



July 1, 2023

Keith Reynolds, WDB Chairperson  
Workforce Board Lehigh Valley  
555 Union Boulevard  
Allentown, PA 18109

Dear Mr. Reynolds,

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

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

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

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

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

Sincerely,

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

Brenda Duppstadt  
Bureau of Workforce Development Administration Director

cc: Phillips M. Armstrong, Lehigh Valley Executive, Workforce Board Lehigh Valley, Chief Elected Official (CEO)  
Lamont G. McClure, Northampton County Executive, Workforce Board Lehigh Valley, Chief Elected Official (CEO)  
Nancy Dischinat, Executive Director, Workforce Board Lehigh Valley

Addendum to the PA Department of Labor & Industry's Approval  
of the Lehigh Valley PY 2021-2024 Local Area Plan Modification

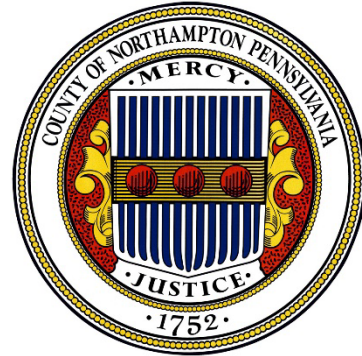
**Conditions**

To gain final approval of the Lehigh Valley PY **2021-2024 WIOA** Local Area Plan Modification, the local board must provide a written response to the Department no later than September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023, that includes the items described below.

1. Documentation that the local board completed their 30-day public comment period and replied to comments received, as evidenced by updated narrative in local area modification prompt 5.5. In addition, all applicable items listed on the Pennsylvania WIOA Plans Submission Checklist, Fiscal Year 2021-2024 WIOA Regional and Local Area Plan Modification, must be submitted for final submission. This must include but is not limited to a clean copy of the local area plan modification, completed attestations, completed Attachments 1-3, and documentation of public notice/public comment which must be emailed to the following account: [RA-LI-BWDA-Policy@pa.gov](mailto:RA-LI-BWDA-Policy@pa.gov).
2. Documentation that the local board had the opportunity to vote and approve the revised local area plan modification for final submission. This must include but is not limited to a submission cover letter using L&I's template and the applicable WIOA Plan Review and Modification Form(s) which must be included in the local area plan modification package and emailed to the following account: [RA-LI-BWDA-Policy@pa.gov](mailto:RA-LI-BWDA-Policy@pa.gov).
3. Documentation that the CEO was aware of the vote and consents to the final submission of the revised local area plan modification. This must include but is not limited to a submission cover letter using L&I's template and the applicable WIOA Plan Review and Modification Form(s) which must be included in the local area plan modification package and emailed to the following account: [RA-LI-BWDA-Policy@pa.gov](mailto:RA-LI-BWDA-Policy@pa.gov).



Phillips Armstrong  
Lehigh County Executive



Lamont McClure  
Northampton County Executive



**WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT  
LOCAL PLAN MODIFICATION  
PROGRAM YEARS 2021-2024**

**Release for Public Comment: June 21, 2023  
30-day Public Comment Deadline: July 20, 2023  
Board Approval of Final Modification: September 12, 2023  
State Approval of Final Modification: September 28, 2023**

**Local Workforce Development Area name: Workforce Board Lehigh Valley**

**Effective Date: July 1, 2023**

## INTRODUCTION

The Workforce Board Lehigh Valley (WBLV) Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Local Plan serves as **Lehigh Valley’s Workforce Development System Roadmap** that continues through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) to serve as the catalyst for the strategic alignment and integration of Workforce Board Lehigh Valley’s vision, mission and goals of a comprehensive workforce system, established by the Governor as outlined in the Pennsylvania State Plan, and developed through the expertise of WBLV’S clearinghouse partners: the Bureau of Workforce Development Administration, Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations, Pennsylvania Workforce Development Association, the Pennsylvania Center for Workforce Information and Analysis (CWIA), the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC), Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation, Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce, One-Stop Partners, employer and job seeking customers, and our Community Based Organizations in aligning workforce services, education, training, and employment opportunities as we reimagine services through the continuous improvement of Lehigh Valley’s Workforce System.

Consistent with guidelines issued by the PA Department of Labor and Industry, the WBLV Local Plan timeline includes: Public Comment period February 25, 2021-March 26, 2021 followed by Board approval, and submission to Labor and Industry on or before April 2, 2021, culminating in state approval and Local Plan finalization. [Note: Local Plan Modification Public Comment 6/21/2023 to 7/20/2023.]

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



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

The Lehigh Valley Workforce Development Area is a two-county workforce area directed by the Lehigh Valley Workforce Investment Board, Inc., Doing Business As Workforce Board Lehigh Valley (WLBV), under leadership of the Lehigh County and Northampton County Executives serving as the WBLV’s Chief Elected Officials. The WBLV Program Year 2021-2024 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Local Area Plan has an effective date of July 1, 2021. [Note: Modification effective date 7/1/2023.]

The WBLV uses Workforce Intelligence and labor market data methodologies to develop and drive innovative and cost effective workforce development, educational and occupational training, and Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth programming. Our data portfolio serves as a clearinghouse for employers

in benchmarking compensation packages provided for attraction and analyses for competitive worker retention, and includes information on age distribution, educational attainment, demographics, commuting patterns, barriers to employment, employment status, industry growth and occupational trends, to name a few. Our Workforce Intelligence is used to serve job seekers and the community in showcasing jobs, skills, occupations, career pathways, training, education, and wages in high priority occupations and Lehigh Valley's Targeted Industry Sectors of Healthcare, Manufacturing, Transportation/Warehousing/Logistics, Finance and Insurance, and Professional/Technical/Scientific Services. Lehigh Valley's Workforce Intelligence and labor market information is available from the following comprehensive list of Federal, State, and Local data sources.

### **Federal Data Sources**

Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia

[www.philadelphiafed.org/research-and-data/regional-economy/regional-charts](http://www.philadelphiafed.org/research-and-data/regional-economy/regional-charts)

National Association of Workforce Boards

<https://www.nawb.org/resources/labor-market>

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

[www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov)

U.S. Census American Community Survey

[www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/](http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/)

### **State Data Sources**

Center for Workforce Information and Analysis: Lehigh Valley Profile

<https://www.workstats.dli.pa.gov/Documents/WDA%20Profiles/Lehigh%20Valley%20WDA%20Profile.pdf>

Center for Workforce Information and Analysis: Lehigh County Profile

[www.workstats.dli.pa.gov/Documents/County%20Profiles/Lehigh%20County.pdf](http://www.workstats.dli.pa.gov/Documents/County%20Profiles/Lehigh%20County.pdf)

Center for Workforce Information and Analysis: Northampton County Profile

[www.workstats.dli.pa.gov/Documents/County%20Profiles/Northampton%20County.pdf](http://www.workstats.dli.pa.gov/Documents/County%20Profiles/Northampton%20County.pdf)

PA Chamber of Commerce

<https://www.pachamber.org>

PA Department of Education

<https://www.education.pa.gov/about/Resources/Pages/default.aspx>

PA Partnerships for Children

<https://www.papartnerships.org/resources-publications/mapping-tools/>

PA State System of Higher Education (PASSHE)

<https://www.passhe.edu/SystemData/Pages/default.aspx>

<https://www.passhe.edu/prepared4PA/Pages/default.aspx>

## Local/Regional Data Sources

Community Services for Children

<https://www.cscinc.org/>

Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce

Dr. Kamran Afshar, [www.kaa-inc.com](http://www.kaa-inc.com)

Dr. Jay Bryson, Wells Fargo, [www.wellsfargo.com/com/insights/economics/about](http://www.wellsfargo.com/com/insights/economics/about)

Lehigh Carbon Community College

<https://www.lccc.edu/>

Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation

<https://lehighvalley.org/about-lehigh-valley/research-documentation/>

Lehigh Valley Planning Commission

[www.lvpc.org/pdf/2019/FutureLV/FutureLV%202019%20Reduced.pdf](http://www.lvpc.org/pdf/2019/FutureLV/FutureLV%202019%20Reduced.pdf)

Northampton Community College

<https://www.northampton.edu/>

Penn State Data Center

[www.pasdc.hbg.psu.edu](http://www.pasdc.hbg.psu.edu)

Society for Human Resource Management/Lehigh Valley Chapter

<https://www.shrmlv.org/page/Surveys>

Workforce Board Lehigh Valley

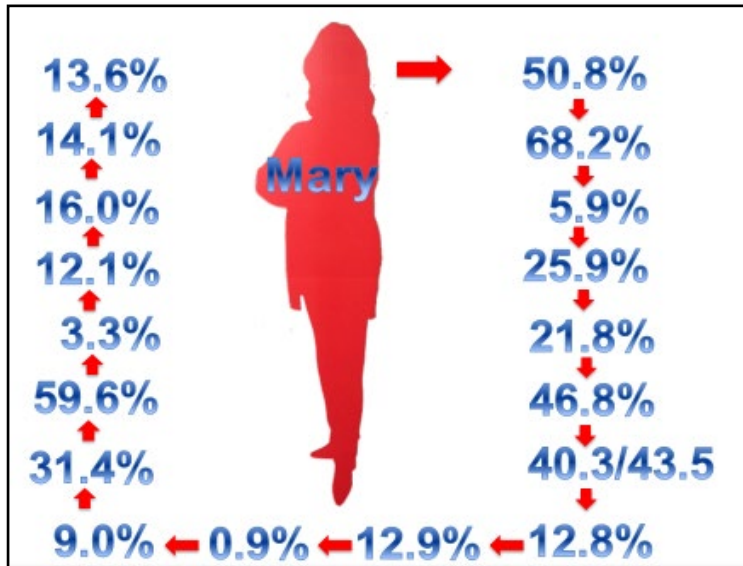
[www.lvwib.org](http://www.lvwib.org)

**Individuals with Disabilities:** As of 2021, the unemployment rate for individuals with disabilities in Lehigh County is 13.6 percent and Northampton County is 12.4 percent; however, these levels are on par with the state at 13.8 percent unemployment rate for individuals with disabilities. [Source: American Community Survey, 1-year est., 2021]

**Single Parent Households:** In 2021, as a percentage of Total Family Households with Children, 19.6 percent of Lehigh County households are Single Parents with Children, compared to Northampton County at 20.0 percent and the state at 23.1 percent. [Source: American Community Survey, 1-year est., 2021]

**Additional Data:** Lehigh Valley has developed an Environmental Analysis that tracks barriers of our workforce system customers including Skills Deficiencies, Transportation, Criminal Background, housing and more. As outlined in section 4.13, many of these barriers have been exacerbated by the pandemic. The WBLV uses Lehigh Valley Planning Commission's (LVPC) Equity Analysis that evaluates 14 data points on housing, education, transportation and employment to determine the level of access to opportunity for Lehigh Valley residents. As data continues to be analyzed, findings are uploaded on LVPC's Interactive Opportunity Map, which we use to develop strategies to serve job seekers. [Source: Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, <https://lvpc.org/datalv.html>]

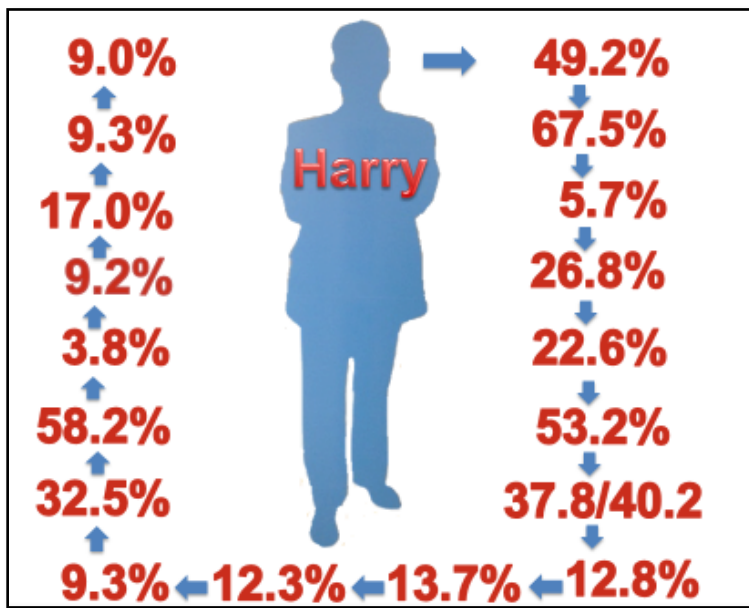
The WBLV illustrates characteristics of Lehigh Valley’s workforce through its unique Mary and Harry Adult Worker charts, and Emily and Johnny Youth charts shown on the following pages.



[Source: PA Center for Workforce Information and Analysis; American Community Survey]

- Mary makes up 50.8% of Lehigh Valley’s population
- Mary is 68.2% White, 5.9% African American, and 25.9% Other Race
- Mary is 21.8% Hispanic
- Mary makes up 46.8% of labor force
- Her median age in Lehigh County is 40.3 and 43.5 in Northampton County
- 12.8% are in 50-59 range; however, the largest cohort is 10-19 age range at 12.9%
- 0.9% are Veterans
- 9.0% which are 25 years and older have less than a High School education
- 31.4% have a High School diploma or equivalent
- 59.6% have at least some college experience or a higher degree
- Her population grew by 3.3% from 2016 to 2021
- 12.1% are at poverty level or below
- The largest occupational group Mary belongs to is Office and Administrative Support occupations at 16.0%, followed by Education, Legal, Community Service, Arts, and Media occupations at 14.1%, and Management, Business, Financial occupations 13.6%

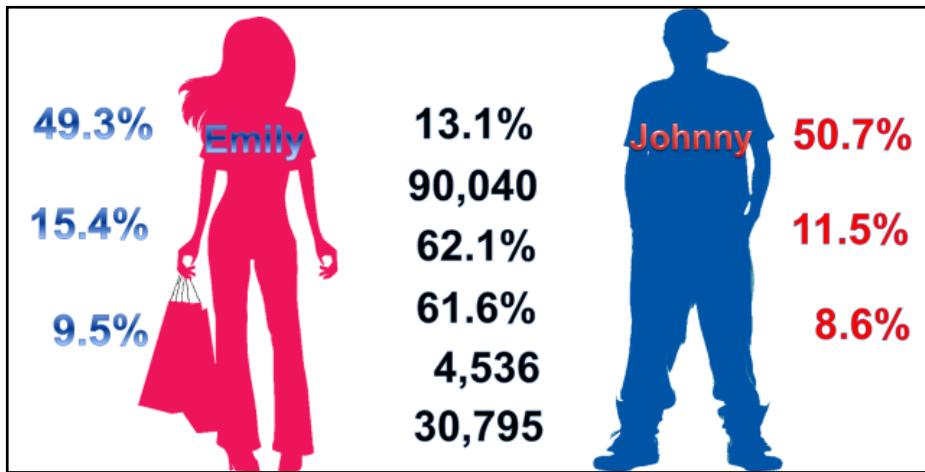




[Source: PA Center for Workforce Information and Analysis; American Community Survey]

- Harry makes up 49.2% of Lehigh Valley's population
- Harry is 67.5% White, 5.7% African American, and 26.8% Other Race
- Harry is 22.6% Hispanic
- Harry makes up 53.2% of labor force
- His median age in Lehigh County is 37.8 and 40.2 in Northampton County
- 12.8% are in 50-59 age range; however, the largest cohort is 30-39 age range at 13.7%
- 12.3% are Veterans
- 9.3% which are 25 years and older have less than a High School education
- 32.5% have a High School diploma or equivalent
- 58.2% have at least some college experience or a higher degree
- His population grew by 3.8% from 2016 to 2021
- 9.2% are at poverty or below
- The largest occupational group Harry belongs to is Management, Business, and Financial at 17.0%, followed by Computer, Engineering, and Science occupations at 9.3%, and Production occupations 9.0%





[Source: PA Center for Workforce Information and Analysis; American Community Survey]

- Emily and Johnny are between the ages of 15 and 24
- They represent 13.1% (90,040) of Lehigh Valley’s population
- Emily is 49.3% of youth population and Johnny is 50.7%
- 15.4% of Emily’s and 11.5% of Johnny’s population are at poverty level
- For youth 16-24 years old, 62.1% of Emily’s and 61.6% Johnny’s population are currently in the labor force
- Of those youth in the labor force, 9.5% of Emily’s and 8.6% of Johnny’s workforce are unemployed. Therefore, 4,536 youth are looking for work. They may have previous work experience at restaurants, grocery stores, amusement, recreation industries, and retailers.
- 30,795 youth are not currently in the labor force

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### Labor Market Trends

Lehigh Valley labor market trends show that the top ranked skills are needed in the following fastest growing industries. The PA Center for Workforce Information and Analysis cautions that this data reflects the impact of a recovering labor market post-COVID, i.e., surge in public, facing occupations such as Amusement, Recreation, Schools, and others as shown in following table. [Source: PA Center for Workforce Information and Analysis]

Top Ten Industries	Employment Change (Percent)
Other Amusement & Recreation Industries	41.43%
Other Schools & Instruction	39.68%
Medical & Diagnostic Laboratories	30.37%
Community Care Facility for the Elderly	27.34%
Restaurants & Other Eating Places	23.26%
Computer Systems Design & Rel Services	21.05%
Child Day Care Services	20.26%
Home Health Care Services	20.16%
General Medical & Surgical Hospitals	19.08%
Individual & Family Services	18.42%
Top Ten Industries	% Employment Change

[Source: Long-term Industry Employment Projections, 2020-2030]

Lehigh Valley Ten-Year Employment Projections show a trend that our region will experience a 7.95 percent growth rate by 2030, growing from 311,680 jobs in 2020 to 336,360 jobs in 2030. Skills will be needed in growth occupations of: Food Preparation & Serving Related Occupations, Personal Care & Service Occupations, Healthcare Support Occupations, Healthcare Practitioners & Technical Occupations, and Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports & Media Occupations.

Skills needed within the following occupations are projected to remain flat or decrease: Office and Administrative Support Occupations, Production Occupations, Sales & Related Occupations, and Construction & Extraction Occupations.

**1.2. How are skills gaps defined in the local area? Provide a description of the skills that are required to meet the needs of employers in region and local area?**

The WBLV continuously reviews the needs of employers to identify and **define skills gaps** that exist in the workforce. The WBLV sees its role as a convener between business and talent as vital to the continued growth of the workforce. We identify skills gaps and barriers to employment through the following methodology. Outcomes of the data analyses are applied to WBLV policymaking, as necessary.

- Researches, collects, and analyzes data on skills needs and barriers to employment. Sources include, but are not limited to: PA Center for Workforce Information and Analysis, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Census Bureau, Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce, Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation, Society for Human Resource Management, and regional economists.
- Partners with the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission to analyze information regarding workforce and population demographics and characteristics that identifies gaps in equitable access to housing, transportation, education, training, and employment through an innovative real-time Geographic Information System (GIS) data tool.

- Collects real-time data from job seekers, customer satisfaction surveys, and PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley customer usage information. Data is collected through individuals filing for unemployment, individuals who have been dislocated from business, and people using the workforce system. The WBLV identifies required skills for job seekers to be competitive.
- Collects real-time workforce data from Rapid Response efforts with companies which are downsizing. Data is also collected through job openings, and employer recruitments at PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley.
- Coordinates with Lehigh Valley’s education system including K-12, career and technical schools, and two- and four-year institutions. Information is exchanged regarding education, training, credentials, certificates and degrees required by employers, resulting in a greater understanding of the talent supply pipeline and career pathways that lead to high priority occupations in targeted industry clusters.
- Partners with the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) to identify employer education and training needs, Knowledge, Skills and Abilities, and the effort to map workforce competencies to existing and future curriculum.
- Uses the talent of the WBLV membership comprised of representation from business, economic development, education, community-based organizations, unions and workforce development.
- Partners with the Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation to conduct Talent Supply Studies to define trends and shortfalls in the workforce and talent supply, resulting in a comprehensive analysis of education and workforce labor requirements.
- Works with neighboring regions to examine commuting patterns and shared labor markets.
- Engages employers to analyze and define the top Knowledge, Skills, Abilities, credentials, certificates and degrees needed currently and in the future. Through customized Career Pathways developed with employers, the WBLV shows career advancement steps and workplace Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities.

**Top Job Skills** required to meet business and industry’s needs in the Lehigh Valley, ranked by ten-year growth percentage of annual demand across all industries, are outlined below. [Per CWIA, updated Top Job Skills for 2020-2030 will be available end of year 2023.] Detailed work activities are dominated with the top skill of *ordering materials, supplies or equipment* with 19.1 percent of annual demand, and top tools and technologies center primarily on *knowledge and skills with computer software, hardware, and technology*. We continue to monitor the data on top skills, since several skills may change when new data is published as a result of new skills and technology needed in the workplace impacted by the pandemic and Fourth Revolution/Industry 4.0 jobs.

[Source: PA Center for Workforce Information & Analysis; Occupational Employment Projections; U.S. Department of Labor O\*NET database]

<b><u>Top 10 Detailed Work Activities</u></b>	<b><u>Percent of Annual Demand</u></b>
Order materials, supplies, equipment	19.1 %
Record operational or production data	15.1%
Calculate costs of goods or services	14.9%
Sell products or services	14.5%
Monitor inventories of products, services	11.8%
Clean work areas	11.7%
Collect deposits, payments, fees	11.5%
Greet customers, patrons, visitors	11.4%
Prepare documentation for contracts, transactions	11.1%
Clean food preparation areas, facilities, equipment	10.7%

<b><u>Top 10 Tools &amp; Technologies</u></b>	<b><u>Percent of Annual Demand</u></b>
Spreadsheet software	86.1%
Office suite software	77.7%
Database user interface and query software	76.4%
Word processing software	72.1%
Personal computers	70.9%
Desktop computers	58.4%
Electronic mail software	57.2%
Notebook computers	47.0%
Internet browser software	45.4%
Enterprise resource planning (ERP) software	44.4%

### **WBLV Employer Career Pathways**

A real-time analysis of WBLV Employer Career Pathways shows that the following Knowledge, Skills and abilities are required by employers: communication skills, attention to detail, teamwork, customer services, self-direction, motivation, multi-tasking, problem solving, flexibility, dependability, trustworthiness, and responsibility.

### **Local Examples of Skills Gaps and Best Practices Based on Knowledge of the Workforce**

Studies and data continue to indicate that, across all jobs in the Lehigh Valley, employers cite the need for employability skills. While these skills are not considered an occupational skill under WIOA, employers continue to be challenged regarding the lack of employability skills in their workforce. The WBLV has established an Employability Skills Curriculum in Lehigh Valley’s highest-risk school district which has 21 components aligned to the U.S. Department of Education Employability Skills Framework. PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley offers employability skills training and all eligible training providers are required to provide employability skills in their programs.

The following are **Best Practices** of employers addressing skills gaps in partnership with the WBLV.

**Central Admixture Pharmacy Services, Inc. (CAPS) is a B. Braun Medical Inc.** subsidiary located in Allentown, PA, is the nation's largest network of admixture pharmacies and is a pioneer in the outsourcing of compounded sterile preparations. CAPS continues to partner with the WBLV and PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley, serving as the company’s workforce intermediary and back-office HR department, to hire and train job seekers to become certified Pharmacy Technicians, with a goal of hiring approximately 120 for their Lehigh Valley location alone. Our partnership began in December 2016 when the company worked with the WBLV to recruit, attract and retain a workforce pipeline through the development of a customized 12-week classroom curriculum to train Pharmacy Technician candidates, with the goal of trainees obtaining the Pharmacy Technician Certification Board (PTCB) credential. CAPS uses Lehigh Valley’s On-the-Job Training (OJT) program to attract eligible workers into this high-demand career pathway with 30 individuals placed to-date through the OJT program. Demonstrating the success of this best practice, CAPS has an 80%+ success rate in their trainees obtaining the required certifications. New trainee cohorts start after each 12-week period, ensuring a steady pipeline of OJT participants for our WIOA customers.

**XPO Logistics and NFI** are major transportation and logistics companies in the Lehigh Valley which have continuously consulted and engaged with the WBLV to understand labor market data and discuss talent pipeline issues. To meet the demand for CDL-A Truck Drivers, they have become the new training vendor of record and developed their own, in-house Commercial Driver’s License training programs.

XPO's customized training program, which targets new hires and/or upskills Class B CDL-certified workers, is called the Less-than-Truckload (LTL) Driver Sales Representative Student Program, an intensive program consisting of classroom education and hands-on driving experience. NFI developed a customized internal training program designed to provide CDL A training called Shifting Gears, a comprehensive hands-on training for current employees, in partnership with the local career and technical school.

**Cetronia Ambulance Corps** worked closely with the Workforce Board Lehigh Valley and PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley to initiate a new, employer-driven pre-apprenticeship program for Emergency Medical Technicians/Paramedics, a high demand healthcare occupation, which became the first EMT/Paramedic Registered Apprenticeship in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Office of Apprenticeship and Training. This is a four-year Career Pathway program with classroom training at Lehigh Carbon Community College (LCCC) and On-the-Job Training (OJT) at Cetronia Ambulance. Apprentices take the Paramedic National Certification exam and receive their journey person certificate with up to 20 college credits applied towards an associate degree and/or towards an advanced nursing program. Cetronia Ambulance has partnered with the WBLV on special grants and OJT resources to re-employ WIOA customers.

**The Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce** serves as Intermediary for the WBLV in identifying gaps in skills, talent supply, and hiring by obtaining feedback on skills needs from the Chamber's 6,000 employer members, its Councils and industry-driven Committees. The Chamber also serves as Lehigh Valley's One-Stop Operator to continuously communicate with One-Stop Partners to identify skills gaps and customer needs from the standpoint of their organizations which include: LCCC, Northampton Community College, Lehigh Career & Technical Institute, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations, Educational Data Systems, Inc., Community Action Lehigh Valley, PA Department of Human Services, Unemployment Compensation, and AARP.

In summary, the WBLV focuses on identifying and addressing skills needed by employers and skills gaps in the workforce through education, training, Career Pathways, and work-based learning opportunities that provide a clear and equitable access to all Lehigh and Northampton County residents, based on WIOA's priority of services. The priority of services policy includes veterans and their spouses, individuals who are eligible for WIOA funds, individuals with barriers and those who are basic skills deficient. Our goal is to increase access to training and employment through a customized service delivery approach.

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

The Workforce Board Lehigh Valley convenes business and industry leaders, representatives from economic development, education, community stakeholders, and One-Stop Partners to identify, discuss and offer solutions to challenges in aligning Lehigh Valley's labor force skills, and education and training activities with the needs of Lehigh Valley's employer base.

Over the past year, challenges centered around the impact of COVID-19 such as work/life balance, childcare, work schedules, fear of COVID, and more. Ongoing challenges are: awareness of Career Pathways, talent supply shortages, re-engagement of youth into training, education and employment, and aligning education and training with employer needs, as outlined below.

These challenges are taken from Local Plan discussions during the following WBLV Committees: Business-Education Partnership, February 1, 2021; Workforce Solutions, February 10, 2021; Business and Policy, February 12, 2021; Youth Council, February 17, 2021; Finance, February 24, 2021; Chief Elected Officials, February 24, 2021, Executive Governance, March 2, 2021, and Workforce Board Lehigh Valley Board, March 9, 2021.

Recommendations that resulted from the 2018 Lehigh Valley Talent Supply Study established the Lehigh Valley Education and Talent Supply Council which captured Talent Supply issues. An updated 2021 Talent Supply Study is being conducted to provide proactive insights and data into new challenges facing the workforce system, Lehigh Valley's Talent Supply and our economy.

1. **Challenge:** To reimagine Lehigh Valley's Workforce System post-pandemic.

**Solution:** The WLBV will use our knowledge base, lessons learned, and workforce system service readjustments made as a result of the pandemic, as outlined in Lehigh Valley's Post-Pandemic Plan, to transform Lehigh Valley's Workforce System to a hybrid delivery model including remote and in-person services. This WIOA 2021-2024 Local Plan describes in detail the reimagining and transformation of the PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley workforce system.

**Solution:** Establish a COVID-19 Staff Task Force 2; Continue strategy meetings with the WBLV Executive Governance Committee; incorporated technology policy; and meetings with PA Department of Labor and Industry leaders regarding workforce issues and safety protocols; realigned technology policies; readjusted hours at our comprehensive and satellite locations; consulted with PA Workforce Development Association to share best practices; constant contact with Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce and Society for Human Resource Management employers regarding layoffs and hirings; Develop a hybrid training model; and, the private sector initiating training programs to retain workers and train new hires.

**Solution:** Implemented COVID-19 pandemic accelerated efforts of the WBLV to reinvent its customer-centric workforce system and transformed strategic delivery of services through the PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley workforce system. Customers are served through a hybrid delivery system of virtual and in-person services, a dedicated Here to Help Call Center phone line, virtual workshops and seminars, and case management continues virtually and by in-person appointments with a focus on serving Veterans. Workforce services are a combination of virtual and in-person services, training in anchor programs of WIOA, youth, and Employment Advancement and Retention Network (EARN), and special grants including the Linking to Employment Activities Pre-release (LEAP), Economic Transition, Youth Reentry, and State/Local Internship Program (SLIP) resulting in continued employer involvement. All grants will be pursued to accelerate efforts to continually reinvent Lehigh Valley customer-centric workforce system, under the direction of the Northampton County and Lehigh County Executives serving as Chief Elected Officials and the Workforce Board Lehigh Valley.

**Solution:** Continue to reinvent the workforce system to provide virtual connections including: online documentation for eligibility across all programs; training on Zoom and Google Voice; electronic database system and process flow for collection of QA services across all programs; a local Jobs Portal, Virtual Job Fairs, and Employer Wednesdays; expanded Employability Skills Curriculum with seminars and workshops; and, drive-up services to accommodate customers.

Expand technology options for job seekers by offering computer hardware technology for eligible customers, and create virtual opportunities to embed in our One-Stop Partners operations, and facilitate workforce information services sessions with employers. Through technology, an in-person operation will continue to shift to a hybrid delivery platform that updates our customer-centered approach. Working with employers to transform their employment practices through work schedules, Paid Time Off, wages, benefits, company culture and environment, technology usage, employee recognition and additional hiring benefits.

2. **Challenge:** An individualized Career Pathway for every Lehigh Valley employer outlining the Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities required for business and industry.

**Solution:** A Lehigh Valley Career Pathways Promise Grant was seed-funded through a PA Department of Labor and Industry Strategic Innovation Grant, and discussed during WBLV Quarterly Board Meetings and during communications with employers at Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce Board of Governors meetings and their Manufacturing, Healthcare, Transportation, Energy and Environment, Public Policy, and Membership Committees. The Chamber serves as WBLV's Business Intermediary and, as such, presents WBLV issues, challenges and solutions at every Committee meeting.

The WBLV has completed 150 customized company Career Pathways Knowledge, Skills and Abilities to provide WBLV's partners in workforce development, economic development, education and community with business and industry's career pathways. Our **Lehigh Valley Career Pathways Promise** is aligned to PA Department of Labor and Industry's Bureau of Workforce Development and Administration objectives of developing and implementing innovative programs and strategies designed to meet the needs of all employers, and implementing promising practices for workers and businesses as described in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

In Phase One of our Career Pathways project, we tested and refined our template and researched the Career Pathways' value to companies through their success in recruiting, attracting, training and retaining their workforce, and in developing their company's succession plans. In Phase Two, the WBLV offers Lehigh Valley's entire employer base the opportunity to be included in our **Lehigh Valley Career Pathways Promise** to be the first Pennsylvania region to have a Career Pathway in every business. All WBLV Career Pathways will be downloaded to a new Path to Careers website, [www.PathtoCareers.org](http://www.PathtoCareers.org), a statewide online resource that connects students and educators to local businesses through career exploration activities and funded by a Business-Education Partnership Grant in the Central Pennsylvania region. All 17 Lehigh Valley School Districts and all One-Stop Partners within the Lehigh Valley workforce system will be provided Career Pathways.

Sustainability will be achieved through soliciting public and private resources, partners, and companies to develop Career Pathways in the targeted sectors of Healthcare, Manufacturing, Transportation/Warehousing/Logistics, Finance and Insurance, Professional/Scientific/Technical Services, and other industries. An upcoming challenge is digitizing and completing videos showcasing companies and their Career Pathway opportunities.

3. **Challenge:** To ENGAGE employers in aligning labor force skills, education and training.

**Solution:** Through the PA Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) business outreach program called ENGAGE, the WBLV will continue to partner with the Manufacturers



Resource Center and the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce and its 6,000 employer membership to conduct roundtables to engage and interact with CEOs, Human Resources professionals and business leaders from companies within targeted industries and demographic sectors, to assess their needs as a group, discuss challenges and offer solutions to issues focusing on Lehigh Valley's industry sectors of Manufacturing, Transportation and Warehousing, Professional/Technical/Scientific Services, Finance and Insurance, Healthcare, Energy and Environment, Food and Accommodation.

Aligning Registered Apprenticeship Programs, Work/Life Issues Impacted by COVID-19 and beyond, Women and Minority Owned Businesses, and diversity issues with business and industry leaders to share challenges such as talent supply, alignment of education and training to employer needs, development of Career Pathways, and changing workforce system resources and services. ENGAGE Roundtables continue to be solutions in matching workers for available jobs.

4. **Challenge:** Capture real-time workforce intelligence to supplement the PA Center for Workforce Information and Analysis data to analyze Lehigh Valley's workforce assets and talent pipeline.

**Solution:** Through the joint effort between the WBLV and the Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation (LVEDC) Education and Talent Supply Council, a 2021 *Talent Supply Study* will be conducted to update research from the 2018 Study, reassess employer talent needs, and validate strategic approaches that the Lehigh Valley uses to address talent supply challenges. This new study will involve an in-depth multi-sector survey of Lehigh Valley employers, a reanalysis of strategic initiatives, and critical insights to the COVID-19 pandemic's effect on the Lehigh Valley including the economy, educational providers, and workforce development system. LVEDC and WBLV will understand the regional impact and how to prepare and thrive in a post-pandemic future.

**Solution:** The WBLV has a collaborative partnership with the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission to gather, examine and analyze Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access (IDEA) data for discussion at WBLV's new IDEA Committee meetings.

5. **Challenge:** Develop a Workforce Board Lehigh Valley Knowledge, Skills and Abilities Consortium with Lehigh Valley's employers to determine current and future employment, training and education needs.

**Solution:** Establish a *Lehigh Valley Knowledge, Skills and Abilities Consortium* including economic development, and the Education and Talent Supply Council, workforce development, K-14 education including PA State System of Higher Education (PASSHE), and training providers to align industry-driven knowledge, skills, abilities and competencies with the education and training needed to build a talent pipeline.

WBLV will partner with PASSHE Prepared4PA initiative, comprised of post-secondary institutions, employers, and Workforce Boards across Pennsylvania, to align industry-driven knowledge, skills, abilities and competencies with the education and training needed to build a talent pipeline. Goals are to: understand regional differences across the state across six high-demand industry clusters of advanced manufacturing, healthcare, finance, energy, information technology, and agri-business; develop competency maps for curriculum and skills development; pilot the competency curriculum through upskilling and reskilling of adult learners; and, create a scalable competency model.

6. **Challenge:** Recall, Reboot and Reclaim students who dropped out or stopped out of high school.

**Solution:** Implement a *Three Rs: Recall, Reboot, Redirect* initiative, through a PA Department of Labor and Industry Business-Education Partnership Grant to recruit and engage youth from Lehigh Valley's urban school districts in Allentown, Bethlehem, and Easton who either graduated through social promotion, stopped out, or dropped out due to the pandemic, and redirect them into post-secondary education, training and career pathways to employment. The *Three Rs* initiative will provide youth post-secondary education and community college dual enrollment opportunities. Our challenge is to accelerate the education and employability of young adults to fill the talent supply shortage.

7. **Challenge:** The aging of Lehigh Valley's workforce through retooling and growing the cohort of workers ages 55 and above.

**Solution:** Increase their technical and employability skills, and update their credentials. Data indicates the aging Baby Boomer population is retiring and leaving the workforce, compounding the fact that Americans are having smaller families and not replacing the existing population. Our challenge is to upskill older workers' technical and employability skills through credentialing to ensure employment opportunities.

**Solution:** Optimize available opportunities for this cohort including the development of career pathways that focus on upskilling, and highlight benefits to employers including incentives to entice older workers to remain in the workforce.

**Solution:** Work with training providers to customize training options for job seekers with longer work histories that need to re-enter the workforce.

8. **Challenge:** Increase Employability Skills of Lehigh Valley's workforce pipeline.

**Solution:** Continue the development of a Career Linking Class and Employability Skills Curriculum developed for high school students within the Allentown School District (ASD), the most at-risk school district in the Lehigh Valley, through a PA Department of Labor and Industry Business-Education Partnership Grant and with oversight by the WBLV Business-Education Partnership Committee. This career and college readiness course was approved by the ASD School Board in their Program of Studies, and is based on nine areas of: applied academic skills, critical thinking skills, resource management, information use, communication skills, systems thinking, technology use, personal qualities and interpersonal skills, all developed using the U.S. Department of Education Framework of Employability Standards in Career and Technical Education and the Adult Education.

Private support through the Century Fund provides resources to have WBLV establish College and Career Resource Centers in the Allentown School District which incorporates a full menu of college and career readiness services including employability skills.

**Solution:** The Employability Skills Curriculum will be put online for use by all Lehigh Valley School Districts and the curriculum integrated into the curriculum offered at PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley workforce system and our One-Stop Partners. The Curriculum will be available to any PA Workforce Board or organization interested.

9. **Challenge:** Ensure workforce staff and job seekers are digitally literate.

**Solution:** Digitization of the PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley workforce system through the transfer of specialized workforce services to an interactive, technology-driven Digital Literacy Programming format.

**Solution:** Offer digital education and training to broaden the high-skill and under-represented talent pipeline.

**Solution:** Determine performance measures to track digital adoption within the PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley workforce system.

10. **Challenge:** Increase the number of high school graduates who enter higher education.

**Solution:** Develop a *Course on College* targeted to high school students in Allentown, Bethlehem and Easton to increase their awareness and access to higher education, including college and university exploration and navigating the application process and financial options.

**Solution:** A partnership between the WBLV, Lehigh Carbon Community College and Northampton Community College regarding skills required for training opportunities and jobs *Close to Home*.

11. **Challenge:** Increase the educational and skills attainment of Lehigh Valley's current and future workforce.

**Solution:** Utilize the private sector to upskill the workforce through occupational skills training, educational attainment, incumbent worker training, apprenticeship programs, and work-based learning, in partnership with Lehigh Carbon Community College, Northampton Community College and higher education.

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

The immediate transition to virtual workforce services in 2020 due to the pandemic was possible because our system was proactive and implemented technology and workflow in our programs that allowed staff and customers to connect online. The ease and success in which this switch took place indicates that customers welcomed the switch and that virtual and hybrid program offerings will become a permanent feature of our service delivery and will grow exponentially.

We must ensure job seekers have access to high-speed internet and digital devices. Increasingly, communities and businesses offer free Wi-Fi hotspots, which assist with access to virtual service for those who do not have internet service in their home. While most customers have at least a smartphone for accessing workforce services, it is preferable using workforce services computers available for job seekers. Lack of a digital device will never be a barrier to receiving workforce program services. The WBLV will continue to work to require our service providers to ensure equitable, free, and for those with no technology to provide easily obtainable online access.

The barrier of broadband and cellular access has been identified by the PA Workforce Command Center as an issue that needs to be resolved, particularly in rural areas. The WBLV's Supportive Services/Incentives/Needs-Related Payments/Stipend policy includes technology assistance to job seekers and

approved at the September 1, 2020, quarterly WBLV meeting. This Policy was updated to clarify Supportive Services on September 13, 2022. To teach and support the use of newly introduced platforms and devices, PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley provides instructional seminars and one-on-one coaching to support total access to workforce development services and to provide customer with the digital skills needed for training and employment.

The WBLV's business-driven approach highlights employer needs and requirements in all workforce development activities, from intake and assessment interviews, case management, curriculum development and our instructional approach, training and upskilling, job development and placement, to ongoing retention support. We develop and maintain close relationships with business owners, managers, and trade associations to stay informed about employment trends, current in-demand workforce skills, skill gaps, training solutions, the knowledge, skills, and abilities, and education and training required for entry level through upward mobility through career pathways.

Job seeker surveys are conducted through an automated system that drives continuous improvement. An "on-demand" orientation in the Welcome Center eliminates delays and expedites connections to designated staff who work personally with job seekers to explore career options and provide advice on supportive services, training and employment next steps. Employment barriers are discussed and referrals are made to appropriate internal or one-stop partners or other partner resources to stabilize the household at the outset of engagement. An integrated data management system streamlines tracked participant information and utilizes that same data across all programs and levels of service to eliminate duplicate inquiries and collection.

Basic and individualized employability skills are tailored to the needs of job seekers. Instructional staff modify and update curriculum to keep pace with the ever-changing landscape of employer and labor market demands. All program services are designed and delivered in accordance with federal, state and local regulations and guidelines.

Remote sessions have grown into a full menu of workforce and training virtual offerings. Co-facilitation of live virtual events with employers and subject matter experts is a valued service that continues to grow.

Workforce partners, regional counterparts, and various departments and agencies at the state level frequently source the WBLV's expertise in program implementation and best practices. Initiatives such as the real-time Welcome Center, full integration of program services, the first American Job Center co-located within a hospital campus, workforce coordinators stationed in both secondary and post-secondary educational facilities, PA CareerLink® staff housed in the county jail to deliver pre- and post-release programming, and a paramedic apprenticeship program continue to grow and serve as workforce models. We are also working with the PA Office of Apprenticeship and Training to design an Apprenticeship Pathway for high school students.

Education and training efforts are based on industry knowledge and labor market information to determine the skill development needed to provide quality candidates who best match employers' needs. Training is individualized through the initial assessment, one-on-one conversations with an Education and Training Advisor, career pathway exploration, current skills assessment and educational goal planning. An essential part of this process is identifying transferable skills gained through prior employment. When location, timelines, abilities, and personal circumstances are all taken into account, traditional classroom options are discussed and decisions made as to a career path and post-secondary engagement.

Despite the pandemic, employers' immediate hiring needs and demand for a substantial candidate pipeline remain unchanged. While training providers continue to develop and offer hybrid or virtual coursework, many prospective students have financial, time constraints, and lack the discipline to excel in a hybrid or virtual environment, that prohibit them from participating in and benefiting from some programs. We continue to monitor the results.

Many people are experiencing long-term unemployment, and benefit from an "earn as you learn" option. This new work-based model shifts some training responsibilities to employers as they onboard new hires and upskill current workers through Incumbent Worker Training (IWT). This new model is not only a win-win for the job seeker but it is mutually beneficial for the employer that is filling vacancies and creating career pathways. An additional benefit for both parties is ongoing support to ensure employee retention and advancement.

Historically, special projects such as Economic Transition and Line worker training promote industry-specific training and employment opportunities through partnerships with education and the business sector. One example is the Prologis project, which offers credentialing in the transportation and logistics industry to candidates who receive placement assistance at the end of their coursework.

Work-based trainings include paid internships, On-the-Job Training, pre-apprenticeships, and Registered Apprenticeships. We offer work experience for work-ready participants who lack a significant employment history, experience, or skill development in their desired field. We continuously develop opportunities in high-demand occupations to increase a pipeline of job candidates.

In partnership with the Business Engagement Services Team (BEST), the WBLV's Executive and Business Directors nurture employer relationships. PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley staff promote and develop On-the-Job Training, apprenticeships, paid work experience, and unsubsidized placement and advancement opportunities. Workforce system partners connect remotely or in-person with employers at Business and Industry Partnership meetings, Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) and Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce events, job fairs, specialized recruitment events, and site visits.

An active job bank maintained to develop work-based training opportunities that align with the Lehigh Valley's targeted industry sectors is imperative. BEST Job Developers and Recruiters are assigned to career clusters that align with the high-priority occupations in diversified manufacturing, transportation and logistics, business and professional, healthcare, and customer service. Workforce Board Lehigh Valley has established an Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access (IDEA) Committee of the Board to oversee diversity in all workforce system offerings, to seek out those unemployed and workers in need of training in underserved communities, and those with barriers to employment. This strategy fosters strong employer connections with key staff members to grow career-specific opportunities for their job seekers.

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

The WBLV uses labor market data and workforce intelligence provided by the PA Center for Workforce Information and Analysis (CWIA) among other sources to provide the following Lehigh Valley regional analysis of economic conditions. [Sources: PA Center for Workforce Information and Analysis; Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages; Long-term Industry Employment Projections, 2020-2030; American Community Survey, one-year estimates, 2021]

From a long-term perspective, Lehigh Valley Ten-Year Industry Projections show a healthy employment growth of 7.9 percent, with total employment at 336,360 projected by 2030, compared to Pennsylvania with a 7.6 percent growth rate. The Lehigh Valley as a region mirrors Pennsylvania which both have a diverse economy and, notwithstanding a pandemic, are not impacted by booms or busts in a single industry. Data outlining existing and emerging industries, occupations and employer needs are described below.

### **Lehigh Valley In-Demand Industry Sectors and Location Quotients**

Lehigh Valley's existing top ranked industry sectors by employment are Healthcare with at 19.2% of total employment, Transportation and Warehousing at 11.9%, Manufacturing 11.3%, and Retail at 10.3%.

The Transportation and Warehousing sector has seen the largest growth trajectory in the last 5 years, growing 30.7% from 2017 to 2021 with a 2.06 Location Quotient (LQ describes how concentrated an industry is within the Lehigh Valley, as compared to the concentration of that industry throughout the state). Other industries with notable LQs are Administrative and Waste Services at a LQ of 1.25, Manufacturing with an LQ of 1.17, and Healthcare with an LQ of 1.04.

Lehigh Valley's industry subsectors with the fastest growth, as a percent of Employment Change, are: Other Amusement & Recreation industries at 41.4%, Other Schools & Instruction at 39.7%, and Medical & Diagnostic Laboratories at 30.4%. The top ranked subsector that will experience the fastest growth by volume change of employment is General Medical & Surgical Hospitals with 3,360 more jobs by 2030.

### **Lehigh Valley In-Demand Occupations**

As of December 2022, Lehigh Valley's current top occupations, according to CWIA's Jobs Postings Dashboard, are Retail Salespersons, Registered Nurses, Manufacturing Sales, Freight and Material Movers, Customer Service Representatives.

[Note: The PA Center for Workforce Information and Analysis cautions that this data reflects the impact of a recovering labor market post-COVID.] Based on the CWIA Long-Term Projections (2020-2030), the fastest growing occupations are: Restaurant Cooks, Amusement & Recreation Attendance, Fitness Trainers & Aerobics Instructor, and Medical & Health Services Managers with 47.7%, 44.6%, 42.1%, and 42.1% growth, respectively.

Lehigh Valley's occupations with fastest growth, as shown by Ten-Year Employment Change Volume, are Freight and Material Movers (1,570 added jobs), Registered Nurses (1,440 jobs), Home Health & Personal Care Aides (1,430 jobs), and Fast Food & Counter Workers (1,240 jobs). The top occupation by total annual demand is Laborers/Freight/Stock/Materials Movers with 2,423 more jobs added each year from 2020 to 2030.

Across all occupations, employers continue to need a more educated, technically skilled workforce. We believe that the new high school degree is an Associate's Degree and this statement is validated by CWIA's Lehigh Valley Employment Distribution by Educational Attainment data showing that employers require a workforce with education in post-secondary (16 percent) and Associate's/Bachelor's/Advanced degrees (25 percent).

On-the-Job Training is still an employer requirement, along with educational degrees, certificates, and credentials. The educational level projected to grow the most over the next ten years, according to business and industry's occupational needs, is an Advanced Degree at 12.4 percent growth rate,

followed by Associate's Degree at 12.0 percent, and Bachelor's Degree 10.1 percent.

As of the first quarter of 2022, current educational attainment for Lehigh Valley's workforce is estimated at 27 percent who have some college or an Associate's Degree, and 24 percent with Bachelor's Degree or higher. Less than a high school level is 11 percent of Lehigh Valley's workforce and high school graduates are estimated at 24 percent of the population. It should be stated that educational attainment data was unavailable for 13% of the Lehigh Valley workforce, which may affect the comparison across time.

Employability skills across all industries will continue to be needed by employers. The WBLV Employability Skills Curriculum is now a credit-bearing course in the Allentown School District's Program of Studies with 150 high school students enrolled. All 17 Lehigh Valley school districts, two community colleges, three career and technical schools, and two Intermediate Units have received the curriculum. The PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley workforce system has implemented Employability Skills into its menu of services for customers.

## 2. STRATEGIC PLANNING: Vision and Goals

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

Lehigh Valley's **Workforce Development System Roadmap** continues through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) to serve as the catalyst for the strategic alignment and integration of Workforce Board Lehigh Valley's vision, mission and goals of a comprehensive workforce system, established by the Governor as outlined in the Pennsylvania State Plan, and developed through the expertise of WBLV'S clearinghouse partners: the Bureau of Workforce Development Administration, Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations, Pennsylvania Workforce Development Association, the Pennsylvania Center for Workforce Information and Analysis (CWIA), the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC), Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation, the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce, our One-Stop Partners, employer and job seeking customers and our Community Based Organizations in aligning workforce services, education, training, and employment opportunities as we continuously reimagine services through the continuous improvement of Lehigh Valley's Workforce System.

In this 2021-2024 WIOA Local Plan the Workforce Board Lehigh Valley leads with Business and Industry Strategies, Workforce Initiatives Execution, System and Operations Improvement, and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy as the Lehigh Valley community rises from the economic, workforce and community devastation caused by a deadly Pandemic called COVID-19. This Pandemic continues to test Workforce Board Lehigh Valley's strategic vision, and its use of business intelligence to develop and execute a remote workforce platform of services through technology, while maintaining and expanding services through an in-person universal workforce delivery system.

Therefore, the Workforce Board Lehigh Valley's **VISION** in support of economic growth and worker self-sufficiency is through education and training, while mitigating barriers for adults, dislocated workers and youth and holds itself accountable to the Chief Elected Officials for the continuous improvement of business and workforce services that move the Lehigh Valley toward our Vision:

***The Lehigh Valley has a world-class global workforce.***



Workforce Board Lehigh Valley supports an integrated system of partnerships and articulates our **MISSION** as: A private-sector led, integrated, regional workforce system of economic and workforce development, education, employers and community partners working in collaboration with data experts such as the PA Center for Workforce Information and Analysis and the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission to ensure the Lehigh Valley workforce system has strategically positioned services for a universal population with a focus on those most in need to ensure Lehigh Valley has an educated and skilled workforce that meets business and industry's global labor demands.

The WBLV's strategy is to continually prepare an educated and skilled workforce to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency to ensure the Lehigh Valley has a world-class competitive workforce. This begins with the WIOA key provisions that create opportunities for economic and career success for workers, and opportunities to improve workforce development and adult education and training systems.

WIOA focuses on vulnerable populations including low income adults, dislocated workers, Veterans, youth with limited skills, ex-offenders, and individuals with little or no current work experience and who face many personal and financial barriers. It requires the board to continue to implement a holistic in-service and virtual services approach within the workforce system, and to reshape and expand our workforce system partners, policies, and workforce and training options, supportive services, policies and practices. The new strategies emerging will lead to improving the education, training, and support services needed for career pathways that lead to employment. These pathways provide on and off ramps, credential attainment, work experiences, mentoring, apprenticeships and wrap-around support services to mitigate barriers to employment and increase the employability of all job seekers.

## GOALS

The following Workforce Board Lehigh Valley goals align and support the Governor's five broad goals for Pennsylvania's workforce development system as outlined in the WIOA Combined State Plan.

**WBLV Goal 1:** Develop Career Pathways and build Registered Apprenticeship opportunities with Lehigh Valley employers.

**Strategy:** Implement *Lehigh Valley's Career Pathways Promise* to develop individualized Career Pathways for all Lehigh Valley employers to provide workforce, economic development, education, community partners and all job seekers with business and industry's pathways to employment, and the knowledge, skills and abilities required for pathways to Registered Apprenticeship, and upward mobility within business and industry.

**Strategy:** Incorporate Career Pathways in the formation of Pre-Apprenticeship Training, Registered Apprenticeship programs, and mentorship training programs recognized by the Pennsylvania Office of Apprenticeship and Training for career advancement.

**Aligns to Governor's Goal 1: Career Pathways and Apprenticeship:** Develop a comprehensive career pathways system in PA and expand career pathways as the primary model for skill, credential, degree attainment, with an emphasis on assisting individuals to address barriers to employment, earn a family-sustaining wage, and advance their career.

**WBLV Goal 2:** Convene Industry Partnerships in Healthcare, Finance and Insurance, and Professional, Scientific and Technical Services.

**Strategy:** The Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce serves as the Workforce Board Lehigh Valley's Intermediary to convene business and industry leaders to identify business priorities and execute solutions for training, hiring, and retaining workforce talent.

**Aligns to Governor's Goal 2: Sector Strategies and Employer Engagement:** Engage employers and industry clusters through innovative strategies to improve the connection and responsiveness of workforce programs and services to labor market demand, including recruiting, training, and retaining talent.

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**WBLV Goal 3:** Lehigh Valley has a holistic system of services, and work-based learning opportunities for Youth.

**Strategy:** Engage all Youth providers in the Lehigh Valley in the development of a Lehigh Valley Strategic Youth Plan that serves as a holistic clearinghouse mapping Youth programs, services, resources and work-based learning for upward mobility to ensure a pipeline of youth that meets the knowledge, skills and abilities of employment opportunities.

**Aligns to Governor's Goal 3: Youth:** Increase opportunities for all youth to experience work-based learning through summer employment, pre-apprenticeship, Registered Apprenticeship, internships, job shadowing, mentoring, and other experiences in the workplace, including developing employability skills.

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**WBLV Goal 4:** Ensure all Federal and State funding allocation and grants support Lehigh Valley's Model in the delivery of workforce services and mitigating barriers to training in growing and emerging industries for all job seekers with an emphasis on workers impacted by post-pandemic job loss.

**Strategy:** Emphasize the re-entry of workers affected by the pandemic.

**Strategy:** Advocate for funding that supports modernization of the educational systems and expands workforce training and re-training to prepare youth, adults and dislocated workers for new and emerging employment.

**Aligns to Governor's Goal 4: Continuous Improvement of the Workforce Development System:** Identify and enact system changes and improvements that enhance the collaboration and partnership between agencies and partners in the workforce development system.

**Aligns to Lehigh Valley Planning Commission Study: *Jobs + Housing At Risk, A COVID-19 Pandemic Assessment, Allentown School District.***

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**WBLV Goal 5:** Improve Lehigh Valley's One-Stop Workforce Delivery System for job seekers and employers.

**Strategy:** Increase user-friendly services and accessibility of PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley’s One-Stop Centers, and One-Stop Partners with an emphasis on serving individuals with barriers to learning, training, and employment.

**Strategy:** Develop strategic partnerships with employers to serve as training vendors.

**Strategy:** Strengthen strategic partnerships with K-14 to increase access to, and participation of eligible youth.

**Aligns to Governor’s Goal 5.** Strengthening the One-Stop Delivery System: Implement improvements to one-stop service delivery to better serve all customers, including job seekers and employers.

**Aligns to PA Keystone Economic Development and Workforce Command Center Report.**

**WBLV Goal 6:** Increase technology and technology training as a necessary tool for training, education and employment within Lehigh Valley’s Workforce System for eligible customers.

**Strategy:** Employ technology in the design and recalibration of remote and in-person workforce services.

**Strategy:** Align to WBLV’s Technology Policy Goal for 2021-2024.

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**WBLV Goal 7:** Ensure Diversity, Equity and Inclusion within Lehigh Valley’s Workforce System.

**Strategy:** Inventory WBLV Board and Committees in terms of diversity, and develop strategies to ensure the Board and Committee are representatives of Lehigh Valley’s diverse populations.

**Strategy:** Include the WBLV non-discrimination policy on all WBLV Request for Proposals (RFP) and require those applying to supply their non-discrimination policy with proposals.

**Strategy:** Participate in Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access (IDEA) Initiatives throughout the Lehigh Valley, such as the Color Outside the Lines Committee of the Community Action Lehigh Valley, and become a DEI Champion of the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Collaboration.

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**WBLV Goal 8:** *A New and Future Professions Partnership* will lead regional workforce development through partnerships with the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission to identify housing, transportation, infrastructure and workforce trends.

**Strategy:** Ensure alignment to the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission’s Study called *Jobs + Housing At Risk, A COVID-19 Pandemic Assessment*.

**Strategy:** Ensure alignment to the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission’s Slate Belt Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan that enables the boroughs of Bangor, East Bangor, Pen Argyl, Roseto, Portland and Wind Gap and the townships of Plainfield, Washington, Lower Mount Bethel and Upper Mount Bethel to shape their collective vision for the future.

**Strategy:** Formalize planning and implementation of the *New and Future Professions Partnership* by working with employers, educational institutions, state government, County Executives as Chief Elected Officials, and the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission.

**Strategy:** Continue to support re-entry of workers affected by the Pandemic into the workforce.

**Strategy:** Continue to focus workforce entry, training, and retraining on growing and emerging industries.

**Strategy:** Continue to advocate for funding that supports modernization of the educational system and significantly expands workforce training and retraining to prepare for new and emerging industries.

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**WBLV Goal 9:** Throughout PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley’s workforce system, expand support services as families face the financial burdens brought on by COVID-19.

**Strategy:** Many jobs lost during the pandemic are unlikely to be available post-pandemic. Therefore, intensive career services, occupational skills training, and technology, provided as needed, are available to Lehigh Valley’s eligible population.

**Strategy:** Development of a post-pandemic On-the-Job Training Initiative will be explored, aligned with an employer outreach program. Ensure PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley services are accessible and user-friendly through increased hours and satellite centers that provide technology for training and job search. Explore a new, intensive Case Management Model.

**Strategy:** Develop a Lehigh Valley communications plan focused on business and industry, job seekers and the community.

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

To achieve the WBLV’s strategic vision of a world-class competitive global workforce, Workforce Board Lehigh Valley WIOA Local Plan for Program Years 2021-2024 embeds our required core programs of: Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth; Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy; Title III Wagner-Peyser Act; and Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation into Lehigh Valley’s workforce system, and collectively work to meet and exceed the performance and service standards of our core partners.

Our core partners are co-located and/or provide access to their programs within the Comprehensive PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley workforce system. As WBLV members, the core partners have the opportunity to contribute to strategy development, resource decisions, service alignment, and the tracking of participants to assure successful outcomes.

The WBLV assures that partner coordination and alignment are documented through Memoranda of Understanding (MOU), interagency initiatives, and regular meetings. The WBLV also works with the core partners to monitor shared performance measures, leverage funds, dual enroll participants as appropriate, share information as allowable, and work together to assure customer success.

In accordance with WIOA and Labor and Industry Guidance, the WBLV negotiates its infrastructure and operational costs with core partners and includes the negotiation results in the MOU.

The following outlines our strategies in working with our core partners.

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

The WBLV competitively procures the Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker provider and separately procures Youth providers. The WBLV Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker services provider also provides some, not all, of the local Youth WIOA program services. Currently our Title I provider is Educational Data Systems, Inc. (EDSI).

### **Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Programs (AEFLA)**

The WBLV coordinates with AEFLA programs in several ways. Lehigh Carbon Community College and Northampton Community College have representatives co-located virtually or in person in the comprehensive PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley center. Individuals with low basic skills who must upgrade their basic skills to attend postsecondary training are referred to AEFLA programs to hone their English, Math and Literacy skills, including English Language Learners. WIOA Title I services are restricted to individuals who have an I-9 (Ready and Able to Work Form). WIOA also refers refugees and individuals who cannot produce the documentation needed for WIOA services to AEFLA providers. WIOA defines youth in GED programs as dropouts/out-of-school.

Youth staff refer high school dropouts to AEFLA programs to avoid duplication of services and to assist youth in obtaining their high school credential. As placement is a required performance measure for AEFLA programs, the AEFLA providers may be included in virtual or onsite recruitments and job fairs.

### **Title III Wagner-Peyser**

Co-location of Wagner-Peyser and WIOA staff continues under WIOA and all services are coordinated with Wagner-Peyser, Trade Act, Rapid Response and Veterans staff. WIOA participants are enrolled in Wagner-Peyser.

During recruitments and job fairs, PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley and core partners encourage employers to provide the names of the individuals they hired as a result of the recruitment or job fair to record and share outcomes. All WIOA staff work closely with Wagner-Peyser staff to identify long-term unemployed and dislocated workers to cross refer participants.

**Title IV Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)** Note: As directed by the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, we have been directed to maintain the existing language and strategies as follows.

WIOA funded PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley staff will explore dual enrollment of in-school youth with OVR when advantageous to and with consent from each participating youth. OVR must spend 15 percent of their funds on in-school youth, all of whom fit within the WIOA barriers.

WIOA focuses on out-of-school youth eliminating or severely reducing in-school programs which existed under WIA. By dual enrolling the youth served by OVR in WIOA, both programs can benefit from the outcomes. OVR can provide the program design elements and WIOA can provide low cost assistance through employability skills.

By working together to dual enroll youth, the WBLV can maintain an in-school program, OVR can take advantage of the education and job placement tools of the PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley and both agencies will realize improved performance.

Similarly, with adults, cross referral and dual enrollment will benefit the customers and enhance performance for both entities. The WBLV will work with OVR to include them in job and recruitment fairs to broaden the options for employers and jobseekers for both entities.

In addition to the above, the WBLV will: share the Eligible Training Provider List with all the WIOA core partners including the performance achieved by participants in their individual courses of study; analyze PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley centers on an ongoing basis for accessibility; share information with PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley partners to communicate activities and initiatives; facilitate the development of career pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs; improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential including industry-recognized certificates or certifications; and, educate partners on services and tools available in the PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley so that the partners can assure their clients are aware of the services.

### **2.3. How will the local board’s vision and goals align with, support and contribute to the governor’s vision and goals for the state’s workforce development system, as well as any of the goals and strategies articulated in the regional plan?**

The following Workforce Board Lehigh Valley goals align and support the Governor’s five broad goals, as outlined in the WIOA Combined State Plan.

**WBLV Goal 1:** Develop Career Pathways and build Registered Apprenticeship opportunities with Lehigh Valley employers. As described in Section 2.1, Goal 1 Strategies, the WBLV continues to work individually and collectively with employers, education providers, workforce system partners and the community to create new and expand existing Registered Apprenticeships and Pre-apprenticeships through: developing Career Pathways with employers that incorporate the Apprenticeship model, convening summits and roundtables with the 6,000-member Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce to expand awareness of Apprenticeships, serving as the workforce intermediary between employers and the state’s Apprenticeship and Training Office, developing Lehigh Valley High School Apprenticeship classroom courses to increase awareness of Apprenticeship options while offering work experiences for youth, promoting mentorships which are a critical element of Apprenticeships, and ensuring access to services leading to industry-recognized postsecondary credentials including Registered Apprenticeships.

**Aligns to Governor’s Goal 1: Career Pathways and Apprenticeship:** Develop a comprehensive career pathways system in PA and expand career pathways as the primary model for skill, credential, degree attainment, with an emphasis on assisting individuals to address barriers to employment, earn a family sustaining wage, and advance their career.

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**WBLV Goal 2:** Convene Industry Partnerships in Healthcare, Finance and Insurance, and Professional, Scientific and Technical Services.

**Aligns to Governor’s Goal 2: Sector Strategies and Employer Engagement:** Engage employers and industry sectors through innovative strategies to improve the connection and responsiveness of

workforce programs and services to labor market demand, including recruiting, training, and retaining talent.

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**WBLV Goal 3:** Lehigh Valley has a holistic system of services, and work-based learning opportunities for Youth.

**Aligns to Governor’s Goal 3: Youth:** Increase opportunities for all youth to experience work-based learning through summer employment, pre-apprenticeship, Registered Apprenticeship, internships, job shadowing, mentoring, and other experiences in the workplace, including developing employability skills.

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**WBLV Goal 4:** Ensure all Federal and State funding allocation and grants support Lehigh Valley’s Model in the delivery of workforce services and mitigating barriers to training in growing and emerging industries for all job seekers with an emphasis on workers impacted by post-pandemic job loss.

**Aligns to Governor’s Goal 4: Continuous Improvement of the Workforce Development System:** Identify and enact system changes and improvements that enhance the collaboration and partnership between agencies and partners in the workforce development system.

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**WBLV Goal 5:** Improve Lehigh Valley’s One-Stop Workforce Delivery System for job seekers and employers.

**Aligns to Governor’s Goal 5. Strengthening the One-Stop Delivery System:** Implement improvements to one-stop service delivery to better serve all customers, including job seekers and employers.

**Aligns to PA Keystone Economic Development and Workforce Command Center Report.**

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*The following additional four WBLV goals support and contribute to Lehigh Valley’s workforce system.*

**WBLV Goal 6:** Increase technology and technology training as a necessary tool for training, education and employment within Lehigh Valley’s Workforce System for eligible customers.

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**WBLV Goal 7:** Ensure Diversity, Equity and Inclusion within Lehigh Valley’s Workforce System.

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**WBLV Goal 8:** *A New and Future Professions Partnership* will lead regional workforce development through partnerships with the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission to identify housing, transportation, infrastructure and workforce trends.

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**WBLV Goal 9:** Throughout PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley’s workforce system, expand support services as families face the financial burdens brought on by COVID-19.



**2.4. What are the local levels of performance that have been negotiated with the governor and chief elected officials? How will the local board’s goals relate to the achievement of these measures?**

Negotiating local performance levels establishes an alignment between the Governor of the Commonwealth, Chief Elected Officials, and the WBLV, as well as an alignment with all workforce development boards across Pennsylvania against which local areas are judged. They also provide benchmarks to ensure we achieve our vision of a world-class competitive global workforce.

The WBLV’s local levels of performance for the required federal measures have been negotiated for PY2022 and PY2023, and are in *Attachment 1*.

The measures attainments for PY2022 and PY2023 were determined on September 14, 2022. The WBLV employs numerous strategies in meeting performance measures with a commitment to meeting and exceeding performance expectations.

Strategies that WBLV uses to assure attainment of the measures include, but are not limited to:

1. **Assessment:** A comprehensive assessment measures individual skills, interests, and qualifications, resulting in effective individual service strategies.
2. **Informed decisions:** Case managers guide participants in making informed choices on career pathways and training options along their career pathway.
3. **Counseling, Case Management, and Support:** Caring staff and reasonable caseloads allow case managers to connect frequently with participants, and mitigate barriers to career goals.
4. **Data:** Collecting and analyzing data allows for timely service strategy corrections and assists in meeting performance standards.
5. **PA CareerLink®:** Staff understand the codes necessary to record outcomes, resulting in participants being credited for successes they achieve.
6. **Staff Training:** The WBLV provides guidance and required training and retraining to PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley staff in understanding the measures and the formulas for determining that performance levels are on target and on the track to be met. Performance measures are never a surprise.
7. **Performance Measures and Levels** are used as a gauge of our workforce system’s performance.

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

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

Local governance begins with the Chief Elected Officials (CEOs) who in the Lehigh Valley are the Lehigh and Northampton County Executives. They have entered into a consortium of governments agreement to provide oversight and policy guidance to the local workforce area, and to address those areas requiring their sole decision-making authority or the exercise of their decision-making authority in

concert with the WBLV, the majority private sector board they have appointed in accordance with WIOA requirements and Commonwealth guidance. By legislation, they are financially liable for the workforce funds allocated to the Lehigh Valley. The CEOs are also responsible for appointing local workforce development board members, approving the WBLV budget, and serving as the local grant recipient.

The CEOs have designated the Lehigh Valley Workforce Investment Board, Inc. DBA Workforce Board Lehigh Valley (WBLV) as the fiscal agent, as well as their sub grant recipient, responsible for procurement, accounting, contracting, oversight, policy implementation and funds management.

The WBLV is responsible for the vision, strategy, policy, budgeting, oversight of programs and funds, and for developing a comprehensive workforce system.

The WBLV, appointed by the CEOs and certified by the Commonwealth to meet WIOA, is an incorporated non-profit entity, which governs and makes decisions through a committee structure.

The WBLV is supported by a relatively small staff whose responsibilities include:

- Overseeing implementation of WBLV policy decisions
- Conducting and reporting oversight activities
- Preparing the region's budget for elected officials and board approval
- Preparing board and committee agendas and proper back-up so that the WBLV can make informed decisions
- Organizing studies and planning activities
- Conducting procurements as necessary to support grant activities

The WBLV conducts its business through the committees listed below. Policy decisions are first assigned for review and recommendation to the appropriate committee and then are considered by the WBLV Executive Committee before coming to the board for a final vote. Board members can serve on any committee. All board members are encouraged to serve on at least one committee. Through the use of a committee structure, concerns can be addressed at a more molecular level so that by the time items are presented to the full board there is significant support for the approval of most recommendations. This results in cohesive decision making.

The current WBLV committee structure which includes some non-board members required by WIOA is as follows:

### **EXECUTIVE GOVERNANCE**

Includes the Workforce Board Lehigh Valley Officers and Committee Chairs.

The Executive Governance Committee recommends priorities, goals, objectives, projects and strategies to address the long-term workforce development needs of the community and delegates actions approved by the WBLV to standing and special committees. This Committee negotiates with the Commonwealth on local performance measures, monitors performance outcomes, and ensures accountability and transparency of the workforce system.

## **FINANCE**

The Finance Committee maintains oversight of the WBLV spending plan and reviews program budgets, conducts fiscal and financial oversight of programmatic and administrative entities, analyzes strategic plans to determine fiscal impact, develops and recommends fiscal policies, procedures and processes, and reviews audit reports and financial aspects of program monitoring reports, making recommendations as needed.

## **YOUTH COMMITTEE**

The Youth Committee develops and implements a comprehensive youth plan targeting at-risk youth that coordinates services, training and work-based learning while monitoring and measuring effectiveness. The Committee recommends policy to the Board for a comprehensive youth workforce program that ensures a full range of services and job opportunities, leverages resources, coordinates community services among schools, public programs, and community-based organizations, recommends and reviews eligible youth service providers, provides ongoing leadership and support for continuous quality improvement, and develops innovative ideas focused on pipeline development.

## **WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS, ACCOUNTABILITY AND COMPLIANCE**

The Workforce Solutions, Accountability and Compliance Committee assists with operational and other issues and solutions relating to the workforce delivery system including provision of services to individuals within targeted populations and individuals with disabilities. The Committee provides leadership in: reviewing career services offered, education and skills training, delivery system policies, customer service satisfaction, labor market data and workforce trends. The Committee also monitors performance accountability and certification of the one-stop delivery system.

## **BUSINESS AND POLICY**

The Business and Policy Committee engages the private sector to provide strategies on business and policy issues focused on workforce intelligence, labor market data, business workforce needs, skills shortages, career pathways, and talent supply that impact the workforce. The Committee recommends implementation of strategies that build a strong collaborative environment based on private sector labor market demands. The Committee also educates and informs community stakeholders on legislative workforce issues and makes recommendations to the Board concerning workforce policy.

## **BUSINESS-EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE**

The Business-Education Partnership Committee promotes collaboration between business and education to foster productive citizenship, lifelong learning, and employability skills for economic growth.

## **INCLUSION, DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND ACCESS (IDEA) COMMITTEE**

The IDEA Committee ensures Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access through an inventory of the current Workforce Board and its committees, in terms of demographics in the Lehigh Valley, and develops strategies to ensure they are representative of Lehigh Valley's diverse population.

The WBLV Chair also has the authority to create ad-hoc committees, as required.

The following EEO liaison is responsible for ensuring equal employment opportunities and civil rights protection in the Lehigh Valley's workforce delivery system and any complaints are directed to the following individual. If complaints are escalated, they are directed to the Equal Opportunity Officer. Please see section 4.4.

David (Mike) Dopkin  
PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley Site Administrator  
EEO Liaison  
Bureau of Workforce Programs and Operations  
PA Department of Labor and Industry  
555 Union Blvd, Allentown, PA 18109  
Phone: 610-841-1022 Fax: 610-434-3122  
Email: ddopkin@pa.gov

Nanse Wolfington  
Director of Compliance  
EEO Officer  
Workforce Board Lehigh Valley  
555 Union Blvd., Allentown, PA 18109  
Phone: 610-841-8332 Fax: 610-437-3527  
Email: equalopportunity@careerlinklv.org

Many of the key stakeholders are represented on the WBLV. In addition to the stakeholders represented on the WBLV, and our required and additional program partners detailed on Attachment 2 and 3, others include:

- The one-stop partners in addition to the core partners which are represented on the board: Our partners are critical to coordination and integration efforts requested by WIOA. They are named in other parts of this plan along with our related activities so they are not individually identified in this section of the plan.
- Our public education providers at the secondary school and postsecondary level including our literacy providers: It is the Governor's goal to serve basic skills deficient adults and to expend significant resources on participant training. To do this we must be able to build skills so participants can effectively complete postsecondary studies and we must be able to offer education that presents options for attainable goals.
- The GLVCC, LVEDC, counties and cities economic development representatives: The Chamber and economic development entities are the WBLV intermediaries to the business community. Our excellent partnerships continue to open opportunities for our participants. We also count on them for feedback regarding workforce services so that we are aware of opportunities for improvement.
- Community Based Organizations (CBO): Often participants engage with grass roots organizations before accessing workforce services. Our CBO community partners provide services at acute times in participant lives and serve as a bridge between community wide social services and the workforce services offered through the PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley.
- Our Municipalities: The Lehigh Valley governments have recognized that workforce services are a key economic driver. As a result our municipalities are as heavily invested in our success as our County government stakeholders who bear the liability for program funds.
- Our plan aligns our workforce system with WIOA regulations. WIOA regulations require partners to collaborate to support a seamless customer-focused service delivery network within the one-stop workforce system.
- Improving the quality of the workforce, reducing welfare dependency, increasing economic self-sufficiency, meeting skills requirements of employers, and enhancing the productivity and competitiveness of the Lehigh Valley requires the involvement of key stakeholders and entities associated with administrative and programmatic and service delivery functions as depicted on the Workforce Board Lehigh Valley System Organizational Chart Model, see Attachment 2.

The Governor of Pennsylvania has designated Lehigh and Northampton Counties as a workforce region and has aligned workforce regions across Pennsylvania with the Partnership for Regional Economic Performance (PREP) partners. The WBLV will continue to develop the workforce system with our PREP partners including Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation, Lehigh University Small Business Development Center, Manufacturers Resource Center, Ben Franklin Technology Center, and industrial development authorities.

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

PA Department of Labor and Industry (L&I) coordinated the co-location of the Wagner-Peyser Act funded Employment Service staff in the PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley/American Job Center (AJC) one-stops, under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) which preceded WIOA. The Wagner-Peyser funded staff provide Labor Exchange Services, Trade Act Services, Veterans Employment and Training Services, and Foreign Labor Certification (FLC) services in the workforce area.

Their services include:

- Local and regional workforce and labor market information
- Job vacancy listings
- Skills necessary to obtain an available job
- Information on local occupations in-demand, earnings, skill requirements, and opportunities for advancement
- Job search and placement assistance
- Career counseling, including information on in-demand industry sectors and occupations
- Information on nontraditional employment
- Employer recruitment
- Information and referrals to specialized business services
- Intensive case management through the Trade Assistance Act (TAA) and Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) programs.
- Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) orientations
- Conduct employment service workshops, onsite, at specified remote locations and virtually
- Approval of new employers into PA CareerLink® and new employer contacts
- Approval of Foreign Labor Certification (FLC) Job listings
- Rapid Response Services

Together with WIOA funded staff, the Employment Service staff conducts:

- Outreach
- Initial Assessment and Orientation to information and services available through the PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley

Individuals enter a PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley Center and can access workforce services needing little or no staff assistance. However, for customers who are unable to meet their employment needs through self-help, initial assessments are used to determine the need for specific assessment in areas such as literacy skills, numeracy, and English language proficiency, aptitudes, abilities, skills gaps, or for other support services, such as Vocational Rehabilitation under the Title I of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 for identified needs. Where it appears customers can be better assisted by a one-stop partner,

staff are knowledgeable and able to make referrals to and coordinate with our one-stop partner programs. To assure one-stop services are available to everyone, information about our PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley services, referral and support services are in accessible formats and languages.

Individuals can file for unemployment benefits online 24 hours a day. They can also file by phone or come into a PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley. The WBLV works with L&I to see that Title I staff receive state training to help individuals requesting assistance with UC claims.

The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)/Employment Advancement and Retention Network (EARN)/Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is already a One-Stop partner. The current WBLV Title I provider, Educational Data Systems Inc. (EDSI), is also the EARN workforce services provider for TANF recipients.

In addition to self-service or minimal assistance services, a wide range of individualized services are available to job seekers at the One-Stop. If basic career services are not sufficient to connect individuals with employment, they can receive the following through WIOA:

- Diagnostic testing and other assessments
- In-depth interviewing and evaluation to identify employment barriers and goals
- Identification of career pathways and career planning
- Development of individual employment plans
- Counseling
- Soft skills including: Learning/study skills; Communication skills; Interviewing skills; Time management; Resume writing and cover letters; Professional appearance and behavior; Pre-apprenticeship career skills; Financial literacy; ESL assistance; and, Financial aid assistance

Individualized services are provided following eligibility determination and enrollment into the WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker or Youth programs.

The WBLV makes all basic career services available in the PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley and satellite offices. Many services are available in person and virtually, including resume assistance, employability skills, digital education, and assistance qualifying for high school credentials. For those needing training in order to obtain or retain employment, the WBLV works with L&I to provide education through Individual Training Accounts (ITAs).

The WBLV works through its One-Stop Operator to continue collaborating with all required partners to promote alignment of workforce services. Our current One-Stop Operator, the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce, was selected following a competitive procurement. The Operator does not deliver participant services or training, but is well-regarded by the employer community. One-Stop Operator recommendations are made in a neutral environment that is acceptable to all partners. The Operator will continue to align and integrate partner programs and services into the Lehigh Valley's workforce delivery system by:

- Promoting colocation of all partners at the One-Stop to provide expanded services to job seekers
- Ensuring a cohesive, streamlined integrated service delivery that is a true workforce system of partners

- Aligning the workforce delivery system to support both the Local Plan and the State Combined Plan
- Cross-training of all partner staff in program basics
- Establishing common forms, policies, and processes among partners
- Developing an MOU that outlines the services, programs, and individualized career services provided at the One-Stop
- Establishing the One-Stop as a clearinghouse for workforce, education, training, community, and employer services
- Educating the partners on labor market data to fill employer needs
- Serving on partners' Advisory Committees
- Aligning strategic initiatives among all partners and organizations to streamline services and reduce redundancy
- Ensuring the PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley is customer-centric
- Engaging employers through a targeted sector strategy
- Engaging employers in strengthening the workforce system

For a list of one-stop program partners, see Attachment 3.

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

- **Expand access to employment, training, education and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly individuals with barriers to employment.**
- **Facilitate the development of Career Pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs (specify on-ramps from adult education).**

The WBLV validates eligibility of individuals through inspection and retention of required documents outlined in TEGL 19-16 including, but not limited to, original birth certificates, social security cards, selective service verification, public assistance and unemployment compensation records. In cases where the lack of hard copy verification would preclude delivery of services, telephone and/or self-certification is used as prescribed by program statutes. WBLV developed a process to sign electronic documents and provide virtual registration appointments and eligibility determinations when in-person visits are not feasible. Barriers to employment are determined and validated through assessments, inspection of customer documents and through one-stop partner collaboration. An integrated Environmental Analysis tracks and mitigates barriers from identification to resolution.

Title I, Title II, the WBLV and Lehigh Valley employers collaborate regularly to develop classroom, distance, online, virtual, and hybrid education and training opportunities aligned with local high priority occupations that include multiple career pathway entry and exit points. The curriculum promotes portable and stackable certificates and post-secondary credentials, including industry-recognized certificates, certifications, and access to industry-recognized postsecondary credentials from Registered Apprenticeships. Cohorts of students enrolled in programs are supported by a dedicated Training and Education Advisor who connects both individually and with the group to ensure barriers are mitigated and everyone remains on track.

Wagner-Peyser, Title I, Title II, and Title IV core partners engage in combined initiatives, staff cross training, integrated customer information sessions, monthly PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley and functional team meetings, and joint community outreach to expand awareness of program services. Core partner

staff facilitate cross referrals and dual enrollments to expedite customer access to the most appropriate services to support program participant outcomes and enhance performance across all programs, including increasing awareness of WIOA Title II program and services for customers and ensuring staff are well-versed in Title II-specific eligibility requirements.

Eligibility to receive services under WIOA Title IV may only be determined by a qualified Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) Counselor. Core partners are co-located at PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley centers and PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley staff also have an in-person and virtual presence at partner site locations to serve individuals and groups of customers.

The WBLV works to expand access to employment, training, education and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly individuals with barriers to employment by:

- Serving as a convener of workforce partners and a leader in innovative thinking to work toward achieving the alignment and integration envisioned under WIOA
- Investing resources allocated and awarded to the WBLV to achieve alignment and to assist our Title I provider and core partners to attain the performance measures negotiated for the local area
- Allocating resources for in-person and remote work-based training options
- Expanding technology resources for underserved populations in the community

Providing the program oversight needed to:

- Support the One-Stop Operator in the initiatives established in the MOU between the One-Stop Partners
- Assure performance measures are met
- Assure the WIOA priority of services for adults
- Reduce the TANF/SNAP rolls through participation in work activities and training options leading to self-sufficiency
- Ensure eligible training providers and their training coursework are effective and meet the demands of employers while providing needed credentials to job seekers and employed workers
- Develop and implement processes to virtually deliver services
- Identify and support technology needs to facilitate participant engagement in workforce activities
- Serve as ambassadors and intermediaries to employers to promote the one-stop workforce system
- Speak at meetings of other boards on which WBLV members serve about the benefits of the one-stop system to our local community Advisory Committees of strategic workforce partners Adopting targeted sector strategies to engage employers
- Serve on the Board's committees

The WBLV will work to facilitate the development of Career Pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs (specify on-ramps from adult education) by:

- Monitoring compliance with MOU agreements for integration and cross referral
- Bringing successes and challenges in these areas to Board committees and the full board to find community-wide solutions and replicate strategy designs that work
- Seeking grant funds and leveraging partner funds to allocate the responsibility for developing career pathways and shared intake and enrollment processes so that no partner is required to undertake the full cost of development



- Entering into agreements with Adult Literacy providers to work together to move youth in secondary school credential training to completion of the credential and postsecondary training
- Entering into agreements with Adult Literacy providers to identify adults who will soon earn secondary school credentials for enrollment into WIOA training or employment assistance
- Reviewing Adult Literacy Provider applications and reporting to the PA Department of Education on suggested improvements to achieve desired outcomes

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

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

The WBLV facilitates the strategic engagement of employers in workforce development programs starting with its mission that emphasizes a private sector-led workforce system. Our strategy is and has always been that our primary customer is the employer and our aligning strategy is that we have a continuous improvement plan to ensure the employer remains our first customer. Without employers, there are no jobs; therefore, one of the WBLV's top priorities is to strategically engage employers to develop innovative workforce development programs and initiatives.

Our employer engagement strategy originates with our employer-led Board which is comprised of Lehigh Valley's business leaders in small, medium and large companies and in-demand industry sectors and high-priority occupations in healthcare, manufacturing, transportation and warehousing, finance and insurance, professional, scientific and technical services and other sectors who set the strategic direction of the Board and are engaged in Board committees and initiatives.

The Lehigh Valley has 15,687 employer establishments with an average of 22 employees per establishment. The WBLV's overarching strategy for employer engagement is to continuously improve our transparent and seamless one-stop workforce system for employers in high-priority occupations and targeted industry sectors. WBLV coordinates a regional workforce and economic development strategy by using workforce intermediaries and collaborating with employer-led organizations such as Partnership for Regional Economic Performance (PREP) partners, as well as the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce (GLVCC) and Society of Human Resource Management/Lehigh Valley Chapter. The result of this coordinated strategy is comprehensive business outreach and engagement to meet the labor market demands and employment and training needs of employers through Lehigh Valley's workforce system.

Employers are strategically engaged in Lehigh Valley's Next Gen Industry Partnerships, comprised of targeted, in-demand industries and high priority occupations, which bring businesses together with workforce, economic development, education and the community to collectively address workforce needs, identify consortium-based incumbent worker training, share best practices, develop innovative

workforce pipeline programs, gain access to workforce intelligence and labor market data, connect with the PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley workforce system, and participate in youth programming. The Workforce Board Lehigh Valley (WBLV) transitioned to Next Gen Industry Partnerships with an agenda defined and driven by business leaders, versus public partners addressing answers to industry's needs by promoting their services.

This model is a three-tiered listening system. Tier One: Business leaders in the same industry sector convene to strategize and define priorities. The role of public partners is to listen to the business leaders' issues. Tier Two: Action teams, championed by business leaders, are created to address business strategies, priorities and solutions. Public partners support the identification of priorities, solutions and action items. Tier Three: Implementation of industry WBLV's strong relationship with our 6,000-member Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce, and our integrated service delivery with the Partnerships for Regional Economic Performance (PREP) partners, ensure that the WBLV's Industry Partnership is strengthened.

As a best practice, we have integrated our Next Gen Industry Partnership with the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED), Engage program to optimize employer engagement, resolution of business issues and connection to the PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley workforce system.

In the Workforce Board Lehigh Valley's continuous quest for employer partnerships, through our Business and Industry Engagement Plan, we constantly review our strategies, practices, activities, and search out employer champions to lead workforce development initiatives in the Lehigh Valley. This strategy is designed to increase and elevate business and industry engagement over our current levels. The WBLV has placed a strategic emphasis on creating new and increasing the current capacity of Lehigh Valley's Apprenticeships and Pre-apprenticeships which engage employers in developing a talent pipeline for business and industry through a structured Earn-While-You-Learn methodology. Currently, the Lehigh Valley has 44 Registered Apprenticeships with the Apprenticeship and Training Office.

The WBLV's Local Plan Goal #1 is to develop Career Pathways and build Registered Apprenticeship opportunities with employers; therefore, we continue to focus our efforts and energies on expanding and increasing awareness of Registered Apprenticeships and Pre-apprenticeships in the Lehigh Valley as a proven pathway to attract and recruit new workers, while retaining and advancing incumbent workers. WBLV serves as the intermediary between employers, education and training providers with the Apprenticeship and Training Office to expand Registered Apprenticeships, as well as Pre-Apprenticeship programs that serve as feeder programs for our region's Apprenticeships. To increase awareness of apprenticeships within our future workforce, the WBLV is developing a high school Pre-Apprenticeship pathway, embedding the Apprenticeship model in high school classes, and providing youth with work-based learning opportunities.

To improve business and employer engagement and to identify new business leaders, the WBLV continues to strategically collaborate with the GLVCC, the sixth largest chamber in the U.S., as a workforce intermediary to engage the Chamber's 6,000-employer membership base with a reach to 15,000 employers in the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce database, increasing the Lehigh Valley's workforce system reach by connecting employers to workforce services.

The WBLV coordinates a unified business engagement strategy with PREP partners including the SBDC to connect small employers to the workforce system through business outreach, messaging and special initiatives. The LVEDC along with county, city and municipal economic development departments

engage Lehigh Valley employers in WBLV workforce development initiatives and PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley employer services, whether the businesses are already located in the region or are considering relocating to the Lehigh Valley. The MRC, another PREP partner, also works to connect employers to the WBLV workforce system, partnering through the DCED Engage! Business Outreach Program.

WBLV continues to measure employer outcome results through workforce system data compiled for the WBLV reports. Current data shows that 6,018 Lehigh Valley employers, or approximately 39% of Lehigh Valley establishments, registered in the Commonwealth Workforce Development System. The role of PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley's Business Engagement Services Team (BEST) is to work with the WBLV to measurably increase this engagement rate by targeting in-demand industry sector employers by posting their positions on PA CareerLink®; providing assessment, recruiting and screening services; referring program connected job seekers through work-based training opportunities such as On-the-Job Training (OJT); participating in company-specific or targeted industry sector job fairs virtual/or on-site such as Employer Wednesday, and connecting employers to a diverse community network.

The WBLV's connection with the Society for Human Resource Management/Lehigh Valley Chapter is an employer engagement strategy engaging their 900 members in innovative workforce programs including the Linking to Employment Activities Pre-Release (LEAP) Northampton County Prison and Lehigh County Jail programs, youth activities, and resume critiquing and interviewing skills workshops to prepare job seekers for job fairs.

The PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley workforce system BEST staff work with the WBLV to enhance and facilitate employer engagement by creating new business partnerships and enhancing existing employer relationships, including supporting hiring events at employer locations. BEST's specific strategies for employer engagement include the following:

1. **Social Media:** Through the use of technology and social media, employers are highlighted, resulting in connections to employers that are immediate, brief and content rich. Like us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter and connect to us on LinkedIn.
2. **Employer Visits:** While maintaining existing business relationships, the BEST connects one-on-one with businesses to connect new employers with PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley services. Because of the COVID pandemic and its impact on face-to-face engagement, virtual platforms have been developed in order to continue connections and robust dialog with employers. Tele-conferencing mediums such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Go To Meetings, have demonstrated success and will more than likely continue to be an effective tool, even in a post pandemic landscape.
3. **PA CareerLink®:** The BEST offers website training to companies to create business folders, upload job postings, search for potential employees, review candidates, and provide ongoing technical assistance.
4. **Work-Based Training:** Employers are engaged in the workforce system through work-based training opportunities such as OJTs for newly-hired job seekers in exchange for a wage reimbursement.

5. **Recruitment:** New methods of connecting employers with job seekers include:
- **Virtual recruitment/job fairs** connect employers with job seekers. Employers schedule their events with a member of the BEST team, who then create the virtual job fair booth, outreach materials, such as flyers, and placed onto the PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley online events calendar. Job seekers register and receive a link on how to connect into the virtual event.
  - **Employer Wednesdays** were piloted during the pandemic, allowing an employer to conduct a face-to-face meet-and-greet with job seekers, at PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley locations. Job seekers register and receive an appointment time, ensuring an orderly and safe flow of job seekers entering the facility while following proper health and safety protocols.
  - **Satellites Sites:** The BEST team provides support to the PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley satellite sites by canvassing their designated areas to engage employers with job seekers.
  - **Next Gen Industry Partnerships:** The BEST team members review pipeline talent, assess employer needs, and promote customized employer services.
  - **Recruiting:** Work face-to-face on-site, or virtually with job seekers. Each is assigned an industry focus area, which includes manufacturing, healthcare, hospitality and service, Commercial Driver's License (CDL), trade-distribution-logistics, and professional. Job seekers use the Lehigh Valley Career Pathways Template as included in Section 4.11 to assist with their job search efforts.
  - **Apprenticeships:** Engages employers in apprenticeship models such as the EMT/Paramedic, Engineering, and Electromechanical registered apprenticeship programs. Business Services works with the employer on discussing their needs and how best to develop the apprenticeship, in coordination with the state's Apprenticeship and Training Office (ATO).
  - **Community-Based Organizations:** Maintains relationships with CBOs through monthly meetings to exchange job postings, labor market trends and employer needs, PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley services and programs, and job fairs. Community Based Organizations (CBO) are routinely informed of events, such as information sessions to benefit their clients.
  - **Veterans:** Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER) primary mission is employer outreach on behalf of military veterans. Working in tandem with the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) Representative, the LVER connects employers with qualified Veterans, especially those who face barriers.
  - **Monthly BEST Meeting:** BEST meetings with all workforce system partners examine local hiring and business trends, upcoming job fairs, best practices, services and events with the purpose of maintaining optimal business and employer engagement throughout all workforce system partner organizations.
  - **Incumbent Worker Training:** The WBLV may use no more than 20 percent of WIOA funds allocated to pay for the cost of providing training through a training program for incumbent workers. Incumbent workers are defined by WIOA Section 134(d)(4).
  - **The Business Engagement Services Team (BEST)** functions with the Business Services Liaison (BSL), a Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER), and Recruiters. Individual Recruiters are assigned an industry strand to include Healthcare, Manufacturing, Transportation & Logistics, Professional and Business Services, Hospitality, and the Service Industry. The Recruiters, while working with their cohort of job seekers, can assist the BSL in developing new and growing existing employer relationships, based on the needs of the job seekers. In addition, the LVER is tasked with making 120 employer visits each quarter, and 20 percent of those contacts are required to be new to the one-stop. In addition to the core staff, the BEST functional team includes, Youth Business Services Representative, an OVR Business Services Representative, and BWPO Career Advisors.

New business partnerships are facilitated in a variety of ways, to include personal calls, face-to-face meetings, video-conferencing, networking, and attending numerous business and economic conferences that occur throughout the year. In addition, communication is facilitated with local industry partners, CBOs, local business and economic development organizations, regional Chambers of Commerce, and the WBLV Business Relations Office in maintaining and connecting new employers to the One-Stop.

On all new employer engagement, especially with an on-site visit or virtual meeting, the BSL utilizes technology to easily demonstrate all the resources and services available to employers when utilizing the one stop system. This can include creating a business folder on PA CareerLink®, posting jobs, and searching for candidates, all while making a site visit or meeting via a virtual platform.

Regularly throughout the year, the BSL and the BEST team attend events, to include job fairs, workforce, business, and economic symposiums, town hall meetings, workforce and virtual or otherwise economic development conferences, industry partnership meetings and other networking events where the opportunity exists to meet with new employers and businesses and connect them with One-Stop services.

The functional BEST unit, inclusive of BWPO and EDSI staff, coordinates all recruiting efforts including job fairs, customized recruitment and sector driven events. This includes scheduling with advance notice in order to fully promote, and publicize the event, and to create outreach flyers with links to the PA CareerLink® job posting number. An electronic flyer is published onto the PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley website, along with social media, so that job seekers are provided the date and time of the event, as well as have an opportunity to apply for any available position(s).

The electronic flyers are distributed via email to all PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley staff and subsequently shared with job seekers. Hard copy flyers are available throughout the agency in classroom, public areas and staff work stations.

In addition to individualized job fairs, larger, multi-targeted sector events are conducted monthly at PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley, and can be conducted virtually using a variety of different video-conferencing platforms. The BEST functional unit is proactive in employer engagement recruiting for these events which receive the same or higher level of promotion as the individual job fairs. In addition, the team utilizes a variety of social media to promote these events to include community calendars, LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, Google+, and PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley website.

In coordination with PA Department of Labor and Industry Rapid Response Unit, PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley has a Rapid Response team that offers outreach and a full range of information, networking, and employment and training assistance to dislocated workers, and offers assistance to companies which are undergoing downsizing of their staff. This team is networked in the community and includes organizations that are funded to assist dislocated workers, along with community, government, educational, and private sector partners. Members of the local team include representatives from: PA L&I's Rapid Response Unit, PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley staff including BEST members, Unemployment Compensation Service Center, United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley, Social Security Administration, PA Health Access Network Affordable Care Act, and Employee Benefits Security Administration.

The PA CareerLink® Site Administrator is part of the initial Rapid Response fact finding meetings. The information gathered from these meetings, such as wage information and skills, gives the BSL information for future placements of the dislocated workers. Rapid Response Coordinator work with local businesses to host job fairs for the displaced employees that will be, or have been impacted by the facility closing.

The BEST cultivates, develops, and manages employer relationships throughout the Lehigh Valley to target businesses that offer quality training and advancement opportunities. Connections are made with employers at business and industry partnership meetings, Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) and Chamber events, job fairs, and site visits. EDSI staff maintain an active job bank to develop work-based training opportunities that align with the Lehigh Valley's targeted industry sectors. Staying current with these high demand positions that represent the needs of employers allows us to provide the best training and employment opportunities for program job seekers. Staff personally engage new business contacts and promote business services including the Work Opportunity Tax Credit, federal bonding, reentry programs, customized recruitment assistance, labor market information, PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley website technical assistance, training, and veterans programs. Training subsidy options are highlighted to incentivize employers to participate in work-based training programs.

During the initial contact, an informational packet is provided to promote work-based training options OJT, apprenticeship programs, and subsidized or transitional work opportunities. Staff provides an overview of training and eligibility criteria to each employer to establish mutually beneficial work-based partnerships.

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

Linkages between the PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley workforce system and Unemployment Compensation (UC) programs have been strengthened by the following efforts. Currently, the workforce system has two UC Representatives onsite who meet one-on-one with UC claimants to resolve claim issues. Also on a bi-monthly basis, UC Representatives assist claimants filing initial UC claims. The PA CareerLink® Site Administrator attends bi-monthly meetings with BWPO and UC leaders where issues, best practices and suggestions are discussed. On arrival each participant who is new to the workforce system, is screened to ensure they have fully completed their profile in PA CareerLink®, completing that requirement for receiving UC benefits. If they are missing the registration or any section thereof, the participant is instructed on what needs to be corrected and advised of the resources that can be used to correct the deficiencies including technology and assistance from the PA CareerLink® staff. The participants are provided the work search requirements needed to maintain their UC benefits. When questioned, PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley staff will show the claimants where in the Pennsylvania Unemployment compensation handbook (UCP-1 REV 08-19) the information is located or how to access an electronic copy of the handbook on [www.UC.pa.gov](http://www.UC.pa.gov).

During orientations, both Welcome Center and Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA), Unemployment Compensation (UC) claimants are informed of the work search requirements and where to locate the information in the Pennsylvania Unemployment compensation handbook (UCP-1 REV 08-19). PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley staff encourage the claimants how to complete the Job Search Activity log on [www.pacareerlink.pa.gov](http://www.pacareerlink.pa.gov) and the benefits of using that system.

Regarding the RESEA program, the WBLV, through the Site Administrator or BWPO supervisor, ensures that the RESEA program meets all program requirements. The PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley offers daily sessions to accommodate the RESEA participants. During the mandatory one of one orientation follow up sessions, BWPO Career Advisors expand on the full range of services offered by the PA CareerLink® including: Resume Writing, Computer Basics, and Barriers to Employment. Upcoming hiring events are

also discussed. Career Advisors encourage all RESEA participants to enter the WIOA program and take advantage of that program's benefits. To further encourage WIOA participation the BWPO Career Advisors are instructed to use the WIOA information session as the default follow up session for the RESEA participants.

During the January 2021 RESEA restart, each PA CareerLink® is assigned four RESEA participants per BWPO Career Advisor. Each BWPO Career Advisor will schedule 10 Personal Service Meetings (PSM) per week to accommodate the RESEA participants. Multiple meeting times are scheduled throughout the day to accommodate the needs of the participants.

RESEA participants who are not compliant with the work search requirements are identified on the RESEA coversheet as instructed. The RESEA coversheet is returned to the Unemployment Compensation Service Center for further evaluation. Participants who do not attend the mutually agreed upon, mandatory follow up session, are marked as did not report on the PA CareerLink® event roster, and the RESEA follow up service, DNRAFA, is entered into PA CareerLink® indicating the participant did not attend the required follow up activity. This service entry prompts a failed action to the Unemployment Office. During the RESEA one-on-one interview, the staff member will annotate any questionable statements made by the claimant, such as the claimant stating they were on vacation. The information will be provided to the UC office for investigation as instructed in the RESEA manual. In the event a PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley staff become aware of any UC eligibility issues through the course of daily operations, information will be compiled and sent to the local Employment Security Specialist assigned to our workforce area through the BWPO supervisor or the PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley Site Administrator.

**3.5. How will the local board coordinate local area workforce investment activities with regional economic development activities that are specific to a local area? How will the local board promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services?**

As the Lehigh Valley Workforce Development Area is a single area region, the WBLV has established strong and lasting relationships with its economic development partners as described throughout the plan. Because regional and even County boundaries need to be flexible to meet employer needs, the WBLV maintains a close relationship with Lehigh Valley and Lehigh and Northampton County Economic Development partners and its sister workforce areas bordering the WBLV Workforce Region. County, workforce, even state borders are invisible to both employers and job seekers. To meet employer needs the WBLV reaches out to its neighboring workforce areas as partners in serving employer initiatives, to address employer needs which cross workforce boundaries, and to jointly plan as needed when a business is expanding or relocating and is seeking employees.

Coordination includes planning of available workforce, assessment of skill gains, and initiating a Workforce Action Plan to meet employer expectations.

The community and financial resources the WBLV uses to promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services are: (1) the Community Action Lehigh Valley (CALV) who provides training for entrepreneurs and business start-ups; (2) the Small Business Development Center at Lehigh University who provides workshops and technical assistance and training such as workshops on Start Your Business, financing, human resources, government contracting, and international trade; (3) the Manufacturers Resource Center who provides peer-to-peer networking and offers a training portfolio on leadership, supervisory, process improvement, quality, and a technical training portfolio targeted to

employers; and, (4) WBLV hosts Industry Partnerships which includes training resources to assist entrepreneurs. WBLV also offers a comprehensive menu of services including on-the-job training resources, PA CareerLink® job postings, hiring assistance, recruiting, apprenticeships, roundtables, forums and provides the necessary data to start and grow a business.

The WBLV utilizes the business start-up and economic development resources in our two counties and three cities including: Lehigh County Department of Community and Economic Development, Northampton County Department of Community and Economic Development, Allentown Economic Development Corporation's Bridgeworks Center, Bethlehem Department of Community and Economic Development, and Easton Department of Community and Economic Development/Easton Economic Development Corporation.

WBLV collaborates with the SBDC to provide information, technical assistance and services for job seekers and customers considering entrepreneurial career pathways. PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley staff refer job seekers to the SBDC, which serves as our region's subject matter experts for small business start-ups. As a Partnership for Regional Economic Performance (PREP) partner, SBDC staff provides business workshops for job seekers and employers within our Employer and Educator Engagement Center at PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley.

Our new Agenda includes infiltration into high schools to address the Career Pathways for Entrepreneurship. As we continue to develop Career Pathways, Small Business Development Center will be our partner in capturing potential employers to be speakers at our High School Entrepreneurial Programming for youth.

The Community Action Lehigh Valley (CALV) and its Community Action Development Corporation (CADC) receives referrals from PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley for job seekers that are interested in CADC's entrepreneurial skills Start Your Business program, a 19-week training course designed to guide individuals through the process of starting and operating a successful small business including business planning, tax preparation, outreach and the opportunity to apply for a micro-loan from the Rising Tide Community Loan Fund.

Entrepreneurial skills training is attached to many different occupational and educational career training are more and more imperative to have for not only hiring purposes, but for upward mobility within a job. We encourage entrepreneurial training as a component of all training, especially those occupations which can lead to self-employment and accommodate persons with disabilities and our second chance population.

Our major economic development partner is the Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation (LVEDC) "who markets the economic assets of the Lehigh Valley and creates partnerships that lead the recruitment, growth and retention of employers. The priorities of LVEDC are to market the assets of the Lehigh Valley economy that provides economic growth and opportunity for people of all skills and education and strengthens all our cities, boroughs and townships, Recruit companies in targeted economic sectors, promote and coordinate a skilled and prepared workforce, and expand public and private sector LVEDC investment and build partnerships for economic growth."

As LVEDC's workforce partner, the Workforce Board Lehigh Valley and our workforce system called PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley markets the assets of the Lehigh Valley's workforce, and creates partnerships that lead the efforts of current and new occupational skills training, postsecondary education and higher



education to ensure a workforce is available and trained for all jobs within Lehigh Valley’s economy. Companies existing, growing, and newly recruited have access to a universal workforce system lead by a private sector driven Board of Directors that ensures we have a skilled and prepared workforce based on business and industry needs and economic growth.

Our organizations are aligned throughout this plan because economic development drives the growth, WBLV drives our workforce system aligned to current and new business development, WBLV works with education to ensure youth are on educational pathways to employment, which ensure we have a skilled and prepared workforce bases on economic development growth.

The alignment of WBLV with LVEDC is imperative to our Region’s success.

WBLV measures success by industries added to our economy, number of new jobs created, educational attainment across all populations, and above all satisfying employers training and employment needs. We also meet our performance standards, aggressively research resources for innovative programming that includes our economic development partners, and work together to ensure the Lehigh Valley has a list of global employers and ensure:

**THE LEHIGH VALLEY HAS A WORLD-CLASS GLOBAL WORKFORCE**

**4. OPERATIONAL PLANNING: Local Area Workforce Delivery System**

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

The local area workforce delivery system is comprised of a comprehensive One-Stop Center and four affiliate centers. The centers are located as follows:

CENTER	LOCATION
<b>Comprehensive Center</b> Workforce Board Lehigh Valley/PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley	555 Union Boulevard Allentown, PA 18109
<b>Satellite Centers</b> PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley Allentown Employment and Training Center Lehigh Carbon Community College Donley Center	718 Hamilton St. Allentown, PA 18101
PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley At St. Luke’s Sacred Heart	325 North 5 <sup>th</sup> St. Allentown, PA 18102

The WBLV competitively procures Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker provider and separately procures Youth providers. The WBLV Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker services provider, currently Educational Data Systems, Inc. (EDSI), also provides some, not all, of the local Youth WIOA program services.

As it is throughout the Commonwealth, Wagner-Peyser, Labor Exchange Services, Trade Act, Veterans Services, Business Services, Employment Advancement and Retention Network (EARN), Vocational Rehab, Foreign Labor Certification (FLC), and Rapid Response services are co-located.

The WBLV provides employer intermediary services; however, all employer services which match a participant to employment are provided through the integrated teams comprised of Title I provider, Wagner-Peyser staff in particular the Veteran Employment and Training staff, and Office of Vocational Rehabilitation.

Monitoring is conducted by WBLV staff. However, the WBLV is looking at procuring external monitoring which will encompass expertise in fiscal oversight. Board staff is co-located in the workforce offices and board meetings take place in the one-stop, so that staff and board members can see their resources at work.

The WBLV does not have any contracted training for adults or dislocated workers. All training is provided through Eligible Training Providers (ETPs) through the award of an Individual Training Account (ITAs). The maximum amount of an ITA is determined by current WBLV policy.

The WBLV monitors the performance of its ETPs and refers or halts referrals as occupational sectors expand or contract or based upon the performance of the provider. The current WBLV committee structure is outlined in question 3.1.

**Equal Employment Opportunities and Civil Rights Protections**

The following EEO Liaison is responsible for ensuring equal employment opportunities and civil rights protection in the Lehigh Valley’s workforce delivery system and any complaints are directed to the following individual. If complaints are escalated, they are directed to the Equal Opportunity Officer.

Please see section 4.4.

<p>David (Mike) Dopkin          PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley Site          Administrator EEO Liaison          Bureau of Workforce Programs and          Operations          PA Department of Labor and Industry          555 Union Blvd, Allentown, PA 18109          Phone: 610-841-1022 Fax: 610-434-3122          Email: ddopkin@pa.gov</p>	<p>Nanse Wolfington          Director of Compliance          EEO Officer          Workforce Board Lehigh Valley          555 Union Blvd., Allentown, PA 18109          Phone: 610-841-8332-Fax: 610-437-5627          Email: <a href="mailto:equalopportunity@careerlinklv.org">equalopportunity@careerlinklv.org</a></p>
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**PA CAREERLINK® LEHIGH VALLEY ONE-STOP OPERATOR**

In accordance with WIOA, the WBLV issued a Request for Quotes (RFQ) to competitively procure a one-stop operator for PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley and its three satellite sites. The process to competitively procure the one-stop operator was as follows:

- The RFQ was posted on the WBLV and PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley websites.
- Ads were placed in the two area daily newspapers – The Morning Call and the Express-Times.
- Email announcing the RFQ was distributed to WBLV members and the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce.
- A bidders’ conference was conducted to give interested vendors an opportunity to ask questions regarding the RFQ.

- A One-Stop Operator Evaluation Committee of WBLV members was created to rate of the two proposals we received from the RFQ and to make a recommendation to the WBLV.
- The WBLV accepted the recommendation of the Evaluation Committee and approved the selection of the One-Stop Operator.

The Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce was the successful vendor and serves as the One-Stop Operator.

The roles and responsibility of the One-Stop Operator which are articulated in the Agreement with the one-stop operator are as follows:

- Serve as an intermediary to the public one-stop partners.
- Coordinate among all the WBLV one-stop locations.
- Familiarize themselves with the one-stop partners so that the one-stop operator knows and understands the program services and performance requirements of the one-stop partners.
- Work with the one-stop partners on the continuous improvement of the one-stop system.
- Familiarize themselves with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania’s one-stop certification criteria so as to assure the WBLV’s compliance in the areas identified below under deliverables.
- Work with the WBLV on technology and website issues.
- Together with the WBLV, facilitate the development of the required one-stop MOU as described in WIOA section 121.
- Work closely with the WBLV to address the one-stop’s effectiveness, including customer satisfaction to assure the WBLV one-stop exceeds the performance levels set by the state with respect to: integration and coordination of services for participants and businesses, and by identifying new ways to coordinate between the one-stop, education and employers that involve all the one-stop partners.
- Assist and participate in the WBLV’s Workforce Solutions, Accountability and Compliance Committee.
- Prepare reports on a monthly basis to include actions taken with respect to each of the deliverables highlighting accomplishments, improvements, challenges and recommendations.

#### **TITLE I PROVIDER**

In accordance with WIOA, the WBLV issued an RFP to competitively procure the delivery of WIOA Title I Career Services for Adults, Dislocated Workers and EARN. The competitive procurement process included the following steps:

- The RFP was posted on the WBLV website.
- Large display ads were placed in the two area daily newspapers – The Morning Call and the Express-Times.
- Email announcing the RFP was distributed to WBLV members and to the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce.
- A Bidders’ Conference was conducted where the RFP expectations were outlined.
- A Title I Evaluation Committee composed of WBLV members was appointed to rate the proposals received and to make a recommendation to the full WBLV.

The WBLV accepted the recommendation of the Evaluation Committee and unanimously voted to approve EDSI as the successful vendor for a one-year period followed by three one-year renewable periods at the option of the WBLV.

**WIOA Brings Together, in Strategic Coordination, the Following Five Titles and Six Core Programs. Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act**

**Five Titles of WIOA**

**Title I – Workforce Investment Systems.** This section authorizes programs that provide training and certification services to unemployed and underemployed individuals. Title I programs are administered primarily through the Employment and Training Administration within the U.S. Department of Labor. Title I authorizes that one-stop delivery system of employment activities must be coordinated.

**Title II – Adult Education and Literacy.** This section authorizes education services to assist adults in improving skills, literacy, secondary education, and developing English language proficiency.

**Title III – Workforce Investment Related Activities.** Title III makes amendments to the Wagner-Peyser Act of 1933, which authorizes the public employment of services and the employment statistics system. It works to provide job search and job matching assistance to unemployed individuals through the one-stop system.

**Title IV – Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998.** This title amends the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which provides employment-related services to individuals with disabilities.

**Title V – General Provisions.** This title captures a variety of issues and includes the Senior Community Services Employment Program.

**The following are the Lehigh Valley’s Required Program Partners.**

The list below outlines PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley One-Stop Required Partners and their Program Titles under WIOA, which outlines their respective services available through Lehigh Valley’s comprehensive workforce system.

**ONE-STOP REQUIRED PROGRAM PARTNERS**

**WIOA Title I – Programs authorized under WIOA Title I, Subtitle B – Workforce Investment Activities and Providers**

Authorizes programs that provide training and certification services to unemployed and underemployed individuals.

- WBLV (contract with Educational Data Systems, Inc.)

**WIOA Title I – Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Program**

Program to counter the chronic unemployment and underemployment experienced by farmworkers who depend primarily on jobs in agricultural labor.

- PathStone Corporation, Inc.

**WIOA Title II -- Adult Education and Literacy**

Authorizes education services to assist adults in improving skills, literacy, secondary education, and developing English language proficiency.

- Lehigh Carbon Community College
- Northampton Community College
- ProJeCt of Easton

### WIOA Title III – Wagner-Peyser

Authorizes the public employment of services and the employment statistics system. It works to provide job search and job matching assistance to unemployed individuals through the one-stop system.

- Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations

### WIOA Title IV – Programs authorized under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Provides employment-related services to individuals with disabilities.

- Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

### Lehigh Valley’s Private Sector Stakeholders

The Lehigh Valley has strong working relationships with the private sector that support the WBLV and our workforce system. It is because of the investment and engagement of the WBLV, LVEDC, MRC, SBDC, GLVCC, SHRM/Lehigh Valley and every employer who is enrolled in PA CareerLink® that we are successful in providing employer-driven employability skills, training in high priority occupations, and employment opportunities. We are proud of our employer market penetration and will work to continue to engage the private sector in every aspect of Lehigh Valley’s workforce system transformation.

The following are Lehigh Valley stakeholder partners within the PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley workforce system:



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

**WIOA Title I** – Programs authorized under WIOA Title I, Subtitle B – Workforce Investment Activities and Providers Authorizes programs that provide training and certification services to unemployed and underemployed individuals.

- WBLV (contract with Educational Data Systems, Inc.)

**WIOA Title I – Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Program**

Program to counter the chronic unemployment and underemployment experienced by farmworkers who depend primarily on jobs in agricultural labor.

- PathStone Corporation, Inc.

**WIOA Title I – Native American Programs**

- Council of Three Rivers American Indian Center’s Employment and Training Program

**WIOA Title II -- Adult Education and Literacy**

Authorizes education services to assist adults in improving skills, literacy, secondary education, and developing English language proficiency.

- Lehigh Carbon Community College
- Northampton Community College
- ProJeCt of Easton

**WIOA Title III -- Wagner-Peyser**

Authorizes the public employment of services and the employment statistics system. It works to provide Labor Exchange Services, Rapid Response, Foreign Labor Certification (FLC) including job search and job matching assistance to unemployed individuals and Business Services\* through the one-stop system.

- Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations
- \*Business Services are a shared service of Wagner-Peyser and Title I staff

**WIOA Title IV – Programs authorized under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 Section 112 Client Assistance Program**

Provides employment-related services to individuals with disabilities.

- Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

**WIOA Title V -- Older Americans Act** Captures a variety of issues and includes the Senior Community Services Employment Program.

- AARP

**Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act**

Career and technical education programs at the postsecondary level authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act

- Lehigh Carbon Community College
- Northampton Community College

## **Title II Trade Act of 1974**

Programs focused on getting participants reemployed and ensuring those individuals maintain employment.

- Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations

## **Chapter 41 of Title 38 USC/Veterans**

Provides special individualized services to disabled veterans.

- Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations

## **Community Services Block Grant Act**

Provides a full range of services and activities having a measurable impact on the causes of poverty in a community of those areas of a community where poverty is a particularly acute problem.

- PA Department of Community and Economic Development

## **Department of Housing and Urban Development**

WBLV is in the process of negotiating agreements with the following local providers of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Employment and Training Activities: Housing Authority City of Easton, and Lehigh County Housing Authority.

## **State Unemployment Compensation**

Provides meaningful assistance to individuals seeking help in filing an unemployment claim in PA CareerLink® sites.

- PA Department of Labor and Industry

## **Second Chance Act of 2007**

Reintegration of ex-offenders authorized under section 212 of the Second Chance Act of 2007.

- The Lehigh Valley does not have a Second Chance Act of 2007 provider in the Workforce System.

## **Title IV -- Social Security Act**

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)/Employment Advancement and Retention Network (EARN) programs authorized under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act

- Lehigh and Northampton County Departments of Human Services

## **Job Corps**

The Lehigh Valley does not have a Job Corps program in the region; however, Job Corps orientations are held as needed in our comprehensive PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley center.

## **YouthBuild**

The Lehigh Valley does not have a YouthBuild program in the region.

**Please see Attachment 3: Local Workforce Development Delivery System Program Partner/Provider List for a complete list of partners and providers.**

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

The WBLV is increasing the agility of the one-stop system by innovating processes for both in-person and virtual services. Because individuals' barriers are diverse, multiple platforms and service delivery ensure

greater equity and access. Stand-alone one-stop centers, co-locating with partnering agencies, and offering services through multiple online platforms provide numerous access points to meet the needs of our diverse customer population.

We have adapted our physical space to serve individuals by scheduled appointments and host events with timed entry to ensure everyone's safety. Our co-location with St. Luke's Hospital, and Allentown Employment and Training Center, and with Lehigh Carbon Community College, Northampton Community College, and select public school district buildings increase access for multiple populations. Physical sites provide space for those with emerging digital skills to practice in computer lab settings with onsite support.

The pandemic created an immediate need for increased virtual access and digital services. In designing solutions, the WBLV understood that this would not be a temporary, but rather a long-term approach. Virtual services substantially increase the ability to reach customers and provide necessary services. The restrictions of a brick-and-mortar operation, including safe seating capacity, classroom availability, and computer lab resources, are irrelevant online. Additionally, staff connected virtually with other local resources collaborate more efficiently. For example, sharing updated Unemployment Compensation information, new education and training programs, and food security resources through social media helps individuals from multiple community programs simultaneously. Virtual services also help individuals practice their digital skills. Tutorials in PDF and video formats have been developed. These tools can support individuals who cannot access physical services and who do not have skills to access virtual services independently. We have also updated local policies regarding supportive services to address and resolve barriers to accessing technology.

The following strategies are used to support the WBLV's integrated workforce development system in the core programs of WIOA including Adults, Dislocated Workers, Youth, DHS, Adult Education and Literacy, Wagner-Peyser Programs, and Vocational Rehabilitation to meet the needs of business. Access to partner services is delivered through:

1. One-Stop MOU agreements that describe the methods for providing access to programs and a reciprocal priority of referrals and service engagement between required program partners to include Native American programs, Job Corp, HUD employment programs, Second Chance agencies, OVR, Title II and DHS.
2. Access to the PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley website and by cross-populating partner websites with links to other partner websites. During the pandemic, English and Spanish virtual employability skills sessions were embedded on the PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley website for the public. The workshops focused on using new technology, multiple platforms, and networking strategies needed in the rapidly changing environment. The PA CareerLink® website continues to grow with virtual accessibility to program engagement through online program referrals, Welcome Center orientations, employer worksite agreements, WIOA information sessions, and virtual recruitment events and job fairs. All points of access lead to personal connections with program staff.
3. Board representation by core partner representatives as well as representatives from education
4. Co-location of key partners, including Wagner-Peyser and PA Department of Human Services (DHS) programs



5. Co-locating Lehigh County DHS full operations within the same facility as the WBLV and PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley. Monthly information-sharing meetings are conducted with full representation. Local DHS representatives from both Lehigh and Northampton counties have scheduled PA CareerLink® hours to provide DHS information and client support.

The partnership remained strong during the pandemic as staff-to-staff and staff-to-participant virtual connections supported program engagement, barrier mitigation, and participant goal planning. Local Management Committee and Direct Service Team virtual meetings were facilitated virtually on a quarterly and bi-weekly schedule to identify and fill service gaps in delivering employment, education and training services. Daily, both CAO and contractor teams connected to triage items as needed. DHS and the local service provider advanced a wraparound, customer-centric approach to create family stability within every job seeker's household that supported upskilling, job placement and advancement, and long-term retention. Title I staff are trained on SNAP eligibility to the TANF program to ensure SNAP recipients are aware of the programs and can be referred to TANF program services. This SNAP-to-TANF referral process was developed as TANF caseload volume reduced and SNAP recipient populations remained high.

6. Fully integrating EARN program participants within PA CareerLink® through workshops, employability skills curriculum, directed job search, career advisement, recruiter services, and training and work experience opportunities. Participants are mainstreamed and benefit from enhanced access, leveraged staff expertise, dual enrolled value-added services, efficient referrals to partner and community services. Intensive job development, job placement, retention, and reemployment services for the EARN and all program participants are supported by the BEST staff.
7. For several years, an Environmental Analysis has tracked workforce barriers, and data continues to indicate that similar challenges are faced by job seekers across diverse populations. These barriers have been exacerbated by the pandemic, and in response, Licensed Family Advocate (LFA) services have become an integral part of the job seekers' intake and assessment process.

The LFA provides holistic, trauma-informed care counseling for individuals and families, and full assistance in all areas related to gaining and/or retaining employment and career advancement. During the pandemic period, the LFA supported 128 job seekers, with the greatest need for psychosocial support surfacing during the stay-at-home order. With daycare facilities and schools closed, rising furloughs across many industries, and financial worries mounting, the LFA sought to stabilize those job seekers and families experiencing crisis. Looking ahead, the LFA will continue to assist unemployed individuals through their transition back into the workforce.

8. PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley maintains two Unemployment Courtesy phones at the comprehensive site which are direct lines to one of the UC service centers. These lines allow UC claimants to bypass the call waiting queue and speak to a UC representative immediately after listening to required recorded statements. Under COVID-19 state guidance, the phones have not been in use. Due to the volume of UC inquiries, Title I staff support the scheduling of appointments with the assigned UC representatives on identified dates and times.

For the clients who do not have access to the technology needed to complete the Unemployment documents online, those clients can access the [www.uc.pa.gov](http://www.uc.pa.gov) at any of the available workstations in the Career Resource Center at the comprehensive site and the four satellite locations.

The comprehensive site has one workstation provided by the Office of Unemployment Services and is reserved for UC customers.

Because of increased layoffs caused by COVID-19, BWPO Career Advisors with unemployment experience provided their services to assist with processing record number of unemployment claims and provide customer service to thousands of UC claimants. BWP will continue to assist with UC projects as allowed and as time permits.

The staff at the PA Career® Lehigh Valley are able to assist UC claimants with UC questions pertaining to opening an initial unemployment claim.

9. Sharing instruments such as information release forms and FERPA releases.
10. Staff meetings are held to address the progress of joint participants.
11. Understanding of each partner's performance measure requirements.
12. Sharing data to optimize successful performance measures and eliminate duplication of services.
13. Sharing eligible training provider performance and training related placements.
14. Including partners in targeted recruitments and job fairs to support performance attainment for all entities.
15. PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley services are integrated within communities through employers, community-based organizations, and educational partners. Workforce development services are conveniently available at satellite locations within the tri-city, two-county area. Our latest American Job Center co-located in a hospital is now thriving. Workforce Counselors are available in both secondary and post-secondary educational facilities. Staff are located in the county jail to deliver pre- and post-release programming to help returning citizens achieve a successful transition into the community and the workforce.
16. The PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley Welcome Center identifies the need for community partner referrals to augment a customer's employment, education and training goals. Throughout program engagement, PA CareerLink® staff continue to assess and collaborate with key partners to deliver comprehensive support using all available community resources. These partnerships continue to provide a network of services that expedite the PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley's goals.
17. Customers from limited English speaking and reading populations with limited English proficiency receive equal access to workforce services through Propio Language Services, provider staff language interpreters, documents and websites that are translated, ADA-compliant equipment, and referrals to Title II and IV partners. For persons with impairments, including visual, hearing, and other accessibility needs, a TTY telecommunication device and the provision of a PA certified American Sign Language Interpreter, upon request in advance, are available for Deaf and hard of hearing individuals. In addition to services being available physically and virtually, the Resource Sharing Agreement dedicates funds for reasonable accommodations, should existing infrastructure and ADA-compliant equipment not meet a customer's specific accommodation needs.

18. Integrated data captured by multiple teams and data processing and entry into PA's workforce development system of record tracks real time customer activities from initiation until conclusion; however, data collection and case management for Adult Education and Family Literacy services is handled by a separate system. Basic Services engagement and registration in PA CareerLink® is handled immediately by both BWPO and Title I staff and generates referrals to individualized career services as appropriate. All program staff facilitating customized services are reporting and recording activities ongoing as services are delivered to include Career Advisors, Instructors, Job Developers and Recruiters. An integrated Quality Assurance team interacts with all partner programs to review and ensure the timeliness and integrity of all data entered, to support accurate Common Measures reporting.

A functionally-integrated Business Services Team includes BWPO, Veterans, Title I, Title IV and DHS funded staff. This team facilitates creation of employer records, assistance with real time job orders to meet hiring needs, and ongoing maintenance of individual business folders to promote employer engagement.

Lessons, improvements, and innovations in one-stop service delivery during the pandemic has ultimately created streamlined infrastructure for high quality, easy to access services. The board is driven to further innovate not just the method of how services are brought to individuals, but also recognize and adapt access to the increasingly diverse audience who receives the services. Ongoing innovations to access include:

- Utilizing text messaging software to outreach to job seekers
- Streamlined phone systems across all one-stop service locations
- Expansion of virtual job readiness and career coaching services
- Data analytics on virtual services' impact on outcomes
- Increasing access to connect with hiring employers
- Early and strategic targeted access for dislocated workers
- Easily accessible, interactive career pathways online
- Employer access to agile, responsive talent pipelines

In identifying how customers connect with us beyond visiting physical locations, the one-stop provider streamlined incoming phone calls with an improved phone infrastructure for quick call forwarding and ensuring customers get a live person answering when they call. Further expansion of this phone infrastructure with auto text messaging systems can ensure that customers receive seamless communication between one-stop provider staff regardless of where they are working. Examples of these streamlined communications could be text alerts for hot jobs, Employer Wednesdays, a new workshop topic, or a new training provider. In the future, location will only be relevant to individuals who need to access services in-person. What we deliver and the quality of services, education and training programs, and employer partners will be most relevant.

Moving services to virtual platforms such as Zoom and Learning Management Systems opened new literal pathways for customers to access the one-stop system. As services continue to be offered in virtual spaces, there are opportunities to gather new data on usage and outcomes. For example, connecting leading indicator data on workshop attendees and post-workshop evidence of learning surveys with lagging data on training enrollments, job placement, and job retention will help identify where our services are creating the most impact in outcomes and what ongoing improvements can be made in quality of virtual services.

Creation of engaging, interactive, and self-paced virtual content can enable more Lehigh Valley residents to access services with less one-stop system staff labor. Offering both in-person and virtual options to receive similar services, such as applicants being able to meet a hiring company on Employer Wednesday in-person or via video chat, will ensure services are accessible to anyone.

Understanding that the pandemic will create not just ripples but waves in economic projections and impacts on dislocated workers, the need to connect with unemployment compensation claimants earlier becomes clear and necessary. Non-traditional methods, such as community social media account engagement, Facebook Live service highlight sessions, and connecting with employers earlier through programs such as Shared Work will help improve the service delivery and quicker access for those pending job losses and new to receiving unemployment benefits. Dedicating staff who can contact UC initial claimants and exhausters' will ensure that no UC claimant is unfamiliar with the high-quality services available to them. Future plans to create engaging and interactive career pathways online for the entire local region will also ensure that any job seeker can feel excitement about the next step in their career plan. The goal of the Workforce Board Lehigh Valley is that every business in the Lehigh Valley has a Career Pathway; employer-driven career pathway plans unique to business and industry.

To ensure that the board is providing clear and equitable access to employment, education and training opportunities, mapping out unemployment data for Lehigh Valley per zip code compared to job seekers utilizing our virtual and in-person services data per zip code will ensure we identify communities in need and underserved and provide targeted outreach to those communities.

The board is also committed to accessible solutions that serve and support the employer community and job seeking community. Through dedicated Rapid Response staff, our system will have agile ability to connect with skilled workers who are unfortunately separating from their current employer. Discussing career pivots, transferrable skills, and interview skills will ensure this group is ready to reattach to work quickly. Access to these dislocated workers will be a great asset to employers who are growing in the region and need talent. Increased infrastructure to capture this information, engage with the newly dislocated workers, and reattach them to good wage jobs will help mitigate the long-term unemployed population we may see post-pandemic.

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

The PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley including the operator and one-stop partners strive to comply with WIOA Section 188, 29 CFR 38.40, and the applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act. To this end:

1. PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley staff are training in the WIOA Section 188 requirements.
2. PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley staff are training in the Americans with Disabilities Act definitions.
3. Staff receives annual sexual harassment training.
4. The WBLV annually reviews the accessibility of its facilities.

5. Whenever a new ETPL applies to be put on the ETPL in the Lehigh Valley, an accessibility site visit is conducted or the EEOC Accessibility Questionnaire is required to be completed by the ETPL.
6. The WBLV requires all relevant posters to be displayed in the PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley centers.
7. All service provider contracts, OJT contracts, Work Experience contracts, Customized Training and Incumbent Worker Training contracts include EEO compliance provisions as well as accessibility requirements.
8. On a regular basis accessibility software options are compared to what is already available in the PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley.
9. The WBLV assures state registered American Sign Language interpreters are available upon request. The Welcome Center includes an automated audio-visual overview of services which is also available in Spanish. Bilingual staff conduct assessment interviews to determine and recommend basic career services. Individualized career and support services are available to assist for all language needs that cannot be satisfied by staff personally. Twenty-two percent of local staff are bilingual and extended language resources are available and accessed via EDSI sister sites.
10. The Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO), Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry, conducts an annual Equal Opportunity (EO)/American with Disabilities (ADA) Accessibility compliance review of PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley. Currently the PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley is in pending compliance status. As a result of L&I's Office of Equal Opportunity current annual compliance review, the Workforce Board Lehigh Valley's compliance status has not yet been determined, as WBLV actively works with L&I Office of Equal Opportunity Officer to resolve findings identified in the annual compliance review. As a result of the annual compliance review, WBLV is improving the accessibility of information and services by adding a section to WBLV's website dedicated to Equal Opportunity laws and resources and upgrading and expanding adaptive equipment and technology. Although our website meets Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) standards in site development, the WBLV continues to research adaptive technology improvements for people with disabilities, which would augment current adaptive technology implemented throughout PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley locations.
11. The WBLV Director of Compliance monitors ADA/EO compliance on an ongoing basis using the EEOC/Office of Contract Compliance tools.
12. The WBLV has appointed an Equal Opportunity Officer, Nanse Wolfington, Director of Compliance, WBLV.
13. PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley has adopted an Auxiliary Aids and Services (Universal Access) Policy and Procedure to aid staff in effective communications with people with disabilities a required under Title II of the ADA.
14. PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley receptionists follow the Reception Desk Accessibility Procedures and consult with individuals to determine the auxiliary aids and/or services needed.
15. PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley updates their Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan as needed and submits it to the OEO annually for compliance review. The purpose of the LEP Plan is to demonstrate

the customers of PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley are being provided meaningful access to program information, benefits, and services, even though the customers may be limited in their English language proficiency.

16. The Equal Opportunity Law/Civil Rights Statement, including the process to file a complaint if an individual believes she/he has experienced discrimination, is provided to each individual.
17. All one-stop partner staff receive training to familiarize them with all of the programs and services provided through the one-stop delivery system. Staff also receive annual training on the Auxiliary Aids and Services (Universal Access) Policy and Procedure, LEP Plan, and Disability Etiquette. On a regular basis, we also provide training on the application of WIOA Section 188.
18. PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley, including the operator and one-stop partners, provides a broad range of services, including but not limited to: assessment of skills and abilities; basic skill programs; occupational skill and on-the-job training; barrier mitigation and support services to help individuals obtain employment to a diverse population that include members of both genders; LGBT community; various racial, ethnic, and age groups; individuals with disabilities; and individuals with limited English proficiency. Outreach materials designed to provide an overview of services offered through PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley to the general public either on-site as handouts or at local libraries and schools.
19. PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley coordinates services with the one-stop partners and local agencies, committees, and Wagner-Peyser programs that focus on employment-related functions for targeted groups. Input on types of training, education and services needed is gathered by the One-Stop Operator through partner meetings and outreach. Input gathered is then distributed to PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley staff through staff meetings for inclusion in the Career Resource Center and individualized appointments.
20. WBLV takes the appropriate steps to ensure that equal access is being provided for WIOA Title I-financially assisted programs and activities by promoting PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley programs and services, sharing program information with schools and community services that might serve individuals in targeted populations, and consult with community service groups about improving outreach and services to various targeted populations. WBLV ensures that all programs and service are equally offered to individuals regardless of their gender, racial and ethnic/national origin, religions, individuals with limited English proficiency, individuals with disabilities, and individuals in different age groups. Input on the training, education, and service needs is received from community organizations, training providers, and employers and the WBLV works with each of them and the WIOA Title I-funded service providers to help skill or upskill individuals within the identified populations and prepare them for the workforce through job search assistance and training.

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

Annually the WBLV holds an occupational forecasting meeting. The meeting is publicly noticed and asks for input from board members, employers, education, economic development and the general public on additions to the in demand occupation list provided by the Commonwealth. Attendees are invited to provide evidence-based recommendations to add occupations to the demand list in accordance with a

process approved by the Commonwealth. Appropriate recommendations are passed on to L&I and are approved for inclusion on the targeted occupations in demand list which is the list used for the purpose of approving training to assure training is in demand occupations.

The WBLV participates in a number of activities to project the needs of employers exemplified but not limited to those listed below:

1. The WBLV or its staff cross-populate employer associations throughout the local area and communicate employer needs to the full WBLV.
2. The WBLV procures intermediary assistance which is currently the GLVCC which numbers 6,000 employer members.
3. WBLV representatives present information on PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley services throughout the year at Chamber, economic development and employer association meetings and bring back information relayed by employers.
4. The WBLV partners with the LVEDC on skills gap strategic planning and studies to identify workforce pipeline needs.
5. The WBLV coordinates with education to identify new courses of study offered to meet employer and jobseeker demand.
6. The WBLV staff meets with its local governmental partners which identify constituent needs which include employer needs.
7. The WBLV has a business services unit whose task is to identify current in-demand and emerging in-demand jobs as well as the skills needs of those jobs, and identifies job seeker skills and helps connect them to the appropriate jobs/employers.

WBLV reaches out to employers through its intermediaries, memberships in business associations, and partnerships with economic development. The WBLV reaches out to education by including them on the local board and on their committees. The WBLV outreach activities are geared to hearing the voice of the customer, whether it is a participant, employer or provider. This occurs through meetings, participant activities such as job fairs and recruitments and through surveys. Once information is obtained, workforce intelligence is then incorporated into recommendations leading up to the Board's decision-making processes.

The WBLV conducts outreach once a year to ensure local eligible training providers are aware that they may apply to be on the ETPL list. The WBLV holds quarterly eligible training provider meetings to talk about changes in the job and labor market, performance and employer needs.

By communicating to its network of providers, the WBLV ensures that schools providing training in demand occupations apply to be included on the EPTL.

In accordance with the Uniform Guidance and WIOA, sub-recipient contracts are renewable for four, one-year periods following award and based upon sub-recipient performance. The One-Stop Operator contract is for three one-year renewable periods in accordance with WIOA, which requires a new procurement every four years.

All contracts include required performance objectives. All sub-recipient contract renewals are subject to performance to assure continuous improvement is a component of contract deliverables.

Each new procurement cycle requires a review of the Request for Proposal (RFP) specifications. Policy areas, such as but not limited to, cost per participant, number of enrollments into training, training progress, training completion, employment and for youth enrollment into postsecondary education, are brought to the appropriate board committees for input prior to release of the RFP.

By constantly reviewing past performance, required future performance, incorporating board input and ascertaining fiscal integrity the WBLV employs continuous improvement into the procurement process cycle.

The oversight roles assigned to the board and how they are implemented throughout the workforce service delivery system to support continuous improvement are as follows:

1. The WBLV conducts both financial and program monitoring. Program monitoring also includes performance monitoring. Monitoring is conducted on WBLV activities as well as those of its service providers by Quality Assurance staff.
2. In addition to the above, all sub-recipient contracts require the sub-recipients to develop a self-monitoring protocol and to submit the protocol to the WBLV for approval and to share the results of any monitoring report.
3. All monitoring results in a report and if any corrective action is required, the corrective action must occur within a specified period and documented in writing. Material findings if they were to occur must be reported to the WBLV.
4. To be a high performing board the WBLV also reviews its actions once a year when it meets specifically to review its goals and objectives.
5. Annually L&I monitors the WBLV and the L&I monitoring results are provided to the WBLV.
6. Annually an organization-wide audit is conducted and the results of the audit are reported to the WBLV.
7. The WBLV requires its sub-recipients contractually to provide the WBLV with copies of their annual audits.

Sub-recipients are monitored in a number of ways:

1. WBLV reserves the right to conduct a pre-award risk assessment in accordance with the Uniform Guidance in its Request for Proposals process.
2. Quality Assurance staff monitor contractual requirements and use a tool based upon the L&I monitoring tool.
3. Sub-recipients are required to conduct self-monitoring which process is reviewed and approved by their program manager.



4. All monitoring results in reports and Corrective Action Plans (CAP). If a CAP is warranted by a finding, the service provider has thirty days to submit a CAP that will identify actions needed to correct the finding and a date by when the action will be completed. Within thirty days of the CAP receipt, the WBLV Director of Compliance will review the CAP and make a recommendation to the Executive Director regarding acceptance of the CAP.
5. Program/contract managers monitor all sub-recipients against the requirements of their contractual scope of work and required performance on a regular basis.
6. Progress Reports are provided to the WBLV Board and to its committees.
7. Contracts require providers' invoices include substantiating documentation for reimbursement requests and maintains those documents. All documents are reviewed by the Finance Department prior to payment assuring another level of fiscal monitoring.
8. At least once a year there is a 100 percent file review.
9. Service providers submit a report on a quarterly basis for training provider performance data. The training provider performance report reflects the outcomes of the training providers' programs for the quarter. It captures how many completed the program successfully, how many withdrew from the programs, how many found employment in a related field, and how many did not find employment in a related field. The results are shared with the WBLV Executive Director and, if there are any findings, the WBLV Director of Compliance will work with the service provider and training provider to rectify the problem.
10. Service providers also submit weekly and monthly performance reports that reflect whether or not performance measures are being met. Briefings regarding oversight activities, reports, and findings are provided to the WBLV and to the appropriate standing committee of the Board at regularly scheduled meetings

Customer satisfaction surveys are completed by the one-stop center customers on monthly basis through an electronic survey system. The survey answers are tabulated by the WBLV Workforce Technology Coordinator and provided to the WBLV Director of Compliance for review. Once reviewed, the results are condensed into a one page report that is shared with the WBLV Executive Director and the service provider's Operations Director. Each survey provides detailed customer responses that are used to analyze what areas need improvement to achieve good customer services. If there are any findings or discrepancies that arise from the customer satisfaction surveys, the WBLV Executive Director and service provider will be notified. Once notified, the WBLV Contract/ Compliance Specialist will work with the service provider to devise a solution to the finding.

The WBLV conducts business with training providers in and outside the local area. WBLV requires that eligible training providers sign a Non-Financial Master Training Vendor Agreement. The agreement includes payment and performance requirements.

The WBLV Director of Compliance confirms that an eligible training provider is either licensed by the State Board of Private Licensed Schools or has met one of the exemptions as outlined in the WIOA

Title I Statewide Eligible Training Providers List Desk Guide for Public Training Providers and requests copies of their ADA Policy, Non-Discrimination Policy, and Financial statements prior to approval.

WBLV will not enter into an Agreement with a training provider unless they are in compliance with all federal, state, or local statues, regulations, policies, or procedures.

The WBLV follows the process and criteria provided in the Department’s Eligible Training Provider policy to develop, maintain, and distribute the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). The eligibility of the ETPL provider and/or program is determined by the WBLV solely on the measurable factors identified in the policy. WBLV has not established any additional criteria. To continue developing and maintain the ETPL, the Lehigh Valley Regional High Priority Occupation (HPO) List is provided to training providers to reference when requesting approval for the Eligible Training Providers/Programs List. WBLV will only approve provider programs that lead to an occupation on the Lehigh Valley Regional HPO List. If an occupation is not included on the Lehigh Valley Regional HPO List, WBLV can petition the DLI to consider adding an occupation. If a training provider is not listed on the ETPL, the one-stop system staff can notify the WBLV Director of Compliance and they will reach out to the provider in regards to their eligibility and if they are eligible than a Non-Financial Training Vendor Agreement will be created and they may submit their applications for the programs through PA CareerLink®.

The ETPL is available to the one-stop system staff in helping eligible participants find the training provider/program that is appropriate them. The ETPL can be accessed by the one-stop system customers at any time through PA CareerLink®. In addition, the one-stop system staff provides a brief orientation to eligible customers about using the ETPL in order to find an appropriate training provider/program and provide them guidance throughout their research.

WBLV Director of Compliance individually assesses each training provider’s performance at least once a quarter. If it is noted that performance has decreased, the WBLV Director of Compliance will reach out to the training provider to address the matter at which time a meeting will be requested to discuss their performance. If a training provider does not meet compliance or performance, the WBLV Director of Compliance can recommend to the WBLV Executive Director that funding should be provided to a provider/program on a trial basis or that funding to a provider/program should be discontinued completely.

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

**Adults:** To support the Adult job seekers, the WBLV solicits input from employers on current and projected demands for high-priority occupations within targeted industry sectors. Employers provide input on the need to upskill their current workforce and changing employability and occupational skills requirements. Data provided by the Pennsylvania Center for Workforce Information and Analysis (CWIA) and data sources such as the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation, Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce, Society for Human Resource Management and other workforce intelligence is used to evaluate the high-priority occupations and targeted industry sectors in the Lehigh Valley. The WBLV works with employers and training providers to ensure that the needs of the current workforce are met.

**Dislocated Workers:** To re-engage, retool, and upskill Dislocated Workers, the WBLV engages employers to better understand current and projected employability and occupational skills needed along career

pathways leading to gold collar jobs, technically skilled workers who are earning the gold. The WBLV uses data provided by CWIA and data sources mentioned above to re-engage, retool, and upskill Dislocated Workers in high-priority occupations and targeted industry sectors.

**Initial Assessment and Determination of Needs:** Employment and training activities in Lehigh Valley are available through the PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley in Allentown and two downtown Allentown satellite locations, as well as a satellite location in Easton to be determined. Basic and individualized career services are available at all locations through a virtual or in-person Welcome Center orientation combined with face-to-face appointments. Services during these sessions include an initial assessment and determination of needs, employability skills assistance, staff-assisted job search, referral to individualized career and training services, and referrals to supportive services and employment.

Rapid Response impacted individuals and Unemployment Compensation claimants identified through the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) receive information on how to access individualized career and training services. RESEA participants receive a one-on-one in-person or remote session for assessment and determination of needs in accordance with their career path. Job seekers interested in individualized services participate in an in-person or online information session to learn about benefits, eligibility requirements, and expectations for successful program outcomes.

**Dual Enrollment:** All job seekers are screened for cross-program eligibility and referred to core program services. Regular communication between program staff and participants ensures services are optimized and that duplication is eliminated. Dual enrollment is particularly advantageous for the older Out-of-School Youth population who may still benefit from youth specific life and soft skill sessions and interaction with adults in the adult programs. Working with adult peers who have stronger work histories and actual career experience can grow real workplace knowledge and the employability skills needed for older youth to find, retain, and succeed in a career path.

**Priority of Service:** Federal priority of service is followed by giving Level 1 highest priority to veterans and eligible spouses who are low income (federal poverty level or 70% Lower Living Standard Income Level), basic skills deficient, or recipients of public assistance. Non-veterans who meet the same criteria fall into Level 2 priority. All other veterans and eligible spouses who meet the local adult eligibility (258% of the federal poverty level or below) receive Level 3 priority, and all remaining non-veterans meeting local adult program eligibility are Level 4 priority. Level 5 includes individuals who do not meet the priorities. Staff training, particularly for staff in outreach work, satellite sites, and CRC, highlights priority of service for early identification and referral with priority flagging to WIOA intake staff.

**Individualized Career Services:** The delivery of all services is adaptive and has been expanded to incorporate in-person and virtual offerings, based on participant needs. These services include case management; development of an Individual Employment Plan (IEP); skills assessment and remediation through CASAS, and Essential Education; barrier resolution; individualized career exploration; advisement, career pathways counseling, job search and job readiness preparation; individualized job search; job development and placement assistance. Supportive services are available to ensure the successful completion of an Individual Employment Plan (IEP).

**Individualized Training Services:** Multiple strategies are utilized to gather workforce intelligence and identify high priority trainings and local in-demand occupational strands. Job and labor market information is sourced regularly from CWIA and other independent agencies to survey local business and industry.

Training opportunities include work experience, pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships, On-the-Job Training, and occupational skills training through Individual Training Accounts. All training opportunities are consistent with high-priority occupations and/or identified as occupations within Lehigh Valley industry sectors targeted for growth. These include Health Care and Social Assistance; Manufacturing; Finance and Insurance; Professional, Scientific and Technical Services; and, Transportation and Warehousing. Responding to the need for nontraditional training delivery, we continue to work with training providers to increase distance, online, virtual, and hybrid programs approved on the statewide Eligible Training Providers List. Those pursuing training receive assistance to maximize financial aid. Case management and recruiting services continue through the completion of training, job search, placement and follow-up.

The BEST promotes work-based training to employers in an effort to expand job seekers' opportunities for work experience, pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships, and OJTs. The BEST and WBLV engage with employers through Industry Partnerships, and organizations such as the GLVCC, SHRM, LVEDC, MRC, and Greater Lehigh Valley Building and Trades Council provides opportunities to learn about the needs of employers who propose workforce solutions.

**Community Based Organizations:** PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley maintains working relationships with over a hundred CBOs through email newsletters of upcoming activities and monthly virtual networking meetings to keep community partners aware of employment and training activities available for their clients. A virtual newsletter is in development as a forum for inter-agency information sharing.

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

A skilled workforce is imperative to the growth of Lehigh Valley's industry sectors and training, certifications, credentials, and work-based learning is coordinated through Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) developed specifically for customers that are on a path to obtaining new skills to get employed, or learn advanced skills to ensure they are being trained and upskilled to move along their career pathway within a company.

Contracting with training vendors are also used as a platform for training when employers are looking to train and hire multiple workers. This coordinated effort decreases the bureaucracy and expedites the referral process to training. It also provides customer satisfaction results to use as recruitment into training.

The WBLV provides occupational skills training through ITAs and work-based trainings. Prior to awarding training services, participants are assessed to determine their marketability and whether they have the qualifications and skills to be successful in training.

If the assessment determines the individual is likely to secure and retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or at higher wages, engagement in direct placement services is recommended prior to training consideration. If needed in order to qualify for training, participants are offered remediation through Essential Education, CASAS. Reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities are implemented according to each assessment's guidelines and procedures. Case managers determine participant support needs, whether they can financially support themselves through the completion of training, if their career choice is in a career

pathway that will lead to self-sufficiency and whether they intend to work following completion of training.

All ITAs for training opportunities are in High Priority Occupations which can be found on the statewide Eligible Training Providers List and also identified as occupations within Lehigh Valley industry sectors targeted for growth: Healthcare and Social Assistance; Manufacturing; Finance and Insurance; Professional, Scientific and Technical Services; and, Transportation and Warehousing.

The Workforce Board Lehigh Valley annually researches local training costs and builds policy by setting a tuition cap that covers the costs of the majority of ETPL training programs aligned with local targeted industry clusters. The maximum amount of an ITA is determined by current WBLV policy. Funding for training-related support services is outlined in the Supportive Services/Incentives/Needs-Related Payments/Stipend Policy.

In conjunction with the Workforce Board Lehigh Valley, the Title I contractor sub-recipient is responsible for the primary approval of ITAs. Invoicing and participant reimbursements are initially processed and paid by the Title I contractor and then submitted monthly to the Workforce Board Lehigh Valley for payment.

For individuals seeking training services, all sources of financial aid are explored to coordinate funding and maximize the funding available to participate in the training program. In accordance with WIOA, when participants are PELL eligible and the course of training is certified for PELL grant awards, ITA packages will first apply PELL toward the published tuition.

The WBLV provides occupational skills training through the Eligible Training Providers List and currently does not contract for class-sized training for adults or dislocated workers due to a dense concentration of colleges, universities and local training providers with program offerings leading to employment in high demand occupations.

In addition, skills upgrading is accomplished through the use of on-the-job training contracts, incumbent worker training, paid work experiences and registered apprenticeship opportunities. Work based training contracts are aligned with high priority occupations or targeted growth industries within the Lehigh Valley area. The WBLV promotes the registered apprenticeship model as a means of creating a trained employee pipeline and continues to assist employers with information and the state registration processes.

The WBLV understands the importance of informed customer choice in the career counseling and advisement of the participant's selection of training courses. Both on-site and virtual visits to training provider sites are encouraged and facilitated by staff. Career exploration and training research are required to ensure the training choice is aligned with each participant's career goal, career pathway, and suitability for training and delivery methods.

The WBLV partners with all approved training providers to ensure training programs are directly linked to employment opportunities in the local area that lead to economic self-sufficiency. Local training program outcomes are monitored, reviewed, and referenced throughout career advisement and the training selection process.

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

The Workforce Board Lehigh Valley Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Youth services are based on the 14 Required Youth Program Elements as outlined in WIOA legislation. We continuously evaluate these elements to ensure they reflect our latest innovations, community connections, and program management. WBLV's Youth Program is designed to provide high-quality youth services to at-risk populations and those with barriers to employment, including In-School Youth (ISY), Out-of-School Youth (OSY), Youth with disabilities, and re-entry youth. By leveraging WIOA and TANF resources, and securing public and private grant funding, WBLV's youth programs coordinate partner resources, align with employers' needs, help youth overcome barriers to employment, and result in full-time unsubsidized employment or enrollment in post-secondary education.

In addition to youth programs funded by WIOA and TANF, we pursue additional grant funding for initiatives that provide services for targeted youth populations.

Given the transition to digital and virtual services, which is likely to continue and even expand in coming years, we will be able to reach even more youth through these efforts.

Under the direction of the WBLV and its Youth Committee, key community partners are committed to establishing priorities that ensure a comprehensive community workforce development system for eligible youth. Beginning with career exploration and guidance and opportunities for work experience and skills training, youth activities are aligned to meet employer needs, assist youth in overcoming barriers to employment, exceed performance, and culminate with employment and/or enrollment in postsecondary education.

The Youth Committee includes a private sector chairperson, who serves as a member of the WBLV and its Executive Committee, and members of the community. The Youth Committee recommends policy to the Board to design a comprehensive youth workforce program that ensures a full range of services and job opportunities; leverages resources; coordinates community services among schools, public programs, and community based organizations; recommends eligible youth service providers; provides ongoing leadership and support for continuous quality improvement; and develops innovative ideas focused on pipeline development.

The WBLV provides comprehensive services to participants while maximizing partner resources. With OSY as a WIOA primary focus, WIOA funding is used to design programs that serve OSY aged 17-24 and TANF funding is used for ISY programming. While WIOA defines OSY as 16-24, PA Commonwealth Law 22 Code Section 11.13 requires 16-year-olds to have parental consent and be employed before leaving school. In addition, WBLV data shows an insignificant number of 16 year olds requesting programming. Therefore, WBLV aligns to WIOA's focus of serving older OSY ages 17-24.

WBLV has been successful in securing public and private grant funding that increases opportunities to align career pathways with high priority occupations in targeted industry clusters. The expanded funding allows for the development of partnerships that align key stakeholders and supports co-enrollment in multiple programs to ensure youth have the opportunity to pursue the skills, training and education they need to obtain employment leading to financial stability for themselves and their families.

All Out-of-School Youth, In-School Youth, TANF and special grant funded youth program services are competitively procured. The WBLV workforce development services focus on at-risk populations with barriers to employment and the strategically designed activities include:

**Recruitment and Outreach:** The WBLV's strategy is to locate College and Career Centers throughout the Lehigh Valley. Being close to customers and developing programs tailored to 16-24 year olds will increase the number of youth connected to both ISY and OSY workforce activities and ultimately to the workplace. Targeted outreach aligned with eligibility criteria includes, but is not limited to, strategic partnerships with the school districts, literacy centers and community colleges, Early Learning Resource Center (ERLC), alternative school program choices such as the ELECT and Reengagement Programs, shelters, re-entry partners such as Lehigh and Northampton County Probation and Parole, Domestic Relations and Justice Works, Valley Youth House, food banks, Communities in Schools, Promise Neighborhood, Easton Children's Home, and WIC.

Methods to cultivate and nurture these relationships, both in-person and virtually, are interagency communication, cross agency referral, tracking, cross training, curriculum and workshop development and co-facilitation, student graduation and recognition ceremonies, and community outreach events.

Through strategic partnerships, a pipeline of youth flow through program contractors based upon ISY or OSY status. Initial steps define a barrier to employment, ensure eligibility to work in the United States and establish residency in Lehigh or Northampton Counties. WBLV programs consider youth with barriers to employment as individuals who have dropped out of secondary school, are offenders, homeless, aging out of foster care, pregnant or parenting, have a high school diploma or equivalency and are basic skills deficient, or are an English Language learner. In addition, there are youth who need additional assistance to enter or complete an education program or to secure or hold employment. WBLV defines this barrier as youth without a significant work history, limited employment stability and youth with parents who are offenders.

Once eligibility is determined and documentation has been collected, youth are assessed to determine academic and skills level and to determine the service needs of each participant. Youth determined as qualified and likely to be able to successfully complete program activities are enrolled in provider programs and begin to receive services. Youth not enrolled in programs are referred to other PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley integrated programs.

**Engagement and Re-engagement:** WBLV is expanding and developing new in-person and virtual strategies for communication through technology and social media. Engagement is strengthened through short-term and incremental goal setting utilizing career pathways. Support services gaps are identified up-front through real-time assessments and an environmental analysis that tracks barrier remediation so as to pivot and develop new support strategies. Programming remains current and adaptable to specialized needs such as youth specific employability skills and reentry curriculum and services. Reengagement that meet the needs of youth increases the number of youth participating in workforce activities and ensures meeting negotiated performance standards.

**Research to meet the education and employment needs:** Establishing the WBLV as experts in youth workforce development activities and utilizing local labor market data and customer surveys, provides information to develop innovative activities, programming and best practices to serve youth, particularly youth with disabilities. The Youth Committee and Lehigh Valley employers are vehicles often utilized to review current programming, resulting in new projects that successfully advance youth initiatives.

**Alternate and evidenced-based programs:** WIOA’s focus on OSY continues to drive our service strategies. Providing alternate program choices that encourage re-engagement to education, or engagement in training or apprenticeships is a strategy that leads youth into post-secondary, unsubsidized employment and financial stability. The WBLV offers various youth programming models that include a cohort model or an open enrollment model, a youth reentry model, summer internship experiences that showcase career opportunities, and a reengagement model that encourages high school dropouts to obtain a high school diploma while participating in work-based learning that provides youth with direct employer connections to unsubsidized employment.

**Work-based learning opportunities:** WIOA’s work experiences have both academic and occupational education components and can include summer employment and continuing employment opportunities throughout the school year. The WBLV has updated the Work-Based Training Policy to increase paid work experience wages to a minimum of \$13.00 per hour. Strategies to attract, engage and increase full youth participation in work-based learning include outreach utilizing a wide variety of social media platforms. The benefit of exploring career choices with a look-see prior to enrollment in post-secondary coursework is encouraged and is advantageous in finalizing career path decisions. In-person, virtual and hybrid experiences are developed and allow flexibility to both the youth and the employer base to customize work experience options to individual participant and employer circumstances. Pre-apprenticeship programs, internships and job shadowing and On-the-job training are fully explained to all program candidates in an effort to provide every participant a tailored opportunity with an individualized timeline and learning experience that serves as a primer for either training or unsubsidized employment.

Work Experience opportunities are promoted via business presentations, partner meetings, and community events. Strategic recruitment is conducted with both for and non-profit employers in need of workers and eager to provide coaching and guidance to youth. One primary strategy is to showcase to employers the benefits of the program through mentoring youth to develop their own talent pipelines.

**Career Pathways:** WBLV continues to be a leader in developing career pathways by working with employers and educators to define pathways with multiple entrance and exit points; assessing interests, skills and abilities; and developing career pathways plans outlining the need for additional training, and education.

**Coordination of Resources:** Through coordination and braiding of funds with WIOA core programs, TANF and federal, state and local grants and private funds, more young people with barriers receive fully integrated services to gain marketable skills necessary for a lifetime of employment.

Youth evidence-based programs aligned to employer needs assist youth in overcoming barriers by providing assessments, developing Individual Service Strategies and career plans, support services, referrals to community services, mentoring, and incorporation of the 14 elements as defined in WIOA as follows:

1. Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent or for a recognized secondary credential. ISY programs support youth with academic remediation, and encourage youth to remain in school and obtain a diploma. OSY are assessed and prescribed either internal, short-term remediation or lengthier academic remediation services delivered by a Title II literacy partner.



2. Alternative secondary school services or dropout recovery services are coordinated with Title II providers and reengagement centers at public schools to encourage youth to return to school or obtain a high school equivalency or diploma.
3. Work experience contractors link career path exposure and employability skills training to workplace opportunities and possible direct placements.
4. By partnering with local training providers and employers, youth obtain marketable skills through ITAs, OJTs and apprenticeships resulting in advancement to higher paying jobs with industry recognized credentials.
5. Education offered concurrently with workforce preparation activities, academic remediation and occupational skills training, connect youth to high priority occupations and career pathways to transition into the workplace.
6. Leadership development is initiated with the first case management appointment and is continued through career advisement coaching during the enrollment timeline. Leadership skills are practiced by youth through the introduction of community service projects, first-person exposure to postsecondary educational opportunities, and both virtual and in-person tours and conversations with employers in local business and industry.
7. Supportive services include technology hardware and internet, transportation, background checks, physicals and screenings, driver's lessons, training related study guides, testing and credentialing fees, safety attire and uniforms, tools and equipment, and are documented in the Individual Service Strategy and Career Pathways Plan.
8. Adult mentoring engages employers and community and professional organizations to provide career guidance, positive role modeling and mentorship for youth.
9. Follow-Up services maintain ongoing communication and support such as leadership development, employability and problem solving skills, transportation assistance, and enrollment into postsecondary education, job placement, career advancement and retention.
10. Comprehensive guidance and continuing barrier mitigation are provided through case management, referrals to licensed social workers and/or licensed counselors, and ongoing leveraged support of workforce system partner agencies to ensure a continuum of youth services leading to workplace success.
11. Financial literacy education is delivered in a three-fold method to include a financial literacy component embedded in the youth specific employability curriculum, finance and banking workshops facilitated by employer partners, and hands-on financial and banking coursework is presented during paid work experience orientations by the Youth staff.
12. Entrepreneurial Skills Training is included by youth exploring and identifying business opportunities, developing business plans and budgets, and practicing effective, professional business communication. Additional exposure to entrepreneurial opportunities occurs through employer partner workshops and virtual and/or on-site visits to business locations. Staff advises and directs youth to state approved entities and coursework such as: Northampton Community College, Follett

Family Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship; Lehigh Carbon Community College, Entrepreneurship and Small Business Specialist Credit Diploma; and Lehigh University, Small Business Development Center and the Baker Institute for Entrepreneurship.

13. Labor market and employment information services are provided across Youth programs by incorporating CWIA labor market data into industry specific Career Power Hours, Employer Spotlights, staff guided research, and partner sessions such as the EOC workshops “Matching My Skills” that educate youth on local high priority occupations in targeted industry clusters.
14. Multiple activities prepare youth for the transition to postsecondary education and training. Youth program participants take interest and skills assessments that are utilized to research education and training programs and providers on the approved statewide Eligible Training Provider List. EOC and on-site post-secondary education providers are strong partners who provide in-person and virtual real-time career advisement to youth. On day one of program orientation, a Training and Education Advisor is introduced to youth and continues to guide individual career path exploration. Throughout the development of the ISS this team member assists youth with the education and training decision making process.

#### **Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)**

By developing workshops geared to family members, our clients have additional supports to overcome barriers and ensure lifelong employability. By developing relationships with additional community-based organizations, educational providers, private and public organizations, the WBLV seeks to increase the number of partners working with us. We introduce organizations to an option that provides an additional case manager to their staff complement and provide the partner case management needed to ensure the 14 WIOA elements including tuition for an ITA, work experiences, tutoring, financial literacy and support services. This will allow us to expand our services and provide additional vendors for services.

Further alignment with OVR and youth with disabilities enables opportunities, activities and programming designed to coordinate funding which allows additional participants to receive services. As a core partner, OVR has the ability to collaborate with the WBLV to provide ISY with disabilities the opportunities to participate in pre-employment transition services to gain skills and knowledge to enter the workforce. In partnership with the WBLV and Title I providers, OVR may provide both OVR eligible and potentially eligible ISY with disabilities services to enter competitive, integrated employment.

These opportunities allow ISY with disabilities to assess their own strengths and skills, while exploring vocational possibilities and removing barriers from employment. Work-based learning is an important experience for ISY with disabilities to engage in so that they may be afforded opportunities to discover career paths. Other services that may be provided to ISY with disabilities include:

- **Counseling** and guidance from professional vocational rehabilitation staff to explore career and training options as well as understand OVR services.
- **Independent Living Skills** training for students to gain knowledge to perform the daily tasks essential for maintaining or obtaining independence. Independent Living Skills can include the following: household budgeting and financial management, utilizing public transportation, and navigating through the social services system.

- **Self-Advocacy Training** to assist students with disabilities to gain knowledge on disability awareness, advocating during an IEP process, understanding transition processes, and advocating for themselves in postsecondary education, employment, and coordinating social services.
- **Workplace Readiness Training** provides students with knowledge needed to find and maintain competitive integrated employment. Curricula can include soft skills training, interview skills, job readiness, job-seeking skills, HR practices, and other skills needed to become workplace ready.
- **Job Shadowing** provides students with disabilities a job shadowing experience in an occupation of interest within a community integrated setting. Students are provided an opportunity to shadow employees and understand the knowledge, tasks, and abilities needed to work in this field.

### **Job Corps**

Although there is not a Job Corps residential facility located within the WBLV area, Job Corps representatives are provided space within PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley bi-weekly to promote Job Corps programs. Virtual information sessions and tours are also offered.

### **Juvenile Justice**

Building on the success of the Linking Employment Activities Pre-Release (LEAP) grant, WBLV will begin programming that targets the children of the inmates involved in the justice system.

### **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Youth Services**

The WBLV competitively procures service providers for TANF In-School Youth (ISY) programming. Activities include programming focusing on: leadership development, financial literacy, post-secondary preparation and transition activities, tutoring and study skills training, paid work experience, mentoring, supportive services, and follow-up.

The WBLV received approval in Program Year 2020 to pilot a new youth initiative with Lehigh Carbon Community College (LCCC) and the Allentown School District to serve TANF in-school youth by providing a pathway to higher education through completion of Dual Enrollment Courses at LCCC. Activities include: post-secondary preparation and transition activities, tutoring and study skills training, mentoring, supportive services, occupational skills training, paid work experience, and follow-up.

### **Incentives**

WBLV policy dictates that incentives may be provided to youth and can be up to \$250 a year. Incentives must be defined in Individual Service Strategy, linked to an achievement and must be tied to training and education, work readiness and/or occupational skills attainment. Prior to issuing incentive payments, the program provider's incentive plan must be approved by the WBLV.

### **TANF Contact**

Nanse Wolfington, Workforce Board Lehigh Valley, 610-841-8329, [nwolfington@workforcelv.org](mailto:nwolfington@workforcelv.org)

### **Discretionary Grants**

Periodically, the WBLV receives discretionary grants to serve In-School and Out-of-School Youth, such as the PA Department of Labor and Industry grants such as Youth Reentry, Statewide Activity Business-Education Partnership, and private foundations such as the Century Fund, Bosch, and Air Products.

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

The WBLV coordinates workforce investment activities through the PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley Administrator and One-Stop Operator. A state Rapid Response staff member, a full one-stop partner housed at PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley, coordinates activities with training, educational, and all community services providers.

Lehigh Valley's Rapid Response Team consists of the EDSI Operation Manager in coordination with a Regional Rapid Response Coordinator the team is informed of potential layoff activity through WARN notifications, public notice or referrals from business and industry or through PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley's workforce system,

A WARN notice offers protection to workers, their families and communities by requiring employers to provide notice 60 days in advance of covered plant closings and covered mass layoffs. This notice must be provided to either affected workers or their representatives (e.g., a labor union); to the State dislocated worker unit; and to the appropriate unit of local government. A Rapid Response representative is required to contact a company that has filed a WARN notice within 48 hours of receipt of the notice.

In general, employers are covered by WARN if they have 100 or more employees, not counting employees who have worked less than 6 months in the last 12 months and not counting employees who work an average of less than 20 hours a week. Private, for-profit employers and private, non-profit employers are covered, as are public and quasi-public entities which operate in a commercial context and are separately organized from the regular government.

Regular Federal, State, and local government entities which provide public services are not covered. A covered employer must give notice if an employment site (or one or more facilities or operating units within an employment site) will be shut down, and the shutdown will result in an employment loss (as defined later) for 50 or more employees during any 30 day period.

A covered employer must give notice if there is to be a mass layoff which does not result from a plant closing, but which will result in an employment loss at the employment site during any 30-day period for 500 or more employees, or for 50-499 employees if they make up at least 33% of the employer's active workforce.

Public notice can be from a variety of sources (newspaper, television, press release or some other form of public announcement from the company) and referrals can come from our workforce partner organizations or through workers impacted from the affected worker group.

Upon notice, Workforce Board Lehigh Valley coordinates local workforce development activities with statewide Rapid Response activities using a process that begins with an initial fact finding meeting to evaluate the needs of the dislocating employer's workforce together with statewide and Lehigh Valley Workforce Development Area Rapid Response team members. Re-employment services offered through PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley and an explanation of the specialized dislocated worker services available through WIOA Title I program are provided at this meeting. Fact Finding meetings may occur onsite at the company, at the PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley office or virtually through web based platforms (Skype, Microsoft Teams, WEBX etc.) or at other community locations such as libraries, union halls etc.

An official Rapid Response session is scheduled by the local Rapid Response Coordinator and is offered to all employees prior to their dislocation. The session is customized to the workforce, but at a minimum, provides the workers with information on PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley services, Unemployment Compensation, Healthcare options, retirement options, credit counseling, worker protections under federal law and supportive services available in the local area. Agencies represented in these meetings are Rapid Response, PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley, Greater United Way of the Lehigh Valley, the Federal Department of Labor's Employee Benefit Security Administration, Pennie.com PA State Based Insurance Marketplace and Unemployment Compensation. These sessions typically occur onsite 7-10 days prior to the layoff. Virtual presentations through web platforms (Skype, Microsoft Teams, WEBX etc.) are also available.

Title I Dislocated Worker services can also be promoted with special registration events scheduled to assist the workers with easy access to individualized career services and training opportunities as well as one on one opportunities with an Unemployment Compensation representative so impacted individuals can discuss their personal situations privately.

If there is particular interest in a specific company's workforce from other employers in a similar industry, the Rapid Response Coordinator partners with the Lehigh Valley's BEST team to coordinate and implement a dedicated onsite or virtual job fair. These dedicated events benefit all involved as impacted workers are given the ability to obtain new employment before they lose their prior employment and the company and local community and economy does not have to support additional unemployment costs.

The local Rapid Response Coordinator works with the Workforce Board Lehigh Valley to assure delivery of services and with the Fiscal Agent to assist in the application for additional workforce funds if necessary. WIOA permits states to provide Rapid Response Additional Assistance funds to local areas with an increased number of unemployed individuals due to natural disasters, plant closings, mass layoffs or other events, if there are not adequate local funds to assist the dislocated workers.

The Rapid Response Coordinator gathers data from surveys distributed to affected workers at Rapid Response sessions. These surveys are used as a planning tool for services, and to request additional Rapid Response funds from the state. All plant closings and major layoffs are included in the Lehigh Valley Job & Labor Market snapshot of the local labor market. The document highlights unemployment rate trends, monthly/yearly job change, plant closings, and major layoffs. Companies looking to expand or explore the possibility of relocating to the Lehigh Valley use the plant closing and layoff listing of companies to assess the skills of the available workforce.

The PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley staff conduct outreach projects to reach dislocated workers. Targeted email campaigns and phone calls are made to recently dislocated workers informing them of upcoming hiring events, hosted or supported by PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley Wagner-Peyser staff. WIOA Title 1 staff inform program participants of these events. PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley staff also reach out to customers that have a Self-Service Job Search (SSJS) service code in the system of record to engage dislocated workers within the PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley's programs and services, and to highlight other supportive services.

The WBLV, PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley's BEST staff and the Rapid Response Regional Representative review layoff aversion strategies when advance notice is provided. Referrals can also be made to the Steel Valley Authority's Strategic Early Warning Network for business consultation services for small to

mid-sized manufacturing companies. Referrals can also be made to the Governor’s Action Team to assist companies looking to move into Pennsylvania or grow their existing business model within the Commonwealth. Lastly, a referral can be made in partnership with Unemployment Compensation to Pennsylvania’s Shared Work program designed to help company’s retain their employees during slow periods, allowing their workers to get a portion of their unemployment benefits with the ability to bring the workers back to full time status once business demand resumes.

The local Rapid Response Coordinator also initiates the Trade Act process with companies who are laying off workers due to the impact of foreign competition. The Rapid Response Coordinator facilitates the filing of Trade Act petitions. Trade Act petitions can be filed by a company official, union official, two impacted workers from an affected worker group, or a state official. The petition filing commences the process of a federal investigation to determine if the company meets the criteria for certification. If a company is certified under the Trade Act, federal law maintains that a company must provide the state with a worker list encompassing all workers who may have potential eligibility. Upon receipt of a worker list, local Rapid Response coordinator would invite all impacted workers to a Benefit Rights Interview meeting. A Benefit Rights Interview meeting gives a general overview of all Trade Act benefits available while also allowing the impacted workers the ability to complete paperwork to obtain their individual certification under the Trade Act. Once individually certified, Rapid Response partners with the State’s Trade Act Services unit, Trade merit staff, Title I providers and the Workforce Board Lehigh Valley to coordinate service implementation.

Workforce Board Lehigh Valley is proud of the rapid response process and Action Plan for ensuring Dislocated Workers receive the education, training and supportive services they need to return to employment.

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

Education, training and pipeline development is one of the Lehigh Valley’s most critical strategic workforce strategies. The WBLV not only coordinates educational and workforce activities with relevant secondary and postsecondary education providers, we align education, economic and workforce development, and community organizations to ensure we have a coordinated strategy. The strategy focuses on our collective workforce services and resources that promote pathways to postsecondary education in high priority occupations in targeted industry clusters.

Title II partners are integral in preparing students for the multiple opportunities to upskill and/or advance their education, and strong partnerships continue to grow between the WBLV and program providers. Program presentations, designated points of contact and cross training of available services continue to be an important piece of staff development for all partners. Reciprocal referrals avoid duplication of services by one organization providing expertise, while other partners handle transitions to career launch. Title II providers develop specific occupational coursework with guidance from and in partnership with workforce development to meet local employer needs. English Language Learners and GED graduates from Title II programs in both Lehigh and Northampton Counties are referred to Title I and DHS programs to engage in phase two of their education and career pathway plans. Throughout a student’s individual education and training timeline, the Title I and Title II partner team confers regularly with the participant to ensure goals remain viable and any needed support is readily available. The Lehigh Valley is a hub for education in the commonwealth and home to 11 postsecondary

institutions. Public and private training providers are also a part of the fabric of Lehigh Valley's educational and training system and home to 15 state approved training providers who offer 168 training programs for job seekers and incumbent workers.

We work with our partners to ensure we are not duplicating services and are cost-effective. To ensure coordination, relevancy, and a pathway of enhanced services, instead of duplicative services, the WBLV has a workforce and education strategy built on the collective input of all our education and training providers, PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley workforce system partners and the Lehigh Valley Business Education Partnership.

To coordinate and enhance workforce services in regard to secondary and postsecondary education and to avoid duplication of services, key components of our strategy include:

- Identifying industry credentials leading to high priority occupations, including Registered Apprenticeships and Pre-apprenticeship training opportunities
- Opening an Employer and Education Engagement Center housed at PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley
- Providing industry-driven training and skill requirements to ensure employers have a trained and skilled workforce
- Communicating private sector jobs and employability skill requirements
- Coordinating the creation of career pathways identified by employers in targeted industry sectors in high priority occupations with a focus on individuals with barriers to employment
- Distributing workforce data and information for common career exploration tools used by educational institutions
- Working with career and technical education programs to align industry credentials to high priority occupations
- Providing professional development for educators
- Promoting accelerated learning pathways to a college degree
- Partner with local education and training providers to develop programs that demonstrate measurable skill gains and are part of a clearly defined career pathways for individuals with barriers to employment
- Operationalizing digital badges recognized by employers as an assessment of technical skill levels
- Developing customized training needed to re-tool dislocated workers in high priority occupations
- Identifying successful transition models for secondary students into postsecondary education
- Adult education and literacy programs for remedial work
- Financial aid including PELL and PHEAA grant information
- Creating veteran friendly learning environments

Our strategy with regard to training providers includes:

- Meeting with eligible training providers on a quarterly basis
- Conducting training information fairs at PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley
- Scheduling tours for PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley staff
- Encouraging participants to tour the schools with the courses in which they are seeking training
- Scheduling education site visits for PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley staff to monitor student progress and performance
- Requesting that participants complete FERPA releases
- Collaborating on transitional placement services upon course completion
- Coordinating with partners on outreach and specialized recruitment events
- Prioritizing reciprocal referrals and process for access to partner programs and services

The WBLV also partners with the GLVCC to make a 6,000-member employer base available to work with secondary and postsecondary educators on curriculum development, employability and skills requirements, and to provide work-based learning opportunities for students and educators. This partnership includes collaboration between the WBLV, GLVCC, and the Title I provider to identify opportunities where the employer serves as the trainer and where Registered Apprenticeship, Pre-apprenticeship and OJT coordination may occur.

The WBLV is an active participant in the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Comprehensive Needs Assessment through membership in the Perkins Participatory Planning Committees (PPPC), Lehigh Executive Council on Career and Technical Education and Occupational Advisory Councils for Secondary and Post-Secondary Career and Technical education providers within Lehigh Valley. The WBLV provides connections to local employers to the education providers and councils ensuring career and technical education meets local employer current and future needs. Through the WBLV and local employers, career exploration and guidance information on employment opportunities are provided to students before enrolling and while participating in career and technical education to ensure the students have the most up-to-date information on high-skill, high-wage and in-demand industry sectors and occupations and education meets local and economic needs.

**4.11. Describe the plans, assurances and strategies for maximizing coordination, improving service delivery and avoiding duplication of Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.) services and other services provided through the one-stop service delivery system.**

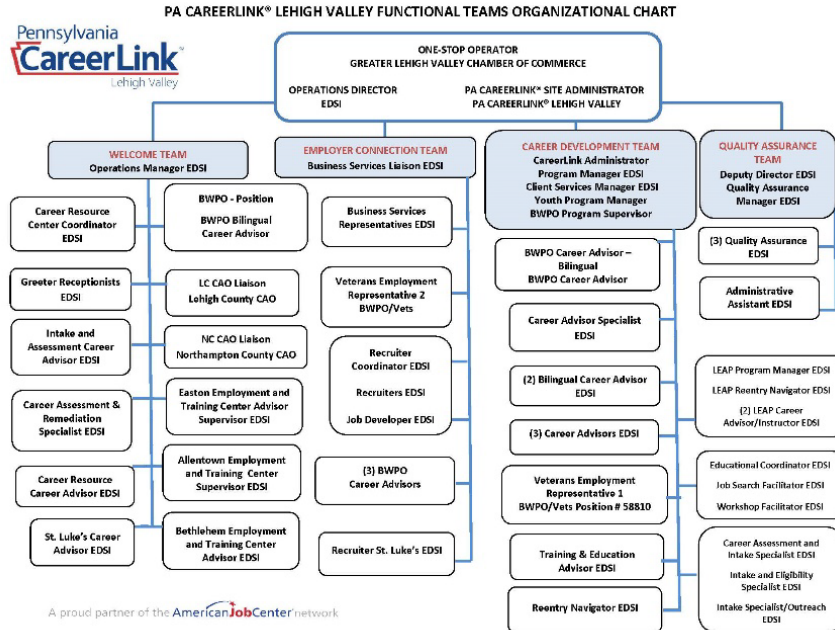
By integrating Wagner-Peyser and WIOA Title I services, the WBLV workforce system provides optimum results for job seekers and avoids duplication of services to expand access to services.

As stated in the comments to the WIOA regulations, employment service staff may provide many of the same services authorized under WIOA Title I other than the provision of training services. Wagner-Peyser acts as the front door to services available in PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley. Since WIOA Title I shares all the same employer performance measures with Wagner-Peyser other than the education measures, WIOA Title I must rely on Wagner-Peyser to achieve the employer measures from the Commonwealth of PA. PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley has adopted a functional teams approach, comprised of mandated system partners. Members are assigned to specific teams based on similar job duties and functions, and shared areas are in place to support easy customer access and communication among team members. WIOA operational manager check-ins are conducted weekly, and monthly meetings bring all partners together virtually or in person as appropriate, to monitor processes, address concerns and strategically plan service enhancements.

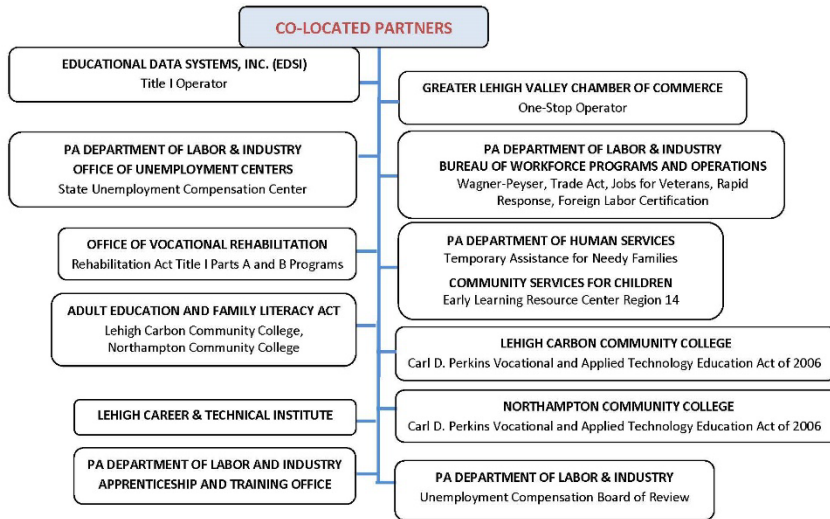
Job seekers work with staff from the Welcome Center and/or Career Resource Center to ensure they have completed PA CareerLink® registration, a PA CareerLink® resume is created, and job preferences are completed. Services offered through the Welcome Center, Career Resource Center, workshops, career exploration processes, and assessments are provided in collaboration with Wagner-Peyser staff. These services are available both in-person and virtually. Staff review the assessment information during a triage interview to determine and recommend basic, individualized, and support services. Determination of program eligibility and referrals to community partners is completed. All required partners are involved in the offering of basic career services and administer assessments to job seekers as applicable, and collaborate to develop Individual Employment.



Please see the following organizational charts for more detail.



**PA CAREERLINK® LEHIGH VALLEY FUNCTIONAL ORGANIZATIONAL CHART**



The following Workforce Planner is used to document PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley customer activities.

TTA \_\_\_\_\_

## WORKFORCE PLANNER

Participant: \_\_\_\_\_ PID: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Career Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_ Program: \_\_\_\_\_

**YOU'RE HIRED EMPLOYABILITY WORKSHOPS**

**MODULE I • MONDAY • \_\_\_\_\_ • 10:00AM TO 12:00PM**  
 Training Opportunities 10:00-11:00am \_\_\_\_\_ Dos and Don'ts of Resumes 11:00am-Noon \_\_\_\_\_

**MODULE II • TUESDAY • \_\_\_\_\_ • 10:00AM TO 12:00PM**  
 So You Have an Interview 10:00-11:00am \_\_\_\_\_ Modern and Mock Interviewing 11:00am-Noon \_\_\_\_\_

**MODULE III • WEDNESDAY • \_\_\_\_\_ • 10:00AM TO 12:00PM**  
 Cover Letters and References 10:00-11:00am \_\_\_\_\_ Thank You Letters 11:00am-Noon \_\_\_\_\_

**MODULE IV • THURSDAY • \_\_\_\_\_ • 10:00AM TO 12:00PM**  
 Online Job Search 10:00-11:00am \_\_\_\_\_ Job Applications 11:00am-Noon \_\_\_\_\_

**MODULE V • FRIDAY • \_\_\_\_\_ • 10:00AM TO 12:00PM**  
 Network to Find a Job and Hiring Test Strategies 10:00-11:00am \_\_\_\_\_  
 Job Retention 11:00am- Noon \_\_\_\_\_

**INTRODUCTION TO DIRECTED JOB SEARCH**

Intro to Directed Job Search: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Industry: \_\_\_\_\_ Assigned Recruiter: \_\_\_\_\_

**EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS - TOOLKIT**

PA CareerLink® Resume \_\_\_\_\_ Toolkit Completion Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 PA CareerLink® Job Preferences \_\_\_\_\_ Staff Initials: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Microsoft Word Resume \_\_\_\_\_

**ASSESS YOUR SKILLS**

CASAS® \_\_\_\_\_

A proud partner of the American Job Center network  
Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.  
 Equal Opportunity Employer/Program  
 Programs at the PA CareerLink® are funded in whole or in part by federal funds.  
 Detailed information can be found at <https://www.dhs.gov/eo-12813>

Client referrals to internal and external partners are primarily made through email and follow-up with phone calls. The list of organizations available for referrals as well as their contacts are maintained by the Site Administrator and the One Stop Operator.

With the focus on our system’s Priority of Service for Veterans, the role of the Disabled Veteran Outreach Program specialist (DVOP) is critical for this referral system. While the DVOP is searching for Veterans who need employment services, they are confirming accuracy of their contacts, and making adjustments when needed. These updates are relayed to the Site Administrator or One-Stop Operator so the appropriate changes can be made in the referral data base.

Employer recruitment events are coordinated by the Business Engagement Services Team (BEST) or Site Administrator, and functional staff are informed in order to make appropriate referrals from the universal career services pool of job seekers.

The role of the One-Stop Operator in the Lehigh Valley’s workforce development system encompasses the following duties, in coordination with PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley’s Site Administrator: serve as an intermediary to the public One-Stop Partners; coordinate all the WBLV One-Stop locations; work with One-Stop Partners to understand their program services and performance requirements of the one-stop partners and ensure continuous improvement of the One-Stop system; understand the Commonwealth’s one-stop certification criteria to assure the WBLV’s compliance to areas identified below under deliverables; and, work with the WBLV on technology and website issues.

Additional one-stop operator duties include: facilitate the development of the required one-stop MOU as described in WIOA section 121; address the one-stop’s effectiveness, and customer satisfaction, to

assure the WBLV meets and exceeds performance levels such as integration and coordination of services for participants and businesses, and by identifying new ways to coordinate between the one-stop, education and employers that involve all the One-Stop Partners; participate in the WBLV's Workforce Solutions, Accountability and Compliance Committee; and, prepare reports on a monthly basis to include actions taken with respect to each of the deliverables highlighting accomplishments, improvements, challenges and recommendations.

The Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce currently serves as the One-Stop Operator but does not assist in the development, preparation and submission of Local Plans. They do not manage or assist in future competitive processes for selecting operators, or select or terminate one-stop operators, career services providers, or Youth providers. The operator cannot negotiate local performance accountability measures or develop and submit budgets for activities of the WBLV. The WBLV is responsible for the negotiated performance measures, strategic planning, budgets, and One-Stop Operator oversight (including monitoring).

The Site Administrator serves as the Functional Leader of the PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley responsible for the day-to-day operation of the site focusing on customer service, and has the authority to organize partner staff to streamline service delivery efforts. Formal leadership, supervision and performance responsibilities remain with the employee's employer of record.

The Site Administrator is a Wagner-Peyser staff person and works closely with the One-Stop Operator on topics relating to, but not limited to, community outreach and systems structure. Duties include the management of daily operations such as: managing hours of operations and coordinating work scheduled and work flow based on operational needs.

Other duties include: assisting the WBLV in establishing and maintaining the PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley system structure, ensuring that WBLV policies are implemented and adhered to, ensuring staff are properly trained by their leadership organizations and provided technical assistance, as needed, integrating systems and coordinating services for PA CareerLink® Lehigh valley and its partners with a priority on customer service, Integrating a Workforce Service Delivery model, as defined by WIOA, functional alignment with One-Stop staff who serve on functional teams, streamlined and non-duplicative service integration to serve customers seamlessly, including targeted populations by providing a full range of services through cross-functional teams, reporting of center activities, as required, and facilitating resolution of complaints, problems, and other issues.

Customer service delivery begins with a Welcome Center orientation, review of basic and intensive services, enrollment on PA CareerLink®, and completion of an assessment. Directly after a video orientation, the customer meets with a member of the staff to review the assessment, discuss career goals, training plans, barrier mitigation and program eligibility.

During the post orientation meeting if the customer chooses to pursue a self-directed job search utilizing the basic services, the staff member guides them through the process of registering for events, and enrolling in virtual workshops.

An assessment, including customer employment and training needs, skills, and barriers, is used for all first time customers and customers who have not utilized our workforce system in the previous 12 months. Returning customers are required to update information on the assessment. This assessment is available to case managers for review prior to meeting with a client for the first time.

Case managers utilize the Individual Employment Plan (IEP) embedded in PA CareerLink®, which provides consistency across the system. Career advisors are familiar with the format of the IEP, which also provides consistent assessments of and progress through customer goals. The familiarity of the IEP also serves to reduce or eliminate duplication of data across workforce partners.

Regarding staff development, monthly PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley staff meetings offer training through presentations by One-Stop-Partners to educate staff on their services. Staff meetings are also used to present updates to the workforce system, including reports by subject matter experts such as: Equal Opportunity specialists, Representatives from the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Lehigh Valley Center for Independent Living, strategies to protect Personally Identifiable Information (PII), Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), Reentry programs and safety topics to include active shooter.

#### **4.12. How will the local board coordinate WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with adult education literacy activities under WIOA Title II?**

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been negotiated to ensure the alignment of service delivery among Title I and Title II providers and to coordinate educational and community resources for participants engaged in Career Services to maximize the number of co-enrolled participants receiving shared services.

1. Title I participants, upon referral to Title II, will receive service priority with the Lehigh Valley Title II providers, to include Lehigh Carbon Community College, Northampton Community College, and Project of Easton. Local adult education literacy providers facilitate in-person, remote, and hybrid modes of instruction to students regardless of residency. When there is virtual engagement, it allows for scheduling flexibility and mitigates transportation issues. After staff evaluation and/or a basic skills assessment is conducted, a formal referral is made through Title I and DHS staff directly to an appropriate adult education literacy provider.
2. Title II providers including Lehigh Carbon Community College, Northampton Community College and Project of Easton were included in the development of our Local Plan through planning meetings, continuous communication, and completion of the One-Stop Partners Input into Local Plan Template which included their vision and goals, engagement strategies, and alignment to the Governor's and Local Plan Goals.

WIOA Section 107 mandates that the WBLV reviews applications of providers of adult education and literacy activities under WIOA Title II for consistency with the WBLV Local Plan and make recommendations to the PA Department of Education (PDE) in alignment with our Local Plan. The Division Chief for the PDE Bureau of Postsecondary and Adult Education provides the Grant Applications and Review Rubric, with particular attention paid to sections called "Alignment with Workforce." After review of the provider applications, the WBLV indicates the level of alignment with our Local Plan using the Rubric Methodology of Close, Partial, and No/Minimal, along with comments regarding strengths and weaknesses to provide recommendations in improving Local Plan alignment. Rubrics completed by the WBLV review team are submitted to the PDE Division Chief, along with conflict of interest statement forms.

The WBLV ensures that our recommendations for adult education literacy activities are in alignment with our Local Plan, especially with the WBLV Vision, Mission, Goals, Strategies, and Solutions. This

alignment also minimizes duplication of services, while ensuring compliance and performance. Data from the PA Center for Workforce Information and Analysis, as well as localized data from the Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation and Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, informs the Board's recommendations.

As required by law, the WBLV is not directly involved in WIOA Title II solicitation and procurement of providers.

3. Title II participants, who meet program eligibility requirements, may receive a direct referral to PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley for a prioritized assessment of training and career services needs.
4. The WBLV and Title II providers will collaborate to determine eligibility requirements for the purpose of co-enrolling Title II job ready participants into Title I intensive placement and follow up career services.
5. A system of cross referral is in place for Title II participants and PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley's youth, adult, and dislocated worker participants for literacy, training, and employment services including concurrent programming, if applicable.
6. Career pathways in High Priority Occupations in Targeted Industry Clusters are jointly established for Title II participants and employers.
7. Develop and maintain a Definitions Map Directory to ensure consistency of services across WIOA programs.
8. Title II providers collaboratively provide a bi-monthly virtual workshop at PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley on Adult Basic Literacy Education options.
9. Title II providers provide technical assistance and staff development in effectively serving participants with basic skill deficiencies. When the PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley identifies cohorts of individuals needing intensive remediation and/or completion of High School equivalency coursework, Title II providers are sourced to facilitate dedicated group instruction.
10. Title II providers meet the partner requirements in 463.305 of the WIOA final regulations, *What is a Comprehensive One-Stop Center and What Must Be Provided?*
  - Staff members present at the One-Stop to assist with basic skills assessment and prescribed individualized education plan
  - Cross-trained staff on Title II programs at One-Stop for engagement in ongoing literacy, ESL, and ABE/GED program services
  - A direct linkage to program staff through technology to regularly coordinate referrals, enrollments, and progress toward educational benchmarks
11. Title II partners are sourced to provide family literacy and ESL services to support disadvantaged populations of job seekers by offering customer-centric, holistic services that can stabilize households and ensure job placement and retention.

12. With participant consent, Title I and Title II providers share assessment results of all co-enrolled participants and agree to share all relevant data related to core outcomes.
13. PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley provides community job and labor market information, career awareness, and access to PA CareerLink®, job fairs, and other employer recruitments.
14. PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley provides outreach services, information sessions, staff development and PA CareerLink® staff training.

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

The Workforce Board Lehigh Valley through the PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley One-Stop workforce delivery system, provides the following services, activities, and programs to participants, as outlined in WIOA Sec. 3(24), Individuals with a Barrier to Employment.

**Methodical Intake Process:**

The Welcome Center conducts orientations on demand, both in-person and virtually, through the PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley website. An overview of PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley services is available via an automated audio-visual presentation, in both English and Spanish, and describes in detail the programs, partnerships, service levels, and resources available through the workforce system, ensuring customers' accessible intake. An online assessment tool, also available in Spanish, initiates the collection of job seeker data including potential barriers to employment. Additionally, bilingual staff conduct in-person or remote/virtual triage interviews to all Welcome Center customers to determine and recommend basic, individualized, and support services.

Staff review the assessment information in real time during a triage interview to determine and recommend universal, individualized career, and support services. Determination of program eligibility and referrals to community partners is completed. A Career Pathway Plan, outlining customized next steps in the workforce system, is developed.

Job seekers work with the Welcome Center and/or Career Resource Center (CRC) staff to ensure they have completed PA CareerLink® enrollments to include PA CareerLink® resumes and job preferences.

Services offered through the Welcome Center, CRC, workshops, career exploration, and assessments are provided as an integrated collaborative effort with Wagner-Peyser.

**Methodical Outreach Efforts:**

Targeted recruitment of individuals with barriers identified in WIOA is accomplished through enhanced outreach that presents the benefits and services of the PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley workforce system with community partners, direct referrals from agencies and programs that serve individuals with barriers, and through collaborative efforts of staff serving as members of boards and CBO committees. Additionally, experienced frontline staff are trained in identifying and mitigating employment barriers and, when necessary, refer individuals with challenges to employment to appropriate partner services.

Information sessions are held regularly at partner and community agencies and events. Staff also participate in virtual outreach opportunities with these organizations. Title II providers, secondary and

postsecondary institutions and community colleges, re-entry programs, and various human service agencies, child care providers, drug and alcohol rehabilitation, mental health, and county assistance offices are all part of PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley's network of service providers. Outreach staff regularly attend job fairs and recruitment events to promote the benefits of our collective workforce services.

Dedicated staff recruit and aid targeted populations throughout the community. Plans include Workforce Counselors are stationed at secondary and post-secondary institutions to engage new and returning students and provide counseling and support to complete educational plans and secure related employment. Staff connect with the long-term unemployed and Unemployment Compensation claimants/exhaustees to reengage and facilitate workforce services for expedited reemployment.

A Licensed Family Advocate assesses program participants who have articulated and/or demonstrated mental health and/or family concerns and provides initial counseling as needed. As appropriate, referrals are made to behavioral health providers.

Mature worker recruitment focuses on meeting the needs of this targeted group through specialized workshops, recruitment events and referral to the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) for eligible job seekers.

**Barriers/Individuals with Disabilities:**

Staff responsible for Recruitment, Career Advisement, Job Search Facilitation Specialist, Employment Interviewer, and Disabled Veteran Outreach Program, receive Re-entry Employment Specialist (RES) training to address the special re-employment needs of returning citizens. State Parole, Probation and North Penn Legal Services serves are samples of referral sources for those in need of intensive counseling.

Pre-release orientations by the Intake Career Advisor and Recruitment staff to participants engaged with the WBLV's LEAP grant raise the comfort level of returning citizens to engage in PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley services post-release. Yearly re-entry recruitment events increase access to returning citizen-friendly employers. Program participants are referred to employers who are receptive and support reentering citizens, and program attached referrals from our ex-offender population.

The PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley Intake and Assessment Career Advisor and Outreach Team conducts numerous off-site and in-house trainings for counselors from various mental health, supported employment and drug and alcohol rehabilitation agencies.

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), a required WIOA partner, is co-located at the PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley office and refers clients through the Welcome Center into WIOA services. Participant services are coordinated between OVR and WIOA. WIOA Title IV eligible OVR customers receive multiple services from qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors that may include but not be limited to; diagnostic, vocational counseling and guidance, vocational evaluation, restoration, training, job placement and pre-employment training services for eligible and potentially eligible high school students with disabilities.

**Provide Services and Resources Equally:**

Service delivery strategies are driven by participant need. While economically disadvantaged participants may face increased challenges, an economic analysis and barrier mitigation is conducted

with individuals across all programs. Numerous workshops and alternative curriculum adaptations are offered to the general population.

Tiered instruction and job search assistance are available for all participants ranging from welfare recipients with no work history to dislocated professionals. Basic, intermediate, and advanced levels of instruction are offered to accommodate specific job seeker needs based on their educational background, work history and employment goals. Individualized and small group instruction accommodates job seeker preparedness from the Employability Skills classroom to Transitional Job Search and finally the Directed Job Search.

The PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley workforce system tracks participant barriers to employment.

**Environmental Analysis Report**

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS - PY2020															
Data Recorded Period: 07/01/2020 through 06/30/2021															
	PY2020 Served	PY2020 Served with barriers	Transportation (14)	Housing (6)	Criminal History / Offender (5)	Child Care / Single Parent (2) (13)	Limited English Proficiency (8)	Physical Health / Disability (4) (11) (12)	Displaced Homemaker (17)	No HS Diploma / GED Basic Skills (1) (7)	Clothing (3)	Long Term Unemployed (9)	Mature Worker (10)	Other (15)	None (16)
EARN	125	122	64	41	17	165	8	49	1	18	19	3	2	10	1
YOUTH	315	181	19	6	16	6	2	98	3	70	1	0	0	3	0
WIOA	975	300	22	10	61	84	21	24	23	10	6	66	92	2	5
Basic Services	1293	707	49	107	267	131	360	218	13	250	45	241	104	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2708</b>	<b>1310</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>361</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>391</b>	<b>389</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>348</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>6</b>

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS - PY2019															
Data Recorded Period: 07/01/2019 through 06/30/2020															
	PY2019 Served	PY2019 Served with barriers	Transportation (14)	Housing (6)	Criminal History / Offender (5)	Child Care / Single Parent (2) (13)	Limited English Proficiency (8)	Physical Health / Disability (4) (11) (12)	Displaced Homemaker (17)	No HS Diploma / GED Basic Skills (1) (7)	Clothing (3)	Long Term Unemployed (9)	Mature Worker (10)	Other (15)	None (16)
EARN	171	161	79	54	24	225	12	59	3	29	100	10	1	7	0
YOUTH	340	178	61	6	29	13	0	88	6	67	5	0	0	3	0
WIOA	1249	346	30	11	55	96	24	19	39	13	10	56	122	1	1
Basic Services	4423	4206	251	479	941	388	1064	1143	97	1718	194	1391	1038	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6183</b>	<b>4891</b>	<b>421</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>1049</b>	<b>722</b>	<b>1100</b>	<b>1309</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>1827</b>	<b>309</b>	<b>1457</b>	<b>1161</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1</b>

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

The PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley workforce system and its Business Services Team called the Business Engagement Services Team (BEST) staff work with their employer customer base, the Engage Business Outreach Program, Industry Partnerships, 6,000 employer members of the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce, One-Stop Partners, other workforce system organizations, and employer associations to assess and prioritize employer needs which lead to customized strategies that enhance employer-led engagement strategies with the local workforce development system. The BEST functional team is composed of the Title I Recruiters and Work-Based Training Developers and is comprised of Title I, Wagner-Peyser, Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations (BWPO), Veterans, and Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) Business Services Team.

OVR meets the needs of businesses by providing no cost services to include ADA Awareness training, ADA Accessibility evaluations, accommodation recommendations for current employees and retention services. OVR also continues to partner with employers with On-the-Job Training (OJT), providing 100% wage reimbursement to businesses that hire OVR customers. OVR also works with businesses through connecting students involved in OVR’s pre-employment transition services. Services under pre-employment transition services include programs like paid work experiences, job shadowing, workplace tours.



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

BEST's strategies for employer engagement include the following:

1. **Rapid Response:** The BEST is an integral piece of the Rapid Response fact finding process to determine, design, and implement appropriate Business Services customized to the workforce being dislocated. Services include industry targeted job fairs, job matching and staff assisted employment referrals to current employer job postings and opportunities, development of work-based training opportunities customized to skill sets, tailored job development and recruiter services for program eligible workers.
2. **Unemployment Compensation seminars:** BEST coordinates with the Office of UC Service Centers Customer Services Section to conduct seminars, either in-person or virtually, on UC topics for employers. Topics include assisting employers in reducing UC costs, employer rights and responsibilities, and PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley employer services information.
3. **Employer Visits:** While maintaining existing business relationships, the BEST conducts outreach to new employers to assess their needs and develop and promote a unique menu of PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley employer services. These meetings may be virtual or in-person.
4. **PA CareerLink®:** The BEST offers website training to companies to create business folders, upload job postings, search for potential employees, review candidates, and provide technical assistance.
5. **On-the-Job Training (OJT) Program:** Employers are engaged in the workforce system through OJT for newly-hired job seekers in exchange for a wage reimbursement.
6. **Job Fairs:** Employers are strategically engaged in the workforce system by conducting recruitments and job fairs, either on-site or through a virtual platform, weekly with PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley. Designated sector events, participated by multiple employers specific to targeted business and industry, are held to attract and provide cohorts of job seekers the greatest opportunity for employment. Employer Wednesdays are on site recruitments held with employers to attract new hires.
7. **Industry Partnerships:** As mentioned in Section 3.4., BEST members review pipeline, talent, assess employer needs, and promote customized employer services during virtual or in person Industry Partnership meetings, which are as appropriate integrated into Lehigh Valley's Engage! Business Outreach Roundtables. This coordinated approach involves representatives of workforce development, economic development, education, workforce system partners and other stakeholders, as necessary, who collectively coordinate their outreach visits to minimize employer fatigue. WBLV's strategy of initiating joint workshops

with workforce development, economic development, education, adult literacy, community organizations and workforce system partners are implemented to understand employer needs and employer-driven services, programming, and resources.

8. **Networking and Outreach:** BEST staff attend virtual or in person workforce, business, education, adult literacy, and economic development summits, roundtables, chamber of commerce events, workforce conferences and other networking events to assess local workforce needs. Facilitation of employer relationships and connection of employers to one-stop services is fostered through these venues to provide ongoing employer-centric service delivery driven by customer needs.
9. **Recruiting:** BEST recruiters work directly with job seekers, either in-person or through a virtual connection, and are assigned an industry focused sector, such as manufacturing, healthcare, hospitality transportation, and professional services.
10. **Registered Apprenticeships:** BEST strategically engages employers in Registered Apprenticeship and Pre-apprenticeship models, working in tandem with the WBLV and the Apprenticeship and Training Office (ATO) in developing registered apprenticeships.
11. **Community-Based Organizations (CBO):** BEST maintains relationships with CBOs, through monthly meetings to exchange job postings, labor market trends and employer needs, PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley services and programs, and job fairs. An open forum discussion is included in each meeting to gather input from community partners that include social services, adult literacy providers and many others.
12. **Veterans:** Integral to the BEST is a Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER) whose primary mission is employer outreach on behalf of military veterans. Working in partnership with the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) Representative and other PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley staff, the LVER connects employers with qualified Veterans, especially those with barriers.
13. **Monthly BEST Meeting:** Monthly BEST meetings are held with all workforce system partners to review local hiring and business trends, upcoming job fairs, and services and events, and best practices with the purpose of providing optimal business services.
14. **Incumbent Worker Training:** The WBLV may reserve the right to use no more than 20 percent of WIOA funds allocated to pay for the cost of providing training through a training program for incumbent workers. Incumbent workers are defined by WIOA Section 134(d)(4).
15. **Partners Outreach:** Employer information is disseminated via regular communication at Board, Committee meetings, the PA Department of Human Services Local Management Committee, and other meetings where expanded participation occurs. Regular employer activities and connections are also disseminated via targeted distribution lists, social media, PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley website through job openings on PA CareerLink®.

16. **Tracking:** Business related services are tracked through PA CareerLink®. Detailed PA CareerLink® reports and ad hoc reports, such as the Service Reporting Tool (SRT), tracks extensive Business Services functions and are utilized to monitor employer engagement activity, measure the effectiveness of the business services deliverables, and survey customer satisfaction.
17. **UC Seminars:** A UC seminar series educates local businesses on their rights and responsibilities pertaining to unemployment compensation. The BEST also uses these meeting to provide information to the businesses on the services the PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley offers.

The WBLV engages business and employers with education including adult literacy and other program partners through the following:

- Board Membership
- Lehigh Valley Business-Education Partnership Committee of WBLV
- Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce
- In-School Youth Programming
- Occupational Advisory Committees
- Matching Employers who need trained workers to Career and Technical Schools
- Providing education with work-based learning opportunities in business such as work experiences, cooperative education, internships, pre-apprenticeships, Registered apprenticeships
- Chapter 339 planning committees
- Career Pathways development and educational levels
- Business Education Partnership Grants
- Teacher in the Workplace grants
- State/Local Internship Programs
- Developing, distributing and collaborating an Employability Skills Curriculum
- Developing and distributing Employer videos
- Providing education with job fair information
- Providing school districts with in-services on Job and Labor market information
- Highlighting public school Superintendents through Chamber of Commerce Forums

As best practices, business services in the Lehigh Valley are supported through a multi-faceted, pro-employer collaboration between the business community, the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce and its 6,000 membership base, the Lehigh Valley Workforce Board, and the PA CareerLink® system. At the engagement and networking level, the Chamber serves as the WBLV Business Intermediary and hosts monthly Chamber Connections Articles, Economic Outlook Events, Veterans Events, and Council Events. These events and services serve as a roadmap to connect businesses to the services and resources at PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley that best meet their needs.

During the pandemic, employer relationships continue to be strengthened due to a changing labor market. Co-facilitated virtual recruitment events and information sessions acquainted a pipeline of job seekers to expanded career paths and high priority occupations throughout the Lehigh Valley. Launching the innovative Employer Wednesday platform at PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley locations enabled a unique employer to be spotlighted each week. Prior to the event, employers receive advanced marketing support on the PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley website and social media. During this event, employers conduct on-site recruiting and receive event services such as timed job seeker entry due to COVID-19 precautions.

Future facing, the continuation of physical and virtual recruitment events will be vital to ensuring employers have access to meeting and hiring the best candidates for their unique needs. Increased access to a wider base of job seekers will also support employers with their own diversity, inclusion, and equity initiatives.

The WBLV has created apprenticeship building opportunities through knowledge sharing, grant access, and technical assistance. Apprenticeships offer a unique earn and learn modality to support job seekers while they train and upskill for higher wage occupations.

The Chamber is also leading career pathway services by developing online, visually appealing career pathways for specific employers. By developing these visual pathways, employers have a great infographic they can use for their own recruitment and internal training. PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley links the virtual pathway to other services, creating a visual depiction of how training services connect to career progressions. Offering these pathways through QR codes increases ease of access.

Other creative activities to expand recruitment of candidates for employers include a Jobs Tree, typically a wooden display adorned with ornaments each holiday season that contain a job lead. The tree is now located annually on-site at St. Luke's Sacred Heart in Allentown and also virtually on the PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley website.

Another creative collaboration is working with employers on video overviews of their work, culture, job opportunities, benefits, and how to apply. These videos are displayed on our website and can serve as another accessible friendly way for job seekers to find the right fit with hiring employers.

As the workforce system refines a hybrid model of services, incoming telephone calls are now re-routed to PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley employees. To support Lehigh Valley employers, Allworx was introduced to route employer phone calls to the members of the Business Services team (BEST). In addition, Google Voice was added as another method for inbound employer calls to be directed to BEST staff.

#### **4.15. How will the local board coordinate WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with the provision of transportation and other appropriate supportive services in the local area?**

The following describes how the WBLV and the PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley workforce system coordinates WIOA Title I activities with supportive services.

As customers are engaged with the workforce system, the need for supportive services is determined through an initial assessment conducted by the PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley front line operations staff. Strategies are developed to identify challenges facing job seekers through an Environmental Analysis conducted in the Welcome Center and reviewed at program engagement. Support is established for job seekers using both basic and individualized career services through One-Stop system partners, transportation authorities, community and faith-based organizations, adult literacy providers, academic institutions, and healthcare agencies. Coordination of support services includes direct agency referrals, on-site human resource services, childcare, housing, healthcare, financial literacy, workplace attire, educational assistance, and a full workshop menu.

Workforce guidance and regulations require a coordinated focus on the provision of supportive services. These supports are only provided to participants who are unable to obtain supportive services through other programs or agencies. Based on funding availability, supportive services are provided to eligible

participants who meet program engagement requirements in individualized career and training activities. The WBLV and the One-Stop Operator have established durational and monetary limits to the provision of these services. Supportive services may include transportation assistance, required materials/supplies, clothing, background checks, medical screenings, technology required to fulfill program and training needs, and industry-recognized certifications.

Determination of need is established during the development and modification of an individual service plan. Holistic approaches to career coaching are implemented to understand when a supportive service is needed and appropriate. In some cases, local resources can be leveraged, such as mental health virtual resources, hotlines, food security programs, and legal aid. The referral to and coordination with outside agencies will be investigated prior to the use of WBLV supportive services funding.

In conjunction with the Workforce Board Lehigh Valley, the Title I contractor sub-recipient is responsible for the initial delivery and payment of supportive services. The Title I contractor invoices the Workforce Board Lehigh Valley to receive reimbursement. The WBLV has responded to technology-related needs and adjusted supportive service policies as service delivery and training shifts to virtual and hybrid models.

## 5. COMPLIANCE

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

The Workforce Board Lehigh Valley (WBLV) has cooperative agreements with our Chief Elected Officials that include: Intergovernmental Consortium Agreement By and Among the Chief Elected Officials of Lehigh and Northampton Counties which comprise the Lehigh Valley Workforce Development Area and the Workforce Board Lehigh Valley Partnership Agreement, and the Memorandum of Understanding By and Between the Consortium of Chief Elected Officials and the Lehigh Valley Workforce Investment Board, Inc. Providing for the Assignment of Fiscal Agent Responsibilities.

The WBLV has executed Memoranda of Understanding with all required One-Stop Partners. The implementation of integration strategies described in our MOUs are key to the continued integration of services and no wrong door access to workforce services.

To support all participants regardless of funding stream, the WBLV supports the following activities in its PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley which are the result of cooperative and mutually beneficial relationships with private and public community partners.

1. Lehigh Valley's Youth Mentorship Program uses business, industry, and healthcare professionals to serve as mentors for youth job seekers.
2. Training Providers on the Eligible Training Providers List provide one-on-one advisement and career pathways workshops promoting upskilling opportunities in high-priority occupations across the Lehigh Valley.
3. Fulton Bank provides Financial Literacy Workshops such as budgeting, banking services and responsible borrowing as part of our workforce services menu.

4. Lehigh and Northampton County Assistance Offices office hours are established throughout the week to advise and assist individuals' access Department of Human Services and programming.
5. Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC) is a one-stop shop for early education needs. ERLC has office hours on site at PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley, along with childcare information workshop sessions designed to provide quality referrals and assistance with accessing subsidized childcare services.
6. Crime Victims Council of Lehigh Valley is a vital nonprofit organization providing support and services to victims of all violence, their families and significant others throughout Northampton and Lehigh Counties. CVC facilitates individual and group information sessions to raise awareness regarding crime victimization and prevention in a supportive and non-judgmental format.
7. The Perfect Fit for Working Women, a premier program of YWCA Allentown and PA Workwear site, is dedicated to the empowerment of women and girls, social justice, and strengthening our community. A professional development workshop series provides training on topics such as Professional Expectations & Etiquette, Self-care in the Workplace, and Difficult Work Conversations.
8. North Penn Legal Services is a nonprofit organization providing civil legal aid to low-income residents of Northeastern Pennsylvania. North Penn Legal Services partners with PA CareerLink® to provide monthly workshops surrounding criminal record mitigation and provides one-on-one counseling/appointment scheduling.
9. Northampton and Lehigh County Adult and Juvenile Parole and Probation partners through cross program referrals for PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley intensive services, and collaborates in integrated services to support participant with seamless delivery of services.
10. Educational Opportunity Centers, Inc. (EOC) provides free services to encourage and assist adults, as well as high school students in target area schools who are interested in continuing their education. EOC provides information and financial aid assistance, individually and through workshop series at PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley.
11. Center for Humanistic Change, Inc. (CHC) is a private, not-for-profit agency providing prevention education (alcohol, tobacco and other drugs) and life skills training focusing on decision making for healthy choices. CHC facilitates in-person and virtual Workplace Foundation Skills sessions weekly.
12. Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority (LANta), a transit agency that provides public, fixed-route bus service throughout Lehigh County and Northampton County, and provides transportation access, and planning.
13. PPL Electric Utilities provide essential energy services. PPL presents sessions on energy usage, conservation, resource assistance and costs savings solutions for participants.
14. Penn State Extension is a modern educational organization dedicated to delivering science-based information to people, businesses, and communities. Penn State Extension provides nutrition classes for job seekers at the PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley locations.
15. Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)/Lehigh Valley is the premier professional association for human resource professionals in the Lehigh Valley and surrounding areas of

Pennsylvania. SHRM provides individualized resume review assistance and mock interview services. They also participate as mentors in the Northampton County Jail to participants enrolled in the Linking Employment Activities Pre-Release Program (LEAP).

16. Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN) is a healthcare network in the Lehigh Valley and serves Pennsylvania through their various locations. LVHN has partnered with PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley offering “Career Education Sessions” (normally offered only to current and former LVHN employees) to job seekers and the public with insider tips on navigating job interviews, hiring in healthcare, and human resources practices.
17. Lehigh Valley Center for Independent Living (LVCIL) – LVCIL is a non-profit organization that serves people with disabilities from Lehigh and Northampton Counties, as well as their family members. LVCIL facilitates quarterly workshops on disability-related topics such as accommodations.
18. SCORE Lehigh Valley provides entrepreneurial mentoring and education on the formation, growth and success of small businesses, and offers workshops through the PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley on entrepreneurship-related topics and takes referrals for mentoring.
19. Community Action Lehigh Valley, Inc. (CALV) mission is to “...improve the quality of life by building a community in which all people have access to economic opportunity, the ability to pursue that opportunity, and a voice in the decisions that affect their lives.” PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley has helped connect a new nursing school to information on the ETPL and refers individuals interested in business ownership for services.
20. The Literacy Center of Allentown is dedicated to adult literacy education in a community-based setting. The Literacy Center offers free training on GED/ESL, computers, working from home, becoming an Administrative Professional, and more. PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley works in close partnership bringing these services to our participants.
21. ProJeCt of Easton serves at-risk families and residents in the Lehigh Valley to help break the cycle of poverty. They provide Adult Education, Family Literacy, School-Based Programming, and Emergency Support to more than 5,000 people a year, including people referred from PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley.
22. Lehigh Carbon Community College (LCCC) facilitates sessions on resumes, as well as one-on-one resume critiquing in our Resume Deep Dive workshop.
23. Communities in Schools mission is to surround students with a community of support, empowering them to stay in school and achieve in life. Communities in Schools partners with the PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley Out-of-School Youth programming to reengage students who have dropped out of the Allentown School District.
24. The Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation (LVEDC) is a major partner in WBLV’s workforce system. The alignment between economic development, workforce development, education, and the community defines Lehigh Valley’s integrated services for employers and job seekers. WBLV and LVEDC are partners in economic growth.

25. The WBLV and its PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley workforce system provides services focusing on Digital Literacy; Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce events and training; partnerships with community based organizations; Lehigh Valley’s school districts; community colleges; and higher education.

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

The WBLV sub-recipients are liable to WBLV for any disallowed or questioned costs that they or the WBLV incurs as a result of sub-recipients expending funds in violation of their agreement with the WBLV, or in violation of the appropriate federal, state, or local statutes, regulations, rules, policies or procedures.

Disallowed or questioned costs may be identified through local, Commonwealth or Federal monitoring activities, or through audits. All contracts with sub-recipients contain the following clauses:

1. In the event of a termination, the Contractor shall be paid for services rendered up to the date of termination however, from the amount due there shall be deducted (a) any claim which WBLV may have against the Contractor in connection with this contract or any other prior Agreement; and (b) any outstanding questioned or disallowed costs attributable to the Contractor arising out of an investigation, monitoring report or audit of this Agreement or any other Agreement Contractor had with the WBLV.
2. Disallowed and Questioned Costs – (a) Contractor shall be liable to the WBLV for any disallowed or questioned costs that Contractor or WBLV incurs as a result of Contractor expending funds in violation of this Agreement or in violation of the applicable federal, Commonwealth or local statutes, regulations, rules, policies, or procedures. (b) Disallowed or questioned costs may be identified through a monitoring report, investigation, review, or audit. Disallowed or questioned costs shall be refunded and promptly repaid to WBLV by Contractor within thirty (30) days of the issuance of the report.
3. Audit Resolution Procedures - Contractor agrees to be subject to the monitoring, review and audit resolution procedures established by WBLV, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania or the applicable federal agency and to cooperate with WBLV in the event that resolution cannot be achieved at WBLV’s level.
4. Deduction from Monies Due Contractor - If this or any other Agreement is in effect at the time of the identification of a questioned or disallowed cost, or a credit that is due the WBLV, the WBLV may deduct the amount disallowed/questioned from any reimbursements or payments due Contractor.
5. Failure to Discover - WBLV’s failure to promptly discover or demand payment for questioned or disallowed costs will not relieve Contractor from their obligation to repay the disallowance or questioned cost at the time of identification or demand.
6. Stand In Costs - Contractor may, with the written approval of WBLV and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, substitute allowable uncharged costs or in kind contributions, made from non-federal sources to support the program funded by this Agreement, to stand in for a disallowed or questioned cost. Such contributions or in kind payments must have been documented in



Contractor's fiscal books of account as required by the federal rules. The expenditure must be supported by the Contractor's Independent Audit Report. The uncharged costs must have been incurred in the same title, cost category, and program year as the costs, which they are proposed to replace.

7. Expiration of the Contract - The expiration of the contract shall not affect the WBLV's, the Commonwealth's, or any federal agency's right to audit, disallow, or question a cost, or Contractor's obligation to repay the cost.
8. Audit Requirements Upon Dissolution of Contractor's Organization or Termination of Agreement in the event of the voluntary or involuntary dissolution of Contractor's organization Contractor shall inform the WBLV, within 24 hours of Contractor's knowledge of its intent to dissolve or of the involuntary dissolution of their organization, and prior to actual dissolution, agrees to allow WBLV to arrange for an immediate audit of Contractor's organization. The WBLV may also request or make provisions for the preservation of all records pertaining to the program(s) funded by this Agreement so that an immediate audit may be performed.

In addition, sub-recipient contracts require adherence to the Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR 200 et al and also require that sub-recipients maintain insurance which names the WBLV as an additional insured which would generally cover most losses resulting in disallowed costs including theft and fraud. The WBLV also maintains appropriate insurance coverage. The WBLV would immediately provide notice to the sub-recipient's insurer and its own for any matter that should be covered by insurance.

A sub-recipient has 30 days to remit payment to the WBLV following receipt of notice of the disallowance. Unless an appeal is filed pursuant to the appeal rights under the WIOA regulations applicable to audits and reviews, the WBLV may choose to issue a second payment request or if it is determined that a second request will not result in repayment, the matter will be reported to the WBLV and Consortium of Elected Officials with a request for approval to hire an attorney and notice their Director's and Officer's Carrier which may provide legal assistance as well depending on the policy to pursue the collection through the court system as a breach of contract matter. Notice will also be sent to DLI so they may be apprised of actions being taken at the local level and may provide such guidance as they deem appropriate.

It should be noted that other than fraud (which is covered by insurance) the USDOL has worked with local boards and sub-recipients to resolve disallowed costs in a number of ways which do not always include cash repayment. Depending on the basis for the disallowance the WBLV may work with L&I to review determinations of disallowed costs to seek non-cash repayment methods.

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

The WBLV Executive Committee is reviewing the Guidance pertaining to the actions a local board must take for high performance status currently under development by the Department of Labor and Industry.

The following factors are being considered by the Department of Labor and Industry:

- Attainment of the Governor's goals as described in the PA Combined Plan;

- Successfully performed by meeting the local area negotiated federal performance goals;
- Sustained fiscal integrity throughout the local area and all interactions on a regional level (include employment of appropriate fiscal practices such as the adoption of internal controls and more robust procurement policies);
- Attainment of successful monitoring reports and other evaluations by federal and Commonwealth oversight staff;
- Creation and employment of workforce governance and/or service delivery best practices that can be modeled;
- Adoption and use of new and/or improved methods to reach and serve individuals with barriers to employment;
- Adoption and use of new career and training services provided for the WIOA Title I programs;
- Attainment of the Commonwealth’s training expenditure targets;
- Successful regional coordinated employer engagement practices between local Business Service Team(s) and local board(s) direct activities; and
- Sector initiatives measured through the employment of qualitative and quantitative measurements.

Our workforce system is built upon performance within the law and its regulations, procurement of services and contracting. Furthermore, WBLV aligns its plans with the PA WIOA Combined State Plan, Commonwealth policy, grant requirements and follow the guidance provided by the Department of Labor and Industry.

WBLV’s fiduciary and administrative responsibilities are professional and the Board understands their responsibility to be accountable to Lehigh Valley stakeholders.

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

The WBLV uses the following process for stakeholders to provide input into the development of the WBLV WIOA Local Plan Modification, which mirrors the process used for development of the initial Local Plan. Business, education, labor organizations, and community based organizations are represented on the WBLV and its Committees to assure input into the Plan with the following process.

1. All policy issues included in the Local Plan are brought before the WBLV and its Committees for input.

Once the plan is approved, any changes to policies are discussed with the WBLV and its Committees. The plan is advertised and sent to the PA Department of Labor and Industry for approval.

2. The Local Plan is discussed and feedback provided during WBLV Board and Committee meetings: Business-Education Partnership; Workforce Solutions, Accountability and Compliance; Business and Policy; Youth; Finance; WBLV Executive Governance; Workforce Board Lehigh Valley Board meeting; and at the Chief Elected Officials meeting.
3. The Local Plan was provided to each of the Board members and the Consortium of Chief Elected Officials prior to its being posted for public comment.
4. The availability of the Local Plan for public comment is advertised in local newspapers, posted on the WBLV and PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley websites, Chief Elected Officials’ offices, County Government centers, and PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley satellite offices, with the ability for the public to email comments.
5. Announcements were made of the availability of the Local Plan on other websites such as counties and cities. Announcements were also provided to the One-Stop Partners, Community Based Organizations meetings, and at community, economic development and business organizations including the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce, and Society for Human Resource Management/Lehigh Valley, Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation, and others.
6. In addition to all of the above actions, the WBLV Executive Director made presentations regarding the Plan to the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, Lehigh and Northampton County Chief Elected Officials.

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

Please see 5.4 above for the process. The following outlines public comments received during the 30-day public comment period, along with WBLV responses.

Comment	WBLV Response
Comment received during the 30-day Public Comment period, June 21, 2023 to July 20, 2023 related to the Local Plan Modification was received from Lehigh Career & Technical Institute (LCTI), Wendy Harris, Director of Postsecondary and Workforce Education: “Thank you Nancy, this plan looks great!”	Nancy Dischinat, Executive Director, WBLV responded favorably on June 27, 2023, thanking LCTI as a partner.

## ATTESTATIONS

By checking the box adjacent to each line item, the local board attests to ensuring the compliance components and documents listed are (or will be) in place and effective prior to June 30, 2023. In the rare circumstance that something is not applicable, the local board must write "N/A" next to adjacent line item.

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

The Lehigh Valley Local Workforce Development Area attests that each of the below referenced policies contain any required language or content and were last revised, if necessary, by this plan's effective date.

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

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

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

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

Financial management policy and process including cost allocation plan; internal controls; cash management; receipts of goods; cost reimbursement; inventory and equipment; program income; travel reimbursement; audit requirements and resolution; annual report; property management; debt collection; and allowable costs.

Local area procurement policy that must describe formal procurement procedures.

Local area MOU.

Program management policies and processes must include; equal opportunity for customers; complaints and grievances; supportive services;; file management; eligibility determination and verification; self-sufficiency criteria; self-attestation and certification random sampling; priority of service;; training verification/refunds; individual training accounts; contracts for training services; statewide training providers list and eligibility verification; local area training provider list and eligibility criteria and process; "additional assistance" definition;; work-based training policies including incumbent worker training, OJT, CT, and apprenticeship.

It is best practice to have a risk management policy and process including records retention and public access; public records requests; monitoring, grievance; incident; and disaster recovery plan.

It is best practice to have a human resources policy and process including employee classification; benefits; holidays and PTO; recruitment and selection; employee development; discipline; layoffs, terminations and severance; sexual harassment; and equal opportunity and non-discrimination.

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

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

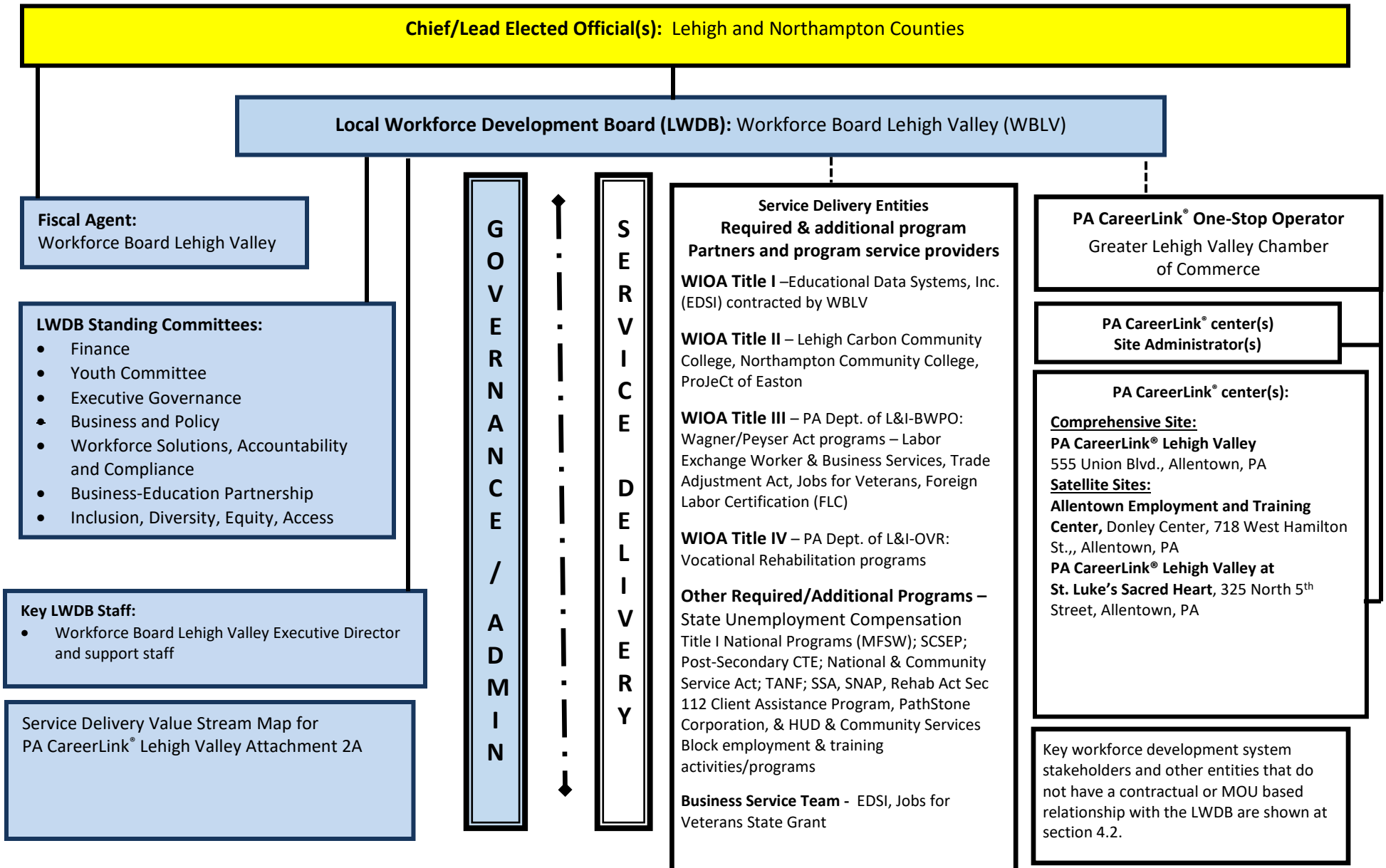
The Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry, or L&I, negotiates WIOA Title I programs performance goals with the U. S. Department of Labor on a two-year program cycle, which aligns with the WIOA planning requirement of reviewing WIOA Local Area Plans every two years. In an effort designed to meet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

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

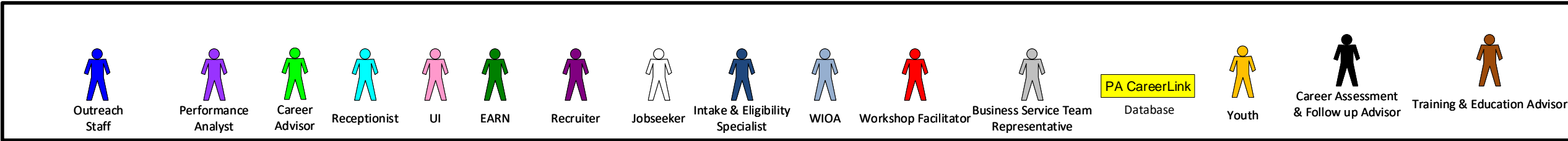
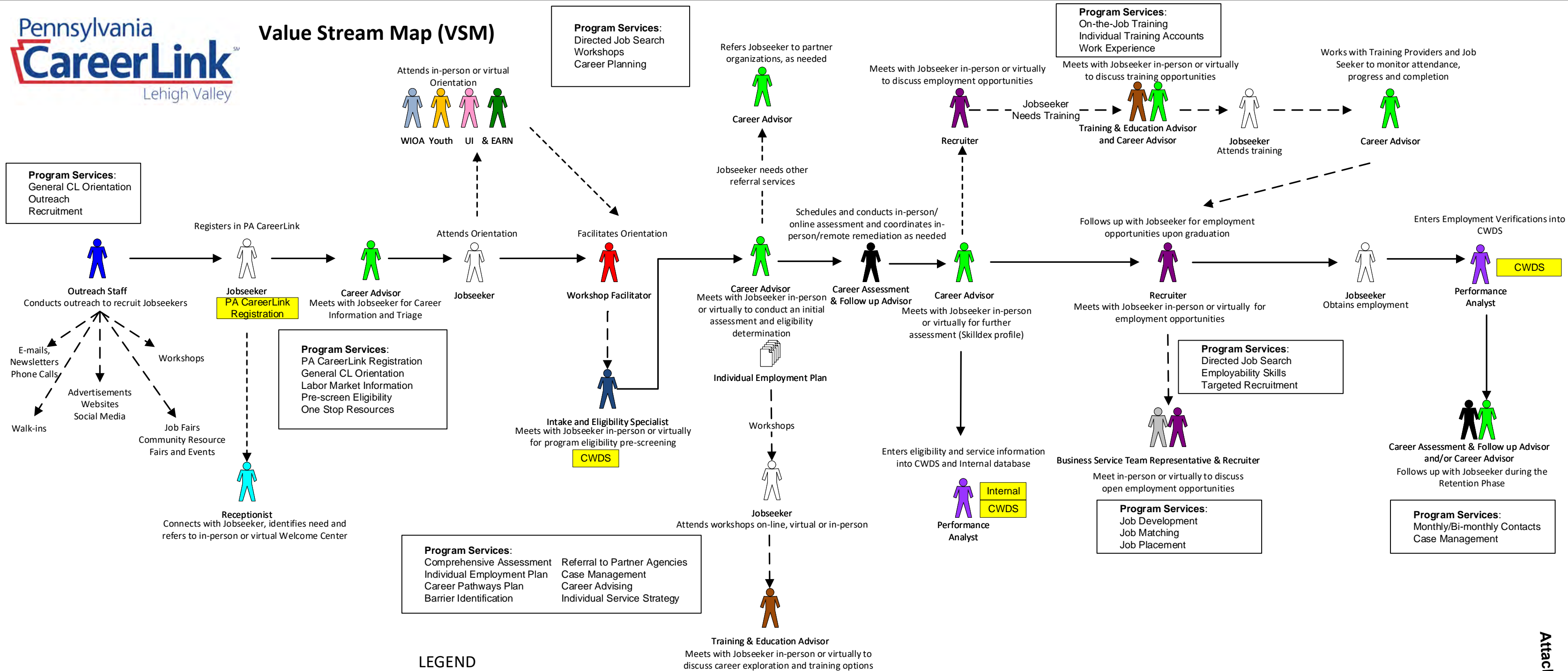
Table A	LWDA Name: Lehigh Valley		
WIOA Title I Programs (Adult-Dislocated Worker-Youth) Performance Measures	<u>Attained Performance Results</u>	<u>Negotiated Performance Goals</u>	<u>Negotiated Performance Results</u>
	*Program Year 2021	*Program Year 2022	*Program Year 2023
<b>Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)</b>			
Adult	72.6%	74.0%	75.0%
Dislocated Worker	73.2%	80.0%	82.0%
Youth	70.8%	70.0%	71.0%
<b>Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)</b>			
Adult	70.8%	71.0%	72.0%
Dislocated Worker	75.1%	80.0%	82.0%
Youth	66.9%	68.0%	69.0%
<b>Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)</b>			
Adult	\$8,532	\$8,000	\$8,200
Dislocated Worker	\$11,659	\$9,000	\$9,250
Youth	\$6,118	\$4,000	\$4,100
Adult	74.2%	76.0%	76.0%
Dislocated Worker	83.6%	75.0%	77.0%
Youth	70.7%	70.0%	71.0%
<b>Measurable Skill Gains</b>			
Adult	76.1%	65.0%	68.0%
Dislocated Worker	92.5%	70.0%	72.0%
Youth	55.4%	65.0%	66.0%

Attachment 2: WIOA Local Workforce Development System Organizational Chart model

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



# Value Stream Map (VSM)



**PY 2021-2024 WIOA Multi-Year Regional/Local Area Plan -  
Workforce Development Delivery System Program Partner/Provider List**

Local Workforce Development Area name: Lehigh Valley

Effective Date: July 1, 2023

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

<b>Program Name</b>	<b>Program Authorization</b>	<b>Local Area Partner/Provider</b>
<b>POC address</b>	<b>POC telephone</b>	<b>POC website/email</b>
<b>Youth, Adult, Dislocated Worker Employment and Training Activities</b>	<b>WIOA Title I, Subtitle B</b>	<b>Workforce Board Lehigh Valley Nancy Dischinat</b>
<b>555 Union Blvd. Allentown, PA 18109</b>	<b>610-841-1122</b>	<b>lwib.org/ndischinat@workforcelv.org</b>
<b>Native American Programs</b>	<b>WIOA Title I, Sec. 166 (29 U.S.C. 3221)</b>	<b>Council of Three Rivers American Indian Center's Employment and Training Program Kerry Jevsevar</b>
	<b>412-782-4457</b>	<b>Cotraic.org/kjevsevar@cotraic.org</b>
<b>Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Program</b>	<b>WIOA Title I</b>	<b>PathStone Corporation, Inc. Nita D'Agostino</b>
<b>1625 North Front Street Harrisburg, PA 17102</b>	<b>610-925-5600</b>	<b>pathstone.org/ndagostino@pathstone.org</b>
<b>Adult Education and Family Literacy (AEFLA)</b>	<b>WIOA Title II</b>	<b>Lehigh Carbon Community College Stefanie Nester</b>
<b>4525 Education Park Dr. Schnecksville, PA 18078</b>	<b>610-799-1740</b>	<b>lccc.edu/snester@lccc.org</b>
<b>Adult Education and Family Literacy (AEFLA)</b>	<b>WIOA Title II</b>	<b>Northampton Community College Dr. David Ruth</b>
<b>3835 Green Pond Rd. Bethlehem, PA 18020</b>	<b>610-861-5065</b>	<b>northampton.edu/druth@northampton.edu</b>
<b>Adult Education and Family Literacy (AEFLA)</b>	<b>WIOA Title II</b>	<b>ProJeCt of Easton Janice Komisor</b>
<b>320 Ferry Street Easton, PA 18042</b>	<b>610-258-4361 ext. 22</b>	<b>Projecteaston.org/jkomisor@projecteaston.org</b>
<b>Wagner-Peyser Act</b>	<b>WIOA Title III</b>	<b>L&amp;I, BWPO Marybeth Ferguson-Williams</b>
<b>479 Thomas Jones Way Suite 500 Exton PA 19341</b>	<b>484-401-2881</b>	<b>pa.gov/marybwilli@pa.gov</b>



**PY 2021-2024 WIOA Multi-Year Regional/Local Area Plan -  
Workforce Development Delivery System Program Partner/Provider List**

<b>Vocational Rehabilitation</b>	<b>WIOA Title IV</b>	<b>PA Dept. of Labor &amp; Industry OVR Susan Storm</b>
<b>45 N. 4<sup>th</sup> St. Allentown, PA 18102-3413</b>	<b>610-821-6441</b>	<b>pa.gov/sustorm@pa.gov</b>
<b>Senior Community Service Employment Program</b>	<b>Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965</b>	<b>AARP Foundation WorkSearch Demetri Antzoulatos</b>
<b>10 E. Church St, Room 501 Bethlehem, PA 18018</b>	<b>484-280-7414</b>	<b>aarp.org/dantzoulatos@aarp.org</b>
<b>Postsecondary CTE</b>	<b>Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006</b>	<b>Lehigh Carbon Community College Stefanie Nester</b>
<b>4525 Education Park Dr. Schnecksville, PA 18078</b>	<b>610-799-1740</b>	<b>lccc.edu/snester@lccc.org</b>
<b>Postsecondary CTE</b>	<b>Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006</b>	<b>Northampton Community College Dr. David Ruth</b>
<b>3835 Green Pond Rd. Bethlehem, PA 18020</b>	<b>610-861-5065</b>	<b>northampton.edu/druth@northampton.edu</b>
<b>Trade Adjustment Assistance</b>	<b>Chapter 2 of Title II of the Trade Act of 1974</b>	<b>L&amp;I, BWPO Marybeth Ferguson -Williams</b>
<b>479 Thomas Jones Way Suite 500   Exton PA 19341</b>	<b>484-401-2881</b>	<b>pa.gov/marybilli@pa.gov</b>
<b>Jobs for Veterans State Grant</b>	<b>Chapter 41 of Title 38, United States Code</b>	<b>L&amp;I, BWPO Marybeth Ferguson-Williams</b>
<b>479 Thomas Jones Way Suite 500   Exton PA 19341</b>	<b>484-401-2881</b>	<b>pa.gov/marybilli@pa.gov</b>
<b>Employment and Training Activities-Department of Community and Economic Development</b>	<b>Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9001)</b>	<b>Community Action Lehigh Valley Dawn Godshall</b>
<b>1337 E. 5<sup>th</sup> St. Bethlehem, PA 18016</b>	<b>610-691-5620</b>	<b>communityactionlv.org/dgodshall@caclv.org</b>
<b>Unemployment Compensation Programs/Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA)</b>	<b>State unemployment compensation laws</b>	<b>PA Dept. of Labor &amp; Industry Kris Kessler</b>
<b>651 Boas St, Room 625 Harrisburg, PA 17121</b>	<b>717-787-4971</b>	<b>www.dli.pa.gov/ krkessler@pa.gov</b>
<b>TANF Programs</b>	<b>Part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act</b>	<b>PA Dept. of Human Services Larry Rascoe</b>
<b>801 Market Street, Suite 6129 Philadelphia, PA 19107</b>	<b>267-858-3346</b>	<b>pa.gov/ lrascoe@pa.gov</b>

**PY 2021-2024 WIOA Multi-Year Regional/Local Area Plan -  
Workforce Development Delivery System Program Partner/Provider List**

<b>EDSI Corporate</b>		<b>EDSI Kevin Schnieders</b>
<b>15300 Commerce Dr. N, Ste 200, Dearborn, MI 48120</b>	<b>313-271-4095 x 106</b>	<b>edsisolutions.com/kschnieders@edsisolutions.com</b>
<b>EARN Program</b>	<b>Part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act</b>	<b>Workforce Board Lehigh Valley Nancy Dischinat</b>
<b>555 Union Blvd. Allentown, PA 18109</b>	<b>610-841-1122</b>	<b>lvwib.org/ndischinat@workforcelv.org</b>
<b>Rapid Response Services</b>	<b>WIOA Title I</b>	<b>L&amp;I, BWPO Marybeth Ferguson-Williams</b>
<b>479 Thomas Jones Way Suite 500 Exton PA 19341</b>	<b>484-401-2881</b>	<b>pa.gov/marybilli@pa.gov</b>
<b>Foreign Labor Certification (FLC)</b>	<b>Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952</b>	<b>Workforce Board Lehigh Valley Nancy Dischinat</b>
<b>555 Union Blvd. Allentown, PA 18109</b>	<b>610-841-1122</b>	<b>lvwib.org/ndischinat@workforcelv.org</b>
<b>Housing and Urban Development</b>	<b>Department of Housing and Urban Development</b>	<b>Housing Authority City of Easton Tyler Martin</b>
<b>157 S 4th St- Easton PA 18044</b>	<b>610-258-0806</b>	<b>www.eastonhousing.org/tmartin@eastonhousing.org</b>
<b>Housing and Urban Development</b>	<b>Department of Housing and Urban Development</b>	<b>Lehigh County Housing Authority Christina Feiertag</b>
<b>635 Broad St. Emmaus, PA 18049</b>	<b>610-965-4514 ext. 5212</b>	<b>lehighcountyha.org/chris@lcha-vhdc.org</b>
<b>Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)</b>	<b>Part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act</b>	<b>PA Dept. of Human Services Larry Rascoe</b>
<b>801 Market Street, Suite 6129 Philadelphia, PA 19107</b>	<b>267-858-3346</b>	<b>pa.gov/ lrascoe@pa.gov</b>
<b>Rehab Act Sec 112 Client Assistance Program</b>	<b>WIOA Title IV</b>	<b>PA Dept. of Labor &amp; Industry OVR Susan Storm</b>
<b>45 N. 4<sup>th</sup> St. Allentown, PA 18102-3413</b>	<b>610-821-6441</b>	<b>pa.gov/sustorm@pa.gov</b>

The following required partners are not located in Lehigh Valley local area and therefore not represented in the local service system: Job Corps, YouthBuild Program, Reentry Employment Opportunities (REO) Programs. Referrals to neighboring service providers are available upon request.