



DUPAGE COUNTY  
**WIOA**  
LOCAL PLAN

2020-2024



<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>2</b>
Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act Planning Structure Overview of DuPage County	
<b>CHAPTER 4: OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES- LOCAL COMPONENT</b>	<b>5-36</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Coordination of planning requirements (Memorandum of Understanding, Service Integration Plan)</li> <li>B. Information regarding the use of technology in the one-stop delivery system</li> <li>C. How the Local Board will support the strategies identified in the Unified State Plan and work with entities carrying out core programs</li> <li>D. Information regarding the local coordination strategies with state, regional, and local partners to enhance services and avoid duplication of activities</li> <li>E. How the local area will provide adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities</li> <li>F. How the local area will provide youth activities</li> <li>G. How the local area will provide services to individuals with barriers to employment as outlined in the Unified State Plan</li> <li>H. Description of training policies and activities in the local area</li> <li>I. Local Board authorization of the transfer of WIOA Title IB workforce funds, including the maximum dollar amount and/or percentage that is authorized to be transferred on an annual basis</li> </ul>	
<b>CHAPTER 5: PERFORMANCE GOALS AND EVALUATION- LOCAL COMPONENT</b>	<b>37-40</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Information regarding the local levels of performance negotiated with the Governor and chief elected official</li> <li>B. Description of the current and planned evaluation activities and how this information will be provided to the Local Board and program administrators as appropriate</li> </ul>	
<b>CHAPTER 6: TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS AND ASSURANCES- LOCAL COMPONENT</b>	<b>41-42</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Fiscal Management</li> <li>B. Physical and Programmatic Accessibility</li> <li>C. Plan Development and Public Comment</li> </ul>	
<b>ATTACHMENTS</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Memorandum of Understanding</li> <li>B. Local Title I Supportive Service Policy</li> <li>C. Local Title I WIOA Training Provider Eligibility Policy</li> <li>D. DuPage County Procurement Ordinance</li> </ul>	

## Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act Planning Structure

The Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA), signed into law in July 2014, outlines how the core programs of federal investment in the areas of employment and training will be coordinated. To that end, WIOA requires each state to develop four-year strategies in the form of a Unified State Plan covering all core programs. The Unified State Plan informs the regional and local plans that, in the State of Illinois, take place at the Economic Development Region (EDR) and Local Workforce Area (LWA) levels.

DuPage County (LWA 6) is part of the Northeast Region of Illinois (EDR 4.) The DuPage County Workforce Innovation Board ("Local Board"), in conjunction with the WIOA required partners and other workforce system stakeholders throughout the County, developed a four-year local plan per the guidance of the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO.) The local plan is aligned with the Unified State Plan and the regional plan developed by all WIOA partners in EDR 4. (The regional plan for EDR 4 contains Chapters 1-3 of the Regional & Local Planning Guide provided by DCEO in October 2019; the local plan in the pages to follow contains Chapters 4-6.)

### Overview of DuPage County<sup>1</sup>

DuPage County shares its entire north and east borders with Cook County, as well as a portion of its southern border. It is the second most populous County in the State of Illinois (931,826) behind Cook County, and the two counties combined account for nearly half of the state's population. The County also shares borders with Will County, Kane County, and Kendall County. It is densely populated (2,835 people per square mile) in comparison with the rest of Illinois (229.5 people per square mile.) Between 2010 and 2019, DuPage County experienced a net increase in total population of 1.4% in comparison to an overall decrease for the state of Illinois (-.46%).<sup>2</sup>

### WIOA Demographics

The unemployment rate in DuPage County as of December 2019 was 2.2%, which was the lowest in the state.<sup>3</sup> With that being said, DuPage has continued to see consistent Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) and mass layoff activity including major retail closures, ongoing telecommunications layoffs including Nokia, and significant manufacturing plant closures including General Mills and Pepperidge Farms. The projected total layoffs resulting from WARN and Trade Act events for 2018-2020 is 2,971.<sup>4</sup> Initial claims for unemployment insurance from April 2018 through July 2019 were 31,505, which is third highest in the state behind Cook and Will counties.<sup>5</sup> Funding for dislocated workers and Trade Act-eligible individuals continues to be essential to DuPage County residents in transition.

Regarding residents who are WIOA-eligible based on income, 4.94% of families, or 11,982 families, in DuPage are living below the poverty line. <sup>2</sup> According to the American Community Survey, 1.5% of households in DuPage County received cash public assistance (TANF) between 2013-2017. In 2018, 63,429 people received SNAP benefits in DuPage County. <sup>6</sup>

Although DuPage County is well known for its highly educated workforce (50.9% of the population has a Bachelor's degree or higher), there are 33,625 residents (6.7%) who have less than a high school diploma. An

<sup>1</sup> Chmura JobsEQ/Economic Overview, January 2020- unless otherwise noted

<sup>2</sup> Claritas/Impact DuPage Dashboard, January 2019

<sup>3</sup> IDES Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

<sup>4</sup> Dislocated Event Tracking System (DETS)

<sup>5</sup> IDES Monthly RS-101 Report

<sup>6</sup> Illinois Department of Human Services/Impact DuPage

estimated 18.9% of the population (175,707 people) is foreign born, and 9.2% residents indicated they speak English less than “very well” in the most recent American Community Survey.

Other WIOA-relevant population data for DuPage County includes:

- Individuals with a disability 18-64- 5.9% (34,139)
- With a Disability, Age 18-64, Labor Force Participation Rate and Size- 53.4% (18,225)
- Individuals 18-24- 8.8% (82,240)
- Disconnected Youth (16-19 year olds who are (1) not in school, (2) not high school graduates, and (3) either unemployed or not in the labor force)- 1.2% (615)
- Individuals 55-64- 13.7% (127,564)

## Economy and Industry Sectors

DuPage County has a vibrant and diverse economy, with over 34,000 employer establishments and a total GDP of \$91,564,026,000 in 2018. As with the entire Northeast region, the location of DuPage is an asset that uniquely positions it as a transportation hub for the nation. In addition to its proximity to both O’Hare and Midway International Airports, it is also the place where four major interstates meet and an extensive rail freight system boosts commerce. The Northeast Chicago metro region contains an estimated 3,865 track-miles of rail, which is more mileage than nearly 40 other states and carries 50% of all US rail freight.

DuPage is home to two of the top international research labs in the world: Argonne National Laboratory and Fermilab National Accelerator Laboratory. The County is home to many corporate headquarter locations, as well as a strong base of over 1,900 manufacturing businesses. Still, the healthcare industry sector employs more people in DuPage than any other, with over 75,000 working at the county’s eight hospitals and large physician groups.

These characteristics of DuPage demonstrate alignment with the target industry sectors identified in the Northeast regional plan:

- Health Care
- Manufacturing
- Transportation, Distribution, Logistics
- Information Technology.

These key industry sectors not only drive employment throughout DuPage and the region as a whole, but they also provide realistic on-ramps for WIOA participants into middle skill careers that pay family-sustaining wages.

The chart below shows that Health Care and Social Assistance is the largest sector in DuPage County and is projected to have the largest annual growth over the next five years. Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (which includes Information Technology professions) is the second largest sector. It has a high location quotient of 1.46 in DuPage and is projected to continue experiencing growth annually moving forward. Both of these sectors contain career paths that pay self-sufficient wages, allow for increased earning potential over time, and have on-ramps to career pathways in the middle skill category (i.e. requiring less than a Bachelor’s degree to obtain.)

The third highest sector on the chart below, Retail Trade, has experienced negative growth year over year in DuPage due to closures of major retail outlets and the emergence of e-commerce. Additionally, many jobs in this sector do not have distinguishable career pathways, do not pay a self-sufficient wage, and do not lead to higher earning potential over time. Other sectors on the chart that, although experiencing growth, are not an area of focus for WIOA programming due to similar factors as those given for Retail Trade are: Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services; Accommodation and Food Services.

Manufacturing has a location quotient of 1.05, and, although the forecast shows significant negative growth, that data does not agree with the demand consistently demonstrated by employer partners throughout the

County. Opportunities are abundant in advanced manufacturing throughout the region, and consistently solid performance outcomes for WIOA clients who select this pathway are evident. The aging workforce dilemma for manufacturing firms has been well documented, and the local industry sector is primed for significant growth in apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships to mitigate the effects of upcoming waves of retirement.

Lastly, the sectors of Wholesale Trade and Transportation and Warehousing have location quotients of 2.04 and 1.17 respectively for DuPage County. When combined, total employment for DuPage is 85,525. Additionally, the vast majority of manufacturing companies also have jobs that fall under the umbrella of these sectors because of the packaging and distribution portions of their operation. Focusing on supporting businesses in these two sectors by developing workforce with relevant skill sets provides an overlapping benefit to local manufacturers as well. As mentioned previously, due to the unique location of the region and its status as a transportation hub, there is an opportunity to attract additional business investment by developing the strongest workforce in this sector as possible.

2-Digit Industry	Empl	Avg Ann Wages	LQ	5yr History	Annual Demand	Forecast Ann Growth
Health Care and Social Assistance	75,936	\$58,338	0.80		8,151	1.3%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	64,431	\$90,990	1.46		6,044	0.8%
Retail Trade	61,272	\$35,471	0.90		7,758	-0.7%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	60,900	\$47,431	1.44		7,017	0.0%
Manufacturing	57,162	\$74,490	1.05		5,272	-1.1%
Wholesale Trade	50,972	\$88,733	2.04		4,952	-0.8%
Accommodation and Food Services	45,732	\$22,741	0.77		7,611	0.5%
Educational Services	41,714	\$52,853	0.78		3,786	-0.2%
Transportation and Warehousing	34,553	\$60,140	1.17		3,603	-0.2%
Construction	33,403	\$76,722	0.89		3,432	0.5%
Remaining Component Industries	130,475	\$75,405	0.77		13,217	-0.3%
<b>Total - All Industries</b>	<b>656,549</b>	<b>\$64,876</b>	<b>1.00</b>		<b>71,697</b>	<b>0.0%</b>

### Local Plan Guiding Principles

The strategies laid out in the DuPage County Local Plan provide detail on how the local workforce system will deliver on the guiding principles put forth in the Unified State Plan, specifically:

- Demand-Driven Orientation
- Strong Partnerships with Business at All Levels
- Pathways to Careers of Today and Tomorrow
- Cross-Agency Collaboration and Connections
- Equitable Access and Opportunity for all Populations
- Focus on Continuous Improvement and Innovation.

This chapter provides an overview of all the operating systems and policies within the Local Workforce Innovation Areas (LWIAs). LWIAs must incorporate key documents into the plan that describe the one-stop delivery system and the services that are provided by the workforce partners. **LWIAs are required to provide updated information and analysis noting any significant impacts of the COVID-19 National Health Emergency and what steps will be taken to address the challenges and opportunities that are associated with the local operating system and policies.**

**A. Coordination of Planning Requirements: The plan will incorporate the Memorandum of Understanding and Service Integration Action Plan:**

The Local Workforce Innovation Area 6 **Memorandum of Understanding (Attachment A)** provides a description of the one-stop delivery system, and other information that is essential to the establishment and operation of effective local workforce development systems as required by the WIOA Rule (20 CFR Part 678.705). The Memorandum of Understanding and any subsequent modifications is incorporated by reference into this plan.

This umbrella Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) describes the commitment of the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) Required Partners ("Partners") to provide integrated delivery of federally-funded workforce services in Local Workforce Innovation Area (LWIA) 6 at the sole comprehensive One-Stop Center in that area- workNet DuPage Career Center ("workNet DuPage") in Lisle, IL. The MOU defines the workforce services each Partner will provide in LWIA 6, the methods each Partner will use to provide these services, and the roles and responsibilities of all Partners related to service delivery. All Partners are committed to offering their specific job seeker and/or business programs at workNet DuPage, including a comprehensive range of job search, employment, business, and training-related services. These offerings are described in the Local Service Matrix (Appendix F to the MOU.) When combined, each Partner's contributions to the programming available at workNet DuPage yield one cohesive, full-service system for job seekers and businesses that allows for the removal of barriers from successful job search, career development, business development, recruiting strategies, etc. LWIA 6 is consistently striving for enhanced cohesiveness of the one-stop system and improved service integration amongst all Partners.

The Local Workforce Innovation Area 6 Service Integration Action Plan provides a description of how local workforce partners will align and coordinate services as required by the State of Illinois Service Integration Policy (WIOA Policy Chapter 1, Section 13). Information from the initial Service Integration Action Plan is included below. Any subsequent modifications to the Service Integration Action Plan are incorporated by reference into this plan.

This plan, also described in the MOU, describes the goals and strategies jointly agreed upon by all Partners to enhance service coordination and integration. For the term of this Local Plan, goals include:

1. Cross-training of One Stop Staff
2. Improved communication across Partners
3. Staff collaboration on customer assessments.

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

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

The workNet DuPage Career Center utilizes a coordinated navigation process embedded in the Center's website- [www.worknetdupage.org](http://www.worknetdupage.org). Job seeker customers can gain entry to the Center in one of three ways- in person, by phone, or online. In all cases, whether staff-assisted or independently accessed, all customers complete the navigation questionnaire located on the website, and their responses are recorded on the back- end of the platform. The Navigators on staff guide each customer to the proper referrals and identify the next steps for the customer to take based on their responses.

Aside from this technology-enabled intake process, there is not currently an integrated, technology-based, shared intake and case management system available in the State of Illinois. LWIA 6 continues to await further guidance from the State on implementation and transition to such a system.

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

The workNet DuPage Career Center mobile-friendly website serves as an entry-point to the one-stop delivery system for staff-assisted services, as well as offering numerous options for self-assisted service including:

- ✦ Access to job listings
- ✦ Career exploration and career pathway tools
- ✦ Profiles of local employer partners who are hiring
- ✦ Tips and resources on resume writing, interviewing, negotiating, and job retention
- ✦ Specialized information for veterans and individuals with disabilities
- ✦ Comprehensive business services information for employers
- ✦ Needs assessment tool for employers
- ✦ Links to all Partner websites as well as Illinois workNet and Illinois JobLink.

Additionally, workNet DuPage operates several social media accounts to connect the community with information and services. The Center plans to expand the use of video and YouTube to make more content available online, e.g. workshops for individuals who cannot travel to the Center.

Although DuPage County does not have “remote areas” per se, adequate transportation is an issue for segments of the population. According to the American Community Survey (2013-2017), approximately 4.0% of households in DuPage County are without a personal vehicle (13,808 households.) Title 1/DuPage County Workforce Development Division (WDD) staff plan to utilize the County’s geographic information system (GIS) to gain insight into areas of the County that may be underserved or in which a higher percentage of residents who lack adequate transportation live. That data will inform any future efforts to bring services out into the community for increased accessibility.

Lastly, all Partners are required to have staff on-site at workNet DuPage to provide services, or, in the absence of on-site staff, a direct linkage wherein no decline in customer experience is noted. Partners providing direct linkage access to services, as described in the MOU, should experience comparable customer service and experience to having a staff member on-site. Direct linkages at workNet DuPage consist of direct phone lines manned by staff of the representative agency who are prepared to provide information and access to service immediately via phone.

- **As part of the 2022 modification, describe how lessons learned about the remote delivery of services during the COVID-19 National Health Emergency will be adapted into operations over the next two years.**

At the onset of the COVID-19 National Health Emergency in March 2020, a rapid and seamless transition to a technology-enabled environment was imperative to continue providing high quality services to job seekers and businesses in DuPage County. Early adoption of a secure file sharing platform, electronic signature system, and cloud-based voucher (ITA) system allowed Title I staff to continue intake, eligibility determination, career planning and assessment, and issuance of Individual Training Accounts unimpeded. Title I staff also converted Rapid Response services to a coordinated virtual workshop titled From Layoff To Launch so that information on UI, Title I, and healthcare options would continue to be shared with the large volume of individuals going through layoffs and furloughs. Those sessions were up and running in April 2020 administered by Title I staff and a local Department of Labor representative using information from IDES approved ahead of time and kept current as changes to the UI programs and guidelines evolved. Job search skills training workshops and networking sessions were all held virtually in the Spring of 2020 and have continued as of early 2022. Job seekers could also connect with and learn about local employers and available career paths through the virtual Career Conversations series started in January 2021.

Recognizing that not all job seeker clients had adequate technology to connect with our services through a digital platform, services were also provided by phone and through socially distanced and masked meetings, e.g. physical drop off of required documents in the lobby or drive-through style in the parking lot. Once the Governor-mandated shutdown concluded, clients could also come to the Center in person if needed and receive services in a safe fashion via masking, social distancing, partitions, etc. Laptop computers were purchased and loaned to clients in need as a supportive service to facilitate completion of program requirements, online occupational training, and job search.

Though technology and remote delivery of services can enable some job seekers to connect with services more easily than they would have otherwise been able, a complete switch to remote service delivery would be an inequitable response to the pandemic. Title I will move forward with service provision through the lens of workforce equity taking into account the multitude of differing needs and abilities of job seeker clients. While some clients may not be able to visit the Center in person due to a transportation barrier or child-care issue, others may not be able to thrive with remote service due to digital literacy levels or a preference for one-on-one in person contact. Client engagement over time is often dependent on relationship-building and rapport with staff, and those components can suffer when all work is conducted by computer or phone. Person-to-person interaction can also be more important for individuals struggling with mental health or feelings of isolation and disconnectedness due to the pandemic.

As a result of Title I's overall experience to date with remote service delivery and lessons learned navigating through the national health emergency, hybrid service offerings will continue to be offered. This allows the greatest flexibility for both staff and clients, and the blend will allow us to make even greater strides toward equitable service provision for all. Clients will be able to engage with staff in-person or virtually if there is a barrier to their ability to reach the Center. Attention will be paid to such barriers, and assessment around barrier removal will be incorporated into those clients' service plans, as a barrier to attending in-person services would also likely impede ability to attend in-person employment. Career Conversations featuring area employers will continue to be held virtually so that as many people as possible in the community can attend and benefit. Job search skills training will revert to in-person workshops in many instances so the peer-to-peer cohort style learning can be reinstated. Virtual Rapid Response sessions will continue to be offered, as well as a return to in-person on-site workshops when appropriate.

Business client engagement with the Center's job seeker programming saw an increase as a result of virtual service delivery. Employers seem more willing to serve as presenters, mock interviewers, etc. when able to do so remotely as the time commitment is less significant and there's no travel involved. Employer clients have also been guided through the virtual job fair offering on Illinois workNet, and that will continue to be made available. In-person worksite visits are a preference for many employer clients so that business services staff can see their operations and office environment. Those resumed once it was safe to do so over the course of the national health emergency.

Beyond Title I, IDES has provided one-on-one Re-Employment Services and Eligibility Assessments over the last two years by phone. This format previously was a large workshop twice a month with upwards of 30 people each time. IDES also adopted an online scheduling feature, to schedule limited "In person" services to keep with the mitigation requirements. The exponential increase in demand for IDES services during the pandemic revealed the need for new and increased just-in-time communication strategies to the unemployed. Because every unemployed person's experience and need is unique, IDES has looked at multiple ways to improve communications with a focus on those individuals who experience barriers to accessing public services. IDES improved web-based information (making IDES website mobile-friendly; adding information about other types of assistance; using plain language; providing information in the top 6 languages spoken in IL). The options offered are considerate of barriers that people in poverty typically face—transportation, care giving, digital and language access—and are intended to reduce the time associated with receiving services; reduce the chances of not getting benefits in a timely manner; and provide information about how to find WIOA partner services and financial resources through other avenues (SNAP, TANF, utility relief, etc).

CSBG program provision through DuPage County Community Services was primarily switched to phone interviews instead of in-person assessments. Clients could mail, email, or place documents for eligibility in a

drop box. Remote work policies were implemented.

The Department of Human Services/TANF switched heavily to phone contact with clients as a result of the national health emergency and continues to focus on quality of work and timeliness when connecting clients with services. This includes continuing to develop processes for identifying areas of need while providing client service by telephone versus in person.

The College of DuPage (COD) responded in multiple ways to address the barriers and concerns due to the remote delivery of services during the COVID-19 National Health Emergency. The College quickly adapted to provide instruction and services virtually. Faculty and staff were able to accommodate student needs and continue providing instructional services. Hybrid models were developed so students could continue to receive hands-on instruction through lab and clinical sites. The College of DuPage Title II staff provided at-a-distance learning options across all programs and proficiency levels. To address barriers to at-a-distance participation, laptops and hot spots were provided for participants in conjunction with digital literacy training. Expanded delivery options of instruction and support services for COD students will continue and enhance opportunities for student learning.

**C. Describe how the Local Board will support the strategies identified in the Unified State Plan and work with entities carrying out core programs, including a description of the following, noting significant implications of the COVID-19 National Health Emergency where applicable (§ 679.560(b)(1)(ii)):**

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

In the most general sense, the Local Board, through the workNet DuPage Career Center, expands access to employment, training, education, and supportive services simply by offering such a comprehensive range of services and programs in an integrated and coordinated fashion at a single location. Despite differing specialty areas and types of programming offered by all Partners in the Center, customers have a “no wrong door” experience; no matter what their original intention was in visiting the Center, he/she will leave with knowledge of all relevant services and appropriate referrals as well. Each Partner provides service to individuals with various barriers, with some Partners specializing in one area and others specializing in multiple areas. By consistently informing each other’s clients about all services through the navigation process and regular inter-staff communication and referrals, all eligible individuals gain expanded access to service.

More specifically, the Local Board, through the workNet DuPage Career Center, makes expanding access to employment, training, and education by unique populations and all individuals with barriers a central priority. Beyond ensuring all Federal accessibility and equal opportunity guidelines are met, as outlined and described in the Memorandum of Understanding, plans are in place to continue developing and/or expanding special programming efforts on behalf of all Partners, for the following (Unified State Plan strategy- Provide economic advancement for all populations through career pathways):

✦ Individuals with disabilities

Title IV/Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS), as the local subject matter experts in this arena, help educate and cross-train staff as needed in addition to partnering on special initiatives and individual cases. Title I/DuPage County acquired expertise and a strong network of contacts as a result of the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) Round 5. As a result of strong success and return on investment with prior work-based learning for youth with disabilities, there is a continued emphasis on this area of service. DuPage County has served as a host work site for these internships, as have a significant number of private sector businesses throughout the County. Title I/DuPage County WDD, Title IV/Department of Rehabilitation Services, and the College of DuPage have partnered on outreach efforts for young adults in transition from high school. Title I funds have also supported students in their attendance of the College of DuPage’s COACH program and Elmhurst College’s ELSA program. Title I funds are awarded through a competitive process to contract youth programs, and an emphasis on disability-related programming has been a hallmark for LWIA 6 including Parents Alliance’s Project Search program. An annual Job Fair geared

toward individuals with disabilities has been held at the Center since 2017, with attendance of the last event topping 300. Parents Alliance is also collocated at the workNet DuPage Career Center, and they specialize in serving individuals with disabilities. Newer partnerships with organizations like Turning Pointe and Workplace Initiative are expected to develop over time into more successful job placements and job retention efforts. As a region, the Workforce Partners of Metropolitan Chicago also have dedicated grant dollars toward incumbent worker training efforts that will boost inclusion and diversity in the workplace and support the hiring of more individuals with disabilities.

All services and programs for individuals with disabilities continued on post-onset of the COVID-19 National Health Emergency; however, work-based learning placements for youth programs were severely impacted during the shutdown and most of 2020. As of this writing for the 2022 required modification, programming and work-based learning placements are largely back to normal.

✦ Youth (see Chapter 4, Section F, bullet 1)

✦ Veterans

Veterans receive priority of service at the workNet DuPage Career Center. The Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) Veterans staff provide resources and information related to Employment Services and Opportunities tailored specifically for veterans. They also establish and maintain relationships with businesses who are interested in hiring veterans, and they connect those businesses to relevant tax credit information.

IDES Veteran Employment Representatives and Title I/DuPage County WDD participate in tri-annual Veteran Employment and Services workshops in conjunction with Veterans Affairs, DuPage Veterans Assistance Commission (VAC), Midwest Shelter for Homeless Veterans, and various employers.

Title I/DuPage County WDD staff also undertake a variety of efforts to identify veterans in need of assistance and to help them attain employment including:

- Quarterly attendance at Roll Call Chicagoland Veteran Networking Events to inform veterans of services and to work on veteran resumes
- Participation in DuPage Veteran Assistance Commission (VAC) Events: DuPage Veteran's Resource Fair, Military/Veteran 101 Training, DuPage Homeless Veterans Task Force Seminar; plus, annual training provided by DuPage VAC and Veterans Affairs (VA)
- Participation with VA Compensated Work Therapy Program and Veteran Job Clubs as requested.

✦ Incarcerated Individuals/Reentering Individuals

Since 2018, workNet DuPage has placed an increasing emphasis on programming efforts geared toward incarcerated individuals or those reentering, including individuals in recovery from addiction. Notably, the Recovery from Addiction and Manufacturing a Path Up (RAMP-Up) program has had strong results providing MSSC Certified Production Technician training to individuals in recovery. Through a partnership with multiple County departments, community-based organizations, the College of DuPage, and area employers, the program has yielded strong outcomes and return on investment (15 students graduated, 8 with full CPT status (4 exams passed), 7 with at least one certification exam passed, 11 holding/retaining full-time employment, 4 holding part-time or temp employment--- cost per student of\$2,001.83.) Plans to continue holding cohorts of the program twice a year are in place, and the option of expanding into the County Jail may be explored.

Title I/WDD has two staff members who are authorized to go into the County Jail, in conjunction with the Sheriff's Department, to meet with individuals who have completed occupational training (e.g. janitorial, industrial laundry) while incarcerated. Initial orientation to Title I and One Stop services are provided and an initial determination of employment goals upon release are established. Reentering individuals then connect with Title I/WDD business services staff upon release and are connected to either interviews with employers or the appropriate Title I business services contact person in their area of residence. Business

services representatives throughout the Chicago metro region work in this type of closely coordinated fashion as a result of the regional business services work being conducted in Economic Development Region (EDR) 4.

Title I dollars have gone toward supporting a youth contract that provided welding training to incarcerated youth at the DuPage County jail. The Sheriff's Department is interested in scaling this program up as funding allows for additional incarcerated or work release individuals.

Title I/WDD staff are working toward expanding referrals from DuPage Probation, the Drug Court, and the F.O.C.U.S. program (for first time drug offenders.) Efforts are underway to coordinate sufficient wrap-around services with community partners to improve employment retention outcomes once job placement activities have taken place.

IDES offers special programs for reentering individuals, as well as connections to tax credits and fidelity bonding for employers who make hires.

#### ✦ Authorized to Work Refugees/Asylum Seekers/Immigrants

In 2019, workNet DuPage rapidly accelerated coordination with World Relief to improve the earning potential and quality of life for asylum seekers and refugees in the local area. Initially, those efforts primarily consisted of referrals to the Center and standard WIOA services including vouchers for occupational training programs. Over a series of debriefs, the process has grown to include pre-referrals steps involving language and literacy training, post-training mock interviewing by both training providers and Title I/WDD staff, job search workshops tailored to the particular population, strong employer support in the local manufacturing community, and potential expansions into OJT hiring and apprenticeship model development. All Title II/College of DuPage transition programming activities, curriculum and materials are shared with World Relief DuPage in an effort to develop pre-bridge coursework and establish a formal recruitment and referral pipeline. To date, over 30 asylum seekers and refugees have been served. The vast majority have completed manufacturing programs, although some individuals have also gone into information technology or healthcare programs. Upon exit from WIOA services, individuals are showing an average \$2.50-\$3.00/hour pay increase and improved family self-sufficiency. Over the term of this plan, this initiative will continue to grow and expand.

#### ✦ Domestic Violence Survivors

Title I/DuPage County WDD staff brought services on-site to a local community-based organization and shelter that serves victims of domestic violence. Career exploration and job search information were supplied on a weekly basis, as well as general information about the one stop system and Center. Transportation is a serious barrier for many people in this situation, so accessibility to services and

information was increased by bringing them on-site. Several women utilized WIOA services as a result of this initiative, and the concept may be revisited or scaled in some way over the course of this plan.

#### ✦ TANF Recipients

For those individuals receiving TANF, involvement in a work or training activity is a requirement. Employment and volunteer opportunities are discussed with each client, and packets containing opportunities are provided. Employment & Training workshops are held monthly by Department of Human Services (DHS) staff at which clients can receive assistance/information regarding GED programs, WIOA grants for vocational training, and information on car donations through the local community-based organization Loaves & Fishes. Attending workshops is an activity that is included in the Responsibility & Services Plan (RSP.) During the workshops, clients receive useful information regarding the above-mentioned resources to help them become more self-sufficient.

TANF work requirements were waived for a period of time as a result of the COVID-19 National Health Emergency, and are back in place as of this writing for the required 2022 modification.

#### ✦ Young and/or Single Mothers

Title I/WDD Staff and DHS are planning to develop an initiative around increasing the numbers of young and/or single mothers enrolled in WIOA services. According to the US Census Bureau/American Community Survey (2013-2017), 14.4% of households in DuPage County are led by a single parent female. Data also clearly depicts the struggles with earning power that is experienced by many women in this category—

The median family income in DuPage County (US Census Bureau and MIT Living Wage Calculator) in 2015 was:

- ✦ Married Couple Parents \$122,352
- ✦ Single Dads \$66,901
- ✦ Single Moms \$32,544

The required annual income to meet basic needs (US Census Bureau and MIT Living Wage Calculator) in 2015:

- ✦ Two Working Parents + Two Children \$71,344
- ✦ Single Parent + Two Children \$51,771

In an effort to career counsel more women into higher-paying occupations, the effort may involve folding in the Breaking Boundaries initiative founded by WDD leadership in 2017. Supportive service accessibility and partnerships with community-based organizations who provide relevant services will be key for this project, in much the same way as it was key to the success of RAMP-Up. Beyond DHS and Title I, it is anticipated that Title II, IDES, DRS, and College of DuPage Perkins will also be part of this collaboration over the course of this plan.

#### ✦ Older Workers

SCSEP service provision by National Able and Community Assistance Programs (CAPs) allows low-income older workers the opportunity to earn income while gaining work experience and a foothold within a potential employer. Workshop content for older workers is also covered in Title I's boot camp as well as the bi-monthly Friday Job Club meetings. workNet DuPage typically serves a high percentage of older workers each program year with access to training dollars, job search assistance and coaching, etc. For example, in PY17, 40% of dislocated worker clients were older workers (55+.)

In order to fully expand access to employment for these vulnerable populations and all WIOA eligible individuals, it is imperative that the local workforce system focuses on developing more qualified job seekers. In alignment with the action item "Prepare Illinois workers for a career, not just their next job" stemming from the Governor's Executive Order 2019-03, the LWIA plans to:

- ✦ Expand access to training and education by identifying and addressing gaps in available occupational programs

Efforts to ensure the programs available on the WIOA/Title I Eligible Training Provider List are reflective of the real-world demands of employers in the area/region are ongoing. An example of this is the convening by the Local Board of an IT Advisory group who have outlined a list of in-demand, cutting edge computer and tech skills that would have significant return on investment for job seekers. As a result, the local tech and entrepreneurial incubator Innovation DuPage is working toward becoming an approved provider offering accelerated, short-term tech programs such as Full Stack Engineering, cloud technology certifications, etc.

- ✦ Support and expand apprenticeship opportunities (See Chapter 4, Section H, bullet 2)
- ✦ Provide work-based learning opportunities (See Chapter 4, Section H, bullet 2)
- ✦ Conduct targeted outreach for specific training and employment opportunities in high-demand occupations

When conducting outreach and marketing the services available at workNet DuPage, the strategy is to draw clients to the Center with a specific occupational goal and career path in mind. Rather than sending a stack of general brochures outlining a menu-like list of services out to libraries and other community partners, for example, the goal is to be able to advertise specific career pathways tied to specific training tracks and with backing from specific employers. By spelling out the access to employment and training being given to WIOA-eligible individuals in more detail, it is thought that outcomes for both the job seeker customer and business customer will be enhanced over time and overall interest in and awareness of the Center will increase. The Edward-Elmhurst Health/Northwestern Medicine initiative described on page 8 is a good example of the plan moving forward for the Local Board.

- ✦ Focus on short-term credentialing opportunities to reduce time from training to reemployment

Title I/DuPage County WDD Career Planners have been trained to help WIOA clients think in terms of short-term, mid-term, and long-term goals with the understanding that services accessed presently typically have short- or mid-term implications. The emphasis is on reentry to the workforce on a career path that provides self-sufficient wages and opportunity for increased earning potential over time. This model of career planning manages client expectations and lays out a clear vision for both during and after participation in the WIOA program.

- ✦ Provide high-quality job search training and career services to accelerate reentry to the workforce

The comprehensive range of job search workshops and resources available through the Center, specifically those offered by Title I/WDD and Title III/IDES staff, expand access to employment for all who participate. Increasing soft skills and/or workplace skills workshops is an idea being explored, including a potential online offering that covers customer service skills for IT professionals. Soft skills and workplace skills workshops in place for youth and individuals with disabilities have proven successful to date.

The Local Board recognizes that job seekers in transition often require access to supportive services in order to fully utilize the programs and opportunities made available to them. Throughout the COVID-19 National Health Emergency that began in early 2020, increased supportive services and programs were made available by all Partners. Increased funding for rent assistance and child-care through DuPage County Community Services and other community partners are two examples, as well as technology provision such as laptop leasing or hotspot provision.

- ✦ The Department of Human Services (DHS) has a supportive service policy in place for the clients they serve. Some TANF clients report an inability to work due to barriers preventing them from finding and retaining employment. Lack of childcare or inability to afford childcare is considered a barrier. As a part of receiving TANF, the client can receive financial assistance for childcare, including having the first month paid for when they find employment. Transportation has also been reported as a barrier for TANF clients. Clients can receive assistance with public transportation, car insurance, and car repairs.

- ✦ Title I/WDD offers transportation assistance for individuals in training or active job search in the form of gas cards or bus passes. Referrals are also made by all staff to outside entities as needed, including DHS, DuPage Community Services, People's Resource Center, Prairie Legal Services, Poised For Success, Loaves & Fishes, food pantries, DuPage Pads, DuPage Health Department, Bridge Communities, Naperville 360, etc. Clients can also access the DuPage C.R.I.S. (Community Resource Information System- [www.dupagecris.org](http://www.dupagecris.org)) at all computer terminals in the Resource Room. The C.R.I.S. is an online directory of all available programs and services in DuPage County. **Title I modified the Supportive Service policy in April 2020 to allow for the loaning of laptops and associated equipment.**

Finally, in order to fully expand access to employment and achieve the action item "Connect job seekers with employers" stemming from the Governor's Executive Order 2019-03, Partners must have strong relationships with the business community. The Local Board recognizes that strategic focus must be on both job seeker customers (ensuring a "supply" of highly qualified talent to meet employer demands) and business customers (understanding, gaining access to, and building relationships with the "demand" in the local area.) For this reason, the Local Board, through the workNet DuPage Career Center and led by Title I/DuPage County WDD, will continue to place a heavy emphasis on the area of business services. A higher volume of close relationships with area businesses yields increased access to employment opportunity for all WIOA eligible individuals, including those with barriers. The Business Services team in LWIA 6 will increase access to quality employment opportunities in high-growth, in-demand areas on behalf of all WIOA eligible individuals by:

- ✦ Identifying "transformational" vs. "transactional" business targets

Regional business services staff throughout Economic Development Region (EDR) 4 recently completed a Business Engagement Professional training course and acquired Certified Business Engagement Professional certification. The Business Services team of workNet DuPage, led by Title I DuPage County Workforce Development Division (WDD) staff, are incorporating the concept of transformational vs. transactional as learned in that training course into their efforts to strategically target and group business customers.

Transformational relationships, as defined for local use, are:

- primarily with businesses in targeted high-growth industry sectors as defined in the Regional plan and this Local plan;
- those in which there are multiple areas of synergy where both WIOA clients and the business can benefit;
- those in which the business' interests and needs align with one or more of the Business Services team's local strategic goals, including goals involving job placement of unique populations;
- longer-term in nature and evolve over time;
- the focus of ongoing strategic relationship-building and maintenance over time due to significant level of return on investment.

Transactional relationships, as defined for local use, are:

- with businesses that are not in targeted high-growth industry sectors as defined in the Regional plan and this Local plan;
- those that are looking for a "one and done" transaction, i.e. a single job posting;
- those in which the business' interests and needs are at cross purposes or do not align with the Business Services team's local strategic goals, including goals involving job placement of unique populations;
- short-term and could be a one-time contact or service; do not involve ongoing dedication of staff time and resources due to insignificant or substandard return on investment.

By consistently and strategically growing their base of business customers with whom they share a transformational relationship, the workNet DuPage Business Services team will be able to offer more and better employment opportunities and services to all WIOA eligible job seekers. Support from the business community is the key to efforts like those described above for individuals with disabilities, incarcerated/criminal justice involved, asylum seekers and refugees, etc.

- ✦ Developing connections based on employer demand-driven initiatives (Unified State Plan strategy- Support employer-driven regional sector initiatives)

workNet DuPage/DuPage County WDD staff, in conjunction with the Local Board, have had successful talent pipeline efforts that identify and cluster specific employer demands and utilize that information to design marketing and programming efforts. Examples that the LWIA plans to further develop and/or scale across different employers and in-demand occupations include:

- Edward-Elmhurst Health/Northwestern Medicine talent pipeline— The healthcare industry in DuPage County has grown more than any industry over the past five years, adding nearly 14,000 jobs. The Local Board identified a critical need for skilled Patient Care Technicians and Medical Assistants, with job openings approaching 1,000 locally over the next year. Two of the biggest regional healthcare providers, Edward-Elmhurst Health and Northwestern Medicine, in their capacity as Workforce Board members, spearheaded efforts to collectively address this large-scale labor demand. Title I/DuPage County WDD staff initiated a marketing campaign to drive more WIOA eligible individuals to the Center with the specific goal of getting started on healthcare career pathways. As a result of this targeted marketing effort, the percentage of workNet DuPage clients entering the healthcare field through training increased 34% from the previous year (PY17.) Upon completing training, WIOA clients are set up with interviews at one or both healthcare providers. Edward-Elmhurst has also incorporated Incumbent Worker Training into their strategy to address the skills gap, and an initial pilot of training/promoting housekeepers and patient transporters into entry-level nursing roles was implemented in PY18. Over PY18, healthcare was the #1 industry in which young adult clients at the Center, ages 18-24, launched careers. Increased access to healthcare career pathways for youth, low- income individuals, and all WIOA-eligible clients has resulted from this initiative, and the plan is to expand the model into other high-growth occupational areas moving forward.
- Diesel Mechanic apprenticeship— Employment of Diesel Service Technicians and Mechanics is projected to grow 5 percent from 2018 to 2028, about as fast as the average for all occupations. It's well known that the Diesel Technician workforce is an aging one, with almost a third of current Technicians due to retire over the next 5-6 years. Based on local employer feedback, we know that there is significant demand for Diesel Technicians, and the competition for this type of talent is strong. To address this demand, Title I/DuPage County WDD Staff have been coordinating with Universal Technical Institute (UTI) and a number of employers including Waste Management, CIT Trucks, JX Enterprises, and Crown to establish a registered Diesel Mechanic apprenticeship program. Through this effort, access to employment and training in this high-growth occupation will be vastly expanded for all WIOA eligible clients, and access to more qualified workers will be enhanced for our local employers.
- Manufacturing talent pipelines— A recurring theme in LWIA 6 over the last 10+ years has been the critical skills gap in the manufacturing industry exacerbated by the aging manufacturing workforce and ongoing waves of retirements. DuPage has the second largest manufacturing employment of any County in Illinois, and the needs expressed by local employers are centered on Computer Numerical Controlled (CNC) Machine Operation and Maintenance Mechanic occupations. Title I/DuPage County WDD Staff have made significant efforts to meet these employer demands by expanding access to employment and training by unique populations of job seekers. As mentioned above, one current initiative underway is to provide CNC training to asylum seekers and refugees working with World Relief. Another talent pool that has gained increased access to employment and training in manufacturing are individuals in recovery from addiction. Such individuals often have criminal records that can serve as an additional barrier to employment. Through partnerships with the DuPage County Community Services (CSBG), DuPage Health Department, Title II/College of DuPage, Perkins/College of DuPage, and several community-based organizations in the area, the Recovery & Manufacturing a Path Up (RAMP-Up) program has successfully led participants to attainment of MSSC Certified Production Technician credentials and subsequent employment. Both of these efforts will evolve and be expanded on over the term of this Local plan.

- ✦ Presenting coordinated responses to business customers as an integrated business service and economic

development team (Unified State Plan strategy- Expand service integration.)

Having an integrated local business service team (“Business Response Team”) presents a more professional and cohesive image to employers approached by any given member of the Team. It allows each team member flexibility to talk about and present more resources and options when meeting with an employer and increases the impact of any proposed package of customized solutions and resources.

The local Business Response Team, which includes staff from Title I, College of DuPage, DRS, IDES, SCSEP providers, Choose DuPage (economic development), DCEO Team Red, and the DuPage Convention and Tourism Bureau, plans to more fully launch a previously piloted version of a business self-needs assessment tool. This tool will serve as a single point of navigation for business customers in much the same way the process works for job seeker customers and is currently available on the workNet DuPage website. A concerted outreach and marketing effort will be needed to scale up usage of the tool among all Business Response Team partners.

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

As demographics and economic changes shift toward a more diverse workforce, the College of DuPage’s Adult Education program strives to meet the increasing need for adult education, literacy and English language acquisition programs. The College has successfully implemented an Integrated Education and Training (IET) model through the Integrated Career and Academic Preparation System (ICAPS). ICAPS programs are offered for established integrated career pathways where students are able to complete their high school equivalency and be co-enrolled in credit CTE courses leading to a certificate. The ICAPS model provides comprehensive student services that include a team-teaching approach with CTE content instructors and supplemental basic skills instructors. Employment and work-based learning opportunities are also integrated and serve to enable smoother transitions to additional postsecondary degree and certificate programs. Current ICAPS certificate programs at the College include: COMPTIA A+, Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA), MSSC Certified Production Technician, and Office Technology Specialist. In support of the Colleges Perkins V four-year plan, these ICAPS programs will be expanded to include other career pathways in high demand, high wage areas to increase access to postsecondary education for low-skilled adult learners. The state through the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) will also offer state leadership funds to further develop and scale these programs during the next four years.

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

College of DuPage’s Dual Credit Program is an opportunity for qualified high school students to enroll in a college-level course and, upon successful course completion, earn both college and high school credit. The college courses are taught at the high school during the regular school day by high school teachers who are credentialed as adjunct faculty at College of DuPage. The College of DuPage has the largest dual credit headcount enrollment in the state. Dual credit offerings are available to high school students at 25 district schools including the Technical Center of DuPage (TCD). About 70% of the College’s dual credit offerings are Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses. This coursework plays a pivotal role in the integrated programs of study with district high schools that aim to expand career pathways opportunities and to align course work to ensure smoother transitions between education and the workforce. The College will increase meaningful and intentional CTE dual credit offerings where appropriate to reduce college costs, speed time to completion, and further enhance high school to college transitions. Efforts and strategies will be implemented to ensure certificate and degree attainment for underserved populations.

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

The College of DuPage Credit by Demonstrated Competence program offers students the opportunity to demonstrate achievement outside the classroom and gain college credit for it. There are two methods for

earning credit through this program – Credit by Proficiency and Credit by National Examination. Students may complete 42 of the 64 credits needed toward an Associate's degree, or up to half of the credits needed toward a certificate, through this program.

Credit by National Examination offers an opportunity to demonstrate knowledge in a particular subject area by submitting scores from the nationally recognized Advanced Placement Program (AP) College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) or International Baccalaureate (IB). In order to receive credit for an accepted exam, official scores must be sent to the College of DuPage Testing Center.

Credit by Proficiency offers an opportunity to gain credit for knowledge acquired in an occupation or educational environment outside of college, or through other life experience, related to specific College of DuPage courses. Through this process, students who demonstrate knowledge needed to complete a COD course can gain college credit without taking the course. Faculty and administrators in each academic division determine if a specific course lends itself to this method of gaining credit and the means by which one must demonstrate their knowledge. Some exams have been established and are available in the Testing Center.

In the COD Perkins Strategic four-year plan, key strategies will be identified and implemented to increase the awareness of the COD CTE certificate and degree programs as well as increasing the awareness of the demonstrated competence program at the College.

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

Choose DuPage, the economic development organization for DuPage County, will be launching a targeted workforce attraction campaign in 2020. The purpose of this campaign is to attract and retain segments of the labor force that do not require extensive education and training to qualify for jobs in high demand occupations. Specifically, the campaign will focus on talent in the Healthcare, Professional/Scientific/Technical, and Business/Finance sectors. The campaign seeks to dispel misperceptions about working in the suburbs and highlight the modern, updated workspaces, nightlife/entertainment options, attractions, and ease of commute available in DuPage County.

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

Career pathways are a hallmark of WIOA legislation. Career pathways offer a clear sequence, or pathway, of education coursework and/or training credentials aligned with employer-validated work readiness standards and competencies. A number of career pathways are available to job seekers, with a recent focus on Manufacturing, IT and Healthcare occupations. Information on career pathways is readily available at the One Stop Center as well as on Illinois workNet. The Career Planners at workNet DuPage are trained to understand the local high demand occupations and the career pathways that exist in those occupations. This knowledge allows the Career Planners to educate job seekers on various pathways available and the educational opportunities available to get onto a career pathway.

Co-enrollment in core programs across the system is encouraged. Title I/WDD DuPage County partners with Title II/College of DuPage (COD) in the administration of the aforementioned Integrated Career and Academic Preparation System (ICAPS) program. For example, a cohort of Office Technology ICAPS students are currently co-enrolled in WIOA Title I and Title II. Additional opportunities for co-enrollment across system partners are being explored and will be implemented as appropriate.

The College of DuPage will continue to play a pivotal role in career pathway work moving forward. To date, COD has collaborated and developed programs of study with district high schools to provide students a clear pathway that best prepares them for a postsecondary certificate, degree or industry credential. As federally defined, A Program of Study is a coordinated, nonduplicative sequence of academic and technical content at the secondary and postsecondary level that: Incorporates challenging State academic standards; Addresses

both academic and technical knowledge and skills including employability skills; Is aligned with the needs of industries; Progresses in specificity beginning with all aspects of an industry or career cluster and leading to more occupational specific instruction; Has multiple entry and exit points that incorporate credentialing; and culminates in the attainment of a recognized postsecondary credential. The program of study incorporates career exploration, work-based learning opportunities and dual credit coursework where appropriate. Currently the College of DuPage has sixteen programs of study with one or more district high school at the Technology Center of DuPage. The Perkins V four-year plan includes strategies to develop new programs of study as well as to improve and enhance existing programs.

The Local Board is committed to exploring robust development of career pathways options for high school students in conjunction with the secondary education system in the County, the College of DuPage (COD), private business, and area Chambers of Commerce or other business-oriented stakeholders. Over the term of this plan, it is expected that growth in the amount and awareness of available career pathway options in high schools will increase significantly.

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

All training services funded through Title I dollars lead to recognized post-secondary credentials such as certificates, industry-recognized certification, licensure (e.g. CDL), etc. Methods and activities around improving access are described throughout this plan.

In addition, the College of DuPage has collaborated and developed programs of study with district high schools to provide students a clear pathway that best prepares them for a postsecondary certificate, degree or industry credential. As federally defined, A Program of Study is a coordinated, nonduplicative sequence of academic and technical content at the secondary and postsecondary level that: Incorporates challenging State academic standards; Addresses both academic and technical knowledge and skills including employability skills; Is aligned with the needs of industries; Progresses in specificity beginning with all aspects of an industry or career cluster and leading to more occupational specific instruction; Has multiple entry and exit points that incorporate credentialing; and culminates in the attainment of a recognized postsecondary credential. The program of study incorporates career exploration, work-based learning opportunities and dual credit coursework where appropriate. Currently the College of DuPage has sixteen programs of study with one or more district high school of the Technology Center of DuPage. The Perkins V 4-year plan includes strategies to develop new programs of study as well as to improve and enhance existing programs. Emphasis is placed on using the ICCB Program of Study Expectations Tool that provides a framework to guide CTE faculty and advisory teams in the assessment and development of programs of study. The program of study templates also reflect the integration of credentials that are stackable and support progress as the student moves along the career pathway.

• **In the 2022 modification, use insights and lessons learned from COVID-19 National Health Emergency regarding the identification and service delivery to targeted populations significantly affected by the pandemic**

A combination of creative targeted outreach and strong community-based partnerships have been two significant keys to identifying and connecting with target populations. In August 2020, Title I staff compiled data breaking down which towns in DuPage County were home to the most hospitality workers. Using that data, outreach and communications efforts were targeted to those towns. Targeted outreach efforts were also geared toward towns that contained higher levels of families at or below poverty level and which have more residents at lower education levels. At the conclusion of PY20, noticeable gains in total Title I clients occurred in several of those target areas over PY19 levels. Continued use of data and research to inform outreach efforts will be a feature of the next two years.

Strong community partnerships with groups serving individuals in need of rent assistance or eviction counseling, child-care assistance, reentry services, and homelessness, in addition to the secondary school system and transition programs, have been critical in reaching target populations suffering the worst economic effects of the

pandemic. While forming these partnerships is essential to identify residents in need, the work must then include consideration of how best to design processes and services to facilitate successful access while remaining in compliance with WIOA regulations. This will be a key area of focus over the next two years- how to customize and streamline processes and access as much as possible to meet the individual needs of various clients and groups of clients. This step represents an important part of the workforce equity lens utilized by LWIA6 staff.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, IDES has continued identifying targeted populations using the Re-Employment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) criteria.

Department of Human Services/TANF is continuing to focus on identifying targeted populations, and plan to continue work with community partners to develop new methods for addressing challenges of various populations. DHS also notes a desire to explore more statistical data and support that other agencies or community partners can provide.

As outlined in the College of DuPage's Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA), the College identified the need to better support and serve and meet the specific needs of CTE special populations students. The College did upgrade the part-time Workforce Development Specialist position to a full-time Workforce Development and Student Resource Specialist. This position coordinates direct support services to CTE Special Population students. Initiatives that were implemented to address barriers to CTE special population student success included the launching of a CTE Laptop Loan and Hotspot programs in addition to providing financial assistance in terms of textbook support. The College will continue to offer these services and plans on expanding direct support to CTE special populations through additional direct services including child-care and transportation supports. In addition, the Workforce Development and Student Resource Specialist serves as a central point of contact for students sharing additional internal and external resources and references.

College of DuPage's Title II staff have noted that participants with lower levels of English proficiency have been greatly impacted by the move to online instruction. Provision of digital literacy training opportunities within the communities of greatest need in conjunction with core programming allows for successful navigation of the online learning environment. Title I and Title II continue to coordinate on support for students in ICAPS programs.

Digital literacy and digital equity will be a continued area of focus for all Partners over the duration of this plan.

Businesses have been impacted in a number of ways as well that have affected how staff identify and serve business clients. At the onset of the pandemic during the height of the layoffs, Title I staff connected with businesses that were in a position of making the difficult decision to lay staff off. By providing information on services and resources available, businesses could offer something to those affected by making a connection to the local workforce system. Title I staff continuously researched companies laying workers off or in danger of having to lay workers off to attempt proactive rapid response throughout that time and help ensure no dislocated workers were left unaware of the resources available.

Once the economic impact of the pandemic shifted gears toward recovery, it became clear the primary challenge would be assisting businesses with securing enough workforce to meet their needs. Services such as virtual recruiting events or job fairs and free job posting were most sought after at that time. Connecting employers to other partners and resources has been critical, including the Small Business Development Center, Choose DuPage, Innovation DuPage, and a range of organizations that serve special populations so that may businesses can diversify their talent pipelines and solutions.

Two key strategies emerged for Title I business services staff-

1. Build relationships, develop trust, and address objections regarding the public workforce system, hiring of special populations, etc. while employers are most open to considering non-traditional alternatives
2. Focus on upskilling and increasing the economic mobility of the workers that businesses already have through use of Incumbent Worker Training grants.

**D. Provide information regarding the local coordination strategies with state (including the Unified State Plan), regional and local partners to enhance services and avoid duplication of activities, including a description of the following, noting any significant implications of the COVID-19 National Health Emergency, where**

**applicable:**

The collaborative nature of the One-Stop Center WIOA Partners at the workNet DuPage Career Center, along with the presence of the core Partners on the Local Board and the oversight of all Partners by the One-Stop Operator, provides for coordination of services and reduced duplication/redundancy of efforts. The navigation process for both job seeker and business customers enhances access to coordinated service. The local Partners will explore asset mapping as a solution for further reduction of duplication and stronger community-wide service provision moving forward.

Following the onset of the COVID pandemic in March 2020, the local partner team switched all group meetings to a virtual format. Discussions around services being offered, changes to service offerings, office reopening/return to the office, etc. were ongoing throughout. All mandated partners are actively engaged in participating in these meetings and discussions to ensure coordination of services and the avoidance of duplicate activities. Currently, a collaborative effort includes tracking and assessing the effectiveness of the One-stop center referral system. Improvements have been made and process changes are ongoing in that regard. New technologies are being explored to better capture all referral activity using lessons learned from other local areas in our region. Partners also continue to work on "Service Integration" with sharing of reports and access to systems.

Partner meetings and service coordination is still taking place through use of virtual meetings as of January 2022. A return to in-person meetings or a pattern of alternating the meeting mode will be revisited in the coming months once the Omicron surge has subsided.

Partner staff have not all returned to working out of the office as of January 2022, but revising processes and potentially reorienting/reintroducing new staff once that occurs will also need to be discussed within the partner team.

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

The DuPage County Workforce Development Division (WDD) is responsible for provision of WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs and services for all of DuPage (LWIA 6.) All services are provided at the workNet DuPage Career Center. The Title I/DuPage County WDD Director makes regular reports to the Local Board as well as the Economic Development Committee of the County Board. Additionally, both the Title I/DuPage County WDD Director and the Local Board staff are members and regular participants in both the Workforce Boards of Metropolitan Chicago (WPMC) regional and the Illinois Workforce Partnership (IWP) statewide workforce development groups. Both these organizations allow for collaboration on service provision, increased understanding and enactment of WIOA provisions, and sharing of best practices. The Title I/DuPage County WDD Director is also a board member of Choose DuPage, the economic development alliance for DuPage County. This, coupled with participation in area Chambers of Commerce, enhances business service delivery and coordination of workforce and economic development activities locally. Title I/DuPage County WDD staff also participate in local consortiums such as the West Suburban Jobs Council and the Community Connections Network, both of which tie in Title I services to the broader community of social service organizations.

Title I is the primary provider in DuPage County for Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth who are in need of:

- ✦ Career planning and training/employment plan development
- ✦ Funding assistance for occupational training programs
- ✦ Comprehensive job search skills training including resume assistance, interviewing techniques and strategies, online job search skills, etc.

**• Adult education and literacy activities under WIOA Title II. This description must include how the Local Board will carry out the review of local applications submitted under Title II consistent with WIOA Secs. 107(d)(11)(A)**

**and (B)(i) and WIOA Sec. 232 (§ 679.560(b)(12)).**

The College of DuPage is responsible for provision of adult education and literacy activities under WIOA Title II. Staff from the College of DuPage provide service daily at the workNet DuPage Career Center, as well as at various locations throughout the County.

Title II is the primary provider for individuals in need of:

- ✦ Adult Basic Education (ABE) to build reading, writing, and math skills
- ✦ High School Equivalency (GED) classes, including those that are part of an Integrated Career and Academic Preparation System (ICAPS) model and are pursuing in-demand occupational certification concurrently
- ✦ English Language Acquisition (ELA) classes and assistance
- ✦ TABE testing.

Upon receipt of the local applications submitted under Title II, the Local Board will review and score each item per required guidelines and rubrics.

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

The Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) is responsible for provision of Wagner-Peyser employment services for DuPage County. IDES staff provide service daily at the workNet DuPage Career Center, and they are the primary provider for individuals in need of:

- ✦ Labor exchange services and job matching/job search assistance
- ✦ Reemployment services
- ✦ Specialized assistance for Veterans.

**• Vocational rehabilitation service activities under WIOA Title IV (§ 679.560(b)(13)).**

The Department of Human Services/Rehabilitation Services (DRS) is responsible for provision of vocational rehabilitation services under WIOA Title IV in DuPage County. DRS staff provide service several times a week at the workNet DuPage Career Center, and their primary office is located in nearby Downers Grove.

Title IV is the primary provider for individuals with disabilities in need of:

- ✦ Supported Employment including job analysis, job development and placement, and job coaching
- ✦ Planning for post-high school transition and STEP programs
- ✦ Work incentive planning and assistance to understand how working will affect SSDI/SSI benefits.

**• Relevant secondary and post-secondary education programs and activities with education and workforce investment activities (§ 679.560(b)(9)).**

DuPage County has over 20 secondary schools and a multitude of post-secondary institutions, including 19 locations of accredited colleges and universities. The College of DuPage (COD) is a WIOA partner and has two representatives on the Local Board. DeVry University and Universal Technical Institute are represented on the Local Board, as is the Assistant Superintendent of Glenbard District 87 (the third largest high school district in Illinois.) Lastly, the Regional Superintendent of Schools for DuPage County serves on the Local Board. These relationships have led to increased efforts to tie together the local business community with the school system by increasing efforts to meet Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) standards centered on work-readiness and work-based learning models. These partnerships also help inform apprentice expansion efforts in DuPage County, identify gaps in existing training options for WIOA job seeker clients, and support efforts to increase career awareness in young adults through programming like the previously mentioned Breaking Boundaries.

In collaboration with local high schools and the Technology Center of DuPage (TCD), the College of DuPage currently supports and maintains over twenty formal Programs of Study (POS) in a variety of Career and

Technical programs providing high school students with a coordinated, nonduplicative sequence of academic and technical content at the secondary and postsecondary level including employability skills that are aligned with the needs of industries including career exploration and dual credit opportunities where appropriate. In addition, the POS progresses in specificity beginning with all aspects of an industry or career pathway leading to more occupational specific instruction that incorporates credentialing and culminates in the attainment of a recognized industry or postsecondary credential.

• **How the Local Board will support the state strategies identified under § 676.105 and work with the entities carrying out core programs and other workforce development programs, including programs of study and career pathway programs under the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.) to support service alignment and needs identified in regional or local level assessments including the Perkins Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (§ 679.560(b)(1)(ii)).**

The College of DuPage is currently facilitating a Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA). The CLNA is a data-informed, continued improvement process that assesses the extent to which our COD Career and Technical Education programs and programs of study are meeting and in alignment with local workforce needs through the following six key areas:

1. Student performance data;
2. Size, scope and quality;
3. Labor market alignment
4. Progress toward implementing CTE programs of study;
5. Recruitment, retention and training of CTE faculty and staff
6. Progress towards improving access and equity

The College will be reviewing and analyzing multiple data sets in aggregate and disaggregate formats to help identify and uncover equity gaps as well as program and labor market needs. Key stakeholders including the Local Board and other workforce partners will be receiving feedback surveys to gather additional input. In addition, College of DuPage CLNA Community Open Forums will be held to provide additional opportunities for feedback. The results of the College of DuPage CLNA will be used to develop the four-year Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century local application. This four-year plan will be shared with the Local Board along with all progress updates as the plan is implemented. The Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment will be conducted every two years and will engage and involve both internal and external stakeholders.

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

See Attachment B for the Local Title I Supportive Service Policy

Title I/WDD offers transportation assistance for individuals in training or active job search in the form of gas cards or bus passes. **In April 2021, the LWIB approved an expansion of the Supportive Service Policy to include laptop loan service. Laptop loans also include associated equipment as necessary.** Referrals are also made by all staff to outside entities as needed, including DHS, DuPage Community Services, YWCA (child care assistance), People's Resource Center, Prairie Legal Services, Poised For Success, Loaves & Fishes, food pantries, DuPage Pads, DuPage Health Department, Bridge Communities, Naperville 360, etc. Clients can also access the DuPage C.R.I.S. (Community Resource Information System- [www.dupagecris.org](http://www.dupagecris.org)) at all computer terminals in the Resource Room. The C.R.I.S. is an online directory of all available programs and services in DuPage County.

The Department of Human Services (DHS) has a supportive service policy in place for the clients they serve.

Some TANF clients report an inability to work due to barriers preventing them from finding and retaining employment. Lack of childcare or inability to afford childcare is considered a barrier. As a part of receiving TANF, the client can receive financial assistance for childcare, including having the first month paid for when they find employment. Transportation has also been reported as a barrier for TANF clients. Clients can receive assistance with public transportation, car insurance, and car repairs.

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

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

The workNet DuPage County One-Stop Career Center offers a wide range of services designed to help job seekers on their path to employment. The Center has a comprehensive Job Search Resource Room that provides internet access and other technology needed for job search, i.e. photocopiers, fax machine, etc. The space also includes a library of job search resources and materials to assist with career exploration and best practices for job search including resume templates. Title III/Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) staff provide assistance with Illinois JobLink and filing of online UI claims. Assistive technology is available, and staff are knowledgeable on its use. The College of DuPage (COD) has a section of career exploration and materials related to certification and degree programs. A variety of supportive services information is available, and the DuPage CRIS (Community Resource Information System) can be accessed on all computers in the Resource Room. Job listings are available on the workNet DuPage website and Illinois JobLink. The Center also will continue hosting periodic, targeted recruiting events such as the job fair for individuals with disabilities, as well as newly designed formats embedded in with the bi-monthly Job Club meetings or as stand-alone events. All recruiting events focus solely on employers who offer full-time, non-temporary jobs that pay family-sustaining wages and are in high-growth occupational areas or career pathways.

Partners offer workshops in the Center for Adult and Dislocated Worker clients covering topics such as job search techniques (resume, interviewing, etc.), soft skills, and career exploration. Title I/DuPage County Workforce Development Division (WDD) is responsible for the majority of the workshops offered. As part of a strategic effort to increase the number of local WIOA "career services only" enrollments, a new Fast Track To A Job program was rolled out in January 2020. This battery of workshops is run as a cohort with individuals who already possess the marketable skills and earning potential necessary to become reemployed in self-sufficient employment, but who are in need of coaching on job search skills and the 21<sup>st</sup> century job search. The cohort will include peer-to-peer accountability meetings and networking opportunities as well. Title I/DuPage County WDD leadership, along with the Local Board, will monitor overall increases on career services only enrollments, as well as any effects on cost-per WIOA participant metrics moving forward. This program will be offered in addition to the standard workshop boot camps for all other WIOA participants. Title I/DuPage County WDD staff also offer special workshop series for youth and youth with disabilities. These workshops are typically partnered with training services. Title III/IDES provides RESEA workshops for long-term unemployed, veterans, and other individuals who are at-risk for long-term unemployment. The Center offers coordinated workshops and orientations for Trade Act eligible individuals and dislocated workers from WARN events. Title I/DuPage County WDD and Title III/IDES partner on these extensions of the Rapid Response process. Bimonthly Job Club meetings are open to the public and feature industry professionals as guest facilitators. Information and orientation sessions for older workers interested in SCSEP services are also offered as needed.

Each partner offers individualized career services that typically begin with an intake (eligibility determination) and the gathering of assessment information. An individualized plan for the customer is developed based upon the customer needs and the scope of services provided by the different partner agencies. Employment and training activities that fall under these scopes of service include: career exploration and planning, labor market research, referrals to supportive services, training plan development, funding assistance for training through Title I as well as other financial aid, basic skills assessment, adult basic education, job development for

individuals with disabilities and older workers, labor exchange services, internship development, and job placement assistance. Referrals are made among all partners as needed, and assistance or input is provided on shared client cases.

Training services provided through Title I/DuPage County WDD include Individual Training Accounts for occupational programs in high-growth sectors. Such programs result in credentials that are in-demand among the regional employer base. An emphasis is placed on short-term training programs that will lead to credential attainment and reemployment in as short a time frame as feasible. On-The-Job Training (OJT) wage reimbursements are available to employers who hire individuals who are not fully qualified at the time of hire. OJT is intended to bridge the skills gap over the course of up to the first six months of employment and can be used as part of a package of services supporting apprenticeship models. Title I/WDD Business Services staff target employers throughout the region who are hiring consistently and who represent career pathways that will lead to self-sufficient employment. Lastly, Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) provides reimbursement to companies that provide training for existing workforce. This type of training is designed to strengthen the company, enhance overall competitiveness, prevent layoffs, and boost the skills of individual trainees. IWT can also be utilized as part of a package of services, in conjunction with possible OJT or ITA usage, to support apprenticeship models.

The Center will strive to match the expenditure of training dollars to specific employer demand-driven initiatives that will be designed, developed, or expanded over the span of this Local Plan (see Chapter 4, Section C, Bullet 1.) Initiatives will tie in the use of ITAs, OJTs, and IWT depending on the design put together by both the involved partner agencies as well as regional employers and other outside community-based agencies.

Follow up services are offered to all Title I/WDD WIOA clients and can include periodic contacts regarding employment retention, removal of barriers that are threatening employment retention, periodic newsletters outlining resources/retention tips/workplace skills/career development, etc. The majority of WIOA clients receive follow up services, the degree of which vary depending on the client's level of need and personal preference.

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

Title I/DuPage County WDD staff coordinate with Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity (DCEO), Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) & Department of Labor (DOL) Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA) to assist DuPage County area employers with their workforce reductions and assist the affected workers with their transition plans. This team approach deals with three very important needs dislocated workers have: information on unemployment insurance benefits, health insurance options, and becoming re-employed. The Rapid Response team coordinates with the employer to offer both pre-layoff and post-layoff services to connect the affected workers with employment & training services funded through either WIOA or TAA.

In addition to the local efforts made by the Rapid Response team, the Workforce Partner of Metro Chicago has launched successful regional efforts to tie together the business services teams of each LWIA in EDR 4 (Northeast Illinois.) As part of that effort, there will be an increased level of Rapid Response coordination on WARN and Trade events throughout this part of the State across localities. A focus on rapid reemployment of affected workers by establishing pipelines for employers throughout the region has been proposed and is in development.

**As part of the 2022 modification, describe how adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities will address the impact and recovery from the COVID-19 National Health Emergency.**

**While the range of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities described in the previous**

section are all being offered post-COVID onset, modifications have been made and will continue to be implemented by all partners to best aid in economic and workforce recovery.

All Partners have made the transition to remote service offerings through the use of virtual meeting technology, phone appointments or assessments, remote coursework offerings, etc. Moving forward, many Partners, including Title I, will focus on ensuring a range of both in-person and virtual offerings. While remote/virtual offerings may increase access for some adults and dislocated workers, it may be a hindrance to others. In order to fully address the unique needs and challenges of all, both methods need to be available and equivalent. Staff will be advised to take an either/or/both mindset when offering service to clients so that the best fit for each individual's unique needs can be found. Some challenges identified with remote/virtual methods of service that are sometimes overlooked are a result of the technologies themselves. For example, if a job seeker is waiting on a phone call to set up an appointment, but the settings on their phone do not allow unrecognized numbers through, that call is never received. Similarly, email contacts can wind up in spam filters particularly if there are attachments included. Partner staff also need to be aware of individuals' sensitivity and alertness around potential fraud and scams. The idea of a training grant, for example, has struck some potential adult and dislocated workers as a possible scam. That has been communicated directly to staff by job seeker clients. The precipitous increase in fraud for unemployment claims and job opportunities throughout the pandemic has increased mistrust, and the comparatively more disconnected, less personalized remote service offerings do not assuage these concerns as much as physical presence in the Center does. All Partners should utilize multiple means of communication to reach and serve adults and dislocated workers, including phone, email, physical mail, text messaging, to help ensure no job seekers are missing important communications.

To address the isolation and job search fatigue/mental health strain many job seekers have felt throughout the pandemic, Title I staff piloted an adaptation of Agile methodology to provide wrap-around "swarm"-style services for clients in active job search mode post-training completion. This client-centered approach yielded several takeaways, including the positive response from job seekers and the enhanced feeling of being supported, the valuable cross-training and learning that arose among staff as a result of the multifunctional team, and ways to strengthen the process moving forward. This technique will help staff identify and address the unique needs of job seekers in a customized, team-driven, fashion and allow for holistic IEP updating and barrier removal. As this activity is conducted in person to provide a solution to disconnectedness and isolation, additional Partner staff will be included upon return to the Center.

Another key component of recovery for all will be strengthening career counseling techniques to ensure all options for all clients are being considered and covered, particularly in cases where an individual does not have an already established career path and skill set. By identifying additional data sets and continually monitoring that data, staff will be able to identify areas where underrepresentation among various groups exists. For example, a request has been made for access to an updated "Distribution of Experienced Labor By Race And Sex" report from the Economic Information & Analysis Division of IDES. While the report currently available on the IDES website shows some interesting trends, the data is not current and is based off the 2006-2010 American Community Survey. An updated data set will allow us to see if the trends apparent in that report still appear at present, and strategy for addressing those disparities can be designed and implemented.

All Partners will continue to build upon the use of labor market information and direct feedback from business clients to ensure that adults and dislocated workers are being guided toward the most in-demand and well-paying jobs available in our area.

Rapid Response services for dislocated workers may also continue through either in-person or virtual meetings and workshops depending on the business' needs and preference. Title I staff, in conjunction with our local partner from the Department of Labor, will continue offering the From Layoff to Launch rapid response sessions to those individuals who were not offered traditional Rapid Response service through their employer or who were not part of a WARN event.

Lastly, the onset of COVID has affected adult and dislocated worker services by leading Partners to examine processes and service access points more closely to ensure the experience of working with the partners is inviting and user-friendly for all. Increasing on-site information sessions and service delivery in the community will be explored as a way to diversify access points and increase awareness. Targeting outreach toward populations and municipalities most in need and continuing to develop/expand partnerships with community-based organizations that serve diverse populations will assist in recovery for all.

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

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

LWIA 6 offers a range of youth workforce investment activities for WIOA-eligible young adults, including those with disabilities. The Partners work in an integrated fashion, along with the local secondary education system, toward this service provision.

Partners co-present at community outreach events geared toward young adults with disabilities and their families. Title I/DuPage County WDD and Title IV/DRS provide information on job search, employment & training services, and supportive services. The College of DuPage counseling staff compare/contrast the transition from IEP services to the services provided by the College's Center for Access & Accommodations, and their Financial Aid staff also participate and present information.

If a youth with a disability requires additional supports or accommodation, the Partners work together to provide what is needed. Title IV/DRS has funding for employers to make accommodations, as well as for job coaching assistance and occupational training. Title I/DuPage County WDD has funds available for interpretation services, occupational training, and work-based learning. Assistive technology is available at the workNet DuPage Career Center. LWIA 6 was part of the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) Round 5, and, as a result, there exists an extensive network of external agencies and training providers that can be brought to the table in a staffing setting when appropriate.

Title I/DuPage County WDD runs an in-house youth program for young adults, both with and without documented disabilities, as well as contracts out youth programming through competitive procurement.

The in-house Make Your Way (MYWay) program is a workshop cohort that youth attend as the first step of WIOA program participation, based on the required WIOA youth program elements. The program reaches out to youth who are seeking a career pathway either by attending training or pursuing a career through internship and/or on-the-job training. The workshop cohort begins with assessment of the youth's basic skills, occupational skills, prior work experience, and basic needs. Exploration of the youth's career interests and the development of an individual service strategy serve as the guide for the youth's program participation. The cohort is a 3 week program which all youth clients are required to attend that covers financial literacy, entrepreneurial education, labor market information, resume writing, interview skills training, and soft skills/workplace skills training. Career readiness workshops are offered and may include speakers from DuPage County companies who articulate what they look for in an employee and highlight opportunities at their places of work. Youth may also tour College of DuPage (COD) to see what programs are offered, and they are also exposed to other training providers that may align with their career and/or training interests. Additional workshops are attended by youth as needed and identified in their Individual Service Strategy. Upon completion of all workshops, youth continue their program participation either by enrolling in an occupational training program or by participating in a work experience prior to occupational training enrollment. Youth not pursuing occupational training are matched with local companies for placement in 4-8 week long internships aligning with their career interest and/or On-The-Job Training direct hire.

Due to successful expanded outreach efforts, the highest volume of MYWay applications to date was received

during PY18. To handle the increased volume, DuPage County WDD staff began coordinating internal and offsite group intake sessions. For example, a group intake session was held at West Chicago High School (District 94) in addition to several group intake sessions at workNet DuPage. This is a strategy that the DuPage County WDD youth team plans to expand over the term of this local plan.

More broadly, the Title I/DuPage County WDD youth team has a goal of increasing the number of youth internships and work-based learning experiences for young adults with barriers to employment, including those with disabilities, young parents, those experiencing homelessness, and those with criminal justice involvement and/or addiction issues. In particular, and likely as a result of DEI Round 5, the team has had success with internship and employment placement for youth with documented disabilities, and a concerted effort to continue directing training dollar investment in that way has been made. DuPage County also serves as a work experience host site for youth participants with aligned work interests.

In addition to utilizing direct training dollars to support youth with disabilities in-house at workNet DuPage, Title I/DuPage County WDD also has awarded contracts for youth training services, through a competitive procurement process, to programming that expands access for this population. workNet DuPage has contracted with Parents Alliance Employment Project since 2014 to serve in-school youth with disabilities via the Project SEARCH Program. Project SEARCH is a national model whose primary objective is to secure competitive employment for people with disabilities. Project SEARCH programming is held at Northwestern Medicine Central DuPage Hospital where youth receive classroom instruction, work-based learning opportunities and exposure to the world of work. Since 2014, the Project SEARCH program has served 32 in school youth with disabilities. Of the 32 served, 30 have retained employment to date.

Due to the success of Project SEARCH, Parents Alliance Employment Project was awarded a contract to administer a new program, Inspired By Ability. Inspired By Ability is modeled after PROJECT Search and provides out of school youth with job coaching and work experience opportunities which lead to unsubsidized employment within the community.

The other youth contracts awarded also reflect current priorities of the local workforce area, specifically youth with criminal justice involvement and youth with significant cultural barriers. First Institute Training and Management was awarded a contract to provide welding training and AWS certification on-site at the DuPage County Jail. This allows individuals to obtain a marketable certification which will qualify them for gainful employment once released, thus reducing recidivism.

Lastly, to address the needs of those who face significant cultural barriers to employment, workNet DuPage awarded a contract to World Relief DuPage Aurora. World Relief has a 40-year history of serving immigrants and refugees in DuPage County. This contract allows World Relief to administer programming that includes job readiness training, career exploration and occupational training that will lead to employment for this population.

The competitive Request For Proposal process over the term of this plan will continue to look for programs that serve vulnerable youth populations such as those described above and which offer strong career pathway orientations.

Recently, Title I/DuPage County WDD youth staff have noted an increase in the number of young adults with disabilities who are attending (or planning to attend) the College of DuPage's Career Opportunity Achievement (COACH) program. The COACH program is a two-year cohort program for adults with intellectual or developmental disabilities. In addition to an academic focus on reading, writing, math and computer literacy, COACH also promotes social skills, independence and career exploration. COACH has been developed to provide post-transition students with engaging educational and life-skills training to help prepare for meaningful employment. The overall goals for COACH students are to:

- ✦ Demonstrate basic reading and math skills

- ✦ Use technology effectively to support academic and career pursuits
- ✦ Explore career options to identify a career path
- ✦ Practice appropriate workplace behavior
- ✦ Participate in on-campus and off-campus job-shadow and internship placements to gain work experience
- ✦ Build social skills through interaction with peers and the college population at large
- ✦ Develop self-determination through peer mentoring and staff/faculty advisement
- ✦ Apply time management skills to effectively manage program expectations.

This will continue to be a strong option for usage of Title I Youth dollars for young adults with disabilities moving forward. More data on the outcomes of this program for WIOA clients will be available at the conclusion of the term of this local plan.

**• A description of how local areas will meet the minimum expenditure rate for out-of-school youth.**

A combination of contracted youth services and in-house service provision is used by LWIA 6. Expenditures made on Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) and work-based learning for WIOA-eligible youth are typically exclusively for out-of-school youth. Contracts awarded for youth training services are also primarily focused on out-of-school youth, with a small percentage being awarded to in-school programs. The Local Board and DuPage County staff (including Finance staff) regularly monitor all expenditures to ensure all minimum expenditure rates are being met/exceeded.

**• As part of the 2022 modification, describe how youth activities will address the impact and recovery from the COVID-19 National Health Emergency.**

At this point in the economic recovery post-COVID onset, higher starting wages are possible for young adults in a wide range of jobs. Fast food restaurants and big box retailers are paying more and more, and often including sign-on bonuses, etc. Some young adults gravitate toward short-term, low-commitment, quick payoff set-ups like gigs, side hustles, and freelance arrangements. Though workers are needed in those sectors and positions, WIOA programming focuses on demand occupations that meet select criteria (including earning potential and economic mobility over time) and that build the workforce needed to support and enhance the local economy. As stated in this plan, the key sectors for LWIA6 (and Region 4) are Healthcare, Advanced Manufacturing, Transportation/Distribution/Logistics, and Information Technology. Outreach efforts and career counseling need to sell young adults on the importance of a career path over other alternatives, including how career paths offer benefits, increasing economic mobility over time, future financial stability, e.g. retirement benefits, and more. Work also needs to be done to ensure that workforce shortages at business clients are not due to inequitable wage and benefit offerings.

Title I made the development and offering of work-based learning a top priority for young adults post-pandemic. In the initial phase of the national health emergency, it was extremely difficult, if not impossible, to secure work-based learning placements. At this stage of recovery, Title I staff have arranged a wide variety of opportunities ranging from digital file management to warehouse to social media specialist to fingerprinting technician, and more. By increasing wages for internships to align with market rates/entry-level position rates, these work-based learning opportunities can compete with the other alternatives at young adults' disposal. This renewed focus on internships is key as more youth need or want to work at this time due to the lingering effects of the national health emergency.

Title I staff are also taking a more creative approach to youth activities including the pacing or stacking of youth services. For young adults who are unsure what path they want to take or who lack the insight needed to make that decision, informational interviews with partner businesses or WIB members to learn more about potential career paths of interest are made available. Acknowledging disparities in the amount of social capital and connections some young adults have, there is an intentional effort to make available opportunities for building that capital which is needed to network. Job shadows can also be arranged to provide career exploration and workplace readiness.

Virtual events have been held to focus specifically on younger workers, such as a Career Conversation that featured four young adults in different occupations describing their experiences. An effort to make sure job search skills training is providing universally needed job search tips and is not geared primarily toward more skilled or older workers is in place as well.

Keeping in mind what's next, such as electric vehicle-related jobs, infrastructure bill-related construction opportunities, and the increasing importance of digital skills literacy and cybersecurity skills, will be a key tenet for serving youth clients moving forward.

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

The term "individual with barrier to employment" means one or more of the following populations: displaced homemakers, low-income individuals, Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians, individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities, older individuals, ex-offenders, homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths, youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system, individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers, eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers, individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act, single parents, including pregnant single women, long-term unemployed individuals, and such other groups as the Governor determines to have barriers to employment (WIOA Sec. 3(24)).

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

Below is the LWIA 6 Local Policy regarding Priority of Service for clients. This policy was developed in conjunction with the Board and Title I/DuPage County WDD staff to ensure that priority usage of funds is in accordance with the WIOA statute. The Policy is designed to provide priority of career and training services to Veterans, Low Income Individuals, and those who are Basic Skills Deficient.

Policy for Priority of Service For Individualized Career Services And Training Services  
WIOA Adult Program

FOR DUPAGE COUNTY RESIDENTS: The list below describes the priority of service for individuals served in the WIOA Adult Program based on the requirements in WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(E), proposed 20 CFR 680.600 and 680.640, TEGL 10-09,

- 1st Priority – Covered persons (veterans and eligible spouses) who are:
  - low income [as defined by WIOA Sec. 3(36)], or
  - recipients of public assistance, or
  - basic skills deficient.
  
- 2nd Priority - Individuals (non-covered persons) who are:
  - low income [as defined by WIOA Sec. 3(36)], or
  - recipients of public assistance, or
  - basic skills deficient.
  
- 3rd Priority - Veterans and eligible spouses who are:
  - not low income, and
  - not recipients of public assistance, and
  - not basic skills deficient.

4th Priority - On an exception basis, WIOA eligible individuals (non-covered persons) who do

not meet the WIOA Adult Program eligibility for priorities 1, 2 or 3 may be served under the 4th priority. The WIOA eligible adult must meet the income guidelines for 4<sup>th</sup> Priority and one or more of the following categories of an individual with a barrier to employment:

FAMILY SIZE	250% OF LLSIL
1	\$35,521
2	\$58,236
3	\$79,916
4	\$98,665
5	\$116,442
6*	\$136,185

\*For families with more than 6 members, add \$19,743 for each additional member.

Barriers to employment:

- Individuals with disabilities;
- Older individuals;
- Ex-offenders;
- Individuals who are English language learners, have low levels of literacy, and/or are facing substantial cultural barriers;
- Single parents (including single pregnant women);
- Long-term unemployed individuals (27+ weeks);
- Individuals lacking formal training beyond High School whose current employment is not in a high growth occupation.

- 5th Priority- Individuals who are NOT DuPage County residents will only be eligible for services if they meet either the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> priority listed above and only if funds are available.

The Priority of Service and barriers to employment were developed to ensure that career services and training funds are allocated to clients who will benefit the most from help obtaining skills and certifications that lead to self-sufficient employment.

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

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

Title I staff use IWDS Target Population reports in conjunction with in-house report and data collection to track enrolled program participant volume and characteristics.

To use the PY19 1A grant as an example, out of 88 new 1A registrants, 50% identified as male and 50% as female, with the following racial/ethnic breakdown-

White- 36.4% (73.8% total DuPage population<sup>1</sup>)  
 Black- 30.7% (5.1% total DuPage population)  
 Asian- 28.4% (12.4% total DuPage population)  
 Hispanic- 11.4% (15.2% total DuPage population.)

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<sup>1</sup> Impact DuPage/Claritas

Average wage at exit for 1A program participants, PY19:

Male- \$18.73/hour  
Female- \$23.78/hour  
White- \$21.58/hour  
Black- \$21.71/hour  
Asian- \$17.97/hour  
Hispanic- \$27.14/hour.

For PY20, out of a total of 384 newly enrolled participants in all grants:

40.4% identified as Female (50.9% total DuPage population)  
59.4% identified as Male (49.1% total DuPage population)  
7% identified as having a disability (4.8% total DuPage population)  
54%- White (73% total DuPage population)  
20% Black (5.2% total DuPage population)  
19% Asian (13% total DuPage population)  
12.2 % Hispanic (15.2% total DuPage population)  
1% American Indian/Alaskan Native (0.3% total DuPage population)  
3.6% Prefer not to answer.

Using the above examples, some sample conclusions now driving strategy are that:

- Women have been slower to reengage with the workforce system likely as a result of well-documented pandemic-driven challenges, and increased attention on how best to support return-to-work for women should be given over the next two years of this plan;
- Hispanics seem to engage with the workforce system at a lesser rate compared to the proportion of overall DuPage County residents who identify as Hispanic, and this could result from language barriers or a number of other factors worth exploring; innovative solutions to language barriers (for all residents with English as a second language) need to continue being advanced, and community partners that serve the Hispanic community should be identified and partnered with as trusted messengers of the available resources through the public workforce system.

This type of data disaggregation in addition to reviewing the overall occupation background in DuPage County by race and sex and the training programs/industry sectors breakdown of WIOA-funded participants will continue to expand and be used to inform decision-making, policy, career counseling, and client service moving forward.

To address workforce equity, IDES hired two Unemployment Insurance Advocates who have reached out to underserved populations. Both advocates work closely with IDES regional offices, local offices and community stakeholders to identify customers in need of assistance in filing unemployment claims, obtaining benefits, and directing outreach to individuals in need of assistance.

- Serve as a liaison to the community by being a source of information to those seeking Agency services, updates, or troubleshooting on pending UI claims.
- Provide regular reports to Agency leadership on the quality of services and areas in need of improvement.
- Prevent complaints by working with supervisors, managers, and community stakeholders offering suggestions and making efforts to resolve complaints and obstacles.
- Resolve complaints by listening to claimants, legal service providers, community groups, elected officials and businesses who represent claimants.
- Maintain confidentiality of claimant information and agency data.
- Improve overall quality in service to claimants and work to reduce the backlog of

claims resulting from the global pandemic.

The College of DuPage (COD)/Perkins reviewed a variety of data sources in aggregate and disaggregate forms including a Comprehensive CTE Data Review, CTE Program Reviews and the COD Equity plan as part of the CLNA. This review revealed focus areas where equity gaps were identified, specifically addressing the performance gaps between White students and Black/African American or Latino students and low-income and higher income students.

For COD/Title II programs, eligibility for adult education services is specific to English proficiency and Reading/Math levels of participants. Systems and processes are designed to address a broad range of reading levels and language proficiencies and target all non-English Language Background students as well as students lacking a high school diploma or its equivalent. Data is used to target communities of greatest need based on these criteria.

DuPage Community Services/CSBG will continue ensuring outreach is directed at low-income census tracts, as well as reviewing demographic intake data to ensure all sectors of the population are being reached.

Department of Human Services/TANF does not currently have access to data of this nature, but plan to continue working with department heads to provide insight.

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

In accordance with Perkins V, the College of DuPage is currently facilitating a Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA). This is a data-informed, continuous improvement process that assesses the extent to which the College's Career and Technical Education programs and programs of study are meeting and in alignment with local workforce needs through the following six key areas: 1) student performance data; 2) size, scope and quality as defined by the state plan; 3) labor market alignment; 4) progress toward implementing CTE programs of study; 5) recruitment, retention, and training of faculty and staff; and 6) progress toward improving access and equity. The CLNA process engages a diverse body of internal and external stakeholders in collecting input and feedback along with other data analysis that will be used in developing the COD four-year Perkins Application. Some of the other data that was used in the analysis included: Past Career & Technical Education Program Reports; a Comprehensive CTE Data Review; College of DuPage Environmental Scan; Economic Modeling System (EMSI) Occupational data reports; WIOA Unified State Plan; College of DuPage Strategic and Local Plan; State Adult Education Plan and the Illinois State Plan for the Strengthening Career and Technical Education (Perkins V).

The College of DuPage CLNA process consists of a CLNA Steering Committee and four working group teams: 1) Workforce/Labor Market Alignment; 2) Student Performance; 3) Equity and Access; and 4) Programs of Study. In the upcoming months, the teams will be reviewing and analyzing multiple data sets in aggregate and disaggregate formats to help identify and uncover equity gaps as well as program and labor market needs. In addition, the teams will be sending out feedback surveys to both internal and external stakeholders gathering additional feedback and input. Results of the local CLNA will be used in the development of the College of DuPage four-year Perkins Strategic Plan. This will include developing goals to capture and analyze data on the new special population groups as well as develop action plans where disparities and inequities are identified.

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

Title I/DuPage County WDD, in conjunction with the College of DuPage/Perkins and many community partners and employers, launched the Breaking Boundaries initiative in 2017. The goal of Breaking Boundaries is to

expose women to non-traditional occupations and career pathways that provide greater earning potential over time. Three events were held between 2017-2019- one at College of DuPage, one at Universal Technical Institute, and one at Lake Park High School. There is continued interest in the community in maintaining this initiative- one member of the Local Board who represents trades and the unionized construction market of the Chicago metro area attributes increased amount of young women pursuing apprenticeship paths in the trades to the increased exposure through these events. Title I/DuPage County WDD staff have also noted several cases of women selecting occupational training in traditionally male areas, and there is interest in further coordinating and emphasizing those routes. Beyond potentially holding additional Breaking Boundaries events and programming over the term of this plan, Title I/DuPage County WDD plan to fold non-traditional career counseling into both youth/secondary school client outreach and service as well as service and guidance provided to young mothers and/or single mothers in partnership with the Department of Human Services (DHS.)

The College of DuPage develops a variety of STEM based activities for district schools and community residents to offer enhanced, experiential learning opportunities for K-12 and the community at large including: Annual STEMCON event; STEM Career Night; STEMinars; DuPage County Science Fair; Science Olympiad; STEM Spotlights; and Women in STEM events.

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

Although mentoring is not a major aspect of WIOA programming at workNet DuPage at this time, effective models can be explored over the term of this plan and incorporated into initiatives that would be best served by the addition, such as mentoring for World Relief participants, for individuals in recovery from addiction who are building their new career path, or for women who are breaking into traditionally male fields.

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

Results of the College of DuPage CLNA will be used in the development of the College of DuPage four-year Perkins Strategic Plan. The plan will include providing professional development opportunities to train faculty and staff on data-driven approaches to address equity gaps.

The Local Partners are committed to developing a common workforce equity lens definition and providing All Staff training periodically to relay how that lens translates to the work collectively being performed.

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

Title I/DuPage County WDD will use the County's geographic information system (GIS) to gain insight into areas of the County that may be underserved or in which a higher percentage of residents who do not have high school diplomas, who meet low income guidelines, and/or who lack adequate transportation live. That data will inform any future efforts to bring services out into the community for increased accessibility.

**H. Provide a description of training policies and activities in the local area, including the following and any significant implications of the COVID-19 National Health Emergency, as applicable:**

- **How local areas will meet the annual Training Expenditure Requirement (WIOA Policy Chapter 8, Section 49);**

The Local Board and the Title I/DuPage County Workforce Development Division (WDD) comply with the State Training Expenditure Requirement that a minimum of 50% of expenditures will be on training-related services and activities as outlined in the State policy. This requirement will be met by providing a combination of the calculable services in that policy, with a majority of expenditures anticipated in the areas of occupational skills training (Individual Training Accounts-ITAs) and work-based learning (Incumbent Worker Training- IWT, On-

the-Job Training- OJT, Apprenticeships, Work Experience/Internships.) For PY18, the total percentage of funds expended on direct training activities was over 53.7%. That percentage was reached by calculating only ITA, IWT, and work-based learning costs. The local area did not factor in Trade Act expenditures (which are high in LWIA 6) or any other allowable categories of spending.

As a result of the serious workforce shortages in DuPage County along with lagging client engagement with Title I services due to lingering COVID repercussions, Incumbent Worker Training has taken on increased significance and may represent a larger portion of overall training expenditures than usual. While the unemployment rate is down, the labor force participation rate for DuPage County is also lower than it was prior to the onset of the national health emergency, i.e. 2019- 507,948 vs. 2020- 484,215 (BLS.gov.) Focusing on upskilling incumbent workers to secure pay increases or promotion while helping businesses address workforce shortages through productivity and ability gains is a key strategy at this time. The use of Incumbent Worker Training grants to assist the working poor is also being explored. For example, through a partnership with DuPage Pads, the Title I business services team is gathering information on which residents of the shelter are working and wish to remain at their current employer, but who need to earn a higher wage to attain self-sufficiency. Through communication with those employers and the determination of what training would be needed for the employee to advance and increase their pay rate, the business services team plans to utilize IWT grants as means for economic mobility for some of our most vulnerable residents.

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

Four of the Partners operating out of the workNet DuPage Career Center use work-based learning strategies and programs to benefit job seekers and businesses throughout LWIA 6.

Title I/DuPage County WDD offers the widest range of work-based learning programs and strategies, including:

- ✦ Incumbent Worker Training (IWT)—Local businesses can apply for a training grant that will reimburse up to \$25,000 of the costs of training existing workers. Emphasis is placed on training projects that lead to pay increases, promotions, and industry-recognized credentials for workers and/or that are part of an apprenticeship model.
- ✦ Apprenticeships—As mentioned above, a focus on apprenticeships is being utilized when considering IWT grant applications for approval. Target goals have been set for how many apprentices Title I/WDD would like to see served through IWT grants for individual program years. Beyond IWT grants, Title I/WDD leadership are active in regional efforts through the Workforce Partners of Metro Chicago to guide more companies through the process of learning about and implementing apprenticeship programs. Partnerships with the College of DuPage's Project Hire Ed, Universal Technical Institute's diesel mechanic training program, and other organizations throughout the local area are expected to yield even greater apprenticeship-related outcomes for both job seekers and businesses. Title I/DuPage County WDD is also participating in the ConstructionWorks project through the Illinois Tollway to guide more individuals from underrepresented populations into skilled trade apprenticeships.
- ✦ On-The-Job Training (OJT)—Local employers can receive a wage reimbursement of up to 75% for the first six months of employment when hiring an eligible individual who needs to be trained on-the-job. Title I/WDD aims to primarily use this tool when supporting apprenticeships or to facilitate job placement of reentering ex-offenders (including individuals in recovery from addiction), veterans, older workers, youth, homeless individuals, individuals with disabilities, refugees and/or asylum seekers, and others experiencing significant barriers to employment.
- ✦ Internships/Work Experience—Title I/WDD primarily utilizes this tool in the form of paid internships to help youth gain work experience and/or to explore a career path or workplace. Transitional jobs for income-eligible adult clients can also be developed to help bridge significant gaps in work history or to overcome other substantial barriers to employment.

Goals for each work-based learning program are established as part of the annual strategic plan and are discussed quarterly among the management team.

In addition to Title I/WDD work-based learning, the two Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) providers at workNet DuPage provide income-eligible older workers with part-time, paid community service positions and work-based training at local nonprofits.

The College of DuPage through its Continuing Education, CTE degree and certificate programs offers students a variety of work based learning opportunities for students. Rigorous internships play a key role in many CTE degree/certificate programs providing students authentic work-based learning experiences. Each internship has a Learning Agreement that outlines a specific Learning Plan and Evaluation Rubric for each identified Learning Goal. The agreement also outlines the specific role and expectations of the employer, faculty advisor and student. Many of the College's programs include coursework that requires practice in a clinical or simulated lab environment. In addition, students in the Automotive, Cosmetology, Culinary Arts, Hospitality, and Dental Hygiene programs provide students further opportunities to hone and develop their work-based and customer service skills through services offered to the public at reduced costs.

Lastly, the Department of Human Services/Rehabilitation Services (DRS) offers their Supported Employment Program to job seekers with disabilities and employers. DRS provides job analysis, job development, and job coaching assistance to job seekers, while offering employers wage reimbursements through periods of On-The-Job Evaluations (OJE) and On-The-Job Training (OJT.)

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

Below is the LWIA 6 Local Policy on Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) as developed and approved by the Local Board with Title I/DuPage County WDD leadership. Customer choice in the selection of training programs is available to eligible adults, dislocated workers, and youth who are assessed as suitable and in need of occupational training to obtain self-sufficient employment. Customer choice is limited to training programs and providers that align with the customer's employment and training plan developed with Title I/WDD staff. Emphasis is placed on short-term training programs that lead to marketable skills/credentials and provide the quickest route to reemployment that pays a self-sufficient wage on the chosen career pathway. Training provider performance data is available through Illinois workNet, which pulls the participant outcome information that is entered in IWDS. Title I/WDD staff also request updated outcome data from the training providers to give them the opportunity to submit and verify the successful completion, employment, and credential attainment numbers for all students, not only WIOA or TAA participants. Title I/WDD staff have the ability to review and share this information with clients regarding specific training provider/program outcomes, along with any specific, objective feedback from previous clients who participated in the programs. During the assessment process, clients are also asked to research and compare multiple providers. As part of that research, Title I/WDD Career Planners encourage the clients to ask each provider specific questions about the course content, schedule, as well as the provider's job placement and successful completion rates, etc. by way of due diligence. This helps to ensure that clients are making well-informed decisions about the training program and provider they choose.

#### Policy for Individual Training Accounts (ITAs)

Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) will be capped at a maximum of \$10,000 for DuPage County residents, workers, or dislocated worker non-residents who worked in DuPage County. ITAs will only be given for training that is from a Certified Program/Provider and is on the Demand Occupation Training List, per DCEO's Training Provider Policy.

Youth ITAs can be issued to Older Youth and Out-of-School Youth who cannot benefit from the youth services available through the DuPage County WDD contracted programs. Youth must meet all 1Y residency requirements.

- **Provide a copy of the local training provider approval policy and procedures. Describe how the Local Board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services through the system and that the providers will meet the employment needs of local employers, workers and jobseekers.**

See Attachment C for the Policy for Local WIOA Training Provider Eligibility.

The Local Board ensures the continuous improvement of services provided by eligible providers in several ways. First, Title I/WDD staff consistently monitor program outcomes and respond to any client concerns and issues to determine if a particular program or provider should ever be removed from the Eligible Training Provider List for the purposes of customer protection. The successful completion, credential attainment, and training-related employment rates of the providers are reviewed at least annually by Title I/WDD staff. If a training provider does not appear to be meeting adequate levels of performance, this is addressed with the provider. Potential causes and solutions are discussed, in an effort to help the provider improve their level of service and performance.

Next, by consistently reviewing local labor market data, the Local Board and Title I/WDD Staff compare the training programs being offered by providers with the occupations that are in demand in the surrounding area. DuPage WDD also consults regularly with Local Board members who represent a range of industries to gain feedback on employment trends in the area. The Local Board, along with the Title I/WDD Business Services Unit, also communicate and collaborate with employers across several sectors to help identify and meet their employment needs and the skills required of their employees. These efforts help to ensure that gaps in types of training being offered are addressed so that the demands of employers are aligned with the training investments being made in the education of WIOA clients.

**The Local Board will consider needed revisions to the Training Provider Eligibility policy and approval process to have providers supply details pertaining to: offering virtual/hybrid learning models along with in-person; incorporating professional/soft skills into curriculum; equity targets or data.**

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

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

Funds will be transferred between Adult and Dislocated Worker streams on an as needed basis during the program year. Up to 100% of Adult money may be transferred into Dislocated Worker or vice versa. This determination will be made based on the amount of WARN activity and overall volume of layoffs in the local area.

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

Up to 20% of Adult and/or Dislocated Worker funds may be used on Incumbent Worker Training. The amount diverted for this purpose will be based on the overall budget, with priority being given to ITAs and OJTs in times of moderate to high unemployment. Preference will be given to IWT projects that demonstrate any/all of the following: a clear avenue toward layoff aversion, demonstrable position and/or pay upgrades for trainees, the use of an apprenticeship model, attainment of industry-recognized credentials, significant impact on the company's competitiveness.

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

Up to 10% of combined Adult and Dislocated Worker allotments may be used on transitional jobs for Adult (1A) clients. Target populations for transitional jobs include, but are not limited to, ex-offenders, long-term unemployed, and individuals with disabilities.

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

No funds will be expended on performance contracts.

**J. As part of the 2022 modification, if needed, describe the impact of the pandemic the operating systems and policies within the Local Workforce Innovation Areas (LWIAs) otherwise not already described above. Include what steps, to the extent known, that will be taken over the next two years to adapt to the impact of the pandemic regarding the operating systems and policies within the Local Workforce Innovation Areas (LWIAs).**

All Partners acknowledge the importance of clear remote work policies and continued monitoring of the efficiency, accuracy, and effectiveness of those models when and where used. All Partners are committed to continuous improvement and ongoing engagement with each other as the Local Partners Team. Shared areas of focus beyond service integration now include determining how best to leverage available data in a post-COVID environment, define and describe a collective workforce equity lens approach, and monitor progress toward equity goals.

**K. Describe how a workforce equity lens is or will be incorporated in the operating systems and policies as part of the Local Workforce Innovation Areas (LWIAs).**

Beyond all the content previously covered regarded an equity lens focus, the Local Partner team plans to define what using a workforce equity lens approach means to collective staff, as well as conduct periodic All Staff meetings focused on how to implement this approach.

## CHAPTER 5: PERFORMANCE GOALS AND EVALUATION – LOCAL COMPONENT

The plan must include information on the actions the Local Board will take toward becoming or remaining a high performing board, consistent with the factors developed by the State Board (WIOA Sec. 101(d)(6)) and (§ 679.560(b)(17)). **LWIAs are required to provide updated information and analysis noting any significant impacts of the COVID-19 National Health Emergency and what steps will be taken to address the challenges and opportunities that are associated with performance goals and evaluation.**

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

### • WIOA Performance Measures

The Local Board will comply with Title I performance measures negotiated by the State. **The Local Board has been instructed to not factor the COVID-19 National Health Emergency into performance negotiations or considerations.**

Performance Measures	PY 2020/2021 Performance Goals	PY 2022/2023 Performance Goals
<b>ADULT</b>		
Employment Rate- 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter after Exit	74%	72%
Employment Rate- 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter after Exit	73%	70%
Median Earnings	\$8,000	\$9,200
Credential Attainment	79%	76%
Measurable Skills Gain	50%	61%
<b>DISLOCATED WORKERS</b>		
Employment Rate- 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter after Exit	78%	76%
Employment Rate- 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter after Exit	78%	75%
Median Earnings	\$12,500	\$15,500
Credential Attainment	75%	76%
Measurable Skills Gain	55%	70%
<b>YOUTH</b>		
Employment/Placement in Education Rate- 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter after Exit	70%	72%
Employment/Placement in Education Rate- 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter after Exit	69.5%	70%
Median Earnings	\$3,500	\$4,250
Credential Attainment	70%	70%
Measurable Skills Gain	42%	58%

### • Additional State Performance Measures

The Local Board will comply with additional state performance measures as directed.

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

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

The primary service delivery strategy for LWIA 6 continues to be the use of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) to assist WIOA clients in returning to work and/or boosting their earning potential and/or beginning or continuing on an in-demand career pathway. The success and return on investment of this strategy can be seen in the performance outcomes. For example:

- PY16-PY18 Title I Exiters (1,212 individuals) earned total wages four quarters post-exit of over \$48,894,702.79. A basic calculation of return-on-investment (total post-program wages divided by total allocation for those three program years) shows a return of \$3.11 for every single WIOA dollar expended. That calculation does not factor in multiplier effects, impact on State and Federal taxes, effects on SNAP and TANF, etc.
  - From PY16-PY18, 70.5% of all participants were exited with employment. Of those exited with employment, 85.5% had training-related employment.
  - From PY16-PY18, 81.1% of Adult participants attained a marketable credential, 78.0% of Dislocated Worker participants attained a marketable credential, and 70.1% of Youth participants attained a marketable credential.
  - In PY18, low income clients attained an 85.5% increase in wages among program Exiters.
  - In PY 18, youth clients showed wage gains of 103.2%.
- Υ For PY20, program Exiters attained an average 11% increase in earnings.

Providing coordinated and integrated service at a single One-Stop centrally located in DuPage County continues to be an effective delivery strategy. The workNet DuPage Career Center provided career counseling, job search support, funding assistance, and other services to 3,329 individuals during PY18.

As a result of the national health emergency, the adoption of multiple virtual and remote client services strategies has increased flexibility and accessibility.

Utilizing Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) grants to serve local businesses, primarily in targeted industry sectors, continues to be an effective service delivery strategy. From PY16 to the present, over \$850,000 has been spent or obligated on training projects for area manufacturers, information technology firms, transportation/distribution/logistics companies, and a variety of small (<10 employees) businesses so that they could increase productivity and competitiveness by upskilling their workers.

As a result of the national health emergency, the use of IWT has become an even more effective strategy to meet the needs of both business and individual clients as described above.

Other more specific service delivery strategies that have shown promising returns on investment in their early stages, and which will continue being emphasized moving forward, are:

- Internships and work-based learning for youth with disabilities
- Occupational training and job placement for World Relief participants
- Increased emphasis on “Fast Track To A Job Search” career services for WIOA clients not in need of additional occupational training services

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

workNet DuPage has curtailed hosting job fairs at the Center. The return on investment for these events has been minimal, and the time and resources spent organizing them is difficult to justify when looking at the amount of hires that are made as a result. workNet DuPage will explore using targeted recruiting events and meet & greets in other ways and will contrast the effectiveness of these methods with those of large scale job fair events.

workNet DuPage made two attempts to deliver the MYWay youth program in low-income sections of the County. The idea was that doing so would reduce any transportation barriers and directly tie-in employers in those communities with the program. Although getting employer buy-in was not a problem, the team was unable to identify enough interested young adult participants on either attempt. This could be due to the low overall volume of WIOA-eligible youth in the County and the amount of other resources available.

workNet DuPage Title I staff are reducing the number of participants who begin Associates degree programs with WIOA dollars. The length of such programs, the burden the duration places on capacity of Title I staff, the impact these programs have on credential attainment rates, and the delay with reentry to the workforce all negatively affect return on investment. The focus is being placed squarely on short-term occupational training leading to marketable credentials in high-demand industry sectors and job areas.

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

As a region, Economic Development Region (EDR) 4-Northeast Illinois successfully piloted regional IWT with a regional Talent Pipeline grant focused on the Transportation/Distribution/Logistics industry. Projects included upskilling of Ford automotive technicians at dealerships throughout northeast Illinois, as well as an effort focused on capacity-building for employers to hire and retain more workers with disabilities. The region plans to continue expanding these efforts over the term of this plan, including scaling into other in-demand sectors. Additionally, the Workforce Partners of Metropolitan Chicago (WPMC) plans to identify the most significant regional skills gaps and develop a campaign to market those specific career pathways and fill that demand in a coordinated fashion over the term of this plan. This strategy would imitate in some ways the previously successful Accelerated Training for Illinois Manufacturing (ATIM) initiative.

Lastly, the Northern Illinois Workforce Coalition (NWIC) has successfully worked as a region to coordinate education and workforce efforts and deliver quality return-on-investment.

**○ What return on investment and qualitative outcome data for various education and training programs will be collected to identify barriers to enrollment?**

As the State works toward a more cohesive system for tracking performance and outcome data of providers on the WIOA Eligible Training Providers List, it will be easier to decipher which programs yield the greatest return on investment. Regarding barriers to enrollment in the form of equity gaps, the Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment being conducted for Perkins V will help identify gaps and uncover specific barriers to enrollment.

o **What are the most cost-effective approaches to taking down those barriers or helping residents overcome them?**

Cost-effective approaches will be explored and experimented with once a clearer picture of all barriers related to equity gaps is in place. For the time being, the Local Board is aware that the common barriers of transportation and child-care are significant impediments to employment attainment and retention for a segment of community residents. Partnerships with other community organizations will continue to be developed to help offset those barriers as much as possible.

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

The Title I Administrator provides regular updates to the Local Board regarding client traffic data, usage of funds, and a variety of updates on other relevant data and program evaluations including DCEO or DOL monitorings, internal monitorings, overall service offerings evaluation, etc.

**D. As part of the 2022 modification, if needed, describe the impact of the pandemic on the regional service strategies, including use of cooperative service delivery strategies and the connection of job seekers with employers, not covered in the above sections. Include what steps, to the extent known, that will be taken over the next two years to adapt to the impact of the pandemic in regard to the regional service strategies, including use of cooperative service delivery strategies and the connection of job seekers with employers.**

The impact of the pandemic on regional service strategies and EDR4's regional response and action plans is covered in detail in Chapters 1-3.

**E. As part of the 2022 modification, describe how a workforce equity lens is or will be incorporated in the analysis of performance goals and implementation of evaluation activities.**

Currently, WIOA Performance Goals do not take into account categories such as race, ethnicity, disability, gender, etc. when setting levels of expected performance. The Statistical Adjustment Model (SAM) is in the process of being rolled out and will take into account existing barriers of job seekers served and modify performance outcomes accordingly. Evaluating disaggregated outcome data will illuminate future areas of focus regarding underrepresentation in specific occupations.

As part of the COD/Perkins CLNA update for 2022, the workforce development sub-team is reviewing and analyzing regional and local occupational projection data and will identify occupations and programs where there is an equity discrepancy. Program faculty will then identify enrollment and completion strategies to lessen those equity gaps. Target goals will be set with assessments occurring on an annual basis.

For Title II/ABE, workforce outcomes are part of the achievement benchmarks that must be met by funded programs. These include obtaining employment, retaining employment, mean wages and employer satisfaction. This applies to all participants across educational programs and levels.

This chapter includes the technical requirements and assurances that are required by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA Sec. 121 (c)(2)(iv)). **LWIAs are required to provide updated information and analysis noting any significant impacts of the COVID-19 National Health Emergency and what steps will be taken to address the challenges and opportunities that are associated with meeting the administrative requirement of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act programs.**

**A. Fiscal Management**

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

The DuPage County Finance Department is responsible for the disbursement of grant funds.

- **Provide a copy of the local procurement policies and procedures and describe the competitive procurement process that will be used to award the subgrants and contracts for WIOA Title I activities (§ 679.560(b)(15)).**

The competitive process used to award subgrants and contracts in LWIA 6 for WIOA Title I activities are pursuant to the DuPage County Procurement Ordinance (Attachment D.)

**B. Physical and Programmatic Accessibility**

- **Describe how entities within the one-stop delivery system, including one-stop operators and the one-stop partners, will comply with WIOA Sec. 188, if applicable, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology and materials for individuals with disabilities, including providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities (§ 679.560(b)(5)(iii)).**

The local one-stop system, including the one-stop operator and the one-stop partners, will comply with all Federal and State physical inclusiveness and accessibility requirements, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, Section 188 of WIOA, the Illinois Accessibility Code, the most recent ADA standards for Accessible Design and the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards, and all other applicable statutory and regulatory requirements. workNet DuPage maintains a culture of inclusiveness for all clients and staff. The physical characteristics of the facility, both indoor and outdoor, are in compliance with CFR Part 37, the 2010 or most recent ADA standards for Accessible Design, and the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards including a handicapped entrance door to the building. The Center is located in a convenient, high traffic, and accessible location with public transportation stops on both sides of the building and adequate parking which is clearly marked for individuals with disabilities. Indoor space is designed in an "equal and meaningful" manner providing access for individuals with disabilities. Technology, assistive devices, and materials for individuals with disabilities are readily available and accessible. Staff training for utilizing those materials, as well as for how best to serve individuals with disabilities or other barriers to employment, are held on an ongoing basis. These trainings typically take place at One-Stop all-staff meetings. The schedule for those meetings will be set at the beginning of each calendar year.

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

As required under WIOA and related State policies, all WIOA Required Partners develop, amend as necessary, and adhere to an umbrella Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that provides the framework for: integration of and access to the entire set of services available within the local one-stop system, accessibility of services to

individuals with disabilities, agreements on cross-training of staff, service delivery methods and staffing, sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers, shared costs for operating the Center, etc. (See Attachment A.)

### **C. Plan Development and Public Comment**

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

Legal notice regarding the required 30-day Public Comment period was published in the Daily Herald, DuPage County's primary newspaper. Additionally, the draft Plan was available on the workNet DuPage website ([www.worknetdupage.org](http://www.worknetdupage.org)) for viewing and comments 30 days prior to submission of the plan. There was an opportunity to have input into the development of the local plan, particularly for representatives of businesses, education, and labor organizations. A series of meetings were held with stakeholders to encourage a collaborative effort in drafting the plan. The Plan was also made available to the DuPage Workforce Innovation Board which includes representation from business, education and labor organizations. The Board was invited to submit any pertinent feedback to the draft plan.

Any comments posted during the 30-day Public Comment period will be forwarded to the Local Board, Partners, and the Chief Elected Official. Necessary changes will be made to the Plan prior to final submission.

**The same process outlined above for public comment is being utilized for the required 2022 revision.**

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

The draft Local Plan was made available to the Board on February 7, 2020 and to the public on February 20, 2020. A public notice was published in the Daily Herald newspaper on February 20, 2020 and an email was provided for comments. The Plan was also available on the workNet DuPage website ([www.worknetdupage.org](http://www.worknetdupage.org)). The plan was available for viewing on-site at the workNet DuPage Career Center, 2525 Cabot Drive, Suite 302, Lisle, IL 60532.

There were no public comments.

The revised plan was submitted for public comment and no comments were received.

- **Provide information regarding the regional and local plan modification procedures.**

Any modifications needed or requested over the term of this Plan will be brought to the Partner group and Local Board for consideration and approval.

**Members of the Local Partner Group submitted information for the sections of the plan that required revision in 2022, and the draft revised plan was brought to the Local Board at the January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2022 meeting.**

### **D. Describe how a workforce equity lens is or will be incorporated in with meeting the administrative requirement of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act programs.**

LWIA6 will continue to comply with all Federal and State physical inclusiveness and accessibility requirements, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, Section 188 of WIOA, the Illinois Accessibility Code, the most recent ADA standards for Accessible Design and the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards, and all other applicable statutory and regulatory requirements, as well as all Equal Opportunity policies and standards including those adhered to by each Partner agency when hiring.