers to give a 60-day notice of a plant closing or mass layoff to employees, their unions, DCEO’s Bureau of Workforce Development and the Illinois Department of Labor. The Illinois WARN applies to employers with 75 or more full-time workers. If a closing or layoff results in 24 or more affected workers, the Illinois DCEO Rapid Response Unit will initiate and coordinate rapid response activities. If a closing or layoff results in 24 or fewer affected workers, Title I service provider takes the leadership role to coordinate Rapid Response services between the employer, IDES, Public Health, DRS, and any employee union representative. The WIOA Director, WIOA Operations Manager, and TAA Coordinator will lead the Rapid Response team.

The Rapid Response team will meet to identify customer needs and basic demographics. Based on the customer needs, the Rapid Response Team will initiate an on-site orientation, at the employer’s convenience, with all rapid response agencies present. Each agency will present provided services and required deadlines in order to receive services at the orientation. After the initial on-site orientation, the service provider sends multiple Career Planners to provide intakes, job-search assistance, and initial counseling at the work site. If on-site services are not feasible during the layoff period, then arrangements will be made to provide services at the local WIOA office at the convenience of the employees. This rapid response process will help to ease the employee transition from layoff to the dislocated worker program. The Rapid Response team provides on-site services until the layoff begins, and services will then continue at the nearest WorkNet office.

4.G Youth Activities

In collaboration with CEFS (Title I provider), LWIA 23 provides services to both Youth In-School (Ages 14-21) and Youth Out-of-School (Ages 16-24). Through partnerships with local businesses, CEFS connects with youth to provide skills and training for the workforce. Youth/young adult customers may receive vocational training in WIOA-approved programs, GED® tutoring/attainment, job search assistance, resume development, paid work experience, mentoring and development of leadership skills, job readiness training, financial literacy, and additional supportive services such as uniforms, transportation, child care, required learning materials/tools, and more as needed.

Youth Activities

Below are the required elements of the WIOA Youth Program:

1. Tutoring, study skills training, and instruction leading to secondary school completion, including drop out strategies
2. Alternative secondary school offerings
3. Paid and unpaid work experiences including summer employment, pre-apprenticeship programs, internships, job shadowing, and On-the-Job Training
4. Occupational skills training at local colleges
5. Leadership development opportunities
6. Supportive services
7. Adult mentoring for duration of at least 12 months
8. Follow-up services for one year
9. Comprehensive guidance and counseling as well as referrals to counseling
10. Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities
11. Financial literacy education
12. Entrepreneurial training
13. Career Services providing labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors such as career awareness, career counseling, and exploration services
14. Activities to help Youth participants prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training

The most successful of these activities is paid work experience. After intake and assessment, an Individual Service Strategy (ISS) is developed, which identifies any special needs accommodations required by the customer. Youth participants are matched with work sites that meet their needs and offer Youth the opportunity to succeed. During the first day of work, the Career Planner, Youth participant, and worksite supervisor develop work skill goals for the first month of work.

Career Planners are in constant contact with worksite supervisors. Career Planners visit the worksite at least twice each month to meet with the Youth and worksite supervisor to develop and evaluate new work skill goals. Ultimately, the goal is for the Youth to develop all skills necessary for obtaining unsubsidized employment. When a Youth participant reach all goals and have necessary skills to obtain unsubsidized employment, job search assistance starts and paid work experience ends. Many times, during this process, the Youth in paid work experiences are also receiving support services, financial literacy education, and GED® attainment.

The continued challenge, however, is to develop a comprehensive outreach program to make all service providers and customers aware of the services listed above. The intention is to be inclusive, not exclusive. Outreach to the community cannot rely solely upon word-of-mouth; it must also be conducted through comprehensive, well thought out marketing plan. Hence, this challenge will be a primary focus of the Youth service provider.

Many of the youth who are identified as deficient in basic literacy skills, school dropout, individual with a disability; homeless, runaway, or foster child; pregnant or parenting; or offender, face multiple barriers to employment. Many of them lack the educational skill, occupational skill, and job readiness skills to be successful in the labor market. The services to be provided that will address the special needs will include academic training, vocational training, work experience, on-the-job training, job mentoring, job shadowing, youth employment competencies, job search assistance, and possibly special youth programs.

Serving Youth with Disabilities

The Local Title IV Partner, IDHS-DRS agency, also operates the Secondary Transitional Experience Program (STEP). This program is currently being offered to the high schools in the region for youth with disabilities between the ages of 14.5 and 22. This program helps youth with disabilities transition to employment and community participation during and after high school. Students learn to become self-sufficient adults. STEP offers a variety of services as listed below:

- Job exploration Counseling
- Work-Based Learning Experiences
- Counseling on Post-Secondary Education
- Workplace Readiness Training
- Instruction in Self-Advocacy

In addition, the Eastern Illinois Area of Special Education (EIASE) hosts LIFE Academy for students who have major physical and/or physical disabilities ages 3-21 and the Adult LIFE Academy for those aged 18-21. This program helps students to learn a variety of self-care activities such as learning how to cook, make phone calls, do laundry, go shopping, how to clean a home, make a bed, personal hygiene and so much more. Adult LIFE Academy also runs the Recycling Center Program where some students learn to sort recyclable materials that are either sold or made into weather-resistant picnic tables and benches. These students work with a job coach and visit local businesses to pick up materials and find new customers. Here they learn valuable job skills, such as teamwork, following directions, safety, communication, etc.

Many secondary schools within the region offer Special Education Cooperative Education, through EIASE, for students who have Individual Education Plans (IEPs). These students are placed in business partner host sites where they work during the end of the school day. Most placements are paid and all offer high school credit for participation. This program teaches students to be work-ready in that they create resumes, practice completing applications, learn



work ethics, gain basic employment skills, and of course have hands-on work experience at local businesses.

Minimum Expenditure Rate – Youth Out of School

Title I service provider, CEFS, conducts a monthly budget and encumbrance process that manages funds to ensure all target expenditure levels are met. These financial processes have been effective in the workforce program for over 38 years. The financial encumbrance process allows planning and continued services to customers throughout the year. Lake Land College (fiscal agent) and CEFS (youth service provider) work together to meet the financial requirements of Title I. At the beginning of each fiscal year, CEFS and Lake Land College develop a program budget and forecast enrollment for the youth program, both in-school and out-of-school. Career Planners enroll Youth participants based on this forecast, and all partners will assist with possible referrals to identify out-of-school youth.

Youth Program Design Framework

Designing a framework for youth programs involves careful consideration of the unique needs, interests, and aspirations of young people in the local area. The local Workforce Innovation Board (WIB) will play a central role in developing this framework, which will encompass the 14 program elements outlined by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

The LWIA 23 Design Framework of the WIOA Youth and Young Adult Program is as follows:

1. Intake and eligibility: Career Planners assess the participants unique set of circumstances and uses an equity lens to determine best approach to ensure full understanding and support of participant.
 - a. Eligibility overview
 - b. Workshops, toolkits, and resources
 - c. Interest surveys
2. Objective assessments: With a strengths-based approach and managing expectations, Career Planners guide the assessment experience for the individual and serve them effectively to develop educational and career pathway planning.
 - a. Successful intake and assessment process/procedure
 - b. Career assessments
 - c. Interest profiles
 - d. Life Skills resources
 - e. Financial Literacy assessments and resources
3. Individual service strategy: Career Planners conduct a multitude of assessments to get an objective gauge of youth's past and present and then develop an ISS, not for the youth but with the youth. This ensures youth buy-in to work towards their career and life



goals. The progressing trust building between the youth and the professional is documented with regular updates to the ISS.

See **Attachment XYZ** for the *14 Youth Program Elements* and how they are available to program participants.

4.H Priority Population Services

In accordance with the Jobs for Veterans Act, priority and services will be delivered first and foremost to qualified veterans in LWIA 23.

Priority Populations

All required WIOA partners identify the following targeted populations in accordance with the State Unified Plan:

- Long-term unemployed
- Low-income adults
- Individuals with disabilities
- Public Aid Recipients
- Out-of-school youth
- Migrant and seasonal farmworkers
- Re-entry individuals (ex-offenders)
- English Language Acquisition (ELA) or English Learners and those facing cultural barriers
- Older individuals
- Homeless
- Single parents
- Youth in foster care or aged out of the system
- Displaced homemakers
- Low-literacy adults
- Low-skilled
- Basic Skills Deficient
- Active-duty military dependents

SEDR will consider the above targeted populations as priority. Within the WIOA partner programs, services are available to assist these targeted populations. Specifically, while CEFS Adult and Dislocated Worker programs serve various populations, it has a policy in place to provide services for those most in need. CEFS utilizes a priority rating sheet to document all known barriers and targeted populations. The priority rating sheet is completed at time of application identifying all barriers. Each barrier is assigned a specific point value and documented on the form by the Career Planner. The priority rating sheet is calculated, adding all points together for a total score and is part of the customer's file. When selecting for "enrollment into training activities", priority is given to those customers with the most points as documented on the priority rating sheet. In order to best serve the customers in LWIA23, the local board has agreed to follow the State Unified Plan when identifying target populations and barriers.

Mitigating Barriers to Employment & Training **

The Local Workforce Innovation Board adopts the State's stance that equitable access is a fundamental principle within WIOA and makes it the utmost priority. The work of the LWIB is to



establish goals to improve inequities for the populations we serve, create accessible career pathways for all customer that address barriers to employment and enhance equality among partners. The LWIB of LWIA 23 mitigates barriers to success through several strategies.

- Work-Based Training – including On-the-Job Training (OJT), Registered Apprenticeship training, Customized Training, Paid and Unpaid Work Experience, Pre-Apprenticeship Training, and Incumbent Worker Training. Policies on each of these strategies can be found in **Attachment XYZ**.
- Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) - used to assist eligible adults, dislocated workers, and youth in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) program. Participants must be certified by a Career Planner as eligible to receive WIOA Title I training services and accepted for admission to a training institution prior to being approved for an ITA. Examples of services requiring an ITA include occupational skills training, skill upgrading and retraining, entrepreneurial training, and adult education and literacy activities.
- Individuals eligible for an ITA must have the skills and qualifications to successfully participate in the selected training program and must select a training program directly linked to local employment opportunities (labor market demand). The WIOA service provider will utilize the Illinois WorkNet website, IDES Labor Market Data, and various assessment tools to ensure informed client choice in the selection of training programs.
- An individual must have applied for federal student financial aid prior to receiving an ITA and whenever possible, an individual should also apply for state or local financial aid and scholarship awards. An individual may receive both financial aid and an ITA, however they cannot be used to pay for the same services.
- In accordance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, ITAs will be the primary method of payment of occupational skills training for adults, dislocated workers, and out-of-school youth through the system, however contracts for services or vendor agreements will be used in place of ITAs for on-the-job training, incumbent worker, or other training that meets the federal definition and requirements of allowable non-ITA training.
- WIOA requires States to establish procedures under which Local Workforce Innovation Boards will certify training providers by program. The provider certification process is intended to ensure that quality-training programs are available to customers of the workforce development system, providing customers data to make an informed decision when selecting a training program. The following section includes the procedures/policy the Local Area will follow when certifying training providers.

Equitable Access to Services

Revealing Disparities

Drilling into regional data, workforce partners are painfully aware that women in SEDR earn less than male-led households; People of Color are also more likely to experience poverty and less likely to obtain postsecondary education than Caucasian populations in our region. Analysis of the disaggregated data and review of current policies and programs reveal opportunities to develop apprenticeships in health care fields and potentially education as well. Establishing apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships in career pathways where concentrated populations of women and women of Color are likely to work in low paying positions, like certified nursing assistants and in-home health caregivers, will begin to bridge the wage and skill inequities in our region. The regional workforce leaders will take a continuous improvement approach in data analysis and seeking additional opportunities to address inequities in our communities. Future outreach efforts will be strategic and targeted to populations experiencing disparities.

STEM Careers for High School Students

Regional partners collaborate to identify opportunities to increase STEM career exposure to area high school students.

- Lake Land College Perkins Program already partners with Eastern Illinois Education for Employment System 340 (EIEFES) to organize the annual *8th Grade Career Conference* which provides career exploration to local eighth-grade students. All Career Clusters are represented at the Conference with heavy emphasis on STEM careers.
- EIEFES also organizes the Construction Trades Expo each year.
- Effingham County Chamber of Commerce, Coles Together and several major industrial employers offer students the chance to participate in Manufacturing Day events where high school aged children visit a job-fair style conference as well as go on tours of local manufacturing facilities.

Mentor Programs for Adults

Partners will continually explore mentoring programs and evaluate current programs for their efficacy in the adult populations, and specifically adults who have been displaced or are moving to a new career. Each Title partner utilizes a mentorship model in some manner.

- Title I service provider uses a case-management approach to all individuals receiving services. WIOA services are provided to individual customers depending on their own specific needs. In other words, each unique case is viewed through an equity lens to determine the barriers preventing the individual customer from reaching their goals and customized supports are administered.
- Title II partners employ Transition Specialists to support Adult Education students in their journey from GED[®] attainment to the workforce or post-secondary instruction.



Transition Specialists also approach each individual with an equity lens to determine their exact needs and bridge gaps.

- Title III promote equity through Employment Specialists who work with veterans and other special populations who need additional supports.
- Title IV also takes a case management approach to mentor individuals through their progress to obtaining their goals.

Each Title partner fully supports the concept of mentoring and guiding individuals through the obstacles they face as they push towards their career pathways. Case managers, Career Planners, Employment Specialists, and Transition Specialists all have different titles, but each serves in a mentor role. In a bid for continuous improvement, Title partners frequently reflect on how the mentorship approach can be improved or expanded.

Strategically Locating Services

In an effort to ensure workforce services are strategically located in relation to the population in need, partners will utilize offsite locations and technology when needed. Additionally, given the rural area of LWIA 23, partners will travel to customers, if necessary.

4.1 Customer-Centered Approach in Service Delivery

Human-Centered Approach for Improvement

Meeting Customers Where They Are

The LWIB will facilitate access to services provided through the One-Stop delivery system, including those in remote areas, through the use of technology and other means. This will be accomplished as follows:

The Title I service provider has satellite WorkNet offices in Fayette, Coles, Marion, Crawford, Richland, and Lawrence counties in addition to the Effingham One-Stop Center/Illinois workNet Center with Career Planners present on location. All WIOA Career Planners have access to laptop computers that allow the Career Planners to complete intakes and assessments anywhere in the thirteen-county region. If a customer is unable to travel to meet a Career Planner or lacks the technology to access services remotely, a Career Planner will go to the customer.

Title I service offers an online application and the option to meet customers via Zoom, by telephone, at public locations, or at outdoor open-air venues convenient to the customer. Title I services will continue to be offered in multiple modalities indefinitely.

Customers seeking Title IV services can access services through the internet, telephone call for services, or visit one of the DHS offices in person. Customers seeking specific vocational rehabilitation services can also arrange to meet with vocational rehabilitation counselors in



other locations. By using the web-based case management system with access via remote technology through laptops with air cards or similar means, counselors can meet with customers almost anywhere. Customers seeking IDES services can access services in-person or through technological methods.

All other partner services will be available via technology. All partners recognize the importance of being flexible to adjust to circumstances at the moment to meet the need of the individuals we serve.

Review of the Referral Process

4.J Local Area Training Policies & Activities

Work-Based Learning

Use of work-based learning strategies is encouraged and supported by all stakeholders of the workforce ecosystem in the SEDR. The support methods generally involve engaging stakeholders, fostering partnerships, promoting awareness, and providing support.

Title I

Before the start of each fiscal year, Lake Land College and CEFS develop a budget. Work-based learning activities are included in the budget for Youth, Dislocated Worker, and Adult training activities. Enrollment is also projected from this budget. The Local Workforce Innovation Board staff and Title I service provider, as well as other program staff, meet regularly with businesses to discuss work-based learning opportunities and promote available incentives to encourage employers to participate in work-based learning initiatives.

Career Planners develop work sites for paid **work experiences**, which are often developed after the customers' needs are identified. Or, worksites are developed first and then appropriate customers are matched to the worksite. There are over 171 worksite agreements, active and inactive, in the SEDR.

Apprenticeships are designed to meet business needs for a highly-skilled workforce. They can be registered, non-registered, or in pre-apprenticeship form. Business and industry benefit from apprenticeships as they reduce employee turnover by fostering greater employee loyalty, increase productivity, and improve the bottom line. Workers gain career opportunities and improving wages by obtaining credentials for skills through this work-based learning model.

Regional Work-Based Learning Efforts

Across the region, there is tremendous emphasis on the important of work-based learning and experiential learning as well as career exploration. Some of the regional activities include:



- *Tech 2-Day*- Flexible options for technology certificate or degree programs at Lake Land College. The program schedule is designed around the needs of business and will incorporate competency-based lab work.
- *Teens with Tools* – Lake Land College’s summer youth program focused on experiential learning specifically designed for middle school students. Teens with Tools is a partnership with area school districts and Lake Land College. In this program, junior high/middle school students enroll in career exploration coursework taught by Lake Land College faculty. In 2023, the program piloted at Effingham Junior High and included seven weeks of hands-on technology-based instruction such as 3D printing, pipe bending and braising, bridge building and automotive coursework. AI goggles were also utilized during Teens with Tools. Summer 2024, the College intends to expand programs to include offerings from all divisions and will hold courses at satellite sites throughout the district.
- *LIFT* - LIFT is a regional innovation and technology center located in Mattoon. LIFT offers advanced programming in seven different pathways with a menu of courses for students to choose from. Most courses end with industry credential, certification, dual credit, and workplace experience.
- *Effingham Regional Career Academy (ERCA)* - The Effingham Regional Career Academy provides an innovative outlet through which educators and employers inspire students to pursue training for high-demand careers in the regional workforce. Creating targeted educational opportunities and a pipeline of skilled individuals for area employers will positively impact future access to a skilled workforce, and our region’s agility in adapting to forthcoming industry trends.
- *BenchWorx Summer Camp* - BenchWorx is a mobile education program whose mission is to introduce students of all ages to the art of woodworking. We teach children to use tools safely, effectively, and eventually independent of adult assistance. Each class begins with the introduction of a new tool, followed by safety demonstrations. Children create toys and useful projects using hand tools. They do not need any prior experience and all of the tools/materials required to make the projects are provided by BenchWorx.
- *Kids Camp at Lincoln Trail College* – variety of classes for youth including photography, career exploration, American Sign Language, and more.
- *Lincoln Trail College Summer Theater Camp* – First through ninth grade students have hands-on involvement in designing and producing two theatrical productions including costume design, set design, and performance production.
- *Supervised Occupational Experience (SOE)* – courses embedded in some CTE programs at community colleges which place students in full-time training experiences



with industry employers. The college instructor and employer supervise and evaluate the trainee. Often incorporated into Agriculture programs.

- *Clinicals* – supervised work experience for students in Allied Health programs such as Certified Nurse’s Assistant, Nursing, Dental Hygiene, Emergency Medical Technician, Physical Therapy Assistant, and more.

Goals for Work-Based Learning Activities

Expanding Apprenticeships: LWIA 23 Business Services Team (BST) will optimize support for employers' talent strategies by enhancing the existing apprenticeship infrastructure. The focus is on aligning partners, funding, and services to seamlessly integrate within the LWIA 23 workforce ecosystem. To achieve this, LWIA 23 will target innovative programs in Educational Services (K-12 Teachers), Health Care, Technology/Cybersecurity, Transportation, and the Supply Chain, with the aim of expanding current or creating new Department of Labor (DOL)-Registered Apprenticeship Programs.

By the end of Program Year 2028, the goal is to establish or expand at least twenty (20) DOL-Registered Apprenticeship Programs in the targeted industries of LWIA 23. The Business Services Team aims to create employer buy-in for sponsorship through incentives such as Illinois state tax credits, supplemental grant funding, and proven return-on-investment.

Through the BST’s Apprenticeship Navigator service, at least two new partnerships with local businesses and educational institutions each year, measured by executed On-the-Job Training or Incumbent Worker Training contracts, or other memoranda of understanding (MOU) agreements. Additionally, the goal is to achieve a 15% increase in employer satisfaction scores related to apprenticeship programs, as measured through post-engagement surveys. The BST will initiate the planning and development of apprenticeship programs within the next three months, with the goal of having at least three programs established or expanded within the fiscal year. Regular assessments will be conducted to measure progress, and status will be reported to the LWIA 23 Consortium Committee and LWIB in quarterly meetings.

The BST will collaborate with industry associations, educational institutions, and businesses in the targeted sectors to identify opportunities for apprenticeship program development or expansion. Partnerships will be formed to secure funding and support services, ensuring the sustainability and effectiveness of the apprenticeship programs. The team will leverage existing resources while actively seeking additional funding sources to achieve the established goals.

Professional Development for Front-Line Staff

Providing comprehensive professional development opportunities for staff on topics related to equity, access, trauma-informed care, and customer-centered service delivery is a rising

priority for the workforce development ecosystem. Through high-quality professional development, workforce partners can ensure that staff are well-equipped to provide high-caliber, inclusive, and responsive services to all individuals accessing workforce development support. Currently the following resources are leveraged for professional development:

- *Family Community Development Certification* - More popularly known as FCD Specialist training, this learning opportunity equips community action staff with the mindset and skills needed to work with families and individuals who experience low-income. Using a blend of problem-based learning with the strength-based perspective, FCD Specialist curriculum consists of: poverty informed practices, trauma informed practices; goal setting; cultural competency; and more.
- *Illinois Association of Community Action Agencies (IACAA)*- IACAA offers a variety of comprehensive training programs in support of the Illinois CAA network. Some of the training programs include: Community Needs Assessments; Customer Service; Poverty Informed; Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Contractual Trainings; Trauma-Informed; Poverty Simulation; and more.
- *WIOA Professional Development w. ICSPS* – WIOA professional development facilitated by ICSPS and includes Wednesday Workforce Webinars; Workforce Academy; WIOA Summit; Returning Citizens; Identity & Innovation; and more.
- *National Veteran Training Institute* - The National Veterans’ Training Institute (NVTI) provides specialized training and professional skills enhancement for veterans’ service providers’ staff. Focusing primarily on training individuals who help veterans secure long-term employment, NVTI is committed to ensuring that those who are tasked with this critical responsibility have the knowledge and tools necessary to perform their jobs effectively.
- *Illinois Center for Specialized Professional Support (ICSPS)* - ICSPS designs and delivers professional development, technical assistance, and program improvement strategies for career, technical, and adult education, and workforce professionals. The Center focuses on equity, access, diversity, and inclusion in recruitment, retention, completion, and transition for Illinois students - encouraging achievement of special population learners. ICSPS offers customized professional development on Universal Design for Learning, strategies to enhance recruitment and retention, embracing a growth mindset, and supporting special populations students.

Individual Training Accounts

The Local Workforce Innovation Board 23 (LWIB), through its selected Service Provider (S/P), desires to empower and encourage customers in decision-making to achieve individual employment goals. The LWIB desires to assist in the advancement of long-term employability



and economic self-sufficiency of incumbent, dislocated and potential workers who lack marketable skills.

The purpose of the Individual Training Account (ITA) is to assist One-Stop customers in developing technical or vocational skills in demand occupations so they may compete in the labor market. Funding may be authorized for course work necessary to satisfy technical or vocational competencies, apprenticeships, entrepreneurship opportunities tied to technical or vocational competencies, or for requirements of a certificate, license, or degree. It is the policy of the Local Workforce Innovation Board 23 that ITA's will be issued to customers for training that is the most expeditious and most appropriate for a customer to achieve employment in a self-sufficient occupation. ITA's are issued annually based on funds available. The time period that an individual attends training will vary based on the program of study and course availability. The board's intention is to indicate that when funds are limited ITA programs lasting the least amount of time in duration will receive priority over programs lasting longer periods of time. The board considers it necessary to help customers seek additional sources of funding for training activities. This will help defray the ITA costs of the local workforce area, thus allowing the S/P the ability to serve more customers. Therefore, ITA funds are not to be considered the only source of available funds. The board is requiring and placing trust in its Service Provider to actively assist customers in seeking additional sources of funding; including not just the required federal and state student assistance, but alternate sources of funds such as scholarships, grants, and other forms of financial assistance.

Customer Choice and Education

Individual Training Accounts will:

- maximize informed participant choice and flexibility in service delivery;
- focus on the immediate and long-term needs of the individual;
- place trust in joint participant and advisor decision-making;
- issue payment to the training provider and not directly to participant;
- utilize the Individual Employment Plan, objectives, and comprehensive career assessment as the basis for the selection of occupational training in demand that is delivered by a Certified Training Provider.

Customers will receive the following educational guidance related to ITA's:

- verbal and written communication will be in language that is easy to understand;
- a complete list of Certified Training Providers will be made available to customers in multiple formats and media;



- career exploration will be offered through Illinois Job Link, and/or other resources available in the One-Stop Centers.

General Provisions

ITA candidates must be assessed by a S/P case manager and have an Individual Employment Plan developed prior to selecting a training program. The assessment must be a comprehensive career assessment. Candidates must select training programs that are directly linked to available employment opportunities and that are published in the Illinois Statewide Certified Training Provider listing.

Value, Cost and Duration of ITA's

The Value of the ITA is determined by three factors: demand and growth occupations; cost of training required for particular skill sets; and customer skill levels.

ITA's will normally be issued by case managers for an amount not to exceed \$10,000 per fiscal year, (July 1 to June 30). In exceptional case by case situations, based on the assessment, other ITA requirements, and the availability of funds, this amount may be increased to \$20,000 per fiscal year (July 1 to June 30). Any person who will seek funding over the \$10,000 ceiling will require an approval from the Program Manager of Dislocated Workers or the Adult and Youth program with a second approval required by LLC Director of Workforce Investment. With these two written approvals (Program Manager and LLC Director of Workforce Investment), services can proceed. In the event that the total projected training costs exceed \$20,000, the case manager must work with the customer to implement a plan as to how the difference will be paid. This system for ITA valuation will allow the most flexibility and promote a more conducive environment to achieving the goal of the Individual Training Account, which is to empower and encourage customers in decision-making to achieve individual employment goals and to assist in the advancement of long-term employability and economic self-sufficiency of incumbent, dislocated and potential workers who lack marketable skills.

ITAs may be used to cover the cost of tuition, student fees, books. Neither the LWIB nor the Service Provider assume liability for any cost not specifically authorized nor for costs incurred by individuals not certified prior to participation.

The Service Provider will monitor the availability of WIOA training dollars to ensure funds are available to complete approved individual training plans. Note: Supportive Services needed to complete a training plan are not part of the ITA. These costs include: tools, transportation, child care and other supportive services. Supportive Service expenditures are governed by separate LWIB and agency policies.



ITA Issuance

ITAs are established by the Service Provider on behalf of a customer, payment will be issued by the S/P to the Certified Training Provider. Payments may be made by electronic transfer of funds through financial institutions, vouchers, or other appropriate methods. Payments will be made incrementally, with portions paid at different points during training based on satisfactory progress as outlined in the IEP. With the review and approval of board oversight staff, the S/P will develop forms and procedures to manage the issuance and tracking of ITAs in the one-stop system.

Coordination of ITAs with Other Grant Assistance

ITAs must be coordinated with other available resources to cover the costs of training and related expenses before WIOA funds may be used, in whole or in part. Such coordination must be documented by S/P staff in the case file. Pell grants will be awarded to the customer to offset any expenses incurred during their training per WIOA Section 134 (3)(B)(ii) and (iii). Other grant assistance included, but is not limited to MAP Awards; Other federal and state financial aid (including TAA); Private tuition assistance or scholarships

Certified Training Provider Agreements

The Certified Training Provider will inform the S/P of the amount and disposition of any financial assistance and grant awards for WIOA customers and will assure that any duplicated payment will be refunded to the S/P. The Certified Training Provider will adjust charges as appropriate to the S/P if eligibility for financial assistance is not established until after a customer is referred to the provider.

The LLC staff and the Service Provider will have access to customer information compiled by the Certified Training Provider including their financial assistance package, academic progress, grades, and classroom attendance. This information will be provided to the above-mentioned organizations upon presentation of a wavier concerning the release of confidential information signed by the customer.

All Certified Training Providers are required to maintain copies of all eligibility documents necessary to be listed as a certified training provider. This information will be monitored and reviewed by LLC oversight staff.

Role of the Service Provider Staff



Customer will be assisted early in the assessment process to establish eligibility for Higher Education Act Title IV funds and other forms of financial aid. This includes providing appropriate application and submitting these forms.

Service Provider staff will work with customers and Certified Training Providers to calculate the total funding resources available, as well as to assess the full education and education-related costs (training and supportive services) necessary for the customer to complete the chosen program.

Service Provider staff are also required to obtain a signed release of information from all ITA customers. This is necessary so the Service Provider staff can better coordinate customer services and LWIB staff may access information necessary to complete monitoring reviews and efficiency or effectiveness studies. The information to be released, and to be addressed in the release of information, at a minimum will include financial assistance package information, academic progress, grades, classroom attendance or disciplinary actions taken against customers. This information release must be reviewed and approved by LWIB oversight staff.

For additional information see [Attachment XYZ](#).

Continuous Improvement of Service Providers

Annual monitoring of the Title I service provider ensure continuous improvement. The LWIB staff reviews the service provider for non-discrimination compliance, ADA accessibility, WIOA registrant review, fiscal monitoring of contracts, and security reports. Upon completion of each review, a monitoring report is sent to all parties involved with a list of recommendations and/or findings. These parties are given the chance to respond with a corrective action and assurance that all findings have been corrected. A follow-up review is conducted to ensure compliance with the monitoring report. The completed monitoring reports are presented to the Local Workforce Innovation Board's Planning and Oversight Committee and / or Youth Committee for review and determination if further action is required.

Tracking Basic Services

Through partner discussion and inquiries, it has been determined that most core partners do not formally track services provided to non-enrolling individuals. There are informal tracking mechanisms such as sign-in sheets, IWDS visitor reports, and ESL profiles.

4.K Title IB Workforce Fund Transfers

Adult & Dislocated Worker Transfers

Transfer funds between adult and dislocated worker funding streams:

1. Upon notice of allocations for the program year, the Service Provider (CEFS) and Fiscal Agent / Grant Recipient (Lake Land College) meet to discuss program needs of the two funding streams. Items taken into consideration are funds carried forward from previous program year, current fund obligations, and future market of participants.
2. Upon results of analysis, a determination is made if funds should be transferred to best meet the needs of our workforce area. Decisions made are communicated with the Planning and Oversight Committee and Chief Elected Officials. The local area limit available to transfer annually is equal to the maximum allowed by the Illinois Department of Commerce.

Incumbent Worker Training Funds

The local area will take into account funds available, business demand, and individual need for services, to determine the amount of funds to set aside for incumbent worker training. As allowed under WIOA Section 134(d), a maximum of 20% of Dislocated Worker and Adult funds can be allocated. The intent is to also apply for additional funding opportunities outside of WIOA formula allocations as they become available.

Transitional Jobs

The Local Workforce Innovation Board chooses not to use funds for transitional jobs.

Pay-for-Performance

The Local Workforce Innovation Board chooses not to use funds for pay-for-performance contracts.

4.L Workforce Equity Lens: Operating Systems and Policies

Equity is interwoven in the very fabric of WIOA programs and services. Case management approach to supporting residents in overcoming barriers to success in a holistic, customize manner is a tried-and-true method of addressing inequities. Title partners work together to create targeted outreach efforts to reach those most in need of assistance. New technologies implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic, brought light to innovative ways to increase accessibility of services to individuals. Regional workforce development leaders are committed to using an intentional approach to improving equity throughout our daily operations and in development of new initiatives directly addressing disparities. As a region, we prioritize bringing opportunities to marginalized individuals. Each new workforce endeavor will be assessed with an equity lens to uphold accountability.



5. PERFORMANCE GOALS & EVALUATION

5.A.1 Performance Measures

The Local Board will evaluate performance based on the following locally negotiated performance standards. In Program Year 2022, the following performance goals were negotiated:

- **Adults**
 - 87% will be employed at the 2nd quarter after exit
 - 84% will be employed at the 4th quarter after exit
 - Will have a median earning of \$7,500 at 2nd quarter after exit
 - 69% will attain a credential
 - 56% will achieve measurable skills gains
- **Dislocated Worker**
 - 79% will be employed at the 2nd quarter after exit
 - 82% will be employed at the 4th quarter after exit
 - Will have a median earning of \$8,700 at 2nd quarter after exit
 - 78% will attain a credential
 - 68% will achieve measurable skills gains
- **Youth**
 - 72% will be placed in employment/secondary education at the 2nd quarter
 - 72% will be placed in employment/secondary education at the 4th quarter
 - 60% will attain a credential
 - 60% will achieve measurable skills gains

The Local Board will continuously monitor the performance outcomes for the local fiscal agent, eligible providers under Title 1B, and the One-Stop delivery system. The Local Board will also integrate the use of the performance outcomes into its local continuous improvement planning.

The local partners will develop a system of measuring the satisfaction of customers to the regional workforce development system, through an interagency effort that includes all the required partners in the Effingham OneStop Center and affiliate sites.

5.A.2 Additional State Performance Measures **

The primary indicator for the **Effectiveness in Serving Employers** indicator has not yet been defined. For this reason, the recent negotiations processes did not include this indicator. The purpose is to establish a primary indicator of performance for effectiveness of serving employers through piloting two new measures:

1. Retention with the same employer - Number and percentage of students employed by the same employer in Qtr. 2 and Qtr. 4 post-exit from their program.
2. Employer Penetration Rate - Number and percentage of employers providing services divided by the total number of employers in the region.

5.B Current & Planned Evaluation Activities

Within SEDR, existing service-delivery strategies will be reviewed and analyzed to determine what strategies will be expanded upon based on the promising return on investment (ROI).

Each of the partners will continue with their respective services. No specific service strategies have been certified viable for expansion as of Year One of the four-year plan. During the course of the first half of the plan time line, LWIB partners intend to design and develop methods of evaluation for promising return on investment. Collectively, the team will examine how services can be collaboratively reviewed and expanded upon to meet ROI. The first step is to define what a “promising” return on investment means in regards to each partner and for each service. Secondly, identifying accurate methods to generate and collect appropriate data for measurement. Finally, results from the analysis will allow all partners to recognize which strategies warrant expansion. This collaboration will occur from the consortium level of partners to the direct service staff in various communities, with a focus on networking with the partnership and improving communications.

Previous methods used to review and analyze ROI have been very general and broad-spectrum. As opposed to disaggregating data for each service or strategy, a cumulative approach was taken. Return on investment was reviewed for the Adult and Dislocated Worker funding streams by comparing the estimated annual wage of participants to the direct training expenditures. For PY 2022, the ROI for Title I Services:

PY 2022 Return on Investment	
Program	Est. Annual Wage/Direct Training Expenditures
Adult	\$0.65
Dislocated Worker	\$2.68
<i>Average</i>	<i>\$1.39</i>

5.B.1 Expanding Strategies Based on ROI

Title I will continue to provide Individual Training Accounts (ITA), supportive services, work experiences, On-the-Job Training (OJT), and Incumbent Worker Training (IWT). OJT, work



experience, and IWT programs will continue to grow as collaborations develop with partners and businesses in the communities. A priority will be to link partner resources in order to market these services as a partnership. For example, community colleges, in cooperation with local region business services, need to be able to talk with businesses about funds available for incumbent worker training when businesses ask for such training. The Business Service Team will continue to partner with employers when hiring the unemployed, thereby taking advantage of the OJT and work experience programs offered by other partners. Moreover, Adult Ed continues to expand Integrated Career & Academic Preparation System (ICAPS) programming in the future. An expansive asset map has been developed and is expanding to include community partners. An increase in shared referrals among partners is a desired goal of this collaboration.

5.B.2 Reducing Strategies Based on ROI

At the present time, no delivery strategies will be eliminated. The LWIB will eliminate training programs from Eligible Training Programs List that are not in high-demand within our region.

5.B.3 Creating New Strategies Based on ROI

A future goal is to implement a shared, automated referral system.

5.C Workforce Equity Lens: Analysis of Performance Goals & Evaluation Activities

A workforce equity lens will be incorporated in future analysis of performance goals and implementation of evaluation activities across LWIA 23. Performance Measures are the gold standard of evaluations for WIOA partners statewide; however, they are not necessarily based on equity beyond serving individuals facing barriers to employment. The Title I service provider currently issues Customer Service Surveys to all WIOA customers; CEFS has determined that the Surveys do not include equity or accessibility measures and thus need to be reviewed with that equity lens. CEFS also assesses the needs of customers not only at enrollment, but also continuously throughout their participation with WIOA programs. Equity is ingrained in the holistic, customized assessment of barriers which change and evolve throughout an individual's journey along their chosen career pathway.



6. TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS & ASSURANCES

6.A.1 Fiscal Management

The Chief Elected Officials selected Lake Land College based in Mattoon, as Fiscal Agent/Grant Recipient, effective July 1, 2014. Lake Land College is the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds. (See ATTACHMENT: XYZ)

6.A.2 Local Procurement Policies & Procedures for Subgrants & Contracts

LWIA 23 follows the grant recipient/fiscal agent procurement policy. (See ATTACHMENT: Purchasing and Bidding Policy)

LWIA 23 follows a competitive proposal policy to select sub-grantees and contracts. (See ATTACHMENT: Competitive Proposals Policy)

Service Provider Request for Proposals (RFP) will be developed and the funding opportunities will be publicly advertised. All potential providers who have expressed an interest in being considered for awards will be sent Requests for Proposals (RFP) for the area or areas of service for which they wish to be considered. The list will be considered public information.

The primary consideration in selection of sub grantees to deliver services within the workforce investment area will be the effectiveness of the agency or organization in delivering comparable or related services based on demonstrated performance; in terms of the likelihood of meeting performance goals; cost; quality of training; and characteristics of participants to be served. In addition, proper consideration will be given to community-based organizations, including organizations providing non-traditional training for women, as service providers. Appropriate educational agencies in the local area will be given the opportunity to provide educational services unless alternative agencies or organizations demonstrate they would be more effective or would have greater potential to enhance the participants' continued occupational and career growth.

The following criteria will be considered in evaluating proposals (order of listing does not represent priority ranking):

1. Clear statement of documented needs and ability of program to serve those needs
2. Ability to serve target populations and provide meaningful work
3. Coordination with other organizations, evidence of co-operative planning, and utilization of non-LWIA resources
4. Supervisory capability

5. Administrative capability, including ability to conform to fiscal and programmatic reporting requirements
6. Reasonableness of budget
7. Compliance with federal regulations and RFP guidelines
8. Funds are not used to duplicate effective services or facilities in the area

6.B Physical & Programmatic Accessibility

SEDR will comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. IDES and DHS are mandatory partners in the Illinois Employment and Training Centers. Cooperative efforts will be made to provide services and activities to individuals with disabilities. As required by WIOA, DHS has individuals in each office whose responsibilities include the promotion and development of job opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

The Effingham OneStop Center is also equipped with state-of-the-art equipment to allow for accessibility to persons with disabilities. Partners will take a joint effort in maintaining the equipment as well as ensuring all staff are trained to use equipment.

American Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility of the Illinois WorkNet system is regularly reviewed for compliance to ADA standards and requirements. Partners are committed to making reasonable accommodations for all individuals seeking services by assessing needs and making appropriate resource referral.

The comprehensive One-Stop center will maintain a culture of inclusiveness in compliance with Section 188 of WIOA, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and all other applicable statutory and regulatory requirements.

Additionally, the physical characteristics of the facility, both indoor and outdoor, meet compliance with 29 CFR Part 37, the 2010 or most recent ADA standards for Accessible Design and the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards. Services are available in a convenient, high traffic and accessible location considering reasonable distance from public transportation and adequate parking (including parking clearly marked for individuals with disabilities). Indoor space is designed in an “equal and meaningful” manner providing access for individuals with disabilities.

6.C Plan Development & Public Comment

The Local Workforce Innovation Board has charged representatives, its board members, and the core partners in LWIA 23 with the task of drafting the regional plan. The plan is developed with the regional workforce partners in consultation with the LWIB. Upon final approval from the LWIB, the regional plan is then submitted to the Chief Elected Officials for approval.

Chief Elected Officials then review and have the opportunity to comment on the plan. Other local elected officials, the business community, labor organizations, educators, vocational



rehabilitation agencies, service providers, welfare agencies, community-based organizations, transportation providers, and advocates have opportunities collaborate in the development of the local plan through plan development sessions, committee meetings and the plan's public comment period.

The LWIB provides a 30-day public comment period prior to submission of this plan, including an opportunity for input into the development of the local plan, particularly for representatives of businesses, education, and labor organizations. LWIA 23 advertises the plan's availability for public comment in the local newspaper, *Effingham Daily News*. The newspaper announcement directs interested individuals to the LWIA 23 website (www.lwa23.net) to view the regional plan draft. The plan remains posted on the LWIA 23 website for 30 days prior to the submission of the plan. Any public comments received during the 30-day window will be brought to the LWIB for consideration.

6.D Workforce Equity Lens: Meeting Administrative Requirements of WIOA

Incorporating a workforce equity lens into meeting the administrative requirements of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) at the local workforce area level involves a deliberate and comprehensive approach to ensuring that all individuals, particularly those who have historically faced barriers to employment, have equitable access to opportunities and resources. The SEDR workforce system is committed to implement an equity lens through the following:

- *Data Collection and Analysis:* reviewing and analyzing data on the demographics of the local workforce area, including race, gender, age, disability status, and other relevant factors. Gaps identified in the analysis will be brought to the forefront and root causes of the gaps will be researched in an effort to reduce disparities and identify areas for improvement.
- *Identifying Disparities:* Use the data analysis to identify disparities in access to workforce development programs, training opportunities, job placements, and employment outcomes among different demographic groups. This step is crucial for understanding where inequities exist and where interventions are needed.
- *Developing Equity Goals and Strategies:* Based on the identified disparities, develop specific equity goals and strategies for addressing them. These goals should be aligned with the overarching objectives of the WIOA, such as promoting economic self-sufficiency and ensuring equal access to high-quality employment services.
- *Engaging Stakeholders:* Engage a diverse range of stakeholders, including community organizations, advocacy groups, employers, and individuals from marginalized communities, in the planning and decision-making process. Their input is essential for designing effective strategies that are responsive to the needs of the local workforce.

- *Adopting Inclusive Practices:* Integrate inclusive practices into all aspects of workforce development programming, from outreach and recruitment to service delivery and evaluation. This may include offering culturally competent services, providing accommodations for individuals with disabilities, and addressing language barriers.
- *Monitoring and Evaluation:* Establish mechanisms for ongoing monitoring and evaluation to track progress towards equity goals and outcomes. Regularly review data on program participation, employment outcomes, and customer satisfaction to assess the effectiveness of equity initiatives and make adjustments as needed.
- *Continuous Improvement:* Foster a culture of continuous improvement by soliciting feedback from stakeholders, learning from best practices, and promising approaches, and adapting strategies in response to changing needs and circumstances.

By incorporating a workforce equity lens into the implementation of the WIOA at the local level, the workforce ecosystem can work towards creating a more inclusive and equitable workforce system that benefits all members of the community.



CONCLUSION

The Southeastern Economic Development Region (SEDR) – also known locally as LWIA 23 - plan adheres to WIOA guidelines, emphasizing a customer-centered approach, diversity, equity, and inclusion, and employer engagement. Over the next four years, LWIA 23, in partnership with workforce stakeholders, will implement strategies to enhance regional coordination, develop talent pipelines, and align service delivery to meet the evolving needs of businesses and job seekers. Through collaboration and innovation, SEDR aims to build a skilled workforce, promote economic prosperity, and ensure equitable access to opportunities for all populations.



GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS



Appendix

Attachments		
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1	Chief Elected Official (CEO) Functions and Agreement Between Multiple Chief Elected Officials	
2	Chief Elected Official Delegation of Authority and Acknowledgment of Financial Liability	
3	Local Workforce Innovation Board (LWIB) Certification and Recertification Requirements	
4	One-Stop Operator Procurement	
5	Career Planning	
6	General Follow-Up Services	
7	Selective Service Registration Requirements	
8	Youth Eligibility	
9	Service Priorities	
10	Veterans' Priority of Service Requirements	
11	Individual Training Accounts	
12	On-the-Job Training	
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15	Training Provider and Training Program Eligibility – Eligible Training Provider List	
16	Supportive Services	
17	Privacy and Security	
18	Property Control for Property Purchased with WIOA Funds	
19	Compliant and Grievance Procedures	
20	Purchasing & Bidding	
21	Competitive Proposals	
DOCUMENTS		
	Memorandum of Understanding	
	OSO Service Integration Self-Assessment	
	LWIA 23 Regional GOALS 2024-2028	
	14 Elements of Youth Program	
	Template of Individual Service Strategy	





14 Elements of Youth Program

	CEFS	ADULT T ED	IDES	DRS	CTE	PERKI NS	CBOS	X	Y	Z	AA	BB	CC



